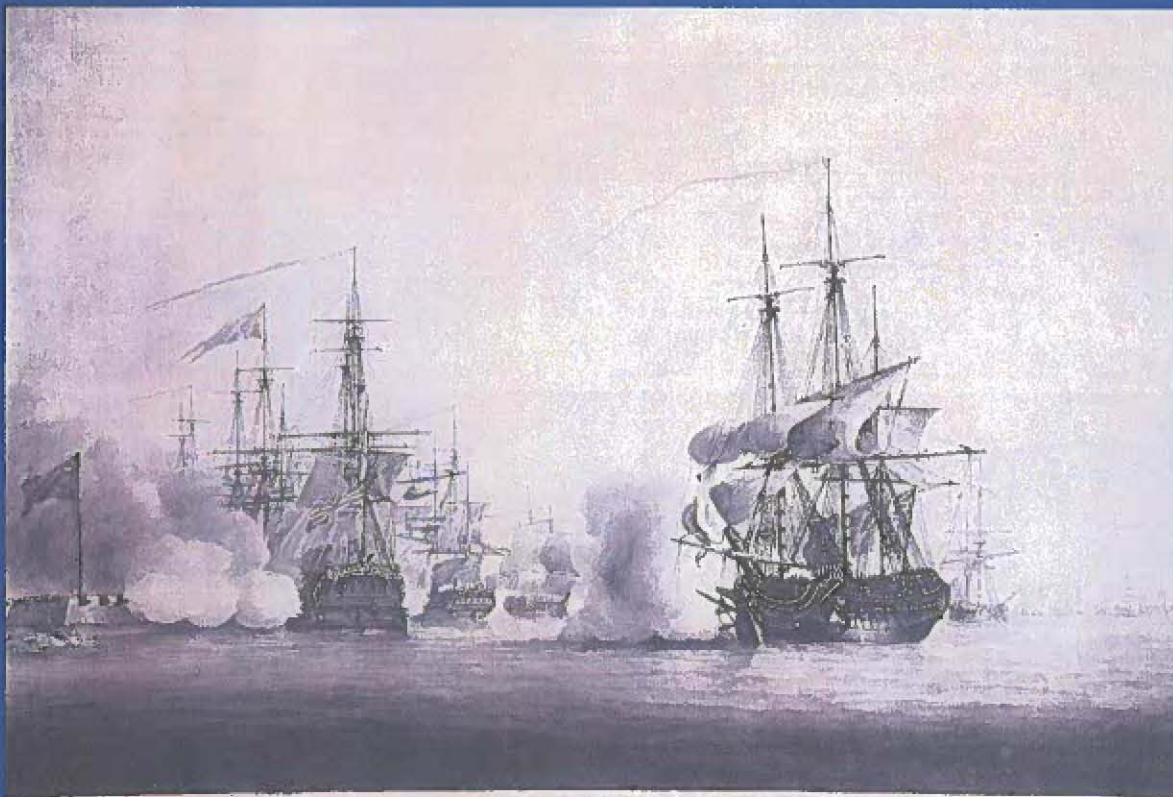


# The Carolina lowcountry

## April 1775–June 1776

### and the Battle of Fort Moultrie



*A View of the ATTACK made by the BRITISH FLEET under the Command of Sir Peter Parker upon FORT MOULTRIE on SULLIVANS ISLAND June 28 1776*

by Terry W. Lipscomb

South Carolina Revolutionary War Battles: I  
SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY



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The cover: Attack by the British Fleet. Engraving by Nicholas Pocock.

**SOUTH CAROLINA REVOLUTIONARY WAR BATTLES: 1**

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## Introduction

This publication is the first in a projected series of reference handbooks that will survey South Carolina in the Revolution. It is written for the general reader and as a reference for the more avid history enthusiast, the genealogist, the historian, and the numerous government agencies that deal with the state's past. Rather than marshalling facts and drawing profound conclusions from them, the narrative describes events, then pulls back to sketch the historical and geographical context. Above all, it tries to answer the questions that the South Carolina Department of Archives and History regularly receives from visitors and correspondents.

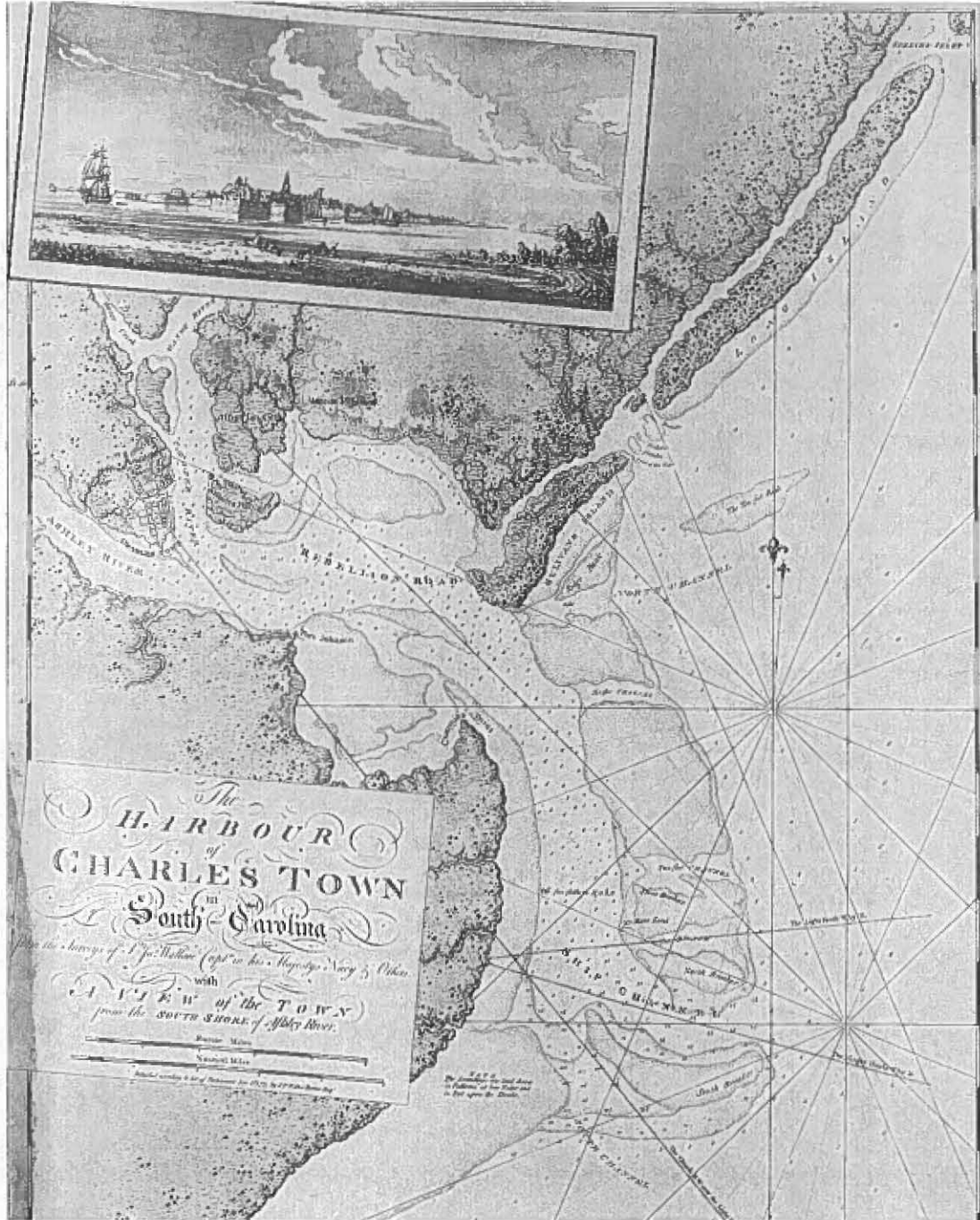
These questions typically concern names, dates, locations, and people. Queries relating to ancestors are familiar to the experienced archivist, but the public in general has an appetite for concrete and specific history. Who was this person? What was this person's background? Where, in terms of a modern map, did this battle occur? Could I see the remains if I visited the site? How does the landscape differ now from the landscape then? How did geography shape the events of two centuries ago?

As planned, the series will provide not merely a gazetteer of major battles and troop movements. It will give a geographically balanced survey of the Revolution as it was experienced in every corner of the state. It will discuss events that were

important to the local history of a given area, irrespective of the effect they had on the outcome of the southern campaign. Though much space will be devoted to the location and description of battles and skirmishes, coverage will not be restricted to these sites alone. Nor will the scope of the narrative be so strictly defined as to exclude from the category of battles and skirmishes the sporadic raids, reprisals, or bloodshed in the frontier settlements. The object is to provide a reliable guide to what happened during the Revolution within a thirty-mile radius of the courthouse square.

In short, this series is concerned neither with what constitutes a "South Carolina revolutionary battle" nor with how many transpired. Rather, it will supply details the reader might reasonably want to know about the subject. Factual errors handed down from writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been repeated endlessly in works dealing with the Revolution in South Carolina. The reader in search of information about a particular battle needs to be certain that the historian has not misdated the event, placed it ten miles from the actual location, or confused the commanding officer with his cousin. While this publication makes no claim to infallibility, it does provide convenient access to recent historical detective work on the events in question.

1. Contending patriot and loyalist factions were preoccupied with military control of Charlestown and its strategic harbor during much of 1775 and 1776. The best contemporary nautical chart of the scene of operations is this 1777 effort by the noted cartographer J. F. W. DesBarres.



## Arms and ammunition for a revolution

In the twenty-sixth year of American independence, General William Moultrie sketched in his Revolutionary War memoirs a vivid recollection of South Carolina on the eve of Lexington and Concord: "The militia were forming themselves into volunteer uniform companies; drums beating, fifes playing; squads of men exercising on the outskirts of the town; a military spirit pervaded the whole country; and Charlestown had the appearance of a garrison town; every thing wore the face of war; though not one of us had the least idea of its approach; and more especially of its being so near to us, for we were anxiously looking forward to a reconciliation; when on the 19th day of April, war was declared against America, by the British troops firing upon the inhabitants at Lexington; an account of which flew over the whole continent; and now the hopes of a reconciliation were at an end; and recourse to arms was the only and last resort."<sup>1</sup>

If the outbreak of war caught Moultrie and his fellow colonists by surprise, it scarcely caught them unprepared. Local patriots looked with disfavor on Britain's latest conciliatory proposals and saw them as an attempt to divide and enslave the colonies. The time had come, they decided, to defend their liberties. Thus, while the historic events were transpiring in Massachusetts, a secret committee of the South Carolina Provincial Con-

gress was laying plans to appropriate the contents of the public arsenal in Charlestown.

### **Raiding the arsenal**

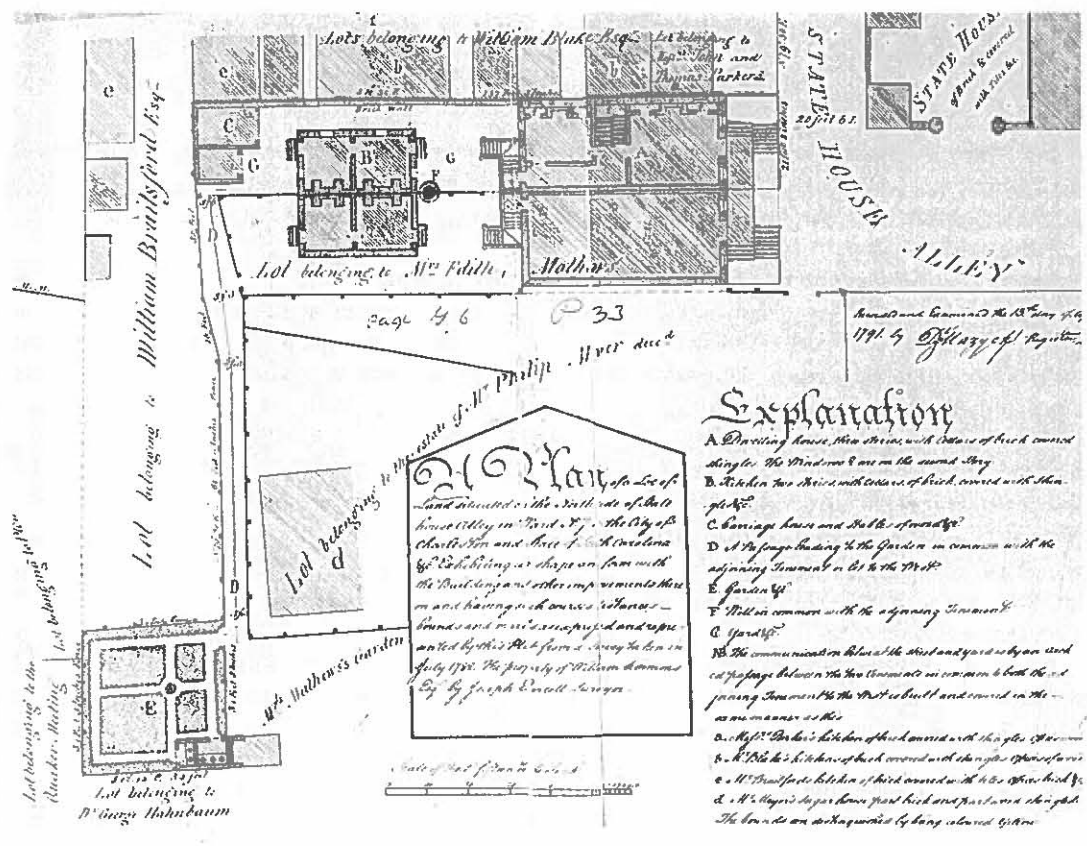
Two days after the British troops opened fire at Lexington, South Carolina's revolutionary leaders set their enterprise into motion. At eleven o'clock on the evening of 21 April 1775, the patriots broke into the armory, and in less than three hours, they carried off all the serviceable weapons and military stores. The following morning, the ordnance storekeeper told Lieutenant Governor William Bull that cutlasses, cartridge boxes, matches, flints, and eight hundred muskets were missing. That same morning, the deputy powder receivers sent word that 1,600 pounds of gunpowder had disappeared the night before from two magazines on the outskirts of town. The lieutenant governor issued a proclamation that offered a reward of one hundred pounds sterling for information leading to the arrest of the "persons unknown" who were involved in these daring offenses.

The townspeople ignored Bull's offer, for the conspirators numbered within their ranks a veritable who's who of colonial South Carolina. Party to the seizures were the lieutenant governor's nephews, William Henry Drayton and William Bull, and such eminent citizens as Arthur Middleton,

Thomas Lynch, Henry Laurens, Benjamin Huger, Charles Pinckney, and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. Christopher Gadsden took custody of the powder taken from the two magazines when it was landed at his wharf. A number of these gentlemen held seats in the provincial legislature, which had voted not two months before to repair the very weapons the patriots had now removed from the armory. But the seizure, as Henry Laurens observed in a letter of 22 April, was intended simply to make the arms more accessible to the public.<sup>2</sup>

The ordnance storekeeper responsible for the safety of the weapons in the armory was Charlestown merchant John Poaug. Before the raid, several of the revolutionary leaders had brazenly approached Poaug and demanded that he hand over the keys. Poaug replied that he could not give them up and suggested that no one was preventing them from breaking open the doors. The patriots seem to have taken his advice, for on the morning of 22 April, Poaug was able to tell Governor Bull that the doors to the armory had been forced open by violence. From the intelligence Bull was able to gather, the events of the previous night were a mystery not only to Poaug, but to witnesses such as the captain of the town watch and the housekeeper at the State House, who were present at the scene.<sup>3</sup>

2. This eighteenth-century plat depicts the scene of the 1775 armory raid. The patriots carried the public arms out of the State House and through the adjacent alley and deposited them in the deep brick cellars of the Blake Tenements (the structure marked "A" in the legend).



**The site of the armory**  
 The armory was located in the attic story of the provincial State House, which had been built during the administration of Governor James Glen. Just why it was incorporated into the center of colonial government is unclear. The 1751 act authorizing construction of the State House gave no reason, but it may have been intended as a security measure in the event of a slave revolt, or perhaps it was simply that the frugal colonial lawmakers wanted an all-purpose public building.<sup>4</sup> In any event, South Carolina's

original State House became the scene of the colony's first significant incident of the Revolutionary War. In terms of present-day Charleston, the site is at 77 Meeting Street on the northwest corner of Broad and Meeting streets. The property, however, has undergone many changes since the Revolution began. On 8 February 1788, a fire, which raged out of control when it reached the upper story where the armory was located, gutted the building and consumed a large quantity of military stores belonging to the

United States government. Three weeks later, the General Assembly passed a controversial act for rebuilding the structure, even though a State House was being erected at the new seat of government in Columbia. Because the reconstructed building was intended to serve as the courthouse for Charleston District, the law did not mention an armory, but in other respects, the building is said to have followed closely the interior design of its predecessor, retaining the old walls and doorways. William Drayton is

4



believed to have been the architect who supervised the new construction. Damage from the 1886 earthquake and subsequent remodelings and additions make it difficult to say just how closely the modern Charleston County courthouse resembles its colonial prototype.<sup>5</sup>

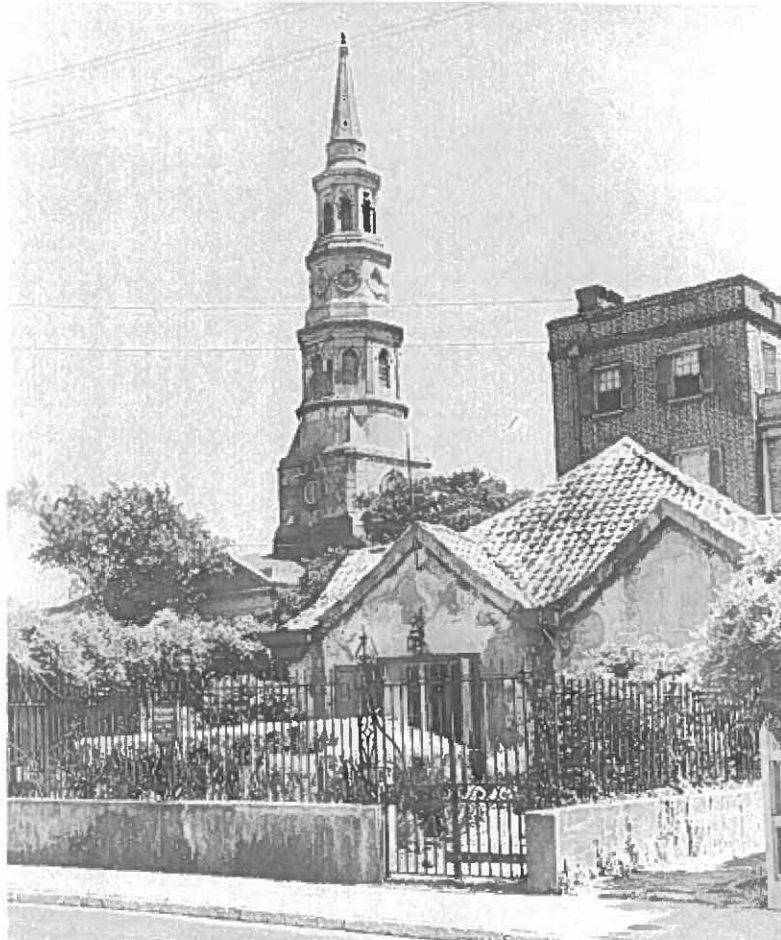
### ***The sites of the colonial magazines***

Two blocks north and one block east of the courthouse, a fine example of a colonial powder magazine still stands at 21 Cumberland Street. While construction of this magazine can be dated to the early eighteenth century, neither this nor any other centrally located magazine was in use in Charlestown in April of 1775. As early as the 1740s, the townspeople had noted that the neighborhood of the old magazine, which stood between the steeples of “the two most publick places of Divine worship,” seemed to attract electrical storms. Because residents near the facility feared for their lives “if it should please God to strike the same with Lightning,” the colonial government discontinued its use. For the next quarter century, the town magazine was situated near the barracks on the west side of Charlestown.

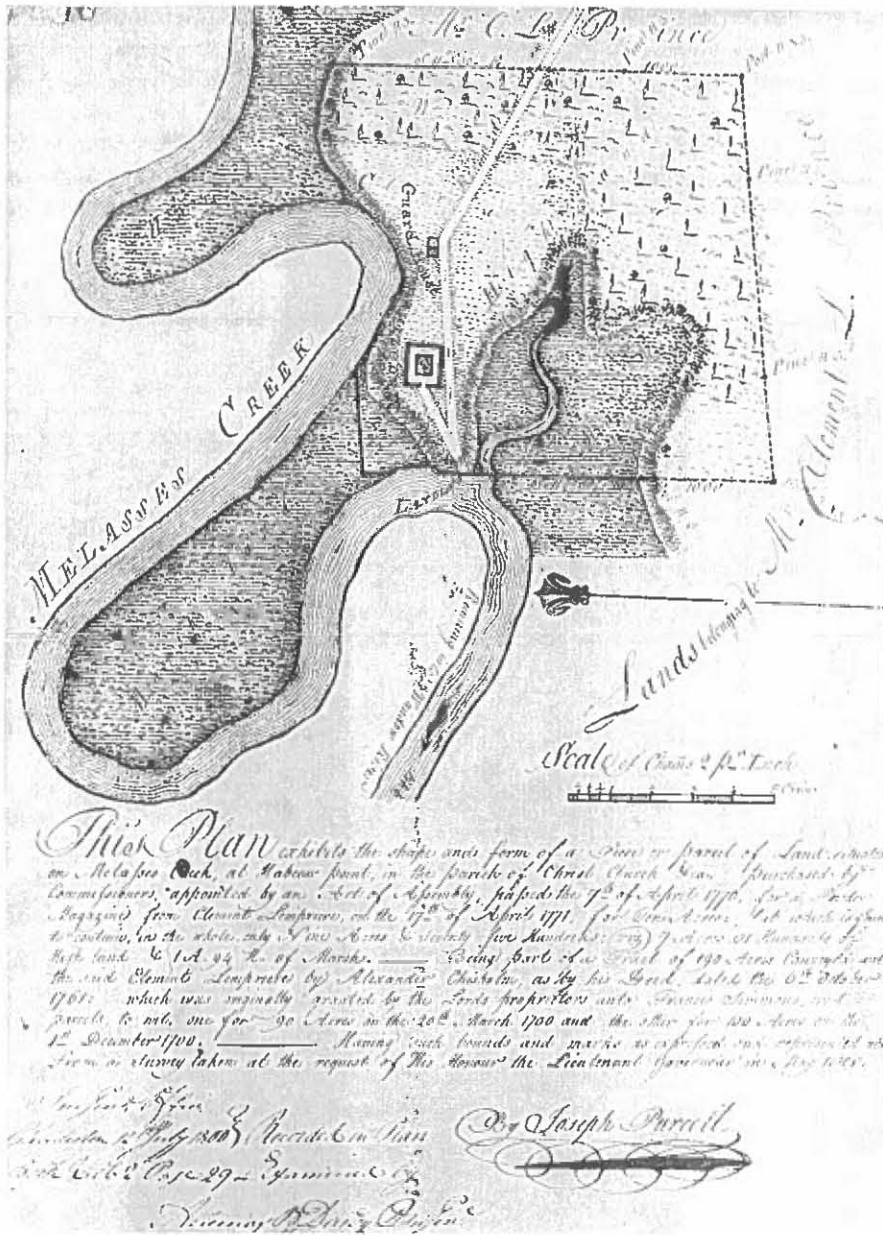
In 1770, provincial legislators decided that the increase in the number of buildings and inhabitants in the thriving port made it too dangerous to continue operating any magazine within the town. They passed legislation to replace the existing magazine by building two new structures in the shipyard districts on the

outskirts of Charlestown. The act created a deputy powder receiver for each of the new magazines and directed each receiver to live near the magazine under his authority. One dismayed Charlestonian protested in a letter to the newspaper that with no magazine in town, he shuddered at the thought

of what might happen in the event of another war. But since gunpowder was levied from incoming vessels as a kind of import duty, the plan had a certain logic, and builders proceeded to draw up specifications for the magazines that patriot conspirators would later target.



3. In 1775, an observer standing north of Charlestown's original pre-1740s powder magazine (foreground) would have seen the octagonal domed steeple of an earlier St. Philip's Church rising to the southeast.



4. Surveyor Joseph Purcell demonstrated his usual meticulous skill in executing this plan of Hobcaw Magazine as it appeared twenty-five years after the historic events of 1775.

By 1775, a British prohibition on gunpowder exports to the rebellious colonies had taken its toll on powder receipts in South Carolina, making patriot leaders eager to possess existing supplies. There is evidence that the colonists had been eyeing the provincial powder reserves for some time before the events of 21 April. Legislative journals in the state archives reveal that two months before the patriots conducted their raids, the Commons House of Assembly had fired the night watchmen at both magazines.<sup>6</sup>

#### Hobcaw magazine

One of the new magazines stood across the river at Hobcaw Point near the junction of Cooper and Wando Rivers—about one mile north of the modern Cooper River bridges. It was built on a ten-acre tract purchased from Clement Lempriere, and a copy of the plat that accompanied the transaction is among today's Charleston County records. The magazine may have been standing at the time the plat was drawn, for the surveyor sketched its position in relation to the boundaries of the property. In May of 1800, Joseph Purcell executed a beautifully detailed resurvey of this property, which clearly places the magazine on the south bank of Molasses Creek. The deputy receiver of this magazine, mentioned as Mr. Prince by Lieutenant Governor Bull, was almost certainly Lieutenant Charles Prince. Prince had married Clement Lempriere's only child and lived near the magazine on property adjacent to his father-in-law's. Though

Lempriere was an active patriot. Prince, from early childhood, had been brought up in His Majesty's naval service and was probably the sort of loyal subject who would not have helped patriots gain access to the magazine. Prince later recalled that he "was frequently invited to join the Americans but in a delicate manner as he was an Officer in the Kings Service."<sup>7</sup>

#### Cochran's magazine

Eighteenth-century reckoning placed the second magazine on Charlestown Neck within four miles of the town. Bull's proclamation said it was built on land belonging to deputy powder receiver Robert Cochran. This colonial entrepreneur operated a shipyard on his wife's inherited portion of an old proprietary land grant, but the magazine actually stood further north on an adjacent tract sold to the public in 1771 by Cochran's sister-in-law, Margaret Elliott. An extant copy of the original survey by Peter Horlbeck includes a ground plan of the magazine. As recently as the early 1900s, the heavy foundations of an old powder magazine were still visible near Shipyard Creek. There is good reason to believe that Cochran's role in the transfer of provincial gunpowder reserves to patriot hands may have been more than passive. He later helped the patriots in various capacities, and he described himself in a 1791 memorial to the General Assembly as "one of the first persons in the State who risk'd their lives to procure means for its defence against the hostilities which were carrying on against her."<sup>8</sup>



5. This map by J. F. W. DesBarres depicts the Savannah coast at the time of the Revolution. During the *Philippa* incident, patriot forces were posted on Daufuskie Island, at Tybee lighthouse, and on Cockspar Island (the easternmost large island in Savannah River). Since eighteenth-century vessels used the south river channel to approach Savannah, the capture of the *Philippa* would have occurred within the present-day boundaries of Chatham County, Georgia.

#### Seizing cargoes

The armory incident was already two weeks past when South Carolinians heard that war had broken out on 19 April in Massachusetts. "The account of the skirmish . . . seems to produce effects here very different from intimidation," Lieutenant Governor Bull noted in a letter to the British ministry. Bull was right. The revolutionary Provincial Congress convened on 1 June and proceeded to usurp most of the powers exercised by the royal government of the colony. It created a Council of Safety and authorized three

regiments of provincial troops, while members of its secret committee planned covert measures to acquire additional military supplies. Through contacts in Georgia, the secret committee learned that a shipment of powder and ammunition destined for the Indian trade was on its way from England to Savannah, and thence to St. Augustine. Determined to seize this cargo, the Charlestown patriots entrusted its capture to Captain John Barnwell and Captain John Joyner, both inhabitants of Beaufort.<sup>9</sup>

Barnwell and Joyner assembled a force of forty armed men, set out in two barges, and established a camp on the southernmost tip of Daufuskie Island at Bloody Point—named for a legend that said colonists once massacred a band of marauding Indians on the site. Here, from the South Carolina side of the Savannah River, the patriot force could observe all shipping as it approached Tybee Bar. They arrived well in advance of the powder shipment, but their enterprise seemed jeopardized by the conspicuous presence of the armed schooner HMS *St. John*, which had anchored in the river while its commander, Lieutenant William Grant of the British navy, transacted business with Georgia's royal governor, Sir James Wright. Savannah's patriot leaders, encouraged by letters from the Charlestown committee, soon rectified the situation. The Georgia Provincial Congress appropriated the merchant schooner *Elizabeth*, turned her into an improvised warship by outfitting her with ten carriage guns and a quantity of small arms, renamed her the *Liberty*, and placed her under the command of Joseph Habersham and Oliver Bowen. The patriot's *Liberty* must have been more than a match for HMS *St. John*, for Habersham and Bowen soon forced the British schooner to abandon her station near the bar of Savannah River and depart for New Providence.

During the afternoon of 8 July 1775, not long after Grant's vessel put to sea, the merchant ship *Philippa* arrived with the anticipated consignment of powder and ammunition. The

patriot schooner hoisted a white flag with the words "American Liberty" printed in large red letters within a red border and was soon escorting its prize to Cockspur Island. There, Carolina and Georgia patriots unloaded most of the cargo, including, it seems, a consignment of over fifteen thousand pounds of gunpowder. The patriots transported 5,212 pounds of this supply to Charlestown and deposited it in the old powder magazine. The rest remained in Georgia hands. In a deposition made later, the *Philippa*'s unlucky master, Captain Richard Maitland, named several South Carolinians as parties to the seizure. Besides Barnwell and Joyner, Maitland recognized James Black, a Beaufort shipwright, and Lieutenant James Doharty of Barnwell's company.<sup>10</sup>

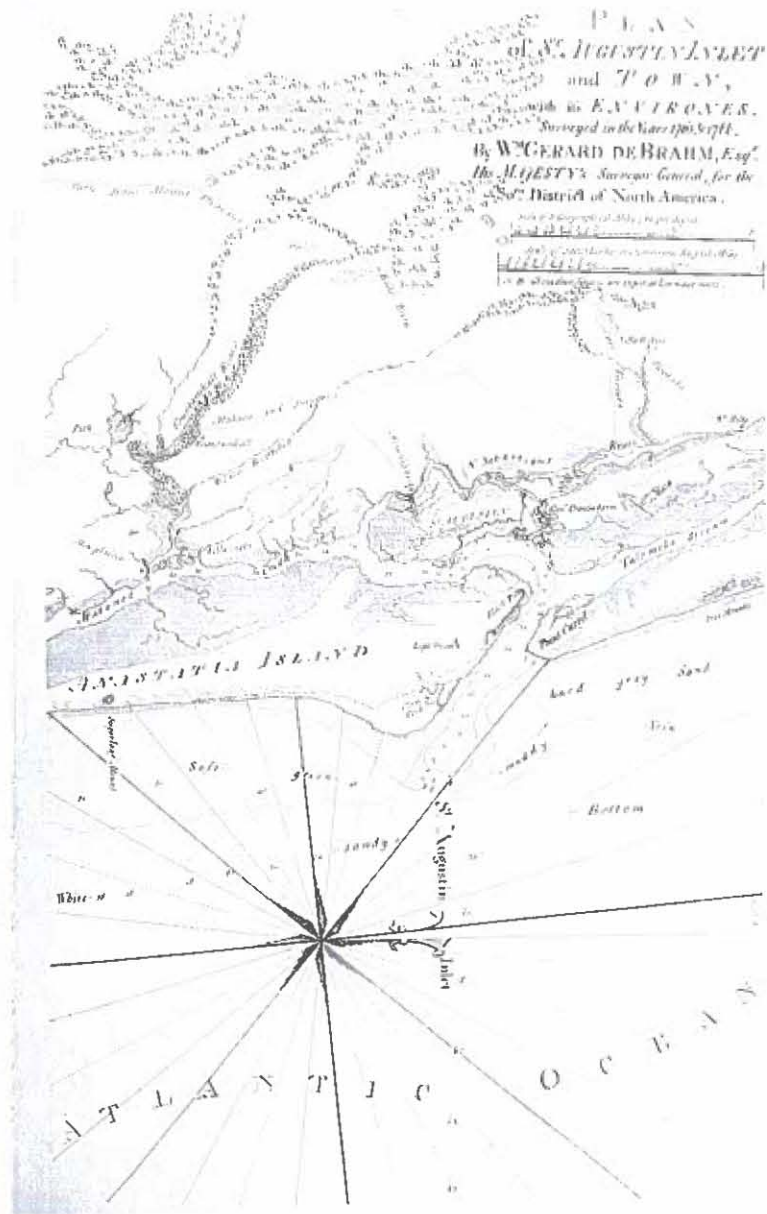
By coincidence, only a week before the *Philippa* was captured, the South Carolina congressional delegation in Philadelphia had sent an urgent letter to the secret committee in Charlestown, asking it to send all the gunpowder the colony could spare for use in the siege of Boston. At the 12 July meeting of the Council of Safety, William Henry Drayton and Arthur Middleton astonished their fellow members with a double measure of news: George Washington's army was dangerously short of gunpowder, but South Carolina and Georgia, in actions only now being revealed, had recently hijacked several tons of that article. The Council immediately dispatched Drayton and Miles Brewton to Savannah to persuade the colony of Georgia to furnish the critical supply.

A consignment of 5,025 pounds, drawn entirely from Georgia's share of the gunpowder, was transported to Tucker's Island at the mouth of North Edisto River and transferred to the vessel that had been sent from Philadelphia to collect it. By 21 July, the valuable cargo was safely en route to the Continental army.<sup>11</sup>

Alarmed by the dispatch from Philadelphia, the Charlestown patriots began to contrive bolder schemes. By 25 July, the Council of Safety was outfitting a sloop to raid powder magazines on the island of New Providence. They had pressed this vessel into service from a most unlikely source. When the Honorable Edward Fenwick of South Carolina died in New York on 7 July, the affluent Johns Island Fenwicks chartered the sloop *Commerce* to transport his body home for burial. On 21 July, the vessel delivered home both the funeral party and the two-week-old mortal remains of Fenwick. The consternation of the vessel's master and owners can well be imagined when they learned that the South Carolina patriots intended to "borrow" the *Commerce* to use in a commando raid. The Council of Safety took the vessel, replaced its captain and crew with a well-selected patriot force of twenty-one whites and five blacks, and gave the command to Captain Clement Lempriere, a veteran of privateering expeditions during the colonial wars. The ship's company included four experienced mariners who had formerly commanded their own vessels—Simon Tufts, John Hatter, Robert Cochran, and John Joyner.

On 27 July, the *Eagle* packet arrived in the harbor. With it came word that an ordnance brig carrying a large cargo of military stores for the British garrison at Fort St. Mark was expected off St. Augustine. At a midnight session, the Council of Safety hastily rewrote Lempriere's orders and dispatched new instructions to the *Commerce* at Beaufort, where the patriot expedition had halted before sailing for the Bahamas. With the original mission now abandoned, Lempriere set his course for St. Augustine, where, on 7 August, the South Carolinians sighted the British ordnance brig *Betsy* anchored outside the bar. Equipped only with small arms, the *Commerce* was no match for the ordnance brig, which mounted two cannons. Lempriere, however, apparently posted his black sailors conspicuously on deck, kept the rest of his hands below, and deceived the British crew into thinking the *Commerce* was simply a harmless country vessel manned by slaves. The British crew suspected nothing until the sloop pulled alongside the brig and sent over a boarding party armed with swords, pistols, muskets, and bayonets.

Once aboard the *Betsy*, the patriots helped themselves. Although the brig had unloaded and sent ashore part of its cargo, Lempriere's crew made off with between twelve and fourteen thousand pounds of the total shipment—a haul that included 111 barrels of the king's gunpowder. As if he were conducting a routine business transaction, Lempriere paid Captain Alvara Lofthouse for the plundered



6. This plan of British St. Augustine shows how the crew of the *Commerce* could hijack a ship's cargo outside the bar and escape before the local authorities could mount a pursuit.

cargo with a draft for £1,000 sterling drawn on the financially solvent Charlestown merchant firm of Miles Brewton—a gesture he offset somewhat when, in his haste and confusion, he mistakenly handed Lofthouse a portion of the orders signed by Henry Laurens on behalf of the Council of Safety. The orders revealed that the crew of the *Commerce* was to seize the powder whether the captain of the brig would take payment or not. The incident, nonetheless, evoked a backhanded compliment from one St. Augustine loyalist, who remarked that while the South Carolina patriots might be even crazier than their New England counterparts, he did not think them to be such great rogues.

A Florida government armed sloop pursued the *Commerce* throughout its return voyage to South Carolina, but the patriots maintained a comfortable lead, crossed Tybee Bar a few hours ahead of the British vessel, escaped into the Inland Passage, and reached

Port Royal Sound by way of Skull Creek. They stored the gunpowder temporarily in the courthouse at Beaufort and rushed provincial troops to the area to oppose any British attempt to recapture this acquisition. Patrick Tonyn, the royal governor of East Florida, issued a proclamation that charged Clement Lempriere, Simon Tufts, and their associates with piracy and offered a reward of £200 sterling for their arrest. Since neither the South Carolina nor the Georgia newspapers would publish the proclamation, nothing came of Tonyn's offer.<sup>12</sup>

#### **Patriots armed**

By the end of the summer, the resourceful patriots had left the colony well provided with warlike stores. They may eventually have launched their scheme to raid powder supplies in the British islands, and it was rumored that a South Carolina schooner had been involved in the disappearance of over one hundred barrels of gunpow-

der from a Bermuda magazine. Meanwhile, Charlestown's extralegal government was conducting a substantial illicit arms trade with the French and Dutch islands by demanding payment in arms and ammunition for the rice it exported. One such exchange—a transaction with the island of Hispaniola during the month of July—required three schooners to transport the cargo. Lacking the British military or naval presence they needed to suppress such traffic, the Crown officers in South Carolina could only watch helplessly while the leaders of the patriot faction turned their colony into a veritable arsenal of revolution. "It is presumed the Inhabitants of this Province need be under little Apprehension of a Scarcity of the *Means of Defence*," a local newspaper reassured its readers on 1 September "there hardly ever being a more ample Supply at one Time in this Country, than at present."<sup>13</sup>

## "Steps of greater violence" in Charlestown Harbor

The new royal governor, Lord William Campbell, was the Crown's senior representative in Charlestown during the turbulent summer of 1775. Governor Campbell, a younger brother of the fifth Duke of Argyll, had served as a post captain in the Royal Navy, as a member of Parliament, and as governor of Nova Scotia. His family was well known for its loyalty to the House of Hanover and for its role in suppress-

ing the Jacobite rebellions in Scotland during the earlier part of the century. Lord William himself was a familiar figure to Charlestonians. He had commanded the station ship HMS *Nightingale* in their port for several months in 1763 and had married Miss Sarah Izard, a daughter of one of their city's most prominent families.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, neither Campbell's experience nor his family connections could help

him in the situation he encountered on his arrival in South Carolina. By the time he took up the reins of government on 18 June, the revolutionary Council of Safety held the executive powers in the colony and would allow him to perform only the ceremonial functions of his office. Campbell even found it difficult to protect his incoming and outgoing correspondence from the prying eyes of patriot

committees. After three months in office, Lord William described himself as a “phantom of authority.”<sup>15</sup>

### **His Majesty’s ships**

This situation forced the governor to depend heavily on the support of the navy; but, as he complained to the ministry in London, the affairs of South Carolina had been left in the care of “one poor solitary worm-eaten sloop.”

### **The Tamar**

The “worm-eaten sloop” was the station ship HMS *Tamar*,<sup>16</sup> whose variety of defects, said Admiralty records, made her unsafe for active service. The sloop had remained on station in Charlestown Harbor for months while her crew strengthened her foremast and made other temporary repairs. Her skipper’s assessment of her condition, which he submitted to Admiral Samuel Graves on 29 July, was unoptimistic: “Her Sheathing is dropping off forward and as the Worms bite so much am fearful that her Plank will be soon eat thro’ as my Anchor Stocks are all eat to a honey Comb, and a foot of the Ends dropped off although it is not a month since summoned last.” Moreover, Governor Campbell and his private secretary, Alexander Innes, alleged that the skipper of the *Tamar* was nearly as unseaworthy as his vessel. Innes described Captain Edward Thornbrough as “a poor, helpless, lame, bedridden old Man,” who had served almost fifty years in the Royal Navy and was worn down with age and infirmities. The *Tamar*,

however, had one feature in excellent working order—her battery of sixteen guns. This capacity to defend herself was a matter of some concern to the patriots. Council of Safety president Henry Laurens summed up the vessel astutely when he wrote, “The Tamar is as well prepared as such a Crazy Bark can be.”<sup>17</sup>

### **The Cherokee**

On 7 September, the arrival of His Majesty’s armed sloop *Cherokee* partially, though inadvertently, realized Campbell’s hopes for more naval support. The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty had placed this vessel at the disposal of surveyor general William Gerard De Brahm for his survey of the southern district of North America—a mission unrelated to the quarrel between America and Great Britain. Unluckily for De Brahm, the situation in Charlestown had so deteriorated that Campbell asked Thornbrough to countermand the *Cherokee*’s orders and detain her in the harbor. Both Campbell and Innes were gratified by the cooperation they received from the survey ship’s commanding officer, Lieutenant John Fergusson, who impressed them as courteous, efficient, and energetic. The *Cherokee* was a fine vessel comparable in size to any sloop-of-war in service, but she had been fitted as a geographic research ship rather than as a man-of-war, and her armament of three-pounders provided little effective firepower for the king’s service in South Carolina. De Brahm protested against this diversion of his ship to a purpose

for which it was unsuited. “A fine time to talk of his surveys of a Country that we are in a doubt to whom it may belong,” Innes noted in a letter to East Florida governor Patrick Tonyn.<sup>18</sup>

### **British plans revealed**

Fortuitously, the *Cherokee* had arrived one week before the final rupture between Campbell and the refractory South Carolinians. The Charlestown patriots could tolerate a royal governor whose influence in the colony remained inconsequential, but they began to suspect that Campbell was encouraging a faction of loyalists living in the settlements along the frontier. To confirm their suspicions, the patriots hatched a cloak-and-dagger scheme to entrap the governor. They disguised Captain Adam McDonald, an officer in the newly-raised First Regiment of South Carolina provincial troops, as a loyalist backwoodsman and sent him to Lord William’s home (34 Meeting Street in present-day Charleston) on the evening of 13 September. During the meeting that evening, Campbell revealed not only that he was plotting with the king’s supporters in the upcountry but that he had received a letter from Lord Dartmouth suggesting that British troops would soon be sent to South Carolina. The next morning, a nine-member patriot delegation, including Captain McDonald (presumably now in uniform), Charles Pinckney, Thomas Ferguson, and Thomas Bee, accosted Campbell in front of his house. The governor invited the gentlemen

in, confirmed what they had learned from Dartmouth's letter, but refused to show it to them. "Matters," he added, "were now arrived at such a pass as entirely destroyed all expectations of the present unlucky differences being settled without steps of greater violence than any that had hitherto happened being taken."<sup>19</sup>

### **Taking Fort Johnson**

These disclosures sent both factions into a flurry of military activity. Suspecting that the Council of Safety would now try to seize Fort Johnson in Charlestown Harbor, Governor Campbell inspected this facility and then instructed Captain Thornbrough to disable the fort's lower battery. Soon after nightfall on 14 September 1775, Thornbrough sent a party of about thirty armed crewmen ashore under the direction of Captain Innes, Lieutenant Fergusson, and Lieutenant Joseph Peyton. Working almost until dawn, the British seamen dismounted the twenty-one cannons on the lower battery and threw them off the platform. They then returned to the *Tamar*, carrying most of the fort's gunpowder with them. Innes's expedition, however, was not the only one abroad under the cover of darkness. Two hours after the British sailors departed, a detachment of patriot grenadiers commanded by Lieutenant John Mouat walked unopposed through the open gates of the fort. Mouat's detachment was the vanguard of a 150-man force made up of units of the South Carolina provincial regulars—men from the grenadier companies belonging to the

First and Second regiments, commanded respectively by Captain Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and Captain Barnard Elliott, and men from a company of light infantry belonging to the Second Regiment, commanded by Captain Francis Marion. Colonel William Moultrie had dispatched the force to take the fort in the name of the Council of Safety.

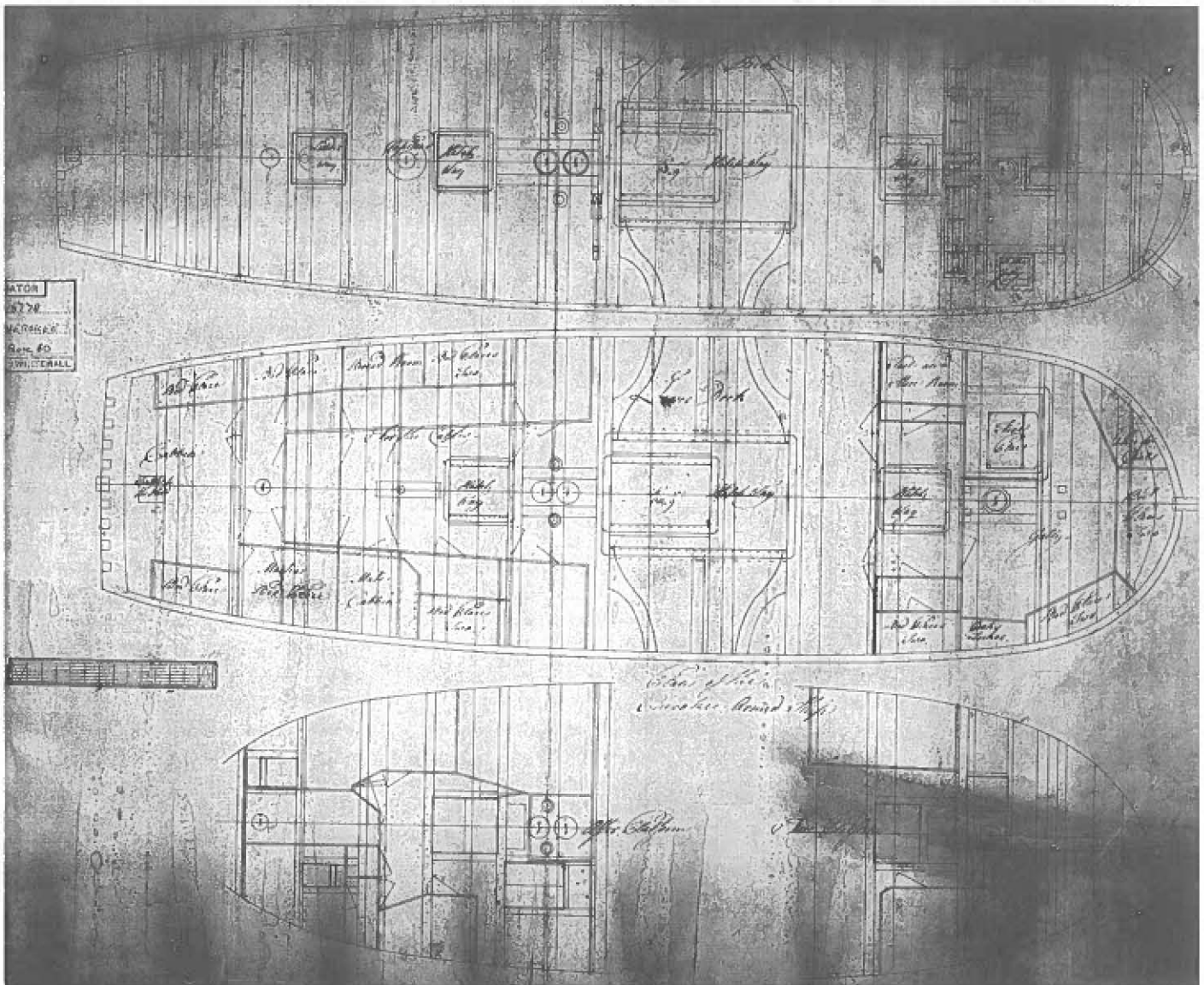
Moultrie had selected Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Motte, son of the long-time colonial public treasurer Jacob Motte and one of the more professionally-trained military men in the South Carolina forces, to command this expedition. Motte had obtained a junior officer's commission in the British army at the beginning of the French and Indian War and had served in Canada with the Sixtieth Regiment of Foot (Royal Americans). During the early morning hours of 15 September, the transport craft carrying Motte and his troops arrived at James Island. Logistical problems delayed Motte's landing but contributed unexpectedly to the success of the mission, for when Motte's troops finally entered the fort, the British landing party had gone and only three privates under the command of gunner George Walker were left. Motte's good luck held. The British had dismounted the lower battery's cannons but had left them unspiked because the governor had been loath to order the disabling of a fine set of guns that the British Crown, at considerable expense, had sent over from England. When they discovered this, Motte and his patriot force quickly borrowed a gin and tackle from the

Charlestown Artillery Company and began to remount the cannon. Meanwhile, Governor Campbell convened a final meeting of His Majesty's Council, closed the Crown offices in South Carolina, dissolved the Assembly, and retired on board the British warships for safety. On the morning of 16 September, the *Tamar* and *Cherokee* weighed anchor and moved up to attack Fort Johnson. But fortune smiled once more on the patriot cause. Neither the tide nor the prevailing winds in the harbor would permit the British to accomplish their mission, and the warships fell back toward Rebellion Road. The provincial troops gained the precious time they needed to put the fort's heavy artillery back into operation.<sup>20</sup>

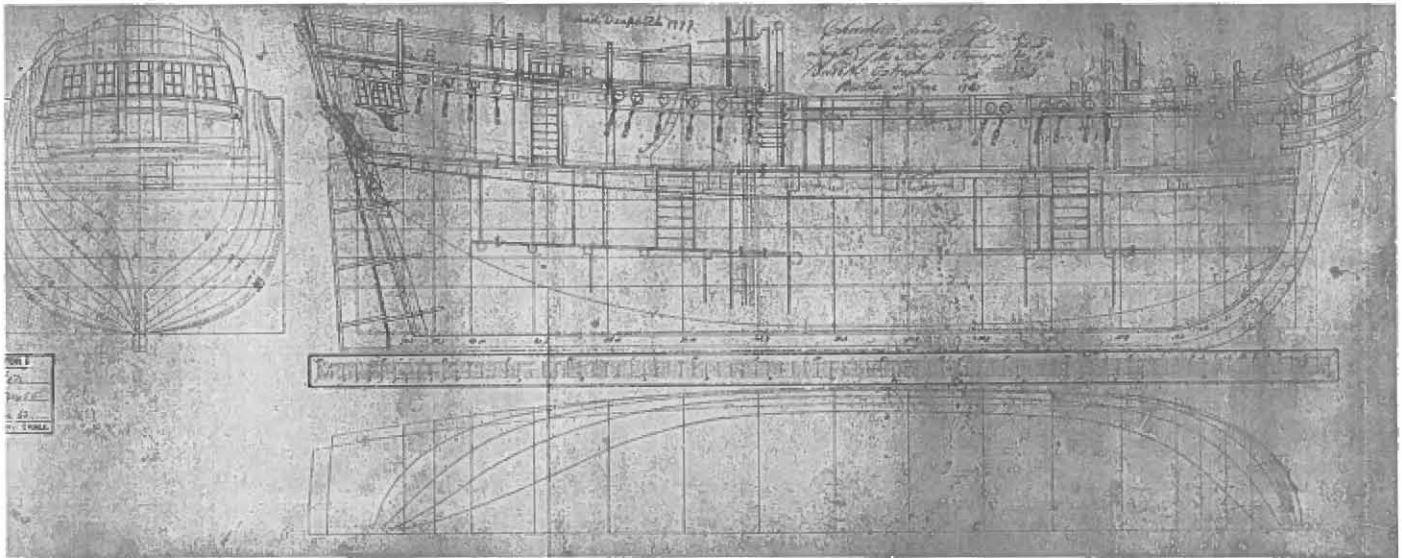
### **The fort's commander**

Conspicuously absent from these proceedings was Colonel Probart Howarth, the British commander of Fort Johnson. Howarth was a veteran of many years' service in the British army and had been dangerously wounded at Braddock's defeat in the last colonial war. His commission as governor of Fort Johnson had been signed by General Jeffrey Amherst in February of 1760, but his first post in South Carolina dated back to 1749. A contemporary drawing of a party at Peter Manigault's house depicts Howarth making off with a fellow reveler's wig—attesting to his status as an accepted member of Charlestown society. According to the receiver general of the colony, Howarth treated his command as a sinecure, lived in Charlestown, and left the day-to-day operation of the





7a. From September 1775 to January 1776, HMS *Cherokee* served as South Carolina's "floating governor's mansion." The detailed plans of the vessel on this page and on page 14 are from the collections of the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, England.



7b. Lines and profile of HMS *Cherokee*.

fort in the hands of the gunner. His absence from the fort on the morning of 15 September, therefore, would not have been extraordinary. The patriots, however, were unwilling to leave matters to chance. They feared some injury to their old friend's person or character and wanted him out of harm's way. To this end, they invited Howarth to go with a party into the country shortly before the provincial troops took Fort Johnson. "He went, accordingly," remarked William Moultrie, "not suspecting our intentions." It is possible that Howarth's timely disappearance confirmed Governor Campbell's suspicions concerning the patriots' designs on the fort.<sup>21</sup>

#### The fort's gunner

The unpleasant task of surrendering Fort Johnson to the patriots fell

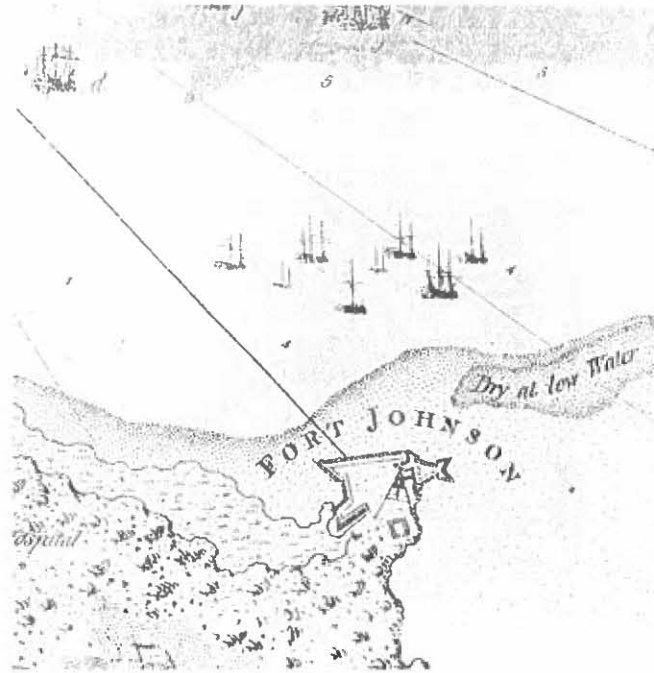
to Howarth's subordinate, George Walker, whom Alexander Innes described as "a rattling fellow but well affected to Government." The description was apt, for the gunner's loose tongue had landed him in trouble with Charlestown's patriots and sparked one of the more hair-raising incidents of mob violence in revolutionary South Carolina. On 12 August—the Prince of Wales's birthday—while Walker was performing his routine duties, a ship's master from Philadelphia had invited him to drink "damnation to king Geo: the 3d & all the rascalls about him." The gunner probably thought the treasonable toast outrageous and was no doubt quick to say so; unluckily, he later fell in with a mob of 500 patriots who disagreed. The mob held a sham trial, pronounced Walker a Tory and an enemy

to the country, and sentenced him "to be put into a Cart, Stripp'd naked, Tarr'd & Feathered all over his body and pelted with whatever might be found in the Street & in that Condition to remain 5 hours at the expiration whereof to be put under a pump and pumped upon one hour, & finally to be thrown over the end of Col. Beals Wharf into the River." When the mob gave Walker one last chance to drink the offensive toast, he drank instead damnation to the rebels, then flung the bowl into their faces. With that, the mob proceeded to carry out the particulars of the sentence with great enthusiasm. Later, in testimony before the Loyalist Commission, Walker implied that he surrendered Fort Johnson primarily because he lacked the means to defend it. His earlier behavior leaves little reason to doubt this.<sup>22</sup>

### The site of Fort Johnson

This antiquated fortification had been built in 1708, during the administration of Sir Nathaniel Johnson, the proprietary governor for whom it was named. The original structure, known as the "upper fort," stood on a promontory of James Island known as Windmill Point and lay within point-blank shot of the main channel used by ships approaching the town. Because the channel opposite Windmill Point was only three-quarters of a mile wide, the peacetime garrison could easily enforce the port's quarantine regulations against incoming vessels. The fort's age and its fragile construction, however, left its military value uncertain. The upper fort was a small triangular work; two projections described variously as demi-bastions or cut bastions fronted the water, while a third bastion in the form of a swallowtail stood at the rear. A 1756 report described the structure as being only a thin case of brickwork filled with loose sand. At the water level below the upper fort, a lower barbette battery presented a greater threat to enemy warships. It mounted twenty-one guns of respectable caliber—seven twenty-six-pounders, twelve eighteen-pounders, one twelve-pounder, and one nine-pounder.<sup>23</sup>

Exposed as it was to the fury of gales, Fort Johnson had been a perennial drain on the colonial treasury. Nonetheless, provincial legislators preferred the expense of upkeep to the considerable cost of building a sturdy new fort. In 1757 and 1758 while Britain was at war with France, the



colonists sought the advice of professional military engineers and planned to repair the fort and enlarge it by building a tabby hornwork on the land side. They began construction, but legislative financial support for the work apparently dissipated once the French military threat was past, and construction was halted before the hornwork was finished. In 1764, cracks appeared in the seaward face of the old fort, and an inspection verified that some of these ran all the way from the parapet to the foundation. In 1769, the fortifications commission described Fort Johnson as "Intirely Ruinous & unfit to be repaired." This was essentially the state of the fort in 1775 when the Council of Safety inherited it. In October of 1776, General Robert Howe

urged the General Assembly to case the old masonry of the fort with palmetto logs to prevent an enemy cannonade from shocking the foundation and collapsing the walls.<sup>24</sup> Later descriptions of the fort suggest the Assembly took Howe's advice and indicate that by the late 1770s, the fort had taken on a quadrilateral shape.<sup>25</sup>

The physical history of colonial Fort Johnson could be reconstructed with more confidence were it not for gaps in the documentary record. In 1757, Lieutenant Emmanuel Hess, an engineer with the Royal American Regiment, drew a plan of the enlargement projected at that time. No copy has been located, but Hess said that in his draft, the surrounding marshes gave the perimeter of Fort Johnson with

8. The eccentric ground plan of colonial Fort Johnson is clearly visible in this engraving based on a contemporary DesBarres map. The actual fort may never have possessed the completed hornwork shown on its western flank, and thus there is reason to suspect that DesBarres may have had access to the 1757 engineer's plan by Emmanuel Hess.

the completed hornwork an odd shape. Even more intriguing are the circumstances surrounding a now lost colonial plat dating from the period of the American Revolution. In 1775, the commissioners of fortifications asked deputy surveyor Benjamin Lord to prepare a survey of the acreage belonging to Fort Johnson—ostensibly to settle a seventeen-year-old dispute over the boundary line between the public land and the adjoining property belonging to the heirs of Thomas Lamboll. Since the plat bore the date of 29 June 1775, however, the suspicion arises that the colonists were more interested in collecting military intelligence about the defenses of Fort Johnson than in settling a boundary dispute. Today, the College of Charleston and the South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department use much of the colonial site as a marine research center; the Medical University of South Carolina owns the rest of the property. The only intact historic structure still standing above ground is a powder magazine that legend had attributed to the eighteenth century until an archaeological dig in the early 1970s dated its construction to the War of 1812.<sup>26</sup>

### **Obstructing the harbor approaches**

It was clear to the patriots of 1775 that mere possession of Fort Johnson would not secure the harbor against British warships. Some of the more enthusiastic revolutionaries proposed a scheme for blocking the entrance to Charlestown bar by sinking thirty-one schooners in the two main

channels—the Ship Channel and Lawford's Channel. The moderate Henry Laurens condemned this project as a prescription for economic disaster, even should it prove feasible. Laurens grumbled that the Charlestown radicals would soon be wanting to pump all the water out of Cooper and Ashley Rivers. But when this matter, together with a proposal to fortify Haddrells Point and Sullivans Island, came before the Council of Safety, Laurens reluctantly cast a swing vote in favor of the measure. Thomas Bee and other members of the moderate faction, who feared that this scheme would provoke a confrontation with the *Tamar* and *Cherokee* and subject Charlestown to enemy fire, moved quickly to undercut the Council's vote. They persuaded 368 of their fellow Charlestonians to sign a petition against the measure. Their action led to a dramatic outcome they had not foreseen, however, when the notion of obstructing channels surfaced again in a less ambitious form.<sup>27</sup>

Having rejected the ill-conceived attempt to block the harbor entrance, the patriots shifted their attention to the navigable passages inside the Charlestown bar. Besides the broad southern channel, which passed by the guns of Fort Johnson, the harbor contained two northern channels, which gave warships a safer means of approaching the town. One, the Marsh Channel—later known as Folly Channel—ran between Shutes Folly Island and the shoal known as the Middle Ground; the other, a long narrow pas-

sage known as Hog Island Channel, ran close to the northeastern shore of the harbor. Should these channels permit hostile shipping to get within range of the Cooper River waterfront and commence the sort of bombardment that was being inflicted on New England coastal towns, the warehouse district stored enough tar, pitch, and turpentine to set all Charlestown ablaze. The patriots estimated that it would require only six schooners to block both northern channels.

On 19 October, the Council of Safety entrusted this mission to William Henry Drayton and Thomas Heyward, Jr. The Council considered the obstruction of Hog Island Channel the riskier venture and assigned the *Defence*, one of the colony's new armed schooners, to act as an escort. By 27 October, the *Defence* had been fitted for active service. Captain Simon Tufts, with a crew that included thirty volunteer seamen recruited from the First and Second regiments of provincial infantry, commanded the schooner. On 9 November, the Provincial Congress ordered an additional thirty-five infantrymen on board to act as marines under the command of Captain William Scott of the First Regiment, and it put Edward Blake,<sup>28</sup> the colony's new commissary of naval stores, in charge of sinking the hulks. Drayton accompanied Tufts on board the *Defence* to direct events, but because he was disgusted at the irresolution of the Council, Drayton decided to press matters to their logical conclusion by starting a fight with the British warships.

On the afternoon of 11 November 1775, the expedition set off. It proceeded down Hog Island Creek in full view of the British warships anchored in Rebellion Road. In an account he gave to the Provincial Congress the next day, Captain Tufts said that the *Tamar* fired six shots at the *Defence* as the patriot schooner was approaching the spot where it intended to drop anchor; he responded, he said, by returning two shots. Captain Thornbrough remembered the opening exchange differently. The *Tamar*'s log book, which is in the British Public Record Office, says Thornbrough fired a single shot directed not at the *Defence* but at a boat that was sounding the channel; the log book also says that the patriot schooner then fired four shots at the *Tamar*. Drayton, in his memoir of this affair, admitted that the patriots returned Thornbrough's fire with a pair of nine-pounders—the schooner's heaviest weaponry—and directed it at Thornbrough's vessel "to provoke, and urge him therefore, to acts of hostility." Tufts reported that the British sloop continued its cannonade; in reality, the *Tamar* fired only several desultory shots at a range too short to stop the patriots from sinking three of the hulks in the channel.

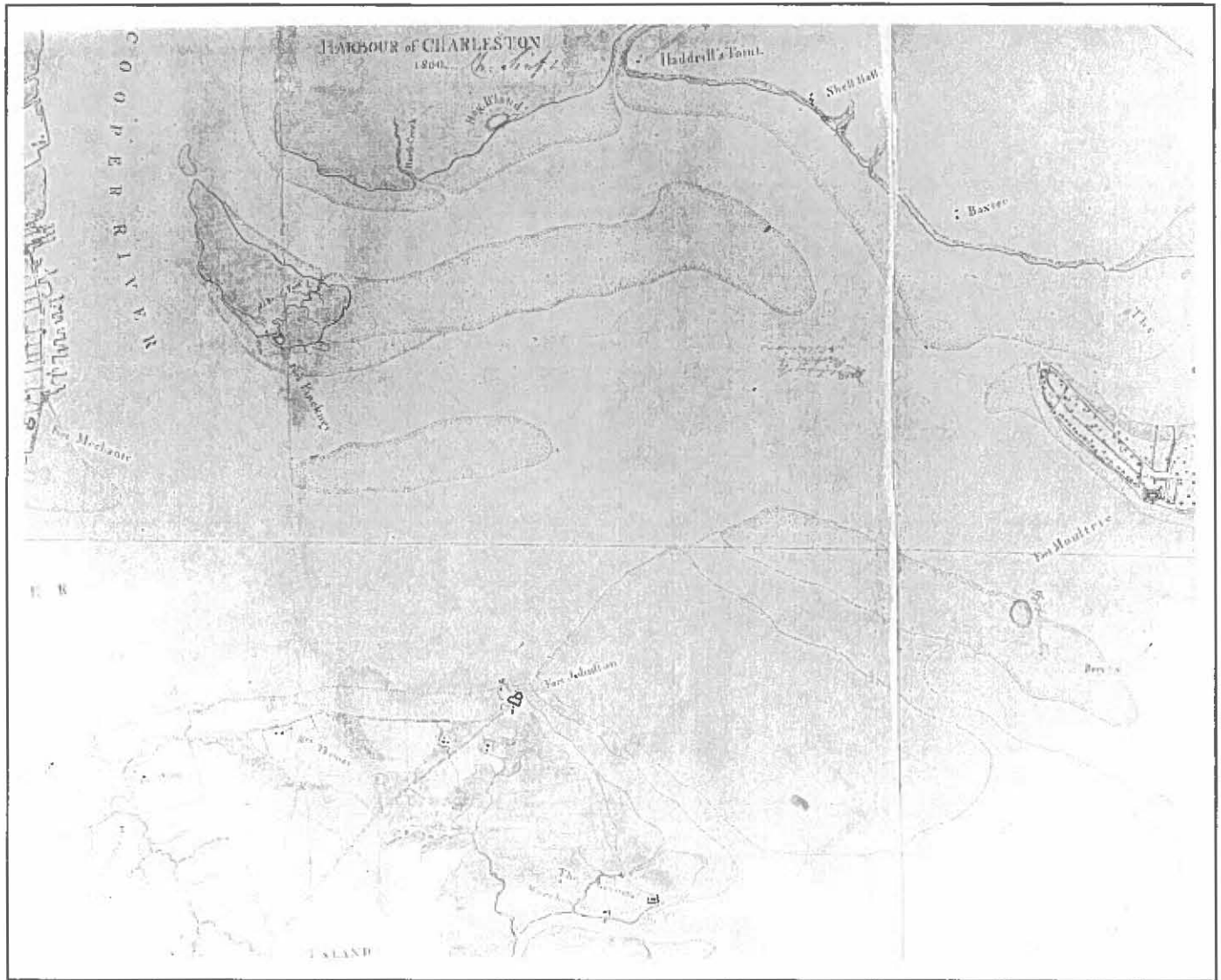
The afternoon's events provoked Lord William Campbell, who prevailed on Captain Thornbrough to warp his ships as close to shore as possible, then to open fire. The *Tamar* and *Cherokee* completed the maneuver before daylight on 12 November, and about half past four that morning, they opened a

cannonade that startled the inhabitants of Charlestown and the garrison of Fort Johnson. The ships fired about one hundred thirty shots at the *Defence*, but even with the *Tamar*'s six-pounders, the distance was too great for accuracy, and most of the shots passed harmlessly through the schooner's rigging onto the mainland. The soldiers at Fort Johnson added to the fireworks by elevating their twenty-six pounders ten degrees and firing several shots in a trajectory they mistakenly assumed was within range of the warships. The alarm in Charlestown sounded, and while both regulars and militia stood to arms, anxious spectators thronged the bay to watch the outcome. Dr. John Budd, a local physician and enthusiastic patriot, concluded that the prolonged fire must have caused many casualties on the patriot schooner; in quixotic fashion he paddled across the Cooper River in a canoe and boarded the *Defence* in the midst of the firing to offer his professional services to his countrymen. Although the British cannonade produced no casualties, it seems to have forced the patriots to withdraw prematurely and to botch the scuttling of the fourth hulk. The skirmish that Drayton was interested in winning, however, was not so much this one as the one he was having with moderates of his party. From his point of view, the action at Hog Island Channel succeeded. For it stiffened public resolve to defend the harbor and helped to determine that in 1776 that defense would be made from Sullivan's Island rather than from the Charlestown peninsula.<sup>29</sup>

### ***The site of Hog Island Channel***

The skirmish of 11–12 November 1775 is considered the first battle of the Revolution in South Carolina. This judgment is not based on the opinions of later historians; it is based on the testimony of the patriots themselves, who attached great political significance to the incident. In a dispatch to the Georgia Council of Safety, Drayton described it as "an event of the highest moment to the southern part of the United Colonies on this continent." Even the imperturbable William Moultrie referred to it as the commencement of hostilities in South Carolina. Two geographic points of reference can be used to establish the area of the encounter. First, contemporary sources show that the colonists were attempting to block Hog Island Channel at its mouth, which can be located approximately through early nautical charts. Second, Thornbrough's log book places the British vessels at anchor abreast of Sullivan's Island at the beginning of the action. These sources, then, place the principal scene of the action in the area of Charleston Harbor adjacent to the modern community of Mount Pleasant.

Hog Island Channel derived its name from a five-hundred-acre tract of salt marsh located to the northwest of Mount Pleasant. This land had been designated as "Hogg Island" as early as 1694, when Edmund Bellinger received a land grant in the area. In colonial times the name usually referred only to the useful portion of the land—a seventeen-acre tract of bluff



9. John Christian Senf's 1800 map of Charleston Harbor shows a topography that had changed little in the twenty-five years since the naval battle of Hog Island Channel, though various new man-made structures are evident. Pencil notations on this map suggest that it was submitted as evidence in a nineteenth-century lawsuit arising from a pilot boat collision.

property not far from the mouth of Shem Creek. By the early twentieth century, erosion had reduced the entire island to marsh land, but later, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began to use this area to dispose of silt dredged out of Charleston Harbor. In 1973, the General Assembly passed an act to develop this landfill for recreational and historical purposes. Today, the Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum occupies the area formerly known as Hog Island.<sup>30</sup>

### Hostilities spread

While shots were being exchanged in Charlestown Harbor, the HMS *Scorpion*, a sloop-of-war mounting fourteen guns, arrived off Cape Fear to augment the British naval presence in the Carolinas. The moment Governor Campbell learned of its arrival, he insisted that Captain Thornbrough summon it to join the small flotilla at Charlestown. The British, however, had assigned the vessel to the North Carolina station, and when the *Scorpion* dropped anchor in Rebellion Road on 29 November with Governor Josiah Martin of North Carolina on board, Thornbrough got caught in a crossfire between the royal governors. Martin demanded the immediate return of the sloop to its station in North Carolina. Campbell asserted that it was unlikely the British warships could long hold their position in the harbor without the presence of the *Scorpion*. When Thornbrough yielded to Martin, the indignant South Carolina governor accused the captain of failing to recognize both the strategic importance of

Charlestown Harbor and the need to keep it open to the British fleet. Campbell gave Thornbrough a list of pointed queries to answer and told him to justify his decision in writing. Meanwhile, Captain John Tollemache of the *Scorpion*, a brash young naval officer, newly promoted through political influence, was antagonizing the inhabitants of South Carolina by threatening the patriots and seizing property from incoming vessels. On 18 December, after being delayed by a two-week stretch of contrary winds, the *Scorpion* finally sailed for North Carolina. Its departure left Governor Campbell in a position even more precarious than the one he had been in before it arrived.<sup>31</sup>

### Raids and retaliation

The patriots were in high dudgeon with Campbell at this time because they believed he was using Sullivan's Island as a sanctuary for runaway slaves. The island had been public property for many years, and the British warships had been using the single structure then standing on it—the old colonial quarantine station or pest house—as a watering station.<sup>32</sup> For some weeks, the Council of Safety had been receiving reports that the British were harboring a considerable number of fugitive slaves on the island and on board their vessels and that armed parties of blacks and sailors were descending nightly on the mainland to raid provisions from nearby plantations. These raids were probably being made even before the *Scorpion* arrived in the harbor, for on 27 No-

vember, the Provincial Congress had assigned Captain John Allston's company of foot rangers to patrol the sea-coast from Seewee Bay to Haddrells Point. Allston's company—an elite volunteer unit of the Craven County militia—was sometimes referred to as the "Raccoon Company," perhaps in allusion to the Raccoon Keys, which marked the coastal political boundary between Berkeley and Craven counties; it was also known as the "Indian Company." Although the company's rank and file certainly were not all Indians, contemporary records say the soldiers scouted "in the Indian manner" and sometimes disguised themselves as Indians. It has also been suggested that Allston may have recruited a few genuine Indian scouts from Catawba-affiliated tribes such as the Pedees, Waccamaws, and Cheraws.

When the *Scorpion* sailed for North Carolina, it carried off about thirty or forty fugitive slaves, whom the British had refused to restore to their owners. The patriots responded with a rapid succession of hostile moves against the *Tamar* and *Cherokee*. The Council of Safety cut off supplies for the vessels under Captain Thornbrough's command; it then issued orders to remove all livestock from the islands that lay exposed to enemy foraging parties; and it placed lieutenants John Withers and James Coachman of Allston's company in charge of a retaliatory raid on Sullivan's Island. Before daylight on 19 December, fifty-four rangers under the command of Lieutenant Withers landed on the island, burned the pest house, shot and killed three or four

fugitive slaves who resisted, and exchanged fire with a party of sailors from the *Cherokee*, who were retreating in boats with about twenty slaves. No casualties resulted from this last exchange, but a patriot source reported that the British sailors were "much frightened by the whooping & appearance of a party from our Indian Company." Withers's troops captured sixteen prisoners—both fugitive slaves and loyalists—destroyed a number of water casks belonging to the ships, and left the island unsafe for future landing parties. If the British had lingering doubts about the seriousness of their predicament, these must have been dispelled when Major Charles Cotesworth Pinckney marched two

hundred soldiers of the First Regiment to Haddrells Point (now Mount Pleasant) and threw up a battery of eighteen-pounders under the cover of darkness. On the morning of 24 December, several shots fired by the patriot gunners to test their range told the warships that the rebel artillery now controlled access to Sullivans Island by way of the Cove.<sup>33</sup>

### **The British depart**

By the end of December, the Council of Safety's injunction against supplying the vessels with provisions, water, and fuel had its desired effect. Thornbrough, no longer able to maintain his station, formally notified Governor Campbell that the royal gov-

ernment had lost its foothold in the colony. As the new year of 1776 dawned, the men-of-war, together with their retinue of supporting vessels, were preparing to make sail and depart from the harbor. On 6 January, to the great relief of the Charlestown patriots, they left for Savannah. Within forty-eight hours, a committee of the Council of Safety visited Sullivans Island, surveyed its military potential, and recommended that a strong fort and battery should be built there. Three days later, the full Council adopted the committee's proposal and contracted with Cornelius Dewees for the purchase and delivery of palmetto logs at a cost of one shilling per foot.<sup>34</sup>

## Britain's expedition against the southern colonies

On 15 January while the British sloops were making a leisurely progress toward Savannah, the frigate HMS *Syren*, commanded by Captain Tobias Furneaux, overtook them. The *Syren* had just arrived on the coast from England and was the advance ship of a British fleet preparing to sail for North America. Furneaux presented Governor Campbell with a two-month-old letter from the Earl of Dartmouth, outlining British military aims in the southern colonies. This turn of events persuaded the South Carolina governor to transfer his quarters to the *Syren* when the sloops reached Savannah and to proceed with Furneaux to the expedition's rendezvous point at

Cape Fear. There on 10 March, they encountered Sir Henry Clinton in command of a modest British force. Clinton, Campbell, and Governor Martin of North Carolina now waited impatiently for the fleet and transports to arrive from Ireland. They had a long wait ahead of them.<sup>35</sup>

### **The plan**

The plan of the expedition, as it took shape in England during the autumn of 1775, was to dispatch from the British Isles a squadron of warships under the command of Commodore Sir Peter Parker, together with seven regiments of infantry<sup>36</sup> and two companies of artillery under the command of

Lord Charles Cornwallis. When the fleet reached its rendezvous at Cape Fear, Cornwallis was to surrender command of the troops, along with a packet of sealed orders from the secretary of state, to Sir Henry Clinton, the major general assigned to this theater by British headquarters in North America.

The British ministry had dispatched this large armament to the southern colonies because it believed that a timely display of military force in conjunction with a rising of loyal inhabitants might restore some of these governments to their allegiance. Although the alleged priority of this expedition was to help loyalist forces in





10. This portrait engraving of Sir Henry Clinton by H. H. Ritchie dates from the year following the Battle of Fort Moultrie.

the colony of North Carolina, the British seem from the outset to have been hedging their bets with respect to Governor Martin's colony. Some of the expedition's planners questioned the suitability of Cape Fear as a site for naval maneuvers and doubted whether great numbers of troops could be landed safely there. If prospects failed to materialize in North Carolina, the ministry directed Clinton and Parker to use their discretion based on conditions in the field. Official correspondence frequently suggested Charlestown as a probable target, and the Admiralty Office, on 11 November, had been sufficiently confident that an attack would be made on the capital of South Carolina to order the fifty-gun ship *Experiment* to sail from Boston to join Parker's fleet. Clinton's sealed orders from Lord George Germain named several areas of the southeastern seaboard as possible mili-

tary objectives but took specific note of the Carolina port: "If you should judge it expedient to proceed in the first place to South Carolina, as Charlestown is the seat of commerce of all that part of America and consequently the place where the most essential interests of the planters are concentrated, the restoration of the legal government there must and will have very important consequences."<sup>37</sup>

### The delays

The key element in this campaign was timing. To fulfill the high expectations of its planners, the expedition should have been ready to sail for the colonies by the first week in December. When preparations dragged on for weeks beyond that date, the king himself aptly observed, "We must shew that the English Lion when roused has not only his wonted resolution but has added the swiftness of the Race Horse."

Unfortunately, British strategic planning in the eighteenth century was conducted by a labyrinthine bureaucracy of decentralized and autonomous departments. Not until 20 January 1776 were the fleet and transports ready to sail, and then the expedition ran afoul of a 1769 Irish statute that committed the British Crown to a standing army of 12,000 men in Ireland. The lord lieutenant of Ireland forbade Cornwallis to embark his regiments until the Irish Parliament—a legislative body that seems not to have been overly concerned with the king's colonial problems—gave its permission. One politician in Dublin was quoted as saying that "he was averse to

send men, with swords in their hands, to cut the throats of our American brethren." The delay was costly. When Parker's fleet finally sailed on 12 February, it found itself locked into a weather pattern that hampered its progress. First, a terrific storm in the Bay of Biscay scattered the ships. "The wind," said one eyewitness, "blew with relentless fury, and no man could remain on deck, except he was lashed fast, for the waves rolled over the deck by turns, with a forcible rapidity." Next, an extended calm forced the fleet into a tedious three-month passage across the Atlantic. His pace thus slowed, Parker was unable to rendezvous with Clinton until 3 May 1776.<sup>38</sup>



11. In 1804, the illustrator William Ridley engraved Sir Peter Parker's likeness to accompany a biography published in the following year's volume of the *Naval Chronicle*.

These delays compromised the original intent of the expedition. Because the planners had directed Clinton's troops to join Sir William Howe's army in the north for the summer campaign, Clinton could not undertake operations that would commit an extensive force to the southern colonies so late in the season. Any belated campaign in North Carolina would have to overcome the formidable obstacles of both climate and geography and would have to face patriots who had already defeated a loyalist uprising and arrested its leaders. Prospects in South Carolina seemed no fairer. Even were they to succeed in capturing Charlestown

easily, the British had neither the time nor the resources to effect anything permanent there; and Governor Campbell was compelled to admit that given the recent convulsions, it would take more than one day to recover the colony. While Clinton turned his thoughts toward Virginia and the Chesapeake Bay, Parker dispatched a party—Lieutenant Toby Caulfield of the Royal Navy and Captain James Moncrief of Clinton's engineer corps, together with one petty officer and ten sailors—to conduct a forty-eight-hour reconnaissance of Charlestown Harbor. The party set forth in the *Pensacola* packet and, escorted by the frigate *Sphinx*, swiftly accomplished

the mission. In a report they gave to Parker on 26 May, Caulfield and Moncrief indicated that the South Carolinians had not yet completed the fort they were building on Sullivan's Island. The two British commanders now had a legitimate military objective that could be limited in scope. If Sullivan's Island could be captured by a sudden attack in force, they reasoned, they could place their garrison in the fort and protect their beachhead by stationing a pair of frigates in the harbor. Clinton and Parker decided to mount a joint operation against the South Carolina fort and sailed from Cape Fear on 31 May.<sup>39</sup>

## The palmetto fort

The incomplete state of the works on Sullivan's Island cannot be ascribed to any lack of information among Charlestonians about the British military threat. As early as the second week in February, Colonel Christopher Gadsden had brought from Philadelphia substantially accurate English and American newspaper accounts of the expedition. On the very night of his arrival, Gadsden had met with the Council of Safety and delivered to it a resolution from the Continental Congress notifying the colony of the impending British attack. The resolution urged South Carolina to make a vigorous defense and opposition by all possible means. The colonists might even have known as much about Parker

and Clinton as those officers knew about themselves had a letter from John Laurens to his father, Henry, not miscarried into enemy hands. That resourceful young South Carolinian, then a student in London, seems to have established a private pipeline into British government sources, for the letter he wrote gave a wonderfully detailed report on the expedition. In any event, Gadsden's intelligence was enough to cause alarm. The planters began moving their families and valuables into the country, and soon a general exodus from the town was in progress. Batteries had already been thrown up on Sullivan's Island for its temporary defense, and by the end of February, construction of the

large fort projected by the colonists had begun. News of the intended British invasion must have added impetus to the project, for on 2 March, the Council of Safety ordered Colonel William Moultrie to the island to assume command.<sup>40</sup>

Unlike Fort Johnson across the harbor at Windmill Point, this new work had been designed as a conventional square fort with bastions at the four corners. It was also conceived on a grander scale—when completed, it would accommodate a garrison of one thousand men. But the most notable characteristic of Moultrie's fort was its method of construction, for the patriots had forsaken the traditional tabby masonry of the Carolina coast in favor



12. In 1782, William Moultrie visited Charles Willson Peale's studio in Philadelphia and sat for this portrait. As the uniform indicates, Moultrie was then a major general in the Continental Line.

of a palmetto log fort with sixteen feet of sand and marsh clay packed between its interior and exterior walls.<sup>41</sup> The curtain and bastions fronting the water mounted enough armament to inflict damage on any enemy ship trying to navigate the harbor entrance, and the incongruity that nine of these heavy guns had originally been a gift from the British Crown seems not to have bothered the patriots.<sup>42</sup> Since the government of the colony had not decided on a name for the unfinished fort, it was unofficially known as Sullivans fort, Fort Sullivan, or Sullivans Island fort.

### The patriot commanders

While military preparations were under way, a succession of three officers exercised command of patriot forces in South Carolina. Christopher

Gadsden superseded William Moultrie on 13 February. Gadsden was the senior colonel of the South Carolina provincials, and when the Council of Safety summoned him from Philadelphia, Thomas Lynch remarked, "My Colleague Gadsden is gone home to Command our Troops, God Save them." On 1 March, the Continental Congress moved to coordinate defense of the southern coast by appointing general officers to take command in the respective colonies. Congress named Major General Charles Lee, a professional soldier highly esteemed by its members, as commanding general of the entire southern army and placed Brigadier General John Armstrong, a competent veteran of Indian warfare along the Pennsylvania frontier, in charge of the South Carolina forces. Much to his surprise, however, General Armstrong found that South Carolina had no Continentals to serve under his command when he arrived in Charlestown on 3 May—the military regulations of the Continental establishment did not suit the patrician notions of the local aristocracy, and hence South Carolina was still maintaining an independent army. Armstrong contented himself with the role of military adviser to President John Rutledge and explained in a letter to Philadelphia, "I did not debate for a dubious Command which had it even been offered me as it was not, I could not with propriety accept." Rutledge nonetheless allowed Major General Lee to assume command of the South Carolina forces when he arrived on 8 June with 700 North Caro-

lina and Virginia Continentals to organize a defense of the harbor and city.<sup>43</sup>

When Lee came among the Charlestonians, they were in an unprecedented state of excitement. At noon on 4 June, Parker's fleet had anchored at the mouth of the harbor. From Sullivans Island to Cummings Point the horizon was covered by more than fifty sail, and the pendants flown by the men-of-war could easily be seen. After inspecting the works around the town, Lee told a meeting of about one thousand townsmen that everything depended on their bravery, perseverance, and unanimity. Aside from a few malcontent Tories and men of property, the townsmen reacted with "a Love of Country & a boldness arising from an assurance of being engaged in a just Cause." People from all classes of society set to work, throwing up breastworks and barricades and pulling down buildings along the waterfront. The transformation resulted in the beautification of the city as well as the better security of its inhabitants. In the wake of the most systematic demolition of sheds and warehouses that had occurred along the Cooper River since the 1752 hurricane, Charlestown now presented a strikingly handsome prospect from across the water.<sup>44</sup>

### Opposing strategies

Although Lee's leadership in fortifying the peninsula had won the applause of its citizens, his views concerning Moultrie's new battery on Sullivans Island found little support from anyone in the South Carolina

government. Appraising it as a "very imperfect and ill plan'd fort," the opinionated general proposed evacuating the island to consolidate his defenses at Haddrells Point. In a letter to Rutledge he complained, "I never cou'd from the conversation I have had with the different Gentlemen here, well understand on what principle Sullivans Island was first taken possession of and fortify'd, or on what principle it is to be maintain'd." Admittedly, the defense of the island held an element of risk. There was a danger that enemy vessels might enfilade the front platform from the fort's southwestern side. Should British troops make a landing in force, there was reason to fear that the fort, with its low walls and only two completed sides, might be taken by assault. The garrison had no secure means of retreat, and in a worst-case scenario, the fort might become a "slaughter pen."

Nonetheless, because enemy ships had to pass within half cannon shot of its batteries before they could approach the town, Sullivans fort, for

South Carolina patriots, was the key to Charlestown Harbor. General Lee himself admitted that the completed portion of the exterior work was impregnable to artillery; and the patriots knew that the fort's commander, Colonel William Moultrie, held unbounded confidence and a determination to defend his post.

Since Sullivans Island, and not Charlestown, was the real British objective, it may have been fortuitous that the South Carolinians trusted their instincts rather than Lee's advice. Rutledge and his Council had not forgotten the events of the previous autumn, and they remembered how difficult it had been to dislodge even a small hostile force from Sullivans Island. Because the island was relatively inaccessible from the mainland, any garrison the British might station there would be free to do a great deal of mischief.

But by 19 June, Lee was convinced that the British planned to take the city. Misled by reports from enemy deserters, he believed that Clinton

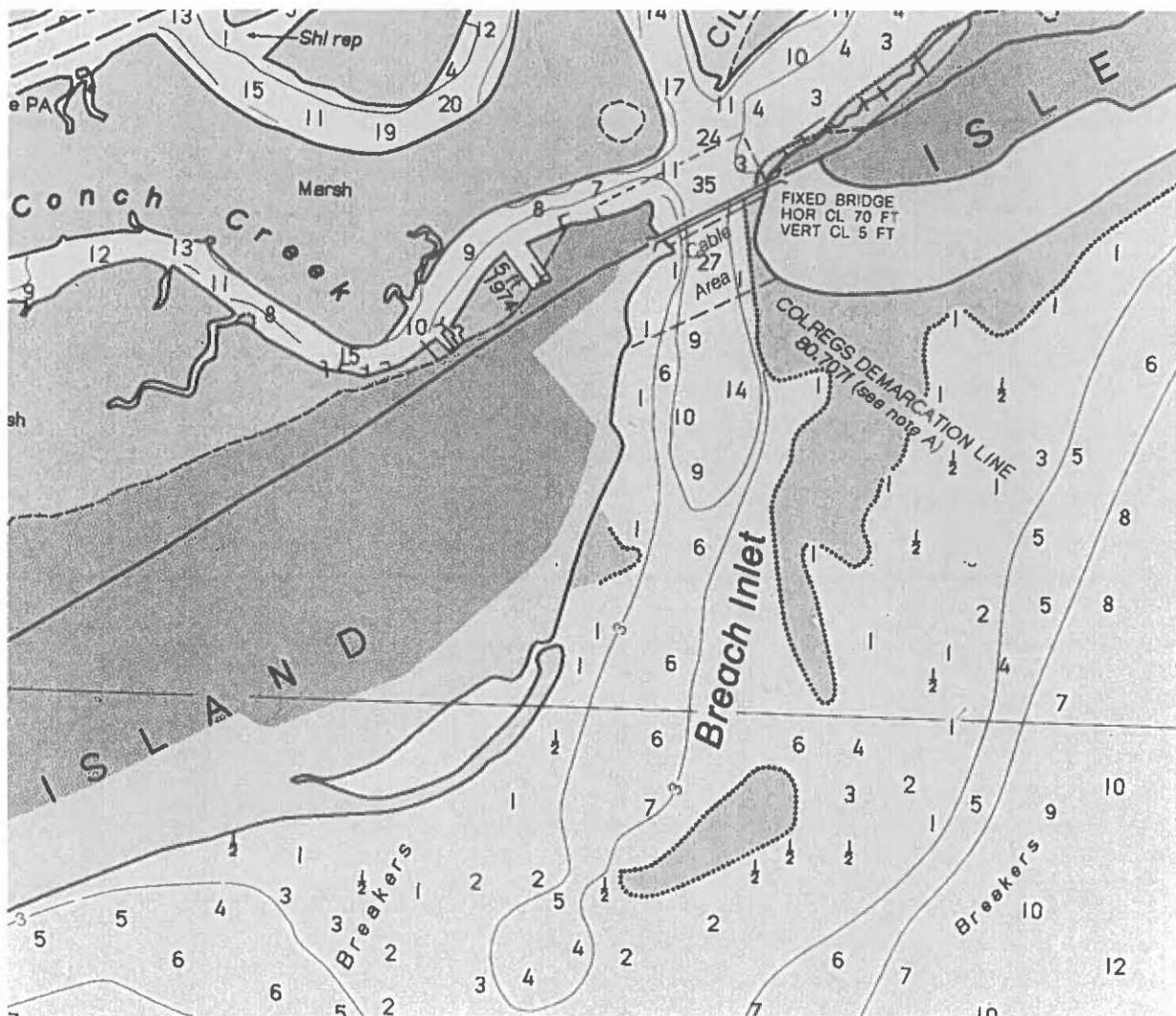
would divide his army into two corps to mount a coordinated attack on Charlestown and Haddrells Point. Anticipating that Clinton's flanking movement would isolate the Sullivans Island garrison, Lee decided to reopen his case for evacuating Moultrie's fort. He asked Rutledge to convene a special meeting of the Council on 22 June. No official record of this meeting has survived, but some sources hint at the proceedings. It may have been on this occasion that Lee, when told it would be impractical to remove the fort's heavy ordnance in the face of the enemy, proposed spiking the guns and blowing up the magazine. It was probably on this occasion that Rutledge vowed never to abandon the fort while a single soldier remained alive to defend it, and afterwards that he sent a confidential memorandum to Colonel William Moultrie, containing only the following words: "General Lee wishes you to evacuate the fort. You will not without an order from me. I will sooner cut off my hand than write one. John Rutledge."<sup>15</sup>

## Planning a coup de main

The patriots' confusion about the enemy's plans might have been forgiven, for their plans were turning into something more elaborate and circuitous than the surprise attack originally contemplated. Before the British transports had even reached Charlestown, General Clinton tried to persuade

Parker not to land troops on Sullivans Island. While the fleet was occupied with crossing the bar and anchoring in Five Fathom Hole at the harbor entrance, Clinton was looking at Long Island (now the Isle of Palms), which seemed to offer his army an approach to Sullivans fort from the rear. Assured

by a number of alleged experts that a ford passable at low tide connected Long Island and Sullivans Island, Clinton, in his preoccupation with other important matters, took their word and failed to check the facts. On 8 or 9 June, the British commander landed on the north end of



13. Could 2,500 troops find a wading route across Breach Inlet even today? This modern US government nautical chart might tend to discourage the attempt. The soundings are for depth in feet at mean lower low water and are accurate as of 20 January 1990 (four months after Hurricane Hugo).

Long Island with about four or five hundred troops. The balance of the army made it ashore by 18 June, only to find that the expedition had run into difficulties. Clinton, who had

been ashore at night reconnoitering the crossing to Sullivan's Island, had begun to suspect the worst when he and his officers waded shoulder deep into Breach Inlet at low tide and found

the water ahead getting deeper. The disconcerting truth was that, although the inlet contained patches of dry sand at low water, channels that were seven or eight feet deep and wide enough to

stop troops from crossing under enemy fire intersected those patches of dry sand.

Captain James Murray, an officer serving in the expedition with the 57th Regiment, shrewdly assessed the situation: "So much was the General pre-possessed with the idea of this infernal ford, that several days and nights were spent in search of it. . . . It appears to me, but I speak it with the diffidence natural to one that has been an witness of the affair, that we might have abandoned the idea of attacking that part of the Island upon the first discovery of our mistake. It would not then perhaps have been too late to have landed under the fire of the men of war." In his dispatches of 18 June, Clinton gave Parker the bad news. There was no ford, and consequently, the navy would have to begin operations with little expectation of help from the troops. He suggested lamely that the army might "make some little Demonstration towards Mount Pleasant" and offered Parker two battalions, if the commodore thought they could land safely on the south end of Sullivans Island. In reality, there was an excellent chance that Clinton, Cornwallis, Brigadier General John Vaughan, and the 2,500 troops under their command were about to sit out the forthcoming battle on the hot sands of Long Island in the company of its indigenous snakes and mosquitoes.<sup>46</sup>

A similar set of miscalculations had temporarily immobilized the navy. In theory, the strategy of sudden attack was fine, but the fleet's commodore had reckoned without the vicissitudes

of navigation on the Carolina coast. The arrival of the warships off Charlestown Bar coincided with the end of the fair weather and spring tides that would have carried them into the harbor with ease. Storms, fogs, and interminable stretches of unfavorable winds began to hamper fleet operations. Then Commodore Parker discovered that work on the palmetto fort was further advanced than the British had been led to believe. He now rated Fort Sullivan as a military objective dangerous enough to require his presence, abandoned his original idea of allowing the frigate captains to carry out the attack, and lost precious days transporting his fifty-gun flagship *Bristol* across the bar. He finally crossed on 10 June, but the weather remained uncooperative, and ultimately, more than three weeks elapsed between the first appearance of the fleet and the day of battle. The patriots took every advantage of this delay. They removed laborers from other projects and assigned them to Sullivans Island in a last-minute attempt to strengthen the unfinished fort. Meanwhile, General Charles Lee grudgingly put aside his differences with the provincial authorities and gave William Moultrie the benefit of his expertise in an effort to make the fort defensible. The British, on the other hand, received a belated windfall from the repeated postponements of their attack when the fifty-gun vessel *Experiment* arrived from Boston to join Parker's squadron.<sup>47</sup>

### British tactics

The British navy, when it attacked a strong coastal fortification, preferred firing against the gunners with deadly force rather than trying to batter down the walls. If warships could get close enough to their target to barrage it with grapeshot and musket fire, they could usually overcome shore batteries. The navy also used the standard device of firing explosive shells from specialized vessels mounting seaborne mortars. In planning the reduction of Sullivans fort, however, Commodore Parker was handicapped. The fleet's mortar capability had been cut in half when the *Carcass*, one of the expedition's two bomb ketches, had been forced to return to England after being dismasted in the Bay of Biscay. Furthermore, reliable expertise concerning the navigation of Charlestown Harbor was in more ominously short supply than the commodore seems to have realized. Through an oversight, the British naval bureaucracy had failed to give Parker a single officer with knowledge of the harbor, though, as one dumbfounded Charlestown loyalist observed afterwards, "this was no obscure place, but well known, to many Gentlemen of the Navy." Even more astonishing was Parker's failure to enlist the aid of Lieutenant John Fergusson and the crew of the sometime Royal Navy survey ship *Cherokee*, whose firsthand knowledge of Sullivans Island lay at his command a few hours away in Savannah, Georgia. Ultimately, these omissions left the execution of the commodore's battle plan dependent

upon the reliability of a handful of black pilots, who either had been seized from coastal shipping or had been spirited out of Charlestown through the ingenuity of Lord William Campbell.<sup>48</sup>

The British squadron consisted of eleven warships. Some of these were less than sixth-rate vessels, and two had no part in Parker's plan of attack—Captain Roger Wills's little sloop of war *Ranger* and Lieutenant John Graves's armed schooner *St. Lawrence* were stationed at the back of the island to favor Clinton's operations. Parker planned to use two divisions composed of seven of the larger and more heavily armed vessels to mount the naval attack against Fort

Sullivan and to use the two remaining vessels to support the attack. His main division would approach the fort head-on and cannonade its front curtain and bastions; on reaching their stations, the fifty-gun ships—Captain John Morris's *Bristol* and Captain Alexander Scott's *Experiment*—were to be flanked by a pair of twenty-eight-gun frigates—Captain William Williams's *Active* and Captain Thomas Symonds's *Solebay*. His second division of three frigates—Captain Anthony Hunt's *Sphinx* (twenty guns), Captain Christopher Atkins's *Actaeon*, and Captain Tobias Furneaux's *Syren*—would wait for his signal to enfilade the western side of the fort, cut off the garrison's retreat, and protect the

fleet from fire ships. One of the support vessels, Captain James Reid's bomb ketch *Thunder*, would anchor at an angle from the fort's southeast bastion and cover the approach of the fleet, and Captain Charles Hope's twenty-eight gun armed vessel *Friendship* would protect the *Thunder*. Unofficially, the squadron contained a twelfth fighting ship, the armed schooner *Lady William*. This converted merchant vessel had been seized and fitted by Governor Campbell and placed under the command of a trustworthy South Carolina loyalist, Captain William Gickie. The *Lady William* had been directed to help Clinton in navigating the creeks behind the island.<sup>49</sup>

## The battle of Fort Moultrie

As the days turned into weeks, the townspeople grew used to the sight of an enemy fleet occupying the harbor entrance. On the morning of 28 June, however, their composure was rudely shattered when they saw the men-of-war in motion and bearing down on the fort. At about half past ten, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas James of the British artillery used the thirteen-inch mortar on board the fleet's bomb ketch to fire the opening shots of the battle. The patriot gunners held their fire until the *Active* and *Bristol* came within range of the southwest bastion.

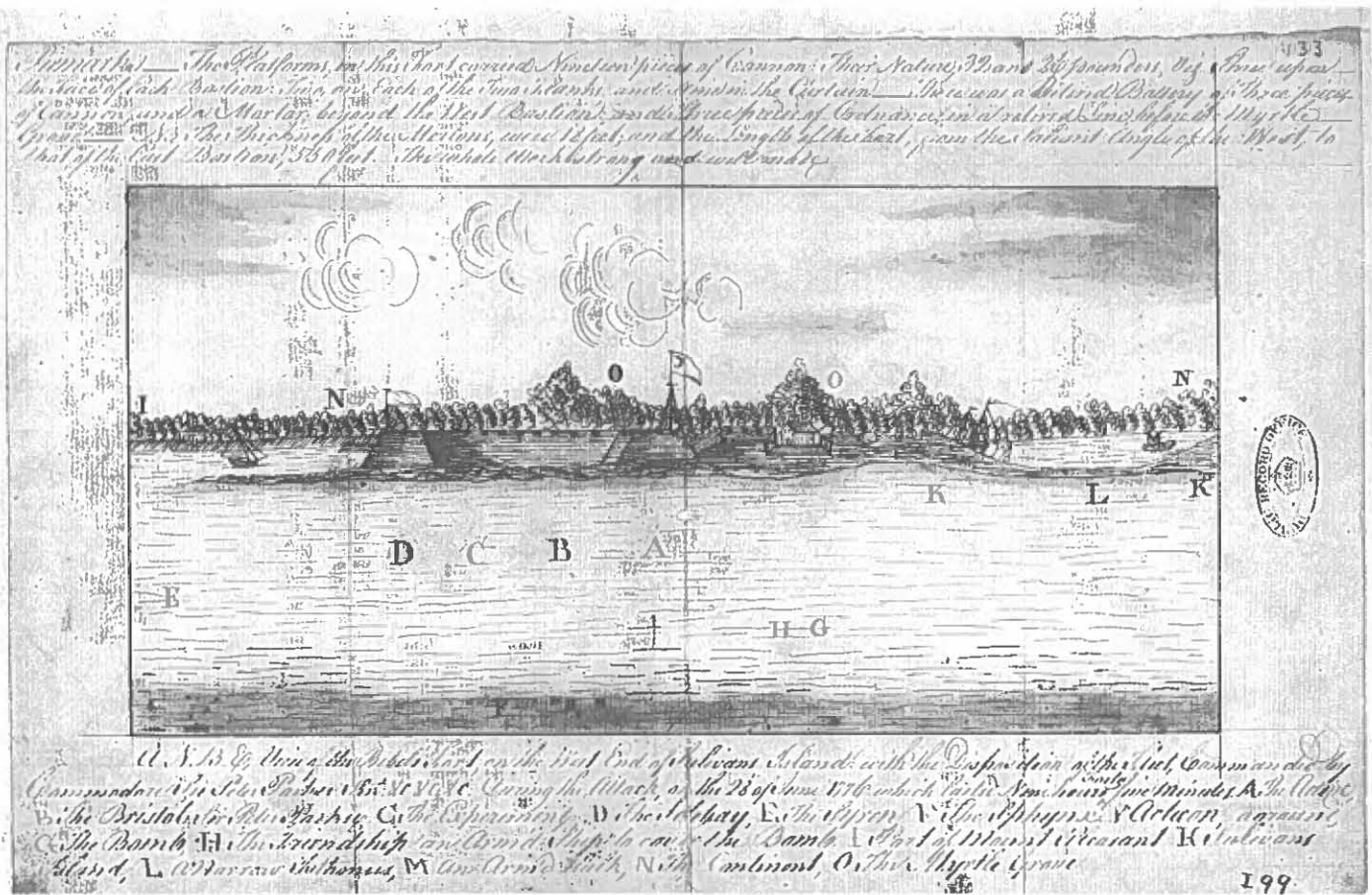
### British plans miscarry

Had the British attack proceeded according to plan, the warships, guided

by the South Carolina blacks, whom the British had impressed into service as pilots, would have continued their approach until the fort's gun platform came within range of the small arms fire from their masts. But to Parker's dismay, his chief pilot, Sampson, anchored the *Bristol* between four and five hundred yards from the shore.<sup>50</sup> Neither threats nor promises would induce Sampson to move the flagship closer to the fort. Eventually, Parker resigned himself to the situation, ordered Sampson to go below with the ship's doctor out of harm's way, and signalled the *Experiment* to get well inside the flagship's anchorage. When the captain of that vessel encountered a similar obstinacy from his pilot, the

course of the battle began to turn to the patriots' advantage. General Lee's fears might yet have been realized had the *Sphinx*, *Actaeon*, and *Syren* succeeded in their attack on the fort's western side. Those frigates, however, led by the pilot on board the *Sphinx*, took too wide a circuit and ran aground on the sandbar known as the Lower Middle Ground.<sup>51</sup>

While the movement of the frigates was miscarrying on the west, the attack from mortars was failing on the east. The engineer on the *Thunder*, Colonel James, was firing on the fort from the prodigious range of 2,600 yards. Thus, though his aim was faultless, his bombs either fell short or burst in mid air. To compensate for the distance, James



14. This is how the palmetto fort looked to the British invaders on 28 June 1776. This pen-and-ink sketch by an engineer attached to the fleet is now in the British Public Record Office.

began adding powder to each mortar and succeeded in throwing a number of shells inside the American works. Few of these presented any danger to the garrison, for they were either buried in the loose sand of the island or swallowed by a morass in the center of the fort. Eventually, the overcharged mortars shattered the beds and rendered the bomb ketch unfit for ser-

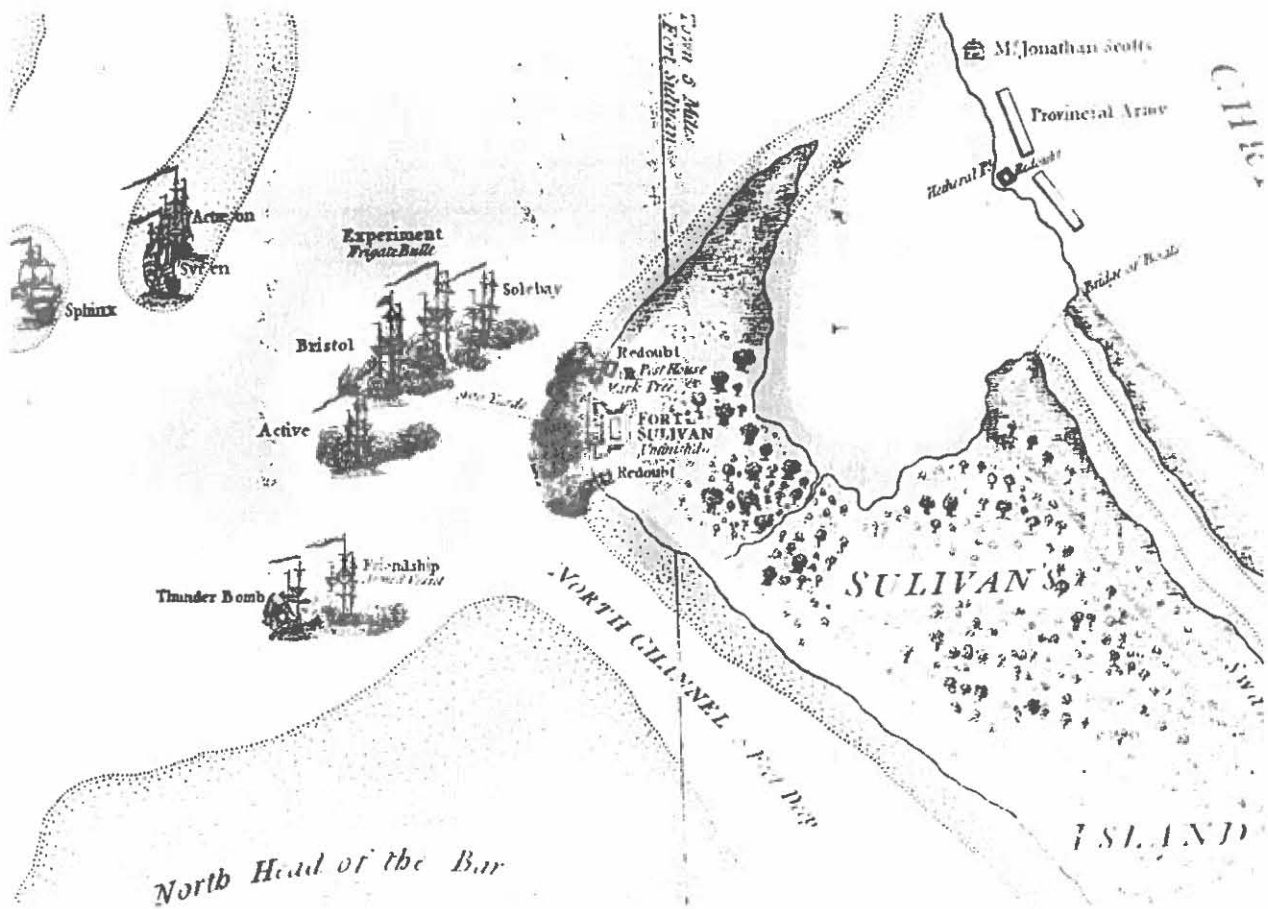
vice. Although the vessel fired over sixty shells, patriot casualties were few—the shells wounded one man slightly and an explosion near the fort's magazine and commissary killed three ducks, two geese, and one turkey.<sup>52</sup>

#### The engagement

Thus, the battle became an artillery contest between the front line of war-

ships and the shore battery. The general engagement had begun at about half past eleven when the *Active*, *Bristol*, *Experiment*, and *Solebay* anchored in a formation covering the front side of the fort and began one of the fiercest cannonades in the annals of eighteenth-century naval warfare. One enthralled eyewitness in Clinton's army described the fleet as "an eternal sheet





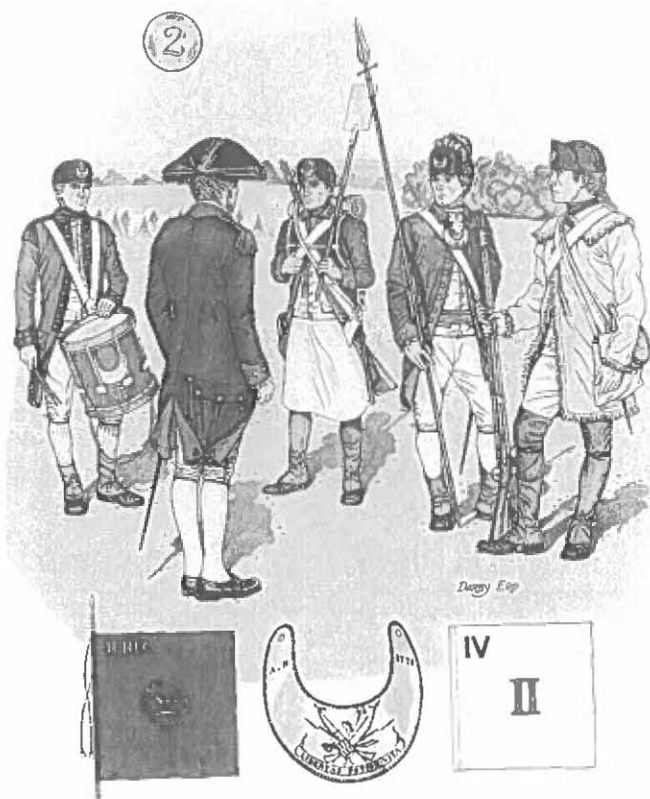
15. By September 1776, the London firm of Sayer and Bennett, sellers of maps and sea charts, had this plan of the recent engagement at Sullivan's Island available to the curious public. The bridge of boats on the far right of this detail was General Lee's way of improving communications between the fort and the mainland.

of fire and smoke," while another declared, "I think it was by far the grandest sight I ever beheld." The British seem to have expected that resistance from the inexperienced garrison would last for half an hour at most. When it continued, Captain James Murray expressed the expedition's general reaction: "After the first hour we began to be impatient and a good deal

surprized at the resistance of the battery. But when for 4 hours the fire grew every moment hotter and hotter we were lost in wonder and astonishment." Several hours into the engagement, when the patriot gunners temporarily ceased firing, Captain Scott of the *Experiment* trained a spyglass on the fort's exterior wall to inspect its condition. He was perplexed

to find that except for some defacement of the embrasures, the incessant fire from the British ships had done no damage. The palmetto wood had absorbed the shot without splintering, and the wall was unbreached. Afterwards, in a particularly florid burst of prose, General John Armstrong described "the Splendid Walls of England, unequally arranged with

16. On 28 June 1776, the fort's garrison would have been using at least some of the Second Regiment uniforms and accouterments shown in this modern reconstruction.



pool of applicants competing for a limited number of appointments. Enlisting the rank and file had been a more painstaking task. Following some initial success in signing up volunteers from the neighborhood of Charlestown, the First and Second regiments had sent recruiting officers through the hinterland of Georgia, Virginia, and both Carolinas to look for soldiers among the floating population of the southern backcountry. The regiments had found another source of recruits when disruption of the colony's normal commercial shipping deprived merchant seamen of their customary livelihood and forced them to enlist.<sup>54</sup>

The majority of Moultrie's troops were not only inexperienced in battle. Since they were trained as light infantry, they may also have lacked much experience and proficiency in the management of "great guns." Evidence suggests that even the regimental musicians were serving in artillery crews along the fort's gun platform. Many years after the Revolution, Philip Martin Frey, who fought alongside an eighteen-pounder during the British attack, remembered that "in all his service he acted as Drummer except in the Defence of Fort Moultrie where we made noise enough without the Drum for Sir Peter Parker." Presumably, Moultrie relied for expertise on some of his commissioned officers and the twenty-two support troops he had on loan from Lieutenant Colonel Owen Roberts's artillery regiment. The South Carolina artillerymen were better paid than the soldiers in most

indignant brow in battles noisy line, against the feeble the Simple Cabbage Stalk, but by secret & patriotick texture, the irrefragable Palmeto."<sup>53</sup>

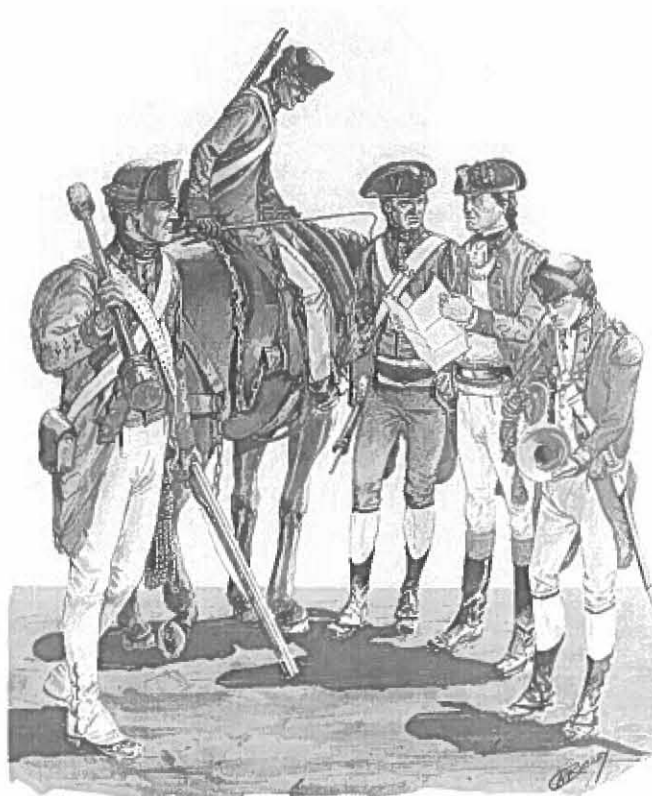
### **The patriot troops**

Four hundred thirteen officers and men of the Second South Carolina Regiment helped by twenty-two officers and men on loan from Lieutenant Colonel Owen Roberts's Fourth Regiment (artillery) were defending the American battery. All the Second Regiment's field officers had some military experience dating from the

last colonial war. Colonel William Moultrie, a native South Carolinian of Scottish ancestry, had served as a captain of provincial regulars during the Cherokee War; Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Motte was a British army veteran; while Major Francis Marion had held a lieutenant's commission under Moultrie in the last war. Most of the company officers were inexperienced but well-motivated young men, who belonged to the Carolina lowcountry's first families. The provincial government had selected these infantry officers from a large

provincial regiments, and some of them were the most highly trained troops in Charlestown. Besides giving useful guidance to the infantry, their role in the fort's defense may have extended to such tricks of the eighteenth-century artilleryman's trade as heating the shot in furnaces and supervising its careful loading. Red-hot shot was a standard tactic against flammable wooden and canvas targets such as those arrayed before the patriot battery.<sup>55</sup>

Fortunately, the issue of the battle depended less on the experience of the patriot troops and more on the bravery and discipline they showed under fire—behavior that confounded the experts. The fort's real vulnerability lay in its insufficient powder reserves. General Lee, showing remarkable consistency of purpose, had removed half of the Second Regiment's gunpowder to Haddrells Point. About two hours into the battle, Lee, prevented by wind and tide from crossing to Sullivans Island in person, sent a message to Colonel Moultrie advising him to spike the guns and conduct an orderly retreat after he had exhausted his ammunition. Moultrie is said to have retorted, "Only give me a further supply of ammunition and I will save the Fort and destroy the Fleet." At the start of the battle, the garrison had only twenty-eight rounds for twenty-six guns, but because no more than twelve or fifteen of the guns could be brought to bear on the enemy fleet, this supply lasted longer than expected. Moultrie prudently conserved his ammunition by ordering his



Matross      Third Matross      Sergeant      Field Officer      Matross

17. Col. Moultrie's artillery support troops from the Fourth Regiment consisted largely of matrosses like the soldier at the far left.

troops to take careful aim, to fire each gun at ten-minute intervals, and to shoot only through the brief openings that appeared in the clouds of smoke enveloping the ships. The deliberate and deadly accurate fire coming from the fort soon evoked the respect of the king's officers, and British accounts generally noted that "the artillery of the *Yankies* was admirably well served."<sup>56</sup>

A late afternoon visit to the fort convinced General Lee that Moultrie and his soldiers, who were fighting like

Romans in the third century, had the situation well in hand. There were stories of men who had lost arms or legs but refused to be carried off until they had exhorted their comrades never to abandon the standard of liberty. Most renowned was the mortally wounded Sergeant James McDaniel, whose last words were said to have been, "Don't let liberty expire with me." In his later report to the president of Congress, Lee alluded to such incidents of heroism and took care to add "This I do assure you, Sir, is not in

the stile of Gasconading Romance usual after every successful action, but literally fact." Although three soldiers were killed "by their own imprudence," apparently when they raised their heads above the parapet at ill-timed moments, most casualties were sustained by shots coming through the embrasures as the men were running out the guns. The official casualty reports listed Sergeant McDaniel and eleven other patriots killed during the engagement—Corporal Samuel Yarbury and privates John Fleming, James Hunter, John Boxall, John Hickie, Luke Flood, Richard Rogers, Isaac Edwards, John Ryan, and Rowley Purdy. The reports omitted the name of the single black who died in the action, a slave belonging to Lieutenant Thomas Dunbar.<sup>57</sup>

#### *Sergeant William Jasper*

When the action began, a tall flagstaff, which had once been the mast of a ship, stood on the rampart of the southeast bastion in the angle formed by its southern flank and face. On the flagstaff flew a large garrison flag, blue with a white crescent in the upper corner.<sup>58</sup> Soon, damage from enemy fire knocked the staff over the wall and onto the beach, and the fear arose that friend and foe alike might think the garrison had struck its colors to prepare for surrender. "Colonel, don't let us fight without our flag!" called William Jasper, a grenadier sergeant stationed on the opposite side of the fort. "How can you help it?" Moultrie answered, "The staff is gone." Jasper shouted in reply that he would fasten

the color to a makeshift staff and raise it on the salient angle of the bastion (where it would be visible to all). The sergeant leaped through an embrasure, walked the length of the fort through enemy fire, and cut the flag from the mast. He then mounted the outside wall, called to Captain Peter Horry for help, tied the flag with a cord to a sponge staff provided by Horry's gun crew, and planted it firmly in the sand on top of the rampart. That done, he gave three cheers and returned to his post.<sup>59</sup> This feat made Jasper one of the most widely-known heroes of the American Revolution, but little is known of his origin, except that Captain Barnard Elliott recruited him in Halifax County, Georgia, on 7 July 1775.<sup>60</sup> Jasper received President John Rutledge's dress sword, an elegant weapon with a silver hilt, for his act of bravery at the battle of Sullivan's Island. "Wear it," said Rutledge, "in remembrance of the 28th day of June, and in remembrance of me."<sup>61</sup>

#### *Patriot powder*

During the nine-hour engagement, the king's ships traded shots with the fort at a ratio of twenty to one. According to one knowledgeable British source, the *Experiment* alone fired away nearly one hundred sixty barrels of gunpowder. At about three in the afternoon, the scarcity of patriot powder forced Moultrie to cease fire until he could get more. The fort's first resupply came from Francis Marion, who led a small party out to the schooner *Defence*, anchored in the cove behind the island, and commandeered two or three hun-

dred pounds from her magazine. President Rutledge, responding to a letter that had been dispatched to Charlestown early in the battle, sent an additional five hundred pounds from the city. In the two hours it took to procure reserves, patriot accounts say that midday rations were served, and the officers had time to smoke their after-dinner pipes. The prolonged silence of the battery, together with the comings and goings of parties in quest of powder, seem to have deluded some British observers into thinking that the patriots were repeatedly deserting and then reoccupying the fort. In his official report of the engagement, Commodore Parker gave credence to these misconceptions, and he also soberly reported that during the afternoon a reinforcement from Mount Pleasant had hanged a deserter from a tree behind the fort. The "hanged man" was actually a blue-and-scarlet uniform coat, which, in the heat of battle, had been discarded on top of the rampart, then propelled by an enemy shot into a tree behind the platform. In a sly dig at the navy, Sir Henry Clinton speculated that the commodore had misinterpreted Jasper's rescue of the flag by concluding that Moultrie had hanged the sergeant from the flagpole.<sup>62</sup>

Despite the astonishing disproportion of shots and the patriots' temporary cease-fire, the British ultimately sustained far more damage than they inflicted. By concentrating their fire on the two fifty-gun ships, patriot gunners made the most of their limited ammunition and wreaked havoc during the final hours of the battle. Soon

after they resumed firing late in the afternoon, a lucky shot cut the springs on the *Bristol's* anchor cable and sent the flagship drifting stern-first toward the fort, presenting a target that could be raked fore-and-aft. Two hours in this predicament put the already-damaged ship in need of enough repair to occupy every ship's carpenter in the British fleet. The vessel was twice set on fire by red-hot shot; her masts were so damaged that one of them later fell overboard, and another had to be shortened; her cabin was so nearly shot to pieces that large fragments of it floated up to town on the next day's tide; and her hull was perforated to such an extent that the commodore was indebted to a sultry June day and a placid harbor for keeping him afloat.

While the *Bristol* was thus exposed, a serious wound incapacitated the captain of her consort vessel, the *Experiment*, and suddenly placed Lieutenant Ambrose Reddall, the executive officer, in a position of grave responsibility. Reddall assumed command with spirit and confidence, maintained a constant fire on the American battery, and was widely credited with preserving the entire squadron. He undoubtedly earned the praise, for the fort's guns gave the *Experiment* her share of attention and shot three or four of her portholes into one.<sup>63</sup>

### **British casualties**

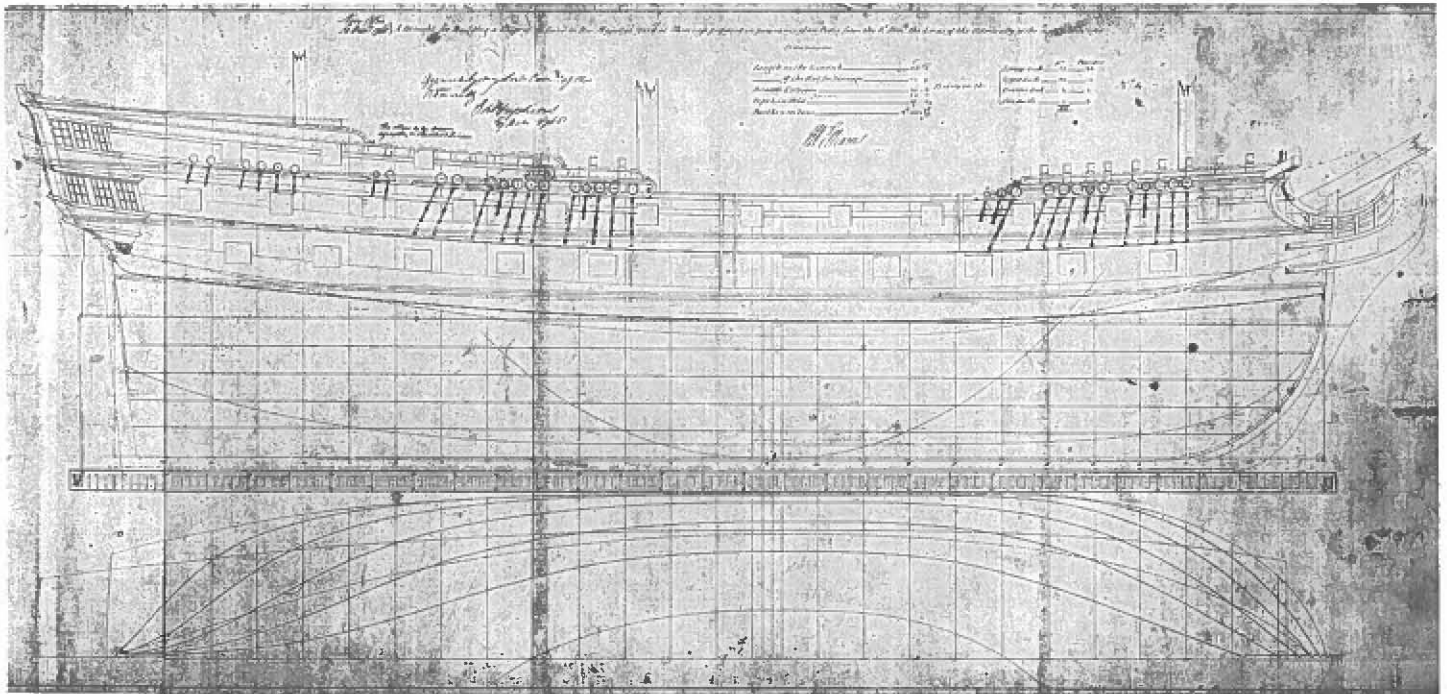
"Never did British valour shine more conspicuous, nor never did our marine, in an engagement of the same nature with any foreign enemy, experience so rude an encounter," was the

judgment of the *Annual Register* on this affair. The encounter cost the Royal Navy dearly in injuries and human lives. The casualty list from the two fifty-gun ships ran to forty killed and seventy-one wounded on the *Bristol*, and twenty-three killed and fifty-six wounded on the *Experiment*. "During the action no slaughter-house could present so bad a sight with blood and entrails lying about, as our ship did," reported one of the flagship's officers, and his testimony was corroborated by an army officer who was present: "I was on board the *Bristol* during the action and suffered much from the sight of so much slaughter. I am perfectly satisfied with what I have seen of civil war and devoutly wish that omnipotence would arrest the progress of the destroying angel and say it is enough."<sup>64</sup>

The ammunition the patriots fired at the *Bristol* included chain shot, intended to destroy the masts, rigging, and sails. When one of these projectiles struck Captain John Morris in the forearm, it shattered two bones and required the amputation of his injured limb above the elbow. While the ship's surgeon was performing the operation, the patriots fired a red-hot ball through the man-of-war's cockpit, killing two surgeon's mates and wounding the ship's purser. Undaunted, Captain Morris insisted on resuming command of the flagship. The attendants dressed his wounds and carried him up to the quarterdeck, where he continued to issue orders until patriot fire again struck him down. In the last words he uttered before losing consciousness, he committed his family to

the protection of God and the generosity of his country. Several days after the battle, the hospital brig *Pigot* departed for London with Morris on board, but he died shortly thereafter, and the vessel reversed course to give him a proper burial on the Carolina coast. Morris was probably interred not far from Spence's Inlet (Deweese Inlet) within what is now the Isle of Palms Beach and Racquet Club. When George III learned the details of the captain's death, he settled both a bounty and a pension on his widow and dependents. Among Morris's survivors was a thirteen-year-old son, who afterwards became Sir James Nicoll Morris, commander of the seventy-four-gun ship of the line HMS *Colossus* at Trafalgar and, later, rear admiral on the staff of Lord de Saumarez.<sup>65</sup>

Patriot fire either killed or wounded every person stationed on the *Bristol's* quarterdeck, and on one occasion it cleared the deck of all except the commodore. Parker himself was wounded by a splinter, which "whipt the Commodore very cleverly, tore all his breeches behind to pieces, and left his posteriors quite bare"; a splinter also injured his knee and left him unable to walk without the help of two men for some time after the battle. Predictably, it was the injury to Parker's attire that fascinated and entertained the patriots. Once British deserters had spread the news abroad, Parker became the target for an endless succession of "breeches" jokes, which may have achieved their height—or depth—when one patriot wag remarked, "How an Admiral or a General looks with his



18. The National Maritime Museum in Britain today possesses two sets of lines and profile for Parker's flagship HMS *Bristol*. This starboard side view is taken from the original plans approved by the Admiralty Board in 1768.

Breaches shot away it would be happy if they had lost what was in them."<sup>66</sup>

South Carolina's governor, Lord William Campbell, who had placed his Royal Navy experience at Parker's disposal, commanded some guns on the lower deck of the *Bristol*. During the action, a shot penetrated the side of the ship near the porthole where Campbell was standing. The shot killed two sailors, damaged the hull, and sent a splinter into Campbell's left side. Campbell's wound neither forced him to quit his post nor was thought to be serious. Two years later, on 4 September 1778, however, Lord

William Campbell, the colony's last royal governor, died at Southampton, England, from a "painful and lingering consumption, which the physicians thought proceeded from the wounds he received at Sullivan's Island."<sup>67</sup>

The captain of the *Experiment*, Alexander Scott, whom Lieutenant Reddall took over from so ably, had his left arm shot off and received so many other wounds that his chances for recovery looked slim. Various American dispatches and newspaper accounts prematurely announced his death, but he did, at length, survive to contradict those stories. Although the injuries he received from the attack on Sullivan's

Island forced his return to England and his retirement from active service, Scott ultimately attained the rank of rear admiral. Knowledge of Scott's later life comes partly through his relationship with his nephew and legal ward, Alexander John Scott. The younger Scott served in the Royal Navy as chaplain of HMS *Victory*, and in that role, he was a companion of Nelson's last hours at Trafalgar.<sup>68</sup>

The ill-fated attack on Sullivan's fort left vacancies in the fleet, which the British filled later with a number of new commissions. One of these went to Midshipman James Saumarez and marked the beginning of a stellar

career in British naval history. Nineteen-year-old Saumarez was stationed on the *Bristol* during the battle, and his efficiency and coolness under fire brought him to the commodore's attention. He was credited with reattaching the springs of that unlucky vessel's anchor cable and was apparently unfazed by two narrow escapes from enemy fire—one when a cannon ball decapitated a fellow midshipman who was standing so close to him that he was drenched in the man's blood. During the engagement, Saumarez told Parker he should come down from his dangerous position on the poop ladder. The commodore simply smiled at the young sailor's temerity and replied, "You want to get rid of me, do you?" Saumarez was commissioned a lieutenant after seeing his first action at the Battle of Fort Moultrie and later became Lord de Saumarez, hero of Algeciras and the Battle of the Nile, and vice admiral commanding Britain's Baltic fleet during Napoleon's invasion of Russia.<sup>69</sup>

Moultrie's gunners relegated the five British frigates to secondary targets; as a result, they escaped the appalling punishment received by the fifty-gun ships. The *Active* and *Solebay*, however, reported several killed and wounded, and the three vessels that ran aground in the harbor—the *Actaeon*, *Sphinx*, and *Syren*—came to considerable grief without any intervention from the patriot battery. When the flanking movement first fell into disorder, Captain Furneaux's *Syren* drove Captain Atkins's *Actaeon* onto the bank, where she became hopelessly entangled in

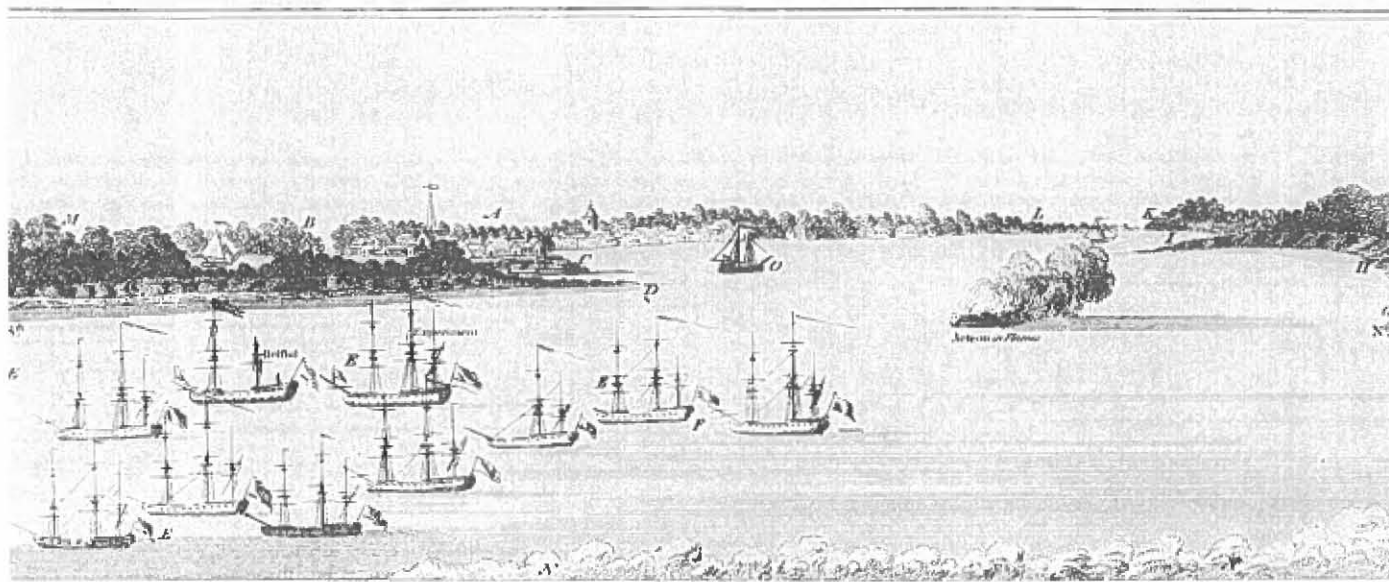
the swashes and sandbars of the Lower Middle Ground. Atkins's ship later drifted across the bow of Captain Hunt's *Sphinx*, forcing Hunt to cut off the *Sphinx*'s bowsprit and rigging to save the *Actaeon*'s mainmast. The frigates at least had the good fortune to ground during a rising tide, and within two hours, Furneaux had succeeded in warping the *Syren* back into deep water. He abandoned all thought of attacking the fort's western flank and instead moved up to join the fight in company with the disabled bombship's escort vessel *Friendship*. Furneaux may have been the only frigate commander from the second division to return his ship to action. The *Actaeon* remained stranded on the sand bank. Hunt finally floated the *Sphinx* after disentangling her from the *Actaeon* and removing a good deal of stern ballast, but his damaged ship seems to have accomplished nothing of note.<sup>70</sup>

When night fell, the odds shifted even more in favor of the patriots. From the fleet's point of view, the fort, cloaked in darkness, presented only "the appearance of a heavy storm, with continual flashes and peals like thunder." The British gunners, who had shown a marked tendency to overshoot the low walls of the battery in daylight, now had to fire at random. Meanwhile, almost every shot from the fort took effect. By nine o'clock in the evening, the squadron had spent most of its ammunition, and Commodore Parker decided to order a withdrawal while he could still take advantage of the ebb tide. The men-of-war cut their cables and, refraining from their customary

piping and whistling, silently withdrew from the range of patriot guns, leaving their anchors behind. While the British were breaking off the engagement, Captain Richard Shubrick of the grenadier company fired the final shot of the battle from the right wing of Fort Sullivan.<sup>71</sup>

### ***The fate of the Actaeon***

By sunrise next morning, the warships had put about two miles between themselves and the fort. The *Actaeon*, fast aground on her sandbar, was the only ship left within range of enemy fire. Although the crew had tried to heave her off, the hawser cable attached to her bower anchor had snapped at four in the morning, and when that happened, any hope of getting her afloat vanished—there was no spare bower anchor, for Atkins had left it in Torbay when the fleet sailed. During the voyage from England, Atkins had vowed to "give those fanatic scoundrels a good banging who have dared to treat the mother country with impunity and ingratitude"; it was a less ebullient Christopher Atkins who now sent a party out to the *Bristol* to ask for the commodore's permission to abandon ship. Parker hesitated—understandably. The *Actaeon* was one of the Royal Navy's most beautiful frigates, built of specially hardened wood and not twelve months in commission. The situation, however, was perilous. The *Actaeon*, sitting in only seven feet of water at low tide, had heeled into the fort and was lying end on, unable to fire effectively when daylight returned and the fort resumed firing. To prevent the ship



19. This view, drawn by the engineer aboard the bomb ketch and published by the London engraver William Faden, graphically shows the situation of the British fleet on the morning of 29 June 1776. Note the condition of the *Bristol's* masts.

from falling into patriot hands, Atkins set her ablaze, ordered all hands off, climbed with his crew into the boats, and rowed off to join the rest of the fleet. They left the *Actaeon* with her colors flying.

Atkins had underestimated Yankee enterprise if he thought his action had secured his ship against enemy plunder. Lieutenant Jacob Milligan, a patriot naval officer who had been on the provincial ship *Prosper* and had commanded a party of sailors on Sullivans Island at the time of the British attack, took three boats and launched a salvage operation. Boarding the blazing derelict, Milligan fired four of her guns

at the *Bristol* while his men lifted the ship's colors, the bell, some sails, and a large and varied quantity of stores for the use of Moultrie's garrison. When Milligan's party noticed that the frigate was on fire near the magazine, they left quickly. They rowed back to the island, jubilantly flying the *Actaeon's* ensign upside down from the front of the leading boat. Within half an hour of their departure, the *Actaeon* blew up, "and from the explosion issued a grand pillar of smoke, which soon expanded itself at the top, and to appearance, formed the figure of a palmetto tree."

On the night of 30 June, five American sailors, who had been impressed into the Royal Navy as members of the *Actaeon's* crew, deserted from the fleet and surrendered to Christopher Gadsden's troops at Fort Johnson. According to them, the frigate's hawser cable had not simply broken, it had been sabotaged. When the court-martial of Captain Christopher Atkins was held on the *Active* on 4 July, these five sailors were conveniently unavailable for questioning by the British. The court, however, acquitted the captain of any misconduct in the loss of his vessel.<sup>72</sup>



## The action at Breach Inlet

According to British historian Esmond Wright, the army's failure to take Fort Sullivan from the rear was caused by a lack of either boats, guts, or intelligence. General Clinton was less direct in explaining his inactivity during the battle, and his written accounts were notable neither for their logic nor candor. Even had his imagined ford across Breach Inlet proved real, it would scarcely have facilitated a simultaneous land and sea assault on Sullivans Island, for it would have forced the army to attack at ebb tide when the navy had to attack at flood tide.<sup>73</sup> The British general knew his back-door strategy was in jeopardy when he realized that his dilatory movements had given the patriots time to garrison and fortify their side of the Breach. He thought of landing, instead, on the mainland and creating a diversion against Haddrells Point in conjunction with the proposed flanking movement of Parker's frigates. The patriots, however, analyzed the pattern of British reconnaissance and concluded, perhaps correctly, that the enemy intended to enter by way of Inlet Creek and Bolton's Landing.

Lee had based his case for evacuating Sullivans Island on the presumption of a British move in this direction. Had matters been left to his discretion, the patriot general, ironically, might have saved the British army the trouble of creating any diversion. An evacuation of the island was, after all, Clinton's objective. But the obstinacy

of the South Carolina authorities stopped the patriot forces from overreacting. Lee and Armstrong kept a guard stationed on this part of the mainland to repel the enemy at the landing, and had the British attempted to move inland, their reception committee would have included Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Sumter and a corps of upcountry riflemen belonging to the Sixth South Carolina Regiment. Moreover, the same logistical problems that were interfering with Clinton's contemplated attack on Sullivans Island would have hindered his alternate plan as well.<sup>74</sup>

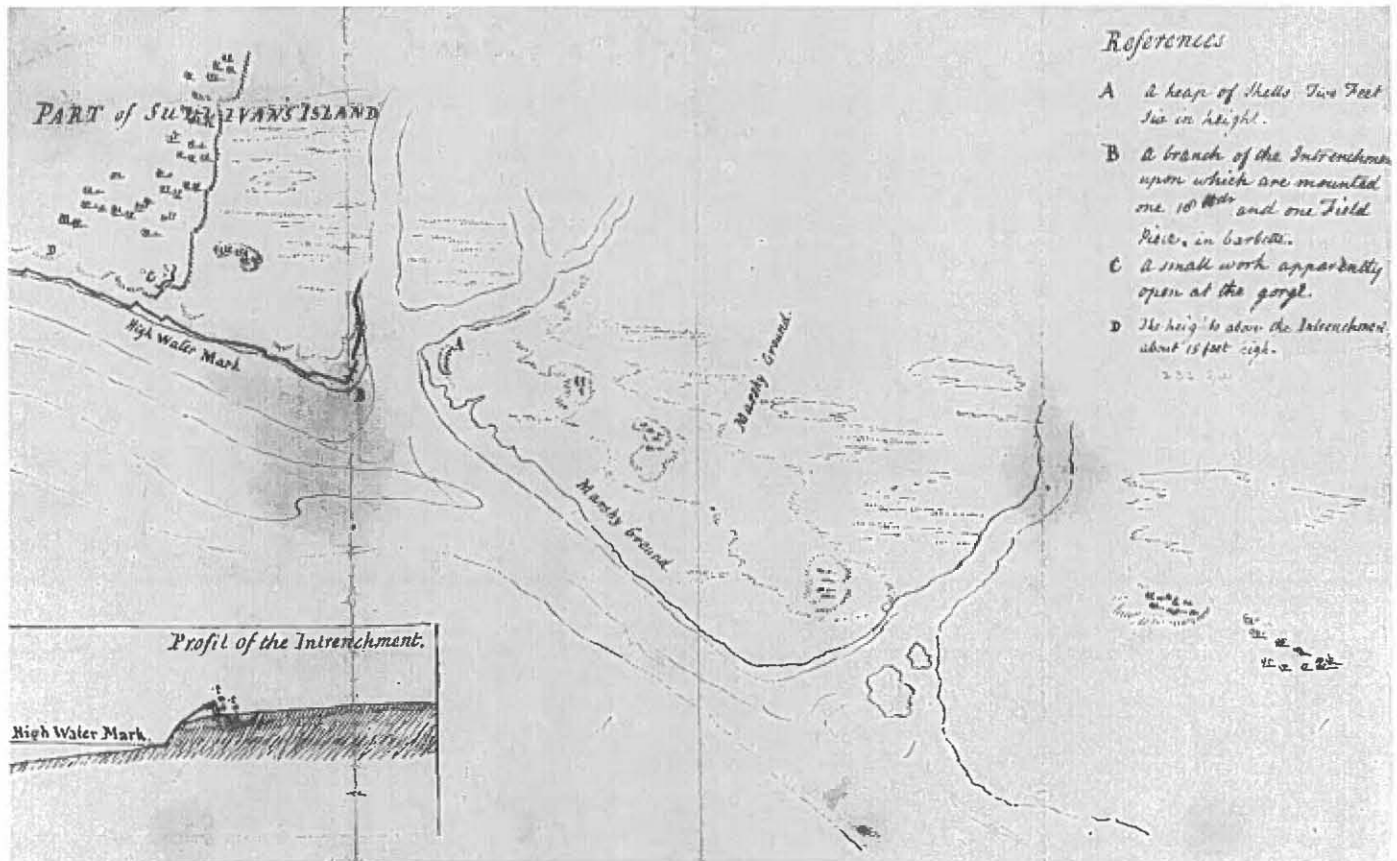
From the patriot headquarters at Haddrells Point—command post for a large force of Virginia and North Carolina Continentals, South Carolina riflemen, and Charlestown militia artillery under the direct command of Brigadier General Armstrong—the patriot forces were poised to throw reinforcements in whatever direction the redcoats might try to land in force. Armstrong's jurisdiction included Sullivans Island, where William Moultrie, who was next in the chain of command, was in charge of all patriot forces. Colonel William Thomson, commanding officer of the Third South Carolina Regiment (rangers), had responsibility for the defense of Breach Inlet. Three hundred riflemen from Thomson's regiment, 200 North Carolina Continentals under Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Clark, 200 South Carolina militia under Colonel Daniel

Horry, 50 soldiers of Captain John Allston's Raccoon Company, and a detachment of artillery made up Thomson's force at the inlet.

### **Thomson's redoubt**

The patriot advanced post the British land forces first encountered at the inlet consisted of a narrow entrenchment at the extreme point of Sullivans Island. The defenders, however, did not remain idle while they waited for the king's troops to make their move, and on 22 June, an exasperated Clinton discovered the reason for their industry. Abandoning and dismantling their original position, the Americans withdrew 500 yards from the Breach into a new and stronger position, featuring an extended front with a battery to the right and a morass to the left. Based on remains that the shifting sands of the island uncovered seventy-five years after the battle, Colonel William Thomson's redoubt is believed to have been constructed of palmetto logs on a brick foundation.<sup>75</sup>

When the ships attacked on the 28th, the redcoats "strained every nerve" to help, but to no avail. The grounding of the frigates either thwarted Clinton's plans for a diversion on the mainland or gave him a legitimate excuse to forgo the attempt. The British general was equally reluctant to tangle with Thomson's advanced guard across the Breach. Not only had the relocated defense line moved the patriots beyond easy range



20. Both the British forward artillery position at Breach Inlet and Colonel William Thomson's entrenchments (as perceived by the British) are represented in this sketch. The cartography is by Capt. Lt. Abraham d'Aubant of the Royal Corps of Engineers.

of enemy mortars, but the British gunners were operating under the further disadvantage of having a forward artillery position they could not maintain during flood tide. Though Clinton had 2,500 troops on Long Island, he had only enough boats to transport six or seven hundred men at a time, and, according to their estimates, the British would have needed a turnaround interval of not less than thirty minutes

to launch a second wave. Furthermore, the troops could only have landed by way of a channel so narrow it would have forced the boats to advance in single file, exposed all the while to fire from the patriot battery. The patriot guns commanding the passage consisted of one eighteen-pounder and some small-caliber brass field pieces, all loaded with grape shot. Nonetheless, while the naval battle

was under way at the other end of the island, Clinton's forces seemed to be preparing to mount an attack. The British mortars opened fire on the patriot advanced post and landed at least a few shells on or near the target. The single unnamed casualty the patriots officially reported may have been Private Jeremiah Simmons of Captain Eli Kershaw's ranger company, who later claimed to have received a

lifelong disability when an explosion splintered one of the artillery carriages. The redcoats, organized into three brigades under Clinton, Cornwallis, and Vaughan, drew up in formation, and the troops in the vanguard—the grenadiers, the light infantry, and the 15th Regiment—got into their flat-bottomed boats. Carrying some light field pieces to cover the landing, the *Lady William*, in company with an armed sloop, approached Sullivans Island at the head of the flotilla. The two vessels preceding the troops, however, ran aground in the creek, and the British soldiers and crewmen who managed to get within range of patriot rifles and grape shot “received such a fire . . . as made them think it would be out of their power to get Thompson’s consent to land, without which their Army

would have pretty well melted down, by the time they would have got to the Fort.” The flotilla retreated in disarray. General Clinton studied the American position with his spyglass, multiplied Thomson’s 750 troops in his imagination to at least three thousand, surmised that his first wave was outnumbered four to one, and despaired of an operation that looked like a suicide mission. When hostilities broke off, the patriots had nearly run out of ammunition for their eighteen-pounder, but by five in the afternoon, they were reinforced by 700 Virginia Continentals under Colonel Peter Muhlenberg. The security of the fort’s rear was assured.<sup>76</sup>

Thus ended the British army’s contribution to the Battle of Sullivans Island. Clinton wrote later that he

intended his movement against the advanced post mainly as a feint. Drayton suggested, however, that Sir Henry, when he looked at the patriot troops entrenched up to their eyeballs, developed a sinking feeling that the scenario at Bunker Hill was about to be replayed. A lack of cooperation between the army and navy plagued the British expedition against South Carolina, and the outcome led to recriminations and efforts to assign blame. The first face-to-face interview between Parker and Clinton after the battle seems to have ended in a shouting match, for two sailors from the *Solebay*, who later deserted in New York, told officials at American headquarters “That the Admiral turned General Clinton out of his Ship after the Engagement, with a great deal of abuse.”<sup>77</sup>

## The fruits of victory

To the citizens of a newly-launched republic badly in need of a military victory, the courier who brought news of the battle of 28 June was like the Athenian runner who delivered the news of Marathon in 490 B.C. with the words “Rejoice, we are victorious!” In Philadelphia, where the independence of the American colonies had recently been declared on 4 July, the British defeat was a particular cause for celebration. In North Carolina, the Council of Safety considered the action at Sullivans Island to be “one of the Most important Events that hath happened to this Country during the course of the present unnatural war.” In Vir-

ginia, Purdie’s *Virginia Gazette* ran a headline proclaiming “GLORIOUS NEWS from SO. CAROLINA,” and ended the story with the exclamation, “General LEE, and our brave friends of SOUTH CAROLINA! HUZZA!” A contemporary British historian was not exaggerating when he observed that “the Americans were much elated upon this success, which considerably inflamed the spirit of revolt.”

News of the victory prompted frequent expressions of wonder. From Williamsburg, Virginia, Colonel Adam Stephen commented, “The event of that dreadful cannonade is most astonishing. Porto Bello, Boccochico, &

the other Castle at Carthagena were compelled to yield to Vernon: Fort Lewis in St. Domingo yielded to Knowles’s mettle: Pray, of what stuff is Fort Sullivan made to resist so many 12 & 18 pounders, for so long a time?” An eyewitness in Parker’s fleet predicted the reaction from the British: “This will not be believed when it is first reported in England. I can scarcely believe what I myself saw on that day—a day to me one of the most distressing of my life.”<sup>78</sup>

Not surprisingly, some saw evidence of divine retribution in the events of 28 June 1776. Remembering the swaggering and braggadocio of British

forces before the patriot victory. Clinton's deputy adjutant general Lord Francis Rawdon recalled the Greek epigram averring that "Nemesis forewarns with a cubit and a rein, not to do anything without measure, nor to speak unbridled." Observers less sympathetic to the British cause drew their comparisons directly from the Old Testament. Lieutenant Governor John Page of Virginia suggested that if George the Third did not repent, acknowledge that the hand of the Lord was upon him, and allow the independent American colonies to depart in peace when he heard the news of Sullivan's Island, then he ought to be "turned out like Nebuchadnezzar to graze."<sup>79</sup> Perhaps the most remarkable commentary was the one that appeared in the pages of an opposition newspaper in Great Britain:

A correspondent observes, that amidst the accumulated distresses, overwhelming this devoted country by the prosecution of the present most unjust and cruel war, it must be some consolation to every good mind to perceive, that all the abominable attempts to reduce or enslave the virtuous and brave Americans, are frustrated: Who does not see that our merciful, just and omnipotent Creator approves of their resistance? Large fleets separated and dispersed, some of them with difficulty return dismasted, some driven to the West-Indies, and others taken.

These are not common accidents. Ships in an honourable employ rarely meet with such disasters. We may reasonably suppose our unhappy seamen, who lost their lives against South Carolina, would not have met with such fate had they been on honourable business. They have seldom failed of being victorious against a common and real enemy. Was it ever known that 18 or 20 guns belonging to France or Spain were more than a match for eleven English ships of war, with two hundred and seventy cannon on board? The man who believes that the Sullivan's Island affair was accidental, is an Atheist.<sup>80</sup>

The material results of the victory at Sullivan's Island were scarcely less important than its impact on men's imaginations. The failure of this initial British campaign in the South left the Carolina loyalists without government support for over three years. Under patriot control, the port of Charlestown remained open to friendly commercial and military shipping, providing a supply line to the patriot army, a safe harbor for Continental and state navies, and a base for rebel privateers.<sup>81</sup>

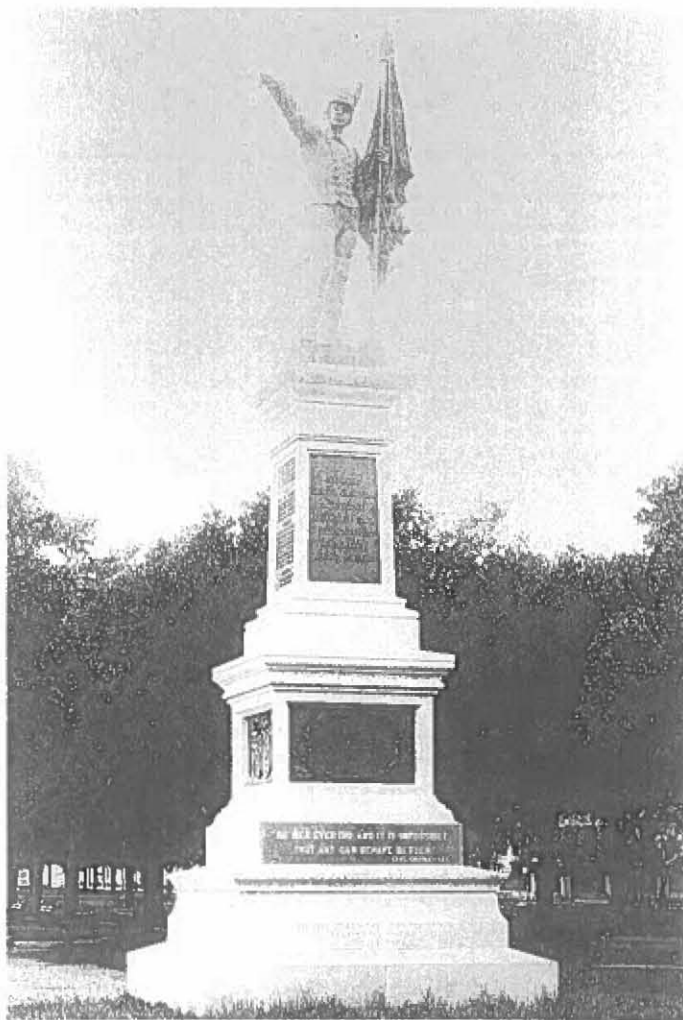
The battle had also settled the question of the official name by which the palmetto fort would henceforth be known. The decision had been made by 2 August, when newspaper editor John Wells reported, "We hear that the fort on Sullivan's Island will be in

future called Fort Moultrie, in honor of the gallant officer who commanded there on the memorable 28th of June 1776." The name Fort Moultrie has been applied not only to the revolutionary fort and its successor forts down to the present day, but, retroactively, to the action of 28 June as well. In accepted usage, this historic event is known as the "Battle of Fort Moultrie" as well as the "Battle of Sullivan's Island."

Twice during the fort's long history, attempts to rename it have been made. After the surrender of Charlestown to the British on 12 May 1780, the royal forces, understandably gratified at the opportunity to change the fort's irksome name, designated it Fort Arbuthnot, in honor of Vice Admiral Marriot Arbuthnot, commander of British naval forces during the successful siege. Among the archives of the state, there is a return of ordnance at Fort Arbuthnot, dated 23 June 1780, which shows that the British changed the name shortly after their victory. The name reverted to Fort Moultrie as soon as the British departed. Then in 1902, the federal government issued an order naming the Sullivan's Island army post Fort Getty in honor of George Washington Getty, a Union army colonel in the Civil War. Once South Carolina opinion made itself known in Washington, the War Department probably regretted the idea: the order was quickly rescinded, and by 1903, the post was once again known as Fort Moultrie. By the time the incident had run its course, Secretary of War Elihu Root had received a joint

manifesto prepared by the Rebecca Motte Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Society of the Cincinnati of the State of South Carolina, the South Carolina Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, the Charleston Ancient Artillery Society, and the South Carolina Historical Society.<sup>82</sup>

The physical remains of the original Fort Moultrie proved less resistant to the ravages of time. Within a decade of the 1782 British evacuation of South Carolina, a financially distressed state government had allowed the renowned palmetto fortress to disappear. After being given a guided tour of the site by William Moultrie and other eminent Charlestonians, the visiting President George Washington noted in his diary entry for 5 May 1791 that there was scarcely a trace left of Fort Moultrie. In time, Sullivan's Island became the site of new works adapted to the military requirements of later wars. The third Fort Moultrie was completed under the auspices of the federal government in 1809 and remained in active service as an army post until 15 August 1947. Today, the site remains under federal administration by the National Park Service as part of the Fort Sumter National Monument.<sup>83</sup> The memory of the original palmetto fort, however, is still perpetuated through a variety of official South Carolina state symbols and insignia that feature the likeness of the cabbage palmetto tree. 🌴



21. The handsome new Fort Moultrie Centennial monument had been standing in White Point Gardens for only seven years when it was photographed for an 1883 Charleston guidebook. The timed exposure used in this antique photograph produced a beautifully-textured print, though the camera was unable to capture a well-defined image of Sergeant William Jasper. This statue was the work of Charleston sculptor Emile T. Viett.



## A South Carolina infantryman's eyewitness account . . .

On 25 August 1875, the *Charleston News and Courier* published the following original letter describing the Battle of Fort Moultrie. The author, Edward Hall, had been stationed on the extreme western flank of the action, outside the fort, in a gun emplacement commanded by Lieutenant William Capers. The widow of Hall's grandson, then residing in Washington County, Georgia, made the manuscript available to the newspaper. By 1875, the letter was much worn, and parts of it could not be deciphered.

CHARLESTOWN, 2d of July, 1776.

*To Mr. Richard J. Hall, of St. Stephen's Parish:*  
MY DEAR FATHER: Several weeks have elapsed since I had the pleasure of writing to you, which is attributable to the constant marching and hard work of the 2d Regiment, to which I now belong: \* \* \* \* But through the kindness of Lieutenant William Capers, the brave and gentlemanly commander of my company, I have obtained four days' leave of absence to see cousin Richard Hall safely in the hospital here. He was one of the only two officers wounded in the great battle on the 28th, having been struck by a fragment of a bomb on the left shoulder and side. \* \* \* \* But let me tell you something of the great defence which we made at Sullivan's Island, or as we now call it, Fort Moultrie. Since the sickness of Capt. Horry our company has been commanded by Lieut. Capers, a good soldier, kind and generous as he was and is brave. We received orders on the 20th of June to leave the "Half Moon" fort, and, by a transport vessel, were landed on the west side of the island, where we found the

other part of the regiment, commanded by Col. Moultrie, and joined them by day and night in strengthening the large work which was being erected. Our work was assigned on the southwest side of the fort, which is built entirely of the palmetto logs, made into the form of pens, and the interior filled with sand. By the morning of the 26th we had mounted two 32-pound cannon, and were so well fixed as to receive a compliment from Col. Moultrie, who, with Maj. Horry, spent some hours inspecting our line, which is an extension of the main work. Never have I seen men work so faithfully. It was evident that we were going to have a great fight, and to have a place in the drama was the ambition of every member of the company. Capt. Laurens and Pickering gave us instructions during the 26th in loading and handling our guns, (they are of the artillery,) but soon found out that our officers, Capers, Dewers and Parker knew enough to point a gun. We were all in expectation of an attack by land on the 26th, but the east end of the island was well



## . . . of the Battle of Fort Moultrie

taken care of by Col. Thompson's regiment. \*  
\* \* \* Our constant anxiety was terminated on  
the morning of the 28th. \* \* \* \* It was evident,  
from the manoeuvring of the British ships,  
that we were to have hot work. About 8 o'clock  
the sloop Thunder Bomb commenced throwing  
shells, which fell over us, doing no harm.  
Shortly after the guns of the fort on our left  
opened on the Active, a large frigate, who  
sailed up in fair range and gave us a full broad-  
side. This was followed by the others, and for  
hours it seemed that all the devils from the pit  
were let loose. All along the fort, on the sea  
face, from our side and angle our brave men  
were returning this fire, and it was plain that  
our shot were doing them great harm. It would  
be impossible for me, my dear father, to convey  
to you an idea of this terrible scene, even if I  
had the leisure to do so. It was not until the  
enemy sent a portion of the fleet around to  
attack the west face of the fort that we had a fair  
chance. One of their large vessels, the Acteon,  
ran aground on a shoal and became a splendid  
target for us, and we were gratified in having a  
fair chance to receive and give shot for shot. In  
the evening it was reported that the British had  
landed and captured the force under Col.  
Thompson, and were coming down on us; but  
this soon turned out to be false report. \* \* \* \*  
At night the firing ceased, and we were permit-  
ted that night to rest from our labors. The next  
morning's sun revealed the fact that the enemy

had retired. The Acteon still remained aground,  
and was captured by Capt. Milligan with a board-  
ing party of volunteers. She was set on fire by her  
crew and burned to the water's edge. It would be  
impossible for men to have behaved better than  
did our noble regiment in this battle. I have the  
pride to say to you that I have not heard of a single  
instance of cowardice, but of many cases of per-  
sonal bravery. Sergeants Jasper and McDonald  
greatly distinguished themselves; the latter, poor  
fellow, was among the killed. In our company we  
had but two wounded, Edward Thomas and  
Stephen Dwight, the former seriously injured by  
a fragment of a bombshell. \* \* \* \* Yesterday the  
regiment was drawn up, in the best regimentals,  
and reviewed by Col. Moultrie and President  
Rutledge. After which a handsome standard was  
presented to the regiment by Mrs. Elliott, the lady  
of Col. Bernard Elliott. The standard was re-  
ceived by Col. Moultrie. You may be assured that  
where it leads we are sure to follow. Our men are  
greatly inspirited, and we all feel that we can,  
under the blessing of Heaven, do much towards  
securing liberty and independence. \* \* \* \* My  
health is excellent. I need some things, but can  
well forego these at present, since my condition is  
no worse than that of hundreds in our army. \* \* \*  
\* I send this by the hands of Mr. Elias Gendron,  
who politely offers to be of service to me. \* \* \* \*  
With affectionate remembrances, your dutiful  
son,

EDWARD HALL.

## Appendix: a martial catechism

The British defeat at Sullivans Island inspired a number of ingenious lampoons, which appeared in the pages of contemporary newspapers. Perhaps the most wicked of all was the following piece, reprinted in the *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* for 30 November 1776 and attributed to “a late London Paper.”

*QUESTION. WHAT is a Coup de Main?*

**A. A very sudden attack, which takes only a month to prepare for, and ten hours to execute.**

*Q. In what doth a Coup de Main begin?*

**A. In a vigorous assault.**

*Q. In what doth it end?*

**A. In a victorious defeat, whereby the enemy is silenced, as we have no more ammunition to annoy, and the conquering party sheers off in the shattered condition of triumph.**

*Q. By whom should a Commodore be directed?*

**A. By a pilot, so skillful as to discern a sand-bank, and so industrious as to run the fleet athwart it.**

*Q. If it is necessary for troops to pass a ford, how are we to know the depth of water?*

**A. By inquiring of the enemy, who will inform us truly—allowing for the difference between feet and inches.**

*Q. Should the governor of a province know anything of the soundings of the coast?*

**A. Just enough to take his departure, after firing a lower-deck gun as the signal of flight.**

*Q. What is the best method of securing a ship?*

**A. To burn her.**

*Q. How can we perceive when parties of the enemy run away?*

**A. By placing the optical glass of fancy to the eye of desire, and the vision will be produced according to—our wishes.**

*Q. When ought a fort to be entered?*

**A. Not when it is evacuated and silenced for an hour and a half. For that would be to possess by occupancy, what should be gained by force of arms. It is glorious to make enemies retreat, but not very warlike to take advantage of their absence.**

*Q. When a rebel is hung on a tree, of what should the sight remind us?*

**A. That there are ropes in England which would fit the neck even of a first lord of the treasury.**

*Q. What is the most prudent method of conquering a province?*

**A. To be defeated at a fort; for that saves both the trouble and danger of sailing up a river.**

*Q. How may we know that ships of war do not want men?*

**A. When they are borrowed from the transports.**

*Q. What is it to foresee a conquest?*

**A. When troops cannot be landed without a certainty of loss, and a risque of victory.**

*Q. What is American cowardice?*

**A. Only spirit enough to direct a fire that seldom misses.**

*Q. What is the coolest method of destroying a fleet?*

**A. By red hot balls.**

*Q. When a Commodore is repulsed at a fort, what is he to do?*

**A. To sail with jury masts, and without ammunition, to assist a General.**

*Q. What will be the most authentic detail of the victory at Fort Sullivan?*

**A. A court-martial account.**

**SCOURGE.**



## Notes

1. William Moultrie, *Memoirs of the American Revolution* (1802; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1968), 1: 57–58.

2. John Drayton, *Memoirs of the American Revolution* (1821; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1969), 1: 220–25; Joseph Johnson, *Traditions and Reminiscences Chiefly of the American Revolution in the South* (1851; reprint ed., Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, 1972), 51–56; *South-Carolina and American General Gazette*, 28 April 1775; K. G. Davies, ed., *Documents of the American Revolution 1770–1783* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1972–1981), 9: 111–12, 114; Commons House Journal, 1 March 1775, SC Archives; Henry Laurens, *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, ed. Philip M. Hamer et al. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press for the South Carolina Historical Society, 1968–), 10: 104–5.

3. Walter B. Edgar and N. Louise Bailey, *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1974–), 2: 529–30; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 58; Drayton, *Memoirs*, 1: 233. Moultrie mistakenly identified the ordnance storekeeper as Robert Cochran, who held this post under the state government rather than the royal government.

4. *Acts Passed by the General Assembly of South Carolina [1751]*, 41–43, in William Sumner Jenkins, ed., *Records of the States of the United States of America* (Washington: Library of Congress microfilm, 1949), B.2, South Carolina Session Laws, Reel 3 (hereinafter cited as RSUS).

5. A. S. Salley, *The State Houses of South Carolina, 1751–1936* (Columbia: Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1936), 6; A. A. Muller to Henry Knox, 7 February 1788, Knox to the President of Congress, 19 March 1788, Continental Congress Papers, Item 150 (Knox Letters), 3: 149, 153, National Archives microfilm; Beatrice St. Julien Ravenel, *Architects of Charleston* (Charleston: Carolina Art Association, 1945), 69–71, 73; Michael E. Stevens and Christine M. Allen, *Journals of the House of Representatives, 1787–1788*, The State Records of South Carolina (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press for the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1981), xxv–xxvi; *Acts and Ordinances of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed in February, 1788*, 18–19, in RSUS, B.2, SC Session Laws, Reel 4a. A 1791 plat by surveyor Joseph Purcell showing the State House in relation to adjacent structures is bound between pages 32 and 33 of Conveyances, 6G (1791), Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyance Office, Charleston (microfilm at SC Archives).

6. Thomas Cooper and David J. McCord, eds., *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina* (Columbia: A. S. Johnston, 1836–41), 4:

319–20; *South Carolina Gazette*, 31 May 1770; Report on the powder receiver's accounts, Commons House Journal, 21 February 1775, SC Archives. In terms of present-day Charleston, the barracks magazine was located south of Magazine Street and some distance west of Archdale Street. See Johnson, *Traditions*, 274; "Sir Henry Clinton's Map, 1780," *Year Book, City of Charleston* (hereinafter cited as YBC), 1882, map bound between pages 360 and 361. For the definitive work on powder magazines in the port city, see Nora M. Davis, "Public Powder Magazines at Charleston," YBC, 1942, 185–210.

7. John McCrady Plat Collection, No. 2345, Roll C3183, Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyance Office (microfilm at SC Archives); Plat of Hobcaw Magazine, May 1800, Map Collection, box 7, folder 1, SC Archives; Conveyances, 5T (1786–87): 318–19, Charleston County RMC (microfilm at SC Archives); Drayton, *Memoirs*, 1: 224; Mabel L. Webber, "The Bond Family of Hobcaw Plantation, Christ Church Parish," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* (hereinafter cited as SCHM), 25 (January 1924): 10–11; Transcripts of the Manuscript Books and Papers of the Commission of Enquiry into the Losses and Services of the American Loyalists, 53: 41–47, New York Public Library (microfilm at SC Archives).

8. *South-Carolina and American General Gazette*, 28 April 1775; Henry A. M. Smith, *The Historical Writings of Henry A. M. Smith* (Spartanburg: The Reprint Company in association with the South Carolina Historical Society, 1988), 3: 49–51; Conveyances, 5T (1786–87): 490, Charleston County RMC (microfilm at SC Archives); Plat of Cochran's Magazine, 15 July 1771, Map Collection, box 8, folder 16, SC Archives; Johnson, *Traditions*, 52–53; Stevens and Allen, *Journals of the House of Representatives, 1791*, 35.

9. Records in the British Public Record Office Relating to South Carolina, SC Archives, 35: 104–5 (hereinafter cited as BPRO Transcripts; these records have been published as SC Archives Microcopy Number 1); William Edwin Hemphill and Wylma Anne Wates, eds., *Extracts from the Journals of the Provincial Congresses of South Carolina, 1775–1776* (Columbia: South Carolina Archives Department, 1960), 33 ff.; Drayton, *Memoirs*, 1: 268–69.

10. Sheldon S. Cohen, "The Philippa Affair," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* (hereinafter cited as GHQ), 69 (Fall 1985): 338–54; Drayton, *Memoirs*, 1: 269–71; Davies, *Documents*, 7: 352, 9: 176–78, 11: 43, 44, 52, 54, 125–28; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 10: 220; South Carolina Historical Society, *Collections*, 2: 50, 51; *Georgia Gazette*, 12 July 1775. For the legend of Bloody Point, see G. P. Elliott, "The

Massacre at Bloody Point," *The Magnolia; or Southern Apalachian*, n.s. 2 (June 1843): 382–83. The cargo that the patriots were expecting on board the *Philippa* should not be confused with the annual royal present of ammunition to the Indians, which arrived on a later vessel. This consignment reached Savannah on 17 September and was also seized by the patriots.

11. Drayton, *Memoirs*, 1: 271–73, 298–300; SCHS, *Collections*, 2: 36, 48–50, 51–52, 54–55. Tucker's Island was the former name of Botany Bay Island, which lies on the west side of North Edisto River.

12. D. E. Huger Smith, "An Early Revolutionary Incident," *SCHM*, 13 (January, 1912): 64–65; Public Ledger, 1775–1777, 3. Commissioners of the Treasury, Records of the State Treasurer (SC Archives Microcopy No. 4); Drayton, *Memoirs*, 1: 304–7, 332–37; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 78–79; Wilbur Henry Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida, 1774 to 1785* (1929; reprint ed., Boston: Gregg Press, 1972), 1: 21–22; Davies, *Documents*, 10: 66, 11: 84–85, 113; William Bell Clark and William James Morgan, eds., *Naval Documents of the American Revolution* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1964–), 1: 1193, 1199–1200, 2: 104; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 10: 248–49, 299, 308, 401–2; Frederick George Mulcaster to James Grant, 29 September 1775, James Moultrie to James Grant, 4 October 1775, Continental Congress Papers, Item 51 (Intercepted Letters), 1: 125–26, 240, National Archives microfilm; Edgar and Bailey, *Biographical Directory*, 2: 401.

13. BPRO Transcripts, 35: 188–89; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 79n; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 1: 1200; B. D. Bargar, ed., "Charles Town Loyalism in 1775: The Secret Reports of Alexander Innes," *SCHM*, 63 (July 1962): 134; Davies, *Documents*, 11: 49–50, 97; *South-Carolina and American General Gazette*, 1 September 1775.

14. Sir Robert Douglas, *The Peerage of Scotland* (Edinburgh: George Ramsay and Company, 1813), 1: 118; Langdon Cheves, "Lard of South Carolina," *SCHM*, 2 (July 1901): 234–35; W. E. May, "His Majesty's Ships on the Carolina Station," *SCHM*, 71 (July 1970): 168.

15. Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 1: 729–30; BPRO Transcripts, 35: 261–65.

16. The name is derived from the Tamar River, which empties into the harbor of the great British naval port at Plymouth. The pronunciation of the vessel's name caused it to be frequently misspelled "Tamer" in contemporary documents.

17. Davies, *Documents*, 9: 191, 11: 82, 97, 155, 157; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 1: 60–61, 500, 1008, 2: 742; Innes, "Secret Reports," *SCHM*, 63: 131, 134; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 10: 429.

18. William Gerard De Brahm, *De Brahm's Report of the General Survey in the Southern District of North America*, ed. Louis De Vorse, Jr. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 49–52,

275; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 1: 449, 2: 56, 244, 466–67, 584, 743; Davies, *Documents*, 11: 116–17, 155; "Papers of the First Council of Safety of the Revolutionary Party in South Carolina, June–November, 1775," *SCHM*, 3 (April 1902): 76. In preparation for his expedition, De Brahm had inspected a number of Admiralty sloops without finding a suitable vessel. In September 1774, the Admiralty purchased the sloop *Codrington* specifically for this mission. Since there seems to have been no class of naval vessels named for American Indian tribes, it is likely that De Brahm, who had lived briefly among the Cherokee Indians while supervising the construction of Fort Loudoun in 1756, suggested renaming the *Codrington* as HMS *Cherokee*. See John F. Millar, *American Ships of the Colonial and Revolutionary Periods* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1978), 90–91; Joseph A. Goldenberg, *Shipbuilding in Colonial America* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia for the Mariners Museum at Newport News, 1976), 112.

19. Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 29–35; BPRO Transcripts, 35: 264–65; Joseph W. Barnwell, ed., "Correspondence of Hon. Arthur Middleton," *SCHM*, 27 (July 1926): 113, 137; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 10: 386, 397–98, 399. The dispatch that precipitated this crisis was Dartmouth's letter of 5 July to Campbell, which is recorded in BPRO Transcripts, 35: 141–44.

20. Davies, *Documents*, 11: 117; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 2: 102, 114, 125, 299; "Diary of Captain Barnard Elliott," *YBC*, 1889, 159–62; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 10: 382–85, 387; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 86–90; Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 35–39, 51–52; Loyalist Transcripts, 52: 91, 53: 404; *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774–1961*, s.v. "Isaac Motte"; Alexander Garden, *Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War in America* (1822; reprint ed., Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, 1972), 17; *SCHM*, 4: 249n. One of the earliest disability claims by a South Carolina veteran arose from the attempt to remount the cannon, when the breech of one of the heavy guns fell on an infantry private. See Audited Account of Moses Baker (AA-248C), Accounts Audited of Claims Growing out of the Revolution in South Carolina (these records have been published as SC Archives Microcopy No. 8); *Journals of the House of Representatives, 1787–1788*, 550.

21. Claim of Probart Howarth, Loyalist Transcripts, 53: 395–405; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 86; Francis W. Bilodeau, ed., *Art in South Carolina, 1670–1970* (Columbia: South Carolina Tricentennial Commission, 1970), 70–71.

22. Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 2: 467; Claim of George Walker, Loyalist Transcripts, 52: 90–104; Davies, *Documents*, 11: 112; "Middleton Correspondence," *SCHM*, 27: 126, 129.

23. Harry S. Mustard, "On the Building of Fort Johnson," *SCHM*, 64 (July 1963): 129–35; *De Brahm's Report*, 91; Loyalist Transcripts, 53: 404; Henry Bouquet, *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*,

ed. S. K. Stevens et al. (Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1951-), 1: 138; George Milligen-Johnston, *A Short Description of the Province of South Carolina*, 36-37, reprinted in Chapman J. Milling, ed., *Colonial South Carolina: Two Contemporary Descriptions* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1951); Journal of the Commissioners of Fortifications, 28 December 1756, SC Archives; "Diary of Captain Barnard Elliott," *YBC*, 1889, 160-61. A brief history of Fort Johnson by William A. Courtenay can be found in *YBC*, 1883, 472-77. Though this century-old sketch retains considerable value and interest, some passages are dated and must be used with caution.

24. Terry W. Lipscomb, ed., *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, November 12, 1754-September 23, 1755*, The Colonial Records of South Carolina (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press for the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1986), 103; *Papers of Henry Bouquet*, 1: 147-48, 153, 169; Journal of the Commissioners of Fortifications, 7 December 1756, 16 June 1757, 12, 21 December 1764, 5, 9 December 1769, 19 January 1770, SC Archives; Journal of the Commons House, 8, 18 July 1761, SC Archives; "Plan of Fort Johnson," 4 October 1800, *YBC*, 1883, bound between pages 474 and 475; William Edwin Hemphill, et al. eds., *Journals of the General Assembly and House of Representatives, 1776-1780*, The State Records of South Carolina (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press for the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1970), 127, 172; Lee Kennett, ed., "Charleston in 1778: A French Intelligence Report," *SCIAM*, 66 (April 1965): 110; Paul G. Sifton, ed., "*La Caroline Meridionale*: Some French Sources of South Carolina Revolutionary History, With Two Unpublished Letters of Baron de Kalb," *SCIAM*, 66 (April 1965): 107.

25. Ironically, the ultimate downfall of Fort Johnson was not the result of a direct enemy attack. British and German sources reveal that the patriots themselves demolished the fort in 1779, fearing that enemy forces under General Augustine Prevost would capture it from the land side. See Sir Henry Clinton, *The American Rebellion*, ed. William B. Willcox (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), 409; Bernhard A. Uhlendorf, ed., *The Siege of Charleston* (1938; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1968), 199; Loyalist Transcripts, 53: 402-3; "Sir Henry Clinton's Map, 1780" (inset), *YBC*, 1882.

26. *Papers of Henry Bouquet*, 1: 218, 235-36; "Plan of an Enclosed Battery," 1787, *YBC*, 1883, bound between pages 472 and 473. Possibly the best extant plan of the colonial fort appears in a map entitled "A Sketch of the Operations Before Charlestown the Capital of South Carolina," published as "Sir Henry Clinton's Map, 1780," in *YBC*, 1882, and attributed to Clinton's engineer corps. Actually, it is a reproduction of the Joseph F. W. DesBarres map described in entries 80 and 80a of Kenneth Nebenzahl, *A Bibliog-*

*raphy of Printed Battle Plans of the American Revolution 1775-1795* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 53-54. A small-scale but interesting depiction of the fort site is printed in Charles Stedman, *The History of the Origin, Progress, and Termination of the American War* (1794; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1969), 2: map facing page 185. The most detailed modern maps of the site are the archaeological plans published in Stanley A. South, "Fickle Forts on Windmill Point: Exploratory Archeology at Fort Johnson, South Carolina," University of South Carolina, Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, Research Manuscript Series, no. 81 (Columbia, 1975). For the particulars of the Lamboll boundary dispute, see Journal of the Commissioners of Fortifications, 24, 26 July 1758, SC Archives.

27. Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 54-57; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 10: 159-60, 422-23, 426-27, 449; R. W. Gibbes, ed., *Documentary History of the American Revolution* (1853-57; reprint ed., Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, 1972), 1 (1764-1776): 200-201.

28. At this time, Blake was a key advisor to the patriots on naval affairs. With the cooperation of Captain Thomas Tucker and the pilots Bryan Foskey and Alexander Elsinore, he had helped prepare a survey and report on the feasibility of obstructing Charlestown Bar. Blake, Tucker, and Clement Lempriere had also been named on 5 September as commissioners to equip three armed schooners for the service of the province. See Edgar and Bailey, *Biographical Directory*, 3: 70-72.

29. Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 70-74, 113-14; William Edwin Hemphill and Wylma Anne Wates, *Extracts from the Journals of the Provincial Congresses of South Carolina, 1775-1776*, The State Records of South Carolina (Columbia: South Carolina Archives Department, 1960), 111, 113, 116, 117, 119, 123-24, 145-46; *The Remembrancer, or Impartial Repository of Public Events*, 4 (1776, pt. 3): 185; Order Book of Francis Marion, 27 October 1775, Henry E. Huntington Library (microfilm at SC Archives); Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 93, 107; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 10: 473, 478-79, 509; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 2: 1015-16; Davies, *Documents*, 12: 27; "Diary of Captain Barnard Elliott," *YBC*, 1889, 176-77; *SCIAM*, 21 (April 1920): 83. For data regarding the armament and ship's complement of the *Tamar* and *Cherokee*, see *Naval Documents*, 2: 742, 743. For a well-documented account of the patriot schooner's career in the South Carolina naval service, see Harold A. Moutzon, "Defence, A Vessel of the Navy of South Carolina," *The American Neptune*, 13 (January 1953): 29-50.

30. Hemphill and Wates, *Journals of the Provincial Congresses*, 123; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 107; Smith, *Historical Writings*, 3: 99-103; Petrona Royall McIver, *History of Mount Pleasant, South Carolina* (Charleston: Ashley Printing and Publishing Company, 1960), 10; "Rebellion Road Development Concept Program, Hog Island,

Charleston Harbor, South Carolina: A Technical Report," prepared for the Charleston County Parks, Recreation and Tourist Commission by Lyles, Bissett, Carlisle, and Wolff Associates (Columbia, 1972); *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina*, 58 (1973): 132-40; Joseph F. W. DesBarres, "The Harbour of Charles Town in South Carolina from the Surveys of Sir James Wallace Captain in His Majestys Navy and Others, 1777," maps 59a, 59b, Kendall Collection, South Caroliniana Library; John Christian Senf, "Plan of the Harbour of Charleston, 1800," Map Collection, drawer 2, folder 15, SC Archives. A less meticulous but more readily accessible contemporary harbor chart can be found in Kenneth Nebenzahl and Don Higginbotham, *Atlas of the American Revolution* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1974), 56-57.

31. Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 2: 1002, 1150, 1194-95, 3: 14, 244, 759; Walter Clark, ed., *The State Records of North Carolina* (Winston: M. I. and J. C. Stewart, 1895-1905), 11: 259-61; BPRO Transcripts, 36: 32-39; Davies, *Documents*, 12: 28-30; SCHS, *Collections*, 3: 75; *London Evening Post*, 31 August 1776; Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 158-61; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 108-9, 112.

32. One contemporary British map of Sullivans Island shows the location of the colonial pest house in relation to the 1776 site of the first Fort Moultrie. See entry number 66 in Nebenzahl, *Bibliography of Printed Battle Plans*, 45. (A portion of this map is reproduced as figure 15 above.) An immigrant who was quarantined on the island in 1772 described the structure as a large house that was used as a hospital. See Alexander Chesney, *The Journal of Alexander Chesney, a South Carolina Loyalist in the Revolution and After*, ed. E. Alfred Jones, *Ohio State University Bulletin*, vol. 26, no. 4 (Columbus, 1921), 3. Not long after the Revolution, the state government began to rebuild the pest house. A set of instructions issued by the governor in October of 1783 specified that the dimensions of the two-story structure should be forty-four by fifty-two feet, and that it should be built "of Brick and tiled or slated Roofs (Bricks for the purpose belonging to the Public from former buildings being on the Spot)." See Miscellaneous Records, 2U (1783-85): 52, Records of the Secretary of State, SC Archives.

33. SCHS, *Collections*, 3: 40, 47, 62-63, 63, 66, 84, 89, 90, 94-95, 103, 105, 106, 128; Hemphill and Wates, *Journals of the Provincial Congresses*, 158, 159-60; "Miscellaneous Papers of the General Committee, Secret Committee and Provincial Congress, 1775," *SCHM*, 9 (July 1908): 116-17; Douglas Summers Brown, *The Catawba Indians: The People of the River* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1966), 262; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 10: 576, 609; Davies, *Documents*, 12: 29; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 3: 202, 725, 1164; *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, 22 December 1775; Audited Account of Thomas Durant (AA-2106),

SC Archives; Claim of George Walker, *Loyalist Transcripts*, 52: 92, 101; Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 163-64; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 112-16; Jack L. Cross, ed., "Letters of Thomas Pinckney, 1775-1780," *SCHM*, 58 (January 1957): 24-26. Both Pinckney's letter and Thornbrough's log indicate that construction of the Haddrells Point battery was not quite the speedy affair alleged by Drayton and Moultrie. On the origin and purpose of volunteer units like the Raccoon Company, see Fitzhugh McMaster, "Volunteer Companies, SC Militia, 1775," *Military Collector and Historian*, 33 (Spring 1981): 36-37.

34. SCHS, *Collections*, 3: 151, 156-57, 157; Davies, *Documents*, 12: 30; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 10: 609; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 3: 666-69, 763, 824.

35. Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 3: 866, 931-32, 1164, 4: 290; BPRO Transcripts, 36: 43-44, 53; *State Records of NC*, 11: 286-87; Clinton, *The American Rebellion*, 25-26.

36. The seven regiments of foot ultimately assigned to this command were the 15th, 28th, 33rd, 37th, 46th, 54th, and 57th.

37. Eric Robson, "The Expedition to the Southern Colonies, 1775-1776," *English Historical Review*, 66 (October 1951): 535-60; Dartmouth to Campbell, 7 November 1775, BPRO Transcripts, 35: 306-9; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 3: 346-47, 360-61; Davies, *Documents*, 11: 203-5.

38. *The Correspondence of King George the Third*, ed. Sir John Fortescue (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1927-28), 3: 331; Robson, "Expedition to the Southern Colonies"; *The Remembrancer*, 2 (1776, pt. 1): 345-46; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 4: 944, 951-52, 1156-57, 1352-53; *The Private Papers of John, Earl of Sandwich, 1771-1782*, ed. G. R. Barnes and J. H. Owen, (Publications of the Navy Records Society, vol. 69 [London, 1932]) 1: 120-21; *General Evening Post*, London, 30 July 1776; Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 2 (1776-1782): 20; Clinton, *The American Rebellion*, 28. The *South Carolina and American General Gazette* for 27 March, 3 April, 17 April, and 8 May 1776 serialized the texts of the debates in the Irish Parliament, as reported by the British newspapers.

39. Clinton, *The American Rebellion*, 25-29; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 4: 531, 1397-98, 1431, 5: 111, 131-32, 224, 324-25, 351; Davies, *Documents*, 12: 155-56, 165, 167; Stedman, *American War*, 1: 184; William B. Willcox, *Portrait of a General: Sir Henry Clinton in the War of Independence* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), 85.

40. *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, 9 February 1776; *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789* (Washington: Government Printing Office for the Library of Congress, 1904-37), 4: 15-16; SCHS, *Collections* 3: 254; BPRO Transcripts, 36: 67-69; Frances Reece Kepner, ed., "A British View of the Siege of

Charleston, 1776," *Journal of Southern History*, 11 (February 1945): 96–97; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 11: 35, 51, 101, 116; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 124.

41. Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 290–91. For a summary of present-day knowledge concerning the site and construction of Moultrie's fort, see Edwin C. Bearss, "The First Two Fort Moultries: A Structural History," National Park Service, Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation (Washington, 1968); Stanley South, "Palmetto Parapets: Exploratory Archeology at Fort Moultrie, South Carolina," University of South Carolina, Institute of Archeology and Anthropology, Anthropological Studies, no. 1 (Columbia, 1974). One of the unsolved mysteries of South Carolina history is the identity of the patriot who suggested the fort's method of construction. According to Henry Laurens, the palmetto log fort was the idea of an individual who predicted its resistance to enemy artillery fire. See *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 11: 240.

42. The twenty-six-pounders mounted on the front curtain and the southwest bastion were part of a shipment of thirty such guns that had been received during the administration of Governor William Henry Lyttelton. Britain was then at war with France, and these cannons were intended for defense of the harbor. The king's order in Council on 7 April 1759 authorized the shipment in response to a major lobbying effort by the executive and legislative branches of the South Carolina government. The state archives possesses copies of the inventories and correspondence sent from the Tower of London in 1759 to accompany the shipment. During the Revolution, it was widely rumored among the British forces that these cast-iron guns had been the lower deck cannons of the French ship of the line *Foudroyant*, captured in 1758 by the British navy. In August of 1776, an inquisitive French diplomat confirmed this story through a knowledgeable source in the Colonial Office. See BPRO Transcripts, 28: 17–25, 167–76; Lyttelton to James Wright, 1 September 1759, Letterbook 1757–1759, 410–11, Lyttelton Papers (microfilm at SC Archives); Journal of the Council, 24 November 1759, SC Archives; Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 290–91; Francis Bickley, ed., *Report on the Manuscripts of the Late Reginald Rawdon Hastings, Esq.*, Historical Manuscripts Commission (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1934), 3: 175; *London Evening Post*, 24 August 1776; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 1003, 6: 569–70.

43. Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 174, 279, 280; Paul H. Smith et al., eds., *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774–1789* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1976–), 3: 21, 96, 126; *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 4: 180–81, 181, 206; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 75n, 140; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 4: 1474; Charles Lee, *The Lee Papers* (New York Historical Society, *Collections*, publication fund series, vol. 5

[New York, 1872]), 2: 10–12, 204–5; Armstrong to John Hancock, 7 May, 12 August 1776, Roll 179, Item 162, Continental Congress Papers, National Archives microfilm; "Letters of Thomas Pinckney," *SCHM*, 58: 29–30; *Divers Accounts of the Battle of Sullivan's Island* (Charleston: South Carolina Historical Society, 1976), 2.

44. *Lee Papers*, 2: 53–54; Kepner, "A British View," 97–98; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 420, 903; *London Evening Post*, 10 September 1776; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 11: 226; Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 280–81; Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 2 (1776–1782): 4, 14.

45. Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 282–84, 313–14; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 141; *Lee Papers*, 2: 73–74, 74–75, 80–81, 95; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 11: 226–27; Kepner, "A British View," 98; *Divers Accounts*, 3; Garden, *Anecdotes*, 8. The fortification of Sullivan's Island had been recommended originally by a committee chaired by John Rutledge three months before he was elected president of the colony under the provincial constitution of 1776. See *SCHS, Collections*, 3: 151–52, 156–57. Rutledge may have confided details of the 22 June meeting to the historian Alexander Garden when the two men visited the site of Fort Moultrie many years after the Revolution.

46. Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 351, 352, 387, 388, 421, 433, 489–90, 555, 573, 607–8, 609, 609–11, 653; Clinton, *American Rebellion*, 30–32; Davies, *Documents*, 12: 163, 168; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 150–51; *Hastings Manuscripts*, 3: 175; Stedman, *American War*, 1: 186; James Murray-Pulteney, *Letters from America, 1773–1780*, ed. Eric Robson (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1951), 25–26; *The Annual Register*, 1776, "History of Europe," 160.

47. Murray, *Letters from America*, 25; "Letters of Thomas Pinckney," *SCHM*, 58: 67; Davies, *Documents*, 12: 168; Clinton, *American Rebellion*, 32n; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 465, 747, 1002–3; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 144; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 11: 226–27. The spring tide ended on the night of 4 June 1776 a few hours after Parker reached Charlestown.

48. Murray, *Letters from America*, 27; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 11: 253, 276; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 4: 932, 953, 5: 388, 965; Kepner, "A British View," 102–3.

49. Nebenzahl and Higginbotham, *Atlas*, 58–59; *The Annual Register*, 1776, "History of Europe," 159; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 799–800, 826; Davies, *Documents*, 12: 168–69; Douglas W. Marshall and Howard H. Peckham, *Campaigns of the American Revolution: An Atlas of Manuscript Maps* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1976), 18–19. The *Lady William* had originally been the schooner *Polly*, jointly owned by William Stone, Peter Duval, and Isaac and Benjamin Huger. On 23 September 1775, Governor Campbell had seized the vessel and made it a prize on the pretext that its ballast shot constituted ammunition for the rebels. After the schooner had been armed with six carriage guns,

Lieutenant Joseph Peyton of the *Tamar* was temporarily placed in command. William Gickie joined Campbell in January of 1776 after defying the Council of Safety edict against supplying the warships. A former lieutenant in His Majesty's navy, Gickie had resigned from the service in 1763 to become a planter at Goose Creek, South Carolina. See Audited Account of William Stone (AA-7432), SC Archives; Lark Emerson Adams and Rosa Stoney Lumpkin, eds., *Journals of the House of Representatives, 1785-1786*, The State Records of South Carolina (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press for the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1979), 170, 439-40; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 10: 419-20, 532-33; Davies, *Documents*, 11: 158, 12: 166; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 2: 189; 3: 666, 667, 686, 687, 6: 90; Smith, *Historical Writings*, 3: 263; Claim of William Gickie, *Loyalist Transcripts*, 55: 188-96.

50. For the most plausible contemporary estimates of the distance, see Clinton, *American Rebellion*, 35n; Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 2 (1776-1782): 6, 8, 10. To those watching the battle from a distance, the ships seemed to be further from the fort than they actually were, and estimates from 600 to 800 yards were not uncommon. In the accounts of Moultrie and Lee, who observed the warships from the receiving end, the distance was foreshortened to 350 yards.

51. Kepner, "A British View," 99, 102; Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 2 (1776-1782): 16; *Divers Accounts*, 17, 18; *Hastings Manuscripts*, 3: 175; Murray, *Letters from America*, 27; Clinton, *American Rebellion*, 34n, 35n; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 170-71, 171; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 11: 245, 253; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 798-99, 905, 6: 110; Davies, *Documents*, 12: 156, 157. Sir Henry Clinton's soundings off Sullivan's Island in 1780 confirmed the general consensus that the ships could have anchored within 150 yards of the shore, and perhaps as close as seventy. British sources variously imputed the behavior of the pilots to ignorance, fright, or deception, and even the *Annual Register* commented on their "strange unskillfulness." The pilots may have been more familiar with the harbor than their performance during the battle suggests. According to a claim against the state arising from the British seizure of one Harry, "a most valuable Negroe man pilot," Harry had been trained by his master William Stone, who was one of the most able pilots on the Carolina coast. See Audited Account of William Stone (AA-7432), SC Archives. The state treasurer also reimbursed Jacob Waldron £800 for a black pilot taken away by a man-of-war. The price that Waldron received suggests the slave was highly skilled and possessed expert knowledge of Charlestown Harbor. See Cash Book, 1775-1777, 22 May 1777, Commissioners of the Treasury, Records of the State Treasurer (SC Archives Microcopy No. 4).

52. Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 293, 294, 295; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 800, 1003, 1161; Murray, *Letters from America*, 27; Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 2 (1776-1782): 3, 7-8, 16; Davies, *Documents*, 12: 169; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 175; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 11: 244; *The Annual Register*, 1776, "History of Europe," 163; *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, 30 July 1776.

53. Davies, *Documents*, 12: 168-69; Murray, *Letters from America*, 26; *Hastings Manuscripts*, 3: 175; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 797, 905; William Laird Clowes, *The Royal Navy: A History* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston and Company, 1898), 3: 378-79; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 11: 239-40; Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 2 (1776-1782): 9-10; Armstrong to John Hancock, 12 August 1776, Roll 179, Item 162, Continental Congress Papers, National Archives microfilm. The account of the battle in Clowes's *Royal Navy* was actually written by Alfred Thayer Mahan.

54. Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 2 (1776-1782): 5; Edgar and Bailey, *Biographical Directory*, 2: 476-77, 485-87, 3: 477-79; Kepner, "A British View," 96; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 64, 75-76, 80, 91-92, 93; Joseph W. Barnwell, ed., "Bernard Elliott's Recruiting Journal, 1775," *SCHM*, 17 (July 1916): 95-100. Moultrie (1: 183) provides a complete list of Second Regiment officers who were in the fort on 28 June. Unfortunately, he neglected to list the two artillery officers who were present, but circumstantial evidence suggests they may have been Captain Barnard Beekman and Lieutenant Calvin Spencer. See "Diary of Captain Barnard Elliott," *YBC*, 1889, 218; Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 300n; Claim of Calvin Spencer (W21983), Roll 2255, Revolutionary War Pensions, National Archives microfilm.

55. Kepner, "A British View," 99, 100; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 864; Claim of Philip Martin Frey (W9435), Roll 1028, Revolutionary War Pensions, National Archives microfilm; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 93; Harold L. Peterson, *The Book of the Continental Soldier* (Harrisburg, PA: The Stackpole Company, 1968), 136. For confirmation of Philip Frey's service, see Numbered Record Books Concerning Military Operations and Service, Pay, and Settlement of Accounts and Supplies in the War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Microcopy 853, Roll 16, volume 9 (List of South Carolina Troops, 1775-83), National Archives microfilm.

56. Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 282, 296-97, 299-300, 310-11; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 166, 176-77; *Divers Accounts*, 16, 21; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 905, 1004; Murray, *Letters from America*, 29.

57. Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 300-301, 302-3, 318, 326; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 176, 177; *Lee Papers*, 2: 95, 101, 108; *Divers Accounts*, 6, 11, 13, 21; Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 2 (1776-1782): 6, 9, 18; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 11: 240-41; Kepner, "A British View," 100; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 905. Sergeant James

McDaniel, identified only by surname in most histories and documentary publications (the surname variously appearing as McDonald, McDaniel, or McDougal according to the writer's preference) can be positively identified by consulting Numbered Record Books, Microcopy 853, Roll 16, volume 9, National Archives microfilm.

58. At the request of the Council of Safety, Moultrie had designed this flag, which South Carolina forces used as an American flag in the interval between the end of royal government and the adoption of the Stars and Stripes. One of Drayton's manuscripts (quoted in *Memoirs*, 2: 290) suggests that the garrison flag of Fort Sullivan may have featured a literal depiction of a Second Regiment cap insignia—a crescent inscribed with the word "Liberty." In the days when seamstresses, not machines, produced flags, the inclusion of embellishments like the motto was not uncommon, and in this case, may have been regarded as faithful to the intent of Moultrie's design. On the other hand, flag enthusiasts have often interpreted Drayton's statement out of historical context by suggesting that the motto was more conspicuous than the crescent. A conjectural reconstruction published in 1872 by the historian George Henry Preble depicted a banner with "Liberty" inscribed across the bottom of the blue field in large white letters. Though unsupported by either tradition or contemporary evidence, this New England writer's version has been reproduced countless times in books, magazines, and reference works. See Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 90–91; George Henry Preble, *Our Flag: Origin and Progress of the Flag of the United States of America* (Albany, NY: Joel Munsell, 1872), 143 and plate 6.

59. Peter Horry, "Battle of Fort Moultrie," *The Historical Magazine [Dawson's]*, 3 (August 1859): 249; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 179; Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 290, 298; *Divers Accounts*, 14, 21; Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 2 (1776–1782), 6, 18; "The Unsuccessful Attack on the Fort on Sullivan's Island, June 28, 1776" and "The Morning after the Attack on Sullivan's Island, June 29, 1776," watercolors painted at the scene of the battle by Lieutenant Henry Gray, Gibbes Art Gallery, Charleston, S.C. Contrary to later artists' renderings of the scene, Sergeant William Jasper replaced the flag at some distance from the stump of the broken mast.

60. The known facts of Jasper's life are recounted in Kenneth Coleman and Charles Stephen Gurr, eds., *Dictionary of Georgia Biography* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983), 1: 526–27; and Wylma Anne Wates, "Sergeant William Jasper," unpublished manuscript in Subject File, P-2, SC Archives. On Jasper's enlistment, see specifically "Bernard Elliott's Recruiting Journal," *SCHM*, 17: 100. The mystery of Jasper's origin and nationality has given rise to at least three different theories: (1) By the time of the Fort Moultrie Centennial in 1876, the notion of an Irish origin had

taken firm hold in Charleston. The city's Irish military organizations took a proprietary interest in Jasper's share of the festivities, publicizing the sergeant as a "son of Erin." While the basis for this claim was never plausibly explained, Charleston's centennial committee did erect the handsome statue of Jasper that still stands in White Point Gardens. (2) A theory popular in the upper part of the state holds that Jasper was a native South Carolinian of either British or Welsh ancestry who was born near the Pacolet River within the later boundaries of Union County. The argument is drawn from local tradition and genealogy, but it is certain that a family of Jaspers did live somewhere in the vicinity of Grindal Shoals during the eighteenth century. (3) In 1768 a family of German Jaspers (overlooked by researchers because they appear in South Carolina records under the High German spellings "Gaspar" and "Gaspard") settled on the east side of the Savannah River at New Bordeaux, Hillsborough Township, in present-day McCormick County. One hypothesis identifies the sergeant as a German immigrant (and possible relative of the South Carolina Gaspar(s)) named John William Jasper, who took a naturalization oath in Philadelphia in October 1767 and may subsequently have decided to seek his fortune on the southern frontier. For the various Jasper theories, see "The Carolina Centennial," *News and Courier*, Charleston, SC, 19 April 1876; *Fort Moultrie Centennial, Being an Illustrated Account of the Doings at Fort Moultrie* (Charleston: Walker, Evans, and Cogswell, 1876), pt. 2: 19n; Allan D. Charles, *The Narrative History of Union County South Carolina* (Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, 1987), 32; George Fenwick Jones, "Sergeant Johann Wilhelm Jasper," *GHIQ*, 65 (Spring 1981): 7–15.

61. Horry, "Battle of Fort Moultrie"; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 181; Garden, *Anecdotes*, 90–91; "Jasper's Sword," *Columbia Daily Register*, 28 March 1879. After the presentation ceremony, Rutledge seems to have acquired a new sword for personal use by appropriating from state custody one of the side arms that had been confiscated from prominent Charlestown loyalists. On 30 May 1777, the state treasurer paid £70 to Edward Savage (formerly a high-ranking officeholder under the royal government) for "a Sword in Room of one Given Sergt. Jasper." See Public Ledger, 1775–1777, 206, Records of the State Treasurer (SC Archives Microcopy No. 4). Unfortunately, the Jasper sword failed to survive to posterity. It ultimately came into the possession of the sergeant's practical daughter, who had the hilt melted and cast into a pair of dessert spoons.

62. Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 296–97, 310–11; *Hastings Manuscripts*, 3: 175; Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 2 (1776–1782): 8, 10; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 167, 176, 176n; *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, 12 December 1776; Davies, Documents, 12: 169; Randolph G. Adams, *British Headquarters Maps and Sketches* (Ann Arbor:

William L. Clements Library, 1928), 97. In Peter Horry's manuscript memoir, the *Defence's* anchorage in the cove's navigable channel is referred to as "Stop Gap Creek." The Horry document is cited in William Gilmore Simms, *The Life of Francis Marion*, third edition (New York: J. and H. G. Langley, 1846), 73. Fifty-six years after the battle, one revolutionary veteran told of yet another intriguing incident that may have added to British confusion. The advance guard facing the army at the northeast point of Sullivan's Island included one company of Catawba Indians, none of whom had seen a British bombshell. Prompted by an imprudent curiosity or bravado, three or four of them tried to pick up an unexploded shell, which had landed near their position, with predictably disastrous results. Disconcerted by this novel method of warfare, a number of their fellow Catawbas who, until that moment, had shown great bravery under fire, could think only of escape. They fled to the bridge of boats, which connected Sullivan's Island with Haddrells Point, and when the guard there rebuffed them, they threw down their arms and swam the cove to the mainland. See Claim of Jeremiah Harrold (S17467), Roll 1206, Revolutionary War Pensions, National Archives microfilm.

63. Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 298–99; Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 2 (1776–1782): 6, 8, 9; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 11: 243; *London Evening Post*, 22, 29 August 1776; Murray, *Letters from America*, 27–28; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 797, 802, 905; Davies, *Documents*, 12: 169–70, 170.

64. *The Annual Register*, 1776, "History of Europe," 161; Davies, *Documents*, 12: 169–70; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 905, 966; *Hastings Manuscripts*, 3: 178.

65. *The Annual Register*, 1776, "Chronicle," 156, "History of Europe," 161; *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, 9 January 1777; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 905, 1003, 6: 42; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 11: 243; Davies, *Documents*, 12: 165, 170; Murray, *Letters from America*, 28; *Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. "Sir James Nicoll Morris."

66. Davies, *Documents*, 12: 170; *The Annual Register*, 1776, "History of Europe," 161; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 11: 243; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 1161, 6: 56.

67. Davies, *Documents*, 12: 165, 170; *London Evening Post*, 27 August 1776; Douglas, *Peerage of Scotland*, 1: 118; *General Evening Post*, London, 8 September 1778; Cheves, "Lizard of South Carolina," *SCHM*, 2: 235–36n.

68. Davies, *Documents*, 12: 170; *The Annual Register*, 1776, "History of Europe," 161; Murray, *Letters from America*, 28; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 966; Robert Beatson, *Naval and Military Memoirs of Great Britain from 1727 to 1783* (1804; reprint ed., Boston: Gregg Press, 1972), 4: 152; *Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. "Alexander John Scott (1768–1840)."

69. Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Types of Naval Officers Drawn from the History of the British Navy* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston and Company, 1902), 382–427; Clowes, *Royal Navy*, 3: 376, 379; *The Naval Chronicle*, 6 (1801): 86–87.

70. Davies, *Documents*, 12: 170; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 799, 803, 1003–4, 1161; *London Evening Post*, 29 August 1776; Murray, *Letters from America*, 27; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 171; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 11: 244; Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 2 (1776–1782): 16. Captain Tobias Furneaux is more renowned in history for his role in exploration of the South Pacific than for his misadventures at the Battle of Fort Moultrie. A member of the British expedition that discovered Tahiti in 1767, Furneaux later served under Captain James Cook on the latter's second voyage of discovery (1772–1775). As captain of the *Adventure*, he accompanied Cook in the first crossing of the Antarctic Circle, charted the coast of Tasmania (where Bass Strait still contains a group of Furneaux Islands), and by returning the *Adventure* to England ahead of the *Resolution* (12 July 1774) accomplished the first recorded circumnavigation of the globe from west to east. For a full-length biography, see Rupert Furneaux, *Tobias Furneaux, Circumnavigator* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1960).

71. Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 179–80; Murray, *Letters from America*, 27; *London Evening Post*, 29 August 1776; Davies, *Documents*, 12: 169; *Divers Accounts*, 21; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 797, 798, 825; A. S. Salley, "Horry's Notes to Weems's *Life of Marion*," *SCHM*, 60 (July 1959): 120.

72. Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 799, 803, 825–6, 826, 929, 1004, 1161, 6: 569; Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 2 (1776–1782): 6, 8, 17; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 170–71, 180; Davies, *Documents*, 12: 169; *London Evening Post*, 29 August 1776; *Sandwich Papers*, 1: 120–21; Audited Account of Jacob Milligan (AA-5259), SC Archives; Gray, "The Morning after the Attack," Gibbes Art Gallery; Terry W. Lipscomb, *South Carolina Becomes a State* (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1976), 29; Murray, *Letters from America*, 27; *Hastings Manuscripts*, 3: 176; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 11: 236–37, 244. The evidence of sabotage comes from one tantalizing laconic statement found in some recorded texts of the deserters' narrative: "Acteon (by the Assistance of a Friendly English Seaman) remained fast Burnt & Blown up by her own people." Obviously, the American crewmen were either implicated or were at least privy to the circumstances. By 14 August, patriot salvage crews working the shallow waters along the sand banks had brought up ten painstakingly manufactured Royal Navy nine-pounders from the wreck of the *Actaron*, along with anchors, spars, and assorted useful wreckage left behind by the British. See *Providence Gazette and Country Journal*, Providence, RI, 28 September 1776. Artifacts from the Battle of Fort Moultrie were



still being recovered from the harbor as late as the early 1800s.

73. A newspaper contributor signing himself "Candid" accounted for the elusive ford by arguing that the depth of Breach Inlet at ebb tide would have been influenced by the direction of the wind. "The banks are said to have moved," alleged another correspondent, "which prevented the troops getting across the water. The circumstance of the banks moving is not extraordinary; it frequently happens in this part." Whatever the explanation for the water being impassable on the balmy day of 28 June, it must be admitted that this inlet was a chancy proposition on which to risk a military operation. See Beaton, *Naval and Military Memoirs*, 4: 150n; *The Remembrancer*, 3 (1776, pt. 2): 314.

74. Esmond Wright, ed., *The Fire of Liberty* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 61; Clinton, *American Rebellion*, 32–33. Bolton's Landing is probably the feature marked as military reference "G" on the map in Marshall and Peckham, *Campaigns*, 18–19. This landing on the mainland opposite the barrier islands was probably located on a plantation belonging to Christ Church Parish landowner Allen Bolton. For further references to Bolton's Landing and American dispositions on the mainland, see Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 154–55, 157–58; Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 292–93; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 608; *Journal of Alexander Chesney*, 7; Claims of Thomas Lofton (S17114) and William Mackay (W6), Rolls 1578 and 1611, Revolutionary War Pensions, National Archives microfilm. According to Sixth Regiment veteran Lofton, Bolton's Landing was two miles up the mainland from Haddrells Point.

75. Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 292–93; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 142–43, 156; Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 2 (1776–1782): 16; Davies, *Documents*, 12: 163–64; Clinton, *American Rebellion*, 32; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 689; Marshall and Peckham, *Campaigns*, 17; Johnson, *Traditions*, 91, 94, and map facing 96.

76. *Divers Accounts*, 6, 21; Clinton, *American Rebellion*, 31, 34–35; Davies, *Documents*, 12: 163–64; *Hastings Manuscripts*, 3: 176; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 142–43; Audited Account of Jeremiah Simmons (AA-7000), SC Archives; *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, 9 January 1777; Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 2 (1776–1782): 10, 16–17; Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: 295–96; Johnson, *Traditions*, 94–95; *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 11: 238.

77. Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 6: 99. Almost twenty years later, Clinton was still trying to defend the army's behavior by denying that he ever seriously intended to attack Thomson's redoubt. See Sir Henry Clinton, *Observations on Mr. Stedman's History of the American War* (London: J. Debrett, 1794), 1–5.

78. *Lee Papers*, 2: 136–37; Smith et al., *Letters of Delegates*, 4: 450, 491, 527; *State Records of NC*, 11: 313; *Virginia Gazette* (Purdie's), supplement to 12 July 1776, printed on 13 July; Stedman, *American*

*War*, 1: 187; Clark and Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 5: 1004. A Charlestown Quaker named Daniel Latham, who delayed the start of a private business trip until he learned the outcome of the battle, carried the earliest unofficial word of the victory between South Carolina and Philadelphia. He left on the morning of 29 June, three days ahead of General Lee's courier, and the fairly constant lead he is said to have maintained, should have put him in Philadelphia by 16 July. This story is reasonably credible, for Joseph Johnson seems to have had it firsthand from Latham, who was still living in the year 1842. See Johnson, *Traditions*, 97–98. It was the arrival of the official dispatches that prompted Colonel Stephen to salute Charles Lee by return mail with the words of Pheidippides in the original Greek.

79. *Hastings Manuscripts*, 3: 176; *Lee Papers*, 2: 134.

80. *The London Evening Post*, 14 September 1776.

81. The coverage of the battle provided in the foregoing account is by no means exhaustive and may be supplemented by two valuable studies in particular. The operations by naval and military forces of the opposing sides are recounted in extensive detail in Edwin C. Bearss, "The Battle of Sullivan's Island and the Capture of Fort Moultrie," National Park Service, Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation (Washington, 1968). A sober military analysis of the battle by a qualified expert can be found in Henry Lumpkin, *From Savannah to Yorktown: The American Revolution in the South* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1981). Several of the more important maps of the engagement are readily available in published sources. These include Drayton, *Memoirs*, 2: map facing 290; Nebenzahl and Higginbotham, *Atlas*, 58–59; Johnson, *Traditions*, map facing 96; Marshall and Peckham, *Campaigns*, 16–19. The researcher in need of a systematic guide to the mapping of this important battle should consult Randolph G. Adams, "The Cartography of the British Attack on Fort Moultrie in 1776," in William Warner Bishop and Andrew Keogh, eds., *Essays Offered to Herbert Putnam by His Colleagues and Friends on His Thirtieth Anniversary as Librarian of Congress, 5 April 1929* (1929; reprint ed., Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, Inc., 1967), 35–46. For a readable and extremely useful background work on ships and navigation in South Carolina history, see P. C. Coker III, *Charleston's Maritime Heritage 1670–1865* (Charleston: Cokercraft Press, 1987).

82. Gibbes, *Documentary History*, 2 (1776–1782): 18; Moultrie, *Memoirs*, 1: 183; *Miscellaneous Records*, 3B (1791–1793): 382, *Records of the Secretary of State*, SC Archives; Clark, *State Records of NC*, 16: 13–14; Edward M. Riley, "Historic Fort Moultrie in Charleston Harbor," *SCHM*, 51 (April 1950): 74; "In History's Name," *News and Courier*, Charleston, S.C., 4 April 1903. William Moultrie said the legislature named the fort, but it was more likely

named by order of the Privy Council. The General Assembly did not reconvene until 17 September, and its journals contain no mention of naming the fort.

83. A. S. Salley, *President Washington's Tour Through South Carolina in 1791*, Bulletins of the Historical Commission of South

Carolina, no. 12 (Columbia, 1932), 19; *Gazette of the United States*, Philadelphia, PA, 21 May 1791. The history of Fort Moultrie as a harbor defense post from 1776 to 1947 is recounted in Jim Stokely, *Constant Defender: The Story of Fort Moultrie* (Washington: National Park Service, 1978).

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5. The Coast, Rivers and Inlets of the Province of Georgia. J.F.W. DesBarres, *The Atlantic Neptune*. Photograph courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington DC.
6. Plan of St. Augustin Inlet and Town by William Gerard De Brahm. Map from Kings MS 211 f 27, British Library. Reproduced by permission of the British Library, London, England.
7. Profile and deck plans of HMS *Cherokee*. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, England.
8. Colonial Fort Johnson. Detail from "Sir Henry Clinton's Map, 1780," *Year Book, City of Charleston*, 1882. Photograph by Hunter Clarkson, Alt-Lee, Inc.
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13. Chart of Breach Inlet. Detail of Charleston Harbor Entrance nautical chart, January 1990. US Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Photograph by Hunter Clarkson, Alt-Lee, Inc.
14. Map Showing Plan of Sullivans Island. PRO map reference MP1 99. Photograph courtesy of the Public Record Office of Great Britain.
15. Naval engagement at Sullivans Island. Detail from "A Plan of the Attack of Fort Sullivan." Map by Sayer and Bennett. Photograph courtesy of the Library of Congress.
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18. Profile of HMS *Bristol*. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, England.
19. A N.W. by N. View of Charles Town from on Board the *Bristol*. Engraving by William Faden. The South Caroliniana Library. Photograph by Charles Gay.
20. Sullivans Island. Manuscript map by Captain Lieutenant Abraham d'Aubant. Reproduced by permission of the William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.
21. Fort Moultrie Centennial Monument. *Charleston in 1883* by Arthur Mazyck and the Heliotype Printing Company of Boston. South Caroliniana Library. New photograph by Charles Gay.

