

## Panton, Leslie & Company: Shipping in the Age of Revolutions

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A robust body of scholarship has examined the fur trade in North America from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Many important works analyzed the fur trade through a variety of frameworks including world economic systems, gender and labor relations, diplomatic interactions, cultural exchanges, and processes of ethnogenesis among many others.<sup>2</sup> While some scholarship has included the important role that maritime activities played in the fur trade in North America, the coasts and seas have received only cursory attention in the works that examined the deerskin trade in the Gulf South.<sup>3</sup> This paper attempts to orient the deerskin trade in the Southeast through a maritime history perspective by using Panton, Leslie & Company as a case study, including their unique need for coastal vessels, and how seaborne wartime activities impacted the company's ships that were the key to their deerskin trade operation.

Panton, Leslie & Company was one of the most powerful merchant houses in the Southeast during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. From Florida to Tennessee, the company held a virtual monopoly in Spanish Florida where they sold guns, goods, rum, and cloth to Southern Indians largely in exchange for deerskins.<sup>4</sup> Aside from the deerskin trade with Southern Indians, the company regularly sold goods, cattle, and foodstuffs to the Spanish population as far away as the Yucatan.<sup>5</sup> Yet, it was through the fur trade that the company accumulated much of its initial wealth and political influence. Eventually Panton, Leslie & Company (which became John Forbes & Company in 1803) obtained massive amounts of property via Spanish land grants and by acquiring tribal grounds as Native American debt to the company through the deerskin trade accumulated.<sup>6</sup>

William Panton was one of five original partners in Panton, Leslie & Company headquartered in the port town of Pensacola, Florida, which dominated Indian trade throughout the southeastern Spanish borderlands during the Age of Revolutions.<sup>7</sup> William Panton was not only the driving

force behind creating the company in 1783; he was the leading partner until his death in 1801. In the summer of the year he died, *The Caledonian Mercury* printed his death announcement.<sup>8</sup> The newspaper, printed in his home country of Scotland, reported that he died on “his passage from Pensacola to Nassau” aboard the schooner *Shark*.<sup>9</sup> This vessel, which operated for nearly two decades, was just one of a number of coastal ships in the company fleet that made business possible. The sailors who loaded the cargo, navigated the currents, and unfurled the sails to harness the trade winds were the backbone of the whole operation. Panton, Leslie & Company ships sailed across the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea, and Atlantic Ocean to carry on their trade between American, Spanish, British, and French ports throughout some of the most volatile times of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These vessels were packed with the company’s property including manufactured goods, beef, salt, rum, deerskins, and slaves. While the deerskin trade that Panton, Leslie & Company engaged in was inextricably connected to the lands the company ultimately acquired in North America, it was equally a maritime venture that crisscrossed the Atlantic world.

The five original partners, including William Panton, were all Scottish loyalists who formed the company during the last year of American Revolution in 1783. Panton himself was a merchant long before the company was founded. He began his apprenticeship for John Gordon & Company of Charleston in 1765.<sup>10</sup> By the time the American Revolution started, William Panton was an experienced Indian and slave trader with long established partnerships. Panton and his associates, like many other Indian merchants from the southern British colonies of South Carolina and Georgia, fled to British East Florida for protection after the outbreak of the war.<sup>11</sup> There he and his partners continued to trade with the British, as well as lease their armed company schooners to the Governor of East Florida to support the war effort.<sup>12</sup> Unlike the thirteen colonies in rebellion, the fourteenth colony of East and West Florida remained loyal to King George III throughout the conflict.<sup>13</sup>

In the last couple of years of the war Spanish forces, which had allied with the American rebels in 1779, controlled West Florida after seizing the capital of Pensacola in 1781.<sup>14</sup> East Florida, with its capital in St. Augustine, remained firmly under British control until the war officially ended.<sup>15</sup> With the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783 and recognition of American independence, Spain regained control of East and West Florida as a reward for their alliance against Great Britain.<sup>16</sup> Unlike many British subjects who evacuated the former British colonies

at the end of the war, Panton and his partners stayed.<sup>17</sup> The company was founded during the outbreak of the Age of Revolutions and would continually operate as the French, Haitian, and Spanish American wars for independence swept across the Americas.<sup>18</sup>

With Spain's approval, Panton, Leslie & Company remained in East Florida and West Florida to trade with the Upper and Lower Creeks, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Yamasees, and Seminoles.<sup>19</sup> The Spanish allowed this to happen out of self-interest.<sup>20</sup> This included a tactic of having the company supply Native Americans with firearms and gunpowder so they could effectively act as a defensive buffer against interlopers and American settlers.<sup>21</sup> Over the next few years the company gradually expanded its trade westward throughout Spanish territory, and established warehouses and trading posts strategically along rivers and the coasts.<sup>22</sup> Archaeological investigations of the Panton, Leslie & Company headquarters, some of its trading posts, post stores, and associated Native American villages confirm that a staggering variety of manufactured goods, particularly British made, were traded for deerskins and furs.<sup>23</sup> In fact, two years before Panton died he claimed his company "never failed to export less than 124,000 deerskins a year" since it was founded.<sup>24</sup> The company certainly profited from this trade, with one contemporary estimate finding that Panton "generally sold his wares at 500 percent of their prime cost."<sup>25</sup> However, as historian Kathryn Braund suggested, the fortunes to be made in the deerskin trade were limited due to a number of costs and losses associated with it including "shipping, insurance, custom duties, and fluctuations in the price of skins."<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, in 1804 the company reported that their total assets were worth nearly \$400,000.<sup>27</sup> Still, Panton, Leslie & Company flourished in the deerskin trade, but much of the fortunes they made when the fur trade declined after 1812 derived from land and slaves.<sup>28</sup>

Three years after Panton, Leslie & Company formed they owned 19 separate land grants totaling 12,820 acres, as well as 250 slaves to work their numerous plantations and ranches.<sup>29</sup> The subsidiary John Forbes & Company eventually obtained two land grants that "each exceeded one million acres."<sup>30</sup> The Forbes Purchase in particular covered hundreds of square miles between the Apalachicola and Wakulla Rivers to settle Indian debts.<sup>31</sup> At the time, it made the company the largest landowner in the Floridas.<sup>32</sup> They were also the largest slave-owner in Pensacola.<sup>33</sup> In fact, when the very ill William Panton departed on the company schooner *Shark* in 1801, five of his slaves were aboard.<sup>34</sup>

Throughout most of the company's history it imported, bought, or sold people of African descent.<sup>35</sup> In 1791 Panton requested a license from the Spanish governor of Louisiana to import slaves from Jamaica.<sup>36</sup> Five years later Panton requested authorization to build housing for his slaves in Pensacola.<sup>37</sup> A letter William Panton written to his storekeeper and associate Edward Forrester in 1799 mentioned that he should "send me the negroes" and "have them shipped but first examine them and send none that is not good."<sup>38</sup> Upon his death Panton's last will and testament required his surviving partners to make "exact inventories" of all his debt and property, including specifically "real estate," "vessels," and "negroes."<sup>39</sup> Itemized in an account book, a long list of goods recorded as sold in 1805 included "the negro man Luke \$400" and "Adam-\$350."<sup>40</sup> That same year company owners requested permission to introduce slaves from the Bahamas to Pensacola.<sup>41</sup> In 1811 the company established a branch office at Amelia Island on the east coast of Florida. Nearby at Fernandina one of the associates opened a warehouse along the waterfront to ship American cotton to England, where the company also probably illegally smuggled enslaved Africans into the United States.<sup>42</sup> In 1810 the Spanish brig *Neptuno* owned by Vicente Ramos, landed in Congo to acquire "negros bozales" (slaves brought directly from Africa). On its return to the Caribbean, the ship was detained in Barbados.<sup>43</sup> After requiring the captain, Antonio Martin, to pay a duty, on 17 December the British Vice-Admiralty Court in Bridgetown "decreed this vessel and the slaves onboard her to be released from the present detention."<sup>44</sup> *Neptuno* delivered these enslaved Africans to the port of Pensacola where they were sold by John Forbes & Company in June 1811.<sup>45</sup> In 1817, William Forbes wrote how he had to smuggle enslaved women and children, although he claimed to dislike the practice.<sup>46</sup> According to historian William Coker, even a couple of years before Spain sold Florida to the United States two of the company owners in particular, the brothers John and James Innerarity, "became heavily involved in the slave trade."<sup>47</sup> This included purchasing people from the Cuban slave market.

Enslaved people owned by the company performed various skilled and unskilled labor that spanned the diverse enterprises the firm was involved. Some enslaved people did grueling work like tanning hides, cutting lumber, herding cattle, and farming. Other company slaves served as traders, guides, and interpreters. Some enslaved people even sailed across the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico on company ships.<sup>48</sup> A voyage the schooner *Shark* took from Apalachicola to Pensacola in 1799 highlights how enslaved people regularly made up the crew on company

vessels. The captain of the ship during this voyage was a white British subject from Mobile named Peter Lavaellet, but his crew included “two negroes belonging to Panton Leslie & Company, a free negro, who has also been long in their service, of by one other person a white man.”<sup>49</sup> Another voyage the company ship *Sheerwater* took from Mobile to New Providence in 1805 had a very similar crew aboard. While the captain was a white man named Samuel Thurston, the rest of the crew included a sailing master, two free mulattos, and three company slaves.<sup>50</sup>

The fact that company slaves regularly served on their fleet of ships is not at all out of the ordinary for the time period. Historian Jeffrey Bolster documented the common practice of enslaved African-Americans serving as sailors throughout the Age of Sail in the United States.<sup>51</sup> Enslaved sailors across the Atlantic World used their maritime knowledge on all types of vessels from deep-water ships that ventured over oceans to small “droggers” involved in the coastal trade.<sup>52</sup> Enslaved mariners served on merchant ships owned by their masters, like Panton, Leslie & Company, as well as on naval warships, privateers, and even slavers across the globe. In most cases they stood before the mast beside free people of color and sailors of all nationalities, especially during the Age of Revolutions.<sup>53</sup> The maritime skills these enslaved seamen acquired through their experience sailing on company ships manifested as agency when the right circumstances to free themselves arose. During the War of 1812, British commander Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane issued a proclamation that promised enslaved African-Americans their freedom if they joined British forces against the Americans.<sup>54</sup> A few months after it was published, on 23 February 1815, sixty-two enslaved people who worked on a John Forbes & Company cotton plantation along the St. Johns River escaped to British-held Cumberland Island in Georgia. Some of these escaped slaves must have had experience sailing, since they stole a company ship and navigated it by themselves to get there. Days later, John Forbes demanded the British return his stolen ship and slaves, but the commanding officer at Cumberland Island declared that under British law they were free. He did, however, inform Forbes that, “the boat will be returned upon proof of ownership.”<sup>55</sup>

The vessels the company owned and the seamen (both free and enslaved) who sailed them were essential for the partners’ Indian trade. A sworn deposition by partner John Forbes concerning the capture of the company schooner *Shark* in 1799 made this point clear by stating, “they have found it indispensably necessary to employ drogging or coasting vessels, without

which their aforesaid trade could not be carried on at all.”<sup>56</sup> The number of vessels the company owned fluctuated over time. For example, from 1793 to 1797 the company owned at least fifteen vessels of varying rigs. These ships sailed to and from various ports including Pensacola, London, Mobile, Havana, New Orleans, Nassau, Philadelphia, Charleston, Yucatan, and New York.<sup>57</sup> However, in 1804 the partners listed only six vessels as part of their assets stationed in Pensacola, Mobile, St. Augustine, and Havana with a total valuation of \$45,000.<sup>58</sup> Between the years 1784 and 1819 the company used at least forty-five different sailing ships to carry on its trade between various ports across the Atlantic World. These vessels ranged in size from the 25-ton schooner *Polly*, crewed by three men, to the 202-ton frigate *Hamilton* with a crew of twelve. The type of watercraft the company owned also varied. For rivers they used small boats, canoes, and ferries, and for coastal and deep-sea voyages they relied on an assortment of sloops, schooners, brigantines, and frigates.<sup>59</sup>

The company vessels were a large investment and required a great deal of the owners' attention and firm's expense. The ships recorded as part of the company's property in 1804 accounted for about eighteen percent of the total value of their physical assets. To put that into perspective, this was nearly the same amount as the value of the houses and lots the company owned in Pensacola, St. Augustine, and Mobile combined.<sup>60</sup> The costs and the time needed to maintain the fleet included constantly attending to natural and manmade issues with the vessels such as repairing shipworm damage or replacing poor caulking jobs.<sup>61</sup> Bad weather conditions also threatened their vessels with disaster. In 1800, the company brigs *Campbell* and *Greenwood* were lost at sea with all hands.<sup>62</sup> Aside from replacing and repairing the ships themselves, costs associated with the shipping side of the business included paying duties, customs, permit fees, and offloading fees; furnishing crew payroll; buying provisions; and purchasing insurance just to name a few.<sup>63</sup> Insurance expenses could vary depending on the hazards expected, cargo carried, type of vessel, and length of each voyage, but were especially costly during wartime primarily as a result of captures by privateers.<sup>64</sup> From 1793-1797 French privateers in particular cost the company \$185,059 due to higher insurance rates and losses.<sup>65</sup>

Throughout the Age of Revolutions the company suffered a number of losses in their trade due to privateers. These privately armed ships of war obtained legal permission from sponsoring nations to capture enemy merchant vessels when hostilities erupted. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a number of nations issued commissions to privateer vessels with the goals

of hampering their enemy's trade and bolstering the host country's naval forces. Once a privateer captured a "prize," they were required to take it in to port for adjudication so a maritime court could rule whether it was a lawful spoil of war. If the court determined the prize to be legitimate based on the requirements of the commission, the captured ship and its cargo could be sold at auction. The profits were then divided between the privateer crew, owners/investors, and supporting government. While privateering was a widely accepted form of maritime commerce raiding during wartime and governments tried to regulate the practice, it was not without controversy. For example, especially during the Spanish American wars for independence privateers commonly were accused of outright piracy.<sup>66</sup> Merchants tried a variety of different strategies to mitigate risks at sea during wartime against privateers (from arming vessels to obtaining marine insurance) with varying levels of success, and some merchants even invested in privateering voyages.<sup>67</sup> Panton, Leslie & Company partners, however, did not view privateers in the most positive light.

Privateers first started to harass Panton, Leslie & Company ships at the time of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. During this period, French privateers received commissions to attack both British and Spanish merchant ships.<sup>68</sup> The company ships were fair game to French privateers because they flew both flags. The master of the company brigantine *Sheerwater*, William Cooke, revealed that he carried "two sets of papers Spanish and English" and carried "Spanish Colours and English Colours."<sup>69</sup> In 1796 French privateers specifically targeted company ships in Pensacola, and Panton complained to the Spanish governor that a French privateer "captain and crew, or part of them, was permitted to come up to town, where they gained intelligence of the time my vessels may be expected."<sup>70</sup> He was later informed that the privateer ship *Henrick* had blocked Pensacola so that none of their ships could be brought into port.<sup>71</sup>

Since company ships carried and flew a Spanish flag they also fell prey to British privateers when war erupted between those two nations in 1796. Just two years into the conflict, John Forbes warned Panton "that there is an English privateer sloop off the Bar of Mobile who landed some men on Dauphin Island."<sup>72</sup> He had good reason to be concerned. From 1793 to 1800 a number of company ships were captured by both French and British privateers, including *Aurora*, *Grenada Packet*, *Cato*, *Margaret Ann*, *The Sisters*, *Nancy*, *Mary*, and *Shark*.<sup>73</sup> In each of these cases the company contested the legitimacy of the captures within the courts that

determined their legality, although William Panton remarked that “the process will be expensive but I have no doubt of obtaining justice in the end.”<sup>74</sup> In the worst outcomes for the company, their vessels were condemned, all the cargo was sold by the captors, and insurance did not cover their losses.<sup>75</sup> In other cases, they successfully argued in court for the return of their ships. However, even when their ships were restored, the company ultimately still lost money since they were not always compensated financially for any missing or spoiled goods onboard. Any perishable items, such as peltry or meat, could be ruined awaiting the court to make a decision. Besides, regardless of the outcome, the partners still had to pay costs of litigation. The case involving the company schooner *Shark* is illustrative.

In 1799, the British privateer vessel *Bellona* under command of Captain Walter Wilson captured the company schooner *Shark* on its voyage from Pensacola to Apalachicola. At the time of its capture, the five-man crew aboard *Shark* was hauling goods worth \$4,973. It also carried five Spanish soldiers as passengers.<sup>76</sup> Captain Wilson of *Bellona* considered this a legitimate prize since he alleged that *Shark* transported the supplies and men of a belligerent country. By 8 November a prize crew aboard *Shark* was reported near the Florida Keys, and the next day they sailed the vessel into New Providence where it was taken to the Vice-Admiralty Court in the Bahama Islands for judgement.<sup>77</sup> A month later, Thomas Forbes filed a claim with the court arguing that his company ship was a recognized neutral vessel that transported private property with the permission of the British government, and alleged that the capture was illegal.<sup>78</sup>

The Vice-Admiralty Court heard the case on 3 January 1800. After examining the case, Judge John Kelsall found there was “no evidence of there being more than a bare acquiescence on the part of William Panton,” and determined that the Spanish soldiers onboard *Shark* were merely there “to prevent or repel... attacks of any Marauders or Banditte who might mediate violence against them or their stores.”<sup>79</sup> The “marauders” and “banditte” the judge referenced were “privateers” who obtained commissions from the independent state of Muskogee founded by William Augustus Bowles. Bowles was a loyalist from Maryland who attempted to establish himself as the “Director General” of a “pro-British Creek state.”<sup>80</sup> He issued commissions from the State of Muskogee and established his own prize court along the Apalachicola River. With the backing of some British associates in the Bahamas and Native allies in the Gulf South, Bowles threatened trade by sponsoring privateers to attack company and Spanish ships with a motley crew of white, black, and Indian crew members.<sup>81</sup>



Nevertheless, the cargo *Shark* carried at the time of capture was ruled as being legitimate neutral property of the company, and the judge directed the ship to “be restored to the Claimant.” However, he found that the capture itself was valid and the company was not entitled to receive damages from the captors.<sup>82</sup> The company auctioned the restored cargo in February, but by that time the barrels of pork had spoiled. After fees were deducted, including duty, commission, advertising, and a “negro hire,” the proceeds from the auction totaled £494.90. However, the company still lost money on the cargo since additional court costs and taxes totaled £211.83.<sup>83</sup> Even after all this the case was not over for the partners. In August, associate John Leslie informed Thomas Forbes that “the captors of the *Shark* have entered an appeal,” and it was “recommended to us, to endeavor to come to some compromise with the captors.”<sup>84</sup> Whatever agreement the partners eventually came to is not known. Nevertheless, in June *Shark* was outfitted in Nassau and by October was hauling cargo again for the company.<sup>85</sup>

This was not the last time privateers hindered the company’s ability to trade. In May 1800, the company reported \$16,549 in losses from Bowle’s privateers who stole company goods, cattle, slaves, and the Brig *Sheerwater*. The company was offered 10,000 pesos for the vessel, but Panton refused because he knew it would be used as a privateer.<sup>86</sup> Although the company eventually recovered *Sheerwater*, the ship sustained \$672.07 in damages during Bowles possession. The brig needed five months’ of repair work done in Pensacola that cost the company another \$2,900.00.<sup>87</sup> Bowle’s privateers continued to be a problem off Florida’s Gulf coast a year later. In 1801 the privateer cutter *Tostonoke* commanded by Captain Richard Power sailed with a commission from the State of Muskogee. *Tostonoke* departed from Apalachicola for a six-week cruise, but instead of finding company ships loaded with goods the privateer crew captured four different Spanish vessels on “a fishing voige from the havana” near Tampa, Charlotte Harbor, and Sarasota.<sup>88</sup> The Spanish ships were probably related to the Cuban fishing ranchos that had inhabited Southwest Florida’s coast since the 1600s.<sup>89</sup>

In 1805 company partner William Simpson informed his associate that while he had plenty of corn to send from Mobile, he “cannot procure a vessel to carry to load to Pensacola” because the owners of the “small crafts do not wish to risk a voyage to Pensacola on account of English privateers.”<sup>90</sup> Privateers remained a threat to company ships several years later, especially vessels sailing in the waters of the Gulf of Mexico between New Orleans and Pensacola. On 7 August 1811, the French privateer schooner *La Franchise* was lurking off the coast of Pensacola

with a crew of sixty, but was ultimately chased away by a U.S. gunboat.<sup>91</sup> The crew of *La Franchise* proved to be not just a nuisance to merchant ships at sea, but even to seamen in port. By November, the “heterogeneous crew of Italians, Venetians, Sicilians, Portuguese, and Frenchmen” from *La Franchise* started a riot in Savannah after attacking some American seamen with “knives and daggers.” In retaliation, a band of American sailors shot some of the privateersmen on the vessel, boarded and towed *La Franchise* across the river, and set it ablaze.<sup>92</sup> That same year, the company schooner *Shark* was captured by a French privateer off the coast of West Florida near Cape San Blas.<sup>93</sup> During the Spanish American wars of independence, company partners worried about insurance on shipping due to a Mexican privateer ship that captured the schooner *Montserrat*.<sup>94</sup> The fear was justified a year later in 1816 when the Cartagena privateer schooner *Jupiter*, commanded by a French captain, seized the company vessel *Sophia*.<sup>95</sup> Cartagena de Indias, or modern Columbia, relied heavily on American, French, and Haitian privateers during its revolution against Spain.<sup>96</sup>

By the time Florida became a U.S. territory in 1821 the deerskin trade was no longer the main source of income for the company, and the partners instead focused their time and resources on land sales, speculation, and litigation. They still had a few ships, but their trade was localized and the vessels’ importance for the company diminished.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, the first forty years of the company’s history, or two-thirds of its entire existence, depended on the partners’ ability to deploy a fleet of company vessels. The money and energy to build and maintain the fleet that made their trade possible occupied much of the partners’ time and company resources. Among many other obstacles, the privateers who were unleashed throughout the Age of Revolutions hindered their ability to trade. Yet, the sailors and ships that carried their trade goods through all the natural and human dangers awaiting them at sea were the linchpin to their business of trade across the Atlantic world.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Nassaney, *The Archaeology of the North American Fur Trade* (University Press of Florida, 2015), 36

<sup>2</sup> Bruce White, "Grand Portage as a Trading Post: Patterns of Trade at 'the Great Carrying Place,'" Grand Portage National Monument, National Park Service, September 2005, 5. Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 168. Jo-Anne Fiske, Susan Sleeper-Smith, and William Wicken, *New Faces of the Fur Trade: Selected Papers of the Seventh North American Fur Trade Conference, Halifax, Nova Scotia* (Michigan State University Press, 1998). Nassaney, 1-10.

<sup>3</sup> Some works that do include maritime aspects of the fur trade focus on the use of rivers and lakes in the Great Lakes region and along the Pacific Coast. Robert Englebert and Nicole St. Onge, "Paddling into History: French-Canadian Voyageurs and the Creation of the Fur Trade World, 1730-1804," in *From Pierre-Espirt Radisson to Louis Riel: Voyageurs and Metis* (Presses Universitaires de Saint-Boniface, 2014) 73-103. Nassaney, 146-153.

<sup>4</sup> Kathryn Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 58, 72. Coker, x.

<sup>5</sup> Coker, xi.

<sup>6</sup> Colin Calloway, *White People, Indians, and Highlanders: Tribal People and Colonial Encounters in Scotland and America* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 119

<sup>7</sup> William Coker, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands: Panton, Leslie & Company and John Forbes & Company 1783-1847* (University of West Florida Press, 1986), 15.

<sup>8</sup> "Died," *The Caledonian Mercury*, 4 July 1801, accessed July 12, 2018, [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com)

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* Coker, 234-235

<sup>10</sup> Coker, 15.

<sup>11</sup> Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (Vintage Books, 2011), 70. Coker, ix.

<sup>12</sup> Coker, 36.

<sup>13</sup> Roger Smith, "The Fourteenth Colony: Florida and the American Revolution in the South" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 2011), 10. Kathleen DuVal, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (Random House, 2016), 8-10,

<sup>14</sup> DuVal, 153

<sup>15</sup> Smith, 229-231.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 24. DuVal, 185.

<sup>17</sup> Jasanoff, 13.

<sup>18</sup> Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (The Belknap Press, 2005); Caitlin Fitz, *Our Sister Republics: The United States in an Age of American Revolutions* (Liveright Publishing, 2016); Edgardo Perez Morales, *No Limits to their Sway: Cartagena's Privateers and the Masterless Caribbean in the Age of Revolutions* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2018) 40-54; Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2016); Rafe Blaubarb, *The Revolutionary Atlantic: Republican Visions, 1760-1830* (Oxford University Press, 2017); Jane Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions* (Harvard University Press, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Siska Williams, "Tracing the Trade: A Proposed Archaeological Model for Panton, Leslie, and Company Trade Site Types in Second Spanish Florida" (Unpublished master's thesis, University of West Florida, 2010), 31.

<sup>20</sup> Coker, xi.

<sup>21</sup> Williams 126.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 127-129.

<sup>24</sup> Braund, 72.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

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

<sup>27</sup> Matthew Clavin, *Aiming for Pensacola: Fugitive Slaves on the Atlantic and Southern Frontiers* (Harvard University Press, 2015), 194.

<sup>28</sup> Braund, 58. Coker, 364.

<sup>29</sup> Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (University of Illinois Press, 1999), 171.

<sup>30</sup> Coker, 352.

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- <sup>31</sup> Coker, xxi, 326-327.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid. 366.
- <sup>33</sup> Clavin, 27.
- <sup>34</sup> Note (Spanish) 1802, Reel 13, Papers of Panton, Leslie, & Company, The University Archives and West Florida History Center, University of West Florida Libraries (hereafter PPLC). While the index to this document describes that there were three slaves onboard, the original note written in Spanish actually reads “3 negras y 2 negros.”
- <sup>35</sup> As historian Matthew Clavin pointed out, this fact was largely overlooked in the most comprehensive account written about the history of the company. See Clavin, 194-194.
- <sup>36</sup> William Panton to Estevan Miro, 3 June 1791, Reel 6, PPLC.
- <sup>37</sup> William Panton to Baron Carondelet, 12 March 1796, Reel 10, PPLC.
- <sup>38</sup> William Panton to Edward Forrester, 7 May 1799, 1966-01, Folder 1, 1799-1843, Innerarity-Hulse Papers, The University Archives and West Florida History Center, University of West Florida Libraries (hereafter IHP).
- <sup>39</sup> Panton’s Will, 3 December 1801, Reel 13, PPLC.
- <sup>40</sup> “Pensacola Concern in Account with John Forbes, 1805, Box 3, Folder 4, IHP.
- <sup>41</sup> James Innerarity to Folch, 10-12 July 1805, Reel 16, PPLC.
- <sup>42</sup> Coker, 274.
- <sup>43</sup> Ramos, November 1811, Reel 18, PPLC.
- <sup>44</sup> Vice-Admiralty Court Proclamation for Brig Neptuno, 17 December 1810, Reel 18, PPLC.
- <sup>45</sup> Manifest and Letter, 21-24 November 1811, Reel 18, PPLC. Maxent letter, 8 June 1811, Reel 18, PPLC. Notice regarding slave sale, 17 June 1811, Reel 18, PPLC. The captain of the Spanish brig *Neptuno* received thirty-one dollars in advanced pay for his “voyage to Angola.” Receipt to Luis Racman, 1 March 1810, Box 1, Folder 1, IHP.
- <sup>46</sup> William Forbes to John Forbes, 24 October 1817, Reel 21, PPLC.
- <sup>47</sup> Coker, 326.
- <sup>48</sup> Clavin, 28.
- <sup>49</sup> “Schooner Shark Cargo Vs. Wilson of the Bellona Private Vessel of War,” Box 1, Folder 1, IHP.
- <sup>50</sup> Passport from Folch for Sheerwater, 13 July 1805, Reel 16, PPLC.
- <sup>51</sup> Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).
- <sup>52</sup> In the prize case of the schooner *Shark* the Forbes Company mentions employing “drogging vessels.” Drogging vessels, or “drohgers,” were “small vessels that brought cargo out to merchant ships or plied coastal trade.” For definition of “droggers” see James Delle, *The Colonial Caribbean: Landscapes of Power in Jamaica’s Plantation System* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 113.
- <sup>53</sup> Morales, 15-17, 22. Emma Christopher, *Slave Ship Sailors and Their Captive Cargoes, 1730-1807* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 51-90, 60-61.
- <sup>54</sup> Coker, 292. For more on the role enslaved people played in the War of 1812 see Gene Allen Smith, *The Slave’s Gamble: Choosing Sides in the War of 1812* (St. Martin’s Press, 2013).
- <sup>55</sup> G. Cockburn to John Forbes, 26 February 1815, Reel 20, PPLC.
- <sup>56</sup> “Schooner Shark Cargo Vs. Wilson of the Bellona Private Vessel of War,” December 1799, Box 1, Folder 1, IHP.
- <sup>57</sup> Coker, 222-223.
- <sup>58</sup> Arthur Whitaker, *Documents Relating to the Commercial Policy of Spain in the Floridas with Incidental Reference to Louisiana* (The Florida State Historical Society, 1931), 258.
- <sup>59</sup> The author compiled a list of sailing vessels that the company owned for the years 1783-1821 in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Details including the ship name, year, vessel type, tonnage, and captain were recorded if mentioned. A vast majority of these ships were identified through combing through the original documents in the PPLC, IHP, and East Florida papers. Secondary sources were also consulted including Coker and Whitaker.
- <sup>60</sup> Whitaker, 258.
- <sup>61</sup> Arturo O’Neill to Martin Navarro, 22 June 1785, Reel 2, PPLC. William Panton to Governor Miro, 23 October, 1791, Reel 6, PPLC. “Witnesses on Ship Martha,” 13 March 1815, Reel 20, PPLC.
- <sup>62</sup> Coker, 215.
- <sup>63</sup> For examples of some of the costs associated with the company shipping see Invoice Schooner Tiburon, May 1814, Box 1, Folder 3, IHP; Invoice Schooner Fair American, 4 July 1814, Box 1, Folder 3, IHP; Invoice Schooner Jealous Victor, 9 July 1814, Box 1, Folder 3, IHP; “Henry and Owners for disbursements,” 1818-1819, Box 1, Folder 5, IHP.

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<sup>64</sup> Guy Chet, *The Ocean is a Wilderness: Atlantic Piracy and the Limits of State Authority, 1688-1856* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 51-65. Jeremy Baskes, *Staying Afloat: Risk and Uncertainty in Spanish Atlantic World Trade, 1760-1820* (Stanford University Press, 2013), 160.

<sup>65</sup> Coker, 220-223.

<sup>66</sup> On prize courts see Donald A. Petrie, *The Prize Game: Lawful Looting on the High Seas in the Days of Fighting Sail* (Naval Institute Press, 1999); Matthew Taylor Raffety, *The Republic Afloat: Law, Honor, and Citizenship in Maritime America* (The University of Chicago Press, 2013) 31. For a thorough discussion on the anachronistic meaning between piracy and privateering, the difference between commission and letters of marque, and the limits of government authority on the practice see Guy Chet, *The Ocean is a Wilderness*. For an overview of the historic context and use of privateering in Europe and the Americas see Janice E. Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton University Press, 1994), 21-68. Also see Alejandro Colas and Bryan Mabee, ed., *Mercenaries, Pirates, Bandits and Empires: Private Violence in Historical Context* (Columbia University Press, 2010); Carl Swanson, *Predators and Prizes: American Privateering and Imperial War, 1739-1748* (University of South Carolina Press, 1991); Patrick Crowhurst, *The French War on Trade: Privateering 1793-1815* (Scolar Press, 1989); David J. Starkey, *British Privateering Enterprise in the Eighteenth Century* (University of Exeter Press, 1990); David Starkey, E.S. Van Eyck Van Heslinga, and J.A. de Moor, *Pirates and Privateers: New Perspectives on the War on Trade in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (University of Exeter Press, 1997). For privateering during the Spanish American wars for independence see David Head, *Privateers of the Americas: Spanish American Privateering from the United States in the Early Republic* (University of Georgia Press, 2015); Matthew McCarthy *Privateering, Piracy and British Policy in Spanish America, 1810-1830* (Boydell Press, 2013); and Morales, *No Limits to their Sway*.

<sup>67</sup> Baskes, *Staying Afloat*, 178, 276.

<sup>68</sup> Starkey, *Pirates and Privateers*, 6-7, 155-169. Rafe Blaufarb, "The French Revolutionary Wars and the Making of American Empire, 1789-1796," in Suzanne Desan, Lynn Hunt, and William Max Nelson, *The French Revolution in Global Perspective* (Cornell University Press, 2013), 148-152.

<sup>69</sup> Court of Vice-Admiralty Interrogation of William Cooke, 7 April, 1798, Reel 11, PPLC.

<sup>70</sup> William Panton to Baron de Carondelet, 16 August 1796, Reel 10, PPLC.

<sup>71</sup> William Panton to Robert Leslie, 8 November 1796, Reel 10, PPLC.

<sup>72</sup> John Forbes to William Panton, 13 January 1799, Reel 11, PPLC.

<sup>73</sup> Extracts of Paragraphs of Letters, 29 March 1799, Box 3, Folder 4, IHP. James McAlpin to Folch, 29 October 1796, Reel 10, PPLC. Coker, 185-186, 215.

<sup>74</sup> William Panton to Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, 9 May 1798, Reel 11, PPLC.

<sup>75</sup> Coker, 186.

<sup>76</sup> Laurence, 19 September 1799, Reel 12, PPLC.

<sup>77</sup> Robert Bush, ed., *Surveying the Early Republic: The Journal of Andrew Ellicot, U.S. Boundary Commissioner in the Old Southwest, 1796-1800* (LSU Press, 2016), 210-211.

<sup>78</sup> Thomas Forbes Claim on Schooner Shark, December 1799, Box 1, Folder 1, IHP.

<sup>79</sup> Schooner Shark Cargo Vs. Wilson of the Bellona Private Vessel of War", Box 1, Folder 1, IHP.

<sup>80</sup> Jasanoff, 108, 223-242

<sup>81</sup> J. Leitch Wright, Jr. *William Augustus Bowles: Director General of the Creek Nation* (University of Georgia Press, 1967). Gilbert C. Dinn, *War on the Gulf Coast: The Spanish Fight Against William Augustus Bowles* (University Press of Florida, 2012). Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions*, 100-110.

<sup>82</sup> Schooner Shark Cargo Vs. Wilson of the Bellona Private Vessel of War", Box 1, Folder 1, IHP

<sup>83</sup> "Sale at Auction by Alexander Bain and Company of part cargo of the schooner shark acquitted in the court of vice admiralty by order of Mister Forbes," 28 February 1800, Box 1, Folder 1, IHP.

<sup>84</sup> John Leslie to Thomas Forbes, 22 August 1800, Reel 13, PPLC.

<sup>85</sup> Folch to Lopez Angulo, 27 October, 1800, Reel 13, PPLC. List of Ships, 26 June 1800, Reel 13, PPLC.

<sup>86</sup> Vincente Folch to Casa Calvo, 2 June, 1800, Reel 13, PPLC.

<sup>87</sup> American State Papers, Public Land, Volume 4, "Claims to Lands in East and West Florida," 104.

<sup>88</sup> Thanks to Cole Smith for sharing this unique privateer logbook with the author. Journal of Captain Richard Power, on board the Tostonoke, November 2, 1801. AGI Cuba, 218. According to one of his captain's ship logs that detailed another privateer cruise in 1802, the crew of *Muskogee Mekko* included "six red men." This crew also attacked Spanish vessels around Cedar Key and Sarasota. Captain David Gipson's Journal, on board the Tostonoke or Diligence, sailing alongside with Muskogee Mekko, 1802, Legajo 218, Papeles de Cuba, Archives General de Indias.

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<sup>89</sup> Maranda Almy, "The Cuban Fishing Ranchos of Southwest Florida, 1600s-1850s," Master's thesis, Department of Anthropology, 2001, University of Florida, Gainesville. John Worth, "Creolization in Southwest Florida: Cuban Fishermen and "Spanish Indians," Ca. 1766—1841," *Historical Archaeology* 46, no. 1 (2012): 142-60.

<sup>90</sup> William Simpson to James Innerarity, 28 October 1805, Reel 16, PPLC.

<sup>91</sup> George F. Emmons, *Statistical History of the Navy of the United States: The Navy of the United States, From the Commencement 1775-1853* (Gideon & Company, 1854), 76-77.

<sup>92</sup> "Dreadful Riot at Savannah," 29, November 1811, *The Raleigh Minerva* (Raleigh, North Carolina), accessed 12 July 2018, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/58181293>.

<sup>93</sup> J. V. Morales, 3 September 3, 1811, Reel 18, PPLC.

<sup>94</sup> James Innerarity to John Innerarity, 2 November 1815, Reel 20, PPLC.

<sup>95</sup> John Forbes to A. Gordon, 4 December 1816, Reel 21, PPLC. "Captain of French Corsair," 6 December 1816, Reel 21, PPLC.

<sup>96</sup> Morales, 1-3, 56.

<sup>97</sup> Coker, 364-365.