

**SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**AS A**  
**ROYAL PROVINCE**  
**1719-1776**

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## COAST DEFENSES

The first colonists had no sooner settled on the west bank of the Ashley than they began to construct fortifications. Governor West wrote to Lord Ashley, March 2, 1671, that thirty acres had been cleared and palisades erected to protect the settlement from the Indians.<sup>1</sup>

In 1680, the colony moved across to the neck of land between the Ashley and Cooper rivers. The town as then laid out consisted of a narrow strip of land along the Cooper river front, bounded on the west by the present Meeting street, and on the north and south by creeks extending along what are now Market and Water streets.<sup>2</sup>

The earliest statutes on the subject of fortifications are lost. Walls and trenches were at once constructed, but they were doubtless very weak and had to be frequently repaired. When Governor Archdale came out in 1695, he was instructed to fortify the town and grant it a charter. The work then begun was continued by his successors, Deputy Governor Blake and Governors Moore and Johnson. In 1704, the fortifications consisted of six bastions, two half-moons or ravelins, and a line of palisades and trenches. On the Cooper river side were Craven's bastion, at the extreme northeast near the foot of the present Market street; a half-moon near the end of Broad street; Granville's bastion just north of the creek that ran through Water street; and Blake's bastion on an island at the mouth of the creek. Along the northern bank of the creek a line of palisades

<sup>1</sup> Shaftesbury Papers, *S. Car. His. Soc. Col.*, V, 267.

<sup>2</sup> J. J. Pringle Smith in *Charleston Year Book*, 1880, 242-243.

and entrenchments extended to Meeting street at its intersection with Tradd, up Meeting to the neighborhood of Cumberland, and thence across to Craven's bastion at the Market street wharf. At the intersection of Church street and Stoll's alley was Ashley's bastion; of Tradd and Meeting, Colleton's bastion; of Broad and Meeting, Johnson's covered half-moon; and at the extreme northwest, at the corner of Cumberland and Meeting, Carteret's bastion.<sup>1</sup>

The walls were evidently very weak, for an act of November 4, 1704, stated that some evil-disposed persons had been climbing over and breaking them down. A penalty of fining or whipping was provided for all who scaled the walls or went down into the trenches.<sup>2</sup> As a result of this weakness, repairs had continually to be made. Laws for that purpose were enacted in 1707, 1714, 1719, 1721, 1725, and at various other times.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the walls, moats, and bastions, Charleston was further protected by a fort at the entrance to the harbor. Built in 1708 at the extreme east end of James's Island, it was at first known as the fort on Windmill Point, but was later called Fort Johnson. A guard of two officers and twelve men was stationed there.<sup>4</sup>

The town soon began to expand beyond the walls,

<sup>1</sup> Oldmixon in Carroll, *His. Col. of S. Car.*, II, 448; McCrady, *S. Car. under Prop. Govt.*, 341-342; Maps in McCrady, frontispiece, and *Charleston Year Book*, 1880, op. 242, 1884, frontispiece, 1886, op. 280; Map of Charleston printed by Walker, Evans, and Cogswell Co., 1895.

<sup>2</sup> *Statutes*, VII, 36-37.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-47, 60-65, 65-71, 72-73, III, 250.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 328, 333-336.

especially toward the south and west. There was little or no attempt made to extend the limits of the fortifications, however, until after the Spanish war of 1740-42. A watch-house was erected in White Point Garden at an early date, and, in 1708, intrenchments were thrown up along the point for purposes of defense.<sup>1</sup>

The next move was made in January, 1736, when Gabriel Bernard, a European engineer, was taken into the service of the province.<sup>2</sup> In accordance with his recommendations, there was passed, May 29, 1736, "An Act for repairing the old and building of new Fortifications for the security and defense of this Province from attacks by Sea, and for appointing Commissioners for carrying on such works: and for continuing New Church Street and Little Street to Ashley River."<sup>3</sup> As this law has not been preserved, we can only infer some of its provisions from the title and from various committee reports. Bernard was employed as engineer at a salary of seven hundred pounds per annum. Church street was continued from Vanderhorst creek (Water street) to South Battery. A curtain line of brick or stone was to be constructed along the bay, and the front between White Point and Vanderhorst creek filled up.<sup>4</sup> Very little was done under this act beyond the erection of a battery in White Point Garden at the

<sup>1</sup> *Statutes*, II, 328.

<sup>2</sup> *Council Journals, Ms.*, VI, 170-171, 317. Tradition says that he was an uncle of Rousseau. *Charleston Year Book*, 1880, 255-256.

<sup>3</sup> *Statutes*, III, 436. Title only.

<sup>4</sup> *Council Journals, Ms.*, VI, 317, VII, 11; *Com. House Journals, Ms.*, IX, 554-555. There was a bridge across the creek erected by Colonel Vanderhorst.

foot of Church street, which was called Broughton's battery in honor of the lieutenant-governor.<sup>1</sup>

The Carolinians, as we have seen, were badly frightened in the summer of 1742 by an incursion of the Spaniards into Georgia. On July 7, the assembly resolved to provide means for putting Charleston in the best possible posture of defense. Colonel Othniel Beale was employed to draw up plans for fortifying the southern and lower eastern portions of the town. Fortifications were hastily constructed of cedar posts from Vanderhorst creek (Water street) to Broughton's battery, perhaps a little to the west of the present East Battery, and from there "to the point at the landing on Conseiller's creek," probably near the foot of Gibbes street. Altogether about six thousand pounds were expended.<sup>2</sup>

As soon as the immediate danger was over, the zeal of the assembly perceptibly cooled. After making complaints of the heavy expense, they finally refused outright to make any further appropriations until a capable engineer could be secured to draw up plans. Governor Glen was requested to send to the Bahamas for engineer Bruce.<sup>3</sup> This was done, and Captain Bruce arrived in Charleston early in January, 1745. After

<sup>1</sup> I can find no direct evidence that this battery was constructed in 1736-37, but we may infer as much from the fact that it is often mentioned in the journals after, but never before, that date. Furthermore, its name would indicate that it was erected during the administration of Lieutenant-Governor Broughton, 1735-37.

<sup>2</sup> *Council Journals, Ms.*, VIII, 143-144, 378, X, 146-147, 152-153, 167-168, 236, XI, 207, 260, 269-270; *Public Records, Ms.*, XXI, 17-28.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 388.

looking round for a few days, he made a report to the governor and council calling attention to some weak points in the defenses which had hitherto been overlooked. He said that Charleston was strongly defended by nature on all sides except the northern, and suggested that the neck should be fortified at once. The bar was a great security and Fort Johnson commanded the usual entrance to the harbor. There was another entrance, however, by way of Hog Island creek. To protect this he recommended the erection of a battery on the marsh land opposite the curtain line, to be in the shape of a horseshoe with the open end toward Charleston.<sup>1</sup> The report was favorably received, and Captain Bruce drew up two plans for a citadel, to be located on the upper neck midway between the Ashley and the Cooper. One was for a large citadel, 4,592 feet in circumference with four bastions, the other for a smaller one, 3,760 feet in circumference with two bastions and two demi-bastions.<sup>2</sup> These plans had to be given up as the expense was greater than the province could bear.<sup>3</sup>

The recommendations made in the report were, however, strictly adhered to. An act, ratified May 25, 1745, ordered the commissioners of the fortifications to cut a moat through land and marsh from Craven's bastion to the Charleston workhouse, said moat to be thirty-six feet wide, as deep as possible, and commanded by one or two bastions. On the marsh south of Hog Island

<sup>1</sup> *Council Journals, Ms.*, XIV, 88-90.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 127-128.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 250.

creek—the site of Castle Pinckney—there was to be erected a horseshoe battery of not more than sixteen cannon. The total expense was estimated at £20,000 currency, to be paid out of the fortification fund. As there was not enough money on hand belonging to that fund £20,000 in fortification orders were to be issued, receivable in payment of all duties appropriated for fortifications.<sup>1</sup>

Work was begun at once. The commissioners of the fortifications reported, February 22, 1746, that the moat and rampart across the neck were almost completed. The law had provided for not more than two bastions, but they regarded these as insufficient and erected three. Four or five were really needed.<sup>2</sup> The assembly approved the work and resolved that two more bastions or ravelins should be constructed, one of them at the high road, that is at King street.<sup>3</sup>

As near as we can judge from the limited data at hand, this line of fortifications extended from Market street wharf to the marshes of the Ashley river, striking the present Colonial lake about midway between Queen and Beaufain streets. King street was crossed at Clifford, and Mazyck at Magazine, the workhouse being on the southwest corner of Mazyck and Magazine.

The horseshoe battery on the marsh was probably not erected at this time, as the expense of the other work was so great. Its estimated cost was four thousand pounds.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Statutes*, III, 653-656.

<sup>2</sup> *Council Journals, Ms.*, XIV, Part II, 27-29.

<sup>3</sup> *Com. House Journals, Ms.*, XXI, 357.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, XXVII, 439; *Council Journals, Ms.*, XV, 158.

For the next few years little was done beyond keeping the fortifications in repair. This work was entrusted to a special board of commissioners containing some eight or ten members. With the approbation of the governor and council, they were empowered to make contracts and purchase lands for erecting forts and batteries in such places as might be necessary. There was a special fund at their disposal derived from an extra import duty on rum, Madeira wine, sugar, molasses, and a few other articles. It varied in amount from £7,000 to £9,000 per annum until 1751, when the general duty act fixed it at £5,000.<sup>1</sup>

Governor Glen looked upon the appointment of such commissioners as an encroachment upon his duties as chief executive. He attempted to destroy the board gradually by refusing to fill vacancies as they occurred. A message from the assembly, dated January 23, 1752, called his attention to the ruinous condition of the fortifications and urged him to complete the board at once. No attention was paid to this, nor to another message of the same character which was sent up on March 11. Finally, a third message was sent on April 29, complaining that their requests had been disregarded and again urging that the vacancies should be filled. They stated further that they had heard that there were over twelve thousand pounds in the fortification fund, and recommended that it should be used to repair Forts Frederick and Johnson.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Council Journals, Ms.*, XV, 158; *Com. House Journals, Ms.*, XXVI, 61; *Public Records, Ms.*, XXV, 110; *Statutes*, III, 749.

<sup>2</sup> *Com. House Journals, Ms.*, XXVII, 139-140, 233, 400-401.

In his reply, made a few days later, Glen called attention first to the weak condition of the fortifications, notwithstanding the great amount of money that had been expended on them. Before beginning repairs, a skillful engineer should be called upon to draw up plans, and he suggested that there was now such a gentleman in the province whom they could employ. Coming to the request to fill up the vacancies on the board, he declared that such establishments as commissioners of fortifications were an encroachment on His Majesty's authority, and that he would make no appointments until he had consulted with his council.<sup>1</sup>

The skillful engineer referred to by the governor was Mr. William Gerald De Brahm, formerly a captain engineer in the service of the emperor Charles VI, but at that time a resident of Georgia.<sup>2</sup> He was highly recommended by Count Seckendorf, under whom he had served.<sup>3</sup> With the advice of his council, Glen had sent to Georgia for him to come over and draw up plans for repairing the fortifications.

The assembly refused to consent to the employment of De Brahm on the ground that it would be unsafe to allow a foreigner to sound the channel and make plans of the fortifications. As for the vacancies on the board of commissioners, they expressed surprise that the governor should dare to say that a law of the province encroached on His Majesty's prerogative. At any rate,

<sup>1</sup> *Com. House Journals, Ms.*, XXVII, 434-440.

<sup>2</sup> *S. Car. Gazette*, No. 1141, May 6, 1756.

<sup>3</sup> *Public Records, Ms.*, XXV, 120.

the law was in force until repealed by the king and could not legally be dispensed with by the governor.<sup>1</sup>

Two days later, that is on May 16, the assembly adjourned to November 21. The province was visited by a violent hurricane, on September 15, which destroyed houses and bridges, entirely demolished the fortifications, and caused considerable loss of life.<sup>2</sup> The assembly was hastily called together to take measures for the relief of the sufferers.

The necessity of rebuilding the fortifications renewed the old controversy. The assembly insisted that the membership of the board of commissioners should be completed and that the work of reconstruction should begin at once. Glen, on the other hand, declared that the first step should be the employment of a competent engineer to draw up plans. The old fortifications had been built in piecemeal fashion and were always weak; now was an opportunity to begin anew according to some definite system. The dispute dragged on for several weeks. The assembly declared that, if an engineer was necessary, they would prefer to employ Colonel Beale rather than a foreigner, whose recommendations were written in the French language. Glen yielded so far as to appoint the commissioners of the fortifications, but the dispute in regard to De Brahm caused a delay of nearly three years in the systematic repairing and

<sup>1</sup> *Com. House Journals, Ms.*, XXVII, 546-550.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 581. For a detailed account of this storm, one of the severest ever known in Charleston, see note to Ramsey, *His. of S. Car.*, II, 320-326.

rebuilding of the fortifications.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile the commissioners were spending the £5,000 per annum belonging to the fortification fund in making some haphazard repairs. The damage done by the hurricane, as well as the subsequent repairs, are described in a report of February 4, 1755. Craven's bastion (at Market street) had been almost entirely washed away, but had since been repaired, with the exception of the parapet, and now was equipped with eight twelve-pound cannon. The Half Moon (at Broad street) had a platform in fairly good condition, with five large and two small cannon lying upon it. At and around Granville's bastion (at Water street) were twenty-five new and twelve old cannon. A small bastion between Granville's bastion and Broughton's battery (probably at Church and South Battery streets) had been badly damaged, but the brick work had since been repaired and the foundation well secured with ballast stones. No parapet had yet been raised or platform laid. There were seventeen good cannon mounted and twelve old ones lying on skids. The bastion at the foot of King street had been in ruins since the hurricane. Tipper's bastion, a little to the west (about the end of Legaré street), and the bastion near Conseiller's creek (about the end of Gibbes street) were in the same condition.<sup>2</sup> The cedar palisades extending from Conseiller's creek round to Gran-

<sup>1</sup> *Com. House Journals, Ms.*, XXVII, 591, 611-612, XXVIII, 28-31, 86-92, 108, 110-117, XXX, 531, 623-624; *S. Car. Gazette*, No. 1141, May 6, 1756; *Public Records, Ms.*, XXV, 106-115, XXXII, 386.

<sup>2</sup> I cannot ascertain the exact dates of the construction of these smaller bastions. They were probably erected in 1742-43 under the superintendence of Colonel Beale.

ville's bastion were almost all washed away, only a few posts being left between Tipper's and Conseiller's bastions. The rampart across the north end of the town, being built of loose sandy soil, had suffered very greatly, much of it having fallen into the moat alongside it. The bastions and ravelins along this line were also in a ruinous condition. In Fort Johnson the platform of the lower battery was destroyed and several heavy cannon lost. The upper fort also suffered some, but it had since been repaired and thirteen cannon were now mounted.<sup>1</sup>

Taking this report under consideration, the assembly forgot their old animosity toward De Brahm and requested Governor Glen to send for him. Arriving in Charleston early in April, 1755, he made a careful examination of the town and harbor and then presented elaborate plans for fortifying the town on all sides. Lieutenant-Governor Bull states that the scheme was laid aside because it would have kept De Brahm long in the pay of the province, but would have been of little real value in defending the town.<sup>2</sup> Captain De Brahm had to limit his energies to rebuilding the curtain line from Vanderhorst creek (Water street) around the battery to the land of Thomas Shubrick, in the neighborhood of Gibbes street. It doubtless followed the line of Colonel Beale's cedar palisades. The work was eighteen months in building and over £30,000 was expended.<sup>3</sup> A report of a committee, dated March 10,

<sup>1</sup> *Com. House Journals, Ms.*, XXX, 197-203.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 433-434, 524-525; *Public Records, Ms.*, XXXII, 386.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, XXXI, Part I, 118-119; *Public Records, Ms.*, XXVII, 61, 179.

1756, intimates that the method of construction was unsatisfactory. The walls, according to the report, consisted of fascines laid on the loose sand without any foundation or security against the waves and violent rains, except a few stones piled on the outside.<sup>1</sup>

Early in 1757, Governor Lyttleton wrote to Lord Loudon, then in command of the British forces in America, asking for an experienced engineer. He immediately sent Captain Hesse to Charleston. Lieutenant-Colonel Bouquet, commander of the Royal American troops, who arrived in the province in June, 1757, was also well versed in engineering.<sup>2</sup> Plans were formed for building a new line of defenses across the neck.<sup>3</sup> By a majority of only two votes in the assembly, an act was passed, July 6, 1757, appropriating £44,300 currency to carry on the work. Fortification orders were issued, to be redeemed gradually by additional import duties on wines, rum, biscuit, and flour.<sup>4</sup> All the orders were called in and destroyed by June 2, 1761, as a law was then enacted for repealing the clause for the levy of an additional duty.<sup>5</sup> The work was partially carried out, but never completed.<sup>6</sup>

The peace of 1763 removed all danger from the French, Spanish, and Indians. Accordingly, cannons were dismantled, carriages housed, and the fortifica-

<sup>1</sup> *Com. House Journals, Ms.*, XXXI, Part I, 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XXXI, Part II, 143; *S. Car. Gazette*, No. 1195, June 23, 1757.

<sup>3</sup> *Public Records, Ms.*, XXXII, 386-387.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, XXVII, 285, 288; *Statutes*, IV, 45. £44,300 currency was equivalent to £6,328:11:5 sterling.

<sup>5</sup> *Statutes*, IV, 150-151.

<sup>6</sup> *Public Records, Ms.*, XXXII, 387.

tions generally neglected until the outbreak of the Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

#### FRONTIER DEFENSES

Frequent invasions of the Spanish and Indians made the protection of the frontiers an absolute necessity. Some attention has already been paid to this subject in discussing rangers, independent companies, and scout boats. The first fort erected in the province was Fort Johnson, in 1708. That, being designed for the special protection of the town rather than as a frontier defense, has been considered in connection with the coast defenses. The earliest frontier outposts were those established during and just after the war with the Yemassee in 1715. On March 7, 1716, the assembly resolved that garrisons should be established at seven different points. The largest of these were at Port Royal and at Savanno Town, which soon received the name of Fort Moore.<sup>2</sup> Fort Moore was situated on the eastern bank of the Savannah river, six miles below Augusta, in what afterwards became New Windsor township.<sup>3</sup> Later in the year Fort Congrees—or Congarees—was erected on the Congaree river just below the present site of Columbia.<sup>4</sup> In 1716, forty-two men and officers were stationed at Fort Moore, twenty-seven at Port Royal,<sup>5</sup> and perhaps

<sup>1</sup> *Public Records, Ms.*, XXXII, 387; *Journal of a Voyage to Charleston in So. Carolina by Pelatiah Webster in 1765, Southern History Association Publications*, II, 135.

<sup>2</sup> *Com. House Journals, Ms.*, V, 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Council Journals, Ms.*, XIV, 242-245; *Public Records, Ms.*, XVIII, 242.

<sup>4</sup> *Com. House Journals, Ms.*, V, 111, 151; McCrady, *S. Car. under Royal Govt.*, 299.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 166.

about the latter number at the Congarees. As soon as the danger from the Indians passed away, the garrisons were reduced and the smaller posts abandoned. There were, in 1720, eight or ten small cannon at Port Royal and five or six at each of the other two forts.<sup>1</sup>

In 1721, Fort King George, or Fort Altamaha, was constructed by Colonel John Barnwell near the mouth of the Altamaha river on the extreme southwestern frontier. It was garrisoned by His Majesty's independent company, which came over with Governor Nicholson in 1721.<sup>2</sup> As we have already seen, this fort was destroyed by fire in January, 1726. Temporary barracks for the troops were erected and they were kept there until September, 1727, when the place was entirely abandoned.<sup>3</sup>

The next fort erected was at a place called Pallachocola Old Town. It was probably situated on the Savannah river, just above the Florida Central and Peninsula railroad bridge, in what is now Effingham county, Georgia. A small palisade fort was constructed under an act of February 23, 1723.<sup>4</sup> A garrison was maintained there until 1735, when it was dismissed and the fort was turned over to the Georgia authorities.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Public Records, Ms.*, VIII, 68.

<sup>2</sup> *Public Records, Extra, Ms.*, I, Part I, 17, 129, 193; *Com. House Journals, Ms.*, V, 533-534, VI, 71-72, 86, 87; *S. Car. His. Soc. Col.*, II, 148.

<sup>3</sup> *Public Records, Ms.*, XI, 287, XII, 239; *Council Journals, Ms.*, IV, 65.

<sup>4</sup> *Statutes*, III, 179-180.

<sup>5</sup> *Council Journals, Ms.*, VI, 70, 118-119.