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HISTORICAL
MEMORANDUM

RELATING TO

FORTS

IN

NEW PROVIDENCE

NASSAU
MONTAGU
CHARLOTTE
FINCASTLE



NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE.

"THE NASSAU GUARDIAN."

1913.

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HISTORICAL MEMORANDUM RELATING
TO FORTS IN NEW PROVIDENCE.

FORT NASSAU.

1696 to 1837.

The site of Fort Nassau is now occupied by a part of the western portion of the Hotel Colonial as the Fort lay about 300 feet north and west of Nassau Court. The large well (Blackbeard's) under the Hotel was in the south-west bastion of the Fort.

There appears to have been a fort on this site as early as 1672 as application was made for "a King's flag for the forte" in the petition sent to the Governor of Jamaica, Sir Thomas Lynch, by the Governor of the Bahamas, John Wentworth, under cover of his letter dated 23rd of August 1672. (C. O. 1-29.)* 1672.

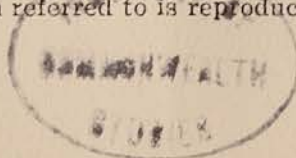
A stockaded fort was built in 1687. (C. O. 1687. 138-6.)

Under Governor Nicholas Trott's "administration the town of Nassau was restored, the church rebuilt, and a fort of twenty-eight guns erected to "protect the town" (*Admiral Grave's claim to Bahamas p. 5.*) 1690.

On the 12th of April 1695 the Lords Proprietors in a letter to Governor Nicholas Trott approved of the building of a City to be called Nassau although two Acts for this purpose had been disallowed. (C. O. 5-289) and on the 29th of January 1696 they also approved of his building a fort. (C. O. 5-289.) 1695.

The completion of this fort was reported under date of the 6th of February 1697. (C. O. 5-1287). 1697

* C. O. refers to the Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Office series. No plan referred to is reproduced.



It was planted with twenty-two cannon and the town at that time consisted of one hundred and sixty houses and was called Nassau. (*Bruce's Memoirs p. 391.*)

1699. Writing on the 27th of May 1699 to Governor Nicollas Webb the Lords Proprietors said that the expenses for the building of the fort should be reimbursed by An Act of Assembly. (*C.O. 5-289.*)

1700. The walls of the fort had been partly levelled by the Spaniards 27th of May 1700. (*C.O. 5-1260.*)

1703. When the French and Spaniards were at war with England in 1703 and Ellis Lightfoot was President and Deputy Governor of these Islands the enemy surprised them so completely that they found the inhabitants feasting with their President and their neglected fort without any garrison. The enemy destroyed the fort, spiked the guns, burnt the town, and church and plundered the inhabitants. (*Bruce's Memoirs p. 392.*)

1718. In consequence of the depredations of the pirates and at the request of the Merchants of London and Bristol George the First sent Captain Woodes Rogers out as Governor with a company of one hundred men and a large quantity of all kinds of stores to fortify the place. This first royal Governor arrived off New Providence with his fleet on the evening of the 1st of August 1718. He was informed that the fort was extremely out of repair only one gun was mounted (a nine pounder) and that there was no accommodation for his men except one little hut or house which was inhabited by an old fellow whom the pirates in derision called "Governor Sawney." There were nearly one thousand pirates on shore awaiting the King's pardon. The fleet entered the harbour the following day and the entire day was spent in mooring and securing the vessels. When the Governor landed the next morning—3rd of August—he was

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received by Thomas Walker Esq. the Chief Justice, and Thomas Taylor, Esq. the President of the Council and other principal inhabitants. The pirate captains had drawn up their crews in two lines reaching from the waterside to the fort and as the Governor and the other officers marched between these lines the crews made a running fire over the Governor's head. Having arrived at the Fort the Governor's Commission was opened and read and he was sworn in. As there were no accommodations for his men they were forced to unbend the sails and make camps of them, until houses were built. The method of building those inside the fort was by making six little holes in the rock, at convenient distances, and in each hole was stuck a forked pole. On these poles, from one to the other, were placed crossed poles or rafters, which being lathed on the top and on the side with small sticks were afterwards covered with palmeta (palmetto leaf) and then the house was finished for the builders did not much trouble themselves about the ornaments of doors and windows. The repair work on the fort was carried on at the same time, everybody (excepting officers) being obliged to work four days in the week upon fortifications, so that in a short time a strong entrenchment was cast around the fort, and being also well pallisadoed it was rendered tolerably strong.

On the 10th day of September 1718 a Court Martial was held in the Fort upon a number of pirates who had been captured. Seven were acquitted and the following nine were condemned to death: John Augur, William Cunningham, Dennis MacKCarthy, William Dowling William Lewis, Thomas Morris, George Bendall, William Ling, and George Rounsivel. On Friday the 12th of December 1718 at 10 o'clock in the morning the condemned men were led to the top of the rampart fronting the sea. Thence they were conducted down the ladder to the foot of the fort wall to the gallows whereon

a black flag was hoisted. They were allowed three quarters of an hour under the gallows which they spent in singing psalms. At the last moment George Rounsivel was pardoned. (*Johnson's History of the Pirates.*)

1722. Governor Woodes Rodgers in his report thereon sent by command of the King said that he was proceeding on the works of the fortifications at Providence with as much expedition as possible and when completed they would be impregnable. (*Council Minutes 5th March 1722-3.*)
1729. A view of the Town and Harbour was taken in 1729 from outside of Hog Island and shows Fort Nassau apparently in good condition.
1733. Richard Fitz William was appointed Governor in 1733 and he brought with him an addition of 50 men and a large quantity of all sorts of stores and an engineer (Mr. Thomas More) to fortify the place. More's sudden death prevented him from making any great progress with the work. (*Bruce's Memoirs p. 394.*)
1741. Peter Henry Bruce, an engineer of international reputation, was appointed on the 1st of July 1740 Chief Engineer to fortify the Bahama Islands, at twenty shillings a day. He arrived in Nassau on the 21st of April 1741 having come here by way of Carolina. Upon viewing Fort Nassau he found it in a very ruinous condition: the barracks, which were built of wood were ready to tumble down, and there was no other building within the fort; the powder magazine was a house that stood at some distance from the fort exposed in such a manner that anybody might set fire to it. He found 15 guns mounted upon very bad carriages. The remainder of the guns were scattered in every direction. Some of them were buried in the sand within high watermark, some were spiked and others rammed full of stones and sand.

The carriages, trucks and shot were dispersed in every direction. Bruce collected them with much difficulty as most of them had been made use of by the inhabitants for ballasting their vessels. After he had got the guns together he drilled those that had been spiked, cleaned all of them from rust and proved them by firing them. As the result he had 54 guns, consisting of six, nine, twelve and eighteen pounders, fit for service and these he mounted on the new carriages which had come out in the store ships from England. As there were no masons in the place he obtained two bricklayers from Philadelphia.

After the completion of Fort Montagu in July 1742 Bruce again turned his attention to Fort Nassau. When his money ran out he proposed going to Charleston until more arrived. But the Governor would not allow him to leave the island until Fort Nassau was finished and advanced his own money to Bruce for that purpose. Bruce had also made reports to the House of Assembly, of which he had been a member, and the House unanimously made the necessary assessments to assist in completing the forts.

Fort Nassau and the sea Battery were finished at the end of December 1744.

Bruce, in his memoirs, which were originally written in German, records as follows :

Fort Nassau and Sea Battery were finished the latter end of December, which I rebuilt almost from the foundations, as I found them in a very shattered ruinous condition: I found it necessary to add a new bastion in place of an old square tower, and built in it the powder magazine and gunner's store, each of them to contain 300 barrels of powder; and under the East curtain three large stores, or casemates, and a gate, all bomb proof; above the gate an arched apartment for the Governor, with a

view of the whole town and harbour; upon each point of the bastions are sentry boxes of stone; through the west curtain is a sally port and casemate, also bomb proof, before which is the Sea Battery; and the whole is surrounded with pallisades of mastich wood, eight inches square, and three inches distant from each other, eight feet above ground, and two feet sunk in the rock, well secured above and below with rails and braces. As there were formerly no buildings within the fort, except barracks of wood entirely decayed, I built new barracks of stone to contain six hundred men, and a suitable set of apartments for officers; likewise a kitchen and bake-house, with two ovens, above which are apartments for the chaplin, surgeon, gunner, and armourer; within the fort is a well with fresh water, and one before each gate within the pallisades. The whole is mounted with fifty-four pieces of cannon, 6, 9, 12, and 18 pounders, all on new carriages, besides twenty-six brass mortars, two of which are of seven inches, twelve of $5\frac{1}{2}$ and twelve of $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, mounted on new beds.

The finishing of both those forts cost government no more than four thousand pounds, whereas a former estimate (More's 1733), for the same thing, came to twelve thousand, two hundred fifty-four pounds nine shillings and ten pence three farthings; but as I happened to come here at a time when war was declared, and we were threatened with an invasion, and being then exposed to the insults of an enemy, the inhabitants very frankly provided materials for their own security, which, with the other frugal methods I took, saved the government several thousand pounds; but I was ill rewarded for this my faithful and dangerous service.

When all was finished, the governor and I attested each other's accounts, and I gave him a bill on the board of ordnance for two thousand and four hundred pounds he had laid out toward finishing

those works, and he gave me, at the same time, a certificate of my having performed and finished all the works necessary to be done in the island of Providence, which I gave in to the board of ordnance on my arrival in London. (*Bruce's Memoirs pp. 429-30.*)

John Gambier in his answers to certain questions in 1755 reported that there were two forts in the Colony, one situated at the south west entrance of the Harbour and the other at the south east. The walls, palasodoes and barracks were in very good order. The great guns were very much honey-combed and unfit for service. The carriages were entirely rotten with the exception of four which had been made locally at the beginning of the then late war. There was not more than twenty five barrels of powder in the Magazine. 1755.

A REPORT of the Repairs & Additions made to Forts Nassau & Montague and the two Water Batteries at New Providence one of the Bahama Islands. By order of the Honble. Thomas Gage Esquire Major General & Commander in Chief of his Majesty's Forces in North America &c. 1770.

In pursuance to your Excellency's Commands of the 28th of Octr. 1769 which you were pleased to honour me with I proceeded Novr. 4th 1769 to New Providence and arrived there Novr. 18th following and immediately presented your Excy's Dispatches to Govr. Thomas Shirley and consulted with him upon the best and most economical manner of fulfilling the Commission I was charged with.

With respect to the Works in general your Excellency will be able to judge of the ruinous state I found them in by the following necessary Repairs and Additions an Estimate of which I carefully calculated previous to opening the Works agreeable to the latter part of your Excellency's Orders, and then

commenced on the most essential part of them. And as the situation of Fort Nassau naturally pointed itself out as their principal Defence (as per Survey hereunto annexed) I made it my first and chief object of my attention.

REPAIRS AND ADDITIONS MADE TO FORT NASSAU.

Novr. 22d. I opened the Works by employing the several Artificers in repairing the North and South Pile of Officers and Soldiers Barracks within Nassau.

The Repairs consisted of an entire new Roof both as to Timbers and Shingling; New Doors and Casings, Window Shutters & Casings with new Locks, Bolts Hinges, Latches and Catches & fastenings; the floors repaired and supported by Beams and Shores; New Gutters laid through out: the whole painted as also the several Roofs for their preservation.

The Walls underpinned, pointed and whitewashed within and without.

This Powder Magazine I constructed in the North End of the East Curtin (being originally a Bombproof Casemate) and by far the most eligible spot for the purpose, excepting what is called the Powder Magazine which unfortunately is so situated as to be a meer receptacle for the Drainings of this Fort which obliged me to take the above resolution particularly when I found there 150 Barrels of damaged Powder & so much so as to be entirely unserviceable. This Work is pointed & whitewashed, & a Drain of 1 ft. by 1 ft. 6 in. chiselled into the Rock & arched with masonry directed underground through its Center; six Air Holes pierced, with Copper Gratings; A Wall built to enclose it, and give it a double security; the Rampart over it new laid with Bricks in a kind of Pozolano or Terrass: two Air Holes

pierced in the outer Wall: a floor laid of Pitch Pine and Red Cedar Sleepers and one new Door painted, with Fastnings.

The Water Polygon entirely secured from the Violent force of the Sea which daily encroached on those Water Fronts so as to have undermined them in a dangerous manner, especially their two Saliants: to prevent this a Revetement of Masonry was constructed of twelve feet base by seven feet perpendicular and protected without by one hundred and forty-eight Blackwood Piles drove into the Rock.

The Enceinte or Body of the place repaired by pointing, underpinning & whitewashing it throughout, internally and externally, the same of the Embasures, Merlons and Guerites.

Banquettes of Masonry constructed to all the Faces and Flanks, not one having ever been formed there before, and without which the Defences for Musquetry were rendered useless.

Drains & Water Courses cut by cold Chissels into the Rock for carrying off the very heavy Rains a material circumstance to have been till now neglected which was the principal cause (amongst others) of the ruinous state that these Works were in.

As to the Ramps there is but one, and even that would have been sufficient had it been so constructed as to have been practicable for the transporting of the Ordnance to and from the Works, for which purpose a bed of hewn Bermuda Stone was laid & covered over with several Courses of Rubble and Lime siftings, which had the desired effect.

The Principal Entrance & its Ornaments repaired and renewed: and Racks for Arms fixed up within contiguous to the Guard Bed.

The Outer Gate to the Principal Entrance (situated in the left face of the place of Arms in the East Curtin) made entirely new with all its Ironmongery, as likewise its Ornaments and covered with three Coats of Paint.

The Barrier to the Water Sally Port made new with all its necessary Ironmongery and painted twice over.

Bog-Houses both for Officers and Men repaired by supports and Braces of Cedar Scantling: One new Door, Lock Hinges & Bolt, the whole painted and the Roof Tarred.

A new Flag Staff fifty feet in height with a truck the whole hooped with Iron and proper Cordage, and twice painted.

The Pallisades which are respectable and advantageously disposed of are entirely repaired and covered with two coats of a Composition of C over Turpentine, Pitch, Tar, Spanish Brown, Lamp Black and Lynseed Oil. A double course of cedar Ribbands drove with seven inch spikes.

Forty eight Tompions turned for the Ordnance mounted on the Works, each made of Beef Wood and thrice painted.

The Carriages which are constructed entirely of Mahogany consist of forty six in number, and are completely repaired, & twice coated with Paint, Turpentine and Oil.

The two Kitchens which are situated under the Officers Barracks in the South Curtin are repaired; by pointing and whitewashing them, and altering both their Chimnies; levelling their floors, and making Drains through them into the main one to carry off the stagnated Waters which they must otherwise have been constantly subject to, from

their position. Their Doors and Casings made new with proper fastenings and Hingees; and painted. The Floors both repaired, and supported by replacing some Beams and strengthening others.

The Store Houses (which with Governor Thomas Shirley's consent) I have appropriated to that purpose, being but lately occupied as Barracks; they consist of three in number, and found them with lodgments of Water and the Stench on entering them insupportable, the Walls covered over with a green slime: these inconveniences proceeded from the want of Guttars to the south side of the Roof, the heavy rains having made their way down the retaining Wall of the Rampart which forms part of the South Pile of Soldiers Barracks.

Three Ovens repaired by pointing Bricking up and white washing them and altering the Direction of one of their Flues or Smoke Courses.

Two Wells repaired by clearing, cleaning and raising them somewhat above the Surface with Masonry together with new Platforms and painted: these Wells are sunk in the solid Rock.

All the Shot and Shells and Iron Trucks belonging to each of these Posts I have had carefully collected and stored in new Garlands, particularly the Shells, which till now were all piled without the Works.

Thirty six Handspikes of the young Mahogany for completing the Gun Carriages.

One Wheel-Barrow shod and painted.

One Triangle or Gin for mounting and dismounting the Guns made entirely new with all its Ironmongery and Apparatus, as Handspikes, eight fathom of white rope hauser, two three fold Iron

Blocks with Brass Sheaves, and the whole covered with three coats of Paint.

The forty six pieces of Cannon double coated to preserve them and the natures marked on each.

And thirteen double Births or Cradles of white pine with red cedar Frames for the troops made to work out the residue or Ballance of the sum prescribed, together with the remainder of the Boards Scantling and Nails.

The Water Battery which mounts six eighteen Pounders is constructed as an irregular Ravelin to the West Curtin of this Fort and is thoroughly repaired by pointing under-pinning and white washing it, making a new Saliant to it, and raising it's left Face to prevent the Enfilade and Reverse from the commanding ground within the range of Musquetry: It's Platforms (of hewn stone) are likewise repaired, and the whole put in a proper State of Defence.

Fort Montague is a Redout only, of Masonry situated two miles to the Eastward of Fort Nassau, as per general plan hereunto annexed. Its Barracks (if they may be so called) consist of two Rooms repaired as Fort Nassau and with the same kind of Materials, as has it's Enceinte, Area, Powder Magazine, Battery Ordnance and Carriages whose numbers and natures are already ascertained in the returns delivered in to your Excellency.

JOHN MONTRESOR, Engr.

To his Excy. Major Genl. Gage Comdr. in Chief &c.

[Enclosed in Major General Gages letter to the E. of Hillsborough, 18th Aug. 1770 (No. 48).]

The following is an extract from a report of a select committee of the House of Assembly recommending the conversion of the site of Fort Nassau into one for Public Buildings. 1789.

Extract from the Minutes of the House of Assembly of the 28th April 1789. Manuscript Votes p. 250.

REPORT of the Committee appointed to enquire into and report on the state of these Islands.

. . . . In the course of the present investigation your Committee were led to enquire into the situation of Fort Nassau and they find that so early as the year 1767 representations were made to the Secretary of State respecting the defenceless condition of that fort and in consequence thereof a sum of money was appropriated by Government for its repairs, which was inadequate to the purpose, or improperly applied. After the peace on the arrival of Brigadier General McArthur the Fort was found in almost total ruin, it being the only place of defence in the Island; the General and Lieutenant Wilson the Engineer took such measures as were at that time indispensibly necessary towards putting it into a tenable and secure state; and there being no place of sufficient security for the reception of powder and ordinance stores a magazine was at that time constructed and capacious stores erected contiguous to the said fort and surrounded with a very strong picketing. After the great hurricane of 1785 the ramparts of the fort being almost entirely sapped, very heavy expense was again necessarily incurred, to prevent them by strong abutments from falling into the sea; however notwithstanding the frequent repairs, and the considerable sums expended about that fort, your committee find it at present in a defenceless state (in which opinion commanding officer of His Majesty's troops concurred with the committee) nor from its situation

being commanded and almost overlooked by two or three heights one within four hundred yards of its wall can it ever be made as your Committee apprehend a fortification of strength; These considerations seem forcibly to have struck our present Governor, His Excellency Lord Dunmore, who soon after his arrival caused another fort called Fort Charlotte to be begun on a commanding height in the vicinage of the Town which is now so far completed that from its strength and situation it is fully sufficient for the defence of the bar of the harbour of Nassau the town and its western approaches.

Your committee therefore apprehend that Fort Nassau is now wholly unnecessary to the protection and defence of the Island of New Providence, and that it is probable when Government is made acquainted therewith the troops and stores will be removed to Fort Charlotte as most eligible from its healthful situation and the security afforded by the strength of the fortifications

Your Committee has been thus particular respecting Fort Nassau as on the event of the removal of the troops and stores and its relinquishment by Government the site of it and the ordnance yard would be the best adapted for the erection of the Public Buildings so much wanted being near the centre of the town of Nassau and having the harbour on the one side and an open square called "the Parade" on the other.

Your Committee also are of the opinion that the buildings now within the walls of the fort and ordnance and barrack yards with additions might be fitted for the present use for the various civil departments and that a sufficient space of ground would remain for the erection of other public edifices

which the increasing population of the country may at any future time render necessary.

THOS. BROWN.	JNO. MCINTOSH.
JNO. KERR.	JNO. O'HALLORAN.
JOHN MARTIN.	A. MURRAY.
THOS. FORBES.	JNO. MCKENZIE.

Lord Dunmore wrote to Lord Sydney on the 31st August, 1789, to the following effect:

Public buildings badly needed for the General Assembly and Courts of Justice, there being at present only a small building in a ruinous state with merely two rooms in it, in one of which the General Assembly and Courts of Justice are held, the other being the gaol. No other room available for any purpose, even as retiring room for juries, &c., &c. Council and Assembly desire the grant of the site and buildings of Fort Nassau. These may be converted, at small expense, to serve the above purposes, and also for the Custom House. "Fort Nassau, from its situation, commanded and overlooked as it is by heights, could never have been of any essential service, but at present it is entirely useless, the Ramparts being so much mouldered and decayed that a Gun cannot be fired from them without the risk of their tumbling to pieces." The barracks are badly constructed and ill situated. Had the works at Fort Charlotte not been stopped, Lord Dunmore would have erected barracks there. Many advantages.

Lord Grenville writing to Lord Dunmore under date of 26th November, 1790, informed him as follows: "The granting of the site of Fort Nassau and the present ordnance and barrack yard, to the Council and Assembly as desired is a measure which cannot be acceded to, at least until a survey and report has been made thereon." 1790.

Three of the ten companies of the 47th or Landcashire Regiment of Foot which garrisoned Nassau in 1790 were quartered in Fort Nassau. (*Guardian Almanack, 1911.*)

1802. McKinnen speaks of a considerable square in the western division of the town the north side of which, "near the water, is bounded by palisadoes, enclosing the works of a neglected fortress, from whence the town is named." (*McKinnen's West Indies, p. 213.*)

1837. Fort Nassau was pulled down in 1837 to make room for the Military Barracks which were erected to take the place of those east of Fort Charlotte, which had been condemned as unhealthy and were subsequently demolished. (*Guardian Almanac 1911 p. 32.*)

Governor Elias Hasket was imprisoned in Fort Nassau after his deposition in 1702.

1891. There are also a number of plans of Fort Nassau in the Department of the Surveyor General and Civil Engineer which were handed over to that Department by the military authorities upon their departure from the Colony in 1891. Plans are also in London, at the Colonial Office, War Office and Public Record Office.

There is a fort of this name in Demerara on the right bank of the Berbice River some 75 miles from its mouth but the fort has almost entirely disappeared.

1899-1900. Hotel Colonial erected partly on site of Fort Nassau, Military Barracks and Fleming Square. The officers quarters remain *in situ* east of the Hotel.

FORT MONTAGU.

1741.

From the representation of the Commissioners for trade and plantations to the House of Lords dated January 14th 1734 it would seem that as early as 1728 the building of a fort to command the eastern entrance to the harbour was begun. (C. O. 5-5.)

It was not however until the arrival of Peter Henry Bruce, an engineer of international reputation, that the present Fort Montagu was built and named after the Duke of Montagu. Bruce was appointed on the 1st of July 1740 Chief Engineer to fortify the Bahama Islands, at twenty shillings a day. He arrived in Nassau on the 21st of April 1741 having come here by way of Carolina.

With characteristic energy he immediately set to work providing material for the erection of Fort Montagu on the south east point of the harbour about three miles from Nassau. Both Governor Tinker, with whom Bruce had come to the Bahamas, and his predecessor, Governor Fitzwilliam, had provided lime but it was at so great a distance that Bruce made his lime on the spot. He found great inconvenience in providing stone which was carried from the woods on the heads of the negroes as there was no such thing as a "wheel carriage" in the Island. Rumours reaching him about the 8th of June 1741 concerning a projected expedition from Havana to make a descent on New Providence, Bruce, who had been elected a member of the House of Assembly in preference to being appointed a member of the Council, laid the defenceless state of the Island before the Assembly. The Assembly ordered all vessels and boats to carry stones for the erection of the Fort and also a number of mastic trees for pallisades.

Governor John Tinker laid the foundation stone on the 10th of June 1741 in the presence of the principal inhabitants, and named the fort Montagu and the sea battery, which was immediately north-east of the fort, Bladen's battery. (Governor Tinker's son was named John Bladen.)

Bruce experienced many difficulties in his work because of quarrels which he had with Lieut. Stuart and the Governor.

1741. Bruce in his memoirs deals with Fort Montagu as follows : (pp. 396-399).

Upon the 10th of June the governor laid the foundation stone, in the presence of the principal inhabitants, and named the fort Montagu, and the sea battery Bladen's Battery. All the stone on this and the adjacent islands is of so soft a nature, when raised from the quarries, that we could cut and shape them in any form with very little labour; and after they have been some time exposed in the open air, they turn hard as flint, with this excellent property, that in firing into the walls, the ball lodges as in a mud wall, without making the least breach; this I proved by several shot from an eighteen pounder. I found no small difficulty in getting fresh water for the mortar: I was at first supplied by a small pool of rain water, but when that was dried up I had recourse to digging a well through this soft rock; and getting as low as the level of the sea we found water very fresh, by the sea water having filtered through the stone, and left its saline particles behind. We found afterwards that the farther we dug from the sea, the water proved to be so much the fresher. The masters of vessels provided themselves with filtering stones, which contained several gallons, to rectify their spoiled water on board. The mastich wood, which the inhabitants delivered for palisades, was as hard and heavy as iron: I was obliged to form them while the wood was green, for

when they are fully dry, there is no possibility of working them. The inhabitants affirmed to me that they would last above a century; they are so hard that a musket ball makes no impression on them; they assured me they were proof against swivel shot, but this I did not think proper to try.

Fort Montagu and Bladen's Battery were finished the latter end of July, 1742, and mounted eight 18, three 9. and six 6 pounders. Within the fort is a terraced cistern, containing thirty tons of rain water and so contrived as to receive all that falls within the fort, with a drain to carry off the superfluous water; there are barracks for officers and soldiers, a guard room, and powder magazine, bomb proof, to contain ninety-five barrels of powder; two of its sides are close upon the sea, and the two land sides are well secured by mastich pallisades. When the fort was finished, I invited the governor and principal inhabitants to it, and then delivered his excellency the keys thereof, under a discharge of all the cannon. The Governor and inhabitants were now extremely well pleased to consider themselves in a condition to repel the invasion of an enemy, as the back door through which the place often had been surprised, was now shut up; and in this good humour the governor wrote the following letter to the Duke of Montagu.

New Providence, Aug. 28. 1742.

"My Lord",

I should have presented my duty to your grace much sooner, but waited till Captain Bruce had finished the fort, which I have taken the liberty of by your grace's illustrious name, as a mark of respect and veneration due to your graces person and merit. It is situated so as to guard the eastern part of this island very securely, and is as strong as anything of its size can be; and I must do the gentleman who has the direction of those works, the justice to say, I believe the public money was never more frugally or more

justly administered; which is a proof of your grace's excellent judgment in the choice of men. He is now engaged about the other works, at Fort Nassau; and as he proposes to lay before your grace, and the board of ordnance, the absolute necessity there will be of erecting a strong redoubt, in order to complete the well-fortifying of this island, a farther sum of money will be wanting than the sixteen hundred pounds already allowed: which soon be laid out in raising the old fort from the ruinous condition it lies in now. I think, by the nearest estimate we can make, there will be still wanting two thousand five hundred pounds: which when your grace is pleased to compare with the mighty sum Mr. Moore's plan would have taken to put in execution, I hope this will be thought a trifle; especially when the ill consequence of such a place falling into an enemy's hands, is taken into consideration. We may set them at defiance if these works are all completed in the manner proposed: because I am persuaded this will then be the strongest possession in British America: always supposing a proper garrison will be established, which cannot be less than three hundred men. Fort Montagu requires an officer and fifty men for its ordinary guard; your grace will see the impossibility of doing the common duty with only one independent company, our whole force at present. I have presented a memoril to the board, praying for a supply of powder and small arms, which, I hope, will not be thought unreasonable, when it shall appear fifty barrells were sent to general Oglethorpe before he went to St. Augustine, and two mortars. which have never been returned, and now I believe he has use enough for them. I have also intelligence, that if the Spaniards succeed at Georgia, they will fall upon us next. I humbly ask pardon for this freedom, and only beg your grace will be pleased to take the Bahama Islands and their governor under your protection.

Signed JOHN TINKER.

A REPORT of the Repairs & Additions made to 1770.
 Forts Nassau & Montague and the two Water Batteries at New Providence one of the Bahama Islands. By order of the Honble. Thomas Gage Esquire Major General & Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Forces in North America &c.

* * * * *

Fort Montague is a Redout only, of Masonry situated two miles to the Eastward of Fort Nassau, as per general plan hereunto annexed. Its Barracks (if they may be so called) consist of two rooms repaired as Fort Nassau and with the same kind of Materials as has it's Enceinte, Area, Powder Magazine, Battery Ordnance and Carriages whose numbers and natures are already ascertained in the returns delivered in to your Excellency.

JOHN MONTRESOR, Engr.

To His Excy. Major Genl. Gage Comdr. in Chief &c.

[Enclosed in Major General Gages letter to the E. of Hillsborough, 18th Aug. 1770 (No. 48.)]

The Inscription over the entrance is obliterated.

North of the fort are the stone trenches in which the palisades were planted.

The Americans under Commodore Hopkins captured this fort in March 1776. 1776.

The Spaniards captured it in 1782. But it was retaken by the Loyalists in April 1783 under the command of Colonel Andrew Deveaux. 1782-1783.

In the year 1776, the island of New Providence was taken by a small force under Commodore Hop-

kins, of the American Navy, but abandoned soon after as untenable. It was taken again by the Spaniards, under Don Juan de Cagigal, Governor-General of the island of Cuba and the Havannah, who attacked the island with a force of 5,000 men, at the time when Colonel Maxwell, the Governor, had only about 170 invalids to oppose to them. He was obliged to capitulate, obtaining very favourable terms, on the 8th May, 1782. The Spaniards obtained nominal possession of the Bahamas until the conclusion of the war, when Spain, in 1783, finally relinquished all claim to the island; but before peace was notified, New Providence had been recaptured by a loyalist Colonel (Andrew) Deveaux, of the South Carolina Militia, in a most gallant and extraordinary manner, as detailed in his own official report to Sir Guy Carleton:

“ I have the pleasure to inform your Excellency, that on the 1st of April last, not having heard that peace was concluded, I formed from St. Augustine an expedition against New Providence, to restore its inhabitants, with those of the adjacent island, to the blessings of a free Government. I undertook this expedition at my own expense, and embarked my men, which did not exceed sixty-five, and sailed for Harbour Island, where I recruited for four or five days, from thence I set sail for my object, which was the eastern fort on the island of Providence, and which I carried about day-light, with three of their formidable galleys on the 14th. I immediately summoned the grand fortress to surrender, which was about a mile from the fort I had taken. His Excellency, the Governor, evaded the purport of my flag, by giving me some trifling informations, which I took in their true light.

On the 16th I took possession of two commanding hills, and erected a battery on each of them, of 12 pounders. At daylight on the 18th, my batteries being complete, the English colours were hoisted on

each of them, which were within musket shot of their grand fortress. His Excellency, finding his shot and shells of no effect, thought fit to capitulate, as you will see by the enclosed articles:—

‘1. The Government House and public stores to be handed over to his Britannic Majesty.

‘2. The Governor and garrison under his command to march with all the honours of war, remaining with a piece of cannon and two shot per day, in order to hoist the flag of his Catholic Majesty. Provisions for the troops, sailors, and sick in hospital, to be made at his Britannic Majesty’s expense; as also, vessels prepared to carry them to the Havannah, and particularly a vessel to carry the Governor to Europe.

‘3. All the officers and troops of the garrison, belonging to his Catholic Majesty, are to remain in possession of their baggage and other effects.

‘4. All the vessels in harbour belonging to his Catholic Majesty, are to be given up, with everything on board the said vessels, to his Britannic Majesty.

‘5. All effects appertaining to Spaniards to remain their property, and the Spanish merchants to have two month’s to settle their accounts.

(Signed)

ANTONIO CLARACO y SANZ, A. DEVEAUX.
New Providence, April 18, 1783.

“ My force never, at any time, consisted of more than 220 men, and not above 150 of them had muskets, not having it in my power to procure them at St. Augustine. I took on this occasion one fort consisting of thirteen pieces of cannon, three galleys, carrying 24 pounders, and about fifty men. His Excellency surrendered four batteries, with about

seventy pieces of cannon, and four large galleys (brigs and snows), which I have sent to the Havannah with the troops as flags. I, therefore, stand in need of your Excellency's advice and directions in my present situation, and shall be exceedingly happy to receive them as soon as possible. I had letters written for your Excellency on this occasion, since the middle of last month, but the vessel by which they were to be conveyed, went off and left them, therefore, I hope your Excellency will not think it my neglect in not having the accounts before this.

A. DEVEAUX, Colonel

Commandant of the Royal Foresters.

New Providence June 6th, 1783. "

The articles of capitulation which provided that the conquered garrison should be sent to the Havannah insisted particularly, that a vessel be furnished to convey the late Governor to Europe. He appears to have been very unwilling to remain in the West Indies after his defeat, and, indeed, the Spanish troops could not restrain their expressions of mortification, when they learned the same small number of the force to which they had surrendered, and observed how miserably they were armed, and how ludicrously equipped.

It is said that men of straw were dressed out, to increase the apparent number, and some of the troops were disguised and painted as Indians, always the inveterate foes of the Spaniards. (*Bacot's The Bahamas*—pp. 45-47.)

An earlier description of this exploit is given in McKinnen's *West Indies* (pp. 249-52). He was in Nassau in 1802.

During the earlier part of the American war the island was taken by a small force under Commodore Hopkins, and abandoned as untenable. But it was retaken afterwards in the year 1781 by the

Spaniards, assisted by the Americans, and retained during the remainder of the war. But previous to the notification of the treaty, an enterprising young officer, Lieutenant-colonel Deveaux of the South Carolina militia, had undertaken, with a body of about fifty volunteers, to recover the possession of the island, at that time garrisoned by seven hundred Spanish regular troops. He sailed on this desperate attempt in two armed brigantines, commanded by Captains Dowd and Fennell, from St. Augustine in East Florida; and after picking up a few recruits principally negroes, at Eleuthera and the adjacent island, appeared off the key which forms the harbour of Nassau on the east of the town, towards night. The conquest of a fortified island by so disproportionate a body of men could only be effected by consummate ingenuity and address. The men were landed, without opposition, to the east of Fort Montagu, which guards the entrance of the harbour in that quarter; and so great was the supineness of the garrison, that, when the invaders had reached the ramparts, the sentinel only was awake to defend them. He appeared with a lighted match in his hand, ready to blow up the fortress in case of extremity. But Colonel Deveaux, who headed the attack, before he could recover from his surprise sprang upon him, and, frustrating his intention, made him a prisoner with the sleeping garrison. Having thus easily possessed himself of Fort Montagu, Colonel Deveaux immediately proceeded to the top of the ridge, and took a position in front of the Governor's house in the upper part of the town. Every artifice was used to deceive the Spaniards, both as to the number and description of the enemy they had to contend with. A show of boats was made, continually rowing from the vessels, filled with men, who apparently landed, but in fact concealed themselves by lying down as they returned to the vessels, and afterwards made their appearance as a fresh supply of troops proceeding to disembark. Men of straw, it is said, were dressed out to increase the

apparent number on the heights; and some of the troops, to intimidate the Spaniards, were painted and disguised as their inveterate foes the Indians. One or two galleys in the harbour had been captured, and, trusting to the circumstances in his favour, Colonel Deveaux summoned the Governor to surrender, with a pompous description of his formidable force. Some hesitation being at first discovered, the Colonel seconded his overtures with a well directed shot at the Governor's House from a field piece, during his deliberation, which produced an immediate capitulation. The Spanish troops, in laying down their arms, it is said, could not refrain from expressing the utmost mortification and confusion as they surveyed their conquerors, not only so inferior in point of numbers, but ludicrous in their dress and military appearance.

1891. There are a number of plans of Fort Nassau in the Department of the Surveyor General and Civil Engineer which were handed over to that Department by the military authorities upon their departure from the colony in 1891. Plans are also in London at the Colonial Office, War Office and Public Record Office.

FORT CHARLOTTE.

1787.

1787. Shortly after Lord Dunmore arrived, which was at the end of 1787, he started to build Fort Charlotte and it may be gathered from a report of a Select Committee of the House dated the 28th of April 1789 that on that date the Fort had almost been completed. The Fort was named after the Consort of Geo. III. This was the main or eastern portion. Subsequently the middle bastion was added and called "Fort Stanley," then the western portion, which is known as "Fort D'Arcy." It was called after Lieut. D'Arcy who does not however appear to have appreciated

the honour. Writing to Major General Morse on the 6th July, 1798, he says " Neither my plans nor ideas have been followed by Lord Dunmore, tho' I learn from Capt. Rutherford that His Ldp. has honor'd me by giving my name to a part of his works. As I know not where I merited this attention I should be glad to be well rid of it....." The Fort was built on land belonging to Sir Henry Marr, who also owned Charlotteville. Sir Henry is buried in the Cathedral. There appears to have been a Hospital near the site of the present Cricket pavilion.

There are considerable underground works attached to the Fort.

About the end of 1790 the erection of new barracks 1790. immediately east of Fort Charlotte was commenced at the expense of the Imperial Government as the House of Assembly did not consider that in the then financial circumstances of the Colony they could grant the money for the purpose as they had been asked to do by the Governor. The works were completed in March 1794 and cost £30,244 5s. 4½d. These barracks were condemned as unhealthy by Staff-Surgeon Richardson and pulled down about 1837. Prior to this there had been barracks near the spot now occupied by the Golf house where also previously had stood a private residence called " Sterling Castle. "

A salute was fired from the Fort in 1793. (*Bahama Gazette Vol. IX. No. 497.*) 1793.

The English and American flags were hoisted 1798. over the French flag at Fort Charlotte in honour of Nelson's victory over the French. (*Bahama Gazette Vol. XV. No. 1205.*)

Telegraphic signals at Fort Charlotte. (*Bahama Gazette 1800 Vol. 17, No. 1380.*) 1800.

1802. There is an excellent engraving of Fort Charlotte Barracks dated 1802, by Lieut. Col. John Irving, which shows the following inscription on the front of the top tower over the main entrance:

“ John Earl of Dunmore ”

Governor

March 23, A. D. 1792. ”

surmounted by a clock with the Royal cipher “ G. III. R. ”

1806. Great mortality at Fort Charlotte Barracks. (*Royal Gazette 1806 No. 241.*)
1827. A sentry was shot on the drawbridge by a private. (*Royal Gazette 1827, No. 1393.*)
1855. The curiously shaped building east of the obelisk was a guard house. The obelisk was erected in 1835 (*Argus 1835 No. 93.*)

The Fort is now used as a signal station.

The following letters and reports trace the history of Fort Charlotte and deal generally with the question of the fortifying of the Bahamas.

1787. NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE,
December 21st 1787.

My Lord,

* * *

I had proposed erecting Works upon a Hill to the Westward which commands both this Town and Harbour, but the accounts I have received from different quarters within these few days, are such as makes me hope that by this time Peace may be established in Europe, and being in daily expectation of the Arrival of a Ship from London that has for some time been expected here, I have for the

present suspended that operation, that as little expence as possible may be incurred to the public.

I must however beg leave to recommend the erecting of Works upon the abovementioned Hill at all events, the expence will not be very considerable, and I have purchased some Planks and other Materials for that purpose, but should I be right in my expectations of Peace taking place, I shall not proceed further without orders from your Lordship.

* * * * *

I am &c.

DUNMORE.

Right Honble.

Lord Sydney.

NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE,
February 29th 1788.

1788.

My Lord,

In my letter of the 21st. of December, I informed your Lordship that I had suspended the operations respecting the erecting of Works on a Hill to the Westward for the defence of this place; but, a few days after the Ship sailed which carried that dispatch a Vessel arrived here from the Windward Islands, by which I was informed, that all the Governors in that quarter were Fortifying and putting themselves in the best state of defence in their power, I therefore thought it my duty to proceed in erecting Works on the abovementioned Hill, as the most effectual means of protecting this place. The Works are not very extensive, and the most frugal means in my power are observed in carrying them on, the expence will not be considerable, but at present cannot be ascertained.

* * * * *

I am &c.

DUNMORE.

The Right Honourable

Lord Sydney

&c. &c. &c.

My Lord,

The ship being detained by contrary Winds, gives me an opportunity of sending you the inclosed five Cards; The N. 1 & 2 contain the whole of the Fort when joined together, that is now erecting on an eminence that entirely commands the Harbour, and the entrance into it, and it is commanded by no other ground, N. 1. is pretty near completed, and N. 2. is in considerable forwardness, the Parapets are filled with Terrass, not earth, which I am persuaded will—long before the Cedar Posts are decayed become as hard as the Rock. The Plan is drawn by Mr. Rutherford a Young Gentleman in the Corps of Engineers who came here a few days ago from Nova Scotia accidentally in his way to N. Carolina on private business. The ship is now under way so must conclude with requesting your Lordship will have the goodness to present these Cards to His Majesty with my most Hbe. duty. & I have the Honor to be with great respect.

Your Lordships &c.

DUNMORE.

Nassau 10 ber 23d. 1788.

NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE.

Dec 15th. 1788.

My Lord,

Fort Charlotte (a plan of which is enclosed) is now pretty far advanced and tho' not regular I am hopeful on trial would be found as difficult of Access as most regular ones that ever were constructed, and it is built in general of such Materials that if not destroyed by an Enemy, will last without any repair for a great number of years, I mean that part which is constructed of Cedar, the other is entirely cut out of the Rock, and will be growing better every day instead of worse. There are two magazines that contain above a Thousand Barrels of Powder and there are two others either for fixed

Ammunition or for Casemates for the Troops, these are all cut out of the solid Rock, under the works perfectly proof against Shells, and under one of the Marlins there is a well that will amply supply the Garrison with Water, and the other part of the Work is totally cut out of the Rock without one Morsel of Wood belonging to it, and must last to eternity without wilfully destroyed, at great expence and trouble, and I do assure you I have used every method I could devise to make the expence as small as possible, which I think you must be convinced of by the small sum I have drawn for (£4000.) This Work will require Forty Two Guns, and will perfectly defend the Harbour and entrance into its West end, and I think a small Work at the East end will be sufficient to protect this Town and Harbour from any enemy, without they come in very great force indeed, supposing always that there is a sufficient Garrison with a certain proportion of Artillery for its Defence. I thought it proper to reserve about one Hundred Acres of Land round the Fort, to prevent houses being built near it, for exercising the troops, and for supplying them with all sorts of Vegetables, which is absolutely Necessary for the preservation of their health in this Climate, more especially as they have no fresh Provisions owing to its high price. It will also be absolutely requisite to erect Barracks for the troops on the Hill adjoining to the Fort, first because those they are now in, are in a ruinous State, and Secondly because they are in the Town where the Men procure Rum which is their destruction, and thirdly because the present Barracks are at much too great a distance from the Fort, and I will venture to assert that when lodged on the Hill they won't loose one Man where they now loose ten.

* * * * *

I am &c.

DUNMORE.

[Note—A P. S. states the plan is not ready, but will be sent in his next.]

1789.

NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE,
January 28th 1789.

My Lord,

* * * *

By your letter dated the 21st of September 1787 you ordered me by Command of His Majesty to erect such Works as should be thought necessary for the defence of this place, which I am accordingly doing, as your Lordship will have seen I hope before this reaches you, by a plan I sent you in my letter of the 23rd of December last, and by which you will find that we will have occasion for above Forty Guns in Fort Charlotte, besides those we shall want for the east end of the Harbour where I think a small Work will be necessary as Vessels drawing twelve feet Water may come that way. We shall also be much in want of some guns of a large Caliber, which I hope Your Lordship will order to be sent us, and there are none I should like better than some of the 68 pounder Carronades with hollow shott; about Twelve of them would be of infinite use on the Beach under Fort Charlotte in case of an Attack.

* * * *

I am &c.

DUNMORE.

The Right Honorable

Lord Sydney

&c. &c. &c.

4 March 1789. Lord Sydney to Lord Dunmore.

Plans of Fort Charlotte shall be laid before the King. In the mean time the work must be stopped, as the plan is now under the consideration of the Board of Ordnance and alterations may be proposed. * * *

NASSAU NEW PROVIDENCE,
13th April 1789.

My Lord,

* * * *

In my letter No. 10 I gave your Lordship a particular description of the Fort I have been erecting

here, a plan of which I transmitted to your Lordship in my letter No. 12 as I did also my Account Current with Government and the Quarterly Accounts and Vouchers from the commencement of the work to the 31st December last in my letter No. 15. What further expence may be incurred in finishing the Works is not at present in my power to ascertain. This is the Work mentioned in my letter No. 3, and I have not proceeded to the erection of any other as yet, tho' a small one to the Eastward will be absolutely necessary (as your Lordship will see by the plan of the Harbour) but that will I hope be attended with but a small expence.

* * * * *

I am &c.

DUNMORE.

Right Honble.

Lord Sydney

&c. &c. &c.

4 June 1789. Lord Dunmore to Lord Sydney.

Has ordered the embarkation of the detachment of the 37th Regt. as required. These orders were given with great reluctance as it leaves the place "without any kind of protection and to me it is an exceeding unpleasant thing, not to have a single man to take care of three Forts, Magazines and Stores, for which purpose I shall be obliged to arm some Negroes".....

"With respect to Fort Charlotte, I shall proceed no further upon that work, than to secure from injury those parts of it which are in great forwardness and nearly finished."

* * * * *

8 Nov. 1790. Lord Dunmore to Lord Grenville. 1790.

The works at Fort Charlotte were not complete when Lord Sydney's orders were received to put a stop

to them. "As that Fort commands the Town,
 "Harbour and Bar, it is highly necessary in the
 "present situation of Affairs that they should be
 "completed, I therefore hope to receive your orders
 "for going on with them." * * *

26 Nov. 1790. Lord Grenville to Lord Dunmore.

Announces amicable adjustment of discussions with Spain. Orders the works at Fort Charlotte to be discontinued. Requests a plan thereof & an account of the expense already incurred, & the amount necessary for its completion.

The granting of the site of Fort Nassau, & the present ordnance and barrack yard to the Council and Assembly as desired (see 31 August 1789—see p. 13) is a measure which cannot be acceded to, at least until a survey and report has been made thereon. * *

Copy of a letter from Lt. D'Arcy to the Duke of Richmond, dated London, 19th March 1792.

(Observations on the Bahama Islands.)

1792.

LONDON 9th of March 1792.

My Lord Duke

In obedience to the Orders conveyed in Lord Grenville's Letter of the 9th of May 1791 relative to New Providence, I confined my Report to what had been done to put that Island in a State of defence and to suggest what appeared to me most necessary to improve the Work that had [been] commenced without venturing to hazard an Opinion against augmenting the Defences or Military Establishment of the Island, which from its vicinity to the Gulf of Florida has always been thought of consequence and is now the principal Store-house for all the Bahama Islands, knowing that as long as

the Town and Port of Nassau is considered in this light and thus resorted to, objections to it unasked for, would run a great risque of being ill received. But now that it is my duty I can have no Difficulty in stating the objections that appear to me to apply to the Port of Nassau and that render it incapable of being defended without a very strong Garrison or having the Superiority at Sea.

That Nassau has been resorted to more than One hundred Years will not appear a Sufficient Argument for making it the Metropolis of the Bahama Islands, when it is considered that its former connection with the Government of Carolina—its being near the Gulf Stream—at one time possessed by Pirates—at another the Rendezvous of Privateers were the Causes that principally contributed to its present State—and not any natural Powers of Defence that it possessed, as may be inferred from the many successful attacks that have been made upon it. Should the Policy of having a Port near the Gulf Stream to annoy the Enemy be insisted on, it should be such a one as could guard against his resentment—how deficient the Port of Nassau is in this respect, I will endeavor to explain.

Sketch No. 1* shews the Places referred to, Fort Charlotte occupies the best situation in the Neighbourhood of Nassau for the Garrison to retire to without losing the Command of the Bar and by being at the Extreme of the high Ground, has the Command of all the flat Country to the Westward, and prevents any approach to Fort Nassau along the Sea Coast—These Advantages allow the Governor or Officer Commanding to send from the Garrison strong Detachments to the Defence of Fort Montagu and the landing places to the Eastward, where the greatest danger has generally been apprehended. But if the Enemy are acquainted with the

* The sketches are not reproduced.

Island and the Modes of attack in their choice they will render the defence very difficult to the Officer commanding in Providence, and in a short time oblige him to give up his Out Posts and the defence of the Town. I shall suppose the enemy Masters of the Approaches to Providence and landed in Hog Island (to which there is not at present any Defence) from whence they can sink the Ships in the Harbour and burn the Town if they please—which was the intention I understand of Don Juan Manual Cagegal in 1782 had not the Place capitulated—but admitting they go on in a more regular way—From the Place marked A they could greatly annoy Fort Montagu and drive the gun boats or Armed Vessels assisting the defence behind Potters Key, and while erecting Batteries for those purposes—suddenly enter Horse Channel and land part of their Force on a safe and extensive Shore between Delapot Point and C without fear of opposition, as the Governor of Providence could not venture to detach a sufficient Force so far to the Westward, while he saw the Enemy in possession of Hog Island and part of their Fleet in Hanover Sound—From the Place marked C the Enemy would find a good Road to the high Ground at Moss's from whence they could make good their communication to the Ridge DD. This Move would oblige the Governor to withdraw his Detachments from the Eastward, as he must know it would not be in his power to prevent the Enemy gaining in one Day some part of a Line of such an Extent as the Ridge EE. It may be said they would have a difficult Country to cross from DD. but as the Difficulties in these three Miles do not arise from Rivers or Ravines— but from short Trees and thick Underwoods—Obstructions almost universal in Providence, they would be in favor of Numbers, at least the Defendants could not make sufficient advantage of those Obstructions to justify the risque of a Defeat at a distance from the Fortress, when they would have to combat with the remainder of the Enemy from Hog Island and the Eastward.

Probably this mode of Attack may appear unnecessary, as it cannot be doubted that an Enemy might make good his landing to the Eastward, tho' it would be attacking in the way expected, and giving every chance to the Resistance opposed to it. Which way soever the Attack is made—it would appear from the Situation of the Places to be defended—that the Governor cannot long have it in his power to keep up a communication with Outposts so distant, and that the Invaders must in a short time be in possession of Forts Montagu and Nassau, and of the Town. With these advantages he invests Fort Charlotte—the Degree of Opposition he is to expect cannot be estimated from its present unfinished State—but should it be made capable of holding out a long time, the Enemy may probably content themselves with carrying on such an Attack as will keep the Fire of the Place in Check, while they destroy the Harbour, which will not appear a difficult operation when its confined entrance and depth of water is considered. But without exposing all the defects of the Port of Nassau or opposing Arguments to those whose Rents are in Providence—It must be allowed that the Bahama Islands have altered very much in point of Importance since the Year 1782, when the capture of Providence by the Spaniards included the Conquest of them, it being almost the only Inhabited Island. But at present several of the Bahama Islands are inhabited, the *Caicoses*, *Crooked Island*, *Long Island*, *Cat Island* and the *Exumas* are of great extent and in a flourishing way owing to the Culture of Cotton. With such a prospect of an increase of Commerce from the settling of those Islands—every additional Expence and Attention bestowed on Nassau with a View to their benefit—must be regretted—if there is a Port better adapted to their Trade and Protection.

All Navigators allow that the Bahamas are but imperfectly known and that a Naval Survey of them is very much wanted, probably the best port is yet

to be found, of those that are known, The Hawks Nest at Turks Island, and the Harbour of Exuma, are the best, and perhaps in a Military View considering the central situation of the latter it is unnecessary to look for any other. For on observing the Extent of the Bahama Islands, and the Space they occupy Vizt. Six Degrees of Latitude and Ten Degrees of Longitude, it will be evident, that a Naval Force can best give them protection, while the inhabitants are so few in proportion to the acres they occupy. All that can be desired in their present situation is to have a central Fort Fortified, in which their supplies from England can be safely lodged, and to which they can send their produce in time of War with the least risque to be shipped for England. If Lieutenant Wilson's Survey is correct, of which I have no reason to doubt, Exuma is a Port capable of being made to answer these purposes and is greatly preferred to that of Providence by Masters of Vessels acquainted with both places. In support of this opinion they alledge that in the Harbour of Exuma there is deeper Water and better holding ground, than in that of Providence, and that they do not run the same risque of being Wind bound, as they in general can beat out in Exuma. *Crab Key* in the Harbour of Exuma is well situated for a Town, tho' at present it is not sufficiently supplied with fresh Water—unless this can be remedied by good wells or Tanks, Opinions will be divided between this Situation Stocking Island, and Man of War Key—the two latter are well supplied with fresh water and are equally contiguous to the Harbour of Exuma, as appears by the Plan. With respect to Climate, the Island of Exuma is reputed Healthy—Soldiers sent there from Providence on Account of Sickness have recovered—tho' the Voyage and Change of Air might have had this Effect in any other direction.

The Harbour between Turks Island and Salt Key called the Hawks Nest is from its Southern

situation far removed from being of that importance to the Bahama Islands that Exuma is capable of, yet on a further examination the Hawks nest may be found worthy of attention with respect to the Windward Passages and Turks Island the latter being frequented in the Salt Raking Season by a number of Americans and other Strangers that are often disorderly and require to be kept in Awe by a Military Establishment.

The preceding Pages on the Subject of the Bahama Islands I with great deference lay before Your Grace as the result of my Observations joined to the best information I could obtain.

I am with the greatest respect

My Lord Duke

Your Grace's Obedient Servant

ROBERT D'ARCY.

His Grace the Duke of Richmond &c.

Lieutenant D'Arcy's Report on Fort Charlotte and the Defences of the Harbour of Nassau, New Providence, in obedience to Lord Grenville's Letter of 9th May, 1791.

LONDON 2nd of May 1792.

Sir,

In consequence of the prospect of Hostility alluded to in the Preceding Letter* I found that Lord Dunmore had commenced a Work called Fort Charlotte on the only Spot near Nassau capable of Defence—and had removed to it the Ammunition and the most serviceable Guns of the Island.

The present State of Fort Charlotte is expressed by Plan No. 4* shewing the Nature and Number of the Guns mounted and the Casemates cut in the Rock under the Work.

I have attentively considered the construction of Fort Charlotte—The extent of the Front that it opposes to the Enemy on the side most liable to be attacked is but 130 Feet for want of sufficient Room on the Hill on which it stands—No alteration that I could propose would remedy this defect or preserve Works in so confined an area from being ruined by the Enemy's Fire, and therefore I have judged that the security of the Post must depend on its Flanks its Casemates and the depth of its Ditches. On this Idea the Works expressed in Plans No. 1 and 2* are humbly proposed with an Estimate of their Expence amounting to £17,846 17 0 Sterling which in addition to £7,736 103 already expended on Fort Charlotte amounts to the Sum of £25,583 7 3 for completing that Work to which if the Expence already incurred in building the Barracks at Fort Charlotte Vizt. £10,784 7 11 and the Sum required to complete them Vizt. £4,635 19 4 be added to the Expence of the Fortifications—the Total Expence of Fort Charlotte including the Barracks will amount to £41,003 14 6 Sterling.

Plans No. 3* shews the present state of the Barracks and the extent of the intended accomodation containing Four Rooms 103 Feet long by 22 feet wide for the Soldiers and 32 Rooms 18 feet long by 14 feet wide for their Officers which appears to be sufficient to lodge conveniently the number of Troops proposed. The situation of the new Barracks seems to have greatly the advantage of those at Fort Nassau. The Troops when lodged in them will be far from the Temptations of the Town, in a much larger Area, and from their elevated situation to all appearance in a better Air. Notwithstanding these advantages it is to be regretted that there was no other situation for this Barrack, as it will favor the approaches of the Enemy by screening them from

* The plans are not reproduced.

the Fire of Fort Charlotte. But as the Barrack is an Obstruction that already exists it may be thought advisable, if there is sufficient time in the early part of the Siege to remove the Roof of the Barracks to guard against Fire, and to strengthen the Walls of the East Wing—to make it capable of defence as a Cavalier to annoy the Enemy's approaches—which they can commence within Four hundred Yards of the Covert way—as is expressed on the Plan of the Ground.

There could be no material Objection in point of Health to Troops being stationed in the Buildings in and contiguous to Fort Nassau were they in a State of repair, but as Fort Nassau will cease to be the Place of Arms (the Idea that gave Rise to the Buildings alluded to being placed under its Protection it does not now appear advisable to put them into complete Repair unless Troops or Stores are expected to arrive before sufficient accomodations can be provided for them under the protection of Fort Charlotte whose situation will admit a number of Buildings on the Northward between it and the Sea without interfering with its Defences. While Fort Nassau is so enclosed by the Town and commanded by the high ground on the South that it never can be considered in any way contributing to the Defence of the Island but as a Battery to flank the Harbour and to protect the retreat of those stationed at the Eastern Defences or such Vessels as chose to put to Sea, or to risque the Shelter that Fort Charlotte could afford in preference to falling into the Hands of the Enemy.

Fort Montagu situated at the East End of the Harbour of Nassau is well placed to defend this Entrance and to flank the Bay and Landing place to the West of it; but as it would be very possible for a Galley with the Tide in her favor to pass this Fort—and greatly to annoy it in the rear—a Battery would be well placed on the East End of Potters Key

to oppose such an Enterprize—should there be no Armed Vessels in the Service of the Government, which I humbly hope is not likely to be the Case in time of War, as the first part of the Defence would greatly depend on the support the armed Force of the Island would receive from One or Two Vessels in the Stile of Gun Boats to annoy the Enemys landing and to force them to attempt it far from the Town—that if they effected it they would have to make their advances thro' the Woods and be longer exposed to the Climate.

In the preceding Answers I have endeavoured to the best of my ability to attend to the Objects pointed out in Lord Grenville's Letter—But as it is now the time of Peace when no danger can arise from delaying the fortifying of Providence, I think it my duty to wish no project of mine contained in Plans No. 1 and 2 to be approved until the Bahamas are better known—least by the comparative Approbation of the situation of Fort Charlotte I may be accessory to placing the Garrison intended for the defence of the Bahamas on the Island most accessible to the Enemy—and in a Fortress not capable of resisting a regular attack more than Eighteen Days.

I am with the greatest respect
Sir,

Your obedient servant
R. D'ARCY

Lieut. Royl. Engineers.

The Right Honble. Henry Dundas
One of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State
&c. &c. &c.

1794. 17 Feb. 1794. Lord Dunmore to Lord Dundas.

“ As to the expenditure of the last quarter being laid on and about Fort Charlotte, that is not the Fact, for in that quarter, the Water Battery to the

Westward of the Town, according to Lt. D'Arcy's plan, was erected, mounting five 24 pounders and one 42 pounder; And a battery of four 24 pounders on Hog Island in front of the town as well to prevent the enemy from landing on that Island, as to defend the entrance to the Eastward, by Hanover Sound; and also a Battery upon a hill in this Island, to the Eastward of the Government House, mounting two 24 pounders, two 32 pounder Carronades, two 12 pounders and one Howitzer, which not only comes the Battery in Hog Island, but all the Town and Road to the Eastward where the enemy might probably have effected a Landing."

7 July 1796. A "Statement of works to be 1796. done at Fort Charlotte and its Dependent Fortification" mentions cutting away rock round the West front of *Fort Fincastle*.

13 November 1796. Lt. Gov. Forbes to [Portland]

Reports the inadequacy of Fort Charlotte, which is still unfinished. In case of war, many of the barracks must be pulled down, as too near the fort and affording cover to the enemy. The Eastern part of the Island is "totally defenceless, as from the "small Fort of Fincastle, no material protection can "be expected."

FORT FINCASTLE.

1793.

This fort was built by Lord Dunmore after Fort Charlotte and takes its name from his Viscounty It is situated on Bennett's Hill.

In Lord Dunmore's Letter to Lord Sydney of 1789. the 13th April, 1789, (Vide Report on Fort Charlotte) he states that a small work to the Eastward would be absolutely necessary.

1794. Lord Dunmore in his letter to Lord Dundas of 17th February, 1794, explaining the expenditure for the December Quarter, 1793, refers to "a battery upon a hill in this island to the Eastward of the Government House mounting two 24 pounders, two 32 pounders Carronades, two 12 pounders and one Howitzer, which not only covers the Battery in Hog Island, but all the Town and Road to the Eastward where the enemy might probably have effected a Landing."

* * * * *

1796. A "Statement of works to be done at Fort Charlotte and its Dependent Fortification" mentions cutting away rock round the West front of Fort Fincastle.

On the 13th November, 1796, Lt. Gov. Forbes reports to Lord Portland the inadequacy of Fort Charlotte which is still unfinished. In case of war, many of the barracks must be pulled down, as too near the Fort and affording cover to the enemy. The Eastern part of the Island is "totally defenceless, as from the small Fort of Fincastle no material protection can be expected."

A Light used to be exhibited from this fort until the Hog Island Light was completed in 1817. (*Royal Gazette 1817 II. Nos. 392 & 461.*) The Fort is now used as a signal station.

This fort viewed from the east is like an old paddle-wheel steamboat coming "bow on." There is a similarly shaped fort at Barbados.

MISCELLANEOUS FORTS AND BATTERIES.

* WINTON. East End of New Providence.

There are remains of stone work of this battery and barrack but no guns can be found.

BLUE HILLS. Centre of New Providence.

There are remains of stone work on the elevation around which the road winds but no guns can be found.

SOUTH WEST BAY.

About 100 yards from the landing place two guns have been discovered and some traces of stone work.

CHARLOTTEVILLE OR OLD FORT.

This was the property of Sir Henry Marr, who was buried under the Cathedral aisle, about the end of the 18th century. Fort Charlotte is also built on lands acquired from Sir Henry Marr. There used to be guns at Charlotteville on the terrace on the seaward side of the house, but some years ago a previous owner Mr. P. F. Curtis planted them at the entrance to the estate.

* POTTER'S CAY.

There are remains of a fortification—consisting of a battery and block house—at the eastern end of this Cay, but no guns can be found.

* HOG ISLAND.

The present residence of Mr. H. C. Albury is built in the vicinity of the site of a battery and block house, and there are some guns scattered around.

* Plans in the Record Office London dated 21st July 1813.

Elaborate fortifications on Hog Island and False Point were contemplated in 1859. Plans of them are in the Record Office, London.

WATER BATTERY.

Opposite Fort Charlotte. This a battery of 4 guns.

The sites of all of the forts are vested in the Public Board of Works except those of Charlotteville and Hog Island which are private property.

HARCOURT MALCOLM.

3458



