

**REVOLUTIONARY ROGUES:
THE SPANISH AMERICAN PIRATES AND
PRIVATEERS WHO TRIED TO CONQUER
FLORIDA**

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Privateers of the Americas:

*Spanish American Privateering from the United States in
the Early Republic*



BACKGROUND TO OUR STORY

- Spanish American Wars of Independence (1808-1826)
 - Napoleon invades Spain (1808)
 - Juntas formed to govern in king's name (1808)
 - Juntas begin declaring independence (1811)
 - Fighting Spain and each other
 - Commission privateers

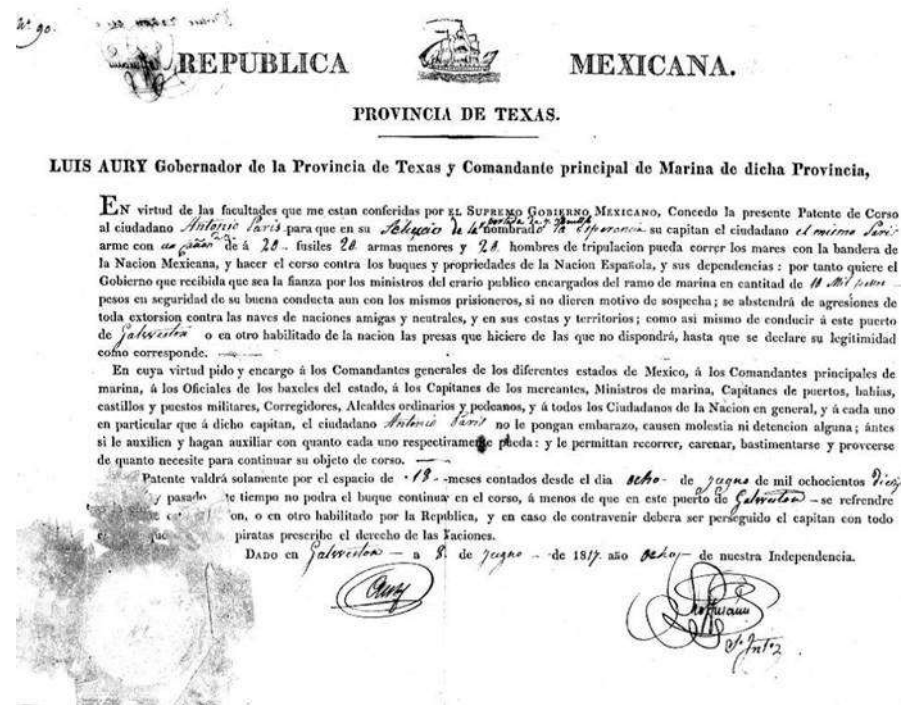


Declaring Independence
in Venezuela



MORE BACKGROUND...

- What is a privateer?
 - Privately owned warship (not navy)
 - Commissioned
 - Keep captured prizes (after court proceeding)
 - Only during war, only attack enemies
- What is a pirate?
 - No legal authority
 - Attack all, any time



Privateering commission, 1817



ALMOST THERE...

- What is a filibuster?
 - Private military expedition
 - May be authorized (or not)
- What is East Florida?
 - Florida from the Apalachicola River to the east and south
 - Capital at St. Augustine
 - Loyal to Spain
 - Unimportant except geopolitically
 - Ships from Cuba to Spain



INVASION

- Gregor MacGregor
 - British officer
 - Claims nobility
 - Venezuelan general
 - Filibuster expedition
- The Plan
 - Recruit men, gather supplies
 - Obtain commission
 - Conquer Amelia Island
 - Establish base of operations
 - Privateering
 - Smuggling
 - Resupply
 - Conquer Florida
- The Goal
 - New front in war

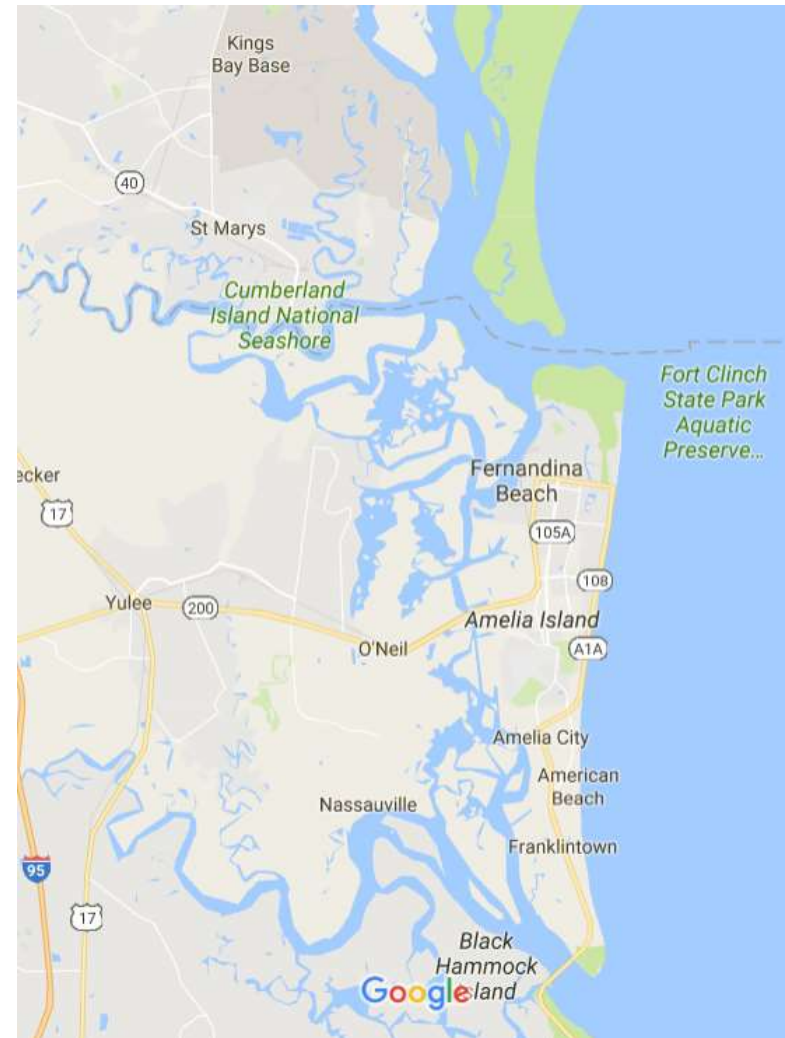


Call me *Sir* General
MacGegor!



INVASION

- Why Amelia Island?
 - On U.S. border
 - Good for privateering
 - Good for smuggling
 - Good for base of operations
 - Best of both worlds
 - Close to U.S. ports
 - Outside U.S. law



Amelia Island today



INVASION

- The Plan
 - ~~Recruit men, gather supplies~~
 - ~~Obtain commission~~
 - ~~Conquer Amelia Island~~
 - June 29, 1817
 - 100 men scare away Spanish defenders
 - La Republica de Las Floridas
 - Establish base of operations
 - ~~Privateering~~
 - ~~Smuggling~~
 - Resupply
 - Conquer Florida
 - Counter attack coming
 - Abandons Florida



Flag of La Republica de Las Floridas, 1817. Guess whose design?



Amalia, Veni, Vici, Vici/ Libertas Floridarium duce Mac Gregorio



MEXICAN PROVINCE

- New life
 - Remnant defeats Spanish
 - Usurped after 2 days
- Commodore Louis-Michel Aury
 - Privateer
 - Cartagena navy
 - Mexican filibuster
 - Takes charge of Amelia
 - “Chief of the Mexican Republic”



Self portrait?



MEXICAN PROVINCE

- Success where MacGregor failed
 - Privateering
 - Est. \$500,000 prize goods
 - Slave trading
 - 600-950 people
 - Official government
 - Constitution drafted
- Loopholes in U.S. law
 - Rowboats
 - *“They can smuggle one or two at a time without detection...”*
 - Neutrality
 - *“I considered it neutral ground, and it was the wish of [the] government not to infringe...”*



Gefe de las fuerzas de mar y tierra
de las Floridas



U.S. INTERVENTION

- Problem: outside U.S.
 - Offend Spain
 - Treaty negotiations underway
 - Offend Spanish Americans
 - Neutrality
- Monroe chooses invasion
 - Violations of U.S. law
 - Fourth privateering center
 - No respect for AI governments
 - No Transfer Resolution (1811)
- Out with a whimper
 - Army/navy lands
 - Aury leaves
 - U.S. doesn't give back



JQA:
“Break up the
marauders.”



Monroe: “OK.”

