

JOURNAL

Hugh Rose

2 September 1698

We weighed anchor from Madera road, the Governor having been very civil to us, the Commodore¹ gave him 15 guns, Captain Pinkerton² 13, and Captain Drummond³ 11, all which he particularly returned with two less. We had a fresh breeze at ENE and stood away WSW...

10 September 1698

This morning we passed the Tropic of Cancer with a fresh and fair gale, the ships performed the usual ceremony of ducking several of the ships' crew who had not passed before; they were hoisted to the main yard arm, and let down 3 several times with a soss into the sea out over head and ears, their legs being tied somewhat close, which was pretty good sport....

30 September 1698

Moderate gales and fair weather; at 6 in the morning we made the islands of Antigua and Montserrat, at noon the island of Redondo, being a small island, or rather a rock, like the Bass; bore SSE half a mile distant, and the island of Nevis NW and BW 4 leagues. It is a very pleasant like island; the fort hoisted their flag and we our colors.

1 October 1698

Moderate gales and fair weather. At 6 last night the west end of Saint Christopher's bore N½E distant 4 leagues. This day at noon the SE end of Santa Cruz bore W½N distant 7 leagues.

2 October 1698

Yesterday the Council met on board the Commodore, when it was resolved that Captain Pinkerton in the UNICORN, with the SNOW and Mr. Paterson,⁴ should be immediately dispatched for the island of Saint Thomas, being a free port of the Danes, in order to get pilots for the Main, and what intelligence were possible of the state of Darien. Accordingly, at 6 at night they parted from us. We steered directly for Crab Island, which we made in the morning bearing NW½ distant 5 leagues.

3 October 1698

This morning we went ashore and took possession of the island in the name of the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa, etc. We left some of our people ashore all night, and stood of to sea, it looking like bad weather, much thunder, lightning, and rain.

4 October 1698

In the forenoon our men came on board, and we bore away to leeward, where is the best anchoring. About half an hour past 4, in Frenchman's Bay, we saw a sloop with Danish colors, with a tent on shore with the same hoisted on the top of it. We immediately stood in and anchored close by her. The Commodore sent to know what she was and her business there, who answered they were Danes with a governor and 15 men sent by the Governor of Saint Thomas to assert the King of Denmark's right to that island, and to protest against our having anything to do there. This sloop was dispatched away as soon as possible after Captain Pinkerton's arrival there; viz., on Sunday at 2 o'clock, but we landed that morning by 8; so that we told them they came too late. However, they offered their protests, as did the Governor of Saint Thomas, to Captain Pinkerton; this they owned was matter of form and what they were obliged to do to please the Court; but wished with all their hearts we settled there, for then they would have a bulwark between them and those of Puerto Rico (a rich and

¹ Captain Robert Pennicuik in the SAINT ANDREW

² Captain Robert Pinkerton in the UNICORN

³ Captain Robert Drummond in the CALEDONIA

⁴ William Paterson (1658–), founder of the Bank of England and organizer of the Darien colonization expedition

large island and very populous very near) who were very troublesome neighbors. These 24 hours we have had much wind with thunder, lightning, and great rain.

5 October 1698

This day Captain arrived with the SNOW, and brought one Captain Allison with him, who freely offered to go along with us to Golden Island. This man is one of the eldest privateers now alive, and commanded a small ship with Captain Sharp when they went into the South Sea over the Isthmus; he was like ways at the taking of Panama, Portobello, Chagres, and Cartagena. All the time we stayed here the Saint Andrew had a tent on shore with the Company's colors flying on it, and 60 men for a guard when we filled our water.

This evening came in a sloop commanded by one Moon. Captain Allison was concerned in her in £2000. She was loaded with flower, beef, and other goods. We endeavored to drive a bargain with him for some provisions, but his prices were too high. Much wind, with great rain, thunder, and lightning.

6 October 1698

The weather continues very bad. The sloop sailed in the afternoon, being bound to Curaçao, and from thence was for Cartagena with slaves; he designs afterward for Portobello, and promised to call at us in passing.

7 October 1698

At 4 in the morning we weighed and got under sail, having filled our water, and got our sick men, tent, and guard off from the shore. At 8 at night we took our departure from the SE end of Puerto Rico bearing W½N distant 5 leagues—squally weather....

28 October 1698

This day fair but squalls of wind and rain in the night. At 6 last night the island Ferta bore E½S distant 2 leagues. This is a low island, about a mile long, full of trees, which may be seen 7 leagues off; there is good anchoring on the south side, and very good water.

29 October 1698

The weather squally. The other day when at anchor we tried the current and found it set NE 36 miles in 24 hours.

30 October 1698

Fair weather. At 6 at night the SAINT ANDREW and UNICORN anchored in a fine sandy bar about 3 leagues to the westward of the Gulf of Darien. There came 2 canoes with several Indians on board. They were very free and not at all shy. They spoke some few words of English and indifferent Spanish. We gave them victuals and drink, which they used very freely, especially the last. In their cups we endeavored to pump them, who told they had expected us these two years, that we were very welcome, and that all the country was at war with the Spaniard. They got drunk and lay on board all night. In the morning when they went away we gave each an old hat, a few two-penny glasses, and knives, with which they seemed extremely pleased. The CALEDONIA and SNOW stood off to sea all night.

31 October 1698

These 24 hours with land and sea breezes. This morning we went in boats to Carrot Bay, which is about 2 leagues to the westward of the place where we anchored last in, to view the bay and endeavor to get intelligence of Golden Island; we being at a loss, for none of us knew the land. Here we met our friends that were aboard, who informed that Golden Island was some few leagues further to the westward. Fair weather with land and sea breezes.

1 November 1698

These 24 hours fair weather with land and sea breezes. In the forenoon we anchored within half a mile of Golden Island. In the afternoon we went in our boats to sound all about Golden Island, which we did with great exactness, but found it not convenient for our ships, there not being room enough about the point of the main for ships of our length to swing in. 'Tis true there is room enough near the island, but then we might be attacked by the greatest either from eastward or westward, for they can come in both ways, nor is there a drop

of water within a mile of the point. On the main and all the bay round full of mangrove and swampy ground, which is very unwholesome. As we went to sound, we saw a flag of truce waved in the bottom of the bay. We went thither and found about 20 Indians with bows and lances, but upon our approaching they unstrung their bows in token of friendship. We made one of our men swim ashore (while we lay off upon our oars) to know their meaning. They desired us to come ashore, but we did not think it fit. Then they told us that tomorrow one of their greatest captains would be on board of us—so we parted.

2 November 1698

This morning according to what was said, came on board one Captain Andreas with 10 or a dozen along with him. He inquired the reason of our coming hither and what we designed. We answered our design was to settle among them, if they pleased to receive us as friends, our business was trade, and that we would supply them from time to time with such commodities as they wanted, at much more reasonable rates than either the Spaniard or any other could do. He inquired if we were friends to the Spaniard. We made answer that we had no war with any nation; that if the Spaniard did offer us no affront nor injury, we had nothing to say to them, but otherwise we would make open war with them. This they seemed pleased with all, still believing us to be privateers, and our design upon the South Sea. He began to run out upon the praises of Captain Swain and Captain Davies, two English privateers, who he said were his particular friends, and whom he knew in the South Sea. We received it coldly, and assured him we were upon no design, believing it to be a pump, as we found by the men's conversation. We gave him a hat braided with broad gold galloo, with some toys, so we parted for that time. He (as generally all the people are) is of a small stature. In his garb he affects the Spaniard, as also in the gravity of his carriage. He had a loose red stuff coat on, with an old hat, a pair of white drawers, but no shoes nor stockings. Those that were with him were stark naked, only a thread tied round their middles, to make fast another to that kept on a small piece of plate upon the end of their yards, made like the small end of an extinguisher; this is always made either of silver or of a certain leaf of a tree, and all wear it above 14 years of age.

3 November 1698

Yesterday in the afternoon, we went in our boats to sound a bay about 4 miles to the eastward of Golden Island, and found it a most excellent harbor. The harbor is within a great bay lying to the westward of it, made by Golden Island and a point of land bearing from thence east about a league. From that east most point to the opposite one, is a random cannon shot, and in the middle of the entry lies a rock about 3 foot above the water, on which the sea beats furiously when the wind is out and blows hard. This looks terrible (when in the bay) to those who know not the place well, but in both sides of this rock is a very good and wide channel, that to the southward being about 3 cable-length breadth, with 7 fathom water close to the rocks nose, and the other to the northward near 2 cables length. There is a small rock under water, a little within the points bearing off of the southernmost SSW and of the northernmost SSE and of the rock without SE and BE. From these two outward most points, the harbor runs away east a good league, and near the middle on the right hand the land sets out, so that its not a musket shot over, and thus far there is not less than 6 fathom water with very good easy ground, and here you ride land-locked every way that no wind can possibly hurt you. Within this to the bottom of the harbor, till within a cables length of the shore, we have not less than 3 fathom water, nor can a hurricane make the least sea there. The land on the left hand coming in is a peninsula, and about 3 miles long, very high and steep towards the sea, where it will be extremely difficult for anybody to land till you come to the isthmus, where is a small sandy bay. Small ships may ride but this by a good ditch and fort may safely be secured. The western most point towards the harbor is low and very fit for a battery to command the entry, which would be excellently secured by another on the opposite shore. The land on the peninsula is extraordinary good, and full of stately trees fit for all uses, and full of pleasant birds, as is also the opposite shore, and has several small springs which we hope will hold in the driest season. But on the other side there are 4 or 5 fine rivers that never do dry. This harbor is capable of containing 1000 of the best ships in the world, and with no great trouble wharfs may be run out to which ships of the greatest burthen may lay their sides and unload.

This morning Captain Andreas came on board again with his traveling wife, having in all four. Polygamy being here allowed, everyone may have as many as he can maintain. He was still on the pump as to our design, but when he found our account all of a piece, he told us that the English, after they had been very friendly with them, had several times carried away their people, and that was the reason that Captain Pedro (whom he promised to bring aboard with him when last here) would not venture till he were better assured of our integrity. He likewise told us that there were some French who lived among the Indians towards the Samballas to the westward. Fair weather. This day we landed and took possession.

4 November 1698

The weather fair, with land and sea breezes. This forenoon we weighed and got in to the harbor, but the UNICORN unhappily struck on that sunken rock within the heads, and beat of some of her sheathing. There were 40 men sent from each ship to clear away and make huts for our sick men.

5 November 1698

We sent all our sick ashore, and sent 30 men more from each ship to clear away. The Council met and went to view the most proper place for a fort. Fair weather.

6 November 1698

Fair weather. This morning arrived a canoe with one Frenchman, 2 Creolians of Martinique, and 4 Indians; as also a periager with Captain Ambrosio and Captain Pedro, who live about 16 leagues to the westward. These Frenchmen have lived 4 years with these Indians, and one of the most sensible of them speaks their language perfectly, who gave us the following account; viz., that the stories of King Panco Rosa and Golden Cape were mere fables. That indeed there was about 50 years ago one who by his valor and conduct against the Spaniard had acquired so great a reputation that they made him commander-in-chief of all their united forces; but he had no sooner got the power into his hand than he became a most barbarous tyrant, and often for his pleasure would cut of the heads of his bravest captains. And what yet troubled them more, he would allow no men besides himself but one wife, which they by no means could endure, so they set upon in the night and murdered him; since which time they never allowed anyone to be greater than his fellows, only in time of danger the wisest and bravest among them within their several districts is chose as their captain for the time, and those now allowed to be so are as follows. Captain Diego commands from the bottom of the Gulf of Uraba on this side to Carrot Bay, and has about 3.000 men under his command. He is esteemed the most powerful among them; he has been at war with the Spaniard about 12 months. The occasion of it was thus. The Indians having found 3 gold mines within his jurisdiction, 2 whereof small and a very great vein, consulted with themselves what to do, and being sensible that they did not understand to work them, concluded to discover them to the Spaniard, provided they would allow them such a share of the profit. This was agreed to and faithfully promised by the Spaniard, but no sooner had the Indians shown them, but they shut up two of them, and set strong guards upon them, and fell to work upon the third, of which the Indians demanding their share, they bet and abused them, calling them their slaves, and threatened to exterminate them, which provoked them so that a little time after they seized upon 20 Spaniards and 3 priests, and cut them to pieces.

Next to Diego is one Captain Paussigo of Carrot Bay. He is one of the Indian clergymen, and commands that part of the coast that lies between Carrot Bay and Golden Island, he is but a small captain, and brother-in-law to Andreas. The peninsula which we possess, and which we found un-inhabited, nor has it been ever by any heretofore that we can hear of, lies between him and Captain Andreas.

From Golden Island to the River Pinas, about a league to the westward of Isle of Pinas, Andreas and his brother Pedro command; they are greater than Paussigo, but not so powerful as Diego, yet their united interest by consanguinity, together with the vicinity of their command to our settlement, makes their friendship of greatest consequence. These people have had a good correspondence for several years past with the Spaniard, and have suffered some of them to reside among them, to give an account to Panama by land from time to time, who were upon this coast. But about two months before our arrival here, Captain Ambrosio, who has the adjoining command, forced them to enter into the common confederacy and cut of 10 Spaniards who lived on

the main of Golden Island. We distinguish it thus by reason that the natives call all the main opposite to the island by the same name that it bears. About a league from the water side there is a high mountain wherein they assure us are several mines of excellent gold. The Spaniards are very sensible of that, and have from time to time taken great care (by fair or foul means) never to let them be opened, well knowing that being so near the north sea they would have the least share of them. This Andreas has often been at Panama, the mines of Santa Maria, and in the south sea. The Spaniards, believing he might be useful to them, made him a captain by giving him a stick tipped with silver, upon which he values himself above others, and that was, we are apt to believe, endeared him in some measure, yet the love of one's country and liberty is so natural that we have great reason to believe that as soon (being a sensible and cunning fellow) as he is satisfied we are able to protect him, he will certainly join in our interest. The French mortally hate him for having betrayed some of their nation to the Spaniard while they were at peace with them.

From the river Pinas, Captain Ambrosio commands the Rivers Bononos, Mango, and Cocost to the Samballas. He is a man about 60, but strong and vigorous, a mortal enemy to the Spaniard, with whom he has had a long war; he is esteemed the bravest and most successful of their commanders upon all occasions. He is of a middle size, well-made, strongly-limbed, and of a great and somewhat stern countenance. He has a son-in-law, one Pedro, a brisk little fellow. He speaks good Spanish, having been kept slave to them at Panama for several years, and who can never forget nor forgive their usage of him there. He likewise speaks very good French, having lived sometime at Petitguavis. He has as much of the French gaiety as Andreas of the Spanish gravity, and is a good friend to the French, whom they are made to believe have a design speedily to settle near them, and we have reason to believe the same if we had not prevented them. This Pedro is highly esteemed by Ambrosio and all his people, whose daughter he has to wife, as also two of his daughters by himself, which is allowed here, yet it seems they believe it a crime, since if they have any children during the life of the mother, the children are buried alive, which is very strange that the innocent should suffer for the guilty. They pressed us very hard to come and live by them, as also jointly to make war with the Spaniard, whom they would engage upon the forfeiture of their heads, if we would but assist them but with one hundred men and as many arms, with 2.000 of their own people, to drive them not only out of all the mines which are but 3 days journey from us, but even out of Panama itself. We gave them fair words and promised to go to the westward with them to view the coast, and if there were any convenient harbor for our shipping we should be their neighbors.

The Samballas to the River Conception is commanded by one Corbet, who is altogether in the French interest, and we have the following account of him. About 7 years ago there being abundance of French privateers about the Samballas, this Corbet and they contracted a particular friendship, and he did them many good offices. They in return told him that if he would go to Petitguavis, the Governor there, Monsieur du Cass, would make him amends for all his favors to them. He resolves upon it, and away he goes in a French vessel, but chanced to be taken by an English privateer and carried to Jamaica, where he and two Indians more were sold for slaves. As soon as Monsieur du Cass was informed of this, he sent to the Governor of Jamaica, who at his desire immediately released them, sent them to Petitguavis, from whence they took the opportunity of a French privateer bound for the Samballas, and turned home; they were prisoners in Jamaica about 7 months.

Corbet continued rambling with the privateers, and made another trip to Petitguavis, where he had not been long when Monsieur Ponti arrived, with whom he went to Cartagena. When Monsieur Ponti presented him with goods (which we suppose were useless to him) to the value of 2.000 crowns, Monsieur du Cass, Governor of Petitguavis, who accompanied Monsieur Ponti in that expedition, gave him a commission as general of all the French and Indian forces on the coast of Darien to take, sink, and destroy the Spaniard or any other enemy. Notwithstanding this large commission, both the French and more sensible Indians have no opinion of his capacity, courage, or constancy, for he has a correspondence under hand with the Spaniard which they do not like; But Ambrosio, who all allow to be most daring and brave, as also the most faithful to his promise, being a true friend and most inveterate enemy, keeps him within bounds.

Next to Corbet from the River Conception is one Nicola, a man who speaks Spanish as well as any natural Spaniard, having been bred for above a dozen of years of his youth among them; he likewise reads and writes it perfectly, and understands the state of Europe very well, which no other of them has any notion of. He is said to be wise and brave, extremely beloved by his people for his justice and good nature, in so much that there have been designs to cut off Ambrosio to place him in his room, for the last is of a rough military temper, and often upon slight pretences makes bold to take from them what they have. However, if they do not love him they fear him, and his near alliance and strict friendship with Diego in the Gulf, a powerful and old gallant fellow, renders him secure.

This Nicola was in good terms with the Spaniard till about 12 months ago. A trifle made him break with them, and it was thus. He had got an excellent French fuse from a buccaneer which he valued extremely; it was somewhat out of order, nor did he know how to put it to rights again. A Spanish Don from Portobello, being at his house, told him he would carry it with him and get it mended, which the other consenting to, with a desire that it might be returned as soon as possible, they parted. The Don showed it to the Governor, who liked it extremely and said it was too good for a heathen who kept correspondence with the French, so he ordered an old rusty match to be sent in lieu thereof. This he took so heinously that he fell upon the Spaniards wherever he found them and cut them off, nor is he to be reconciled to them; his command reaches from the River Conception to the Spanish border. Thus we parted with the Frenchman, whom we treated with all possible civility; they went home to Ambrosio's and promise to return in 5 or 6 days.

7 November 1698

The weather fair, with small breezes. Our people are employed in making of huts and clearing away ground.

8 November 1698

The wind and weather as above. There has been a great number of Indians on board ships, whom we use very kindly, and who consume a great deal of liquor.

9 November 1698

The weather as above.

10 November 1698

This day Captain Andreas dined on board the Commodore with his first wife and his sister; they are generally of a small size as well as the men, their features are indifferent (bating their color) only their eyes are somewhat too small. They had a single cloth wrapped about them in form of a petticoat made of cotton, with a sort of a linen mantle about their shoulders, a great many beads about their necks and arms, with large gold rings put through the gristle that divides their nostrils; they are very submissive to their husbands, who notwithstanding are very kind to them. They told there had been a skirmish between the Indians of the Gulf and the Spaniard. That the last had killed about 20 men, and had taken as many women for slaves. That they knew of our being here and were exceeding angry with them for making friendship with us. Fair weather.

11 November 1698

The people ashore are employed in making of huts, clearing way, etc., and those on board in ordering their holds, overhauling their rigging, blocksails, etc.

12 November 1698

Much rain in the night.

13 November 1698

Much rain in the morning. We saw a ship Saturday to the westward, which we believed to be Captain Lang in the RUPERT, prize, who we heard was in the Gulf of Uraba.

14 November 1698

We had sharp showers of rain with the wind round the compass.

15 November 1698

It has rained very hard, and gusts of wind. This evening Captain Lang in his boat came to visit us.

16 November 1698

Captain Lang dined on board the Commodore. Much rain and thunder, which hinders our work.

17 November 1698

Captain Lang dined on board Captain Pinkerton. In the evening Lang's boat went to his sloop, which lay at the Isle of Pinas. Much thunder, lightning, and rain.

18 November 1698

This morning Captain Lang and Captain Pinkerton went for the Isle of Pinas.

19 November 1698

At 8 o'clock this morning Major Cunningham, Mr. Mackay, and Captain Pennicuik set out to the westward, and about 4 in the afternoon got on board Captain Lang, where they, with Captain Pinkerton, stayed all night, it blowing hard so that our longboats could not thither till next morning. Much rain, fresh gales of wind, thunder and lightning.

20 November 1698

About 8 in the morning our longboats got up, together with Captain Pedro in his periager. What others have found or may think of Lang we know, but he appears to us to be of no great reach; he has a full and ample commission, his principle design it seems was to find out wrecks and to fish. He owned, and so did all his people, that his boat had not been so much as been ashore in any place betwixt the gulf and the Isle of Pinas, nor had he any conversation with those people, so that he can have no pretence upon our settlement. We left him about 10 o'clock, he said he was bound for Jamaica. This night the Councilors lay in a little bay about 2 leagues to the westward of the River Pinas. In the night time a fresh gale variable and some small showers.

21 November 1698

In the morning they weighed and sounded all along the coast, and about noon found a most excellent harbor about 4 leagues to the westward of where they lay all night, capable of containing 10.000 sail of ships. It is made by an elbow of the Main to the eastward, and a range of keys about it, 10 in number, running to the eastward above 2 leagues. To one of those called Laurence Key the greatest ship in England may lay her side to. Here the privateers used to careen, but the inconveniency of that place is that ships may not only come in both from the eastward and westward, but between several of the keys, so that it cannot be defended without a great many forts as well as men. After they had surveyed this bay they got to the River Coco. About 4 o'clock they landed and went to Ambrosio's house, which is a good league from the waterside. It stands upon the banks of this river with about 10 or a dozen lesser houses about it. Their houses are on the sea hand inaccessible in a manner, being so advantageously situate that no stranger can come at them that way by reason of the numerous unseen shoals, small rocks, and banks.

When they came near, Ambrosio advanced about 50 paces with 20 followers, all clothed in white loose frocks with fringes round the bottoms, and lances in their hands. He saluted them very kindly, and gave them a calabash full of liquor almost like lambswool, which they call mischlew, being made of Indian corn and potatoes; this they get drunk with all often. Before the house about 20 paces it was very smooth and clean; the house was about 90 foot long, 35 in breadth, and 30 in height; it was curiously thatched with palmetto royal, and over that, Cajan leaves; the floor was of a firm earth like Tarras, very smooth and clean; the sides were of large canes about the bigness of a man's leg, and near an inch asunder. In this house lived Ambrosio and Pedro with their whole families, in all about 40 persons. There was an old woman who was very stirring about the house, she seemed to be near 60, but upon asking her age the Frenchman told she was about 120. They could not believe it, and were persuaded they were mistaken in the computation of time; he assured them not, and as an undeniable demonstration showed the sixth generation of that woman's body in the house, which indeed was very surprising. She is Pedro's grand-mother; when it was assured that it was common among them to live to 150 or 160 years age, yet its observed that those of them that converse often with the Europeans and drink their strong liquor are of short life.

22 November 1698

In the morning they had some plantans, potatoes, and wild hog dressed for breakfast, after their fashion. Then Ambrosio and Pedro went out with their guns to kill some fowl for the strangers. Pedro returned with some partridges, the largest and best ever they saw, being bigger than capons, and exceedingly sweet. They being afraid it would be late took leave ere Ambrosio returned, Pedro and the Frenchman conveying them to the waterside. They lay that night at the easternmost of the keys mentioned before. Pedro did climb high coconut trees and threw down a great number most delicious for the juice and kernel. They are very big. This Pedro is incredibly dexterous at the bow and arrow, which he showed them by shooting frequently in one place; they learn their boys to shoot with blunt arrows.

23 November 1698

By daylight they weighed and got to the Isle of Pinas with their pinnaces by noon, and at night home. Captain Lang sailed the Sunday before.

24 November 1698

Much wind and rain.

25 November 1698

Wind and rain as above.

27 November 1698

Very much rain and wind.

28 November 1698

These 24 hours there has fallen a prodigious quantity of rain.

29 November 1698

Much rain with fresh gales.

30 November 1698

This being Saint Andrew's day, the Councilors dined on board the Commodore, where Captain Andreas was invited, who being inquired at anent his having any correspondence with the Spaniard as was reported, he ingenuously confessed that the Spaniards had been friendly to him and had made him a captain; that he was obliged for his safety to keep fair with them; and that they assured him we were nothing but privateers who had no design to settle, but to plunder both Spaniard and Indians and be gone in 2 or 3 months time; and if that he assisted us any way, as soon as we were gone they should destroy him and his.

He got all possible assurance of the contrary, which he appeared to be fully satisfied with, and desired a commission and to be taken under the protection of our government with his followers, upon which he should give all his right to this part of the country, which relished well enough. He went away and promised to return in 2 or 3 days.

1 December 1698

Much thunder, lightning, and rain.

2 December 1698

The weather continues very bad which hinders the work much.

3 December 1698

Great showers of rain with much wind. Captain Andreas came this day on board the SAINT ANDREW, where the Councilors were. He had his commission read to him, and expounded in Spanish, whereby the Council made him one of their captains to command the natives in and about his own territories, and received him and all submitting to him into the protection of their government, he being thereby obliged with his followers to obey, assist, and defend them and all their concerns upon all occasions. To all which he heartily agreed and seemed very well satisfied. Then the presses of the Council for the time did in presence of the Councilors and several others and some of Andreas' people, deliver him his commission written on parchment, with the colony's seal

and very broad gold striped and flowered ribbon appended, joining hands together he promising to be just and faithful to us and our interest. He had at that time given him a broad basket-hilted sword and a pair of good pistols, with which he promised to defend us all to the last drop of his blood against our enemies. He presented the Council with a bow and a bunch of arrows as a token of his kindness and friendship. Then he and those with him got a hearty glass, and at drinking the Company at home their health, 7 guns were fired, which he took as a great favor; he stayed on board all night.

4 December 1698

Much thunder, lightning, and rain.

5 December 1698

Some wind and rain.

6 December 1698

Showers of rain with squalls of wind. The sons of Captain Diego and Captain Ambrosio came and stayed with us 4 or 5 days. The natives come every other day with plantans and yams; the common people among us buy them from them and give them small trifles for them, which they are well satisfied with.

7 December 1698

Blustering weather with some showers.

8 December 1698

Wind and weather as above.

9 December 1698

Wind northerly. Sometimes most excellent fish taken here, as also tortoises, (but very few as yet, not having time nor nets fit for them) some of them above 2, others above 300 weight: they are the best of meat. One of them will serve 100 men of reasonable appetites.

10 December 1698

There is excellent Cedar trees in great abundance, as also Mahogany, Yellow Sanders, Lignum Vitae, Manchinill excellent for inlaying, and many others of great use. There are hopes of finding out the Nicaragua, the best of lit for Scarlet, as also Banileos is here in great quantity, an excellent perfume and much used in the finest chocolate, as also in this country excellent fruits, such as cocoa nuts, whereof chocolate is made. Vanillas, sugar canes, maize, oranges, plantans, bananas, yams, manioc, and several others all very good, the ground very fertile and rich.

11 December 1698

This morning came on board the Commodore a French longboat, with the lieutenant of the ship she belonged to, and the purser of a Dutch. The ship to which the lieutenant belonged is named the ZANTOIGNE of 42 (had but 32 mounted), commanded by Monsieur Vite Thomas. The Dutch ship was one of 22 guns, a trader upon the coast. The Frenchman reported he came out in company with those that returned the church plate to Cartagena. She is a merchant ship, but has the King's commission, and half the Company paid by the King; he was very lucky, so begged liberty to stop his lakes in our port, which we freely granted. The Dutch ship being afraid of the Barlevento fleet, kept him company, and likewise desired our protection. She is richly loaded and has been upon the coast some time, yet has most of her cargo still on board, being bound to the coast of Cartagena. She must be here till the Barlevento fleet pass for Puerto Bello.

12 December 1698

This morning the French ship anchored near Golden Island, and the Dutchmen came into the harbor, directly he saluted the Commodore with 7 guns who returned him 5.

In the afternoon, the French captain came on board; he told us all the news on the coast, that the President of Panama had given an account to the Governors of Cartagena and Puerto Bello of our arrival and settlement. The Spaniards along the whole coast are in a wonderful consternation upon the matter. He told that 18 days ago one Juan Bernardo (a very rich and honest man) was sent with a long boat and 37 men by the Governor of

Cartagena with a commission to know what we were and our design here; he was told there was nothing heard of him, so the Frenchman concluded the boat was sunk, being so old and leaky that she could hardly swim. He further said that there were 4 sail of ships, about 50 guns each, newly come from Spain, whereof the DARTMOUTH, an English man of war of 52 guns taken by the French was one; that they believed our design was upon the river Mississippi, so were gone into the Gulf of Mexico to seek us. That the Barlevento fleet was not at Cartagena consisting of 3 sail; viz., the general of 56 guns, one of 36, and another of 28 guns, the vice-admiral of 40 guns being gone with a Dutch ship of 32 guns whom they made prize, as also 2 English sloops for trading upon the coast to Veracruz.

That Mexico was all in a confusion, for upon advice of the King of Spain's indisposition, Count Montezuma, viceroy and of the race of these great emperors, had made such an interest that it is not doubted but that he will speedily set up for himself. Cartagena has likewise been in a civil war, which is only covered, not quenched.

At Porto Bello about 700 slaves got into a body, which in a little time increased to above 1500. The Governor did all he could to suppress them, but they being supplied with arms and ammunition from the French, English, and Dutch traders, it was not in his power to suppress them, so was forced to come to very dishonorable terms. To wit, to allow them to be a free people independent of the Spaniards, and only to be called their friends, So that hundreds of them might be seen in Porto Bello strutting and taking the right hand of their masters, who dared not to say it was ill done; this agreement is said to have been made about 8 months ago, and shows the weak condition the Spanish Empire is in, in this new world. The French have been very industrious in promoting their interests here, both with the natives and Spaniard, which they have cultivated to a great degree, nor is it to be doubted that they will push fair for a great share of these countries upon the King of Spain's death.

13 December 1698

In the afternoon the French ship came in, he saluted the Commodore with 9 guns who returned (he having the King's commission and colors) the same number, then 3 of thanks; he had also the like return, then one, and then like to that.

14 December 1698

This day Captain Lang's boat came into the harbor and told us he sailed for Jamaica on Sunday last, that he had left 3 men and a woman with Captain Diego in the gulf, and that the Barlevento fleet consisting of several sail of great ships and abundance of small vessels full of soldiers were lying at the Burus taking in provisions in order to attack with all their strength in a few days. This obliges us to make all dispatches with our battery. The Council have ordered their ships in a line of battle in the mouth of the harbor. Fair weather.

15 December 1698

Captain Andreas sent word that the Spaniards were marching from Panama to Porto Bello, with a great number of men in order to attack us.

16 December 1698

Several other Indians came in and gave the same account. The battery is going quickly on; our men are very hearty and seem to long for a visit from Jacques, that they might have a just pretence to their gold mines not far off.

17 December 1698

There is a lookout made from which ships or vessels within 10 leagues can be destroyed.

18 December 1698

Fair weather, the fortification near finished.

19 December 1698

This morning one of the men whom Captain Lang left towards the gulf, with a boy and two Indians, came in a canoe and told that a Spanish periager landing where they were, the Indians and they set upon them, and killed 7 of them; this was found fault with by us, lest Lang's men should be thought ours and so we thought to be the

first breakers of peace. It was also told here that Lang had been a day's journey from his ship among the Spanish Indians on purpose to mis-represent us, calling us thieves and robbers and disbanded soldiers not owned or protected by the King of England.

This day the battery was finished, 16 twelve-pounders being mounted on it, and we are now in such a condition as that nothing more is wished than a visit from Jaques.

20 December 1698

The French ship came out and anchored by our ship at the mouth of the harbor. Fair, and wind at NBE.

21 December 1698

Some sharp showers of rain and a fresh gale as above; Entrenchments are making.

22 December 1698

The Frenchman warped out a little without us. Captain Paussigo of Carrot Bay, who is hearty and cordial to our interest, came and among other things told that close by, about 2 miles distant only, there were several gold mines, which he promised to show, and did let some of the Councilors see few parcels of gold which he affirmed he got from thence, which was extraordinary fine.

23 December 1698

Fair weather. Captain Ambrosio being upon this place tells that the Spaniard are marching with 600 of them and 200 of the south sea Indians, (who can travel through the woods) to attack us in the night if possible, but its feared with us they will not come; but whatever be in it, the work goes well on, the men working with much vigor and resolution. Ambrosio has been very kindly and civilly used and a present given him.

The French have strangely insinuated into the favor of the Samballas Indians, and chiefly through the means of Pedro, Ambrosio's son-in-law, who is wholly French, and was to have gone with this ship to Petitguavis, if not to the court of France. Nothing, in our opinions, has hindered them from settling on this coast at this time but the expectation of the King of Spain's death. But seeing us here, with which they were strangely surprised, they believe it high time to delay no longer; however our satisfaction is that neither Andreas nor that Pedro, who are our neighbors, have any manner of friendship for them. If they settle among the Samballas with the pretensions they have to the Crown of Spain, the English and Dutch must both look about them, for their trade on this coast (which is very great) will be utterly lost, and we are apt to believe the first will make their enmity give way to their interest, and rather close with us than suffer so powerful and troublesome a neighbor to fix here without opposition.

This day came in a small sloop loaded with flower, beef, etc. from Jamaica. The Commander was sent by Captain Moon, who is mentioned before; the cargo was consigned to Captain Aletson.

24 December 1698

In the morning early the French ship got under sail—the Council not having ended their dispatches for Scotland which they designed by her. Captain Pennycook went in his pinnace to know whether he designed to come to an anchor at Golden Island or put directly to sea. The Captain had drunk pretty hard the night before with Pedro Ambrosio and some other of the Samballas Indians, so that he was then asleep. The wind had blown hard at N and there came in a great sea, and with all it felt little wind, so that she fell away to leeward a great pace, where was nothing but an iron shore. She had certainly been stranded on the first point, had not Captain Pennicuik made his boat get ahead and tow her. She weathered that point not twenty fathom, then was obliged to anchor in a little bay. At the Captain's desire, Captain Pennicuik sent for a long boat, an anchor, and cable, with all the pinnaces to row them out, but stayed himself to assist what was possible, and at the Captain's earnest desire promised to stay by him as long as he kept the ship; for the sailors being all hot-headed since the night before, did not mind what their Captain said to them. The ship did ride about 3 quarters of an hour after they anchored, and then her best bower cable broke, and in half an hour after the small bower gave way, so ashore she went upon the rocks, where in half an hour she was all in pieces, no boat daring to come near her. Captain Pennicuik was as good as his promise and stayed till he saw the Captain (who could not swim) upon a

raft and gone, then took his opportunity and swam ashore, having received some small wounds and bruises from the wreck and rocks, the sea beating on them furiously. There were 22 out of 56 drowned—'tis said many of them occasioned by the weight of gold and money they had about their necks (having broke up chests); others beat to pieces upon the rocks after they had swam ashore. The Captain had in his roundhouse in gold and silver to the value of 60.000 pieces of eight, and in goods not disposed of to the value of 30.000 crowns.

25 December 1698

The French captain and lieutenant went on board the Commodore, being both extremely bruised. The men were dispersed into the several ships. Officers and men were sent to guard the wreck.

26 December 1698

Fair weather and a good gale at NBE.

27 December 1698

This morning the French captain went with two divers belonging to the ship to see what could be got from the wreck. He gets all possible assistance to save all that comes ashore.

Hill Burton, ed. *The Darien Papers: Being a Selection of Original Letters and Official Documents Relating to the Establishment of a Colony at Darien by the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies, 1695–1700* (Edinburgh, 1849):142–161.