

# EXECUTION OF TEWANAYE

Carlos de Hault de Lassus (1764–1842), Governor of Upper Louisiana

to Don Juan Manuel Salcedo, Governor of Louisiana (1801–1803)

New Madrid, 6 January 1803

As I informed Your Lordship by my letter number 168 from Saint Louis, I took passage in the galliot LA FLECHA and arrived at the post of Sainte Genevieve on the fifth of the past month, where I found in part all the militia summoned by said official communication, assembled and ready to march in spite of the bad weather. The weather obliged the commandant of the galliot to lie by and camp ten leagues from post Sainte Genevieve because of the ice which came down and surprised all navigators on the Mississippi. This occurrence obliged me to remain at Sainte Genevieve until the thirteenth day [of the month] because of the snow which was falling every day and the extreme cold; and to wait for the arrival of my papers and the dispatches which were in the galliot for the commandants of Cape Girardeau and New Madrid in order to advise them of our arrival. I dispatched them by messenger on the 10<sup>th</sup>, advising them that the council would not be held on the 15<sup>th</sup> because of this bad weather which had detained us.

Because of the zeal of these habitants and the extraordinary cold, I have ordered three rations per day to be given to each militia-man, and I have left orders to the captain commanding the galliot to do the same with the soldiers in camp, and that if the river permits it before the 20<sup>th</sup> to immediately follow to New Madrid, and after the 20<sup>th</sup> to go back to the post of Saint Louis.

Having marched on the 13<sup>th</sup> in company with the militia, summoned under the orders which I gave and ordered to be observed on the way for the conservation of all those habitants, who are zealous for the service, and having taught them to draw up in order in the places where we stopped, we arrived on the 15<sup>th</sup> in the neighborhood of Cape Girardeau, where we met Don Luís Lorimier,<sup>1</sup> commandant of the said post, who advised me that he had detained the official with the guard a league away in order to distribute them from there in their lodgings, because the dwelling houses were scattered. We followed and met the vanguard. Their commandant advised me that he had been a drummer and fifer and recognized that it was the company of Cape Girardeau. It arrived a minute later and Don Luís Lorimier informed me that it was the company which he had enlisted in accordance with my orders. I went to receive them; ordered them to halt in their tracks, and thence they took those who came with me to their houses.

I must remark that this company is composed of the best young fellows that one can see. They are well-mounted and armed, and Lorimier took the precaution to make them a standard bearing the arms of the King.<sup>2</sup> I, the commandant of Sainte Genevieve, Don Francisco Valle,<sup>3</sup> and a guard with the standard went to the habitation of Lorimier, who gave us all that was necessary with the greatest generosity, beside the definite measures which he took so that all the militia might receive what they needed.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> I gave orders to continue the march. Together with this militia, we marched on the 17<sup>th</sup> until half-past twelve, under the orders which I thought necessary for a march and as corresponds to the decorum of the royal arms, and under the precautions necessary so that no accident might happen to any of the habitants who were so desirous of being useful to their country.

In view of the bad weather and the continual snow in the land, I taught them how to form their ranks properly, to deploy, etc., so that we arrived at the post of New Madrid in column form on the 20<sup>th</sup>, as I informed Your Lordship by my number 170 of 20 December last, in the midst of a heavy shower and cold. Thus it continued

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<sup>1</sup> Louis Lorimier (1748–1812), founder of Cape Girardeau

<sup>2</sup> Charles IV (1748–1819), King of Spain (1788–1808)

<sup>3</sup> François Vallée (1758–1804)

for three days, in which I allowed these militia to rest and gave my orders for the service demanded by the circumstances, together with those of this post.

The continuous bad weather was the cause that no more than a small band of Indians of the Mascouten tribe had yet arrived. From the tribe of our prisoners, I was advised that this band was evilly inclined and was making threats. I immediately sent for Don Luís Lorimier, and he told me that he had really been very poorly received, but that it meant nothing for them to talk in this manner, for they saw that no tribe was present and perhaps they imagined that it was because it was not pleasing to the other tribes to perceive those who were going to punish them.

The following day, namely the 23<sup>rd</sup>, I told Lorimier to find a method of bringing the captain of the Mascouten to my lodgings. He accomplished that, and I talked with him mildly. He became quiet, and when he left, Lorimier advised me that everything would be all right, but that this old man seemed to him to be a talker.

On the 24<sup>th</sup>, I was arranging to free the four Mascouten who were imprisoned with Tewanaye, the criminal.<sup>1</sup> Lorimier went back to talk with the said chief and informed me that everything of the evening before was gone to the winds, and that they were again continuing their threats. Therefore I postponed freeing the aforesaid four prisoners, judging that would be giving them sure proof that we feared them and would have without doubt have opposed the sentence of Tewanaye.

Before deciding on a violent extreme, I consulted Lorimier. He told me that if none of the nations was present, it was either a proof that they feared the Mascouten because they were in great number, or that they did not regard this punishment, which I was preparing, with pleasure. Nevertheless, he could not presume that of the Shawnee and the Delaware, whom he believed had not yet arrived because of the bad weather, because it was cool, and that he would go to look for them in the vicinity of Cape Girardeau. I accepted the proposition instantly, and he set out.

The Delaware and Shawnee arrived with a band of warriors of each nation, notwithstanding the rain and snow that was falling heavily. I beheld their arrival with great pleasure. That instant I commissioned Lorimier to talk to them strongly and to endeavor by all means to get them on our side and to come to an agreement with the Mascouten. Lorimier did that with the greatest of success, by means of his experience in dealing with the tribes and the confidence which the Shawnee and Delaware have in what he told them. The 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup> it continued to rain heavily, but more chiefs and highly-regarded Shawnee, Mascouten, Piankeshaw arrived and in sufficient number to carry out what had been ordered for the council.

On the 28<sup>th</sup>, when I was informed that the Mascouten chief with his warriors had gone from the other side, I immediately commissioned Don Luís Lorimier to go to find the chief of the Delaware in order to obstruct his way and to go in search of him, informing him that he would interest himself for them and beg favor for the least guilty. The Delaware chief, Takinantha, did that with the best of zeal. This is the same chief who last year surrendered the Indian of his tribe who had killed an American from the American government. Takinantha came back on the 29<sup>th</sup> and told me that, after considerable trouble, he determined to come, since Monsieur Peyroux had told them or promised them that all should have their freedom. The Mascouten chief Agyponsetchy and the chief Kaskaloua and their warriors really came back on the 30<sup>th</sup>. I arranged everything for the council on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

Enclosed I am sending the process by which can be seen the two councils and the sentence that was executed on Tewanaye, which was effected by the arms in the presence of the members of his tribe, who were satisfied. All that was done I send to Your Lordship by messenger so that Your Lordship may inform the principal chiefs of the truth of the tribe of Mascouten, if you consider it advisable, in order to avoid having the four prisoners when set at liberty, from going down, perhaps to re-count the matter in any other way than just as it occurred.

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<sup>1</sup> After the 1802 massacre of David Troter and his son, the Mascouten tribe delivered Tewanaye and five other warriors to Spanish officials. After an investigation, Tewanaye confessed and the other Indians were cleared of all charges.

These and the chief Agyponsetchy and the highly-regarded Kaskaloua have today crossed to the other side after re-iterating that they will be satisfied.

I hope that I have done the best thing and that this example will serve as an assurance for the tranquility of these habitants and merit the approval of Your Lordship. Nothing more is left for me than to express to Your Lordship the zeal generally of all these habitants who have abandoned their families since the first of last month because of a very bad storm, and especially of Don Luís Lorimier, both on account of his zeal and for his success in dealing with the tribes who surround us and who has been of great use to me in this delicate matter.

Tomorrow I shall set out with the militia who have come with me, in order that we may return to our respective posts. I leave with this commandant the orders necessary for his defense, in case anything new happens, which I do not expect.

Louis Houck, ed. *The Spanish Régime in Missouri* (Chicago: Donnelley and Sons, 1909), II:318–321. [*place names modernized*]