

Chapter 7

Lord Windsor



Castillo del Morro, Santiago de Cuba | by Peter Glogg, Switzerland

Thomas, Lord Windsor arrived in Jamaica on 11 Aug 1662 and succeeded D'Oyley as governor of Jamaica. His name was Thomas Hickman-Windsor, and when he arrived, he held the title Baron Windsor, later he became 1st Earl of Plymouth. With Lord Windsor came new royal instructions, one article of which directed him to “grant such commissions as to you may seem requisite for the subduing of all our enemies by sea and land, within and upon the Coast of America.” Also, he was instructed as follows:

You shall endeavour by all fitting means to obtain and preserve a good correspondence and free commerce with the plantations

and territories belonging to the King of Spain, for all such our subjects as shall trade there with security to their persons, ships, and goods, and with regulations for the benefit of trade as shall seem to you and the council most advantageous to the same; but if the governor of the King of Spain shall refuse to admit our subjects to trade with them, you shall in such case endeavour to procure and settle a trade with his subjects in those parts by force . . . [Calendar of State Papers, No. 278].

These orders were of special significance to Harry Morgan because they clearly authorized the new Governor Windsor to use force against Spain if that nation refused to trade with his West Indian colony—even though England and Spain were at peace in Europe. By extension, Windsor had the King's authority to issue privateering commissions or letters of marque, legitimizing the use of private armies and navies against Spanish colonies in the New World. So, whatever we might think about the morality of the Jamaicans' attack on Spain's colonies, most had the protection of English Law.

Lord Windsor brought out with him back pay of £12,274 for the 1,523-strong Jamaican garrison. And, as he was required to do, he released over 1,000 soldiers with full pay and a gratuity for their past service. He replaced them with 400 foot soldiers and 150 horsemen “under command and discipline as long as shall be thought fit for the preservation of the island with two ships of war constantly plying upon that coast.” The released soldiers became available to volunteer for future operations against the

Spanish. An additional £2,000 was granted for “perfecting the fort of Cagway.”

The militia was divided into five regiments distributed throughout the island, which Windsor had divided into seven administrative areas called parishes. The name, Port Royal, was applied to one of the new parishes and the port and town at the Point, formerly known as Cagway. The new parish encompassed the Point, the Palisadoes—which was still little more than a series of small cays separated by marshy areas—and a portion of the Jamaican mainland. (In 1866, the mainland portion was merged with the parishes of Kingston and St. Andrew.)

Augmenting the small full-time army, all the male inhabitants capable of bearing arms were enrolled in the new militia. The 27-year-old Captain Henry Morgan was among the officers appointed to the regiment at Port Royal. He had been one of the 1,000 or so army officers and men who became civilians when Lord Windsor disbanded Cromwell’s army in Jamaica.

Harry Morgan had received his land grant and had applied for and received a privateering commission from Lord Windsor. He was now a part-time officer in the new militia and used his newfound time and freedom of movement to seek out, purchase and equip a small ship, which he owned jointly with Jamaican friends.

On a stopover at Barbados on his way to Jamaica, Lord Windsor had made what seems like a conscientious effort to promote trade with the Spanish islands. He sent the frigate *Griffin* with messages to the Spanish governors at San Juan, Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo, Hispaniola offering to trade with those islands. His application was curtly refused in both cases, and Spain's representatives remained unrelentingly hostile to Jamaica.

This response was welcomed by more than a few Jamaicans, for many of the disbanded soldiers were eager to undertake any adventure that promised to be profitable. Not surprisingly, with a council comprised almost entirely of former army officers who favoured war, the resolution passed. This one declared that since the governors of Porto Rico and Santo Domingo would not engage in trade, Lord Windsor, according to His Majesty's instructions, was authorized to use force against the Spanish colonies. They also stated that in their opinion, the proclamation declaring peace with Spain applied only in Europe. In other words, there *was* no peace beyond the line.

With the blessing of the colony's governing council, Jamaicans once again went on the offensive. The target was *Santiago de Cuba*, the second-largest city in Cuba and the capital of *Santiago de Cuba* Province on the southeastern coast of the island, about 100 miles north of Jamaica. The Cuban city, which had acted as an advance

base in efforts to reconquer Jamaica, had for some years been a potential target for a retaliatory raid.

Cleared of all charges in London, Commodore Sir Christopher Myngs had returned to Jamaica with Lord Windsor in the 46-gun frigate *Centurion* to once again take up his post as Commander-in-Chief of naval forces at Port Royal. This was his third Jamaica posting. Myngs's officers set about recruiting from among the former soldiers of the army who gladly enlisted. In all, about 1,300 men were assembled and equipped. Ships were fitted out and provisioned. Ten of them were privateers, and two were Royal Navy warships, Commodore Myngs's flagship the *Centurion* carrying a crew of 180 men and its consort, the 14-gun *Griffin* commanded by Captain Swart. Among the privateers was Edward Mansfield (aka Mansvelt), who, commanding a large contingent of buccaneers (Brethren of the Coast), sailed as second-in-command to Commodore Myngs. Also among the privateers sailing with the fleet was Harry Morgan.

By this time, Harry Morgan was well known by Commodore Myngs and the privateers operating from the Point, and especially among the former soldiers, some of whom Morgan had served with for more than five years. He held the rank of captain, for he continued to be a member of the Port Royal militia regiment, but he also "captained" his own small ship. Harry had become somewhat of a protégé of Edward Mansfield, who commanded the buccaneers, with the buccaneer admiral frequently

seeking private counsel from the younger man. It was also to Harry that Mansfield looked when he needed someone to lead a crucial operation.

This diverse force of Royal Navy sailors, former soldiers and officers of Cromwell's army and former cow-killers had one important aspect in common: they hated Spaniards. From them, they expected no quarter, and to them, they had none to give. With their raid on *Santiago de Cuba* in October 1662, these resolute warriors would unleash a ferocious two-decade-long whirlwind of violence against the coastal communities of Spanish America unlike anything witnessed before or since.

Myngs's fleet joined up with Sir Thomas Whetstone and seven other Jamaican stragglers off eastern Cuba. And, helped by the intelligence Whetstone provided, the raid on *Santiago de Cuba* surpassed expectations—at least, from an English point of view. After being delayed by calms and contrary winds, the fleet arrived off Cuba's south coast on 5 October. With no time to waste because the element of surprise had to be maintained, Myngs and Mansfield landed 1,000 men ashore and marched two miles across rugged and thickly overgrown terrain. By the following day, they had fought themselves into the Cuban town.

Don Christobal Arnaldo de Ysassi, the old governor of Jamaica, was among the town's defenders. The former governor was in command of several Spanish-Jamaican

refugees. As it turned out, the inhabitants did have time to prepare a defence, and the first English charge had been met with artillery and musket fire from behind hastily improvised barricades. Within a day, however, six small vessels had been seized and the town captured.

The victorious Jamaicans spent the rest of that day ransacking deserted buildings. The following morning, the commanders divided 500 men into several search parties and sent them out in different directions to hunt for fleeing Spaniards. Those they captured were taken prisoner and ransomed back to their families. Myngs also sent 100 seamen to reinforce the fleet, which he had left with orders to attack the harbour's defences.



San Pedro de la Roca | by Manfred Lentz

The following day, the Jamaicans attacked the tall stone castle called the “*Morro*” or “*San Pedro de la Roca*.” This formidable fortress had previously been thought impregnable. The fort occupied a steep, rocky promontory and was surrounded by 63-foot-high landward facing walls. It was armed with thirty-four cannon and had quarters for 1,000 soldiers. However, only one subaltern and 30 men defended the fort on this day, so it fell with surprising ease after the charging Jamaicans shouted fiercely, made menacing gestures and fired a few musket-shots.

Myngs’s fleet was now free to enter the inner harbour. And holding the town for five days, large parties were sent out to plunder and lay waste neighbouring plantations and settlements. In so doing, they destroyed several sugar-works and about 2,000 houses before razing the castle and carrying away all the cannons they could.

On 22 October, the victors made a triumphant return to Port Royal. Myngs led his fleet into the harbour at the Point with the prize ships, and the captured sugar, hides, wine, silver plate, negro slaves, artillery and even some church bells. Morgan and his men were lionized as news of Myngs’ stunning success spread throughout the island and set the pattern for Jamaican raids for the next two decades.

The damage the expedition had caused at *Santiago de Cuba* in destroyed buildings, fortifications and burned-out sugar works and plantations was estimated at the time

to be £500,000, but that was probably exaggerated. Only six men had been killed in battle, but 20 others had died from accidents or disease.



James, Duke of York and Albany, was the King's brother and heir to England's crown. After the Restoration, James had been confirmed as Lord High Admiral of England, an office to which he had been appointed at three years of age. The position was initially honorary but became substantive after the Restoration and James had become an adult.

The Lord High Admiral's authority was extended to include all colonial possessions. As such, James issued commissions to all colonial governors, appointing them vice-Admirals and empowering them to establish courts of admiralty. Consequently, Lord Windsor appointed a judge of the admiralty court in Jamaica with authority to hear complaints, condemn lawful prizes and impose penalties for infractions of the Navigation Acts. Moreover, the King was entitled to receive one-fifteenth and the Lord High Admiral one-tenth of the value of all captures condemned and declared lawful prizes. And so the King and his brother became partners with Harry Morgan and every other privateer.

Now that news of Commodore Myngs's success at *Santiago de Cuba* had spread far and wide, other adventurers

acquired small vessels and applied to Lord Windsor for letters-of-marque against Spain. Satisfied that Myngs's success at Santiago had removed the immediate danger of an invasion from Spain, the governor freely granted these commissions.

Thus, many more privateers put out to sea under the protection of their licenses. There they hoped to make their fortune, leaving the *Centurion* and some smaller ships of the Royal Navy free to remain in or near Port Royal for protection of the colony. However, Lord Windsor did not enjoy financial rewards due to him.

Blaming ill health and having had enough of the tropics, he sailed for England on 28 Oct 1662. His achievements were substantial, however. In a very few months, Lord Windsor had disbanded the army, replaced it with a new militia, divided the island into parishes, granted patents to landowners and taken *Santiago de Cuba*.

Sir Charles Lyttleton, the deputy governor, assumed the administration, and Myngs, in recognition of his recent success in Cuba, was sworn in as a member of the island's Council.