

*La Torre's Testimony: Transcription*¹

[Side summary]

Se Da quenta AVra Mag [Vuestra Majestad] Sobre Las
declaraciones de la habahía del
espíritu Santo y de aber Imbiado
las Al Virrey DelaNueva España

[Beginning of main body]

Señor

Con la notizia que e adquerido quenta de las exactas, dilijencias que por mandado de Vra Mag se an
hecho en el Reyno, de la nueva España, por el des cubrimiento de la bahía del hespíritu Santo, que
esta en las cos tas dehestas Provinzias, Y las diligençias Y notizias que mi antecesor, á óbetenido y
echo, de que según estoí Informado dyo, quenta a Vra Mag. Ho escuso el darlayo, por mi parte, de
las que a dado, Y declaración[Declaración] que a echo un mulato esclavo deste presso [presidio], que
se allava enpoder de Ingleses de los quales se Juio [huyo] Y a porto aquí quien declara haber estado
pocos dias ha [ahí] conellos en la d[ic]ha poblacon de la d[ic]ha bahia del hespíritu Santo, Y save [Y]
se obliga á enseñarla aun que diçe hesta ó culta mui dentro delorio [del rio], Y da nodzia [noticia]
Larga de todo como constara a Vra Mag. Por los autos
Y declaraciones echas ante mi Por el de las quales e Imbiado yntantto a el Virrey de la nueva españa
para que Sealle, conesta noticia Laqual doy a Vra Mag Para que conbiniendo asi a el R. Serbico el
acer se halgunas deligençias por heste presso, [presidio] o puertto de apalache como el mas cer can[o]
á ella sepodran aver acosta demuy pocos Resgates para los naturales Y su abía on heste mulatto ò
como Vra Maq q [que] mandare, nstro Señor g[illegible], L.C.Y.R. P. de Vra Mag felices años como
la [cris]tiandad amenes[o]r, San Agustín”

Febrero 29 del 1688 =

[Signature] Diego de Quiroga y Lossada

[Page ends]

[On the side] Auttos Sobre el Mulato de Arguelles

[On the margins:] Cometido

En la Ciudad de San Agustín de la Florida en quinze dias del mes de dizembre de mill y s[eis] y
ochentta y siete años el Sr, [Señor] Capittan de Cavallos Corasas Españolas Don Diego de quiroga y

¹ “Quiroga y Losada to the King transmitting a statement relative to the Bay of Espiritu Santo,” Feb. 24, 1688 (reel 19, Stetson Collection, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, Gainesville, Fla.). Some words are abbreviated in the original text, such as San Agustín and ciudad. These have been silently expanded. In cases where the text is hard to read, assumptions have been put in brackets.

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Losada Governador, Y Capn. General desta d[ic]ha Ciudad Y su Provincias, por su Mag. dijo que por quanto asi por lo que Le ay[n]formado a su merced por algunas Persona desta Ciudad, como por las declaraciones que atto maso Algunos Ingleses, Y negros que an [he]cho fuga del puerto de San Jorje, Poblasón de Ingleses que[sit]ta A la partte del norte desta Ciu[dad] de que Thomás mulatto esclavo de El Capt Anthonio de argüelles que lo es de Infantería Por su Mag en este presso [presidio], que izo fuga del y dela Serbidumbre del dicho su amo y se fue en las peraguas de Corssa [de] Alegandro Thomás de León que fue a el dicho Puertto de S Jorje Y donde se quedo dicho mulatto y ofressio entregar esta plaza comottodo con esta, por Instuinando[?] que pa[san] enpoder de su merced y por quanto el dicho mulatto Thomás asidotraido ante su merced discendole aver aportado Alactho delachua del Capn. Don Thomás Menedez Marquez Contador de la Real hacienda, armado sin saver soi mottivos porttanto su merced mandava y mando se le reciva su declarazion aciendo le las preguntas Y repreguntas que conbengan Y por este su autto asi lo probeio su merced mando y firmo = Don Diego De Quiroga y Losada = anti emi Alonso Solano escrivano Público y de Governación

[Side] Delcarasió[n]

En La Ciudad de San Agustín de la Florida en quince días del mes de diciembre de mill y [seis] Y ochenta Y siese años el señor de Capn. de Cavallos Corasas Españolas Don Diego de quiroga y losada Governador Y Capn General desta d[ic]ha ciudad, y sus Provincias, Por su Mag. para La declarazion que hesta mandado serreciva allon[s]enido en ella mando su merced pareser ante si A Thomás de la Thorre Pardo Contenido en oho [dicho] autto del qual por ante mi el SSn. le fuerres [illegible] do juramen[to] por Dios Y una señal de Cruz en forma

6r-6-20 Signature

[Page ends]

Dederecho Y abiendolo fecho [hecho] So cargo del Prometió desir berdad Al qual se le Izieron Las Preguntas siguiettes = fuele preguntado que Causas o motivos tubo para embarcarse, Sin licencia, del Governador de esta plaza Y del Capn Anthonio de arguelles su amo parayrse fujitivo desta Ciudad en las piraguas del Cargo de Alejandro Thomás deleón que salio de o[rsear] Y que darse en la poblazon de Saint Jorge que es de Ingleses que esta en las costas del norte de esta Cuidad = dijo que teniendo Pleitto pendiente sobre su libertad en esta Ciudad, Ante el Governador Don Juan Marquez Cabrera Binieron ha este puerto dos piraguas del cargo de Alejandro Thomás de león Corsado y abiendo comunicado con el suso d[ic]ho su demanda trataron el que Iria este declarante con el d[ic]ho Alejandro Thomás Asegurandole el suso d[ic]ho que de Ajustars no ser libre sino esclavo y en la funzión que iba a ser a la poblason de San Jorje si peresiera se lo pagaria a su amo en cuia con formidad se embarco en dichas piraguas, Y estando en la provincia de Guale tubo una hor den el haiu[dante] Andres hernandes theniente de d[ic]ha provinzia para que lo aprelendiera Y rremitiera ha este presidio Aloquales dho [dicho] Alejandro Thomás de león Por cartta que escrivio al dho [dicho] Governor Don Ju[an] Márquez Cabrera quien abia des pachado d[ic]ha order por dicha cartta aseguro la persona en Cuia con formidad le llebo en su compania Astta los Plantaes de la d[ic]ha Poblacon de San Jorje y [esttandolos] saqueando les dio una noche intenporal, que les obligo a las d[ic]has piraguas barar En

tierra y des eampararlas Por el muchot tiempo y al quartto del Alba enconttro hestte declarante con el d[ic]ho Cap Alejandro Thomás y dos Indios apalachinos de los que abian llebado desta ciudad y queriendo pasar inbraso de rio parayr aunplantare don de estava par[te] de su Jente por averlo a quella noche

[Page ends]

Y do asaquias los ser Caron Cantidad de Indios chiliques y los prendieron y los llebaron al R[l] donde estavan juntos mas de dozientos Ingleses, y otros tantos Indios que se abian juntado al[i]rebatto de huida ocho leguas [de] poblazon y aviendolos apretendido, los rremitieron a dicha poblazon A presencia del Governador de ella, fuele preguntado, quien le paso en la d[ic]ha poblazon, y que delijenias, Icieron con ellos, Dija lo que el save sobre hestt arrazon Dijo que luego que fueron A presoncia [del] d[ic]ho Governador de San Torres, Los mando meter en las Carce[l] Y rrezivirles declarazion Preguntandoles de Don de benian y abian salido y de donde heran d[ic]has piraguas aqueles rrespondieron que abianse [L]ido del puertto dela havana y abian Aporttado [illegible] de San Agustín abuscar Jente, Y que hestte declarante y el dicho Alejandro Thomas [A]llandose En este presidio forcados, [s]e abian embarcado en d[ic]has piraguas para allando ocassion ber si sepodian escapar como lo abian hecho = fuele preguntado que delijenias hizieron conellos enlaprision, Y que desinios[diseños] tubieron E Infentaron a ser ha este presi[dio] y como se escapo de la d[ic]ha poblazon dijo que abiendoles ttenido en la d[ic]ha carzel cosa de tres semanas un corsario Olandes llamado Yanqué que estava en d[ic]ho puerto de San Jorje con tres embarcassiones la dos de portte y una pequeña con d[u] cientos hombres le preguntos a este declarante La forma y modo que po[dr]ia tener para benir a in[v]adir ha este presi[dio] por averleofresido el Governador d[ic]ho puento [puerto] tres cientos hombres con que aria numero de quinienttas, hasiendole a este declarante muchas pregunttas y attodo le desbelo por lo qualle Jente que tenia en su compania sedesanimos y no Consigio suyntento asi por esto como por aver benido Nuebo Governador quien lo a cavo de desaser = Y por

[Page ends]

Ser la embarcassion mas inmediata la del d[ic]ho Corsario se envarco en ella paso las Islas dejarlo [v]enttro abuscar jen[te] Para carsear por aver se le quedado toda la mas en el d[ic]ho puertto de San Jorge y iendo a la Isla de Jamaica, lequedo en ella heste declarante Y hestando para salir dos valandras [P]arayrabusear a un pasaje que llaman los abraros en la costa de Santo Domingo, Y hestando faltos de bucros, Se acomodo con uno de los Capitanes asegurandoles que en esta costa heraplatico y entendia la Lengua de los Indios y que el los pondria en partte donde pudiesen co[r]er los que ubiese menester solo su animo de ber si se podia escapar Y que fue solo su animo, Y andando en esto fueron Aporttar alab[aria] que llaman del hespiritu Santo en la Ensenada de la nueba España = fue Le preguntado que poblacon, y fortificasion tiene dicha avadia que numero de jente y de que na[z]ion dijo que habiendo llegado a la costa y descubien[do] La puntta de la d[ic]ha baía que caie acia la parte dell este fueron naveganos, por dicha costa quinze leguas poco mas o menos, hasta llegar A la boca de [u]nrrio y subiendo cosa de Legua y media todo camino del nortte llegaron A una poblazon de franzeses que se conpondra de asta ucien[tas] personas de toda Jente hombres Y mujeres, niños y hesclavos, donde tienon Un redutto depiedra travada con lañas de fierro y plomo que tendra de la

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par[te] que mira A el d[ic]ho rrio diez Pies de Alto y por la de tierra seis con catorze piezas de fierro pequeñas

[Page ends]

Don de Estubo seis días y A la salida bios La otra puntta ela d[ic]ha baia de la par[te] del este que segun le dijeron Los Pilottos tiene de pu[esta] A pu[esta] dicha baia Por la Costa del Lamar dies leguas, y abiendo benido A la Costa de Apalache endichas dos Balandras Y dicho los pilottos hestavan sobre el puertto de tampa Les dijo heste declarante que alli avia Indios, Le echaron en una, canoa oi haze treinta Y cinco días, que fuese Atierra, con siete hombres Y hestando en ella, se entro el monte adentro diciendo le esperasen allí, que el yba a cojer Indios Y dejandolos se bino Pasando rrios y malezas a buscar el hacto del achua guiado por los Indios que Encontro, Y quelo que tien d[ic]ho Y declarado esta berdad, y lo que lea suzedido [s]o cargo del Juram[ento] que tiene [f]echo en que[ie]a firmayrratifica, y que es de eda[d] de quaren[ta] y seis años no firmo por [sa]ber firmolo su merced d[ic]ho señor Gover[nador] de qued[or] fee = Don Diego de quiroga y Losada = Antte mi Alonso Solano escrivano Publico y de Governacion =

[Closing signature]

Va Imdo = van = a este = A = Todo Vaya Con Cuerda con sus orijinales [q] quedan en mi poder Y oficio a que me remito y para q con este demandamiento [de] Sum[d]. d[ic]ho. A Gov. Y Capn. Gen. Don Diego de quiroga y Losada a doy de presense en San Agustín de la Florida en veinse [veinte] de febrero de mill SSs. y ochensa y ocho [illegible] [escribió] en [tres] [illegible] de papel comun con esta de mi signo Exno Correr [ano] [illegible] Selladó con [illegible] sello = Hago mi signo X en ttestim[onio] de [verdad]

[Signature]
Alonso Solano²

² There are two additional pages in the original document that are difficult to decipher. They are part of the processing of the report. They are not part of the declaration.

*La Torre’s Testimony: Translation*³

[Side summary]

Informing Your Majesty about the Declarations concerning the Bay of Espíritu Santo, which were [also] sent to the Viceroy of New Spain

[Beginning of the main body]

Sir

The news I have received tells of the proceedings that were conducted by command of Your Majesty in the Kingdom of New Spain concerning the discovery of the Bay of Espíritu Santo, which is on the coast of this province. The proceedings and news my predecessor made and obtained, I am informed [he] reported to Your Majesty. I am also taking the opportunity to send on my behalf [these reports] and this Declaration given by a mulatto slave of this presidio who was held by the English from whom he fled and came here. [He] declared having spent a few days with said population in the said settlement of the Bay of Espíritu Santo. And he knows and is commanded to reveal its location, though he claims that it is hidden very far inland [along] the river. He gave a long report with many details as ordered by Your Majesty, which was obtained by the acts and testimonies made before me. I have sent a copy of this report to the Viceroy of New Spain, so that he may also possess the same information I am sending to Your Majesty. It will be convenient to gather reports from this presidio or [from] the port of Apalachee, which is the closest to it [the settlement in the Bay of Espíritu Santo]. [These proceedings] can be obtained for the price of a few trade goods given to the Indians and from the report of this mulatto or however Your Majesty Commands... May God keep Your Majesty safe.

February 29, 1688

[Signature] Diego de Quiroga y Losada

[Page ends]

[On the side] Act about the Mulatto de Argüelles

[On margins:] Stated

In the city of San Agustín, Florida on the fifteenth day of the month of December of the year one thousand six hundred and eighty seven, the Captain of the Cavalry and Cuirasseers: Don Diego de Quiroga y Losada Governor and Captain General of the aforementioned city and provinces, reported the information he had received by way of the testimonies taken from some Englishmen and Negroes who had fled from the Port of San Jorge [Charles Town, South Carolina], an English town that is to the north of this city, and [by way of] [La Torre] the mulatto slave of the Captain

³ Punctuation has been corrected silently. In translating the document I have remained as close to the original as possible, but for the sake of making the testimony more legible I have included additional or clarifying information in brackets.

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Antonio de Argüelles of the Infantry, appointed by Your Majesty. [La Torre] fled [San Agustín] and escaped the service of his master, and he [La Torre] went on the piraguas led by Alejandro Thomás de León, which were headed to the Port of San Jorge, where the mulatto remained and offered [to show the English how] to take this town [San Agustín] by any means he could. For these reasons, said mulatto [La Torre] is brought before his Grace, having been apprehended in La Chua [hacienda] by Captain Don Thomás Mendez Marqués, accountant of the royal treasury, and [Mendez Marqués] sent him [La Torre] [to San Agustín] without being aware of his motives. For this reason, I sent for his declaration to be taken, asking him all the questions I thought necessary, and through this act I now send [this report] to Your Majesty. Sent and signed = Don Diego de Quiroga y Losada = made before Alonso Solano, public and government notary.

[side] Declaration

In the city of San Agustín, Florida on the fifteenth day of the month of December of the year one thousand six hundred and eighty seven, the Captain of the Cavalry and Cuirassiers: Don Diego de Quiroga y Losada Governor and Captain General of the aforementioned city and provinces received this declaration of Thomás de la Torre made and sent to Your Majesty. The unclear contents of this act which were testified before me and sworn before God with a sign of the Cross made correctly [by La Torre].

61-6-20 [Signature]

[Page ends]

Having promised to tell the truth. [La Torre] was asked the following questions = [La Torre] was asked which cause or motive he had in embarking without a license from the Governor of San Agustín or Antonio de Argüelles, his master, [and] for leaving [like a] fugitive from this Town in the piraguas in the command of Alejandro Thomás de León, which departed and then remained in the town of San Jorge, which is English and is located in coast to the north of this city [San Agustín] = [La Torre] said that the lawsuit for his freedom was pending in this city when two piraguas commanded by Alejandro Thomás de León arrived before Governor Márquez Cabrera, both men reached an accord and they agreed that this witness [La Torre] would go with the said Alejandro Tomás [de León], the said [León] assuring him [the governor] that he [León] would not free [La Torre] but employ him as a slave in the attack against the settlement of San Jorge. If he [La Torre] perished [during the attack], he [León] would pay his master [Argüelles]. [A]fter those formalities were established, he [La Torre] embarked in the said piragua. [A]nd while [stationed] in the province of Guale, he [León] received an order from the Adjutant Andrés Hernández, the lieutenant of said province, who ordered the return of him [La Torre] to this presidio, and to such [demand] the said Alejandro Thomás de León wrote a letter to the governor Don Juan Márquez Cabrera, who had dispatched the original order [calling La Torre back to San Agustín]. In his letter [León] assured [the governor] of [La Torre's] character. After such promises, he [León] took him [La Torre] in his company to the plantations of said settlement of San Jorge. [W]hile sacking them [the plantations], one night a storm struck them, which forced the said piraguas to come ashore to keep from harm's way. At day break, this witness found the said Captain Alejandro Thomás [de León] and two Apalachee Indians, who had departed from this city, and wanting to cross an arm of the river in

order to reach the plantations near San Jorge where some of their people were on account of having gone that night to sack them [the plantations].

[Page ends]

They were surrounded by a large number of Chilique Indians [who] apprehended and took them to where there were more than two hundred English and several other Indians, who had all gathered near the town, eight leagues to the south from the said settlement, and having apprehended them, they [the Chilique] remitted them to said settlement before its Governor. [La Torre] was then asked what happened while he was in that settlement, and what business had been conducted with the English. [La Torre] stated all he knew on this regard. He [then] said that they were brought before the Governor of San Jorge, who sent them to jail and ordered them to testify, asking them where they were coming from, where they had departed, and from where their said piraguas had originated. And they answered that they had come from the Port of Havana and had boarded in San Agustín, and this witness [La Torre] and the said Alejandro Thomás [de León] had found themselves as prisoners in this presidio and had embarked in said piraguas hoping for an opportunity to escape, just as they had done = [La Torre] was asked what proceedings were conducted [with the English] in the prison, and what [military] designs they [the English] had against this [the Spanish] presidio, and how he [La Torre] had escaped the said settlement. [La Torre] said that after having spent about three weeks in jail, a Dutch corsair called Yanque [Jan Willems or Captain Janke] arrived in the Port of San Jorge with three vessels, two with masts and one small, [and had a force of] two hundred men. [Janke] asked this witness the best modes and methods to come to this [Spanish] presidio since the governor of said port [Charles Town] had offered to supply [Janke with] three hundred [additional] men, making a total of five hundred. [The Dutch corsair] asked many questions of this witness, and he [La Torre] revealed all that he knew and, as they learned the details [of San Agustín's strength], the men in his [Captain Janke's] company became discouraged and abandoned their plans. [Captain Janke] did not launch his attack for that reason and also because a new governor arrived who disallowed the attack.

[Page ends]

And since the vessels of the said corsair were the ones departing the soonest, [La Torre] embarked on them and traveled to the Islands in search of recruits, since the vast majority of [Janke's] men had remained in San Jorge. The said witness [then] went and decided to stay in the Island of Jamaica. There [La Torre learned of] two vessels about to go wreck-salvaging in a stretch near the coast of Santo Domingo. Since there was a shortage of ships, [La Torre] befriended one of the captains and assured him that of the said coast [Bahía of Espíritu Santo] he was well knowledgeable and understood the Indian tongue, and that he [La Torre] would lead them to a place [in the Bay] where there were as many [Indians] as they could grab. [La Torre made these promises] in the hopes that he could make his escape, relying only on his determination. After traveling that way, they reached a bay, which was called the Bahía of Espíritu Santo, located in the inlet of New Spain. [La Torre] was asked what inhabitants and fortification said place had, and how many people were there, and what nation they were from. [La Torre] said that after reaching the coast and reconnoitering the entryway of said Bay that lies to the east, they sailed along said coast for about fifteen leagues until they

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reached the mouth of a river, [which they sailed up] and after a league and a half in a northward course, they reached a French settlement, which had about two hundred inhabitants, including men, women, children, and slaves. They had a redoubt made of stone, fortified with iron and lead beams. The redoubt was reportedly ten feet high on the side facing the river and six feet high with fourteen small iron pieces on the side facing the land.

[Page ends]

[La Torre] stayed there for six days and, as he departed, he saw the other side of the bay to the east, which according to what the pilots had told him, the bay stretched for about ten leagues along the coast. After reaching the coast of Apalachee in two bilanders and learning from said pilots that they were in the Port of Tampa, this witness [La Torre] told them that there were Indians there. Today it has been thirty five days since he [La Torre] got in a canoe with seven other men and went inland. There [in Apalachee] [La Torre] went into the woods, telling them [the seven other men] to wait for him while he went to find Indians. And leaving them there, he [La Torre] crossed rivers and thickets in search of La Chua, guided by Indians he found. What he has said and stated are the truth and the events described were spoken in sworn testimony signed and ratified. [This witness] is forty-six years [and] does not sign because he does not know how. His Grace Sir Governor gives Faith = Don Diego de Quiroga y Losada = Made before Alonso Solano public and governmental notary.

[Closing signatures]

Having sent this = All these [materials] sent match the originals, which remain in my power and person which is subject to the orders of the said Governor and Captain General Don Diego de Quiroga y Losada present here in San Agustín Florida the twentieth of February of [the year] one thousand six hundred and eight-eight [illegible] written in three [illegible] on standard paper with my signature in the present year. Sealed [illegible]. I make my sign X attesting to this testimony's truthfulness.