

Report of the Reduction of Trinidad de Salcedo, by Lt. Col. Ignacio Elizondo of the Royal Spanish Army, 6 September 1813.

Translated and annotated by Bob D. Skiles, 13 January 2013

Note: Due to the significance of the events related in this account to the early history of Texas (and due to my neophyte skills as a translator of provincial Mexican Spanish), I felt it incumbent that the translation should be reviewed and corrected by an expert ... so I asked Sra. Dora Elizondo Guerra, of San Antonio, and she kindly consented, and the results of her corrections have been incorporated in the following translation; translated from photo-images of a copy of the 1813 report of Lt. Col. Ignacio Elizondo, sent to the viceroy by his commanding officer, Joaquin de Arredondo, and published in the official government newspaper of Mexico.

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GAZETTE OF THE GOVERNMENT
OF MEXICO

FOR TUESDAY, 9 NOVEMBER, 1813

His Excellency D. Joaquin de Arredondo has sent to this Viceroyalty the following official letters and dispatches.

Excellency: Just as I began to close these pages to remit them to Your Excellency I received the reports of Lieutenant-Colonel D. Ignacio Elizondo, which copies I respectfully enclose so that Your Excellency will become informed of what has recently happened.

God protect Your Excellency many years. [From:] His Excellency D. Joaquin de Arredondo, Headquarters at Bexar, 14 September, 1813. [To:] His Excellency, Viceroy, Don Felix Maria Calleja.

I have the honor of informing Your Excellency of my fortunate success in the pursuit of the rebels of Texas in spite of the scarcity of supplies and the poorly mounted troops. I supplied myself with 100 head of cattle taken from the precincts of this capital, and continued in the same direction by double-time marches, as I informed Your Excellency I would; arriving on the Colorado in three days with 80 somewhat tired horses. From here I resolved to press on with 250 men mounted on more serviceable horses; leaving behind the other 250 [men] with instructions to catch up with me little-by-little. On this day, a short distance ahead, I found a fresh track and continued on it with 40 men. On the following day, at 8 in the morning on Nuncio Creek, I discovered 7 Anglo-American men and one Spaniard. I captured 3, and the rest escaped into the thick woods. I continued my march, and around ten in the morning I arrived on the Brazos River where in clear sight, on the opposite bank, there was a small group of the enemy. Impeded as we were by the said river's waters, I attempted to distract them by offering them a pardon

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with the condition that they cross-over and turn themselves in. Meanwhile, a picket of my troop stripped-down and mounted bareback, crossed to the other bank and captured 7 men, 6 women and 3 boys. Only one escaped. I ordered 4 of them to be executed, allowing them spiritual solace. I immediately rejoined my troop and continued the march, leaving behind at this location 1 corporal and 7 soldiers and 37 tired horses with my order that they should wait for the troop that had been left at the Colorado, and that when reunited the 50 men should stay there with the drove of useless horses. The rest [of the troop] was to continue trying to catch up with me.

On the second day, after having left this place, and realizing that the tracks I was following were also recent, and that in spite of an all-day march we had not gained any ground, I detached a party of 45 men commanded by Second-Lieutenant D. Fernando Rodriguez and D. Tomas Saucedo, and ordered them to go in pursuit of the rebels. I continued behind them, giving them the order to advance and to spy on the town of Trinidad, and to determine the number of people in it. The next day I advanced with 15 men to assist the detachment that I had dispatched the previous day; and at ten o'clock I received the report from its commander informing me that the detachment had not been able to reach Trinidad, due to the river being at flood-stage, and that he had learned that the ringleader [José Álvarez de] Toledo and his followers were there; and that he [the commander] and his forces, on

their return, two leagues before they reached Trinidad, had captured the Delgado family and had executed the ringleader, Antonio Delgado. I shortened my march and reunited with my detachment; I hid in the woods in ambush two leagues before reaching Trinidad, in the vicinity of a prairie at a place situated at the junction with the La Bahia road which had been taken by the bandits. This place is so well situated that I have not moved from it, nor has anyone traveling through it escaped me. On the same day I ordered 40 men with the aforesaid officers, ordering them to take two inflated cowhides as floats for crossing [Trinity River] during the night, by the crossing known as "Bar[r]'s [that is, the crossing at the Barr Ranch], in order to cut-off the ringleaders and their rabble, in case they should attempt to flee toward Nacogdoches; which [the detachment] was unable to accomplish because the rebels had an outpost of Jaraname Indians there whose firing impeded the crossing causing [the detachment] to withdraw to this camp. During the same night, I dispatched a party of 20 men under the command of Second-Lieutenant D. Manuel Chapa, to the crossing known as "El Salto" [The Falls], where news was had that the Arocha family was headed. The next day

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I marched with 50 mounted men and I went to take the town of Trinidad where I learned that the small band of the enemy that had been occupying it had fled in the night for Nacogdoches; and I ordered three honest residents of the aforementioned town to go see their relatives and incite a counter- revolution, and to apprehend all the main ringleaders; and to promise a general pardon to the town's people and to assist them immediately with troops. I took the town of Trinidad, and stationed there a party of 35 men and I returned to my camp.

On the second day I received a report from Second-Lieutenant D. Manuel Chapa that he had apprehended the family of Francisco Arocha who, as a result of being camped near the river, had been wounded. Several enemies were captured there while others escaped in the confusion caused by the crowds. [Chapa] seized 22 rifles, 11 pistols, 22 saddles, and 23 horses and mules, and on his return he encountered a platoon of rebels, at the Beman ranch. A group of rebels appeared from a mott of trees declaring that they would rather die than surrender. Said officer assured them that they would be pardoned if they surrendered. [Chapa], forced by the inadequate size of his troop, most of whom were occupied in guarding prisoners, tried to keep the rebels distracted with conversation, while he

signaled me for assistance, without the enemy's notice, and I immediately sent him 20 men. I captured 21 men, 14 women and 17 children, simultaneously capturing 23 rifles and 40 horses and mules.

Finally Sir, from the 26th of last month, and since I have been camped in this place, not a day has passed that I have not captured rebels, not only here where I am hidden, but also during my continuous patrols, accomplishing this without even crossing the Trinity River. I was unable to press on due to the lack of cavalry, since my troop is almost on foot, yet filled with enthusiasm and courage.

To date I have ordered the execution of 27 soldiers, including 2 sergeants and four corporals, 2 insurgent captains, and other officers of the ringleaders; 31 countrymen, including several ringleaders; among all these, some that executed the worthy leaders of Texas [Governors Salcedo and Herrera, and other Spanish officers]. I have spared the life of 17 soldiers and 19 countrymen until they are brought before Your Excellency. In addition I have gathered a large number of women, boys and girls. I have taken 150 head of cattle [from the ranch] belonging to the disloyal [Samuel] Dav[e]nport, for the sustenance of my troops and the families as well as more than 200 horses

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and mules, which I have seized from the enemy, and which were totally useless. In addition, more than 100 guns [*fusiles*], and some pistols that I am giving to the troops; 500 pesos in coin; a small amount of baggage that seems to me of little value. I have not taken the time to inventory this, as I have been very busy. The day after tomorrow I expect to have the results from Nacogdoches. I have captured 9 Anglo-Americans whom I have already pardoned, assembled and sent to Nacogdoches in the aim of joining them to others of their ilk in the aforementioned location. If the residents from Trinidad have not yet incited the proposed counter-revolution, they are to do so and also capture Toledo and the other ringleaders who accompany him. Meanwhile, I have come here, and having concluded my business, I will return to the capital with all my command [and place it] at the disposal of Your Excellency, in the hope that it will meet with Your Excellency's superior approval. Upon my return I will present Your Excellency with a detailed report of the operations of my expedition.

The 250 men who confronted so many difficulties and followed me here are worthy of recognition, and so I recommend them in general to your superiority, and in particular I recommend: Captain D. Isidro de la Garza,

Second-Lieutenants, D. Fernando Rodríguez and D. Manuel Chapa; and Sergeants Diego Ximénez, Claudio de Luna, and Leandro San Miguel, commanders of the guerrillas of operations; since their valor, patriotism and performance is worthy of being granted Your Excellency's goodness and consideration.

God keep Your Excellency many years. [From:]: Spanish Camp at Trinidad, on 2 September, 1813. – Ignacio Elizondo. [To:]: Brigadier and Commandant-General, D. Joaquin de Arredondo.

I bring to Your Excellency's attention that during my stay in Trinidad, I have forwarded dispatches to you, and have executed a total of 71 insurgents, including the ones already reported to Your Excellency. On the 5th of the current month, I advanced to[ward] Nacogdoches, and at the *Remudadero* [the place where tired mounts were exchanged for fresh ones, located at an intermediate point between remote posts along a *camino real*], I received official notice that those rebels in Nacogdoches had already fled for Natchitoches, and that only three royalist families had stayed. I do not find it necessary to enter the above mentioned place [Nacogdoches], as the three royalist families complied without hostility to the official order that they withdraw to Bexar; and using the discretion that Your Excellency has given me, I granted a general pardon, in the name of His Majesty. My order was promulgated to the emigrants, on the condition that within 50

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days they must appear in Bexar or they would otherwise be shot should they be captured. On the above mentioned day I returned to Trinidad, and on the 6th I crossed the river. On the 7th, I undertook my retreat, burdened by 100 male prisoners also some women, with armaments, clothes and jewelry, about which I will inform you in detail when we meet.

God keep Your Excellency many years. [From:] Camp of the spring of the Brazos [River], September 12, 1813. – Elizondo. [To:] Commandant General D. Joaquin de Arredondo.

GAZETTE OF THE GOVERNMENT

OF MEXICO

FOR TUESDAY 9th OF NOVEMBER OF 1813.

Sir Brigadier D. Joaquin de Arredondo has sent to this superior the following official letters and parts.

Excellency, Sir. - Just as the time came to begin to close these pages, and to remit them to Your Excellency, I received the reports of Lieutenant-Colonel D. Ignacio Elizondo, whose copies I enclose herewith, so that Your Excellency may be informed of what has recently happened.

God protect Your Excellency many years. [From:] Headquarters of Bexar, 14 September 1813, His Excellency, *Joaquin de Arredondo* [To:] His Excellency, Viceroy, Don Felix Maria Calleja.

I have the honor of informing you, Sir, of my happy success in the pursuit of the rebels of Texas, in spite of the scarcity of supplies, and the poorly mounted troops. Of the first thing, I supplied myself with 100 animals [cattle] taken in the precincts of this capital, continuing my [same] direction, by double-time marches, as I told you [I would] Sir, and arrived on the Colorado in three days, with 80 somewhat tired horses. From here I resolved to go forward with [only] 250 men [mounted] on the more serviceable horses, leaving the other 250 [men], who, little-by-little, were falling behind. This day, [after] a short walk, I found a recent track, and going forward with 40 men following [it] to [where], the next day, at eight o'clock in the morning, on Nuncio Creek, [were] 7 Anglo-Americans

and 1 Spaniard; of those were apprehended 3, and the remaining ones escaped, due to the harshness of the forest. I continued my march and came to the Brazos River at ten o'clock in the morning, where I stopped, seeing on the other side a small group of enemies; more blocking the crossing [of the waters] of said river; [I] tried to distract them, [by] offering them a pardon, if

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they would [only] cross-over and present themselves; and, meanwhile, a picket of my troop stripped-down, and mounted bareback, they hurled themselves [across] to the other bank; and apprehended 7 men, 6 women, and 3 boys, only 2 [of the group] escaping; I had 4 of them shot, after having gotten spiritual assistance [... received last rites ? ... said their last prayers ?]. Immediately, I rejoined my troop, and continued the march, leaving at this point 1 corporal and 7 soldiers, with 37 tired horses, with [my] order that they should [expect arrival of] the troop that had left the Colorado, and that [when] gathered the 50 men should remain there, with the whole drove of useless horses, and the remaining ones were continuing in my command. The second day after leaving this place, seeing also that there were recent tracks that [continued, we followed], and that in spite of [having marched] the whole day, weren't gaining-on anything; [consequently, I detached] a party of 45 men commanded by the second-lieutenants D. Fernando Rodriguez and D. Tomas Saucedo, and [ordered] that these were [to go] ahead in pursuit of the rebels, and I would follow with my command, giving [the detachment] the order to go ahead: to spy on the town of Trinidad and [determine] the number of people in it. The next day I went forward with 15 men to assist my detachment that had been dispatched the previous day; and, at ten o'clock, I received the report of its commander, as ordered by me, giving me the account that [the detachment] had not been able to reach [the town of] Trinidad, due to the river being in flood-stage; and, having had news that the ringleader, [José Álvarez de] Toledo, and his followers, were there; and, of [the detachment] having apprehended on its return, the Delgado family, two leagues before they [the Delgado family] reached the Trinity, in charge of the ringleader, Antonio Delgado. Abridging my march, I reunited with my detachment, and hid in the woods [in ambush], two leagues before reaching Trinidad, in the vicinity of a prairie, the point [being situated] at the junction with the La Bahia Road, [the road] that was bringing the bandits; the place [being] so profitably situated that without moving, none has escaped from me, of those that passed [along the road]. The same day I placed 40 men under command of the aforesaid officers, [ordering them to take] two [inflated] cowhides as floats for crossing [Trinity river] in the night, by the crossing known as "Bar[r]'s," [that is, the crossing of the Barr Ranch] in order to cut-off the retreat to the ringleaders, and their rabble, in case of their wanting to withdraw for Nacogdoches; which the detachment could not [accomplish], for the rebels had an outpost of Jaraname Indians there, whose firing impeded the crossing, so [the detachment] withdrew to this camp. The same night I dispatched a party of 20 men under command of second-lieutenant D. Manuel Chapa, to the crossing known as "del Salto" [of the Falls], where notice was had that the families of the Arochas were headed. The next day

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[I] marched with 50 men, all that could [be] mount[ed], and went to take the town of Trinidad, in which I knew that the brief gathering of enemies, that had been occupying it, had fled in the night for Nacogdoches; and ordered three honest residents of the aforementioned town to go see their relatives in Nacogdoches; to form [in Nacogdoches] a

counter-revolution; to apprehend all the main ringleaders; and, promising a general pardon to the people and to assist them immediately with troops. [I] took the town of Trinidad: stationed there a party of 35 men and I returned to my camp.

On the second day I received the report of the second-lieutenant D. Manuel Chapa of having apprehended the family of Francisco Arocha; he being wounded, [but he] escaped by having been encamped next to the river. Several enemies were apprehended there; also, several others escaping, they being lost in the confusion of the melee. [He] seized 22 rifles, 11 pistols, 22 saddles, and 23 horses and mules, and on his return he discovered a platoon of rebels, at the ranch of Beman; one of them [a rebel] came out from a mott [of trees] to receive [parlay with the troops], stating that they [the rebels] would not surrender, and that they would [rather than surrender] first lose their lives. Said [rebel] officer was persuaded that they would be forgiven, if they surrendered; but this one [Lieutenant Chapa], forced by the inadequate size of [his] troop, most of whom were pre-occupied in guarding prisoners, tried to keep them [the rebels] distracted with conversation, while he signaled for assistance, without the enemies noticing it, which was sent immediately: apprehended were 21 men, 14 women, and 17 children; seized from them 23 rifles and 40 beasts, horses and mules.

Finally, Sir, from the 26th of [the past month], that I have been camped in this situation, no day has passed lacking the apprehension of rebellious, alike in the camp where I am hidden in the woods, as with my continuous patrols, [even] without crossing the Trinity river, [even] without having advanced for lack of cavalry, since my troops are almost afoot, but [they are still] filled with enthusiasm and courage. Up to today, I have ordered shot 27 [rebel] soldiers, including 2 sergeants and 4 corporals, 2 insurgent captains, and other officers of the ringleaders; 31 countrymen, including several ringleaders; among all these, some that murdered the worthy chiefs [that is, Governors Salcedo and Herrera, and other Spanish officers] of Texas. I have spared the life of 17 soldiers and 19 countrymen until they are put in the presence of Your Honor. Equally, I have gathered a large number of women, boys, and girls: I have taken 150 animals, for maintenance of my troops and families, [cattle formerly] belonging to [the ranch of] the disloyal [Samuel] Dav[e]nport; and, more than 200 beasts, horses

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and mules, totally useless, that were seized from the enemy, with more than 100 rifles, and some pistols that I am giving to the troops; 500 pesos in coin; a small amount of third-rate equipage that seems to me of little value: I have not taken time to inventory this, as I have been in a very busy state. I hope before tomorrow has ended to have the results for Nacogdoches. Anglo-Americans that have been apprehended: 9; those, I have already pardoned, and assembled for [sending to] Nacogdoches, to join the others of their ilk in the aforementioned point; if the residents [from Trinidad that were sent before] [have not already] caused the proposed counter-revolution, [then] they [the new group being sent] may stir it up; [and, even] apprehend Toledo, and other ringleaders who accompany him; meanwhile, I came [here] and have concluded my business, [and] I will return to the capital, with all my command, at the disposal of His [Your] Excellency, hoping to merit his [your] superior approval; and, upon my return, will present to him [you] the detailed diary of the operations of my expedition.

The 250 men, who have accompanied me, up to this point, on so many duties, are worthy of recommendation, and so I make it, in general, to your highness, and in particular recommend: Captain D. Isidro de la Garza; and, the Second-Lieutenants, D. Fernando Rodriguez and D. Manuel Chapa; and, the sergeants Diego

Ximenez, Claudio de Luna, and Leandro San Miguel, commanders of the guerrillas of operations; since they are, for their valor, patriotism, and performance-under-difficulties, worthy of the grace that Your Highness has the goodness to grant them.

God keep Your Highness many years. [From:] Spanish Camp in the Post of Trinidad, on September 2, 1813. - *Ignacio Elizando*. - [To:] Sir, Brigadier- and Commandant-General, D. Joaquin de Arredondo.

I report to Your Highness, that while I have remained in the Post of Trinidad, as I have given you notice, I have executed-by-firing-squad a total of 71 insurgents, inclusive of the previous ones that I have reported to Your Highness. On the 5th of the current month, I advanced on Nacogdoches, and in the place *Remudadero* [Remountery = a corral of horses at an intermediate point between remote posts along a *camino real* maintained for remounting cavalry], I received official notice that those [rebels] in Nacogdoches had already [fled] for Natchitoches, and that only three *realista* [royalist] families had stayed. I do not find it necessary to enter the above mentioned place [Nacogdoches]: for they complied without hostility to the official order that the three [*realista*] families [must] withdraw to Bexar; and using the discretion that Your Highness has given me, I granted a general pardon, in the name of His Majesty. My order was promulgated to the emigrants, on the condition that within 50

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days they must appear in Bexar, and that otherwise, would be shot whenever they were apprehended. On the above mentioned day I returned to the [Post] of Trinidad, and on the 6th crossed the river. On the 7th, I undertook my retreat, with the detained [comprised] of 100 male prisoners, and [a quantity of] women, with armaments, clothes, and jewelry, [all] that we laid eyes on.

God keep Your Highness many years. [From:] Camp of the Spring-of-the-Brazos [River], September 12, 1813. - *Elizondo*. - [To:] Sir, Commandant-General, D. Joaquin de Arredondo.

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draft translation & annotation by Bob D. Skiles, 13 January 2013.