

ENEMUND MEULLION

1737 – 1820

Lieutenant of Militia in the 1779 Expedition of Bernardo de Galvez, Governor of Louisiana

by Donald Peter Moriarty

The name Meullion has been variously spelled Meuillon, Meullion, Meuillion. The focus of this paper, Dr. Ennemond Meullion, was born at Moirans, Isère (diocese of Grenoble) then in the province of Dauphiné, France, in 1737, a son of Ennemond Meullion and Claudine Barral. After completing his medical education in France, he emigrated to Louisiana about 1769 where he settled first in the Pointe Coupée District, on the Mississippi River, probably about two hundred miles above New Orleans. He there married on 7 September 1773, Anne Stephan, a daughter of Jean Stephan and Anne Françoise Rolland and the widow of Jacques desAutels. However, Anne died in December, 1773, only a few months after her union with Dr. Meullion. There were no children of this marriage, but Anne left six children from her first marriage.

In June 1777, Dr. Meullion was listed as a Sub-Lieutenant of the Pointe Coupée militia company. In this capacity, in September 1779 he participated in the expeditions of Governor Bernardo de Gálvez to capture the British forts and posts at Manchac and Baton Rouge. The following is a narrative of that action.

In May of '79, the Court at Madrid informed its colonial administrators that it intended to declare war on Great Britain by the twenty-first of June, and Gálvez took immediate action to assure that British colonial officials along the Mississippi and in the Floridas to the east would not be able to benefit from the war. In less than three months he was ready, and on August 27, 1779, he launched the first of his three campaigns. A violent hurricane had devastated his base at New Orleans on the 18th, only nine days before, spoiling, sinking or washing away nearly all the provisions and boats assembled for his expedition. Despite this, Gálvez quickly made good his losses or did without, and set out only four days after his originally intended date of departure.

The Spanish force, which grew from Militia levies as it passed through the various posts en route, ultimately totaled slightly over 1,400 men. They covered 105 miles in eleven days, losing at least a third of their number along the way to fatigue and disease before they caught sight of the first enemy post at the border village of Manchac, south of Baton Rouge. At dawn the next day, September 7, Gálvez's militia rushed the fort and took it from its shocked, twenty-seven man English garrison without the loss of a single Spaniard.

Resting his men a few days, Galvez then pushed on to Baton Rouge, and reached there on September 12. Early the next day, the Spanish guns began to blast the palisade to splinters and level the earth-works. The English took this punishment for three and a half hours, and then raised the white flag. Included in the capitulation agreement was the surrender of 80 grenadiers who staffed Fort Panmure some 80 miles to the north, at Natchez. The lower Mississippi was now safely within Spanish hands.

Shortly thereafter, Dr. Meullion left the Pointe Coupée District and went to the Opelousas District, now the parish of St. Landry, where he engaged in the active practice of medicine. There, he met and married Jeannette Poiret, a daughter of André Claude Baptiste Poiret, the Chevalier de Brie, and his wife Françoise LeKintreck (the daughter of Joseph LeKintreck and Anne-Marie Hopf). Jeannette, the widow of Colonel Jacques La Mothe, had moved from New Orleans to Opelousas some time previously with her four small children. Their marriage at Opelousas was registered with a date of 26 July 1783, but may have taken place as early as February, 1780 – the records are unclear on this point. This was the second time Dr. Meullion had chosen a widow with children as his mate; however, thus far he had no children of his own. But fortune was kinder to him in his second venture and this wife not only bore him six children but would outlive him by fifteen years.

Sometime between January and July 1795, Dr. Meullion moved with his family to the El Rapido District in the vicinity of the present city of Alexandria, in Rapides Parish; he was in residence at El Rapido at the time of the

1799 Census of Louisiana. His home was located on the right descending bank of the Red River, a few miles below Alexandria. At the time of his arrival, Estevan Maraffret Layssard was commandant of the Post of El Rapido (1770-1795). This same Layssard had been captain of the local militia that went with Governor Gálvez in his campaign in 1779, and it is not unreasonable to believe that Layssard and Dr. Meullion were acquainted from that common experience. Estevan Layssard was succeeded as commandant by his son Valentine Layssard (1795-1798), and he in turn by Caesar Archinard (1798-1800), a Frenchman who had emigrated from Geneva, Switzerland.

During the period 1800-1803, Dr. Meullion served as Commandant of the El Rapido District, and was the last Spanish Commandant of that district. In November, 1803, he was deputized to receive the El Rapido District for France in the transfer of the province from Spanish to French authority.

The Province of Louisiana was transferred by France to the United States of America on 20 December 1803 and, during 1804, was subdivided into the Territory of Orleans (south of the 33rd parallel) and the District of Louisiana (north of the 33rd parallel). In May 1805, Dr. Meullion was appointed by Governor Claiborne to be the first Treasurer of "the County of Rapide" within the Territory of Orleans, making him one of very few (if not the only) individual to hold a position of public trust in all three phases of Louisiana's colonial history. At the time of the 1810 US Federal census, Dr. Meullion's residence remained in Rapides Parish where he died in May 1820 at the age of 83. Dr. Meullion and his wife, Jeannette, are buried in the Rapides Cemetery in Pineville, Louisiana.

In recognition of Dr. Meullion's service as a Sub-Lieutenant of Militia in the Gálvez expeditions, in 1930 the Daughters of the American Revolution marked his grave as that of a Revolutionary Patriot Ancestor. Subsequently, he also has been recognized in this capacity by the Sons of the American Revolution. His grave site can be viewed at www.findagrave.com, memorial #22613945.

Compiled by Donald P. Moriarty from resources of the Alexandria Genealogical and Historical Library, Alexandria, Louisiana; and with additional source material from David Cheney Conroyd of Tinley Park, Illinois. 27 February 2017.



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Lunemond

Le vingt sixiesme jour d'Avril l'an six cent
huit fils de M^r Lunemond Meunier avec M^{lle} Claudine
Barral mariee, le parrain a est M^r Louis Simard
et la marraine M^{lle} Marianne Meulhon femme de
Loulant. En presence de M^r Jacques Guiffrey et de
Jeanne Lupta, led^e Guiffrey Aprouvee le parrain
est mariee non led^e Lupta pour ne faulxist
SIMARD Guiffrey Marianne Meulhon
Jacques Lupta Simard