

All the principal bayous which communicate with the lake, and the narrow strip of land on the borders of the Mississippi, through the swamps, had been obstructed. There was, however, a communication with Lake Borgne, but little known, called the Bayou Bienvenu, used by fishermen; its head near the plantation of general Villere, seven miles below the city. Major Villere had received orders from his father to guard this bayou, and he accordingly stationed a guard near its entrance into the lake, at the cabins of some fishermen. It afterwards appeared, that these wretches had been in the employment of the British. On the twenty second, guided by them, the enemy came suddenly upon the American guard, and took them prisoners. The division under general Keane, by four o'clock in the morning, reached the commencement of Villere's canal, and having disembarked and rested some hours, proceeded through the canals, and by two o'clock, reached the bank of the river. General Villere's house was suddenly surrounded, as also that of his neighbour, col. La Ronde; but this officer, as well as major Villere, was so fortunate as to effect his escape, and hastening to the head quarters, communicated the intelligence.

The alarm gun was fired, and the commander in chief, with that promptitude and decision for which he is so remarkable, instantly resolved on the only course to be pursued, which was, without the loss of a moment's time, to attack the enemy. Coffee's riflemen, stationed above the city, in one hour's time were at the place of rendezvous, the battalion of major Plauche had arrived from the bayou, and the regulars and city volunteers were ready to march. By six o'clock, the different corps were united on Rodrigues' canal, six miles below the city. The schooner Caroline, captain Henley, at the same time dropped down the river. The command of general Coffee, together with captain Beale's riflemen, were placed on the left, towards the woods; the city volunteers and men of colour under Plauche and Daquin, the whole under the command of colonel Ross, were stationed to the right of these; and next to them, the two regiments of