
"Burning & Destroying All Before Them": Creeks and Seminoles on Georgia's
Revolutionary Frontier

Author(s): Kevin Kokomoor

Source: *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Winter 2014, Vol. 98, No. 4 (Winter 2014), pp.
300-340

Published by: Georgia Historical Society

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44735557>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*

JSTOR

“Burning & Destroying All Before Them”: Creeks and Seminoles on Georgia’s Revolutionary Frontier

BY KEVIN KOKOMOOR

“So that in addition to other Misfortunes we may consider ourselves as fairly in for an Indian War.”¹

When invading British soldiers marched north from St. Augustine in 1778 to help a larger force capture Savannah, no Seminoles accompanied them. When the same army ascended the Savannah River to take Augusta, only a few Creeks met them there. Soon British commanders were bemoaning that lack of support, complaining that although they had been assured of Seminole and Creek assistance they got next to nothing. Their complaints reflect the general lack of recognition Native warriors received for their participation in the southern theatre of the Revolution. Only in the last few decades or so, in fact, have historians begun to expand on the complexity of Native involvement

¹Houston to Laurens, August 20, 1778, in *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, ed. Philip M. Hamer (Columbia, SC, 1968–), 14:192 (hereafter cited as *PHL*).

MR. KOKOMOOR is a teaching associate at Coastal Carolina University. He resides in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

THE GEORGIA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY
VOL. XCVIII, NO. 4 WINTER 2014

in the period.² This examination of the Revolutionary War continues that trend by looking closely at the Georgia backcountry and the Georgia-Florida frontier, on the various threads of Creek and Seminole involvement there, and the consequences of their widespread raiding. By focusing in such a precise way, Creeks and Seminoles emerge as dynamic groups that had tremendous roles to play not only in the war as it was fought in the region, but also in the legacy of the war and Georgia's postwar growth as well.

Creek raids in Georgia tended to be small and scattered and Seminole patrols were usually localized along the border with East Florida. Native raids seldom led to larger military confrontations let alone decisive victories, and that perhaps explains why they have been overlooked.³ Yet, as studies of the Revolutionary era continue to shift further into the backcountry, different actors gain importance. Native war parties, for instance, were along the frontier from the earliest days of the war and they raided well into its closing days. Georgia's vulnerable backcountry made these sorties particularly effective, and Creek attacks in particular had a powerful destabilizing effect on the region. War parties fell on isolated plantations where Georgians had little warning and no hope of assistance. Raiders pilfered what they could and destroyed the rest, undercutting Georgians' means of supporting the war effort.

²The earliest studies of the region barely mention Native involvement during the Revolution. See, for instance, Kenneth Coleman, *The American Revolution in Georgia, 1783–1789* (Athens, GA, 1958), 96, 112–15. More recent studies of backcountry fighting in the South do include Native actors, yet they still tend to portray their involvement in passing, or as light and ineffective. See, for instance, studies of Georgia and South Carolina in, *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution*, ed. Jeffrey J. Crow and Larry E. Tise (Chapel Hill, NC, 1978); and Ronald Hoffman, Thad W. Tate, and Peter J. Albert, eds., *An Uncivil War: The Southern Backcountry during the American Revolution* (Charlottesville, VA, 1985); or David K. Wilson, *The Southern Strategy: Britain's Conquest of South Carolina and Georgia, 1775–1780* (Columbia, SC, 2005). By approaching particular actors or regions, several studies have produced the best incorporation of Native actors. See Edward J. Cashin, *The King's Ranger: Thomas Brown and the American Revolution on the Southern Frontier* (Athens, GA, 1989); Martha Condray Searcy, *The Georgia-Florida Contest in the American Revolution, 1776–1778* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1985); Leslie Hall, *Land and Allegiance in Revolutionary Georgia* (Athens, GA, 2001); and Jim Piecuch, *Three Peoples, One King: Loyalists, Indians, and Slaves in the Revolutionary South, 1775–1782* (Columbia, SC, 2008). The best incorporation of Creek or Seminole warriors into the American Revolution, however, still appears in chapters of larger Native American histories. These include David H. Corkran, *The Creek Frontier, 1540–1783* (Norman, OK, 1967); James H. O'Donnell III, *Southern Indians in the American Revolution* (Knoxville, TN, 1973); Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (New York, 1995).

³The best studies of that region in particular are: Jim Piecuch, *Three Peoples*; Cashin, *King's Ranger*; and Searcy, *The Georgia-Florida Contest*.

They also ambushed militia units and sacked their forts, sapping morale. Their attacks forced state troops to protect their farms and their families rather than engaging the British in Savannah, St. Augustine, or elsewhere, which influenced the trajectory of the British occupation of the South. Creek and Seminole warriors also had an important role to play in protecting East Florida. They patrolled the rivers, repulsed several American invasions, and stole cattle from the Georgia frontier that fed locals and regular soldiers in Florida, all of which kept the province in a stable and relatively peaceful position even as Georgia descended into chaos. As long as the Revolution raged, Creeks and Seminoles had critical roles to play.

The many reports of localized raiding reveal additional levels of complexity to Native involvement that go much deeper than simply taking part in the fighting. Warriors, for instance, were more than the unwitting agents of British military policy. They made the decision as to how to engage in the war, and their decisions were based on longstanding and complex Creek traditions—kinship connections and the idea of blood vengeance, for instance—as well as political or economic decisions brought on by the war. They also attacked on their own terms and according to Native fighting customs that were common in the Southeast. At times that style of fighting frustrated British commanders, but at other times they encouraged it and even depended upon it, integrating Creeks and Seminoles directly into their war strategy. Such widespread participation, however, came with a price. The intense, personal level of violence that Creek and Seminole raids brought to the Georgian backcountry influenced the creation of a particular, Indian-hating Georgian ethos. The houses and barns Natives burned, the forts they sacked, and of course the people they killed, all warped Georgians by the close of the war into a profound and inveterate anti-Indian people. Indeed, Creek and Seminole warriors turned out to be incredibly successful combatants—so successful, in fact, that their attacks had social and psychological consequences that spilled over into the postwar years. Their violence influenced how Georgians perceived Natives generally—not kindly—and the deep distrust and animosity of the war years had important implications once the fighting came to a close.

British military commanders hoped to take advantage of Georgia's "defenceless state," which would "make but a poor resistance." It was a realization not lost on American officials, who complained that they were "surrounded almost on all Sides by Enemies & no internal resources of our own."⁴ The youngest of the southern colonies, Georgia also represented the smallest and most sparsely settled of them all. With large rice plantations spread along the coast, frontier Georgia was largely a backcountry of subsistence farmers.⁵ Population growth was steady, but it still lagged behind other colonies in the South. By comparison, in 1770 North Carolina boasted a population of 197,000 and South Carolina 124,000, while Georgia languished far behind with only twenty-three thousand. The pace of expansion quickened in the years before the Revolution so that by 1775 and 1776 upward of fifty thousand Georgians were spread throughout the province. Most of that growth was along the backcountry, however, so that according to one historian "some things remained the same: the population was generally poor but landholding, frontier conditions prevailed, and civil government, while functional, lacked the financial resources to sustain itself independently."⁶

Just to the west of those settlements lay the sprawling hunting lands that numbers of Creek communities claimed as theirs. The Ogeechee River marked the boundary between the two peoples. Further to the southwest the Oconee and Ocmulgee Rivers form the Altamaha. Smaller rivers, including the Big and Little Satilla, were further south and flow similarly. The winding St. Mary's River marked the natural and political boundary between Georgia and Spanish East Florida, followed by the St. John's River further

⁴Brown to Tonym, n.d., in CO 5/556, p. 328, reel 147, in the Panton Leslie & Company Collection, Accession M1986-10, University Archives & West Florida History Center, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida (hereafter cited as PLC); S.E. to [Lee?], May 28, 1776, in *Collections of the Georgia Historical Quarterly* (Savannah, 1957), 12:7-8 (hereafter cited as *CGHS*); Clay to Laurens, October 21, 1777, in *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society* (Savannah, 1913), 8:53.

⁵Hall, *Land and Allegiance*, 8-9; Kenneth Coleman, *The American Revolution in Georgia* (Athens, GA, 1958), 1-2, 10-12.

⁶Hall, *Land and Allegiance*, 1, 9-15; Coleman, *The American Revolution in Georgia*, 8-10. For more studies on the development of early Georgia, see: John T. Juricek, *Colonial Georgia and the Creeks: Anglo-Indian Diplomacy on the Southern Frontier, 1733-1763* (Gainesville, FL, 2010); Julie Anne Sweet, *Negotiating for Georgia: British-Creek Relations in the Trustee Era, 1733-1752* (Athens, GA, 2005); Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia, 1730-1775* (Athens, GA, 1984); Ralph Betts Flanders, *Plantation Slavery in Georgia* (1933; rpt., Chapel Hill, NC, 1967); E. Merton Coulter, *Georgia: A Short History* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1947).

south. Creek warriors from across the region used most of these lands as seasonal hunting grounds that they hoped to harvest deer and other furs from in the winter months.⁷ At the western end of the hunting lands began the Creek communities themselves.⁸ Dozens of them combined to create a heavily populated Creek Country, where there were from fifteen thousand to twenty-two thousand people living by the early 1770s.⁹

British superintendent John Stuart, who directed Anglo-Native diplomacy in the Southeast, shared strong political and economic ties in Creek Country and was widely respected there.¹⁰ He positioned one deputy, David Taitt, at Little Tallassee in the Upper Country, along the Coose and Tallapoosa Rivers, where he developed an excellent relationship with the leading headman there. Only a few years earlier, Taitt had concluded a sweeping tour of the region, meaning that by the time he was a regular resident of Little Tallassee he already had plenty of friends there. Further to the south, in the Lower Country, Stuart enjoyed strong trading arrangements with several communities because of their proximity to Pensacola and Mobile, both significant British garrisons and trading depots. Many headmen were close by (on the

⁷The best accounts of Creek hunting and trading come from Kathryn H. Holland Braund, *Deerskins & Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685–1815* (Lincoln, NE, 1993); and Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and Their World* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003).

⁸Creek communities dotted two separate river systems, both of which flow south from western Georgia and eastern Alabama to the Gulf of Mexico. Farthest to the east was the Flint–Chattahoochee–Apalachicola River system, which reaches the Gulf between present day Pensacola and Tallahassee. Farther west still was the Coosa–Tallapoosa–Alabama River system, which drains into Mobile Bay. Dozens of Creek communities were spread along the banks of these rivers, stretching through most of present day Alabama, Georgia, and the Florida panhandle. Most of the towns along the Flint–Chattahoochee system were referred to as “Lower Towns,” or “Lower Creeks.” They are referred to here as existing instead in the Lower Country. Coweta and Cusseta, which were opposite sides of the Chattahoochee, were the largest and most influential ones in that region. To the northwest, several more towns were located near the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers, which were referred to as “Upper Towns,” or “Upper Creeks,” but are referred to here as being in the Upper Country. Tuckabatchee was the largest town in this region, followed by Oakfuskee and Tallassee. See Michael D. Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis* (Lincoln, NE, 1982), 11–12; Braund, *Deerskins & Duffels*, 6–7.

⁹Peter Wood, “The Changing Population of the Colonial South, An Overview by Race and Region, 1685–1790,” in *Powhatan’s Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, eds. Gregory A. Waselkov, Peter H. Wood, and Tom Hatley (1989; rpt., Lincoln, NE, 2006), 81–87; Braund, *Deerskins & Duffels*, 8–9.

¹⁰John Richard Alden, *John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier* (Ann Arbor: MI, 1944); and J. Russell Snapp, *John Stuart and the Struggle for Empire on the Southern Frontier* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1996).

Chattahoochee or Apalachicola Rivers), making them inclined to British trade goods and therefore British politics; some were known to visit the superintendent on occasion once he was stationed in Pensacola. These ties were further strengthened with the arrival of John McIntosh in the region. Stuart's commissioner to the Lower Country, along the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers, McIntosh made his headquarters in Chehaw, and many Flint River and Hitchiti headmen quickly took a liking to him.¹¹

Further to the south, from the Florida panhandle east into north central Florida, several smaller communities played an important role in the Revolution as well. Like most Creeks, people there referred to themselves usually according to their community identity, like Cuscowilla, Alachua, Mikasuki, or Talahasochte. Many traders—the British, Spaniards, and then Americans—however, increasingly referred to them as Seminoles. The lines between Creeks and Seminoles—the physical as well as cultural lines—remained vaguely defined during the Revolutionary period. Creeks had been moving into the region and settling there permanently for a generation before the Revolution, and by 1774 there were over a dozen settlements that stretched from the panhandle all the way south to Tampa Bay. Although the social and physical structures of those communities were practically identical to Creeks to the north, many historians have pointed to the late 1760s as the point, at least politically, when a separate Seminole identity began to emerge.¹² When Cowkeeper, a headman from Cuscowilla, refused to attend a treaty with other Creeks in East Florida in 1765, for instance, local British leaders began to refer to the two groups separately. Little is known about the population of Seminoles in Florida, although one count in 1800 placed their number at around three thousand, suggesting that even during the Revolutionary era the number of Seminoles in Florida was

¹¹"Journal of David Taitt's Travels From Pensacola, West Florida, to and Through the Country of the Upper and the Lower Creeks, 1772," in *Travels in the American Colonies*, ed. Newton D. Mereness (New York, 1916), 493–568; Corkran, *The Creek Frontier*, 301.

¹²Brent Richards Weisman, *Like Beads on a String: A Culture History of the Seminole Indians in North Peninsular Florida* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1989), 37–66; Brent Richards Weisman, *Unconquered People: Florida's Seminole and Miccosukee Indians* (Gainesville, FL, 1999), 13–29; James W. Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida* (Gainesville, FL, 1992), 3–13, 15–19; John K. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835–1842* (1967; rpt., Gainesville, FL, 1991), 1–6.



The naturalist William Bartram stopped over at Cuscowilla while on a lengthy trip through the Southeast shortly before the Revolution. While there, he evidently made this sketch of one of Seminole Country's leading warriors, Micco Thlucco, or the Long Warrior. *Courtesy of the North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.*

significant.¹³ That relatively sparse settlement pattern, however—particularly in East Florida—meant that Seminoles were never

¹³Brent R. Weisman, "Archeological Perspectives on Florida Seminole Ethnogenesis," in *Indians of the Greater Southeast: Historical Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, ed. Bonnie G. McEwan (Gainesville, FL, 2000), 229–317, particularly 307–308; Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 26.

under much Anglo-American pressure. As a result, the British leadership in St. Augustine enjoyed a generally excellent relationship with them. Governor Patrick Tonyn maintained a particularly long and warm relationship with the Cowkeeper. The two conversed frequently and Seminoles from Cuscowilla and surrounding communities were regulars in town.¹⁴

British legislators enjoyed dynamic political and economic ties to communities stretching the length of Creek and Seminole countries. If called upon to defend East Florida or send war parties to the assistance of British forces, hundreds of Seminoles and potentially thousands of Creeks might respond. The situation in Georgia was very different, where interactions with Seminoles were rare and with Creeks could be considered, at the very best, strained. Shortly before the Revolution, for instance, Georgian and South Carolinian merchants pressed mightily for a cession of land along the northern border of Creek Country to help satisfy Cherokee debts. That did not make much sense to Creek headmen, of course, and when the cession took place over their strenuous objections they retaliated violently against the backcountry. When a Creek emissary traveled to Augusta to seek peace he was promptly murdered, and a posse of locals who celebrated the perpetrator as a hero rescued him from jail when local authorities contemplated charging him with a crime. Then, a particularly enterprising Georgian by the name of Jonathan Bryan asked a handful of Creek headmen for written permission to build a small house and range some cattle on some of their hunting lands. That seemed harmless enough to the headmen, who signed a document Bryan gave them. When they realized that Bryan had actually tricked them into signing a deed securing him a ninety-nine year lease for a sizeable chunk of East Florida, they were incensed

¹⁴Tonyn to Gage, September 14, 1775, in *American Archives*, ed. Peter Force (Washington, DC, 1837–1853), ser. 4, vol. 3, 705 (hereafter cited as *Amer. Archives*); Taitt to Stuart, August 1, 1775, in *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770–1783*, ed. K.G. Davies (Shannon, Ireland, 1972–), 11:61–62 (hereafter cited as *DAR*); Lowndes to Lauren, March 16, 1778, *PHL*, 13:8–9; Tonyn to Germain, November 10, 1780: CO 5/560, page 27, PLC r. 149; Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 15–19; Corkran, *The Creek Frontier*, 289–92; O'Donnell III, *Southern Indians*, 20–24, 27–29; Braund, *Deerskins & Duffels*, 166–67; Piecuch, *Three Peoples*, 67; Cashin, "But Brothers, It is our Land We Are Talking About," 242; J. Leitch Wright Jr., *Creeks and Seminoles: The Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulge People* (Lincoln, NE, 1986), 114; Braund, *Deerskins & Duffels*, 166; Calloway, *American Revolution in Indian Country*, 257.

and tore their signatures from the document. Bryan chased the headmen down, got them drunk, and managed to get a few of them to sign it again. As soon as they sobered up, of course, the headmen were only further enraged.¹⁵ Georgians, many Creeks were quickly coming to realize, were not their friends. Making matters worse, the American trade, backed by the newly formed Continental Congress, was never as good as the British trade—at times it did not exist at all. That was clear enough as early as 1776, when the Congress cut off all trade into Creek Country, a move that made absolutely no sense to American trader George Galphin. Without trade, he complained, Creeks would flock to Pensacola, and then “we may expect an Indian war.”¹⁶

Trade problems, when added to the increasingly belligerent actions of backcountry Georgians, made it difficult for Americans even to keep Creek communities neutral. And British officials were as attentive to the Native communities’ prospects as they were to Georgians’ shortcomings. They hoped to develop a war strategy that included Creek and Seminole war parties, and, from the political atmosphere of the early Revolutionary Southeast, that would not be too difficult to do.¹⁷ Lord George Germain, who replaced Thomas Gage in 1776 as the commander of all British forces in North America, urged Stuart to bring Creeks down “on the frontiers of Georgia and Carolina.” The “distress and alarm so general an attack upon the frontier of the southern provinces” would not fail to destabilize the Americans and assist

¹⁵Several chapters deal with the complexity of the Ceded Lands debacle in depth. They include: Cashin, *William Bartram*, 38–75; Snapp, *John Stuart*, 116–46; and Kathryn E. Holland Braund, “‘Like a Stone Wall Never to be Broke’: The British–Indian Boundary Line with the Creek Indians, 1763–1773,” in *Britain and the American South: From Colonialism to Rock and Roll*, ed. Joseph P. Ward (Oxford, MS, 2003), 53–79. For the killing at Augusta and the Bryan debacle, see Piecuch, *Three Peoples, One King*, 32–34; Alan Gallay, *The Formation of a Planter Elite: Jonathan Bryan and the Southern Colonial Frontier* (Athens, GA, 1989), 127–52.

¹⁶Galphin to Laurens, February 7, 1776: *PHL*, 11:93–95. For problems with the American trade see Braund, *Deerskins & Duffels*, 164–88.

¹⁷John Stuart, Britain’s superintendent for Indian affairs in the South, was the most conservative, hoping to keep Creeks and other southern Natives as far away from the fighting as possible. Others felt differently, however, and pressed for immediate involvement. General Thomas Gage, who at the time commanded the overall British effort in North America, had a more aggressive position in mind. He directed Stuart at the very onset of fighting in 1775 and 1776 to begin asking Creek headmen for an assertive role along the frontier. See Corkran, *The Creek Frontier*, 293; Piecuch, *Three Peoples*, 67–68; Cashin, *King’s Ranger*, 41.

in any larger assaults that would come across the colonies.¹⁸ These directives did not fail to stir either Stuart or Tonym into aggressively soliciting the help of their Native allies. From Pensacola, Stuart began a campaign in Creek Country, explaining that warriors could “alarm and divert the attention of the contiguous provinces,” which would ultimately “oblige them to seek protection in their stockades.” Their raids would force rebels to “guard their own frontiers,” and “spread such a terror and cause so great a diversion,” that the American war effort would come to a grinding halt.¹⁹

In St. Augustine, Tonym needed little encouragement, having lobbied aggressively for Native involvement from the very outset of the war. Their service would be “very great,” he was convinced, and a raiding war was, in his opinion, long delayed even in 1775. The Americans “were a thousand times more in dread of the savages than of any European Troops,” he explained to the British general Sir Henry Clinton. “Why not use them to our advantage?” Creeks could “lay waste” to Georgia “at a moment’s notice . . . hovering on the back county perplexing and harassing the enemy, keeping all along the frontiers of that province in a warm alarm.” It answered “the publick purpose of annoying, and distressing the rebels,” and the constant depredations would “sicken the rebels,” and force them, ultimately, to stay on their plantations and protect their families.²⁰

¹⁸Germain to Stuart, February 7, 1777: *DAR*, 14:35–37. Based on Georgians’ repeated threats and attacks against Loyalists and British forces, he penned Patrick Tonym, the governor of East Florida, “I do not see how you could avoid making reprisals upon their stores,” obliging them “to experience something of the distress which they meant to bring upon the garrison and inhabitants of East Florida.” See Germain to Tonym, April 2, 1777, in *CO* 5/557, PLC, r. 148.

¹⁹Stuart to Prévost, July 24, 1777: *DAR*, 14:147–150; Stuart to Germain, August 10, 1778: *DAR*, 15:180–81; Stuart to Knox, October 9–November 26, 1778: *DAR*, 15:211–12.

²⁰Tonym to Dartmouth, December 18, 1775, in *CO* 5/556, PLC, r. 147; Tonym to Clinton, June 8, 1776, in *CO* 5/556, 340, PLC, r. 147; Tonym to Germain, October 30, 1776, in *CO* 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Tonym to Howe, December 25, 1776, in *CO* 5/557, PLC, r. 148. He reiterated the same in 1777. Indian war parties, with a small detachment of regular troops, would make a “powerful diversion,” and that “Such is the discord and dissatisfaction” which would prevail, “that a small body of troops might with great ease reduce that province to obedience.” See Tonym to Germain, April 2, 1777, in *CO* 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Tonym to Germain, July 3, 1779, in *CO* 5/559, PLC, r. 149. For more on this, see Gary D. Olson, “Thomas Brown, the East Florida Rangers, and the Defense of East Florida,” in *Eighteenth-Century Florida and the Revolutionary South*, ed. Samuel Proctor (Gainesville, FL, 1978), 16–18; Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country*, 257; Piecuch, *Three Peoples*, 62, 75–76.

Both Tonyn and Stuart moved quickly to draw Natives directly into the fighting once directed to do so by their superiors. Late in 1775 they convened a meeting with several warriors and headmen from Lower Creek and Seminole communities at a point on the St. John's River in East Florida called the Cowford, today's modern-day Jacksonville. In a ceremony marked with pomp and celebration, the two urged the headmen to take a more direct stance against the Americans.²¹ Seminoles, being closest to the British garrison at St. Augustine, were first to respond. Small parties began scouting the St. John's and St. Mary's Rivers and harassing Georgians in the rich rice-producing region just over the border. They also regularly captured rebel livestock and stole provisions from along the Georgian frontier, transporting them to settlers and soldiers in Pensacola, St. Augustine, and elsewhere in the province.²² Meanwhile, small parties of Creeks began moving onto the Georgian frontier from the west, and within months they were crossing the Satilla River in south Georgia and attacking plantations directly. By the late months of 1776 and into 1777, a "great number of Indians and whites" had penetrated farther. They crossed the Altamaha and attacked Fort Barrington, wrecking many of the surrounding plantations while families sought shelter in the stockade. This caused an "utmost consternation," and ultimately forced many settlers to abandon their homes and retreat closer to Savannah. According to another report there were upwards of two hundred warriors camped on the Satilla. They "were burning & destroying all before them," and they left

²¹Tonyn to . . . , October 25, 1775, in CO 5/568, page 72, PLC, r. 153; Tonyn to . . . , December 18, 1775, in CO 5/568, page 83, PLC, r. 153; Tonyn to Dartmouth, December 18, 1775, in CO 5/556, PLC, r. 147; "Welcome Headmen and Warriors. . ." Conference at Cowford, St. John's River, December 6, 1775, in CO 5/556, PLC, r. 147; Talk to Usitchie Mico . . . , at the Cowford, St. John's River, December 8, 1775, in CO 5/556, PLC, r. 147; Corkran, *The Creek Frontier*, 294. This marked the beginning of a relationship between the British and various Creek and Seminole communities that would last the course of the war. Groups of warriors and their families routinely made their way into St. Augustine and Pensacola, where the British promised to compensate them for raiding rather than hunting or farming. See, Stuart to Germain, April 13, 1778: *DAR*, 15:96; Taitt to Germain, August 6, 1779: *DAR*, 17:178–80; Shaw to Germain, August 7, 1779: *DAR*, 17:184–85.

²²Joseph Barton Starr, *Tories, Dons, and Rebels: The American Revolution in British West Florida* (Gainesville, FL, 1976), 76; Olson, "Thomas Brown," 20–25.

houses and provisions in ashes on both sides of the river when they departed.²³

The Altamaha region was raided repeatedly well into 1777. In small but sharp engagements, Creeks killed a number of Georgian and American mounted troops and kept the region "in almost perpetual Alarms." Soon even Fort Barrington had been sacked and burned, and war parties moved further into Georgia toward the fortified station at Beard's Bluff. They eventually burned that fort as well, which was viewed locally as a devastating blow. It was "the most important & commonest Fort for entrance of the savages into our state," Continental officer Lachlan McIntosh complained. With its loss Seminole and Creek war parties were free to move from the south and the west unchecked onto the state's richest lands. They did this regularly for years to come, directly endangering the larger settlements in the highly profitable region south of Savannah.²⁴ Already, both British and American officials declared, Creek raiders were spreading havoc along the frontier,

²³For quotes, see: Lachlan McIntosh to —, n.d., in Lachlan McIntosh Papers, 1742–1799, b. 1, f. 1, MS 526, Georgia Historical Society (hereafter cited as LMP); N.A., October 29, 1776: *CGHS*, 12:11; McIntosh to Elbert, January 17, 1777, in Lilla M. Hawes, ed., "The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774–1799, Part III," *The Georgia Historical Society* 38 (December 1954): 356–57; and Headquarters, Savannah, November 25, 1776: *CGHS*, 12:19–20. For general accounts and complaints of the raiding, see: Lachlan McIntosh to [Habersham?], [25?]: LMP, b. 1, f. 1; To his Excellency General . . . , Savannah, N.D. [1776]: LMP, b. 1, f. 1; McIntosh to Guinette, May 1, 1776, in Lilla M. Hawes, ed., "Letter Book of Lachlan McIntosh, 1776–1777. Part I," *The Georgia Historical Society* 38 (June 1954): 154–55; McIntosh to Beard, October 1, 1776, in Hawes, "Letter Book of Lachlan McIntosh, 1776–1777. Part I," 160–61; McIntosh to Howe, November 19, 1776: *CGHS*, 12:18–19; and Copy Letter to President Bulloch, November 1, 1776, in Lilla M. Hawes, ed., "The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774–1799, Part IV," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 39 (March 1955): 60.

²⁴For quotes, see: McIntosh to Hall, Brownson, and Walton, January 23, 1777, in Hawes, "The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774–1799. Part III," 357; and McIntosh to Colo. McIntosh and Major Marbury, January 8, 1777: *CGHS*, 12:34. For general accounts of attacks or raiding, including on Barrington, Beard's Bluff, and others, see: McIntosh to Howe, December 28, 1776, in Lilla M. Hawes, ed., "The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774–1799. Part II," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 38 (1954): 261; McIntosh to —, December 30, 1776, in Hawes, "The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774–1799. Part II," 261; McIntosh to Wm. McIntosh, January 2, 1777, in Hawes, "The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774–1799. Part II," 262–63; Lachlan McIntosh to —, N.D.: LMP, b. 1, f. 1; Letter Dear General, signed W. L. Schooner, N.D. [1776]: LMP, b. 1, f. 1; To Lieut. Colo. Wm. McIntosh or Major Marbury, December 12, 1776: *CGHS*, 12:21–22; McIntosh to Howe, December 29, 1776: *CGHS*, 12:9; McIntosh to Few, December 30, 1776: *CGHS*, 12:30–31; McIntosh to Lieut. Colo. Wm. McIntosh, January 2, 1777: *CGHS*, 12:30; McIntosh to Howe, January 7, 1777: *CGHS*, 12:32–33; McIntosh to Howe, January 7, 1777: *CGHS*, 12:31–32; Clay to Laurens, September 9, 1778: *CGHS*, 8:105–6.

creating a tremendous source of indignation among backcountry settlers and sapping the morale of local militiamen.²⁵

Another blow came in February when a combined force of East Florida Rangers, Natives, and even a contingent of British regulars from St. Augustine sacked Fort McIntosh on the Satilla River. McIntosh was garrisoned with a sizeable number of state troops, and its capitulation sent shockwaves across the frontier. “For God’s sake be expeditious to prevent their crossing the Altamaha if possible,” Lachlan McIntosh responded when he heard of the attack. Militia commanders, however, instead scrambled to protect the region’s plantations from the steady stream of raids that followed. As their successes demonstrated, small Creek and Seminole parties had devastating potential. After word arrived in the spring of 1777 that more Creeks had attacked another small fort, were now widespread along the frontier, and had killed three more of his men, McIntosh responded in despair: “It would appear that but the whole Indian Nation” was bent on attacking Georgians “on every side.”²⁶

McIntosh’s state troops struggled to protect the coast’s rich rice plantations, to say nothing of the isolated farms that dotted the Georgian backcountry. By 1777, the few men under his con-

²⁵Tonyn to German, May 5, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; S.E. to Gen. McIntosh, May 26, 1777, in *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society* (Savannah, 1902), 5, pt. 2:31; Elbert to Harris, May 27, 1777, in *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society*, (Savannah, 1901), 5, pt. 1:32.

²⁶For quotes, see: McIntosh to Scriven, February 19, 1777, in Hawes, “The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774–1799, Part III,” 362; McIntosh to Howe, April 2, 1777: *CGHS*, 12:44–45. The attack on Fort McIntosh illustrated the highly coordinated and effective movements of Creek and Seminole war parties. With the Cowkeeper ambushing Georgian troops on one bank of the Altamaha, another Seminole warrior “with his packs in the swamp towards the river,” and Hitchiti chief Philatouchie with a third group “betwixt the branch and creek,” Native and ranger groups effectually cut off the garrison and heavily influenced its surrender. Soon regular forces arrived to formally accept the commander’s official capitulation. For accounts of the attacks, see: McIntosh to Howe, February 19, 1777, McIntosh to Scriven, February 19, 1777, and McIntosh to Bostick, February 20, 1777, all in Hawes, “The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774–1799, Part III,” 361–62; Brown to Tonyn, February 20, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Tonyn to German, April 2, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Cashin, *The King’s Ranger*, 61–62; J. Leitch Wright Jr., *Florida in the American Revolution* (Gainesville, FL, 1975), 43. For more examples of McIntosh and others’ urgency in providing protection for the settlements east of the Altamaha after the attacks, see: Screven to —, 19 February 1777, in *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society* (Savannah, 1980), 20:48–49; McIntosh to Howe, February 19, 1777, McIntosh to Bostick, February 20, 1777, McIntosh to Habersham, February 20, 1777, McIntosh to Sumpter, March [?], 1777, Savannah, 10 O’clock, April 11, 1777, and McIntosh to Washington, April 13, 1777, all in Hawes, “The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774–1799, Part III,” 361–367.

troop were "entirely out in detached party's, upon alarms," and they found that protecting the out settlements was practically impossible. Groups of "disaffected" people, Loyalist rangers, and Indians were attacking all the way to the Ogeechee River, "continually making incursions" and "daily committing outrages." It was difficult, one Georgian complained, "to protect our out settlements from the Insults of the Savages, who have been very troublesome, & kill'd several people in different parts of the State within this six mos."²⁷ Groups of Coweta warriors were out several times in the spring, for instance, and the Creek headman Philatouchie regularly guided groups of Hitchitis from the Lower Country to the frontier as well. One party arrived at the burned-out Fort Barington and defeated a rebel horse company, killing a number of them and forcing the rest to flee. A few months later a Seminole party again dove deep into Georgia and killed upwards of eighteen more state troops.²⁸

The integration of Native and partisan units was particularly effective. Governor Tonym was not a military commander and could not control the sizeable regular military force garrisoned in St. Augustine. He did, however, have the authority to raise local ranger troops, and he quickly did that. He also did not have to go through Stuart when requesting help from the Seminoles and Creeks that resided within the bounds of East Florida, and he could pay them for their service using public funds.²⁹ Many

²⁷McIntosh to Kennon, January 26, 1777: *CGHS*, 12:39; McIntosh to Washington, April 13, 1777, in Hawes, "The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774-1799, Part III," 366-67; Clay to Laurens, September 29, 1777: *CGHS*, 8:40; August 5, 1777, in "Minutes of the Executive Council, May 7 Through October 14, 1777, Part III," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 34 (June 1950): 109.

²⁸Stuart to Germain, March 10, 1777: *DAR*, 14:49-50; Taitt to Stuart, May 23, 1777: *DAR*, 14:93-94; McIntosh to Tonym, May 29, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Taitt to Brown, May 29, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Tonym to Stuart, August 31, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Treutlen to The officers . . . , August 25, 1777, and Elbert to Middleton, September 9, 1777: *CGHS*, 5:52-54; Tonym to Germain, December 26, 1777: *DAR*, 14:275-77; Stuart to Germain, March 5, 1778: *DAR*, 15:54-55.

²⁹Tonym to Germain, October 18, 1776, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Tonym to Prévost, January 17, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Tonym to Prévost, January 23, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Tonym to . . . , February 24, 1777, in CO 5/568, 156, PLC, r. 153. For more on the tension between military and civilian authority in Florida and Georgia, see: W. Calvin Smith, "Mermaids Riding Alligators: Divided Command on the Southern Frontier, 1776-1778," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 54 (April 1976): 443-64. American general Robert Howe, in one count, enumerated four hundred Rangers, four hundred other Loyalists, and one hundred Natives on the frontiers, making the combined force a shade under one thousand men. See Howe to Laurens, April 26, 1778: *PHL*, 13:191.

times these two groups worked in concert with each other, particularly when working along the Georgia-Florida border. One ranger, Thomas Brown, was particularly influential.³⁰ Tonyn commissioned him a colonel and made him the commanding officer of the East Florida Rangers early in the war, and he quickly built a formidable mounted fighting unit. Having never before worked with Creeks, he “plunged himself” into Creek Country shortly after his appointment and soon felt comfortable in his surroundings.³¹ Together the mixed groups, operating independent of regular troops, sped up precipitously the rate at which cattle and fresh provisions were driven off the Georgia frontier and into East Florida. They also roamed the frontiers with devastating effect, as an exasperated American general complained, “from whence they detach constant successive scouting parties of observation, they penetrate within five miles of Savannah, and have even passed through the town of Augusta.”³²

The ease with which war parties crossed back and forth between East Florida and Georgia made St. Augustine the object of increasing Georgian anger. It drew in Creeks and Loyalists like a magnet, Americans complained, many of whom promptly turned around to devastate Georgia plantations as irregular soldiers. It

³⁰Once a prominent landholder outside of Augusta, Brown remained a staunch Loyalist when talk of revolution began circulating and he paid for it dearly. Scalped several times, tarred and feathered, “burned and scarred,” badly beaten, and missing a few of his toes, Brown barely escaped with his life. He would have his revenge, however, and once established in Florida he personally oversaw the burning of much of Georgia’s backcountry. He was “as responsible as any single individual for the savage partisan fighting in the south,” according to one scholar, and he put the torch to more than a few of his tormenters’ plantations. See Wright Jr., *Florida in the American Revolution*, 22–23; Olson, “Thomas Brown,” 15–16; Gary D. Olson, “Loyalists and the American Revolution: Thomas Brown and the South Carolina Backcountry, 1775–1776,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 68 (October 1967): 207–19; William M. Dabney and Marion Dargan, *William Henry Drayton & The American Revolution* (Albuquerque, NM, 1962), 90–91; James H. O’Donnell, “A Loyalist View of the Drayton–Tennent–Hart Mission to the Upcountry,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 67 (January 1966): 15–28.

³¹Tonyn to Stuart, August 31, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Edward J. Cashin, “‘But Brothers, It is our Land We Are Talking About’: Winners and Losers in the Georgia Backcountry,” in Hoffman, Tate, and Albert, *An Uncivil War*, 250–251. As the senior officer in the group, Brown would see his force swell to 130 men by 1778, and at one time there were reportedly four companies of his men out on the frontiers of Georgia simultaneously. Cashin, *King’s Ranger*, 42–46, 50; Carole Watterson Troxler, “Refuge, Resistance, and Reward: The Southern Loyalists’ Claim on East Florida” *Journal of Southern History* 55 (1989): 575; Major Williamson to Drayton, June 27, 1776, in *Documentary History of the American Revolution*, ed. R. W. Gibbes (New York, 1855–1857), 2:22–23 (hereafter cited as *DHAR*).

³²Howe to Laurens, April 26, 1778: *PHL*, 13:191; Olson, “Thomas Brown,” 20.

was a dangerous threat and it needed to be eliminated. Not only could Georgians strike a blow against the British garrison there, many hoped, they could also quell Creek raiders, who would be much less likely to support the British without their strong presence there. Lachlan McIntosh and Jonathan Bryan both believed that would be an American miracle, even if it meant little more than reducing East Florida to rubble. McIntosh wished “heartedly” the whole province would be “entirely broken up,” and that they would be able to “ritualiate, & endeavor to distress the Castill of Augustine if possible,” which would give Georgians “some rest from their pilfers by land & water, and detach the Creek Indians from their interest.” Bryan’s plan to carry “distress and war” into Florida was no less brutal. He suggested that if the “whole country” was ravaged, “the cattle on the east side of the Saint John’s drove off and the inhabitants obliged to evacuate their plantations and fly into the castle,” they would essentially starve, and make the province easy prey for a Georgian army. That would “not only from principles of dread, attach the Indians to our interest,” but would also cut off the British ability to hold “any intercourse with these savages,” tamper with them, or “supply or stir them up against us.”³³

Various collections of state and Continental forces made three separate attempts to invade Florida.³⁴ All three failed, however, and Native warriors played important roles in repulsing each of

³³“If the season of the year . . . ,” n.a., n.d., frames 3–6, in CO 5/548, PLC, r. 145; To his Excellency General . . . , Savannah, N.D. [1776]: LMP, b. 1, f. 1; For McIntosh quotes, see: McIntosh to Washington, April 13, 1777, in Hawes, “The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774–1799, Part III,” 366–67; To his Excellency General . . . , Savannah, n.d. [1776]: LMP, b. 1, f. 1. For Bryan quotes, see: At a meeting of the Council, August 19, 1776: *CGHS*, 5, pt. 1:92–94. Proponents of carrying the war into Florida also hoped to build a chain of small garrisons along the Altamaha, not only as protection for the Georgian frontiers, but also as staging areas for Florida raids, to “be able to make In [roads] into the Enemys upon every proper Occasion.” There should be troops ready “at all times,” McIntosh explained, “to annoy the Enemy & break up their Settlements to the very Gates of Augusteen.” See: McIntosh to . . . , October 22, 1776: *CGHS*, 12:15–16; Head Quarters, October 24, 1776, in Hawes, “Letter Book of Lachlan McIntosh, 1776–1777. Part I,” 165–166; McIntosh to Howe, October 29, 1776: *CGHS*, 12:17–18; Copy Letter to President Bulloch, November 1, 1776, in Hawes, “The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774–1799, Part IV,” 60; Entry for Thursday, February 10th 1778, in Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789, r. 87, 144, Microcopy 247, 182 reels (hereafter cited as *PCC*); See also: Searcy, *The Georgia-Florida Contest*, 37, 54; Gallay, *The Formation of a Planter Elite*, 154–55; Wilbur H. Siebert, “Privateering in Florida Waters and Northwards in the Revolution,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 22 (October 1943): 67–68.

³⁴For the best accounts of the invasions of Florida, see Searcy, *The Georgia-Florida Contest*, 52–97, 126–47.

them, illustrating the strong commitment of Creek and Seminole headmen to the survival of East Florida and particularly St. Augustine. While the town housed a sizeable garrison of regular troops, many times they were either out on expeditions elsewhere or were sick and unfit for duty. Natives and their ranger counterparts constituted Florida's defensive front line and indeed, St. Augustine and its surrounding plantations survived only because of Seminole and Creek involvement in the province's defense.³⁵ Because they were closest to St. Augustine, the Cowkeeper's Seminoles took the role most seriously. Tonym regularly depended on them to scout for rebel parties and repulse them when they threatened the region, which happened fairly regularly. And when threatened by invasion, Tonym's first communications were usually to the Cowkeeper, asking him to position groups of warriors along the St. John's and St. Mary's Rivers, as well as outside of St. Augustine. A sizeable force of 250 warriors was in St. Augustine in the spring of 1777, for instance, in response to one such call. It was later reported that, from the Eufaulas down to St. Marks, St. Augustine, and then down to the Florida point, there were eight hundred warriors ready to assist Tonym or Stuart at a moment's notice, "which form a strong body."³⁶

On several occasions the Seminole and Creek troops directly contributed to the repulsing of either a Georgian or an American army. This first happened in 1776, when a small army of state and Continental troops first attempted to burn St. Augustine. Planters on the St. Mary's River "were apprehensive of being disturbed by the Georgia Rebels" in April and September, and Tonym complained to Lord Germain that he had heard "great boastings from

³⁵Tonym to Mr. Gait, March 30, 1776, in CO 5/556, PLC, r. 147; Starr, *Tories, Dons, and Rebels*, 52–53; Piecuch, *Three Peoples*, 76. Both Stuart and Tonym recognized from the earliest days of the Revolution that strong and dependable relationships with the surrounding communities were vital. See Tonym to Gage, September 14, 1775: *Amer. Archives*, ser. 4, 3:703–5; Tonym to Dartmouth, December 18, 1775, in CO 5/556, PLC, r. 147; Stuart to Germain, May 2, 1778: *DAR*, 15:113–14; Wright Jr., *Florida in the American Revolution*, 26–28; Pennington, "East Florida in the American Revolution," 24–25. At the St. John's River conference in 1776, for instance, one of Tonym's main goals was to fit the various chiefs for a "hearty junction with the King's troops," so that they would be ready and eager to come to the aid of the province whenever it was needed. See: Tonym to . . . , December 18, 1775, in CO 5/568, page 83, PLC, r. 153.

³⁶Tonym to Dartmouth, February 16, 1776, in CO 5/556, PLC, r. 147; Tonym to Clinton, February 17, 1776, in CO 5/556, PLC, r. 147; Stuart to Prévost, July 24, 1777: *DAR*, 14:147–150; Stuart to Germain, March 10, 1777: *DAR*, 14:49–50; Stuart to Tonym, July 21, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148.

Georgia, of what great things they are to do. If they come they may possibly ruin our plantations." Tonyn put various Lower Creeks on alert, asking them to be prepared "to give us all their assistance" as soon as they were called upon, and he confidently predicted to Germain that, with their help, he would "hear in the end a good account from me." The Georgian boastings were not idle threats, and a large expedition was soon reported moving across the St. Mary's, making it as far south as the St. John's River. Tonyn hastily applied for Seminole assistance and was promptly informed that "the talk had been given out, that the Indians were ready to assist, and that a party of them might be expected in town in a few days." When a confrontation occurred near the river, groups of rangers and Natives easily repulsed the poorly strategized and under-equipped invasion and it collapsed. Seminole and Creek chiefs continued to illustrate their dedication to the British cause even after the scare, and were out "in great numbers and on constant services" well into the spring of 1777.³⁷

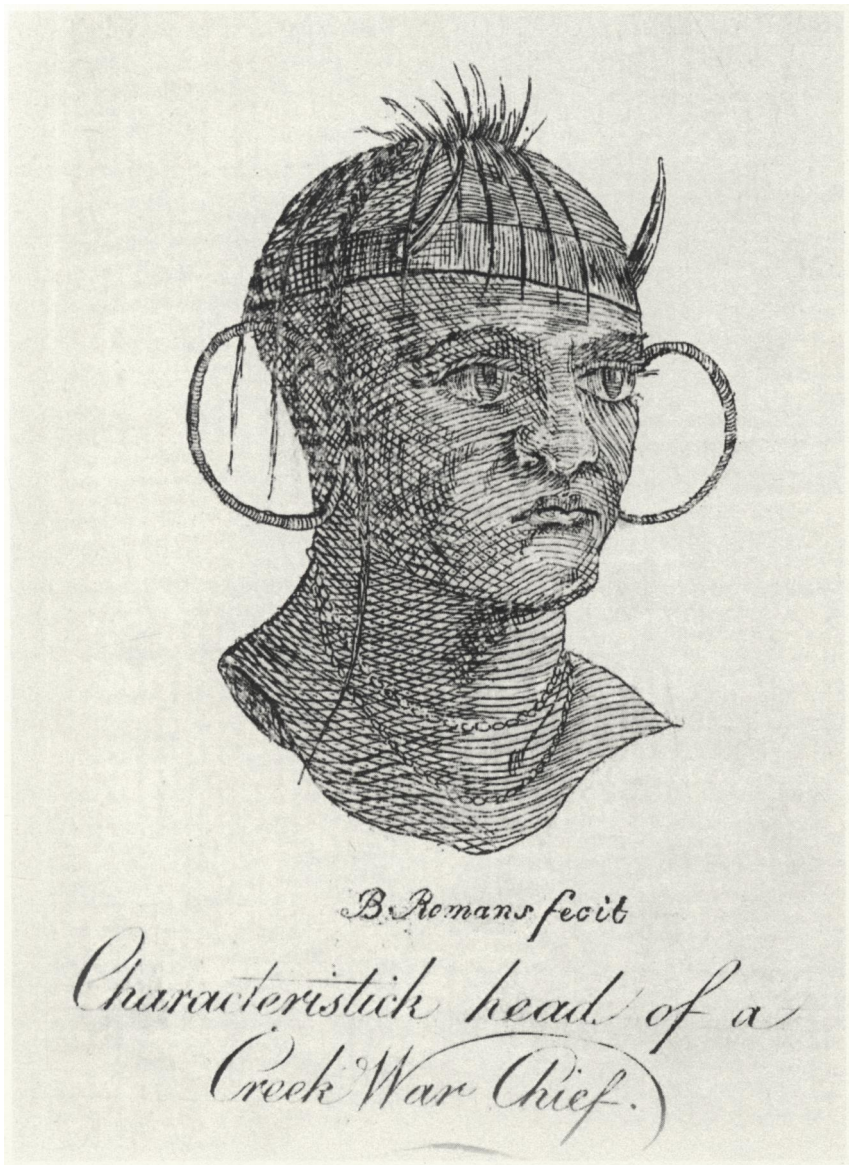
Meanwhile, Creek war parties continued pushing ever deeper into Georgia, prompting the Continental general Robert Howe to complain in the spring of 1777 that the situation was "truly deplorable," and settlers were "almost as defenceless as ever." During the summer, various groups of Creek warriors were out on "excursions against the settlements," and were harassing families as far as the north side of the Ogeechee. That, in turn, spread waves of panic through the rest of the region, "that they cannot be protected from such an inferior force." Soon a sizeable group of Cowetas, reported to be upwards of one hundred, fell upon the northern frontiers of Georgia with terrifying effect. "Several parties" of Cowetas were out well into the winter, according to Stuart, and they were being particularly violent. They killed dozens in several attacks including a number of Continentals, with

³⁷For quotes, see: Tonyn to . . . , April 22, 1776, in CO 5/568, p. 125, PLC, r. 153; Tonyn to Germain, September 9, 1776, in CO 5/556, p. 396, PLC, r. 147; Tonyn to Mr. Gait, March 30, 1776, in CO 5/556, PLC, r. 147; In the council Chamber . . . , August 9, 1776, in CO 5/571, PLC, r. 152; and Tonyn to Stuart, April 15, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148. For other general accounts of the run up to the invasion and its aftermath, see: Tonyn to Dartmouth, [?] January 1776, in CO 5/556, 96, PLC, r. 147; Copy of a letter from a Mr. Jollie, February 13, 1776, in CO 5/556, 130, PLC, r. 147; Tonyn to Dartmouth, February 16, 1776, in CO 5/556, PLC, r. 147; Tonyn to Clinton, February 17, 1776, in CO 5/556, PLC, r. 147; Tonyn to Mr. Gait, March 30, 1776, in CO 5/556, PLC, r. 147; Tonyn to Prévost, September 5, 1776, in CO 5/556, 392, PLC, r. 147; and Searcy, *Georgia-Florida Contest*, 56-57, 60-61.

a handful being officers. Kialijee, Hookchoie, and Alabama warriors from the Upper Country were soon moving east for the same purpose. Parties from these communities meant that the raiding was bringing warriors from an increasing swath of Creek Country, alarming news indeed for Georgians who surely felt increasingly vulnerable.³⁸

The Coweta raids also demonstrated the dynamics of Creek raiding traditions. Although Creeks went to war largely because of their economic and political ties to the British, some of their attacks were also the result of particular Georgian actions. While out in 1777, for instance, one Coweta war party was surprised by a group of Georgian militia and a few of them were killed. While Georgians relished in their victory and hoped it would serve as a deterrent, Creek traditions ensured that it would have the opposite effect. Most of the killed Cowetas were members of the tiger, or panther clan, which was particularly powerful in the Lower Country. The influential Coweta chief Escochobey, for instance, was a member of the panther clan, and he would call on his kin to avenge the death of the slain warriors, their clan relations. Clans represented an ancestral lineage that could be traced in Creek cosmology back basically to the creation of the world, and clan membership was central to Creek identity. Because each clan constituted an extended family, marriages between separate kinship lines created complex webs of real and fictive relations that bridged families and communities across the stretches of Creek Country. While those relationships brought people together, however, they also influenced how people died. Retaliation for a dead kinsman was necessary to quench his or her “crying blood.” Satisfaction had to be taken to set the deceased at peace, and to correct the critical balance between life and death that had been dis-

³⁸For quotes, see: L. Van Loan Naisawald, “Major General Robert Howe’s Activities in South Carolina and Georgia,” *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 35 (March 1951): 25–26; Taitt to Stuart, May 23, 1777: *DAR*, 14:93–94; Clay to Laurens, September 29, 1777: *CGHS*, 8:40; McIntosh to Tonyn, May 29, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Taitt to Brown, May 29, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Stuart to Germain, October 6, 1777: *DAR*, 14:192–94. For other accounts of those attacks, see: Affidavit of Isham Ward, August 11, 1777, in the Keith Read Collection, MS 921, Hargrett Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Georgia, b. 7, f. 13 (hereafter cited as KRC); Taitt to Tonyn, August 15, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Taitt to Tonyn, August 24, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Elbert to Harris, October 19, 1777: *CGHS*, 5, pt. 2:62–63; Stuart to Germain, April 13, 1778: *DAR*, 15:96; Stuart to Germain, May 2, 1778: *DAR*, 15:113–14. See also, Searcy, *Georgia–Florida Contest*, 111–13.



By the early 1770s, Bernard Romans had travelled extensively through the South while working as a surveyor and cartographer, including some of Creek and Choctaw Country. During those travels he made several sketches, including this one of a Creek warrior. *Courtesy of the Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.*

turbed. It was the responsibility of the slain man or woman's clan to satisfy that debt, which they frequently did by taking the life of the perpetrator or a member of his or her clan. "We must have blood for blood," one Oakfuskee chief explained succinctly.³⁹

The elderly Tallassee chief Emistisiguo shared Escochobey's panther identity, meaning that the two headmen shared in a kinship line that bridged powerful communities in the Upper and Lower Country. The panther clan had deep ties throughout Creek Country, ensuring that on word of the Coweta losses, hundreds of warriors would have been motivated to strike out in revenge. British agent William McIntosh noticed this from his perch in Chehaw, in the Lower Towns. There "the war hoop is to be sent to the upper and lower Towns immediately, and I can now assure you that in a very little time the great part of the nation will be sent off as soon as the Cowetas arrive." Later, in a separate engagement, a "strong body" of Cowetas returned from an attack on the Ogeechee River. Having had one of their number killed and two wounded, more Cowetas were preparing to head out in revenge, and many more "propose going to war again when their corn comes to be ripe."⁴⁰ Georgians were quick to celebrate their small victories over Creek raiders. With the defeat of even the smallest war party, however, they were destined to suffer retribution.

Attacks increased in the fall of 1777 and into 1778 as American attacks on Creek hunters along the northern frontier pushed hesitant communities further towards the British. This, in turn, forced more Georgians to abandon their plantations and flee, while those who stayed fortified their farms and houses and prepared for the worst. Residents along the Ogeechee applied

³⁹As a visitor would explain a few years later, "By a confused intermixture of blood, a whole tribe becomes uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters and cousins to each other; and as members of each clan commonly wander abroad, and intermarry in distant towns, and others from those towns come in and supply their places, the whole body of the people have become connected by the ties of blood and hospitality, and are really but one great family of relations." For information on clans and kinship in Creek country, see Caleb Swan, "Position and State of Manners and Arts in the Creek or Muscogee Nation in 1791," in *Information Respecting . . . the Indian Tribes of the United States*, ed. Henry R. Schoolcraft (Philadelphia, 1855), 5:237. For more on this, see Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge, MA, 2010), 80–100; Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and Their World* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003), 228–32. Quote taken from Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country*, 80.

⁴⁰Jos Habersham to Isabella Habersham, May 3, 1778: *CGHS*, 20:49–50; McIntosh to Tonym, May 29, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Stuart to Prévost, July 24, 1777: *DAR*, 14:147–50; Braund, *Deerskins & Duffels*, 166

to legislators late in 1777 for more military protection, "owing to the many Robberies of Negroes Horses &c." that were taking place along the river right outside of Savannah. Governor John Treutlen complained that "such will always be the alarmed situation of this country, as long as these savages have their minds poisoned by the people & refugee forces at Saint Augustine."⁴¹ Fed up with the attacks, Treutlen and other Georgians amplified their calls for another invasion of East Florida, renewing the hope that if St. Augustine burned, Creeks would be forced to scale back their raiding. Combined state and Continental forces mounted a second invasion in 1777, yet Lower Creek and Seminole warriors turned out again in the province's defense. When the American parties approached the shores of the St. Mary's River, Tonyn assured his worried subordinates that he, with his Native and ranger forces, would "be able to give a very good account" of the invaders. No sooner had a sizeable detachment of over one hundred Americans crossed the river when they were "attacked & defeated"—even routed—by a combined force of roughly one hundred regulars and forty Indians, almost certainly Seminoles. Skirmishes lasted three days, but ended with a "most precipitate flight" by the American army, causing a number to surrender and others to desert.⁴²

British and Creek forces seized the initiative after the failed invasions and increased their attacks on Georgians across the frontier. The results could be seen late in 1778 with more Creek attacks along the backcountry and responses from disillusioned Georgian legislators. Twenty settlers had been killed as of September of 1778, according to Savannah resident Joseph Clay, while Rawlins Lowndes warned that there was "an appearance of

⁴¹For quotes, see: September 27, 1777, in "Minutes of the Executive Council, Part III": 121; Treutlen to Hancock, August 6, 1777: *PCC*, r. 87. For general reports of these attacks see Galphin to Jones, October 26, 1776: *Amer. Archives*, 3:648–650; Galphin to Laurens, October 13, 1777: *PHL*, 11:533; Galphin to Laurens, December 22, 1777: *PHL*, 12:176–77; Clay to Laurens, October 16, 1777: *PHL*, 11:560–61; Clay to Laurens, October 21, 1777: *PHL*, 11:576–77; Galphin to Laurens, December 22, 1777: *PHL*, 12:176–77; and Searcy, *Georgia-Florida Contest*, 37.

⁴²For accounts of the expedition, see: Tonyn to Germain, May 8, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Brown to Tonyn, May 15, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Brown to Tonyn, May 18, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Clay to Laurens, May 19, 1777: *CGHS*, 8:20–21; North End, Amelia, May 19, 1777: *CGHS*, 5, pt. 2:25–26; Nth. End Amelia., May 20, 1777: *CGHS*, 5, pt. 2:26; Tonyn to Germain, June 16, 1777, in CO 5/557, PLC, r. 148; Searcy, *Georgia-Florida Contest*, 93–95.

a storm brewing up in the Creek Nation.” Respected American trader George Galphin gave similar information, alerting officials in August that “several gangs” were descending “down upon the frontiers,” and that they should prepare for heavy raiding. The northern frontier, where tensions between Creeks and Georgian settlers still ran high, suffered perhaps the worst violence. In the late summer of 1777, for instance, a war party surprised a militia unit there commanded by Captain Dooley. Dooley, who had been responsible for attacks on Creeks in the past, was killed while the remainder of the group made a hasty and dishonorable escape. That emotionally charged attack only presaged more confrontations in 1778.⁴³

Georgians, frustrated by the continued increase in violence, made a third effort to strike at East Florida in 1778. Residents of the frontier could “expect no Security or Safety” while the Indians were out and while East Florida remained in British hands, according to Henry Clay, as “Tonyn with his Thieves & Stuart & his adherents with the Indians will always be annoying us.” Georgian backers, who had continually pushed for the expedition, were more determined than ever to reduce St. Augustine to ashes. Henry Laurens explained to Governor John Houstoun that “Georgia will be unhappy, and her existence as a free and Independent State rendered doubtful,” as long as St. Augustine was in British hands. Even South Carolina was in danger, “continually galled by rovers and cruisers from that pestiferous nest.” It was of the utmost importance to “the more Southern States, as it affords Assistance to the Indians, & a place of Refuge to a Banditti called the Florida Scout, who are committing continual Depredations on the Fron-

⁴³Clay to . . . , September 7, 1778: *CGHS*, 8:109; Lowndes to Laurens, August 16, 1778: *PHL*, 14:169; Wells to Laurens, August 16, 1778: *PHL*, 14:179; Gervais to Laurens, August 18, 1778: *PHL*, 14:185, note 1. For the attack on Dooley and others in 1778 see: Gervais to Laurens, August 16, 1777: *PHL*, 11:461; Affidavit of Isham Ward, August 11, 1777: *KRC*, b. 7, f. 13; Gervais to Laurens, February 16, 1778: *PHL*, 12:451; Galphin to Laurens, March 8, 1778: *PHL*, 12:526; Houston to Laurens, August 20, 1778: *PHL*, 14:192; Clay to . . . , September 7, 1778: *CGHS*, 8:109–10; Clay to Laurens, September 9, 1778: *CGHS*, 8:105–6; Gervais to Laurens, September 21, 1778: *PHL*, 14:334; Searcy, *The Georgia–Florida Contest*, 132, 248–49.

tiers, & as they live by plunder, it is not supposed that they will not cease their incursions till Augustine is ours."⁴⁴

In the face of a third invasion in as many years, the atmosphere in East Florida again grew tense. As they had already done twice, however, Floridians fell back on Native allies and their ranger forces. And, for the third time, they succeeded in driving the Americans back. The invasions culminated in the battle of Alligator Creek Bridge, which was a decisive victory for the British and a disastrous defeat for the American army that marked the end of their efforts to seize or destroy St. Augustine.⁴⁵ Creeks from several towns in the Lower Country were quick to respond to the invasion or offer their assistance, and many of them were involved in the defense of the province in one way or another. Hitchiti chief Perryman, hearing of the approaching army, arrived in April with upwards of one hundred warriors, and reportedly more than thirteen hundred others were willing to head to St. Augustine when British agents David Taitt and William McIntosh appeared with talks that everything was at peace, and that they would not be needed. Ultimately, however, both of those deputies did begin to lead groups towards either East Florida or the Georgia backcountry. In May it was reported that more had left the Lower Country for the province, and that a separate group of Cowetas was ready and awaiting the order from Stuart to do similarly. Once-rebel commissioners and traders Timothy Barnard and David Holmes volunteered to lead warriors as well, and set off with groups from

⁴⁴For Clay's quotes, see: Clay to . . . , September 7, 1778: *CGHS*, 8:109–10; Clay to Laurens, September 9, 1778: *PHL*, 14:290. See also, Lowndes to Laurens, September 22, 1778: *PHL*, 14:341. For Lauren's quotes and other similar thoughts, see: Laurens to Houstoun, August 27, 1778, in *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774–1789*, eds. Paul H. Smith et al. (Washington, DC, 1976–2000), 10:509 (hereafter cited as *LDC*); Langworthy to Houstoun, April 5, 1779: *LDC*, 12:296. Houstoun had earlier expressed these similar fears, that the province faced "certain ruin" unless the province was reduced. Likewise, South Carolinian Edward Rutledge hoped to General George Washington that the expedition would be successful in raising "the American Standard, on the Ramparts of the Castle." See Houston to . . . , March 20, 1778: *PCC*, r. 87:182; Rutledge to Washington, December 18, 1778, in *The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series*, ed. Philander Chase (Charlottesville, VA, 1987–2013), 18:455 (hereafter cited as *PGW: RWS*).

⁴⁵Tonyn to Germain, May 1, 1778, in CO 5/558, PLC, r. 149; Wright Jr., *Florida in the American Revolution*, 55–57. Accounts of this battle can be found in Brown to Tonyn, June 30, 1778, in CO 5/558, PLC, r. 149; Shaw to Tonyn, July 1, 1778, in CO 5/558, PLC, r. 149; Tonyn to Stuart, July 3, 1778, in CO 5/558, PLC, r. 149; Stuart to Tonyn, July 10, 1778, in CO 5/558, PLC, r. 149; Stuart to Germain, August 10, 1778: *DAR*, 15:180–81; John Faucheraud Grimke, "Journal of the Campaign to the Southward. May 9th to July 14th, 1778," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 12 (July 1911): 129.

Cooloome, and Fusshatchie, high in the Upper Country. They would later add to that group with more warriors from Eufaula, Tuwassie, and other Seminole communities around the St. Marks region in Florida. They soon met up with McIntosh and the body of Hitchiti and Chehaw's warriors he was escorting from the Lower Country. News from Little Tallassee was that several war parties had left that area as well, most of which directing "their operations against the back settlements of Carolina and Georgia" as a diversion. The turnout was impressive, demonstrating the growing commitment among Creek communities to the British cause. Once in the province they added to the numbers of Seminoles who had answered Tonym's calls directly. There were sixty in with groups of rangers patrolling along the St. Johns River, and Tonym "dispatched messengers to the Cowkeeper and Oconee King to rouse all their people" from central Florida in further support.⁴⁶

The swift and decisive British victory prompted both Tonym and Stuart to again praise the province's Creek and Seminole allies. East Florida emerged from several invasion crises more or less unscathed, and soon the province's planters and merchants "were busily employed in their different capacities."⁴⁷ Three American invasions failed because of the help Floridians received from their Native allies, and in the wake of those successes they enjoyed a period of relative stability. Just to the north, however, Americans found that period marked by increasing carnage. Many Georgians feared that, because of their failure to take Florida in 1778, "the inroads we have suffered will be renewed." Those pre-

⁴⁶Tonym to Germain, April 19, 1778: *DAR*, 15:111–112; Stuart to Germain, May 19, 1778: *DAR*, 15:121–22; Stuart to Germain, August 10, 1778: *DAR*, 15:180–81; Tonym to Germain, July 3, 1778, in CO 5/558, PLC, r. 149. Disagreements between Stuart and Tonym caused another sizable party of Creeks to turn back right at the point when American forces were amassing on the north side of the St. Mary's, throwing the governor into a fit. See Tonym to Germain, July 3, 1778, in CO 5/558, PLC, r. 149.

⁴⁷Tonym to Germain, July 24, 1778, in CO 5/558, PLC, r. 149; Stuart to Germain, August 10, 1778: *DAR*, 15:180–81; Wilbur H. Siebert, "Slavery in East Florida, 1776 to 1785," *Florida Historical Society Quarterly* 10 (January 1932): 140; Stuart to Knox, October 9–November 26, 1778: *DAR*, 15:211–12; Germain to Tonym, February 10, 1779, in CO 5/559, PLC, r. 149; Tonym to Prévost, May 29, 1779, in CO 5/559, PLC, r. 149. British commander George Germain instructed Tonym to begin setting up a civilian government, and even to release most of the rangers and militia from service. Although there were occasional attacks by Georgians and other privateers, the province was secure, and its economy grew rapidly. See Germain to Tonym, March 3, 1779, in CO 5/559, PLC, r. 149; Tonym to Germain, June 12, [1782?], in CO 5/560, p. 216, PLC, r. 150; Wright Jr., *Florida in the American Revolution*, 23–24; Linda K. Williams, "East Florida as a Loyalist Haven," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 54 (April 1976): 469–71.

dictions were largely correct. From 1778 to 1779, Floridian scouts and Indians were “continually making incursions into our State,” pressing far beyond the north bank of the Ogeechee River, and did so “with very little interruption.” Thomas Brown and groups of Creeks made it as far as Augusta, where they reportedly felled fourteen Americans in one blow. Meanwhile, Creeks raided plantations and carried slaves off from within miles of Savannah. The “daily depredations” of these various groups, Governor John Houstoun complained, “almost at our very Town-Gates, threaten us with certain ruin unless some remedy is applied.” Houstoun marked the nadir, assuring Henry Laurens in Philadelphia that “our situation at present looks gloomy.” Georgians seemed to be “encompassed by enemies,” without any means to defend themselves. Widespread predation between their frontier and East Florida “has hurt us prodigiously,” and certainly “in that petit Guere,” he lamented, Georgians played a losing game.⁴⁸ Despite the outcome of the war, he and others feared that little would be left.

The increase in Creek raids during 1778 and 1779 reflected a change in British strategy that shifted much of the Revolution's fighting into the southern colonies. Massive numbers of regular troops invaded Georgia and South Carolina and, at least temporarily, returned them to British control. The strategy was straightforward. There were powerful Loyalist pockets willing to participate in the retaking of the South, British commanders thought, and if those groups received the proper support they could be used to take back the region quickly, permanently, and with little bloodshed. Soon thousands of British soldiers sailed from New York and began their re-conquest of the South. After landing along the coast just south of Savannah, Colonel Archibald Camp-

⁴⁸For quotes, see: Clay to Laurens, September 9, 1778: *CGHS*, 8:106; Houstoun to Laurens, March 30, 1778: *PHL*, 13:13–14. For various accounts of sustained raids and attacks, as well as Georgian legislators' increasingly dire predictions through 1778, see: Wells to Laurens, January 23, 1778: *PHL*, 12:336; Elbert et al., to Roman and Eustace, February 7, 1778: *PCC*, r. 87:168; Howe to House of Assembly, February 10, 1778: *PCC*, r. 87; Letter from Whitefield, May 6, 1778: *PCC*, r. 87:209; Stuart to Tonym, July 10, 1778, in CO 5/558, PLC, r. 149; Wells to Laurens, September 6, 1778: *PHL*, 14:280–281; Clay to . . . , September 7, 1778: *CGHS*, 8:109–10; Clay to Laurens, September 9, 1778: *PHL*, 14:289–90; Gervais to Laurens, September 21, 1778: *PHL*, 14:333; Houstoun to Laurens; October 1, 1778: *PHL*, 14:375; Elbert to Harris, October 19, 1777: *CGHS*, 5, pt. 2:62–63; and Piecuch, *Three Peoples*, 102–3.

bell's forces easily took the town. Brigadier-General Augustine Prévost met him with an army that he marched north along the coast from St. Augustine, and the two began planning operations to the northward. Early in 1779, Campbell captured Augusta while Prévost remained in Savannah, returning Georgia speedily to British rule.⁴⁹

Prévost, Campbell, and other British commanders expected Creeks to play a significant role in the reconquest of Georgia. In December of 1778, Stuart was ordered to assemble as large a Creek army as he could and march it east, where they would connect with Campbell in Savannah. Groups of Seminoles and Creeks from the Lower Country would, hopefully, assault Georgians on the Altamaha and at Sunbury along the coast to keep them distracted, while other larger parties from both the Lower and Upper Towns struck across the northern provinces of Georgia and into South Carolina. The whole of the forces would then be "bent upon joining His Majesty's forces." They would help take Augusta and the Georgian backcountry and then, perhaps, march into South Carolina. Stuart assured Germain that upwards of a thousand warriors under the direction of both Taitt and McIntosh were on their way in April of 1779, and even Henry Laurens believed there were more than five thousand men and warriors

⁴⁹Beginning in 1778 British commanders at the highest level, including Lord George Germain, Sir Henry Clinton, and Charles Cornwallis invested the bulk of British forces in this strategy. Armies would move into southern cities, liberate and empower the repressed Loyalist populations that were hidden there, and then they would move along. The retaking of Georgia was to be the first step in this new strategy—"a showcase of peace and prosperity under British auspices that would entice other rebellious colonies back under the British flag." For an overview of the Southern Strategy, see John Shy, "British Strategy for Pacifying the Southern Colonies, 1778–1781," in *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution*, eds. Jeffrey J. Crow and Larry E. Tise (Chapel Hill, NC, 1978), 155–73; Martha Condray Searcy, "1779: The First Year of the British Occupation of Georgia," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 67 (Summer 1983): 168–69; Piecuch, *Three Peoples*, 1–7, 11–12. See also, Randall M. Miller and Moses Kirkland, "A Backcountry Loyalist Plan to retake Georgia and the Carolinas, 1778," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 75 (October 1974): 207–14; and Kenneth Coleman, "Restored Colonial Georgia, 1779–1782," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 40 (March 1956): 1–5. For the invasion of Georgia, see: Coleman, "Restored Colonial Georgia, 1779–1782," 6; Searcy, "1779: The First Year of the British Occupation of Georgia," 171, 173; Alexander A. Lawrence, "General Robert Howe and the British Capture of Savannah in 1778," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 36 (December 1952): 303–27; Patrick J. Furlong, "Civilian–Military Conflict and the Restoration of the Royal Province of Georgia, 1778–1782," *Journal of Southern History* 3 (August 1972): 415–17; Doyce B. Nunis Jr., "Colonel Archibald Campbell's March From Savannah to Augusta, 1779," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 45 (September 1961): 275–86.

“actually at war with Georgia & So Carolina,” and that a thousand could easily be called into the field.⁵⁰

This plan was far too ambitious, however, and it ultimately failed. Small war parties from various towns had neither the training nor the motivation to make war as part of a British army. Only two to three hundred Creeks set off for the British camp outside of Savannah. Despite Taitt and McIntosh's attempts to conduct them to the army as one cohesive group, they quickly broke apart into smaller parties and fell “on the defenceless settlements of Georgia,” much to the horror of the regular British officers further east. According to Prévost, only a dozen or so actually ended up with the army at Savannah. Lieutenant Colonel Campbell would later grumble that from the time he arrived at Savannah to the time he evacuated Augusta, “he had not seen nor heard from an Indian.” If the Creeks had arrived as they were supposed to, he complained, he would have been able to open up communications with the various Loyalists in the Georgia and Carolina back-countries in addition to “other very important services which he was obliged to leave unattempted for want of their assistance.”⁵¹

Stuart and his subordinates soon made clear later that the Creek groups failed to unite with Campbell and Prévost's forces because of logistical problems, not a lack of commitment. Stuart did not receive word of the plans early enough to adequately relay them either to Taitt or McIntosh. And several large Creek parties did march off to meet the British, but they either got there too late, or were attacked en route. Taitt, for instance, insisted that he and his warriors were where they were supposed to be, but that the British army they were to meet never showed up. Only then did he improvise, proposing to the Creek warriors that they “act in their own way on the frontiers of Carolina as directed by General Prévost, which the major part agreed to and set out accordingly.” Although Stuart and his commissioners defended the

⁵⁰Tonyn to Taitt and McIntosh, December 20, 1778, in CO 5/559, PLC, r. 149; Tonyn to Campbell, December [20 or 26], 1778, in CO 5/559, p. 112, PLC, r. 149; Galphin to Laurens, December 29, 1778: *PHL*, 15:19–20; Tonyn to Knox, March 29, 1779, in CO 5/559, PLC, r. 149; Cameron and Stuart to Germain, April 10, 1779: *DAR*, 17:98; Henry Laurens' Notes on a Georgia Campaign, January 20, 1779: *LDC*, 11:494–95.

⁵¹Prévost to Tonyn, March 2, 1779, in CO 5/559, PLC, r. 149; Prévost to Germain, April 14, 1779: *DAR*, 17:101–2; Germain to Stuart, June 1, 1779: *DAR*, 17:138–39; Prévost to Germain, June 10, 1779: *DAR*, 17:143; Prévost to Germain, August 4, 1779: *DAR*, 17:176; Picuch, *Three Peoples*, 150–52.

Creek initiative, British regular commanders were not convinced. They were “most avaricious set of people,” one British military accountant complained, “haughty and overbearing, always overrating their services and full of their own importance” since the conclusion of the Seven Years’ War decades earlier. Despite the grumblings of Prévost, Campbell, and others, however, those closest to the Georgia frontier knew the importance of Native involvement.⁵² Creek and Seminole war parties had already contributed years of fighting that brought security to the British and devastation to the Georgia frontier, all of which had already demonstrated to Stuart, Tonym, and East Floridians that Native alliances were well worth the effort.

Despite the questionable and perhaps demeaning remarks made by a handful of regular officers, the invasion of Georgia impressed several Creek headmen. Also, one prong of the Creek invasion was attacked and disbanded, which unleashed another torrent of Creek men determined to get satisfaction for their losses. When Taitt’s expedition broke up into smaller groups, young British agent Alexander McGillivray led one of them towards the Savannah River, where they hoped to cross into the Carolinas. The party of seventy to eighty warriors was attacked by state troops en route, however, and suffered six dead and many more wounded. “This little accident disconcerted the Indians for a while,” one commissioner wrote, “but has in the end been productive of a good effect by spiring up those Indians.” The kin of the fallen, some of whom were strongly pro-British Tallassees, were sure to seek vengeance, which was bound to bring others from across the Upper and Lower Countries to the Georgia frontier. It was reported that “they are accordingly gone out from almost every town in

⁵²Taitt to Germain, August 6, 1779: *DAR*, 17:178–80; Searcy, “1779: The First Year of the British Occupation of Georgia,” 173–74; Knox to Cooper, April 27, 1779: *DAR*, 17:112–14; Germain to Stuart, June 1, 1779: *DAR*, 17:138–39; Prévost to Germain, August 4, 1779: *DAR*, 17:176. See also, Searcy, “1779: The First Year of the British Occupation of Georgia,” 185. Some British commissioners also recognized the potential danger of letting Creeks slip away from them and possibly back to the Americans. A good relationship, one commissioner explained, however backward it seemed, was still necessary to keep Creek communities away from American influence. “The consequence of their defection, when put in competition with a few thousand pounds, is I humbly conceive hardly to be mentioned.” See Shaw to Germain, August 7, 1779: *DAR*, 17:184–85.

the nation bent upon taking revenge."⁵³ Native cultural dictates, in addition to the strengthening of political and economic relationships, assured that Creek involvement would remain strong.

Not even the death of Stuart in 1779 disrupted Creek raids. Germain quickly split his superintendence in two, assigning Alexander Cameron to the Choctaws and Chickasaws and Thomas Brown to work with the Creeks. Long years working among Creek raiding parties made Brown the obvious choice, and his promotion quickly brought positive results. In 1779, warriors were "constantly going out in parties." One group from the Upper Country attacked a fort on the Ogeechee, killing a captain and five men and destroying a number of the area's plantations. Warriors from Upper Towns were also regularly crossing the Savannah River into South Carolina, spreading devastation into that region as well.⁵⁴ With a British invasion of the south ongoing, both Creek and Seminole participation remained central to the war effort, and Native warriors continued spreading disruption through the Georgian backcountry.

That level of Native involvement in the Revolution had dimensions that went well beyond the physical destructiveness of war. Raiding took a heavy emotional toll on backcountry Georgians, giving attacks a unique psychological importance that had long-term consequences. The fear and the imagery that Georgians attached to Creek and Seminole raids, recounted in terrifying detail, resonated across the frontier. Accounts of those raids, widespread during the Revolution and progressively more devastating, infused a panic and then an anger into the Georgian portrayal of Natives that transformed state citizens and legislators alike into a people almost defined by such narratives. That placed Georgians at the bitterest of odds with their Native neighbors by the end of the war, producing a deeply distrustful and increasingly hostile relationship that had important postwar implications.

⁵³[Lt Colo James Mark] Prévost to Germain, 14 April 1779: *DAR*, 17:101-2; Commissioners for Indian Affairs to Germain, May 10, 1779: *DAR*, 17:118-20; Taitt to Germain, August 6, 1779: *DAR*, 17:178-80.

⁵⁴For quote, see: Taitt to Germain, August 6, 1779: *DAR*, 17:178-80. For the death of Stuart and Thomas Brown's appointment, see: Searcy, "1779: The First Year of the British Occupation of Georgia," 179-84; Piecuch, *Three Peoples*, 155; Corkran, *The Creek Frontier*, 319; O'Donnell III, *Southern Indians*, 82-83.

“In addition to other misfortunes,” Governor John Houstoun bemoaned in 1778, “we may consider ourselves as fairly in for an Indian War.” Within a month, Joseph Clary warned similarly, that settlers were “greatly alarmed with the dread of an Indian war.”⁵⁵ Georgians like Houstoun and Clary feared that prospect perhaps more than any other, because Creeks and Seminoles, like most other Natives in eastern North America, fought in a way that defied many of the traditional war-making customs that ordered the American fighting mentality.⁵⁶ Although Creeks and Seminoles went to war for the same political and economic reasons as settlers, the ways in which they waged war were much different. Natives fought in isolated raids and utilized ambush tactics, which Americans generally found disgraceful.⁵⁷ Those traditions were particularly evident in the South, where Native communities were first transformed by a British trade economy based on Indian slaves and waves of violent slave raids that destabilized the re-

⁵⁵Houston to Laurens, August 20, 1778: *PHL*, 14:192; Clay to . . . , September 7, 1778: *CGHS*, 8:109.

⁵⁶American regular and even militia forces drilled and disciplined in a European style, where soldiers fought in open or mostly unobstructed battlefields and were led by officers. They maneuvered in tight groups and used complex firing tactics that were complemented with the strategic usage of cavalry and artillery. See Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755–1763* (New York, 2002), 192, 194–95; William R. Nester, *The Great Frontier War: Britain, France, and the Imperial Struggle for North America, 1607–1755* (Westport, CT, 2000), 116–22.

⁵⁷In eastern North America, where several Native war-making traditions overlapped, warriors developed a style of fighting that reflected religious, social, and even economic circumstances. Generally, however, war parties were small and swift and they attacked by surprise. Rather than engaging in large battles, they orchestrated strings of small and coordinated ambushes that were designed to minimize their losses while producing the most captives and instilling the most fear in their enemies. Iroquoian war parties, for instance, fought primarily to capture prisoners and dishearten the enemy—to strengthen their tribe while weakening their enemy. This meant that, according to one French visitor, “a victory bought with blood is no victory.” They developed specialized tactics that reflected these desires, most important of which were a “fondness for ambushes and surprise attacks,” an “unwillingness to fight when outnumbered,” and the avoidance of large confrontations or frontal attacks. See Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1992), 36–38; Brumwell, *Redcoats*, 204–5. In the Ohio River Valley, the Delaware and Shawnee operated the same, preferring to strike “where there was little opposition and where they could easily obtain prisoners and booty.” See Matthew C. Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years’ War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754–1765* (Pittsburgh, PA, 2003), 7, 50; Brumwell, *Redcoats*, 204–7.

gion tremendously.⁵⁸ By the mid-eighteenth century, the every-day lives of Creek men revolved almost entirely around hunting, for both sustenance and as a means to trade. From youth, men were taught the art of the hunt; by adulthood they were unmatched in their ability to move stealthily, to track, and to kill. And they were murderously effective when using those skills in war—much more so than their Euro-American counterparts—whether wielding a smoothbore musket, rifle, bow, or blade.⁵⁹ To isolated settlers spread along an undeveloped frontier, it was terrifying. The Native style of war fighting had a long history of invading and tormenting the thoughts of British and American settlers, and Georgians were no different.⁶⁰

The fear of an “Indian war” demonstrated the destructive potential even of the idea of Native involvement during the Revolution. After several small attacks early in the war, for instance, Georgians feared they would soon face a “general rupture,” a “break with” Creeks, and widespread devastation.⁶¹ Even when no widespread raids materialized, those fears still had paralyzing effects on isolated settlers. Raiding parties usually fell directly on the smaller farms because they offered the least resistance and the most benefit. Remote and lightly guarded, homesteads were

⁵⁸ Beginning in the mid-seventeenth century, the rise of “militaristic slaving societies,” “through their slave raiding, spread internecine warfare and created widespread dislocation, migration, amalgamation, and, in some cases, extinction of Native peoples.” See Robbie Ethridge, *From Chacaza to Chickasaw: The European Invasion and the Transformation of the Mississippian World, 1540–1715* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2010), 93. An excellent example of a militaristic slaving society was that of the Westos. See Ethridge, *Chacaza to Chickasaw*, 98–101. Like the Choctaw and Chickasaw to their west, Creeks were the product of disparate tribes that, buffeted by disease and waves of slave raiding, were converted into fierce warriors and professional slavers. See Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country*, 85–87; Joel W. Martin, *Sacred Revolt: The Muskogees’ Struggle for the New World* (Boston, MA, 1991), 19. During the early eighteenth century they practically destroyed Spanish La Florida, enslaving perhaps tens of thousands of Spanish Indians. See Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670–1715* (New Haven, CT, 2002).

⁵⁹Braund, *Deerskins & Duffels*; Brumwell, *Redcoats*, 204–7; Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry*, 7.

⁶⁰For several studies that chart the impact of Indian war on early America, see Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700–1763* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003); Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673–1800* (New York, 1997); William A. Pencak and Daniel K. Richter, eds., *Friends and Enemies in Penn’s Woods: Indians, Colonists, and the Racial Construction of Pennsylvania* (University Park, PA, 2004); Patrick Griffin, *American Leviathan: Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier* (New York, 2008); Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York, 2008).

⁶¹Headquarters, Savannah, November 25, 1776: *CGHS*, 12:19–20; McIntosh to Howe, January 7, 1777: *CGHS*, 12:32–33; Wells to Laurens, August 16, 1778: *PHL*, 14:179; Clay to . . . , September 7, 1778: *CGHS*, 8:109–10.

enticing targets. Farmers out tending to their crops could be ambushed and shot down without any warning at all. At the very best, a gun might be fired or a dog might bark, giving families just enough time to flee. In their wake, however, they left their houses to be burned, their property to be pillaged, and their livestock to be killed or carried off, all of which was commonplace. After a 1776 raid on the Altamaha, McIntosh expressed relief that “all the damage the Indians did was to burn some Houses & Provisions” on both sides of the river. Although he was thankful that most families escaped in that instance, the wanton destruction of property was usually destructive enough to elicit responses. “What they cannot conveniently carry away, they shoot down,” an exasperated Houstoun later exclaimed. Showy acts of violence included the deliberate slaughtering of cattle, the destruction of provisions, or the burning of houses and barns, and they had a dispiriting impact on settlers, many of whom owned little else. With a family to provide for, farmers who lost their stock or crops faced an uncertain future, if not starvation. “Burning & Destroying our property is commencing hostility as much as killing,” as Lachlan McIntosh put it.⁶²

Those sorts of attacks took place with surprising frequency, even in the earliest years of the war. When raiding in the area of Fort Barrington in late 1776, for example, Creek parties destroyed a handful of plantations, and those actions meant that the “whole neighbourhood” was in the “[utmost] Consternation moving their Families.” Around the same time, a state officer approached several settlements on the Altamaha, where he “found people in the utmost confusion, Familys, Women, Children, & Luggage all along the road as I came, moving different ways.” Those refugees were fleeing the burning of “one William Williamson’s Houses and provisions” on one side of the river, along with “several small settlements” on the other, near Beard’s Bluff. Strings of attacks along the Altamaha through late 1776 and into 1777 left the re-

⁶²For quotes, see: McIntosh to Howe, November 19, 1776, in Hawes, “Letter Book of Lachlan McIntosh, 1776–1777. Part I,” 167; Houstoun to Laurens, October 1, 1778: *PHL*, 14, 375; Copy Letter to President Bulloch, November 1, 1776, in Hawes, “The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774–1799, Part IV:” 60–61. For other similar thoughts, see: Tonym to Germain, September 25, 1778, in CO 5/558, PLC, r. 149; Clay to . . . , September 7, 1778: *CGHS*, 8:109–10; Lowndes to Laurens, September 7, 1778: *PHL*, 14:286–87; Gervais to Laurens, September 21, 1778: *PHL*, 14:334. See also, Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 44.

gion "in almost perpetual Alarms," and ultimately, scores of settlers fled.⁶³ The situation farther to the north was similar. Samuel Elbert declared the region safe in 1777, "but how long the savages will permit them to remain so, I am at a loss to guess." Only a year later, a slew of attacks prompted residents to begin "flying from their Settlements." Later, while British forces were occupying Savannah, various groups of Creeks "were constantly going out in parties" and one from the Upper Towns attacked a small fort on the Ogeechee. Destroying a number of the area's plantations and causing the abandoning of others, they were throwing "the inhabitants into great confusion."⁶⁴

As attacks and word of attacks spread through settlements, scores of settlers were frightened enough to leave behind whatever they had and seek shelter elsewhere. Sometimes this was simply a nearby plantation that was larger and reinforced. More fortunate ones might find a small fort or stockade nearby that had been built at public expense and that may even have had a small detachment of local militia or state troops stationed in it. Georgians constructed strings of these small forts, posts, or stockades throughout the war and tried to keep them manned in order to "protect the Back Country & Southern frontiers from Incursions of Indians and from Augustine," and many of them saw extensive usage.⁶⁵ Strikes along the northern frontier in 1777, for instance, prompted widespread forting up. When Samuel Elbert toured some of these stations he saw them "crowded with the inhabitants who have not yet returned to their habitations which they quit at the late alarm." A year later, raiding parties had again "compelled

⁶³N.A., October 29, 1776: *CGHS*, 12:11; Copy Letter to President [Bulloch], November 1, 1776, in Hawes, "The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774-1799. Part IV:" 60; Lachlan McIntosh received several expresses from the area complaining that Indians had killed several people on the Altamaha, that they feared "a general rupture," and that they were fleeing en masse. See McIntosh to [Habersham?], Headquarters, 25[?]: LMP, box 1, folder 1, GHS; McIntosh to Hall, Brownson, and Walton, January 23, 1777: *CGHS*, 12:37.

⁶⁴Elbert to Jones, September 11, 1777: *CGHS*, 5, pt. 2:55; Clay to . . . , September 7, 1778: *CGHS*, 8:109-10; Taitt to Germain, August 6, 1779: *DAR*, 17:178-80.

⁶⁵Lachlan McIntosh planned extensively for the construction and maintenance of forts, stockades, and fortified positions along the frontier, and particularly along the rivers. See, for instance,; McIntosh to Lieut. Colo. Wm. McIntosh or Major Marbury, December 12, 1776, in Hawes, "The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774-1799. Part II," 253-254; McIntosh to Burk, December 17, 1776, in *ibid.*, 256-257; McIntosh to Lt. Colo. McIntosh, December 19, 1776, in *ibid.*, 257-258; McIntosh to Lieut. Colo. Wm. McIntosh, January 2, 1777, in *ibid.*, 262. For one list of forts manned in 1777, see Elbert to . . . , September 9, 1777: *CGHS*, 5, pt. 2:54-55. See also, Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 48-53.

the rebels to seek for safety in their forts,” in Patrick Tonyn’s words. Rawlins Lowndes continued that with “every appearance” indicating widespread attacks were imminent, “the frontier is abandoned and the inhabitants in-forted, for their protection, in many places, and the panic is universal.” Later, Lachlan McIntosh was unable to fill his militia units because everyone was “penned up in little forts to secure their families from the Savages, to whom they are exposed, & harass them continually.”⁶⁶

While frontier stations surely offered a sense of increased security, it was at best incomplete. Cramped conditions could be squalid at times and provisions were always scarce. Often hastily constructed and isolated themselves, simple stockades or fortified houses were also vulnerable to being attacked, if not altogether laid siege to, and many times they were expressly targeted. Almost all of the small forts built to protect Georgia’s frontier farms were attacked or even sacked at one time or another, in fact, and mostly by Indian forces. Georgians lost men at forts Barrington, McIntosh, Beard’s Bluff, and Clark, among others, proving that these attempts at frontier security offered imperfect protection.⁶⁷ Even when fortified up, many settlers could not escape the violence of Creek raids.

Whether those raids targeted an isolated farm or a well-provisioned fort, Georgians often complained that it was impossible to prevent them, or even track down the perpetrators afterwards. When militia units were able to respond to attacks they usually arrived too late. For example, after an alarm on the Altamaha in late 1776, a group of mounted militia ranged from one small stockade to another but was never able to come up with the party that had caused the commotion. After the Beard’s Bluff attacks, McIntosh spread parties out in all directions, thinking that they could “hardly miss overtaking and chastising” the perpetrators.

⁶⁶Elbert to . . . , September 9, 1777: *CGHS*, 5, pt. 2:54–55; Tonyn to Germain, September 25, 1778, in *CO* 5/558, PLC, r. 149; Lowndes to Laurens, September 7, 1778: *PHL*, 14:286–87; McIntosh to Lincoln, August 4, 1779, quoted in Piecuch, *Three Peoples*, 155.

⁶⁷Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 51–52; Hall, *Land and Allegiance*, 62. For three killed at Clark’s Fort, see McIntosh to Hose, April 2, 1777, in Hawes, “The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774–1799. Part III,” 365.

Although spirited, the Georgians failed to come up with anyone.⁶⁸ They usually did not, which cast a pall of vulnerability across the frontier that made settlers and militiamen feel downright helpless. Exposed and without any meaningful defensive capabilities, the threat of attacks weighed heavily on their minds. It dispirited potential soldiers, who worried more about their families and their farms than they did about the American cause. That was the case as early as 1776. After destroying an Altamaha plantation, groups of Creeks and rangers fell on Fort Barrington, and a panicked McIntosh did not know how to respond. There were only a handful of men at the station, and no militia could be called up because all the men in the area were at home, protecting their families. In early 1777 the situation was the same. The mounted militia units were “not yet above half full,” and even then, officers had to force men into the duty. There were “but very few of them as it were dragg’d with the utmost reluctance to themselves & their neighbors.” In 1779, American general Benjamin Lincoln recognized the terrible effect of those attacks and attributed them, partially correctly, to the British. The enemy’s principal design “in bringing out the Indians, is to divert us from the general object, to terrify and keep at home the militia.”⁶⁹

Despite the clear destructiveness of Creek and Seminole raids, Americans like Lincoln were either unwilling or incapable of admitting their effectiveness. Instead, they adopted a specific language common to regions with long histories of Native raiding. Creek raids were not well-planned or militarily valuable, but random and terroristic; locals were quick to condemn them as

⁶⁸McIntosh to Howe, November 19, 1776, in Hawes, “Letter Book of Lachlan McIntosh, 1776–1777. Part I,” 167; Copy Letter to President [Bulloch], November 1, 1776, in Hawes, “The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774–1799. Part IV:” 60. He would later send another group of horse, and “as I imagine they are but a small party of Indians,” he was confident that they would have enough men to “overtake & chastise them for their insult.” See McIntosh to Lieut. Colo. Wm. McIntosh, January 2, 1777, in Hawes, “The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774–1799. Part II,” 262; Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry*, 48–50; Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 42, 53.

⁶⁹McIntosh to . . . , [25 September?] 1776: LMP, b. 1, f. 1; McIntosh to Howe, January 7, 1777, in Hawes, “The Papers of Lachlan McIntosh, 1774–1799. Part II,” 263; Lincoln to Williamson, March 29, 1779, quoted in Piecuch, *Three Peoples*, 153.

such.⁷⁰ Creeks and Seminoles were ruthless savages and murderers, not Revolutionary combatants, and their wartime actions were reduced to butchery, oftentimes with the aid of the scalping knife or the hatchet. Such rhetoric was designed to demonstrate that barbarism, and not effectiveness, was the sole and most important characteristic of an Indian raid. The “savages are too Much inclin’d [to use] the Hatchet against us,” Samuel Elbert explained. Another officer called for “securing helpless & innocent women and children from the scalping knife.”⁷¹ Similarly, Creek warriors were described as being incapable of altering the course of the Revolution—if their actions were connected to the British war effort it at all. Their raids mostly targeted civilians or infrastructure, or at best militia. Therefore, rather than as dynamic actors contributing to the British strategy in an effective way, Indians were opportunistic murderers, while their raids were massacres that were usually explained outside of the context of the larger struggle.

“Murder,” in particular, was used extensively to describe the outcome of Indian attacks. That was true whether Georgians described attacks on state troops or settlers, and usually without regard to the larger context or value of the engagement.⁷² After learning of the attack on a group of mounted militia on the St. Mary’s, Lachlan McIntosh gave orders to pursue the enemies—almost certainly Seminoles—mercilessly. They were “first plundering & now Murdering, therefore I see no Cause of Sparing them any Longer where ever they are found.” By implying that they would be hunted down and killed, he clearly was not considering them British combatants. This was a theme repeated routinely

⁷⁰Peter Silver labeled this the “anti-Indian sublime,” the specific “magnetic rhetoric of suffering,” one fixed “on the sight of attacks and not their causes,” which was widely deployed by the victims of these raids. For a general discussion of this rhetoric, see Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 41–42, 56–58, 73–94. For other ideas of settlers’ views on Indian tactics, see Gregory T. Knouff, “Soldiers and Violence on the Pennsylvania Frontier,” in *Beyond Philadelphia: The American Revolution in the Pennsylvania Hinterland*, eds. John B. Frantz and William Pencak, (University Park, PA, 1998), 179; Brumwell, *Redcoats*, 203–205; Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry*, 7, 50.

⁷¹Elbert to Lee, May 14, 1776: *CGHS*, 12:6–7; Parole—New York, August 19, 1778, in *CGHS*, 5, pt. 2:182–83.

⁷²This was not unordinary; by regarding their losses as such, Georgians adapted the rhetorical style of others who had faced similar attacks in the past. Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 57; Gregory T. Knouff, *The Soldiers’ Revolution: Pennsylvanians in Arms and the Forging of Early American Identity* (University Park, PA, 1998), 161–62.

over the course of the war. Georgians described Creeks and Seminoles as cowardly murderers rather than effective guerilla fighters. When a group of Creeks attacked a group of mounted militia and killed a well-respected soldier, it was explained that "some Indians Murdered Hover, of the Light Horse." The perpetrators were "assassins," and officers were ordered to pursue them "in all quarters," to hunt them "for ever until they come up with them." Samuel Elbert reported in September of 1778 that the "Savages, in the course of the last month, murdered" upwards of twenty on the frontiers, which John Gervais expanded from twenty to thirty. Rawlins Lowndes noted that "Many murders have been committed" by groups of Creeks around the same time, with John Houstoun elaborating, that they had "killed & cruelly butcher'd upwards of thirty of our inhabitants." Gervais agreed with that number, complaining that the "Floridians & Indians" kept them in a "continual state of alarm" with their "Robberies & Murders."⁷³ Georgians attached a specific imagery to Creek and Seminole involvement that was not uncommon along the Revolutionary frontier. It removed Native raids from the realm of the war and placed them in the realm of criminal activity. That interpretation of Native raids, along with Georgians' responses to them, would have consequences as the fighting wound down.

The Creek offensive that caused so much violence from the outset of the war to 1779 would have continued had the British been able to hold their recently re-acquired colonies. The quick victories by Campbell and Prévost, however, did not lead to the generation of Loyalist armies or the peaceful retaking of the southern colonies as British commanders had hoped. Instead, the invasion unleashed ferocious Patriot-Loyalist violence that tore at the region's social fabric. British regulars only held Savannah, Augusta, and a handful of forts, leaving the remainder of the backcountry exposed to vengeful Patriots and panicky Loyalists who were quickly at each others' throats; the Southern Strat-

⁷³McIntosh to Howe, December 13, 1776: *CGHS*, 12:23; To Lieut. Colo. Wm. McIntosh or Major Marbury, December 12, 1776: *CGHS*, 12:21–22; McIntosh to Howe, December 13, 1776: *CGHS*, 12:23; McIntosh to Lieut. Colo. Wm. McIntosh, January 2, 1777: *CGHS*, 12:30; Elbert to Laurens, September 5, 1778: *PHL*, 14:269; Gervais to Laurens, September 21, 1778: *PHL*, 14:334; Lowndes to Laurens, September 7, 1778: *PHL*, 14:286; Houstoun to Laurens, October 1, 1778: *PHL*, 14:375; Gervais to Clay, September 25, 1778: *CGHS*, 8:108–9

egy stagnated as the backcountry descended into chaos.⁷⁴ That intense level of internecine violence overshadowed waning Creek involvement. With the British slowly shifting their focus north into Virginia, American forces began retaking the small frontier forts they left behind. From there they began eyeing Savannah and Augusta, which must have looked ominous to many Creek headmen. The situation deteriorated much more rapidly late in 1779 and into 1780, when Spaniards entered the war. They invaded and retook Louisiana and then West Florida, further distancing Creek headmen from their British allies.⁷⁵ After Cornwallis's defeat at Yorktown a year later, there was very little incentive left for Creeks to resist Americans at all. Savannah and Augusta were in American hands, and Pensacola was in Spanish hands. Thomas Brown had few trade goods to distribute from St. Augustine, and Tonyn was preoccupied with accommodating the thousands of British refugees from across the colonies that were flooding into his province. Indeed, for years Creek and Seminole warriors had carried tremendous violence into Georgia, but now the war was winding down, and not to their advantage.

Because the Spanish rapidly returned to Florida, Seminoles were spared the suspense of serious postwar disruption, at least for another decade. Creek communities, however, were in a very different position. After 1783, they and Georgians were left to sort the winners in the region from the losers. It was clear that the majority of Creek communities had been strong British allies, and

⁷⁴Piecuch, *Three Peoples*, 5; Hall, *Land & Allegiance*, 137–59; Coleman, “Restored Colonial Georgia, 1779–1782,” 8, 11–12. Augusta was “infested hourly with bandittees of thieves and plunderers,” where they were “murdering, plundering, laying waste, and doing all the mischief they possibly can,” while in Ebenezer there was “nothing else but murder, pillage, rape, arson, and the expulsion of women and children.” See Wright to Cornwallis, April 23, 1781: *DAR*, 20:117–18; Wright to Germain, May 5, 1781: *DAR*, 20:134–36; Bryan to Greene, August 27, 1781, in *The Papers of Nathanael Greene*, ed. Richard K. Showman (Chapel Hill, NC, 1976-): 9:260–61 (hereafter cited as *PNG*); Quote of Friedrich von Porbeck: *PNG*, 9:445, note 6; Piecuch, *Three Peoples*, 256, 284. Several accounts of the period portray the region as being torn apart by the partisan violence. The misery of the country “exceeds all belief,” American general Nathanael Greene wrote, “Nor do I beleave any people suffer greater calamities. The Whigs and the Tories are butchering one another hourly.” See Greene to Reed, May 4, 1781: *PNG*, 8:200. The fighting “has driven both parties to that state of animosity,” Briton Robert Biddulph penned, “that they fight whenever they meet with't prospect of advantage, like two species of animals whose nature it is to work the destruction of the other. See Violet Biddulph, “The Letters of Robert Biddulph, 1779–1783,” *American Historical Review* 29 (October 1923): 106.

⁷⁵For the fall of West Florida, see Starr, *Tories, Dons, and Rebels*; and Wright Jr., *The American Revolution in Florida*.

they had done significant damage along the backcountry. For five years they had terrorized innocent Georgian settlers, state authorities declared, and now they would be treated accordingly.⁷⁶ Localized fighting had, indeed, laid a foundation for future interactions between the two groups that promised to be confrontational at best. Very quickly, state authorities approached headmen in just such a manner, setting the tone for increasingly tense Creek-Georgian interactions for the next few years. Governor John Martin only somewhat talked peace, spending much more breath, it seemed, on words of reproach and warning. "Have we not told you the truth?" he pressed. "Did we not say that we should drive the red coats from off our land, which we have done?"⁷⁷ Georgians were "a hardy race of men, and can undergo any kind of fatigue & surmount any difficulties." They possessed "sinewy arms & keen cutting swords, and are not afraid to die." If Creeks wanted war Georgians would give them war, laying their towns in ashes and making "their women widows and their children fatherless." Indeed, while he applied for peace, Martin declared that Georgians would not hesitate "a moment respecting which you would prefer—the sword, or olive branch."⁷⁸

Those words presaged several attempts by state authorities to turn their Revolutionary victory into a cession of Creek lands. In only three years they had concluded three separate and highly contested treaties aimed at doing so—first at Augusta in 1783, then at Galphinton in 1785, and finally at Shoulderbone in 1786. Each of those, however, only led to more confrontation, and ul-

⁷⁶"The violent conflicts of the preceding decades," one historian suggested, "indelibly stamped postwar culture." Entire families and communities "had bled for the land at Indian hands, as passive sufferers and as conquerors, and now that land was theirs." Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, 226, 233–34. As Peter Silver explains, repeated images of Indian attacks helped Europeans and then Americans "draw their first lasting pictures of themselves." By vilifying Indians, and even other Europeans, they asserted "the existence of a suffering, victimized community." See Silver, *Our Savage neighbors*, 74. For an idea of this elsewhere, see Leonard J. Sadosky, *Revolutionary Negotiations: Indians, Empires, and Diplomats in the Founding of America* (Charlottesville, VA, 2009), 121; Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country*, 281–87; Reginald Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy, 1783–1812* (Norman, OK, 1967), 5; R. Douglas Hurt, *The Indian Frontier, 1763–1846* (Albuquerque, NM, 2002), 103–4; Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy in the Formative Years: The Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts, 1780–1834* (Cambridge, MA, 1962), 34.

⁷⁷A Talk sent by his honor the Governor and beloved men of Georgia . . . , in J.E. Hays, ed., *Indian Treaties, Cessions of Land in Georgia, 1705–1837* (Atlanta, 1941), 112–14.

⁷⁸Martin to the Tallassee King . . . , July 19, 1782, in J.M., "Official Letters of Governor John Martin, 1782–1783," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 1 (December 1917): 314.

timately more violence.⁷⁹ The bitterness that marked those exchanges was a direct result of the localized fighting that brought tremendous violence to the Georgian backcountry during the Revolutionary War. Beginning at the very outset of the fighting, Creeks and Seminoles fell on Georgian settlers with devastating consequences. They raided for their own political, economic, and cultural reasons, and British legislators and military leaders actively encouraged them. They burned scores of farms along the frontier and killed dozens of settlers and militiamen. Their attacks not only undermined the American war effort, but they also scarred local Georgians, who carried those scars with them well into the post-Revolutionary period. By focusing on the local and regional, and on the various consequences of their participation, Creek and Seminole involvement in the Revolution places them at the very center of the region and the period.

⁷⁹Michael D. Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis* (Lincoln, NE, 1982), 34–35; Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745–1815* (Baltimore, MD, 1992), 96–99; Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733–1816* (Cambridge, U.K., 1999), 79–82.