



GENERAL ANTHONY WAYNE

Entered according to act of Congress, A. D. 1878, by William McDermut, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington, D. C.

Published by:
M^CDERMUT & CO.
FT. WAYNE, IND.

The Importance of the Oconee War in the Early Republic

BY KEVIN KOKOMOOR

General Anthony Wayne hailed originally from Pennsylvania, yet in 1788 he was a resident of America's newest state, Georgia, and the proud owner of one of its premiere coastal rice plantations. His property had once belonged to a prominent British Loyalist, but Georgia's Patriot government had confiscated it during the American Revolution and, like many others, redistributed it to men like Wayne for their wartime loyalty. For Wayne, it was his military service to the state that had earned him the sprawling set of rice fields over which he now lorded. As part of a Pennsylvania regiment in the Continental Army, Wayne's career slowly took him south; after the Patriot victory at Yorktown he landed in Georgia. There he partook in a small but pivotal battle in the last days of the war, against a British partisan relief party that was attempting to reach Savannah. Wayne successfully fended off the attack, allowing the Americans to continue pressuring British-controlled Savannah and earning him the highest praises from Georgians—praises that ultimately resulted in his ownership of the plantations he hoped would catapult him into the state's reemerging Lowcountry planter elite.¹

The relief party that Wayne defeated in 1781 had no Redcoats in it. It was no ordinary group of backcountry partisans either, which was exceptional even in a place marked by the most unordinary kind of fighting. It was composed almost entirely of Creek Indians, demonstrating the immensely complicated nature of the American Revolution in the southern colonies. Wayne's victory over the relief party seemingly put an end to years of increasingly vicious Creek attacks that were ruining the Georgia backcountry. It was the kind of victory that set the stage for future state prosperity that would come at the direct cost of Natives: it would be Creek lands into which Georgians would expand. Why was it then that by 1788 Anthony Wayne was complaining anew of Creek attacks that were threatening the rice plantations in his own neighborhood, far from the backcountry?

Left: General Anthony Wayne. *Library of Congress*.

There was a time years earlier when Wayne, like many others in his position, explained away that violence as isolated frontier raids, but that was no longer the case by the fall of 1788. By October the “unhappy Indian War” was “daily” becoming more serious still, and by December the situation was so bad that many of the “most capital planters” were removing their families, slaves, and property to the Carolinas and “abandoning their valuable rice plantations.”² Only a little more than a decade after war had ruined the prospects of coastal Georgia’s rich rice region, according to Wayne, it was happening again. The Oconee War (as this new border dispute was soon called) was sowing chaos across the state and embarrassing the fledgling state government, and the United States Congress was flat out refusing to do anything about it. Far from defeating the Creeks and imposing their will on a vanquished people, Georgia’s citizens—Wayne now included—were facing a catastrophe arguably worse than what they had faced during the Revolution. How had it come to this, Wayne surely thought, and what would happen to this once-hopeful state?

Wayne’s struggles reveal a conflict that has generated little scholarship on regional or Georgia politics, and has inspired almost none on the political development of the American republic.³ Yet the war, which erupted in 1786, pit Georgia citizens against Creek Indians, and raged for several years from the state’s frontier counties all the way to the seacoast, and provides a comprehensive and uniquely helpful view into the tumultuous and transformative years that followed the American Revolution. It was a regional calamity that generated political debate of a truly national scope, and its impact on the development of both the state of Georgia and the federal government had wide-ranging implications.

Many studies of the federal government under the Articles of Confederation explore its inability to solve the country’s financial woes. In the ones that do discuss territorial problems, the focus is usually on the Northwest Territory, the Mississippi River, or perhaps the State of Franklin. Yet the Oconee War demonstrates several overlapping territorial, jurisdictional, and defensive issues, all involving the government’s failure to control settler-Native relations, which deserves equal attention. As the developing crisis in Georgia revealed to authorities at both the local and national levels, under the Articles of Confederation the federal government could not pursue an Indian policy of its own, it could not stop states from pursuing their own Indian policies, and it could not protect states when their individual decisions to act aggressively towards Natives ended up threatening their own destruction. Indeed, while violence in the Northwest Territory or the

State of Franklin debacle have been held up as the prime exemplars of territory-driven crisis in the chaotic post-Revolutionary years, neither crippled an entire already-existing state with full representation under the new federal compact.⁴

The Oconee War might just be the most revealing of all the dysfunctional Confederation Congress-era messes, perhaps because as a narrative guide it moves seamlessly from the aggressive expansion-mindedness of the immediate postwar years through the resultant chaos, and from there through the ratification of the Constitution, all of which culminated in the rise of Federalism. National debates over Georgia's responsibility for the violence that gripped it not only help explain the appeal of the Constitution to many, but the subsequent imposition of George Washington and Henry Knox's Federalist visions along that frontier following ratification. The Oconee War was one of the primary experiences Knox relied on to justify imposing the power of the federal government over Georgia's legislature, exerting for the first time federal jurisdiction in the state's Native, territorial, and military affairs. Ultimately, the crisis in Georgia was a seminal moment that helped bring an end to the most chaotic post-Revolutionary years, defined critical new powers of the federal government, and laid the foundation for the expansion of the American republic.

In 1781, Georgia governor Nathan Brownson declared a day of thanksgiving "for the restoration of peace to this long afflicted land." By that point, the American Revolution had reduced Georgia almost to ruin. A major British invasion brought the loss of Savannah and Augusta. Bitter Patriot-Loyalist infighting soon bordered on civil war. That havoc led to the abandonment of countless plantations and the loss or escape of thousands of slaves. Not to be forgotten were Creeks, who raided from the west continually and seemingly with impunity. All these troubles combined by the end of the war to leave frontier farms devastated and the profitable rice fields of the Lowcountry deserted. As a returning plantation owner in the latter group lamented, "it must take a very considerable time even to form a tolerable neighborhood, the resettling of plantations that are so entirely gone to ruin, must be attended with nearly as much expence [*sic*], and difficulty, as the first settling of them." Nevertheless, many Georgians were sure that 1781 would mark a new beginning; the state was poised for a rebirth, and there were plenty of reasons to be optimistic about the future. No one doubted "that our country after all will do well," said one resident, and that "temporary distress, hardship & difficulty, time

will surmount.” The “virtue of 1775, with the exertions of subsequent years will guide us in safety and lead in the straight path to peace & Independence.”⁵

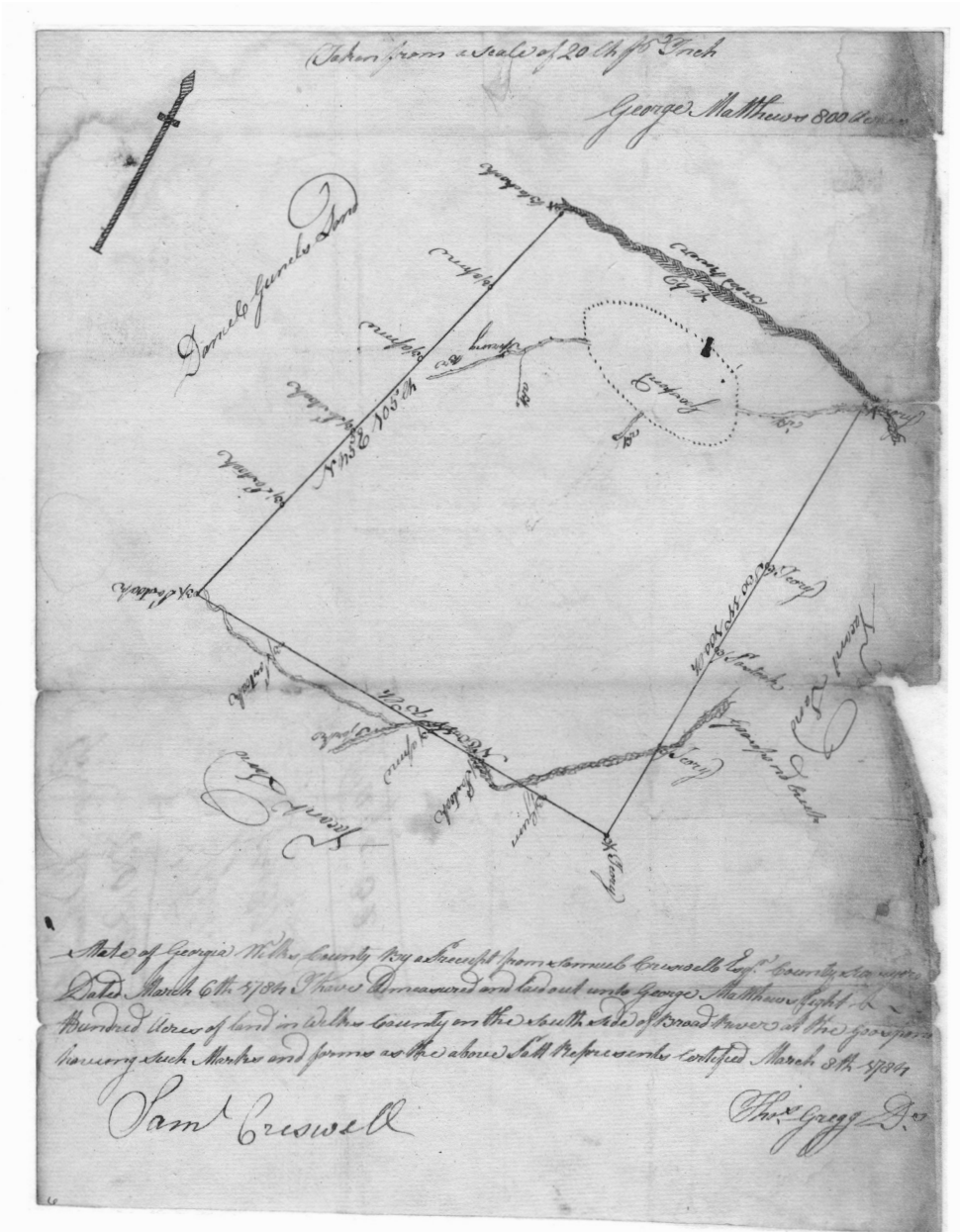
One of the most pressing postwar questions was what to do about neighboring Creek Indians, who controlled vast territories to the west of the state’s border—land over which Georgians now claimed jurisdiction. All interested groups in the region had preferred to keep Creeks out of the Revolutionary War, including the British, Americans, Georgians, and most Creeks themselves. As the struggle slowly moved south, however, American authorities failed to court Native allies like Creeks, who were better provisioned with British trade goods and angered by the aggressiveness of American settlers. By 1779, most Creek communities had not only chosen to back the British, but many had actively raided the Georgia backcountry as British partisans. When the British war effort collapsed and British forces evacuated South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, Georgia state authorities soon looked to Creek communities, and they did so with seething resentment.⁶

Georgia officials’ confrontational approach to diplomacy with Native peoples was typical of most states along the post-Revolutionary backcountry; it was also consistent with the new federal government’s long-term goals for western expansion. One way or another, Native land was always supposed to become American land.⁷ In Georgia, the very men who had struggled against Creeks during the American Revolutionary War—men like John Houstoun, Samuel Elbert, Edward Telfair, George Mathews, George Walton, and George Handley—now held the state’s political reins. For instance, Samuel Elbert (the state’s governor in 1786) commanded Georgia’s state and Continental troops throughout the war, and had led American forces in a disastrous attempt to take St. Augustine. His invasion, like the two other such attempts, was at least partly in response to incessant Creek and Seminole raiding into Georgia’s frontiers. Worse yet, all three invasions were repulsed by irregular British Rangers and Creek and Seminole warriors, all of whom worked in close combination. Samuel Elbert would be no fan of Creeks.⁸

George Mathews, having served in Georgia during the American Revolution under Nathanael Greene, quickly returned after the war’s conclusion to petition the state for land. In 1784, he was granted upwards of two thousand acres in Wilkes County. State authorities had created Wilkes County from land supposedly ceded by Cherokees in 1773, which was referred to at the time as the “New Purchase.” The land (also known colloquially during the period as the “Ceded Lands”) was

also claimed by Creeks. The sale of the land without Creek approval and monetary compensation had generated waves of retaliatory violence over the preceding decade, including heavy raiding during the Revolution. By 1787, the year he first served as Georgia's governor, Mathews had gained another one thousand acres in nearby Franklin County. Lastly there was Anthony Wayne. Although he did not seek public office, Wayne was able to parlay his military service to the state under Greene into a nearly-thousand acre rice plantation once owned by the Loyalist Alexander Wright, the son of Royal governor James Wright.⁹ Each of these men, who had suffered for the province and then the state of Georgia, typified the hope of many for the state's postwar growth. Once-profitable Loyalist plantations were seized and paid as land bounties to Patriots and war heroes like Greene and Wayne. Cheap land for well-connected would-be land speculators like Mathews was next; following them would be the common men. Appropriating Creek lands—central to Georgia's rebirth—was key to those next steps, as Mathews's purchase of Wilkes County land demonstrated.

The men who controlled the levers of state government, having witnessed the violence Native peoples were capable of, had no problem using violence themselves to pry state lands away from unwilling Creeks. More circumspect federal authorities, like Henry Knox, would have appreciated the ability to at least referee such potentially violent interactions, yet the frame of government embraced and ratified by the new American states soon made that prospect a dim one. Even though the Articles of Confederation created a federal government that was weak in many ways, it proved almost entirely useless when it came to Native American relations. Although Congress claimed the right to negotiate with Native peoples, the brief, vague, and confusing Articles made that impossible, both in theory and in reality. Not only did Congress lack the means to either financially support or legally empower commissioners to deal with Native groups, its state counterparts were also largely uninterested even in the idea of letting them do so. Georgia authorities, pointing to other clauses of the same Articles of Confederation, claimed the same right to deal with Creeks. Because Creek communities existed in territory recognized by Congress as belonging to Georgia, and because states retained near-absolute sovereignty over their territory, Georgia authorities were basically right. Congress's power in such disputes was "too inexplicit to be applied as a remedy," leaving leaders in Philadelphia confused and largely ineffective, and American-Native relations in a bizarre and tremendously dysfunctional in-between place.¹⁰



This survey for eight hundred acres on the Broad River, in Wilkes County, was rendered in March 1784. It represents one of several large land grants future Governor George Mathews was able to accumulate in the immediate postwar years. Wilkes County was previously referred to as the “Ceded Lands,” a large tract supposedly secured from Creek Indians both before and after the American Revolution. *Georgia Archives.*

Such ambiguity, of course, did not bother Georgia authorities. Georgians had won the epic revolutionary contest, Creeks had lost, and state-appointed treaty commissioners would now assume the role of glorious victors. They moved both swiftly and unilaterally, bringing a small delegation of Creek headmen to Augusta, high on the Savannah River, to conclude a treaty in 1783. Daniel McMurphy and Richard Henderson, the former titled “Agent to Solicit the Affairs of this State in the Creek Nation” and the latter the state’s “Deputy Superintendent for Indian Affairs,” acted as commissioners. They represented the determination of those in Augusta to chart their own way in Indian policy.¹¹ The commissioners declared victory soon after, having gained a cession of land from their Creek counterparts that expanded the boundary of Georgia west by an entire river system. Where the Ogeechee River had marked the limits of the British province practically since its founding in the 1730s, the Oconee and Altamaha Rivers would mark the boundary of the American state of Georgia. The treaty doubled the size of the state and included rich rice lands close to the coast, as well as large swaths of backcountry that would be some of the best farmland in the entire Southeast.¹²

Despite frenzied, statewide optimism, the Treaty of Augusta had more than its share of shortcomings. Most obvious was the makeup of the Creek delegation that supposedly made their marks on the treaty. Like most southeastern Native groups, the Creek people were remarkably politically autonomous, and Creek life was built around the twin pillars of kinship and community. Community governance meant that individual headmen had almost no authority outside of their own towns or away from their people, people who knew and respected them for their wisdom. Creek lands were public lands and a decision to part ways with some of it could only be made by an overwhelming consensus of community leaders. That required huge turnouts of Creek headmen from potentially dozens of small communities. British negotiators had only managed to achieve that a few times in the past, and with great difficulty. The group that Georgia authorities convened at Augusta was the opposite of what one would expect, given those deeply-respected diplomatic and political protocols: the small handful of headmen was a laughable showing, in no way sufficient to secure the territory Georgia was claiming. State officials would certainly have known this.¹³ The Treaty of Augusta was, in short, the first of several diplomatic charades Georgians staged to legitimize what they considered their rightly-won spoils of war.

Perhaps the state's commissioners understood that to seek a fuller Creek showing would be to court failure and potential embarrassment. After all, none of the Creek communities that had opposed Georgia during the war were present at the treaty that supposedly put the two belligerent parties at peace. Most of them, quite to the contrary, were in Spanish East and West Florida, cozying up to the recently re-arrived Spanish. There, headmen vowed never to cede an inch of Creek territory and signed Spanish treaties that guaranteed that territory by force of arms.¹⁴ Not unpredictably, Georgia-Creek relations deteriorated rapidly in the wake of the Treaty of Augusta. When word of the land cession spread through Creek Country it immediately generated an intense and potentially violent backlash, threatening to bring widespread raiding back to a region that was only just beginning to rebuild, and which was perhaps more defenseless than ever.

State officials, sensing the danger, rushed to renegotiate the treaty. They did so in 1785 at a settlement called Galphinton. This attempt at a peace treaty turned out to be more provocative than the first. Not only did state commissioners meet with almost the exact same Creek delegation as before, but they also claimed to have gained from them even more compensation. Worse yet, when a worried federal delegation led by future Indian agent Benjamin Hawkins arrived and attempted to intervene, the state commissioners more or less ran them off. The latter group then proceeded to complain formally of the federal government's "manifest and direct attempt to violate the retained sovereignty and legislative right" of the state, an insult that was "repugnant to the principles and harmony of the Federal Union." No federal assistance was necessary, they made clear, and any further attempt at such meddling only threatened "to weaken and destroy that entire confidence in the wisdom and justice of Congress, which this State wishes ever to preserve."¹⁵ Such confident and confrontational words would come back to haunt Georgia authorities in the years to come. For the time being, however, with Hawkins and his colleagues gone, state commissioners were free to try the same old tricks.

Like the Treaty of Augusta that preceded it, the Galphinton peace treaty brought no peace. The already-steady flow of weapons from the Spanish Gulf Coast quickened rapidly as Creek communities prepared to assert their ownership of the Oconee lands. Spanish authorities, staking a claim to much of the same territory and interested in using Natives as a bulwark against American expansion towards the Mississippi, were only too happy to oblige. Timothy Barnard, a trader and longtime American asset in the region, warned that several Creek headmen had been seen

returning from New Orleans and Pensacola with guns and ammunition practically by the horse load. “From these circumstances we may expect nothing but a war.”¹⁶

That was indeed the case. After a brief war council that saw a tremendous Creek turnout—far larger than at either of the state’s treaty negotiations—groups of warriors swept across the frontier and began burning settler homes. Early in May, large war parties converged on the state’s newest frontier counties to drive away all the cattle and horses, and to “kill all the people they could find.” As one man complained, “I expect every day to here [*sic*] more people being killed by them.” Within weeks state militias were already on the defensive, as warriors had already killed several settlers and families had been driven “off from there small farmes” in large numbers. To the north, the Franklin County militia was expected to “get weaker every day some moving and others talking of moving,” while one particular alarm “broke all inhabitation” south of the Ogeechee River.¹⁷

The violence that washed over Georgia’s frontier counties took state authorities by surprise, forcing them to seek a third treaty in 1786, at Shoulderbone. Demonstrating what one historian considered the “bizarre” pattern of state-level aggression in the region, however, Georgia authorities positioned themselves to execute what might be the most confrontational and belligerent treaty ever attempted in the immediate postwar period, a period defined by confrontation. Yet the commissioners followed their plans to the letter. Hundreds of soldiers paraded around the grounds in full military regalia while the state commission berated and then threatened the Creek delegation. The Georgians proclaimed that the army that stood before them had no problem putting all of Creek Country to the torch and driving the Creek people—all Creek people—into the wilderness. To avoid this fate, Creeks had to agree to the Treaty of Galphinton in full, accept the execution of a half dozen Creeks for past raids, and give up another half dozen as hostages to ensure fulfillment of the treaty’s obligations.¹⁸

This negotiation was remarkable for several reasons, but perhaps most notably because for the third time in a row it was planned without any federal input, and with only select headmen who had agreed in advance to meet with the state commissioners. Congress was kept entirely out of the loop, while most Creeks (influenced by other headmen and a man of mixed ancestry, Alexander McGillivray) either steered well clear of the council or had no idea it was going on.

Their decision not to participate proved wise: most of the friendly headmen in attendance ended up in chains.¹⁹

As had occurred during the Treaty of Augusta negotiations, a much larger proportion of Creek Country had not only boycotted the Shoulderbone conference but was again enjoying the embrace of governors in St. Augustine, Pensacola, Mobile, and even New Orleans. The Spanish heaped praise on their guests and allies, lauding the headmen's determination to once again take up arms to defend a combined and now-threatened Creek-Spanish sovereignty. Most importantly, they made sure there was no shortage of supplies available for Creek warriors to do just that, including guns.²⁰ Those weapons and aggressive talks, coming after three increasingly insulting treaties, set the stage for the Oconee War.

Georgia authorities, perhaps buoyed by previous victories against Cherokees and emboldened by the aggressiveness of their North Carolinian and Franklinitic neighbors when it came to Native relations, were less worried by these renewed reports of Creek dissatisfaction than they had been before. Rather than attempt a renegotiation, as they had after Galphinton, legislators began to bolster state defenses in anticipation of a fight. As Governor George Mathews confided to trader Timothy Barnard, many state citizens relished the opportunity to avenge Creek actions taken during the Revolution and in 1786, perhaps gaining even more Creek territory in the process. The scars of the Revolution still ran deep. Militiamen rejoiced "at the thought of having it in their power to chastise that Nation for all their past and present injuries." Interest in war rose to feverish levels—many state legislators even proposed a first strike. Certainly falling back on favorable memories of victories over the Cherokee, state authorities were convinced that any conflict with the Creek would bring only more glory.²¹

Eventually Creeks tested that resolve by executing a stunning retaliation for the insults at Shoulderbone, one that became a disastrous and embarrassing test of leadership that pushed Georgia to the brink of state failure. Perhaps that is why the Oconee War, which has received new attention as of late, was almost never mentioned in older state studies. Recent scholarship has focused on the perspective of the Creek communities who asserted through force that Georgia settlers were essentially squatting on their ancestral hunting lands. Warriors were evicting illegal settlers, and by doing so were supporting the idea of Creek sovereignty.²² Georgia settlers who bore the brunt of those assaults had a very different perspective on



Alexander McGillivray was a mixed-race Creek headman who urged fellow Creeks not to participate in negotiation of the Treaty of Shoulderbone in 1786 because of Georgians' aggressive negotiating style and violations of earlier treaties. *New York Public Library*.

them. Many had their properties burned and their livestock killed. Their livelihoods were lost and, in some cases, so were their lives. Large numbers of survivors and their families filed depredation claims for decades after the attacks, seeking compensation from state and federal relief programs. While many of these claimants might have exaggerated their losses or embellished their narratives for maximum emotional effect, a common theme is clear: they really were being evicted.

One man in Glynn County, a Martin Palmer, recalled how in April 1788 the “inhabitants of the frontiers were fled and flying to the Sea Islands for protection in this wretched and distressed situation.” He did as well, and not long after the “Indians burnt all his houses and fencing” and drove off dozens of horses and hogs.²³ Then there was Martin Johnson from Washington County, who had two of his young children shot down and scalped right in front of him. Johnson fled his farm with what remained of his family; when he returned to recover and bury his children, he found that the war party had burned just about everything he owned. That left

Johnson not only mourning the loss of his children, but in a situation familiar to many others in the county. These farmers, “poor & barely capable of a subsistence for their families,” faced starvation. Firsthand accounts like those of Palmer and Johnson are two of the multitudes of reports and depredation claims that tell tales of the raiding, death, and deprivation of the Oconee War, not just across Georgia’s frontier counties, but of its older and more settled districts as well.²⁴

That destruction was the result of state actors who, left by the federal government to pursue their own territorial agenda, had just picked a fight with a strong Native-American people that they had absolutely no chance of winning on their own. What resulted was one of the most impressive Native offensives of the eighteenth century. The attacks began as early as April, and first appeared to the north, in Wilkes County, where one resident would later claim Creeks were “almost incessantly committing depredations on the citizens.” Creek warriors, having raided the “Ceded Lands” violently during the Revolution, wasted little time in renewing attacks in that highly contested county in 1787. Once confident that the raiding would avail them of the opportunity to crush the Creek resistance and seize more territory, legislators were soon complaining that the fighting “must be highly prejudiced to us.” As early as June, Creeks had allegedly killed twenty-five settlers in the process of burning scores more from their homes; they allegedly did so without losing a single warrior.²⁵ These were the opening months of a violent two-year stretch of raiding that unified Creek communities and bitterly divided Americans. While the intensity of that raiding does not rise to the level of the regional violence that engulfed modern-day Ohio, Indiana, or Illinois (which began in the same period), it nonetheless laid bare several state and federal weaknesses that threatened to physically devastate Georgia.

The first weakness was Georgia’s reliance on a federal government that was purposefully designed to be feeble when it came to defense. Although Congress had no right to meddle in a state’s territorial affairs, Georgia representatives were confident now that Congress was “bound to assist us when we make war.” Governor George Mathews gambled heavily on that theory, asserting that Congress would “see the necessity of making war on the part of the United States” if it came to blows with Creeks. Now, indeed, it had come to that.²⁶ Yet, as Mathews soon discovered, there was little national appetite for an offensive campaign on the scale Georgia authorities envisioned. The Articles of Confederation, having proscribed a permanent, standing military, relied on states to provide militias that would

act, temporarily, as an army of the United States in times of crisis. That proved a difficult proposition.

Legislators in Virginia and South Carolina were struggling with financial issues that made raising armies for their southern neighbor imprudent. North Carolina was so wracked by Cherokee violence that the state was threatening to break apart, a struggle that had already birthed the highly contested State of Franklin. The idea of creating a national army from that neighborhood, even under the direst of circumstances, was unrealistic at best. Couched in the ongoing violence of the Midwest and a widening settler insurrection in Massachusetts, the federal government was on the rocks only years after claiming independence. There were already far more problems facing Congress than it could handle, making any military intervention in any part of the union highly unlikely. As could be expected, the Congressional solution was to ease tensions with Creek communities, not invade them.²⁷

A congressional intervention into Georgia's affairs had been discussed for some time, going as far back as the unpopular and unsuccessful treaty attempt at Galphinton in 1785. Later, in June 1786, Congress established an Indian Department and appointed commissioners in a renewed attempt to soothe tensions in the volatile region "south of the Ohio"—an arrangement that was, ironically, almost a mirror image of the British system that preceded it. Superintendents were charged with regulating trade and monitoring each Native group's relations with local governments. Both superintendents and congressional commissioners were to "hear and redress all their grievances and to establish such principles as will best secure the tranquility, peace and friendship of that nation." Like its British antecedent, this system was designed to conciliate, not fight, and when word spread to Philadelphia that Creeks were "meditating a serious blow" against the Georgia backcountry, the solution proposed was diplomacy. While congressmen only briefly considered the possibility of raising a military force, they spent much more effort recommending that Georgians "use every possible means to preserve peace and friendship."²⁸

These attempts at peace were as unpopular among Georgians in 1787 as they had been years earlier. State authorities wanted armies of conquest, not envoys of peace. Thus snubbed, state legislators turned quickly to their neighbors for assistance, going so far as to offer bounties of Indian land as payment for military service. The only promising response came from the breakaway State of Franklin, whose

officials were waging a very similar struggle against Cherokees and responding to congressional neglect in very similar ways. The government there offered Georgia a force of a thousand men to “subdue the outrageous Creek Indians.” In November, Governor George Mathews hoped that a joint army might “chastise the insolence and perfidity [*sic*] of that barbarous nation.”²⁹ Again, however, this amounted to no more than wishful thinking, demonstrating another shortcoming of the federal compact. Any multi-state aid was essentially voluntary. If in theory neighboring states were supposed to assist each other during times of regional struggle, then the Oconee War demonstrated how that theory failed in reality. Even in the face of widespread raiding that constituted a clear regional threat, nothing remotely resembling an army ever came close to marching against Creek communities. It is unclear whether Georgians gained any assistance from any of their neighbors. With troubles of their own, few residents of other states were interested in providing what Georgia was requesting.

With little help on the way, the Oconee War expanded rapidly in the summer and fall of 1787, demonstrating the profound limits of a frontier government’s ability to defend the territorial sovereignty it claimed to command under the Articles of Confederation. War parties not only went deep into Georgia to attack settlers’ homes, they also went straight at the state’s defenses, attacking and in many instances burning the small, stockaded positions that both citizens and state authorities relied on to legitimize and protect their newly settled territory. In June 1787, settlers in Washington County were trying to “collect and make some place of security for their families” after being given “a great alarm” by the death of two men. Forting up in such ways was a common response to Native attacks across early America. Many times the small “stations” they made were simple rudimentary blockhouses designed to house state militia troops. As was the case in Washington County, they could also be a network of well-fortified plantation or farm houses, improved to offer defensible positions and neighborhood security in otherwise isolated country. Often they did not function as conceived. Small, hastily constructed, and cut off themselves, the stations were vulnerable to being cut off, surrounded, or assaulted outright, and it was clear Natives were not afraid to target them directly.³⁰

As worried letters from Georgia leaders revealed, many times that was exactly what happened. A report from late 1787 described how Creeks were “numerous on our frontier counties, and in force round and near the forts and stations in which the inhabitants have taken shelter.” “Indians had killed one man near Knox’ fort” in

Washington County, only months it seemed after settlers had finished constructing the stations in June, “& had also been firing on the Forts below.” The same was true in neighboring Greene County.³¹ To the south, James Jackson’s plan to use a Revolutionary War-era fortification known as Beard’s Bluff to halt Creek warriors at the Altamaha River turned out to be useless. Not only had it failed to stop Creeks from entering Glynn, Liberty, and even Chatham Counties, but soon they were on the coast. That was the case at Brunswick and Midway, where warriors attacked a Captain Lewis “at his station at Shephard’s plantation.” Attacks on another fortified location nearby compelled its evacuation; its inhabitants fled to the larger and better defended coastal town of Darien for protection. Soon after its abandonment, the stockaded home was burned. Creeks then hit another small, fortified house nearby.³²

Reports like these reveal the ongoing failure of Georgia’s government officials and militia commanders to physically protect state sovereignty. Authorities had relied on small fortified outposts, state militias, and armed locals to defend their counties, all of which were failing. The fortified stations simply did not work. Not only did they fail to prevent Creek warriors’ penetration into the furthest corners of the state, they also failed to protect the property of farmers once those warriors arrived. Furthermore, a lack of cash—even in 1787—meant that “three of the forts on the frontiers were so badly provided with ammunition as to render their situation very insecure.” The few state troops assigned to such small stations, very much isolated and with little food, began threatening desertion.³³ One local commander complained to James Jackson that his men were “reduced to a starving condition as there is but a few of the stations have had a single pound of provisions these four weeks”; they were mostly living off surrounding farms. That would not last for long. Almost as distressing, and certainly more humiliating, they suffered from “nakedness for want of clothing.” Many men had not “had a shirt on their bodies for a month past.”³⁴ Not only were the forts failing to make the region safer, but residents knew it. In Wilkes County, “indifferently armed and entirely without ammunition,” families were dispirited by such “hazardous and defenceless a situation.” Along the Ogeechee, settlers succeeded in building a small fortification, but without “assistance of arms & ammunition” they would “yet be obliged to break.”³⁵

Addressing the Georgia House of Assembly in October 1787, Governor Mathews soberly reported that the state was under constant attack, it was bankrupt, and that militia enrollment was dangerously low.³⁶ Violence had already claimed over thirty settlers’ lives, scores more were wounded or captives, and the fighting was

threatening to upend state government itself. When the time came for the state legislature to convene, there were doubts that anyone would show; indeed, there were not enough members at the October session “to constitute a house,” according to one report. All members from the southern frontiers were delayed, and those from the north were “generally engaged in defending their families and property on the frontiers.” The government was struggling to function at even the most basic level. Legislators feared they would have to declare a state of alarm, “when martial law will in some measure take place”—then the state would be in real trouble. To outside observers it was clear the fighting was far from over. There was “doubtless reason to fear” that “frontier settlements will be ravaged.” Georgians were “so greatly alarmed that they are even fortifying Savannah.”³⁷

Surprisingly, when there were enough legislators present to conduct business, there was little change in the state’s position. A committee “on Indian affairs” produced a stunning narrative of the state’s various heartfelt peace efforts with the Creek people and “the infractions of them on the part of the savages, their aggressions, etc.” Ultimately, the committee recommended “in the strongest and most express terms the necessity of our preparing for war.” The dozens of killed had not yet softened the state’s tone and resolve, despite the frontiers having been “the scene of blood and ravages.” Mathews soon appealed directly to Congress. Rather than attempt renegotiating with the Creek, Georgia legislators redoubled their efforts to draw Congress into the fray, demanding a strong military intervention into what was now a genuine regional crisis. In November 1787, Mathews declared that legislators in Augusta had already made plans to arm and assemble thousands of men. The endeavor would be “attended with such expense,” he explained, that Georgians were again requesting, and now expecting, federal aid. Mathews was confident that “the United States will grant such assistance as will enable us to prosecute the war with vigor.” In a move that congressmen in Philadelphia must have feared would come, Georgians were “determined to enter into a serious War,” and expected “and will call upon Congress for the Assistance & support of the Union.”³⁸

No more interested in war than before, Congress again rejected Mathews’ request. For some time such demands had been drawing irritated and detached responses from Philadelphia. The Oconee War was exposing more fundamental jurisdictional flaws in the Articles of Confederation. Congress had tried to intervene at Galphinton, which was not lost on the commission appointed to investigate Mathews’s claims. Not only had the federal commissioners been rebuffed

by their state counterparts, but they had also been intentionally misled, insulted, and even threatened. Now, years later, those same state legislators were screaming bloody murder, pointing to the Articles and claiming that it was now the federal government's responsibility to raise a national army to come to the state's aid. Congress had no right to meddle in Georgia's dealings with the Creeks, responded the committee members, but now government was bound to provide money and troops for the defense of the state when their own ill-advised, unilateral actions drew upon themselves a war? To do so would be "to punish such nations as the State shall name, to act in aid of the state authority; to send her forces and recall them as she shall see fit; to make war or peace." No way could this be what the federal compact was constructed to mean.³⁹

Furthermore, it was clear the commissioners believed that Georgians were getting what they deserved. In straightforward and surprisingly pitiless language, congressmen described an "avaricious disposition in some of our people to acquire large tracts of land and often by unfair means," which appeared "to be the principal source of difficulties with the Indians." There was no doubt that settlements were established on lands "near the Oconee claimed by the Creeks," and that "various pretences [*sic*] seem to be set up by the white people for making those settlements, which the Indians, tenacious of their rights, appear to be determined to oppose." The state position was "not only to be productive of confusion, disputes and embarrassments," but was "by no means the true one." This was a sober and surprisingly accurate assessment of the situation. Georgia's actions in usurping Congress's right to deal with Natives threatened to leave the power of the federal government "a mere nullity; and to make it totally uncertain on what principle Congress is to interfere between them and the said tribes." The conundrum left congressmen feeling increasingly frustrated and—after having been undermined by Georgians' actions in the past—unwilling to come to the aid of a state that was obviously struggling. The report was condemnatory and the charges grave. Yet the Congress's position was nevertheless an alarming one to take. If it would not intervene now—even if only to provide a basic defensive aid to the state—it was unclear what role there was for the federal government in Georgia's affairs. But Congress would not intervene, at least not militarily, and instead empowered a new commission to "use every endeavor to restore peace and harmony between the said States and the said Nations on terms of Justice and humanity."⁴⁰

The complaints coming from Philadelphia reflected not only a weak state and a weak federal government, but also the exceptionally poor relationship that existed between the two. Little military assistance would come from neighboring states, and little help would come from Congress. While the finger pointing in Philadelphia offers a compelling example of the dysfunction possible under the Articles of Confederation, it becomes even more telling in the context of the extreme violence that was consuming Georgia's frontier counties. Now twice-abandoned by the federal government, the second year of the war brought to many Georgians more devastation than the first. Most frontier counties effectively emptied of settlers. By January, Creeks were reportedly "victorious in every quarter," going so far as to drive settlers off the Cumberland River and, according to one report, north over the Ohio River. The trader John Leslie, operating for the Spanish out of Pensacola and Mobile, confirmed these reports to Governor Vincente Manuel de Zéspedes in St. Augustine. Creek successes "over the boasters of Georgia" were more than they ever could have hoped, and "will convince people, they are the braver men, than some are willing to allow." Georgia accounts reveal much of the same, despite being couched in decidedly different language. According to Governor George Handley, a "great number" of settlers had lately "been killed & cruelly mangled, their houses burnt & stock drove away with every other depredation that cruelty could suggest."⁴¹

The repeated inability of Georgia legislators to secure aid from neighboring states left the job of defense entirely to the state's militias, and it was clear they were not up to the task. In exposed Washington and Burke Counties, militia patrols had to turn back because of a lack of ammunition and food.⁴² "We are left in this quarter in a defenceless situation," a militiaman wrote, with "neither arm, ammunition, or man, and without which we cannot attempt to tend the little land we have opened." Meanwhile, closer to the seacoast, "the bravest of Liberty" were being "worked down—& absolutely despondent," wrote James Jackson to the governor. Settlements in the newest western counties, many of which were the product of the recent state treaties with Creeks (like Wilkes) were obviously the hardest hit. According to William Few, the "alarming Reports from our unfortunate frontier inhabitants" made it obvious that if help did not come soon, "our frontier will be shortly entirely broke."⁴³

More worrisome to state authorities was the increased vulnerability of the coastal rivers and Sea Islands. According to one report early in 1788, "all the houses about Brunswick" had been burned or at least attacked. It was not simply a coastal town

but an important rice port; its attack marked the creep of the Oconee War onto the profitable rice plantations, which worried planters and state officials alike.⁴⁴ As early as March, residents on the Satilla River—close to the coast and near the border with Florida—were “making a stockade fort for their defense.” James Jackson, who commanded most of the militia in the region, was planning to again man Beard’s Bluff to keep Creek warriors from crossing the Altamaha and moving into heavily populated Liberty, Glynn, and Camden Counties. Less than a month later, however, warriors had already done “a deal of mischief and murder” in the latter two counties.⁴⁵

Whatever James Jackson had in mind for the state’s defenses was definitely not working; Creek war parties were now raiding into the counties with some of the state’s premier river plantations. These raids reveal the true extent of the Oconee War: it was clearly evolving into something more than a border dispute focused on frontier farms and confined to the westward counties. Creek war parties had penetrated far past the disputed Oconee lands and all the way across the Ogeechee and Altamaha Rivers. Thus began the expansion of the Oconee War into the neighborhood of Anthony Wayne’s Richmond and Kew plantations, darkening his own personal opinions of the war. Those worries were corroborated by several other distressing reports, supporting Wayne’s direst predictions. In addition to Glynn and Camden Counties was richly populated Liberty County, which had “suffered exceedingly, and some of its wealthy planters are nearly ruined,” complained one man in the summer of 1788. Governor Handley concurred. Planters were “in great consternation some of them moving their property,” and he feared “a total evacuation of that rich Country.” There was little hope that local militias could retaliate, which would “give great spirit to the Savages,” and plundering could go all the way to Frederica, on the coast.⁴⁶ It was from that area that James Jackson relayed the complaints of a Captain Cone, who was also threatening to abandon his land. If he went, Jackson warned, “there will not be a settler left to Savannah River.”⁴⁷

Even Chatham County (the seat of which was Savannah) was impacted. Wet weather had kept farmers “backward” in their harvests; then Indian alarms had obliged them to head out on patrols rather than oversee their plantations, which only made the situation worse. It was a tragedy, one plantation owner complained, “that our whole attention should be taken off from promising harvests & turnd to this disagreeable business.” The country was “very unsafe,” crops were going to ruin,

and the residents were requesting a blockhouse and men for their protection.⁴⁸ The Oconee War had come home to the Lowcountry.

Those threats were not lost on state authorities, who began to understand the true cost of the Oconee War. In the years after the Revolution, western territories were one of the few sources of revenue for many states, like Georgia. There authorities looked to raise critical funds through the sale of lands in newly opened counties like Wilkes, Washington, Greene, and Tallassee. Even by 1787, however, far fewer people were buying land in the new frontier counties because of warfare with the Creek, severely limiting that revenue stream. Even if prospective settlers stayed, the prospects of even the most enterprising farmers making anything of their lands were thin. What crops that had not been burned were rotting “for want of harvesting.” Forted up with neighbors or otherwise too scared to tend to the corn or wheat crops they had started, settlers found that there was little money to be made in a region once extolled as the finest in the South.⁴⁹

Again, however, far worse for state legislators was the havoc being wrought in the Lowcountry. Plantation owners were only just reestablishing in 1788—men like Anthony Wayne. Newly resettled plantations like his were not being developed and successful plantations were being abandoned. Both meant that rice was not being produced, which needed to happen if Georgians were to aspire, someday, to live in a financially solvent state. The effects of the Oconee War, in this respect, were clear by the spring of 1788. There was not enough rice being produced to provide the revenue for even the militia troops the state had authorized to protect what remained—even for just three months. “And you cannot but be sensible how deplorable must be our situation, should we be deprived of the means of supporting the few Troops on our frontiers, and our own Militia,” one man complained, “many of whom are scarcely able to support their families, during their absence.”⁵⁰ Many planters were abandoning their lands, either for Savannah or Charleston or for the more remote and better defended islands. Those reports reflected the worst fears of men like Anthony Wayne—the profitable Georgia Lowcountry was being abandoned.⁵¹

By that time state depredation lists were growing large. Eventually, over one hundred settlers were reported as killed or badly wounded. Another one hundred slaves were reported as killed or gone, scores of homes and other buildings had been burned, and innumerable hogs, horses, and cattle had been killed or pilfered.

While those numbers reflect a death rate much lower than in the Midwest, the list of burned properties was still astronomical, and included some of the richest Lowcountry properties in the Southeast. The state could not raise money, could not defend its citizenry, and no one at the national level was interested in helping.

Creek successes had also softened the state's confrontational posture considerably. Even then, however, American mediators had a great deal of work ahead of them. The Oconee War had been a tremendous success as far as Creeks were concerned, and influential Creeks like Alexander McGillivray were not going to be interested in compromising with the state for much of anything. "Georgians being now fully convinced of our superiority in the field," McGillivray declared, "will no longer persist in the folly of encouraging [*sic*] a scheme of encroachment." Other chiefs shared in the confidence. Georgians were disposed to a war of words, rather than the "more manly decision of arms." Sooner or later, they were destined to "find themselves mistaken, they will find that we are not to be bullied into their measures so easily as they may flatter themselves."⁵²

The American diplomatic failures that soon followed also reflected high Creek confidence. Congress's plan for superintendents had been and continued to be, in effect, useless. Creek leaders declared they would settle for nothing less than the complete abrogation by the state of Georgia of all three of its pretended treaties, a tough proposition for any American negotiator to consider. But one of the congressional commissioners was also George Mathews. Mathews had served as Georgia's governor during some of Oconee War's darkest days and owned land in two separate frontier counties; demands made by Creeks for Georgians to give up those counties would have been nothing less than maddening to him. There was absolutely no way he, whether officially authorized to do so by Congress or not, would consider a deal to end violent Creek raids against farming families—his own citizens—by kicking them out of their homes and relinquishing half of Georgia's claimed territory. Plenty of Georgia citizens clearly agreed. When the commissioners toyed with the idea of keeping settlers off any lands that had not been ceded by the whole Creek people, the backlash was immediate. The potential loss of that land was "what they cannot relish & which added to other injuries and insults." Citizens would march to war rather than relent. General James Jackson pleaded to see to the "innocent & unfortunate Citizens redressed. -- a treaty, would be a treaty of iniquity without it."⁵³

The continued impasse eventually brought both Georgia legislators and congressmen to the new federal Constitution, which was being debated by delegates in Philadelphia. There are relatively few Georgia sources that connect local acceptance of the Constitution to the Oconee War directly. To one unnamed commentator, however, the Constitution's popularity in the state seemed nearly universal. The legislature was at that time at Augusta "on account of an Indian war," and he was sure "but they will adopt the measures recommended by Congress and the Convention." Abraham Baldwin, then far to the north on family business, penned a friend that "my anxiety for our little state is much increased by our late accounts," among which were fresh reports of the Creek depredations. "Perhaps these internal commotions," he suggested, "will accelerate their determination on the great political question." Of a like mind was Joseph Clay, a merchant in Savannah, who stated the importance of the Oconee War in unambiguous terms. The war had already killed plenty of people, he wrote John Pierce, and if it continued much longer "it must be attended with the most ruinous consequences to this state." Although the federal government's newly proposed powers alarmed him, of the "two evils we must choose the least. Under such a government we should have avoided this great evil, an Indian war."⁵⁴

Then there was Anthony Wayne, struggling to establish himself as a rice planter along Georgia's coast. He spoke about the Constitution several times, and it was clear to him that it would improve the circumstances for planters in precarious positions like his. Wayne, while observing neighboring planters abandon their lands late in 1787, was already nervously anticipating a time when "the Federal Constitution was in Operation." The Creek troubles would be made an "immediate Continental business" then, which he correctly foresaw as including a federal army presence along the border, which he hoped would put an end to "Indian Depredation in the future." By July 1788, he was anxious that "a permanent peace may be effected with the Creek nation," providing much needed security "to the persons & property of the inhabitants" and bringing the region's rice plantations "once more into demand."⁵⁵

Congressional delegates in Philadelphia offered by far the freest and most open criticism of the situation in Georgia. First were complaints about how inadequate government—at both the state and federal level—had led to such a crisis. Not only was Georgia "much distressed by the Indians," but for John Jay much of the fault lay with the state. Echoing previous criticism from Congress, the state's

embarrassments resulted “from want of a proper government to guard good faith, and punish violations of it.” Jay would later elaborate on state indiscretions in *Federalist* no. 3. In his argument for one “good national government” as a protection against the violence—legitimate or not—that frequently led to war, Jay argued that such violence was “more frequently caused by the passions and interests of a part than of the whole; of one or two States than of the Union.” For Jay, “not a single Indian war has yet been occasioned by aggressions of the present federal government, feeble as it is; but there are several instances of Indian hostilities having been provoked by the improper conduct of individual States, who, either unable or unwilling to restrain or punish offenses, have given occasion to the slaughter of many innocent inhabitants.” Although he did not name the state directly, Georgia was clearly on Jay’s mind. James Madison, to an extent, must also have been thinking of Georgia when he penned *Federalist* no. 42. Although he was referring specifically to issues of trade and commerce he, too, was grappling with the complicated and conflicting issues of Indian, state, and federal sovereignty that were at the heart of the Oconee War. It was one of the defining failures of the current government, he argued, when the Articles of Confederation “have inconsiderately endeavored to accomplish impossibilities; to reconcile a partial sovereignty in the Union, with complete sovereignty in the States; to subvert a mathematical axiom, by taking away a part, and letting the whole remain.”⁵⁶

Jay and Madison were not the only critics making their displeasure about Georgia known from Philadelphia. Pointing to reports that residents were fortifying Savannah, another added that “if we are to be much longer unblessed with an efficient national government,” without money or credit, “I fear we shall become contemptible even in the eyes of savages themselves.” And as George Washington was sure, “the disturbances in Georgia will or at least ought to show the people of it the propriety of a strict union and the necessity there is for a general government.” Indeed, it was Washington who spoke in perhaps the frankest terms of all about Georgia’s troubles. Writing from Mount Vernon, he declared that if a state as weak as Georgia, “with powerful tribes of Indians in its rear and the Spaniards on its flank, do not incline to embrace a strong *general* government, there must, I should think be either wickedness or insanity in their conduct.”⁵⁷

These criticisms were both accurate and prophetic: Georgia was the first southern state to ratify the Constitution. For a small state with so much potential for western expansion, it is impossible to explain the popularity of the Constitution there

without mentioning the Oconee War. As one outside commentator explained, “attacked by Indians,” it was in the state’s interest “to appear federally inclined in order to obtain help from the present Union.” State authorities were also quick to begin soliciting federal aid after the ratification of the Constitution. As early as February, George Handley was pleading for help to the governor of South Carolina and others because Georgians were “almost daily murdered.” To “prevent if possible the further effusion of blood & hostilities” they needed to quickly aid the federal commissioners in whatever way they could. Handley begged Richard Winn, then the superintendent of Indian affairs to Congress, to “procure at least the suspension of hostilities.” The distressed situation of the state’s settlers required “immediate & effectual measures being taken.” Nearby South Carolina representatives “anxiously” waited for word on federal negotiations as well, which they hoped would “have the happy effect of stopping the farther Effusion of Blood & establishing a lasting peace.”⁵⁸

What Georgia state authorities got with the incoming Washington administration however (particularly from Secretary of War Henry Knox), was far less than what



This 1795 map shows the limits of Georgia, including the highly contested northern counties of Franklin, Wilkes, Greene, and Washington. Also listed at the bottom is the unsuccessful Tallassee Co., “as claimed by the State of Georgia prior to the Treaty of New York.” *Library of Congress.*

they had probably hoped. Although Georgians continued to lobby aggressively for a military campaign against the Creek people, Washington and Knox had other ideas. With Native-settler violence intensifying in the Northwest Territory and a military intervention there seemingly inevitable, the administration began discussing the possibility of raising the country's first army. Neither Washington nor Knox was interested in beginning a campaign in Georgia against a much larger Creek people, one that would potentially draw direct Spanish involvement. While Knox believed the "Old Northwest" problem would be the first to test the government's military might, the Oconee War would test its ability to impose its diplomatic will over antagonistic state interests. With stronger language in the newly ratified Constitution that theoretically placed Indian affairs more squarely under federal jurisdiction, Knox approved a new conference to be held at the Rock Landing, on the Oconee River. He made sure that a competent federal commission—not a state one—would arrange and conduct the negotiation.⁵⁹

Despite enthusiasm from both Americans and Creeks, Rock Landing proved a tremendous disappointment, which threatened to derail Knox's plans and plunge the region back into violence. The commission that arrived, despite being picked at least partially by George Washington himself, stunned the Creek delegation by proposing a federal treaty that was, in substance, basically identical to the state treaties that preceded it. The Creek delegation, which numbered in the hundreds, responded by simply leaving in the middle of the night. The failure of the conference drew ferocious criticism from American authorities—particularly of Alexander McGillivray, who was supposed to be brokering the conference. Knox warned McGillivray that the federal government would eventually support Georgia militarily if Creek raiding continued, and pressed him to make a peace deal. Much of that warning, of course, was a bluff: no more prepared for a southern offensive than before, there was little chance of an American army marching into Creek—and Spanish—territory to avenge an overextended state of Georgia. Luckily for Knox it never came to that. Interested in a deal himself and eager for the opportunity to negotiate with Americans without outside interference, McGillivray never called Knox's bluff. Instead, McGillivray and a handpicked delegation were soon en route to New York to meet with the Washington administration directly.⁶⁰

What developed in New York turned out to be the first Washington administration treaty to be approved by the United States Senate. On its face, the agreement (which affirmed the Oconee and Altamaha Rivers as Georgia's western boundary, rather than

the Ogeechee) appeared to favor the state's interests, yet New York was also definitely a compromise.⁶¹ Territorially, for example, the treaty returned to the Creek people the debated "Tallassee County," south of the Altamaha. Georgia had taken that strip of land in earlier treaties, and by New York much of it had already been surveyed and sold to settlers. No other treaty during the era—indeed, very few in the history of Native-American relations—would return lands to Native peoples. It certainly haunted Georgia authorities, who were still bitter about the deal years later.⁶²

The treaty also set a precedent that went far beyond simply ending the Oconee War. Its success moved Creek affairs from the jurisdiction of the state and placed them firmly under the protection of the federal government, which was exactly what Knox had envisioned. The Treaty of New York established the Washington administration's Federalist vision for Indian affairs. It also defined the federal government's role in Native relations and provided for a stable and hopefully peaceful Southeast. No longer would a state like Georgia negotiate with Natives directly. If state authorities wanted to talk to Natives, they would go through federal intermediaries. Indeed, several of the key treaty provisions that Knox had negotiated personally came at Georgia's expense. Not only did the treaty recognize and guarantee all Creek lands against future encroachment, but Creeks also authorized Knox to construct military posts along the boundary line. Federal troops, not state ones, would man these posts, which were designed to protect Creek sovereignty as well as Georgia settlers. To further separate Creeks and Georgians, those troops would operate in conjunction with a new trade and intercourse act passed around the same time. This law sought to keep settlers and Natives from interacting with each other. Soon troop garrisons were at Coleraine, on the St. Mary's River, or Fort Fidius, along the Oconee River. By 1792, the region contained one of the largest assemblages of federal troops anywhere in the country. Creeks also authorized trading houses to be operated directly by the federal government. While designed ostensibly to counter the Spanish trading operations along the Gulf Coast, federal authorities also crafted the provision to minimize the influence of the risky and often predatory private trading outfits that operated at the state level.⁶³

All of these stipulations made for a very bittersweet deal for Georgians, many of whom made their disgust at the federal effort publicly known. The Treaty of New York, ultimately, was an important milestone in the imposition of the federal government into Native diplomacy. It marked the physical movement of

government onto the frontier, between Natives and state authorities. Federalists like Knox—although no friends of the Creek people—understood the importance of peace and stability, and they were willing to secure that peace by sacrificing core state interests. The model was soon repeated with the Cherokees in the 1791 Treaty of Holston. Although Cherokees did not get nearly as good a deal as the Creeks, many of the same provisions in that treaty irritated state and territorial officials, who once again felt shortchanged by federal action.⁶⁴

It was the violence and confusion of the Oconee War that opened the door for Knox's successful expansion of the federal government, punctuated by the signing of the Treaty of New York. From immediate postwar negotiations through debates over the Constitution, the Oconee War connects the chaos of the post-Revolution years to the beginning of the Federalist Era. The state of Georgia, flush with victory in the American Revolution, set the Oconee War in motion by treating with Creek Indians in increasingly unilateral and belligerent ways. Both the state's approach to Creek diplomacy and the bloodshed that ensued exposed the inability of the federal government to adequately manage Indian affairs, territorial expansion, and regional defense. Abandoned by the federal government and backed into a defensive corner by the war only years later, Georgia was in no condition to reject the Constitution, which threatened to remove the state's control over its own territorial future. And that, indeed, was exactly what happened in 1790.

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



NOTES

1. Paul David Nelson, *Anthony Wayne, Soldier of the Early Republic* (Bloomington, IN, 1985), 170, 174–176, 198–199
2. Anthony Wayne to Sharp Delany, October 7, 1788, box 3, in Anthony Wayne Papers, 1681–1913, M-398, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan; Anthony Wayne to Sharp Delany, December 5, 1788, Anthony Wayne Papers, box 3.
3. Scholarship on the Oconee War period in Georgia is new and developing. Two examples of recent scholarship include Joshua Haynes, *Patrolling the Border: Theft and Violence on the Creek–Georgia Frontier, 1770–1796* (Athens, GA, 2018); and Watson W. Jennison, *Cultivating Race: The Expansion of Slavery in Georgia, 1750–1860* (Lexington, KY, 2012). There is, unfortunately, very little older scholarship on the period and, in fact, older studies tend to gloss over the period altogether. See, for example, Kenneth Coleman, *The American Revolution in Georgia, 1763–1789* (Athens, GA, 1958). Even studies that do focus on the immediate war years do not describe the Oconee War as such. For this approach, see Randolph C. Downes, “Creek–American Relations, 1782–1790,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 21 (June 1937): 142–84.
4. For a modern interpretation of the Articles of Confederation period, see George William Can Cleve, *We Have Not a Government: The Articles of Confederation and the Road to the Constitution* (Chicago, 2017). Excellent studies that are shifting historical understanding of the period back to the South include Kristofer Ray, *Before the Volunteer State: New Thoughts on Early Tennessee, 1540–1800* (Knoxville, TN, 2015); Kevin T. Barksdale, *The Lost State of Franklin: America’s First Secession* (Lexington, KY, 2008); and Walter T. Durham, *Before Tennessee: The Southwest Territory, 1790–1796* (Piney Flats, TN, 1990). One of the best studies of Indian affairs during the period is still Reginald Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy, 1783–1812* (Norman, OK, 1967). More recent and excellent studies that are bringing federal–Native relations back to the center of the Articles period include Leonard J. Sadosky, *Revolutionary Negotiations: Indians, Empires, and Diplomats in the Founding of America* (Charlottesville, VA, 2009); David Andrew Nichols, *Red Gentlemen & White Savages: Indians, Federalists, and the Search for Order on the American Frontier* (Charlottesville, VA, 2008).
5. By the Honorable Nathan Brownson..., October 5, 1781, Trust Company of Georgia Collection, MSS 294, box 2, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University; “St. John’s,” September 7, 1783, item 1, in Lachlan McIntosh, Jr. Papers, MS 525, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah; Telfair, Jones, and Few to Martin, July 13, 1782, Trust Company of Georgia Collection, box 2; Anthony Wayne to Nathanael Greene, February 28, 1782, in Richard K Showman, ed., *The Papers of Nathanael Greene* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1976–2005), 10:423. For studies of the American Revolution in the southern colonies, see Jim Piecuch, *Three Peoples, One King: Loyalists, Indians, and Slaves in the Revolutionary South, 1775–1782* (Columbia, SC, 2008); Ronald Hoffman, Thad W. Tate, and Peter J. Albert, eds. *An Uncivil War: The Southern Backcountry during the American Revolution* (Charlottesville, VA, 1985); George R. Lampugh, “Farewell to the Revolution: Georgia in 1785,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 56 (Fall 1972): 387–403.
6. The role of Creeks in the American Revolution is covered extensively in Haynes, *Patrolling the Border*; Kevin Kokomoor, *Of One Mind and of One Government: The Rise and Fall of the Creek Nation in the Early Republic* (Lincoln, NE, 2018); Kevin Kokomoor, “‘Burning & Destroying All Before Them’: Creeks and Seminoles on Georgia’s Revolutionary Frontier” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 98 (Winter 2014): 300–40; Jim Piecuch, *Three Peoples*; Edward Cashin, *The King’s Ranger: Thomas Brown and the American Revolution on the Southern Frontier* (Athens, GA, 1989); David H. Corkran, *The Creek Frontier, 1540–1783* (Norman, OK, 1967). For specific Georgia state talks that demonstrated the state’s immediate postwar approach, see “Friends and

Brothers,” January 11, 1782, in John Martin, “Official Letters of Governor John Martin, 1782–1783,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 1 (1917): 282–85; Martin to the Tallassee King and Head Men..., July 19, 1782, “Official Letters of Governor John Martin, 1782–1783,” 313–15; and “A Talk sent by his honor the Governor and beloved men of Georgia,” in Louise F. Hayes, ed., *Indian Treaties Cessions of Land in Georgia, 1705–1837*, Unpublished Typescript, 1941, in Georgia Department of Archives and History, Morrow, GA, 112–14. (Hereafter cited as *Indian Treaties*.)

7. Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*; Sadosky, *Revolutionary Negotiations*; and Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (Cambridge, England, 1995).

8. The military careers of several of these men, including Elbert and Walton, are covered extensively in Searcy, *The Georgia-Florida Contest*. See also, Kokomoor, “Burning & Destroying.”

9. Elijah Clarke to George Mathews, April 13, 1787, in Louise F Hayes, ed., *Creek Indian Letters: Letters Talks and Treaties, 1705–1839*, in *Four Parts* (Unpublished Typescript, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Morrow, 1939), 1:148–49; Melvin Herndon, “George Mathews, Frontier Patriot,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 77 (July 1969): 322. The “Ceded Lands” debacle is covered in Haynes, *Patrolling the Border*; Kokomoor, *Of One Mind*; and John T. Juricek, *Endgame for Empire: British-Creek Relations in Georgia and Vicinity, 1763–1776* (Gainesville, FL, 2015); Nelson, *Anthony Wayne*, 170.

10. “Wednesday, July 18, 1787,” in *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789*, ed., Worthington C. Ford, et al. (Washington, DC, 1904–37), 33:365–68. (Hereafter cited as *Journals*); Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*, 14–15, 27; Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York, 2008), 291–92.

11. For these titles, see Daniel McMurphy to John Martin, August 22, 1782, in *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:30–32; Richard Henderson to John Martin, September 23, 1782, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:33; Richard Henderson to John Martin, September 27, 1782, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:34.

12. See, for instance, Joseph Clay to Henry Laurens, March 15, 1784, in Philip M. Hamer, ed., *The Papers of Henry Laurens* (Columbia, SC, 1969–2003), 16:419; Extract from the minutes..., March 23, 1784, MS 1170, box 37, folder 14, Telamon Cuyler Collection, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia, Athens. (Hereafter cited as Telamon Cuyler); Downes, “Creek-American Relations, 1782–1790,” 143–46

13. This interpretation of Creek political culture, autonomy and plurality, and community consent is taken from Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733–1816* (Cambridge, England, 1999), 11–37; Kokomoor, *Of One Mind*, 69–104; Haynes, *Patrolling the Border*, 84–104

14. Creek culture focused on plurality, consent, and inclusivity. Cultural forces like real and fictive kinship networks, gift-giving practices, and ceremonies like the Green Corn dance bound Creeks together as one people. Otherwise, politically and economically Creek communities functioned autonomously and headmen exercised little coercive control, either in their communities or outside of them. See Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and their World* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003); and Saunt, *A New Order of Things*. For an outline of the Spanish resurgence in the Southeast after the Revolution, see Weber, *The Spanish Frontier*, 282–83; and Jane M. Berry, “The Indian Policy of Spain in the Southwest 1783–1795,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 3 (March 1917): 462–77

15. For the treaty, see Alexander McGillivray to Durouzeaux, September 12, 1785, in *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:94–95; Alexander McGillivray to Arturo O’Neill, February 10, 1786, in John Walton Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks* (Norman, OK, 1938), 102–3. (Hereafter cited *McGillivray*.); Alexander McGillivray to Esteban Miró, May 1, 1786, *McGillivray*, 106–7; Downes, “Creek-American Relations, 1782–1790,” 146–51. For the Georgia response, see “In General Assembly, February 11, 1786,” in *American State Papers: Indian Affairs* (2 volumes, Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1832–1861), 2: 17. (Hereafter cited *American State Papers*.)
16. Timothy Barnard to Edward Telfair, August 14, 1786, in Louise F Hayes, ed., *Letters of Timothy Barnard* (Unpublished Typescript, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Morrow, 1939), 59–61.
17. Thomas D. Watson, “Strivings for Sovereignty: Alexander McGillivray, Creek Warfare, and Diplomacy, 1783–1790,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 58 (1980): 405. For the various accounts of the raiding over the course of May, see J. Clements to Edward Telfair, May 6, 1786, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:103; Galphin to J. Clements, May 6, 1786, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:104; Fort to Edward Telfair, May 14, 1786, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:105; J. Clements to Edward Telfair, May 14, 1786, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:106; Cleveland, Walton, and Cleveland to Edward Telfair, May 15, 1786, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:107; Thompson to Governor and Executive Council, May 17, 1786, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:108; Daniel McMurphy to Arturo O’Neill, July 11, 1786, *McGillivray*, 118–20.
18. For the design and proceedings at Shoulderbone, see “A Talk to the Kings, Headmen, and Warriors October 21, 1786,” Telamon Cuyler, box 77, folder 22; “A Talk Delivered by the Kings, Headmen, and Warriors, October 22, 1786,” Telamon Cuyler, box 77, folder 22; “A Talk Delivered to the Kings, Headmen, and Warriors, October 23, 1786,” Telamon Cuyler, box 77, folder 22. For the army in particular and for other stipulations, see E.T. to James, August 27, 1786, in “Some Official Letters of Governor Edward Telfair,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 1 (1917): 149–50; and E.T. to James, August 27, 1786, in Louise F Hayes, ed., *Force Transcripts: Georgia Records Council Correspondence, 1782–1789* (Unpublished Typescript, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Morrow, 1938), 69–70. (Hereafter cited *Force Transcripts*.) For other later accounts, see Galphin to the Honorable Board of Commissioners, October 26, 1786, Telamon Cuyler, box 78, folder 4; E.T. to John Twiggs, October 11, 1786, *Force Transcripts*, 73; Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745–1815* (Baltimore, 1992), 96–99; Board of Commissioners, November 8, 1786, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:145–46; Downes, “Creek-American Relations, 1782–1790,” 152–57; and Watson, “Strivings for Sovereignty,” 405–6.
19. For McGillivray’s plans on the conference, see [Telfair] to Durouzeaux, May 30, 1786, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:110–11; Galphin to the Honorable Board of Commissioners, October 26, 1786, Telamon Cuyler, box 78, folder 4; Alexander McGillivray to Arturo O’Neill, October 30, 1786, *McGillivray*, 135; Davenport to Governor of Georgia, November 1, 1786, *Telamon Cuyler*, box 40A, folder Telfair 29; “Talk of the Tallassee King, April 11, 1787,” *Letters of Timothy Barnard*, 73–75; Affidavit of Richard Call, October 4, 1789, *Telamon Cuyler*, box 78, folder 21; Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 98; Downes, “Creek-American Relations, 1782–1790,” 155–58. Scholars have long pointed to this period as the most important one for Alexander McGillivray, who was able to use widespread anti-Georgia sentiment among most Creek communities and his family’s trade relationships to amass considerable power and influence in the Southeast. This rise is well documented in Watson, “Strivings for Sovereignty,” 400–14; J. Leitch Wright Jr., “Creek-American Treaty of 1790: Alexander McGillivray and the Diplomacy of the Old Southwest,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (December, 1967): 379–400; Lawrence Kin-

- naird, “International Rivalry in the Creek Country: Part I. The Ascendancy of Alexander McGillivray, 1783–1789,” *Florida Historical Society Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (October 1931): 59–85; and Arthur Preston Whitaker, “Alexander McGillivray, 1789–1793,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 5, no. 3 (1928): 289–309.
20. Timothy Barnard to . . . , October 17, 1786, *Letters of Timothy Barnard*, 66–69; Zéspedes to Alexander McGillivray, May 22, 1786, *McGillivray*, 112–13. For Spanish discussions about shipping supplies, see Alexander McGillivray to William Panton, August 3, 1786, *McGillivray*, 123; Alexander McGillivray to Zéspedes, August 3, 1786, *McGillivray*, 124–25; and Alexander McGillivray to Arturo O’Neill, October 4, 1786, *McGillivray*, 132. For American accounts, see Woods to Edward Telfair, January 14, 1787, Telamon Cuyler, box 77, folder 30; and Barnard to Matthews, May 1, 1787, *Telamon Cuyler*, box 1, folder 11; Downes, “Creek-American Relations, 1782–1790,” 160.
21. George Mathews to Elijah Clark, April 17, 1787, Force Transcripts, 95; George Mathews to James Jackson, April 18, 1787, Force Transcripts, 96; John Sevier to George Mathews, March 3, 1787, *Telamon Cuyler*, box 81, folder 21; George Mathews to Timothy Barnard, August 7, 1787, *Letters of Timothy Barnard*, 70–71. For general interest in the war, see Stephens to Read, July 28, 1786, box 3, folder 41, in the Felix Hargrett Papers, MS 2311, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia, Athens; Alexander McGillivray to Spanish Officials, July 10, 1785, *McGillivray*, 90–93; and Downes, “Creek-American Relations, 1782–1790,” 155–58.
22. This argument is presented expertly in Haynes, *Patrolling the Border*.
23. Martin Palmer Deposition, *Indian Depredations*, 1, pt. 1:133–34; Sarah Summerlin Deposition, *Indian Depredations*, 1, pt. 1:141–42.
24. Joel Moore Deposition, *Indian Depredations*, 1, pt. 1:148–49; The United States to Martin Johnson, *Indian Depredations*, 1, pt. 1:153; Martin Johnson Depredation, *Indian Depredations*, 1, pt. 1:153–54; Martha Cureton Deposition, *Indian Depredations*, 1, pt. 1:155–56. For more related correspondence, see Elijah Clark to Governor of Georgia, April 14, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 3; James Jackson to Meriwether, April 4, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 3; James Jackson to George Handley, April 11, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 3. For attacks, see Lanier to James Jackson, February 14, 1788, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:167; Israel Bird to James Jackson, February 14, 1788, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:168; Stewart to Maxwell, September 26, 1788, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:181–82; Maxwell to James Jackson, September 27, 1788, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:182–84.
25. John Gilbert Deposition, *Indian Depredations*, 1, pt. 2:282; Elijah Clark to George Mathews, April 13, 1787, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:148–49; Alexander McGillivray to Arturo O’Neill, July 10, 1787, *McGillivray*, 155–56; Habersham to McIntosh, June 30, 1787, Felix Hargrett Papers, box 2, folder 33; Cocke to George Mathews, June 25, 1787, Telamon Cuyler, box 40A, folder “Mathews Letters.”
26. “A Talk to the Kings, Headmen, and Warriors. . . , October 21, 1786,” Telamon Cuyler, box 77, folder 22; George Mathews to Few and Pierce, April 24, 1787, in *Governor’s Letter Book, October 20 1786–May 31 1789*, ed. Louise F Hayes (Unpublished Typescript, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Morrow. Hereafter cited *Governor’s Letter Book*), 54.
27. Sadosky, *Revolutionary Negotiations*, 119–20; Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*, 14–15; Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 288–91; Downes, “Creek-American Relations, 1782–1790,” 147–48; Prucha, *American Indian Policy*, 36–37.
28. Wednesday, June 28, 1786, *Journals*, 30:369–72; Monday, July 24, 1786, *Journals*, 30:424–25;

Thursday, July 26, 1787, *Journals*, 33: 407–8; Friday, August 3, 1787, *Journals*, 33:454–62.

29. For various examples of Georgia Legislatures to reach out, see “Extract of a letter to Telfair..., September 30, 1786,” Telamon Cuyler, box 5, folder 2; E.T. to His Excellency the Governor of Virginia, May 27, 1786, Force Transcripts, 63; To Mr. Robert Dixon, May 27, 1786, Force Transcripts, 64; To His Excellency William Moultrie, May 30, 1786, Force Transcripts, 64; Martin to Edward Telfair, July 3, 1786, Telamon Cuyler, 1:127; George Elholm to Walton, October 23, 1787, Telamon Cuyler, box 5, folder 2; George Elholm to George Mathews, November 1, 1787, Telamon Cuyler, box 83, folder 7; George Mathews to George Elholm, November 5, 1787, Telamon Cuyler, box 83, folder 7; George Mathews to Timothy Barnard, August 17, 1787, Force Transcripts, 103–4; and G.M. to Cocke, November 8, 1787, *Governor’s Letter Book*, 123; Mathews’s correspondence with Sevier is particularly telling. See George Mathews to John Sevier, August 9, 1787, *Governor’s Letter Book*, 71–72; George Mathews to John Sevier, October 10, 1787, in *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, ed., Jensen Merrill (Madison, WI, 1976), 3:222. (Hereafter cited as *Documentary History*.)

30. Jared Irwin to George Mathews, June 11, 1787, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:156; Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 51–52.

31. Hillhouse to George Mathews, October 26, 1787, in *Georgia Military Affairs*, ed., J. E. Hayes (Unpublished Typescript, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Morrow) 1:164; Extract of a Letter from Augusta, October 15, 1787, *Documentary History*, 3:223; Cessna to the Governor and Executive Council, April 3, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 2.

32. Extract of a letter from Wm. McIntosh to Col. J. McIntosh, March 25, 1788, enclosed in James Jackson to George Handley, March 28, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 3; James Jackson to Meriwether, April 4, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 3; Maxwell to James Jackson, March 29, 1788, enclosed in James Jackson to Meriwether, April 4, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 3; N.A., St. Simons, April 1, 1788, enclosed in James Jackson to George Handley, April 11, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 3.

33. Habersham to McIntosh, June 30, 1787, Felix Hargrett Papers, box 2, folder 33; Cunningham to George Mathews, September 30, 1787, Telamon Cuyler, box 40A, folder “Mathews Letters”; In Council, October 5, 1787, *EM, 1786–1788*, 323; Crawford to Jared Irwin, March 3, 1788, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:170; John Twiggs to Governor, March 4, 1788, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:171.

34. Ross to James Jackson, March 10, 1789, *Georgia Military Affairs*, 1:233; Jared Irwin to Governor, March 6, 1788, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:172; Crawford to Jared Irwin, March 4, 178[8], *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:170.

35. Elijah Clark to George Mathews, April 13, 1787, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:148–49; Thompson to Governor, May 17, 1786, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:108; Weed and Semple to Telfair, June 19, 1786, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:120–23.

36. George Mathews to the Speaker of the House of Assembly, October 18, 1787, *Governor’s Letter Book*, 109–12. Also in George Mathews to the Speaker of the Assembly, October 18, 1787, *Documentary History*, 3:225

37. George Mathews to John Sevier, October 10, 1787, *Documentary History*, 3:222; Extract of a Letter from Augusta, October 15, 1787, *Documentary History*, 3:223; George Mathews to Pierce, October 16, 1787, *Documentary History*, 3:224; Jay to Jefferson, November 3, 1787, *Documentary History*, 3:261; Gilman

to Sullivan, November 7, 1787, *Documentary History*, 3:261–62; Downes, “Creek–American Relations, 1782–1790,” 161–64

38. Habersham to Habersham, October 22, 1787, *Documentary History*, 3: 226–27; George Mathews to His Excellency the President Congress, November 15, 1787, *Governor’s Letter Book*, 128–30; Thomson to Huntington, December 27, 1787, in Paul H. Smith, ed., *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774–1789* (Washington, DC, 1976–2000) 24:599. (Hereafter cited as *Letters of Delegates*.)

39. Friday, August 3, 1787, *Journals*, 33:454–62.

40. Ibid.; Friday, October 26, 1787, *Journals*, 33:707–11; Thomson to Certain States, October 27, 1787, *Letters of Delegates*, 24:527; Prucha, *American Indian Policy*, 37–39.

41. Alexander McGillivray to Zéspedes, January 5, 1788, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 165–66; Alexander McGillivray to Esteban Miró, January 10, 1788, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 167; Leslie to Zéspedes, January 28, 1788, in the East Florida Papers, film 55–A, roll 44, P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville; George Handley to Richard Winn, March 31, 1788, *Force Transcripts*, 143–44.

42. J. Clements to Edward Telfair, May 6, 1786, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:104; Fort to Edward Telfair, May 14, 1786, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:105; J. Clements to Edward Telfair, May 14, 1786, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:106; Jared Irwin to George Mathews, June 11, 1787, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:156; John Twiggs to Governor, March 4, 1788, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:171; Jared Irwin to the Governor, March 6, 1788, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:172.

43. Wood to the Governor, March 14, 1788, in the John Valence Bevan Papers, MS 525, folder 10, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah; James Jackson to the Governor, October 3, 1788, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:187–88; Few to George Handley, April 1, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 3.

44. N.A. to Governor, n.d., 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 1; Extract of a letter from Wm. McIntosh to Col. J. McIntosh, March 25, 1788, enclosed in James Jackson to George Handley, March 28, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 3; James Jackson to Meriwether, April 4, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 3; Maxwell to James Jackson, March 29, 1788, enclosed in James Jackson to Meriwether, April 4, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 3.

45. Weed and Semple to Telfair, June 19, 1786, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:120–23; James Jackson to George Handley, March 28, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 3; Extract of a letter from Wm. McIntosh to Col. J. McIntosh, March 25, 1788, enclosed in James Jackson to George Handley, March 28, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 3.

46. N.A. to James Jackson, May 16, 1788, enclosed in Weed, Maxwell, and Dunwoody to Jackson, April 20 to May 27, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 83, folder 7; George Handley to George Mathews, April 2, 1788, *Governor’s Letter Book*, 163–64.

47. James Jackson to George Handley, March 28, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 3; James Jackson to Meriwether, April 4, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 3; John Twiggs to Governor of Georgia, March 28, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 3.

48. Berrien to James Jackson, September 30, 1788, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:185–86.

49. Maxwell to James Jackson, September 27, 1788, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:182–84; James Jackson to Lane, March 28, 1788; and extract of a letter from Capt. Wm. McIntosh to Col. J. McIntosh, March 25, 1788, both enclosed in James Jackson to George Handley, March 28, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 3; Cessna to the Governor and Executive Council, April 3, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 41, folder 2.

50. N.A. to James Jackson, May 27, 1788, enclosed in Weed, Maxwell, and Dunwoody to Jackson, April 20 to May 27, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 83, folder 7.

51. George Handley to George Mathews, April 2, 1788, *Governor's Letter Book*, 163–64; James Jackson to George Handley, June 2, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 83, folder 7.

52. Winn, Pickens, and Mathews to McGillivray, November 28, 1788, *American State Papers*, 1:30; Return of depredations committed by the Creek Indians..., *American State Papers*, 1:77, *Indian Depredations, 1787–1825*, ed., Louise F. Hayes (Unpublished Typescript, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Morrow), 4:1. (Hereafter cited *Indian Depredations*.) Additional lists are also available in *Indian Depredations*, 1: pt. 2, 407–55, 501–56; Alexander McGillivray to Esteban Miró, March 15, 1788, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 171; Alexander McGillivray to Zéspedes, January 5, 1787, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 141–42.

53. George Handley to O'Neal, November 7, 1787, Force Transcripts, 135–36; George Handley to John Sevier, February 19, 1788, *Governor's Letter Book*, 137–39; Alexander McGillivray to Esteban Miró, March 15, 1788, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 171; Daniel McMurphy to Edward Telfair, July 30, 1786, *Creek Indian Letters*, 1:129–32; James Jackson to George Handley, June 2, 1788, Telamon Cuyler, box 83, folder 7.

54. Habersham to Habersham, October 17, 1787, *Documentary History*, 3:231–32; Extract of a Letter from Georgia, October 20, 1787, *Documentary History*, 3:233; Clay to Pierce, October 17, 1787, *Documentary History*, 3:232

55. Anthony Wayne to Delany, May 14, 1788, Anthony Wayne Papers, box 3; Anthony Wayne to Mathews and Fishbourne, November 5, 1788, Anthony Wayne Papers, box 3; Anthony Wayne to Sharp Delany, July 4, 1788, Anthony Wayne Papers, box 3.

56. Jay to Jefferson, November 3, 1787, *Documentary History*, 3:261; *Federalist*, essays numbers 3 and 42, accessed online at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/fed.asp.

57. Gilman to Sullivan, November 7, 1787, *Documentary History*, 3:262; George Washington to James Madison, December 7, 1787, *Documentary History*, 3:262; George Washington to Powel, January 18, 1788, *Documentary History*, 3:263; and George Washington to Henry Knox, January 10, 1788, *Documentary History*, 3:2.

58. G.J.A. Ducher to Comte de la Luzerne, February 2, 1788, *Documentary History*, 3:283; George Handley to Gov. of S. Carolina, February 19, 1788, Force Transcripts, 136–37; George Handley to Baldwin, March 24, 1788, *Governor's Letter Book*, 151–53; Pickens and Matthews to McGillivray, March 29, 1788, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 174–75; George Handley to Genl Pickens, March 31, 1788, Force Transcripts, 142–43; George Handley to Richard Winn, March 31, 1788, Force Transcripts, 143–44; George Handley to George Mathews, April 2, 1788, Force Transcripts, 144–45; South Carolina Delegates to Pinckney, June 21, 1788, *Letters of Delegates*, 25:128.

59. Knox's policies and the Federalist approach to Natives in general is laid out well in Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*; Sadosky, *Revolutionary Negotiations*; Nichols, *Red Gentlemen & White Savages*; and Randolph C. Downes, "Creek-American Relations, 1790–1795," *Journal of Southern History* 8 (August 1942): 350–54

60. For the collapse of the conference, see Humphreys to George Washington, September 21, 1789, in *The Papers of George Washington, Presidential Series*, ed., Dorothy Twoig (Charlottesville, VA, 1987–2011), 4:61–62; Alexander McGillivray to William Panton, October 8, 1789, *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 251; Alexander

McGillivray to the commissioners..., n.d., *American State Papers*, 1:74; Lincoln, Griffin, and Humphreys to Secretary of War, September 28, 1789, *American State Papers*, 1:76; Lincoln, Griffin, and Humphreys to Governor of Georgia, October 3, 1789, *American State Papers*, 1:76; Downes, "Creek-American Relations, 1782–1790," 174–80. For examples of the criticism of McGillivray, see Humphreys to George Washington, September 26, 1789, Twoig, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*, 4:86–89; Humphreys to George Washington, September 27, 1789, Twoig, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*, 4:91–95. Secretary of War to the President of the United States, January 4, 1790, *American State Papers*, 1:59–60; Henry Knox to George Washington, February 15, 1790, Twoig, ed. *The Papers of George Washington*, 5:140–42; Watson, "Strivings for Sovereignty," 410–13; Downes, "Creek-American Relations, 1782–1790," 179–83; and particularly J. Leitch Wright Jr., "Creek-American Treaty of 1790: Alexander McGillivray and the Diplomacy of the Old Southwest," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (December 1967): 385–89

61. Wright Jr. "Creek-American Treaty of 1790," 379–400.

62. Downes, "Creek-American Relations," 181–84; Wright Jr., "Creek-American Treaty of 1790." For Georgia anger in later years, see George Mathews to Pickering, April 16, 1795, *American State Papers*, 1:561

63. For one such troop count, see "Statement of Troops..., November 6, 1792," *American State Papers*, 1:318.

64. For state-level response to the Treaty of New York, see Jennison, *Cultivating Race*, 99–101. For the Treaty of Holston, see Durham, *Before Tennessee*, 54–60.

Copyright of Georgia Historical Quarterly is the property of Georgia Historical Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.