

GEORGE GALPHIN AND INDIAN-WHITE RELATIONS IN THE GEORGIA  
BACKCOUNTRY DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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## PREFACE

The history of Indian-white relations during the American Revolution is unusually complex. Before the Revolution the British developed an Indian policy which Indian superintendents and colonial governors attempted to implement in the Southeast as well as elsewhere in the colonies. However, this policy conflicted frequently with economic interests of Indian traders and backcountry settlers. After 1775 when these same Americans had an opportunity to formulate their own policy, new competing interests emerged. Backcountry settlers wanted to grab more Indian lands at the risk of war with the Indians, while traders wished to maintain peace along the frontier. Newly formed state governments attempted to solve this conflict diplomatically, and even the Continental Congress voiced its opinion by establishing Indian neutrality as an official goal.

The responsibility for implementing the first Indian policy of the United States devolved primarily upon commissioners and agents appointed by the Continental Congress and individual state legislatures. In many instances these "diplomats" were Indian traders who had been prominent in frontier affairs during the late colonial period. Some of these wartime "diplomats" were well educated for their day and had political experience; others were both poorly educated and inexperienced. But whatever their

qualifications, each of these men influenced Revolutionary events to some extent, and when the war ended, Congress drew on their collective experiences to formulate a more comprehensive Indian policy.

On the eve of the Revolution, Whig and Loyalist leaders in Georgia focused a great deal of attention on Indian affairs. Georgia, perhaps more than any other colony, had good reasons for expending much of her resources on frontier security. Not only were Indian-white relations in Georgia particularly poor in the late colonial period, but more than half of the colony's borders adjoined Creek or Cherokee lands, and nowhere was any settlement or settler more than one day's journey from Indian territory.

The most important backcountry "diplomat" who emerged in Georgia during the Revolution was George Galphin, and it is on his role in Georgia's Indian-white relations that this thesis focuses. Galphin, a planter, cattle rancher, merchant, mill operator, and slave owner at the time of the Revolution, first rose to prominence as an Indian trader. By 1775 he was middle-aged and largely retired from trading, but his agents continued to operate stores in various Creek towns for most of the war.

Galphin's operations centered around his home at Silver Bluff, South Carolina, but he had other estates as well as a large collection of mistresses and racially mixed children scattered throughout the Georgia and Carolina backcountry. One of his concubines was a Creek princess who bore Galphin three mestizo children. These

consanguineous ties enhanced Galphin's already influential position among the Indians and made him valuable to colonial leaders as a liaison between Indians and whites. Galphin first became involved in colonial politics in the 1760s when Georgia Governor James Wright appointed him agent from Georgia to the Creeks. This position gave Galphin even more experience in the realm of Indian affairs and qualified him to fill the shoes of Whig "diplomat" when the Revolution broke out.

Galphin was probably the most important of the men whom the Continental Congress appointed in 1775 to serve as Indian commissioners in their newly formed southern department. This appointment placed Galphin in direct conflict with the British Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the Southern Department. Provided with only a limited amount of trading goods to use as gifts, Galphin pursued his policy of "rum and good words" in an effort to keep the Creeks either partially or completely neutral and thereby frustrate British designs. However, Galphin's diplomatic efforts were not aimed solely at counteracting the British. He spent just as much time attempting to restrain the Georgia back-country settlers who frequently crossed over into Creek lands to rob, kill, and take up land illegally. From 1775 until his death in 1780, Galphin made numerous attempts to alleviate frontier hostilities.

Much of what we can learn about Galphin must be gleaned from his correspondence with contemporary political and military

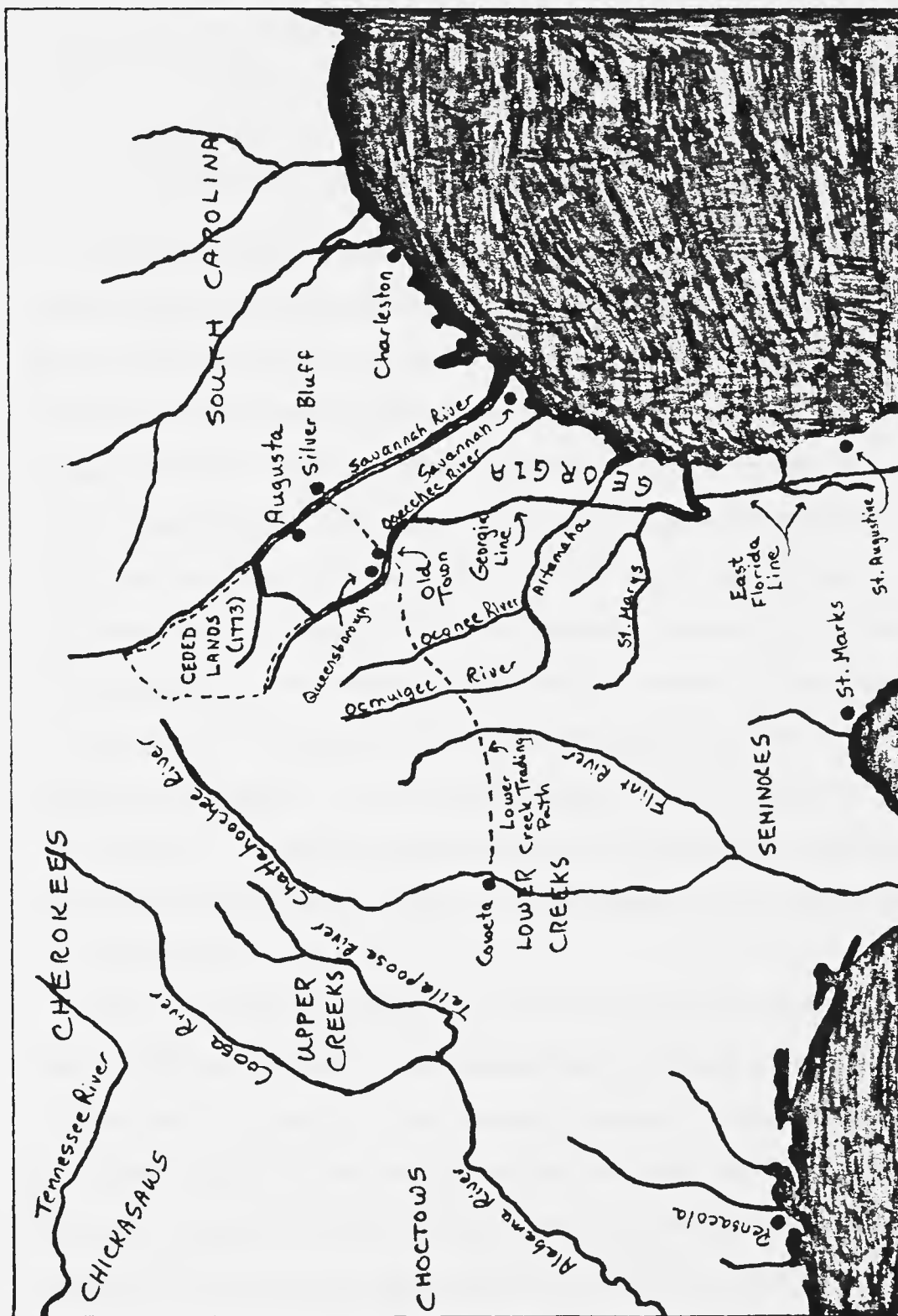
leaders. Two principal collections of Galphin letters exist, one in the possession of the South Carolina Historical Society in Charleston and the other in the possession of the Manuscript Department of the South Caroliniana Library of the University of South Carolina in Columbia. I spent considerable time perusing both collections, and I am appreciative of the courtesy always shown me by the staff of each of these fine libraries.

I also wish to thank Dr. and Mrs. George E. Crouch, the owners and residents of Old Town Plantation near Louisville, Georgia, once the property of George Galphin. I met the Crouches as a college student, and they first acquainted me with Galphin and encouraged me to pursue his fascinating history. Dr. Charles McCurdy, associate professor of history and law at the University of Virginia, and Dr. William Abbot, professor of history at the University of Virginia, both rendered invaluable assistance in the final preparation of this thesis. For their time and interest, I am grateful. I also must not fail to thank my wife, Lucy Tresp Sheftall, for her love and support through two years of graduate school.

Reading Galphin's letters and studying many contemporary documents has convinced me that Galphin played a key role in Revolutionary Georgia. Other students of Georgia history may share my conviction, but no one has yet rescued Galphin from obscurity and given him the place he deserves in Georgia's Revolutionary annals. Galphin is deserving of scholarly scrutiny not

only in his own right, but also because of his tremendous influence on Indian affairs. In this brief study, I have not attempted to write Galphin's biography, but I do hope that my treatment of Galphin within the context of Indian-white relations in the Georgia backcountry will, while providing some biographical information on this significant backcountry leader, also shed more light on both the Revolution in Georgia and the earliest relations between the United States and the southeastern Indians.





THE SOUTHEAST DURING THE REVOLUTION

## CHAPTER I

### NEUTRALITY: THE FIRST FEDERAL INDIAN POLICY

The Continental Congress began formulating a federal Indian policy fully a year before signing the Declaration of Independence.<sup>1</sup> Throughout July of 1775, congressional delegates heard committee reports and individual proposals on the subject of Indian affairs, and these reports culminated in the passage of several resolutions. The first report came from a previously appointed committee on Indian affairs, which included in its membership Patrick Henry and Philip Schuyler. Because "securing and preserving the friendship of the Indian Nations, appears to be a subject of the utmost moment to these colonies," the committee recommended that immediate steps be taken to pacify the Indians.<sup>2</sup> Committee members feared that, otherwise, influential British agents might incite Indians against the frontiers of the rebelling colonies.

Congress promptly addressed the concerns of the committee on Indian affairs. As one of the Massachusetts delegates explained in a letter to a friend: "The Congress sensible of the Importance of the Friendship of the Indian Nations thro this Continent, have appointed Commissioners for three different departments vizt the Southern, the Middle and the Northern, in order to treat with the Indians, and secure their Friendship and Neutrality."<sup>3</sup> The

resolution creating the three departments was passed by Congress on July 12 in direct response to the earlier committee report, and shortly thereafter Congress appointed the commissioners: Four for the northern department, three for the middle department, and two for the southern department. The South Carolina Council of Safety, a Whig-controlled body already dominating the political scene in that colony, was accorded the privilege of nominating three additional southern commissioners, who, along with the two appointed by Congress, were to have jurisdiction over the Cherokee and Creek Indians and other tribes living in the Southeast.

All of the commissioners were empowered to treat with the Indians "in the name, and on behalf of the united colonies" and charged with preventing the Indians from "taking any part in the present commotions."<sup>4</sup> To this end, Congress authorized the commissioners to appoint agents to live among the various tribes and thwart any British efforts to win Indian support. The northern and middle departments each received a \$6,000 appropriation, while the larger southern department received \$10,000.

The establishment of neutrality as the Indian policy of the Continental Congress had important repercussions both in 1775 and throughout the Revolutionary War. Whig leaders later made sporadic attempts to enlist various tribes in military campaigns, but Congress did not authorize solicitation of Indian aid in the summer of 1775. Instead they voted to make neutrality the official

goal to be sought by the commissioners and agents in each of the colonies. This goal eventually proved unattainable because of successful British wooing of most of the tribes in eastern North America. However, with a few tribes where federal agents had unusual influence, there was some success. Among the southeastern Indians, the Creeks maintained a notably neutral stance. Their neutrality during the first few years of the Revolution was due, in large part, to the efforts of George Galphin, a prominent Indian trader and one of the commissioners chosen by the South Carolina Council of Safety to staff the southern department in compliance with the wishes of the Continental Congress.

George Galphin belonged to a peculiar breed of men. In some respects he fitted the mold of a trader--daring, impetuous, opportunistic, and poorly educated but shrewd in business matters. Yet in other contexts he appeared as a polished gentleman and diplomat.<sup>5</sup> He left a mother, a younger brother, four younger sisters, and a wife in northern Ireland in 1737 to seek his fortune in the New World.<sup>6</sup> Few documents survive to shed light on Galphin's Scots-Irish heritage. His father, Thomas Galphin, a linen weaver of Armagh County, died in 1734, two years before young George married for the first time.<sup>7</sup> On December 28, 1736, the warden of Enniskillen Parish in Fermanagh County heard George's nuptial vows to Catherine Saunderson.<sup>8</sup> Within months, twenty-eight year old George abandoned Catherine and the country of his nativity. He arrived in Charleston, South Carolina, with little more than determination to succeed in his new life.

The poor immigrant of 1737 found his niche in the South Carolina backcountry with uncanny rapidity. The financial possibilities of the Indian trade caught his fancy, and by 1741 Galphin was already trading with the Lower Creek towns along the Chatahoochee River with an entourage of four assistants and twenty-five horses.<sup>9</sup>

Like every young trader, Galphin spent a great deal of time living among his Indian clientele, and this dual residency resulted in an unusual domestic life. Aside from his deserted wife back in Ireland, he supported a wife at his South Carolina home and also cohabited with an Indian princess named Metawney when among the Lower Creeks.<sup>10</sup> Metawney bore Galphin's children in the Indian nation while a black slave Rose, a mulatto slave Sapho, an Indian slave Nitehuckey, and a French girl named Rachel Dupee all bore Galphin's children in Carolina.<sup>11</sup> Although none of his offspring were legitimately conceived, Galphin provided handsomely for each of them as they came of age.<sup>12</sup>

Profits from trading expeditions enabled Galphin to begin investing in land and slaves in the 1740s. Some of the earliest tracts of land he purchased lay on the west side of the Savannah River about thirty miles downstream from the Indian trading center of Augusta, Georgia, at a place called Silver Bluff.<sup>13</sup> In previous years Silver Bluff had been a principal town of the Euchee Indians. These associates of the Lower Creeks had resettled in the Chatahoochee valley, but Silver Bluff remained the origin of their

main trading path from Carolina. As the major supplier to the Lower Creeks, Galphin found himself ideally situated at Silver Bluff with a ready-made trail from his doorstep to the Indian nation.<sup>14</sup>

During the 1750s and 1760s Galphin transformed Silver Bluff into a handsome headquarters for his trading operations. He oversaw the construction of a large two-story brick residence as well as more utilitarian warehouses for storing trading goods and skins.<sup>15</sup> Black and Indian slave laborers cleared hundreds of acres of land near Silver Bluff for planting and simultaneously dressed the cut timber in nearby sawmills. At least one of these sawmills was located across the Savannah River from Silver Bluff on land granted to Galphin by the Georgia authorities in 1750.<sup>16</sup> Not content with this one Georgia grant, Galphin enlarged his Georgia landholdings in 1757 and again in 1759.<sup>17</sup>

When Galphin first entered the Indian trade, regulation of the trade and, indeed, of all Indian affairs centered in the governing authorities of individual colonies. Both South Carolina and Georgia required that traders be licensed, but neither this registration process nor other contemporary colonial regulations proved adequate to prevent abuses. The goods were often overpriced, and other forms of trader swindling occurred frequently. Traders also capitalized on the Indians' low tolerance of and penchant for rum as a means of winning economic concessions.<sup>18</sup> Once intoxicated, Indian headmen might be coaxed into exchanging



all of their prized deerskins for far less valuable goods or making even more humiliating concessions. Such machinations made the traders wealthy but created deep and lasting resentment on the part of the Indians.<sup>19</sup>

Resentment toward British traders and colonists hungry for more Indian land caused many tribes to ally with the French at the outbreak of the French and Indian War. In order to reverse this trend and prevent further exploitation of the Indians, the Crown assumed control of Indian affairs in 1756, when the British government established two colonial Indian departments in North America and appointed a superintendent to oversee each.<sup>20</sup> These two departments created to bring order and control to chaotic Indian affairs mirrored previously established northern and southern military departments both geographically and bureaucratically. Sir William Johnson became the first superintendent of Indian affairs for the northern department, and Edmund Atkin received a similar appointment for the southern department.

Atkin was replaced in 1762 by John Stuart, a man of considerable integrity, whose influence among the southern tribes both before and during the Revolution was of great importance to the British.<sup>21</sup> Stuart maintained his headquarters in Charleston from the time of his appointment until 1775, and under the terms of his commission he exercised authority over all Indians living south of the Ohio River. The principle tribes in his jurisdiction were the Choctaw, living in what is today southern and central

Mississippi, the Chickasaw, inhabiting the area of present-day western Tennessee, the Cherokee, and the Creeks. Each of these four tribes claimed extensive lands, but only two of the tribes, the Cherokee and Creeks, posed a direct threat to the security of the southern colonies because of their close proximity to colonial settlements.

The Cherokee, with 3,000 warriors and a population of approximately 12,000, claimed all of present-day western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee, northwestern Georgia, and northwestern South Carolina. Echota on the Little Tennessee River was generally considered the Cherokee capital, but other principal towns were located on the headwaters of the Savannah and Hiwassee Rivers. Stuart and his British contemporaries referred to the four general areas of Cherokee settlement as Lower, Valley, Middle, and Overhill towns. In similar fashion, general groupings of Creek towns were styled as Upper, Lower, and Seminole. Principal towns of the Upper Creeks centered around the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers in present-day central Alabama, while the Lower Creek towns such as Coweta and Cusseta, with whom George Galphin traded, were located in the Chattahoochee valley along the present Georgia-Alabama boundary. The Seminole towns, constituting the third division of the loose confederation of Indians known as Creeks, lay along the rivers of northern Florida. When considered together, the Creek towns boasted 3,500 warriors and a total population of approximately 14,000; the Creek lands



included all of present-day Alabama, western Georgia, and north-western Florida.<sup>22</sup>

In spite of the extensive area included in the southern department and the even larger area and number of tribes under the jurisdiction of the northern department, both departments' superintendents managed to restrain anti-British Indian activity during the French and Indian War by supplying tribes under their control with large annual gifts of goods and ammunition. When the war ended, the British government discontinued the practice of giving presents, and the Indian trade resumed its pre-war proportions. Indian affairs were further complicated by new colonial encroachments on Indian hunting lands. In Georgia, although the Creeks had never officially ceded any land apart from a small strip along the Georgia coast around the original Savannah settlement, Gov. James Wright encouraged prospective settlers with promises of new land. As a result small farmers from the Carolinas and Virginia began settling in the Georgia backcountry as far west as the Ogeechee River.<sup>23</sup>

Land encroachments and continued treachery on the part of colonial traders contributed to a general deterioration of Anglo-Indian relations which culminated in Pontiac's conspiracy in the North and lesser displays of Indian displeasure in the South.<sup>24</sup> In order to assuage Indian fears, King George III issued the Proclamation of 1763, thereby creating an Indian reservation in which colonial governments were not permitted to grant lands and

in which only traders properly licensed by the superintendents could transact business. A treaty with the Creeks and Cherokee signed in Georgia the same year extended that colony's boundary to the Ogeechee River. In 1767 this river and the Little River in eastern Georgia became part of a "permanent" boundary between colonists and Indians which by 1773 stretched from New York to Florida.<sup>25</sup>

By ordering the survey of the boundary line in 1767, British authorities hoped to solve the problem of encroachment onto Indian lands. However, the new boundary had no effect on illegal trading, which threatened backcountry peace as much if not more than the land encroachments. To make matters worse, the Crown decided to return control of the Indian trade to colonial governments, so that after 1767 only matters of land purchase, treaty negotiation, and dispute settlement remained in the purview of the Indian superintendents, John Stuart and William Johnson.<sup>26</sup> Because the 1767 plan had the effect of decentralizing imperial control of Indian affairs, the job of superintendent became all the more difficult. On the other hand, traders such as George Galphin benefitted from more localized control of the trade.

Galphin also benefitted from the expansion of Georgia's territory in 1763. Almost as soon as the new land became available, he was conspicuous among the colonists who besieged the Georgia Governor Wright and his council in Savannah with petitions for grants. Specifically, Galphin hoped to acquire a 1,400-acre

tract known as Old Town, which fronted on the Ogeechee River near the site of an abandoned Indian village. He undoubtedly had his eye on this particular site because of its strategic location at the junction of the river with the Lower Creek trading path leading from his home at Silver Bluff on the Savannah River to the Chattahoochee valley.<sup>27</sup> The frontier was moving from the Savannah River to the Ogeechee, and Galphin no doubt realized the desirability of controlling the Lower Creek trading path as it entered Indian territory in order to insure his monopoly with the Lower Creeks.

Even before Governor Wright signed Galphin's grant to Old Town in 1767, Galphin began using the property to develop a second sphere of influence.<sup>28</sup> The shrewd trader established a commissary and a large cowpens at Old Town, and both ventures quickly proved remunerative.<sup>29</sup> The trading post supplied nearby families with manufactured goods and staples such as sugar and salt; the cattle operation was one of the largest in the back-country.<sup>30</sup> In 1765 Galphin spearheaded an effort to boost the economy of the area around Old Town by encouraging fellow Scots-Irish to settle along the Ogeechee.<sup>31</sup> For three years Galphin advertised widely in northern Ireland, promising economic rewards for hardworkers who would respond and settle in the "Ogeechee paradise."<sup>32</sup> The Scots-Irish did respond. At least seven boatloads of them came between 1768 and 1774, and some of them founded the now extinct township of Queensborough near Old Town.<sup>33</sup>

Galphin's financial empire reached its zenith in the early 1770s. Silver Bluff with its central residence, sawmills, and warehouses remained headquarters for Galphin, but his operations at Old Town certainly vied for primacy in business matters. Surviving portions of several Silver Bluff account books document a constant river traffic between there and Old Town.<sup>34</sup> The Ogeechee commissary not only catered to white settlers in Queensborough township but also functioned as a clearinghouse for Galphin's agents trading with the Lower Creeks. On one trip to Old Town, Galphin's boat carried a cargo of bowls, dishes, padlocks, pepper, paper, glass, buttons, hinges, buckles, scythes, combs, brass wire, cloth, tobacco, hatchets, hoes, traps, gunpowder, tea, beads, ear bobs, wrist plaits, top knots, and breeches.<sup>35</sup> Six hundred pounds of deerskins replaced the manufactured goods when the boat returned to Silver Bluff some months later.<sup>36</sup>

Successful participation in the Indian trade brought with it a certain amount of economic clout which could not be matched by John Stuart or any other British official. Through the years, as Galphin secured a monopoly on trade with the Lower Creek towns, those towns grew virtually dependent on him and his agents. The Indians needed his ammunition to see them through the hunting season and wore only his cloth and trinkets. An experienced trader like Galphin learned the habits and attitudes of Indians with whom he dealt, and the Indian headmen in turn came to place a certain amount of trust in him.

Because of this influence, when conflicts arose between the Creeks and frontier settlers, Georgia Governor James Wright appears to have turned to Galphin for aid as readily as he enlisted the help of Superintendent Stuart (one of whose duties included the settlement of Anglo-Indian disputes). The diplomatic abilities of both men were tested frequently, for encroachments and depredations only intensified after the Indian boundary was established by the treaty of 1763. White settlers brashly crossed the Ogeechee to hunt and pillage in the Indian territory, and Indians stole horses and supplies from the white settlements. When even the smallest infringement occurred, it gave the injured side an opportunity to vent growing resentment. Consequently, every minor incident had the potential of escalating into a major hostility.

Galphin served as peacemaker several times during the early 1770s. In October 1771 a group of Queensborough settlers killed an Indian after he had stolen horses from them. Galphin, acting as Governor Wright's quasi-assistant, smoothed matters by discussing the problem with Creek headmen. His talk also carried a warning for the Indians to keep their "runagating people" at home.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, two months later another wandering Indian crossed the Ogeechee and murdered John Cary of Queensborough. Galphin happened to be at Old Town at the time and hurried into the Creek nation after he received news of Cary's death.<sup>38</sup> The

Creeks demonstrated their respect for Galphin by eventually killing the murderer in front of several traders.<sup>39</sup>

Even though Galphin obtained satisfaction from the Creeks in the Cary crisis, problems continued to plague the frontier. John Stuart, viewing the growing trouble from his Charleston vantage point, placed a large part of the blame on the activities of the Indian traders and their agents, including Galphin. In 1772 when relations seemed at their worst, Stuart sent his own agent, David Taitt, on a fact finding mission into the Creek nation.<sup>40</sup> Taitt's observations confirmed Stuart's suspicions. At the Creek town of Tuckabatchie, Taitt met one of Galphin's "hirelings," Francis Lewis.<sup>41</sup> Lewis stumbled from the effects of rum, which he also supplied freely to the Indians. In fact Taitt charged Lewis with using the alcohol to cheat his Indian customers. Only after a tribe had traded all its deerskins for rum would the flowing kegs be stopped; then the Indians, depleted of their only means for bartering, had to purchase the trader's more necessary goods on credit.

Taitt claimed that the practice of extending credit for goods prevailed throughout the Southeast, and the treaty of 1773 signed the following year proved him at least partially correct.<sup>42</sup> Mounting deficits against the Creeks and Cherokee gave Galphin and other principal traders enough leverage to force another land cession from these tribes in 1773. Both Governor Wright and Superintendent Stuart participated in the negotiations of

the treaty in which the Indians ceded Georgia over two million acres lying north of the Little River and west of the Savannah.<sup>43</sup> This land became known as the "New Purchase" or "Ceded Lands." By promising that he would distribute proceeds from future sales of the Ceded Lands to the indebted traders, Governor Wright proposed to liquidate the Indians' debts.<sup>44</sup>

Because of dissension among the Creek headmen, the treaty of 1773 served only to heighten Indian unrest in the Georgia backcountry. The Indians' festering resentment of the new settlers of the Ceded Lands broke out in violence in December of 1773 when Creeks killed thirteen settlers and four militiamen on the Upper Savannah. Subsequently, both Indians and settlers threatened a full-scale war, and Governor Wright reacted by closing down the Indian trade in Georgia.<sup>45</sup> On previous occasions Galphin had supported Wright's decisions, but this gubernatorial edict damaged his personal interests and he chose to ignore it. In December 1774 David Taitt, still acting as Stuart's emissary to the Creeks, wrote his superior that Galphin and his agents were violating the Indian boycott and were continuing to "trade as they please and pay no regard to any regulation."<sup>46</sup>

Governor Wright reopened the Indian trade in 1775, but by that time Galphin had already broken with Wright. In the spring of 1775, Galphin began to correspond with Whig leaders in Charleston and Savannah and thereafter accepted an increasingly



prominent political role in the Whig struggle to redress British "wrongs." Galphin was not alone among the Georgia and Carolina traders to support the patriot cause. Robert Rae, an Augustan who traded principally with the Upper Creeks, wrote one of his agents in the Upper Creek towns in May of 1775 expressing his dissatisfaction with British policy. Rae described "Capt. Stuart and others" as if they were enemies and reported rumors of a plan by Stuart to instigate a Cherokee war.<sup>47</sup> In concluding, Rae urged the Creeks to "lie quiet" and take no part "on either side."<sup>48</sup>

There is no evidence that Stuart was guilty of troublemaking with the Cherokee, but Whig leaders in Charleston believed the rumors repeated by Rae. In June of 1775 the South Carolina Council of Safety attempted to arrest Stuart.<sup>49</sup> He fled to St. Augustine, where he immediately set out to counteract Whig influence among the Upper Creeks by sending them British presents. In the meantime the South Carolina Council of Safety moved quickly to replace Stuart with six commissioners, three to superintend Indian affairs among the Creeks and three to superintend those with the Cherokee.<sup>50</sup>

George Galphin accepted one of the positions relating to the Creeks and immediately sent word to the Cusseta king that "Stuart and the Great King over the water" had "misbehaved" and that he would replace Stuart as superintendent of Indian affairs until a "good governor" was sent to Savannah.<sup>51</sup> The Cusseta



king gave a noncommittal response to this surprising announcement, but he was undoubtedly receptive to Galphin's promise to send the Lower Creeks some ammunition. Galphin was able to make this promise because earlier the same month Whigs had seized ammunition bound for Savannah and St. Augustine, where British officials remained in control.<sup>52</sup>

At the time Galphin was making his initial overtures to the Creeks, the South Carolina Council sent William Henry Drayton to win over Alexander Cameron, Stuart's agent among the Cherokee, and convince the Cherokee to remain neutral.<sup>53</sup> Similar efforts to keep the Indians peaceful were taking place in the northern colonies, particularly in New York, where the death of British superintendent Sir William Johnson in 1774 had left in confusion relations between the frontier settlers and the powerful Indian tribes known as the Six Nations.<sup>54</sup>

Cognizant of the growing inability of local Whig leaders to deal effectively with the deteriorating Indian-white relations in the backcountry because of limited funds and divided loyalties, the Continental Congress appointed the first committee on Indian affairs on the same day in June of 1775 that Washington was informed of his election as commander-in-chief.<sup>55</sup> It was this committee whose report on July 12 moved the Congress to decide on a policy of neutrality, establish and finance the three Indian departments, and appoint federal commissioners to serve in the departments. A few days later Congress appointed John

Walker of Virginia and Willie Jones of North Carolina to serve as commissioners in the southern department and authorized the South Carolina Council of Safety to name three others to serve with them.

When the South Carolina Council met in Charleston on October 2, 1775, members wasted no time in fulfilling their obligation. They chose Edward Wilkinson, trader among the Cherokee, Robert Rae, trader among the Upper Creeks, and George Galphin, trader among the Lower Creeks, to fill the remaining posts in the newly created southern department.<sup>57</sup> The Council subsequently notified Galphin and his fellow commissioners of their appointments and instructed them "to follow and obey all such Orders & directions in Indian affairs as you may now or shall from time to time hereafter receive from the Representatives of the United Colonies, from the provincial Congress or from the Council of Safety for this Colony."<sup>58</sup>

The commission Galphin received charged him with preserving "peace & friendship" with the Indians, and he apparently accepted the charge willingly. Of course, it was in his best interest to work for peace, for any frontier war would dry up profits from the Indian trade. But Galphin's expectation of benefitting from a commitment to the cause of Indian neutrality was not in itself suspect. Many who supported the Whig cause during the Revolution did so for more than mere patriotic reasons. In other words, when Galphin accepted his federal commission, the

shrewd trader may have seen in it an opportunity to use his bargaining skills and years of experience in manipulating Indians not only to spare the Georgia backcountry from senseless bloodshed but also to save his own empire.

## CHAPTER II

### BACKCOUNTRY DIPLOMACY, 1775-1778

The struggle between the British and Whigs for dominance over the southern Indians began in earnest during the late summer of 1775. From the first outbreak of Anglo-American hostilities, Superintendent John Stuart thought he had an advantage over the Whig commissioners. Not only did the Indians respect him and look to him and his agents for mediation and protection in their quarrels with settlers and traders, but he represented an established bureaucracy accustomed to handling Indian affairs. The Americans, despite their good fortune of having powerful traders such as George Galphin in their camp, were less experienced administrators. Consequently, Stuart felt confident of Indian allegiance and his ability to insure the continuing loyalty of the southern tribes by counteracting the overtures of Galphin and the other federal commissioners.

After learning that Whigs had seized ammunition en route to Savannah and St. Augustine and planned to bribe Creeks and Cherokee with it, Stuart sent communications to David Taitt, his Creek agent, and Alexander Cameron, his Cherokee agent (who was managing to resist solicitations from the South Carolina Council of Safety). Acting on Stuart's instructions, Taitt summoned a meeting of Upper Creek headmen at the town of Little Tallassee and outlined to

them the confusion in the colonies. He blamed all problems on the Whigs, whom he denounced for their contemptuous disregard for Stuart's authority.<sup>59</sup> Taitt's advice to the Upper Creeks was to keep their young warriors away from the frontier and to listen only to the talks sent by Stuart or other loyal British leaders.

The Upper Creeks listened patiently to Taitt, and Emistese-guo, the most powerful chief among all the Creeks, was especially supportive. However, Taitt subsequently visited the Lower Creek towns and found attitudes there toward the British somewhat less favorable. Robert Rae, one of the American commissioners, and David Holmes, Galphin's nephew and agent, had arrived before him with some of the captured ammunition for distribution. Holmes had also brought a talk from Galphin which urged neutrality and promised more supplies. The Lower Creeks, particularly at Coweta town, seemed impressed. When Taitt challenged Holmes "in the square before all the Indians," the headmen refused to take the British side.<sup>60</sup> Instead they asked for supplies and ammunition from both Stuart and Galphin and agreed "to lye quiet and not meddle with the quarrel."<sup>61</sup>

The Lower Creeks were not the only recipients of Whig gifts. While Holmes parried Taitt's thrusts at Coweta, Rae journeyed on to the Upper Creek towns to distribute more ammunition. Taitt hurried after him, only to find himself in the middle of a controversy between pro-British and neutralist factions. Emistese-guo spurned Rae's efforts to win friendship, but Handsome Fellow,

chief of the town of Okfuskee, listened sympathetically to Rae.<sup>62</sup> While this reaction disappointed Taitt, Galphin took immediate steps to capitalize on the pro-American stance of the Okfuskee and the neutral inclinations among the Lower Creeks. Writing from his Silver Bluff home to the South Carolina Council of Safety on October 15, 1775, Galphin pled with the members to send more ammunition to the Creeks and to urge the Georgia Council of Safety to do likewise.<sup>63</sup> Galphin decried the fact that "about half the Uper towns is in the Interest of west Florida & has yused all their Interest to bringe the rest of the nation to their way of thinking, but they Could not perswade them to it nor will it be in their power to Do it in case they are supleyd from here as usual."<sup>64</sup> Hoping to deter the Council from delaying, Galphin added a warning that soon "the season for hunting will be over & there will be no pasifying them & they will say all the talk we have sent them is nothing but Lyes for they were told there wood be nothing but Lying talks sent them from these two provences."<sup>65</sup>

Galphin wanted supplies because he was convinced they would keep the Creeks neutral. Interestingly enough, Stuart's initial objectives were similar to Galphin's. Through Taitt and Cameron, the British superintendent was not inciting war but trying only to reassure the Indians that their British friends would keep them supplied with goods and ammunition. His purpose was to protect the fur trade and prevent Whigs from occupying Indian

lands; and he hesitated to use his influence to incite an Indian war for fear of uniting backcountry Loyalists and Whigs in a common cause.<sup>66</sup> These fears, however, were Stuart's own and did not reflect the thinking of his superiors. Consequently, when British General Thomas Gage wrote Stuart on September 12 and instructed him to prepare the Indians to "take up arms against His Majesty's enemies and to distress them," Stuart had no choice but to comply.<sup>67</sup>

In December of 1775 Stuart took steps to carry out Gage's directive. First, he called Lower Creek headmen to a meeting near St. Augustine where he tried to sway them from their neutral inclinations by attacking Whig integrity. Not only did Stuart blame Whigs for temporarily interrupting the British Indian trade by stealing British ammunition and then sending the Creeks only a small portion of what they would otherwise have received, but he also pointed out that the Americans had no way to manufacture their own goods and therefore could not continue to supply the Indians.<sup>68</sup> The favorable response of some of the Indians, particularly the Cusseta king, buoyed Stuart's hopes of using the Creeks in Gage's military plan.

In order to maintain the support of any Creek town or to insure the loyalties of any southern tribe, Stuart, like Galphin, knew that the Indians must be supplied. Neither Stuart nor the governor in St. Augustine had enough goods and ammunition among the royal stores to satisfy Indian needs, and so Stuart turned

to merchants for help. Some Loyalist traders had followed him from South Carolina to Florida and were reestablishing themselves in Pensacola, where Stuart himself had decided to settle. One of these traders was the superintendent's brother Henry, and Stuart selected him to lead thirty pack horses of supplies through the Indian country. Early in 1776 Henry began his trip. His instructions were to shepherd the special convoy through Choctaw territory to Chickasaw towns along the Mississippi and then eastward into Cherokee country, where Cameron awaited delivery of the goods.<sup>69</sup>

When Henry Stuart arrived at the Cherokee capital of Echota on April 24, he interrupted a council of war. Unknown to Henry or to his brother in Florida, recent encroachments of North Carolinians into Cherokee lands had so angered a group of young warriors that their leader, Dragging Canoe, had called for restoration of tribal honor by waging war against the squatters.<sup>70</sup> Factionalism among tribal leaders and Cameron's strong influence had prevented the war faction from persuading a majority of tribal headmen to accept the symbolic black wampus.<sup>71</sup> Acceptance of the wampus by a majority of the headmen was necessary to give the war faction authority to act. The majority, which included Oconostota, the aged "emperor" of the Cherokee, wanted peace.<sup>72</sup> Both Cameron and Henry Stuart supported Oconostota, not because the two British agents did not welcome the resentment the Cherokee felt for Carolinians, but because, in accordance with the



superintendent's plan to follow Gen. Gage's directive and stimulate a united Indian war, they hoped to restrain the Cherokee warriors until Gage or some other military leader could orchestrate Dragging Canoe's proposed attack on North Carolina backcountry Whigs with British activities along the southern coast.<sup>73</sup>

While Stuart and Cameron were working to prevent a premature war against Whigs, some Cherokee headmen, also opposed to the war faction, met Whig commissioners at Fort Charlotte, N.C. This congress and a similar one between commissioners and Creeks had been arranged in November of 1775 when all five of the newly appointed federal commissioners, including Galphin, had met at Salisbury, N.C., to coordinate strategy.<sup>74</sup> Those few Cherokee who made the trip to Fort Charlotte the following April heard promises that the American trade would continue and that settlers would be removed from disputed lands if the Whigs were trusted instead of the British.

The combination of Whig diplomatic efforts at Fort Charlotte with Cameron's and Stuart's pleas for patience deterred the Cherokee war faction temporarily. The following month when Galphin and Rae convened the previously scheduled Creek congress at Augusta, Ga., there was no hint of concern about the threat of Cherokee war. In fact, a few months earlier Galphin had reported confidently to the Continental Congress that "the Upper

Creeks will take no steps without consulting the Lower Creeks, and the Cherokees will do nothing that will disobey them."<sup>75</sup>

Galphin's contention that the high-spirited Cherokee obeyed Creek leaders was naive but was only incidental to the main point of his letter. He was primarily responding to news that Congress had prohibited exportation of deerskins and other hides. The Creek commissioner argued that "stopping the exportation . . . will put a stop to supplying the Indians with goods. For if the skins does not go home, the merchants will not send in goods."<sup>76</sup> Moreover, Galphin threatened that "if the trade is stopped with the Indians, I must beg leave to lay down my commission, . . . I do not see the use of commissioners when it is not in their power to act as they ought to do to keep the Indians peacable. We all agreed when we met at Salisbury that the Indians must be supplied or it would not be in our power to keep them peacable."<sup>77</sup>

Congressional delegates did not change their trade policy because of Galphin's complaints, but they did take measures which they thought would keep both Indians and Whig traders happy: In January of 1776 Congress appropriated £ 40,000 to be used to purchase foreign goods. These goods were in turn to be distributed among all three Indian departments and then sold by licensed traders under the proper supervision of the federal commissioners.<sup>78</sup> Unfortunately for Galphin, none of the goods reached Georgia in time for distribution among the more than 200

Creeks who met him in Augusta for the May congress, and a lack of sufficient goods spoiled the otherwise successful conference.<sup>79</sup>

The headmen attending the Augusta congress were largely Upper Creeks from Okfuskee town and Lower Creeks from Coweta town. They heard a strong anti-British talk that characterized Superintendent Stuart as a man who wanted to kill the Creeks by sending them against the frontier. According to the commissioners, the Crown intended to starve the Indians with a paucity of goods, while the Whigs planned to purchase ample supplies from France and Spain until they could manufacture their own. The British evacuation of Boston was referred to expansively as proof of British military failure.<sup>80</sup>

Although the commissioners had few goods to give the Indians at Augusta, they did have large quantities of rum. In return for its liberal distribution, Galphin made three requests: that the Creeks remain neutral, that they trade only with the Americans, and that they expel the British agents living among them.<sup>81</sup> The Indians honored none of these requests, but for some weeks after the conference, Stuart was concerned that they might. The Creeks returned to their towns in a drunken state, threatening to kill the British traders and convinced of the wisdom of neutrality. Taitt wrote Stuart from the town of Little Tallassee on July 7 that the returning Indians' arrival had "thrown the nation into great confusion."<sup>82</sup> Taitt blamed the belligerent behavior on the rum, but he decried the fact that not only Whig commissioners

but also Loyalist traders in Pensacola and Mobile sent the Creeks rum. As a result, some of the towns remained "in a continued torment." However, Taitt reassured Stuart that when the Indians were sober they had no desire to fight for either British or Americans but "rather wish to enjoy the advantages of neutrality by being paid from both parties."<sup>83</sup>

Whatever relief Stuart may have felt over Taitt's reassurance of Creek factionalism was quickly overshadowed by news from Cameron of the outbreak of a Cherokee war. Just when Cameron and Henry Stuart thought their diplomatic efforts were succeeding, a delegation of northern Indians--Iroquois, Shawnee, Delaware, and Ottawa--arrived in Echota to solicit Cherokee aid for a united frontier war. The recitation of grievances by these tribes swayed enough headmen to give the war faction the support it needed. Without notifying Stuart or attempting to coordinate his move with the British effort to capture Charleston in June, Dragging Canoe led his warriors in a broad attack against the Carolina frontier settlements.<sup>84</sup>

Whigs had already repulsed the British fleet's attack on Charleston when the Cherokee made their attack in the backcountry. Moreover, the Cherokee paid dearly for their bold strike. Colonel Samuel Jack and 200 militiamen from Georgia marched into the Cherokee country in late July and destroyed towns along the Tugalo and Chattahoochee Rivers. The Cherokee offered only feeble resistance. The following September, Colonel Andrew

Williamson with 1,100 South Carolina troops under his command destroyed the Lower Cherokee towns and then joined 2,000 North Carolinians, who had already burned the Middle towns, on a march of destruction into the Valley towns. Meanwhile, 1,800 Virginians penetrated the Appalachians to the Overhill towns and leveled many of them.<sup>85</sup>

From the moment that he first learned of the Cherokee war, Stuart advised the Creeks not to form an alliance with the Cherokee. Fortunately for them, the Creeks listened. When Cherokee deputies approached Emisteseguo and other headmen, the Creeks rejected all overtures, saying that Stuart had not authorized the frontier war.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, Emisteseguo knew that inclinations toward neutrality remained strong in some of the Creek towns. Galphin undoubtedly reinforced this neutral faction and contributed to the Creeks' reluctance to join the Cherokee fight when he sent the Indians an exaggerated warning in August that if they "were to break out there would be 7 or 8,000 men immediately sent against them for a third part of all the province is under pay and ready to march in an hour."<sup>87</sup>

Shortly after issuing this threat to the Creeks, Galphin received word from Charleston that the Declaration of Independence had been signed in Philadelphia. His reaction was not enthusiastic. As he wrote one of his agents, "am damn sorry for I was still in hopes affairs would have been settled . . . This is a wish that they were in hell that was the means of so many

brave men being killed and God knows when there will be an end to it, now as there is independence declared."<sup>88</sup> Even more alarming to Galphin than independence was news of a massacre on the Ogeechee River. In order to prevent further hostilities, he rode immediately to Old Town, his frontier plantation. There he learned the details of the tragedy: Coweta warriors, who felt they had never received satisfaction for the previous murder of a kinsman, had shot and smashed the head of one white settler.<sup>89</sup> A long talk addressed to the Coweta headmen apparently convinced them to restrain temporarily from further frontier raids, but the Ogeechee massacre marked a turning point in Coweta attitude. This town, which once provided Galphin's staunchest support, became anti-American.<sup>90</sup>

Although he undoubtedly regretted the loss of Coweta town as an ally, Galphin had no time to lament his loss. He spent the fall of 1776 working frantically to prevent the settlers of the Georgia Ceded Lands from declaring war on the Creeks. Despite the fact that the Creeks had not come to the aid of their Cherokee brothers in July, many Georgians and Carolinians suspected a conspiracy and wanted to kill Creeks along with Cherokee.<sup>91</sup> On October 26 Galphin wrote of his dilemma to Willie Jones, a fellow Federal commissioner: "I have a hard task to keep the Creeks our friends, when both our enemies and the people that should be our friends want us to be at war with them."<sup>92</sup> Galphin explained that he had been forced to send home Indians waiting to see him

at Old Town because "some of the people upon the ceded land said they would come down and kill them," and, moreover, that "the people upon the ceded land . . . say they will kill them wherever they meet them."<sup>93</sup>

By the time he wrote Jones, Galphin felt that the frontier war fever had passed its peak, but a new crisis was already arising. Stuart, alert to the growing antagonism of the Coweta and other Creeks toward the Georgia backcountry settlers and hoping to turn the animosity to his advantage, proposed a conference at Pensacola in October.<sup>94</sup> According to Galphin, the Creeks rejected the first proposal, but when Stuart then sent presents and ammunition, they reconsidered.<sup>95</sup> In fact, almost 500 Indians from the Upper, Lower, and Seminole towns attended the conference. Stuart gave them more presents and promised that the British trade would continue. Even more importantly, he agreed to negotiate a peace between the Creeks and Choctaw, with whom the Creeks had engaged in a limited warfare for years.<sup>96</sup>

The Creek-Choctaw war had previously served British interests because of its economic and political effects, but when as a result of the Pensacola conference Stuart felt he had regained Creek loyalty, he wanted the war to end so that the Creeks could concentrate all efforts on aiding the British. The Creeks seemed pleased and grateful to Stuart for helping them to work out a peace with the Choctaw. In fact, their gratitude led them to make such rash promises as to aid in the defense of St. Augustine



against a Whig attack.<sup>97</sup> After leaving Pensacola, a few Creeks did keep their promises, but most did not.

Several forces contributed to the failure of the Creeks to attack the Georgia frontier during the winter of 1776-7 as Stuart had hoped. The friendly ties that Galphin maintained with the Upper Creek Okfuskee and the Lower Creek Cusseta insured a continuing factionalism among the tribal leaders.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, after the destruction of the Cherokee towns, Alexander Cameron and many Cherokee sought refuge in the Creek towns.<sup>99</sup> The presence of these Indians, some "entirely naked and destitute of everything," served as a visible reminder to the Creeks of the price of a frontier war.<sup>100</sup> Even the Cherokee who did not flee to the Creeks paid for their aggression by having to cede more land to the Carolinians in the spring of 1777; South Carolina acquired all of its present-day northwestern corner, and North Carolina acquired much of its western land. Dragging Canoe and the survivors of his war faction, who refused to participate in the treaty signing, seceded from the Cherokee tribe, moved south along Chickamauga Creek into what is now northwest Georgia, and styled themselves "chickamaugas."<sup>101</sup>

The Cherokee war appears to have damaged the prestige of some of the Federal Indian commissioners, particularly those in Virginia and North Carolina, for after the war ended those states took a more active role in Indian affairs and appointed their own agents to serve as superintendents.<sup>102</sup> However, the failure



of the federal commissioners responsible for the Cherokee did not tarnish Galphin's image. In fact, Galphin was given a great deal of credit for keeping the Creeks neutral during the Cherokee war in spite of Stuart and the backcountry settlers. As his reputation as an Indian diplomat grew, Galphin gained the confidence and respect of many Whig political leaders, among them Henry Laurens, a leading South Carolina merchant and planter. After Laurens was elected to the Continental Congress in 1777, Galphin sent his periodic reports on Indian affairs directly to him. This relationship became even more significant on November 1, 1777, when fellow delegates elected Laurens President of the Congress. He served in that capacity over a year and also served on the Continental Congress' standing committee on Indian affairs until he accepted a diplomatic post in Holland and left Philadelphia early in 1779.<sup>103</sup>

Although the evidence is not conclusive, Galphin's first significant contact with Laurens appears to have been early in 1777. The general failure of the Creeks to carry out the promises made to Stuart in Pensacola the previous October gave Galphin an advantage, which he took steps to press in the spring. With Laurens' help Galphin got an authorization from the Continental Congress to hold another congress with the Creeks. However, due to the ever present danger of exposing Indians to backcountry settlers still clamoring for a Creek war, Galphin resolved not to let Indians congregate at Augusta or Silver Bluff but to meet

them at Old Town, his Ogeechee plantation.<sup>104</sup> There Galphin and Rae welcomed almost 500 Creek headmen and warriors in May of 1777.<sup>105</sup>

Stuart later pronounced the Old Town congress a failure because "no Indian of any consequence went to the meeting," and Galphin only distributed a "scanty allowance of powder & shot."<sup>106</sup> However, Stuart may have been engaging in a bit of wishful thinking. Handsome Fellow from Okfuskee and representatives from other Upper towns attended along with the Cusseta king and headmen from most of the Lower towns. Conspicuously absent were Emisteseguo, who remained fiercely pro-British, and all of the Coweta; their anti-American attitude had increased dramatically several months earlier when backcountry Whigs killed several Coweta warriors who were stealing horses in the Ceded Lands.<sup>107</sup>

Galphin opened the congress by expressing his regret that the Coweta blood had been spilled. He then asked the Indians to continue to exercise restraint and promised to send them goods if they drove British agents out of their towns. Galphin also extended an invitation from the Continental Congress for some of the headmen to visit Philadelphia. In response to Galphin, the Indian leaders spoke of their desire to maintain peace and their immediate and pressing need for goods. They made no promises to run out the traders. The Philadelphia invitation did not appeal to them, but Handsome Fellow and eight other Creek leaders did agree to visit Charleston.<sup>108</sup>

When the congress ended Galphin escorted the Indian delegation to Charleston, where they toured the city's fortifications, inspected South Carolina military forces, and boarded foreign ships in the harbor. Gov. John Rutledge greeted the Indians publicly and painted a grand picture of America's forthcoming victory in the Revolution. Rutledge also reiterated the demand made by Galphin at Old Town that the Creeks drive the British agents out of their towns.<sup>109</sup> The Creek leaders received a great deal of attention while in Charleston, but the local newspapers also focused attention on Galphin. For instance, the Gazette of the State of South Carolina described him as "a gentleman, . . . whose extensive influence and indefatigable exertions in the Creek nation," were enabling the Carolinians "to enjoy our present security from the ravages which that numerous and warlike people have been urged incessantly to commit on our frontiers."<sup>110</sup>

Galphin had hoped to meet Henry Laurens in Charleston, but the newly elected congressman had left for Philadelphia before Galphin's arrival. Therefore, in order to keep his advocate abreast of happenings in the backcountry, Galphin wrote Laurens a lengthy letter on July 20.<sup>111</sup> Most of the letter consisted of a report on the congress and the subsequent trip to Charleston, but Galphin also passed along his latest "account from the frontier of Georgia," where "there is numbers of bad people . . . that wants a Creek war." Although Galphin had great dislike for "these dammed villians . . . the half of them Tories," he was

pleased to hear that the Ceded Lands, usually the hotbed of frontier conflict, "has been very peaceable since the Congress."<sup>112</sup>

Unfortunately for Galphin, his intelligence relative to peace in the Ceded Lands became quickly outdated. When he and the Indian leaders arrived at his Silver Bluff home on their return from Charleston in early August, news awaited them of a Coweta raid against the Georgia frontier.<sup>113</sup> According to a letter written by the Georgia Whig Governor, John-Adam Treutlen, to the President of the Continental Congress, the Indians were caught stealing horses and pursued by settlers and soldiers; in a subsequent skirmish the Indians killed Captain Thomas Dooly of the Third Georgia Continental Battalion and several other "valuable" officers.<sup>114</sup> Later in August, while Galphin was still at Silver Bluff making arrangements for the transportation of the Indians and their goods back to the Ogeechee, Thomas Dooly's brother, Captain John Dooly of the Georgia Continental Regiment of Horse, rode to Silver Bluff and demanded that the Indians be detained until he received satisfaction for his brother's death.<sup>115</sup>

News of Dooly's demand spread quickly. John Lewis Gervais, a Charleston attorney, wrote Laurens of the "great Insult offered to this State" because of Dooly's actions. The vengeful brother, explained Gervais, took the Indians to Augusta, "where they are kept close prisoners."<sup>116</sup> The South Carolina General Assembly became so enraged over Dooly's diplomatic improprieties that it

voted to send soldiers to rectify the situation. The soldiers turned out to be totally unnecessary, however, because long before their arrival Galphin convinced Dooly to place the Indians in the custody of Robert Rae, not only a federal Indian commissioner but also lieutenant colonel of the Second Georgia Continental Battalion. Rae released Handsome Fellow and his colleagues and insured their safe return to Silver Bluff.<sup>117</sup> Dooly was not only outwitted by Galphin and Rae but subsequently court-martialed.

Dooly's treatment of the Creek headmen angered Galphin, but his underlying concern was the general attitude of the settlers and militamen on the Ceded Lands who had reacted so violently to the Coweta raids. As Galphin confided to Laurens in his next letter, "the people on the ceded land will undo all we are doing . . . there is a number in Georgia wants a Creek war."<sup>118</sup> As if the hostility of Ceded Lands settlers were not cause enough for concern, Galphin also reported to Laurens that he had heard rumors of a new commitment on the part of Stuart to thwart Whigs with any means at his disposal. What Galphin may have suspected but could not yet confirm was that Stuart was going forward with his plan for a major Indian offensive. Working through Taitt in the Upper Creek towns and through William McIntosh, Taitt's counterpart in the Lower Creek towns, Stuart was indeed spending the summer attempting to form Creeks, Cherokee refugees, Chickamauga tribesmen, and Loyalists into an army, which he hoped could

attack the Georgia frontier in concert with a British attack on the Georgia coast planned for fall.<sup>119</sup>

In addition to his organization of the Indians in the summer of 1777 into a military force, Stuart also participated in a plot to assassinate Galphin. Unknown to Galphin, a party of Loyalists and Indians commanded by Lt. Samuel Moore of Florida agreed to carry out the murder, supposedly in exchange for £ 500. Moore's party penetrated into Georgia early in the summer and waited in the vicinity of Silver Bluff for an opportunity to strike. This opportunity presented itself on the day that Handsome Fellow and the other Creek chiefs left Silver Bluff for their return to the Ogeechee. Thinking that Galphin would be accompanying the Indians, Moore's party ambushed them and killed Captain John Gerard, one of the Indians' escorts whom the murderers apparently mistook for Galphin.<sup>120</sup> Galphin had remained at Silver Bluff and was thereby saved, but his close brush with death undoubtedly unnerved him. To make matters worse, Handsome Fellow, who escaped unharmed from the ambush with all the other Creek chiefs, still did not reach his home alive. He died of natural causes on the trading path between Old Town and Okfuskee.<sup>121</sup>

In his next letter to Laurens, Galphin expressed pessimism about the future of Creek neutrality--and for good reason. His Indian visitors had first been captured and then ambushed while under his protection; their escort had been killed in place of him; Handsome Fellow, the leader of their neutrality movement, had

died; and Stuart was planning a major attack on the Georgia frontier. In fact, when the returning Okfuskee and Cusseta headmen reached the Creek towns, they found a nation prepared for war. McIntosh, the Lower Creek agent, stood ready with a large party of Creeks and Cherokee to march against Silver Bluff and Augusta, while Cameron offered 100 pack horses of ammunition to support the assault.<sup>122</sup>

Back at Silver Bluff, Galphin had no detailed information about Stuart's exact plans for an attack, but he obviously knew enough to suspect trouble. He also had no assurance that the Okfuskee and Cusseta headmen would keep the promises they had made at the Old Town congress. Even if they had had good intentions at the time, to what extent had the ominous events of the intervening months changed their minds? In the end, Galphin was not disappointed, for unknown to him, the death of Handsome Fellow actually strengthened the resolve of his fellow tribesmen to squelch the growing war faction among other Creek towns.<sup>123</sup> When the returning headmen learned of the war preparations undertaken by the British agents, they responded to this pro-British show by sending out 150 of their own warriors to kill Taitt, Cameron, and McIntosh.

All three of these agents managed to escape from their would-be assassins. They fled to the safety of Pensacola along with all of the British traders then living among the Creeks.<sup>124</sup> With the primary objects of their wrath unreachable, the neutralist



faction then turned on Emistesequo, Indian leader of the pro-British faction. He survived primarily because of the intervention of Alexander McGillivray, a pro-British mestizo who had worked as Taitt's assistant but was rising rapidly to power as a chief of Little Tallassee town. McGillivray used his influence to stop the marauding of the neutralists and to restore order in the Creek nation. However, despite the fact that no important agents or Indian leaders were murdered, the neutralists won an amazing victory. The army of Indians gathered under Stuart's direction to wage a frontier war disappeared, and not one British representative or trader remained in the Creek nation to sell British goods, deliver British presents, or issue pro-British talks. Furthermore, the Whigs were free to trade and treat as they pleased.

The rout of the pro-British Creek traders provided Henry Laurens with good news to tell the Continental Congress. Efforts to keep Indians neutral and to bring peace to the frontier had already failed with many tribes such as the Cherokee, but Galphin had proven that at least one southern tribe would accept the policy of the Continental Congress. Laurens wrote Galphin from Philadelphia on September 6, 1777, to congratulate him on his "success in treating with the Indians" and to thank Galphin on behalf of "all the United States" for his unwearied labours for the present good disposition of those Savages." But lest Galphin become complacent because of his success, Laurens quickly pointed



out that "their continuance in this temper depends much upon your exertions."<sup>125</sup>

Galphin knew all too well that pro-British factions still controlled many Creek towns and that in order to keep them out of power he must strengthen his position with the neutralist faction and help them to retain control of their tribal councils. He accordingly sent invitations to all the Creek headmen requesting that they meet him again at Old Town in November to conclude a "treaty of peace" among themselves.<sup>126</sup> Handsome Fellow's successor, the White Lieutenant of Okfuskee, and Opeitley Mico of Tallassee agreed to attend as representatives from the Upper towns, but headmen from ten other Upper towns and several Lower towns not only refused but chose instead to visit Stuart in Pensacola before the treaty. These headmen, all pro-British, hoped that Stuart would reopen the British trade which the neutralists had stopped in August.

Because of the potential danger of having British agents in close proximity to still unpredictable neutralists, Stuart refused to comply with the request for a reopening of the trade. Instead, he sent the Indians home and instructed them first to win over the principal disaffected towns, Okfuskee and Coweta.<sup>127</sup> Alexander McGillivray, serving as a spokesman for all of the pro-British Upper Creeks, returned to Pensacola in December with assurances that the Okfuskees had "repented."<sup>128</sup> Stuart was apparently not convinced that the pro-British faction had restored order, and he

made a further request that Okfuskee representatives appear before him in person. This, McGillivray had to explain, was impossible because the Okfuskee were at that very moment meeting with George Galphin!

The treaty at Old Town began on November 6, 1777, and lasted seven weeks.<sup>129</sup> Because of the belligerent attitude of the back-country settlers and the series of tragedies which had followed the summer congress at Old Town, Galphin made sure that proper measures were taken to maintain security. A sizable troop escorted him and Robert Rae to the Ogeechee plantation and remained on guard throughout the period of negotiations so that the 350 Indians attending the treaty would have full protection. Sitting astride his horse, Galphin delivered the opening speech to the assembled Creeks. He first congratulated the neutralist faction for acting like "wise and good people in driving our enemies, the commissaries, out of your Nation." Then he expressed hope that the Creek headmen would "never suffer any of them to return." In case British traders did return, Galphin gave instructions to "tie them and bring them to us." He also expounded on the power and success of the American army and reminded his listeners that what happened to the Cherokee towns could still happen to the Creek towns if they allowed "Mr. Stuart and his commissaries" to supply them and send them talks.<sup>130</sup>

Before concluding the treaty, Galphin not only outfitted 100 pack horses with goods, rum, and ammunition for the headmen

and warriors to carry back with them to their respective towns, but he agreed to keep his trading post at Old Town well stocked so that all Creeks could be supplied continuously.<sup>131</sup> By making such a promise, Galphin was taking a calculated risk. As a trader, he knew that his ability to keep the Indians neutral depended to a large extent on whether he could keep them adequately supplied, especially now that British goods were no longer available. On the other hand, Galphin knew that his goods might not remain as plentiful as his magnanimous gift indicated. Almost all goods had to be shipped from France via the West Indies, and many factors could reduce the flow of goods to a trickle at almost any time.

Nevertheless, he was willing to gamble against future shortages because of the dramatic impression that he knew the mid-winter arrival of the 100 pack horses would make.<sup>132</sup> Surviving documents indicate that Galphin guessed correctly. The Creeks were starving for goods and his convoy was such a welcome sight that even Coweta town with its staunchly anti-American attitude wavered toward neutrality. One of the Coweta headmen sent Galphin a message in February of 1778 in which he admitted that since "all the towns has taken your talk, I will not be against it."<sup>133</sup> Both Galphin's own shrewd calculations and Stuart's refusal the previous December to reopen British trade had contributed to Galphin's success.

The events of the winter of 1777-8 gave Galphin confidence that he might be on the verge of securing a lasting peace in the Georgia backcountry. A small group of Coweta warriors was still raiding the Ceded Lands, and settlers still threatened to kill any Indian trespassers, but with the British trade closed and most of the Creeks listening only to talks from Galphin and his agents, Creek-Whig relations appeared to be healthier than they had been since the appointment of federal Indian commissioners. In his next letter to Henry Laurens, Galphin expressed his optimism:

With the assistens of God we have kept these Savages peaceable, tho no stone has been left unturned to set them upon us by our Enemies. But I hope in God we have got the better of them. There is not a white man from Pensacola or Augustin in the Creek nation. There is none there now but our Traders. I fitted out a number of Indian factors. Some that is returned has made very good returns. If we can but supply them & prevent our people that lives upon the Ceded Land from runing out their Land, I hope before the summer is over we shall have them all in our Interest.<sup>134</sup>

### CHAPTER III

#### WAR WITH THE INDIANS, 1778-1782

Galphin's encouraging reports to Henry Laurens on Indian affairs in Georgia may have contributed to the advent of a new federal policy toward southern Indians in the spring of 1778. On March 6 the Board of War, which had previously been given some oversight of Indian affairs, instructed military commanders to enlist southern Indians in continental service.<sup>135</sup> There was precedent for these instructions. After the loss of Canada in 1776, the Continental Congress had authorized General Washington to enlist northern Indians "in the service of the United Colonies."<sup>136</sup> However, with respect to the southern tribes, Congress adhered to its policy of neutrality until 1778 because of the open antagonism of the Cherokee toward Whigs, the great distances of most southern Indian towns from white settlements, and the assumption that Stuart and his agents strongly influenced actions of Indians throughout the Southeast. Galphin proved the last of these assumptions to be incorrect with respect to the Creeks. Almost singlehandedly and with very little guidance from Congress or the Board of War, he had nurtured a Creek neutralist faction and succeeded in signing a "treaty of peace" with them in 1777. The Board of War's March 1778 decision to use southern Indians

militarily seems to have been a response to the news of Galphin's successes.

However, the instructions from the Board of War to enlist Indians were virtually ignored in Georgia because of the critical events of the late spring and early summer of 1778. At about the time that Galphin was assuring Laurens of Creek loyalty, Alexander McGillivray and a handful of other Upper Creek headmen began planting new seeds of anti-American propaganda. In order to turn fellow tribesmen against the neutralists, McGillivray harped on two principal grievances: the continuing encroachments of backcountry settlers onto Creek lands west of the Ogeechee River and Galphin's failure to provide the Indians with adequate supplies after the Old Town treaty.

When the goods shortage became acute, McGillivray convinced headmen from both Upper and Lower towns to petition Stuart once again to reopen the British trade. A Creek delegation was formed to meet Stuart in Pensacola, and several Okfuskee headmen joined it. Their presence convinced Stuart that the neutralist towns, which had run his traders out of the Creek nation, were back on his side. The superintendent agreed to reopen the trade, and early in March he sent Taitt back to the Upper Creek towns and McIntosh back to the Lower towns. Both agents carried with them an abundance of new goods from London.<sup>137</sup>

Later in March McIntosh held a conference with all Lower Creek headmen and extracted a promise from each of them, even the

Cusseta king, that they would no longer listen to Galphin's "bad talks."<sup>138</sup> Taitt likewise worked to secure promises of loyalty from disaffected Upper Creek towns. The Okfuskee and Tallassee resisted his overtures, but on May 1, 1778, representatives from these towns were present in Pensacola when 400 Creeks gathered at Stuart's invitation to participate in an Anglo-Indian congress.<sup>139</sup> Stuart later claimed that he won further concessions from the Indians, for among other things the headmen assured him of their resolve to "drop all communication with the rebels, place their whole confidence in a trade from Pensacola."<sup>140</sup> How sincere the Indians were when they made these promises is open to speculation in light of their proclivity toward cooperation at congresses, especially when gifts and goods were distributed.

Galphin reported to Laurens from Silver Bluff the following month and tried to discredit reports of Stuart's success at the Pensacola congress. According to Galphin, most of the Indians attending did so to humor Stuart and to increase their chances of obtaining British goods. Of course, the very fact that British agents had returned to the Creek towns and were supplying the Indians was evidence that Galphin's neutralist faction had already lost some ground. Nevertheless, Galphin expressed only optimism in his letter to Laurens and pointed out that hundreds of Creeks continued to trade with him at Old Town. In Galphin's words, "I have been nine weeks at Ogeechee upon the line and was not

one day clear of Indians all the time I was there. I am but just come home and must go back in a day or two."<sup>141</sup>

Galphin's reception of Indian delegations at Old Town proved to be extremely effective as a way of sustaining anti-British sentiments among at least some of the Creek towns. The traditional neutralist faction of Okfuskee and Cusseta continued to resist McGillivray's and Stuart's demands that they sever all ties with Galphin. Moreover, during the early summer of 1778 headmen from these towns openly opposed efforts of the pro-British towns to mobilize another large group of Indians for an attack on the frontier. The Okfuskee threatened to repeat their previous attempt to murder British traders and the Cusseta king warned the Coweta that his warriors would massacre Loyalists near Pensacola if any Creeks moved against Georgia.<sup>142</sup>

The neutralists' rhetoric deterred other Creeks about a month, but in the end McGillivray and the pro-British faction prevailed when Galphin failed to provide an adequate supply of American goods. In July of 1778 several Creek bands set out for the Ceded Lands, where they burned cabins, slaughtered cattle and hogs, and killed several dozen settlers.<sup>143</sup> Before these bands returned, two much larger parties of Creek warriors left the Chattahoochee valley to raid. One of these parties succeeded in capturing a fort on the Satilla River in southeast Georgia, while the second party, numbering 120 warriors, raided settlements along the Altamaha River.<sup>144</sup>



All of the Creek warriors returned to their towns in September and October when they learned of Whig plans to retaliate by destroying any undefended Indian villages. This counterattack never took place, primarily because British troops simultaneously threatened Georgia's coast and because all available militiamen and Continental soldiers rushed to its defense. But despite the fact that Creek towns were spared the torch, when the marauding warriors returned home they were not greeted with victory celebrations. Instead, neutralists threatened civil war by insisting that they would lead raids against Florida Loyalists. The Cusseta king actually sent out raiders who captured three white Loyalists, "killed them, and cut them up and hanged them up on trees in different places."<sup>145</sup> However, this raiding abated when the neutralists received word from Galphin that Georgia leaders, reacting to the vicious Creek raids against the Georgia frontier, had forced him to cut off his already inadequate supply of trading goods.<sup>146</sup> Since the neutralists had consistently prohibited British traders from reentering their towns after running them out in 1777, Galphin's inability to trade with the Indians left the neutralists with no source of supply. In this precarious state, they could not hope to offer much further resistance to the well supplied pro-British faction.

Patrick Carr, an American trader living in Cusseta town in 1778, wrote Galphin in November to encourage him to reopen the American trade. Carr was convinced that even a few goods would

keep the neutrals anti-British, but, as he warned Galphin, "if our friends are not supplied with ammunition our Enemies will get them all over on their side, as they will have no ammunition to defend themselves."<sup>147</sup> Galphin was all too aware of the danger of not supplying the neutralists. As he explained in another letter to Laurens, he had not been in favor of the trade embargo, but "the people upon the frontiers theatnd to kill me & the Indians too if I supplyd them."<sup>148</sup> Not only was Galphin indignant that Georgia Whig leaders had forced him to stop the trade, but he placed all the blame for the raids during the summer of 1778 on the backcountry settlers: "the Ceded Land people may thanke themselves for the Creek war for it never has been in Stuarts power to have set them on us."<sup>149</sup>

At the same time that Galphin was explaining to Henry Laurens why the trade embargo was counterproductive, the Creek neutralists decided to speak to Galphin personally about their increasingly impoverished state. They sent word to him of their intentions, and he agreed to meet them at Old Town in December. Ten headmen, including the Tallassee chief, Opeitley Mico, and the Cusseta king, attended the conference.<sup>150</sup> Apparently Galphin still hoped to keep this one faction of Creeks neutral, but in the absence of any supplies, the federal commissioner could only promise future goods and make what must have been a halfhearted attempt to formulate plans for a "great peace meeting" to be held in the spring of 1779.

The "great peace meeting" never took place, but Galphin did fulfill his promise to the neutralists to secure some goods for them. In fact, he managed to reopen the Old Town trading post in January of 1779. Early in the month he wrote American General Benjamin Lincoln that he "expected a good many Indians down at Ogeechee the last of this month to purchase goods."<sup>151</sup> The optimistic tone of this letter indicates that Galphin hoped a renewal of Indian-Whig trading might preserve and strengthen the neutralist faction. However, he could not foresee that by the end of January not only would travel to Old Town be impossible, but the execution of any of his duties as a federal commissioner would be extremely difficult.

At the time that he wrote Benjamin Lincoln, Galphin knew that British forces had captured Savannah the previous December. But Galphin did not know that British strategists had shifted the entire focus of their American military operations to the South in the fall of 1778. Consequently, he was unprepared for the events of early 1779. After British troops consolidated their position in Savannah, Lt. Col. Archibald Campbell led a column of British soldiers up the Savannah River to Augusta, which he captured and occupied.<sup>152</sup> Campbell had one primary reason for making this move: As part of the master plan for carrying out the war in the South, he expected to rendezvous with pro-British Indians and Loyalists at Augusta. Stuart had led British authorities to believe that these Indians and Loyalists would flock to

aid the British when significant numbers of troops appeared. Campbell apparently had envisioned that this rallying had been taking place while British troops were attacking Savannah. However, because word of the British arrival in Savannah did not even reach Stuart in Pensacola until the following month, no Indians and only a few Loyalists swelled the ranks of Campbell's forces in Augusta.<sup>153</sup>

Campbell was very disappointed when the Indian support did not materialize as promised by Stuart, but he lost no time sending what troops he did have out to plunder. In a raid on Silver Bluff, Galphin lost 129 slaves, 70 horses, and innumerable cattle.<sup>154</sup> He personally had to flee in the night in order to escape capture. Yet, in the midst of this predicament, Galphin took time to try to get a message through to the 100 Creeks on their way to Old Town in late January to swap their deerskins for his supplies.<sup>155</sup> Galphin wished to warn the Creek neutralists "not to Enter Georgia" until the path was again "open to Ogeechee," so that he could meet them and insure their safety.<sup>156</sup> Campbell's men captured Galphin's first messenger, but a second messenger slipped through the British lines and carried the warning into the Creek nation.

As soon as Stuart learned of the British invasion, he resolved once again to execute his long cherished plan for a great Indian attack upon the frontier. Calls for warriors went out to both Creek and Cherokee tribes. About 300 Cherokee responded and got as far as South Carolina before they were confronted by 1,500

Whig militiamen and decided to retreat.<sup>157</sup> Before they could return home, however, 300 Virginia soldiers destroyed some of the Cherokee towns which had survived the 1776 Cherokee war.<sup>158</sup>

Pro-British Creeks defied the weakened neutralists and also responded to Stuart's call. In the spring of 1779, Taitt led about 400 Creek warriors and fifty Loyalists to the Ogeechee, where they burned several forts and also raided Old Town.<sup>159</sup> According to Daniel McMurphy, who then lived at Old Town and worked in the trading post, the marauders carried off more than 1,400 pounds of "skins" and 14,000 pounds of flour.<sup>160</sup> However, 1,000 Carolina militiamen confronted the Indians shortly thereafter and prevented them from joining Campbell, who had already despaired of ever seeing any Indian reinforcements and had withdrawn from Augusta toward Savannah.<sup>161</sup> Frustrated in their attempt to reach Campbell, the Indians split into three groups. Emistesequo led one group toward the Ceded Lands, Taitt and McGillivray set out with seventy followers for Savannah, and the remainder of the Indians returned to the Chattahoochee valley. The Taitt-McGillivray party did reach Savannah and subsequently participated in a raid into South Carolina before also returning to the Creek nation.<sup>162</sup>

All in all, the "unified" Indian movement against the frontier conceived by Stuart did only minor damage, and except for the raid on Old Town and the Ogeechee forts, had little strategic importance except as a distraction to companies of Whig militia operating in

the Georgia backcountry. Stuart, who had been disappointed more than once by the unreliability of Indian aid, did not live to learn of the unimpressive results of the 1779 attack.<sup>163</sup> The superintendent died in Pensacola on March 26 after a brief illness.

Some months later the British authorities reorganized their southern department into two new divisions and decided to subordinate the new superintendents of these divisions to the British War Department so that military commanders could better orchestrate any future efforts to mobilize the Indians. Alexander Cameron, Stuart's former Cherokee agent, accepted the superintendency of the Mississippi division, and Thomas Brown accepted the superintendency of the more strategically critical Atlantic division, which gave him administrative authority over the Creeks and Cherokee.<sup>164</sup> Brown, founder in 1776 of the elite East Florida Rangers, had already earned a reputation for his success as a Loyalist military leader in East Florida and Georgia. He was a major proponent of the use of Indians in British military operations and took a great interest in Indian affairs.<sup>165</sup> After Savannah fell to the British in 1778, Brown accompanied Campbell to Augusta as lieutenant colonel of the King's Rangers. While in Augusta he may have participated in the looting of Silver Bluff. Later, when Campbell's forces withdrew from Augusta, Brown settled in Savannah.<sup>166</sup>

Whigs exercised uncontested control over the Georgia back-country for almost a year after Campbell's withdrawal. During that time Galphin made some effort to maintain contact with a few Creek towns such as Tallassee, but the increasing number of confrontations between Creeks and whites along the frontier soon made communication politically impossible. Moreover, because of the raids on Silver Bluff and Old Town, he had no more supplies to distribute. Eventually the entire Creek neutralist faction submitted to the pro-British faction and agreed to fight against their former friends.<sup>167</sup>

Brown deserves most of the credit for keeping Creek and Cherokee Indians in British interests during the winter of 1779-80, but his efforts were underwritten by his military superiors. General Henry Clinton, who sailed from New York for the South in February of 1780 with 11,000 troops, instructed Brown to "do everything" in his power to keep the Indians "in good humor."<sup>168</sup> Brown spared no expense to achieve this goal. For instance, in order to properly supply the Creeks and Cherokee and equip them for continued participation in the Revolution, Brown spent large sums helping William Panton and others establish a stronger trading community in Pensacola. The Indians were apparently very appreciative of Brown's efforts, and they displayed their pro-British loyalties in April of 1780 when Spaniards threatened Pensacola. McGillivray and McIntosh led 1,800 Upper and Lower Creeks to Pensacola's defense, but after



months passed and the Spanish failed to attack, the Indians drifted back to their towns.<sup>169</sup>

While Indians and British soldiers were massing in Pensacola to insure that town's safety, General Henry Clinton arrived off the South Carolina coast and laid siege to Charleston. As a tactical maneuver, Clinton then sent Thomas Brown in Savannah to reoccupy Augusta, where Whig activity in Georgia had centered for more than a year. In response to Clinton's orders, Brown and his Rangers set out for Augusta in May of 1780, but because of the scarcity of provisions in Georgia, Brown decided to route his march through South Carolina. This alternate approach to Augusta led through Silver Bluff, where Brown stopped long enough to construct a fort and arrest George Galphin. Brown charged the aging rebel commissioner with high treason and apparently sent him to Savannah for trial. No transcript of a trial proceeding survives, but an entry on June 8, 1780, in the journal of the Loyalist legislature meeting in British-held Savannah shows that Galphin's Revolutionary activities were being evaluated.<sup>170</sup>

Within months after Galphin's capture, British forces occupied Charleston and then fanned out into the South Carolina backcountry. Thomas Brown, after securing Augusta for the British, concentrated his efforts on meeting groups of Indian headmen, dismantling several frontier forts in northwestern South Carolina, ordering a number of squatters forcibly removed from Indian lands, and opening British trade between Augusta and the Indians.<sup>171</sup>



In order to strengthen the Anglo-Indian alliance, he also invited Creeks and Cherokee to attend a conference in Augusta in September of 1780.

Three hundred Indians assembled for the September conference and were enjoying the large quantities of rum and trading goods which Brown had accumulated for them when Colonel Elijah Clark and 600 Whig militiamen surrounded Augusta.<sup>172</sup> The ensuing attack caught Brown completely by surprise and forced him to evacuate Augusta; he was reduced to defending a small hill just north of the town with no sources of food or water. However, the Creeks and Cherokee came to Brown's rescue and the combined British and Indian forces managed to hold the small hill against repeated assaults by Clark and his men. Finally, when British reinforcements appeared across the river in South Carolina, the Whig troops withdrew.<sup>173</sup>

In the aftermath of Clark's raid, Brown oversaw the construction of better fortifications around Augusta and also sent his troops into the Ceded Lands to ravage Whig strongholds.<sup>174</sup> Brown's Rangers were joined on this expedition by some of the Indians who survived Clark's raid; other bands of Creeks and Cherokee escalated frontier incursions in order to seek revenge for their fellow tribesmen who had died at Augusta. At the same time, Chickamauga warriors raided the frontiers of South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia. The Indian forays of 1780 terrorized

the southeastern backcountry, but Whig forces retaliated only against the Chickamauga.<sup>175</sup>

How did George Galphin react to these depredations? Unfortunately, surviving records provide no clues. Apparently, Galphin took no active role in Indian affairs after Brown's occupation of Silver Bluff and his own capture. He never resigned as federal commissioner for Indian affairs, but the position had no practical significance during the last years of the Revolution, because the Continental Congress abandoned all attempts to manipulate southeastern Indians after the dissolution of the Creek neutralist faction. Ironically, in 1780 Galphin sat at Silver Bluff, probably under British guard, while Creeks who once treated with him made periodic visits to treat with a British colonel thirty miles away in Augusta. As if this reversal of roles were not hard enough for Galphin to accept, Brown seems to have added insult to injury by designating the fort at Silver Bluff as the place where he would store supplies for the British Indian trade.<sup>176</sup>

The hardships of war and the frustration of failure apparently took their toll on Galphin. He died at Silver Bluff on December 1, 1780, and was buried on his plantation.<sup>177</sup> If he had lived another year, he would have witnessed the reversal of military advantage in Georgia and South Carolina. At Galphin's death the British controlled most major outposts in the backcountry as well as the coastal cities of Charleston and Savannah, but in the late spring

of 1781 a dramatic redcoat retreat began. An increase in rebel guerrilla activity accompanied this retreat. When Whig depredations intensified around Augusta, Brown found it difficult to protect his supply boats coming up the Savannah River; then in May, Continental troops under the command of Lt. Col. Henry Lee recaptured Silver Bluff and cut the supply line altogether.<sup>178</sup> Elijah Clark and his militiamen launched their second attack on Augusta in June, and this time Brown surrendered. After being exchanged, he resumed his duties as Indian superintendent in Savannah.

In spite of the British retreat, southern Indians remained loyal British allies. Cherokee continued to raid North Carolina settlements, and some Creeks aided British resistance of Spanish advances along the West Florida coast. Brown supported both tribes with arms and ammunition. However, by April 1782 Whig cavalry activity around Savannah prevented him from sending further supplies overland. Thereafter, boats carried the arms and ammunition to the Altamaha River, where Indians gathered to collect the supplies and transport them to their towns.<sup>179</sup>

Of all the southern tribes, the Cherokee were the first to make peace with the Americans. Acting under the authority of the Board of War, General Nathanael Greene met tribal headmen in July of 1781 and agreed to a cessation of hostilities.<sup>180</sup> However, representatives from the Chickamauga towns did not sign the 1781 treaty along with their Cherokee brethren, nor did they desist

from their slaughtering and burning in the Carolina backcountry until almost a year after Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown, and then only because Brown directed the Chickamauga chiefs to stop raiding and requested them to move their towns further west from white settlements.<sup>181</sup>

Creeks continued to assault Whigs almost as long as did the Chickamauga. The last confrontation took place in June of 1782, when Emisteseguo, McGillivray, and 160 Upper Creek warriors on their way to Savannah to reinforce the British garrison there surprised American General Anthony Wayne and his troops. One of Wayne's soldiers killed Emisteseguo in the battle which followed the surprise meeting.<sup>182</sup> Wayne subsequently offered to suspend hostilities, and McGillivray, who eventually replaced Emisteseguo as the most powerful Creek chief, accepted on behalf of the tribe.<sup>183</sup>

Despite their agreement to the cease-fire, the Creeks had no desire to make peace with the Americans as had the Cherokee. They clung to their British supply line even after Brown and other officials evacuated Savannah and resettled in St. Augustine. When news reached the Creeks in the summer of 1783 that the British were also withdrawing from Florida in favor of Spain and recalling all traders and agents from the Indian country, the Upper Creeks sent a delegation to St. Augustine to demand that Brown take the tribe with him and that the King resettle them on British lands.<sup>184</sup> Of course, when the last British ships

left Florida in 1783, no Creeks were on board. Instead, this tribe, like the other tribes who supported the British during the Revolution, were left to the mercy of their victors.

The penalty for choosing the losing side was all too obvious to the Creeks. Georgia, like her sister states, looked upon Indian land as the spoils of war which should rightfully belong to the state. The Georgia Assembly began calling for a conference with the Creeks as early as April of 1783 so that the Indian leaders could cede the state all the land between the Ogeechee and Oconee Rivers as reparation "for the many injuries done that virtuous State."<sup>185</sup>

Galphin had been dead almost three years when on November 1, 1783, Creek headmen met newly appointed Georgia commissioners in Augusta to cede their lands and make their peace with the Americans. McGillivray boycotted the treaty, but there were other chiefs from Upper and Lower towns present. Both Opeitley Mico of Tallassee and the Cusseta king attended. They were old friends of Galphin's and former leaders of the neutralist faction.<sup>186</sup>

The November 1783 treaty officially ended Indian-white conflict in the Georgia backcountry during the Revolution; moreover, the treaty proclaimed that "all differences between the said parties heretofore subsisting shall cease and be forgotten."<sup>187</sup> However, while Revolutionary hostilities ceased, new conflicts over the Indians' coveted land simultaneously arose. The federal government, operating under the Articles of Confeder-

ation, attempted to solve these conflicts over the next several years by formulating an Indian policy that was much more detailed and comprehensive than the cursory resolutions and committee reports of the Revolutionary era. George Galphin of course had no direct influence on the formulation of this new federal policy, but his earlier wartime experiences with the Creeks certainly provided an example of how diplomacy instead of aggression could pacify Indians and work to American advantage.

## NOTES

### Chapter I

- <sup>1</sup> Francis Paul Prucha, American Indian Policy in the Formative Years: The Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts, 1790-1834 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 27.
- <sup>2</sup> Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, 34 vols. (Washington, 1904-1937), II: 174-77.
- <sup>3</sup> Thomas Cushing to Joseph Hawley, July 24, 1775, in Edmund C. Burnett, ed., Letters of Members of the Continental Congress, 8 vols. (Washington, 1921-1933), I: 176.
- <sup>4</sup> Journals of the Continental Congress, II: 174-77, 183.
- <sup>5</sup> Francis Harper, ed., The Travels of William Bartram (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), 198.
- <sup>6</sup> Deed Book E, 306, in the Office of the Clerk of the Superior Court, Chatham County Courthouse, Savannah.
- <sup>7</sup> Letters of administration on the estate of Thomas Galphin, late of Tullamore in Armagh Co., were granted his widow Barbara on February 6, 1734/5. The entry in the Index of Prerogative Administrations in the Genealogical Office, Dublin, Ireland, reveals that Thomas left seven children, among them a son George.
- <sup>8</sup> Deed Book E, 305, in the Office of the Clerk of the Superior Court, Chatham County Courthouse, Savannah.
- <sup>9</sup> Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, II: 123-24.
- <sup>10</sup> A. S. Salley, Jr., ed., Register of St. Philips Parish (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1974), 177. Also, Colonial Deed Book BBB, 75, in the Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.
- <sup>11</sup> Will of George Galphin, Old Estate Book, 14-25, in the Probate Court, Abbeville County Courthouse, Abbeville, S.C.
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- 17 Ibid., VII: 673-74; VIII: 183.
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- 20 Ibid.
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- 22 James H. O'Donnell, III, "The South on the Eve of the Revolution: The Native Americans," in W. Robert Higgins, ed., The Revolutionary War in the South: Power, Conflict, and Leadership (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1979), 68.
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- 25 Louis DeVorsey, Jr., The Indian Boundary in the Southern Colonies, 1763-1775 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 3.
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- 115 Davis, "George Galphin," 21.
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- 126 Colonel Samuel Elbert of the Second Georgia Continental Battalion ordered "Capt. Walker with his troops and as many of the third regiment as Col. Rae thinks necessary are to attend him & Mr. Galphin to the Indian Treaty & to protect and keep from harm the Indian ambassadors now on Ogeechee, after which they are to be marched to headquarters." See, "Order Book of Samuel Elbert," Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, V, pt. 2, 67-68.
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134 Ibid.

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