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LACHLAN McGILLIVRAY: A SCOT ON THE ALABAMA FRONTIER

by

Mary Ann Oglesby Neeley

Most Alabamians are familiar with Alexander McGillivray, the Creek leader who did so much to help his people maintain their lands in the decade following the American Revolution. His father, Lachlan McGillivray, is less well known except in regard to the glamorized story of his marriage to the half-Indian-half-French girl, Sehoy Marchand. Lachlan was an interesting and influential man in his own time who has been somewhat neglected by historians. Alabama's Albert Pickett discussed Lachlan to some extent, but he did not go into great detail regarding Lachlan's political and business achievements. Both Lachlan and the mother of his children, Sehoy, influenced their son, Alexander. The specifics concerning the parents help to explain the later actions of the offspring.

The traditional story of Lachlan and Sehoy was told by Pickett, and subsequent historians, including Thomas Owen, John Caughey, and Arthur P. Whittaker, have followed his example. The early Alabama historian described Lachlan as the son of wealthy parents of Dunmaglass, Scottland. When he was sixteen, the boy ran away, sailed for Charleston with a shilling in his pocket, the clothes he wore, "a red head, a stout frame, an honest heart, a fearless disposition, and cheerful spirits which seldom became depressed." This dauntless lad, once in Carolina, joined and worked with a band of traders who paid him with a jack knife. Lachlan traded the implement for deerskins which he then bartered in Charleston, and thus launched himself into a career as a trader. The immigrant soon established a trading post in the vicinity of Fort Toulouse, the French enclave at the confluence of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers in the heart of the Creek country.[1]

A few miles above Fort Toulouse, at the Hickory Ground, lived an Indian girl named Sehoy Marchand. Sehoy, according to Pickett, was the daughter of Captain Marchand, a com-

[1]Albert J. Pickett, *History of Alabama and Incidentally of Georgia and Mississippi* (1851; rpt. Birmingham: Birmingham Book and Magazine Co., 1962), 342-343.

mander of Fort Toulouse who had been killed during a mutiny of his troops in 1722. The mother of this girl was also named Sehoy and was a member of the powerful, elite Wind Clan.[2]

Pickett related that the younger Sehoy was sixteen when Lachlan arrived in the Creek land, and was "cheerful in countenance, bewitching in looks, and graceful in form." As her father was a dark-complexioned Frenchman, she did not look light enough for a half-blood. Soon Lachlan and Sehoy "joined their destinies in marriage according to the ceremony of the country." The two lived at Little Tallassee, four miles above Wetumpka, on the east bank of the Coosa, while Lachlan's trading venture, enhanced by his marriage into the Wind Clan, continued to expand.[3]

So has the romantic story of the parents of Alexander McGillivray been reiterated since Pickett wrote in the early 1850's. Yet, there is some doubt to be cast on the validity of this account. Pickett placed Lachlan's arrival in America in the wrong location, and it was under somewhat different circumstances.

The McGillivray clan was of celtic origin, descended from a warrior named Gillivray whose stronghold had been Dunmaglass. There was a McGillivray at the battle of Culloden who was wounded and ordered killed by Cumberland. It was from the clan seat in Invernesshire, a region strong in Stuart sentiment, that Lachlan came.[4] Pickett was correct in stating this, but the South Carolina colony was not the young immigrant's port of entry.

The new colony to the south of Carolina, Georgia, was having problems. Following its settlement in 1733, the Trustees discovered that some of the "useful poor" from England were inclined to be "useless" in the New World, so they determined to send over some Scottish Highlanders and persecuted Germans. To procure the necessary Highlanders, Lieutenant Hugh McKay and Captain George Dunbar were commissioned to recruit the prescribed number of one hundred and fifty men, women, and children. These people were enlisted in the vicinity

[2]*Ibid.*, 343.
[3]*Ibid.*, 343, 344.
[4]Thomas Innes, ed., *The Scottish Tartans* (London: Johnston and Bacon, 1969), 68.

of Inverness. Some who signed for the voyage paid their own passage and that of their servants; some went as indentured servants to the Trust. In all, one hundred and sixty-three persons sailed on the *Prince of Wales* from Inverness, October 20, 1735. On board were three McGillivrays: Archibald, Farquar, and Lachland.[5]

The ship arrived in Tybee Roads off Savannah on January 10, 1736. Only one of the McGillivrays was a paying passenger: Archibald was fifteen and had a grant of fifty acres. Farquar and Lachlan were not so fortunate. Farquar, age thirty, came as a servant of J. Cuthbert, and Lachlan, sixteen, was the servant of "Jo. Machintosh, Holmes' son." Apparently, Jo. left the Georgia colony to settle in Carolina in December, 1740.[6] It is possible that Lachlan continued into Carolina with Mackintosh and from there began his life as a trader.

Thomas Woodward in his *Reminiscences* asserted that Lachlan was given his start in the Indian trade by Malcolm McPherson, and that McGillivray came into the Creek country in the company of John Tate and Daniel McDonald. By his own account, Lachlan received an Indian trading license from South Carolina in 1744 for commerce with the Upper Creeks.[7]

Among the Creeks, Lachlan met the Indian, Sehoy, who already had a daughter by McPherson. The girl did have "powerful connections" through her clan, but there is reason to doubt that she was half-French. Woodward flatly denied her white blood, asserting that she was a full-blooded Tuskegee woman. J. D. Driesbach in his letters to Lyman Draper also said that Sehoy was a Tuskegee woman of non-mixed blood. Some credence may be given these accounts as there may never

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[5]Allen D. Candler, ed., *Colonial Records of the State of Georgia* (Atlanta: Franklin-Turner Co., 1905), III, 387 (Hereafter referred to as Col. Rec. Ga.); John Patterson MacLean, *An Historical Account of the Settlement of Scotch Highlanders in America* (Cleveland: Helman-Taylor Co., 1900), 150-151; E. Merton Coulter and Albert B. Saye, eds., *A List of the Early Settlers of Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1949), 83.

[6]MacLean, *Historical Account,* 151; Coulter and Saye, eds., *A List of Early Settlers,* 83, 85.

[7]Thomas Woodward, *Reminiscences of the Creek or Muskoghe Indians* (1859; rpt. Mobile: Southern University Press, 1865), 52; William L. McDowell, Jr., ed., *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, May 21, 1750-August 7, 1754* (Columbia: South Carolina Archives Department, 1958). 518 (Hereafter referred to as Col. Rec. S.C.).

have been a Marchand serving as commander at Toulouse. There was a Captain Marchand de Courcelle stationed at Mobile, and it was from his detachment that troops for Toulouse were selected. This man, however, was still being mentioned in records of the Mobile colony ten years after the mutiny at the fort.[8]

Lachlan and Sehoy established a relationship from which three children survived childhood: Jeannet, Sophia, and Alexander. The trader built a home and planted an apple orchard at Little Tallassee, a few miles up the Coosa River from Otciapofa (the Hickory Ground.)[9]

McGillivray's career as a trader continued, and a 1750 South Carolina list of licensed Creek traders included his name. He demonstrated his usefulness to the colonial government in various ways during the years. In 1751, he wrote to the South Carolinian, William Pinckney, that the oft-mentioned rumors of Creek-Cherokee hostilities were becoming a reality as the Creeks had killed seven or eight Cherokees and were searching for others. McGillivray labeled the Cherokees the aggressors for their killing of some Creeks the previous summer.[10]

The trader then reported on the re-building and strengthening of the French Fort Toulouse. Built in 1717 as a trading center and an advanced outpost in the French-English rivalry for the control of the continent, the fort was not a fortification designed for either offensive or defensive action against the Indians. The natives, in their efforts to insure their lands and well-being, shifted their favors from one European power to another. Their invitation to the French to establish the fort was an example of this strategy. In 1751, the French renovated the fort in their continuing exertions to influence the Creeks,

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[8]Woodward *Reminiscences*, 53-54; J. D. Driesbach to Lyman Draper, Draper Manuscripts, Series V, Vol. I, p. 1, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis. (Microfilm in possession of Dr. F. L. Owsley, Jr., Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama); John Stuart to George Germaine, Oct. 6, 1777, PRO, CO 5/79, p. 61 (Microfilm, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.); Daniel H. Thomas, "Fort Toulouse," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXII (1960), 160.

[9]Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 345; John R. Swanton, *Early History of the Creek Indians and Their Neighbors* (1922; rpt. New York: Johnson Reprint Co., 1970), 242.

[10]McDowell, ed., *Col. Rec. S.C.*, 129; Lachlan McGillivray to William Pinckney, Dec. 18, 1751, in *ibid.*, 215-216.

and as English-French antagonisms steadily increased. Lachlan wrote that

> The French at the Allebawmaw have completed their fort which is a pretty strong one; they have a boat come up lately deep loaded with a Priest, Popery, and Brandy. . . .

Lachlan went on to relate that the head men of the Upper and Lower Creeks had been invited to Mobile to receive presents. He also reported hearing that "a great Number of Men arrived lately at Mobile (supposed to be Soldiers) which gives the Indians a good deal of Umbrage."[11]

It is evident that Lachlan was acting not only as a trader, but also as an observer and representative of the colonial administration. The Creek-Chrokee hostilities continued, and in 1753, Governor James Glen of South Carolina instigated moves to end the troubles. At a conference in Charleston, Lachlan acted as interpreter for the Creeks. In 1754, he reported to Glen on the success of the peace mediations.

> The Peace you made between this Nation Creek and the Cherokees shews a very promising aspect for last winter they met in the hunting ground, eat, drank, and smoaked together, and a few days ago there was several Head Men and Warriors set out from this Nation for the Cherokees in order to confirm the Peace.[12]

The South Carolina governor was informed in the same letter that there was some difficulty between the Creeks and the Choctaws. McGillivray illustrated one of the aspects of European tactics in North America with his explanation that the French were "endeavoring to make up the Breach but I hope they will not succeed." The English often pursued a policy of encouraging Indian tribal hostilities as this tended to divert the natives' animosities from themselves. The French, though, frequently encouraged peace between the tribes. Too, in 1754, the French needed Creek allies other than those living in the immediate Fort Toulouse area. The Scottish trader in his

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[11]McGillivray to Pinckney, Dec. 18, 1751, in McDowell, ed., *Col. Rec. S. C.*, 216; Thomas, "Fort Toulouse," 141-152; Bienville, "Memoir on Louisiana," in Dunbar Rowland and Albert G. Sanders, eds., *Mississippi Provincial Archives, 1704-1743, French Dominion* (Jackson: Press of Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1932), 512.

[12]McDowell, ed., *Col. Rec. S.C.*, 388; Lachlan McGillivray to Gov. James Glen, April 14, 1754, in *ibid.*, 501-502.

letter to Glen exemplified the English approach. It was expedient that there be peace between the Creeks and Cherokees, who were English allies, but it was not an urgent matter that the Creeks and Choctaws, who were strongly Francophile, be on friendly terms.[13]

In 1754, McGillivray protested the South Carolina Council's granting a trading license in some of his towns to another trader. In stating his case, the petitioner pointed out that

> he gave no cause of complaint to the Indians or his fellow traders and kept the Indians of his Towns in good Order and well affected to this Government, and that he has upon all Occasions exerted himself in the Indian Nation for the publick Good even to the Neglect and Detriment of his own Business is a fact well known to all the Traders in that Nation. . . .

Lachlan reminded the officials of his work as linguist for which he received no reward and that the reason he was not in town in June to re-apply for his license was that he was on public business. One of the towns whose license he lost was his own home, "Weetomkee, Old Town, alias Little Tallassee." The council, on consideration of the petition, withdrew the other trader's permit and in doing so reinstated McGillivray's.[14]

During the French and Indian War, McGillivray took part in various efforts to thwart French designs. He wrote Governor William Lyttleton of South Carolina in 1758 that the Upper Creeks had proposed an expedition against a French fort on the Mississippi. The trader had forwarded powder and ball to aid the Indians in their mission.[15] In 1763, the English worries concerning the French in America ended with the defeat of the latter and their withdrawal from the continent. McGillivray's affairs prospered as he rose to further prominence among the traders.

In 1775, James Adair, a trader to the Chickasaws, dedicated his *The History of the American Indian* to Lachlan

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[13]McGillivray to Glen, April 14, 1754, in McDowell, ed., *Col. Rec. S.C.*, 502; John E. Alden, *John Stuart and the Southern Frontier* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1944), 30-31.

[14]McDowell, ed., *Col. Rec. S.C.*, 518.

[15]McGillivray to Sir William Henry Lyttleton, July 13, 1758, Lyttleton Papers, 1756-1760, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan (Xeroxed copies in possession of author).

McGillivray, George Croghan, and George Galphin; all three men were active on the frontier. Adair lauded them for

> Your distinguished abilities — your acquaintance with the North American Indian language, rites and customs — your long application and service in the dangerous sphere of an Indian life and your successful management of the savage natives. . . .[16]

The author described Lachlan McGillivray as "humane and intelligent" and acclaimed both Galphin and Lachlan as "sensible, public-spirited, and judicious." He credited the traders with keeping the Creeks from joining the Cherokees in their attacks on the English in 1760-1761. In recommending either McGillivray or Galphin for the position of Indian superintendent, Adair stated that no one had as much influence with the dangerous "Muskoghe" as they.[17] Although Lachlan was never appointed to the office, his influence and esteem among the traders are attested to be Adair's proposal.

McGillivray did not confine his activities to those of a trader, nor did he spend his whole time in the Indian Country. In 1749, as a resident of Augusta, he petitioned the Council of Georgia for one hundred acres of land on which he proposed to build a grist mill; the request was granted. Lachlan continued to ask for grants and usually received what he desired. In 1755, he was granted a lot in Hardwicke, and in 1756, five hundred acres on the Little Ogeechee River. From 1756 to 1762, he was the recipient of eight lots (some in Savannah and some in Augusta) and over seven thousand acres of land. In January, 1761, he stated that he owned forty-nine slaves.[18]

The trader-planter was recognized as a prominent citizen in the Georgia colony by various appointments to public office. In March, 1757, he became justice of the peace for the districts of Halifax and Augusta; on November 7, 1768, the Council of Georgia elected him as a member of the General Assembly for Halifax and Parish St. George. He was named commissioner

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[16]Samuel Cole Williams, ed., *Adair's History of the American Indian* (Nashville: National Society of Colonial Dames of America in Tennessee, 1953), xxxiii.

[17]*Ibid.*, 299, 393.

[18]Candler, ed., *Col. Rec. Ga.*, VI, 294; VII, 347, 344; Silas Emmett Lucas, Jr., *Index to the Headright and Bounty Grants of Georgia* (Vidalia, Ga.: Georgia Genealogical Reprints, 1970), n.p.; Candler, ed., *Col. Rec. Ga.*, VIII, 460-461.

of roads for Northwest Road "as far as Christ Church extends" on June 29, 1780.[19]

As the colonies moved toward a break with Great Britain and revolution, many Scots in America retained their loyalty to the Crown while others followed the course of the patriots. Lachlan took the path of the loyalists. In 1774, he signed a petition objecting to the method used for drawing up resolutions by "pretended advocates for liberties in America." In all the colonies at this time, non-mercantile elements were trying to "drive a reluctant minority of merchants into a sacrifice of trading interests for a good desired only by the former."[20] Lachlan McGillivray was not willing to destroy his ties with the British Empire.

Because of his pro-English sympathies, Lachlan was treated severely by the Georgians at the close of the war. The executive Council ordered his property appraised on June 19, 1783, and on June 24, 1783, the property was ordered sold. On July 15, the House of Assembly requested the governor to send to the executives and legislatures of all the states a list of persons issued with an Act of Attainder, Banishment, and Confiscation. Lachlan's name was fourth on this list which was headed by James Wright, the former royal governor. Besides banishment, Lachlan lost an estimated $100,000 in property. At the fall of Savannah and the departure of the British, McGillivray went back to Scotland and was living in Dunmaglas as late as 1799.[21]

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[19]Candler, ed., *Col. Rec. Ga.*, VII, 505; X, 646; Lilla M. Hawes, ed., *Collection of Georgia Historical Society* (Savannah: Georgia Historical Society, 1952), X, 112.

[20]George Gillman Smith, *The Story of Georgia: 1732-1860* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1968), 224; George White, *Historical Collections of Georgia* (1855; rpt. Danielsville, Ga.: Heritage Paper, 1968), 48-49; Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution:* 1763-1776 (New York: Frederick Unger Publishing Co., 1957), 6.

[21]Allen D. Candler, ed., *The Revolutionary Records of Georgia* (Atlanta: Franklin-Turner Co., 1908), 506-507; Georgia Statutory Laws, Record of the States, Ga. B2, July 15, 1783, n.p. (Microfilm, Ralph B. Draughon Library, Auburn University, Auburn, Ala.); Arthur Preston Whitaker, "Alexander McGillivray, 1783-1789, 1789-1793," *North Carolina Historical Review*, V (1928), 181; Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 419; John Innerarity to William Panton, March 12, 1799, in Marie Taylor, "William Panton," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XIV (1935), 118.

Although he did not take his family to Scotland with him, Lachlan had made some provisions for his son through the years. In 1759 and 1762, he requested and received grants of land for Alexander in Georgia. Thomas Woodward did not think that Alexander was literate, but a magazine of 1790 claimed that the elder McGillivray had the younger educated in Charleston and Savannah. Pickett and Woodward differ as to the circumstances and whereabouts of his children at the time of the last battle of Savannah. Woodward stated that Lachlan left the Creek Nation with Sophia and Alexander, but he was forced to send them back in the custody of a slave because of the American strength around the beleagured town. Pickett states that Sophia, who was married and had a son, was in the city with her father during the siege. Alexander was, by this time, a British agent among the Creeks and participating in Indian assaults on the Georgia frontier settlements. It is, therefore, unlikely that he was sent back to the Indian country in the care of his father's slaves. He was an independent young man engaged in activities of his own.[22]

Lachlan McGillivray, during his years among the Indians, developed an understanding of the problems confronting the natives because of their contact with the whites. One of the most serious of these was the use of hard liquor by the tribes. A contemporary author, Alexander Hewatt, commenting on the decreasing Indian population, blamed it on reduction of hunting grounds, European encouragement of tribal animosities, smallpox, the Indian slave trade, and, most fatally, the introduction of "spiritous liquors." Lachlan, too, thought liquor very damaging to the natives. In a letter to Governor Glen in 1754, McGillivray wrote

> The Indians are well affected and a general peace and Quietness resides among them, excepting what Disturbances is occasioned by immoderate Quantities of Rum brought among them. Which is a stop put to, would very

[22]Candler, ed., *Col. Rec. Ga.*, VIII, 123-124, 647; *The Universal Asylum and Columbin Magazine*, Sept., 1790, William Augustus Bowles File, Albert J. Pickett MSS. Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Ala.; Woodward, *Reminiscences*, 53; Pickett, *History of Alabama*, 418; Mary Ann Neeley, "Alexander McGillivray, Diplomatic Leader of the Creeks: 1783-1793 (unpublished Master's thesis, Auburn University, 1973), 25, 28-29, 33.

much contribute towards a good Harmony among the Indians.[23]

In a letter to Governor Lyttleton in 1759, McGillivray reported on the deaths of several of the Chickasaws "of smallpox owing to an immoderate use of spiritous liquors, bathing in cold water and drinking freely thereof."[24]

The frontier Indian traders were a hardy breed, looking for personal gain and achievement but with an interest in the Indians as a people to be both exploited and loved. Lachlan McGillivray was one of these who gained importance in the development of the Alabama-Georgia frontier. It is detracting from the real personality and character of the man to associate him only in regards to an Indian love affair and the accomplishments of his son. The older McGillivray, through his astuteness in dealing with both the natives and the whites, accrued money and status. Because of his loyalty to the English Crown, he lost not only these but his family as well. His willingness to sacrifice his life's work because of his beliefs speaks for the character of this man who arrived in America as an indentured servant.

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[23]Alexander Hewatt, *An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Colonies of South Carolina and Georgia* (1779; facsimile rpt. Spartenburg: The Reprint Company, 1962), II, 272-279; McGillivray to Glen, April 14, 1754 in McDowell, ed., *Col. Rec. S.C.*, 501-502.

[24]McGillivray to Lyttleton, May 15, 1759, Lyttleton Papers.

ALABAMA TOWN PRODUCTION DURING THE ERA OF GOOD FEELINGS

by

Stuart Seely Sprague

The successful conclusion of the War of 1812 triggered the first town promotion boom in America. The battles of The Thames and Horseshoe Bend made large areas of the Old West safe for settlement. Though most of this land was sold by the acre, a growing number of enterprising men, varying from individual farmers to bands of experienced speculators, saw the advantage of buying land by the square mile, platting it, and selling it in small sections as town lots and out lots. This was a national movement, yet its Alabama manifestations have been all but overlooked.

From 1815 to 1819 a bubble of economic optimism remained unbroken. The idea of a city rising out of the wilderness did not seem far fetched to a generation that has seen Pittsburgh, Lexington, Cincinnati, Louisville and St. Louis do just that. A sizeable number of the known new towns were platted in the South. The proportion would be even higher if runs of Southern newspapers of the period, the prime source of such information, were as full as that of Northern papers. Yet despite these gaps one can say confidently that of the four states and territories in which the planning of would-be cities was most noticeable, two were Southern: Kentucky[1] and Alabama.

It was the *Mobile Gazette* that carried the poem that best epitomized the spirit of the get rich quick, instant city mania:[2]

SOUTHERN SPECULATIONS

What own a city! you exclaim,
Yes own the spot, that's just the same,

[1]For Kentucky see Stuart Seely Sprague, "Town Making in the Era of Good Feelings: Kentucky 1814-1820," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* (forthcoming).

[2]*Mobile Gazette* quoted in the Dayton *Ohio Watchman*, June 11, 1818, verses 4-6, 8, 10, 12.

On which the place must stand;
For if on maps its once laid down,
It is a genuine a town,
As any in the land.

Town-making, now is quite a trade,
Of which the rules are ready made,
For those who stand in need;
Thus when a sport is intended,
If these ingredients be blended,
It cannot but succeed.

First choose an elevated bluff,
Just where the river's deep enough,
For ships of larger mould;
(If there should be a bar below,
O'er which the vessels cannot go,
The fact need not be told).

The most important point perhaps,
Lies in the drawing of the maps;
The painter there must try
By mingling yellow, red and green,
To make the most delightful scene,
That ever met the eye.

Of this obscure spot you may swear,
There never was a purer air,
And if your not believed,
At least your not belied,
For none can prove that men have *died*,
Where no man ever lived.

'Tis when the rage is at its height,
That knowing ones will quit the site,
Whilst those that stop behind,
Of this desertion can't complain,
For what they lose in wealth they gain
In knowledge of mankind.

That this poem originated in Alabama and was picked up by an Ohio paper indicates not only the extent of instant city

boosting in both places, but also the similarity of the system throughout the country.

Alabama's new towns, as a group, were better advertised than any other set of would-be cities.[3] When the Philadelphia *Union* devoted nearly a page and a half to new towns, fully five out of the fourteen were Alabama paper towns. Four out of the dozen known Alabama towns located in the press achieved urban status (census definition 2500 inhabitants): Florence 34,031; Athens 14,360; Demopolis 7,651 and Marion 4,289.[4] Only Kentucky can come close to comparing with the territory in the success of its would-be cities.

The Muscle Shoals became a focal point for town promotion. BAINBRIDGE lay "immediately at the foot of the Muscle Shoals, on the South side of the Tennessee River."[5] Perhaps anticipating the competition of its neighbor, the speculators promoting FLORENCE on the other side of the river spoke of "the usual channel for large boats" being on the northern side, "that towards the southern bank being too shallow." Those backing Florence proclaimed that "Florence lies just below the last of that long series of rapids or shallows, constituting the Muscle Shoals. This, therefore, is, and must be the head of steam-boat navigation." Not content with bragging about Florence's location, the promotors spoke of the town plat — the two main streets were 115 feet wide, other streets 99 feet wide, all lots were corner lots and of almost half an acre each; land had been donated for a college, female seminary, a public walk or pleasure ground, a jail, a court house and a market. Other advantages, real or imagined, included the expectation of an extensive armory and cannon foundery nearby and the passage of the Nashville to New Orleans military road

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[3]Some individual cities were in Indiana and Kentucky, but taken as a whole, Alabama towns were more widely advertised. This may well be because its immigrant flow came from Georgia and Tennessee.

[4]*Nashville* (Tennessee) *Clarion* January 26, 1819, trustees J. R. Bedford, James Bright, Michael Byrd, for Marion. The other towns are discussed below.

[5]*Ibid.*, January 12, 1819 and also *Knoxville* (Tennessee) *Register* January 26, 1819, Ro. Weakley, T. Saunders, Jonathan Donelson, Jr., R. P. Currin, Charles Boyles, L. J. Gist, B. Reese, proprietors.

through town.[6] The advertising blitz paid off as 284 lots brought $226,000.[7]

Florence's most serious rival was HAVANNAH. This paper town was advertised not only in the Huntsville *Alabama Republican* but also in the *Nashville Clarion,* Lexington *Reporter,* Louisville *Western Courier* and *Pittsburgh Gazette.* "Of all of the sites for towns," wrote the not disinterested trustees, ". . . the town of Havannah has incomparably the highest claim to precedence in a commercial point of view." The town, like Florence, was located on the north side of the Tennessee River and nine miles from its more successful rival.[8] Not too far away was COURTLAND, a paper town that aspired no higher than to become a county seat.[9]

If one analyzes advertisements for new towns in Alabama, two things became apparent: certain individuals were involved in more than a single speculation and the press of Tennessee and Georgia was depended upon as outlets in which to advertise the would-be cities. ALABAMA, located "only ten miles by land to the junction of the Coosa and Talapoosa," had eleven proprietors. Four gave Milledgeville, Georgia as their address, four Nashville, and three Madison County, Mississippi Territory. Both the geographical spread of the proprietors and the fact that two of them, namely James Jackson and Thomas Bibb,

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[6]*Nashville* (Tennessee) *Clarion* May 19, 1818, Lexington, Kentucky *Reporter* June 3, 1818; *Louisville* (Kentucky) *Public Advertiser* July 21, 1818, all contained Florence information. Trustees listed as Leroy Pope, Thomas Bibb, John Coffee, James Jackson, J. Childress, Dabney Morriss, J. McKinley.

[7]Canton *Ohio Repository* September 18, 1818, quoting the Washington, D. C. *National Intelligencer;* John Bach McMaster *A History of the People of the United States from the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York, 1883-1913) IV, 396.

[8]Lexington, Kentucky *Reporter* July 22, 1818, *Nashville* (Tennessee) *Clarion* July 28, 1818, *Pittsburgh* (Pennsylvania) *Gazette* August 7, 1818, and scheduled to be advertised in the Huntsville *Alabama Republican,* Louisville, Kentucky *Western Courier.* E. J. Bailey, George Coulter, Hugh Campbell, Samuel Ragsdale, Joseph Farmer, trustees.

[9]*Nashville* (Tennessee) *Clarion* October 6, 1818. William H. Whitaker, James W. Camp, John M. Tilford, Joseph Farmer (name also listed for Havannah), Benjamin Thomas, William F. Broadax, Bernard M. Kiernan, trustees.

were later associated with promoting Florence are instructive.[10] The same strong ties to Tennessee and Georgia can be seen in the choices J. S. Walker made in selecting newspapers in which to advertise his COOSAWDA.[11] The promoters of both the towns of Alabama and Coosawda believed that a city would grow up not far from the junction of the Coosa and Talapoosa.

The name of James Jackson appears in association with COTTON-PORT and ATHENS as well as ALABAMA and FLORENCE. Cotton Port, not to be confused with Cotton Gin Port at the head of navigation on the Tombigbee, was located "on the west bank of Limestone river, one mile above its junction with the Tennessee." Of its four trustees, two were associated with Florence as well. James Jackson and Jonathan Coffee.[12] ATHENS, though not having a Florence man for commissioner, was indirectly associated with James Jackson. The advertisement in the *Clarion* announced that the plan "may be seen at the counting room of James Jackson & Company, Nashville."[13] In as much as much of Alabama was settled by Georgians and Tennesseans, it should not be that surprising that individuals and newspapers from those states should play such a prominent role in advertising Alabama's paper towns. DEMOPOLIS is a case in point being advertised in the *Knoxville Register, Nashville Gazette, Murfreesborough Courier,* Milledgeville *Georgia Journal* as well as the *Tuskaloosa Republican,* Huntsville *Alabama Republican* and *Mobile Gazette.*[14]

The established port of Mobile was challenged by BLAKELY. Though the booster press was quite uncommon in this first round of town promotion, Mobile's rival published the *Blakely Sun.* Its 1818 boast that whereas "one year ago, there

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[10] *Ibid.*, September 2, 1817. Milledgeville proprietors John Scott, Z. Lamar, Charles Williamson, William D. Stone; Nashville proprietors A. P. Hayne, Jonathan Donelson (see also Bainbridge listing), William E. Butler, James Jackson (see also Florence and Cotton Port proprietors); Madison County, Mississippi Territory proprietors James Manning, Thomas Bibb (see also Florence), Waddy Tate.

[11] *Knoxville* (Tennessee) *Register* July 20, 1819, to be advertised in the *Nashville* (Tennessee) *Whig, Augusta* (Georgia) *Journal,* Milledgeville *Georgia Journal.*

[12] Philadelphia *The Union* August 8, 1818. Trustees Jonathan Coffee, James Jackson, John Bahan, James Bright.

[13] *Nashville* (Tennessee) *Clarion* April 28, 1818. Robert Beaty and John D. Carriel, Commissioners.

[14] *Knoxville* (Tennessee) *Register* August 24, 1818.

was but one house," now there are one hundred was reprinted as far away as Ohio.[15] Another ambitious promotion was that of Cahawba or CAHABA as it was spelled in the Eastern press. According to its backers, Cahawba "will, probably be the seat of government for the state of Alabama." This dream was fulfilled until 1825 when Tuscaloosa captured the prize.[16] Not all newly promoted towns aspired to grandeur. CANTON and COURTLAND were relatively unambitious. The proprietors of the latter were "convinced that the seat of justice for the county of Lawrence, will unquestionably be located at Courtland."[17] The trustees were overly optimistic as another town received the honor. Courtland, despite the fact that a railroad later ran through it, never achieved urban status, clinging on for life with a population of less than a thousand.

Neither in John W. Rep's *The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States* nor in his companion volume *Town Planning in Frontier America* is there a treatment of Alabama's new towns. Likewise though Thomas Perkins Abernethy's *The Formative Period in Alabama, 1815-1828* contains a section entitled "The Immigrants," and his *The South in the New Nations 1789-1819* also covers the 1815-1819 period, neither volume covers in any detail, Alabama's new towns. The number and relative success of new towns within the territory indicates that at least in the case of Alabama, the South had greater urban aspirations than historians have heretofore credited the section. The immigrants and the speculators envisioned a state with towns and cities as well as farms and plantations.

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[15]Dayton *Ohio Watchman* December 10, 1818. See also McMaster, *History of the People* IV, 395-396.

[16]Philadelphia *The Union* August 8, 1818; Thomas Perkins Abernethy, *The Formative Period in Alabama, 1815-1828* (University, Alabama, 1965), 53, 55, 137.

[17]For Canton, East of the Alabama River see *Knoxville* (Tennessee) *Register* February 9, 1819. For Courtland see *Nashville* (Tennessee) *Clarion* October 6, 1818. William H. Whitaker, James W. Camp, John M. Tilford, Joseph Farmer, Benjamin Thomas, William F. Broadax, Bernard M. Kiernan, trustees.

JOHN ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL AND THE HAMPTON'S ROADS CONFERENCE QUIXOTIC DIPLOMACY, 1865

by

Paul J. Zingg

By February, 1865, Confederate hopes for victory had all but vanished. Although the spring campaigns had not yet commenced, Grant's near-encirclement of Petersburg and Sherman's march into the Carolinas portended the inevitable collapse of Southern resistance. Yet for three rebels, the times warranted not the further prosecution of war but the final search for a negotiated peace. Commissioned by executive order of Jefferson Davis, Alexander H. Stephens, R. M. T. Hunter, and John Archibald Campbell journeyed to Hampton Roads, Virginia, to undertake an informal interview with official representatives of the United States government upon "the issues involved in the war existing, with a view of securing peace to the two countries."[1]

On board the Union steamer *River Queen* anchored off Old Point Comfort, Abraham Lincoln and Secretary of State William H. Seward awaited the Southern commissioners. Neither party was unfamiliar with the subtleties of intersectional diplomacy. Although the conference at Hampton Roads would prove to be an important and dramatic encounter between pacific-minded representatives from the North and South, it was hardly the first such meeting. The abortive Crawford-Forsythe-Roman mission in March and April of 1861 had discouraged formal Southern contacts with the Union until the last full year of the war.[2] Yet, individuals on both sides

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[1]Instructions of Jefferson Davis to the Peace Commissioners (January, 1865), in John Archibald Campbell, *Reminiscences and Documents Relating to the Civil War During the Year 1865* (Baltimore: John Murray and Co., 1887), 4.

[2]The mission of Martin J. Crawford of Georgia, John Forsythe of Alabama and A. S. Roman of Louisiana represented the first official diplomatic act of the Confederacy. The Commissioners arrived in Washington on March 5, the day after the inauguration of Lincoln, and petitioned both the President and Secretary Seward for interviews. Their demands for immediate recognition of the Confederate States went unheeded. Although they exchanged notes with Seward, the Southerners were never accorded a formal interview. The ministers returned to the South soon after the outbreak of hostilities at Fort Sumter.

[3]Greeley to Lincoln, July 7, 1864, in Edward C. Kirkland, *The Peacemakers of 1864* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 76.

of the Mason-Dixon line undertook numerous private peace missions, watched closely by authorities in Washington and Richmond.

Responsibility for the particular initiative which led directly to Hampton Roads lay with several sources. Horace Greely, editor of the New York *Tribune*, particularly urged Lincoln to grasp any opportunities for peace. "Our bleeding, bankrupt, almost dying country longs for peace," he wrote the President in the summer, 1864.[3] Greely soon obtained a special presidential commission to convey a declaration of Washington's conditions for peace to a wholly unaccredited delegation of Southerners in Niagara, Canada. Although the Niagara Conference of July, 1864, dissolved almost before it began, it did serve as the vehicle by which Lincoln formally announced his requisites for peace and his personal willingness to meet and discuss the terms "with any authority that can control the armies now at war against the United States."[4] Although private peace efforts continued, the presidential offer went virtually unheeded until January, 1865.[5]

John Archibald Campbell claimed that his correspondence with the Supreme Court Justice Samuel Nelson in December,

[4]Lincoln to "To Whom It May Concern," July 18, 1864, in Roy P. Basler, Ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), VII, 451. Lincoln's terms included ". . . the restoration of peace, the integrity of the whole Union, and the abandonment of slavery." The President's public letter is particularly noteworthy because he formally announced that Southern acceptance of the Federal emancipation program was a requisite for peace.

[5]Among the more notable of the private peace inquiries which continued during the latter days of the war were: the informal negotiations of James F. Jacquess and James R. Gilmore with Jefferson Davis, July, 1864; the Peoria and Springfield conventions, August, 1864; the unofficial discussions between United States Ambassador to Great Britain Charles Francis Adams and Tennessean Thomas Yeatman early 1864; and the Toronto meetings between Jeremiah S. Black and Jacob Thompson, August, 1864. For details, see: Harriet Chappel Owsley, "Peace and the Presidential Election of 1864," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, XVIII (March, 1959), 3-19; Clament A. Evans, *Confederate Military History* (Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Co., 1899), I, 477-459; Harlan H. Horner, *Lincoln and Greeley* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1953); Horace Greeley, *The American Conflict* (Hartford: D. D. Cass and Co., 1886), II; and Kirkland, *The Peacemakers of 1864*. Brief sketches of these events can be found conveniently in J. G. Randall and David Donald, *The Civil War and Reconstruction*, Second Edition (Lexington: D. C. Heath and Co., 1969).

1864, led directly to the Hampton Roads conference. In mid-December Campbell inquired "whether anything could be effected for the amelioration of the conditions which it [the war] has occasioned."[6] Campbell admitted that his inquiry was completely unofficial; his objective was "simply to promote an interchange of views and opinions which might be productive of good, and scarcely do harm."[7] Nelson forwarded the letter to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, "who expressed satisfaction with it," but sent no reply to Campbell.[8]

The private activities of Greely, Campbell, and others certainly demonstrated a genuine, non-partisan drive for peace. The example of such efforts and the subtle pressures for peace which they brought to bear on Lincoln moved the President to express publicly his receptivity to legitimate Southern overtures.

Perhaps in the final analysis, though, the peace conference that convened at Hampton Roads was due less to individual initiative than to general public demand. The imminent collapse of the Confederacy and the overall national exhaustion relative to the war effort by December, 1864-January, 1865, doubtless placed peace negotiations in a more favorable light as a viable alternative to the war's continuation. Though conditions prevailed which by themselves were most conducive to serious peace efforts, enterprising individuals both North and South provided the final energy which placed the peace forces on the road to the Virginia conference.

In late December, 1864, Francis P. Blair, Sr., a Maryland gentleman and the father of a Brigadier General under Sherman's command, received a *carte blanche* pass from Lincoln "to . . . go South, and return."[9] Although Lincoln denied Blair's right "to speak for the United States government," it is inconceivable that the President was wholly unaware — as he later affirmed — of the purpose and destination of Blair's

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[6]Campbell to Nelson, December, 1864, in *Southern Historical Society Papers*, XVI (January, 1865), 7-8. Campbell sent a copy of this letter to George Munford, Secretary of the Society.

[7]*Ibid.*

[8]Campbell to Justice Benjamin Curtis, July 20, 1865, in *Century Magazine*, XXXVIII, New Series XVI (October, 1889), 950-954.

[9]Lincoln to Blair, December 28, 1864, in Basler, *Lincoln*, VIII, 188.