



BRITISH DRUMS  
ON THE  
SOUTHERN FRONTIER

*The Military Colonization of Georgia, 1733-1749*

by

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# I

## *Southeastern North America*

1565-1732

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Spaniards were born and buried in southeastern North America for a hundred years before the arrival of the first English colonists in the Carolinas. Saint Augustine, Florida, the first permanent Spanish settlement, was established in 1565 to protect the treasure galleons en route from Central and South America to Spain, to Christianize the Indians, and to prevent rival European nations, especially France and England, from colonizing the region. As in all of their other North American settlements, the Spaniards induced the Indians to become Catholics and Spanish subjects through the efforts of missionaries operating from a chain of fortified missions garrisoned with royal soldiers. Three mission provinces were established in southeastern North America. West of Saint Augustine was the province of Timucua where the missions were located along the major east-west path. Further to the west was the province of Apalachee, the most prosperous economically and politically. The province of Guale (pronounced Walie) included the Atlantic coast and coastal islands of present Georgia. Revolts by the mission Indians, attacks by fierce inland Indians, and raids by English pirates drove the Guale missions ever southward until, by the end of the seventeenth century, the northernmost mission was located on Amelia Island in present Florida.<sup>1</sup>

By the middle of the seventeenth century England was developing into an imperial power with colonies in North America at Virginia, Maryland, and New England. King Charles II, coming to the throne in 1660, looked at the vacant land between Virginia and Spanish Florida with covetous eyes. An expedition

formed by the Carolina Proprietors, eight of Charles's friends, established Charles Town near the mouth of Ashley River in South Carolina during 1670. Ten years later the small settlement was moved to its present location (Charleston) where it became the leading city of the southern English colonies.<sup>2</sup>

Spain and England were old enemies who shared a common dislike stemming from religious differences and imperial clashes. By the early eighteenth century the balance of power had shifted to England's favor. Spain, after serving as a major power in Europe for two hundred years, was in decline. Beginning with the destruction of the Spanish Armada in 1588, the English had begun to despise and underestimate the Spaniards. Warfare between the two countries soon extended to the American colonies where old feuds were sharpened by the Carolina proprietors' charter that attempted to award them land encompassing not only North and South Carolina but also Saint Augustine and the Spanish mission provinces. The first serious clash occurred when the Spaniards destroyed the two-year-old Scottish settlement of Stuart's Town on Port Royal Island, South Carolina, in 1686. The South Carolinians did not immediately retaliate, but in 1702, after the outbreak of Queen Anne's War (1701-13), they conducted an unsuccessful attack on Saint Augustine. Between 1704 and 1710 South Carolinians and their Indian allies raided and completely laid waste the Spanish mission provinces of Timucua and Apalachee. In 1706 the Spaniards, with the aid of French ships, retaliated by invading South Carolina; however, the militia and a small flotilla of provincial boats forced the Spaniards to retreat, following some skirmishes outside Charles Town's earthen walls.<sup>3</sup> Queen Anne's War left Spanish Florida in a dismal condition. Most of its Indian allies had deserted or had been killed, the garrisoned missions lay in ruins, and the few settlers were forced to live in Saint Augustine under the protection of a small garrison and the walls of Fort San Marcos.

North Carolina, under a separate government since 1689, suffered a near disastrous war with the Tuscarorá Indians during the period 1711-13. The Tuscaroras were defeated largely because two expeditions composed of South Carolinians and their Indian allies marched to North Carolina's assistance and conducted spirited offensive operations.<sup>4</sup>

The South Carolinians had developed into a confident people, extremely warlike as a result of a decade of continuous and usually successful skirmishes with Spaniards and Indians. The introduction of rice culture gave the colony a cash crop that prompted the organization of large plantations at the expense of small farms and increased the black slave traffic from Africa until by 1715 the white population was only about 6,250 while black slaves numbered about 10,500. However, land was readily available on the frontier where cattle and corn could be raised without the necessity for large gangs of slaves, thereby assuring the existence of a small number of yeomen farmers for frontier defense.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the South Carolinians' confidence, growth, and prosperity, they were destined to suffer greatly for their increasingly poor relations with the Indians. The balance of power in southeastern North America was controlled by a small number of powerful Indian nations, most of which were loose federations of several towns whose populations usually spoke dialects related to the Muskogean, Iroquoian, or Siouan languages. The principal nations and their geographical locations (in reference to modern states) were as follows: the Creek in Alabama and Georgia; the Choctaw in Alabama and Mississippi; the Chickasaw in Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee; the Catawba in South Carolina; the Yemassee in Georgia and later in South Carolina; the Tuscarora in North Carolina; and the Cherokee in South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. Smaller nations roamed the area either as independent groups or as subsidiaries of the larger nations.<sup>6</sup> South Carolina traders and their caravans of Indian bearers or pack horses traversed the southeastern forest paths from Charles Town inland for hundreds of miles to practically every town, exchanging their trade goods for the Indians' deer skins and captive slaves. Indians became so dependent upon English woollens, cutlery, and guns that some nations moved closer to Charles Town, the source of the coveted trade goods. Guarding each of the principal entrances into the colony was a friendly Indian sentry-town, protecting the settlers from attacks by enemy Indians. However, by the first decade of the eighteenth century, South Carolina was taking her Indian allies for granted. The colonial government refused to control the conduct of the traders who

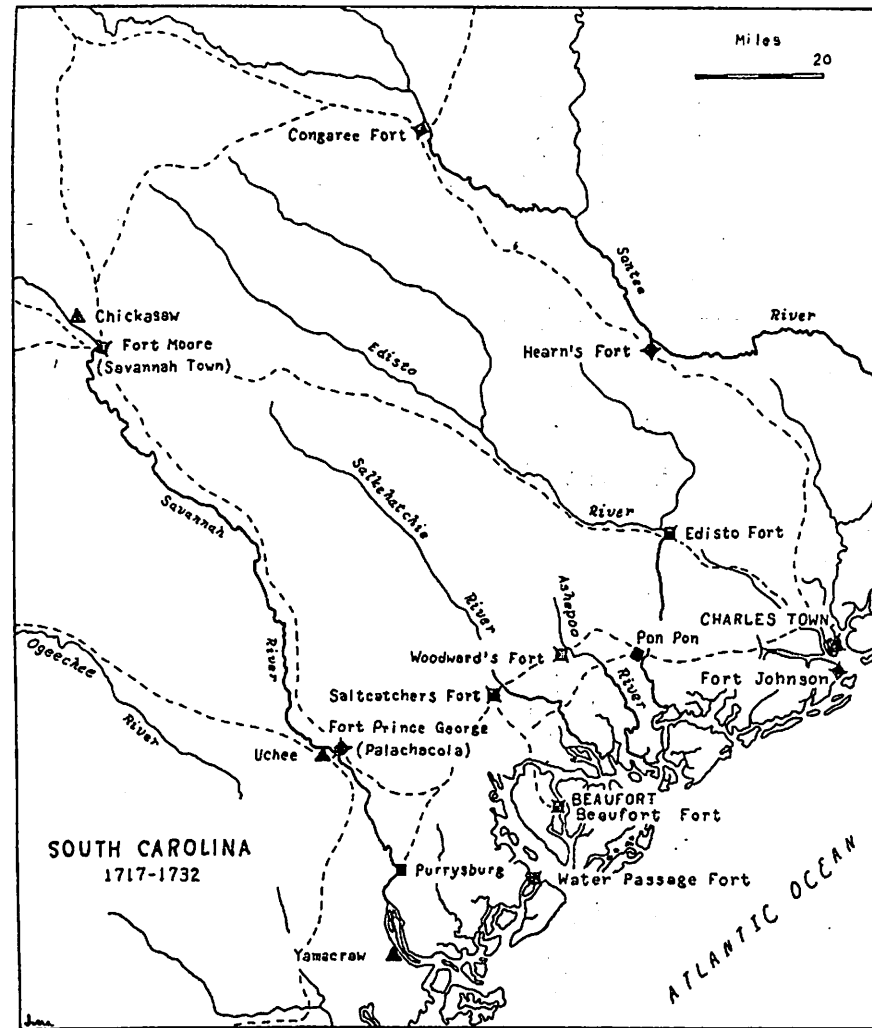
extended unlimited credit to the Indian hunters until the debts became impossible to pay, sometimes collected the debts by selling Indian wives and children into slavery, cheated on the weighing of skins with false weights and measures, and conducted themselves like barons in the Indian towns where they were licensed to trade.<sup>7</sup>

By 1715 the Indians would bear no more. A conspiracy of gigantic proportions was formed and in April the Yemassee, whose settlements were then located in South Carolina between the Combahee and Savannah Rivers, began a war by killing the traders in their towns and several scores of settlers living between Port Royal and the Edisto River. Most of the nations and independent towns were members of the conspiracy, but the English discovery of their intentions had caused a premature initiation of the war, resulting in subsequent uncoordinated attacks. In June the Catawba and other northern Indians attacked the Santee settlements north of Charles Town. During July the Creek and Apalachee penetrated South Carolina defenses, destroying the plantations southwest of Charles Town between the Edisto and Stono Rivers. Most of the women and children of the colony were forced to take shelter in Charles Town, but the militia, reinforced with armed slaves and settlement Indians, responded superbly and followed each of the three invasions by defeating the Indians and forcing them to withdraw. A decade of war had well prepared the South Carolinians to defend their colony. The Yemassee retreated to Florida under the protection of the Spaniards, and the former sentry-town Indians along the frontier fled to the interior to live with the larger Indian nations. During the winter of 1715 a South Carolina army, bolstered with Virginia and North Carolina soldiers, marched into the Cherokee nations and compelled their allegiance.<sup>8</sup>

By 1718 the major fighting was over, but the Yemassee and Apalachicola continued to conduct small-scale raids and ambushes against the settlements between the Savannah and Edisto Rivers. South Carolina developed a system of defense against the raids which became the standard for the southern frontier. Small garrisons of soldiers manned the cannons of the following fortifications: Fort Moore, guarding the principal western crossing over the upper Savannah River; Congaree Fort, cover-

ing the main northern path on Congaree Creek; and Fort Johnson, protecting the entrance to Charles Town Harbor. Scout boats patrolled the southern entrance into the colony via the Inland Passage (present Intracoastal Waterway) from stations at Beaufort Fort, located in the town of Beaufort, and Water Passage Fort on present Pinckney Island. Protecting the settlements were three companies of rangers who patrolled the forest paths on horseback. The Northern Rangers were probably stationed at John Hearn's plantation on the Santee River, the Western Rangers were at James Rawlings's Edisto Bluff plantation on the big bend of the Edisto River, and the Southern Rangers were stationed initially at John Woodward's plantation near the head of the Ashepoo River and later at Palachicola Fort on the lower Savannah River. Only about a hundred men manned the entire system. Although changes were made in locations of some forts and in the number of soldiers employed, this basic system of defense remained in use throughout most of the colonial period and served as the model for the defense of Georgia.<sup>9</sup>

The French, who had established the small colony of Louisiana in 1698, were by 1720 considered more dangerous than the Spaniards. Earlier, during Queen Anne's War, South Carolinians had organized and led armies of Creek and Chickasaw Indians against Louisiana, but they were unable to destroy either the French settlements or their Choctaw Indian allies. As part of their expansionist aims, the French had long desired to extend their influence among the southern Indian nations, and during the Yemassee War they took advantage of South Carolina's precarious situation, making deep diplomatic inroads with the Creek. In 1717 Fort Toulouse was constructed and garrisoned among the Upper Creek near the conflux of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers in present Alabama. South Carolina, fearing that the French were preparing to isolate the British colonies against the Atlantic coast by a fence of garrisoned forts, sought help from England. In 1720 Colonel John Barnwell, an experienced South Carolina soldier, convinced the British government to supply a company of regular British soldiers to assist South Carolina in a program to build a screen of forts to counter French expansion. But the screen did not then progress beyond the erection of one fortification. From



1722 to 1727 the Independent Company of Foot, composed of invalids and old men, garrisoned Fort King George located at the mouth of the Altamaha River near present Darien, Georgia. The ill-conceived fortification was designed to prevent the French from controlling the Altamaha River region and to guard the southern frontier from attacks by Spaniards and Yemassee Indians.<sup>10</sup> However, the French were not then capable of such expansion efforts, and the fort did not prevent the movement of Yemassee war parties from their sanctuary in Spanish Florida to South Carolina.

Between 1726 and 1728 Yemassee attacks became so severe that South Carolina was forced to a near-war footing. The frontier militia was often on alert, two crews of scouts watched the Inland Passage, and mounted rangers patrolled between the Savannah and Edisto Rivers. In 1727 the British Independent Company of Foot was withdrawn to Beaufort Fort to help protect the Port Royal settlers, leaving only a two-man lookout at Fort King George. One of the Yemassee Indians' most successful attacks was the ambush of a scout boat on Daufuskie Island; the crew was killed and the commander was carried to Saint Augustine as a prisoner. Finally, a large South Carolina raiding party under Colonel John Palmer, an experienced scout and militia officer, penetrated Florida's defenses in March 1728, burning and pillaging the Yemassee towns nestled near Saint Augustine.<sup>11</sup>

Border warfare slackened following the raid into Florida, but the frontier settlements still lay open to future raids. Schemes for planting fortified settlements along the edge of the frontier as a buffer zone against the Spanish and French had been considered even before Colonel Barnwell's proposal of 1720. The colonization schemes were finally placed into effect in 1730 when the British Board of Trade, acting upon newly appointed South Carolina Governor Robert Johnson's proposals, ordered settlements laid out. Eleven "townships" were to be established and settled by Protestants from Britain and Europe. Nine of the townships were eventually laid out within the present bounds of South Carolina. East and north of Charles Town were Kingston on the Waccamaw River, Queensboro on the Peedee River, Williamsburg on the Black River, and Fredericksburg on the Wateree River. From the

northwest to the southwest lay Amelia on the Santee River, Saxe Gotha on the Congaree River, Orangeburg on the North Fork of the Edisto River, New Windsor on the upper Savannah River, and Purrysburg on the lower Savannah River. Two townships were supposed to have been located near the Altamaha River in old Guale, the virtually uninhabited Atlantic coastal area that was hotly claimed by both England and Spain, but their establishment was delayed until the task was undertaken by the new colony of Georgia during the period 1733-36.<sup>12</sup>

The colonization of Georgia was timely for the British defense of the southern frontier. Although the South Carolinians were finally recovering from the Yemassee War under the excellent guidance of Governor Johnson, they were probably unwilling, at that moment, to extend the frontier south and west of the Savannah River where conflict with the Spaniards was certain. The extremely hard fighting of the Yemassee War, the long discouraging guerrilla war that followed, financial difficulties, political quarrels, and the danger of slave revolts had cooled their aggressive spirit. Nevertheless, the South Carolinians could and would gladly assist a colonizing effort from England. They unselfishly placed their tiny army at Georgia's disposal, assisted with materials and supplies, and they provided frontier experts such as Colonel William Bull to advise and assist in building a fortified community on the southern frontier.<sup>13</sup>

The Georgia project was the fusing of two requirements into one solution. The first requirement was philanthropic. James Oglethorpe, Dr. Thomas Bray, Sir John Percival, and many other Englishmen considered colonization one of the best methods of solving the problem of Britain's debtors, unemployed, and poor. This coincided perfectly with the second requirement, military colonization of the Altamaha-Savannah Rivers region as ordered by the Board of Trade. Slavery was prohibited in Georgia; villages of white protestant yeomen, planting crops and training as soldiers, were to act as a buffer against the Spaniards in Florida and the French in Louisiana.<sup>14</sup>

## II

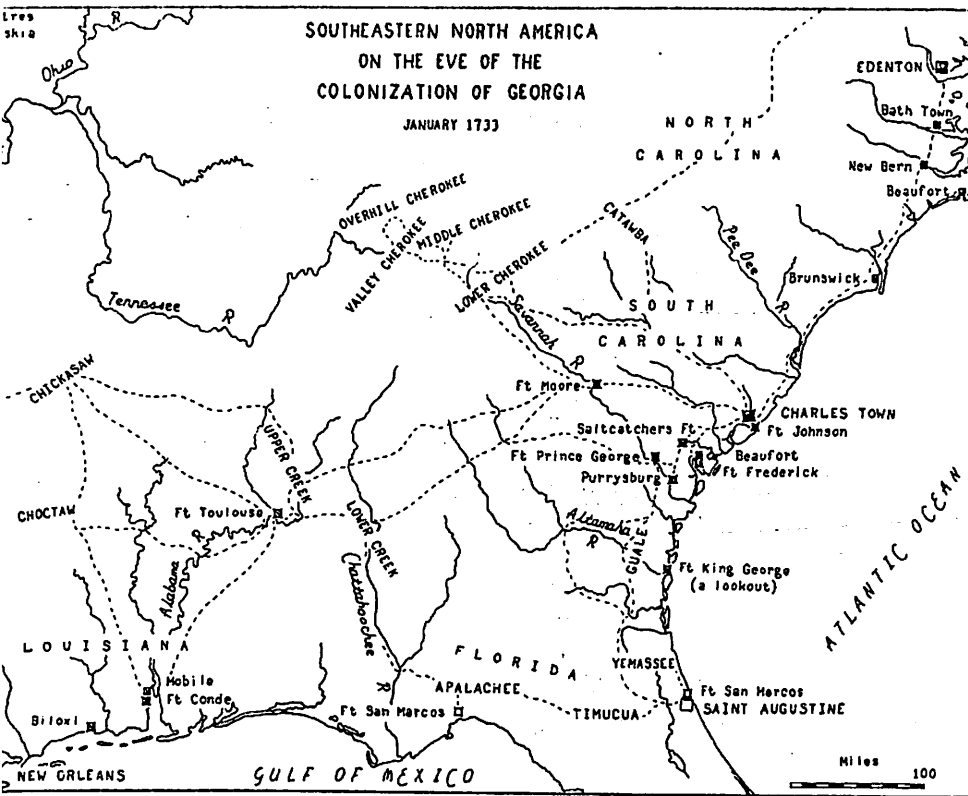
## *"Cover and Protect That Settlement"*

1733-1735

About the latter part of January 1733 a messenger from Charles Town rode his horse into Saltcatchers Fort at the head of Combahee River on the South Carolina frontier and delivered a message to Captain James McPherson, the commander. Inside were marching orders from the governor. "You . . . are hereby order'd immediately with fifteen men to repair to the new Settlement of Georgia, there to Obey orders and directions as you Shall receive from Mr. Oglethorpe, in order to Cover and protect that Settlement from any insults; of this fail not."<sup>1</sup>

At that moment 113 people, newly arrived from England, were temporarily camped in Fort Frederick at Port Royal, South Carolina, awaiting transportation to the southern bank of the Savannah River where they planned to establish a new British colony called Georgia. South Carolinians correctly viewed the new settlement as a godsend; it would absorb the bloody raids of the Florida Spaniards and their Yemassee Indian allies which had previously been directed toward South Carolina. A grateful South Carolina General Assembly had provided the new colonists with boat transportation, breeding cattle and hogs, provisions, and military protection by the provincial scout boat and Captain McPherson's Company of Southern Rangers.<sup>2</sup>

The governor's orders severely disrupted the frontier rangers' monotonous daily routine. They selected riding and pack horses and strapped provisions and ammunition to pack saddles. Captain McPherson chose six of the company's twenty



privates to remain in garrison at Saltcatchers Fort. Within a few days they were reinforced by the temporary assignment of a lieutenant and four rangers from Fort Prince George on the Savannah River.<sup>3</sup>

McPherson owned a five-hundred-acre cowpen (cattle ranch) near the fort upon which he had built his home. His wife, thirty-three-year-old Rachel Miles McPherson, born and raised on the frontier, assumed full responsibility for maintaining the cattle and preparing for the approaching corn planting season.<sup>4</sup> Unknown to either of them, five years would pass before he returned permanently from the expedition to Georgia.

The company probably began its movement to Georgia at

dawn one day during the first week of February 1733. The governor had made preparations for the rangers to ride to the Savannah River, cross on riverboats called piraguas, ride down the western bank, and then rendezvous with the Georgians. The path was a new one, a ride of over forty miles which followed the ridges and crossed a number of creek swamps, perhaps a two-day journey for the rangers and their pack horses. They probably spent a night at Purrysburg, a new frontier "township" of Swiss immigrants on the east bank of the Savannah River. The next morning they pulled and shoved their horses onto the piraguas which had been assembled to transport them down river to the Georgia settlement. They probably landed near the Yamacraw Indian town located in the present city of Savannah. The Yamacraw were a mixed Yemessee-Creek band of about one hundred people who had moved there three years before. John Musgrove and his wife Mary, who were part white and part Creek Indian, had the trade monopoly of this band and were living among them.<sup>5</sup>

The Georgia colonists had already landed at Yamacraw Bluff on Thursday, 1 February, about half a mile southeast of the Indian town and were laying out a settlement called Savannah. James Oglethorpe, the Georgia trustee who acted as the colony's leader, was proceeding under the advice of Colonel William Bull, a prominent South Carolina frontiersman. When the rangers rode into the Georgians' camp they found them hard at work hacking a town out of the wilderness. A third of the men were clearing trees from the town site, another third were working on a blockhouse, and the remainder were clearing land for the planting season just a month away. Cold rains fell in torrents that February, making working conditions miserable.<sup>6</sup>

The Georgians must have thought the rangers exhibited a poor appearance when compared to the smartly dressed British dragoons they had seen in England. Their small Spanish horses were quite ugly after three days on muddy trails, saddles and other leather gear were unpolished, and Captain McPherson, with a personal servant in attendance, was probably the only one who made a decent appearance. Most of the rangers' faces were scarred from smallpox and partially covered with three days' growth of whiskers. Because of the cold weather some

wore wool caps or caps of fox fur, some with the foxtails still attached. Others wore hats in various degrees of dilapidation. The upper garments probably included a checked shirt and sometimes a waistcoat, worn beneath a coat or pea jacket. Buckskin knee breeches and heavy knee-length stockings, which were often covered with canvas spatterdashes or leather Indian leggins, clothed the legs. Shoes protected their feet. Each man carried a flintlock carbine and two large pistols; the latter were attached to the front of the saddle in holsters. The firearms were each loaded with a bullet that was covered with three or more large turkey or swan shot, an excellent short-range brush load. The rangers made their own cartridges by rolling powder, ball, and shot into paper cylinders that were carried in a leather or leather-covered wooden box hanging from a sling over the shoulder or from a belt at the waist. There was no mention of their carrying swords, although Captain McPherson may have worn one. Most men probably carried hatchets that were utilized as both tools and weapons.<sup>7</sup>

Their appearance as a company of British provincial soldiers might have severely disturbed the king, but anyone who thought their crudeness was an indication of their incompetence would have been badly mistaken. Since their activation in October 1726 the Southern Rangers had patrolled the thickets and swamps of the Edisto, Ashepoo, and Combahee Rivers on the alert for Yemassee war parties who raided the frontier from their sanctuary in Spanish Florida. The company initially included Captain William Peters, an experienced Indian fighter from Saint Bartholomews Parish; Sergeant William McPherson, James's brother; and fourteen privates. A mico, or chief, named Harry and ten of his Kiawah Indians, Muskhogee of the Cusabo group, were attached to the company for at least a year. By December 1726 the company was stationed in the Pon Pon settlement on the western bank of the Edisto River near present Jacksonboro, perhaps on Captain Peters's nearby plantation. There are few surviving accounts of the company's early patrols, but the rangers occasionally scouted as far as the Salkehatchie River to check on reports of war parties camped there. On one occasion a detachment of the company was in hot pursuit of a raiding party when Sergeant William McPherson's horse was shot from under him. In June 1727 James McPherson



South Carolina Provincial Soldiers in Georgia, 1733–1737  
Scout, Ranger, and the Scout Boat Carolina

(Drawing by Bill Drath)

son became sergeant in his brother's stead, and about November of that year the government commissioned him captain when William Peters resigned. During the year 1727 Yemassee war parties struck at will in their former settlement, the "Indian Land," which lay between the Savannah and Combahee Rivers. During the following year, or shortly thereafter, the company, which totaled twenty-two men, transferred to the Indian Land. On the western bank of the Salkehatchie River, then called the Saltcatchers (which is actually the upper portion of Combahee River), the rangers constructed Saltcatchers Fort, also called Rangers Fort, near the present town of Yemassee. They were responsible for patrolling the area between their fort and Fort Prince George near the Savannah River, thirty miles to the west. By January 1733 the members of the company had served



as frontier rangers for an average of four years each, and during patrols they had ridden over much of the South Carolina frontier. They knew the Indians' method of war and adopted it as their own. Lawrence Cooke, William Finley, William Fichet, William Small, and others made the ranger service a career and continued to serve in Georgia as rangers for several years.<sup>8</sup>

Oglethorpe stationed the company up river about five miles northwest of Savannah at a place called the Horse Quarter from where they patrolled the area close around Savannah during the remainder of the winter and spring of 1733.<sup>9</sup>

With the beginning of summer Oglethorpe began the organization of a defensive screen on the exposed south and west sides of the town. On June 12 he ordered Captain McPherson and his rangers to accompany him on a reconnaissance of the area around Savannah to find the best locations for ranger stations and villages.<sup>10</sup>

Oglethorpe and McPherson had undoubtedly already inventoried each other and liked what they found. Oglethorpe was to have many disagreements and make many enemies among South Carolina officials and McPherson was later disliked by several Georgia officials, but both men continued to think highly of each other.

James Oglethorpe was a thirty-seven-year-old wealthy English bachelor with extensive leadership training and a complicated personality. He was not a handsome man. He possessed a long face having a large Roman nose, slightly protruding eyes, a high forehead, and a prominent double chin. Nevertheless, the gaze he delivers from a surviving portrait exudes self-confidence. By the age of twenty-six he had served as a British infantry lieutenant, attended Oxford University, experienced combat in eastern Europe as the aid-de-camp to Prince Eugene of Savoy, inherited the family's English estates, sat as a member of Parliament, and killed a man in a drunken brawl. He possessed a fantastic amount of energy and had the self-confidence to use it; however, he was quick of temper and often bold to the point of recklessness. He purposely suffered the same privations as those with whom he was in company, despite their social class, and he espoused the cause of oppressed debtors, seamen, and soldiers. Nevertheless, critics were accurate

in insisting that he was vain and belligerent. For reasons of philanthropy and nationalism, he had been involved in the plans for the colonization of Georgia from the beginning and was a member of the Board of Georgia Trustees, the colony's governing body, who considered him their representative in Georgia. He lived to the advanced age of eighty-nine, a remarkable achievement for those times.<sup>11</sup>

James McPherson was a forty-five-year-old native of South Carolina who was known for his friendly disposition. After a lifetime on the frontier he naturally lacked Oglethorpe's social polish, but he was an experienced frontier soldier, having served in the militia during the Yemassee War and in the Southern Rangers for the past six years. He continued to command South Carolina ranger troops during periods of frontier crises until the age of sixty-two. It is a credit to McPherson's leadership ability that his rangers averaged several years each under his command, unlike most frontier soldiers who did not stay with a company or garrison for more than six months or a year. He lived to the advanced age of eighty-three.<sup>12</sup>

Using Yamacraw men as pathfinders, they probably worked their way northward on the incomplete paths following the Savannah River. Not far north of Savannah, Oglethorpe ordered a change of direction to the west. After about ten miles of hard going they came upon the well-marked warpath that began near Saint Augustine in Florida and ended at the Palachicola crossing on the Savannah River. Oglethorpe decided this path had to be blocked against the Yemassee Indians who had long used it to penetrate the South Carolina frontier. When the expedition arrived at the ford where the path crossed the Ogeechee River, Oglethorpe ordered McPherson to build and garrison a fort for Savannah's defense.<sup>13</sup>

Oglethorpe agreed to pay Captain McPherson and his men £200 for building the fortification; eighteenth-century soldiers did not construct forts without receiving extra wages. Both men would have discussed the type of fort needed, where to erect it, and the required construction techniques. Oglethorpe was completely familiar with European fortification practices, and McPherson had constructed Saltcatchers Fort and had probably helped with a number of others. The favorite type of fortification on the South Carolina frontier at that time

was the small palisade fort that differed little from small field forts in Europe. The shape varied according to the topography, but it was usually square with diamond-shaped bastions protruding from the corners. The outworks usually consisted of earthen walls, a moat, and a wooden palisade planted in the moat, with huts, a stable, and other buildings grouped inside. This was the type of fort built on the Ogeechee River. Oglethorpe named it Fort Argyle in honor of his good friend, the second Duke of Argyle. The initial site was on the east bank of the Ogeechee above present Morgan Bridge, about eight and three-quarters miles north of its junction with Canoochee Creek.<sup>14</sup> After tracing the outline of the proposed fort, Oglethorpe evidently returned to Savannah.

If McPherson followed customary practice, he divided his men into work crews. One party continued clearing the site and began building crude shelters as protection from rains, another group was composed of loggers who fell the trees needed for construction, and those men designated as sawyers dug a saw pit and began sawing planks. After a squared timber was extended over the excavation, the sawyer, on top of the pit, and his assistant, in the pit, sawed planks with a two-man saw set into a frame, a process that required a considerable amount of work and time.<sup>15</sup> The youngest rangers probably drew the unpopular assignment of sawyers' assistants, sweating in hot pits with sawdust falling in their faces.

The limbs and tops of the trees that were cut from the fort site were dumped into the adjacent Ogeechee River, which is narrow at that site and has many turns because of the extreme lowness of the land. About the first part of August, after most of the trees had been cut, the trimmings created a tight jam in the river just below the fort, rendering the site untenable. Boats could not bypass the jam, and there was no other practical way to transport heavy supplies to the fort because the numerous streams and swamps rendered movement by wagon or cart nearly impossible. Work was halted and McPherson informed Oglethorpe, who then paid £50 for the labor on the ill-sited fort and ordered him to move downstream and begin again. The company, unquestionably complaining and cursing, picked up their tools and belongings and crossed the river. The partially completed fort, afterwards called First Fort, or Old Fort, was left standing.<sup>16</sup>

McPherson and his men moved about five miles down the west bank of the Ogeechee to a point three and two-tenths miles above the mouth of Canoochee Creek where the channel widens and a ten-foot bluff crowds against the river. Here they began work on a new Fort Argyle.<sup>17</sup> Tactically it should have been located on the east bank where the river would have served as an obstacle to war parties approaching from Florida; however, swamps crowded the river banks elsewhere, leaving precious little high ground for a fort site.

Even though the South Carolinians were inured to the extreme heat of July and August, they probably did not work much during the afternoon when the heat was most stifling. More likely, the working day began at dawn and continued until near noon when they probably relaxed in the shade drinking beer, smoking clay pipes, and sleeping during the hottest part of the day, resuming work in the cool of the evening. Swarms of flying insects harassed the sweating rangers all day and at sundown the mosquitoes began their attacks. The only relief was gained from a smoky fire or a pipe. The South Carolina rangers accepted those inconveniences as an inevitable part of their lives.<sup>18</sup>

McPherson probably defined the outline of the walls and bastions with stakes. The design was a square, 110 feet to the side. Outside of this line the rangers dug a moat four or five feet deep and about fifteen feet wide. The dirt shovelled from the moat was piled upon the inside and used to build the earthen wall or curtain. One method of building the wall was to dampen each layer of newly piled earth and walk back and forth to pack it. In order to achieve at least a forty-five degree slope on the outside and seventy-five degrees or more on the inside, a facing material was normally utilized to retain the loose sandy soil. Perhaps a layer of swamp mud, six inches to a foot thick, was packed on both the outside and inside of the sandy wall, or a facing of logs, planks, or fresh sod could also have been used. The wall was shaped upwards to a height of about four and one-half to five feet so that a man could stand erect and fire over the top. The top was about six feet wide and flat, sloping slightly forward.<sup>19</sup>

A bastion protruded perhaps thirty to forty feet beyond each corner of the wall. According to fortification practice they were diamond shaped, but if exact measurements were not followed

and if McPherson did not insist, they might have been carelessly finished in a rather oval form. Defenders of such fortifications normally fought from the bastions, where flanking fire could rake the walls to either side and prevent attackers from climbing inside. Four small cannons had been carried to the fort and two were probably mounted in each of the bastions facing the land side.<sup>20</sup>

The final portion of the outworks constructed was a fence of logs called a palisade which served as an additional obstacle to attackers. Logs about eleven feet long and a foot thick were trimmed and set into a narrow ditch about three feet deep along the center of the moat. Each log was individually set about three inches apart. A row of small, split logs was nailed horizontally to the back of the palisade, about two feet from the top, to support angle braces that were fixed diagonally against the back of the palisade at spaced intervals. The completed palisade was eight feet high, a little lower than the earthen wall, to allow the rangers to fire over it. Since an attack from the river was unlikely, that side of the fort was probably protected by only half-bastions and a palisade, without the addition of a moat and an earthen wall.<sup>21</sup>

Twelve buildings were constructed, some of which were probably frame houses. The process of building structures of whole logs was seldom used in Georgia or South Carolina except for the construction of fortified houses. Instead, a house was normally built by erecting a stout frame and siding it with clapboards. Square beams were slowly hewn out with a broadax and used by those designated as carpenters to construct the house frame. Unfortunately, no stones lay in the tidewater lowlands of Georgia and bricks were not yet available; therefore, large beams were laid on the ground in the shape of a rectangle to form the foundation. After the side frames were pinned together on the ground, the entire company raised them into place on the foundation beams. The whole frame was held together by the use of mortise-and-tenon joints and wooden pins called treenails. Clapboards, tapered boards about four feet long that were split from small logs with a hatchet-like tool called a froe, were nailed horizontally to the house frame. Finally, rafters were added and covered with shingles, also split from small logs with a froe. A frame building was probably

used as a storehouse with a cellar underneath for a powder magazine.<sup>22</sup>

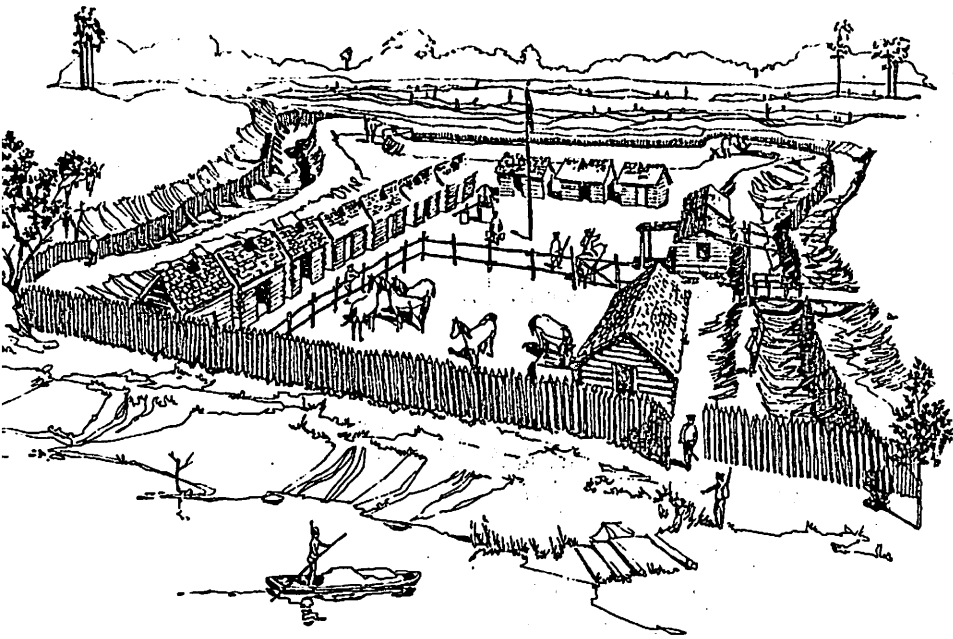
Most of the barracks were probably crude huts constructed of frames of poles lashed together with clapboards covering the sides and shingles or bark covering the roofs. Since there were no bricks available for fireplaces or chimneys that year, fires were built on the earthen floors and the smoke escaped through holes in the roofs. A similar hut, only much larger, was built as a stable designed to hold thirty horses.<sup>23</sup>

It is doubtful that a latrine, or "necessary house," was constructed, since their use in early South Carolina and Georgia forts appears to have been practically unknown. It was very likely that frontier soldiers and their families used the woods surrounding the fort as a latrine, and during periods of alarm, when it was thought unsafe to leave the fort, individual "cat-hole" toilets were probably dug in the moat or behind the barracks huts.<sup>24</sup>

At about the beginning of September six families were sent from Savannah to Fort Argyle to farm the adjacent lands.<sup>25</sup> With their help the fort was probably finished about Christmas 1733.

Oglethorpe had raised two companies of volunteer Indian militia from among the Yamacraw, one of which, commanded by a principal warrior named Skee, was to hunt and patrol along the fork of the Altamaha River. Oglethorpe ordered that they were to be given free provisions when visiting Fort Argyle or the other settlements, but the Indians usually imposed upon their hosts by remaining a week or longer in a place where the food was free. If the warriors' habits were similar to Skee's they could also have stayed drunk for a similar period.<sup>26</sup>

The Indians would have found liquor available at Fort Argyle despite the fact that, because of Oglethorpe, Georgia was officially "dry." Oglethorpe apparently was not an ardent prohibitionist, he was just an incompetent diagnostician. The Georgians were unaccustomed to the southern climate and many of them died that first year as the result of dysentery and typhoid, but Oglethorpe thought the cause was an excessive intake of rum. He convinced the Georgia trustees in London to pass a law making rum drinking unlawful and staved in



Fort Argyle, 1734  
(Conjectural)

(Drawing by Bill Drath)

all the rum barrels he could find. He had little success in his personal prohibition, however, because drinking rum punch was the popular escape from the hardships of daily living for the poor settlers on the southern American frontier. McPherson was very tactful in procuring liquor for his South Carolina rangers; as late as the spring of 1735 he was having rum, disguised as cider, delivered from Charles Town. Oglethorpe had no prejudice against wine or beer; all ages, sexes, and classes normally drank those beverages instead of water. Beer was always cheap and usually available in Georgia, and a homemade substitute could be created by boiling molasses, sassafras roots, Indian corn, and the tops of fir trees in water.<sup>27</sup>

Early in 1734 South Carolina reinforced the Company of Southern Rangers by adding five men to the detachment at Fort Argyle. William Elbert, a South Carolinian, received a

Georgia trustees' commission as lieutenant of the company, and Captain McPherson accepted a Georgia commission in addition to the one from South Carolina. Lieutenant Elbert and half of the twenty rangers transferred to First Fort where they built a few huts from the unused lumber lying there. In June of that year Elbert married seventeen-year-old Sarah Greenfield, one of the original Georgia settlers, but it is not known whether she shared his primitive living conditions at First Fort. He and his detachment patrolled northeast along the Yemassee war path to Palachacola on the Savannah River.<sup>28</sup>

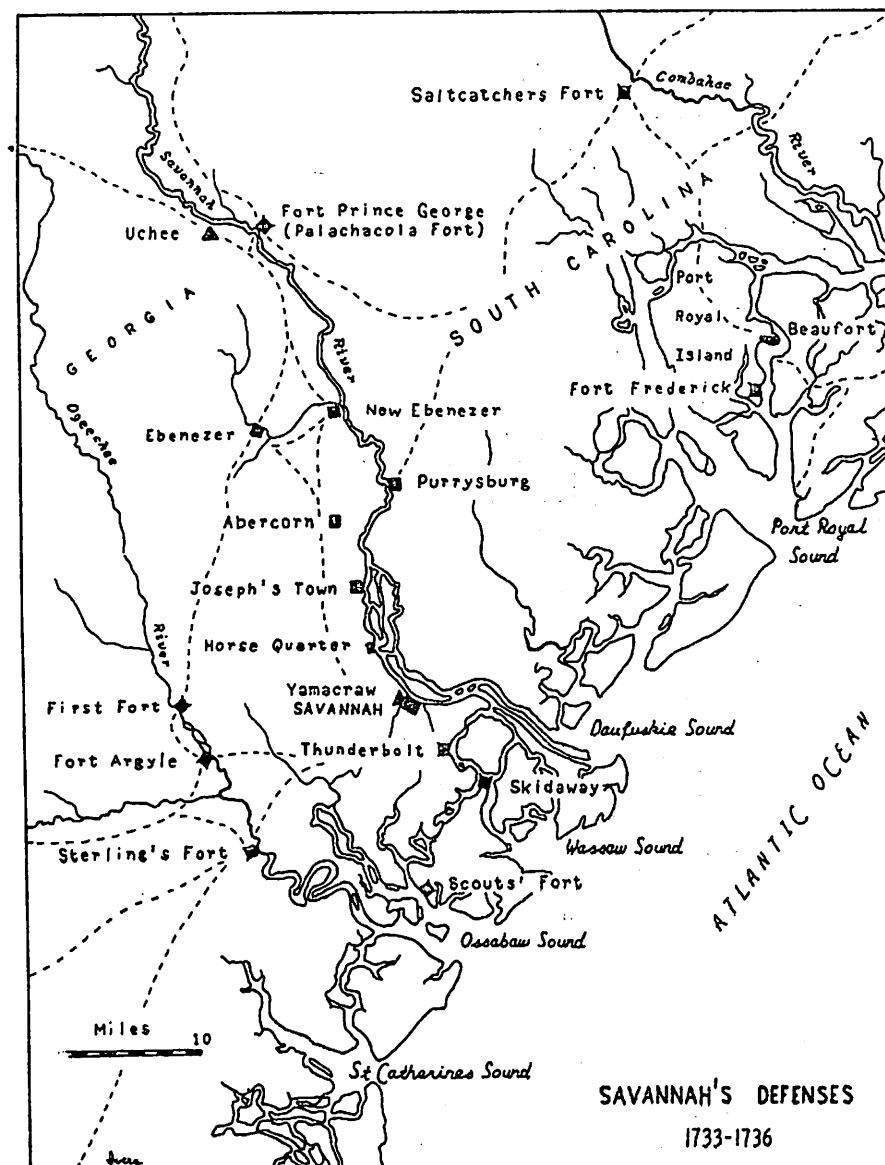
Palachacola had long been a strategic point on South Carolina's southwestern frontier. The name was derived from Palachacola Town, a settlement of friendly Apalachicola Indians which had served as a South Carolina sentry-town, guarding the principal crossing site on the lower Savannah River. However, when the Yemassee War began in 1715 those Indians joined the conspiracy against South Carolina and were soon forced to vacate Palachacola Town and flee to their ancient home in present southwestern Georgia. Without a guard on the lower Savannah crossing site, war parties could cross the river and penetrate the settlements at will. The Company of Southern Rangers (1716-18) built a fort across the river from the abandoned town and patrolled along the east bank of the Savannah River during the first six months of 1718 in an attempt to secure that portion of the frontier. From March 1719 to September 1721 the location served as a factory, or Indian trading center, and it may have included a fort with a small garrison.<sup>29</sup>

For a while Palachacola lay unguarded, but in early 1723 the settlers living north of Beaufort began clamoring for government rangers to protect their plantations from the raids of Yemassee war parties operating from Spanish Florida. In February the South Carolina government ordered a captain, a lieutenant, a sergeant, and nineteen horsemen to be recruited to build and garrison a "small Palisade Fort" at Palachacola. They were to range east above Beaufort and north to Fort Moore, keeping the Indians west of the Savannah River. William Bellingier, a local landowner, was appointed captain and Edmond Maxwell, a former ranger, was commissioned lieutenant. The men were probably enlisted during March. In April

or May they began building the fort on the east side of the Savannah River in the northwest corner of present Jasper County, South Carolina. In late August, Captain Bellinger dejectedly reported that the fort was not yet completed because most of the men were sick and he was doing most of the carpentry himself; snakes from the nearby swamps were also a problem. In June 1724 Captain Bellinger and Lieutenant Maxwell became thoroughly discouraged and resigned. Rowland Evans, a former garrison commander during the Yemassee War, was appointed captain and Philemon Parmenter was selected as his lieutenant. The garrison's strength was reduced from twenty-two to seventeen.<sup>30</sup>

The fortification's official name was Fort Prince George, but the rangers were usually known as the Palachacola Garrison. The fort may have undergone at least two major rebuildings by the time Georgia was settled; timber and earthen fortifications on the southern frontier required rebuilding every four or five years. Wooden structures and palisades decayed quickly and torrential rains eroded the earthen walls into the moat.<sup>31</sup>

Life in Fort Prince George was lonely at best, but frontiersmen were accustomed to loneliness and did not expect to be entertained. The rangers probably drank too much rum and kept company with Indian girls from the Uchee, or Yuchi, town across the river. Most of those men who spent more than a few months in the garrison probably "went native." Young soldiers stationed among a foreign people quickly adopt many of the habits and customs of that people no matter how primitive, when provided the impetus of pretty mistresses. There were usually Indians from one nation or another loafing around the fort because of the requirement that all Indians entering South Carolina via the Palachacola entrance had to stop there and wait for permission from the government in Charles Town before continuing on, Garrisons were supposedly not permitted to engage in trade with the Indians, but a considerable amount of bartering probably took place. The government encouraged the garrison to farm and raise corn, their staple food, and paid them a good price for each bushel. A contractor provided other provisions such as salt, flour, and meat. The men had little if any religious guidance; the nearest minister was located at Beaufort. Nor was there a doctor in

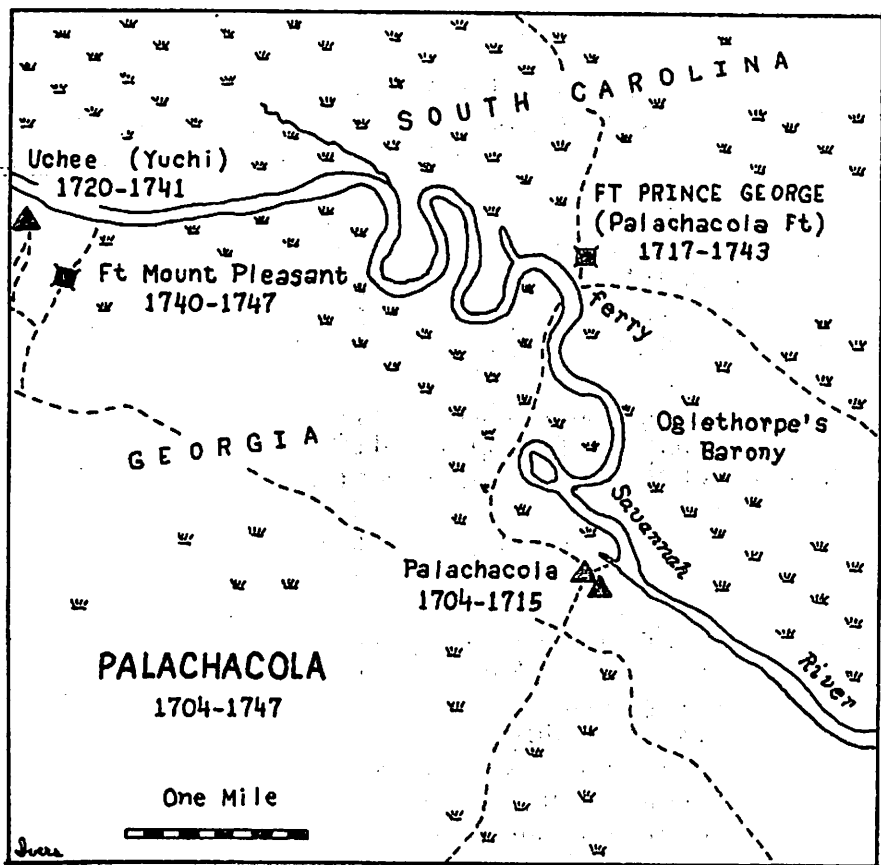


The Palachacola Garrison was instructed to patrol the one hundred miles of frontier between Port Royal and Fort Moore once every two weeks, but it appears very unlikely that they actually covered the terrain that often, if ever. During the period of brutal Indian raids, 1726-28, the garrison's patrols did not discourage all the Yemassee war parties from crossing the Savannah River and penetrating the settlements. The garrison shared surveillance of the Indian Land with McPherson's Southern Rangers after the latter were stationed at Saltcatchers.<sup>34</sup>

During a Creek Indian scare in August 1732, six months before the settlement of Georgia, the Palachacola Garrison went on full alert. Colonel Alexander Glover, the Creek Indian agent, rode to Fort Prince George and assumed command of that section of the frontier. Even though Captain Evans, the commander of the fort, had been too sick to perform duty for some time, he had still been retained in command; however, when war with the Creeks seemed likely Evans was discharged and Lieutenant Parmenter was promoted to captain. Anear Mackintosh, a Scottish gentleman and heir to the chieftainship of Clan Mackintosh in Scotland, was commissioned lieutenant. At the end of the first week in September the fear of a major Indian war dissolved when the government discovered that the Creeks had no intention of going to war.<sup>35</sup>

In early February 1733 one of the Southern Rangers from Saltcatchers rode into Fort Prince George with the governor's message concerning the measures to be taken to protect the Georgia settlers. According to the governor's order, Captain Parmenter sent Lieutenant Mackintosh and four men to strengthen the remaining ranger garrison at Saltcatchers Fort, leaving both garrisons with ten men each.<sup>36</sup>

South Carolina officials informed Oglethorpe, in early 1734, that Fort Prince George might not be necessary much longer because the rangers at Fort Argyle and First Fort adequately protected that portion of the frontier. Oglethorpe, impressed with Fort Prince George's location, told them that if they ever decided to abandon the fort he would garrison it. The fort was a ready-made station for rangers patrolling the area north of Savannah, and it was also a good location from which to control traffic on the Savannah River. By March 1734 the South



attendance. On one occasion a member of the garrison almost died before he could be transported to a doctor in the settlements.<sup>32</sup>

During part of the year 1725 the government stationed Lieutenant Parmenter and seven of the rangers near present Jacksonboro on the western side of the Edisto River. Each "scout" was ordered to "find his own horse and accoutrements, and provisions . . . and be armed with a gun, a pistol, and cutlass, a hatchet, powder-horn, with at least a quarter of a pound of powder, and cartouch box, with twelve charges . . . and a large mastiff or mungrel bred dog, to go constantly along with them in their scouting. . . ." <sup>33</sup>

dispersed South Carolina militia could muster and march to their assistance. Unfortunately, the South Carolinians suffered a serious disadvantage; their numerous black slaves were becoming more and more restless and would likely seize an invasion as an opportunity to revolt.<sup>41</sup>

### III

## *Mackay among the Creek*

1734-1736

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Two hundred and fifty miles west of Savannah, Georgia, were the settlements of the Creek Indians, consisting of several towns loosely joined into two nations. The Lower Creek occupied both banks of the Chattahoochee River while the Upper Creek were divided into three factions—the Coosa (or Abihka), Talapoosa, and Alabama—each living near rivers of those names. The Creek were a farmer-hunter people and first-class warriors. An assured food supply from their corn fields gave them the leisure to engage in war, a very serious game that they played with religious fervor. Their headmen were skillful diplomats; for decades they played Spanish, French, and British against one another, and they sometimes succeeded in achieving a degree of neutrality unobtainable by most modern nations. The Creek men were superb hunters who harvested great quantities of deerskin to trade for English wool, guns, and cutlery. A large share of South Carolina's economy was based upon that trade, but, equally as important, South Carolina was able to maintain a degree of influence with the Creek only because English trade goods were of greater quantity, lower price, and better quality than similar goods from France and Spain.<sup>1</sup>

The Lower Creek were often troublesome to the British, but in the spring of 1734 they were addressing a loyalty of sorts to Georgia because James Oglethorpe had met with some of their headmen during the previous year and had established a treaty of friendship with the help of Tomochichi, the Yamacraw mico (chief), and a large amount of presents. The trustees'

Indian policy was initially wise and fruitful. They lavished presents on the Indians, redressed the Indians' grievances wherever possible, and acquired land through treaty rather than appropriation. Oglethorpe was the perfect man to carry out the trustees' policy. He ate the Indians' food, slept in their houses, sincerely recognized their value as Georgia's allies, and seldom voiced impatience with their alien-appearing customs.<sup>2</sup>

Most of the Upper Creek towns were generally friendly to the British and often helped assure the lower nation's friendship, but previously, in 1717 following the Yemassee War, the Alabama faction had allowed the Louisiana French to build and garrison a fort among their towns. Fort Toulouse, sitting on the eastern bank of the Coosa River two and a half miles above its junction with the Tallapoosa River, gave the French an ideal staging point for diplomatic and military operations among the other two factions of the Upper Creek. The presence of French soldiers was embarrassing for the British and was dangerous to the future of the South Carolina Indian trade. If the trade was ever disrupted the British would lose their only substantial influence among the Creek who, if allied with the French and Choctaw, could destroy Georgia and possibly even South Carolina.<sup>3</sup>

Ships arriving in Charles Town from England in late February 1734 brought rumors that war with France was near. Recent French diplomatic maneuvering among the Creek now appeared frightfully purposeful. In addition, deserting French soldiers reported that Louisiana was preparing to renew its war with Britain's staunch friends, the Chickasaw. The South Carolina Assembly sent a message to Oglethorpe in Georgia requesting "to concert with him about the proper measures to be taken."<sup>4</sup>

Oglethorpe arrived in Charles Town on 2 March and soon afterward met with the assembly's committee on Indian affairs. South Carolina had long considered building and garrisoning a fort among the Upper Creek to serve as a refuge for the traders in the event of an Indian war and to counter the presence of the French fort. The committee did not believe that the Upper Creek would agree to the presence of South Carolina soldiers, but if Oglethorpe's recent success with the Lower Creek was an indication, then perhaps a Georgia garrison would be

acceptable to them. Oglethorpe agreed to raise a company for that purpose, but he stated that the trustees' appropriation from the crown was insufficient to meet that expense. The committee approached the assembly on 9 March and recommended that South Carolina equip and pay the company. The commons house absolutely refused, but a short time later they relented after receiving a personal request from Colonel William Bull, Oglethorpe's adviser and a respected member of the governor's council. They agreed to pay for the company's subsistence during its first two years if Oglethorpe would raise the men and direct their activities.<sup>5</sup>

On 13 March Oglethorpe wrote a captain's commission for Patrick Mackay, his choice to command the company destined for duty in the Creek nations. Oglethorpe had known Mackay since at least the previous September when he had recommended him to the trustees as a fit person to receive a five-hundred-acre grant of Georgia land. Evidence suggests that, by giving him the commission, Oglethorpe was providing a fellow gentleman with a second chance. Patrick Mackay was from the Highland county of Sutherland in Scotland. He was the eldest son and heir of Hugh Mackay, a well-to-do and influential man. Patrick had engaged in large-scale business speculation and, as a result of bad luck and some possible fraudulent dealings by others, had lost most of the family fortune and gone into debt. He was forced to sell Siderra, the family estate, and, in 1733, after publishing a pamphlet explaining the reasons for his indebtedness, Patrick and three brothers—Hugh, James, and Charles—took passage to the colony of Georgia, arriving there about September. Patrick brought his wife and infant daughter. He, his brothers, and some other Scotsmen who paid their own way were given grants of land upriver from Savannah at a place called Josephs Town, or Captain's Bluff. Oglethorpe returned briefly to Savannah on 11 March to assist a group of German-speaking settlers who had just arrived from Salzburg, and he probably gave Mackay his commission at that time. Mackay appears to have accompanied Oglethorpe when he returned to Charles Town on 23 March.<sup>6</sup>

On 27 April 1734 Oglethorpe addressed official written instructions to "Mr. Patrick Mackay Agent to the Creeks." He



ordered Mackay to recruit his company as soon as possible and march them to the Creek nations where he was to meet with the traders to collect intelligence concerning Spanish and French activities among the Indians. After visiting each of the major towns he was to conduct a conference with all their headmen in order to attain permission to build and garrison a fort in the Upper Creek nation. His power as agent authorized him to hear and redress the Indians' grievances, and having the authority of a constable he could reprimand lawbreaking traders and banish them from the nations if necessary. Instructions covered the conduct of guard duty and the daily tasks of the officers and noncommissioned officers. If the Spaniards or the French threatened military action Mackay was authorized to assume that war had been declared and mobilize the traders and Indians under his command for a campaign to be conducted at his discretion.<sup>7</sup>

Oglethorpe had no authority to appoint Mackay as agent nor to give him disciplinary powers over the traders; the trustees did not pass an Indian trading law assuming authority to regulate the trade in Georgia until the following year. Nevertheless, Oglethorpe was reputed to have remarked to several traders in Charles Town "that "they [the traders] very well knew that the Indian Trade did belong to Georgia, and that it solely did belong to them, but Carolina had begg'd that they might have Liberty to grant License for that Year."<sup>8</sup> Oglethorpe obviously had every intention of assuming control of the trade with those Indians inside the boundaries of Georgia. He wanted Georgia to share the economic benefits of the trade, but, equally important, he realized that the traders' conduct had to be tightly controlled in order to maintain a lasting peace and alliance with the Indians. Previously, in 1715, the traders' lawless conduct had caused a war with the Yemassee nation which had nearly destroyed South Carolina.<sup>9</sup>

There is an indication that Governor Robert Johnson of South Carolina acquiesced to Oglethorpe's plans. He apparently agreed that Georgia should either assume responsibility for regulating the Creek trade or, at the very least, take part in unified control with South Carolina. Perhaps he hoped that Oglethorpe could regulate the traders' conduct even though his own government could not. Both Oglethorpe and Governor

Johnson were careful not to declare their intentions too loudly, since the merchants who participated in the Indian trade were a major political power in South Carolina and would be incensed if they suspected that the trade was about to be lost to Georgia. Having been opposed to the colonization of Georgia from the beginning, they would induce the assembly to withdraw their monetary support for Mackay's company and to halt other funds that had been appropriated for Georgia's assistance.<sup>10</sup>

Oglethorpe left Charles Town on 7 May, bound temporarily for England, and Mackay soon afterward returned to Savannah and began raising and equipping his "Independent Company." Its fully authorized strength was twenty-seven men: a captain, lieutenant, ensign, surgeon, sergeant, corporal, interpreter, messenger, three packhorsemen, and sixteen soldiers, whose term of enlistment was one year. They were equipped for ranging and were called rangers. Few of the mens' names are known, but at least one South Carolinian, William Small, had been a professional ranger under Captain James McPherson since 1727. Oglethorpe had chosen Robert Parker, Jr., as lieutenant and Mackay presented him with his commission during the latter part of May. Parker had arrived in Georgia during the previous December, and during the following April, about a month before he received his commission, Oglethorpe had sent him and three other men to be caretakers of Fort Prince George at Palachacola. He, like his father, was vain and egotistical and later caused the Georgia magistrates considerable trouble. Lieutenant Parker joined the company at Josephs Town where the newly recruited rangers were engaged in clearing land, hewing and sawing logs, and other labors on Captain Mackay's plantation. Hugh Mackay, Jr., Patrick's nephew, was commissioned ensign. The names of the sergeant and corporal are also uncertain but Nicholas Fisher was probably one or the other.<sup>11</sup>

Captain Mackay began outfitting his company. He bought twenty-two muskets from the trustees' store in Savannah, enough to arm everyone but the interpreter, the messenger, and the three packhorsemen who, as civilians, provided their own arms. Two cheap Indian-trading muskets were procured, presumably for two Indian guides. Belt buckles, probably of

brass, were purchased for the men to use in making their own belts; each belt would support a cartridge box, a powder flask, and an iron-handled cutlass. The company needed horses for use as mounts and as pack animals to carry their equipment and supplies, but there were no horses for sale in Georgia. In addition, the trustees' store did not stock the great quantity of presents needed for the Indians. About 1 June, Mackay set out on horseback to purchase those items in Charles Town.<sup>12</sup>

Most of the Charles Town merchants soon became alienated by their government's decision to place Georgia soldiers among the Creek. They had undoubtedly heard reports of Oglethorpe's conversations with some of the traders in which he implied that Georgia would assume control of the Creek trade by 1735. They may also have studied Oglethorpe's instructions to Mackay and been shocked to find Mackay addressed as "Agent" with complete disciplinary authority over their traders. During his stay in Charles Town from June through the first half of August 1734 Mackay informed the traders, who were then in Charles Town to purchase their licenses, of his mission among the Creek and suggested that they stop selling rum to the Indians. South Carolina's commissioner of Indian affairs, Tobias Fitch, resented Mackay's intrusion into his domain and began openly advising the traders to disregard the Georgian's counsel. In response, Mackay requested Governor Johnson to personally inform the traders that he was South Carolina's appointed agent for the Creek Indians. Johnson did direct Fitch to order the Creek traders to assist and obey Mackay, but he deftly sidestepped the inflammable request to appoint Mackay as his agent.<sup>13</sup>

Evidently, word of Mackay's earlier defunct business ventures in Scotland had spread to Charles Town, because some people began calling him Mr. Oglethorpe's "poor friend." Mackay realized he would receive little respect from the merchants and traders until he had the authority to issue trading licenses, a power that would allow him to determine who could trade and to assign traders to specific towns. In despair he wrote the trustees that his title as agent was no good unless they also appointed someone (obviously thinking of himself) as commissioner to issue licenses.<sup>14</sup>

Without the merchants' cooperation Mackay found it difficult

to hire men and buy the necessary equipment and the large number of horses he needed. Finally, he did succeed in engaging three packhorsemen and a personal servant, and he purchased a herd of pack horses from the executor of a deceased Cherokee trader. He borrowed a forge and purchased axes, saws, nails, other tools to build the proposed fort in the Upper Creek nation, and presents for the Indians including Union Jack flags, one for each of the major Creek towns. He dispatched the equipment to Georgia by water in a piragua that he had previously hired at Savannah.<sup>15</sup>

On 15 August 1734, after a summer of frustrating dealings in a hostile Charles Town, Captain Mackay set out overland for Georgia with the herd of horses. During the first night on the road from Charles Town to Palachacola the servant contracted the ague (malarial fever) and was left in the settlement of Pon Pon (modern Jacksonboro). Mackay did not see him again. On the third day the packhorsemen became so ill that Mackay was forced to camp near the Ashepoo River for two days while they partially recovered. After hiring a man from a nearby plantation Mackay continued the trip on 20 August. That day two of the packhorsemen had relapses and were left alongside the road to recover. Mackay and his two remaining men had considerable difficulty in driving the herd, which probably consisted of about fifty horses of the tough breed raised by the Cherokee. During the week it took to travel from the head of Ashepoo River to Palachacola on the Savannah River, several horses escaped and drifted into the swamps. Finally, on 26 August, Captain Mackay rode into Fort Prince George at Palachacola with his horses. Captain Aneas Mackintosh, the garrison commander, lent Mackay two of his rangers to help corral the herd and tend it until the packhorsemen were well enough to rejoin Mackay. The piragua arrived soon afterward and its cargo of presents and equipment was secured in the fort.<sup>16</sup>

When Captain Mackay arrived in Josephs Town he found his Independent Company in a state of convalescence. All the rangers had contracted a fever and were still too ill for duty. Doctor Hirsh and Lieutenant Parker had gone to Savannah where they were recovering. On 16 September, while Mackay was in Savannah visiting his surgeon and lieutenant, he con-

tracted the same fever and lay in bed during the ensuing two weeks, sometimes delirious. About the first of October his fever broke and he left for Beaufort, South Carolina, to rest and regain his strength in the ocean breezes, but as soon as he arrived he had a relapse and lay near death for twenty days. His fever finally broke again and he returned to Savannah on 31 October.<sup>17</sup>

The outlook for Mackay was discouraging. Seven months had passed since Oglethorpe had ordered him to journey to the Creek nations. Most of his rangers had recovered from their recent sickness, but their morale was low. They told Mackay that they had no intentions of remaining in the company after March when their terms of service would expire. Mackay's chief packhorseman, an Indian trader named John Gray, informed him that the horses were sick and some of them would not survive a journey to the Creek nations. Robert Parker, Jr., resigned his commission as lieutenant because he was too ill to perform his duties, and Mackay could not have felt too strong himself after five weeks of intermittent fever.<sup>18</sup>

Captain Mackay wanted James Burnside, a settler at Fort Argyle, as his new lieutenant, but Thomas Causton, the trustees' representative and storekeeper, gave the vacant commission to Adrain Loyer, his former assistant in the trustees' store. Mackay thought Loyer lacked a "Warlick disposition."<sup>19</sup>

In early November, after months of frustrating delays, Captain Mackay began final preparations to journey to Coweta, the principal town of the Lower Creek. Thomas Wiggins, the trader whom Oglethorpe had engaged to assist and accompany Mackay, advised him to take only a part of the company because there were not enough fit horses to mount all the men and pack their baggage. Captain Mackay agreed and left Lieutenant Loyer and eight rangers in Savannah while he and the remainder took boat passage on 10 November to the Uchee Indian town three miles west of Fort Prince George. He planned to return the horses for Loyer and his rangers as soon as the Upper Creek authorized him to build a fort. The packhorsemen had previously swum the horses (four of which had drowned) and boated the presents, supplies, and equipment across the river to the Uchee town. After arriving, the company stayed under the cover of the Indians' huts and traders' houses

for about two weeks while early winter rains delayed their departure. While there, Mackay renewed the trading licenses of the two traders in residence, an act for which he had no authority.<sup>20</sup>

During the last week of November 1734 Captain Mackay and his half of the Independent Company began their overland march to Coweta on the Chattahoochee River. The company probably included Thomas Wiggins who served as guide, Ensign Hugh Mackay, Jr., John Barton the interpreter, Doctor Hirsh, William Clark the messenger, John Gray and one or two more packhorsemen, a noncommissioned officer, and about seven private rangers. Mackay had left two of the rangers at Josephs Town to work on his plantation. Perhaps two or more Yamacraw Indians attended the company as hunters, guides, and scouts.<sup>21</sup>

When traveling the southern forest paths the members of a ranger party awoke and began riding early in the morning. Indian scouts ranged to the front and flanks to hunt deer and turkey for the party's food supply. They stopped before noon each day for two or three hours in order to rest and skin the wild animals that the Indians had killed for the evening meal. Afterwards, the rangers rode until just before sunset when they stopped and made camp near a stream. The horses were not tied but were allowed to wander in the vicinity of the camp with a leather hobble tied between their forelegs to keep them from straying too far. Bells were tied around their necks to inform the rangers of their locations during the next morning's dim predawn light. After guards were posted around the camp, meat and other food was divided among the groups, or messes, of four or five men each who prepared supper over their separate fires. After eating, the men lay down to sleep with their weapons close by, using saddles for pillows.<sup>22</sup>

The exact trace of the path they followed is unknown, but it probably ran from the Uchee town west-northwest to a point just below present Milledgeville, then southwest to present Columbus. The path would have been narrow with tree branches closing in on the riders from all sides, and a man who did not watch the path could have been knocked from his saddle. Almost every creek bed was a swamp where the rangers were

forced to dismount and wade through the deep stinking mud. Captain Mackay reached certain conclusions about ranger equipment during that journey. The muskets he had bought were designed as infantry weapons, too long and cumbersome for horsemen negotiating narrow paths. The cheap saddles he had purchased were falling apart. He soon wrote to Oglethorpe, asking him to supply short carbines and a "hunter" type of saddle.<sup>23</sup>

The first major river crossing was the Ogeechee. Crossing large rivers was a time-consuming project for a party with baggage. Horsemen crossed by one of two methods. The first and most dangerous method was to ride the swimming horses across, a maneuver that could and often did result in men being swept off and drowned. The second and most comfortable method was to search the bank until an Indian dugout canoe or raft could be found and then paddle across while the horses were made to swim alongside. The packhorsemen floated the baggage across rivers in a skin boat, a small portable craft made by stretching a leather cover over a wooden frame. It was collapsible and was carried in one of the horse's packs.<sup>24</sup>

About a week after beginning their journey they crossed the Oconee River approximately four miles southeast of present Milledgeville. There the path joined with the Lower Trading Path, which ran from Fort Moore, South Carolina, on the Savannah River to Coweta on the Chattahoochee River. This was the path that joined Charles Town to the Lower Creek nation. A day or two later they passed by the ancient mounds at modern Ocmulgee National Monument in Macon and crossed the Ocmulgee River. About 10 December, ten to twelve days after leaving the Uchee town, the company arrived at the Flint River. Mackay wrote and dispatched instructions to all of the principal traders among the Lower Creek to meet him within fifteen miles of Coweta and accompany him to that town. About two days later approximately fifteen "Gentlemen Traders" met Captain Mackay on the trail and saluted him in frontier fashion by firing their muskets into the air. The next day the combined parties received a friendly welcome from Chigellee, the principal mico of the Lower Creek, as they rode into Coweta on the west bank of the Chattahoochee River, two and one-half miles southeast of Mill Creek, which

runs through modern Phoenix City, Alabama. That was Mackay's headquarters for the next three and one-half months.<sup>25</sup>

He spent the remainder of the winter visiting the Lower Creek towns, most of which were similar in appearance. Each of the richest warriors' residences usually consisted of four buildings: a winter lodge and kitchen, a summer hut, a storage hut, and a hut for skins and other trade goods. All faced an open court. The town square consisted of an artificial mound, with a winter hothouse and a summer-cabin court on top, and a large rectangular yard where the game of chungke was played. Surrounding the town were the cornfields that were worked in common by the inhabitants.<sup>26</sup>

Each of the towns probably gave him a customary reception, varying in intensity. Since it was winter the welcoming ceremony likely took place in the hothouse, a circular building about fifty feet in diameter which served as the winter temple and men's club. Inside of this smoky stinking hut the head warriors served a black ceremonial drink made of the leaves of the Yaupon holly tree. Afterward they may have moved outside to watch a game of chungke: A small wheel-shaped chungke stone was bowled down the field followed by two warriors who threw light poles toward the spot where they expected it to stop. The closest pole determined the winner. Food was later served, and that night the Indians probably danced for Mackay's entertainment.<sup>27</sup>

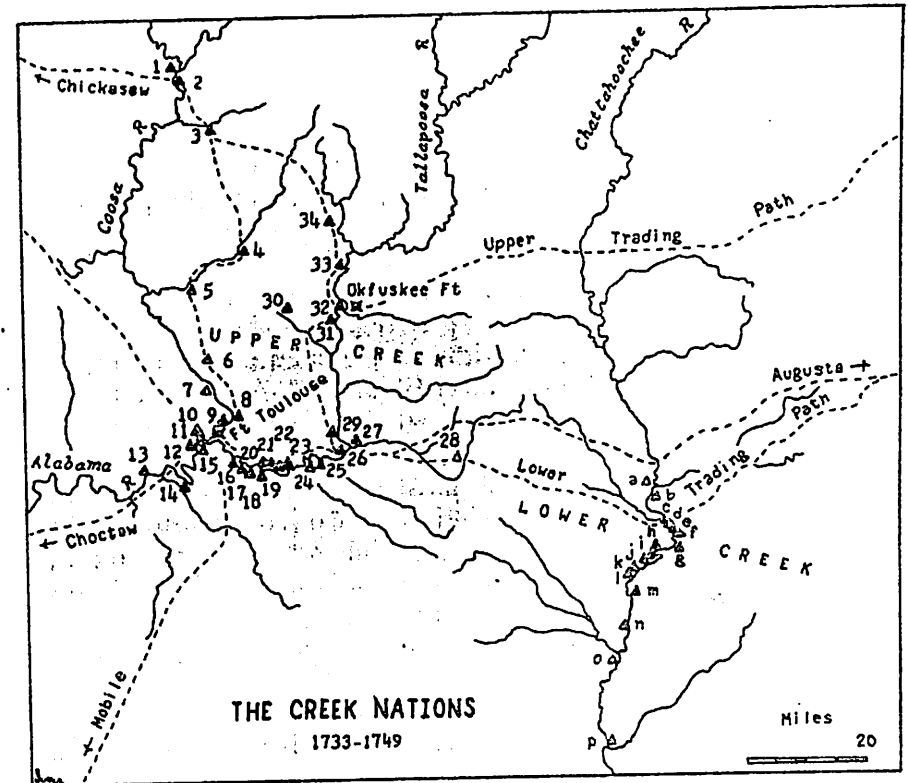
The Independent Company had some success in establishing rapport with the Indians through Doctor Hirsh, who worked among the Indians of the various towns curing many of their minor ailments. The young doctor also served as the company's surgeon and veterinarian, treating both the rangers and their horses.<sup>28</sup>

Mackay unfortunately established a degree of influence over Licko, the mico of a small town called Uchesses, which was probably one of the Uchee, or Yuchi, settlements. Mackay, on his own initiative, had decided to take positive action against the Spaniards because they were supposedly building fortifications in Apalachee, south of the Creek nations. Licko already hated the Spaniards—they had reportedly killed his brother—and only a little persuasion by Mackay through John Barton, the interpreter, was needed to set him on the warpath with

twenty-five of his men. Believing that the Spaniards would retaliate if they suffered from Licko's raid, Mackay wrote Thomas Causton at Savannah to suggest that he alert the settlements and send some Yamacraw to scout the crossing sites of the Altamaha River. Licko struck a Spanish outpost named Fort Pupo on the west bank of the Saint Johns River during the first week of May 1735, killing the fort's master gunner. A month later, true to Mackay's prediction, a party of Yemassee Indians from Florida surprised a Yamacraw scouting party camped on the Altamaha River, killing seven men.<sup>29</sup>

During his initial days with the Lower Creek, Captain Mackay was undoubtedly fascinated by their customs. Unlike most Europeans of that period, the Creek bathed daily. Scratching one another until blood was drawn was an obsession; children were scratched when naughty to let out the evil spirits and men scratched each other to pledge friendship. They were often noisy with their whoops, each designed for a special occasion. Their clothing was a mixture of traditional Creek and period English. The common winter dress was a trade shirt, a cloth apron or breechcloth, moccasins, and a blanket. The Creek conducted war by employing small raids and ambushes to gain a few scalps instead of organizing extensive campaigns, like European nations, to destroy entire armies and towns. After killing a few men, women, or children and stealing a few horses they returned home to celebrate and brag. There was very little group discipline; a warrior could accompany or not accompany a war party, and even after joining he could quit and return home at any time with no question asked. If a war party was overwhelmed they seldom stood and fought but instead turned and ran, sometimes for days, to escape death with no loss of face. However, like Europeans, elevated social status served as the reward for courageous actions in battle.<sup>30</sup>

Mackay's fascination with the Creek customs quickly soured. Unlike Oglethorpe, he had no particular respect or tolerance for Indians. He pictured them as being sullen and gloomy, but that was certainly an inaccurate description of their character. He thought their answers to his political questions were ambiguous, but the Creek survived by being ambiguous; Spanish and French captains asked them the same questions. He thought they were too arrogant, but arrogance was their pre-



#### Lower Creek Towns

(Approximately 1,200 Warriors)

a. Coweta	e. Chiaha	i. Apalachicola	m. Oconee
b. Kasihta	f. Okmulgee	j. Kolomi	n. Sawokli
c. Yuchi	g. Hitchiti	h. Atasi	o. Hogologiee
d. Osochi	h. Westo	l. Tuskegee	p. Eufaula Hopai

#### Upper Creek Towns

(Approximately 1,365 Warriors)

1. Chickasaw	10. Old Coosa	19. Old Tallassee	27. Tallassee
2. Coosa	11. Tuskegee	20. Kanhatki	28. Halfway
3. Abihkutci	12. Koasati	21. Kolomi	29. Yuchi
4. Wakokai	13. Autauga	22. Fushatchee	30. Okchai
5. Pakan	14. Pawokti	23. Holiwahali	31. Eufaula
6. Wiwohka	15. Pakana	24. Atasi	32. Okfuskee
7. Okchai	16. Tawasa	25. Tulsa	33. Suka-ispoga
8. Wetumpka	17. Muklasa	26. Tukabahchee	34. Hilibi
9. Ohtcaituci	18. Shawnee		

dictable attitude after Britain, Spain, and France had vied for their allegiance with presents during the past fifty years. Since their young unmarried women each cohabitated with numerous young men he believed they lacked any virtuous principles, but Mackay apparently did not realize that his virtues were not the same as those of the Creek. He thought the most disgusting thing about the Indians was their "cowardly" method of making war. Mackay's lack of respect for the Indians soon led to a diplomatic break with the headmen of Tustegoes, perhaps a small branch town of Kasihta, or Cussita. He later punished that town by withdrawing their traders.<sup>31</sup>

Captain Mackay completed his business among the Lower Creek during the last week in March 1735 by assembling all the micos and principle warriors at Coweta to listen to him deliver Oglethorpe's written speech advocating continued friendship and trade with the British.<sup>32</sup>

On 30 March the company began its journey to the Upper Creek. By this time Lieutenant Loyer and his eight rangers had apparently joined Mackay. The company must have maintained an apprehensive guard because the French commander of Fort Toulouse, sometimes called Alabama Fort, had threatened to repel them by force if they entered the Upper Creek nation. Mackay was spoiling for a fight and would have welcomed a confrontation; however, the governor of Louisiana chose to limit French reaction to diplomatic outbursts, thereby preventing clashes between Mackay's rangers and the French garrison. Actually, the governor and his Choctaw allies were involved in a costly war with the Chickasaw and were in no position to extend themselves militarily.<sup>33</sup>

Mackay sent orders to all the Upper Creek traders to meet him at Halfway, a small town on Chewookeleehatchee Creek about forty-five miles east-northeast of present Montgomery, Alabama. From there the traders escorted the company to Tallassee near the junction of Uhapee Creek and Tallapoosa River, where Mackay showed the traders his commissions from Oglethorpe, the trustees, and the governor of South Carolina. The governor's commission may have been a fake because Mackay had admitted earlier that he had been unable to obtain such a document, but the illiterate traders were not aware of the difference. He informed them that Georgia now controlled

the trade and that they would have to go to Savannah instead of Charles Town to buy their licenses, regardless of what orders they had from South Carolina.<sup>34</sup>

A short time later Mackay met with the headmen of the Upper Creek towns at Okfuskee, a principal town, and bluntly stated his demands. "First, for them to pull down and demolish the French Fort at Albasas. Secondly, if they would not do that, then to let him build a fort wherever he should think convenient. Thirdly, that if they would not consent to do as before proposed that he would withdraw all the Traders from amongst them."<sup>35</sup> The headmen withdrew and debated the problem for a week. The ultimatum was a blow to the Creek whose national policy was the maintenance of neutrality. However, they had become so dependent upon British trade goods that they could not easily exist without them. They reluctantly agreed to allow Mackay to build his fort.<sup>36</sup>

Although the South Carolina Assembly later argued that a fort was never constructed, it is certain that a fortification of some sort was built near Okfuskee, sometimes called Great Okfuskee, located west of modern Dadeville, Alabama, on the west bank of the Tallapoosa River opposite Sandy Creek. The entire site is now under Lake Martin. Okfuskee Fort, probably a log blockhouse surrounded by a stockade, contained the western-most British garrison in North America.<sup>37</sup>

During his stay in the Creek nations Captain Mackay had learned to detest many of the traders. Although some of them were reputable businessmen, many more were scoundrels who sold unlimited rum, cheated with false weights and measures, contracted immense debts, drank to excess, and conducted themselves like stud horses among the Indian women. Although Captain Mackay seemingly made attempts to reform the traders, they generally ignored him. He resolved to make examples of some of them in order to frighten the others into submitting to his authority. Before leaving for the Upper Creek he had ordered four pairs of handcuffs from Savannah.<sup>38</sup>

Nevertheless, several of the traders, Thomas Wiggins in particular, seem to have been in Captain Mackay's favor. They probably helped him formulate his scheme for more orderly control of the trade by organizing the most honest and reliable

traders into a monopolistic trading company. After Mackay received permission from the Upper Creek to build a fort, he met with the traders at Okfuskee and proceeded to organize a trading company that consisted of Thomas Wiggins and ten others. They submitted to Georgia's jurisdiction and were the only authorized traders among the Creek. The members of the company seem to have been pleased with the arrangement; they were spared the £50 charge for a license and a tax of six pennies placed on each deerskin by South Carolina, requirements that they detested, and there was less competition. Captain Mackay informed those traders who had not been invited to become part of the company that they must leave the Creek nations, cautioning them not to return with a renewed South Carolina license because that document was no longer valid. In all, he forced five traders to leave the Upper Creek and three to leave the Lower Creek. Some of these men headed straight for Charles Town to inform their merchant backers.<sup>39</sup>

From the very boldness of Mackay's attack on South Carolina's trading system it appears that he expected to receive lawful backing from the Georgia trustees. At Oglethorpe's instigation they had passed an Indian trading act during the previous January, in which they claimed Georgia's jurisdiction over the trade. However, during April and May 1735 Mackay acted without any authority whatsoever in regulating the trade because the trustees' act was not approved by the king and his council until April, and it did not become effective until June.<sup>40</sup>

About the middle of May, just before Mackay left the Upper Creek, a most unfortunate incident occurred. Doctor Hirsh and William Edwards, a servant to a trader named Alexander Wood, had a quarrel for some unknown reason and they may have exchanged blows. When Captain Mackay heard about it he judged that Edwards was in the wrong and ordered him handcuffed and shackled with leg irons. Mackay had found a man to punish as an example for the traders. The next day Ensign Hugh Mackay, Jr., marched Edwards alongside an escort of rangers to the chuncoe pole, the Creek torture stake, in the town square of Okfuskee. Edwards's shirt was stripped off and he was tied to the pole while two rangers cut a bundle of hickory switches. When all was ready Mackay and the traders joined the crowd of curious Indians to watch.

However, One Handed King, the Okfuskee mico, and Lieutenant, a prominent warrior, interceded to prevent the whipping, which they considered a loathsome form of punishment. One Handed King hugged Edwards in his arms and said they would have to whip him too. Lieutenant said Edwards would not be whipped. Mackay said the punishment would be carried out. Lieutenant picked up the bundle of switches and threw them aside. It was a tense moment for Indians and white men alike. Finally, Captain Mackay relented and Edwards was freed.<sup>41</sup>

Anthony Willy, formerly the lieutenant of Fort Moore, South Carolina, was apparently commissioned lieutenant of the company at about that time to replace Adrain Loyer. Willy was the first officer in the company with any experience on the frontier. He and a small party of rangers were left at Okfuskee, probably to build the fort, while Mackay and the remainder of the company returned to Coweta on the Chattahoochee River.<sup>42</sup>

During June the headmen of both the Upper and Lower Creek left for Savannah where a large quantity of presents had arrived from England. Mackay, intending to preside over the distribution, left Coweta with his detachment of the company, arriving in Savannah on 18 June.<sup>43</sup>

As Mackay rode into Savannah a political storm was breaking over his actions among the Creek. The Spanish governor of Saint Augustine had written two letters of protest concerning Licko's raid and would soon write a third. The banished South Carolina traders were arriving in Charles Town and indignant merchants were crying for restitution. Governor Johnson, who might have defended Mackay to some extent, had died the month before. His replacement, Lieutenant Governor Thomas Broughton, was in sympathy with the South Carolina Indian trading faction and pressed the attack against Mackay. Mackay, undaunted by the uproar he had caused, added to the storm by issuing Georgia licenses to those traders who had accompanied him to Savannah.<sup>44</sup>

Because of the outraged complaints from South Carolina and Florida, the Georgia magistrates made an attempt, in appearance at least, to determine whether Mackay had sent Licko and his war party on their raid against the Spanish fort in

Florida. About the first of July they conducted a hearing in the presence of the Creek headmen. They exonerated Captain Mackay and placed the blame on John Barton, the company's South Carolina interpreter whom Mackay had disliked from the beginning. Barton was placed under arrest for inciting Licko to raid Spanish territory, but he was probably released in about a month following a protest by Lieutenant Governor Broughton.<sup>45</sup>

Captain Mackay outfitted the company for further service by having uniform coats tailored to replace the rangers' civilian coats. During the first part of July, after the Indian conference, he prepared to set out with the company on a scouting mission toward Florida. Instead he went to Beaufort, South Carolina, perhaps to recover from a recurrence of his fever.<sup>46</sup>

Throughout July indignant letters were exchanged between Mackay and Lieutenant Governor Broughton and also between the Georgia magistrates and the lieutenant governor. Broughton claimed Mackay had exceeded his instructions, which were only military, but Mackay, with the magistrates backing, said his actions were well within his authority.<sup>47</sup>

The indignation in Charles Town over Mackay's actions against the traders led to direct action. Broughton and the assembly resolved not to pay for the cost of the Independent Company as previously promised. In addition, Broughton sent his Indian commissioner to reside in the Creek nations to insure that traders with South Carolina licenses were not barred from trading. There were rumors that South Carolina would thwart Mackay with military force if necessary. Additional rumors hinted that the Georgia militia would back Mackay. By the end of the summer it was apparent that a physical clash would occur if Captain Mackay returned to the Creek nations with the intention of enforcing his trading laws. He wisely decided to spend the remainder of 1735 with part of his company at Josephs Town, while Lieutenant Willy and his detachment of the company sat quietly at Okfuskee.<sup>48</sup>

Word of Mackay's actions eventually reached the Georgia trustees in London. His provocation of an Indian attack on a Spanish fort was an international incident and his unauthorized banishment of the South Carolina traders had caused a rupture in their relations with South Carolina, a colony that

was providing valuable aid to Georgia. In order to avoid further trouble and to placate South Carolina, the trustees ordered Captain Mackay discharged and directed Oglethorpe to investigate his actions and punish him if necessary.<sup>49</sup>

After returning to Georgia, Oglethorpe visited Captain Mackay at Josephs Town on 9 February 1736. There is no record of what they said at that meeting, but it must have been embarrassing for both of them; although Mackay's actions had been highly provocative, he had been attempting to implement an unworkable policy planned by Oglethorpe. Oglethorpe retained the rangers on duty, but he carried out the trustees' order and discharged Captain Mackay.<sup>50</sup>

Patrick Mackay commands a degree of sympathy from modern observers. He was one of the most conscientious officers to serve under Oglethorpe in Georgia; despite sickness, hardship, and extreme misfortune he continued to carry out his instructions with great personal courage. His attempt to improve and regulate the conduct of the traders, although impossible within his limited power, was nevertheless valiant. Unfortunately, he had two primary shortcomings that seriously hampered his effectiveness. First, he had a deep prejudice concerning men who were not of his social stature and culture. Unlike Oglethorpe, he could not tolerate what he believed to be repulsive habits and customs of the traders and Indians. Second, he was a newcomer to America without experience or knowledge of frontier politics and the established relationship of the Indian trade with the South Carolina economy. Nevertheless, he might have succeeded if Governor Johnson had lived, for that British statesman apparently considered Indian affairs from the strategic standpoint. His successor, Lieutenant Governor Broughton, viewed the Indians as one of the financial mainstays of his friends, the South Carolina merchants. Thus, even if Mackay had been a man of exceptional tolerance and great experience he probably could not have secured a portion of the Creek trade for Georgia without incurring the wrath of the South Carolina merchants. The bitter dispute between South Carolina and Georgia concerning jurisdiction over the Indian trade was still far from settled.



## IV

## Occupation of the Spaniards' Doorstep

January–June 1736

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The old Spanish-mission province of Guale, that vast land of seacoast, marsh, and forest between the Georgia settlements and Spanish Florida, had lain virtually uninhabited since 1727 when the British garrison was withdrawn from Fort King George on the Altamaha River. When Oglethorpe returned to England in late 1734 the British flag still flew over the fort, but the outworks were in ruins and the garrison included only two lonely South Carolina watchmen whose existence was centered around a supply boat's periodic visits.<sup>1</sup>

In 1730 the British Board of Trade had ordered South Carolina to establish two "townships" on the Altamaha River and to rebuild Fort King George as a buffer against the Spaniards, but the order was ignored. The project was tabled after the plans for settling Georgia were finalized; however, Oglethorpe's personal strategy called for Georgia to colonize that region before the Spaniards could reestablish themselves there. During March 1735, nine months after his return to England, he began his campaign by inducing the Georgia trustees to ask Parliament for £51,800, half of which would fund the establishment of 880 men in twenty forts on the Altamaha River. According to Oglethorpe's probable expectation, Parliament naturally did not agree to such an outlandish request, but they did provide, without significant question, a budget of £26,000, enough to allow Oglethorpe to continue planning. In June the trustees approved Oglethorpe's more conservative plan for two fortified

towns in the Altamaha River region of old Guale. Scottish Highlanders were to establish a town and garrison the site of Fort King George, while Englishmen and Salzburgers were to settle a town and garrison a fort on Saint Simons Island.<sup>2</sup>

The Scottish settlement was the responsibility of Hugh Mackay, Sr., who was a former British army lieutenant, a brother of Patrick, an uncle of Hugh, Jr., and a Georgian since 1733. Mackay and John Cuthbert, another Highland gentleman, were given trustees' commissions as captain and lieutenant, respectively, of the militia. More than 170 people, including a number of men who indentured themselves as servants, were recruited from the county of Sutherland in Scotland. They embarked for Georgia in October 1735 and arrived at Tybee Roads, the mouth of the Savannah River, in January 1736. Mackay and part of the men immediately set out for the Altamaha River and the remainder followed soon afterwards with the women and children. Their town, Darien, located on the site of the modern village of that name, initially consisted of some huts, a small battery of cannons, a guard house, a store house, and a makeshift church. The Gaelic-speaking Scots were a colorful addition to the American wilderness with their Highland dress, consisting of belted plaids, stockings, brogues, and bonnets. Each man was armed with a broadsword, a target (shield), and a poorly manufactured musket.<sup>3</sup>

The settlers for Frederica, the proposed town and fort for Saint Simons Island, were recruited in London. Oglethorpe left England with two ships containing 257 colonists in December 1735, arriving in Georgia during early February 1736. Leaving the settlers at Tybee Roads, Oglethorpe continued upriver to the town of Savannah where he remained for a week, completing necessary business before sailing southward for the Altamaha River. He agreed with those Salzburgers who were already settled at Ebenezer, north-northwest of Savannah, to move their settlement to a better location on the western bank of the Savannah River. He also agreed to allow many of the fifty-nine German-speaking Salzburgers who had accompanied him to settle with their countrymen at New Ebenezer rather than at the proposed town of Frederica.<sup>4</sup>

One of Oglethorpe's first priorities was to establish five ranger units (a total of fifty men) to provide additional frontier

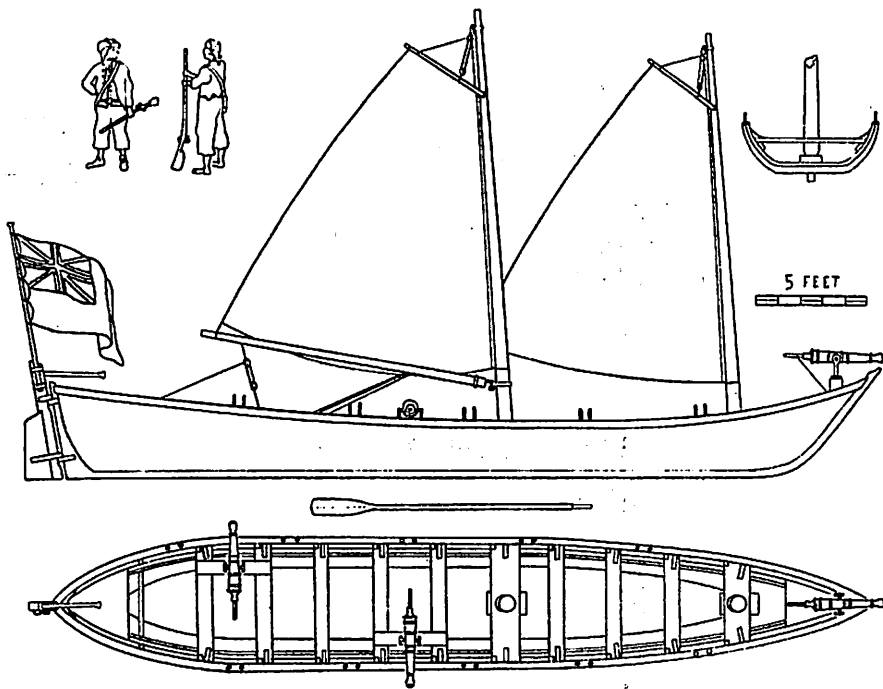
protection. According to the trustees' order Oglethorpe discharged Captain Patrick Mackay, but he divided the Independent Company into two separate parties: he retained Lieutenant Anthony Willy's detachment at Okfuskee in the Upper Creek nation, and he ordered the detachment of Ensign Hugh Mackay, Jr., to prepare for duty in the Altamaha settlements. A third unit, Captain Aneas Mackintosh's Palachicola Rangers, was already garrisoning Fort Prince George near the Savannah River in South Carolina. The two remaining units were probably on duty by June of that year: Oglethorpe drew orders for Captain Roger Lacy to enlist a party of rangers for the purpose of building and garrisoning Fort Augusta on the upper Savannah River and for Lieutenant John Cuthbert to recruit a party of rangers to defend the immediate northern approaches to Savannah. Not included among the new detachments was Captain James McPherson's Company of Southern Rangers, which belonged to South Carolina. Oglethorpe ordered Captain McPherson and a detachment of his company to ride south to the new settlement of Darien and provide the Highlanders with additional protection until the Frederica settlers could move to support them. He also ordered Ensign Mackay and his party of ten rangers and two packhorsemen to escort two surveyors on a reconnaissance of the wilderness between Savannah and Darien to find a good route for a road.<sup>5</sup>

Oglethorpe encountered a major problem in moving the Frederica settlers from Tybee Roads to Saint Simons Island; the captains of the ships refused to sail southward and enter the uncharted entrance of Jekyll (Saint Simons) Sound. They were probably also afraid to venture too far into Spanish-claimed waters without the protection of a British warship. A solution was finally discovered when Oglethorpe offered to purchase the cargo of a merchant sloop named *Midnight* if the master promised to unload at the Frederica site. The ships' captains consented to accompany the sloop to reconnoiter the entrance to the sound. Thirty male settlers boarded the vessel under the direction of William Horton and John Tanner, Jr., gentlemen who had accompanied Oglethorpe on his return to Georgia, and sailed on the evening of 15 February.<sup>6</sup>

The following evening Oglethorpe, with two assistants and a party of Indians, sailed toward the proposed Frederica settle-

ment in the South Carolina scout boat. Captain William Ferguson, the boat's commander, and his crew of ten Southern Scouts had been on loan from Beaufort, South Carolina, since January 1733. Initially stationed in Savannah, the crew had built a base fort on modern Green Island near the southern end of Skidaway Island by early 1735. South Carolina had been using scout boats almost continuously since the beginning of Queen Anne's War (1701-13) when they were stationed at Port Royal to prevent Spaniards and enemy Indians from entering the settlements via the Inland Passage. The scouts' function was similar to that of the rangers, but instead of patrolling on horseback along paths, they plied the rivers and creeks of the Inland Passage (present Intracoastal Waterway) in their boat. Although they were often rather irresponsible, their performance was excellent under competent leadership; like marines, they could fight from their boat or land and fight on foot. The scout boat, which the Georgians informally named the *Carolina*, had been built about 1728, and was evidently a large, double-ended canoe boat, dug from a giant cypress log, having a length of about thirty-five feet and a beam of about six feet. It probably had two gaff-rigged masts; however, its main propellants were the ten scouts, each of whom pulled a large oar. Three swivel-guns (small cannons) provided enough firepower to engage small boats and to counter ambushes from the river banks. The *Carolina* was valuable for operations in the Georgia tidewater; it was shallow draft, light, rugged, and fast.<sup>7</sup>

They rowed and sailed down the Inland Passage instead of the open sea, which was dangerous for an open boat. Leaving the Savannah River, the swift scout boat entered the Wilmington River and quickly arrived at the Thunderbolt settlement on the western bank where Roger Lacy, one of the new ranger commanders, was a principal settler. During the short visit that followed, Oglethorpe perhaps gave Lacy his commission and instructions on recruiting his men. The first night's camp was made on the north end of Skidaway Island. The next morning they pushed on, passing Captain Ferguson's scout-boat base, and while crossing Ossabaw Sound at the mouth of the Ogeechee River the wind rose and the *Carolina* was nearly swamped. The twists and turns of the channel and the



*The Scout Boat Carolina, ca. 1728–1743*  
(Conjectural)

(Reproduced from Larry E. Ivers, "Scouting the Inland Passage, 1685–1737," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 73 [July 1972], by permission of The South Carolina Historical Society).

many tributaries disappearing into the savannah marsh and woods made navigation extremely difficult, but Captain Ferguson had scouted this area many times and did not miss a turn, even during darkness. Oglethorpe was in a hurry and he pushed the scouts to row day and night. They, like most soldiers who served directly under Oglethorpe, were satisfied with his leadership and competed for his compliments. Even the Yamacraw warriors occasionally took the oars.<sup>8</sup>

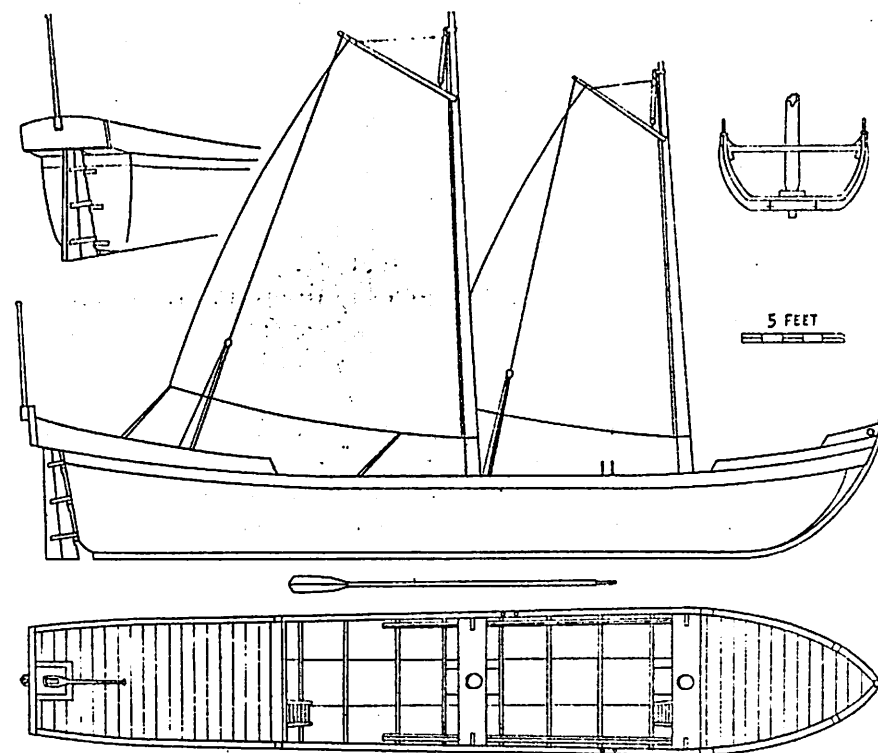
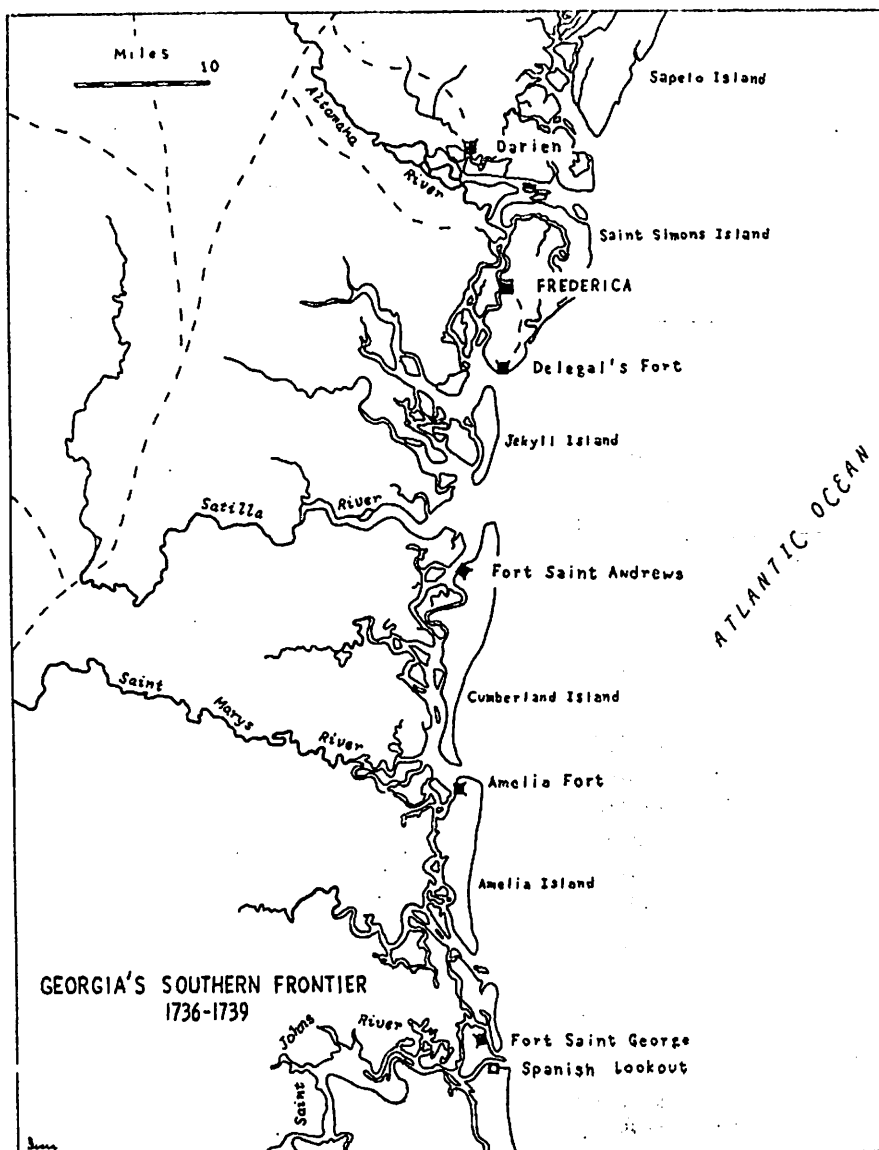
On the morning of 18 February the *Carolina* moved cautiously down the Frederica River alongside Saint Simons Island. After the scouts primed their muskets and the boat's swivel-

guns, the Indians were landed on the southern end of the island near the sound to reconnoiter the area for the presence of Spanish patrols. They soon met a hunting party of Yamacraw who informed them that a strange ship was anchored in the sound. A stealthy observation by Oglethorpe and the scouts identified the vessel as the sloop *Midnight*. Later that same day they disembarked at present Fort Frederica National Monument and built a few "booths," or temporary huts, constructed of pole frames that were sided with palmetto leaves, to serve as shelters for themselves and their supplies. During the next few days Oglethorpe traced the outline of Fort Frederica and taught the men a few techniques of fortification.<sup>9</sup>

On 22 February, Oglethorpe took the scout boat and began the return trip to Savannah. During the journey he visited Darien and earned the Highlanders' respect by disdaining a soft cot and a tent, choosing instead to spend the night on the ground wrapped in a Highland plaid. Oglethorpe and the scouts reached Tybee Roads on 25 February and were followed the next day by the two ships' captains who still refused to sail their vessels into Saint Simons Sound from fear of uncharted waters and Spanish men-of-war. However, the settlers agreed to a request by Oglethorpe to make the journey in open piraguas despite the hardships that would result.<sup>10</sup>

A little fleet of piraguas departed for Frederica on 2 March. Piraguas were constructed from large cypress or cedar logs, but they were larger than canoes, their close relatives. In order to achieve a length of forty to fifty feet or more, a beam of seven or eight feet, and a depth of four or five feet, the following construction technique was utilized: a long dugout log was cut in half lengthwise, a large plank and fitted end-pieces of timber were fixed between the two halves, and sideboards were placed atop the gunwales. The square stern was decked with a cabin beneath, and another small deck was built in the sharp bow. Those cargo craft were normally driven by two gaff-rigged masts and a couple of oars, but additional oars were provided on this occasion to enable the new settlers to speed their progress to Frederica. Oglethorpe kept the men hard at work on the oars by placing all of the beer in one of the lead piraguas.<sup>11</sup>

Upon arriving at Frederica the settlers began building huts



*A Small Piragua*

(Reproduced from Larry E. Ivers, "Scouting the Inland Passage, 1685-1737," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 73 [July 1972], by permission of The South Carolina Historical Society).

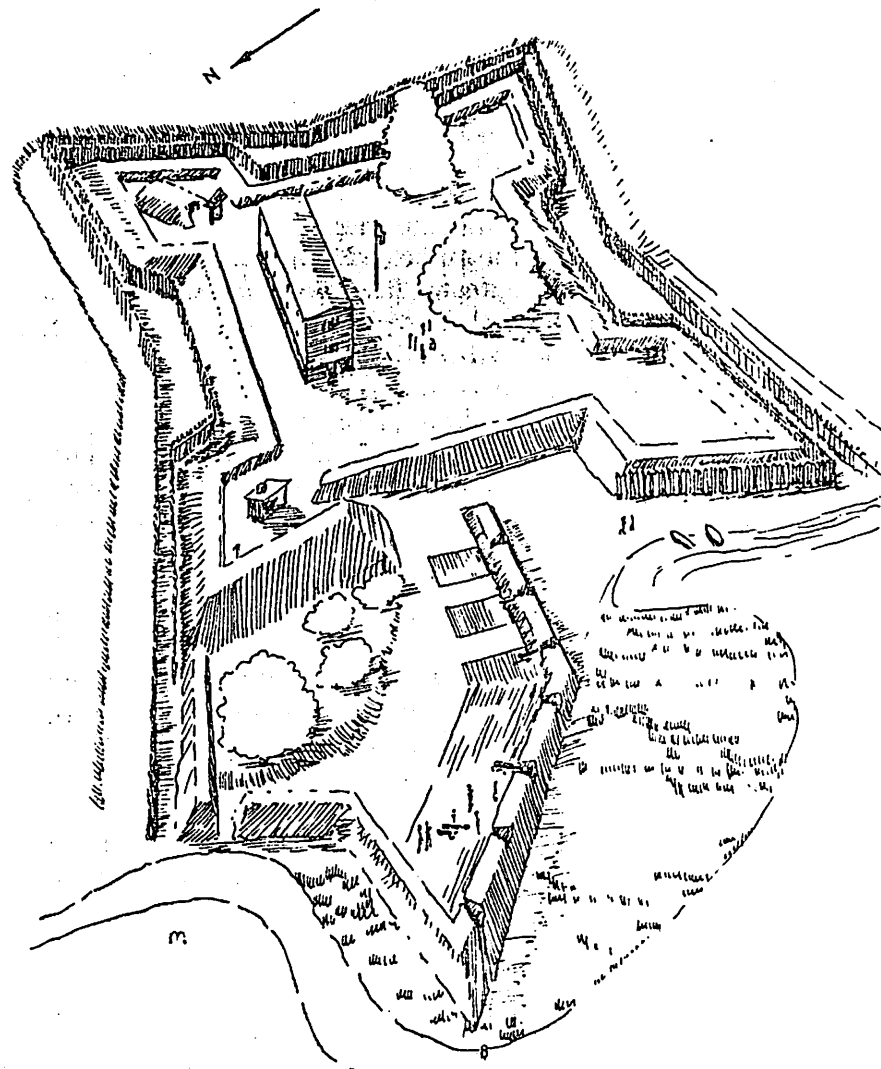
and earned trustees' pay by assisting in the construction of the fort. Fort Frederica was a square-shaped fortification, 124 by 125 feet on the inside with a regular bastion at each corner and a spur battery that jugged beyond the fort on the river side. Sod-faced earthen walls and a row of palisades planted in a moat surrounded a storehouse, powder magazine, well, and blacksmith shop.<sup>12</sup>

Hugh Mackay, Jr., and his party of rangers arrived in Frederica on 15 March after a ninety-mile road-surveying journey from Savannah to Darien. The horses were transported to Frederica in piraguas and were lent to the settlers for use in plow-

ing the small fields that were prepared for planting potatoes, corn, and other crops. The rangers then returned to Darien to help protect that settlement.<sup>13</sup>

On 16 March Oglethorpe boarded Captain Ferguson's scout boat *Carolina* and began a hasty reconnaissance of the Inland Passage to the south, looking for a site upon which to build an outpost for the additional protection of the Frederica and Darien settlements. He decided that a fort with a garrison on Cumberland Island, twenty miles to the south, could effectively block the Inland Passage. A month later, on 18 April, Oglethorpe set out with a party to establish the fortification and conduct a more thorough reconnaissance of the Inland Passage. Accompanying him were the scout crews of the *Carolina* and a new sister scout boat named the *Georgia*, recently purchased in South Carolina and commanded by John Ray, one of Ferguson's scouts. Forty Yamacraw warriors under Tomochichi accompanied the party in their canoes. The next morning they rendezvoused with a piragua from Darien containing Captain Hugh Mackay, thirty Highland indentured servants, and Ensign Hugh Mackay, Jr., with his party of ten rangers. That afternoon the boats landed on the northwest side of Cumberland Island where Oglethorpe traced the outline of Fort Saint Andrews on a hill overlooking the Inland Passage, a location now known as Terrapin Point. Captain Mackay directed the trustees' Scotch servants in the construction of the fortification while his nephew's rangers protected them.<sup>14</sup>

Fort Saint Andrews was built in a configuration called a "Star-Work," the shape of which was a four-pointed star, each of the points being a bastion. The northern points were short; the two southern points were long. Excluding the bastions, the inside dimensions of the fort were about 65 by 130 feet. In order to construct a wall from the loose sand, the only earthwork material in the area, it was necessary to cover a layer of limbs and brush with a layer of sand, which was covered, in turn, by a layer of limbs, etc. This was merely an expedient; not long afterward a wooden form was constructed to contain the sand walls. A palisade of logs was planted in the moat into which natural springs flowed, providing fresh water. A single-story plank-sided frame house was constructed with a powder magazine and store house in the cellar under-



Fort Frederica, 1736  
(Conjectural)

(Reproduced from Albert C. Manucy, *The Fort at Frederica* [Tallahassee, 1962], by permission of The Department of Anthropology, The Florida State University).

neath. A triangular earthen battery surrounded by a palisade was soon built at the bottom of the hill for cannons covering traffic on the Inland Passage.<sup>15</sup>

While the fort was under construction Oglethorpe continued his journey southward to the Spanish outposts on the south side of the Saint Johns River to inquire about a British diplomat who was conducting negotiations with Florida's governor. The British secretary of state, the Duke of Newcastle, realizing that the settlements at the Altamaha River's mouth would cause added tension, had dispatched his personal representative, Charles Dempsey, to Florida in order to attempt a negotiated settlement with the Spaniards. An escort under Major James Richards, a Swiss settler from Purrysburg, South Carolina, had conducted Dempsey from Savannah to Florida two months before, but no word had been received from them since.<sup>16</sup>

During the reconnaissance Oglethorpe underwent his first experience in the utilization of Indian allies in a combat situation. Tomochichi was determined to kill some Spaniards or their Yemassee Indian subjects in retaliation for the ambush of one of his hunting parties the year before. Oglethorpe left the Indians on the north side of the Saint Johns River, under the watchful eye of William Horton with one of the scout boats, while he crossed the Saint Johns River looking for Spaniards who could provide information about Dempsey. After an unsuccessful attempt to make contact with the Spaniards he returned to the northern bank where he found that Tomochichi had taken most of his Indians and disappeared. Oglethorpe was left with the terrible apprehension that Tomochichi was about to create a disastrous incident by attacking a party of Spaniards. That night, following hours of worrying, one of the Indians' boats returned containing a handful of seemingly crazed warriors who nervously jumped about and "foamed at the mouth." Tomochichi had discovered a camp of Spaniards nearby and was preparing to attack them. Fortunately, Oglethorpe quickly joined the old mico and was able to induce him to wait until daylight before initiating his attack. The next morning the force of scouts and Indians cautiously approached the camp that was located less than a mile away. Just before initiating an attack they discovered that the camp actually consisted of Major Richards and the crew of the boat that had escorted Dempsey to Saint Augustine.<sup>17</sup>

The governor of Florida, Francisco del Moral Sánchez, had sent letters to Oglethorpe in care of Richards in which he complained of an attack by Creek Indians on one of his outposts during the previous month. Verbal reports from Richards indicated that Governor Moral was preparing to attack the Altamaha River settlements. Oglethorpe's reaction to the letters and reports was at the same time conciliating and aggravating to Governor Moral. Upon returning to Frederica he ordered the *Colony Piragua*, having four swivel-guns and twenty oars, and the *Marine Boat*, a new eight-oared scout boat, to patrol the Saint Johns River from a base fort that was to be built on Saint George Point (modern Fort George Island). Oglethorpe's written excuse to Governor Moral for this action was to prevent Creek war parties from "crossing the Saint Johns River into Florida. As proof of his good intentions he sent Indian runners to the mainland to ask Creek hunting and war parties not to molest Spanish outposts. However, Oglethorpe was actually occupying land that he believed rightfully belonged to England, in spite of the Georgia charter that limited the colony to the land between the Altamaha and Savannah Rivers. He also was not opposed to the idea of eventually appropriating Florida, and there is evidence indicating that some officials within the British government maintained similar convictions.<sup>18</sup>

During May, while the militia and boats were being outfitted for operations on the Saint Johns River, meager British military contingents began arriving in Georgia. A detachment of the Independent Company of Foot transferred to Frederica from Fort Frederick, South Carolina. Not to be confused with the disbanded Independent Company of Rangers, this was an infantry company of the British regular army which had been in South Carolina since 1721 and had garrisoned Fort King George near Darien from 1722 to 1727. Oglethorpe had received permission for their use before leaving England and had ordered their transfer immediately after his arrival in Georgia. After refreshing the detachment with beer he settled them on the southern tip of Saint Simons Island where they began building Delegal's Fort to guard the entrance into the sound. A month later the remainder of the company followed under its acting commander, Lieutenant Philip Delegal, Sr. The sloop-of-war *Hawk* also arrived during May. Captain James Gascoigne, the commander, was an experienced hand, having

previously served as a lieutenant on the Carolina station during the period 1728-34. He carried a trustees' grant for five hundred acres of land on Saint Simons Island, a location still known as Gascoigne Bluff.<sup>19</sup>

Captain Christian Hermsdorf, a Salzburger settler, proceeded southward on 13 May in command of the *Marine Boat* and the *Colony Piragua*, intending to build Fort Saint George while Major Richards and Horton carried Oglethorpe's letters to Governor Moral in Saint Augustine. Two weeks later Oglethorpe sent Captain Ferguson and his scout boat *Carolina* to support Captain Hermsdorf, but in the early morning hours of 2 June, Ferguson returned hurriedly with news of a setback in Oglethorpe's plans. Because of Captain Hermsdorf's fort-building activity on the Spaniards' doorstep, Major Richards and Horton had been made prisoners in Saint Augustine, and Spanish soldiers were reputed to be maneuvering on the southern bank of the Saint Johns River. Captain Hermsdorf had been forced to withdraw his apprehensive force of English and Salzburger militia to Cumberland Island when they became mutinous.<sup>20</sup>

Oglethorpe immediately set out for Fort Saint George with the scout boat *Georgia* and a yawl from the sloop-of-war *Hawk*, whose crews he reinforced with Highland militiamen from Fort Saint Andrews. After quieting the fears of Hermsdorf's men, whom he met at the southern end of Cumberland Island, Oglethorpe rowed on to Fort Saint George. They continued the construction of the fort on the northeast side of modern Fort George Island on present Mount Cornelia, a hill about sixty feet high, where the southern entrance to the Inland Passage could be easily guarded. A fort had been built there in times past enclosing a hill about forty-five feet high on the immediate eastern slope of Mount Cornelia. The old moat and earthen walls were repaired and palisades were planted, connecting the fort with the top of Mount Cornelia where cannons commanded the island. Captain Mackay was soon brought down to replace Hermsdorf and take command of Fort Saint George, leaving Ensign Mackay, Jr., in command of Fort Saint Andrews.<sup>21</sup>

Governor Moral, viewing Oglethorpe's activities with alarm, believed the defenses of Florida were too weak to withstand an immediate assault by the Georgians. He decided to enter

into negotiations and released Dempsey, Richards, and Horton, accompanied by a Spanish officer to act as an intermediary. Subsequent negotiations between Oglethorpe and the Spanish officer took place in Saint Simons Sound aboard the sloop-of-war *Hawk* during the latter part of June 1736. The Spaniards wanted the English to withdraw from the area settled by Georgia, to control the depredations of the Creek Indians, and to abandon Fort Saint George, obviously leaving room for future compromise by qualifying the unacceptable demand to evacuate Georgia with a reasonable demand to abandon only the military complex on Florida's doorstep. The conference lasted seven days, but no agreement was reached.<sup>22</sup>

Oglethorpe was under considerable political pressure during that period. In April the trustees had written him that Parliament had granted only half of the money that had been requested to subsist the colony during the approaching year. In order to keep expenses within the limited budget they ordered Oglethorpe to discharge the rangers and scouts, to temporarily disregard his plans for building the new towns of Darien and Frederica, and to resettle the colonists on the Savannah or Ogeechee Rivers. However, Frederica and Darien were well established by the time Oglethorpe received the orders. He unquestionably engaged in considerable self-debate over the instructions, but since he believed that Georgia had to expand her defenses or be eventually destroyed by the Spaniards and the French, he boldly decided to ignore the trustees and continue the establishment of the two settlements. In June the trustees relented, perhaps because of pressure from sources within the British government. They wrote Oglethorpe that they were still of the opinion that Frederica and Darien ought to be abandoned because of the shortage of funds, but since withdrawing the colonists might signify British weakness he could proceed in building the towns if he believed they were necessary. They warned him to keep spending to a minimum,<sup>23</sup> but this was another order he decided to ignore.

During October, Oglethorpe and Governor Moral finally reached an agreement. Both parties agreed to hold their Indians in check, Oglethorpe abandoned Fort Saint George and Moral agreed not to occupy the site afterward, and all future disputes were to be submitted to their respective governments

for settlement. Not long afterward the agreement was rendered effectively void when the Spanish government in Madrid relieved Moral of his governorship because of its dissatisfaction with his compromise. But Moral had only been buying time; two and a half weeks before signing the treaty he had requested a reinforcement of fifteen hundred regular Spanish soldiers to enable him to conduct a surprise attack on Georgia.<sup>24</sup>

During his occupation of the Spaniards' doorstep Oglethorpe had displayed his principal strength and his primary weakness regarding his military ability. He was highly respected by his contemporaries, for his ability to exert leadership over men in his immediate presence, especially during crises periods, was exceptional. However, he was sometimes extremely reckless, a trait that was becoming increasingly obvious. Although the Spaniards were understandably angered and frightened by the British settlement of the Altamaha River area, his provocative actions, such as his unauthorized construction of Fort Saint George and the establishment of patrols on the Saint Johns River, pushed them to the brink of armed conflict. A war at that time would probably have resulted in Georgia's destruction. No permanent diplomatic settlement of border issues was possible while Oglethorpe continued in personal command of Georgia's defenses.

## V

*The Coveted Indian Trade*

June–November 1736

Oglethorpe was still determined that Georgia should assume jurisdiction over the Indian trade within Georgia's chartered boundaries, despite Captain Patrick Mackay's previous failure in carrying out that mission. The trade in deer skins was far too lucrative to ignore; it could provide Georgia with the stable economic base that it needed in order to achieve self-sufficiency. Probably more important to Oglethorpe was the Indian trade's potentiality as a bargaining lever that could be utilized to assure the Indians' allegiance to Georgia in the event of war with Spain or France. Georgia's claim for jurisdiction over the trade was logically based on the fact that the Creek and Chickasaw resided within Georgia's chartered boundaries. However, South Carolina had maintained a monopoly of the trade for forty years and would not quietly yield such a prize to Georgia. The Charles Town merchants had weathered Oglethorpe's first crude assault by his agent, Captain Mackay, and they were more than prepared to continue the fight and appeal to the British government if necessary.

During early 1735 the trustees had appointed Oglethorpe as Georgia's commissioner of the Indian trade. His powers were enumerated in "An Act for maintaining the Peace with the Indians in the Province of Georgia," which specified the following: all traders operating in Georgia must procure a trustees' license and post a £100 bond to guarantee good conduct; a £100 fine was established for trading without a license; traders who disobeyed the orders of Commissioner Oglethorpe were subject to arrest by a constable supported by a detachment



from the nearest military garrison; traders traveling to and from the Indian nations must report to a designated garrison whose commander would monitor their activities; and Commissioner Oglethorpe was to establish a monopoly by distributing the traders among the towns. Since Oglethorpe and the trustees mistakenly believed that the Cherokee lived within the boundaries of Georgia, they attempted to extend their jurisdiction to include those nations in addition to the Creek and Chickasaw. The British government approved the act and the secretary of state wrote a letter in care of Oglethorpe, ordering South Carolina to abide by its provisions. Ironically, the act was based on South Carolina's trading act of 1731.<sup>1</sup>

In February 1736, less than a week after discharging Captain Mackay for his indiscretions among the Creek, Oglethorpe set in motion his new campaign to wrest control of the Indian trade from South Carolina. He sent a copy of the trustees' trading act to Lieutenant Anthony Willy, who commanded Georgia's garrison of rangers at Okfuskee Fort, to show to the Upper Creek traders, and another copy was dispatched to South Carolina's Fort Moore, near which many of the traders maintained storehouses and homes. All traders were ordered to appear in Savannah during the period between March and June to procure Georgia trading licenses.<sup>2</sup>

During June, Oglethorpe began to enforce the act in earnest after discovering that many of the traders had not obeyed his summons to purchase Georgia licenses. Noble Jones, the colony's surveyor, was sent to Fort Moore as his personal representative to order the traders to conform to the Georgia trading act. Oglethorpe designated Roger Lacy, a new ranger captain, as the agent to the Cherokee, and John Tanner, Jr., a young gentleman from Frederica, as the agent to the Creek. Oglethorpe instructed both men to ride to their appointed Indian nations and enforce the trustees' trading act by seizing the trading goods and property of those traders who did not have a Georgia license.<sup>3</sup>

Captain Lacy had arrived in Georgia in February 1734 and had been given a five-hundred-acre grant of land at Thunderbolt near Savannah. Some thought he was an epileptic, but it was also rumored that his periodic fits were psychological, caused by his rather irresponsible wife, Mary. Others said that

his sickness was caused by a nervous condition, resulting from heavy drinking.<sup>4</sup>

On 11 June Oglethorpe wrote orders for Lacy, requiring him to send constables and some of his rangers to arrest the offending Cherokee traders and to confiscate their property. At the same time Oglethorpe wrote a letter to ten Cherokee traders, who evidently had secured trustees' licenses, appointing all of them constables to assist Lacy. Three days later he granted each of those men five hundred acres of land in Georgia across the Savannah River from Fort Moore, South Carolina.<sup>5</sup>

Lacy decided to accomplish the mission himself and began the journey up the Savannah River with the ten allied traders and ten of his rangers. During July, after stopping for a short visit at Fort Moore, the party apparently took the trade route along the west bank of the Savannah River, the Upper Cherokee Trading Path, to the Lower Settlements, the nation of Cherokee at the heads of the Chattooga and Keowee Rivers in present South Carolina. Then they probably turned northwest and rode through the Middle Settlements at the headwaters of the Little Tennessee River in present North Carolina. There the party apparently turned southwest and rode around the southern slopes of present Great Smoky Mountains National Park, passing through the Valley Settlements. The last nation of Cherokee the party visited was the Over Hills Settlements to the north along the upper Tennessee and French Broad Rivers in the vicinity of present Knoxville, Tennessee. Captain Lacy and his party were probably impressed by the terrain that they rode through during that summer. The rugged tree-covered Smoky Mountains with their perpetual haze were a drastic change in scenery and temperature from the swamps and tidelands of the Savannah region. However, the rangers' horses, which had lately belonged to Captain Patrick Mackay's Independent Company of Rangers, were quite familiar with the terrain, as they had originally served as pack animals for a Cherokee trader.<sup>6</sup>

As Lacy and his party moved from town to town they seized the trading goods and deer skins from the stores of those South Carolina traders who did not possess a Georgia license.<sup>7</sup> This greatly confused and disturbed the Cherokee; after all,

"they were all Englishmen that traded amongst them and they did not concern themselves where they came from."<sup>8</sup>

The traders in the Over Hills Settlements had five days advance warning of Lacy's approach and were waiting for him. He arrived at the town of Great Tellico near present Tellico Plains, Tennessee, on 4 August where he confronted the trader John Gardiner who apparently served as spokesman for the others. Lacy informed Gardiner that he was acting according to instructions from Oglethorpe to discipline traders who did not possess a lawful Georgia trading license. When Gardiner asked him what he proposed to do about the Virginia traders operating among the Cherokee, Lacy replied that his orders from Oglethorpe were not to interfere with them. Lacy advised Gardiner to sell his trading goods to one of those traders who had a Georgia trading license (one of the constables) and then take his deer skins to Savannah and sell them after procuring a Georgia license. Gardiner refused, obviously thinking that Lacy was bluffing.<sup>9</sup>

Three days later Captain Lacy, his rangers, and the trader-constables visited Gardiner at his store in Tennessee, a small town a few miles northeast of Great Tellico on the south bank of the Little Tennessee River. When Gardiner refused to open his storehouse door Lacy had a constable break it down. He gave Gardiner a receipt for the confiscated items and ordered him out of the Cherokee nations. Similar incidents were repeated in town after town.<sup>10</sup>

In general, the Indians became incensed at Lacy for evicting the traders, some of whom were well liked. When the headmen of Great Tellico asked Caesar, a principal chief, if Lacy and his men were Frenchmen, he replied, "No, but . . . they were all one as Enemies."<sup>11</sup> The Over Hills Cherokee would apparently have assassinated Lacy and his men if the South Carolina traders had requested it.<sup>12</sup>

About 1 September, after confiscating the possessions of most of those traders who had South Carolina licenses, Captain Lacy and his rangers wisely departed from the mountains of the Cherokee and returned to Savannah.<sup>13</sup>

John Tanner, Jr., agent to the Creek, had set out for the Creek nations about June. He apparently established his headquarters at the house of trader Thomas Wiggins in the Lower

Creek town of Kasihta on present Lawson Army Airfield, Fort Benning, Georgia. Most of the South Carolina traders in the Creek towns had purchased a Georgia trading license in order to avoid further trouble with Georgia agents; however, on the last day of August, two South Carolina traders, who had earlier been removed from the Creek nations by Captain Patrick Mackay, arrived and reopened their trading stores for business. Jeremiah Knott was licensed by South Carolina to trade at Tukabahchee in the Upper Creek nation and Thomas Johns was licensed for Kasihta in the Lower Creek, Tanner's headquarters. Before a week had passed Tanner sent for both men and ordered them to leave the Creek nations within ten days. Knott apparently departed, but Johns ignored the instructions and continued to trade. Ten days later Tanner visited his store and repeated his warning, again with no response. A week afterward, on 27 September, Lieutenant Willy and three rangers surprised Johns, confiscated all his property, and evicted him from the town.<sup>14</sup>

It appears that Tanner, who was only about twenty years old, was not respected by the Creek, who considered him a child. The Creek were as confused and angered as the Cherokee over the seizure of the South Carolina traders' property. The warriors of one Lower Creek town actually applied war paint in preparation for killing Tanner, but they were prevented by the pleadings of a trader. Hobohatchey of Abihkutci, a principal mico of the Upper Creek, declared that "no Goods should be seized in his Towns."<sup>15</sup> Even Tanner's host, Ellick, a mico of Kasihta, warned him to return Johns's trading goods and informed him that he was no longer welcome. Reacting to a timely order from Oglethorpe, Tanner left the Creek nations for Savannah on 27 October, escorted by Lieutenant Willy and his Okfuskee garrison of rangers.<sup>16</sup>

While Lacy and Tanner were bullying their way among the Indian towns, the commander of South Carolina's Fort Moore had considerably complicated matters by refusing to allow anyone to enter the Creek or Cherokee nations without a South Carolina trading license.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, unknown to any of the front-line participants, Oglethorpe had been forced to give ground to the South Carolina trading interests. South Carolina's Lieutenant Governor

Thomas Broughton and his merchant friends had been in a quandary since the British secretary of state had informed him that the Georgia Indian trading act had the king's approval and must be obeyed. To conform with the secretary of state's orders and give up the profitable Indian trade was unthinkable; however, to ignore the British government was not without its dangers. They decided to attempt a compromise. By this time they had secured the sympathy of most of the South Carolina government. A committee from both houses of the assembly met with Oglethorpe in Savannah during the last week in July and proposed, quite reasonably, that the Indian trade be jointly conducted and regulated. Wording a reply in the guarded polite terms of a diplomat, Oglethorpe in no way conceded South Carolina's right to any portion of the trade with those Indians inside Georgia's boundaries;<sup>18</sup> nevertheless, he knew that South Carolina could and probably would mount a considerable campaign to retain control over a share of the Indian trade. In addition, it was obvious that Georgia would soon have to fight Spanish Florida, and without South Carolina's help disaster would be almost certain. Therefore, the last part of his reply to the committee stated that since the exact boundaries of Georgia were unknown, South Carolina's traders would not be molested "until the Boundary Lines are settled or his Majesty's Pleasure known concerning the same."<sup>19</sup> In one sentence he had declared that he would thereafter place the Indian trading problem in the laps of the Georgia trustees and the British government.

During the spring and summer of 1737 the British government considered a petition from the South Carolina Assembly which asked for continuation of their monopoly of the Indian trade. Relying on Oglethorpe's testimony, the resulting decision of the attorney general and the solicitor general recognized Georgia's jurisdiction over the trade; however, the Privy Council's review modified the decision by requiring Georgia to license all traders who were certified by South Carolina.<sup>20</sup> In effect, both colonies were deprived of any real authority to regulate the trade or to control the conduct of the traders. Their only logical recourse was cooperation, but by then neither colony was in a mood to share authority.

The Indians and their traders would have noticed few

changes in the operation of the trading system. Even though Georgia had won the right to issue licenses and to maintain a commissioner for those Indian nations within her boundaries, the trading business was still monopolized by the Charles Town merchants and most of the trade's economic benefits continued to flow to South Carolina. The traders continued their abuse of the Indians, seldom controlled by either Georgia or South Carolina. Thus, Britain's relationship with the southern Indians was less than satisfactory during the ensuing war with Spain and France.

Oglethorpe's plans to assume jurisdiction of the Indian trade had been faulty and ill-timed from the beginning. He had misjudged the impact of the Indian trade on South Carolina's economy, tradition, and pride, and he had not expected the entire South Carolina Assembly to support the interest of only thirty-one Charles Town merchants who were engaged in the trade. In early 1734 he might, with Governor Robert Johnson's help, have reached some type of compromise with the merchants which would have given Georgia a little profit and a measure of disciplinary authority over the traders. Instead, he chose to employ provocative measures in an attempt to capture the entire trade. Such tactics infuriated Lieutenant Governor Broughton, who had assumed the acting governorship upon Johnson's death in May 1735. Broughton and the merchants, already opponents of the colonization of Georgia, were able to promote a feeling of resentment for the new colony among a growing number of South Carolinians. In early 1737, in retaliation for Oglethorpe's tactics, the assembly discharged Captain James McPherson's Company of Southern Rangers and Captain William Ferguson's scouts of the boat *Carolina*, the discharge being retroactive to September 1736. Oglethorpe continued both units in service, but they were now paid by the Georgia trustees. Attitudes became more amiable after Broughton died in November 1737 and William Bull, Oglethorpe's friend and advisor, assumed the acting governorship; however, the close family relationship between the two colonies had been damaged beyond repair.<sup>21</sup>

## VI

*Preparations for War*

1737-1739

Ships arriving in Charles Town and Savannah from the Caribbean Sea in January 1737 brought reliable rumors that the Spaniards were preparing to attack. By the following month an invasion appeared so imminent that the South Carolina government raised a company of soldiers, a portion of which formed the crews of two scout boats, and stationed it in Fort Frederick near Beaufort, an anticipated Spanish objective. In addition, handfuls of men were placed along the coast as look-outs, and Indians were ordered recruited under South Carolina officers to scout in Georgia along the Savannah and Altamaha Rivers.<sup>1</sup>

The Georgia militia remained in a state of alert throughout the late winter and spring of 1737. At Savannah the men spent a month building a fort near the trustees' garden as a refuge for the women and children. It was a large well-built structure about two hundred feet square, consisting of a stockade wall, two timbers thick, with two bastions on the land side and two half bastions facing the river.<sup>2</sup> The Georgia trustees disapproved of the fort, astutely observing that "The real Defense of the Town is the Woods and Swamps, and a few Men who know the Country assisted by the Indians might have made a much better Defense in the Woods than in the Fort; Since thereby; they could have prevented an Enemy from coming to the Town which they could not by defending the Fort."<sup>3</sup>

At Darien, Lieutenant John Mackintosh and his Highland militia rushed work on the fort that Oglethorpe had traced during the previous September. The fortification, located on

or near old Fort King George, had two bastions on the land side and two half bastions facing the marsh. One night during the spring, when the sentries thought they saw a group of strange men near the fort, the entire settlement became excited and a number of volleys were fired into the darkness.<sup>4</sup> Several weeks of alert were unfavorably affecting the Georgians' nerves.

When a Spanish invasion force still had not appeared by the spring of 1737, the South Carolina provincial company was discharged and tensions began to ease on both sides of the Savannah River. But the real danger had just begun. Relations between Spain and Britain concerning commercial issues, depredations against English shipping, and the settlement of Georgia had steadily worsened since late 1736. Finally, in April 1737, while Georgia and South Carolina were relaxing their guard, the king of Spain became exasperated with Britain's refusal to abandon Georgia and secretly ordered the governor of Cuba to begin preparations to destroy that entire British colony. The Cuban governor spent the remainder of the year 1737 collecting soldiers, ships, and provisions. In October he informed the Spanish king that the attack could be launched as early as the following spring.<sup>5</sup>

Despite her preparations for war, Spain continued to negotiate for Britain's withdrawal from Georgia. By January 1738 both countries were considering the organization of a commission to discuss seriously the settlement of the boundary issue between Georgia and Florida. Believing that Britain was considering the abandonment of its towns near the Altamaha River, the king of Spain dispatched a message to the Cuban governor ordering him to cancel the planned invasion of Georgia. The royal messenger was almost too late. When he arrived in Cuba during March the invasion force of more than one thousand men had already loaded their ships and were prepared to sail in a few hours. The commission to settle the Georgia-Florida boundary dispute was never organized, principally because Spain, miscalculating Britain's determination to retain the colony of Georgia, demanded the abandonment of the Altamaha settlements and forts before discussions could begin.<sup>6</sup> Spain lost the best opportunity she ever had to destroy Georgia.

Ignorant of the fact that they had barely escaped destruction, the Georgia militia had returned to scratching a living out

of the soil. In 1737 the delay in planting the crops, caused by the fort-building activity, plus the lack of rain until late summer were responsible for a miserable yield.<sup>7</sup>

Previously, during the year 1736, Oglethorpe had administratively divided Georgia into the southern and northern military divisions, separated by the Ogeechee River. Frederica and Darien were located in the southern division; Savannah was in the northern division.<sup>8</sup>

Practically all the rangers, about two-thirds of the Georgia trustees' tiny army of approximately one hundred provincial soldiers, were stationed in the northern division, perhaps to replace Savannah's ring of fortified villages that were largely depopulated because of death and desertion. Captain James McPherson's Company of Southern Rangers, now in the trustees' pay, remained in garrison at Fort Argyle near the Ogeechee River. William Elbert had resigned as lieutenant in the spring of 1735 and Arthur Ogle Edgecomb had been commissioned in his place. In the fall of 1736 Edgecomb left the colony, reportedly dissatisfied with Georgia because rum was not allowed. Apparently, a replacement lieutenant was not appointed. The company's strength varied from nineteen to twenty-five men. Fort Argyle was in ruins by the spring of 1738; decay had damaged the palisade and rains had eroded the earthen wall.<sup>9</sup>

Captain McPherson spent a large amount of his time purchasing beef cattle in South Carolina and driving them to Georgia where they were butchered for the settlers. Oglethorpe and the trustees were well satisfied with his performance of duty and showed their appreciation by presenting him with a silver watch. However, he did not get along well with Thomas Causton and William Stephens, the trustees' officials in Savannah. During March 1738, when McPherson threatened to disband the company unless he and his men received an increase in pay, Causton and Stephens readily agreed to his demand because of their fear of a Spanish invasion. Nevertheless, Stephens, the trustees' secretary, reported that McPherson had been remiss in his duties, accusing him of sitting idly in Fort Argyle instead of patrolling the frontier.<sup>10</sup>

Lieutenant John Cuthbert commanded a party of six rangers which had been raised during the summer or fall of 1736.

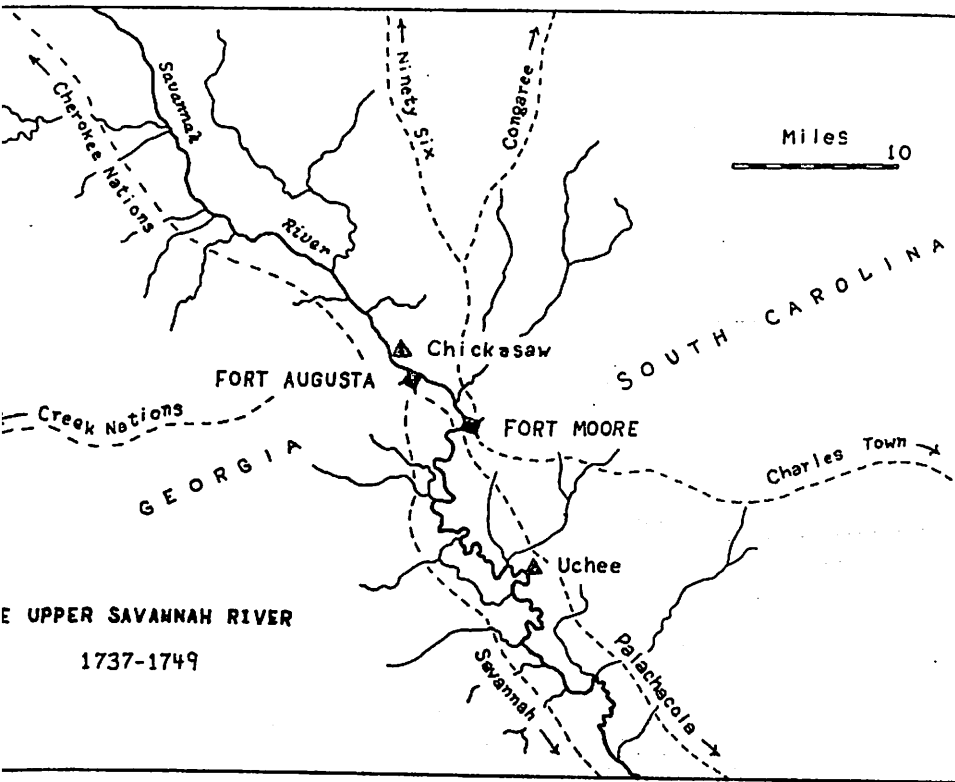
Cuthbert was a Scottish gentleman and a dependable officer who had initially served as the lieutenant of Darien's Highland militia under Captain Hugh Mackay. He and his men were stationed on his plantation at Josephs Town where they screened the northwest approach to Savannah.<sup>11</sup>

During May 1737 Thomas Jones and two men, all skilled South Carolina woodsmen, entered the trustees' service as a party of rangers and were stationed near Savannah. Jones's father was an Indian trader and his mother was an Indian, probably Creek. His South Carolina home was near Pon Pon (modern Jacksonboro), but he had owned a lot in Savannah since 1734. "Tommy" had been a trader among the Creek since at least 1723 and he had recently made an unsuccessful attempt to trade among the French-allied Choctaw Indians.<sup>12</sup>

Captain Aneas Mackintosh's garrison of Palachacola Rangers at Fort Prince George in South Carolina continued to range the country north of Purrysburg and protect the major Savannah River crossing site. Except for preventing South Carolina settlers from encroaching upon the Uchee Indian land just across the river and capturing runaway indentured servants, the garrison's existence was uneventful.<sup>13</sup>

Previously, in early 1736, Oglethorpe had instructed Captain Roger Lacy and his party of rangers to build and garrison a fort named Augusta on the upper Savannah River. The project was an integral part of Oglethorpe's scheme to assume control of the Indian trade. The intended fort site was located at the crossroads of the principal trading paths that led to the Creek and Cherokee nations, and it overlooked the head of navigation on the Savannah River. A garrisoned fortification at that location could protect a Georgia storage center and traders' settlement, provide a refuge for traders during an Indian war, and serve as a lifeline to Lieutenant Anthony Willy and his three rangers at Okfuskee in the Upper Creek nation. The fort and its garrison would not have been necessary if Georgia and South Carolina had cooperated in administering the Indian trade; the latter colony concurrently maintained a garrison in Fort Moore at Savannah Town, or New Windsor township, only four and one-half miles to the southeast on the eastern bank of the river.<sup>14</sup>

Lacy had intended to begin building Fort Augusta in late



1736 after returning from the Cherokee nations; however, because of the difficulty in gathering provisions and delays caused by the Spanish alarm, he did not leave Savannah until 19 May 1737. Lacy and fourteen men arrived at Kinyans Bluff, the site of modern Augusta, in their garrison boat named the *Augusta* on 29 May. Lacy's assistant, Lieutenant Richard Kent, and a half-dozen workers joined them during the latter part of July. They set to work on the construction of a stockade of puncheons (logs that were split in half and planted upright with the round side facing out), which was probably about nine feet high. They may have built a banquette, or platform walkway, along the inside of the stockade. The fort was 110 feet square with a projecting bastion at each corner containing small one-pounder cannons. There were no earthworks and apparently no moat since Fort Augusta's principal danger was

from Indian raids and a stockade was adequate protection against a war party's musket balls. Houses for the two officers, barracks for the rangers, a stable, a powder magazine, a storehouse, a corn crib, and a well were probably constructed within the enclosure formed by the walls. Farming, patrolling, and inconveniences, such as the instance of one of the men suffering an alligator bite while on a boat trip from Savannah, delayed completion of the fort until April 1738.<sup>15</sup>

Lacy became too sick to perform his duties during December 1737 and returned to his home at Thunderbolt where he was expected to die. However, after a long illness he recovered and resumed his duties at Augusta during the latter part of April 1738. Mary Lacy never joined her husband at Augusta. During July 1738 she was indicted in Savannah for having knowingly purchased stolen beef. After being informed of his wife's trouble Lacy arrived in Savannah, extremely ill. Two days later, on 3 August, the ranger captain died.<sup>16</sup>

The garrison of fifteen rangers at Augusta was placed under the command of Lieutenant Richard Kent, who continued in that capacity for the ensuing ten years. Kent, whose father was a former member of Parliament and a good friend of Oglethorpe's, was one of several young gentlemen who arrived in Georgia on Oglethorpe's coattails. He developed into an outstanding ranger officer and, of all the soldiers in Georgia, he apparently became Oglethorpe's favorite.<sup>17</sup>

The only rangers stationed in the southern military division of Georgia were Ensign Hugh Mackay, Jr., and his party of ten men who garrisoned Fort Saint Andrews on Cumberland Island. They patrolled the island's woods and dunes on horseback and scouted the Inland Passage as far south as the Saint Johns River in an eight-oared scout boat called the *Saint Andrews*.<sup>18</sup>

Most of the trustees' soldiers stationed in the southern division were scouts. The two principal scout boats were the *Georgia*, still commanded by John Ray, and the *Carolina*, now commanded by John Latter following Captain William Ferguson's return to South Carolina. Ray's and Latter's scouts continued to patrol the Inland Passage between the Savannah and the Saint Johns Rivers. A third crew of scouts, perhaps under the command of Francis Brooks, manned the scout boat *Amelia*

and garrisoned Georgia's southernmost outpost located on the northwestern portion of Amelia Island. Amelia Fort had apparently been built in October 1736 by the militiamen who had been withdrawn from Fort Saint George according to the agreement between Oglethorpe and Governor Moral of Spanish Florida. The crude fortification consisted of a large clapboard house surrounded by a stockade. Five small cannons commanded Saint Marys Inlet and the Inland Passage.<sup>19</sup>

Oglethorpe had departed for England during November 1736, arriving there in January 1737 after his ship narrowly escaped disaster in a storm. One of his first tasks was to placate the trustees who were incensed over his vast expenditures and their lack of information regarding his activities in Georgia. Oglethorpe, an excellent speaker and showman, won the trustees' gratitude after only two conferences.<sup>20</sup>

The primary reason for Oglethorpe's return to England was to secure adequate defensive measures for Georgia. He correctly surmised that Spain was fully prepared to undertake military action, if necessary, to eliminate the Georgia settlements. During a frank conversation with Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole in February 1737, he argued that the southern frontier could best be defended by regular British soldiers, pointing out that Georgia could field only about three hundred militiamen. During that month Walpole offered Oglethorpe the position of "General of the Forces of South Carolina and Georgia," but Oglethorpe refused unless a regular regiment of British soldiers was raised under his command for the defense of those colonies. Walpole apparently also offered Oglethorpe the governorship of South Carolina, but he reportedly refused because he would have had to give up his seat in Parliament. Walpole sensibly questioned whether British soldiers should have been stationed on the southern frontier for fear of further agitating Spain; however, knowledge of the Spaniards' preparations for attacking Georgia overcame his reluctance. In June, Oglethorpe received a commission as "General & Commander in Chief of the Forces in South Carolina & Georgia" and a promise of British soldiers. On 25 August, Oglethorpe was given an additional commission as colonel of a regiment to be raised for service in Georgia, and after a successful audience with King George II in September he began recruiting his soldiers.<sup>21</sup>

The establishment, or table of organization, of General Oglethorpe's infantry unit, the Forty-second Regiment of Foot, authorized a total strength of 684 officers and men. The regimental staff included an adjutant, quartermaster, chaplain, surgeon, and two surgeon's mates. There were six companies, each of which included a captain, lieutenant, ensign, four sergeants, four corporals, two drummers, and one hundred private men who enlisted for seven years. A company was composed of four platoons of twenty-five men each, led by sergeants who were assisted by corporals. The Forty-second Regiment's companies were authorized more men than companies of other regiments of foot, probably because they were designed to be scattered among the forts of Georgia and South Carolina, thereby operating like independent companies.<sup>22</sup>

Two hundred and fifty men were drafted out of the Twenty-fifth Regiment of Foot that was stationed at Gibraltar. These men, combined with the soldiers of the Independent Company of Foot that were already stationed in Georgia, were divided into three companies. The remaining three companies were recruited in northern and central England.<sup>23</sup>

According to tradition, General Oglethorpe received a commission as captain of the first company, but the actual labor of command was accomplished by a captain lieutenant, a position filled by Albert Desbrisay. Likewise, Lieutenant Colonel James Cockran and Major William Cook, the second and third ranking officers, also received commissions as captains; however, their companies were commanded by their lieutenants. The remaining three companies were commanded by Captains Richard Norbury, Alexander Heron, and Hugh Mackay, Sr.<sup>24</sup>

The War Office allowed General Oglethorpe to select some of his own officers, but Lieutenant Colonel Cockran, Major Cook, Captain Norbury, and Captain Heron received commissions because of their connections within the British government. All were experienced soldiers, but the first three eventually caused the regiment considerable trouble. Oglethorpe appointed some of his Georgia militia officers to regimental positions. Besides Captain Mackay were John Tanner and William Horton who received commissions as ensigns, and Hugh Mackay, Jr., who became regimental adjutant. About twenty

young gentlemen volunteers accompanied the regiment as cadets who hoped to eventually obtain commissions.<sup>25</sup>

The regimental uniform was in sharp contrast to the drab civilian clothing worn by the trustees' rangers and scouts. Men of the Forty-second Regiment wore a black cocked-hat with their long hair tucked underneath, a red loose-fitting coat with green lapels and lining, a red waistcoat, red knee breeches, and white spatterdashes (brown for field duty) to cover the lower legs. Corporals wore a white worsted knot on the right shoulder as a badge of rank. Sergeants were designated by a crimson sash with a green stripe around the waist, silver lace on the hat, and a silver-hilted sword. Beyond wearing red coats, the officers' uniforms seem to have been designed according to individual taste.<sup>26</sup>

Each private and corporal carried a ten-pound, long land musket, commonly known as the "Brown Bess." This was a reliable smooth-bore weapon without sights, having practically no accuracy beyond one hundred yards. Cartridges were carried in a leather box on the right side, suspended by a strap that passed over the left shoulder. A bayonet and a short infantry sword were worn on the left side in a carrier attached to the waist belt. Sergeants carried a halbred, a spear-ax weapon, instead of a musket.<sup>27</sup>

On 6 May 1738 two transport ships carrying Lieutenant Colonel Cockran and some of the soldiers from Gibraltar anchored in Tybee Roads at the mouth of Savannah River. A third transport arrived six days later after mistakenly steering course for South Carolina, a place that Oglethorpe had ordered the transports to avoid because he feared that the soldiers might desert for the delights of Charles Town. A large quantity of supplies and about thirty ailing soldiers were brought up river to be housed in Savannah. Three weeks later Captain Mackay embarked his company in five piraguas and moved them via the Inland Passage to Fort Saint Andrews on Cumberland Island where Adjutant Hugh Mackay, Jr., had supervised the trustees' seventeen Highland indentured servants in the construction of Barrimacke, a small village of huts, to house the regulars. On 29 May, Lieutenant Colonel Cockran sailed in a transport and a brigantine with his company to the south end of Saint Simons Island where they assumed garrison duties at Delegal's



*The Forty-Second Regiment of Foot, 1737-1749  
Private in a Battalion Company and a Private in a Grenadier  
Company*

*(Drawing by Bill Drath)*



Fort and began constructing adjacent Fort Saint Simons. During early June the Independent Company of Foot was transported from Delegal's Fort to Fort Frederick near Beaufort, South Carolina, its new station. Reinforced with the soldiers who had recovered from their illness in Savannah, the Independent Company was integrated into the regiment as Captain Norbury's company.<sup>28</sup>

The three companies that were recruited in England conducted a public parade in London during early March 1738 and were ready for embarkation at Portsmouth by the middle of May. Unfortunately, the ships did not sail until midsummer because of contrary weather that kept them wind-bound in the harbor. On 18 September five transports carrying General Oglethorpe, about three hundred soldiers, and a like number of women and children arrived at Saint Simons Island. Oglethorpe's company was stationed at Fort Saint Andrews with Captain Mackay's company, Major Cook's company apparently garrisoned the south end of Saint Simons Island with Lieutenant Colonel Cockran's company, and Captain Heron's company was probably stationed at Fort Frederica. William Horton, the commander of Frederica's militia during the previous two years, was commissioned ensign in the latter company. The entire regiment consisted of 629 officers and men present for duty.<sup>29</sup>

Six weeks after his arrival Oglethorpe inspected his and Captain Hugh Mackay's companies at Fort Saint Andrews. Members of Captain Mackay's unit, men who had been transferred from Gibraltar, were in a surly mood. They were disappointed with their primitive surroundings, they were not receiving extra pay for food as they had in Gibraltar, and they had not yet received the traditional extra pay for the sea journey to Georgia.<sup>30</sup> Many were probably heartbroken because of leaving their Spanish mistresses, and Oglethorpe's prohibition against rum was undoubtedly a severe disappointment. However, these dissatisfactions should not have, by themselves, precipitated a mutiny. The underlying cause of the rebellious attitude was probably one that adversely affects commanders of many newly organized military units. When the commander of the Twenty-fifth Regiment at Gibraltar selected 250 of his men for assignment to Oglethorpe's Regiment, he obviously "unloaded" his misfits. Captain Mackay's company

therefore contained a large part of an entire regiment's most undesirable men—the slow-witted, the physically and psychologically ill, and the malevolent, and this last group apparently intended to test the courage and tenacity of their new officers.

Oglethorpe observed a dawn reveille ceremony outside on the parade ground and then walked into the fort. A large number of soldiers from Captain Mackay's company followed him, stood outside the house where he was eating breakfast, and loudly demanded to be heard. In order to entice the mob of soldiers out of the fort, Oglethorpe calmly left the house and walked out the gate. The mob tumbled after him. Once all were outside he stalled for time by listening to their shouted grievences while the fort was secured. After voicing the mob's demands, a ringleader suddenly yelled for action. Oglethorpe immediately grabbed the man and dragged him into the fort. Another soldier then took over leadership of the mutiny, and he was apprehended by Captain Lieutenant Desbrisay, Oglethorpe's assistant company commander. The soldiers attempted to pursue Oglethorpe and Desbrisay into the fort, but Captain Mackay and Adjutant Mackay, blocked their path at the moat bridge. A brief struggle ensued and a soldier named Ross seized and broke Captain Mackay's sword, wounding Captain Mackay in the hand. Some Highlanders, who were present in the fort, came to the officers' rescue with broadswords drawn. The frustrated mutineers ran to Barrimacke, their camp of huts below the fort, in order to get their weapons.<sup>31</sup>

Desbrisay quickly visited the camp and returned to the fort where he reported that the mutineers were loading their muskets. After ordering the few Highlanders and scouts who were present to procure their weapons and follow him, Oglethorpe and some of his officers ran down to the camp where they found the men of Captain Mackay's company assembling in the street. As they drew near, one soldier, about five yards distant, pointed his musket at them. Oglethorpe ordered "down with your arms,"<sup>32</sup> but the rebellious soldier answered, "No, by God, I'll down with you."<sup>33</sup> Almost simultaneously Oglethorpe charged forward with his sword drawn, the soldier fired his musket, and Captain Mackay, who had previously wrenched a musket from another mutineer, fired at Oglethorpe's assailant. Captain Mackay's bullet struck and wounded the soldier whose

own bullet buzzed harmlessly over Oglethorpe's shoulder. The soldier attempted to use his empty musket as a club, but Oglethorpe tore it from his hands, contemptuously refusing to use his sword. At about the same moment Desbrisay narrowly escaped death when another soldier attempted to shoot him and his musket misfired. A third soldier pointed his musket at Oglethorpe and pulled the trigger, but it also misfired. Oglethorpe rushed him, seized his musket, recocked it, and threatened the other soldiers who were then crowding into the street. He offered to pardon those who dispersed and to shoot those who would not. They dispersed, cowed by his ferociousness and his apparent invincibility.<sup>34</sup>

Oglethorpe walked along the streets of the camp, ordering the sergeants to keep the men in their huts. His officers conducted a search of each hut and found twenty-five loaded muskets. The young "new raised men" of Oglethorpe's company had been influenced by the veteran "Gibraltar men" of Captain Mackay's company; however, after observing their officers' courageous actions they began obeying orders. A short time later Oglethorpe had both companies assembled. He sternly reprimanded them, but he pardoned all except five of the ringleaders. That night he wisely talked to each man individually and ascertained that their only justifiable complaint was the lack of sea pay, and this he ordered paid.<sup>35</sup> His prompt and skillful actions averted a blow to Georgia's defenses, for had the mutineers been successful their best recourse would have been to cast their lots with the Spaniards in Saint Augustine.

Dissension within the regiment was not confined to rebellious enlisted men. Lieutenant Colonel Cockran and Captain Mackay began quarreling and, by early March 1739, a mutual hatred had developed. General Oglethorpe, obviously disgusted by their conduct and fearing violence, ordered a court-martial to be conducted in order to determine who was at fault. Since there were not enough British officers in North America who outranked Lieutenant Colonel Cockran, both he and Captain Mackay were arrested and separately escorted to Charles Town from where they were transported to England to stand trial. Captain Mackay was the vindicated party. He was ordered back to the Forty-second Regiment, arriving in Georgia during Oc-

tober 1739. Lieutenant Colonel Cockran was "removed," or transferred, to the Fifth Marine Regiment.<sup>36</sup>

The arrival of the regiment significantly increased the military strength in Georgia; therefore, the trustees refused to pay any more expenses for rangers, scouts, or fortifications after 1738. Oglethorpe reluctantly began discharging the trustees' military units. The party of rangers headed by Ensign Hugh Mackay, Jr., which had been recently transferred from Cumberland Island to Amelia Island, was disbanded in early October 1738. Mackay remained at Amelia Fort with the trustees' sixteen Highland indentured servants who provided a militia garrison for the fortification and a crew for the scout boat *Amelia*. Captain James McPherson and his Southern Rangers, now a mixed company of Georgians and South Carolinians, were discharged in mid-November and McPherson returned to his Saltcatchers plantation in South Carolina. Two rangers remained in Fort Argyle as caretakers. Captain Aneas Mackintosh's garrison of Palachacola Rangers was disbanded in December, but he was kept on the payroll until the end of May to assist in rounding up the trustees' cattle which ranged free in the woods. Thomas Jones and his party of rangers were retained until June 1739, then they were also discharged.<sup>37</sup>

Oglethorpe did not disband the remaining ranger units and the scout-boat crews because he considered them too essential to Georgia's defense. He did dispatch a fifteen-man detachment of Captain Norbury's regimental company from Fort Frederick, South Carolina, to garrison Fort Augusta; however, after the boat carrying the regulars capsized in Daufuskie Sound—drowning ten soldiers, three wives, a boy, and two South Carolina Negro boatmen—he decided to retain Lieutenant Richard Kent's garrison of Augusta Rangers, now reduced to ten men. Likewise, Lieutenant John Cuthbert's small party of rangers was retained at Josephs Town. Lieutenant Anthony Willy remained at Okfuskee Fort with one man to watch French movements among the Creek nations, and another officer, perhaps the trader Samuel Brown, and one soldier were placed in the Cherokee nations. Oglethorpe considered the two scout boats under John Ray and John Latter absolutely necessary and refused to disband their crews. Defending Georgia against Spanish and French threats and British criticism had been Ogle-

thorpe's passion for some time. Now he proved his commitment by assuming payment of those remaining Georgia provincial rangers and scouts out of his own pocket.<sup>38</sup>

In June 1739 a message arrived from the secretary of state, informing Oglethorpe that England and Spain had finally agreed to stop their preparations for war and begin serious discussions. Oglethorpe decided to take advantage of the enforced lull in military preparations and seek the assured assistance or, at the very least, the neutrality of the Creek Indians in the event of a war with Spain. Although he was not particularly worried about the loyalty of the Cherokee or the Upper Creek, he was concerned about the possible actions of the Lower Creek who bought English trade goods but continued to send delegations to Saint Augustine. Having failed earlier to achieve jurisdiction over the Indian trade, which would have given him a powerful lever for use in demanding the loyalty of the Lower Creek, he was forced to use the less effective tactic of rendering them the diplomatic courtesy of his personal visit.<sup>39</sup>

On 8 July 1739 he left Frederica accompanied by a few officers of the Forty-second Regiment and some Scottish gentlemen including Lieutenant George Dunbar, Adjutant Hugh Mackay, Jr., and Aneas Mackintosh. After traveling by boat to Ebenezer they transferred to horseback and rode north to the Uchee town where Lieutenant John Cuthbert and his party of six rangers were waiting to act as the expedition's escort. The rangers had just finished blazing a trail from Augusta to the Uchee town along the west bank of the Savannah River. The expedition now consisted of Oglethorpe, twelve officers and gentlemen, Cuthbert and his rangers, about five servants, and an unknown number of Indians who served as hunters and guides. Oglethorpe also hired an additional ranger, probably Thomas Hunt, to accompany him as a bodyguard-servant. He apparently continued to serve Oglethorpe during the ensuing four years.<sup>40</sup>

They left the Uchee town on 24 July, probably following the trail that Patrick Mackay's company had traveled five years earlier. On 8 August the expedition arrived at Coweta and received a very cordial welcome from Chigelley, the principal

mico of the Lower Creek. Chigelley was a warrior to be reckoned with. Twenty-four years earlier he had led a war party of several hundred Creek and Apalachee to within twelve miles of Charles Town, South Carolina, leaving ashes and death behind him. During the next two and a half weeks Oglethorpe was treated as a very important guest of the towns of Coweta and Kashita where he held several councils during which he passed out presents and exchanged speeches with the headmen of both Creek nations. Even the men of his expedition served as diplomats. On one occasion while they were watching the Indians dance, traders' rum or the primitive beat of the drums induced some of them to compliment the Indians by joining in the rhythmic stomping.<sup>41</sup> The visit was extremely timely and may have been partially responsible for the Creek maintenance of neutrality during the subsequent war with Spain and France. The results were probably disappointing to Oglethorpe, however, for he had hoped that the Creek would provide him with large war parties for use in raiding Florida.

On 25 August Oglethorpe and his expedition began their return to the coast, initially setting out on the Lower Trading Path toward the Savannah River, arriving at Augusta eighteen days later. Even though Oglethorpe became sick with a fever he inspected Fort Augusta, which was under the command of Lieutenant Richard Kent, visited with Captain Daniel Pepper of South Carolina's nearby Fort Moore, and talked with several Cherokee headmen who came down from their nations to receive presents.<sup>42</sup>

On 13 September, a rumor arrived at Augusta that war had been declared against Spain. Four days later, after Oglethorpe and his expedition had started down river toward Savannah, they met a trading boat whose crew was carrying the terrifying news that some Negro slaves in South Carolina had revolted a few days before. South Carolinians, outnumbered by their slaves and living in fear of a revolt for more than a quarter of a century, had taken elaborate but ineffective measures over the years to keep the slaves unarmed, uneducated, and unorganized. The slave insurrection took place west of Charles Town on Stono River where Angola-born Negro slaves who lived in that neighborhood had banded together, armed them-

selves, and killed twenty-three people. The local militia quickly cornered them, killed about forty, despite their brave stand, and scattered the remainder in the swamps.<sup>43</sup>

The threat of a number of slaves escaping to Florida via Georgia and rumors of war with Spain gave Oglethorpe the excuse he had been looking for to increase the size of his ranger force. On 18 September, while he and his expedition continued down the Savannah River, he wrote a captain's commission for John Cuthbert and ordered him to expand his small party of rangers into a company. Captain Cuthbert and his men apparently disembarked at the Uchee town, and within a few days he and his new lieutenant, Richard Scroggs, rode to Charles Town to buy horses for the company.<sup>44</sup>

When Oglethorpe arrived at Fort Prince George, or Palachacola Fort, across the river from the Uchee town he found thirty South Carolina militiamen from Purrysburg in garrison. The obvious objective for the rebellious slaves was Saint Augustine—the Spanish governor had promised freedom for all slaves who escaped to Florida—and the principal route to Saint Augustine crossed the Savannah River at Palachacola. In fact, some of Captain James McPherson's slaves had recently escaped on stolen horses from his Saltcatchers plantation, crossed the river at Palachacola, and ridden nearly unhindered through Georgia to Florida. Oglethorpe ordered Captain Aneas Mackintosh, the former commander of the fort and a member of the expedition, to recruit and command a new ten-man garrison of rangers for Fort Prince George. He also bargained with some Indians to patrol along the river. Oglethorpe had a personal interest in that area. Unable as a trustee to own land in Georgia, South Carolina had earlier granted him a twelve-thousand-acre barony in and around Palachacola.<sup>45</sup>

On 27 September 1739, three days after arriving in Savannah, Oglethorpe received a letter from King George II, informing him that the final attempt at negotiations with Spain had broken down and ordering him to "annoy the Subjects of Spain, and to put the Colonies of Carolina and Georgia in the best posture of Defence."<sup>46</sup> Oglethorpe, obviously delighted, interpreted the instructions as his authority to invade Florida even though war had not been declared. He wrote a letter to Lieutenant Governor William Bull of South Carolina that same day,

acquainting him with the king's instructions and requesting assistance in laying siege to Saint Augustine. He also dispatched requests to the various Indian nations, asking them for warriors and giving them his permission to raid Florida.<sup>47</sup>

A week later Tomochichi, the ancient mico of the Yamocrow, died after a long illness. Oglethorpe paid his old friend the honor of giving him an elaborate military funeral and burying him in one of Savannah's town squares with a monument erected over his grave.<sup>48</sup>

After remaining in Savannah and making war preparations for a month, Oglethorpe set out for Frederica, arriving there on 8 November. War was just a few days away.<sup>49</sup>

had not participated in the invasion of Florida, for the fort on the upper Savannah River was too important, commercially and strategically, to leave unguarded. Augusta was also a tough frontier town. Its population included the rangers, South Carolina Indian traders, packhorsemen, loitering warriors representing most of the southern nations, and the white men's Indian wives, mistresses, and numerous children. Although slavery was prohibited in Georgia a few Negro slaves lived there with their South Carolina masters. Augusta's toughness and remoteness from Savannah required the presence of a peace officer. At first Kent had no authority over civilians, but in November 1741 the trustees in London appointed him a conservator of the peace, granting him authority to sit in judgement over breaches of the peace and small civil actions such as minor debts. He was also promoted to captain in June or July of that year. The garrison of rangers was originally authorized a captain, a lieutenant, and fifteen private men; however, by 1741 it had been reorganized similar to a troop of dragoons. The new organization included a captain, two sergeants, two corporals, a drummer, and between twelve and fifteen privates for a total authorized strength of twenty men.<sup>20</sup> Although the garrison may have been authorized a lieutenant, the position seems never to have been filled.

During the late summer of 1741 the inhabitants of Augusta suffered a terrible flash flood. Although the town and fort, located on a bluff, escaped the waters, large numbers of livestock were drowned and an exceedingly good corn crop was destroyed. The Chickasaw Indian town, a few miles upriver, was washed away and the Indians, taken unaware, escaped only by clinging to floating logs and brush.<sup>21</sup>

Captain Aneas Mackintosh, commander of the Palachacola Rangers at Fort Prince George, South Carolina, had returned to Scotland in February 1740. His older brother, the "Laird of M'intosh," was dead or dying and Aneas returned to his homeland to inherit the chieftainship of his clan and the family estate. Aneas's younger brother John, a Palachacola Ranger since at least 1737, was promoted to captain and assumed command of the garrison. The subsequent history of Fort Prince George is confusing. The last reference to a garrison there was in June 1742. There are no records to indicate that the

rangers were ever paid by Oglethorpe, the trustees, or the South Carolina Assembly from the time of their reactivation in late 1739. However, the garrison probably numbered fewer than half a dozen men whose primary duty was the operation and protection of the Palachacola ferry across the Savannah River which the South Carolina government had authorized Oglethorpe to establish beginning in June 1740. The rangers' subsistence was perhaps dependent upon the receipts from ferrying passengers, livestock, and freight.<sup>22</sup>

Realistically, there was little need for the Palachacola Rangers after November 1740. During that month Oglethorpe ordered a fort built and a garrison of two officers and twelve rangers stationed near the Uchee Indian town three miles to the west of Palachacola across the Savannah River in Georgia. Thomas Wiggins, who had long owned a trading house there, was commissioned captain of the garrison. Wiggins, a good friend of Oglethorpe's was a capable officer who had a great influence among the Creek and Uchee Indians. His lieutenant was Anthony Willy, former commander of Okfuskee Fort in the Upper Creek nation. By the spring of 1741 a small fort, called Mount Pleasant, had been constructed near the Uchee town. The fortification was probably a stockade surrounding Wiggins's trading house, a few barracks huts, and a stable. The Indian town was practically uninhabited by 1741, although a few Uchees occasionally returned to the area to hunt and a few lived further up river at Silver Bluff in South Carolina.<sup>23</sup> Fort Mount Pleasant, also called Uchee Fort, was strategically located, commanding the Savannah River from a bluff one hundred feet high from which the rangers patrolled to the west of the river, screening the northern approach to the Ebenezer and Savannah settlements.

Two disasters befell Fort Mount Pleasant during the summer of 1742. During the latter part of June, Lieutenant Willy crossed the Savannah River and visited Captain John Mackintosh at Fort Prince George. After both men retired for the night Willy killed himself with one of his pistols for reasons unknown. About two weeks later Captain Wiggins became ill and went to Savannah where he died shortly afterward. John Barnard, another Indian trader, was then commissioned captain of the Mount Pleasant Rangers.<sup>24</sup>

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