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GEORGIANS AND THE WAR OF 1812

Billy Lee Akins
GEORGIANS AND THE WAR OF 1812

By

Billy Lee Akins

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the History Department of Georgia Southern College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History

June 1968

Approved by:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman of the Department of History

[Signature]

Chairman of the Graduate Division
PREFACE

A detailed monograph of Georgia and the War of 1812 is worthy of attentive study. There have been a few accounts written about events that occurred in Georgia during the war, but an examination of the records indicates no current study that attempts to bring these events together and relate them to the conflict. This the writer has attempted to do.

I would like to acknowledge those who aided in the completion of this project. First, to Dr. Jack Nelson Averitt, Chairman of the Social Science Division of Georgia Southern College, who suggested the topic and who read the manuscript and made many valuable suggestions. I am also indebted to Dr. John Perry Cochran who served as second reader, and to Dr. Julia Frances Smith who served as third reader. I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the library staff of Georgia Southern College, particularly to Mrs. Mae C. Olliff and Mrs. Mildred B. Sanders for their help. I must also thank the staff of the University of Georgia Library, the staff of the Georgia Department of Archives and History and Mrs. Lilla M. Hawes of the Georgia Historical Society for their assistance. Finally, to my wife, Fay Campbell Akins, and to my son and daughter, Terry and Tina, I owe a debt I can never describe or repay.

B.L.A.
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The War of 1812 was almost five years in the making. From 1807 until war was officially declared, the United States government, seeking to avoid the seemingly inevitable conflict, passed an embargo and a non-intercourse act and used every facet of diplomacy to coerce Great Britain to respect the commercial rights of the United States. The foreign policy of the United States during this period created serious discord among the people, with the result that when war was declared, Americans entered the conflict a divided people. President Thomas Jefferson could have reduced much of the agitation that later followed had he taken advantage of the wave of patriotism which swept the country in 1807 and chosen war rather than a temporizing measure. In the summer of 1807, the British committed an overt act which stirred American patriotism to a height unseen since the Revolution. This incident culminated in a loud clamor for strong retaliatory measures against England with the Republicans being the most vociferous political agitators.

On June 22, 1807, the American frigate, the Chesapeake, bound for service in the Mediterranean, weighed anchor from Norfolk, Virginia. About ten miles at sea she was hailed by a British warship, the Leopard, whose captain demanded the surrender of seamen alleged to be deserters from the British naval service. The captain of the Chesapeake refused
to obey the British order. Without warning, the Leopard fired point-blank on the American ship, killing three and wounding eighteen crewmen. The stricken vessel was then boarded and four men were removed.\footnote{Washington National Intelligencer, June 26, 1807.} When the Chesapeake struggled back to Norfolk, public reaction was immediate and loud. Protests from all sections of the country, particularly in the middle Atlantic and southern states, denounced the incident as an outrageous violation of American sovereignty.\footnote{Ibid., June 29, July 1, 3, 8, 10, 1807. Strongly worded resolutions, approved by citizens' meetings throughout the country, appeared on the above dates denouncing the Chesapeake incident and pledging support to the government in any measure it wished to pursue in retaliation.} For a time, the United States wavered on the brink of war.

Although the Chesapeake incident aroused public feelings to a state of concern unparalleled since the days of the Revolution, it was but one of several grievances which the United States had against England. Since the Treaty of Paris, signed in 1783, hostilities had been smoldering between the two countries. British occupation of forts in the Northwest in violation of the treaty, and their intrigues with the Indians, who frequently attacked American settlements, met with vigorous American protest. Boundary and commercial disputes created further anti-British sentiments among Americans. These conflicts, together with British demands, combined to create an ever widening gulf between England and America. The British demanded that Americans indemnify the British for debts owed to English merchants on the eve of the Revolution. They further demanded that the United States government either restore or
compensate the Loyalists' for property confiscated during the Revolution. Moreover, tension had mounted over the attempt of the United States to steer a middle course in her dealings with both England and France during the Napoleonic wars. For several years the United States had suffered a series of humiliating offenses at the hands of both England and France. Great Britain, however, was the chief offender.

Handicapped by manpower shortages, after 1803 the Royal Navy began impressment of sailors from merchant vessels. Many British seamen, in search of better conditions of work and pay, deserted to American employment, and the Royal Navy sought to stop the drain of experienced manpower. Mistakes and abuses inevitably occurred and British boarding parties seized both native and naturalized American seamen from American decks. It is estimated that between 1803 and 1812 a total of ten thousand American seamen were forcibly taken from American merchant ships and impressed into British naval service. The British government further infuriated Americans by imposing restrictions on American carriers sailing between France, Spain and their West Indian possessions. The British government, invoking the formula of the Rule of War of 1756, denied American merchants the right to participate in a direct wartime carrying trade which had not been open to them in time of peace. Americans evaded this prohibition by the subterfuge of paying duties at

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American ports and claiming they made two separate "broken" voyages, following a plan open to them in peacetime.¹

A British admiralty appeals court in the Essex case in 1805 denied this practice as adequate proof of bona fide importation, a change of policy that British sea captains swiftly implemented in scores of seizures of American vessels.⁵ Sweeping interdicts against American commerce continued in 1806. The British ministry issued an Order in Council in May which declared the entire northern coast of Europe from Brest to the Elbe River under blockade, but provided for strict and uniform enforcement of this measure along a more limited coast. An Order in Council in January, 1807, proclaimed the blockade of all coastal trade between enemy ports on the European continent. Another Order in Council dated November, 1807, declared all of Napoleon controlled Europe under blockade as if by naval forces in a most strict and rigorous manner. All ships and goods, British excepted, that violated this order were good and lawful prize. A second edict issued in the same month authorized neutral trade with the Continent, provided carriers first landed at a British port, entered their cargoes, and paid duty.⁶

Napoleon struck at American maritime commerce also, though not extensively until 1807. His navy defeated in 1805 at Trafalgar, he returned to economic warfare to force Britain to terms. An edict issued at Berlin in November, 1806, initiated the famous Continental System.

¹Washington National Intelligencer, September 20, 1805; Bemis, Diplomatic History, p. 111.

⁵Washington National Intelligencer, October 7, 16, 1805.

⁶Ibid., March 16, 1807, January 22, 1808; Bemis, Diplomatic History, pp. 1147, 1149.
The Berlin Decree declared the British Isles in a state of blockade and prohibited all trade including that of neutrals. All ships coming from the British Isles or carrying British goods were liable to seizure. The Milan Decree, promulgated in December, 1807, added a provision that ships submitting to British blockade regulations or permitting search by British vessels would be seized.  

The British Orders in Council and the Berlin and Milan Decrees combined to make all American trade with either belligerent open to seizure and confiscation. Both powers after 1807 harassed American commerce.

Protest, appeal, and in 1806 a non-importation act characterized initial American response to British seizures and impressments. Still the British government refused to yield, giving no ground on the issue of impressment and offering little else on the other points at issue. The sweeping ban on all American exports and ship sailings promised better results.

When Congress convened in October, 1807, President Thomas Jefferson, preferring economic coercion rather than war, proposed an embargo on all commerce with the outside world as the most effective means of defending American rights. He believed that the warring nations of Europe, rather than suffer the loss of American trade, would withdraw their  

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8 Annals of Congress, 9 Cong., 1 sess., I, 51, 90. The Non-Importation Act prohibited importation of such goods from Great Britain as could be obtained either in the United States or in other foreign countries. By this restriction, the United States hoped to force England to respect the neutral rights of the nation.
obnoxious regulations. The Senate acted with great rapidity, referring
the president's message to a committee and passing an Embargo Bill by
a vote of twenty-two to six on the same afternoon that it received the
request. The bill as proposed by the Senate confined American vessels
to American ports and permitted foreign vessels to leave only in ballast
or with cargo already on board. The House passed the Embargo Bill by
a vote of eighty-two to forty-four after two days' debate. Congress
had concurred in Jefferson's embargo policy with the greatest alacrity.
The bill received the president's assent on December 22.

Georgia's congressmen were divided in their support of the
Embargo Bill. In the Senate, William Harris Crawford and John Milledge
split votes on the measure. Milledge voted for the embargo, but
Crawford did not choose to support a measure which he believed to be
fraught with so much danger to the country. Although he resented the
outrages committed against the United States flag on the high seas, he
was not certain that an embargo act was the proper method of correcting
this situation. In the House of Representatives, George Michael Troup
was the only member of the Georgia delegation to support the embargo.


10Ibid., 11 Cong., 1 sess., I, 541-547; see also Letter from
Young Men of Augusta, Georgia to President John Adams, July 2, 1798,
in J. E. D. Shipp, Giant Days or The Life and Times of William H.
Several years earlier, Crawford, while a young school teacher at Richmond
Academy in Augusta, Georgia, expressed similar concern over French
insults to the American flag. On July 2, 1798, at a convention of young
men held in Augusta, Crawford was appointed chairman of a committee to
draft a memorial to President John Adams protesting French aggressions
against commerce of the United States and pledging support for strong
retaliatory measures.
Troup thought it the most effective measure that the government could adopt. Georgia's other Congressmen, William Bibb, Howell Cobb and Dennis Smelt, however, did not share Troup's sentiments on the embargo, and dissented.

Although the majority of the congressmen did not agree on the expediency of laying an embargo, most Georgians, nevertheless, thought it a wise measure and vocally supported it. Even the editor of the conservative and erstwhile supporter of Federalism, the Savannah Columbian Museum and Advertiser, agreed that "the embargo was the next best measure for maintaining the national tonic" and that it gave the president "a new weapon of negotiation." For a time, said the editor, the embargo would be detrimental to both merchant and farmer in that it would reduce prices of American products and increase the price of foreign goods. Nevertheless, predicted the editor, it "will be a popular measure with all classes of people." The editor of the Augusta Chronicle, a staunch supporter of Republicanism, also believed that the embargo would elicit the desired results from Great Britain, declaring that Congress had acted "patriotically" and "wisely" in enacting the measure. Similarly, both Governor Jared Irwin and his successor, David Byrdie Mitchell, thought Congress had acted in the best interests of the country.

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12 Savannah Columbian Museum and Advertiser, January 12, 1808. (Hereinafter cited as Savannah Museum.)

13 Augusta Chronicle, January 23, 1808.
More support for the embargo was engendered in November, 1808, when the Georgia General Assembly called up the question for considera-
tion. In a memorial addressed to the president, the legislators declared
that the "citizens of this state . . . feel happy that a measure has
been adopted which they conceive to be . . . pacific and manly." Additional expressions of patriotism and support for the embargo marked
the celebration of July 4, 1808, by Georgians. In Augusta, toasters
raised their glasses to the embargo declaring it to be "wise, just and
equitable," and that "it exhibits to Foreign nations, that if they will
not be just, we will be prudent." Despite this outpouring of enthusi-
asm, however, Georgia's situation soon became one of despondency, result-
ing from an economic stagnation produced by the embargo.

The economic plight in which Georgians suddenly found themselves
in 1808, however, was not all due to the embargo. Part of it was due to
the state's rapid expansion. From the turn of the century, Georgia's
population had grown rapidly. The 1800 census revealed that Georgia,
next to Tennessee, was the fastest growing state in the Union, having

\[1\] Journal of the House of the General Assembly of Georgia (1808),
pp. 81-82. (Hereinafter cited as Georgia House Journal.)

\[15\] Augusta Chronicle, July 9, 1808.
increased by over one thousand per cent since 1790. The increase in
the number of Negro slaves between 1790 and 1820 reflects the growing
importance of cotton production, the latter expansion resulting from
the invention of the cotton gin in 1793 by Eli Whitney.

As the state's production of cotton expanded, Georgians demanded
and were granted additional land by the federal government as treaty
after treaty was negotiated with the Creek Indians who occupied land to
the west of Georgia. Treaties were made in 1802, 1804 and 1805, by
which all lands east of the Ocmulgee River were ceded by the Indians to
Georgia. This land, which was distributed by lottery to citizens of
Georgia, attracted many settlers from Virginia and North Carolina. The
influx of large numbers of people, the fertility of the newly acquired
land, and the high price of cotton which was rapidly becoming the staple
in Georgia made these early years of the nineteenth century prosperous.
Fortunes were rapidly made, and speculation ran wild. Large debts were

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16A Century of Population Growth, 1790-1900 (Washington: Government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Whites</th>
<th>Number of Negro Slaves</th>
<th>Number Free Negro</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>52,886</td>
<td>29,261</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>82,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>102,261</td>
<td>59,406</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>161,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>117,215</td>
<td>105,218</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>222,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>196,996</td>
<td>149,656</td>
<td>1,757</td>
<td>348,409</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aggregate Amount of Persons Within the United States in the Year 1810,
Third Census Book (Washington, 1811), pp. 30-31. (Hereinafter cited as
Third Census.) Part of the growth in Negro slaves between 1800 and
1810 reflect the large importation of Negroes during the years immediately
preceding January 1, 1808, after which the trade in slaves was prohibited;
Census for 1820, Fourth Census (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1821),
pp. 28-29.
contracted to purchase more and more Negro slaves and additional land. Since 1800, large quantities of cotton from Georgia had been exported to Europe and from this trade her wealth was largely derived. However, the embargo bore down severely on the commercial activity of the state. With all sailings and exports prohibited, farmers and planters faced rapidly falling prices in a domestic market flooded with commodities. Cotton, which earlier had sold for as much as twenty-five to twenty-eight cents a pound, brought only ten to thirteen cents in 1809. The price continued its downward trend, until it reached a low of six cents a pound in the summer of 1812. Individuals who had contracted large debts during a period of prosperity prior to the embargo suddenly found that they could not liquidate them. Universal bankruptcy hung over the state. The plight of the debtor could easily be followed by the large number of sheriff's sales which were advertised daily in the several newspapers over the state.

Savannah, the principal seaport town in Georgia, with a population of five thousand, suffered acutely from the embargo. Her once busy harbor where fleets of small vessels came in with loads of produce from the West Indies, and went out laden with rice, tobacco, cotton and


18Augusta Chronicle, December 31, 1813.

19Augusta Mirror of the Times, October 9, 1809. (Hereinafter cited as Augusta Mirror.)
lumber, was now idle. Enthusiasm, expressed earlier by civic leaders for the embargo, quickly turned to despair. Less than a month after the enactment of the embargo one correspondent despondently reported that the citizens of Savannah were "all in the dumps about the Embargo" as there had been "no sale for produce since the act has been enforced."20

The effects of the embargo were felt in diverse ways. One illustration of the dire financial crisis centers on Whip, a celebrated imported stallion, owned by one Edward Jordan of Washington, Georgia. The stallion's services were widely advertised by his owner who claimed that two of Whip's sons had won the United States sweepstakes. The usual fee for the thoroughbred's services was normally thirty-one dollars, but because the embargo had made money scarce, payment was reduced and could be made in cotton. However, on April 2, 1808, a report circulated that Whip had been removed from service as he was in the custody of the local sheriff.21 His owner, like numerous other Georgians, was unable to meet the obligations of his debts.

With debtors defaulting in payment of debts, loan foreclosures became numerous. As a result, civil courts in several counties were suspended in the spring of 1808, and petitions from grand juries were sent to the governor recommending legislative intervention. The pressure of petitions from the grand juries, together with pleas made by several prominent citizens throughout the state prompted Governor Jared Irwin to call a special session of the General Assembly to convene on May 9,

20 Augusta Chronicle, January 14, 1808.

21 Ibid., April 2, 1808.
at Milledgeville, new seat of the state capitol. When the lawmakers assembled, the governor immediately requested that they devise some means of relieving the financially distressed citizens. Irwin pointed out that although the embargo had brought temporary distress and subjected Georgians to many privations, it was viewed by him as the only means the United States had within her power to avoid becoming a party in the wars which had so long raged in Europe. He was confident that the people of Georgia would "acquiesce with cheerfulness in the wise measure" of the federal government.

The legislature concurred with the governor's request. A bill entitled "An Act to Alleviate the condition of Debtors, and Afford them temporary Relief" was introduced, debated and passed in the Georgia House on May 16, 1808, by a vote of thirty-two to twenty-four. The Alleviating Act, which provided that one third of a debt be paid when due, and granted debtors additional time for payment of the remainder, met with strong opposition among some members of the House. Those who opposed the measure had "great doubts" as to its constitutionality inasmuch as it "tends to violate that article of the Constitution which declares ... that no state shall pass any law impairing the obligation of contract." Furthermore, the opponents of the bill believed that even if the act were not in violation of the Constitution it deprived the creditor of his rights of enforcing payment.

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22 Georgia House Journal (Special Session, May, 1808), pp. 5-9.
23 Ibid., pp. 17, 29, 52-64.
24 Ibid., pp. 129-130.
The Alleviating Act, intended originally to be a temporary measure, was reenacted annually by subsequent legislatures, becoming a source of dissension among the legislators. The public divided in their sentiments over the measure. Those belonging to the creditor group, or who were closely aligned with them, denounced the act as unconstitutional, while those of the debtor class generally applauded the act. Despite creditors' strong denunciation of the Alleviating Act, however, the debtor class wielded the power. Being more numerous, they exerted sufficient pressure on the legislators who continued to submit to the debtors' wishes, reenacting the bill from year to year.

The Alleviating Act provided Georgians with ample opportunity to vent their emotions. Debate on the merits of the act often degenerated into bitter disputes between creditor and debtor. One vociferous opponent was Thomas Charlton of Savannah, Judge of the Eastern District. The judge, speaking before the Grand Jury of Glynn County in November, 1808, agreed that something should have been done to ameliorate the condition of debtors, but expressed grave concern that the legislature had passed an act so broad in scope. He denounced the act as unconstitutional and urged the grand jury to petition the legislature for its repeal.\(^{25}\)

The Alleviating Act found further disfavor with the editor of the Augusta Mirror of the Times. In a strongly worded editorial on November 20, 1809, the editor denounced the act, Governor Irwin, and members of the legislature who enacted it. Pointing out that by enacting the law, the

\(^{25}\)Augusta Mirror, November 28, 1808.
government had impaired the obligation of contracts, the Augusta editor, while admitting that the power of the legislature was enormous, asserted that "it had past that limit to the point of being dangerous."26

The editors of the Mirror's rival journal, the Augusta Chronicle, generally supported the Alleviating Act but they too had some misgivings about the law. Apparently having difficulty collecting from their subscribers, the editors informed readers that they had received information from the "best authority" that the legislature by passing the law had never contemplated that subscribers should withhold their just debts from the press, "if they do withhold [sic], we shall be undone before the 15th of December—no money—no paper—no News!"27

In 1814, the Alleviating Act became an even greater source of antagonism. When the General Assembly met in October, the act was again reenacted by both houses of the legislature. This time, however, the governor, Peter Early, refused to give his assent to the bill. In his veto message, Early stated that the principle of alleviating a debt was unconstitutional for it impaired the obligation of contracts. The governor in concluding his veto message further declared that

Contracts between individuals are matters of private right, and no reason of state can justify an interference with them. They are sacred things, and the hand of government can never touch them, without impairing public confidence. The alleviating system is believed to be injurious to the moral principles of the constitution. It accustoms men to consider their contracts as imposing no moral obligation, and by making fraud familiar, destroys the pride of honesty.28

26 Augusta Mirror, November 20, 1809.
27 Augusta Chronicle, June 25, 1808.
28 Journal of the Senate of the General Assembly of Georgia (1814), p. 38. (Hereinafter cited as Georgia Senate Journal.)
Despite Early's dissent on the measure, the majority of the legislators did not agree with the governor, and promptly passed the bill over his veto. As a result of his unobliging conduct, Early was forced to retire to his Greene County home at the end of his first term as governor in 1815.

The extent that Georgia suffered economically from the embargo and the war which followed can further be seen in the decline of the dollar value of her exports between 1807 and 1814. In 1807, prior to the enactment of the embargo, Georgia's exports were valued at $3,744,945. As a result of the embargo her exports plummeted to a paltry $21,626 in 1808, and, not until 1815 did Georgia's exports regain their former dollar value.  

Georgia, with a dominant agrarian economy, suffered a severe economic set-back as a result of the embargo which cut off her exports of agricultural and timber products. With no economic alternative such as manufacturing, the state's plight remained critical throughout the war years. Yet, Georgians held high hopes in 1808 that new sources of

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1807</td>
<td>$3,744,945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1808</td>
<td>$21,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1809</td>
<td>1,082,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>2,238,686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>2,568,866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>1,066,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1813</td>
<td>1,094,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1814</td>
<td>2,183,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>4,172,319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
prosperity would compensate for those which were forfeited by the embargo. Every indication of manufacturing enterprise in the state was heralded by the press as a happy augury for Georgia. The editor of the Augusta Chronicle, in a burst of enthusiasm, declared that the "Metal and Genius of the American people are rising and bursting out . . . arts and manufacturing are every day coming to light . . . this crisis compels the American to look at home and seek for what he has been heretofore in debt to foreign nations. . . .” The editor, anticipating that Georgia would share in the sudden surge of manufacturing, announced that in the future "a part of the newspaper will be devoted to report such important and useful information." However, the editor's optimism soon gave way to despair for the manufacturing system did not arise in Georgia as it did in the New England states; but rather the large extension of a system of household manufactures, familiar since colonial times.

Some manufacturing did exist in the state but the results were meager. Iron forges and furnaces were in operation in several places in 1810, but due to the scarcity of capital and the high cost of labor these ventures proved unprofitable and ceased to exist after a short time. The same fate befell the factories for the production of cotton and woolen cloth, which had been established in two or three counties. In 1810, the Wilkes Manufacturing Company, located approximately twelve miles from Washington, Georgia, was incorporated with a capital of ten thousand dollars, and another factory was brought into operation about the

30Augusta Chronicle, January 30, 1808, February 1, 1809.
same time on Little River in Morgan County. Both proved short-lived.

In Gainesville, shoes were manufactured. Leather, shoes, hats, carriages, saddles, cabinet work, cotton and woolen cloth constituted the articles marketed. Some homespun was worn in the upper sections of the state, but little was produced in Georgia.

A summary of Georgia manufactures in 1810 show the following in operation at that time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Number in Operation</th>
<th>Amount Produced</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3,000 yards</td>
<td>$1,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloomeries</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13.5 tons</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naileries</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>187,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap and Candles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30,000 candles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanners</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100,000 lbs. soap</td>
<td>18,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distilleries</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>545,212 gals.</td>
<td>162,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewery</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,878 barrels</td>
<td>11,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun Powder</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2,500 lbs.</td>
<td>1,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw Mill</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,252,000 feet</td>
<td>25,040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Georgians also owned 3 carding machines, 20,058 spinning wheels, and 13,290 looms. While the state produced 3,688,534 yards of cotton goods, valued at $1,797,264 in 1810, all except for 3,000 yards was produced in homes. In addition, Georgia home manufacturing produced a variety of other goods, including flaxen, hempen, assorted blends, woolens, stockings and bagging, all valued at $351,892. Despite a large household manufacturing, Georgia's production of goods was

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33Ibid.
insufficient to support a population of over 250,000, consequently the people of Georgia had to look elsewhere for the necessities of life and for any luxuries that could be afforded.

Georgians had always depended on others for manufactured products and most particularly England. Many a Georgian read English books, wore English clothes, sat in English chairs and slept in English beds, cut his wood with English axes and ate out of English pewter dishes. The embargo, and later the non-intercourse acts, however, made it difficult for them to obtain manufactured goods, and even when products could be procured, prices were high. Instead of looking to Europe for manufactured goods, the people of Georgia turned attention to the states of the north.

Manufacturing in New England had made considerable progress as a result of the economic coercion placed on England. The embargo turned people's thoughts from the sea to the factory, and though New England was not aware of it, the embargo was a permanent blessing in disguise, for it laid the foundation of New England's commercial supremacy. Merchandise imported into Georgia from the North included furniture, gunpowder, carriages, oil cloth, gingham, calico, diapers, boots, saddles, thread, cotton bagging, flour, butter, cheese and corn beef. To obtain merchandise from American ports, Georgia merchants first had to secure a certificate from the governor indicating the items desired and the amount needed for a particular town.\footnote{Governor Jared Irwin to Charles Harris, Mayor of Savannah, June 22, 1808, in Governor's Letter Book A, 1802-1809, p. 255, Georgia Department of Archives and History.} This restriction was imposed by a
presidential proclamation of June 6, 1808, because of flagrant violations of the embargo, particularly in New England.

In contrast to Georgia, New England's patriotism was not as strong as her economic interests. Once the embargo cut into her profits, she reacted violently and vociferously, violating the embargo by carrying on a smuggling trade of gigantic proportion with Canada, at the same time bitterly denouncing the Embargo Act and the Republican administration in Washington.

Followers of Federalism in Georgia joined in echoing the sentiments of their New England brethren in opposition to the commercial restrictions which had been imposed on the United States by the Jefferson administration. Unlike the New England states, Federalism had never been politically powerful in Georgia. Although it is true that Georgia was among the first to ratify the federal Constitution, approving it almost unanimously in 1788, this unanimity by Georgia in adopting the Constitution while other states bitterly fought over the matter, did not indicate that a Federalist party would later control the state. Rather, Georgians adopted the Constitution in the capacity of the people of a sovereign state, delegating certain specific powers to the federal government in order to increase its efficiency, but reserving to themselves and to their previously existing state government all rights and powers which were not expressly delegated in the Constitution. Consequently, such influences as the need of the state for national protection against the Indians on the west and the Spanish in Florida were more powerful than any party allegiance in causing the solid vote in favor of a strong central government.35

What strength Federalism once possessed in elections ceased to exist by 1803. Its demise had been hastened when some of its local leaders were indicted in the unsavory Yazoo land fraud of 1796. As a result of this action the state, which had voted previously for George Washington, began to vote solidly Republican. Despite the lack of political power, however, the Federalists still made up a vocal and aggressive minority in Augusta and Savannah. These supporters of Federalism came largely from the conservative, commercially minded aristocrats of the two cities. Such well known men as John McPherson Berrien, John Noel and Joseph Habersham of Revolutionary fame belonged to this group. The Federalists suffered from the restrictive measures of the Republican administration, and they viewed with abhorrence the steady influx of European immigrants eager to embrace the radical ideas of Jefferson. The newspaper organs for the Federalists in Georgia were the Augusta Herald and the Savannah Columbian Museum. Later, in 1812, the vociferous Savannah American Patriot joined the Herald and the Museum in denouncing Republicanism.

As discontent over the embargo became increasingly more vocal, President Jefferson, after fourteen months of the "miserable experiment," yielded to the protest to repeal the measure. On March 1, 1809, the president signed a bill which had been passed by Congress repealing the embargo. After a year, the embargo had failed as a coercive instrument, not because cancellation of trade was a weak weapon, but because the

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hunger of American merchants for foreign goods and markets broke down all enforcement measures and produced a political crisis.

Repeal of the embargo, however, was not accomplished without a struggle in both the Senate and the House. Although Crawford had voted against an embargo, he now led the fight in the Senate against its repeal. 37 He believed that the embargo should be given a fair trial, and when James Hillhouse of Connecticut, supported by Samuel White of Delaware and Timothy Pickering of Massachusetts, introduced a motion to repeal the Embargo Act, Crawford opposed the move. He was aware that there was some discontent, but believed that it was not widespread. In the South, the Georgian declared, "no measure is more applauded or more cheerfully submitted to than the Embargo. It has been viewed there as the only alternative to war. It is a measure which is enforced in that country at every sacrifice." The interests of no section of the Union "are more immediately affected by the measure than the Southern states—than the State of Georgia." 38 He remained firm in support of the embargo, admitting with other Republicans that if it had not been highly successful, "we have every reason to believe that its failure to produce these effects has been connected with causes wholly adventitious; and

37 Crawford's enemies accused him of being in sympathy with the Federalist party, although his opposition to the Embargo Act had no reference to party affiliation. His friends pointed to his actions here as indicative of independence of judgment rather than a leaning towards Federalist principles. However that may be, Crawford was a Republican and generally supported the administration of Jefferson and Madison. Philip Jackson Green, "William H. Crawford and the War of 1812," Georgia Historical Quarterly, XXVI (1942), 16-39. (Hereinafter cited as Green, "Crawford.")

38 Annals of Congress, 10 Cong., 2 sess., I, 64.
which may give way, if the nation adhered to the measure." He hoped there was a "probability of its producing some effect on those who make it necessary for us to exercise this act of self denial." If the measure should be repealed and American vessels be permitted "to go out in the face of the present Orders in Council and blockading decrees and proclamations" they would be exposed to new insults. Crawford was willing to support a repeal of the embargo but stated that

its substitute should be war, and no ordinary war. . . . How are these orders and decrees to be opposed but by war, except we keep without their reach? If the Embargo produces a repeal of these edicts, we effect it without going to war. Whenever we repeal the Embargo, we are at war, or we abandon our neutral rights. It is impossible to take the middle ground, and say that we do not abandon them by trading with Great Britain alone. Can arming our merchant vessels, by resisting the whole navy of Great Britain, oppose force with force? It is impossible. The idea is absurd.

If the administration nursed any apprehension because of Crawford's negative vote on the embargo, his courageous stand against its repeal doubtless was calculated to remove it.

In the House of Representatives, the vote to repeal the embargo was eighty-one to forty. Troup and Bibb voted against repeal. Troup, in reply to John Randolph who called the embargo a measure of degrading submission, took the floor of the House and angrily retorted that it was not one of submission but "a measure of resistance, and of the most formidable resistance." In addition, Troup bitterly denounced the Federalists' charge that the southern states were anti-commercial as being "without even the shadow of foundation." Southerners were just as

39 Annals of Congress, 10 Cong., 2 sess., I, 68.

40 Ibid., 10 Cong., 2 sess., I, 63-73; ibid., 11 Cong., 2 sess., I, 541-547.
anxious for overseas markets to open again for warehouses were bulging with unsold cotton. The South had sacrificed as much commercial prosperity as any part of the Union, Troup asserted. How could it be said that the people of the South were enemies of commerce, he indignantly asked, when they raise seventy million pounds of cotton, but for which they have not a home market for ten million.\footnote{Annals of Congress, 10 Cong., 2 sess., II, 603.}

As a substitute for the embargo, Congress passed a Non-Intercourse Act on March 1, 1809. This act opened up commerce with all the world except France and England and their dependencies. The act authorized the president to suspend operation of the act in favor of either belligerent that repealed its restrictions on American trade. As a coercive measure, however, non-intercourse was no more effective than the embargo. Crawford took no part in the debates on the Non-Intercourse Act, and unlike most "Warhawks," made no bombastic speeches in favor of war. In the House, both Bibb and Troup vigorously opposed the Non-Intercourse Act and voted against its enactment.\footnote{Ibid., 10 Cong., 2 sess., II, 1149-1150, 1641.} Smelt voted for the act and Cobb was out of Washington at the time. The people of Georgia generally upheld the Non-Intercourse Act. Both French and English goods were taboo, the students at the University of Georgia going so far as to appear dressed in homespun as they endorsed the protest.

Three days after the repeal of the Embargo Act and the enactment of the Non-Intercourse Act, President Jefferson willingly handed over the reins of the presidency to his protegé, James Madison. The
Republican press in Georgia on the occasion paid tribute to the departing Jefferson. The editor of the Augusta Mirror eulogized Jefferson, stating that although he had not pleased every individual in the nation, he had, nevertheless, pursued a course dictated by conscience, and that every act of his administration had emanated from immaculate motives.\footnote{Augusta Mirror, March 13, 1809.}

Jefferson's retirement in 1809 helped to bring about a significant change in the attitudes of many Georgians toward the policy of the United States government in its dealings with Great Britain. Soon after the revered Virginian stepped down from the Presidency, Georgians' attitudes began to shift from a reluctant acquiescence to one of militancy. As long as Jefferson occupied the Presidency, the people reluctantly followed the Republican leader's pacifist course in dealing with England, but not so with his successor. James Madison did not enjoy the same devotion among the people of Georgia as had his predecessor. In fact, some Georgians assumed Madison to be weak and vacillating. Consequently they did not feel any restraint, which had been exercised during Jefferson's reign, in demanding that the Madison administration pursue a "get-tough policy" with England.

They deplored the vacillation of Congress in its dealings with Great Britain. They demanded action and declared their support for whatever strong measures the government might choose to take against the belligerent. The editor of the Augusta Mirror called for firmer action against England, and asserted that he hoped that the next Congress would not only talk but act, "'words, words, words,' only if continued will
destroy the independence of the nation," asserted the editor. Troup, Congressman from Georgia, in submitting a number of resolutions to the House which had as their object the vindication of the commercial rights of the United States, declared that it was time that commercial rights of the nation either be exonerated or abandoned.

The Georgia General Assembly, reflecting the temper of the people, made it known to the Madison administration that the citizens of Georgia were ready and willing to support the administration in a war with Great Britain. Calling for more stringent measures against England, the General Assembly in 1809 sent a memorial to the President which declared that "we as citizens of Georgia and members of the Union, will ever be found in willing readiness to assert and support the rights and dignity of our country whenever called upon by the proper authority of our National Republic." This outpouring of sentiment and support indicates that by 1809 the people of Georgia had reached the conclusion whereby they believed that further negotiations with England would be fruitless, and that the only alternative was war.

Neither the Madison administration nor the country as a whole was ready for war in 1809, however, and Georgians had to wait to "vindicate the nation's honor." In the meantime, they turned attention to electing an energetic governor who was destined to play an important role in both state and national affairs during the early war years.

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44 Augusta Mirror, September 18, 1809.
45 Ibid., December 18, 1809.
The Georgia General Assembly elected forty-three year old David Byrdie Mitchell Governor of Georgia on November 9, 1809. The two houses of the legislature, meeting in joint session, chose Mitchell over Jared Irwin, the incumbent, by a vote of sixty-one to forty-one. A more suitable governor could not have been selected to serve during this turbulent period. Mitchell, born in 1766, was a native of Scotland. He had crossed the Atlantic to claim considerable property in and about Savannah which had been willed to him by his maternal uncle, Dr. David Byrdie, a well-to-do surgeon in Savannah. Within a short time after his arrival in Georgia, the idealistic Scotsman became a law clerk and he soon became identified with a group of bright young lawyers in Savannah. Mitchell attracted the attention of James Jackson, one of the prominent figures in politics in Savannah and the state. Mitchell's advice on political and legal matters was sought by Jackson and John Milledge. His assiduous attention to military duty and his reputation for efficiency resulted in his election to the post of Major General of the First Division of the State Militia. Mitchell served in the Georgia House of Representatives, he was solicitor-general of the Eastern District of the Superior Court, and he served as mayor of Savannah from 1801 to 1802. In addition, he was an ardent Republican and Jeffersonian.

Mitchell's State of the Republic message to the legislature in 1810 was described as a masterly description of the state of the world.

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at that time: the intrigues of the European monarchies and their effect upon the United States, the embargo and troubles with Great Britain and France. He concluded:

A retrospective view of our relations with these powers will however satisfy anyone not blinded by prejudice, that we have infinitely more cause of complaint against Great Britain than France, notwithstanding the recent unwarrantable and arbitrary seizures and confiscation of the property of our merchants by the latter power. 49

Believing that war with Great Britain was inevitable, Mitchell worked diligently to strengthen the military defenses of the state. Additional arms and ammunition were procured, fortifications along the coast were strengthened, a line of forts was built along the frontier, and constant attention was given to strengthening the militia. Despite Governor Mitchell's tireless efforts in revamping the militia and strengthening what fortifications Georgia possessed, her preparedness at this time, however, did not warrant the enthusiastic statement which Congressman Bibb made on the floor of the House of Representatives in March, 1810. Bibb boasted to his colleagues that "if all the states were as ready for war as Georgia is, I would be ready and willing to encounter it." 50

In view of the almost destitute condition of the militia due to a lack of sufficient quantity of arms, ammunition, supplies and equipment, Bibb apparently was referring to the psychological preparedness of Georgia rather than military. There is little doubt that psychologically,

49 Athens Georgia Express, November 17, 1810; Georgia Senate Journal (1810), p. 7.
50 Quoted in Green, "Crawford," p. 32.
Georgians were perhaps better conditioned for the approaching war than many of their fellow citizens in other states, thanks to the strong Republican press in the state which had long advocated much more stringent measures against England than Congress was willing to take. Yet, despite a strong, militant attitude, Georgia was militarily unprepared for war as Governor Mitchell pointed out in his annual message to members of the legislature in November, 1811. The chief executive reminded the lawmakers that war with England was imminent and that the state was "almost wholly unprepared to engage in any military enterprise, even... a defensive enterprise." The governor reiterated the need for the consideration and adoption of a plan for arming the militia. Additional weapons were needed. The cavalry was destitute of the necessary equipment to enable it to take to the field should its services be required. Many of the cavalry companies were below the required strength. Artillery was in the same deplorable condition. Mitchell admonished the legislature to take expedient action to put the state in readiness for the approaching conflict, pointing out that the state stood exposed on every frontier, especially on the coast and along the Florida border.

The legislature promptly responded to the governor’s plea for preparedness. On November 25, a measure was enacted which provided for conformity of the militia laws of Georgia to acts passed by the United States Congress with respect to the infantry, artillery, and rifle corps.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{51}Georgia Senate Journal (1811), p. 11.
\textsuperscript{52}Ibid., p. 60.
An attempt to amend the bill to provide for one week's military training each year for members of the militia, however, was voted down. The lawmakers authorized the governor to purchase six pieces of brass ordnances for protection of the sea coast. In addition, the legislature passed an act which provided for better organization and equipment for the cavalry. 53

As Georgia made preparations for war, the Federalists in Georgia and the nation were denouncing it. The Federalist press of the nation redoubled its protests that the fumbling foreign policy of Jefferson, dutifully continued by Madison, was pushing the nation into an unnecessary war with Great Britain. The Republicans' angry rebuttals to those charges resounded in the Augusta Chronicle, the Augusta Mirror, the Savannah Republican, the Milledgeville Georgia Journal and the Athens Georgia Express. Three papers in the state, the Savannah Museum, the Augusta Herald and the Savannah American Patriot, however, braved this barrage of editorial opinion to join, with varying amounts of directness and courage, in the Federalist opposition to the threatening war.

Of the three, the Savannah American Patriot was the most vociferous in denouncing Republicanism and the approaching war. The first issue of the semi-weekly American Patriot was published in Savannah on April 14, 1812. Its prospectus appeared in late January and early February of 1812 in several Georgia newspapers. 54 The editors,

53 Georgia Senate Journal (1811), pp. 53, 90, 97.

54 Savannah Museum, January 30, 1812; Augusta Herald, February 6, 1812; Savannah Republican, January 28, 1812.
John Mitchell and Charles Pratt, promised that the newspaper would seek to "further the principles of Washington and Hamilton," a bold declaration for Georgia editors, especially in 1812. It was the cry of national Federalism and a warning of an anti-administration policy.

In his first issue, John Mitchell, referring to the strong pro-French sentiment in Georgia, invited trouble when he asserted: "Read, Ye Windy advocates of France!" He attacked President Madison as a warmonger and as an incompetent. Of all the "astounding maneuvers" and "pitiful Tricks" that had characterized the current administration, the editor declared, none was stronger than the president's dealings with John Henry, the ex-British agent.55 Other fiery editorials denouncing the Republican administration and praising Federalism poured from the pen of Mitchell. Boldly he quoted the Baltimore Federal Republican on the nation's need of a stronger navy before it dared threaten mighty Britain. He gave unstinted praise to a recent speech on the crisis by Josiah Quincy, a leading New England Federalist. Furthermore, he expressed delight that the federal government was having difficulty in obtaining an eleven million dollar loan from the states with which to conduct the war.56

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55 After the Chesapeake affair, John Henry had been sent by Sir James Craig, Governor-General of Canada, to find out the attitudes of the New Englanders. Henry went to Boston, the seat of Federalism, and kept up a lively correspondence with Sir James. Upon completion of his assignment he asked for but was refused compensation for his services. As a result, Henry sold his correspondence to the United States government for $50,000. On March 9, 1812, President Madison forwarded the letters to Congress along with a statement in which he charged that the British government had been guilty of the high crime of sending an agent to foment disaffection against the constituted authorities of the nation. Reginald Horsman, The Causes of the War of 1812 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), pp. 242-243.

56 Savannah American Patriot, May 19, 1812.
Even the foolhardy Mitchell must have been satisfied with the outrage he provoked. Anonymous letters condemning the editor and recommending that he be used as "an object on which to exercise the body" poured into the war-minded Republican until its editor, John Evans, had to apologize for a lack of space necessary to publish all.  

Mitchell announced on April 21 that anonymous letters, some threatening physical violence, had poured into his office. Scornfully he dared his enemies to come into the open. However, realizing his danger, Mitchell took the precaution of arming himself with two pistols. Nonetheless, he persisted, attempting to make himself heard above the clamor for war. On May 20, the city council of Savannah called a public meeting to discuss the gravity of the nation's problem. The citizens convened on June 3, heard several resolutions supporting a firmer stand against England, and one favoring the invasion of Florida, and passed them all.

In the Patriot on June 5, Mitchell charged that the resolution favoring an invasion of Florida would have been voted down but for the parliamentary trickery of the presiding chairman, Mayor William Bulloch. When the Federalists on the committee offered an alternate set of resolutions which omitted any sanction of the Florida invasion, Bulloch called for a voice vote on whether the minority's resolutions should be considered, and promptly ruled that the audience had voted in the

57 Savannah Republican, April 21, 28, May 2, 12, 1812.

58 Broadside, June 6, 1812, addressed to "The Free Impartial and Unbiased Citizens of Savannah," in Georgia Historical Society, Savannah.
negative. Mitchell insisted that a count of hands would have earned a hearing for the second set of resolutions.

The belligerent patriots of Savannah decided that they had endured enough. That night a mob broke into Mitchell's house. The editor described the outrage in a pamphlet issued on the following day. He had been warned the previous day that he might expect uninvited guests in the evening. Although he was aware of the possible danger, he refused to do more than place two pistols on a table near the chair in which he sat awaiting his unwelcomed visitors. Suddenly he heard footsteps upon his stairs, and "two fellows, one by the name of Pitcher, the other an Irishman, a Tavern-Stewart & Billiard Marker by the name of Burke" burst into the room.

I seized the pistols, cocked them, and demanded their business—they equivocated and shuffled upon my telling them to stand off or I would fire ... others of their brutal comrades appeared. My attention was for a moment distracted, and I felt a repugnance at shedding the blood of a fellow-creature, until compelled by necessity; my left arm was seized and one pistol wrestled from me; I presented the other to the breast of one of the gang, which flashed—I was thus disarmed and surrounded by several strong-bodied men, who with heavy clubs struck me with such violence over my face and uncovered head that, it was my impression at the moment, they intended committing murder.

His cries for help brought his partner to the scene, but Pratt, after firing one shot which missed, elected to depart in search of assistance. In seething anger Mitchell recounted the brutality and humiliation which followed:

59 Broadside, June 6, 1812, addressed to "The Free Impartial and Unbiased Citizens of Savannah," in Georgia Historical Society, Savannah.

60 Ibid.
The degenerated cowards, not content with bruising, must drag me out of my dwelling into the street, where I was surrounded by a large mob, the very filthy dregs of Democracy, who hurried me along with blows, to an adjoining pump, where they gratified their hellish malice.

Supporters finally came to his rescue. He thanked them and assured them that the disgraceful violence he had suffered would only spur him to greater efforts of patriotism. His defiant pledge, however, was never carried out. On June 8, he issued another broadside which announced that the American Patriot had been discontinued and the firm of Mitchell and Pratt dissolved.

Georgians contempt of Federalism was exceeded only by their hatred of the "haughty" British. Though the French were perhaps as guilty as the English in obstructing the trade of the United States, it was the latter who came in for the state's anathema. The editor of the Savannah Republican, pointing to the wrongs that the United States had suffered at the hands of the British, asked: "Do not the acts of glaring oppression of each succeeding day call loudly for vengeance?" "Georgia," writing in the Augusta Mirror, issued a call to arms by declaring that it "seems to be universally admitted that war or submission are the only alternatives left us—why then hesitate!" He urged: "Arise ye sons of freedom, to arms! to arms! and like your fore-fathers, swear to never lay them down until the haughty British shall again consent to do us justice." In much the same tone, the editor of the Georgia

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61 Broadside, June 8, 1812, addressed "To the Public," in Georgia Historical Society, Savannah.

62 Savannah Republican, January 23, 1812.

63 Augusta Mirror, February 17, 1812.
Express announced that the time had arrived for the country to vindicate its honor. "If the impressment of near 7000 of our citizens," the editor asserted, "is not deemed sufficient cause for war, against that perfidious nation—the late attempt to sever our Union thro' the agency of J. Henry and others . . . would be sufficient cause for us to wage war. . . ."64

Georgians assembled in mass meetings throughout the state in the spring of 1812, and adopted and forwarded resolutions to Congress demanding war be declared against Great Britain. At such a meeting on June 3 in Savannah, the citizens approved a resolution which declared that the nation had abundant cause for war against both France and Great Britain, but "it is demanded against Great Britain."65 Savannahians further approved the strong attitude which Congress had recently adopted against Great Britain, and pledged their lives and fortunes in support of the government. Citizens of Milledgeville were of the opinion that Congress had been dragging its feet. On June 13, five days before the declaration of war, a group of citizens met and registered their disapproval of the tardy measures of the federal government. They recommended an immediate declaration of war against England and the issuance of Letters of Marque and Reprisal against both France and England.66

64 Athens Georgia Express, May 29, 1812.
65 Savannah Republican, June 4, 1812.
66 Athens Georgia Express, June 26, 1812.
No doubt this aggressive attitude on the part of Georgians met the full approbation of the "Warhawks" in Congress. This group of new, young members made their appearance in the Twelfth Congress in 1811. The war party, composed of western men and "radical, expansionists, malcontent politicians of the east" found itself in full control when Congress met. Thirty-four year old Henry Clay of Kentucky, the most prominent of the "Warhawks," came to the House of Representatives, where he was at once chosen speaker. Clay was supported in his warlike policy by Peter Buell Porter of New York and John Adams Harper of New Hampshire, and by almost the entire delegation of the western states. Thomas Worthington of Ohio and John Pope of Kentucky, both in the Senate, were the only important exceptions. In addition, a fair portion of the members from Pennsylvania, Virginia and North Carolina joined the young radicals. These Republicans were joined by twenty-nine year old John Caldwell Calhoun, Langdon Cheves and William Lowndes from South Carolina, and by William Harris Crawford and George Michael Troup from Georgia. These young men, representing agrarian interests in the South and West, were not only smarting under the insults heaped upon the country by England and France, but were "eager to snatch Florida and Canada from Spain and England." Public opinion, they believed, demanded war and they were anxious to give the public what it desired.


69Pratt, Expansionists, p. 48.
These men, and others who joined them, were of a wholly different generation of Republicans from Jefferson, Madison and Monroe. They were impatient with the older statesmen and their methods. They deplored the bewildering method in which the Tenth and Eleventh Congresses had conducted the affairs of the government. From 1807 until 1812, the national legislature, along with the president, in opposition to the war movement, looked around for convenient substitutions. Congress, in its vacillating way, avoided war, adopted an embargo; surrendered the embargo; accepted non-intercourse, abandoned non-intercourse; finally fell upon the humiliating Macon Bill No. 2. 70

Serving in the Twelfth Congress from Georgia were William Bibb, Howell Cobb, Bolling Hall and George Michael Troup. William Harris Crawford and Charles Tait held seats in the Senate. Although Georgia's Congressmen did not always agree politically on all measures of the Republican administration, they did, however, vote unanimously for measures designed to prepare the nation for war. Their uniform voting on military matters earned the approval of the editor of the Augusta Chronicle who declared that:

The citizens of Georgia will observe with pride and satisfaction, the course pursued by their representatives, through this trying and difficult crisis; having maturely formed their opinion on public measures, they have pursued with zeal and uniformity like statesmen and patriots, the only course which was left for the preservation of their country's rights and honor. 71

70 This bill restored trade with all the world but offered to renew non-intercourse against England if France repealed her decrees. Likewise, if England would repeal her decrees, the United States would restore non-intercourse against France. Annals of Congress, 11 Cong., 1 and 2 sess., II, 754-755, 1930-1931.

71 Augusta Chronicle, March 20, 1812.
The state of Georgia was fortunate in that she was represented during the frustrating years from 1808 to 1812 by such able congressmen as Crawford, Troup and Bibb. These individuals appear to be the only members of the Georgia delegation who took an active part in the congressional debates. Bibb and Troup often took the floor in the House of Representatives to expound their views, but there is little record of either Cobb, Hall or Smelt speaking out on any issue. In the Senate, Crawford was the spokesman for Georgia. Although he was one of the most zealous and powerful advocates of war with Great Britain, upon the disability of Vice-President George Clinton in March, 1812, Crawford was chosen president pro tempore of the Senate, thereby making him ineligible for active participation on the floor. Although Crawford could not speak in favor of war, he could vote for it, which he did when the opportunity presented itself.

The opportunity came in the spring of 1812. James Madison, under pressure from Congress and Cabinet alike, sent a war message to Congress on June 1. The House of Representatives quickly passed a bill declaring war on Great Britain on June 4 by a vote of seventy-nine to forty-nine. The Senate, after several days debate, passed the declaration on June 17 by a vote of nineteen to thirteen. Georgia's congressional delegation in both houses voted unanimously for war. On June 18, 1812, the United States was officially at war with Great Britain.

Throughout Georgia, newspapers broke the story with patriotic fervor. On June 25, the editor of the Savannah Republican announced triumphantly that the nation was at war with Great Britain. The Augusta Chronicle brought out an extra on Saturday, June 26. The Athens Express
headed its announcement with the single word "WAR" set in large caps. Even the editor of the lukewarm Augusta Herald had already prepared for the inevitable by declaring on June 18 that "our rights must be respected by both belligerents." Editors urged their readers to meet with vigor and confidence this threat to the infant Union.

Patriotism from 1808 until the declaration of war was never lacking in Georgia. In analyzing this patriotism, one wonders at the paradox he finds. If the real grievances which caused the war were interference by Great Britain with American commerce and the rights of American sailors, why was Georgia, a state scarcely affected, so enthusiastic for war? England was not injuring Georgians directly, for they were not engaged in the carrying trade. The searching of a New England ship and the removal of sailors was no loss to Georgians. Yet, they ardently supported measures which were detrimental to the state as a whole, bringing the trading economy to a condition of almost total ruin. The people of Georgia suffered many privations, including bankruptcy, loss of markets and exorbitant prices, yet they continued to express patriotism for the measures which heaped ruin on them.

The enthusiasm of Georgians for war, however, was not measured alone by the indignation they felt at the insults Britain had heaped upon the United States nor because of any compassion they might have felt for the New England shippers, despoiled of their vessels. The people of Georgia had a more immediate interest which touched them closely, the Spanish owned territory of Florida and it was this desire for annexation of lands on Georgia's southern border that prompted the enthusiastic support for the ensuing conflict.

72 Augusta Herald, June 18, 1812.
CHAPTER II

SPANISH FLORIDA: THE EMBRYO OF MANIFEST DESTINY

In a war with Great Britain the people of Georgia saw an opportunity to press for the annexation of Florida. They were convinced that if war were declared against England, the United States government would seize the territory from England's ally, Spain, in order to prevent the British from establishing military bases in Florida.1

Georgia's interest in Florida stemmed from early colonial times. Founded in 1732 as a buffer colony against the Spanish in Florida and as a refuge for debtors, Georgia from its beginning was constantly harassed by the unruly inhabitants of Spanish Florida. Even when Spain ceded the province to England in 1763, the situation did not improve. The unsavory characters who inhabited the once Spanish territory continued to be a constant threat to the peace and safety of Georgia, and in her attempts to end this menace, Georgia's efforts to capture Saint Augustine almost became a habit.

During the Revolution, the British used Florida as a base from which to organize raids against Georgia. In the peace settlement in

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1Journal of the Senate of the General Assembly of Georgia (1812), p. 9. (Hereinafter cited as Georgia Senate Journal.) See Governor David Byrdie Mitchell's address to the General Assembly. The governor, in reporting his activities in Florida as a representative of the federal government in the spring of 1812, stated that the "confidence with which I anticipated the declaration of war against Great Britain led me with equal confidence to anticipate an enlargement of the powers of the president by Congress as a necessary consequence, having for object the entire occupancy of the provinces of East and West Florida."
1783, England ceded the territory back to Spain. Florida became a refuge for Tories, driven out of Georgia, who contributed to the ill-will existing between the Spanish colony and the State of Georgia. The east and west coasts of Florida furnished a haven for a host of smugglers and pirates. The lawless from land and sea flocked to these shores. Fugitive slaves from Georgia found relief from their enforced labor; and in alliance with hostile Indians, they found it easy to pillage the Georgia frontiers. Georgians living along the southern border suffered constant depredations from these miscreants, who crossed the border into Georgia, committed murder, stole livestock and Negro slaves, burned dwellings, and then quickly made their escape back into Spanish-owned territory. These forays furnished a strong inducement

2The peace settlement led to a boundary dispute between the United States and Spain. In her settlement with Spain, Great Britain gave back Florida with the Atlantic and the Mississippi as its eastern and western limits but with no precise definition of its northern boundary. In the preliminary treaty with the United States, however, Great Britain had agreed secretly that, if she were to keep Florida, its boundary would be set at latitude 32 degrees 28 minutes and that, if she ceded it to Spain, its boundary would be located farther south, at the thirty-first parallel. Afterwards the United States insisted upon the more southerly of these lines, but Spain demanded the additional northern strip as rightfully a part of Florida. Spain also claimed extensive territory even north of that, as belonging to her by virtue of successful military operations against the British during the Revolution. Thomas Anderson Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts Publishing Company, 1964), p. 59. (Hereinafter cited as Bailey, Diplomatic History.)


4Lilla M. Hawes, editor, "The Letter Book of General James Jackson, 1788-1796," Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, XI (1955), provides an excellent description of the Indian menace along the south Georgia border; the Florida-Georgia Affairs File, in Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, contains correspondence relating to depredations on the Georgia-Florida border.
for retaliation, and when the Spanish authorities refused to put an end to these practices, many Georgians crossed into East Florida, boldly rounded up their slaves and other property stolen by marauders, and returned them to Georgia.

Not only did the people of Georgia wish to end the Spanish menace in Florida, but equally important in their ardor for the territory was the desire for rich plantation lands and water transportation outlets to the Gulf of Mexico. It was this fact that prompted the Creek Indian Chief, Alexander McGillivray, to write Estevan Miro, the Spanish Governor at New Orleans, in 1789, that

the wishes & Intentions of the Georgians are well known to be these first to compel us to a concession of all the territory which they want from us, a part of which cuts deep into East Florida, their Second object is to force our trade from its present channel the Floridas into their own hands which will at once make them our dictators in all matters.5

Leaders in the Jefferson administration were well aware of the public opinion of Georgia on the Florida question. In 1803, a committee from the United States House of Representatives investigated the feasibility of acquiring the province. The committee pointed out the advantages of annexing East Florida in a report:

From its junction with the State of Georgia at the river St. Mary's it stretches nearly four hundred miles into the sea, forming a large peninsula and has some very fine harbors. The southern point, Cape Florida, is not more than one hundred miles from the Havana, and the possession of it may be beneficial to us in relation to our trade with the West Indies. It would likewise make our whole territory compact, would add considerably to our sea coast,

and by giving us the Gulf of Mexico, for our southern boundary, would render us less liable to attack in what is deemed the most vulnerable part of the Union.  

The report concluded, "If we look forward to the free use of the Mississippi, the Mobile, the Appalchola [sic], and the other rivers of the west, by ourselves and our posterity, New Orleans and the Floridas must become a part of the U. States, either by purchase or by conquest."  

Spain refused to sell the Floridas, but in 1803, Napoleon, claiming that Spain had ceded West Florida to France by the Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1800, included the province in the Louisiana Purchase. Spain protested vigorously, denying that any of Florida was part of Louisiana. All things considered, the title to West Florida was highly questionable. Nevertheless, Americans, undaunted by Spain's remonstrances, claimed territory to the Perdido River as part of the Louisiana Purchase. To this questionable claim to West Florida was presently added a claim to East Florida as payment for injuries occasioned by "conduct unbecoming a neutral" during the period of


7 Ibid.

8 Napoleon had obtained the territory from Spain on the condition that he deliver Tuscany to the son-in-law of Charles IV. Bonaparte never completely fulfilled this promise, though solemnly bound to return Louisiana if he failed to do so. In addition, Spain had secured from Napoleon a written pledge that Louisiana would never be handed over to a third nation. Bailey, Diplomatic History, p. 112.
hostilities between the United States and France, the so-called spoliation claims. But Spain refused to negotiate.

The settlers of West Florida, a majority of whom were Americans who had taken possession of farming land in the Spanish province, did not share the sentiments of Spain. Chafing under Spain's corrupt rule, in September, 1810, the citizens of the Baton Rouge district of West Florida, encouraged by the United States government, revolted against Spanish rule. Raising a flag with a single star, they declared the district to be an independent state and appealed to the United States government for aid and protection. The independence was short-lived. The government in Washington quickly claimed the district as part of the Louisiana purchase and sent troops to enforce the claim.

Although the Georgia press made few references to the desirability of annexing Florida until the Spring of 1812 when war with England was a certainty, the desire for the Spanish territory, nevertheless, strongly existed. This lack of reference probably was due to the fact that the

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11 From 1808 to 1812, only three references were found which expressed the desirability of annexing the Floridas. All were found in the Milledgeville Georgia Journal, July 25, September 12, 1810, January 30, 1811.
people of Georgia did not wish to encourage further the opposition of New Englanders against a war with Great Britain. Merchants in the maritime states, despite British commercial restrictions, still found it profitable to engage in the shipping trade. One contemporary source estimated that if only one vessel in three escaped capture the owner came out ahead. Under this circumstance, it is no surprise that New Englanders opposed the war movement, preferring instead to risk the loss of their ships and merchandise in return for high profits. Georgia citizens, aware of the attitudes of the New Englanders, did not wish to openly express their real intentions for advocating war. Rather, until the war psychosis was fairly general, most Georgians endorsed a positive stand against England to protect the "national honor," "rights of neutrals" and "sailors' rights."

The first Georgia newspaper editor to express sentiments favoring the acquisition of Florida and thus introducing the "expansionist" idea as a cause for war was the editor of the Milledgeville Georgia Journal. In the summer of 1810, the Journal's editor drew readers' attention to the importance of the Spanish province to the nation and to Georgia. It is in the interest of the United States, the editor said, to take Florida under its protection. The Mississippi, Mobile, Sipsey's, Tombigbee, Alabama, Chattahoochee, Apalachicola and other southern rivers hold the key to western navigation. Consequently, the interest of Georgia and Tennessee, together with that of the Territories of Mississippi, Orleans and Indiana, was essentially interwoven with the possession of Florida.
In addition, Florida was valuable for other reasons, according to the editor. The province contained a diversity of soils, ideal for growing a variety of crops and timber. Furthermore, exports from Pensacola alone during British possession from 1763 to 1783 amounted to over 63,000 pounds annually, and imports from Great Britain during this same period were valued at 97,000 pounds annually.\(^{12}\)

If these economic reasons were not sufficient to rouse expansionist-minded Georgians, the *Journal*’s pungent editorial a few weeks later brought a militant reaction from readers. Did not Florida provide a sanctuary for Indians and criminals, the editor asked, who made life hazardous on Georgia’s southern frontier? Had not the "pusillanimous Spaniards" refused to do Georgians justice? Not only did they stand idly by while Georgia’s border was ravaged by these degenerate characters, but they further encouraged such forays.\(^{13}\) A host of Georgia citizens agreed with the editor for they were all too familiar with this menace. They could never feel secure as long as this situation existed. The solution for ending this threat, as Georgians viewed it, was simple: subjugation of the province by United States troops.

George Mathews, ex-governor of Georgia, and well acquainted with public opinion in Georgia on the Florida question, urged William Harris Crawford, Senator from Georgia, to use his influence in Washington to convince the federal authorities of the necessity of acquiring the Spanish colony. Crawford needed no prodding. For some time he had

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\(^{12}\)Milledgeville *Georgia Journal*, July 25, 1810.

\(^{13}\)Ibid., September 12, 1810.
been interested in the cession of the Floridas and frequently expressed his views to the administration leaders in Washington. Crawford believed it necessary to the prosperity of Georgia that this territory be annexed by the United States, and he worked diligently to promote the permanent occupation of the province.  

A rapid succession of events in 1810 provided the conditions for such action. Napoleon conquered Spain, the Spanish royal family fled and Great Britain began to exhibit an alarmingly solicitous attitude toward his Catholic Majesty, the King of Spain. Alarmed over the possibility that Great Britain might use the Spanish foothold in the Floridas from which to launch an attack on the United States, Congress in secret session passed an act on January 15, 1811, authorizing the president to take possession of all or any part of the Perdido River upon either of two conditions: first, if any agreement for such occupation could be reached with the local authorities; second, "in the event of an attempt to occupy said territory, or any part thereof, by any foreign government." The act further authorized the president to use the army and


15Annals of Congress, 11 Cong., 3 sess., II, 1124, 1126, 1127, 1138, 1251-1252, 1259. The act resulted partly from an offer of Governor Vincent Folch of West Florida in which he stated that unless re-enforced by his government before January 1, 1811, he would turn over his territory to the United States; and partly from a widespread belief that England had designs upon the Floridas and would likely seize them if the United States did not.
navy of the United States to effect the occupation and provided that any territory so occupied should be considered as subject to future negotiation.

Under the provisions of the secret act, President Madison appointed Mathews and Colonel John McKee, Indian Agent, to act as agents or commissioners on behalf of the United States to carry it into effect. Summoned to Washington, they received written orders on January 26 from the Secretary of State. Their instructions directed them to "repair to that quarter with all possible expedition, concealing from general observations the trust committed to you, with that discretion which the delicacy and importance of the undertaking require. The conduct you are to pursue in regard to East Florida," Mathews and McKee were instructed, "must be regulated by the dictate of your own judgment, based on accurate knowledge of the situation and of the real disposition of the Spanish government, always recurring to the present instructions as the paramount rule of your proceedings." Their instructions further stated:

Should you discover an inclination in the governor of East Florida, or in the existing local authority, amicably to surrender that province into the possession of the U.S., you are to accept it on the same terms that are prescribed by these instructions in relation to West Florida. And in case of the actual appearance of any attempt to take possession by a foreign power, you will occupy the territory and exclude the foreign force.\(^{16}\)

Mathews' first assignment under the act of January 15, 1811, was to confer with Vincente Folch, the Spanish executive in West Florida, on the possibility of delivering that province to the United States.

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The general's conferences in Mobile failed, the Spanish governor refused to follow through on a previous conditional offer to turn over the province to the United States. Mathews next turned attention to East Florida under the vague and elastic powers granted in his instructions. He proceeded to Saint Marys, Georgia, located near the Florida border, and engineered a mock rebellion among the residents living south of the Saint Marys River, many of whom were former Georgians. These rebellious individuals, including "a few dozen Spanish subjects," fled the Spanish rule of East Florida and joined forces with volunteers from Georgia and Tennessee to form what they called the "Patriot Group." The Patriots, believing that their future would be more secure as American citizens, wished to exchange Spanish rule for that of the United States.

With the promise of American military assistance and other encouragement extended by General Mathews, the Patriots were eager to assist in wrestling East Florida from Spain. As such they provided one of the contingencies stipulated in the secret act of 1811 under which Mathews was to operate. This act specifically authorized the president to take possession of the territory of Florida "in case an arrangement has been or shall be made with the local authority."

17 Ralph Isaacs to George Mathews and John McKee, March 31, 1811, in Clarence Edwin Carter, editor, The Territorial Papers of the United States, 1781-1845, 26 Volumes (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1931-1963, VI, 188-189. Folch had previously offered to hand over West Florida to the United States if he were not re-enforced by January 1, 1811. His desperate situation, however, had been relieved by the Spanish government.

However, when Mathews arrived in East Florida he proceeded to establish the local authority he desired. On March 18, 1812, with the aid of the United States fleet, which had been ordered to Saint Marys, Mathews and the Patriots crossed the Saint Marys River into Florida, raised a flag on Amelia Island, and issued a declaration of independence.  

Two weeks later, re-enforced by United States troops, they enthusiastically marched on to capture Saint Augustine, the Spanish capital. Here the offensive faltered. The revolution had failed to attract a sufficient number of revolutionists to take the Spanish stronghold, and the commander of the United States troops refused to take part in offensive operations against the impregnable fort. Although Mathews bombarded Washington with correspondence seeking information as to what his course of action should be and asking for re-enforcements, his letters went unanswered. Unable to obtain a response from the federal government, Mathews turned to Georgia for assistance.

David Byrdie Mitchell, who was re-elected Governor of Georgia on November 7, 1811, kept an anxious eye on the developments south of the Georgia border. He hoped that the United States government would occupy East Florida and thereby relieve Georgia of her old problem of dealing with the Spaniards. With Florida in the possession of the United States, Georgia would be relieved of the Indian problem

19Milledgeville Georgia Journal, April 1, 1812; Pratt, "Monroe," III, 211.

20Governor David Byrdie Mitchell to General John Floyd, March 29, 1812, in Governor's Letter Book A, 1809-1814, pp. 57-58, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta. (Hereinafter cited as Letter Book A.)
along her southern frontier, new lands could be acquired and new
transportation outlets to the Gulf of Mexico could be opened.

Mitchell was prepared to offer any assistance to the federal
government to accomplish these goals. Upon notification by Major General
John Floyd, Commander of the South Georgia Militia, that a revolution
in East Florida was imminent, the governor issued general orders on
March 18, 1812, to the effect that Georgia would render assistance to
those acting in behalf of the United States government. The chief
executive then ordered Floyd to hold his militia in readiness, and
further, to act upon any overture for assistance if sought by any
officer or agent of the United States. 21

Even though he was prepared to render any aid necessary,
Mitchell was dubious of the whole scheme to take the Floridas. In a
letter to General Floyd, he wrote:

Before I proceed to answer your particular inquiries respecting
the militia service, I take liberty of making some observations
on the situation of parties engaged in the revolution in East
Florida. It is a matter not only of great surprise, but of real
regret that the United States should so manage their affairs
that, in so important a transaction as the occupancy of a province
belonging to a friendly foreign power their agent and officers
should be left with such positive instructions as would leave no
doubt of the conduct they were to pursue. . . . 22

Mitchell proceeded in his letter to point out the precarious position
of the Patriots who ventured to oppose the regular government of the
Spanish province in case they did not succeed. "They had entered the

21 Minutes of the Executive Department of Georgia, January 1, 1811-
September 30, 1812, pp. 319-320, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.

22 Governor David Byrdie Mitchell to General John Floyd, March 29,
undertaking," he said, "with assurance of the United States commissioner of immediate and effectual support; and at the moment of their first attempt they were left without the smallest assistance." He further told Floyd:

Either the commissioner has exceeded his authority or the United States have deluded those people, and in either case the consequence to them are the same. For the honor of the country, I hope the agent has pledged the government without authority. For myself as chief magistrate of the state, I cannot help saying that the silence of the general government upon this subject is unaccountable. ... 23

Mitchell had not been surprised by the revolt in East Florida. No doubt he had been apprised of the government's decision to occupy the province by his close friend, William Harris Crawford. What irritated the governor, however, was the fact the federal government had not informed him as to when the revolution would occur. Since Georgia's frontier bordered on the Spanish province, he felt that he should have been informed so that he could have placed the state militia in readiness. Furthermore, the chief executive knew that should the revolution be unsuccessful, the Spanish governor would prescribe retaliatory measures on the American settlers, the majority of whom were former residents of Georgia.

The federal government's continued silence on the Florida situation left the Governor of Georgia in a dilemma. If he called out the militia to assist the Patriots in East Florida without authority of the president, he would be violating the Constitution which prohibited state governments from engaging in military operations except for the purpose of suppressing an insurrection or when expecting an invasion or

when called upon by the federal government. Yet, in the event he did violate the Constitution and called out the militia, all expenses would have to be met by the state, even if the service performed were one which should be discharged by the federal government. In view of the condition of the treasury and the inadequate equipment of the militia, Georgia could ill-afford to furnish troops to East Florida at state expense.

With the United States government remaining mute on the role Georgia might play in regard to East Florida, Mitchell apparently had reached the decision to send Georgia militia to the province if the Patriots could not subdue Saint Augustine, and if the commander of the United States troops continued to refuse aid. "I shall consider our situation so critical a one," he told Floyd, "that you will inform me of the fact immediately and I shall adopt such measures as are in my power to guard against the consequences of such an event whether I have any communication with the Government or not."^24

Meanwhile, Mathews, unable to dislodge the Spanish at Saint Augustine, made repeated requests for additional troops from Georgia. On April 6, 1812, he informed Benjamin Hawkins, United States Indian Agent, that the rebels besieging the fort were desperate for supplies. He begged Hawkins to do what he could to obtain re-enforcements from Georgia.^25 Simultaneously, he requested 250 men from General Floyd.

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^25 Benjamin Hawkins to Governor David Byrdie Mitchell, April 6, 1812, in Letters of Benjamin Hawkins, 1797-1815, p. 152, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.
In early April, William Harris Crawford apprised Mitchell of the federal government's position in regard to East Florida. Crawford informed the governor that Mathews had exceeded his instructions. Under this circumstance, Mitchell, although he countenanced Mathews' efforts, knew that it was beyond his constitutional power to send troops to aid the Patriots. The chief executive informed Floyd of this fact, at the same time cautioning him that in the future, if Mathews requested troops, his request must be buttressed by some additional authority.

The governor then laid plans for the protection of the southern frontier. He ordered Floyd to place a contingency of troops along the southern border. While he still hoped that the federal government would call upon the state for aid, he made known the fact that he had not abandoned the idea of independent state action. "The fate of Augustine," he told Floyd, "will decide the course which I shall pursue if left without a call from the federal government."^26

With the government remaining silent as to its ultimate aim in East Florida and with Mathews unable to subdue Saint Augustine, Georgia's situation became more precarious. Finally, afraid to wait any longer on official word from Washington, Governor Mitchell wrote the Secretary of War, William Eustis, on April 20, stating that the situation in East Florida was critical and that some action had to be taken. The Georgia volunteers were restless and their battles with the sand flies and mosquitoes had caused many to desert and return to their homes. He further informed the Secretary: "You must be sensible how extremely

^26 Governor David Byrdie Mitchell to General John Floyd, April 16, 1812, in Letter Book A, pp. 61-62.
vulnerable the frontier of Georgia is upon the St. Mary's, nor can it be necessary for me to detail the causes which make it so, they are generally known." He expressed fears that if Saint Augustine were not taken, and if additional Spanish troops arrived, retaliation might be directed against Georgia. In view of the dangerous and critical situation in which Georgia was placed, Mitchell requested permission to call out the militia. He concluded his letter: "A prompt and decisive course in regard to E. Florida has become indispensable in my estimation, not only for the safety of Georgia but for the honor and interest of the Union." Before Mitchell's letter reached the Secretary of War, the Madison administration had decided on a course of action. News had reached Washington of startling events in East Florida.

Although the federal government, by its silence for several months, had lent tacit approval to Mathews' plans, it was expedient at this time to repudiate them. The government had been willing to countenance secret contrivances to bring about the occupation of East Florida, but it had not been prepared for Mathews' open and flagrant use of armed forces against a foreign power. In addition, the publication at this time of the Henry letters which showed that Great Britain had apparently conspired with leading Federalists to bring about the dismemberment of the Union, and the accompanying Republican denunciation of such intrigues, made it particularly inconvenient for the president.

27 Governor David Byrdie Mitchell to William Bustis, April 20, 1812, in Letter Book A, pp. 66-68.
and the secretary of state to be caught supporting an intrigue of similar
nature in the Spanish territory. The similarity between the Henry
Letters and Mathews' intrigue in East Florida was too close to be over¬
looked. Furthermore, the Federalist press was vigorously denouncing the
affair and asking for an explanation. Caught in this embarrassing
situation, there was nothing else for the Madison administration to do
except dismiss Mathews.

On April 4, the Secretary of State, James Monroe, informed the
aged General George Mathews that his conduct in regard to East Florida
had been too vigorous. "I am sorry to have to state," wrote Monroe, "that
the measures which you appear to have adopted for obtaining possession
of Amelia Island, and other parts of East Florida, are not authorized by
the law of the United States, or the instructions founded on it under
which you have acted." Monroe then explained that force was to have
been used only in case of an attempt to occupy the province by a third
power; that, even if occupied by the United States, the province was to
have been held subject to negotiations when Spain should once more have
a settled government. The Secretary told Mathews as a result of his
actions it was necessary to discontinue "the service in which you have
been employed." Monroe then informed Mathews that his powers were there¬
with transferred to the Governor of Georgia.

28Julius William Pratt, Expansionists of 1812 (Gloucester, Mass¬
achusetts: Peter Smith, 1957), p. 109. (Hereinafter cited as Pratt,
Expansionists.) For an explanation of the Henry Letters, see above
p. 30.

29James Monroe to George Mathews, April 4, 1812, Monroe Papers,
Read Collection, University of Georgia Library, Athens. (Hereinafter
cited as Monroe Papers.)
When word of the rebuke reached William Harris Crawford, the
Senator wrote a friend, "poor old Mathews, I am afraid he will die of
mortification and resentment." Crawford was right. En route to
Washington where he planned to expose the administration, Mathews fell
ill of a fever at Augusta and died there on August 30, 1812, his seventy-
third birthday. As a tribute to the old Revolutionary soldier, Governor
Mitchell ordered officers of the militia to wear an arm band of mourning
for thirty days.

Six days after the dismissal of Mathews, Monroe addressed a formal
request to Governor Mitchell to assume responsibility for affairs in
East Florida, and to open negotiation with the Spanish governor for
"a restoration of that state of things in the province, which existed
before the late transactions. It is presumed," Monroe said, "that the
arrangement will be easily and amicably made between you." This part
of Mitchell's assignment would not be too difficult, but Monroe added
a condition which was almost certain to prove an obstacle to any
arrangement with the Spanish governor. Inasmuch as the rebels in East
Florida had presumably been led to put much reliance in the countenance
and support of the United States, Monroe said, it would be improper for
the United States government to abandon them to the resentment of the
Spanish authorities. Monroe directed Mitchell to obtain from the
Spanish governor "the most explicit and satisfying assurance" that the
Patriots would not be harmed. In the light of these instructions,

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30 Green, "Public Life of Crawford," p. 43.
31 Athens Georgia Express, October 2, 1812.
32 James Monroe to David Byrdie Mitchell, April 10, 1812, Monroe Papers.
Monroe provided the new agent with an excuse for holding troops in Florida. No doubt the government realized that the Spanish authorities would never acquiesce to these demands.

Upon receipt of his appointment from the Secretary of State, Mitchell requested more explicit instructions. In reply Monroe gave him additional instructions which made it perfectly clear that the troops of the United States were not, for the present, to be withdrawn from East Florida.

Mitchell was informed by Monroe that "by the law, of which a copy was forwarded to you, it is made the duty of the President to prevent the occupation of East Florida by any foreign power." Mitchell, therefore, was to continue the occupation of East Florida should he see any danger of the landing of British troops in Florida. Monroe reiterated the condition that the occupation was to be continued unless assurances of safety for the Patriots could be secured. And if no British troops appeared, and the Spanish showed signs of yielding to these impossible conditions, the new agent was to report fully to his government, "holding in the meantime the ground occupied."33

The failure of the rebellion, and the tentative decision of the government to restore East Florida to the Spanish authorities, created additional problems for Georgia. With Spain an ally of Great Britain, and with the approach of the inevitable conflict between the United States and England, would not the British use Florida from which to launch an attack on the United States? Militarily, this seemed highly

33James Monroe to David Byrdie Mitchell, May 27, 1812, Monroe Papers.
probable to Georgians. Weak and defenseless Georgia with an unprotected shoreline over one hundred miles long, extending from Savannah to Saint Marys, could offer but feeble resistance to the more formidable British. Even more terrifying to Georgians than a British attack was the fear that the British would stir up the savage red neighbors who occupied lands bordering on three sides of the state. The probability of an attack by the British along the sea coast, the Seminoles from Florida, the Creeks from the west, and the Cherokees from the north, was the source of immense anxiety to the citizens of Georgia.

Governor Mitchell entered into the federal government's plan with enthusiasm. Most of the problems of the state would be solved if the United States could take over the Spanish province.

He received his assignment upon his return to Milledgeville from an inspection tour of two of the four militia divisions within the state. He immediately ordered one thousand men from the division he had just inspected to be prepared to march on a moment's notice, and departed for Saint Marys on April 24, 1812. For four months he was destined to be the principal actor in a serio-comedy type of international intrigue which called for quick thinking and acting.

During the first week of May, 1812, Mitchell's actions reassured the Patriots in East Florida. He rescinded an order for the abolition of the customs house at Fernandina and informed the American commander to hold his position before Saint Augustine. He kept the gunboats, which had been ordered withdrawn, on the Saint Johns River. These incidents brought a temporary increase in the number of Patriots. Their morale

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3 Augusta Chronicle, May 1, 1812.
revived, they talked hopefully of storming the fort, Castillo de San Marcos, at Saint Augustine.\textsuperscript{35}

Mitchell then began negotiations with Governor Juan Jose de Estrada. On May 4, he informed the Spanish governor of the disavowal of Mathews and the American government's desire for peace.\textsuperscript{36} Mitchell's letter brought an indignant reply from Estrada. The Spanish governor had seen in the newspapers of the United States the announcement of the government's disapproval of the conduct of its agent, and had supposed "that the United States troops would have been withdrawn ere now: until that takes place, I can hold no treaty," and, he added, he could not be held responsible for any unpleasant occurrences in the meantime.\textsuperscript{37} After a fruitless exchange of notes, Mitchell broke off communications with the Spanish governor.

In June, Sebastian Kendelan replaced Estrada as governor at Saint Augustine and on June 11, he sent Mitchell an ultimatum, demanding that the troops be withdrawn within eleven days and threatening "disagreeable measures" if such were not done. Mitchell replied that the troops would not be withdrawn, "until such explanation is given


\textsuperscript{36}David Byrdie Mitchell to Juan Jose de Estrada, May 4, 1812, in East Florida Papers, 1812-1821, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.

\textsuperscript{37}Juan Jose de Estrada to David Byrdie Mitchell, May 9, 1812, quoted in \textit{Niles' Weekly Register}, III (January 16, 1813), 312.
for the attack made upon them as will evidence the sincerity of the desire you express of seeing the harmony of the two countries preserved, and be consistent with the honor of the United States to receive." He warned the Spanish governor that force would be met with force.  

Meanwhile, the Georgia press attempted to enlist support for the acquisition of the Floridas. From an economic standpoint, declared the editor of the Milledgeville Georgia Journal, "it must be highly important in a commercial point of view, and if connected with the country north of it, capable of prescribing maritime regulations to the Gulf of Mexico." From a political point of view, said the editor, "West Florida may be considered as an object of the greatest importance to a large division of the United States; because that power which holds the avenue to commerce, may give a tone to the measures of another, should it be unfriendly to liberty and public happiness." East Florida, the editor further stated, may be considered as "one of the main keys to the trade of the Gulf of Mexico." The Patriots or the American troops, it is not quite clear which, in their effort to cut off supplies from Saint Augustine, had seized and partially fortified a blockhouse upon the shore of Moosa Creek, commanding one of the water approaches to Saint Augustine. The Spaniards, on May 15 or 16, advanced against this position with an armed schooner and four armed launches. Under cover of the schooner's guns the launches landed a small force of troops who succeeded in burning the house. Mitchell used this as an excuse to break off communications with the Spanish governor. Pratt, Expansionists, pp. 191-192.

38 Athens Georgia Express, July 3, 1812; Pratt, Expansionists, p. 192.

39 Ibid.

40 Milledgeville Georgia Journal, April 1, 1812.

41 Ibid.
editor of the *Augusta Chronicle* looked with dismay on the possibility of allowing Spain to retain East Florida. In his opinion, war with England justified the seizure of the Floridas as a defensive measure, for they would be more important to England than all the other Spanish colonies in the New World. Furthermore, should East Florida be restored to Spanish authorities, "the consequences will be injurious to the United States, and fatal to the lower part of the State of Georgia," asserted the editor.\(^2\)

The editor of the *Georgia Journal* was equally concerned over the threat to Georgia if the Floridas were allowed to remain under Spanish control. In an editorial on May 20, which strongly advocated the seizure of East Florida, the question was asked readers: "Would not East Florida be the resort, and St. Augustine the safe refuge, of your runaway negroes & of freebooters? Do not the lower Creeks at this time receive their supplies, partly from Pensacola? and would not the British, if in force there, command their service in harassing the exposed settlements in Georgia . . . ?" When the safety of a territory imperiously demands the adoption of a strong measure, the editor stated, "it is no time to quibble about its justice. The necessity of the case will completely justify the act, and Great Britain furnish us precedents without number."\(^3\) It is evident that in the minds of the people of Georgia their peace and prosperity depended upon the subjugation of

\(^2\) *Augusta Chronicle*, May 8, 1812.

\(^3\) *Milledgeville Georgia Journal*, May 20, 1812.
the Floridas. War with Great Britain would provide the justification for such an act.

As war drew closer in the spring of 1812, Georgians became more demanding and vociferous about the annexation of the Floridas. Their sentiments were expressed in a number of meetings held throughout the state. At a meeting in Savannah on June 3, resolutions were adopted which declared that:

it would be wise and prudent in the government of the United States, from the present disorganized state of East Florida, to hold possession of that province; and, by the aid of a competent force, to obtain its early surrender, not only as a measure of precaution against foreign occupancy, and for this still more important consideration, that the safety of our southern frontier greatly depends on an absolute domination by the United States over that province. . . .

Five days prior to the declaration of war, on June 13, the citizens of Milledgeville held a meeting in which they reiterated charges that Great Britain had placed weapons in the hands of the Indians and caused them to make war upon Georgia's frontier. In view of these circumstances, they asserted, the immediate occupancy of East Florida by the United States was "essential to the interest of the country and the safety of our frontier."^45

The petitions of the Georgia citizens did not fall on deaf ears. On the day following the declaration of war, June 19, George Michael Troup, a representative from Georgia, introduced a resolution in the House instructing the committee formerly appointed to consider relations with the Spanish American colonies, to inquire into the expediency of

^44 Savannah Republican and Evening Ledger, June 4, 1812. (Hereinafter cited as Savannah Republican.)

^45 Milledgeville Georgia Journal, June 17, 1812.
authorizing the president to occupy East and West Florida, and to report to the House on that matter. A bill was introduced which authorized the president "to occupy and hold, the whole or any part of East Florida, including Amelia Island, and also those parts of West Florida which are not now in possession and under the jurisdiction of the United States." The bill provided an appropriation of $100,000 and authorized the president to use the military and naval forces to effect the occupation and to set up a temporary government in the territory occupied. This proposal was justified on the ground that Spain, the owner of Florida, was an ally of Great Britain and would allow the latter to make use of Florida as a base of operations against the United States. The House passed the bill on June 25 and sent it to the Senate.  

In the Senate, Georgia's senior Senator, William Harris Crawford, offered an amendment to the House bill which connected the annexation of Canada with that of Florida. His amendment authorized the president to establish a temporary government if "in the prosecution of the present war against" Great Britain the United States "should obtain possession of the British possessions in North America, or either of them." It further provided "that the principles" upon which the temporary government should be established, should not obstruct the restoration of peace between the two nations. Florida and Canada were both to be prizes of successful wars, to be occupied by the nation's armed forces:

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^7 Ibid., I, 324; ibid., 1684-1685.

^8 Ibid., I, 325-326; ibid., II, 1685-1686.
and provided with temporary governments. Crawford's proposal was
apparently made as a sop to the East in order to obviate their objec-
tions to the occupation of Florida. The amendment passed to the third
and final reading. When passage of the bill seemed certain, three of the
foes of the administration, William Branch Giles, Michael Leib and John
Pope, voted with the Federalists. This party faction caused the bill to
be defeated by a vote of fourteen to sixteen. 49

Rejection of the bill by the Senate was met with astonishment and
bitter disappointment in Georgia. "This extraordinary circumstance
considering the times, and our situation in that country," lamented the
editor of the Augusta Chronicle, "may truly be considered a national
misfortune which cannot . . . easily be repaired." 50 The editor of the
Milledgeville Georgia Journal learned with "regret" that the bill had
been rejected by the Senate. Gloomily the editor predicted Georgia's
future:

So long as Augustine, Pensacola and Mobile are occupied by the
enemy or their allies, so long is the tranquility of our
Southern frontier jeopardized, the property and lives of our
citizens placed almost at the mercy of the foe, and our country
exposed to invasion and depredation at the most vulnerable point. 51

One week later on August 5, the editor of the Journal enlisted the
support of Georgians when he declared that "it was a rational and very
general belief . . . that the President would have been authorized by
Congress to take possession of all East Florida--and to aid in the
accomplishment of this object, so necessary to the safety of our

49 Green, "Public Life of Crawford," p. 49.
50 Augusta Chronicle, July 24, 1812.
51 Milledgeville Georgia Journal, July 29, 1812.
Southern frontier." The editor of the Athens Georgia Express, echoing the sentiments of other Republican newspapers, stated that the senators "have left the state of Georgia, in particular, in a very critical situation." This unrestrained editorial pointed out that the State of Georgia could not constitutionally lend aid to the Patriots, but added that Georgians as individuals could still assist their fellow southerners and at the same time share in the fruits of their patriotism. "No authority prevents them from going to East Florida," suggested the paper, and "when there they can join the Patriots—they can assist in conquering the country—and Five Hundred Acres of Excellent LAND, and the Emancipation from BONDAGE of many of their fellow Georgians will be their Reward." Further, the editor asserted, "it is essential to the REAL Independence of America, that both East and West Florida become an integral part of the United States."^53

Meanwhile, the situation in East Florida had reached a stalemate. The Patriots remained camped before Saint Augustine, and with them remained Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Smith and his detachment of United States riflemen. The force was weak, even with both contingents. To bolster the sagging military force, Governor Mitchell in early June enlisted the support of a hundred or more men from Savannah, the Savannah Volunteer Guards and the Republican Blues. He sent his Adjutant General, Colonel Daniel Newman, into the Piedmont area with orders

^[Milledgeville Georgia Journal, August 5, 1812.

^[Athens Georgia Express, August 28, 1812.

^[Savannah Republican, June 13, 1812.
for assembling volunteers at Dublin. The new recruits were to serve for periods of sixty days, but it was hoped that by a succession of such calls the requisite number of men might be kept in service as long as their presence should be required. By the end of June, more than five hundred troops were reported en route for Colonel Smith's camp and a planned attack on Saint Augustine.

In early July, Monroe communicated to Mitchell a copy of the act of Congress declaring war against Great Britain with instructions as to how he was to proceed should the British have already landed in East Florida. He was instructed to inform the Spanish governor that the United States, in declaring war against Great Britain, did not wish to extend it to Spain. Mitchell, however, was to impress upon the Spanish official, with thorough conviction, that the landing of British troops in East Florida would be considered as proof of Spain's hostile disposition toward the United States. Further, he was instructed to make the best possible terms for the Patriots. If British troops had not landed in East Florida, Mitchell was to withdraw his troops from the territory.

Knowing that Mitchell would be extremely disappointed and no doubt bitter as a result of the government's decision to withdraw United States troops from the province, Monroe added that the "object is not to be considered abandoned..." It was likely, he said, that during the next session Congress might reverse its decision; but in the meantime it would not be proper for the troops to remain in Florida in

55Milledgeville Georgia Journal, July 1, 1812.
the absence of means and authority to take possession of the entire province. 56

Mitchell was keenly chagrined over the government's decision to abandon Florida. In his opinion, the revolt of the Patriots and the partial occupation of the Spanish province made annexation even more imperative. Furthermore, war with England had presented Georgians with the opportunity to rid themselves of a constant threat to their safety and to secure valuable land and water outlets to the Gulf of Mexico. Toward that end Mitchell had worked assiduously to place the Georgia militia in service in East Florida, with the result that hundreds of Georgians had volunteered and had enthusiastically moved south. Knowing of the federal government's desire for Florida, he had confidently expected congressional sanction of the occupation of the colony, and the requisite military power for its conquest. Once committed to war, he was convinced that the United States would send troops into East Florida before Great Britain could secure the province for her ally. 57

To him, the Senate's denial of the Florida project was "legislative treason." He wrote Monroe that he had learned with "surprise and mortification" of the fate of the Florida measure in the Senate. He protested against the withdrawal of the troops as a measure fraught with great danger to the southern states, and added that, instead of ordering Smith to withdraw, he had sent him such re-enforcements as he thought

56 James Monroe to Governor David Byrdie Mitchell, July 6, 1812, Monroe Papers.

57 Georgia Senate Journal (1812), p. 9.
"necessary to enable him to maintain his ground, and to prepare him either to meet any re-enforcements which might be received by the Spaniards, or to take possession of Saint Augustine if ordered."

Mitchell continued to pursue a policy for which he had no authority and for which he might lose face, should the Madison administration rebuke him as it had Mathews. The governor knowingly took that chance, believing it a duty owed to the United States and to Georgia.

Believing his services were needed more at the state capitol than at Saint Marys, Mitchell informed Monroe of his intentions to keep the armed force in East Florida, and departed for Milledgeville. Before he reached the city, he became critically ill and for several weeks he accomplished little.

Other state leaders took up the governor's task. At a mass meeting of citizens of Greene County on August 13, 1812, resolutions were adopted and sent to the president and Congress advocating the immediate acquisition of Florida. The petitioners insisted that the United States was justified in forcibly taking the Floridas and expressed disappointment that the Senate had rejected the bill authorizing the president to take possession of the colony. Demanding the immediate occupation of Florida, the petitioners asserted that the Floridas in the hands of Great Britain would allow the British to annoy our Southern coasting trade, and to pursue with success the odious abominable practice of smuggling; and in possession of the Floridas will our enemy have it greatly in her power to stir up against us the merciless and unrelenting Savages immediately bordering upon us: and from a history of the revolutionary war,

58Quoted in Pratt, Expansionists, pp. 194-195.
have we not much to fear from her seductive overtures to our black population, exciting them to abandon their owners and perhaps rise up in rebellion against them. 59

The citizens of Camden County, a county adjacent to East Florida, voiced their grievances against Spanish Florida at a meeting in early October. They charged the Spanish with offering bribes and rewards to the blacks and Indians in Florida to commit murder upon the Patriots there. Forays, including murder and pillage, had recently been extended to Camden County exposing the militia of Camden to "extraordinary vicissitudes, in the performance of military duty which more justly ought to be expected from troops of the United States." 60

"Jackson" writing in the Savannah Republican expressed confidence in the wisdom of the Madison administration, but wanted to know what principle of justice or policy restrained it from calling upon the Governor of Georgia to direct the "vengeance of our militia against the garrison of St. Augustine? The blood of our slaughtered citizens call aloud for it, [the reduction of Saint Augustine] the duty of the government owes itself, and the people demand it," asserted the writer. 61 "Jackson" further called on the federal government to adopt swift and decisive measures that would result in a speedy capture of the Spanish capitol.

59 Citizens of Greene County to President James Madison, August 13, 1812, in Georgia-East Florida-West Florida and Yazoo Land Sales, 1764-1850, pp. 185-188, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.

60 Savannah Republican, October 15, 1812.

61 Ibid., October 27, 1812.
The editor of the Milledgeville Georgia Journal announced that it was "high time the eyes of the people were opened to Georgians' situation. Under existing circumstances, the reduction of St. Augustine, as we have repeatedly stated, is essential to our safety."62

The decision of the Madison administration to withdraw troops from the Spanish colony was accompanied by dim hopes that subjugation of the Floridas would be accomplished, and the people of Georgia talked as if their cause had been abandoned. They insisted that they had patriotically supported the Republican administration and upheld its policies, even though the policies were often detrimental to them. In return for this support, Georgians expected Florida to be taken, by force if necessary. The failure of the United States to send sufficient forces to accomplish the reduction of Saint Augustine and its decision to withdraw the small contingency of troops already there, was a matter of great concern.

In the meantime, the Spanish governor, Kindelan, instigated a rebellion by the Negroes and Indians against Americans in East Florida. Kindelan told them that the capture of Saint Augustine by the Americans would end the freedom of the Negro, and abrogate use of hunting lands of the Indians. To gain support in helping to drive Americans out of Florida, Kindelan offered the Negroes and Indians eight dollars and a bottle of rum for each white scalp.63 No better inducement could have been offered the rum-loving miscreants. Attacks upon the Patriots

62Milledgeville Georgia Journal, October 7, 1812.
63Savannah Republican, October 20, 1812.
accomplished all that Kindelan had anticipated. The Patriots threw their muskets over their shoulders and fled in haste from the camp, leaving Colonel Smith and his American soldiers, almost half of whom were ill, to face the Indians and Spaniards. The Indians continued their onslaught against the whites wreaking havoc along both sides of the Saint Johns River as their mounted raiders ventured as far north as the Saint Marys. 64

Colonel Smith proposed to end the peril by carrying the war into the Indian country. At this juncture, the Adjutant General of Georgia, Colonel Daniel Newnan, with 250 volunteers from Georgia, entered in the service of the United States for 60 days. 65 Smith ordered Newnan to proceed immediately against the hostile Indians and to destroy their towns, provisions and settlements. Difficulty in procuring horses and supplies, and the ravages of malaria in Newnan's forces, however, delayed the time of departure for several weeks. During the delay, the sixty days enlistment time of Newnan's volunteers was coming to an end, and the men, anxious to leave the sweltering sun and the heavy rains of Florida, became increasingly discontented. Although Newnan pleaded for an extension of the enlistment time, many refused to follow their colonel's pleas, demanding instead transports for home.

In the face of adverse circumstances, by September 24, Newnan managed to increase his volunteer force from 75 to 117. Vowing to end the Indian menace, Newnan set off to destroy the Alachua towns. The

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64 Augusta Mirror of the Times, August 31, 1812.
65 Milledgeville Georgia Journal, August 12, 1812.
attempt was courageous but ill-conceived, the force too small, the
distance too great and the provisions insufficient. On the fourth day
out, when nearing the Alachua settlements, the little party encountered
a band of Indians and Negroes, who fled at the militia's charge but took
refuge in a swamp whence they could not be dislodged. Unable to advance
against the enemy and unwilling to retreat, Newnan entrenched himself
near the scene of the encounter and sent a messenger for re-enforcements.
For a week the party lived in the stockade, subsisting on horse meat.66
Finally, threatened with desertion by one of the companies of his
command, Newnan attempted a night retreat, carrying his wounded on
stretchers. The same night a relief party of twenty-five horsemen with
provisions reached the stockade by another route, and finding it
deserted, returned to the Saint Johns. Newnan's party, sick, discouraged
and mutinous, struggled on foot for several days through the wilderness,
living on gophers, alligators and palmetto stocks, while being subjected
to intermittent attacks from the Indians. At length, with the aid of a
second relief party, they reached the Saint Johns with all their sick
and wounded, and were transported by gunboat to Colonel Smith's camp.
The expedition had ended in retreat. Newnan estimated that he had
killed or wounded fifty of the enemy while his own losses had been about
twenty-five. He had not come within sight of an Indian town or a supply
depot.67

66 Daniel Newnan to Governor David Byrdie Mitchell, October 19,
1812, in Niles' Weekly Register, III (December 12, 1812, 235-237.
67 Ibid.
While Newnan was on his fruitless mission, Colonel Smith's situation at Saint Augustine had become critical. Unable to take the heavily fortified town, he had fallen back twenty miles to the Saint Johns. When Governor Mitchell realized the impending failure of Newnan and learned of Colonel Smith's retreat, he ordered ten companies of Georgia militia to Point Petre, Georgia, located four miles above Saint Marys, and informed Floyd to re-enforce Smith without delay. 68 He issued a general order authorizing General Floyd to collect and deposit at Traders Hill provisions for five hundred men and horses. Floyd was instructed to publicize the forthcoming expedition as one against Saint Augustine, but actually he was to destroy the Seminole towns first and then turn on the fortress. 69

In the midst of preparations for a second attempt at subduing the Seminoles in East Florida, the Secretary of State relieved Mitchell as an agent of the federal government. On October 13, the Secretary informed him that his powers were transferred to Major General Thomas Pinckney, adding that the conduct of his mission had "the entire approba-

70 The reason for this change probably was due to the fact that Mitchell, like Mathews, was overstepping authority in the use of force against Spanish Florida. Negotiations were being conducted with De Onis, the Spanish minister, and Monroe hoped to obtain possession of the province by peaceable means.

68 Governor David Byrdie Mitchell to John Floyd, September 26, 1812, in Letter Book A, pp. 76-77.

69 Ibid., October 13, 1812, pp. 78-79.

70 James Monroe to Governor David Byrdie Mitchell, October 13, 1812, Monroe Papers.
The insistence that the Spanish be driven from Florida and that the hostile Indians be subdued was further revealed when the Georgia General Assembly convened on November 2, 1812. In his message to the lawmakers, Governor Mitchell reviewed the course of events in East Florida since the outbreak of the revolution. He had hoped, he said, from the part played by General Mathews, that the government had resolved upon the occupation of the entire province. Upon the declaration of war against Great Britain, he said he had again looked forward to such action, "knowing as I did, and still do, that the interest of Georgia would be effectually promoted by that event, and the views and wishes of the General Government at the same time accomplished." The governor further stated:

The Senate of the United States, however, in their wisdom had different views of the subject, and the matter was permitted to remain as before the war. It is nevertheless my sincere and candid opinion, that the peace and safety of this state will be hazarded if the occupancy of East Florida by our government is relinquished or much longer delayed.71

The governor then referred to the employment of Negro troops and Indian allies by the Spanish:

The present force in Augustine is of a description which we cannot tolerate, and the mode of warfare which the governor of that place has commenced, is so savage and barbarous, that it is impossible for an American to hear it without feeling the utmost indignation and resentment against the powers who commands or even permits it. I recommend this subject in an especial manner to your most serious consideration, as involving, not only your immediate interest, but your future peace and happiness.72

71Georgia Senate Journal (1812), p. 9.
72Ibid.
The governor's message was referred to a joint committee and the committee made its report on November 9. The committee unanimously favored immediate and decisive measures by either federal or state government for the occupation of East Florida. Since the Senate of the United States had for some inexplicable reason rejected the House bill for occupying the Floridas, the members of the joint committee insisted that the State of Georgia must act. Public safety combined with urgent necessity over-shadowed all other considerations and justified by every legitimate and universally recognized principle of the law of nations the seizure of East Florida these legislators stated. In the opinion of the members of the committee, the use of Indians and Negroes in warfare made danger imminent and gave the people of Georgia the right to occupy and hold East Florida until the time when the national government assumed its responsibility for the security of Georgia.\textsuperscript{73} After hearing the committee's report, a bill was promptly introduced in the senate which authorized the governor to occupy East Florida and vested in him full authority to organize sufficient militia for the reduction of Saint Augustine.\textsuperscript{74}

To make war on Spanish Florida without sanction of the federal government was a drastic act with the result that many legislators voted against independent action. The legislature did adopt a memorial to the United States Congress calling for federal seizure of East Florida

\textsuperscript{73}Georgia Senate Journal (1812), pp. 24-25.

\textsuperscript{74}Ibid., p. 25.
and threatening state action unless Georgians were protected. A second resolution authorized Governor Mitchell to use a voluntary cavalry patrol on the border for defense against marauding Indians, and for offense against Saint Augustine in cooperation with the force of the United States.

Since Congress had failed in June, 1812, to sanction the subjugation of East Florida, armed occupation of the province was plainly an unwarranted assumption of power by the president. There were two possible ways of bringing it under the provisions of the Constitution: Congress might be persuaded to reconsider its recent action, or the United States might acquire title to East Florida by treaty. Since Congress was in recess until November, Monroe tried the latter. In the late summer of 1812 Monroe entered into correspondence with Don Luis de Onis, the Spanish minister to Washington. The Secretary sought to learn whether de Onis had power to negotiate for the cession of East Florida to the United States. This correspondence, however, came to naught, and Monroe abandoned the negotiations with de Onis in December, 1812.

75 Georgia Senate Journal (1812), pp. 41-43.
76 Ibid., pp. 45-46.
77 Pratt, "Monroe," III, 260-261. De Onis had been appointed minister to the United States by Charles IV of Spain. But as Charles had been replaced by Joseph Bonaparte, and the latter had been driven from his throne by a party acting in the name of Ferdinand VIII, it was difficult to say whom, if any one, Onis now represented. In fact, the United States had recognized neither the government of Joseph Bonaparte nor that of Ferdinand.
When the lawmakers convened, the Madison administration sought to make a fresh attempt to carry through Congress a bill authorizing the president to take possession of the whole of Florida. The Senate supported a measure calling for a committee to investigate and report the advisability of occupying Florida. On January 14, President Madison furnished the committee with a report drawn by Monroe, the Secretary of State. Monroe stated that he had no knowledge of any plan of the British to occupy Florida, but argued that there was every reason to expect such an occupation and that the United States was unlikely to receive warning in advance. This impending danger together with the American "spoilations" claims against Spain, and the alleged wishes of the Patriots to place the province under the American flag, Monroe argued, made it expedient to take armed possession of the Floridas.

On January 19, 1813, the committee reported a bill authorizing the president to occupy all of Florida and to establish a government there, provided that the portion of the country east of the Perdido River might be "the subject of future negotiation." The proposal found favor with southern but not with northern senators. The measure could be of little benefit to the northern states, and the Federalists were unwilling to be a party to Republican expansion. On a motion by Samuel Smith of Maryland, the Senate voted nineteen to sixteen, to amend the bill so as to limit its application to the section of Florida west of

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the Perdido River, all of which the United States claimed as part of the Louisiana purchase, and all of which except Mobile it actually held. In this innocuous form, the bill passed the Senate and the House. As a result in May, 1813, the small force of regulars and militia which had been on Florida soil since the opening of Mathews' enterprise was withdrawn. Thus, twenty-five months after the opening of the revolution in East Florida, the United States finally repudiated all connection with it.

For the second time the people of Georgia saw their hopes come to naught. Painfully disappointed, nevertheless, they continued to express their feelings on the necessity of occupying East Florida. Governor Mitchell perhaps summed up the sentiments of the majority of Georgians when he wrote a friend that "until the Spaniards and Indians are driven from the Floridas we shall never have permanent security..." 81

Georgians lost in the initial effort to annex Florida. They supported a war with Great Britain, believing that as a result Florida would become a part of the United States. Such a step, they believed, was imperative to the safety and welfare of their state. Georgians had faced the Spanish musket and the Indian tomahawk in East Florida, but Spain still remained in possession of the coveted territory. For almost another ten years, the citizens of Georgia endured the Spanish menace to the south. It was not until 1819 when Spain agreed to a treaty of

81 Governor David Byrdie Mitchell to Judge Toulman, September 20, 1813, in Letter Book A, p. 163.
cession that the northern boundary of Florida was resolved and the territory to Georgia's south was brought under the authority of the United States.\(^\text{82}\)

\(^{82}\text{Florida was ceded by Spain to the United States by the terms of the Adams-Onis treaty, signed February 22, 1819. Bailey, Diplomatic History, pp. 172-173.}\)
CHAPTER III

THE CREEK WAR, 1813-1814

The decision of President James Madison to remove federal troops from Florida in 1813 and to recognize Spain's authority over territory which had been held by American forces since 1812, temporarily thwarted the hopes of Georgians to rid themselves of the Spanish "menace." Frustrated in this effort, public attention was directed to the removal of the Creek Indians from the western boundaries of Georgia, a second objective proposed by Georgians in the war of 1812.

The desire to remove the Creeks was not a new issue during the war of 1812. Georgians had for years coveted the rich lands held by the Creeks in the western part of the state. This ardor for western land was given a strong impetus by the emergence of cotton as the major agricultural product in Georgia following Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin in 1793. British demands for cotton far exceeded the American supply, with the result that in 1800 cotton sold for as high as forty-four cents per pound.¹ With the prospect of a good profit, each year Georgia farmers planted more and more cotton, purchased more land and more Negro slaves whom they discovered to be well suited for the cultivation of cotton. Desiring additional acres to expand cotton production, Georgians were soon clamoring for the rich lands held by the Creeks.

¹Lewis Cecil Gray, History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860, 2 Volumes (New York: Peter Smith, 1914), II, 682.
The Creek territory, which extended from the Florida border northward to an uncertain latitude approximately at the future site of Atlanta, constituted a vast acreage and embraced some of the finest potential cotton lands in the state. Creek occupancy of these choice lands was a constant source of complaint among land-seeking citizens.

The people of Georgia believed that they were justified in seeking to remove the Creeks from the state's western border. One of the contingencies by which Georgia had agreed to cede her western lands to the United States government in 1802 was based upon the promise that the government would remove the Indians from these lands as soon as it could be done peaceably and on reasonable terms. Yet, according to Georgians, the central government had not carried out its pledge. The Indians still remained an obstacle to Georgia's westward expansion. The government, in order to placate Georgia, negotiated treaty after treaty whereby the Indians agreed to yield certain portions of their territory to Georgians. Between 1802 and 1805 three Creek cessions moved the boundary of Georgia from the Oconee westward to the line of the Ocmulgee River and westward from the coast to include the Tallassee strip, originally organized as Wayne County. Still this was not enough for the land seekers. Discontented, the citizens of Georgia contended that all lands in the state be free of Indian claims thus giving the people of the state a chance to utilize the new soil held by the Creeks.

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Following the path to virgin soil, Georgia's expansion was always westward, west by north during the first half of the eighteenth century, then west by south. The state's rapid westward expansion is reflected in the number of new counties created between 1800 and 1820. From 1800 to 1810, fifteen new counties were created, and from 1810 to 1820, seven were added. These counties were located chiefly in the western portion of the state and illustrate the rapidity with which the best western lands were settled. Georgia's westward progress in the early nineteenth century is further illustrated by the frequent relocation of the state's capitol. The capitol, which was moved to Augusta from Savannah at the end of the Revolution, was again relocated at Louisville in 1795. By 1804, the westward moving people considered Louisville too far east and legislated into existence the town of Milledgeville, making it the new capitol in 1807.

Westward expansion also created in Georgians a desire to control navigation on the Alabama River which ran through the Creek nation. Control of the Alabama would give the citizens of Georgia access to the port of New Orleans, thus opening new markets and thereby stimulating commerce. Furthermore, because of expensive overland transportation, a water highway to New Orleans would allow Georgians to ship farm products to the port city at a substantial savings. For the same reason, citizens of Georgia would pay less for merchandise imported into

3Second Census of the United States (Washington: Duane Printer, 1801), pp. 2,3N-2,0; Aggregate Amount of Persons Within the United States in the Year 1810, Third Census Book (Washington, 1811), pp. 80-82; Census for 1820, Fourth Census (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1821), pp. 28-29.
the state by way of the new water route. One contemporary source estimated that Georgians living in the western part of the state, by utilizing the Alabama, could secure goods cheaper from New Orleans than could be procured overland from Savannah, a distance of only 140 miles from Milledgeville. However tantalizing these commercial advantages may have appeared to citizens of Georgia, they could not hope to achieve them until the Creeks were removed farther west.

The prospects of more and richer lands, cheaper transportation costs and new markets were in themselves sufficient reasons to engender a strong desire to expel the Creeks from Georgia's border. These arguments, when coupled with the fact that the Indians were also undesirable neighbors who frequently resorted to savage atrocities against settlers living along the frontier, made removal of the Indians a prime issue.

According to federal regulations, Georgia could not forcibly remove the Indians without first receiving sanction of the central government. This the United States refused to give, preferring instead the gradual method of removing the Indians by negotiating treaties.

The insatiable appetite for more and better farming land engendered sharp conflicts between Georgians and their red neighbors. The Indians had long resisted the encroachment of the white man and for good reason. Not only did the white man force the Indians to give up their lands but he also allowed his hogs, cattle and horses to wonder across the border, mixing with Indian livestock. Furthermore, Georgia settlers fished in streams running through Indian territory and destroyed

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\(^1\)Milledgeville Georgia Journal, September 29, 1813.
the game, hunting deer by firelight, and frightening Indian hunters from their hunting grounds. The Indians, in retaliation, often conducted plundering forays along the frontier of Georgia, murdering, destroying property and stealing livestock.  

Grievances against the Indians induced Governor David Byrdie Mitchell in 1810, under the provision of a legislative resolution of 1807, to appoint a commission headed by General David Stewart to go into the Creek nation to demand either the return of or compensation for property allegedly stolen from the people of Georgia. The governor wrote Benjamin Hawkins, United States Indian Agent, on October 8, 1810, explaining the state's intentions, pointing out that Georgians were growing impatient with repeated delays in recouping losses sustained at the hands of the Creeks. "The state of Georgia has at various times presented the claims of her citizens, but without success," complained Mitchell, "and she has borne with patience those disappointments under the fullest confidence that the Union through their Agent would ultimately prevail in causing the Indians to do that Justice to Georgians so long sought for, and so long delayed."  

With the governor's letter in hand, and an itemized list containing a description of property stolen by the Indians, General Stewart  

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6 Governor David Byrdie Mitchell to Benjamin Hawkins, October 8, 1810, in Letters of Benjamin Hawkins, 1797-1815, p. 130, Department of Archives and History, Atlanta. (Hereinafter cited as Hawkins Letters.)
presented the state's demands to the Indian agent. Although Stewart returned to Georgia with neither property nor compensation, he did return with assurance from Hawkins that Georgia's claims would be forwarded to Washington for consideration.  

While Georgians had cause to be hostile toward the Indians, the Indians were equally justified in hostilities shown toward the people of Georgia. Always forced to yield before an ever advancing agricultural frontier, the Indians saw their existence threatened. It was natural that they should seek to contain the advancement of the white man by allying themselves with Great Britain in the war of 1812. The British, quickly sizing up the Indians' discontent, saw an opportunity to gain additional support in the war against the United States.

The English in 1812 offered food and weapons as inducements to Tecumseh, the Shawnee chief and leader of the Indians in the Northwest, to visit the Creeks, Choctaws, Cherokees, Seminoles and Chickasaws to seek their aid and cooperation against the Americans. The Indian chief, an eloquent orator, visited the southern tribes and made stirring speeches, exhorting the Indians to attack the frontier settlements.

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7David Stewart to Governor David Byrdie Mitchell, October 13, 1810, Hawkins Letters, p. 137.

8The Creeks, numbering about seventeen thousand, lived in a loose confederation of villages in eastern Alabama territory and western Georgia. There were two main divisions of the confederation, the Upper Creeks and the Lower Creeks. The Upper Creeks lived principally along the Tallapoosa, Coosa and Alabama Rivers and their tributaries. The Lower Creeks lived in the lower Chattahoochee-Flint River area of Georgia. Hugh M. Thomason, "Governor Peter Early and the Creek Indian Frontier, 1813-1815," Georgia Historical Quarterly, XLIV (1961), 223-224. (Hereinafter cited as Thomason, "Early.")
Tecumseh's visit created unrest, especially among the Upper Creeks, culminating in numerous cases of lawlessness which alarmed the settlers along the Georgia frontier bordering on the Creek country. By the spring of 1812, a number of murders were committed by the dissidents. Thomas Meredith, a Georgia planter, was killed in March by drunken Autosses; William Lott, a former Georgia legislator, was robbed and killed by a band of Tallasses; two travelers passing through the Creek nation were murdered; and a family on Duck River in Tennessee was massacred in June by the Hallaubees on a false report that the whites had killed an Indian woman. Colonel Hawkins, fearful that Georgia or the federal government would send troops into the nation unless these murderers were brought to justice by their own kind, persuaded the Creek Council, composed of representatives from Upper and Lower Creeks, to bring the murderers to justice.³ Late in August, 1812, six Upper Creeks had been executed for murder and seven whipped for theft. A council of Lower Creeks further cooperated with the Indian agent by announcing their determination to take no part in the war between Great Britain and the United States.⁴

Perhaps the chief factor which prevented the Lower Creeks from "taking up the hatchet" in 1812 was the influence of Colonel Benjamin Hawkins. Hawkins, who had been appointed Creek Indian agent in 1796 by President George Washington, diligently carried out the policy of the

³Benjamin Hawkins to Chiefs of Creek Nation, June 17, 1812, Hawkins Letters, pp. 155-157; see also Milledgeville Georgia Journal, July 1, 1812.

⁴Chiefs of Lower Creeks to Benjamin Hawkins, June 17, 1812, Hawkins Letters, p. 158.
government to civilize the Creeks. Having established his headquarters at Fort Hawkins, on the Ocmulgee in the midst of the Lower Creeks, the Indian agent virtually became "one of the Indians" with the result that the chiefs of the Lower Creeks usually followed his advice. Under the agent's firm persuasion, the Lower Creeks gradually became semi-civilized, practicing animal husbandry and cultivating crops.\textsuperscript{11}

The Upper Creeks were not as docile. Unlike their tribal kinsmen, they resisted the general policy pursued by Hawkins. Refusing to farm for a livelihood, the Upper Creeks preferred to follow the more primitive ways of their ancestors. Furthermore, they had developed a deep hatred for the whites who continuously forced them off their hunting lands. Thus, the Creek nation was divided in its sentiments. The Lower Creeks desired to remain at peace, while the Upper Creeks favored the destruction of the white man.

It is significant to note that the Creek nation who had for years resisted the encroachments of the whites, and had been aided somewhat by the federal government's refusal to force removal, provided a major reason for their dislodgment in 1813. In June, the breach, which for years had been widening between the Upper and Lower Creeks, erupted in a civil war.

An Indian massacre in Illinois triggered the Creek war. Late in 1812 a band of some thirty Creeks, led by Chief Little Warrior of the Upper Creeks, journeyed to Canada where they participated in a massacre

against American militia at Raisin River. On their way home in February, 1813, the Creeks were informed by some guileful or mistaken Chickasaws that a Creek-American war had begun. Little Warrior and his band acted promptly by murdering seven white families settled near the mouth of the Ohio in Illinois. Hawkins, at the urging of the Chickasaws who feared that they would be held responsible for the massacre, demanded that the murderers be punished. The Creek Council quickly voted the death penalty. In April, 1813, eight of the condemned men, including Little Warrior, were killed by warriors from the Lower Creeks. Outraged by the execution of Little Warrior and his followers, the Upper Creeks determined to avenge their deaths by attacking the Lower Creeks and any whites within striking distance.

It is worthy of note at this time that Hawkins, who kept in close contact with the Indians, wrote Georgia's governor on May 31, that there was "nothing hostile to be apprehended from the Creeks" as the chiefs were well convinced that their existence as a nation depended on the compliance with their treaty with the United States. Yet, three weeks later, he was forced to admit that a conflict between the Creeks had commenced and a crisis was rapidly approaching. Perhaps Hawkins had too much confidence in the pledge of the chiefs. Of even greater importance is that Hawkins, who had often been confined to bed because of illness during the winter of 1812-1813, was not adequately informed of the state

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12 Augusta Mirror of the Times, April 17, 1813.

of restiveness among the Creeks. At any rate, he informed Governor Mitchell that the Lower Creeks, who were responsible for the punishment of the murderers of the whites, had been attacked. Hawkins, who had persuaded the chiefs to punish the killers, reported that he too was to "suffer the hatchet."

Governor Mitchell, who also kept in close contact with Indian affairs, had been informed of the uprising. Upon receipt of Hawkins' letter, Mitchell, fearing that the war would spread to Georgia, immediately offered to aid the Lower Creeks by furnishing Georgia militiamen. "In view of the circumstances," the governor told Hawkins, "Georgia can and is willing to afford the [Lower Creeks] necessary aid."

Mitchell's willingness to assist the Lower Creeks was more than mere compassion he may have felt for them. He knew that the tranquility of the state depended on the defeat of the Upper Creeks who had "taken up the tomahawk." Furthermore, he was besieged by demands for protection from inhabitants living along the Indian border who were forced to flee their homes for the safety of the interior of the state. The governor knew also that if aid in the form of militia were given promptly to the Lower Creeks, the Upper Creeks could be defeated without too great a loss of life to Georgians. Of even greater importance was the fact that the governor saw an opportunity to rid the state of Creek occupancy of choice lands without the necessity of negotiating treaties of purchase.

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1 Governor David Byrdie Mitchell to Benjamin Hawkins, June 26, 1813, in Governor's Letter Book A, 1809-1811, pp. 120-121, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta. (Hereinafter cited as Letter Book A.)
Mitchell knew that if he could convince the federal government that the hostilities between the Upper and Lower Creeks were more than a civil war, that behind the hostility lay British aid and encouragement, and that the Upper Creeks intended to attack the state, the Secretary of War would immediately order the Georgia militia into action to quell the Indians. Under these circumstances, no doubt the federal government would then force the Creeks to cede their lands as retribution for their part in the conflict. Thus Georgia would achieve a long sought-after goal. Before Mitchell could accomplish this objective, however, he had to reckon with Hawkins.

Despite Georgia's offer of aid to the Lower Creeks, Hawkins refused. The Indian agent would not admit that the battles between the two Indian factions were anything more than a civil war thus requiring no interference from Georgia. Apparently he believed that the Creeks would not invade or attack property in the state. Consequently, until Hawkins, as an agent of the United States government, admitted that the state was in imminent danger of an attack, Georgia was powerless to act, for under the provisions of the federal Constitution, a state could not without the consent of Congress "engage in war unless actually invaded, or in such imminent danger as will not admit of delay." This Hawkins would not do, and continued to spurn Georgia's offer of assistance, insisting that the Indian uprising was a civil war. Mitchell, much to his chagrin, was forced to wait for positive authorization to send Georgia militia into Indian territory.

The refusal of Hawkins to accept aid from Georgia brought down a storm of abuse upon him. The editor of the Augusta Chronicle, noting the turbulent conditions on the frontier, declared that it was
"distressing to see settlers on the frontier abandoning their homes and crops . . . to seek that security in the interior of the state which ought to be afforded them at home—but such is the will of Col. Hawkins. . . ."\textsuperscript{15} It is not entirely clear why the Indian agent refused the governor's proffered aid unless he was inclined to discount the fears of the Lower Creeks or whether he felt that his influence was sufficient to stop hostilities. His critics blamed his procrastination on his being jealous of Governor Mitchell and his unwillingness to share the credit for subduing the Indians.\textsuperscript{16}

Mitchell did not deem it advisable to wait until an actual invasion of the state occurred before taking action. On July 23, he wrote John Armstrong, the Secretary of War, in whose office Indian affairs were handled, that the Indians were in a state of civil war and that "the ultimate object of the war party is avowedly to cut off the Indians who are friendly to us and then attack the frontiers of Georgia."\textsuperscript{17} In view of this peril, Mitchell requested authority from Armstrong to call out the militia to assist the Lower Creeks should it become necessary.

Before his letter reached Washington, the governor received a directive from the Secretary of War, who had been informed of the Creek uprising by Hawkins, calling for fifteen hundred militiamen to march against the "rampaging Creeks." John Armstrong informed Mitchell that

\begin{footnotes}
\item[15]Augusta Chronicle, July 30, 1813.
\end{footnotes}
troops from Tennessee and the Third Regiment of the United States Infantry were to act in consort with Georgia. The Secretary further informed Mitchell that he had sent a copy of his communication to Governor Willie Blount of Tennessee and suggested to Mitchell that he and Blount work out details on a point of rendezvous between the militia of the two states. Mitchell immediately wrote the Tennessee governor requesting advice concerning a strategic location for assembling the troops.

In the interim, Mitchell received important information from Hawkins. The Indian agent reported that all available evidence indicated that the war among the Upper and Lower Creeks "had originated with the British" and that the British were arming the Upper Creeks through the Spanish governor at Pensacola. Hawkins reported that a large number of Upper Creeks had visited Pensacola in July and had received arms and ammunition from British stores. Under these circumstances, Hawkins told the governor that he should regard his letter as "authentic information of a mediated attack on the frontiers of Georgia."

Mitchell acted quickly. He issued a call for volunteers and assiduously made preparations for the pending expedition into Creek territory. Major-General John Floyd was appointed to command the militia.

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18 John Armstrong to Governor David Byrdie Mitchell, July 13, 1813, in David Mitchell File, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.

19 Governor David Byrdie Mitchell to Willie Blount, July 29, 1813, in Letter Book A, p. 133.

20 Benjamin Hawkins to Governor David Byrdie Mitchell, in Augusta Chronicle, November 6, 1813.
As the militia slowly mobilized for the Indian campaign, a sharp difference of opinion developed between Georgia's governor and the United States Indian agent over the conduct of Indian affairs. On July 28, a delegation of Lower Creek chiefs, impatient at Hawkins' delay in sending assistance, made a direct appeal to Governor Mitchell for reinforcements, pointing out that the Upper Creeks were plundering and burning their villages and murdering members of their group. The Georgia governor promised the delegation that he would send troops to their aid and encouraged them to continue fighting. When Hawkins heard of the governor's offer, he wrote Mitchell, insisting that the Indians' reports of atrocities had been exaggerated. Furthermore, Hawkins was of the opinion that the governor had gone beyond his authority in offering aid. "I have no right to question the purity of your motives, or the soundness of your political principles, but believing as I do, that the General government have exclusively the right to manage all affairs with the Indians, I am of the opinion," said Hawkins, "that all communications should be through their agency for Indian affairs." Mitchell differed sharply with the Indian agent. It was his opinion that a state government, and particularly Georgia, had a right to communicate with the Indians, independent of the federal government or its Indian agency. The present relations between Georgia and the Creek Indians, he said, presented such an occasion. Defiantly, Mitchell informed the


22 Benjamin Hawkins to David Byrdie Mitchell, in Augusta Chronicle, December 10, 1813.
Indian agent that he would continue to correspond with the Indians upon all occasions when, in his judgment, the interest of Georgia would be served. While Hawkins continued his contest with the governor over the exclusive right of the United States to regulate Indian affairs, he made no further protests against Georgia's right to invade Indian country in the existing crisis.

While the debate with Hawkins continued through correspondence, Governor Mitchell continued preparations for reenforcing the Lower Creeks. He was forced to wait upon supplies and equipment from the federal government as Georgia did not possess many of the essential items necessary for the expedition. While waiting upon these supplies, Mitchell ordered Brigadier General David Blackshear of Laurens County to the frontier in order to allay the fears of the people living along the border. Blackshear was instructed to adopt necessary measures to provide security for the frontier settlers. To expedite the orders, Blackshear directed three forts to be built in each of the counties of Twiggs and Telfair and four in Pulaski. These fortresses, located about ten miles apart, were one hundred feet square with two blockhouses and were enclosed with a stockade eight feet high. One subaltern, one sergeant, one corporal and fifteen privates were sent to each fort and two horsemen from each installation were to patrol the frontier between each of the forts. Despite these preparations, Georgians remained

23 Governor David Byrdie Mitchell to Benjamin Hawkins, August 17, 1813, in Letter Book A, p. 111.

concerned throughout the summer and fall of 1813, fearing that the state would be turned into a "blood-bath" by the warring Upper Creeks.

Mitchell informed the Secretary of War on August 9, that he had ordered fifteen hundred militiamen to the frontier by authority granted in the Secretary's letter of July 13. These men, he told Armstrong, were anxious to fight the Creeks but lack of ammunition and equipment prevented immediate action. He reiterated the need for immediate federal assistance in supplying the militia with the necessary items. Mitchell further informed Armstrong that Georgia's situation had become critical as the Upper Creeks had defeated a large number of Lower Creeks at Coweta and were expected to move to an attack of the frontier settlements of Georgia. 25

The immediacy of the situation dictated that the militia be enlarged. Time would not permit obtaining authorization from the Secretary of War to increase the number, and so Mitchell, exceeding his authority, increased the militia from fifteen hundred to two thousand. To supply these additional troops, the governor recalled arms which previously had been issued to other militia throughout the state.

While Georgia was making plans for the Creek invasions, Governor Willie Blount of Tennessee responded in mid-August to Mitchell's request of July 29 for cooperation on the Indian expedition. Blount explained his hesitancy to organize troops without specific orders from the War Department. 26


26 Augusta Chronicle, December 31, 1813.
Mitchell was extremely disappointed over Blount's refusal to act immediately in consort with Georgia against the Indians. Yet, Mitchell could still use Tennessee's negative action to an advantage. He had gone beyond the orders of the Secretary of War by calling out an additional five hundred militiamen. Among other things, the governor was concerned as to whether the federal government would reimburse the State of Georgia for these troops. Now, with Tennessee refusing to send reinforcements surely the War Department, aware of the Indian threat to Georgia, would look more favorably upon his actions whereby he ordered an additional five hundred men into service, bringing the total to 2500.²⁷

In the frustration of preparing the state for the Creek expedition, Governor Mitchell found some encouraging results. Despite the lack of funds and supplies, there had been no lack of volunteers for the expedition. Militia companies in Augusta, Elberton, Greensboro and Sparta reported more volunteers than they were authorized to accept. Georgians were apparently anxious to fight.

The eagerness for battle which Georgia troops exhibited when they assembled at Fort Hawkins on August 21, soon gave way to despair. For two months 2500 militiamen waited poised on the Indian border, eager to fight, but unable to move due to lack of equipment and supplies. The limited, rationed supplies, the illnesses of frontier camp life combined

with the weeks of idleness resulted in an alarming discontent among the untrained and undisciplined militia.\textsuperscript{28}

While the militia waited impatiently at Fort Hawkins for additional supplies, Indians attacked Fort Mims on August 30, 1813. Some 550 people had taken refuge in the fort, located on the Tensaw River, 35 miles above Mobile. Despite the fact that notice of the Indians' approach had been given two days in advance, the gate to the fort had been left open. One thousand "screaming Indians," with arms provided by the Spanish at Pensacola, were inside the fort before the gate could be closed. After a bloody battle of more than three hours, the fort fell. It is estimated that only fifteen white men, along with a few Negroes, escaped. All others, including women and children, were murdered, scalped and their bodies horribly mutilated. It was reported that the Indians carried 250 scalps on poles to Pensacola.\textsuperscript{29}

With the destruction of Fort Mims, the Creek uprising now became a general war. The Indians, in a high state of excitement, wreaked havoc over the country, burning the deserted houses, destroying crops and murdering every white man with whom they came in contact. The crisis seized attention of the nation and especially in Georgia because of the state's close proximity to Fort Mims.

Georgians took a grim view of the massacre. Not only the Indians who had perpetrated the assault, but also the Spanish who had furnished

\textsuperscript{28} Captain Philip Cook to William Jones, September 6, 1813, in William Jones Papers, Folder 3, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah.

\textsuperscript{29} Augusta Chronicle, October 1, 1813; see also Adams, History, VII, 229-230.
the savages with arms must be punished, declared the editor of the Milledgeville Georgia Journal on September 22: "the practice of the Spaniards in supplying the Indians with munitions of war, is an evil of no small magnitude—And one which calls loudly for the immediate inter¬position of government." One week later, the same newspaper called upon the federal government to immediately avenge the deaths of "our butchered countrymen" and for the prompt "destruction of Spain."

One week later, the same newspaper called upon the federal government to immediately avenge the deaths of "our butchered countrymen" and for the prompt "destruction of Spain." The government did act quickly. Urgent appeals for troops were sent to the governors of Louisiana, Georgia and Tennessee. Georgia was already mobilizing for war and now the aid of Tennessee could be counted upon. Andrew Jackson, still bed ridden from a gunshot wound received in a duel with Thomas Hart Benton, was placed in command of an army of 2500 infantry and 1000 cavalry. By the time his troops had assembled, Jackson had sufficiently recuperated to take to the field. He quickly moved into the heart of Creek country to begin the difficult task of subduing the Upper Creeks.

Governor Mitchell was anxious for troops of Georgia to join Jackson also, but federal funds still had not arrived. Perplexed as he was, Mitchell was further disturbed by frequent reports from General John Floyd, commander of the troops, that the militiamen at

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30 Milledgeville Georgia Journal, September 22, 1813.

31 Ibid., September 29, 1813.

32 Andrew Jackson to Governor Peter Early, October 10, 1813, in John Spencer Bassett, Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, 1814-1845, 7 Volumes (Washington: Carnegie Institute, 1926-1935), I, 331. (Herein¬after cited as Bassett, Jackson Correspondence.) This letter is erroneously addressed to Governor Early. Early was not elected Governor of Georgia until November 5, 1813.
Fort Hawkins were growing restless. Some had deserted, and over 250 had become ill. The governor, alarmed by the growing impatience of the troops, sent a steady barrage of letters to Washington demanding that Georgia's troops be furnished adequate supplies without further delay. He asked George Michael Troup, Congressman from Georgia, to investigate the delay of funds and to use his influence to expedite their release. Troup informed Mitchell that the federal government had authorized the funds for the expedition but that the state's delay in receiving them was apparently due to the negligence of the civilian contractor.\(^3\)

Finally on September 26, the governor received $20,000 from the War Department to contract for supplies. Floyd's troops, after two months delay, entered Creek territory on October 19, constructing forts and blockhouses for defense as they advanced.

Less than three weeks after Floyd's army moved into Creek country, Governor Mitchell's two-year term of office expired on November 4, 1813. He had decided not to seek reelection, giving as the reason that a "rotation in office . . . ought to prevail."\(^3\)

No doubt he had hoped to report to the legislature when it convened in November, 1813, that the Creek expedition had been successfully terminated. It would have been a fitting climax to a progressive, but frustrating four years. Circumstances, however, prevented it.

\(^3\)George Michael Troup to Governor David Byrdie Mitchell, October 11, 1813, in Troup Papers, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.

\(^3\)Journal of the Senate of the General Assembly of Georgia (1813), p. 13. (Hereinafter cited as Georgia Senate Journal.)
In the annual message to the legislature, he outlined the many problems which had confronted him during the past summer. Particularly frustrating to Mitchell had been the inability to send troops into action at the first notice of an Indian uprising, the refusal of the Governor of Tennessee to initially cooperate with Georgia, and the difficulty of supplying the militia.

Stepping down from the governorship, Mitchell said: "I am well aware that the present moment is a very unfavorable one for a change, and I shall have felt reluctance in making a determination to withdraw if I had not at the same time felt assured that you had it in your power to obtain the services of a gentleman, whose talents and integrity eminently qualify him for the station..."

Peter Early, a Republican of the Jeffersonian school and a close friend of William Harris Crawford, was elected governor by a joint session of the Georgia Legislature on November 4, 1813, over his opponent, John Clark. No entry of the vote was recorded in either the Georgia Senate Journal or House Journal, only the notation that "both

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36 Although Georgia had only one national party in 1813, that which followed the principles of Thomas Jefferson, there were two factions in state politics. These two groups fought bitterly for years for public offices. One of these factions was led by John Clark and the other by William Harris Crawford. The citizens of Georgia generally aligned themselves with one or the other group. The followers of Crawford continued the tradition of the Federalists, representing the aristocratic tradition, while the Clark faction claimed to represent the cause of the small farmer and frontiersman. The feud, which raged for nearly twenty years, became a personal grudge when Clark and Crawford fought a duel in which the latter was wounded in the left wrist. Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, Georgia and State Rights (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), pp. 94-105. (Hereinafter cited as Phillips, Georgia and State Rights.)
branches proceeded by joint ballot to the election, and on counting the votes, it appeared that the Hon. Peter Early was duly elected Governor of the state of Georgia." Early, who was Judge of the Ocmulgee Circuit of the Georgia bench at the time of his election, was well qualified for the office of governor. He was a capable lawyer, and had served in the House of Representatives of the United States in 1801, 1803 and 1805. His conduct on the bench was "exemplary," and his "firmness and knowledge of the law and impartiality had earned him respect and admiration." Upon assuming the office of governor, Early was confronted with the serious situation of furnishing supplies for Floyd's troops. There was a lack of funds in the state treasury to pay for the needed supplies, and the $20,000 which had been received from the federal government in September was exhausted. As a result, Floyd's progress in the Creek nation had been halted at Fort Lawrence on the Flint River. Aware of Floyd's desperate situation, Governor Early recommended to the legislature that a loan be contracted immediately. The legislature responded to the governor's request, voting on November 12 to borrow $20,000. This money, obtained from the Bank of Augusta, was borrowed for a period of 120 days. With fresh supplies made possible by the loan, Floyd, after

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37 Georgia Senate Journal (1813), p. 16.
38 Thomason, "Early," 223.
39 Georgia Senate Journal (1813), pp. 35, 36.
40 The state was reimbursed by the United States government in the following January. Georgia Senate Journal (1815), p. 5.
considerable delay, marched on to the Chattahoochee River where he constructed Fort Mitchell, named in honor of the former governor, as a supply base from which to operate against the Creeks.

As Floyd moved into the center of the Upper Creek country, new terror spread over Georgia in late fall of 1813. A party of Upper Creek Indians attacked the frontier of Morgan County on November 6, killing eight white settlers. The Indians were pursued by militia but not overtaken. This act greatly alarmed Georgians living in the western counties, and considerable pressure was exerted on the legislature to pass a joint resolution requiring the governor to call out and station detachments of the militia along the frontier. The legislature responded to this demand and further directed the erection of a series of blockhouses in the western counties. In addition, the legislature authorized the raising of a maximum of one thousand troops for a period of fifteen to thirty days to destroy the Upper Creek towns adjacent to the frontier. Major-General David Adams of Jasper County was appointed commander of the expedition.

The militia, consisting of 530 volunteers assembled near Monticello, in Jasper County, during the latter part of November. The governor, fearing that the men if detained too long might become restless and disorderly, wrote Adams on December 7, suggesting that his troops begin operation as quickly as possible. Adams, determined to punish everyone of the "ruthless savages," began to march from Camp Patriotism westward toward the Chattahoochee River on December 9. His objectives were the Creek

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11 Georgia Senate Journal (1813), pp. 23, 29-30, 36.
towns of Newyaucau, Takabatchee, Tallahassee and Immookfau, all in the vicinity of the Tallapoosa River.\(^2\)

Adams' troops crossed the Chattahoochee on December 15, but due to continual rain and high water, he was forced to postpone his plan of destroying the Upper Creeks. Returning to Jasper County on Christmas eve, Adams reported to Governor Early that his troops had burned two or three abandoned Creek towns. He reported that he had sighted Indians on the west bank of the Tallapoosa River, but high water had prevented his troops from engaging them.\(^3\)

While Adams' troops failed to come in contact with the enemy, there was no lack of activity for troops under General Floyd. Marching from Fort Mitchell, the militia under Floyd invaded the Creek country. On November 29, they attacked the village of Autossee, twenty miles above Hickory Ground, where Creek warriors a short time before had listened to the exhortations of Tecumseh. Artillery and bayonet charges were too much for the Creek warriors. After a fierce, bloody battle in which two hundred Indians were killed, the savages fled. Floyd's troops sustained a loss of only eleven dead. Both Floyd and his Adjutant General, Daniel Newnan, were wounded in addition to fifty-four militiamen. Again handicapped by lack of supplies and the numerous wounded, Floyd, forced to retreat to Fort Mitchell, was unable to follow up his victory.\(^4\)


\(^3\)David Adams to Governor Peter Early, December 21, 1813, in unpublished Letters Relating to Georgia Military Affairs, 10 Volumes, III, 316-321, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.

\(^4\)Augusta Chronicle, December 10, 1813.
Late in January, 1814, Floyd and his men recovered sufficiently
enough to resume action against the Upper Creeks. Floyd moved his
troops, numbering seventeen hundred men including four hundred Lower
Creek allies, westward to destroy the town of Hoithlewule on the
Tallapoosa. Pitching camp on January 27 at Calibee Creek, about fifteen
miles from his objective, Floyd made final plans to attack the Upper
Creek town. In the cold, pre-dawn hours of the following morning, Floyd's
camp was surprised by some seven to eight hundred Upper Creek warriors,
led by a British officer. The attack was repulsed, but the battle was
costly to the Georgia militia. Floyd lost 22 killed and 1147 wounded,
the largest number of casualties that had yet occurred in the Indian
war. The Indians "left thirty-seven dead on the field; from the
effusion of blood and the number of head-dresses and war-clubs found
in various directions, their loss must have been considerable independent
of their wounded."\textsuperscript{45}

The battle of Calibee Creek was in substance a defeat for Floyd.
The general's troops, having volunteered for six months duty, had had
their fill of Indian fighting. With the enlistment time coming to an
end, they became so rebellious and decisive in their determination to
return home, that Floyd was forced to abandon all his fortified posts
and to fall back to the Chattahoochee, where he arrived February 1, four
days after the battle. Governor Early was perturbed and dismayed with
the unpatriotic conduct of Georgia militia. In a letter of February 8

\textsuperscript{44}Augusta Chronicle, December 10, 1813.

\textsuperscript{45}Louise Frederick Hayes, editor, unpublished Letters of Timothy
Barnard, 1784-1820, p. 13, Georgia Department of Archives and History,
Atlanta.
he wrote: "How melancholy will be the reflection, should our citizens fighting for the security of their own homes, and having so much glory, cover themselves at last with disgrace, by want of a few days more of perseverance."\textsuperscript{66}

It was not Early's intentions to let the unruly ones escape:

I shall feel it my duty to cause the offenders to be brought to a severe account, should they not have been previously tried. Should the troops contrary to our present hopes abandon their General & not wait to be discharged. I earnestly hope that all such may be returned as deserters & made to suffer all the privations and punishments due to such conduct.\textsuperscript{67}

It is not clear whether any of the militiamen actually deserted Floyd's army or whether Early carried out his threat of punishment. Floyd did return to Milledgeville as quickly as possible, however, and the troops were discharged in early March. Georgia's participation in the Creek war thus came to an end.

While General Floyd had been plagued by problems throughout the Creek campaign, General Andrew Jackson had not been entirely free from similar incidents. Lack of supplies, trouble with rebellious troops, and twice beaten back by his fanatical adversaries, all contributed to the general's troubles. But Jackson was not to be discouraged from carrying out his plans of "exterminating" the Indians. Stubbornly and persistently he continued his onslaught against the Upper Creeks until March 27, 1814, when he effectively broke their resistance in a bloody battle in a bend of the Tallapoosa, where the Indians had

\textsuperscript{66} Governor Peter Early to John McIntosh, February 8, 1814, in Letter Book A, pp. 205-206.

\textsuperscript{67} Governor Peter Early to Major General Thomas Pinckney, February 7, 1814, ibid., pp. 204-205.
constructed a fortress. Approximately one thousand Indians, including women and children, had taken refuge in the enclosure for a last stand.\textsuperscript{48}

Jackson, with about three thousand troops, arrived near Horseshoe Bend on the evening of March 26. He pitched camp six miles northwest of the site, and next morning attacked the Indian fortress. "Determined to exterminate them," he detached a force of seven hundred men and six hundred friendly Indians to surround the bend, while utilizing all of his infantry, Jackson took a position before the breastwork. At 10:30 in the morning, he planted his cannon about two hundred yards from the center of the work, and began a rapid fire of artillery and musketry, which continued for two hours without producing any apparent effects. Meanwhile, Jackson's Cherokee allies swam the river in the rear of the Creek warriors and seized their canoes. With these canoes, two hundred of Jackson's troops were transported into the Horseshoe, where they climbed the high ground to the rear of the Creeks. From this vantage point volley after volley was hurled against the surprised Creeks.\textsuperscript{49}

The Creeks armed only with tomahawks and clubs were no match for the cold steel of the Americans wielded at close quarters. Some stood their ground bravely and were cut down, the majority broke and fled. Others tried to swim the river but while they were in mid-stream became targets for the sharpshooters on the banks. Some sought shelter under a bluff and refused to obey Jackson's command to surrender until the

\textsuperscript{48}Adams, History, VII, 235-256.

\textsuperscript{49}Andrew Jackson to Governor Willie Blount, March 31, 1814, in Bassett, Jackson Correspondence, I, l92-192.
torch was applied and the Indians were smoked out of their hiding place.  

The battle was reduced to mass slaughter. Throughout the rest of the afternoon Jackson's troops occupied themselves with the task of rounding up and killing Indians and among them some of the squaws and children. Jackson expressed regret over the slaying of the non-combatants which, he said, was accidental. From the standpoint of the Indians, the Horseshoe engagement presented a tragic spectacle. Of the original one thousand, only two hundred remained alive. When compared to the victory achieved, the American losses were slight. The cost to Jackson was only 26 killed and 107 wounded, the Cherokee allies reported 18 killed and 36 wounded and the friendly Creeks had 5 killed and 11 wounded.  

Jackson was satisfied that he had completely avenged Fort Mims. The Creeks had at last been conquered, but the victory was hardly to the credit of the United States. For six months approximately 3500 Creek warriors, inadequately equipped with guns and ammunition and dependent chiefly upon their bows and arrows, had defied 15,000 American regulars, volunteers and militia. The Creek war had cost the United States government thousands of dollars for food, pay and equipment. The real victory belonged to the British. For at the cost of a small quantity of powder and shot and a few weapons issued to the Indians

50 Andrew Jackson to Governor Willie Elount, March 31, 1814, in Bassett, Jackson Correspondence, I, 489-492.  
51 Ibid.
at Pensacola by their Spanish allies, they had succeeded in distracting the attention of 15,000 troops that could have been put to more effective use elsewhere, particularly in the northwest.

While Jackson was crushing the Creeks, the war in the northwest had not gone too well for the Americans. Hampered by a lack of an effective fighting force and a lack of money with which to conduct the war, together with fumbling generals, rebellious troops and the opposition of New Englanders to the war effort, the United States had suffered one setback after another. Fortunately for America, Great Britain, preoccupied with her struggle against Napoleon, paid little attention to the American war in its beginning. In the fall of 1812, Napoleon launched the Russian campaign which before the winter was over brought him disaster and prepared the way for his ultimate defeat. As the months passed, Great Britain was able to divert more and more military and naval power to America. As a result of the overwhelming British military power, the United States met with defeat after defeat.

The United States began the war with the avowed object of invading and conquering Canada. A three-pronged invasion was planned to strike into Canada by way of Detroit, the Niagara River and Lake Champlain, with the greatest concentration of force at Detroit. At

52 The opposition in New England went to remarkable extremes. Some of the Federalists there celebrated British victories, sabotaged their own country's war effort and even plotted disunion and a separate peace. The embargo, the war and wartime restrictions bore down heavily on the commercial interest of the New England states and as a result New Englanders openly violated the trade restrictions, carrying on trade with the British in Canada. Furthermore, New England banks refused to buy government bonds or to loan money desperately needed to keep soldiers in the field. In addition, New England authorities refused to allow state militia to take orders from the president or to fight outside the country. Adams, History, VIII, 1-20.
Detroit, however, the elderly General William Hull, Governor of Michigan Territory, retreated and surrendered the fort without firing a shot on August 16, 1812. The other invasion efforts also failed, and Fort Dearborn fell before an Indian attack.

There were a few American victories at sea in 1812 which kept citizens' hopes kindled. American frigates engaged British warships in a series of duels and won some spectacular victories, one of the most renowned being the victory of the Constitution over the Guerriere. American privateers destroyed or captured one British merchant ship after another. After the first year, however, the score was more than evened by the British navy, which not only drove the American frigates to cover but also instituted a close blockade of the United States and harassed the coastal settlements from Virginia to Maine.

While British seapower dominated the ocean, American fleets arose to dispute control of the Great Lakes. First, the Americans took temporary command of Lake Ontario, enabling troops to cross over to York, the capital of Canada. At York, on April 27, 1813, the invaders ran upon a land mine, which exploded killing more than fifty, including General Zebulon Montgomery Pike. Some of the enraged survivors, without authorization, set fire to the public buildings of the capitol, burning them to the ground. After destroying some ships and military stores, the Americans retreated across the lake.

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53 Niles' Weekly Register, II (August 22, 1812), 413.
55 Niles' Weekly Register, IV (May 15, 1813), 178-180.
Next, Lake Erie was redeemed for American use, mainly through the efforts of the youthful Oliver Hazard Perry. Having constructed a fleet, Perry took up a position at Put-in-Bay, near a group of islands off the mouth of the Maumee River. With the banner "Don't Give Up the Ship" flying on his flagship, he awaited the British fleet. On September 10, 1813, the fleet arrived and after a fierce battle in which both sides lost heavily in men killed and wounded, Perry established American control over the lake.56

Perry's victory made possible an invasion of Canada by way of Detroit. The post had been hard to reach overland, for supply wagons either had to struggle through the almost impassable Black Swamp of the Maumee Valley or had to make a long detour around it. After Perry's victory at Put-in-Bay, supplies as well as men could be quickly and easily transported by water. William Henry Harrison, who had replaced Hull in the Western command, pushed up the Thames River into Upper Canada and won a victory on October 5, 1813.57 Although the Battle of the Thames resulted in no lasting occupation of Canadian soil, it did dishearten the Indians of the northwest, who had aligned themselves with the British, and eliminated the worst of the danger they had offered to the frontier. What small successes the United States managed to eke out against the British is 1813, however, were short-lived.

By the spring of 1814, British strategists had devised a master plan for crushing the weak military forces of the United States. One

56Niles' Weekly Register, V (September 25, 1813), 60-61.

57Ibid., V (October 23, 1813), 129-132; see also Beirne, War of 1812, pp. 215-219.
army, eleven thousand strong, was to march down from Montreal. Another, a much smaller amphibious force, was to make a feint at the Chesapeake Bay area, destroying coastal towns and threatening Washington and Baltimore. A third army was to assemble at Jamaica and sail to attack New Orleans and bottle up the West.

While the British were implementing their plans for defeating the United States in the north, General Andrew Jackson in the south, prepared to deal the final crushing blow to the Creeks. Having suppressed the Upper Creeks' resistance at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, the general, on August 9, 1814, ordered them to capitulate. At the newly erected fort named in his honor, Jackson dictated terms of surrender to a Creek delegation. The Upper Creeks were absent from the negotiations. Those present represented the Lower Creeks who had helped to fight the Upper Creeks in the recent Indian campaign. To these allies and friends Jackson presented a paper, originally intended for the Upper Creeks, requiring as indemnity for war expenses a surrender of two-thirds of their territory. They were required to withdraw from the southern and western half of Alabama, within the Chattahoochee on the east and the Coosa on the west. The military objective of this policy was to isolate the Creeks from the Seminoles and Spaniards on one side, and from the Choctaws and Chickasaws on the other.

Jackson apparently was not bothered by the legal problems of the treaty. Technically, the land belonged to the Upper and Lower Creeks, and as such neither faction was capable of making a treaty or granting lands of the Creek nation. Furthermore, the Upper Creeks had fled and

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refused to negotiate and the Lower Creeks could hardly capitulate because they had never been at war against the United States. They had fought in the service of the United States and were entitled to rewards as allies, not to punishment as enemies.

The Lower Creeks refused to accept the terms of the treaty. Jackson told them in reply that their refusal would show them to be enemies of the United States, that they might retain their part of the country, but that the part which belonged to the Upper Creeks would be taken by the United States government. He further told the chiefs who would not consent to sign the paper that they could join the warring Indians at Pensacola, although Jackson added that he would probably overtake and destroy them before they could get there. These arguments were convincing. A number of the Lower Creeks, after stiff opposition, signed the treaty.⁵⁹

Although Jackson forced the Creeks to cede over twenty million acres of land to the United States, the people of Georgia were deeply disappointed over the terms of the treaty. They were chagrined over the failure of the federal government to remove the Creeks from all the rich lands included in Georgia's territory. They had entered the war with the expectation that the government would carry out promises made in 1802 to remove the Indians from Georgia.⁶⁰ Instead, the Indians had been left in the center of Georgia and removed from the territory of Alabama, where the United States was under no obligation to act. Furthermore,

⁵⁹ Adams, History, VII, 260-261.
⁶⁰ Milledgeville Georgia Journal, August 24, 1814.
Georgians regarded the ceded land as worthless. The territory, acquired
by Georgia under the terms of the treaty, was principally pine lands
and lay south of the Altamaha River, reaching from the western boundaries
of the old original county of Wayne westward to the banks of the
Chattahoochee River.

The Milledgeville Georgia Journal reflected the disappointment
of the people in an editorial on August 24, 1814. Pointing out that the
federal government had failed to carry out its promise of 1802, the
editor declared that, "It is believed that this state has strong claims
on the General government, for the extinguishment, at this time, of the
Indian claim to a large part, if not the whole of that valuable terri-
tory." Furthermore, according to the editorial, the state of Georgia
had been treated unjustly by the United States. "Has justice been done
to the state of Georgia," asked the editor, "by an agreement which does
not merely withhold from her the present possessions of this territory,
but places the acquisition of it at a period very remote?"

The Georgia General Assembly in December registered further
disappointment and disillusionment of the Fort Jackson treaty in a
memorial addressed to the president. The citizens of Georgia, the
memorial said, had hoped that the United States would have taken
advantage of the victory over the Creeks to carry out the agreement made
with Georgia in 1802. But as a matter of fact, Georgia had obtained
little or no benefit from the treaty. Furthermore, the territory
acquired was sterile and unprofitable. All the territory to which the

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61 Milledgeville Georgia Journal, August 24, 1814.
Creeks retained title lay in Georgia or very near its western boundary. The memorial concluded with a request that further cessions be obtained immediately.

However disappointed and frustrated over the lack of acquisition of Indian lands, the people of Georgia were deeply relieved to learn of cessation of hostilities in 1814. Although there were occasional reports of Indian depredations, the frontier remained relatively quiet during the spring of 1814. As the threat of an Indian invasion dissipated, fears among the populace subsided and Georgians began to resume their routine way of living. The tranquility was short-lived, however, for on May 7, 1814, the Savannah Republican announced that a large British force was off the coast of Saint Marys and that an attack on Georgia was imminent.

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62 Phillips, Georgia and State Rights, p. 52.
63 Savannah Republican, May 7, 1814.
CHAPTER IV

THE BATTLEFRONT COMES TO GEORGIA, 1814-1815

The announcement that British ships had been sighted off the coast of Georgia in May, 1814, brought the reality of war home to most Georgians. Thus far they had not been confronted by a British attack. They had viewed the fighting in the northern states between the United States and Great Britain as a remote struggle far from Georgia lands. Now with British ships hovering off the coast, the war was no longer something to read about hundreds of miles away, but a warning that Georgians might soon know the full impact of an invasion.

A climate of anxiety resulted from the appearance of the British ships. Not only did the people fear a British invasion, but of equal concern was the possibility that the English would stir up the Indian savages again resulting in a repeat of the disaster at Fort Mims. The devastation accompanying the Creek war had not been forgotten.

Georgians living along or near the coastal areas sent numerous appeals for protection to Governor Peter Early. These requests pointed out that from Savannah to Saint Marys, a distance of over a hundred miles, an extensive and an almost unprotected coastline with numerous water inlets, offered many vulnerable points for a successful British invasion.

Governor Early acted promptly and ordered the entire militia to prepare to march at a "moment's notice." He made available two thousand men to Major General Thomas Pinckney, United States Commander of the
Southern Army. He dispatched two regiments of militia to Savannah under the command of Major General John Floyd and directed Major General John McIntosh to build fortifications along the southern coastline of Georgia. In addition, Daniel Newman, the Adjutant General, issued an appeal for one thousand volunteers to bolster the small contingency of troops guarding the coast. At this juncture, the War Department, aware of the danger of a British invasion along the southern coast, ordered 450 regular troops to the Georgia seaboard.

Savannah quickly assumed the appearance of an armed camp. Soldiers marched in and out of the city, and the haste with which fortifications were going up produced both excitement and fear among the populace. Merchants and shopkeepers made preparations to transfer merchandise to safer locations in the interior of the state. Wagons, hired to convey the goods, jammed the streets and added to the confusion, noise and excitement.

While Georgians prepared defenses, the British were not idle. Reaching the coast of Georgia in early May, landing parties went ashore on Amelia Island and posted proclamations exhorting Negro slaves to join them. The British promised the Negroes food, clothing and protection in return for support against their white masters. Other incentives were offered the slaves. Those Negroes who would go to England were promised free transportation where they were supposed to

1 Governor Peter Early to Major General Thomas Pinckney, May 19, 1814, in Governor's Letter Book A, 1809-1814, p. 3. (Hereinafter cited as Letter Book A.)

2 Milledgeville Georgia Journal, May 18, 1814.

3 Ibid.
to find a country ruled by a Negro Queen in which ladies preferred Negro men as husbands and the gentlemen preferred Negro women as wives. Under the spell of such alluring promises about three hundred Negroes deserted to the British.1

British agents also sought the cooperation of the Indians. On July 1, 1814, Vice-Admiral Alexander Cochrane sent Colonel Edward Nicholls with a detachment of officers to the Indian villages of West Florida. Admiral Cochrane sent two field pieces, two thousand guns and one thousand swords to West Florida and promised arms for every warrior who would fight the Americans. He urged the Indians to encourage the flight of Negroes from Georgia and the Carolinas and ordered Nicholls to clothe, supply and arm the slaves.2

Many of the Upper Creeks, whom Jackson had driven out of Georgia, and the Seminoles in Florida rallied to the British standard. The Indians gave Nicholls the title of commander-in-chief and urged Cochrane to maintain a British post on the Gulf. Indian chieftains assured Cochrane that they would enlist Negro warriors, unite the redmen and crush the "wicked and rebellious Americans."3

Colonel Benjamin Hawkins, United States Indian Agent, confirmed the action of the British relative to Negro slaves and hostile Indians.

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1George Jones, Mayor of Savannah, to Governor Peter Early, May 7, 1814, in Telamon Cuyler Collection, University of Georgia Library, Athens; George Baillie to William Jones, November 18, 1815, in William Jones Papers, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah. Baillie was a prisoner of the British on Saint Simons Island in February, 1815.


3Ibid.
Hawkins informed Governor Early that British troops had landed at Pensacola and Apalachicola and armed the Indians. He told the chief executive that "intelligence" reports confirmed the British plan to attack Saint Marys and Savannah. As a result of Hawkins' report, Georgians anticipated an attack on the state momentarily. Governor Early, fearing resumption of Indian warfare, immediately dispatched four companies of militia to the frontier. Early also sought the cooperation of the Lower Creeks, hitherto friendly to Georgia, and suggested to Hawkins that an attempt be made to persuade the Indians to join in alliance with Georgians. The Lower Creeks, whose settlements were located above the junction of the Flint and Chattahoochee rivers, met with the Indian agent at Fort Mitchell in July. They professed friendship and promised to join in any enterprise against the warring Seminoles and Upper Creeks.

Although neither Indian warfare nor a British invasion occurred during the latter half of 1814, Georgians, nonetheless, spent the summer and fall in a state of suspense and uncertainty. Tantalized by fear of the enemy hovering off the coast of Saint Marys, and alarmed by frequent rumors of Indian atrocities, they lived under fear of an attack by British troops, by the Indians, or a revolt of Negro slaves.

The fear was well founded. Militarily, the state was inadequately prepared to ward off an invasion by veteran British troops. With a

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7*Milledgeville Georgia Journal*, July 22, 1814.
shoreline of over a hundred miles to protect and an extensive Indian border to patrol, a poorly equipped and an inadequately trained militia as well as a depleted treasury, Georgia's military position remained critical throughout the war of 1812.

There had been attempts to provide adequate fortifications in the state. Savannah, the principal port city in Georgia, received immediate attention upon the declaration of war. Because of her importance as a port and the close proximity to the Atlantic Ocean, Savannah appeared to be the most vulnerable point for a successful invasion. Furthermore, British control of the city would give the enemy access to the interior of Georgia and South Carolina by way of the Savannah River. Because of these dangers, a committee was appointed and directed to erect fortifications in the vicinity of Savannah. Fort Wayne, built in 1760 on a sand bluff overlooking the harbor, was renovated in 1812-1813. Records do not indicate the extent of renovations, but the Savannah Republican called for fifty thousand bricks to buttress the fort. In addition, volunteers in row boats were stationed at the mouth of the several water inlets in and around the city to sound alarm should the British attempt a landing. A small contingency of 160 United States troops was also stationed in the city.

The Georgia General Assembly, meeting in 1812, authorized the governor to station a full company of militia in each of the counties

10 Savannah Republican and Evening Ledger, June 22, 29, 1812. (Hereinafter cited as Savannah Republican.)

11 Ibid., June 23, 1812; Journal of the Senate of the General Assembly of Georgia (1813), p. II. (Hereinafter cited as Georgia Senate Journal.)
bordering on the coast, but Governor David Byrdie Mitchell, insisting that the British would not attack Savannah, did not order them into service. Mitchell's reasons for discounting the possibility of a British attack on Savannah were based on his belief that large boats could not navigate the Savannah River, and that the British would not hazard a small boat landing.  

The legislature, in December, 1812, upon recommendation of Governor Mitchell, appropriated $30,000 for the defense of Savannah, but insufficient funds in the state treasury prevented the expenditures. This created much anxiety and resulted in protests from the citizens of Savannah, who accused Governor Mitchell of neglecting to provide the city with adequate protection. Mitchell informed Savannah's Mayor George Jones, who had written him for state assistance, that he could not expend money which was not available. Although the legislature had appropriated funds for the defense of the city, Mitchell reported that the legislators had left him with only $12,000 in the treasury. With this amount he had to make payment on a note at the Planters Bank for state obligations and pay for twelve hundred swords, five hundred rifles and an undisclosed amount of ammunition. Perplexed as to what he could do, Mitchell assured Jones that he would attempt to provide security for the city.

The governor wrote George Michael Troup, Congressman from Georgia, on June 18, 1813, that Savannah and the state were inadequately fortified,

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12 Governor David Byrdie Mitchell to John McIntosh, June 13, 1813, in Letter Book A, p. 110.

13 Governor David Byrdie Mitchell to George Jones, June 17, 1813, in Letter Book A, p. 112.
and requested assistance in obtaining immediate federal aid. Mitchell asked that the number of troops stationed in Savannah and along the coast be increased. He explained that there were only two companies of soldiers quartered in Savannah, while General Pinckney, who had established headquarters at Point Petre, had a force of one thousand. Mitchell asked that a part of Pinckney's troops be moved to fortifications along the Georgia seaboard. ¹⁴

While apprehensions over the unprotected coastline continued, the Creek war temporarily diverted the attention of Georgia's citizens during most of the year of 1813 and the early months of 1814. The appearance of British ships off the Georgia coast in the spring of 1814 brought once again the possibility of a British invasion.

During the summer and fall Georgians watched as the British wreaked havoc along the Chesapeake area, reducing coastal towns to ashes. They read with disbelief and disgust about the capture of Washington and the burning of the principal governmental buildings. A state of anxiety prevailed as a naval squadron sailed from the Chesapeake, and the citizenry expressed relief in the report that the fleet moved around Florida and into the Gulf. But the people of Georgia continued to view their situation as critical. Alarmed that Savannah would suffer the same fate as the Chesapeake area, citizens of the city called a town meeting on September 28 to discuss means of protecting Savannah against an invasion. After lengthy debates, a vigilance committee was appointed with the responsibility of keeping the citizenry informed of British

¹⁴ Governor David Byrdie Mitchell to George Michael Troup, June 18, 1813, in Letter Book A, pp. 115-116.
activities off the coast and of any indication of a British attempt to invade the city. Bulletins on the state of affairs were to be issued daily and the number of ships off the coast were to be kept under surveillance. The vigilance committee was directed to secure the names of all able-bodied men in and around Savannah who were not enrolled in military corps or who refused to assist in erecting fortifications. Savannahians agreed that such laxity among the populace would not be tolerated. Citizens called on Governor Early to "throw into the city ... a force that would effectively protect them." They issued an appeal to Georgians for volunteers to aid in the defense of Savannah and by January, 1815, "several hundred" up-country Georgians responded to the appeal.

The citizens of Savannah also attempted to raise money for defense of their city by soliciting voluntary contributions. This project failed for want of sufficient contributors, and again Savannahians appealed to the governor. Early was still without funds and the legislature was not in session but he believed that he must act quickly in an effort to allay the fears of the people. The governor personally borrowed the necessary funds from the Planters Bank in Savannah with which to complete the fortifications of the port city. When the

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15 Savannah Republican, September 29, 1814.

16 Mathew McAllister to Governor Peter Early, September 29, 1814, in Louise Frederick Hayes, unpublished Indian Letters, 1782-1839, p. 72, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.

General Assembly convened in October, the legislators immediately sanctioned the governor's actions, appropriating funds to repay the loan.

While Early was attempting to fortify Savannah and the Georgia coast, James Monroe, who had replaced John Armstrong as Secretary of War, ordered Governor Early to organize, arm and equip 2500 militia to join Major General Andrew Jackson at Mobile. During the Creek campaign, Jackson had not lost sight of what he considered to be the main threat to the safety of the southern United States, the possibility that the British might establish bases in Spanish Florida and unite the Indians. As soon as he completed the treaty with the Creeks at Fort Jackson, General Jackson marched to Mobile where his fears were confirmed. He learned on August 15 that British troops had arrived at Pensacola, in West Florida, and were arming and training the Upper Creeks with the intention of sending them against Georgia's frontier settlements. The general, fearing a renewal of Indian warfare, kept a close watch on British activities at Pensacola while preparing the Mobile area for a British invasion. Believing that Mobile could be the next point for a British attack, Jackson dispatched 160 men to strengthen Fort Bowyer on the end of a sand pit guarding the entrance to the bay, 30 miles below Mobile. 18

Jackson's precautions were not premature for on September 12, a British force landed to the rear of the fort. Three days later an

18Andrew Jackson to Secretary of War James Monroe, September 5, 1814, in John Spencer Bassett, Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, 1814-1845, 7 Volumes (Washington: Carnegie Institute, 1926-1935), II, 112. (Hereinafter cited as Bassett, Jackson Correspondence.)
assault on the fortress ended in a bloody battle in which the British lost 162 killed and 72 wounded. Jackson's losses were slight, four were killed and four wounded. Badly beaten, the remainder of the British squadron withdrew to Pensacola. 19

As the British retreated, Jackson massed his forces north of Mobile where he awaited authorization from Washington to invade Spanish territory. Permission never came and in order to thwart British activities at Pensacola, Jackson decided that Pensacola must be reduced without further delay. He drafted a letter to the Secretary of War on October 26 explaining his plans for an attack on Pensacola, pointing out that he was cognizant of the fact he would be acting without sanction of the government. 20

With a force of three thousand, Jackson stormed the Spanish town on November 7, forcing the British to flee. After driving the Creeks and Seminoles, who had taken refuge there, into the swamps, Pensacola fell to his command. While Jackson dictated surrender terms to the Spanish governor, a letter forbidding action was dispatched by Monroe to Jackson. Monroe informed Jackson that it was the president's desire not to become involved in a war with Spain. Instead of wielding military force, Monroe said, the United States wished to deal with the Spanish governor at Pensacola through diplomatic channels. 21

19 Major General Andrew Jackson to Secretary of War James Monroe, September 17, 1814, in Bassett, Jackson Correspondence, II, 50.

20 Major General Andrew Jackson to Secretary of War James Monroe, October 26, 1814, ibid., II, 82.

21 James Monroe to Major General Andrew Jackson, October 21, 1814, ibid., II, 82.
letter arrived too late. The general had settled the grievances by force. Jackson explained his actions in the Pensacola campaign in a letter to Governor Early of Georgia as being "occasioned by the unprecedented conduct of the Governor of Pensacola, in harboring, aiding, and countenancing the British and their red allies." Although Jackson had exceeded his authority by invading the territory of a foreign country, Georgians applauded his actions. "The Spaniards have furnished the Indians with arms and encouraged them to attack Georgia, and Pensacola afforded them an asylum," declared the editor of the Milledgeville Georgia Journal on December 7, and Jackson's conduct "is a circumstance which affords no just cause of regret on our part, but rather of gratulation." Whether Jackson was right or wrong in the action he took against Pensacola was of no consequence to the citizens of Georgia. "Old Hickory" had defeated Georgia's ancient enemy and the people were grateful.

While Jackson was subduing the British and Indians at Mobile and Pensacola, the State of Georgia continued making preparations to meet an invasion. Governor Early, believing that an attack on the state was imminent and in need of appropriations for defense, called the General Assembly into special session in October. When the lawmakers convened on October 17, Early requested that the legislators provide means for adequate preparations for war, pointing out that appropriations

\[\text{\textsuperscript{22}Milledgeville Georgia Journal, December 7, 1814.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{23}Ibid.}\]
were needed for defense projects along the coastal area. Difficulty with mutinous troops in the past prompted the chief executive to request reorganization of the militia. He emphasized the need for better organization and better discipline of the troops. The method of electing officers, in his opinion, had proven to be inadequate. He believed that officers elected by men whom they commanded produced insubordination and was injurious to the officers. Calling for prompt action on the part of the legislators, the governor declared: "Our system has been calculated for a peace establishment. It is high time that one should be substituted . . . for a state of War."2

Governor Early then issued an address to the citizens of Georgia in which he recounted the atrocities which the British had committed upon the former English colonies. These were occasioned by jealousies toward the United States, he said, caused by her growing commercial and naval power. Referring to the devastation along the Chesapeake area, the chief executive declared that such practices would create animosities which ages could not erase. The American child, he predicted, would learn in his cradle to "abhor the British name, and the lesson will be handed down from generation to generation."25

The people sanctioned the governor's statements. The editor of the Milledgeville Georgia Journal declared that the governor's address was "precisely such a document as the times call for. It is concise

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2 Georgia Senate Journal (1814), p. 5.
25 Ibid., pp. 6, 7.
and energetic—breathes an indignant spirit of resentment at the atrocious conduct of the enemy. ..."26

The General Assembly also concurred with the chief executive. In response to Early's plea for placing Georgia in the best possible state of military readiness, the legislature passed a measure which authorized the governor to appoint Major and Brigadier Generals, field and company officers according to seniority. In addition, $45,000 was appropriated for the defense of Savannah and $10,000 for Saint Marys and other intermediate points along the coast.27

While the legislators wrestled with the problems of preparing Georgia for war, Early directed final preparations for sending troops to General Jackson at Mobile. The chief executive ordered 2500 Georgia militia to convene at Fort Hawkins on November 21, and tendered command of the expedition to General John McIntosh. In the midst of preparations, the governor was again confronted with the perplexing problem of inadequate supplies. The militia had been called into service initially by order of the Secretary of War, therefore, these troops were technically under command of the United States and as such it was the responsibility of the central government to furnish them with supplies. The United States Army Quartermaster at Savannah was destitute of both supplies and funds, consequently the state of Georgia must provide the troops with the needed equipment if there were to be immediate protection. The

26 Milledgeville Georgia Journal, October 19, 1814.

27 Georgia Senate Journal (1814), pp. 18, 22, 30; Savannah Republican, November 8, 1814.
legislature in December authorized Early to advance $20,000 for that purpose, and another advance of $30,000 was made by Early in January.28

General McIntosh's troops assembled at Camp Hope near Fort Hawkins in central Georgia and the decision was made to send 1700 of the 2500 troops to General Andrew Jackson at Mobile. One regiment of eight hundred under General David Blackshear was to be detached and sent by way of Hartford and down the Flint River to destroy Seminole settlements some sixty miles east of the Flint. Blackshear, on January 7, 1815, reached a point forty-one miles from Hartford where he received orders from Governor Early to rejoin McIntosh on the way to Mobile.

This change of plans was prompted by a letter from General McIntosh advising the governor of the presence of a large force of British troops at Ships Island in the Gulf of Mexico and requesting Blackshear's immediate assistance to bolster the military forces around Mobile. Blackshear set out immediately to join McIntosh. He had proceeded only a short distance when his route of march was changed once again. Governor Early ordered him to move "without delay" to Fort Barrington near the Georgia coast. The new orders were issued after it was learned that the British had landed troops on Cumberland Island, and there were enemy ships anchored off Saint Marys.29

Governor Early put General Blackshear in an awkward position by this order, and Early himself might have been subject to censure for

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28 Governor Peter Early to James Monroe, January 30, 1815, in Governor's Letter Book B, 1815-1821, p. 84, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta. (Hereinafter cited as Letter Book B.)

29 Governor Peter Early to General David Blackshear, January 19, 1815, in Letter Book B, pp. 75-76.
his action. Blackshear's troops were in the service of the United States, not Georgia, and Blackshear himself was under General McIntosh's command. Blackshear's last orders from McIntosh were to proceed toward Mobile. Early justified his order in his letter to Blackshear:

The defense of our land is the first and most imperious duty. Were the regiment under your command without the State, on its route to Mobile, I should not interfer with it; but, under existing circumstance, I should think it criminal inattention to my own greatest duty to suffer the force to pursue its destination. You are already in the field, prepared at all points, and at the very spot most favorable for marching to the relief of the seacoast. Before other troops could be collected, organized, and marched there, insurrection on one side, and Indian massacre on the other, may have produced their full measure of ruin. . . . Under all these circumstances, I take on myself the responsibility of ordering you with the force under your command to shape your course, without delay, to the point invaded.30

The day after counteracting Blackshear's orders, Early explained his actions in a letter to the Secretary of War informing him that because of the British invasion of Georgia he had ordered the militia to the state's defense.31

On January 11, 1815, the British invaded Georgia.32 A force, consisting of two war ships with seventy-four guns, seven frigates, numbers of smaller armed vessels, nineteen barges and fifteen hundred colonial and Negro troops, established headquarters on Cumberland Island

30 Governor Peter Early to General David Blackshear, January 19, 1815, in Letter Book B, pp. 75-76.

31 Governor Peter Early to James Monroe, January 20, 1815, in Letter Book B, p. 78. At this point Georgians had not yet learned of Jackson's victory. After the general had subdued Pensacola, he turned attention to New Orleans. There he displayed his military genius by defeating a superior British force on January 19, 1815, two weeks after a peace treaty had been concluded at Ghent, Belgium.

32 News of the peace treaty had not reached America at this juncture.
off the Georgia mainland. Two days later, on January 13, barges filled with one thousand British troops crossed the sound toward the Saint Marys River and before noon the first barge was pushed aground near Point Petre. On the Point and in Saint Marys, Captain A. A. Massias and a force of ninety-six men defended their posts heroically against overwhelming numbers. Massias' forces suffered fourteen casualties before they retreated to form a defense line near Barrington with Colonel William Scott's eighty-man militia force at Jefferson on the Satilla River.  

Destroying the fort and magazine on Point Petre, the British advanced and laid siege to Saint Marys. The town was given an ultimatum, either surrender or be laid to ashes. Saint Marys capitulated and British and Negro soldiers pillaged the village. Few of the townspeople were molested, but everything of value, including a large quantity of cotton, was confiscated and placed aboard British vessels anchored off shore. The enemy next turned to the islands of Saint Simons and Jekyll, plundering and burning most of the buildings. British forces occupied all the inlet water ways between Brunswick and Saint Marys, and continued pillaging the south Georgia coast; at the same time they continued to encourage the slaves to join them. Negroes flocked to the British standard and so successful were the British in this effort that General Blackshear, who had arrived at Barrington near

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33Niles' Weekly Register, VII (February 4, 1815), 362.
34Ibid., 363.
Darien, ordered all boats and canoes between Darien and Brunswick destroyed in order to prevent the escape of the slaves.\(^35\)

After successfully plundering the lower southern coast of Georgia, the British turned attention northward, moving slowly toward Savannah. Panic prevailed in coastal Georgia, especially in the port city of Savannah. Fear of the British and the Negroes and rumors of six hundred Indians advancing toward Georgia from Florida sent the frontiersmen scurrying for coastal towns above Saint Marys. Settlements on the Saint Marys, Satilla and Altamaha rivers were abandoned as frightened families fled. Governor Early arrived in Savannah on January 22 with two thousand troops and immediately declared martial law in the city in an attempt to control a people made "senseless by fear." Early insisted that the over-powering fear was created by rumors of six thousand British troops marching on the city and of Indian-Negro war parties bent on raiding the frontier settlements.\(^36\)

The rumors had no foundation. Before the British could carry out an attack on Savannah, authorities in London ordered British officials in Georgia to forego a full invasion of the state as a peace treaty was expected momentarily. On January 24, 1815, the British, before evacuating, burned the barracks at Point Petre, seized and towed away all vessels in the Saint Marys River, and returned to their camp.

\(^{35}\)General David Blackshear to General John Floyd, February 13, 1815, in Stephen Franks Miller, Memoirs of General David Blackshear (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippencott and Company, 1858), pp. 461-462. (Hereinafter cited as Miller, Memoirs.)

\(^{36}\)Niles' Weekly Register, VII (February 4, 1815), 364.
on Cumberland Island, where they awaited the formal news of the peace treaty.  

Prior to the British departure from Georgia soil, Georgia militia had an opportunity to avenge some of the humiliation inflicted upon the state. On February 24, 20 Georgians and some 30 Patriots from Florida surprised a force of 250 British troops near Coleraine, 45 miles above Saint Marys. Caught in a deadly cross-fire, approximately 130 English troops were killed or wounded. Admiral Cockburn was so infuriated by the event that he swore that he would send a force of sufficient strength into Georgia to burn every building between the Saint Marys and the Altamaha rivers.  

Before he could carry out his threat, however, he received orders to cease hostilities because of the peace settlement between Great Britain and the United States. 

News of the cessation of hostilities and the signing of the Treaty of Ghent reached Georgia on February 25, 1815. Peace celebrations throughout the state marked the event. In Savannah, the occasion was celebrated by illumination and music with a festive mood predominating. The streets were crowded with people of all "colors, sorts and denominations," who, with lighted candles, on foot and on horseback, enlivened the streets with their merriment. The jubilant crowd was led by a contingency of military forces as they traversed the streets in procession, accompanied by all the martial music that could be mustered. The vessels 

37 Patrick, Fiasco, p. 288. 

38 John McIntosh to David Blackshear, April 2, 1815, in Miller, Memoirs, pp. 465-466.
in the harbor were illuminated, and the air resounded with loud cheers and the firing of cannons and small arms. To further enliven the celebration, seamen from the vessels anchored in the harbor carried a decorated miniature ship through the streets, shouting "Don't give up the ship!" It was evident that Georgians were happy that the struggle between the United States and England had come to an end.

The years from 1808 to 1815 were difficult for the people of Georgia. The embargo, the non-intercourse act and the war created severe hardships. Export trade dwindled with the result that the price of cotton, Georgia's chief export, plummeted to an all time low causing numerous bankruptcies. But despite the financial problems the war was not void of benefits. Georgia had become more self-sufficient. As long as cotton had sold for a high price, Georgians depended entirely on foreign commerce and foreign manufacturers for the necessities of life as well as many non-essential items. Before the war, Georgia raised no wheat, and the production of corn was insufficient for domestic use, consequently the state had to import flour and corn. The embargo and the war changed this dependency. Georgia now raised wheat equal in quality to that of any state, and manufactured flour for exportation. Before the war, Georgia's Indian neighbors supplied the state with beef, while horses and hogs came from Tennessee and Kentucky. Georgia now raised horses, cattle and hogs providing the state with an ample supply of beef and pork. Furthermore, in former times, while basking in the

39 John Floyd to David Blackshear, February 25, 1815, in George White, Historical Collections of Georgia (New York: Pudney and Russell, 1851), p. 164.
full tide of commercial prosperity, Georgians had not produced enough material to clothe themselves nor their slaves. A spinning wheel had been a rarity in Georgia. The embargo and non-intercourse made "every planter... a manufacturer, and every lady a spinstress," at least as far as basic necessities for domestic use.10

Although the war of 1812 increased economic self sufficiency and made Georgia less dependent on others, Georgians were keenly disappointed with the treaty negotiations. The fact that the United States did not secure Florida from Spain and the failure to remove the Creek Indians from the state's western boundary were viewed with concern. In the war of 1812, the people of Georgia saw an opportunity to achieve these objectives. They supported a war with Great Britain, although ostensibly for the benefit of the commercial states of the northeast, to further the interests of Georgia. They were convinced that the United States, in order to prevent the British from establishing military bases in Florida, would secure the territory from England's ally, Spain, and they worked assiduously to achieve this objective. This project failed, however, when the United States Senate refused to sanction subjugation of the Floridas.

Thwarted in this effort, Georgia citizens turned attention to obtaining the second objective, that of removing the Creek Indians from the boundary of the state. The United States government had promised in 1802, as a condition on which Georgia ceded her western lands, to remove the Creeks as soon as this could be done feasibly. In 1812,

10Augusta Chronicle, February 20, 1814.
Indians still remained a barrier to Georgia's westward expansion. When a civil war broke out among the Creeks in 1813, Georgians found little difficulty in persuading the United States government that the Indians were acting in consort with the British and must be defeated. When the Creek war was concluded, Georgians expected the federal government to carry out its earlier promise. This the government refused to do. The Indians were left in the central area of Georgia but were removed from parts of Alabama where the government was under no obligation to act.

When peace was concluded in 1815, the people of Georgia found themselves faced with many of the problems which they hoped that the war of 1812 would alleviate. It was not until 1819, when Spain ceded Florida to the United States, and in 1827, when the federal government finally removed the Creeks and Cherokees from the state, that the people of Georgia finally realized the objectives so clearly expressed in the support of the war against England in 1812.
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