Three peoples, one king: Loyalists, Indians, slaves and the American Revolution in the Deep South, 1775-1782

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THREE PEOPLES, ONE KING:

Loyalists, Indians, Slaves and the

American Revolution in the Deep South, 1775-1782

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A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

James R. Piecuch

2005
APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

James R. Piecuch

Approved by the Committee, October 2005

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all those courageous Americans: white, red, and black, who gave their lives during the Revolution in the hope of creating a different future for America within the British empire.
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PREFACE

In preparing this manuscript, I employed certain terms that require a brief explanation. When referring to those American colonists who supported the British, I have used the term “loyalists” throughout the text, foregoing use of the synonym “Tories,” which had a derogatory connotation. When quoting from sources, however, the terms “Tory” and “Tories” were left unaltered. I used the terms “Whigs,” “rebels,” and “Americans” interchangeably when referring to those colonists who supported the Revolution. To maintain consistency with the documentary sources, I have generally used the term “Indians” rather than “Native Americans.” The terms blacks, slaves, and African Americans are used interchangeably. In those rare instances involving blacks who were not slaves, I have indicated their free status. Charleston, South Carolina, was spelled “Charles Town,” “Charlestown,” and “Charleston” during the 1770s and 1780s; I have left the original spelling intact in quotations, but used “Charleston” uniformly in the text.

In manuscript collections in which each page is numbered, such as the Cornwallis Papers, I have given only the number of the first page of the cited document in the footnotes. The information or quotation from that document may appear on a subsequent page or pages. To reduce the length of the footnotes, I have employed several abbreviations for sources and archives. An explanation of these abbreviations immediately precedes the bibliography.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of a work of this magnitude requires the assistance and encouragement of many people. I would like to thank my advisor, Professor James Axtell, for his guidance and support, along with Professors Eliga Gould, James Whittenburg, and Ronald Schechter for their advice. Thanks also to Professor Ronald Hoffman of the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture for suggesting the Revolutionary South as an appropriate topic.

I am grateful to the David Library of the American Revolution, the Institute of Southern Studies at the University of South Carolina, and the William L. Clements Library for providing fellowship support, and to the College of William & Mary for providing several research grants. Many archivists and librarians also provided valuable assistance, and although space does not permit me to list them all, Sam Fore and Henry Fulmer of the South Caroliniana Library, John Dann, John Harriman and the staff of the Clements Library, Kathy Ludwig and the staff of the David Library, Linda Baier of the Harriet C. Irving Library at the University of New Brunswick, and the staffs at the Library of Congress, Georgia Historical Society, and the Earl Gregg Swem Library at the College of William & Mary merit special thanks.

Anne Yehl also deserves thanks for an outstanding job in assisting me with research.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to my wife Lori and son Joey for their patience and support, and, although they can’t read this, to my Siberian huskies Shyleea and Max, who seemed to know that a long run in the woods can be the best remedy for writer’s block.
ABSTRACT

This study examines the roles of white loyalists, Indians and African-Americans in the British effort to regain control of South Carolina and Georgia during the American Revolution, 1775-1782.

British officials believed that support from these three groups would make the conquest of the Deep South colonies a relatively easy task. But when the British launched a major effort to regain first Georgia and then South Carolina, the attempt ultimately ended in failure. Most historians have explained this outcome by arguing that British planning was faulty in its conception, and that officials overestimated both the numbers of southern loyalists and the effectiveness of Indian support.

A detailed account of the contributions loyalists, Indians and slaves made to British operations in the South demonstrates the scope and effectiveness of this support, and concludes that neither a lack of assistance from these three groups nor poorly conceived plans were responsible for British failure to regain control of Georgia and South Carolina. Rather, British leaders failed to coordinate effectively the efforts of their supporters in the Deep South, largely because they did not recognize that the peoples on whom they counted for aid had disparate interests and a history of mutual animosity that needed to be overcome to achieve their full cooperation. Furthermore, the British never provided their supporters with adequate protection from regular troops, which allowed the American rebels to undertake a brutal campaign of suppression against all who favored the royal cause. Although loyalists, Indians, and slaves strove valiantly to aid the British in the face of such persecution, the violence eventually took its toll and enabled the rebels to overcome their opponents.
THREE PEOPLES, ONE KING:
LOYALISTS, INDIANS, SLAVES AND THE AMERICAN
REVOLUTION IN THE DEEP SOUTH, 1775-1782
Part 1
INTRODUCTION

On the morning of December 14, 1782, the weak winter sun revealed dozens of British ships clogging the waters of Charleston harbor in South Carolina, waiting for the shift of the tide that would carry them over the bar and out into the Atlantic. Throngs of people, blacks as well as whites, crowded the decks, the murmurs of thousands of voices drowning out the sounds of water lapping against wooden hulls, of masts and spars creaking in the wind. The passengers discussed with sadness the events that had led them to this point, and the uncertain future that lay ahead.

Hundreds of miles to the west, in towns scattered throughout the wilderness between the Appalachians and the Mississippi, thousands of Native Americans also pondered their past and their future. Like their black and white counterparts aboard the evacuation fleet, they had committed themselves to supporting the royal cause in the American Revolution. That cause was now irretrievably lost. Yet all of those who had fought for it, black, red, and white Americans, British and German soldiers, had made great efforts on behalf of King George III. The proof of their commitment could be found in the thousands of graves that seeded the soil of South Carolina, Georgia, and East and West Florida, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, from the Gulf of Mexico to the Ohio River. It could be found in the ashes of burned Indian towns, in the bloody scars left by whips across the backs of slaves who had fled to the British, in the once-prosperous farms
and plantations lying desolate after having been confiscated by the victorious American rebels.

In that gloomy December, white loyalists, African Americans, and Native Americans all wondered how things had gone so very wrong, how the hopes they had entertained for their future within the British empire, which had dimmed and flared so many times during the past seven and one-half years, had finally been extinguished. Had they themselves failed to do enough? Did the British government fail them? Or were there other reasons for the distressing outcome of the war? Whatever conclusion they reached, one thing was certain: this was not the fate anyone among them had envisioned in 1775.

British officials had certainly not expected such an outcome either. From the start of the American Revolution, King George III and his ministers believed that the support of the numerous southern loyalists, Indians, and slaves would enable the army to restore royal authority in Georgia and South Carolina with relative ease. Yet despite a promising start when British forces finally launched a campaign in the South at the end of 1778, the effort eventually failed. In the aftermath of defeat, British leaders devoted little effort to an analysis of the reasons for the failure of their southern operations, focusing instead on blaming their political opponents, or avoiding blame themselves, for the lost war.

Historians, however, have since sought to explain why the British failed to regain control of South Carolina and Georgia. Most attribute the British defeat to a fundamental error in planning the southern campaign: officials in London “grossly exaggerated the extent of loyalism in the South.”¹ Don Higginbotham wrote that the decision to


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undertake the southern campaign was made because the ministry "mistakenly thought
great Tory strength lay slumbering in the South." He blamed the royal governors for
"disseminating false information" in this regard, thus creating the "illusion" of numerous
loyalists in the South. The eminent British historian Sir John Fortescue stated that the
British based their military plans for the southern colonies "on the presumed support of a
section of the inhabitants. Of all the foundations whereon to build the conduct of a
campaign this is the loosest, the most treacherous, the fullest of peril and delusion." It
was not surprising, Fortescue declared, that the campaign met "with the invariable
consequence of failure and disaster .... The mere fact that the British Ministry rested its
hopes on the co-operation of the American loyalists was sufficient to distract its councils
and vitiate its plans." Piers Mackesy likewise wrote that the "real miscalculation" made
by British officials in their planning "was the strength and vitality of the loyalists." Elsewhere, he asserted that British planning was handicapped by advice from "biased and
out-of-touch loyalists" who convinced the king's ministers that large numbers of loyalists

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the American Revolution (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1984), 18. See also Paul David
Dec. 1978, in which Nelson states that loyalist support in the South was less than expected, "partly because
loyalists were restrained from joining the British army by the activity of patriot guerrillas, but mostly
because loyalist numbers had been greatly exaggerated in the first place," 628. H. T. Dickinson makes the
Longman, 1998), 16. For similar assessments, see Alan Valentine, Lord George Germain (Oxford: Oxford
University Press, 1962), 433; Robert McChuer Calhoon, The Loyalists in Revolutionary America, 1760-
1781 (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), xi; Robert Stansbury Lambert, South Carolina
Loyalists in the American Revolution (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 307; John S.
Pancake, This Destructive War: The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782 (University: University

2 Don Higginbotham, Daniel Morgan: Revolutionary Rifleman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina

3 Don Higginbotham, The War of American Independence: Military Attitudes, Policies, and Practice, 1763-
1789 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1983), 135.

4 Sir John Fortescue, The War of Independence: The British Army in North America, 1775-1783

5 Piers Mackesy, The War for America, 1775-1783 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 32.
stood ready to assist British troops. Continuing in the same vein, David K. Wilson insisted that British strategy in the South was based "on the erroneous premise that the majority of the population in the southern colonies was loyal to the king" and criticized British leaders for clinging to this idea "notwithstanding the accumulation of considerable evidence to the contrary." Those who have written on the southern campaign for a popular audience generally share these opinions.

Only a few historians believe that British officials had been fairly accurate in their appraisal of loyalist strength in the South. John Shy insisted that the British assessment of the numbers of southern loyalists was at least partially correct, writing that "British estimates of American attitudes were frequently in error, but seldom were they completely mistaken." John Richard Alden went a step farther, describing southern loyalists as "numerous, vigorous and dangerous," and noting that loyalists comprised a large proportion of the population in both South Carolina and Georgia.

Those who concede that British officials were generally correct in believing that loyalists were relatively numerous in the South nonetheless argue that southern loyalists failed to come forward and actively assist the British. Some of these historians attribute this lack of loyalist support to flaws in British policy, as well as to the loyalists'...
essentially passive nature. In his study of the loyalists’ role in British planning, Paul H. Smith found that British officials had no consistent policy regarding the employment of loyalists in support of the army. “The capacity of the Loyalists to affect the outcome of the war, their real ability to thwart the aims of the Revolution, was directly tied to their projected role in British plans to end the rebellion,” he wrote. “Since they were almost entirely dependent upon British military decisions, their part can be understood only in terms of British efforts to organize them. For this reason it is fruitless to attempt to assess their contribution in terms of their strength, concentration, attitudes, and military capacity, without examining British plans for their mobilization.”  

Smith described the British attitude toward loyalists as one of “ambivalence,” with the ministers “eager to use them and unwilling to make the concessions and detailed preparations required to weld them into an efficient force.” He concluded that “the Loyalists never occupied a fixed, well-understood place in British strategy. Plans to use them were in the main ad hoc responses to constantly changing conditions.” In addition, Smith stated that British leaders never fully understood the loyalists, whom he described as “conservative, cautious, abhoring violence ... The Loyalist’s virtues were military weaknesses. He was generally uncertain of his position, and was disinclined to commit himself boldly. He was more likely to hesitate than to volunteer, to watch on the sidelines than to fight openly.” This has become the prevailing view among historians. With regard to South Carolina, Wallace Brown declared that loyalists there “are exceptionally

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13 Smith, Loyalists and Redcoats, ix.
14 Smith, Loyalists and Redcoats, 58. Piers Mackesy, departing from his opinion that British officials vastly overestimated the number of loyalists, takes a position similar to that of Smith. Mackesy writes that the British belief in loyalist strength “was nearer the truth than was once supposed,” and that “American loyalists were indeed numerous. But ... they lacked organisation, unity of interests, and a common standard around which they could rally.” Mackesy, War for America, 36.
open to the charge of timidity and equivocation.”15 Ann Gorman Condon wrote that “American historians have been inclined to dismiss [loyalists] as weak and unimaginative hangers-on, as lackeys of the Crown.”16

Such criticism of the southern loyalists, which originated during the Revolution and continues to pervade the secondary literature, has proven an obstacle to an accurate assessment of loyalist contributions to the British effort to regain control of the southern provinces. Denunciations of the loyalists came from both British and American writers. Lieutenant General Charles, Earl Cornwallis, commander of the British southern department, described loyal South Carolinians in November 1780 as “dastardly and pusillanimous.”17 Cornwallis’s complaints earned him the sympathy of a French observer, the Marquis de Chastellux, who wrote that it was the British general’s sad fate “to conduct, rather than command, a numerous band of traitors and robbers, which English policy decorated with the name of Loyalists. This rabble preceded the troops in plunder, taking special care never to follow them in danger. Their progress was marked by fire, devastation, and outrages of every kind.”18

The views expressed by Cornwallis and Chastellux demonstrate a paradox in opinions of the loyalists. On one hand, loyalists are criticized as passive, while on the other they are assailed as brutal, vengeance-driven purveyors of death and destruction.

The earliest American historians of the Revolution in the South, writing in the heat of anti-British sentiment that persisted well into the nineteenth century, established this portrait of loyalists as venal, bloodthirsty traitors to the glorious American cause. By the 1850s, this had become the standard historical account. In 1851, Joseph Johnson blamed the loyalists for both the viciousness of the war in South Carolina and for the harsh measures the Whigs applied against the loyalists. “They caused the horrors of a civil war, by which the country was desolated; and with it, the vindictive or retaliatory acts, the banishment, sequestration, and the destruction of life and property, on both sides,” Johnson asserted. Those who joined the loyal militia in the South Carolina backcountry in 1780 “were the most profligate and corrupt men in the country,” M. A. Moore declared in 1859.

Attacks on the loyalists also became a staple in fictional works. Nineteenth-century writer William Gilmore Simms published a series of historical novels based on events in revolutionary South Carolina, many of which first appeared in serial form in

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19 David Ramsay, *The History of the Revolution of South-Carolina, from a British Province to an Independent State* (Trenton, NJ: Isaac Collins, 1785); Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1901; reprint, New York: Russell & Russell, 1969); Hugh McCall, *The History of Georgia Containing Brief Sketches of the Most Remarkable Events, up to the Present Day* (Savannah: Seymour & Williams, 1811-1816). A rare exception to the endless attacks on loyalists, from an American writer, is Alexander Garden’s praise for the loyalists’ “zeal and activity in the cause in which they had engaged.” Garden describes the loyalists’ efforts as being “of the highest utility to our enemies, and leads to the development of a melancholy fact, that in almost every instance where our armies have been foiled in action, the opposition proceeded from our own countrymen.” Garden, who served in the rebel forces and wrote his history forty years after the war ended, may have been influenced by the fact that his father, Doctor Benjamin Garden, was a staunch loyalist. Yet Garden, referring to the operations of loyalist units such as the British Legion and the partisan bands of Daniel McGirt and David Fanning, criticizes “the deeds of horror perpetrated by this merciless banditti.” Alexander Garden, *Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War In America, with Sketches of Character of Persons the Most Distinguished, in the Southern States, for Civil and Military Service* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1822; reprint, Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Co., 1972), 258-259.

20 Joseph Johnson, *Traditions and Reminiscences Chiefly of the American Revolution in the South: Including Biographical Sketches, Incidents and Anecdotes, Few of which have been Published, Particularly of Residents in the Upper Country*, (Charleston: Walker and James, 1851; reprint, Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Co., 1972).

magazines and have been frequently reprinted. "Simms never treated the Loyalists with either sympathy or admiration," one historian notes in polite understatement. In his novel *Joscelyn*, for example, Simms describes loyalist leader Thomas Brown as a drunkard, "a savage, a brute, in many respects, ferocious and cruel." Simms portrays Moses Kirkland, another prominent loyalist, as an incompetent coward. Loyalist partisans practice "lust, and murder, and spoliation" in Simms's *The Scout*. Similar themes pervade the rest of Simms's revolutionary novels, such as *Eutaw*.

The trend of depicting the Revolution in the South as a clear-cut conflict between good and evil, the former personified by the American rebels and the latter by their opponents, continued with the work of Lyman C. Draper, who has been described as a "hero-worshiper and patriot" and "a maker of heroes." Draper's account of the Battle of King's Mountain glorified the brutal overmountain men who butchered Patrick Ferguson and his loyalist detachment. Later historians have given these early histories far more weight than they deserve, either accepting them at face value or insufficiently questioning their overall accuracy.

Canadian historian Thomas Raddall identified an important reason why loyalists have seldom received fair treatment in accounts of the Revolution. He observed that for Americans, the struggle for independence "was an epic story to be written in epic fashion,

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with scant regard for the other side of the argument, indeed with scant regard for the truth where the truth diminished in any way the glory of their achievement.” As a result, Raddall asserted that while the rebels’ cause was “fundamentally just,” historians have ignored the often less-than-heroic means the rebels employed in order to succeed, along with “the persecutions, the confiscations and banishment they inflicted upon their fellow-Americans.”

Thus the violent nature of the Revolution in the South has often been overlooked, except when acts of cruelty can be attributed to the British or loyalists. Both participants in the Revolution and later historians have ignored, downplayed, or attempted to justify the brutality with which Americans treated their enemies, for such viciousness contradicted the very ideals for which the rebels fought. As Charles Royster observed, American revolutionaries “agreed that the future of American liberty depended first on winning the war and second on how the war was won. Liberty could survive, many Americans believed, only if the people showed themselves to be worthy defenders of it.” The rebels soon learned, however, that winning the war often required measures that contrasted sharply with the ideals of their cause. Rather than recognize their willingness to sacrifice principle in the name of necessity, most revolutionaries found it easier to blame the British and loyalists for initiating acts of cruelty, leaving the Americans no choice but to retaliate in kind. Historians, too, chose this more palatable course.

Don Higginbotham, in one example of this practice, wrote that “brutality and savagery … had no appeal for the Americans in 1775.” He described the revolutionaries’

goal as “[o]rganized resistance carried out with restraint,” while noting “the absence of British suppression and American vengeance.” Noting that the conflict in the South was exceptional for its high level of violence, Higginbotham blamed this on the loyalists. He described them as “for the most part angry, bitter men” who “wanted a course of harsh retribution” against their former oppressors. The “bloodthirsty loyalists” drove the Americans “into open defiance,” while influencing Banastre Tarleton, Patrick Ferguson, Lord Rawdon and other British officers “most exposed to tory opinions” to embrace harsh, coercive policies.²⁹

Some writers concede that the Whigs were occasionally guilty of acts of violence and cruelty, but continue to insist that the British and loyalists behaved much worse. Cynthia A. Kiemer wrote that “scholars and contemporaries agree that the Whigs were less ruthless than their opponents .... Tories and British regulars terrorized the backcountry’s civilian population, murdering, plundering, taking prisoners, and causing chaos in many communities.”³⁰ Walter Edgar argued that British occupation policy in the South depended on cruelty for its success: “From Charles, Lord Cornwallis, to the humblest Tory militiaman, the occupying forces believed that fear and brutality would cow the populace.” Edgar blamed the British for the atrocities committed by both sides, stating that they “were initiated by British regulars or their Tory allies. Patriot militia bands responded in kind, and the violence escalated into a fury that laid waste to entire communities.”³¹

Very few historians have challenged this view. Fortescue described the rebel militia's "intimidation of loyalists" as a form of "terrorism" that "soon degenerated into indiscriminate robbery and violence," leading to loyalist retaliation and "in Carolina, a civil war of surpassed ferocity."\(^{32}\) Martha Condray Searcy was even more emphatic in placing responsibility for the violence in the South upon the Whigs. "The rebels began the violence," she wrote, referring to the outbreak of the Revolution in Georgia, and added that no evidence indicates that Georgia loyalists retaliated in kind.\(^{33}\)

Two other obstacles to an accurate assessment of the numerical strength of the southern loyalists, their contribution to the royal cause, and the soundness of British plans based on the expectation of loyalist support are the difficulty in gauging the loyalists' numbers and the fact that the allegiance of many southerners frequently shifted from one side to another. Statistical evidence of loyalist strength in the South derives from the claims submitted to the British government after the war by loyalists seeking compensation for their losses. This data indicates that loyalism was more common in South Carolina and Georgia than in any other colony except New York, but claims were filed by only a small fraction of loyalists, making any evidence derived from the claims incomplete.\(^{34}\)

\(^{32}\) Fortescue, *War of Independence*, 259.


\(^{34}\) Wallace Brown, *The King's Friends: The Composition and Motives of the American Loyalist Claimants* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1965), 213-214. Brown writes that South Carolinians filed 328 claims, representing .47 percent of the province's prewar white population. This proportion, while slightly less than that in New York, was "much higher than in any other colony ... except Georgia." Among Charleston residents, the percentage of inhabitants filing claims stood at 2.17, making that place "the most strongly loyal city in all America," with a proportion more than four times higher than that of New York. For the difficulty of using the loyalist claims as a basis for statistical analysis, see Eugene R. Fingerhut, "Uses and Abuses of the American Loyalists' Claims: a Critique of Quantitative Analyses," *W MQ*, Vol. 25, No. 2, April 1968, 245-258.
People in the southern colonies supported the British cause for a variety of reasons, some of which had more to do with local conditions than with attitudes toward imperial governance. Other colonists were neutral or not firmly committed to either side, so that in addition to the contest between staunch loyalists and Whigs, the Revolution in the South was "a struggle for the allegiance of the rank-and-file of the colonies’ white population." In a study of political allegiance in revolutionary Georgia, Leslie Hall concluded that many people adhered to whichever side was best able to provide them with land or protect their claim to the land they owned. Rachel Klein, explaining the rebels’ success in controlling the South Carolina interior, wrote that "the whigs more consistently represented the broad class interests of rising backcountry slaveowners." While these assertions are undoubtedly true so far as neutral southerners and lukewarm Whigs and loyalists are concerned, they overlook those whose loyalism arose from a commitment to political principles, and which led them to sacrifice their land and economic prospects rather than forsake their allegiance to Great Britain.

Given the preponderance of opinion, is it possible to come to any other conclusion than the prevailing one that British policy in the South was fundamentally flawed, based on chimerical predictions of loyalist support provided by biased loyalists and royal officials? Or that the few southern loyalists were either passive or brutal, and thus of little

35 The issues of loyalist motivation and political belief are for the most part beyond the scope of this study. For information on these topics, see Brown, The Good Americans; Calhoon, Loyalists in Revolutionary America; Brown, King’s Friends; William H. Nelson, The American Tory (London: Oxford University Press, 1961); Ann Gorman Condon, “Marching to a Different Drummer – The Political Philosophy of the American Loyalists,” in Esmond Wright, ed., Red, White, and True Blue: The Loyalists in the Revolution (New York: AMS Press, 1976); Condon, “Foundations of Loyalism,” 2-4.
37 Leslie Hall, Land and Allegiance in Revolutionary Georgia (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), esp. xi-xii.
use to the British? In fact, a careful study of the documentary evidence leads to very different conclusions. Casting aside the unsubstantiated reminiscences that constituted many of the early histories of the Revolution in the South, and carefully analyzing contemporary accounts from both British and American sources, reveals that British officials were indeed correct in believing that large numbers of loyalists inhabited Georgia and South Carolina, and that they would contribute greatly to the effort to restore royal authority in those provinces.

The best evidence for this can be found by comparing British assessments of loyalist strength in the South with those made by their American opponents. When compared, the reports are virtually interchangeable. Biased and out of touch the loyalist exiles and royal officials may have been, yet Americans in the South held identical opinions in regard to the numbers and military potential of the loyalists, as well as of the possible dangers that would arise if Indians and slaves assisted the king’s forces. American generals Robert Howe, Benjamin Lincoln, and Nathanael Greene and civil officials such as South Carolina governor John Rutledge did not share the loyalists’ biases, and they were certainly not out of touch: they were on the scene and in close contact with the inhabitants of the southern provinces.

This suggests that British officials based their plans to regain control of the Deep South colonies on accurate information, and the evidence further demonstrates that when British troops arrived in the South, large numbers of loyalists came forward to assist them. Some loyalists did hesitate to openly support the British, not from a “passive” nature, but from fear instilled by years of persecution at the hands of the rebels. The unremitting campaign of Whig cruelty, which far surpassed the brutality attributed to the
loyalists, also eventually drove many loyal Americans to abandon their allegiance to Britain to escape continued suffering. The British failed to restore royal authority in Georgia and South Carolina, not because loyalists were too few, too passive, or too cruel, but because the rebels relentlessly murdered, imprisoned, abused, and intimidated those who supported the king’s government. Many British officers recognized this situation and sympathized with the loyalists’ plight. “The richest loyalist runs the risk of becoming a beggar” if left unprotected by the British army, a Hessian officer noted in 1778.39

Like the loyalists, Indians constituted one of the pillars upon which British hopes for the reconquest of the southern provinces rested. Also like the loyalists, the Indians have been criticized for providing inadequate support to the British and for committing acts of cruelty which drove many white southerners into the rebel camp. As James H. O’Donnell, III, noted, “The general theme that the Indian was an utter villain” arose during the Revolution and “would continue to distort historical accounts.”40 Peter Marshall believed that “a strong case can be made for the view that the horror aroused by Indian participation in military campaigns far exceeded the assistance thus secured by either side.”41 Edward J. Cashin asserted that the British should have avoided using Indians altogether. “The decision to use Indians was a major miscalculation by the British high command,” he wrote, adding that the policy insured that land-hungry backcountry settlers, most of whom were “Indian haters,” would support the rebels.42

42 Edward J. Cashin, “‘But Brothers, It Is Our Land We Are Talking About’: Winners and Losers in the Georgia Backcountry,” in Ronald Hoffman, Thad W. Tate, and Peter J. Albert, eds., An Uncivil War: The
Cashin based his opinion on the erroneous assumption that if British officials had not called upon the Indians for support, the latter would have remained idle spectators to the Anglo-American conflict. Indians recognized that they had a great stake in the outcome of the Revolution, and would have participated regardless of what British ministers in London decided. “The logic of nearly two hundred years of abrasive contact with colonizing Europeans compelled the choice” most Indians made to support Britain, Gary Nash observed, since it was the colonists “who most threatened Indian autonomy,” whereas for more than a decade the British government had attempted to halt the influx of settlers onto Indian land.43

British officials did make several errors in their plans to use Indians against the rebels. First, the ministers assumed that the Indians would act only when instructed to do so by British Indian agents, overlooking the fact that the Indians were independent allies who preferred to fight the colonists on their own terms, which did not always coincide with British plans. Second, British leaders tended to think of the southern tribes as a single entity, overlooking the divisions between the four southern Indian nations, some of which had been aggravated by Britain’s own Indian agents in order to provide security for the colonists by promoting animosity among the Indians. Furthermore, all of the major southern Indian nations, except the Chickasaws, were riven by internal dissension that made unified action by even a single nation difficult to achieve. Finally, British officials failed to realize the animosity that existed between the Indians and backcountry whites, regardless of whether the latter were loyalists or Whigs. This produced the

paradox of committed loyalists alternately fighting the rebels and joining with their white opponents against their erstwhile Indian allies. Despite these flaws in British policy, southern Indians did contribute significantly to the British effort in the South; even when they remained inactive, the Indians constituted a potential threat that rebel leaders could not ignore, and the mere rumor of an Indian attack frequently diverted Whig militia and regular troops who would otherwise have been employed against the British and loyalists. Responding to the Indian menace in the same manner as they dealt with the loyalists, the Whigs unleashed a torrent of brutality to suppress their Indian enemies and intimidated them into withdrawing from the conflict.

The role of Britain’s third group of supporters in the South, African American slaves, was overlooked for nearly two centuries. Most historians followed the path of David Ramsay, the South Carolina rebel who wrote in his influential history of the Revolution that slaves were “so well satisfied with their condition, that several have been known to reject proffered freedom … emancipation does not appear to be the wish of the generality of them.” Ramsay could not have helped personally observing the flight of thousands of slaves to the British; he and those who wrote afterwards evidently preferred to write histories that would please themselves and their patriotic readers rather than face the unpleasant fact that for most African Americans it was the British, not the Whigs, who provided the opportunity to gain liberty. As Gary Nash noted, “the American Revolution represents the largest slave uprising” in American history. “Discovering the power of the revolutionary ideology of protest, slaves found the greatest opportunities for applying it by fleeing to the very forces against which Americans directed their

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ideological barbs.” Nash added that this uprising “was carried on individually rather than collectively for the most part, because circumstances favored individualized struggles for freedom.” The war “gave slaves new leverage to challenge both the institution of chattel bondage and the allied structures of white supremacy.” Divisions in the planter class between Whigs and loyalists shattered the white unity on which the slave system depended, and allowed slaves to seize opportunities to alter their status that arose amidst the wartime chaos.

Driven by their desire for freedom, African Americans refused to remain idle during the struggle. “Whatever the schemes of patriot and tory leaders during 1775, local slave leaders ... were attentive and active participants rather than ignorant and passive objects,” Peter H. Wood wrote. Black activists sought to capitalize on the white struggle in their plans for freedom fully as much as white factions tried to implicate half a million blacks in their political designs.” Most slaves, hoping to escape bondage amid the tumult of war, naturally looked to the British. Many slaves had heard of the Somerset case, tried in England in 1772, in which James Somerset, a slave brought to Britain in 1769, sued for his freedom. Although Chief Justice Lord Mansfield was reluctant to issue a decision that would emancipate the 14,000 slaves then in England, he finally, on June 22, ordered Somerset released. Mansfield’s ruling effectively abolished slavery in Great

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Britain. Some American slaves had concluded that they would be free if they could somehow get to England. The slaves had not forgotten this when the war began. Even if the British army did not offer them outright emancipation, slaves were “accustomed to sorting our degrees of exploitation. If their goal was freedom, the British offered the quickest route to it, almost the only route, in fact, in the South.”

Although British leaders recognized that slaves were likely to assist them in their efforts to suppress the rebellion and discussed various means of employing them, the ministry never settled upon a policy for the use of slaves. This is hardly surprising, since royal officials recognized that any tampering with the institution of slavery risked doing more harm than good to the king’s cause. The status and wealth of many southern colonists was inextricably linked to slave ownership. Furthermore, the constant danger of slave revolt filled white southerners with “a chilling fear which even the rhythmic tedium of daily life could never entirely smother.” Few white inhabitants of Georgia or South Carolina, whatever their political opinions, could contemplate any change in the slave system unaccompanied by violent upheaval. “A successful insurrection loomed as total destruction, as the irretrievable loss of all that white men had won in America.” It would be a “social revolution” that was “wholly destructive” of southern white society.

The Whigs in fact capitalized on rumors that the British government planned to arm slaves to motivate their supporters and to try to bring loyalists into the rebel camp. “The latent distrust of the slave seems to have been deliberately exploited by Southern patriots

50 Wilson, Loyal Blacks, 3.
as a means of arousing animosity toward the British and of coercing those who were lukewarm or timid about breaking with England,” Benjamin Quarles wrote; “such propaganda was effective in stilling any inclination to make a warrior of the Negro.”

The British government’s failure to establish an official policy concerning slaves meant that, as Ira Berlin observed, “the British proved to be unreliable liberators .... as they feared identification as the slaves’ friend would drive slaveholding Loyalists into the Patriot camp.” When forced to deal with large numbers of runaway slaves, “British commanders wavered,” which “made it impossible for fugitives to predict whether they would be greeted as freed people or slaves, treated as allies or spoils of war.” Yet if this inconsistency prevented many slaves from fleeing to the British, the slaves clearly understood that they could not expect any opportunity for freedom from the Whigs.

The limited use that the British made of slaves antagonized many rebels and alienated some loyalists, although not all southern whites embraced the institution of slavery. In the backcountry, where loyalism was strongest, “white frontiersmen with little sympathy for the nabobs of the tidewater sometimes sheltered such black men and women” who had run away from their masters, “employing them with no questions asked.” Nevertheless, Sylvia R. Frey went so far as to assert that in 1780 “the South Carolina pacification program broke down primarily because of British attempts to use slaves as weapons against their masters.” This is a considerable overstatement, since British officials tried to disrupt the system of slavery as little as possible. Although the British often employed rebel-owned slaves in noncombat roles with the army, many

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others, whether owned by Whigs or loyalists, were returned to their plantations. In the end, British reluctance to draw upon the support of African Americans to the fullest possible extent hurt the royal cause by depriving the British of a valuable resource. Already outraged at the limited use the British had made of slaves, the Whigs' animosity could not have been made much worse, and any dissatisfaction arising among white loyalists from the creation of large units of black troops would have been more than offset by the accession of strength to the British army. Even in a restricted role, African Americans made significant contributions to the British effort to regain the southern provinces, and their potential had not come close to being fully realized.

As was the case with loyalists and Indians, the rebels responded ruthlessly to the threat from their slaves. Again, historians have tended to overlook this aspect of the Revolution in the South. Peter H. Wood attributed this to a desire on the part of most Americans to preserve the idea that the Revolution, a noble cause, was fought and won by noble Americans in a noble manner. “After all,” Wood wrote, “the Revolutionary Era remains the most closely guarded treasure in our national mythology. Adding too much realistic detail about the situation of African Americans at the moment when the colonies were declaring their independence might well, in the words of James Baldwin, ‘reveal more about America to Americans than Americans wish to know.’”

Had British leaders chosen to arm large numbers of slaves, they might have faced much difficulty in coordinating the actions of Indians and blacks, because they would have had to overcome the effects of their own previous colonial policies. William S. Willis observes that “the Colonial Southeast was the only place where Indians, Whites, 

and Negroes met in large numbers.” Since the colonists constituted “a frightened and dominant White minority [that] faced two exploited colored majorities,” colonial officials “willfully helped create ... antagonism between Indians and Negroes in order to preserve themselves and their privileges” from the danger of combined Indian-slave opposition.58 The methods used to promote animosity between slaves and Indians included laws prohibiting blacks from entering Indian lands and hiring Indians to capture runaway slaves. These policies were partially effective, although J. Leitch Wright noted that the policy “failed as often as it succeeded ... Africans and Indians intermingled, learned each others’ language, intermarried, and at times made common cause against whites.”59

Unifying white loyalists, Indians, and slaves in a common effort to aid the British army in retaking Georgia and South Carolina would certainly have been a difficult, but not impossible, task. The British belief that these three diverse peoples would be the means by which royal authority would be restored in the southern colonies can be likened metaphorically to a rope, in which each of the three groups was a strand; once braided together, this rope would be strong enough to bind South Carolina and Georgia to the British Empire. British officials correctly expected considerable loyalist support; however, they failed to realize the divisions within the Indian nations, as well as the utter lack of harmony among loyalists, Indians, and slaves, which complicated any attempt to bring them to act in concert. In addition, neither Indians nor slaves were so pliable as to act only when and if the British government demanded their assistance. The Indian nations pursued their own interests as allies rather than as subjects of King George, while

59 J. Leitch Wright, The Only Land They Knew: American Indians in the Old South (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 272-273.
African Americans challenged British hesitance to employ them by fleeing in large numbers to the British army and offering their support. Frustrated at their inability to direct the Indians and fearful of the consequences of arming slaves, British officials relied primarily on the loyalists, made little effort to encourage cooperation between loyalists, Indians, and slaves, and thus deprived themselves of the full strength that would have accrued to them by fully mobilizing and unifying their diverse supporters. This enabled the rebels to suppress the loyalists and Indians separately, while only a fraction of the vast potential of southern slaves to support the British was brought to bear against the Whigs. As a result, Britain's southern strategy, although sound in conception, failed because the ministers formed no detailed plan for its execution. Yet in spite of this impediment, loyalists, Indians, and slaves contributed far more to the British effort to retake South Carolina and Georgia than has been previously recognized. What is striking about their role in the southern provinces is not that they contributed so little, but that in the face of unremitting, brutal opposition, they contributed so much.

The geographic scope of most histories of the Revolution in the South encompasses Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia. This study shifts the regional focus to South Carolina, Georgia, East Florida, and West Florida, which permits a more coherent analysis of the roles of loyalists, Indians, and slaves. The Floridas were the homeland of three of the Indian nations allied to the British, served as refuges for southern loyalists and slaves seeking to escape the Whigs, and functioned as bases from which British regulars, loyalists, and Indians operated against the frontiers of Georgia and South Carolina. While the recapture of North Carolina and Virginia were key elements in the
British southern strategy, the British made no sustained effort to mobilize their supporters in either of those provinces.

This is the first regional study of the American Revolution undertaken from the perspective of the British and their supporters. As such, it seeks to correct the exaggerated tales of untarnished American valor and the unmitigated perfidy of those who adhered to the royal cause. The result is an often unflattering portrayal of the Whigs, while loyalist, Indian, and slave supporters of the British appear in a more favorable light than is usual. An objective analysis of the sources permits no other interpretation. As Gary Nash stated, "for many of the people of North America the struggle for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in the 1770s and 1780s was carried on by fighting with the British and against those American patriots upon whom our patriotic celebrations have always exclusively focused." Those peoples – white, red, and black – who supported King George III do not deserve to be forever castigated by historians solely because they pursued a different dream for America’s future.

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60 Nash, “Forgotten Experience,” in Fowler and Coyle, eds., American Revolution: Changing Perspectives, 32.
CHAPTER I
REVOLUTION COMES TO THE DEEP SOUTH

Between 1763 and 1775, the dispute between Great Britain and several of the North American colonies over the issue of taxation grew increasingly bitter. American Whigs refused to concede that the British parliament had the authority to tax the provinces, while British officials believed that parliamentary sovereignty was the foundation on which the empire rested and would not consider surrendering that authority to the colonists.

The colonies of the Deep South responded to the imperial crisis in different ways. South Carolina’s political leaders, the wealthy planters of the lowcountry, embraced Whig principles and took a prominent role in the colonial resistance to British policy. Although they did not speak for all of the province’s inhabitants, they were powerful enough to align the colony with their neighbors to the north in the revolutionary movement. Georgians, kept in check by their skillful and popular royal governor, Sir James Wright, and fearful that opposition to parliament’s authority might cause them to forfeit British protection from their powerful Indian neighbors, hesitated to commit themselves fully to the Whig cause. Finally, pressured by South Carolina’s Whigs and incited by its own small but vocal rebel party, Georgia became the last of the thirteen colonies to join the American resistance in 1776. In the provinces of East and West Florida, Whigs were few; most inhabitants showed little interest in the disputes of the
1760s and 1770s, and both provinces remained loyal to Britain when hostilities began in 1775.

South Carolina

South Carolina was one of the wealthiest provinces in North America. Charleston, the fourth-largest town in the American colonies, was the provincial capital as well as a leading commercial center. On the vast plantations in the coastal region known as the lowcountry, enslaved African Americans produced large crops of rice and indigo for export, enriching the aristocratic planters who dominated the economic and political life of the colony. Jealous of their power and privileges, the planters actively opposed British policies that appeared to threaten their rights.1

When Parliament passed the Stamp Act in 1765, imposing a tax on newspapers, customs documents, and legal papers, South Carolina planters as well as many Charleston artisans believed that the law encroached upon their right to be taxed only by their own provincial assembly and prepared to resist any attempt to enforce the act. With the law scheduled to take effect on November 1, protests began in October. Opponents of the stamp tax burned an effigy of the stamp distributor, broke several windows at his house, and eventually forced him to resign. They also conducted a mock funeral for “liberty.” Yet compared to their counterparts in many other colonies, South Carolinians’ resistance to the Stamp Act was relatively restrained; they did not engage in the kind of destruction practiced in places like Boston. Tensions ended when Parliament responded to the protests by repealing the act in early 1766.2

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Parliament’s imposition of the Townshend Revenue Acts in 1767 again strained the province’s relationship with Britain. The taxes on imported glass, lead, paint, paper and tea were seen as another attempt to raise money from the colonists without their consent. Charleston’s artisans, who were most affected by the acts, expressed immediate dissatisfaction and soon pressured the planters and merchants, who had initially shown little concern about the new taxes, to join them in opposing the law. Representatives of all three groups agreed to halt the importation of British goods until the acts were repealed. The opponents of British policy, who styled themselves “Whigs,” employed harsh methods to enforce the nonimportation agreement. Adopting the motto “Sign or Die,” the Whigs threatened violence to anyone who showed reluctance to subscribe to the pact. In most cases, however, the coercion was economic: “associators denied nonsubscribers the use of their wharves and refused to purchase their rice, indigo, or other plantation products.” Yet many prominent merchants refused to cooperate, so that British exports to South Carolina dropped by no more than fifty percent. Merchants who had agreed to nonimportation, seeing their competitors profiting by ignoring the agreement, sometimes resumed the purchase of British goods. Parliament repealed the Townshend duties in April 1770, except for the tax on tea.

While lowcountry Carolinians denounced British policies they considered oppressive, their counterparts in the province’s interior or backcountry raised similar complaints about the treatment they received at the hands of the lowcountry planters who governed them. “The planters of South Carolina ... were unwilling to grant representation

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2 Walsh, Charleston’s Sons of Liberty, 48, 50.
to the upcountry, and its House of Commons was an exclusively eastern body."7 The Assembly ignored the desire of backcountry residents for representation, local courts, and other institutions to establish order and secure their rights. When an outburst of violent crime struck the backcountry in 1767, many of the inhabitants joined together to demand that the provincial government address their grievances. Known as "Regulators," these people meted out punishment to criminals while pressuring officials to grant them the right to vote, provide courts and jails, and institute other legal reforms. By 1769, when the movement came to an end, the Regulators had achieved many of their demands. Provincial officials created four judicial districts in the backcountry, each with its own sheriff, court, and jail, and established two parishes whose inhabitants could elect representatives to the Assembly. Nevertheless, backcountry representation in the Assembly remained disproportionately small until the eve of the Revolution, when the provincial congress, in an effort to increase backcountry support for the Whigs, allocated about one-third of its seats to representatives from the region.8

Shortly after Regulator unrest had subsided, the Assembly voted in December 1769 to send a contribution of £1500 sterling (nearly $200,000 in 2002 value) to the Society of the Gentlemen Supporters of the Bill of Rights, an organization devoted to assisting British political radical John Wilkes in his opposition to the government. Wilkes was popular among South Carolina Whigs; Charleston’s artisans had earlier formed a "John Wilkes Club."9 Lt. Gov. William Bull and the Council were aghast, not only because they opposed the payment, but because it had been made without their consent.

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8 Klein, _Unification of a Slave State_, 47-48, 74; Main, "Government by the People," 398.
9 Walsh, _Charleston’s Sons of Liberty_, 31. The 2002 value of the contribution is based on information at http://eh.net/hmit, using the pound’s value in 1780.
The Council therefore refused to permit the Assembly to recover the funds from the 1770 tax receipts. To force the Council’s hand, the Assembly refused to pass a tax bill that did not cover the expense of the donation to Wilkes. Bull and the Council found this unacceptable and a deadlock ensued. When Governor Lord Charles Montagu arrived in September 1771, he too resisted the Assembly’s efforts to include the Wilkes funds in a tax bill, and eventually dissolved the house. Both sides remained intransigent, as the dispute evolved into a debate over the relative powers of the Assembly and the Council.

“No annual tax bill was passed in South Carolina after 1769 and no legislation at all after February 1771. For all practical purposes royal government in South Carolina broke down.”¹⁰

The breakdown of legal government enabled the Whig committees to take effective control of affairs in Charleston. They were therefore ideally situated to take advantage of the next crisis in the imperial relationship – the passage of the Tea Act in 1773. Parliament’s intention had been to assist the financially-troubled East India Company by allowing it to sell tea directly to the colonists at a lower cost; the act actually reduced the tax on tea. To the Whigs, however, the act appeared to be a ploy by the British government to deceive them into abandoning their opposition to British taxation by purchasing taxed tea, something they had avoided since the repeal of the Townshend Acts. When a shipment of tea arrived in Charleston on December 1, a crowd gathered to protest. The merchants to whom it was consigned, fearing the wrath of the mob, refused to accept it. Before a confrontation could develop, Lt. Gov. Bull confiscated

the tea for nonpayment of the tax and stored it in town. This action defused the protests in Charleston.\textsuperscript{11}

In Boston, opponents of the Tea Act had dumped a large quantity of tea into the harbor in mid-December. Parliament responded to the news by passing the Coercive Acts, which closed the port of Boston and placed Massachusetts under military government. South Carolina’s Whigs believed that the Coercive Acts foreshadowed a British attack on the people’s liberty throughout the colonies and joined their eleven northern neighbors in sending representatives to a Continental Congress in Philadelphia.\textsuperscript{12}

When the delegates returned, the Whigs called for the election of a provincial congress, as the Assembly was still moribund as a result of the Wilkes Fund dispute. The congress adopted a nonimportation agreement, chose delegates to attend a second Continental Congress, and began preparations to resist the British with force. In the spring of 1775, reports of fighting between British troops and Americans at Lexington and Concord and rumors that British officials planned to incite slave revolts and unleash Indian attacks on South Carolina radicalized the Whigs. They used coercion to enforce nonimportation and make people sign the Continental Association declaring their opposition to British policy. The recently arrived royal governor, Lord William Campbell, found the Whigs in control of the militia and himself powerless to assert any authority. Fearing for his safety, he took refuge aboard a British warship in Charleston harbor on September 15, 1775. Royal authority no longer existed in the province.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11} Weir, “Most Important Epocha”, 51-52; Maier, From Resistance to Revolution, 275-276.
\textsuperscript{12} Weir, “Most Important Epocha”, 52-55.
\textsuperscript{13} Weir, “Most Important Epocha”, 58-59, 62-64, 68.
Because lowcountry planters dominated the Assembly and nearly all of them were Whigs, the transition from royal government to Whig control was relatively smooth. This made it virtually impossible for loyalists to retain a voice in provincial affairs. One of the few who expressed an opinion displeasing to the Whigs quickly felt their wrath. On August 12, 1774, the Rev. Mr. John Bullman, assistant rector at St. Michael’s Church, preached a sermon in which he urged the people to keep their proper station, do their duty, and not usurp the authority of others. His advice “afforded the Demagogues a handle to work up such resentment in the minds of the People” that Bullman was immediately labeled an enemy of liberty. The vestry of St. Michael’s forbade him from officiating at future services. Although seventy-four church members later signed a petition requesting that Bullman be reinstated, the vestry refused. The humiliated minister returned to England in the spring of 1775. His fate was a harbinger of what awaited South Carolina’s loyalists when they dared to challenge the Whigs.

The rebels had other concerns besides an occasional critic. They worried about the reluctance of their neighbors in Georgia, who in their opinion did not exhibit sufficient zeal for the revolutionary cause. The Georgians showed little desire to cooperate in nonimportation, leading angry South Carolinians to declare that the province should “be amputated from the rest of their brethren, as a rotten part that might spread a dangerous infection.”

Loyalist clerics and wavering Georgians were minor problems compared to other dangers the Whigs faced. From the beginning of the dispute with Britain, South

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15 William Bull to Dartmouth, March 15, 1775, Dartmouth Papers, #1107, Microfilm, DLAR.
16 Quoted in Maier, From Resistance to Revolution, 121.

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Carolina’s large slave population had complicated the political situation. By 1775, slaves would outnumber the province’s white population by 104,000 to 70,000. With nearly two-thirds of whites living in the backcountry and more than ninety percent of slaves in the lowcountry, the fear of slave insurrection was pervasive among lowcountry whites. To keep their laborers subservient, the planters established a system of rigid control that constituted “the most rigorous deprivation of freedom to exist in institutionalized form anywhere in the English continental colonies.” Thus much of the restraint the Whigs demonstrated during the Stamp Act protests was the result of whites’ concern that any tumults might provoke unrest among the slaves. The fear was well founded, as some “disorderly negroes,” emulating white opponents of the stamp tax, marched through Charleston in January 1766 shouting “Liberty.” The march threw Charleston residents into an uproar; provincial officials called out the militia and sent emissaries across the colony looking for signs of slave rebellion.

As relations with Britain worsened, the actions of a black Methodist preacher named David made clear to whites that the threat from their slaves might be magnified by the conflict. David had been trained in England and sent to America by the Countess of Huntingdon to convert slaves to Christianity. In late 1774 or early 1775, David preached a sermon in Charleston on the delivery of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt, declaring that “God will deliver his own People from Slavery.” Whites recognized the incendiary nature of David’s message, and some of David’s white supporters had to rush him out of

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town before he was lynched.\textsuperscript{20} Taken to Georgia, he continued to attack the institution of slavery until whites there, angered by his crusade, returned him to England.\textsuperscript{21}

Fear of slave rebellion was also widespread among backcountry settlers. Many backcountry settlers hoped to one day become slaveowners themselves; while they were hostile toward the lowcountry aristocracy, they "were not hostile to slavery."\textsuperscript{22} One of the Regulators' complaints had been that whenever they managed to "save a little Money ... Wherewith to purchase Slaves," robbers learned of it and stole the funds.\textsuperscript{23} The number of slaves in the backcountry grew steadily in the years before the Revolution, reaching about 6,000 by 1770.\textsuperscript{24}

Reverend Charles Woodmason, an Anglican missionary, recognized the fear of slave revolt in the backcountry as he traveled through the region in the 1760s and used it to strengthen his argument for religious tolerance. Woodmason pointed out the threat that arose from "an Internal Enemy," the province's numerous slaves. "Over these We ought to keep a very watchful Eye," he advised, "lest they surprize us in an Hour when We are not aware, and begin our Friendships towards each other in one Common Death."\textsuperscript{25} In promoting the establishment of schools in the backcountry, Woodmason tried to tap into the fear to dampen the inhabitants' desire for slaves. He expressed the hope that education "may prove a Means of lessening the Number of Negroes that are now

\textsuperscript{20} Berlin, \textit{Many Thousands Gone}, 175.
\textsuperscript{24} Olwell, \textit{Masters, Slaves, and Subjects}, 31.
\textsuperscript{25} Woodmason, \textit{Carolina Backcountry}, 93-94.
employ'd as family Servants and therefrom by Degrees freeing this Land from an Internal Enemy that may one day be the total Ruin of it." 26

Woodmason also found backcountry inhabitants to be extremely hostile to the Indians and likewise appealed to this sentiment to advance his agenda. "There is an External Enemy near at Hand, which tho' not formidable either to our Religion or Liberties, still is to be guarded against," he told a Presbyterian audience in urging them not to discriminate against people of other denominations. "These are our Indian Neighbours. Common Prudence, and our Common Security, requires that We should live like Brethren in Unity, be it only to guard against any Dangers to our Lives and Properties as may arise from that Quarter." 27 He also demonstrated the value of education by contrasting white society with that of the Indians, asserting that among the latter, "for want of due Instruction, the most Savage Dispositions and detestable Practises contrary to the Principles of Humanity as well as of Religion, are transmitted down from one Wretched Generation of Creatures to another." 28 Woodmason may not have actually held such opinions, but he was clearly aware that appeals of this nature would be effective in winning support from the backcountry settlers. The Whigs would employ the same tactic a few years later in an attempt to convince these same people to support the rebellion.

Georgia

Georgia, the most recently founded and weakest of the thirteen rebel provinces, was the last to join the revolutionary movement. During the first years of the dispute

26 Woodmason, Carolina Backcountry, 121.
27 Woodmason, Carolina Backcountry, 93-94.
28 Woodmason, Carolina Backcountry, 121.
between Britain and the colonies, Georgia’s royal governor, James Wright, who had held his office since 1760 and whose political skill and dedication to his province’s welfare made him one of the most capable provincial governors in the British Empire, succeeded in checking the more radical elements in Georgia. It was not until the summer of 1775 that the Whigs finally wrested authority from him and dragged the province into revolution.²⁹

The Stamp Act brought the first challenge to Wright’s popularity and leadership skills in 1765. Most Georgians opposed the act, believing that it infringed upon their liberty. Various protests took place in Savannah, while some opponents of the act organized themselves as “Sons of Liberty.” Wright thwarted the effort of an extralegal meeting of the Assembly to send delegates to the Stamp Act Congress in New York, although when the representatives met officially in December they dispatched a petition to London demanding the act’s repeal. Believing himself bound to enforce the law, Wright closed the port of Savannah until ships could be legally cleared through customs using stamped documents, a clever maneuver which led Savannah’s merchants to petition for enforcement of the act. With the help of the provincial rangers, merchants, and ships’ officers, Wright then intimidated the opposition and put the Stamp Act into effect.³⁰ Despite his success in upholding the law, Wright realized that the Whigs had seriously threatened his authority and expressed “the greatest Mortification to see the Reins of

Government nearly hoisted out of my Hands, His Majesties authority Insulted, and the Civil power obstructed.”

The governor had won the battle over the Stamp Act, but his victory made Whigs more determined to challenge him on other issues. In 1767 the Assembly refused to provide supplies for British troops in the province as required by the Quartering Act. The representatives also challenged the status of the Provincial Council, claiming it could not properly be considered the upper house of the legislature nor act in that capacity. Wright stood firm on both issues and eventually triumphed. In January 1768 the Assembly abandoned their challenge to the Council; they conceded to Wright on the Quartering Act three months later, although General Thomas Gage withdrew the troops in August. However, the representatives blamed Wright for causing both disputes. Wright replied with a scathing critique of the Assembly.

The legislators renewed the battle in December 1768, when in spite of Wright’s admonitions, members adopted an address to the king protesting the Townshend Acts. In response Wright immediately dissolved the Assembly. Most Georgians, however, paid little heed to either the Townshend Acts or the Assembly’s opposition to them until September 1769, when protest meetings were held in Savannah, at which participants voted to adopt a nonimportation agreement. Upon learning that councillor Jonathan Bryan had presided at one of the meetings, Wright suspended him from the Council. The governor also worked quietly to convince people not to sign the agreement, and this, along with the lack of any means to enforce nonimportation, resulted in the complete

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31 Quoted in Maier, From Resistance to Revolution, 92.
32 Abbot, Royal Governors, 126-127, 134, 140-143; Coleman, Revolution in Georgia, 26-27.
failure of the agreement. Even criticism from South Carolina’s Whigs and their threat to suspend trade with Georgia failed to prod Georgians to further action.\(^3\)\(^4\)

Wright battled the Assembly again when in April 1771 the members chose Noble Wimberly Jones as their speaker. Because Jones had been a vocal opponent of British policy, Wright refused to accept Jones’s election, whereupon the Assembly chose Archibald Bulloch instead, then passed a resolution declaring that the governor had violated their privileges. Wright dissolved the Assembly, reported the situation to London, and received orders to disapprove whomever the Assembly chose to be speaker at their next session. The governor then left for England, leaving Lt. Gov. James Habersham to deal with the matter. Three times at its next meeting the Assembly elected Jones speaker, finally replacing him with Bulloch at Habersham’s insistence only to provoke another dispute with the lieutenant governor over editing the Assembly’s records to remove references to Jones’s election. Habersham finally dissolved the Assembly, but the dispute began anew when that body reconvened the next year. The quarrel paralyzed the provincial government, so that no taxes were assessed or collected for two years.\(^3\)\(^5\)

In February 1773, Wright returned to Savannah as Sir James, the king having bestowed a baronetcy upon him for his services as governor. Wright soon regained much of his former popularity when he procured a large land cession from the Creek Indians. The governor toured the new lands, laying out towns, while the provincial government’s land office received a deluge of claims from eager settlers.\(^3\)\(^6\) Unfortunately for Wright, the goodwill engendered by the Creek land cession, which had diverted Georgians’

\(^{34}\) Coleman, “Wright and the Revolution,” 116; Coleman, Revolution in Georgia, 28-32.
\(^{35}\) Abbot, Royal Governors, 156; Coleman, Revolution in Georgia, 34-37.
attention from the revolutionary movement, did not last long. When Creeks who did not approve of the cession attacked the province's frontier in late 1773 and early 1774, many Georgians hoped that Wright would use the attacks as a pretext to extort more land from the Indians. When Wright and Indian superintendent John Stuart instead brought a peaceful end to the dispute in October 1774, backcountry inhabitants denounced the governor, believing that he had sacrificed their interests for the Indians' benefit. The Whigs capitalized on this to win many new adherents to their cause.37

Overshadowed by the threat of war with the Creeks, the Tea Act had gone virtually unnoticed in Georgia. However, when the British government responded to the Boston Tea Party by passing the Coercive Acts, Whigs seized the opportunity to renew their protests against imperial policy. At a meeting in Savannah on July 27, 1774, Whig leaders resolved, despite some opposition, to raise money to aid the Bostonians. A subsequent meeting on August 10, held in spite of Wright's proclamation declaring the gathering illegal, approved resolutions condemning the Coercive Acts and supporting American rights. Those attending also decided not to send delegates to the Continental Congress that would soon convene in Philadelphia.38

This somewhat restrained protest resulted in part from serious divisions among the Whigs. The Assembly was dominated by representatives from Christ Church Parish, many of whom were also leaders in the Whig movement. Many had strong ties to Wright and other royal officials; while they opposed British policy, they hoped to achieve reform within the existing system, "with as little accompanying disturbance as possible." They especially wished to avoid having the Assembly's power pass into the hands of extralegal

38 Coleman, Revolution in Georgia, 40-42.
meetings and congresses. The inhabitants of St. John’s Parish, who were descended from New England immigrants and advocated a more radical resistance to British policy, challenged the conservatives’ authority. The Christ Church conservatives, therefore, blocked the St. John’s representatives’ attempt to send a delegation to Philadelphia.39

Wright worked to counteract the effects of the August meeting by promoting dissenting views. In the weeks after the meeting, petitions circulated throughout Georgia expressing opposition to the Whigs’ proceedings. The petitioners noted that those whose opinions differed from the Whigs had been denied admission, that the meeting’s purpose had been misrepresented, and that attendees who disagreed with the Whigs had been ignored. Seven of these petitions, with 633 signatures, still survive as an indication of loyalist strength in the province, although many signers later joined the Whigs.40

After several months of quiet, Whig agitation resumed in December when St. John’s Parish adopted the Continental Association and demanded that Georgia send representatives to the second Continental Congress. Fearful that the radicals might gain control of the opposition movement, many conservative Whigs agreed to convene a provincial congress in January 1775. Wright tried to thwart the Whigs by calling the Assembly to meet on the same day, hoping that since many members of the Assembly were also attending the congress, the extralegal meeting might not take place. The representatives duly appeared when the Assembly met. Wright delivered an address that “was a sincere attempt to ... discourage revolutionary activities.” The members listened politely, then ignored two petitions with 260 signatures denouncing the colonial radicals

40 Coleman, Revolution in Georgia, 42-43. For examples of some of the dissenting petitions, see “Dissent to the Resolutions of August 10, 1774;” “St. Paul Parish Dissent to August 10 Meeting;” “Kyokee and Broad River Settlements Dissent to August 10 Resolutions,” in Ronald G. Killion and Charles T. Waller, eds. Georgia and the Revolution (Atlanta: Cherokee Publishing Co., 1975), 107-111.
and went on to vote their approval of the actions of the Continental Congress. Wright
then dismissed the members before they could take further action in support of the
rebels.\textsuperscript{41}

Meanwhile, the provincial congress had been meeting when the Assembly was
not in session. Representatives adopted the Continental Association and chose three
delegates to attend the Continental Congress, but those elected declined to go because not
all of Georgia’s parishes had been represented at the congress. In a further demonstration
of the Whigs’ lack of support, only St. John’s and St. Andrew’s Parish put the
Continental Association into effect, causing angry inhabitants of the former to cut off
trade with the rest of Georgia and attempt, unsuccessfully, to secede and join South
Carolina.\textsuperscript{42}

News of the fighting at Lexington and Concord finally swung the political balance
in favor of the Whigs. Reports of the incident reached Savannah on May 10, and that
night rebels broke into the town’s powder magazine and carried off the stores. Georgia
Whigs attracted new supporters by pointing out that British troops had attacked the
colonists and spreading rumors that British officials planned to incite Indian wars and
slave insurrections. Another provincial congress convened in Savannah on July 4, which
assumed control of Georgia’s affairs and committed the province to the Whig cause.\textsuperscript{43}

Later that month, Wright wrote that “the friends of government are falling off daily
because they get no support.” Although his own commitment to king and country did not

\textsuperscript{41} Coleman, \textit{Revolution in Georgia}, 45-49.
\textsuperscript{42} Jackson, “Consensus and Conflict,” 392; Coleman, \textit{Revolution in Georgia}, 49-50.
\textsuperscript{43} Jackson, “Consensus and Conflict,” 392-394; Abbot, \textit{Royal Governors}, 171, 173, 178-179; Coleman,
\textit{Revolution in Georgia}, 52.
waver, the governor had no power to enforce his authority and could only watch as rebellion raged about him.44

Despite their initial enthusiasm, the Whigs faced many difficulties. Georgia’s white population was about 25,000 in 1775, barely equal to the number of slaves in the province, and whites were bitterly divided among themselves. This, along with the presence of the Creeks on Georgia’s western frontier and the proximity of East Florida, would make it hard for the rebels to protect themselves against a serious British effort to reassert royal authority in the province. The Whigs had joined the revolution, but they would not find it easy to make their rebellion succeed.45

**East Florida**

The provinces of East and West Florida were established in 1763 from territory that Spain ceded to Britain at the end of the Seven Years’ War. Both colonies were left open to settlement under the terms of the Proclamation of 1763, which halted the western expansion of existing colonies at the Appalachians. East Florida’s boundaries were the St. Mary’s River to the north and the Apalachicola River to the west. Settlement was concentrated along the Atlantic coast for approximately fifty miles north and south of the capital, St. Augustine. There were several large plantations along the St. John’s and St. Mary’s Rivers, and another plantation south of the capital at New Smyrna, where some one thousand indentured servants from Minorca and southern Europe labored. The province grew slowly: its non-Indian population was only about three thousand in 1775,

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44 Coleman, *Revolution in Georgia*, 53.

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half of whom were African American slaves.46 Most slaves had been imported from Georgia, South Carolina, or directly from Africa to meet the demand for labor on the newly established plantations.47

Shortly after the Spanish cession, Governor James Grant arrived with a few settlers along with some troops to garrison the fort at St. Augustine. Land grants attracted immigrants who established plantations along the rivers. Trade with the Indians developed and soon East Florida was exporting furs, lumber, turpentine, rice, indigo, and a variety of other goods.48

The Stamp Act aroused no opposition in East Florida. The handful of settlers complied with its terms, although Governor Grant reported that all of the inhabitants rejoiced when the act was repealed early in 1766. While British taxation was clearly unpopular, East Florida depended on a parliamentary subsidy to finance its government and defense, so the inhabitants had little grounds to protest the payment of taxes. Nor was there an assembly to provide a forum for complaints against imperial policy; the province’s free white population was too small to require the creation of a legislature, and none was elected until 1781.49

East Floridians continued to show little sympathy for the revolutionary cause in subsequent years. In part, this was because a majority of the free white settlers were government contractors, artisans who supplied the army, or former soldiers. Scots were

numerous and in all of the colonies displayed a staunch loyalty to the crown throughout the Revolution. The province’s weakness relative to the Indians, and its vulnerability to a Spanish attack, also helped strengthen loyalism there. So too did the strong leadership of Governor Patrick Tonyn, a former army officer who arrived in 1774. Grant had left East Florida in 1771, and in the interim Lt. Gov. John Moultrie had administered the province. Tonyn had seen extensive military service in Europe and brought his military habits to his new post. Although his uncompromising attitude alienated some East Floridians, Tonyn scrupulously enforced parliamentary legislation in the province and tolerated no opposition. During the Tea Act controversy, Tonyn had matters so firmly under control that he informed British officials that all the tea destined for the southern colonies should have been sent to St. Augustine, where the duty would have been paid, and the tea could then have been shipped to the other American provinces without incident.\textsuperscript{50}

When the war began, Tonyn, acting on Lord Dartmouth’s instructions, issued a proclamation offering loyalist refugees land grants exempt from quitrents for ten years and protection. Large numbers of loyalists, mostly from Georgia and the Carolinas, found the offer enticing, especially as Whig persecution increased. Small farmers constituted the majority of immigrants, although planters with their slaves, traders, and ministers came as well. The influx of loyalists insured that the province would remain firmly pro-British.\textsuperscript{51} After Parliament prohibited the rebel colonies from trading with the rest of the empire, the British West Indies, along with the army and navy, looked to East Florida to

\textsuperscript{50} Barrs, \textit{East Florida}, 4; Wright, \textit{Florida in the Revolution}, 15, 17, 19. \\
\textsuperscript{51} Wright, \textit{Florida in the Revolution}, 22, 23.
meet their demand for food and other goods, sparking rapid economic growth and making it relatively easy for most loyalist immigrants to support themselves.\(^{52}\)

**West Florida**

West Florida extended westward from the Apalachicola River to the Mississippi, with its northern boundary, adjusted in 1764, set just above the thirty-second parallel. The British government appointed George Johnstone governor and established the provincial capital at Pensacola. Two former French settlements, at Mobile and Natchez, were the only other significant population centers. In the 1760s West Florida developed more slowly than its eastern counterpart. British merchants in West Florida quickly opened a highly profitable trade with Spanish Louisiana which continued until the early years of the Revolution. Growth accelerated in the 1770s as settlers became aware of the great fertility of the Mississippi Valley soil, although disease and the hot climate led to the deaths of many immigrants. The capital and the lands along the Mississippi were home to the majority of the province’s inhabitants, who numbered about 2,500 whites and 600 slaves in 1774.\(^{53}\)

The Stamp Act triggered protests from West Florida’s inhabitants, who were still struggling to establish themselves and did not need an additional financial burden. Many of them refused to accept their land grants in order to avoid paying the stamp duty. Determined to enforce the law, Governor Johnstone threatened to award the land to others if the tax was not paid. Angry settlers and Johnstone’s political opponents, who


saw the unrest as an opportunity to stir up animosity against the governor, subjected Johnstone to "a torrent of abuse." Lt. Gov. Montfort Browne circulated a petition calling for Johnstone's removal, but no organized groups arose to oppose the Stamp Act. Quiet returned to the province after the act's repeal in 1766, and the inhabitants virtually ignored the Townshend Acts and other subsequent parliamentary legislation that produced strong resistance elsewhere in America.

West Floridians elected their first Assembly in 1766, and Johnstone enjoyed good relations with the representatives, although he frequently quarreled with the military officers in the province over the proper limitations of the civil and military spheres. The governor also had problems dealing with the Indians. The Mortar, a leader of the Upper Creeks, criticized the British for failing to prevent whites from settling on Indian land and accused the governor of fomenting war between his people and the Choctaws. Angered when the Creeks killed two whites, Johnstone advocated an attack on that nation with the help of the Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Cherokees. British officials, however, insisted that every effort be made to accommodate the Indians. Johnstone's declining popularity in the province and his aggressive Indian policy led to his recall in 1767. Lt. Gov. Browne became acting governor until he too was recalled as the result of complaints. Elias Dumford then assumed the office of lieutenant governor until the arrival of Peter Chester in August 1770.

55 Starr, Tories, Dons, and Rebels, 36.  
56 Starr, Tories, Dons, and Rebels, 11-12.  
57 Starr, Tories, Dons, and Rebels, 16-17.  
Chester's arrival coincided with an influx of settlers from the older colonies, who were attracted by the rich potential of the Mississippi Valley lands. The governor encouraged immigration with generous land grants. In dealing with the Assembly, Chester strove to uphold the royal prerogative and his own authority as governor, which resulted in conflicts that ended when he dissolved the Assembly in 1772. The legislature did not convene again for six years.\footnote{Johnson, \textit{British West Florida}, 136, 138; Starr, \textit{Tories, Dons, and Rebels}, 28.}

Chester took advantage of the disturbances in the provinces along the Atlantic coast to induce settlers to come to West Florida. He offered generous land grants to newcomers, as well as the right to cut timber on royal lands without charge provided it was shipped to the West Indies. Among the immigrants attracted by the governor's generosity were members of the Company of Military Adventurers and their families. These Connecticut residents, over one hundred families numbering some seven hundred people altogether, began arriving in Pensacola in March 1774. Chester granted land to qualifying veterans of the Seven Year's War and advised the rest to occupy land as squatters until royal approval arrived for their grants. The settlers were later joined by others fleeing New England because of their loyalist sentiments.\footnote{Garland Taylor, “Colonial Settlement and Early Revolutionary Activity in West Florida up to 1779,” \textit{MVHR}, Vol. 22, No. 3, Dec. 1935, 353-354; Robin F. A. Fabel, “Born of War, Killed by War: The Company of Military Adventurers in West Florida,” in Maarten Ultee, ed., \textit{Adapting to Conditions: War and Society in the Eighteenth Century} (University: University of Alabama Press, 1986), 109-111.}

In October 1774, the Continental Congress appealed to West Floridians to join the American resistance, sending a letter explaining its actions and criticizing British policy. The letter, addressed to Speaker of the Assembly Edmund Rush Wegg, accomplished
nothing. Wegg was also the province’s attorney general, and he turned the letter over to Governor Chester, who in turn refused to make its contents public.\textsuperscript{61}

Some West Floridians, however, did support the American rebels. The most notable, James Willing of the Natchez district, tried to win over other inhabitants, apparently with some success, but eventually left for Pennsylvania. Those with Whig sentiments, if not already outnumbered by loyalist neighbors, were soon overwhelmed by the influx of loyalist refugees. At the outbreak of war, Chester issued a proclamation publicizing Dartmouth’s offer to grant land to loyal refugees; by April 1776 large numbers of loyalists were arriving in the province, most of them from South Carolina and Georgia. Virginians and Pennsylvanians also traveled to West Florida by boat down the Ohio River to the Mississippi. Between 1775 and 1781, the Council granted lands to between 1,312 and 1,643 refugees, although these figures do not reflect the total number of refugees who came to the province.\textsuperscript{62}

**The Native Peoples of the South**

Five Indian nations occupied the lands south of the Ohio River and west of the line of white settlement, all of whom would play a role in the revolutionary struggle. Three of these nations, the Catawbas, Cherokees, and Creeks, lived adjacent to rebel colonies. American leaders would enlist the Catawbas in their service and work to keep the Cherokees and Creeks neutral. The Choctaws and Chickasaws, who lived farther west, were generally ignored by the rebels until late in the war. The British, on the other hand, while dismissing any possibility of winning Catawba support from the outset, made

\textsuperscript{61} Starr, *Tories, Dons, and Rebels*, 45-46.

\textsuperscript{62} Johnson, *British West Florida*, 144, 147; Wright, *Florida in the Revolution*, 20, 22; Starr, *Tories, Dons, and Rebels*, 48-49, 230. Starr notes that even the figures for those granted lands cannot be exactly determined, since many grantees listed family members who may not have accompanied them to West Florida.
great efforts to maintain the loyalty of the four larger nations. The Cherokees and Creeks, by their proximity to the rebellious southern colonies, were a potentially valuable asset to the royal cause. Though more distant, the Choctaws and Chickasaws could contribute to the defense of the Floridas and could possibly be employed against the frontiers of the rebel provinces as well. Altogether, the Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, and Chickasaws possessed a total of about 14,000 fighting men. This was a powerful resource for the British if the crown's Indian agents could unify the nations and coordinate their actions with those of regular troops and loyalists.

The Catawbas were the smallest of the southern tribes. Their towns, centered along the Catawba River, lay wholly within the boundaries of North and South Carolina. They had assisted the British and colonists during the imperial wars with France and Spain, which had enabled them to procure favorable trade terms and abundant presents from their allies. However, the expansion of white settlements in the Carolina interior eventually led to conflict and violent confrontations. By the mid-1750s, one Catawba leader recognized that "the White people were now seated all round them and by that means had them entirely in their power." With the Catawba population plummeting below five hundred after a 1759 smallpox outbreak, the tribe realized that accommodation of the whites offered their only hope of survival. After being granted a reservation in 1763 at their own request, they subsisted by pursuing runaway slaves and

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renting their land and selling handicrafts to the colonists. Their weakness had rendered them, in the words of one observer, "inoffensive, insignificant people."65

The Cherokees, residing in what is now northwestern South Carolina, western North Carolina and Virginia, and eastern Tennessee, shared the longest border with the colonies of any southern Indian nation. They had been subjected to increasing pressure from expansionist whites in the years before the Revolution. In 1759 they had gone to war against the colonists, only to see their towns destroyed, which forced them to make peace in 1761.66 Afterwards, the Cherokees sought "stability in their relationship with whites," which led their leaders to cede land in order to maintain peace. Some Cherokees, unwilling to accept the loss of land, challenged those who favored conciliatory policies. This internal conflict shattered Cherokee unity in March 1775, when settlers from North Carolina led by Richard Henderson purchased a vast tract of land west of the Appalachians for £10,000 ($1.3 million) in trade goods.67 The treaty, signed at Sycamore Shoals on the Watauga River, enraged Dragging Canoe, the son of Attakullakulla, who did not share his father's willingness to accommodate the colonists. Dragging Canoe walked out of the negotiations, denounced the transaction, and pledged to resist with force any further white encroachment on Cherokee territory.68

At the start of the Revolution, the Cherokee population was estimated at between twelve and fourteen thousand, of whom some three thousand were capable of bearing

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66 Tom Hatley, The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians through the Revolutionary Era (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 139-140.
67 Hatley, Dividing Paths, 217.
arms. British officials classified the Cherokees into “four divisions” according to the location of their towns. The Overhill Cherokees lived along the Little Tennessee and Tellico Rivers, the Valley and Middle divisions in the Blue Ridge Mountains, and the Lower Towns were situated along the border with South Carolina.

The Creeks inhabited an area comprising western Georgia and much of present-day Alabama and Florida. Whites referred to those living along the Coosa, Tallapoosa, and Alabama Rivers as Upper Creeks, and designated others whose towns were located near the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers Lower Creeks. This distinction vastly oversimplified the divisions within the Creek nation, which was in fact a conglomeration of native peoples. “One might refer to the Creek ‘confederation,’ but it would be more meaningful to employ ‘confederation of confederations,’” explained J. Leitch Wright, Jr. These Indians did not consider themselves Creeks, the name given to them by whites, but instead “identified with their families and towns more than with any larger political organization.” Their primary loyalty was to their clan, which was determined by matrilineal descent, and their secondary loyalty was to their town. This made efforts by either the British or the American rebels to deal with the Creeks exceedingly difficult, since authority among the Creeks was so decentralized. When the Revolution broke out, Creek allegiances were often determined by ethnicity. “In general, pure Muskogees supported Britain, and those in the opposing moiety,” with the exception of the Seminoles, “looked to the United States and Spain.” The non-Muskogees, who had

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69 Lumpkin, From Savannah to Yorktown, 19.
71 J. Leitch Wright, Jr., Creeks and Seminoles: The Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulge People (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 1, 3, 12.
73 Saunt, New Order of Things, 32.
inferior status in Creek society, may have seen an opportunity to challenge Muskogee
dominance by supporting the opposite side in the conflict.  

Spanish influence among the Creeks further complicated British relations with
these Indians. Some Lower Creeks “preserved a strong attachment to the Spanish” after
the Seven Years’ War, and Spanish officials who hoped someday to regain the Floridas
did their best to maintain communication with them. Spanish vessels occasionally visited
the Florida coast to transport friendly Creeks to and from Havana, where the Indians were
welcomed and given presents.

Creeks who inhabited East Florida, known as Seminoles, were developing an
identity as a separate nation in the eighteenth century, although they remained at least
nominally part of the Creek confederation during the revolutionary era. The leader of this
Creek faction, Ahaya of Cuscowilla, known to the whites as Cowkeeper, lived in the area
of present-day Gainesville. An ally of the British since 1740, Cowkeeper remained a
staunch friend of Great Britain throughout the Revolution. Governor Tonyn, finding the
Seminoles well-disposed to the British and realizing that East Floridians could ill afford
hostilities with their Indian neighbors, worked to maintain good relations with
Cowkeeper’s people.

By the 1760s African-Americans had begun to establish a presence in Creek
territory. Most were the slaves of whites involved in the Indian trade, who ignored laws
forbidding traders to bring slaves into the Indian nations. The Creeks saw and often
adopted the traders’ racial attitudes. A few Creeks even acquired slaves of their own.

74 Wright, Creeks and Seminoles, 113-114.
75 Mark F. Boyd and Jose Navarro Latorre, “Spanish Interest in British Florida, and in the Progress of the
76 Wright, Only Land they Knew, 145; Calloway, Revolution in Indian Country, 246-247, 249, 255.
Other blacks among the Creeks were runaways who had been adopted into the nation. These people were often accorded a relatively low status among the Creeks, unless they married Indians or remained long enough to win full acceptance. For the most part, however, the Creeks cooperated with their white neighbors in maintaining the slave system. Under the terms of a 1763 treaty with Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, the Creeks received a bounty of £5 (§650) in goods for every runaway slave they returned. The colonists' generosity arose from their desire to prevent interaction between slaves and Indians; in 1768 Georgia governor Wright noted the danger that might arise if Indians armed fugitive slaves to assist them in the event of war with the whites. To further promote this objective, a 1774 treaty between Georgia and the Creeks required the Indians to hand over any slave they found in their territory to white officials and increased the bounty to £50 (§6500) in goods for each slave the Creeks returned.77

The Choctaws, whose territory encompassed southern Mississippi and western Alabama, were also a divided people.78 After their emergence as a nation sometime in the seventeenth century, they remained split into the Western, Eastern, and Sixtowns groups. This structure "preserved ethnic, geographic, political, and cultural differences." These differences contributed to a Choctaw civil war, fought from 1747 to 1750, and even in the 1760s many Choctaws identified primarily with their ethnic group rather than with the larger Choctaw nation. Some went so far as to consider the other divisions of the tribe to be separate nations altogether. Each division maintained its own clan organization and

political organization. Authority was divided among civil leaders, war leaders, and clan leaders.

The Choctaws had been allies of the French until 1763 and during the Seven Years’ War had fought against the pro-British Chickasaws, against whom they had been frequently at war since the 1730s. After the cession of West Florida to Britain, they encountered difficulties in adjusting to the new relationship with the British. Although the British negotiated an end to the war with the Chickasaws, the British inability to supply the Choctaws with adequate trade goods in the 1760s and early 1770s complicated the relationship. When the British demanded a land cession from the Choctaws at the Mobile Congress of 1765, the Indians reluctantly complied in exchange for trade goods, but the transaction placed further strain on the Choctaw-British relationship.

So too did the behavior of traders who flocked to the nation. Charles Stuart, the Choctaws’ agent, estimated in 1770 that rum comprised eighty percent of the sales that traders made to the nation. Governor Chester worried in 1771 that the “great abuses and impositions” of the “licentious” traders might provoke a war. The Choctaws also fought a war against their traditional enemies, the Creeks. British officials encouraged this conflict, which had begun with “a series of revenge killings” between the two nations. Trader James Colbert, at the behest of Governor Johnstone, “persuaded the Choctaws to reply to the last killing not with another murder but with numerous war parties.”

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80 White, *Roots of Dependency*, 40.
82 White, *Roots of Dependency*, 75.
83 O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 27, 83.
Creeks responded in kind and the war escalated; by 1771 the death toll had reached an estimated three hundred people in each nation. The war continued until the outbreak of the Revolution.84

The Chickasaws inhabited what is now northern Mississippi and western Tennessee. In 1731 a French observer had estimated their population at three thousand, plus an additional 250-300 Natchez Indians who lived among them. Their numbers had dropped to approximately 1,600 by the end of the Seven Years’ War, but had increased to about 2,300, including 450 warriors, at the outbreak of the Revolution. Their performance in the many wars of the eighteenth century earned them a reputation as “the most warlike people on the Mississippi,” and many visitors to their country praised their courage and fighting spirit.85

The Chickasaws had maintained the best relations with Great Britain of any southern nation during the years before 1763. Unlike their neighbors, the Chickasaws never accepted French domination and maintained a trading relationship with the British. Royal officials considered the Chickasaws as longtime allies; they failed to recognize that Chickasaw support for Britain had been a tactic to maintain independence from French control. Whatever the previous reasons for the Chickasaws’ pro-British stance, royal officials worked to cement the relationship after the French had been driven from North America. Both Johnstone and John Stuart used the Proclamation of 1763 to assuage Chickasaw fears that whites would encroach on their territory. The presence of Briton James Colbert, who had been living with the tribe since 1729 and was the father of six

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84 White, *Roots of Dependency*, 77-78.
sons by Chickasaw women, helped reinforce ties. Whites living among the Chickasaws introduced slavery to the nation by the 1750s. Colbert alone owned 150 slaves.\textsuperscript{86}

Chickasaw-British relations were not wholly pacific, however. Indian leaders complained that traders took unfair advantage of them and that immigrants to West Florida passed without permission through Chickasaw territory, in some cases occupying Chickasaw lands. Stuart and Johnstone attempted to halt such practices, but lacked the means to end them completely.\textsuperscript{87}

Relations between the Chickasaws and the other southern tribes were generally good after the end of the Seven Years’ War. The Chickasaws and Choctaws made a peace agreement which still held at the outbreak of the Revolution, thereby insuring that two of Britain’s tribal allies would have no obstacles to collaboration. Some Chickasaws who had moved eastward to the Tennessee River Valley did anger the Cherokees, who attempted to drive them out in 1769. After the Chickasaws “soundly defeated” the Cherokee party, both nations coexisted without further conflict.\textsuperscript{88}

\textbf{John Stuart and British Indian Policy}

The British government’s policy toward Indians in the fifteen years before the Revolution greatly influenced how the southern nations responded to the conflict and also affected many colonists’ attitude toward Great Britain. Beginning in 1761, British officials began to develop “an imperial policy for the wilderness … which was in sharp conflict with both the aspirations of landless frontiersmen and the vested interests of many business groups involved in land speculation.” The most important element of this

\textsuperscript{87} Gibson, \textit{The Chickasaws}, 65-67.
\textsuperscript{88} Gibson, \textit{The Chickasaws}, 63.
policy, the Proclamation of 1763, prohibited colonial governors from granting lands or permitting settlement in areas where such expansion might encroach on Indian territory.89

Responsibility for managing British relations with all of the Indian nations south of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi lay with John Stuart, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Southern Department. Born in Scotland, Stuart had emigrated to South Carolina where he secured appointments to various local offices and briefly served in the Provincial Assembly. Beginning in the late 1750s, Stuart developed a strong friendship with Cherokee leader Attakullakulla, who urged provincial authorities to appoint Stuart agent to the tribe after the Cherokee War ended in 1761. Stuart received the appointment in 1762 on the recommendation of South Carolina governor Thomas Boone.90 Stuart’s diplomatic skills and concern for the Indians’ welfare earned him “great prestige” among the southern Indian nations, although many colonists “detested him because he tried to maintain the Indian boundaries.”91

The tensions between Stuart and the colonists arose from differing views of “what form the greatly expanded British empire would take” in the aftermath of France’s expulsion from North America. While provincial land speculators, politicians, and Indian traders wished to be allowed to pursue their own interests in dealing with the Indians, Stuart and his superiors in London believed that “only centralized frontier government based on British-Indian alliances could ensure peace and prosperity.” To accomplish this,

91 Alden, John Stuart, 336.
British leaders recognized that trade abuses and encroachment on Indian land, the major sources of conflict between whites and Indians, would have to be halted.92

Stuart “targeted whites, rather than Indians, as the chief threat to peace,” and promptly set out to establish “fair and stable trade relations” to end the economic exploitation of the southern nations.93 The Indians were particularly vulnerable to unscrupulous traders, since by the mid-eighteenth century they had become “almost completely dependent on trade for their livelihood.” Indians traded deerskins for cooking utensils, muskets, ammunition, rum, and other commodities brought into their nations by white traders, who increased their profits by inflating prices, falsifying weights and measures, and plying their Indian clients with rum to induce them to accept one-sided bargains.94 The superintendent urged the British government to take control of the Indian trade, license traders, restrict the sale of rum, and fix prices for trade goods to prevent abuses. Officials from the Indian department would enforce these regulations. With support from Indian leaders, the London government, Governors Wright and Johnstone, and General Thomas Gage, the commander-in-chief in North America, Stuart put most of his plan into effect beginning in 1766, despite opposition from many colonists. Stuart and his deputies found it impossible to halt all of the abuses in the Indian trade, but they managed to limit traders’ exploitation of the Indians.95

Stuart also succeeded in checking the colonists’ expansion into Indian land during the 1760s. The Proclamation of 1763 gave the superintendent the necessary authority to prevent settlers from encroaching on Indian territory and insured that officials in the

92 Snapp, John Stuart, 2-3.
93 Snapp, John Stuart, 57, 59.
94 O’Donnell, Southern Indians, 7.
provinces would support him, whether or not they agreed with the terms of the proclamation. Settlers, however, soon chose to ignore the law, and by 1770 Virginians and North Carolinians had begun settling in the Watauga, Nolichucky, and Holston River valleys west of the Appalachians. This was Cherokee land, but the settlers disregarded both Cherokee protests and the orders of provincial governors. The squatters tried to legitimize their actions through the Sycamore Shoals treaty, which was repudiated by Stuart and Governor Josiah Martin of North Carolina.96

With the cooperation of Governor Wright, Georgians did manage to win the British government’s approval for their acquisition of a large tract of Indian land in the interior of that province. Claimed by both the Cherokees and Creeks, the former nation agreed in 1771 to cede the land to the colonists as payment for debts owed to Indian traders. Since the Creeks insisted that the Cherokees had no authority to sell the territory, in 1773 colonial officials negotiated a separate agreement with Creek leaders on similar terms. Georgia thus acquired more than 1.6 million acres of land.97

Stuart opposed the cession. He believed that using debt owed to traders as leverage to wrest land from the Indians undermined imperial authority. He informed Wright that many Creeks had repudiated their leaders’ decision to cede the land and that relations with that nation might become hostile. His prediction proved true when Creek parties attacked the Georgia frontier in December 1773, then ambushed a militia force sent to chastise them. In response, other Georgians encountered one party of Creeks and killed their leader, Big Elk, along with all of the men, women, and children in the Indian camp. Fearing a full-scale Indian war, Georgia’s leaders asked General Gage to send

97 Coleman, Revolution in Georgia, 7; Cashin, “Sowing the Wind,” 240-241.
troops and, in conjunction with the other southern provinces, imposed an embargo on trade with the Creeks. The embargo helped avert war and eventually brought the Creeks to accept the cession, although tensions remained high on the frontier.98

With the dispute between Britain and the colonies moving rapidly toward armed confrontation, the colonists’ actions continued to inflame the Indians and push them into the arms of the British. During the Creek crisis, an Indian leader who came to Augusta in March 1774 to discuss peace “treacherously slain” by a colonist named Thomas Fee. When Fee was arrested in South Carolina on Wright’s orders, a mob who applauded the murderer’s actions freed Fee from the jail at Ninety Six.99 Another Georgian, planter and prominent rebel Jonathan Bryan, deceived the Creeks into leasing him a vast quantity of land. Uncertain of what they had signed, the Creeks presented the document to Stuart and Wright in Savannah. Upon examination, Stuart found that seven or eight Indians had granted Bryan a 99-year lease to all their hunting grounds in East Florida. The Creeks “were much surprised and Offended at it, they severely reprimanded the Indians who had signed the Deed & who hapened to be present.” The signers replied that they thought they had only granted Bryan permission to build a house and keep a few cattle nearby on their land. “The Indians insisted that the Deed should be cancelled, and those who had signed tore away their Marks & Seals from it.” But when the Creeks left Savannah, Bryan “intercepted about 20 ... and having made them Drunk prevailed upon them to execute a new Deed.”100 David Taitt, Stuart’s agent to the Creeks, feared that Bryan’s actions “will certainly be the Cause of an Indian War.” He promised to meet with Creek leaders and

98 Snapp, John Stuart, 121, 139-140; Louise Frederick Hayes, Hero of Hornet’s Nest: A Biography of Elijah Clark, 1733 to 1799 (New York: Stratford House, 1946), 24-26; Coleman, Revolution in Georgia, 8.
100 Stuart to Gage, Jan. 18, 1775, Thomas Gage Papers, American Series, Vol. 125, WLCL.
convince them to oppose any land cession. Although Bryan continued his efforts to persuade the Creeks to uphold the agreement they had signed, Taitt assured Stuart that the Indians would ignore Bryan's demands.

Bryan's clumsy attempt to defraud the Creeks and the murder of the Creek leader helped strengthen Stuart's position with that nation at a time when it appeared the British government might call on the Indians for assistance against the rebels. By late December 1774, General Gage warned Stuart that some Americans had been telling the Iroquois that the king had abandoned the Indians. "I mention it to you," Gage wrote, "lest the like Methods should be attempted to debauch the Southern Nations." Gage urged Stuart to "keep all the Indians firm in their Love and Attachment to the King and in a Temper to be always ready to Act in his Service."

This was Stuart's intention, but he found his situation further complicated when Wright and Tonyn suddenly decided that the time was right to make their own attempt to acquire Indian land. In December 1774, Tonyn informed Stuart that the Creeks appeared willing to sell more of their land, and if so, he would "consider a Proper Time to fix for a Congress to Treat for it." A month later Wright also wrote the superintendent, reporting that the Creeks were willing to cede land. The governor had bypassed Stuart and written directly to his deputy, David Taitt, with instructions "to see whether they [the Creeks] will offer or propose it as we think it will be a good Exchange." Well aware that "the Indians can have no such powerfull motive of quarelling with us as our insatiable avidity for land," Stuart took steps to check Tonyn's and Wright's "Inclination

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101 David Taitt to Stuart, Dec. 17, 1774, Gage Papers, Vol. 125, WLCL.
102 Taitt to Stuart, Dec. 29, 1775, Gage Papers, Vol. 125, WLCL.
103 Thomas Gage to John Stuart, Dec. 28, 1774, Gage Papers, Vol. 125, WLCL.
104 Extract of Tonyn to Stuart, Dec. 18, 1774, Gage Papers, Vol. 125, WLCL.
105 Extract of Wright to Stuart, Jan. 12, 1775, Gage Papers, Vol. 125, WLCL. Emphasis in original.
to be tampering with the Creeks for more Land.” He informed the East Florida governor that the Indian boundaries could not be changed without royal approval, and suggested that Tonyn’s energy would be better spent on improving relations with the Seminoles. 

Stuart then procured Gage’s support to insist that Wright abandon his own plan to acquire Creek land.

Stuart’s adept handling of Indian relations, and the colonists’ own behavior, insured that the southern Indian nations were well disposed toward Britain at the outbreak of the Revolution. Nevertheless, the superintendent would have to overcome some obstacles of his own creation to effectively employ Indians against the rebels if and when that measure became necessary. First, if the British government intended to use slaves as well as Indians against the Whigs, they would have to overcome the effects of their own policy of sowing discord between the two races. Stuart had spent a decade trying to “prevent the Indian country [from] becoming an asylum for negroes” and had personally emphasized the importance of “breaking that Intercourse between the Negroes & Savages which might have been attended with very troublesome Consequences.”

This work might now have to be undone. Second, Stuart now found it necessary to bring the Creek-Choctaw war to an end, after he had already rebuffed overtures from both nations to help them negotiate peace. The war he had encouraged to protect the colonists from the Indians now became an obstacle to any effort to employ the Indians against the colonists. On October 24, 1775, Stuart instructed his brother Henry to be ready to bring the Creeks and Choctaws to the negotiating table as soon as Gage approved the

106 Stuart to Gage, Jan. 18, 1775, Gage Papers, Vol. 125, WLCL.
107 Gage to Stuart, March 11, 1775, Gage Papers, Vol. 126, WLCL.
measure. However, it was not until October 1776 that John Stuart finally met with leaders from both nations and brought the war to an end.\footnote{John Stuart to Henry Stuart, Oct. 24, 1775, in K. G. Davies, ed., \textit{Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783 (Colonial Office Series)} (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1976), 11:162-163; John Stuart to Lord George Germain, Oct. 26, 1776, \textit{DAR}, 12:239-240.}

Even with all of the southern Indian nations committed to support the king, there were drawbacks to employing them against the rebels. Not only would the Indians prove less tractable than Stuart and officials in London hoped, but their method of waging war, which emphasized sporadic raids by small parties, was not compatible with the sustained type of military campaigns that the British planned to subdue the Whigs. Furthermore, when Indians went to war, it meant that they were unable to hunt and plant. Since they could not provide for their own subsistence, they naturally expected their white allies to provide the food and goods needed for their survival.\footnote{O’Donnell, \textit{Southern Indians}, 11; Wright, \textit{Only Land They Knew}, 174.} The Indians’ dependence on agriculture also made them vulnerable to their enemies; “whenever whites destroyed Indian granaries and cut down their corn the effect was devastating. Survivors fled to the woods, where they starved.”\footnote{Wright, \textit{Only Land They Knew}, 222.}

When war between the British and American rebels broke out in April 1775, the ministry in London had not sent Stuart any orders to employ the Indians, but in response to the warning Gage had sent him in December, Stuart took precautions to “guard against any Attempt ... to debauch the Indians” in his department. He promised to do his best to keep the southern Indians firmly attached to the king and ready to act when called upon.\footnote{“Indian Agents,” [1775], in Dartmouth Papers, Reel 3, DLAR. This document is not numbered but follows #1210B.} The Chickasaws and Choctaws, Stuart informed Gage, were all “in the most freindly Disposition towards us,” and the Cherokees and Creeks likewise adhered to the...
British. Two months later, Stuart confirmed that the southern tribes were still well disposed, but warned that the Creeks and Cherokees lacked arms and ammunition, which he urgently wished to provide them "at this very critical conjuncture."

No matter how hard the Whigs might try to win over the southern Indians or at least keep them neutral, they could never overcome the advantages the British held at the start of the conflict. The British government already had an organization in place with agents and commissaries who often lived among the nations to which they were assigned, they were better able to supply the Indians with arms and trade goods, and most important, Stuart had consistently opposed the colonists' attempts to illegally purchase or settle on Indian land. In 1775 "the primary pressure on the southern Indians was the colonial desire for land, a desire which seemed to the natives an insatiable lust." Thus the southern Indian nations had good reason to involve themselves in the conflict, and naturally leaned toward the British, who "represented a source of protection" against the encroaching settlers. Furthermore, in the 1770s most of the Indian nations were in the midst of a cultural and spiritual revival that brought unprecedented unity and manifested itself in part in a movement to prevent further loss of territory to the colonists. To the Indians, the war was merely "a continuation of the struggle about Indian land and who

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115 Stuart to Gage, March 27, 1775, Gage Papers, Vol. 127, WLCL.
116 Stuart to Gage, May 26, 1775, Gage Papers, Vol. 129, WLCL.
119 Dowd, Spirited Resistance, 46.
was to get it.” The Creeks, Choctaws, Cherokees and Chickasaws were prepared, if necessary, to fight alongside the British to insure that they retained their land.

120 Calloway, Revolution in Indian Country, 19, 23. See also Sosin, Revolutionary Frontier, 87.
CHAPTER II
THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND ITS SUPPORTERS
REACT TO THE REVOLUTION

As royal authority collapsed in South Carolina and Georgia at the beginning of 1775, the Whigs moved rapidly to consolidate their control of both provinces. Rebel officials, with the aid of mobs, persecuted loyalists and enacted harsh measures to prevent slave insurrections. They adopted a milder approach to the Indians, attempting to win their support or at least to neutralize them through diplomacy and gifts.

The British government, unwilling to abandon the southern provinces, considered various means to regain control of them. The ministry sifted through numerous proposals and eventually decided to send troops to reestablish royal authority with the aid of loyalists. However, British forces arrived too late. The Whigs resorted to force and defeated the South Carolina loyalists, then repulsed the British expedition that attempted to capture Charleston. Shortly afterward, the Cherokees ignored the advice of British Indian agents, attacked the rebels, and suffered an overwhelming defeat. By the end of 1776, both the king’s supporters and his troops were beaten and demoralized, although East and West Florida still remained securely under British control.

Origins of the Southern Strategy

Responsibility for the planning and conduct of military operations against the American rebels lay with King George III’s ministers. Lord North, the chief minister, felt himself ill-suited to lead the British war effort. “Upon military matters I speak ignorantly,
and therefore without effect," he confessed to the king. 1 Although he participated in planning operations during 1775, in subsequent years North would be only peripherally involved in determining the conduct of the American war. North's failure to provide leadership left management of the military affairs in the hands of the Secretary of State for the American Department, Lord Dartmouth, and from November 1775, Lord George Germain. Although Germain's contentious personality often made it difficult for him to cooperate with his fellow ministers, his consistent support for a tough American policy, skill in parliamentary debate, and abilities as an administrator and strategist convinced North and the king that Germain was well qualified to direct the war. 2

King George III shared Germain's opinion that the government must take a firm stance on the American issue. "The colonies must either submit or triumph," he asserted; "we must not retreat." He enjoyed a good relationship with Germain, and while he left the details of managing the war to his ministers, he followed the situation closely, "often offering advice more sensible and realistic than that of his senior officers." 3

Royal officials considered New England the center of the rebellion and focused their initial efforts on defeating the rebels there in the belief that once this had been accomplished, the other provinces would quickly submit to British authority. Yet at the same time, reports from the southern colonies indicated that loyalist sentiment in that region was strong. A steady stream of correspondence from America and from loyalist exiles in England described the great opportunities waiting to be reaped in the South.

should British troops be sent there to cooperate with the loyalists. This led the ministers to consider a variety of plans for regaining control of the southern provinces.  

Alexander Innes, Governor Campbell’s secretary, informed Dartmouth in May 1775 that there were numerous loyalists in South Carolina, but warned that without military assistance they were rapidly losing hope. “[T]he King’s Friends in this Province (who are not a few if they durst appear) are in the lowest state of despondency,” Innes wrote, “expecting every moment to be drove from their Occupations, and Homes, and plundered of all they have earned.” Less than a month later, Innes reported that many Charleston loyalists were signing the rebel Association from “dread of the terrible consequences both to their persons and properties that may follow a refusal,” which was to be expected since they had been left “without Leader, Countenance or Protection.”

While some loyalists in Charleston succumbed to Whig intimidation, Governor Campbell found that the situation in the backcountry appeared more promising. “The intolerable tyranny and oppression” practiced by the rebels “has already given offence to the moderate of their own party and has stirred up such a spirit in the back part of this country, which is very populous, that I hope it will be attended with the best effects,” he informed Dartmouth in July. Campbell added that representatives from the Camden and Ninety Six districts had visited him, bringing news that loyalists in those areas numbered “some thousands.” The governor instructed these emissaries to tell the people “to

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persevere” and pledged that he would provide them “both protection and reward as soon as it is in my power.”

Confined aboard a “poor solitary worm eaten Sloop” in Charleston harbor after the rebels forced him to flee his home, Campbell waited impatiently for Gage and Admiral Samuel Graves to answer his requests for military support. He complained to Dartmouth in August “of the ill consequences that has attended the total neglect of this Province,” asserting that South Carolina’s loyalists had become “so abandon’d to despair” that it was almost impossible for him to convince them that support from the British government was coming. Yet the situation, Campbell noted, was not entirely hopeless. On August 19 militia Colonel Thomas Fletchall had written the governor that “a departure from the Laws and Principles of the Constitution of government is Not so universal as has been represented.” At a muster six days earlier, the members of Fletchall’s backcountry regiment had drawn up a “Memorial of Loyalty” and only two men had refused to sign it. Fletchall estimated that four thousand men in his district “would Appear in Arms for the King” if called upon. Loyalist leader Moses Kirkland, who had made his way to Charleston from the backcountry, also confirmed in mid-September that four thousand men could be recruited “for the service of government whenever a force appears on this coast.” According to Kirkland, these men needed only arms and “a few experienced officers” to effectively cooperate with British troops.

From Georgia, Sir James Wright sent similar reports to Dartmouth. “There are still many friends to government here,” he wrote on June 9, “but they begin to think they

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7 Campbell to Dartmouth, July 19 and 20, 1775, DAR, 11:50.
8 Campbell to Dartmouth, Aug. 19, 1775, Dartmouth Papers #1446, Microfilm, DLAR.
9 Fletchall to Campbell, Aug. 19, 1775, Dartmouth Papers, #1446, Microfilm, DLAR.
10 Campbell to Dartmouth, Sept. 19, 1775, DAR, 11:118.
are left to fall a sacrifice to the resentment of the people for want of proper support and protection, and for their own safety and other prudential reasons are falling off and lessening every day.”¹¹ Later that month, Wright told Campbell that “without any protection or support” from the army or navy, Georgia was “at last likely to be drawn in” to the rebellion.¹² Yet Wright still considered most Georgians loyal, informing Dartmouth that although a majority of Georgians had signed the rebel Association, “great numbers have been intimidated to sign.”¹³ The governor’s implication was clear: most Georgians would return to their allegiance if they received assistance from the government.

A few dissenters challenged these reports. One writer stated that most Charleston residents were Whigs, and that “it is dangerous for the friends of government (who are very few in number) to speak or write their sentiments.”¹⁴ Another, allegedly a deserter from the British army, believed that royal authority could not be restored in South Carolina. The king’s troops “can do nothing in this country,” he asserted.¹⁵

Such accounts, buried amid a flood of letters from governors, lesser officials, and loyalist exiles testifying to the strength of southern loyalism, had no effect on the ministry. The weight of evidence convinced the ministers that if the loyalists received support from a small military force, they could reestablish royal authority in the southern provinces. Campbell’s and Wright’s reports made an operation of this sort urgent, since loyalist morale appeared to be collapsing in the face of Whig persecution, and loyalty might wither beyond recovery if assistance did not come quickly.

¹¹ Wright to Dartmouth, June 9, 1775, DAR, 9:167.
¹³ Wright to Dartmouth, Aug. 7, 1775, DAR, 11:68.
Many people believed that an effort to regain control of South Carolina and Georgia would benefit from the support of Indians as well as loyalists. Several army officers urged the ministry to employ Indians to assist in crushing the rebellion. General Gage wrote Dartmouth in June 1775 suggesting that “we must not be tender of calling upon the Savages,” because the rebels were using New England Indians to aid in the siege of Boston. From Nova Scotia, General James Grant wrote that same month that “a few scalps taken by Indians ... would operate more upon the minds of these deluded distracted People than any other Loss they can sustain.”16 Patrick Tonyn, one of the most persistent advocates of using Indians against the rebels, asserted that “the Americans are a thousand times more in dread of the Savages than of any European troops.”17 Ironically, John Stuart “could see no advantage to using the Indians until it could be done in such a way as to damage the American cause materially,” and in 1775 he worked to keep the Indians at peace until they could be used in a manner he thought proper.18

While Dartmouth had been reluctant to order British agents to employ the Indians, his successor Germain recognized the potential value of the Indians, believing that in addition to their actual military contributions they would “strike terror” into the rebels.19 Yet he, like Stuart, realized that the government would have to proceed cautiously in this regard. Germain wrote Tonyn praising the governor and Stuart for their successful efforts to keep the southern nations’ allegiance, while recommending restraint in employing Indians against the rebels. Germain pointed out that “the making those Savages Parties in the present unhappy Dispute, is a measure of a very delicate Nature, and perhaps ought

16 Valentine, Lord North, 1:375.
19 Valentine, Lord George Germain, 185.
not to be pressed forward, but in proportion as it may be necessary to counteract any
Steps of the like Tendency, which may be taken by the Rebels.”20

A major reason for Germain’s reluctance to authorize the use of Indians was his
fear that the ministry’s opponents in Parliament, who sympathized with the American
rebels, would take advantage of the issue to turn public opinion against the war.
Germain’s deputy, William Knox, warned that this might happen and was soon proved
correct.21 In the House of Lords, opposition peers denounced the idea of using Indians
against the rebels. Lord Shelburne described proposals to do so as “[b]arbarous” and
“cowardly,” while the Duke of Richmond assailed the notion of inciting “those assassins
to stab your enemy in the back.”22 The opposition in the House of Commons also
vociferously criticized any plan to use Indians against the rebels.23

If determining the role of Indians in the war was, as Germain put it, “very
delicate,” the question of whether or not to seek aid from slaves was even more
vexatious. From the beginning of the conflict, a surprising number of Britons advocated
arming slaves and granting them freedom as a reward for their assistance. This idea,
although horrifying to most Americans, seemed reasonable to many in Great Britain,
where attitudes toward slavery had been gradually changing.

In the years before the Revolution, comments by Britons concerning American
slaves demonstrated their inability “to recognize that in the colonies the revolutionary
new division of men arising from racial slavery was not simply one of temporal

20 Germain to Tonyn, Dec. 23, 1775, Germain Papers, Vol. 4, WLCL.
condition.” For example, the Bishop of London had referred to blacks as “truly a Part of our own Nation,” while the authors of a 1771 geography book recommended that slaves who behaved well should be freed and allowed to become planters, which would unite them to the whites by “bands of friendship, and by mutual good offices.” These ideas reflected the growing strength of the emancipation movement in Britain. By the 1760s many Britons had come to regard slavery as a moral wrong and thought that blacks laboring in the colonies should be treated as subjects rather than property. As the likelihood of war increased, some abolitionists saw an opportunity to weaken the rebellious Americans by striking a blow against slavery. “Proclame Freedom to their Negroes, then how long would they be a people?” Sir William Draper asked in 1774. “They would soon cry out for pardon, and render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s.”

Others who advised the ministry to arm slaves did so simply because they believed it to be an expedient way to defeat the rebels. Some members of Parliament proposed to strike at the economy of the southern provinces by emancipating the slaves, but the House of Commons rejected the proposal. Opposition leader Edmund Burke argued that “declaring a general enfranchisement” of slaves would not have much effect. He suggested that to counter a British threat to emancipate the slaves, the Americans might act first to grant slaves their freedom and arm them to fight the king’s troops.

The ministry’s supporters in Parliament rejected such arguments. On October 26, 1775, William Lyttelton, a former governor of South Carolina, told the House of

24 Jordan, White Over Black, 208-209.
27 Burke’s Speech, March 22, 1775, Proceedings and Debates, 5:612.
Commons that the southern colonies were the weak link in the rebel chain because of "the number of negroes in them" and suggested that "if a few regiments were sent there, the negroes would rise, and embrace their hands in the blood of their masters." Lyttelton did not shrink from this violence, asserting "that the colonies ought to be conquered and then to have mercy shown them." 28 Most members of Parliament, however, sided with former West Florida governor George Johnstone, who pronounced the scheme "too black and horrid to be adopted." 29 Lyttelton's motion to arm slaves failed by a vote of 278-108. 30 Ralph Izard, a South Carolinian who was then in London, denounced Lyttelton for "encouraging the Negroes ... to drench themselves in the blood of their masters." 31

British army officers had fewer qualms regarding the arming of slaves. Shortly before giving up his command, Gage endorsed the idea, telling Lord Barrington, the secretary for the army, in June 1775 that "things are now come to that Crisis, that we must avail ourselves of every resource, even to raise the Negros, in our cause." 32 General John Burgoyne advised King George that Indians should be employed in support of the army and that "arms should be provided for the Negro slaves to overawe the southern colonies." 33 Burgoyne even suggested that the northern Indians could be used to transport arms southward for the slaves. 34

Various officers also assigned slaves a prominent part in several plans that they submitted to Germain for retaking the southern provinces. One suggestion, devised by

30 Frey, Water from the Rock, 67.
31 Ralph Izard to "a friend in Bath," Oct. 27, 1775, in Anne Izard Deas, ed., Correspondence of Mr. Ralph Izard of South Carolina, from the Year 1774 to 1804; with a Short Memoir, Vol. 1 (New York: Charles S. Francis, 1844), 135.
32 Frey, Water from the Rock, 60.
34 Hibbert, Redcoats and Rebels, 57.
Captain Dalrymple of the 20th Regiment, called for the creation of a corps of 2,000 Irish Catholic volunteers, who would be dispatched to the Chesapeake to assist Virginia’s governor, Lord Dunmore. To this force, Dalrymple recommended, Dunmore “should add the bravest & most ingenious of the black Slaves whom He may find all over the Bay of Chesapeake.” Dalrymple described these blacks as “full of Intelligence, Fidelity & Courage as will be found upon Enquiry.” He believed that the combined black and Catholic force could raid along the shores of Chesapeake Bay or even capture Philadelphia if the opportunity arose.  

A variation of this plan recommended that the expedition to the southern colonies then preparing to sail under the command of General Charles, Earl Cornwallis, should be sent to Chesapeake Bay rather than the Carolinas. The troops could capture Baltimore, the writer asserted, and augment their numbers by adding five thousand indentured servants and convicts, along with “the Bravest and most Ingenious of the Black Slaves.” This force could destroy supplies and ironworks along the shores of the Bay, bribing other slaves to destroy facilities farther inland. After achieving its objectives in the Chesapeake, “the Army of Troops, Convicts, Blacks &c may carry the war into Pennsilvania,” and still be available “to Subdue the Carolinas in Winter.”

Yet another proposal, from an officer who had served in the West Indies in earlier wars, asked Germain “to judge, of what Service a Regt of Stout Active Negro’s will be, Commanded by White Officers.” The writer did not envision this regiment as a combat unit; instead, its members would “Contribute to ease the Soldier, from many dutys both

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35 “Project for Strengthening General Howe’s Operations in the North by a Diversion in the South, without taking off the Troops,” [1775], Germain Papers, Vol. 4, WLCL.
36 “Advantages of Lord Cornwallis’s Expedition going rather to Chesapeak Bay than to the Carolinas,” [1775?], Germain Papers, Vol. 4, WLCL.
discouraging and prejudicial to the healths of those” needed to actually fight the rebels. Another benefit of such a unit, the writer noted, was that upon its going ashore in any of the southern colonies, “not a Slave in ten, but would desert to Such a Corps, a Circumstance I am well assured much more dreaded; & of more fatall Consequences to the Rebells then the loss of a Battle.” He added that many planters in the West Indies had “Expressed their Surprise ... that Government have made no application to the west India Collonies, for a Body of their Negros on this Occasion.” These planters, the writer noted, said that Jamaica alone could easily furnish one thousand slaves for such a regiment, and if the ministry approved the plan, the slave unit could be ready for action by April 1776.37

The same writer sent a more detailed proposal to Lord North, listing the number of slaves each West Indies province could contribute to the proposed regiment, which was to consist of two battalions of seven hundred men each, with white commissioned and noncommissioned officers drawn from existing regiments. The black troops were to be armed and equipped in the same manner as other British soldiers, and “every Negro of the Sd Regt who Shall distinguish himself during the war, shall receive his Freedom, & if he is rendred Unfitt for Service a Small pension of £4 [$525] a year during Life.” The government would either reimburse the owners for the slaves provided to the army or replace them with “other Negros taken from the Rebells.”38

As some of the writers indicated to the ministers, precedent existed for employing slaves to assist in military operations. British forces had made considerable use of slaves in the Caribbean during the Seven Years’ War, while free blacks performed militia duty

37 “Campbell” to Germain, Jan. 16, 1776, Germain Papers, Vol. 4, WLCL. Frey identifies the writer of this document and the one cited below as Lieutenant Colonel Archibald Campbell, who later commanded the expedition to Georgia. Frey, Water from the Rock, 69.
38 “Campbell” to Lord North, n.d., enclosed in above.
in the West Indies. In Jamaica, unclaimed runaway slaves labored in royal service to support army garrisons under the provisions of a 1757 law, carrying supplies, mounting artillery, and cleaning barracks. An officer in Dominica wrote that without the assistance of slaves he did not have enough troops to perform all of the duties at his post. 39

Thus, as these reports indicated, many West Indian planters were surprised that "the government did not ask them to supply slaves for military service in North America .... Some of the large planters in Jamaica were willing to provide a thousand slaves for military service on the mainland." Their willingness to do so arose in part from their desire to help suppress the rebellion, as well as from their fears that the unstable conditions created by the Revolution increased their danger from both the rebels and their own slaves. 40

Several other prominent Britons and loyalists, including writer Samuel Johnson and former South Carolina attorney general Sir Egerton Leigh, urged the use of slaves in some capacity, while some such as Thomas Day ridiculed the "American patriot, signing resolutions of independency with the one hand, and with the other brandishing a whip over his affrighted slaves." 41 The ministry, however, refused to go farther than the tacit permission that Dartmouth had given Lord Dunmore in July to use the black troops the latter had already raised. 42

Domestic opposition to the arming of slaves contributed to the ministry's hesitance in the matter. Several British "Gentlemen, Merchants, and Traders" petitioned

40 O'Shaughnessy, Empire Divided, 149.
42 Dartmouth to the Earl of Dunmore, July 12, 1775, DAR, 11:45.
King George III in October 1775 to express their horror at the idea of arming slaves, urging him to reject any such proposal.\textsuperscript{43} Memorials from London and Bristol protesting a policy of harsh coercion in America included denunciations of promoting "insurrections of negroes" as "improper," while the \textit{Annual Register} criticized proposals to arm slaves as undermining both the social system and property rights.\textsuperscript{44} A British traveler in America, having heard rumors that the ministry planned to arm slaves, predicted "that such action would put an end to all quarreling between American patriots and Tories, for 'in that case friends and foes alike will be all one.'"\textsuperscript{45} The Duke of Manchester declared that it would be difficult to bring the Americans to accept a peace agreement, after the government had enraged them by "giving orders to arm the Indian tribes against them; and encouraging the black slaves to rise and cut the throats of their masters."\textsuperscript{46}

As the duke had correctly observed, the question of whether to employ Indians and slaves against the rebels was linked to the larger issue of how the war was to be fought. Sharp divisions existed between those civil and military officials who advocated a harsh policy of subjugation and others who favored applying just enough force to bring the Americans to their senses in order to promote reconciliation.\textsuperscript{47} Realizing that if they "raised the Negroes or placed greater emphasis on the Indians ... the task of reconciliation would have been far harder." Because a harmonious restoration of the imperial relationship was their primary goal, the ministers seized upon an attractive option.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{43} Quarles, \textit{Negro in the Revolution}, 112.
\textsuperscript{44} Frey, \textit{Water from the Rock}, 69, 72-73.
\textsuperscript{45} Jordan, \textit{White Over Black}, 114.
Lord William Campbell had reported that the mere presence of so many slaves made South Carolina vulnerable. "I leave it to any person of common sense to conceive what defence they can make in a country where their slaves are five to one," he wrote. Sir James Murray also noted that while a small military force "can make but little impression on the Continent of America," it appeared likely that a minimal number of troops could "overawe the southern colonies on account of their Negroes." The ministers decided that slaves could provide passive assistance by tying down a large percentage of rebel troops to guard against insurrection, easing the task of the king's soldiers, yet avoiding the complications that arming slaves would create. Therefore "British military leaders and Crown officials seized upon the idea of intimidating independence-minded white southerners with the threat of a slave rising without, however, actually inciting one."

Lord North then set to work reassuring Parliament, the British public, and loyalist slaveowners that the ministry had not originated the idea of using slaves and Indians against the rebels. In the House of Commons on November 20, 1775, he stated that "there never was any idea of raising or employing the negroes or the Indians, until the Americans themselves had first applied to them."

The ministry's failure to take full advantage of slave support proved an immense benefit to the rebels. Southern Whigs recognized that the large slave population in the region made them particularly vulnerable, but also understood that any British effort to

arm the slaves would alienate many loyalists. While attending the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, Georgia delegates Archibald Bulloch and John Houstoun told John Adams “that if 1000 regular Troops should land in Georgia and their commander be provided with Arms and Cloaths enough, and proclaim Freedom to all the Negroes who would join his Camp, 20,000 Negroes would join it from the two Provinces in a fortnight.” In the Georgians’ opinion, only the fact that many loyalists owned slaves would prevent British officials from taking such a step. “They say,” Adams wrote, “their only Security is this, that all the Kings Friends and Tools of Government have large Plantations and Property in Negroes. So that the Slaves of the Tories would be lost as well as those of the Whiggs.”

Most Whigs did not share Bulloch’s and Houstoun’s confidence that the ministry would not arm slaves, so when rumors that such a policy had been adopted reached the southern provinces, an uproar ensued. Governor Wright reported in late May 1775 that an account “that administration have it in view ... to liberate the slaves and encourage them to attack their masters, have thrown the people in Carolina and this province into a ferment.” Although Wright considered the information “absurd and improbable,” he noted that it “had an exceeding bad effect and I am afraid will involve us all in the utmost distress.” The rumors received apparent confirmation when Whig Arthur Lee wrote from London to an acquaintance in South Carolina, declaring that “the ministry had in agitation not only bringing down the Indians on the inhabitants of this province but also to encourage an insurrection of their slaves.” The rebels circulated tales that Governor Campbell had brought 14,000 stand of arms for the slaves’ use. Campbell informed


Dartmouth that it was impossible to describe “the flame that this occasioned amongst all
ranks and degrees; the cruelty and savage barbarity of the scheme was the conversation of
all companies and no one dared contradict” the reports.55

One of the infuriated Whigs, Thomas Lynch of South Carolina, wrote in horror
that the British government “calls in Savages to ravage our frontiers – to massacre our
defenceless women – and children – offers every incitement to our Slaves to rebel – and
murder their masters.” These actions, Lynch said, strengthened the rebels’ will to fight,
but had little other effect, as he saw only “our Indians keeping the peace, against all acts
– used to detach them from us, by lies – calumnies – and interest. Our Slaves remaining
faithful – against the promise – even of liberty.”56

Henry Laurens, one of the most moderate rebels, declared that “the discoveries
which have lately been made of a Settled plan to involve us in all the horrible Scenes of
foreign & domestic Butcheries (not War) have not tended to lull us into Security – While
Men of War & Troops are to attack us in front the Indians are to make inroads on our
backs – Tories & Negro Slaves to rise in our Bowels.” Like Lynch, he observed that the
news had made Whigs more determined to resist. If Britain intended “to manumit & Set
free those Africans whom She Captivated, made Slaves, & Sold to us, the people are also
ready to anticipate the pious work – they are ready to fight against her Soldiers, against
false Brethren, against Indians” rather than submit, Laurens declared.57

Thus the decision not to arm slaves deprived the ministry of one of its potentially
most powerful weapons against the rebels, yet brought the government no advantage. The

55 Campbell to Dartmouth, Aug. 31, 1775, DAR, 11:94.
56 Thomas Lynch to Ralph Izard, Nov. 19, 1775, Correspondence of Izard, 1:154.
57 Henry Laurens to William Manning, Feb. 27, 1776, in David R. Chesnutt, ed., The Papers of Henry
rumors that British officials planned to instigate slave rebellions did as much damage to the royal cause as the actual arming of slaves would have done, without the offsetting benefit of strengthening the army with black troops. The ministry preferred to rely primarily upon the loyalists, supplemented by Indian support when necessary, and would persevere in this policy throughout the war.

The Loyalists: Resistance and Defeat

With royal government no longer functioning in South Carolina, the Whigs moved quickly to consolidate power. Their Council of Safety, chosen by the rebel congress to act in an executive capacity to manage provincial affairs, had as its primary goal the suppression of loyalists. The council unleashed a campaign of persecution targeting virtually anyone who did not endorse the rebel position. Georgia’s Whigs, hampered by opposition from Governor Wright and the strong loyalist element in that province, moved more slowly. Prodded by their counterparts in South Carolina and eager to strengthen their own authority, rebels in Georgia eventually bludgeoned the loyalists there into submission. From the royal governors to small farmers, almost everyone in either province who supported the British or preferred to remain neutral suffered; “harassment was directed almost as vigorously at the least powerful of loyalists, the wives and children,” as it was against men who opposed the Whigs.  

The earliest indication of how far the Whigs in South Carolina were prepared to go to seize and punish loyalists came in April 1775, when some rebels considered capturing Governor Campbell as a hostage to exchange for loyalists they had identified as particularly dangerous. When the Whigs learned that Moses Kirkland, a prominent

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backcountry loyalist, had reached safety aboard the British warship *Tamar* with Campbell’s help, rebel Arthur Middleton proposed “that the Gov. by whose Assistance he escaped, should be taken into Custody & offered in Exchange for K.” Cooler Whigs rejected the idea, but Middleton warned that it was possible the governor “may yet be nab’d, if he does not take care of himself.”

The Whigs continued to show restraint until the summer of 1775, when rumors that British officials planned to incite Indian attacks and slave insurrections provided a pretext for the rebels to raise troops and take action against Charleston’s loyalists. The Whigs then informed royal officials that they were “Hostages, & must Suffer whatever might be inflicted, on any of the Americans.” The newly raised rebel forces helped to intimidate loyalists and the wavering and checked the “dangerous Spirit of resistance, to the recently usurped authority.” Yet one loyalist observed that even these units “were not without Symptoms of discontent & Sedition.”

In the Whigs’ opinion, the best way to deal with such discontent was to employ violence against anyone who refused to sign the Continental Association or otherwise challenged rebel authority. Several rebels forced their way into the bedroom of Doctor Alexander Garden, who was severely ill, to demand that the prominent Charleston physician and suspected loyalist sign the Association. Too sick to read the document, Garden signed with the stipulation that he would renounce it if its contents were at

variance with his allegiance to Great Britain. After recovering, Garden decided that he should probably not have signed it.\textsuperscript{61}

Garden's treatment was mild compared to the fate of others. On June 9, the rebels took Laughlin Martin and James Dealy, the former a man "of Some Credit in Town," into custody. The "two impudent fellows ... had not only refused to Subscribe the Association but threatened vengeance against the whole Country by exciting an Insurrection." An impromptu court sentenced the two men to be tarred and feathered, after which they were "put into a Cart & driven up & down the Broad Street - instantly after that degrading punishment was over they were put on board a Vessel in order to be banished hence for ever."\textsuperscript{62} The brutal punishment "did much to cow loyalists in the capital."\textsuperscript{63}

George Walker, the gunner at Fort Johnson, was another who made the mistake of holding political opinions contrary to those of the Whigs. On August 12, when a ship captain invited him to join in a toast of "damnation" to George III, Walker delivered a scathing reply.\textsuperscript{64} As punishment for this "insolent speech," the rebel mob seized Walker, tarred and feathered him, and then carted him from one "Tory House," to another.\textsuperscript{65} At each stop Walker was forced "to drink damnation" to the inhabitants.\textsuperscript{66} Loyalists visited by the mob and their prisoner included Alexander Innes, James Simpson, and William Wragg. At Fenwick Bull's home, the crowd threw a sack of feathers onto Bull's balcony and asked him to keep it until it was his turn to be tarred and feathered. Eventually the

\textsuperscript{61} Edmund Berkeley and Dorothy Smith Berkeley, Dr. Alexander Garden of Charles Town (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), 263.
\textsuperscript{62} Henry Laurens to John Laurens, June 8, 1775, PHL, 10:167-168.
\textsuperscript{63} Keith Krawczynski, William Henry Drayton: South Carolina Revolutionary Patriot (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 141-142. The author gives Dealy's first name as John.
\textsuperscript{64} Terry W. Lipscomb, The Carolina Lowcountry April 1773-June 1776, and the Battle of Fort Moultrie (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1994), 14.
\textsuperscript{65} Peter Timothy to William Henry Drayton, Aug. 13, 1775, "Correspondence of Middleton," 129.
\textsuperscript{66} Arthur Middleton to Drayton, Aug. 12, 1775, "Correspondence of Middleton," 126.
rebels released Walker at the home of another loyalist, Doctor George Milligen.\textsuperscript{67} Having twice refused to sign the Association, the doctor replaced Walker as the target of the crowd's wrath. The throng surrounded Milligen “like so many hissing snakes,” so that he drew his sword to defend himself. He eventually reached safety inside his house, but left for England later that month.\textsuperscript{68} Reflecting the Whigs’ amusement at the loyalists’ distress, Arthur Middleton joked that while he knew of no “pressing necessity” for Milligen’s departure, it was probable that the doctor “had an unconquerable Dislike to the mode of Cloathing lately adopted,” a reference to the tarring and feathering of Walker. To prevent other loyal inhabitants from escaping to British vessels, the Council of Safety took steps to prevent the loyalists from using their boats to travel within the harbor.\textsuperscript{69}

On August 2, another Whig mob confronted Thomas Brown, a recent immigrant from Yorkshire, at New Richmond in the backcountry. Brown’s refusal to sign the Whig association sparked a struggle in which Brown wounded one of his attackers, then held off others with his sword until he was struck in the head from behind by a musket. The Whigs then tied Brown to a tree, tarred his legs and applied burning wood to his feet, which caused him to lose two toes. They also partially scalped him and carted him through several settlements before leaving the battered loyalist in Augusta, Georgia. This brutality forced Brown to sign the Association, but he soon recanted.\textsuperscript{70}

Even members of the clergy were not exempt from Whig intimidation. “Our Committee has shut up all the ports the Courts & the Church,” Middleton wrote, “the last

\textsuperscript{67} Arthur Middleton to Drayton, Aug. 12, 1775; Peter Timothy to Drayton, Aug. 13, 1775, “Correspondence of Middleton,” 126, 129.
\textsuperscript{68} Berkeley and Berkeley, \textit{Dr. Alexander Garden}, 265-266.
\textsuperscript{69} Arthur Middleton to Drayton, Aug. 22, 1775, “Correspondence of Middleton,” 135.
for a Sermon preach'd in it by Mr. Smith which they did not like." 71 The Anglican rector of Prince George Parish in Georgetown, the Rev. James Stuart, was "violently assaulted by a Savage Mob" because of his loyalism. When he appealed to local officials, "the very Judge applauded the Brutality of the Banditti" who had attacked him, "and encouraged the Aggressors ... to insult him in their Court of Justice." 72

The various mob actions terrified most Charleston loyalists. "The people were in such a humour that I believe there was scarce a nonsubscriber who did not tremble," Whig printer Peter Timothy observed. 73 Hoping to capitalize on the fearful atmosphere they had created, the Whigs decided to stage a public display of power to intimidate the wavering inhabitants of Charleston into signing the Association.

On July 22, the Council of Safety convened to hear the cases of twenty-four men, including several high-ranking provincial officials, who had refused to sign. The Whigs expected that their inquiry, backed by the implied threat of violence, would force many prominent loyalists to recant and others would follow their example. Those appearing before the committee included Chief Justice Thomas Knox Gordon, Attorney General James Simpson, four judges, and some lesser officials. However, only three of the men signed the Association. The majority instead shared the views of judge William Gregory, who declared himself "ever a faithfull Subject & He has taken two Oaths of Allegiance [to the king] and will never break them." Simpson was the most vocal in denouncing the rebel Association, insisting he could not "subscribe it without Perjury and Perfidy." 74

71 Arthur Middleton to Drayton, Aug. 4, 1775, "Correspondence of Middleton," 122.
73 Peter Timothy to Drayton, Aug. 13, 1775, "Correspondence of Middleton," 129.
74 "Loyalists reasons for refusing to unite with the Whigs," South Carolina Box - Loyalists, NYPL. Although the document is undated, Governor Campbell stated that the proceeding took place on July 22, and described it in some detail, Campbell to Dartmouth, July 23, 1775, DAR, 11:55. Arthur Middleton

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Disappointed with the unexpectedly poor results of their proceedings, after a few days of deliberation the Whig committee decided that the reasons the loyalists had given for refusing to cooperate in the rebels’ measures were unsatisfactory. The nonsubscribers were ordered to surrender their weapons, barred from leaving Charleston, and forbidden to interact with Whigs.75

The committee made an exception for William Wragg, confining him to his plantation outside of town, from whence he wrote Henry Laurens to explain his refusal to take the rebel oath and protest the injustice of the Whigs’ proceedings. “Can Liberty be worth contending for or ever preserved, when the first principles, & the essential foundations of it are violated?” Wragg asked. “I have seen Sentence; & am still at a Loss to know my Offence.” Wragg added that he would remain on his plantation as the Council of Safety had ordered, but he chided Laurens and the Whigs for their fears of “the formidable power of twenty Gentlemen, whose Age, Disposition, & the Education of most of them” hardly qualified them as dangerous conspirators.76 Laurens agreed that the Whigs had been too harsh in their treatment of loyalists and urged his colleagues to act with moderation in hopes that kind treatment might induce most to change their views. “Our Cause is good, it does not Stand in need, like Mahomet’s Religion, of Sword & Fire to bring Men into it,” Laurens wrote.77

In fact, the rebel leaders themselves recognized that they had not succeeded in eradicating loyalism in Charleston. Despite a summer of vigorous persecution, the

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76 William Wragg to Henry Laurens, Sept. 5, 1775, PHL, 10:369-370.
Council of Safety worried in late September that "there are more [loyalists] within this Metropolis than without it in proportion to numbers."\textsuperscript{78}

The loyalists outside the town also had to be dealt with. Recognizing that it would be more difficult to impose their will on the inhabitants of the vast backcountry region than it was in Charleston, Whig leaders first opted for an attempt at persuading loyalists to join them. In April the Committee of Intelligence composed the first of four letters it circulated throughout South Carolina in the spring and summer of 1775. These letters denounced Britain's American policy, warned that the British planned to use force to snuff out American liberty, and urged unified resistance against such measures. While it is impossible to determine the effect of the letters, Governor Campbell believed that they did hurt the royal cause.\textsuperscript{79}

Campbell, who maintained a clandestine correspondence with backcountry loyalists with the assistance of Charleston merchant Andrew Mackenzie, felt frustrated at his inability to aid the king's supporters.\textsuperscript{80} The governor could do little other than to inform Thomas Fletchall, the acknowledged leader of the backcountry loyalists, that he "was without power to protect, or assist you." Campbell could only reassure Fletchall and his followers that the government would eventually take steps to aid them. Meanwhile, he advised Fletchall to keep the peace, cultivate loyalty among the people, and "by every means avoid giving offence, or doing the smallest injury to any of your Fellow Subjects, and rest satisfied at present."\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{78} Council of Safety to Stephen Bull, Sept. 23, 1775, \textit{PHL}, 10:418-419.
\textsuperscript{79} Krawczynski, \textit{Drayton}, 127-129.
\textsuperscript{81} Campbell to Fletchall, Aug. 1, 1775, Dartmouth Papers, #1446, Microfilm, DLAR.
The Whigs believed that if they could convert Fletchall to their cause, it might defuse the impending crisis in the backcountry. On July 14 Henry Laurens wrote to the loyalist leader, reviewing the rebels’ reasons for resisting British authority and appealing for Fletchall’s support on the basis of racial solidarity. With the province “alarmed by threats of Invasions by the British Soldiery, of instigated Insurrections by our Negroes, of inroads by the Neighbouring Tribes of Indians & of what is far more to be dreaded the practices & insidious acts of false Brethren,” it was urgent that everyone stand together for mutual protection, Laurens stated. He gave Fletchall an opportunity to dissociate himself from other loyalist leaders, stating that he had heard accounts that Fletchall was friendly to the Whigs “but that you were deterred, partly by the malevolent artifices of Ministerial Hirelings” and by a fear of losing his militia commission. Laurens thus left open a door by which Fletchall could restore himself to the rebels’ good graces.  

Fletchall replied on July 24, assuring the Council of Safety that while “many reports have been maliciously asserted against me,” he could prove they were false. There was little of comfort in the remainder of his letter, however. Fletchall readily admitted that not a man in the militia regiments between the Savannah and Broad Rivers had signed the Whig Association, but that many had instead signed a loyal resolution circulated by Joseph Robinson. Insisting that he had not compelled anyone to sign either document, Fletchall stated while that he did not concur with the Whigs’ views, he was not “an enemy to my country.” For the time being, he declared, “I am resolved, and do utterly refuse to take up arms against my king, until I find it my duty to do otherwise.”

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82 Henry Laurens to Thomas Fletchall, July 14, 1775, PHL, 10:214-217.
83 Thomas Fletchall to Council of Safety, July 24, 1775, in Robert W. Gibbes, ed., Documentary History of the American Revolution, Consisting of Letters and Papers relating to the Contest for Liberty Chiefly in South Carolina, From Originals in the Possession of Gen. Francis Marion, by Gen. Peter Horry, of
Like Robinson, other loyalists challenged the rebels by circulating resolutions declaring their allegiance to the king. People living along the Pacolet River composed a statement expressing their "utmost abhorrence and detestation" of "the daring proceedings of those infatuated people, who call themselves committee men, or Liberty boys." To counter such actions, the loyalists promised to "embody at the shortest notice, to support the rights of the crown, as soon as called by any Legal Authority."84

The loyalists soon got the opportunity to act upon their pledge. While the Council of Safety sparred with Fletchall, they took more forceful steps to gain control of the backcountry by dispatching Major James Mayson with a company of rangers to seize Fort Charlotte on the Savannah River. The outnumbered militia garrison surrendered to the rebels without resistance on July 12. Mayson took the two pieces of artillery and other captured supplies to Ninety Six, leaving a few men to hold the fort. When the loyalists learned of Mayson's action, Robert and Patrick Cunningham and Joseph Robinson assembled about two hundred men who marched to Ninety Six on July 17, forced Mayson to surrender, carried off all the supplies taken from the fort except the two cannon, and then released their prisoners.85

The loyalists' success against Mayson convinced rebel Colonel William Thomson that vigorous measures were needed if the Whigs were to gain control of the backcountry. Thomson informed the Council of Safety that Fletchall, Robert Cunningham, and Robinson had deceived the backcountry settlers into opposing the Whigs. If the three

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were Indians, Thomson wrote, he would consider himself justified to “Send the Council of Safety their Scalps.” However, Thomson believed that “the poor People by them deluded I think may yet be Brought Over by fair Means.” He recommended that the Reverend William Tennent be sent to persuade them, “as they are Chiefly of his Religion, I think he would undeceive and Open the Eyes of many of them.”

The Council decided to follow Thomson’s advice and act against the loyalist leaders while seeking to persuade the backcountry people to join the Whigs. The council ordered an inquiry “into the Conduct of Mr. Kirkland,” which was purported to have “a very dark and suspicious aspect.” Council member Arthur Middleton wanted Kirkland to receive “such punishment as his Crimes deserve; as the matter has been represented he has certainly been guilty both of Mutiny & Desertion.” A week later the council received the evidence it desired in the form of an affidavit allegedly proving Kirkland to be “a rebellious, seditious xxxx,” and questioning the allegiance of Indian trader Richard Pearis. In addition, the council dispatched Tennent, the Rev. Oliver Hart, and William Henry Drayton to the backcountry “to cure this Evil.” Henry Laurens hoped that “by proper applications all those people may be brought at least to promise absolute neutrality & many of them to join us.” To strengthen the hand of its emissaries, the council ordered Thomson to send rebel militia units on a sweep through the province. The council authorized its emissaries to call for assistance from the militia if they found it necessary.

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87 Arthur Middleton to Drayton, Aug. 4, 1775, “Correspondence of Middleton,” 122-123.
88 Arthur Middleton to Drayton, Aug. 12, 1775, “Correspondence of Middleton,” 126.
89 Henry Laurens to John Laurens, July 30, 1775, PHL, 10:257-258.
90 William Moultrie, Memoirs of the American Revolution, So Far As It Related to the States of North and South-Carolina, and Georgia 2 Vols. (New York: David Longworth, 1802), 1:82-83; Krawczynski, Drayton, 160.
Drayton and Tennent set out together on August 2. They first report to the Council of Safety, written five days later, contained little good news. At Congaree Store, in the midst of settlements of German immigrants, the Whigs summoned the people to a meeting. “To our great mortification not one German appeared but one or two of our friends,” Drayton and Tennent wrote. The people in the area were said to believe that if they took up arms against the king, they would lose their land. Conceding that their hopes of success were “but small in this quarter,” they added that they had resorted to threats in order to force some of the Germans to listen to them. They asked Colonel Thomson to order a muster, “& we have declared if the Officers disobey, they shall be broke.”

In response to Thomson’s threats, many people attended the August 9 meeting, although Tennent noted that a large number “had come a great way to oppose” the Whigs. The rebel emissaries harangued them, however, until all but fifteen men agreed to sign the Association. But Drayton and Tennent’s subsequent efforts were less successful. At an August 11 meeting on the Saluda River they convinced only one person to subscribe, while the next day not even one out of one hundred people whom Drayton addressed at Evan McLaurin’s home would sign. Nevertheless, Drayton informed the Council of Safety that he believed that if these people were allowed to elect representatives to the provincial congress, they would recognize its authority. However, he also warned that unless Moses Kirkland was prevented from returning to the

91 Krawczynski, Drayton, 163.
93 William Tennent, “Fragment of a Journal kept by the Rev. William Tennent Describing his Journey, in 1775, to Upper South Carolina at the request of the Council of Safety, To induce the Tories to sign an Association to support the cause of the Colonists,” City Year Book of Charleston, 1894, 297-298.
backcountry, "our progress will have been in vain." In reply, the council authorized Drayton to "spare no expence to secure & have him brought" to Charleston.

Meanwhile Hart had traveled to the forks between the Broad and Saluda Rivers after conferring with Drayton and Tennent on August 7. There he gave a sermon on the political situation, which his audience "heard with Attention." He later learned that "one opposer was convinced and sharply reproved one who quarreled with the Sermon." This small victory marked the limits of Hart's success. The next day Hart stayed at the home of the Reverend Philip Mulkey, and was disappointed to learn that his host "rather sides with ministerial Measures." Hart probed others for their sentiments, finding to his chagrin that "People, in general, are certainly (as they say) for the King; ie, for the Minister, & his Measures; one Man, with whom we conversed, fairly trembled through Madness." On August 11 Hart discussed affairs with more of Mulkey's neighbors and "found them so fixd on the Side of the Ministry, that no Argument on the contrary Side, seemed to have any Weight with them." That evening Hart preached to between twenty and thirty people with no better result. One loyalist said that he "wishd 1000 Bostonians might be killed in Battle .... On the Whole they appear to be obstinate and irritated to an Extreme." After the sermon, Hart spoke with Fletchall, who said that while he did not wish to fight his countrymen, he nonetheless disapproved of the Whigs' measures "and complain'd of sundry Threats which He says are given out against Himself, and the Inhabitants of the Frontiers." Several people who listened to the discussion "seem'd almost universally, by Words & Actions to applaud every Thing" that Fletchall said. Hart concluded that "there

95 William Henry Drayton to Council of Safety, Aug. 9, 1775, PHL, 10:286-287.
97 Oliver Hart, "Diary of Oliver Hart written during his Journey to the Back-Country, 31 July - 6 September 1775," SCL.
appears but little Reason, as yet, to hope that these People will be brought to have a suitable Regard to ye Interests of America." 98

Hart spent a few more days in the area, but made no progress. On August 13 he noted that "there is the greatest Appearance of a civil War" unless God intervened to prevent it. The next day he attended a meeting where Joseph Robinson "Read a ministerial Piece" that Hart thought was "well calculated to fix the Minds of all disaffected Persons. With Sorrow I saw Marks of Approbation set almost on every Countenance." At that point, Hart evidently began to fear that the loyalists might seize him or his papers; he began writing his diary entries in code and did not stop doing so until September 5, when he was on his way home from his unsuccessful mission. 99

Tennent, who had joined Hart, was also frustrated. "The Pamphlet sent up by the Governor has done much damage here. It is at present their Gospel," he wrote in reference to the "ministerial Piece" that Hart had denounced. "It seems as though nothing could be done here." 100 Like Hart, Tennent feared that the loyalists in the area were so strong "that they are nearly ripe to shew themselves and make no Scruple to threaten the whole province with Devastation in a short time." Tennent had also heard rumors that three thousand Cherokee warriors were to join them, and that British troops would also arrive soon. "In short," the frustrated minister wrote, the loyalists "are preparing a great Dish of Blood for you and expect ... to bear down all before them." The situation had "all the Appearance of an hellish Plott," Tennent declared. 101

98 Hart, "Diary," SCL.
99 Hart, "Diary," SCL. Hart calls Robinson "Major Robertson."
100 Tennent, "Fragment of a Journal," 299.
Drayton's arrival spurred a new effort to convert Fletchall, although the latter, abetted by Robinson and Thomas Brown, remained obstinate. Unwilling to give up, Drayton and Tennent focused their efforts on the weak-willed colonel at an August 23 meeting from which Brown, Robinson, and other loyalist leaders were absent. The two Whigs convinced Fletchall to muster his regiment and allow Drayton and Tennent to address the men. When Brown later learned what Fletchall had done, he tried to dissuade the colonel and nearly came to blows with Drayton in the process. Fletchall refused to change his mind, however, and the meeting went ahead as scheduled the next day.\(^{102}\)

The event fell far short of the Whigs' expectations. Only 270 of about 1,500 men in Fletchall's regiment attended, the rest having taken the advice of their officers and remained at home. Drayton's harangue provoked a swift challenge from Moses Kirkland, and their confrontation nearly provoked "a terrible riot." Fletchall and others had to intervene to prevent Kirkland from striking Drayton. After calm had been restored, Tennent spoke, after which Brown made a rebuttal. At the close of the meeting, about seventy men signed the Association, most of whom had already signed it at other meetings. Drayton and Tennent then turned their attention to other regions, but failed to make significant inroads among the loyalists.\(^{103}\) Members of the Council of Safety were not surprised at the poor results. "As I expected you have not hitherto made many Proselytes, & I am sory to prophecy that you will not meet with much more success," Middleton wrote Drayton on August 22.\(^{104}\)

Thomas Brown reported the failure of the Whig emissaries to Governor Campbell on October 18. "Every Artifice Fraud & Misrepresentation were practiced to impose

\(^{102}\) Krawczynski, \textit{Drayton}, 175-176.
\(^{104}\) Arthur Middleton to Drayton, Aug. 22, 1775, "Correspondence of Middleton," 134.
upon the People,” Brown wrote, but the loyalist leaders had prepared the people for “these Incendiaries,” so that Drayton and his colleagues won few converts.\(^{105}\) Campbell accurately summed up the outcome of the Whigs’ mission in a report to the ministry. Having been sent “to poison the Minds of these People,” they “succeeded so badly, that they have been under a Necessity ... to effect by Force what they could not accomplish by Threats, Bribes, or Persuasion.”\(^{106}\)

Drayton had in fact concluded that since persuasion had not had much effect, stronger measures were needed to sway the loyalists. On August 21 he advised the Council of Safety to apply economic pressure against its opponents. If the loyalists were “debarred all communication with Charles Town & all trade with the Country Stores, they will be much chagrined,” he stated.\(^{107}\) The council adopted this recommendation, which created consternation among the loyalists. Moses Kirkland reported that “Thousands of poor People” were “much distressed” because they were “not allowed the Liberty to pass over any Ferry, nor deal in any Store, nor have their Corn ground at any Mill; they are not allowed to purchase Salt to eat with their Provisions, their Estates are threatened to be taken from them.” If this were not enough to make them sign the rebel association, Kirkland said, behind these measures lay the further threat that “their Lives next are to be taken by Sword.” Kirkland’s own life was endangered: the Whigs had offered a reward for his execution or capture, his plantation had been plundered, and he had been forced to employ “Life Guards, to escort me from place to place.” He decided to

\(^{106}\) Campbell to Dartmouth, Aug. 31, 1775, abstract, Dartmouth Papers, #1467, Reel 13, DLAR.
leave the province and sail to Boston, where he hoped to convince Gage to send troops to aid the loyalists.\textsuperscript{108}

Kirkland’s assessment of Whig intentions was correct; Drayton was already planning to use force against the loyalists. Responding to the Council of Safety’s fear that Kirkland’s arrest might provoke an uprising, Drayton said that would not be the case if the other loyalist leaders were taken at the same time. Noting that when Thomson’s militia had marched through loyalist areas, “the King’s men ... were terrified,” Drayton intended “to march into the heart of Fletchall’s quarters with about 800 men and 6 pieces of cannon,” expecting the show of force to be enough to overcome the loyalists without bloodshed.\textsuperscript{109} Thomson announced his readiness to give Drayton “all the Military aid in my power, whenever he shall think proper to demand it.”\textsuperscript{110}

Seeking a pretext to use force against the loyalists, Drayton found it when he learned in late August that Kirkland and his followers were “actually in Arms to attack Augusta & Fort Charlotte.” As soon as he had confirmation that Kirkland’s troops were moving, Drayton told the Council of Safety that he would consider himself “fully authorized ... to proceed to every extremity that may have a tendency to suppress those Men who oppose the authority of Congress.”\textsuperscript{111} Drayton then gathered militia from Thomson’s and Andrew Williamson’s regiments at a camp near Ninety Six. By mid-September the rebels numbered some eleven hundred men. The show of force thwarted Kirkland’s plan; Drayton then sent parties to capture or kill Kirkland, Brown, and Robert Cunningham. All three escaped, however, and Brown and Cunningham assembled two

\textsuperscript{108} Moses Kirkland to Dartmouth, Sept. 20, 1775, Dartmouth Papers, #1526, Reel 14, microfilm, DLAR.
\textsuperscript{110} William Thomson to Henry Laurens, Sept. 6, 1775, \textit{PHL}, 10:371.
\textsuperscript{111} William Henry Drayton to Council of Safety, Aug. 30, 1775, William Henry Drayton Papers, SCL.
hundred loyalists to oppose Drayton. Fletchall soon arrived with an additional 250 men and assumed command, over the objection of some of the more militant loyalists.112

Rather than risk defeat, Drayton appealed to Fletchall to negotiate. Had Brown and Cunningham accompanied him to the negotiations, Fletchall may have been more resolute, but both feared that the Whigs might seize them, so Fletchall went with six other men. Preferring to avoid conflict and aware that his men were short of ammunition, Fletchall and the Whigs signed the Treaty of Ninety Six on September 16.113 Both sides agreed that the “misunderstandings” between them should not be allowed to develop “into quarrels and bloodshed.” The loyalists then declared that they did not oppose the proceedings of the rebel congress, nor did they plan to aid British troops, but rather wanted only “to abide in their usual peace and tranquility.” They promised to turn over to the rebels anyone who spoke against the Whig authorities, and in exchange Drayton promised that the loyalists would not be molested so long as they remained peaceful.114 “I am persuaded Fletchall & his people will be true, & I make no doubt but that the affair is now crushed,” Drayton exulted. Yet Drayton feared the attachment of the backcountry people to Governor Campbell and wrote that “our Safety is utterly precarious while the Governor is at liberty.” Drayton advised the council to “make Hostages of the Governor & the officers” of the crown or else his success might be undone.115

Some loyalists believed that Drayton had taken unfair advantage of Fletchall and therefore did not consider themselves bound by the treaty. Brown stated that Fletchall had been “struck with terror” upon watching the maneuvers of the Whig militia. Brown and

113 Krawczynski, Drayton, 186-189.
Cunningham considered making a surprise attack on the Whigs with their eight hundred men during the negotiations, but decided against it. They undoubtedly wished they had carried out their plan when Fletchall returned with the treaty. Upon learning its “shameful disgraceful” terms, many of the men were “seized with Rage & Indignation” and swore “that they would never abide by them.” Cunningham told Drayton that the latter had dishonorably taken advantage of people “half scared out of their senses at the sight of liberty caps and sound of cannon.” Cunningham said he would not abide by the agreement, which he pronounced “false and disgraceful from beginning to ending.”

Brown and Cunningham met afterwards to discuss a course of action. Since they were short of ammunition, they decided to dismiss their troops until they received further instructions from Campbell. Brown then went to Charleston to meet with the governor. Kirkland had already managed to reach Charleston in disguise and get aboard the Tamar, where Campbell had taken refuge after the Whigs discovered that he had been discussing plans with backcountry loyalists to cooperate with British troops. With Kirkland out of reach, the Council of Safety ordered Drayton to capture Robinson, Cunningham, and Brown or to drive them from the province. Brown was arrested but quickly released.

Robinson had observed the rebels’ military preparations at Ninety Six and heard that they intended to “burn and destroy the Houses and property of all Person who refused to join them” as soon as they had enough troops. Robinson went to Charleston to seek advice from Governor Campbell, who advised him “to levy Forces and March against the Rebels.” Robinson assembled two thousand men, but Fletchall had signed the

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117 Robert Cunningham to Drayton, Oct. 5, 1775, Documentary History, 1:200.  
treaty with Drayton before these reinforcements arrived. Learning that Campbell had fled Charleston and finding himself “without further Orders, Money or Military Stores,” Robinson sent his followers home with instructions “not to suffer any false pretences of the Rebel Party to deceive them, or to efface their principles of Loyalty, until we should enjoy a more favorable opportunity.”

Largely through Drayton’s aggressive efforts, the Whigs had temporarily succeeded in neutralizing the backcountry loyalists. Alexander Innes complained to Patrick Tonyn that if the loyalists had been assisted by “any decent force” of troops, they might have accomplished much. “[B]y what infatuation or neglect these unhappy provinces to the southward have been so totally abandoned, for such a space, I cannot imagine,” Innes lamented.

Peace in the backcountry did not last long, however. At the end of October, two Whig actions provoked the loyalist uprising that the rebel leaders had tried to forestall. First, they arrested Robert Cunningham, brought him to Charleston, and on November 1 ordered him imprisoned for refusing to recant. Cunningham’s brother Patrick promptly organized a force in hopes of freeing Robert. Second, because the Cherokees were complaining of the stoppage in trade, the Council of Safety hoped to placate them and prevent an Indian war by dispatching a wagon with one thousand pounds of gunpowder and some lead for the Cherokees’ winter hunt. When Patrick Cunningham learned of the shipment, he and loyalist Richard Pearis spread word that the Whigs were supplying

119 “Memoir of Lt. Col. Joseph Robinson, 1797,” Rare Books and Special Collections Division, McGill University Library, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
munitions to the Cherokees for use against the loyalists. With 150 enraged followers, Cunningham overpowered the escorting rebel troops and captured the wagon.¹²¹

Whig Colonel Andrew Williamson immediately summoned his militia to recover the ammunition. By November 18, nearly nineteen hundred rebels had taken position in a makeshift fort near Ninety Six. The loyalists gathered about two thousand militiamen and surrounded the Whig fort. Skirmishing continued until November 21, with small losses on both sides. That night the loyalists sent in a demand for surrender, and representatives of the two sides met to negotiate the next day.¹²² A treaty was soon arranged that allowed the rebel militia to leave the fort, whereupon it was to be destroyed. They would then return home unmolested. The loyalists would march across the Saluda River. Each side would release its prisoners, and neither side would engage in hostilities until the “differences between the people” were adjusted. This was to be done by referring the matter to Governor Campbell and the Council of Safety for arbitration – actually a moot point since there was no possibility that the rebel council would even consider Campbell’s views. Any reinforcements coming to the assistance of either party “also shall be bound by this cessation,” the treaty stated.¹²³

The loyalists upheld their part of the agreement, but Colonels Thomson and Richard Richardson, commanding other units of rebel militia, decided that “the Cessation of Arms was not binding on us.” They proceeded to assemble men, but encountered much opposition and had to resort to drafts to fill their ranks. In the Orangeburgh and Congaree areas, the men drafted by Thomson “seem’d very insolent ... & in fact did as much as to

¹²¹ Moultrie, Memoirs, 1:96; Affidavit of Moses Cotter, Nov. 3, 1775, in Moultrie, Memoirs, 1:97-100; Cann, “Prelude to War,” 207; Lambert, South Carolina Loyalists, 44-45.
¹²² Cann, “Prelude to War,” 208-211; Lambert, South Carolina Loyalists, 45.
declare themselves Kings Men.” There were similar problems with some of Richardson’s conscripts. Thomson believed that some of these loyalists had actually “murdered people in the Woods who had been our Associates.” He decided to apply the coercive elements of the militia law to quell the resistance.\textsuperscript{124}

Richardson began his campaign in late November with 1,500 men. The Whigs had an immense advantage because the loyalists had just disbanded under the terms of the treaty and thought themselves protected by it. As Richardson marched through the backcountry arresting loyalist leaders, other Whig parties swelled his force to double its original size. Some loyalists tried to embody and resist, but could not collect more than four hundred men, too few to challenge the large rebel force. Leaderless and intimidated, most of the loyalists pledged neutrality to avoid further persecution.\textsuperscript{125} Richardson sent six captured loyalist officers to Charleston at the beginning of December, asking the Council of Safety not to set them free “as they are Look’d Upon as Active and pernicious men.”\textsuperscript{126} Two weeks later he sent down nine more captives, including Fletchall and Pearis.\textsuperscript{127}

Many loyalists fled to Cherokee territory, where Richardson’s Whig militia caught up with them on December 21. After surrounding the loyalist camp, Richardson ordered an attack. Patrick Cunningham managed to escape, but about 130 loyalists were captured and five or six killed. Richardson wrote that it was “happy the men were

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{124} William Thomson to Council of Safety, Nov. 28, 1775, \textit{PHL}, 10:523.
\item\textsuperscript{125} Lewis Pinckney Jones, \textit{The South Carolina Civil War of 1775} (Lexington, SC: Sandlapper Store, 1975), 77-79.
\item\textsuperscript{126} Richard Richardson to Council of Safety, Dec. 2, 1775, \textit{PHL}, 10:529-530.
\item\textsuperscript{127} Richard Richardson to Council of Safety, Dec. 16, 1775, \textit{PHL}, 10:567.
\end{footnotes}
Restrain'd or Every man had died,” implying that the dead loyalists may have been executed rather than killed in combat.\textsuperscript{128}

A few loyalists eluded the Whigs. Joseph Robinson, upon learning that the rebels had offered a reward for killing him, fled to the Cherokees, then made his way through Creek territory before finally reaching East Florida in 1777.\textsuperscript{129} Captain James Phillips and his company of loyal militia escaped the rebels with the assistance of Alexander Chesney, a nineteen-year-old who lived on the Pacolet River near Grindall Shoals. Chesney led Phillips and his men to his family’s farm, then found another loyalist to guide them to North Carolina, from whence they made their way to St. Augustine through Indian lands. Phillips’s company formed part of the South Carolina Royalist battalion later created in East Florida. “I piloted all the loyalists who came in my way,” Chesney wrote. When the Whigs learned of Chesney’s activities, they arrested him and ransacked his father’s home. After a week’s imprisonment they released him, offering him a choice of joining the rebel army or undergoing trial for aiding loyalists. He chose the former “to save my father’s family from threat.”\textsuperscript{130}

Chesney, Robinson, and other loyalists were fortunate to escape the full fury of the Whigs. All of the loyalist leaders whom the Whigs judged to be most influential and therefore most dangerous were subjected to harassment, imprisonment, and other forms of persecution. A total of 136 loyalist prisoners had been sent to Charleston.\textsuperscript{131} After two months’ imprisonment, thirty-three of the captives, including Fletchall, Pearis, and Robert Cunningham, announced their willingness to “Settle Peace” with the Whigs. In a

\textsuperscript{128} Richard Richardson to Henry Laurens, Jan. 2, 1776, \textit{PHL}, 10:610-611.
\textsuperscript{129} “Memoir of Lt. Col. Joseph Robinson.”
\textsuperscript{130} Chesney, \textit{Journal}, 6.
petition to the Council of Safety, they expressed regret that they had been at odds with their countrymen and their wish to see unity restored in the province. Richardson urged the council to release Cunningham and any others who were repentant, so long as they pledged their property as security for their future good behavior.

Release from prison did not bring an end to the loyalists' troubles. Pearis endured nine months of captivity only to return home to find "his House burnt, his Property destroyed and his Family drove off." Pearis rejoined his family and learned that the Whigs who burned his home had also beaten and abused his daughters. He stayed with his family for a time, "but was so harrassed that he was obliged to fly" to Charleston, where he obtained protection from rebel Governor John Rutledge. Evan McLaurin, a merchant and militia leader who had managed to avoid capture, likewise could not escape persecution. The Whigs seized £400 ($52,500) worth of deerskins he had shipped to Charleston, and harassment at home ruined his business.

The Whigs exulted in their victory. The Council of Safety embraced Richardson's and Thomson's sophistry and approved their decision to ignore the terms of the treaty between Williamson and the loyalists. Henry Laurens expressed joy at the speed with which the rebels had managed to suppress the king's supporters. They had "obliged many hundreds of the Insurgents to Surrender their Arms, took about 150 prisoners of the most troublesome ringleaders & drove out of the Country Such as would not Surrender." With the most active loyalists either gone from the province or in prison, Laurens stated

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134 Richard Pearis Loyalist Claim, Aug. 22, 1783, SCHS.
135 Isabella McLaurin Memorial, April 8, 1783, SCHS.
that “the common people whom they had deluded are convinced of their mistake & in
general declare their willingness to join their Brethren” in defense of their rights.138

Governor Campbell expressed great disappointment at the loyalists’ defeat. He
had hoped that the backcountry people would remain united and prevent the Whigs from
gaining complete control of the province until British troops arrived.139 He attributed
their decision to sign a treaty with the rebels to “want of a leader of either consequence or
knowledge enough to direct their enterprises.” The unscrupulous Whigs then “broke
every article of it and are I am told determined to extirpate the whole body” of
loyalists.140

Although the rebels did not go as far as Campbell had feared, they did take
advantage of the disorganization of the loyalists resulting from the imprisonment and
exile of their leaders. The Whigs seized this opportunity to appoint reliable men to
command the backcountry militia. With the rebels in control of the militia, “the loyalists
stood no chance. They could not organize a counterforce, for they were disarmed,
atomized, and terrorized.”141 Yet rebel leaders realized that they had by no means
eradicated loyalism in the backcountry. In 1776 the Council of Safety had to send
ammunition to the Whig militia in Ninety Six district “to keep the Tories in awe, who
were plenty enough in that section and continued to do more mischief.”142

The Whigs continued to harass any loyalist who challenged their authority. On
June 29, 1776, rebel troops arrested John Champneys for refusing to do duty with the

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138 Henry Laurens to John Laurens, Jan. 16, 1776, PHL, 11:35.
139 Campbell to Dartmouth, July 19 and 20, 1775, DAR, 11:50.
140 Campbell to Dartmouth, Jan. 1, 1776, DAR, 12:30.
141 Piers Mackesy, “What the British Army Learned,” in Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., Arms
and Independence: The Military Character of the American Revolution (Charlottesville: University Press of
Virginia, 1984), 195.
142 Josiah Culbertson, Pension Application, in John C. Dann, ed., The Revolution Remembered: Eyewitness
militia. He was imprisoned in Charleston with twenty-one other loyalists and suffered through several days of “insults and bad usage.” The prisoners petitioned rebel leaders for permission to take an oath of neutrality; they were still awaiting a reply when someone fired a bullet through the window of their room. “This leaden messenger occasioned the conversion of six of the prisoners, who took the oath of allegiance ... the same day,” Champneys wrote. Eventually most of the prisoners swore an oath declaring that the British government had violated American rights, which earned four men their release. But although Champneys had taken the oath, he and five other prisoners were marched to the Cheraw jail. Champneys remained in prison there until January 15, 1777, during which time his six-year-old son died. The Whigs refused his pleas to be allowed to return home to aid his family. Champneys was finally sent back to Charleston and released on February 24 with orders to leave South Carolina within sixty days.143

In Georgia, the rebels’ position was more precarious and in consequence they acted with more restraint than did their neighbors to the north. South Carolina’s Whigs grew so frustrated with Georgia’s reluctance to join the rebels that on February 5, 1775, they banned all trade between South Carolina and Georgia, on the grounds that the latter’s populace was “unworthy of the rights of freedom, and as inimical to the liberties of their country.” The Continental Congress took similar steps in May 1775.144

In response to this prodding, Georgia Whigs moved to consolidate their control by striking at the loyalists. On June 5 the rebels ordered William Tongue, a loyal refugee from New York who had just arrived in Savannah, to leave the province within seven

143 John Champneys, *An account of the sufferings and persecution of John Champneys, a native of Charles-town, South-Carolina; inflicted by order of Congress, for his refusal to take up arms in defence of the arbitrary proceedings carried on by the rulers of said place. Together with his protest, &c.*, London, 1778, 1-2, 4-5.

days or "abide by any consequences that may follow." Three other loyalists received a similar warning.\textsuperscript{145} Having heard a report that pilot John Hopkins had drunk a toast damning America, a rebel mob seized him at his Savannah home on the evening of July 25 and carried him to the town square. There Hopkins was tarred and feathered, then carted through the streets for three hours. The mob forced him to "drink 'Damnation to all Tories and Success to American Liberty,'" and repeatedly threatened to hang him. He was finally released and the crowd dispersed with threats to apply the same treatment to the Rev. Haddon Smith, rector of Christ Church, who had refused to observe a fast day declared by the Continental Congress.\textsuperscript{146} Wright witnessed the abuse of Hopkins, which the governor described as "a horrid spectacle."\textsuperscript{147} When Smith learned of the incident and the threats made against him, he fled to Tybee and from there sailed to England.\textsuperscript{148}

Loyalists living outside Savannah also faced persecution. Mobs at Sunbury tarred and feathered James Watts, a ship's carpenter, for loyalism, and attacked James Kitching, the collector of customs, on the night of August 1. The mob plundered Kitching's home when he refused to sign the Association. Kitching then fled by boat to Tybee, where he found safety aboard a British warship after a twenty-hour journey.\textsuperscript{149}

Such mob actions notwithstanding, Georgia rebels worried about their province's reluctance to commit itself to the revolutionary movement. Peter Taarling told John Houstoun that Georgia's Whigs lacked "warlike spirit." Taarling wished that Georgians

\textsuperscript{145} Affidavit of William Tongue, June 7, 1775, \textit{DAR}, 9:166-167.
\textsuperscript{147} Wright to Dartmouth, July 29, 1775, \textit{DAR}, 11:59.
\textsuperscript{148} Coleman, \textit{Revolution in Georgia}, 65.
“had a 10th. part” of the enthusiasm displayed by northern rebels, and could only hope that “a few months more, may rouse us.”

Loyal Georgians thought that the Whigs were aggressive enough. One Savannah resident noted that loyalists in the province were in no condition to protect themselves. They were “not sufficiently supplied with ammunition, nor can they possibly collect together those who would readily join them, they being dispersed up and down the country.”

Doctor Thomas Taylor, an English immigrant who arrived at Savannah in December 1775, noted that “in this province two out of three are friends to government, but as there is neither ships nor troops to protect them, they know it is in vain to oppose the current, as the Carolina people are all in arms.” When Taylor reached the backcountry town of Wrightsborough in early January 1776, he found that most people in the vicinity were also loyal to Britain. “Altho’ this Province has acceded to the Resolutions of the Congress yet the Majority of the People are Friends to Government,” he wrote. News of the defeat of the backcountry loyalists in South Carolina had further demoralized the Georgia loyalists, however. They had learned that their counterparts “have been lately dispersd,” and “about 150 have been taken Prisoners who after being cruelly used were sent down to Charles Town. The rest dare not return to their Habitations so that the Country around is pillagd & desolate.” This convinced most of the king’s friends in the Georgia backcountry to remain passive and avoid offending the Whigs.

150 Peter Taarling to John Houstoun, Oct. 24, 1775, John Houstoun Papers, GHS.
153 Thomas Taylor to the Rev. Thomas Percy, Jan. 13, 1776, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, WLCL.
When a British naval squadron arrived off Savannah in mid-January to procure rice for the Boston garrison, frightened Whigs took prompt action to prevent any cooperation between loyalists and the royal navy. Eminent loyalists, including Governor Wright, were “bound up by a parole, not to aid or assist any of his Majesty’s ships or troops,” while less prominent inhabitants suspected of loyalty were disarmed.154

Some Georgians showed reluctance to resist the British. When the Council of Safety ordered a militia company from St. Matthew’s Parish to march to Savannah’s defense in January, all but one of the men refused to go. The Whigs accused two loyalists, tavernkeeper James Pace and planter John Hall, of telling the militiamen that they had no obligation to obey rebels. The council ordered both men arrested.155

When fighting between the British ships and Georgians onshore broke out on March 3, many loyalists took advantage of the confusion to flee to the British. The rebels “were inflamed” by the battle, and “particularly at our own People who had treacherously Joined the Enemy against us.”156 Governor Wright, who had already sought safety aboard a British warship, asked the naval commander to stay to protect the loyalists, but that officer had orders to return to Boston. Wright, fearing for his own safety, had no choice but to abandon the province.157

The last vestige of British authority now vanished in Georgia “as a result of the battle and the flight of Governor Wright.” The Whigs triumphed, “not because a majority of the Georgians were willing” to openly rebel, “but because a highly organized and

157 Coleman, Revolution in Georgia, 70.
determined minority” had overthrown royal government.\textsuperscript{158} Wright would later state that with the help of the loyalists he had “Checked the Spirit & Attempts of the Factions, & kept Georgia out of the Rebellion, & Prevented them from Sending Delegates to Congress for near twelve Months.” He insisted that it was only the lack of troops and the efforts of South Carolina rebels in “Spiriting up the ill affected in Georgia, & giving them assistance,” that led to the downfall of royal government in his province.\textsuperscript{159}

Many loyalists decided to follow the governor’s example and escape while they still had an opportunity to do so. Merchant William Moss, expecting to be arrested or assaulted, had fled from Savannah to his plantation upriver when the British ships arrived. From there he sailed in his schooner to join the British, took several other refugees aboard, and went on to St. Augustine. John Lightenstone (or Lichtenstein), operator of a scout boat for the provincial government, fled his house at Yamacraw when the rebels came looking for him. He hid in a field until his slaves could safely get him to his boat and row him to the British flagship. Other loyalists joined him; all were eventually taken to Halifax, Nova Scotia, leaving their families and possessions behind.\textsuperscript{160}

Whig leader Lachlan McIntosh considered the skirmishes with the British fleet and its subsequent withdrawal to be a major victory. He hoped it would convince many loyalists to join the rebels, but still worried that the loyalists “may prevail” in carrying out

\textsuperscript{159} Memorial of Sir James Wright to William Pitt, 1785, British Museum, Egerton Mss. 2135, transcript, LOC.
“their own Sinister Ends” of opposing the Whigs.\textsuperscript{161} To insure that this did not happen, the rebels launched new attacks upon the loyalists. On June 26, the Council of Safety proscribed forty-three Georgians deemed a threat to American liberty. But the resolution contained no enforcement mechanism, so that while some of the named loyalists fled to East Florida, most remained in the province and managed to escape harassment. The council took more aggressive action against the Reverend John J. Zubly. Zubly had staunchly defended American rights in articulate sermons and pamphlets since the Stamp Act crisis and had represented Georgia in the Continental Congress until his opposition to independence led him to resign. Despite his peaceable demeanor and prior contributions to the Whig cause, the council declared the minister a danger to public safety and ordered his arrest.\textsuperscript{162}

Local Whig leaders also took steps to control or punish loyalists. In September the rebel committee in St. Andrew’s Parish decided that loyalists could no longer be allowed to go at large. The Whigs asserted that the loyalists showed “an Inveterate hatred, & malice against the cause of America ... which threaten our own safety.” The loyalists were charged with various crimes, including the refusal to pay fines imposed on them by the Assembly, and “Rejoicing on every Prospect of the success of our Enemies whether Civilized (if they may be so called) or Savages.” The committee ordered that twenty-nine men be taken immediately into custody until they took the oath of allegiance to the state or gave adequate security for their good behavior.\textsuperscript{163}

\textsuperscript{161} [McIntosh?] to Button Gwinnett, May 1, 1776, “Papers of McIntosh,” 154-155.
\textsuperscript{163} “Resolve of St. Andrews Parochial Committee,” “Papers of McIntosh,” 58-59.
The twenty-nine loyalists marked for arrest were all men, but women did not escape persecution. "At the outbreak of the war, loyalist women expected that 'their Sex and the Humanity of a civilized People' would protect them from 'disrespectfull Indignities.' Most of them soon learned otherwise." The Whigs "consigned female loyalists to much the same fate as their male relatives." Women whose husbands had fled were particularly vulnerable and rebels frequently plundered their property. Loyal women were "verbally abused, imprisoned, and threatened with bodily harm even when they had not taken an active role in opposing the rebel cause." Women who directly aided the British, usually by helping prisoners or gathering intelligence, often suffered physical abuse as well.\(^{164}\)

When possible, most loyalist refugees brought their families with them; however, this did not protect them from other hardships. About 180 loyalists fled to Amelia Island, where they spent the summer of 1776 suffering from heat, hunger, and insects. One refugee, Jeremy Wright, watched his property burning on the mainland after Whigs torched the buildings. Refugees traveling overland to East Florida could not escape the Whigs' wrath either. After the rebels plundered his Ogeechee River plantation in September 1776, James Shivers gathered his family and movable possessions and set out for East Florida. On the way he was attacked by Whigs who carried off eight slaves and seventy-five head of cattle. He received two hundred acres of land from Governor Tonyn, however, which enabled him to establish a farm.\(^{165}\)

Governor Tonyn did everything in his power to fulfill his promise to make East Florida "an asylum to the friends of the Constitution." To facilitate settling the refugees,


\(^{165}\) Callahan, *Royal Raiders,* 91; Troxler, "Refuge, Resistance, and Reward," 567-568.
Tonyn procured Dartmouth's assent to suspend all restrictions on the sale and granting of provincial lands. Tonyn then issued a proclamation announcing the availability of land which circulated in South Carolina and Georgia, encouraging further immigration.\textsuperscript{166}

Many refugees, however, found it difficult to obtain land because large tracts had been granted earlier to absentees who had never come to Florida. On November 1, 1776, forty-nine loyalists from Georgia petitioned Tonyn, explaining their difficulty in acquiring small tracts of farmland. The governor referred the matter to London, and in March 1777 the government declared that all granted lands that had not been settled or developed for three or more years reverted to the crown. This enabled Tonyn to divide the large parcels and provide land to the petitioners and other refugees.\textsuperscript{167}

Tonyn also personally intervened to allow loyalists to sell provisions and livestock that were badly needed in the province. Some refugees had brought these items to East Florida, and loyalists in the rebellious provinces also managed to ship grain to St. Augustine. Unfortunately, royal officials there confiscated most of these goods in accordance with the British embargo on trade with the thirteen colonies. Tonyn issued licenses allowing loyalists to circumvent the embargo, which alleviated the financial distress of the refugees while meeting the province's need for provisions.\textsuperscript{168}

Fearing a Whig attack on East Florida, Tonyn decided to create a battalion of militia to defend the province. On August 20, 1776, he addressed the inhabitants of St. Augustine and urged them to serve. To his satisfaction, "the whole joyfully consented," and Tonyn appointed Lt. Gov. Alexander Moultrie colonel of the unit. Tonyn expected to

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item\textsuperscript{167} Siebert, \textit{Loyalists in East Florida}, 1:48-50.
\item\textsuperscript{168} Troxler, "Refuge, Resistance, and Reward," 569.
\end{enumerate}
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raise four companies in St. Augustine, two from settlers along the St. John’s River, and four companies of blacks.¹⁶⁹

The rebels had already launched attacks along the northern border of East Florida. In May 1776, the Georgia council of safety ordered Captain William McIntosh to clear loyalists from their plantations along the St. Mary’s River. McIntosh attacked five plantations, captured four loyalists, and destroyed buildings and crops. Tonyn had learned of the impending raid and ordered troops to the St. Mary’s, but they arrived too late to prevent the damage. During a skirmish with the retreating rebels, three of the four loyalist prisoners managed to escape. The Whigs struck again in early July, plundering plantations, carrying off some fifty slaves, and seizing a few loyalists. A month later another raid destroyed a fort built by Charles Wright on the St. Mary’s; the Whigs then plundered and burned the plantations between that river and the St. John’s. The elderly Wright and twenty-four of his slaves “died of exposure and malnutrition” as a result of the upheaval. East Floridians in the area fled south seeking safety.¹⁷⁰

Southern Whigs and Continental Army commander Gen. Charles Lee decided to follow up the raids with an invasion of East Florida to eliminate the threat posed by the British presence there. In August Lee assembled a force of Georgians, South Carolinians, and Virginians and began his march.¹⁷¹ Rebel patrols eventually reached the St. John’s River, devastating the property of the few remaining loyalists along the way. But the

¹⁷⁰ Searcy, Georgia-Florida Contest, 34-36, 43-44, 50.
¹⁷¹ Searcy, Georgia-Florida Contest, 54-56.
main force got no farther than Sunbury, Georgia, before sickness and lack of supplies halted its advance. The rebels then abandoned the effort.\textsuperscript{172}

Tonyn then seized the initiative by launching retaliatory raids into Georgia. Despite his years of service in the regular army, "Tonyn adapted with startling ease to the type of warfare he was required to wage." He authorized Thomas Brown to organize refugees from the southern provinces into a ranger unit to defend East Florida and when possible to undertake operations against the Whigs in Georgia.\textsuperscript{173} In October the loyalists counterattacked, burning plantations in Georgia at Beard's Bluff and in the area south of the Altamaha River without encountering serious opposition.\textsuperscript{174}

The loyalists had made a valiant effort to uphold royal authority, particularly in South Carolina. They had resisted persuasion, persecution, economic coercion, and held their own against rebel armed force. Only when the Whigs reneged on a peace agreement to surprise and disarm them and arrested their leaders did resistance in South Carolina finally collapse. Loyalists in Georgia had enabled Wright to remain in office longer than any other governor in the thirteen colonies, while East and West Floridians stood firm in their allegiance to the crown. Despite several reverses, most loyalists did not abandon their principles; they only awaited the right opportunity to rally again under the king's standard.

\textbf{Southern Indians: A Mixed Response}

All of the southern Indians carefully observed the developing conflict between Great Britain and the colonies. John Stuart expected the Catawbas to side with the Whigs, but planned to restrain the other nations until British troops were available to cooperate

\textsuperscript{172} Bennett and Lennon, \textit{Quest for Glory}, 48-50; Searcy, \textit{Georgia-Florida Contest}, 61-62.

\textsuperscript{173} Searcy, \textit{Georgia-Florida Contest}, 37-38.

\textsuperscript{174} Searcy, \textit{Georgia-Florida Contest}, 68.
with them. Ironically, the rebels pursued an almost identical policy, inviting the Catawbas to join them while working to keep the neighboring Cherokees and Creeks neutral. But neither Stuart nor the Whig agents could ultimately control the Indians. Seeing an opportunity to strike at the land-hungry colonists, the Cherokees ignored Stuart’s admonitions and attacked the southern frontier in the summer of 1776. The assault failed; the Cherokees suffered a disastrous defeat that rendered them incapable of assisting the British for some time and convinced most Creeks to remain aloof from the conflict.

There was never any question regarding the Catawbas’ alignment. On July 25, 1775, the South Carolina Council of Safety thanked Joseph Kershaw, the Whigs’ representative to that nation, for sending assurances that “those People are hearty in our Interest” and willing to provide men to serve with the rebels.175 Two Catawba leaders visited Charleston in August to inquire into the political situation. The Whigs explained that they were engaged in a quarrel with other white men, and that they “expected their [Catawba] warriors would join ours.”176 Catawba interests and rebel interests, the Whigs asserted, were “just the same.”177 William Henry Drayton, always belligerent, warned the Catawbas that they faced dire consequence if they waged war against the South Carolinians.178

Any fears Drayton had that the Catawbas might ally with the British were unfounded. John Stuart made no attempt to court them, recognizing that those Indians had been “practised upon and seduced by the Inhabitants with whom they live.” By autumn the Catawbas had begun to assist the rebels; forty of them went to the lowcountry...

175 Council of Safety to Joseph Kershaw, July 25, 1775, PHL, 10:247.
176 Moultrie, Memoirs, 1:81.
177 Quoted in Merrell, Indians’ New World, 215.
to track down fugitive loyalists and slaves.\textsuperscript{179} Kershaw appointed Samuel Boykin captain of the Catawba auxiliaries. Boykin and thirty-four Indians took the field in February 1776, again to capture runaway slaves.\textsuperscript{180} In June, Boykin gathered about fifty Catawbas to help defend Charleston against the impending British attack. The Indians were promised "Colony pay."\textsuperscript{181} These Catawbas comprised part of the defensive force at the northern end of Sullivan's Island.\textsuperscript{182}

The Whigs could manage the Catawbas easily enough, but they knew that Stuart's influence with the other Indian nations would have to be countered. They decided to strike directly at the superintendent by circulating rumors that Stuart had received orders to lead Indian attacks and incite slave insurrections in South Carolina.\textsuperscript{183} As the rebel leaders intended, Stuart quickly found himself facing the "Fury of a merciless and ungovernable Mob."\textsuperscript{184} At the end of May 1775, he fled Charleston for the comparative safety of Savannah. Not content with having driven Stuart from South Carolina, Whig leaders in Charleston circulated handbills in Beaufort and Savannah repeating the allegation that the superintendent planned to order Indian attacks on the frontier. This, along with emissaries from South Carolina who proclaimed Stuart's villainy, inflamed the Georgians as well.\textsuperscript{185}

Stuart met with some of Georgia's Whig leaders and tried to convince them that "no steps had ever been taken to interest the Indians in the Dispute between Great Brittain and the Colonies, but at the same time I told them that I had constantly

\textsuperscript{179} Quoted in Merrell, Indians' New World, 215, 216.
\textsuperscript{180} Brown, Catawba Indians, 261-262.
\textsuperscript{181} Henry Laurens to Samuel Boykin, Jan. 14, 1776, PHL, 11:28.
\textsuperscript{182} Brown, Catawba Indians, 263.
\textsuperscript{183} O'Donnell, Southern Indians, 18; Snapp, John Stuart, 160.
\textsuperscript{184} Snapp, John Stuart, 160.
\textsuperscript{185} Krawczynski, Drayton, 132.
considered it as my principal Duty to Dispose the Indians to confide in His Majesty's Justice and Protection, and to act for His Service if required." This statement did not reassure the rebels, who warned Stuart that it was dangerous for him to remain in Savannah. He then escaped in a canoe to a British warship, barely escaping boatloads of armed and angry men who pursued him. Stuart then sailed to St. Augustine, where he found refuge but no respite from the Whigs' slanderous assaults. He learned that the rebels continued to spread "the Greatest falsehoods ... in order to inflame the people against me." 186

In what was undoubtedly a ruse intended to lure Stuart back to South Carolina so that the Whigs could place him in custody, the Committee of Intelligence wrote the superintendent suggesting that he could demonstrate his good intentions by returning to Charleston, where the provincial congress would happily vindicate him if he could prove his innocence. Meanwhile, the committee declared, his property "stands as a Security for the good Behaviour of the Indians in the Southern Department." 187 Stuart, knowing the risks involved if he return to Charleston, replied that he had no intention of inciting an Indian war. He added that it was ironic that his property was held as security for the Indians' good behavior, since their actions depended not on his instructions but "upon the Conduct of the inhabitants of the Provinces." 188

Not content with having driven Stuart to East Florida and threatening to seize his property, the Whigs proceeded to take punitive measures against his wife and married daughter. On February 3, 1776, the provincial congress ordered that the two women be confined to their home in Charleston "as hostages for his [Stuart's] good behavior." Two

186 Stuart to Gage, July 9, 1775, Gage Papers, Vol. 131, WLCL.
187 Committee of Intelligence to Stuart, June 21, 1775, Gage Papers, Vol. 132, WLCL.
188 Stuart to Committee of Intelligence, July 18, 1775, Gage Papers, Vol. 132, WLCL.
days later, the congress allowed Stuart’s daughter to leave Charleston with her husband, on condition that she not leave the province, and permitted Mrs. Stuart to leave her house if accompanied by an officer. However, Stuart’s wife could not receive visitors without written permission from rebel officials.\(^{189}\) Henry Laurens believed the measure was effective, writing that “nothing but Mr. Stuarts family has for Some time past been a barrier against the massacre & butchery of hundreds of Innocent families in Georgia and Carolina.”\(^{190}\) Stuart took a dimmer view of the matter, writing that his wife had been detained, “insulted and threatened.”\(^{191}\) Despite rebel precautions, Mrs. Stuart eventually escaped, and her son-in-law was immediately jailed “on suspicion of aiding and assisting her.”\(^{192}\)

With Stuart gone, the Whigs focused their attention on Alexander Cameron, his deputy to the Cherokees. Like Stuart, Cameron fled to avoid capture. On July 14 Cameron’s friend, Whig colonel Andrew Williamson, reported that Cameron had “gone to the Cherokee Nation,” and that “at this Time there is a good deal of Confusion” in the backcountry “on Acct. of the expected Danger from the Cherokees.” Williamson promised to quiet these fears, as he had received assurances from Cameron that the latter had no intention of ordering the Indians to attack the province.\(^{193}\)

The Whigs then tried to convince Cameron to join them. When that failed, they resorted as usual to threats and violence. On July 23 the Council of Safety asked Williamson to offer Cameron a position as the Whigs’ agent to the Cherokees, with the

\(^{189}\) Moultrie, Memoirs, 1:123.
\(^{190}\) Henry Laurens to Georgia Council of Safety, Feb. 7, 1776, PHL, 11:91.
\(^{191}\) John Stuart to David Taitt, Aug. 29, 1775, Documentary History, 1:159.
\(^{192}\) Moultrie, Memoirs, 1:123.
\(^{193}\) Andrew Williamson to Council of Safety, July 14, 1775, and enclosure, July 12, 1775, PHL, 10:222-223.
same salary he received from the British.\textsuperscript{194} William Henry Drayton wrote Cameron that the rebels “look upon you as an object dangerous to our welfare” and would not be satisfied until Cameron had moved a sufficient distance from the Cherokees to be unable to exercise his duties as Stuart’s representative. Drayton suggested St. Augustine or Pensacola as acceptable destinations. In case Cameron misunderstood the nature of the request, Drayton noted that it “carries all the force of a command.”\textsuperscript{195}

Replying to Drayton’s threats in mid-October, Cameron politely stated that he could not comply with Whig demands. He also said that he found it strange that he was “threatened with condign punishment” when all his efforts had been directed “to cultivate peace and friendship between the Indians” and the South Carolinians.”\textsuperscript{196}

The Whigs did not even wait for Cameron’s reply before sending their militia to seize him. Colonel William Thomson set out with some troops in late July to find the agent and learned on July 31 that Cameron was at Oconee Creek with a dozen white men and several Indians. Thomson immediately marched to surprise his quarry, but on entering the town of Seneca was ambushed by a party he estimated at thirty whites and thirty Cherokees. After driving off the defenders, Thomson burnt the village and six thousand bushels of corn. He then ordered other Whig units to burn nearby Cherokee towns. Captured whites informed Thomson that Cameron was about thirty miles away, with “about one hundred and fifty white men and Indians.”\textsuperscript{197}

Cameron finally reached safety in the Cherokee town of Keowee in mid-August. He noted that the Cherokees were “very cross about the usage their father [Stuart] met

\textsuperscript{194} Moultrie, Memoirs, 1:76.
\textsuperscript{195} W.H. Drayton to Alexander Cameron, Sept. 26, 1775, Documentary History, 1:194-195.
\textsuperscript{196} Alexander Cameron to W.H. Drayton, Oct. 16, 1775, Documentary History, 1:208.
\textsuperscript{197} William Thomson to Drayton, Aug. 4, 1775, Documentary History, 1:125-127.
with in Charles Town, and me at Long Canes being obliged to leave our houses. That they see plainly that the white people mean a war with them,” a conclusion that was not surprising after Thomson’s attack on Seneca. The Cherokees, Cameron believed, preferred war sooner rather than later and “are to a man resolved to stand for the great King and his warriors.” He wanted ammunition for them and wanted to know Stuart’s whereabouts. Despite the uncertain situation, Cameron took comfort in the Cherokees’ loyalty both to him and to the king. They were “the most faithful Indians on the main,” he wrote. The rebels intercepted this letter, which helped convince them that quick action was essential to forestall a Cherokee attack.198

Ominous reports of Cherokee intentions had been coming from the backcountry throughout the summer. Robert Goudey swore a deposition at Ninety Six on July 10 that earlier in the day Man Killer of Keowee, a Cherokee, told him that “Some Few Days ago, a Certain John Vann told the Indians in the Cherokee Nation that they must fall upon the White people on This Side Savannah River and kill them (Meaning the people of South Carolina),” but that the Georgians were not to be molested. According to Man Killer, the Cherokees had replied that “they Could not go to War, that they had no Ammunition.”199

On August 20, the Rev. William Tennent informed Henry Laurens that the loyalists were preparing to strike and that he had heard “Cameron is among the over hill Cherokees and will soon join them with 3,000 gun men.”200 In a subsequent letter, Tennent asserted that the loyalists were too few to challenge the Whigs alone and that “their Dependance is upon the Savages to join their Army. & that the rest of the

198 Alexander Cameron to Andrew M’Lean, Aug. 16, 1775, Documentary History, 1:143-144.
199 Deposition of Robert Goudey, July 10, 1775, Ninety Six District Papers, SCL.
200 William Tennent to Henry Laurens, Aug. 20, 1775, Documentary History, 1:146.
Inhabitants will be forced to join them, to save their Families from a Massacre."\(^{201}\) Jonathan Clark of Ninety Six District told Drayton that John Garwick, a friend of Cameron, had warned Clark that when British troops arrived in South Carolina, Clark should "remove from the frontiers." Garwick added that three weeks earlier, Cameron had met with four hundred Cherokees and urged them to support the king’s troops, and that the Indians, after being assured that Cameron would supply them with ammunition, signified their willingness to attack the colonists with gunshots and war whoops.\(^{202}\)

Other accounts, however, contradicted these reports, leaving the Whigs uncertain as to how they should proceed. “Our Cherokee Indians according to advices which we have just received from thence are well disposed towards us,” Henry Laurens wrote on August 20. He added that the Cherokees “pathetically lament the Scarcity of Gunn Powder & Bullets,” but thought that “it would not be consistent with Sound policy if we were just now to Supply them with those articles.”\(^{203}\)

With the affairs of the British Indian Department apparently in disarray, rebel leaders saw an opportunity to keep the Indians peaceful by assuming management of Indian affairs. In early August, South Carolina Whigs learned that Congress had created three Indian departments, divided geographically, and allocated $10,000 to the southern department for presents and other expenses. South Carolina appointed George Galphin, an Indian trader with a Creek wife and several mixed-race children, to act as one of three

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agents to the Creeks. Andrew Williamson, the backcountry militia colonel, was named one of three representatives to the Cherokees.\(^{204}\)

William Henry Drayton, still in the backcountry after his failed mission to convert loyalists, took it upon himself to deal with the Cherokees as well. In September he met with some Cherokee leaders at the Congarees and attempted to explain the political situation. Drayton said that the Whigs were in part fighting to preserve the deerskin trade. He asserted that since the British abused fellow white men, the Indians should not expect better treatment.\(^{205}\)

Yet while Whig leaders courted the Cherokees, other whites undermined their efforts. In late September, four Georgians murdered a Cherokee man and wounded two others “in cold blood.” Although rebel officials claimed that the assault was “a contrivance by our Enemies to set those barbarians upon us,” the crime increased their fears of an Indian attack.\(^{206}\) Colonel Thomson sent some of his Whig militia to apprehend the culprits in order to conciliate the Cherokees.\(^{207}\)

To further placate the Cherokees, in October the Whigs finally relented and agreed to provide them with gunpowder and lead. When the loyalists seized the wagon carrying munitions, the rebels sent an emissary to the Cherokees with a promise that the ammunition would be sent as soon as the Whigs had recaptured it.\(^{208}\)

While the Whigs attempted to gain the Indians’ goodwill, Stuart and his deputies, whose activities had not been disrupted to the extent the rebels believed, continued to exercise their influence with the southern nations. As he had repeatedly told the Whigs,


\(^{205}\) Hatley, *Dividing Paths*, 187-188.


Stuart’s goal was to keep the Indians neutral. He informed David Taitt, his representative to the Creeks, that in spite of the persecution he had suffered, he was “so far inclined to retaliate good for evil, that I wish to maintain peace.” Stuart told Taitt to avoid any statements that might incite the Creeks to war and instead try “to preserve peace, and attach the Indians to his Majesty’s interest.” Taitt’s most important duty, Stuart declared, was “to frustrate the machinations of Mr. Galphin and his associates.” Stuart also sent talks to the Creeks and Cherokees in which he emphasized his desire that the Indians remain at peace. The “difference between the people in England and the white people in America .... does not concern you,” he told the Cherokees; “they will decide it between themselves.” Stuart promised to do his best to provide supplies to both nations and urged them to follow the advice of his agents.

Cameron worked particularly hard to keep the Cherokees neutral because of his own aversion to an Indian war. In November he told Stuart that if the Indians attacked the colonists, “the Issue of it would be terrible, as they could not be restrained from Committing the most inhuman barbarities on Women and Children.” Cameron added that he thought himself unable to lead the Indians “against Friends, Neighbours and fellow Subjects ... altho the behaviour of the people would almost justify me in doing it.”

In September, Gage finally sent Stuart instructions “to make [the Indians] take arms against His Majesty’s enemies” if an opportunity arose. Stuart, however, was reluctant to do so until the ministry confirmed the orders. The superintendent replied only that he would work to keep the Indians firmly attached to the king. He also advised his representatives to avoid any statements that might incite the Creeks to war and instead try to preserve peace and attach the Indians to his Majesty’s interest.

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209 John Stuart to David Taitt, Aug. 29, 1775, *Documentary History*, 1:158-159.
210 John Stuart’s Talk to the Cherokees, Aug. 30, 1775; John Stuart’s Talk to the Creek Indians, Aug. 1775, *Documentary History*, 1:159-162.
brother Henry to go among the Upper Creeks, try to obtain their commitment to assist the British, and then consult with Taitt as to how the Indians could be used to distress the rebels. After that, Henry Stuart was to visit the Cherokees and urge them to expel rebel agents and traders from their nation. John Stuart understood that it was more important to eliminate rebel influence and secure the Indians’ allegiance than to launch a premature war.²¹³

When Stuart learned in December that fighting had broken out between loyalists and rebels in the South Carolina backcountry, he ordered Cameron to bring the Cherokees to aid the loyalists, but not to launch indiscriminate attacks on the frontier. Stuart’s plan was foiled because Cameron did not receive the letter until six months later.²¹⁴ Many loyalists, however, did take refuge among the Cherokees after their defeat. Whig Colonel Richardson believed that those loyalists had actually “gone to bring the Indians Down” to attack the rebels. If so, Richardson declared, “it Cou’d not be in a better time,” since the Whig militia was assembled and ready.²¹⁵

The expected Indian attack did not come, but many Whigs believed war was imminent. News reached Charleston on February 22, 1776, that the Cherokees had scalped two whites and “danced the War Dance.” Other reports alleged that Stuart was in Boston discussing plans with British officers for an attack on the southern colonies. “Lord Dartmouth’s Indian Engines will probably now begin their pious play of Butchering Women & Children,” Henry Laurens wrote.²¹⁶ Some Whigs, however, believed that an Indian war would benefit them by uniting the backcountry people. Pierce

²¹³ John Stuart to [Henry Stuart], Oct. 24, 1775; John Stuart to Gage, Oct. 24, 1775, DAR, 11:162-164.  
²¹⁵ Richard Richardson to Henry Laurens, Dec. 16, 1775, PHL, 10:567.  
Butler declared that “if the Indians are prevail’d on to attack us,” the men in the frontier districts would unite to protect their homes.\(^{217}\)

The Cherokees were in fact considering war. The militant faction in the nation saw conflict among the whites as an opportunity to strike back against those who had taken their land. Militant leader Dragging Canoe visited Henry Stuart, John Stuart’s deputy, at Mobile during the spring of 1776 to announce his support for the British. Henry Stuart provided Dragging Canoe with a large quantity of ammunition, which the latter brought to the Cherokee town of Chota. There Stuart and Cameron conferred with leaders from all parts of the nation. The British agents urged the Cherokees to remain at peace, but could not sway Dragging Canoe or other militants, who paid more attention to the Shawnee and Mohawk emissaries who favored war. Nor could accommodationist Cherokee leaders such as Oconostota or Attakullakulla dissuade Dragging Canoe. Stuart gave up his effort to argue for peace, contenting himself with obtaining a promise from the militants that they would not cross the Indian boundary or kill women, children, or loyalists when they went to war.\(^{218}\)

The Cherokees began their attacks on July 1, targeting frontier settlements from Georgia to Virginia and catching the Whigs by surprise.\(^{219}\) Rebel leaders had been lulled to some degree; “the Cherokees had amused us by the most flattering Talks, full of assurances of friendship,” Henry Laurens wrote. Then, “very suddenly, without any pretence to Provocation those treacherous Devils in various Parties headed by White Men” struck the frontiers, killing an estimated sixty South Carolinians.\(^{220}\)

\(^{217}\) Pierce Butler to unnamed, March 21, 1776, “Correspondence of Middleton,” 140.
\(^{219}\) Lumpkin, *From Savannah to Yorktown*, 20.
The attacks threw the South Carolina backcountry into confusion. “The whole country was flying,” one Whig reported, “some to make forts, others as low as Orangeburgh.” Officers tried to muster the militia, “but the panic was so great” that few men turned out at first.\textsuperscript{221} The Cherokees “spread great desolation all along the frontiers” of the province, a Whig wrote. “Plantations lie desolate, and hopeful crops are going to ruin.”\textsuperscript{222} In North Carolina, William Sharpe wrote that people for fifty miles along the frontier in Rowan and Tryon Counties had abandoned their homes and taken refuge in garrisons, and that four men and six children had been killed and a militia officer mortally wounded. “About thirty houses burned and plantations destroyed hundreds of fields loaded with a plentiful harvest laid waste and destroyed, many Cattle killed and horses taken away,” he reported.\textsuperscript{223}

As Henry Laurens had observed, many of the initial Cherokee attacks were conducted jointly by Indians and white loyalists. On July 15 the Whigs repulsed an attack on a militia camp, after which the Indians fled and thirteen whites were captured. By July 19, however, reports began to arrive that “the white people in general had quitted the Indians” after an estimated 88 Cherokees and 102 whites made an unsuccessful attack on Lindley’s Fort. Some whites who abandoned the Cherokees turned themselves in to rebel militia officers and were imprisoned at Ninety Six.\textsuperscript{224}

Many Whigs believed that, before the attacks, the Cherokees and loyalists had devised signals so that the Indians could identify and spare loyalists. The Cherokees were

\textsuperscript{221} Francis Salvador to W. H. Drayton, July 18, 1776, \textit{Documentary History}, 2:24.
\textsuperscript{223} William Sharpe to Cornelius Harnett, July 27, 1776, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, WLCL.
said to have "observed sacredly" these signs, except in a few instances.\textsuperscript{225} It is possible that some loyalists received warnings from friends who had escaped to the Indians, but there is scant evidence that most loyalists had advance notice of the Cherokee attack. One person who insisted there had been collusion, the Rev. James Creswell, asserted that the loyalists in Ninety Six district "were really elated with the prospect" of Cherokee intervention. He accused loyalist militiamen of failing to appear at musters in the weeks preceding the attack, which he considered proof that the loyalists had made a secret compact "to assist the savages to ruin the country." Yet Creswell also wrote that the Cherokees "killed the disaffected in common, without distinction of party," which, he said, caused many loyalists to abandon their plans to cooperate with the Indians.\textsuperscript{226}

Fulfilling Pierce Butler's prediction, the Cherokee attacks promoted unity among most backcountry inhabitants, regardless of their political principles. Loyalist Alexander Chesney "marched against the Indians, to which I had no objection," and seemed proud of the fact that he "helped destroy 32 of their towns."\textsuperscript{227} Robert Cunningham "would not at first believe that the British Administration were so wicked as to Instigate the Savages to War against us." When he realized it was true, Cunningham and other loyalists imprisoned in Charleston offered to serve against the Cherokees, and the Council of Safety released them from confinement.\textsuperscript{228} Cunningham and Richard Pearis reported to Andrew Williamson's camp as volunteers. Although suspicious of Pearis, Williamson was certain of Cunningham's reliability. But Williamson decided that "it would be improper to confer any public trust" on Cunningham because the backcountry people

\textsuperscript{227} Chesney, \textit{Journal}, 7.
\textsuperscript{228} Henry Laurens to John Laurens, Aug. 14, 1776, \textit{PHL}, 11:231.
were “so much exasperated” by the sight of loyalists, some “painted as Indians,” cooperating with the Cherokees.\textsuperscript{229}

Most backcountry loyalists did not see any contradiction between their support for royal authority and serving against the Cherokees. The Indians’ presence blocked settlers access to new lands and thus to potential economic advancement, and conflict between whites and Indians was endemic to the frontier. Neither Governor Campbell nor Stuart’s agents had given the backcountry loyalists any indication that the king’s supporters and the Cherokees were now allies in a common cause. Without such instructions, the loyalists followed their usual behavior and acted to protect their homes and families from the Indian threat. As a result, the king’s white supporters who assisted the Whigs found themselves pitted against other loyalists and their erstwhile Indian allies, so that Britain’s supporters ended up weakening each other while simultaneously strengthening the Whig position in the backcountry.

Other loyalists who had been victims of Whig persecution took advantage of the confusion that resulted from the Cherokee attacks to escape to Indian territory. David Fanning of Raeburn’s Creek, South Carolina, had first fled to the Cherokees in late 1775 when the Whigs subdued the backcountry loyalists. Captured in January 1776, Fanning was briefly imprisoned, then jailed a second time on suspicion of conspiring to assist the Cherokees. Amid the chaos caused by the Indian attacks, Fanning escaped to his home, where he found that “a number of my friends had already gone to the Indians, and more disposed so for to do.” Fanning assembled twenty-five men and joined a Cherokee party of over two hundred warriors on Reedy River. After finding that Whig posts in the area

\textsuperscript{229} Williamson to unnamed, July 22. 1776, \textit{Documentary History}, 2:27.
were too strong to be attacked, Fanning left the Indians and went to North Carolina. 230
Other loyalists also took the opportunity to escape to the Cherokees; at least fifteen were later captured in the rebel offensive against the Cherokee towns. 231

By July 22, the Whigs had recovered from the first shock of the Cherokee attack, and Andrew Williamson had assembled seven hundred militiamen to punish the “treachery and faithless behavior” of that nation. 232 Some Catawbas also joined the Whig forces and served as scouts during the invasion of Cherokee territory. 233 Williamson began his advance on July 31. In the early morning hours of August 1, a large party of Cherokees ambushed the militia but were driven off. The rebels found one Indian dead and three seriously wounded on the field; their own losses were three killed and fourteen wounded. Williamson resumed his march and over the next several days burned many towns. On August 12, some Cherokees ambushed a Whig detachment commanded by Andrew Pickens. The encircled rebels managed to fight off their attackers and claimed to have killed or wounded eighty-three Indians. The militia then continued their march, burning towns and crops while most of the Cherokees fled to the mountains. 234 “I have now burnt down every town, and destroyed all the corn, from the Cherokee line to the middle settlements,” Andrew Williamson reported on August 22. Williamson spared only the town of Little Chota, which was on land claimed by the Creeks. 235

Other Whig parties encountered few Indians and carried out their work of destruction with little opposition. Lt. William Lenoir of North Carolina served in a fifty-

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230 David Fanning, Col. David Fanning’s Narrative of his Exploits and Adventures as a Loyalist of North Carolina in the American Revolution, A.W. Savary, ed., (Toronto, 1908), 9-10
233 Brown, Catawba Indians, 263.

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man militia unit which set out on August 17 to invade the Cherokee lands. After uniting with other militia units, the force grew to 3,500. Lenoir did not see any Cherokees until September 6, when a party of militia encountered five Indians. The next day twenty Cherokees attacked Lenoir's detachment, which had separated from the larger unit and numbered one thousand men. One North Carolinian was wounded before the Indians withdrew. The Cherokees killed one man on September 12 after a Whig party had killed and scalped a Cherokee woman. The expedition reached the Cherokees' Valley Towns on September 19, and on that day and the next killed eight Indians and took several prisoners while destroying the towns and cornfields. Two militiamen were killed by Indians on September 22, and on the same day John Roberson “killed an old Indian prisoner & was put under Guard Tyed for it.” Two days later a detachment brought in two white prisoners with their Indian wives and mixed blood children, plus four blacks and “some other prisoners.” The party had also taken between seventy and eighty horses, some cattle, and a quantity of deerskins. The plunder was sold the next day at high prices; the captured Indians and blacks were probably sold as well.

The North Carolinians met Williamson's militia at the town of Hiwassee on September 26 after both forces had destroyed every Indian town within their reach. The combined force completed their work of destruction, which in addition to the burned towns and provisions claimed the lives of an estimated two thousand Cherokee men, women, and children. South Carolina reported a loss of ninety-nine men killed in the

campaign; the casualties of the other southern states were lower. It had been a small price
to pay to break Cherokee power.238

Some militia units continued to launch raids against the Cherokees until late in the
year. Brigadier General Griffith Rutherford of North Carolina sent nearly one hundred
men on a march deep into Cherokee territory in mid-October. They killed and scalped a
few Indians, captured three others, and burned a small town of twenty-five houses. At an
abandoned Cherokee camp the Whigs found an “Abundance of plunder, of Horses And
Other Goods, to the Amount of Seven Hundred Pounds.” When the raiders returned, they
sold their plunder and divided the proceeds. The fate of the three captives, however,
caused a dispute between Captain William Moore, who wanted to keep the women and
boy as prisoners until they could be properly questioned, and the other officers and men,
who “Swore Bloodily that if they were not Sold for Slaves upon the Spot, they would kill
and Scalp them Immediately.” Moore relented to save the Indians’ lives and they were
sold. Eager to procure more slaves and plunder, Moore’s troops announced that they were
“Very Desirous” to undertake another expedition against the Cherokees.239

The Whigs had to limit their actions against the Cherokees in order to end the war
quickly and avoid the risk of being assailed on two fronts should British forces return to
the South. Rebel officials therefore halted the militia raids. When a Capt. Robinson of the
Watauga settlement sought permission in mid-November to invade the Overhill Cherokee
lands to get horses, he received a stern refusal from William Christian, who ordered that
no one be permitted to enter Cherokee territory.240

238 Lumpkin, From Savannah to Yorktown, 25.
239 William Moore to Griffith Rutherford, Nov. 18, 1776, Griffith Rutherford Paper, SHC.
240 William Christian to Col. Russell, Nov. 12, 1776, Miscellaneous Papers, Series 1, Vol. 1, NCSA.
The rebels' victory over the Cherokees had far-reaching consequences. Devastated by the Whig counteroffensive, the Cherokees sued for peace. Only Dragging Canoe remained intransigent, taking his followers farther west rather than surrender.241 By making skillful use of the fact that some loyalists had fought alongside the Cherokees, the Whigs also managed "to score a propaganda victory ... by tapping deep-seated anti-tribal fears among the backcountry farmers." The rebels manipulated the Indian issue so well that they emerged from the Cherokee war "as the opponents of alliance with the Cherokees, even though they had themselves courted the tribe."242 William Henry Drayton articulated the new Whig position, declaring that "the public would have received an essential piece of service" if the whites who had aided the Cherokees had "been all instantly hanged." In addition, he believed that the war provided an opportunity to eliminate the Cherokees once and for all. Drayton advised militia officers to "cut up every Indian corn-field, and burn every Indian town," and suggested "that every Indian taken shall be the slave and property of the taker; that the nation be extirpated, and the lands become the property of the public."243

The timing of the Cherokee attack, which had begun just three days after the British attacked Charleston, provided more propaganda for the Whigs since it appeared to confirm their allegations that the British government had instigated the Indian war. Henry Laurens thought that the Cherokees "probably acted in a concerted Plan with the Ships & Troops,"244 while the Rev. Creswell wrote that it was "quite evident that the savages were

241 O'Donnell, Southern Indians, 48-49.
242 Hatley, Dividing Paths, 189.
made acquainted with the designs of the British fleet against Charlestown, and that there was a concerted scheme between them against our country.\footnote{James Creswell to W.H. Drayton, July 27, 1776, \textit{Documentary History}, 2:30-31.}

Another consequence of the Cherokees’ defeat was that it made the Creeks reluctant to assist the British. When the rebels launched their counterattack, Charles Lee stated that one of their objectives was “striking a necessary terror into the minds of the other Nations.”\footnote{Charles Lee to Edmund Pendleton, July 21, 1776, Charles Lee Letterbook, SCL.} Henry Laurens likewise hoped that a Whig victory would make other southern Indians “simple Spectators of our contest” with Britain.\footnote{Henry Laurens to John Laurens, Aug. 14, 1776, \textit{PHL}, 11:230.} The results of the war met these expectations; Stuart failed to convince the Creeks to assist the Cherokees, and later reported that “all the Southern Tribes are greatly dispirited, by the unopposed successes of the Rebells, and no appearance of any Support from Government.” Whig Indian agent George Galphin contributed to Creek inactivity by circulating reports of the devastation inflicted on the Cherokees.\footnote{O’Donnell, \textit{Southern Indians}, 49-50, 52.}

Whig leaders had been working to undermine Stuart’s influence with the Creeks since the summer of 1775, although they remained more wary of that nation than of the Cherokees. Thus the South Carolina Council of Safety advised the Georgians to reject Creek demands for gunpowder, warning that it might “be putting Arms into their Hands, which they might be influenced to use against the Colonies.” Instead, the South Carolinians suggested giving some Creek leaders a small quantity of powder, which might be enough to satisfy them.\footnote{South Carolina Council of Safety to Georgia Council of Safety, July 24, 1775, \textit{PHL}, 10:243-244.} Galphin, however, warned the council that unless they could supply the Creeks, the Indians would think that the Whigs had lied to them about their friendly intentions, as Stuart’s agents had told the Creeks that the rebels were
deceiving them. Galphin noted that "about half the uper Towns" of the Creeks were aligned with the British because of the Whigs' inability to provide supplies and were using "all there Interest to bringe the rest of the nation to there way of thinking," albeit without success.250 This report convinced the council to promise Galphin that they would provide the Creeks with clothing and ammunition. But two months later, the council informed Galphin that they were unable to deliver the two thousand pounds of gunpowder he had requested for the Indians.251

The Georgians also took steps to maintain peace with the Creeks. Upon learning in January 1776 of "some disturbances that have lately happened between an Indian and some white people," the Council of Safety ordered Whig committees in the frontier counties to arrest any whites who disturbed "Indian amity with this Province."252 This failed to satisfy Galphin, who worried in early February that the disruption of trade made war with the Creeks imminent. Aware that "it is the Trade with them that keeps them in our Intrest," Galphin warned that action was necessary to counter Stuart's efforts to unite the southern nations against the rebels. The combined strength of the Indians, Galphin wrote, was "ten or twelve thousand Gun men, but as long as we can keep the Creeks our Friends they will be a Barrier between us & all the other Indians." But "if the trade is stop'd from here they will all go to Florida, & then we may Expect an Indian War, when Thirty or forty stragling Indians made the Greatest part of Georgia run, what must the whole Nation do," he asked.253 In reply, the council sent Galphin one thousand pounds of

251 South Carolina Council of Safety to Galphin, Oct. 22, 1775, and Dec. 18, 1775, PHL, 10:491, 572.
gunpowder for the Creeks and pledged to procure blankets and more gunpowder. They also promised to seek assistance from the Continental Congress.\textsuperscript{254}

Galphin's worries appeared chimerical when about seventy Creeks who were in Savannah fought alongside the Whigs in the March battle against the British. Afterwards, Stukychee of the Cussitas allegedly declared that "he & his people would now join & assist" the Americans.\textsuperscript{255} Hoping to capitalize on this sentiment, the Georgia Council of Safety considered providing the Creeks with cattle in exchange "for their good offices."\textsuperscript{256} In May, because "several accounts received respecting the Indians are very unfavorable," the council continued its efforts to keep peace by repeating its orders to backcountry militia officers to do everything possible "to prevent the murder of any Indians."\textsuperscript{257} At the same time, the Whigs took precautions by assigning sixty mounted men to guard their western border "from the insults of Indians who are likely to be troublesome."\textsuperscript{258}

Georgians' fears of a Creek attack increased in the spring and summer. Lt. Col. Samuel Elbert of the Georgia Continentals warned Charles Lee that information from St. Augustine indicated that a joint British-Creek invasion was probable. "[T]he Savages are too Much inclin'd [to use] the Hatchet against us," Elbert wrote.\textsuperscript{259} The Council of Safety also pleaded with Lee for assistance in July, shortly after the Cherokees had begun their attacks. "To the west ... are the most numerous tribes of Indians now in North America, viz.: the Creeks, Cherokees, Choctaws, and a number of small tribes, in the whole at least 15,000 gun men," the council reminded Lee. "All of these nations have been much

\textsuperscript{255} South Carolina Council of Safety to Georgetown Committee of Safety, March 15, 1776, \textit{PHL}, 11:165.
\textsuperscript{256} Saunt, \textit{New Order of Things}, 50.
\textsuperscript{258} Lachlan McIntosh to George Washington, April 28, 1776, "Papers of McIntosh," 154.
\textsuperscript{259} Samuel Elbert to Charles Lee, May 14, 1776, "Papers of McIntosh," 155.
tampered with by the emissaries of Government, and without the utmost exertions of
prudence on our side, it is feared may be brought to act against us."260

Lee used the southern Whigs’ fear of the Creeks to convince them to support his
plan to invade East Florida. He told Gov. John Rutledge of South Carolina that the
conquest of East Florida would “make a most salutary impression on the minds of the
Creeks – which is an object of the highest consideration.” Lee asked Rutledge to provide
some South Carolina troops to the expedition.261 After receiving Lee’s proposal, the
Georgia Council of Safety agreed with the general that the occupation of East Florida
would, “from principles of dread, attach the Indians to our interest” and cut off British
communication with the Indian nations.262 “I heartily wish the settlements” in East
Florida “were entirely broke up,” Lachlan McIntosh wrote, endorsing Lee’s plan. “It
would detach the Creek Indians from their [British] Interest.”263

Many Georgia rebels, however, preferred to wage war against the Creeks rather
than invade East Florida. Having seen the ease with which the Cherokees had been
defeated, the Georgians hoped to similarly destroy the Creeks and seize their land. They
pressured their own government and Lee to attack the Creeks, but Whig officials refused
to approve a measure that might devastate Georgia.264 War with the Creeks appeared
likely enough without seeking a confrontation; in October an ominous report reached
Savannah that representatives from the Creeks, Cherokees, Choctaws, and Chickasaws
were meeting with Stuart at Pensacola to decide whether to launch “a general War” on

261 Charles Lee to [John Rutledge], Aug. 1, 1776, Charles Lee Letterbook, SCL.
263 McIntosh to Charles Lee, July 29, 1776, “Papers of McIntosh,” 159.
264 Searcy, Georgia-Florida Contest, 31.
the rebels. According to the informant, five hundred Creeks in Florida were ready to attack Georgia.265

As Whig relations with the Creeks worsened, Stuart’s prospects for retaining that nation’s allegiance correspondingly improved. In September 1776, George Galphin’s nephew, David Holmes, partially undermined Galphin’s work by joining the British. Stuart promptly employed Holmes to work with the Creeks to take advantage of the latter’s influence with them.266 Patrick Tonyn also labored to keep the Creeks attached to the British interest, despite Germain’s instructions to refrain from “indiscriminate use of Indians against the rebels.”267 The governor defused a potential crisis in the summer of 1776, when twenty-two Creeks raided East Floridians living along Indian River. Insisting that the settlers were “much more alarmed than hurt,” Tonyn rejected proposals to retaliate. Instead, he summoned the Indians who were in the vicinity of St. Augustine, “said what was proper,” and secured their promise to identify the offenders. He also asked David Taitt to inform Creek leaders that “such violences ought to be punished.”268

The best way to maintain good relations with the Creeks, Tonyn believed, was to use them in conjunction with backcountry loyalists to harass the rebels. The governor blamed Stuart for moving too slowly to bring the Indians into action, complaining to Gen. Henry Clinton that Stuart needed “a strong Spur” to get him to act.269 Tonyn also expressed his “fear” to Germain that “it is the intention of the Government not to employ the Indians,” adding that such a policy would be a mistake. The Indians, Tonyn asserted,

265 McIntosh to Howe, Oct. 22, 1776, “Papers of McIntosh,” 160.
266 Searcy, Georgia-Florida Contest, 73.
267 Brown, American Secretary, 60.
269 Snapp, John Stuart, 168.
were “ready to join the British troops.” The governor added that he was “well informed the back country of the two Carolinas wished greatly for the Indians to cooperate with them, for His Majesty’s service, but were in great dread of the Indians making an indiscriminate attack.” However, Tonyn believed that “it would be easy to conduct the Indians discriminately” by appointing proper guides for them and designating locations where they could rendezvous with the loyalists.270

Pressure from Tonyn and others finally convinced Germain to approve the use of Indians in October 1776. Germain advised William Howe, the army’s new commander-in-chief in America, that if the general decided to undertake “a Southern Expedition” during the upcoming winter, an “Indian war” might facilitate his operations.271 Several weeks later, Germain emphasized the “great Importance of engaging the Southern Indians in Our Interest” in another letter to Howe. Stuart would be awaiting Howe’s orders to employ the Indians “in seconding any Operations you may think fit to direct” in the south, Germain noted.272 Howe had already decided to use Indians, albeit only in a defensive role. He had ordered Stuart on August 25 “to engage the Indians for the defence of the Florida’s” as soon as possible.273

Some Creeks had already begun to assist the British. About twenty Creeks and some loyalists attacked rebel troops near Fort Barrington in Georgia in October, killing four, destroying several plantations in the vicinity and sending the inhabitants and militia fleeing. Two months later another Creek party raided a rebel post at Beard’s Bluff, then

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271 Germain to William Knox, Oct. 19, 1776, William Knox Papers, WLCL.
272 Germain to William Howe, Nov. 6, 1776, Germain Papers, Vol. 5, WLCL.
killed four Whigs when the garrison emerged to pursue the attackers. Most of the rebels then deserted the post.  

Other Creek leaders also appeared ready to join the war. Tonyn and Thomas Brown managed to convince Cowkeeper to commit the Seminoles to assist in the defense of East Florida, while Emestisiguo of the Upper Creeks informed John Stuart in November 1776 that his people would attack the Americans if the northern nations would cooperate with them. At the end of the month, several hundred Creeks gathered to resist a rumored rebel attack on the Lower Creeks, but the report proved false.

Stuart had to consider defensive strategy as well as offensive maneuvers. Both he and Gov. Chester recognized the importance of protecting West Florida as the base from which the Indians would be supplied. Stuart also understood that the Indians would have to bear most of the burden of West Florida’s defense since the white population was small. In August 1776 he informed Germain that there were about “four hundred good white men, traders and packhorsemen” who lived among the Indians, and “might be embodied” for use “in carrying on any service jointly with the Indians.” Stuart added that such men, “acquainted with the manner and language of the Indians ... might, I conceive, be very useful and tend to prevent the disorders and excesses which bodies of Indians, not conducted by white men might probably commit.” Howe, who had heard rumors that the rebels planned to attack West Florida, agreed. He instructed Stuart to prepare the

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274 Searcy, Georgia-Florida Contest, 68, 77-78; Lachlan McIntosh to [Robert Howe?], Oct. 29, 1776; McIntosh to Howe, Oct. 1, 1776, Oct. 29, 1776, “Papers of McIntosh,” 157, 159, 160.
275 Calloway, Revolution in Indian Country, 258-259; Dowd, Spirited Resistance, 55-56; Stuart to Germain, Nov. 24, 1776, DAR, 12:253.
277 Quoted in Starr, Tories, Dons, and Rebels, 52-53.
Indians to defend the province and to “appoint proper persons to accompany and lead” them.  

Stuart assigned the Chickasaws to guard the trails that passed through the upper Tombigbee Valley in case the rebels attempted to march overland against the British posts on the Gulf of Mexico. He provided them with arms and ammunition; but when the superintendent asked them in late 1776 to guard the Mississippi and Tennessee River approaches to West Florida, the Chickasaws refused, claiming that such duty would interfere with their winter hunt.

**Phantom Slave Insurrections, Real Repression**

When reports that British officials planned to arm slaves and incite insurrections reached South Carolina and Georgia, rebel leaders immediately took steps to prevent their slaves from assisting the British. The Whigs put the militia on guard, searched for signs of slave rebellion, and took harsh action against any blacks who appeared dangerous. Slave laws were rigorously enforced, so that “black people – free and slave – found that regulations which had gone unenforced for years were given new life.”

Upon hearing the first rumors of the alleged British plan, Charles Pinckney, commander of Charleston’s Whig militia, informed loyalist Lt. Gov. William Bull that he had information of “some bad designs in the negroes.” At Pinckney’s request, Bull issued an order increasing the strength of militia patrols in the town. One company patrolled Charleston during the day and two at night to guard against slave insurrection. Whig Josiah Smith wrote that the militia’s primary duty was “to guard against any hostile

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278 Starr, *Tories, Dons, and Rebels*, 52.  
attempts that might be made by our domesticks."\textsuperscript{283} He also noted that the provincial congress’s decision to create three regiments of troops was intended to keep slaves “in awe,” as well as to resist a possible British attack.\textsuperscript{284}

Rebel authorities in South Carolina knew that if such an attack came, many slaves would flee to the British at the first opportunity and carefully studied how to prevent slaves in the lowcountry from reaching the king’s forces. A committee charged with planning the colony’s defense proposed a drastic measure: if the British approached the coast, “All the negroes between the sea, and a line drawn from North Edisto Inlet to Tugaloo, thence along the river to Stono, thence to Dorchester, thence to Goose Creek bridge, thence to the mouth of Back river, thence to Cain Hoy, and thence to the sea, should be removed” to safer locations. The militia would then constantly patrol these boundaries to prevent any communication between the slaves and the British.\textsuperscript{285} This plan would have deprived the province’s most productive plantations of their laborers for as long as the British were in the vicinity of Charleston, and perhaps indefinitely if the British managed to occupy the town, yet South Carolina’s Whigs preferred to let their plantations lie idle rather than risk the loss of their slaves. Such a massive relocation of people, however, would have been nearly impossible to carry out, and the confusion that would have resulted might actually have created opportunities for slaves to escape. Therefore no such systematic evacuation of slaves was ever attempted.

Some Whigs hoped that persuasion would suffice to prevent their slaves from fleeing to the British. In an effort to insure that slaves remain at home, Henry Laurens

\textsuperscript{283} Olwell, Masters, Slaves, and Subjects, 238.
\textsuperscript{284} Frey, Water from the Rock, 57.
summoned all the slaves on his brother’s plantation to a meeting, where he advised them “to behave with great circumspection” and “set before them, the great risque of exposing themselves to the treachery of pretended freinds & false witnesses if they associated with any Negroes out of your family or mine.” Laurens said that the slaves “were sensibly affected” by his speech, “& with many thanks promised to follow my advice.”

Most rebels considered such mild measures insufficient to prevent a slave uprising. The Charleston press fueled white anxiety by frequently publishing material “calculated to incite the fears of the People.” At the same time, reports that Governor Campbell had brought arms for them reached many slaves, encouraging some to “impertinent behaviour.” In late May or early June, a schooner sailing from Charleston into the Carolina interior “was robbed by Some Negroes, they took Nothing else but Powder,” adding further credence to reports that a slave revolt was imminent.

Whig leaders responded to the threat by beginning criminal proceedings against blacks suspected of rebellious tendencies. “Trials of Several Negroes Suspected & charged of plotting an Insurrection have been conducted this Week,” Henry Laurens wrote on June 18. “Jerry the pilot is among the most Criminal – two or three White people are Committed to prison upon Strong Negro Evidence.” Laurens expected even more plots to be revealed, as the Rev. Oliver Hart had reported that one of his slaves and another owned by Joshua Ward “could make very ample discoveries.” The Whigs immediately took the two slaves into custody so they could be interrogated.

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286 Henry Laurens to James Laurens, June 7, 1775, PHL, 10:162-163.
287 Frey, Water from the Rock, 56.
288 Joseph Manigault to Gabriel Manigault, June 4, 1775, Manigault Family Papers, SCL.
289 Henry Laurens to John Laurens, June 18, 1775, PHL, 10:184-185.
A few days later the investigators reported that there was "very little foundation" to the rumors of an impending slave rebellion, "however one or two Negroes are to be Severely flogged & banished." The Whigs conceded that they had not found any substantial evidence of their guilt, but thought it best to make an example of them. Two whites suspected of plotting with the slaves were released for lack of evidence. These findings did not reduce white apprehensions, however, and the militia was "kept on Duty Night & Day" as rumors of slave revolts continued to circulate.290

By early July the fears of insurrection began to abate. Henry Laurens declared on July 2 that "I am sure we have nothing to fear from within."291 Another Whig, Gabriel Manigault, concluded that the tales of impending slave revolts had no validity. "We have been alarmed by idle reports that the Negros intended to rise, which on examination proved to be of less consequence than was expected," he informed his son on July 8; "however a Strick watch has been Kept for fear of the worst."292

This air of assurance evaporated a few days later when the Council of Safety received a letter from St. Bartholomew's Parish, dated July 5, which claimed that Whigs there had discovered "that Several of the Slaves in the neighborhood, were exciting & endeavouring to bring abt. a General Insurrection." Local officials had arrested "such as were said to be the Principal leaders of their Infernal designs" and put them on trial. Several of the slaves were sentenced to receive "Exemplary punishmts," including the hanging of one suspect. The testimony of the accused slaves also revealed the instigator of the alleged insurrection: John Burnet, a Scot who "hath been a long time preaching to

290 Henry Laurens to John Laurens, June 23, 1775, PHL, 10:191-192.
the ... Negroes ... In the Woods – and other Places.” One of the accused slaves testified that another suspect had informed him that Burnet told his black listeners that “the old King had rece’d a Book from our Lord by which he was to Alter the World (meaning to set the Negroes free),” but had died and gone to hell for failing to follow his divine instructions. However, “the Young King, meaning our Present One, came up with the Book, & was about to alter the World, & set the Negroes Free.” On the basis of this hearsay evidence, officials in St. Bartholomew Parish arrested Burnet and sent him to Charleston for further interrogation.293

After examining Burnet, the Council of Safety found him guilty only of excessive enthusiasm for converting slaves to Christianity, which had led him to preach without obtaining permission from the slaves’ owners. Burnet “denied having any Knowledge of the pretended Book,” so the council released him on his promise not to return to St. Bartholomew’s Parish. He then left for Georgia.294 Despite Burnet’s acquittal, rumors of slave rebellions continued to circulate and gain credence. Even Henry Laurens, who had dismissed the accounts a few weeks earlier, was now certain that “[i]nsurrections of our Negroes attended by the most horrible butcheries of Innocent Women & Children” were part of the ministry’s “dark Hellish plots for Subjugating the Colonies.”295

The Council of Safety believed that Thomas Jeremiah, known to the Whigs as “Jerry,” intended to take a leading role in the ministry’s supposed plot; he was the man Laurens described as the worst among the suspected black conspirators arrested in mid-June. Jeremiah, a free black whose skills as a harbor pilot had enabled him to amass considerable wealth, apparently angered the Whigs simply because he was a successful

293 Thomas Hutchinson to Council of Safety, July 5, 1775, PHL, 10:206-208.
294 Council of Safety to St. Bartholomew Committee, July 18, 1775, PHL, 10:231.
295 Henry Laurens to John Laurens, July 30, 1775, PHL, 10:258, 260.
black man in a slave society. Laurens considered him “a forward fellow, puffed up by prosperity, ruined by Luxury & debauchery & grown to an amazing pitch of vanity & ambition.” During the interrogation of the black prisoners, one slave claimed that Jeremiah had asked him to bring some guns to a runaway slave named Dewar, “to be placed in Negro’s Hands to fight against the Inhabitants of this Province, and that He Jeremiah was to have the chief Command of the said Negroes.” Jeremiah also allegedly stated that he had enough powder but “wanted more Arms.” A second slave said that when he had asked Jeremiah what he should do if war came, Jeremiah told him to “join the Soldiers; that the War was come to help the poor Negroes.”

On August 11 the Whigs put Jeremiah on trial, found him guilty of plotting an insurrection, and sentenced him “to be hanged and afterwards burned.” Gov. Campbell, who did not think that the legal proceedings even deserved to be called a trial, protested to the presiding judge, pointing out “the weakness of the evidence” against Jeremiah. Campbell’s intervention “raised such a clamour among the people as is incredible,” the governor wrote, “and they openly and loudly declared that if I granted the man a pardon they would hang him at my door.” Campbell then asked Henry Laurens for assistance in preventing Jeremiah’s execution, noting that one of the slaves who had testified for the prosecution had since retracted his testimony. Laurens answered that he had brought the issues Campbell had raised before the Council of Safety, and that “they utterly refused to take them under Consideration.” Laurens added that he understood that Jeremiah had received a fair trial and justified the Whigs’ threats of violence if he were to

296 Henry Laurens to John Laurens, Aug. 20, 1775, PHL, 10:320-322.
297 Campbell to Dartmouth, Aug. 31, 1775, abstract, Dartmouth Papers, #1467, Reel 13, DLAR.
298 Campbell to Dartmouth, Aug. 31, 1775, DAR, 11:95-96.
299 Campbell to Henry Laurens, Aug. 17, 1775, PHL, 10:328.
be released. "In the Calamitous Situation of this Colony under the threats of
Insurrections, strong proofs of which the people are possessed of, no wonder they are
alarmed at the Sound of Pardon to a Man circumstanced in all respects as Jerry is," he
wrote.\footnote{Henry Laurens to Campbell, [Aug. 17, 1775], \textit{PHL}, 10:329.}
Alexander Innes renewed the correspondence with Laurens the following day in
hopes of obtaining a reprieve for Jeremiah, but without success.\footnote{Alexander Innes to Henry Laurens, Aug. 18, 1775 [two letters of this date] and Laurens to Innes, Aug. 18, 1775 [two letters of this date], \textit{PHL}, 10:330-334.} Some rebels sneered
at the governor's endeavors to save the condemned man; Peter Timothy told William
Henry Drayton that "more force was exerted for his being saved, than there would have
been for you."\footnote{Peter Timothy to William Henry Drayton, Aug. 22, 1775, "Correspondence of Middleton," 132.}

Privately, Laurens pronounced himself "fully Satisfied that Jerry was guilty of a
design & attempt to encourage our Negroes to Rebellion & joining the King's Troops if
any had been sent here." The "uncommon pains taken to Save his Life" by Campbell and
Innes led the Whigs to suspect their motives; Laurens wrote that their efforts on the black
man's behalf "had filled the minds of many people with great Jealousies against certain
Crown Officers."\footnote{Henry Laurens to John Laurens, Aug. 20, 1775, \textit{PHL}, 10:320-322.} The governor believed that the rebels suspected loyalists of
involvement in the alleged plot to promote slave insurrections and sought an opportunity
to punish them for it. "Happy it was for the friends of government in this country that the
wretched creatures who were doomed to death could not be prevailed upon to accuse any
white person though repeatedly told it was the only chance they had for life," Campbell
wrote. "I am convinced if any had been accused they must have fallen a sacrifice to the
fury of the mob."\footnote{Campbell to Dartmouth, Aug. 31, 1775, \textit{DAR}, 11:97.}
In a letter to Dartmouth, Campbell expressed his horror at Jeremiah’s execution. “I could not save him My Lord! the very reflection Harrows my Soul!” the governor lamented. His only consolation was that he had done all in his power to save Jeremiah’s life.\(^{305}\) Campbell called the Whigs “a set of barbarians who are worse than the most cruel savages any history has described.”\(^{306}\)

Campbell’s horror at the execution and compassion for the victim were shared by many in Britain when the news arrived there. Supporters of the government used the judicial murder of Jeremiah to justify taking a hard line against the rebels, whom they portrayed as savages. Pamphleteer John Lind included the incident in a tract designed “to demonstrate how American patriots were using terror to establish a regime which neither the British constitution nor English common law could ever legitimate.”\(^{307}\) The Earl of Sandwich, speaking for the ministry in the House of Lords, declared that the rebels “have put an innocent free negro to death, attended with every circumstance of cruelty and baseness.” He recounted how “a mock tribunal” had allowed the perjury of a slave to convict Jeremiah, even though provincial law did not allow a slave to testify against a free person. This affair proved the need for a harsh policy to suppress the rebels. “After such outrages, lenity would be culpable,” Sandwich stated.\(^{308}\) In a vain attempt to undo the damage Jeremiah’s execution had done to the rebel cause, John Laurens, at his father’s request, published a justification for the Whigs’ actions in a London newspaper.\(^{309}\)

\(^{305}\) Campbell to Dartmouth, Aug. 19, 1775, Dartmouth Papers, Reel 13, #1446, DLAR.
\(^{306}\) Campbell to Dartmouth, Aug. 31, 1775, DAR, 11:96.
\(^{308}\) Earl of Sandwich’s Speech, Nov. 20, 1775, Proceedings and Debates, 6:365, 370.
\(^{309}\) John Laurens to Henry Laurens, Oct. 4, 1775, PHL, 10:450.
Had the ministry wished to arm slaves, or at least to offer freedom to those willing to serve in the king’s forces, the death of Jeremiah and the accompanying outrage provided an excellent opportunity to justify the decision. If the ministers had asserted that such measures were necessary to allow blacks to protect themselves from rebel cruelty, it would have been difficult for opponents to counter that argument. However, there is no evidence that Jeremiah’s execution caused the ministers to reconsider their policy in regard to slaves.

If the ministers still refused to give blacks a more active part in subduing the southern rebels, slaves at least fulfilled their assigned role by keeping the Whig militia occupied. The large number of slaves in South Carolina complicated efforts to keep the rebel militia in service, for with most white men away from home the possibility of a slave insurrection increased. In September 1775, militia Col. Stephen Bull reported that he had been forced to send some of the men from Prince William Parish home because “there were the fewest white men in proportion to the Domestics” there. Bull observed that this was a common problem. “As to the Argument of their domestics being left without white Men,” he wrote, “they certainly are in the predicament with every other Parish or District on Field or Muster days; and you certainly will allow that when they [militia] are in a body they are more safe and ready to march to ... any other part where an Insurrection may be apprehended.” But Bull worried that “should a sudden Insurrection of our Domestics happen,” the militia lacked sufficient gunpowder “to make the least defence.”

Joseph Glover reported that in Colleton County “the Patrol Service

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311 Stephen Bull to Henry Laurens, Aug. 18, 1775, PHL, 10:309.
(which is one of the Materialist in the lower districts)" occupied so much of the men's time that the officers were unable to conduct any training.\textsuperscript{312}

The decision by Virginia governor John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, to arm slaves to suppress the rebellion in that province sparked another uproar in South Carolina. Dunmore believed that his plan would deprive rebel planters of their labor force, keep them at home to guard against slave uprisings instead of serving in the rebel forces, and most importantly, provide both soldiers and laborers for the British army. This latter benefit appeared to be easily realized, as word of Dunmore's proclamation of freedom to any slave who would join him, spread verbally by the slaves and circulated by loyalists, brought three hundred slaves to the governor within a week of its issuance. The proclamation also "undoubtedly had an indirect effect on thousands of additional slaves," even if they did not join the British, by "quickening their hopes for freedom."\textsuperscript{313} It clearly linked the British with emancipation in the minds of slaves across the South.

Dunmore's actions threatened to undermine the entire social and economic structure of the southern provinces and also had the potential to provide enough black troops to defeat the rebels. One Whig, writing from Philadelphia but evidently quite familiar with southern slavery, described rebel views on the issue with great insight:

Hell itself could not have vomitted any thing more black than his [Dunmore's] design of emancipating our slaves; and unless he is cut off before he is reinforced, we know not how far the contagion may spread. The flame runs like wild fire through the slaves, who are more than two for one white in the Southern Colonies. The subject of their nocturnal revels, instead of music and dancing, is now turned upon their liberty. I know not whence these troubles may lead us. If our friends in England are not able to oblige the ministry to give way, we are lost; and already gone too far to


retract with safety.\textsuperscript{314}

South Carolinian Edward Rutledge, who several weeks earlier had urged the Continental Congress to discharge all blacks serving in the rebel army, asserted that Dunmore's actions would "more effectually work an eternal separation between Great Britain and the Colonies, – than any other expedient, which could possibly have been thought of." After the colonists saw "our Slaves emancipated for the express purpose of massacreing their Masters," Rutledge thought that they would no longer consider reconciliation with the mother country.\textsuperscript{315}

Like their counterparts in Virginia who sought freedom with Dunmore, many South Carolina slaves escaped from their masters and made their way to Charleston, hoping to get aboard British warships stationed in the harbor. Some did reach the ships and began cooperating with royal navy sailors in nighttime raids along the province's coast. In early December, Whig leaders learned that nearly five hundred black fugitives were camped on Sullivan's Island awaiting an opportunity to board the British vessels.\textsuperscript{316}

On December 9, Gen. William Moultrie ordered Major Charles Cotesworth Pinckney to take 150 men to the island "to surprize, seize, and apprehend" the slaves. The plan was frustrated, however, when Pinckney failed to locate a ford that would allow him to cross to the island.\textsuperscript{317} The Whigs made a second attempt on December 18; in keeping with

\textsuperscript{314} "Extract of a letter from Philadelphia," Dec. 6, 1775, in Willard, ed., \textit{Letters on the Revolution}, 233. Based on the writer's obvious familiarity with the situation of slaves in the southern provinces, it is probable that he was either a southern delegate attending the Congress in Philadelphia or a northern delegate who obtained his information from a southern colleague.

\textsuperscript{315} Edward Rutledge to Ralph Izard, Dec. 8, 1775, \textit{Correspondence of Izard}, 1:165-166. On Rutledge's opposition to the enlistment of blacks in the rebel forces, see Alden, \textit{South in the Revolution}, 40. Rutledge eventually succeeded in convincing Congress to stop the enlistment of blacks.


\textsuperscript{317} Moultrie, \textit{Memoirs}, 1:113-114.
their policy of encouraging animosity between blacks and Indians, the Whigs sent fifty-four Catawbas to participate in the attack. Their early morning assault killed an estimated fifty blacks and captured several more along with a few British sailors. Almost twenty blacks escaped and were picked up by boats from the British warships.\(^{318}\) The Council of Safety hoped that the attack “will serve to humble our Negroes in general.”\(^{319}\)

Angered at the British naval officers for providing refuge to fugitive slaves, the Whigs repudiated an agreement by which they sold provisions to the navy in exchange for the officers’ pledge not to take supplies by force. Fenwick Bull, a Whig who had gone aboard a warship to discuss the British seizure of a merchant vessel on December 10, accused Capt. John Tollemache of harboring runaway slaves during the discussion. Tollemache replied that the blacks “came as free men, and demanded protection; that he could have had five-hundred who had offered.” He refused a demand to return the slaves, asserting that the Americans were rebels and he had orders to distress them in any way possible.\(^{320}\) The rebels believed that Tollemache’s ship, the Scorpion, carried off between thirty and forty slaves when it left the harbor shortly afterwards.\(^{321}\) One of these was “a valuable black Pilot” whom the captain took “by way of Reprisal & for worse purposes perhaps.”\(^{322}\) Another was John Marrant, who had been “pressed on board” because the British “were told I could play on music.” Marrant served as a musician in the royal navy until the end of the war.\(^{323}\) When the other ships departed, each also had several blacks on


\(^{320}\) Moultrie, Memoirs, 1:112.

\(^{321}\) Henry Laurens to James Laurens, Jan. 6, 1776, PHL, 11:7.

\(^{322}\) Henry Laurens to John Laurens, July 14, 1775, PHL, 10:220.

board. Henry Laurens considered the British “robberies” of slaves “sufficient to alarm every Man in the Colony.”

In the spring of 1776, South Carolina Whigs began to suspect that a British attack somewhere in the South was imminent. They immediately took steps to prevent slaves from fleeing to the British by passing a law mandating the death penalty for any slave who tried to join the king’s armed forces. Two slaves who stole a schooner in a vain attempt to reach British warships scouting Charleston’s defenses were ordered hanged on April 27 to demonstrate that the law would be strictly enforced. Undeterred, five of William Moultrie’s slaves who worked as crewmen on a barge used the vessel to reach a British ship in May. Whigs believed the British naval officers had “obtained ample means of information” from the fugitives.

The rebels feared that if a British attack did come, the necessity of concentrating the militia to defend Charleston would make it difficult to control the large slave population in the lowcountry. “The Militia near the Sea Coast You Know Consists of Overseers, if they are kept from their business, little is to be expected in the Planting way,” Pierce Butler stated. “Besides it is surely improper to leave numbers of Negroes without a White Man. By all Accts. at this time there is Scarce an Overseer on any of the Plantations from Purysburg to Combahee.” Affairs on Ralph Izard’s plantation were in the “utmost distraction” in late March because five of the six overseers had been away on militia duty. Gen. Charles Lee was aware of these problems but decided that concentrating all available troops to hold Charleston would ultimately prove to be the

325 Quarles, Negro in the Revolution, 128.
327 Pierce Butler to unnamed, March 21, 1776, “Correspondence of Middleton,” 140.
328 Henry Laurens to John Laurens, March 26, 1776, PHL, 11:191.
best means of keeping the slaves in check. It was important, Lee wrote, to convince
slaves that the Whigs held real power, as “the opinion which the slave will entertain of
our superiority or inferiority will naturally keep pace with our maintaining or giving
ground.”

Lee’s assessment was correct; the rebels succeeded in defeating a British attack
on Charleston at the end of June without their slaves creating any disruption. When the
opportunity offered, however, slaves continued to escape to British naval vessels that
frequently patrolled the South Carolina coast. In early August the frigate *Active* landed a
party of forty whites and twenty armed blacks on Bull’s Island, where they took some
cattle and “augmented their black Guard by stealing Six more Negroes.” While Henry
Laurens took comfort in the fact that none of his slaves had escaped to the British, he
realized that he had been fortunate in that regard, for “many hundreds of that Colour have
been stolen & decoyed by the Servants of King George the third – Captains of British
Ships of War & Noble Lords have busied themselves in such inglorious pilferage to the
disgrace of their Master & disgrace of their Cause.” Later, when Laurens suspected
that one of his disgruntled slaves might try to escape to a British vessel, he ordered his
overseer to secure the man in irons.

After their initial outrage at reports that the British government planned to incite
slave insurrections, Georgia rebels appeared to have worried far less about such an event
than did their counterparts in South Carolina. It was not until January 1776, when British
warships arrived at Savannah to procure rice for the garrison at Boston, that the Whigs in
Georgia acted to prevent their slaves from revolting or fleeing to the British. The Council

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of Safety then sent the militia “to Strip theNegroe Houses” on both the Georgia and South Carolina sides of the Savannah River of “Arms and Ammunition.” Whig troops searched the homes of overseers as well as slaves; all of the muskets and ammunition found were confiscated, except that overseers were each allowed to keep one musket and thirteen rounds of ammunition. If the slaves did revolt and defeat their overseers, Whig officials did not want them to gain access to a significant supply of arms.332

Many slaves did attempt to reach the British ships, angering rebels who complained that naval officers were “encouraging our slaves to desert to them.”333 If this were not infuriating enough, some slaves added to the Whigs’ frustration during a battle that erupted in March when the rebels tried to prevent the British from seizing several rice-laden vessels. British troops on Hutchinson’s Island had retreated under a barrage of rebel musket fire, abandoning two pieces of artillery. Before the Whigs could secure these trophies, slaves belonging to John Graham, the loyalist lieutenant governor, recovered the cannon and returned them to the British.334

Col. Stephen Bull, who had taken some of his South Carolina militia to reinforce the Georgians, believed that vigorous action had to be taken to halt the flight of slaves to the British and punish those who had taken refuge on Tybee Island waiting to go on board royal navy vessels. Bull learned in mid-March that between forty and fifty slaves belonging to South Carolinian Arthur Middleton, along with over 150 others, were at Tybee.335 Bull urged the South Carolina Council of Safety to approve harsh measures

333 Lachlan McIntosh to George Washington, March 8, 1776, “Papers of McIntosh,” 150.
335 Stephen Bull to Henry Laurens, March 12, 1776; Bull to Laurens, March 13, 1776, Documentary History, 1:266.
against the runaways. If the British were permitted to carry off the slaves, Bull stated, it “will only enable an enemy to fight us with our own money or property,” money if the slaves were sold and the funds applied to the war effort, property if the slaves were armed.336

Bull proposed to solve the problem with the aid of seventy Creek warriors who were then at Savannah.337 He suggested that the Indians raid Tybee and execute all the slaves who could not be recaptured; their owners could be compensated at public expense. The Creeks were the ideal people to conduct the raid and kill resisting slaves, Bull asserted, because the destruction of the refugees might not only “deter other negroes from deserting” but “will establish a hatred or aversion between the Indians and negroes.” A Creek leader had assured Bull of his willingness to lead a party in an attack on the fugitive slaves; however, Bull lacked the authority to order the measure and doubted whether the Georgia Council of Safety was resolute enough to approve his plan. He therefore sought authorization from South Carolina officials, while urging them to keep the matter “a profound secret,” so that the slaves would not learn of the attack and flee, or obtain arms from the British and ambush the Creeks.338 Bull, who made up in astuteness what he lacked in morality, easily recognized the advantages of inflaming the hostility of two potential enemies towards one another at the outset of the conflict in order to spare the rebels the difficulty of opposing both.

On March 16, the South Carolina Council of Safety informed Bull that his plan was “an awful business notwithstanding it has the sanction of Law to put even fugitive & Rebellious Slaves to death, the prospect is horrible.” The council advised Bull that it was

336 Bull to Laurens, March 14, 1776, Documentary History, 1:268.
337 Bull to Laurens, March 12, 1776, Documentary History, 1:266.
338 Bull to Laurens, March 14, 1776, Documentary History, 1:268-269.
up to the Georgians “to give that encouragement which is necessary to induce proper Persons to seize & if nothing else will do to destroy all those Rebellious Negroes upon Tybee Island or wherever they may be found.” Indians could be used if the Georgians thought proper, but white men should lead them if possible. The owners of any slaves killed in the raid should be reimbursed by the public, and South Carolina officials were willing to share the cost with Georgia. The council also told Bull to blame the violence on the British: “to those Royal Miscreants who are carrying on an inglorious picaroon Warr let every inglorious unavoidable act of necessity which we may be driven to commit for our self preservation, be imputed.”339 Southern Whigs would resort to this device throughout the war, committing the most brutal acts of violence and then claiming that their enemies had left them no alternative.

The Georgia militia, dressed and painted like Indians, and some thirty Creeks attacked Tybee Island on March 25. They killed one of six British marines who were on the island at the time, wounded several others, and burned three houses. The rebels also captured a handful of white loyalists and about a dozen slaves.340 Evidently they killed many fugitive slaves, since the British claimed that both whites and Indians in the attacking party practiced “the most savage barbarity,” and that in this regard the whites had behaved worse than the Indians.341

After the British left Georgia, some slaves continued to escape to British vessels whenever they appeared on the coast, while others made the trek overland to the Floridas. Georgia’s Council of Safety noted in July that “negroes are daily inveigled and carried

341 PHL, 11:173n.
away from their plantations" by British warships.342 In September, George Aaron, overseer at Henry Laurens’s plantation at New Hope, Georgia, fled with five of Laurens’s slaves and a sixth belonging to William McIntosh.343 Laurens later learned that his slaves had gone to St. Augustine and complained that they “had been actually Stolen.” He wrote that “the Man who had perpetrated that act of villainy had returned with a party in order to carry off as many more as he could take” and failed only because Laurens had already moved the remaining slaves elsewhere.344 It is not clear whether Aaron took the slaves forcibly for his own benefit or whether they voluntarily accompanied him. Since Aaron would have found it almost impossible to manage six reluctant companions, in all likelihood the men either agreed to escape together; perhaps he deceived the slaves with promises of liberty in Florida, only to sell them back into bondage after they arrived.

Georgia’s rebel leaders worried that loyalists in East Florida would arm the runaway slaves and employ them against their former masters, which led the Council of Safety to advocate an invasion of East Florida in the summer of 1776.345 Gov. Tonyn, however, lacked the resources to undertake such a measure; in October he wrote that “there are a number of Runaway Negros from Georgia, whom I relieved the Captains of the Navy of, to whom they fled for protection,” but added that he needed government assistance to support the slaves and white loyalist refugees who had come to the province.346

344 Henry Laurens to Joseph Clay, Sept. 2, 1777, PHL, 11:482.
345 Wright, Florida in the American Revolution, 39.
Tonyn willingly armed blacks to defend his province. When he created a militia battalion in August 1776, he informed Germain that “we shall be able to raise four black Companies.” Tonyn planned to maintain discipline in those units by assigning “double or treble” the number of white officers in comparison to the amount of officers in white companies.\footnote{Tonyn to Germain, Aug. 21, 1776, www.royalprovincial.com/military/rhist/eastflmil/eflmilletl.htm, Aug. 16, 2002.} Slaves served in the provincial militia throughout the war; others, perhaps free blacks or those who had escaped from rebel masters, joined Thomas Brown’s Florida Rangers, which at one time included about 150 black soldiers.\footnote{Wright, \textit{Florida in the American Revolution}, 108.} Like their governor, “white Floridians assumed not only that slaves should be impressed to labor on fortifications but also that if need be they should be armed and employed as ordinary soldiers.” Several planters along the St. Mary’s River and on the coastal islands, areas particularly vulnerable to rebel raids, probably armed and trained their slaves to defend their estates.\footnote{Wright, “Blacks in East Florida,” 434-435.} Slaves also helped defend the province by providing intelligence of rebel movements. When seventy Whig militiamen from Georgia marched southward to attack a fort at Germyn Wright’s plantation on the St. Mary’s River, a slave warned Wright of their approach, so that the rebels found the defenders prepared for them and had to retreat.\footnote{Hayes, \textit{Hero of Hornet’s Nest}, 40.}

Unlike their neighbors in East Florida, the loyalist planters of West Florida were not threatened by the Whigs and thus preferred to maintain the status quo in regard to slavery. The most serious danger West Floridians faced in 1776 was in fact a possible slave insurrection. On June 24, three neighbors called upon planter William Dunbar of Natchez and told him that they had discovered a slave conspiracy centered at his
plantation. They named three of Dunbar's slaves and a fourth owned by another planter as the ringleaders. "Of what avail is kindness & good usage when rewarded by such ingratitude?" a shocked Dunbar asked himself. He summoned one of the accused slaves, who "seemed to know nothing of the matter," even when confronted by his accusers. Later that day, while the slave was in a boat "with his arms pinioned," he threw himself into the Mississippi and drowned. Dunbar attributed the suicide to the slave's feeling of guilt that "his intended Diabolical plan" had been discovered. The other three accused conspirators were tried on July 1, found guilty, and hanged the next day. Several other slaves suspected of involvement received milder punishments.351

West Florida was the only southern province where slaves had not been directly affected by the Revolution. In Georgia and South Carolina, numerous slaves had sought freedom with the British, an eventuality the ministry had apparently failed to consider when formulating its southern strategy. The slaves' actions had prompted British officers to grant blacks what protection they could provide, while royal governors Dunmore and Tonyn had, on their own initiative, armed blacks. Yet in spite of these clear indications that slaves would not remain passive and that both civil and military officials were willing to employ blacks against the rebels, the ministry refused to alter their policy to take full advantage of slave assistance.

Royal Relief Fails

In the autumn of 1775, the ministry began preparations for an expedition to relieve the loyalists in the southern provinces. Acting in response to the information he

had received from southern governors, in early September Lord Dartmouth suggested a southern expedition to Gen. William Howe. Lord North, who hoped to mollify those Britons who demanded vigorous action by winning a victory with minimal effort, put the plan before the king on October 15. The next day the king approved the diversion of five regiments from Ireland, originally intended to reinforce Boston, for a winter campaign with the objective of retaking North Carolina.\textsuperscript{352}

Dartmouth informed Howe of the plan, going so far as to suggest that “the Appearance of a respectable Force” in the South might “have the effect to restore Order and Government” in both Carolinas, Georgia, and Virginia.\textsuperscript{353} The determination of where to attack first would be left to the officer in command of the expedition; Howe was to appoint a general and send him with some troops from Boston to the Cape Fear River to meet the fleet from Britain, which was assembling at Cork in Ireland.\textsuperscript{354} Despite his insistence that Howe undertake the southern expedition, Dartmouth harbored doubts as to whether the army would find the loyalist support on which its success depended. He told Howe that if the army found “no appearance of a disposition in the inhabitants of the southern colonies to join the King’s Army, I fear little more will be effected than the gaining of some respectable post to the southward, where the officers and servants of government may find protection.”\textsuperscript{355}

Howe was reluctant to make the move, writing Dartmouth that he thought it better “to leave the southern provinces in the fullest persuasion of their security until the rebels


\textsuperscript{353} Dartmouth to Howe, Oct. 22, 1775, Carleton Papers, Vol. 1, No. 68.

\textsuperscript{354} Robson, “Expedition to the Southern Colonies,” 541-543.

\textsuperscript{355} Smith, \textit{Loyalists and Redcoats}, 22.
have been defeated on the side of New York." Yet in spite of his objections, Howe complied with Dartmouth's orders and dispatched Gen. Henry Clinton from Boston with between twelve and fifteen hundred troops on January 20, 1776. Clinton doubted whether he could succeed, because he believed that the southern governors had exaggerated the prospects of defeating the rebels. He noted that "governors are sanguine, the malady is catching, and ministers sometimes infected." 

Loyalists disagreed with Clinton, believing that the opportunity was ripe to regain control of the southern provinces. John Pownall informed Howe in September "that a very considerable part of the People" in South Carolina "have shewn a Disposition to resist" the Whigs and urged the general to aid them. One South Carolinian lamented "the inattention of Government, to this important Colony" in the two years preceding the British expedition. A province "in the habit of Alarm, upon every appearance of ill-humour in the most trifling Tribe of Indians on its Western frontier," was certainly vulnerable to a regular force, he maintained.

En route southward, Clinton met others who echoed that opinion. At New York Clinton conferred with former North Carolina governor William Tryon, whose assertion that the Scotch Highlanders in that province would eagerly support the British dispelled some of Clinton's pessimism. A mid-February conference with Lord Dunmore in Hampton Roads further raised Clinton's hopes for success. But when the fleet reached Cape Fear at the end of the month, Clinton found that the Highlanders had risen prematurely and been defeated by the rebels at Moore's Creek Bridge. Furthermore, he

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did not meet the expedition from Ireland, which should have joined him there. Clinton thus had to formulate a new plan. 360

While awaiting the Cork fleet, Clinton conferred with Lord William Campbell, who had arrived aboard the frigate HMS Syren. Campbell told Clinton that the loyalists in South Carolina, “overflowing with zeal,” had been “precipitate in showing themselves,” and as a result they had been “overpowered, disarmed, and many imprisoned” by the Whigs. The general considered this report and the news of Moore’s Creek Bridge “gloomy forebodings” of what lay ahead, although the southern governors “were not dispirited.” 361 Clinton proceeded to formulate two plans that might replace the North Carolina operations. The first was to establish a post on the Chesapeake near Norfolk, Virginia, where the bay, Atlantic Ocean, and Dismal Swamp created a virtual island where loyalists who joined the troops would have considerable security. The second contemplated an attack on Savannah and a march into the Georgia interior to open communication with the loyalists in the South Carolina backcountry. Further delays in the arrival of the Cork fleet led Clinton to abandon both plans. 362

Meanwhile, Patrick Tonyn submitted an even more ambitious scheme for Clinton’s consideration. The governor proposed to take 150 regulars from the St. Augustine garrison, augmented by thirty rangers, one hundred loyalists, and three hundred Indians, and march into Georgia. Tonyn believed that his force would gather more loyalists and Indians as they marched and could capture Savannah and allow Governor Wright to resume his post. Thomas Brown would provide additional support by

360 Willcox, Portrait of a General, 76-77.
362 Smith, Loyalists and Redcoats, 26.
returning to the Georgia and South Carolina backcountry, where he expected to recruit two or three thousand loyalists. Uniting this force with the Cherokees, Brown intended to secure the backcountry, then march to the coast to join the other British units. Rather than lose time waiting for Clinton’s reply, Tonyn dispatched Brown to the backcountry and informed the general of the plan. Clinton replied only that he had not yet decided where he would attack. Tonyn, impatient to strike the rebels, continued to press the general to adopt his plan and requested “full powers to carry it on with spirit and effect.”

Clinton did not authorize Tonyn to act, but the governor’s idea may have influenced the general’s thinking as he contemplated a third plan of his own. Like Tonyn’s proposal, this plan was intended to take advantage of loyalist and Indian support. Clinton believed that he could dispatch several hundred troops to Pensacola, from where they would advance up the Alabama River and across Indian territory to the Georgia and Carolina backcountry. There they would unite with Indians and loyalists to take control of the interior of those provinces. Clinton even intended to insure continued loyalist support by providing schools, courts, and political representation to the backcountry inhabitants. The plan was barely feasible given the distances the troops would have to traverse through the wilderness; Clinton abandoned the idea when he learned there were not enough boats at Pensacola to transport troops upriver.

The first ships of the Cork fleet, which had been expected to sail on December 1, 1775, finally began straggling into Cape Fear in late April. The ministry’s decision to increase the force to seven regiments, and a lack of naval escort, postponed the fleet’s

364 Tonyn to Clinton, April 15, 1776, Clinton Papers, Vol. 15, No. 17, WLCL.
365 Olson, “Thomas Brown,” 18; Wright, *Florida in the American Revolution*, 34.
departure until February 10. Then foul weather dispersed the ships and caused further delay. When the entire force had assembled, Clinton consulted with Gen. Charles, Earl Cornwallis and Admiral Sir Peter Parker, the respective commanders of the land and naval forces, about how to proceed. Clinton argued that the delay had ruined any chance of assisting the loyalists, since he had orders to rejoin Howe shortly and could not leave enough troops to protect them if they turned out as expected.366

Better than anyone else in the ministry or the army’s high command, Clinton understood the problems the loyalists faced. Most British leaders believed that once regular troops had defeated the Whigs in a province, the loyalists would be able to maintain control with little or no support from the army. Clinton, however, recognized that the rebels would not accept defeat so easily, but would turn upon the loyalists once the army left. In that case, he declared, “all the friends of government will be sacrificed” in one province after another. Only sustained support from the army would enable the loyalists to retain control of a province when it had been recaptured.367 Clinton believed that “to bring those poor people forward” without providing adequate support “would have only exposed them to the resentment and malice of their enemies, and multiplied our difficulties by putting the rebels so much the more on their guard.”368

Despite his reluctance to undertake an attack that in his opinion would harm the loyalists more than help them, Clinton allowed Parker to convince him that Charleston was weakly defended and could be easily captured. Parker’s insistence on attacking Charleston reflected the views of both Dartmouth and Germain; in November 1775, both

366 Robson, “Expedition to the Southern Colonies,” 544-545, 547-548, 553; Willcox, Portrait of a General, 81.
367 Willcox, Portrait of a General, 83.
368 Clinton, American Rebellion, 27.
had suggested the town as a promising objective should operations in North Carolina appear infeasible. Dartmouth had gone so far as to instruct Gov. Campbell to send emissaries to the backcountry to organize the loyalists and lead them to the coast to meet the expedition. Clinton doubted that the town could be taken, but convinced himself that the establishment of a post on Sullivan's Island at the entrance to the harbor would at least demonstrate to the loyalists the government's intention to support them and provide a base for a future attack on Charleston itself.369

By February, South Carolina rebels expected a British attack and prepared to meet it, impressing every available slave to build fortifications to protect Charleston.370 Whig leaders particularly feared that the arrival of the British would ignite a loyalist uprising. Pierce Butler doubted the reliability of backcountry militiamen who had come to reinforce Charleston. "The real Sentiments of a great part of them I believe we are ignorant of," he noted.371 Gen. Charles Lee, believing that the British would attempt to establish themselves on the mainland and summon the loyalists to join them, posted troops to prevent Clinton's soldiers from coming ashore.372 Other Whigs sought to intimidate loyalists from aiding the British by launching another wave of persecution. "Supported by Military force, every appearance of Discontent or dissention, received immediate punishment," wrote one observer. Troops were quartered in the homes of suspected loyalists, where they plundered and vandalized the contents. When the British fleet finally appeared, Whig militiamen began to make examples, "in terrorem, of such as discovered any disinclination to Act, or refused a Test-Oath, which was then tendered.

369 Willcox, Portrait of a General, 84-85; Clinton, American Rebellion, 29; Germain to William Howe, Nov. 8, 1775; Dartmouth to William Campbell, Nov. 7, 1775, Carleton Papers, Vol. 1, Nos. 80, 81.
371 Pierce Butler to unnamed, March 21, 1776, "Correspondence of Middleton," 140.
The Crown officers, and all such as were more immediately suspected of disaffection, were put into close confinement, and their Papers Plate &c Seized.\textsuperscript{373}  

The Whigs had good cause for their fears, since many loyalists hoped to escape to the British when the fleet arrived at Charleston. Several men deserted from rebel units and managed to reach a royal navy frigate that appeared off Charleston bar in May to sound the channel.\textsuperscript{374} Other loyalists coerced into serving with the Whig forces tried unsuccessfully to reach the British when Clinton’s forces landed on Long Island. Alexander Chesney, posted across the channel from the British camp, tried with some friends to make a crossing “but failed for want of a boat.”\textsuperscript{375}  

Parker’s fleet, guided by black pilots, arrived off Charleston harbor on June 1. The presence of one pilot, Sampson, particularly angered many Whigs, who accused him of having convinced the British to attack the town. Clinton landed his troops on Long Island, north of Sullivan’s Island where the rebels were building a fort. People with the expedition had informed Clinton that the water between the islands was only eighteen inches deep at low tide, which would allow British troops to cross to Sullivan’s Island and attack the fort by land while the navy assaulted it by sea. Unfortunately, upon examination the channel proved to be seven feet deep, so the troops stood idle while Parker’s warships attacked the fort on June 28. Parker, also acting on faulty intelligence, kept his ships too far from the fort for their fire to be effective, while the Whigs

\textsuperscript{373} Kepner, ed., “British View of the Siege of Charleston,” 97.
\textsuperscript{375} Chesney, \textit{Journal}, 7.
pummeled the royal navy. After the defeat, Clinton and Parker had no choice but to rejoin Howe, who was preparing to attack New York.376

The repulse of the British inspired the Whigs and left the loyalists dispirited. In South Carolina, “the success of the 28 June made some Converts” to the rebel cause.377 Georgia’s Whigs were “much Elated” at the news, Lachlan McIntosh wrote, while “the Torys now amongst us are ha[rdly worth] our Notice unless it is with pity & Contempt.”378

Germain’s deputy William Knox lamented these effects. “The worst consequence of this failure will be the shewing the rebels where their strength lies and how they may foil us again,” he wrote. Yet Knox found some reason for hope. “Loyalist support had been proven no mere chimera but a force of considerable potential which needed only to be encouraged, supported, and unleashed at the right opportunity,” he concluded.379 His views reflected prevailing British sentiment. The failure at Charleston “in no way dampened Britain’s optimistic view of the temper of the region.”380 The expedition had not succeeded in aiding the loyalists, but the loyalists had not been given a chance to come forward and cooperate with the king’s troops. They would have to wait several years for another opportunity.

Another effect of the Charleston operation, which went unnoticed in London, resulted from the timing of the attack. Although Clinton and Parker’s schedule had been determined primarily by the delays in the arrival of the fleet from Cork, the attack on Charleston took place only three days before the Cherokees attacked the southern

378 Lachlan McIntosh to George Walton, July 11, 1776, “Papers of McIntosh,” 157.
379 Bellot, William Knox, 145.
380 Higginbotham, War of American Independence, 137.
frontier. This coincidence helped convince many in the South that there had indeed been collusion between the British and Cherokees and that the ministry was determined to employ the Indians against the colonists.

In some respects the failure at Charleston worked to Britain’s advantage. Had Clinton and Parker succeeded in taking the town or establishing a post elsewhere along the South Carolina coast, the British position would have acted as a magnet for Whig troops, who would have cut off any loyalist access to it. The post would not have been tenable without supplies brought by sea, so that any delays or difficulties in the delivery of provisions or ammunition might have forced the garrison to surrender. Furthermore, the presence of British troops in the region would undoubtedly have caused the Whigs to make even greater efforts to suppress the loyalists than they otherwise did, which may have demoralized and neutralized the king’s supporters by the time the British were ready to undertake another campaign in the South. Taking these possibilities into account, outright failure in 1776 probably proved more advantageous for the British than a limited success.

Although the Whigs had suppressed the loyalists and slaves, defeated the Cherokees and kept most of the Creeks neutral, they did not consider themselves secure. Upon replacing Charles Lee as commander of the southern department in September 1776, Maj. Gen. Robert Howe noted that South Carolina and Georgia still had “innate foes of more colours than one, to guard against, & more numerous than those who are willing to oppose them.” He expressed particular concern for Georgia, which if retaken by the British “would immediately bring to their aid, the Creek nation, & other potent
tribes of Indians." The presence of British troops there, Howe wrote, "would be a strong temptation for our slaves to elope, & a secure asylum for them when they do." \(^{381}\) Howe worried that loyalists in South Carolina might "spirit up & join" with the blacks, "whose great number & alarming temper make it necessary to guard against the worst." He believed that in Georgia "one third of the inhabitants are enemies to America, & only wait for an opportunity, to plunge a dagger, into its vitals," while slaves there were even "more ready to revolt" than those in South Carolina. \(^{382}\) The Whigs' victories had won them nothing more than a respite; the king's supporters remained a potent foe.

\(^{381}\) Excerpt of Robert Howe's letter to unnamed recipient, Sept. 6, 1776, in Archibald MacLaine Hooper, unpublished biography of Robert Howe, Robert Howe Papers, SHC.

\(^{382}\) Excerpt, Howe to unnamed, Nov. 21, 1776, in Hooper biography, Robert Howe Papers, SHC.
CHAPTER III
WHIGS ASCENDANT

After the Clinton-Parker expedition’s failure to capture Charleston, British strategy in the South focused on defending the Floridas from rebel attack and on maintaining good relations with the southern Indians until the time when their assistance might be required. Yet Governor Tonyn, loyalists and Indians waged their own war against the Whigs outside the bounds of Gen. William Howe’s plans. Shortages of provisions in East Florida led Tonyn to frequently send loyalist and Indian raiders to capture cattle in Georgia, sparking sporadic warfare along the border between the two provinces. Responding to this threat, the Whigs twice invaded East Florida, while in 1778 rebels from Pennsylvania descended the Mississippi River to attack West Florida.

Having secured control of South Carolina and Georgia, the Whigs labored to maintain the upper hand against both their internal and external enemies. They continued to persecute loyalists and banished those who persisted in opposition. Rebel officials also strove to keep the Indians neutral in hopes of avoiding another attack on the frontier. Slaves endured continued repression, although many managed to escape to the Floridas.

But Lord George Germain had not forgotten the southern provinces and repeatedly urged General Howe to undertake a winter campaign in the region. Howe agreed in November 1776 that “South Carolina and Georgia must be the Objects for Winter,” but said he needed fifteen thousand reinforcements before he could begin
operations there.¹ Germain told him that it was impossible to send that many troops, so Howe abandoned the plan.² After studying an August 1777 memorial from Governors Wright and Campbell, which stressed the importance of retaking South Carolina and Georgia and the relative ease with which that task could be accomplished, Germain again advised Howe to undertake a southern campaign. “If Sir Wm Howe would carry any part of his army into the Southern Provinces this winter I should have no doubt of his success,” Germain told his deputy.³ Howe demurred, insisting that operations in the South were impossible unless he received additional soldiers.⁴ Gov. Tonyn also prodded Howe to attack Georgia, asserting that the conquest of that province would open a line of communication to the “back Settlements of the Southern provinces, where there are many well affected to His Majesty,” but this advice failed to sway the general.⁵

Suppressing the Loyalists

By 1777, Whig attitudes toward the loyalists had hardened to a point where even a moderate like Henry Laurens saw no middle ground in the dispute. “A Man who is not a friend to the American Cause certainly holds principles, if he holds any, which are injurious to America,” Laurens informed a loyalist acquaintance. If such a person refused to bear arms against the British, “that Man may, without any torture of construction or expression, be deem’d an Enemy to the American Cause.”⁶

To ferret out such enemies, South Carolina required its inhabitants to take an oath of allegiance to the state and to Congress. This was the basis of a process by which “the

¹ William Howe to Germain, Nov. 30, 1776, Germain Papers, Vol. 5, WLCL.
² Germain to Howe, Jan. 14, 1777, Germain Papers, Vol. 5, WLCL.
³ Germain to Knox, Sept. 13, 1777, William Knox Papers, WLCL.
⁶ Henry Laurens to James Brisbane, April 24, 1777, *PHL*, 11:333.
southern rebels systematically began to isolate and expose" loyalists, although many of the king’s supporters “adopted various subterfuges in order to evade the requirement or, to the same end, attempted to avoid having any contact with the local authorities administering the oaths.”⁷ The oath not only forced many loyalists to reveal their beliefs, it also served “to compromise people in the eyes of the British and to deter them from fighting for the British. A man who swore loyalty to Congress and his state would be a documented rebel if he fell into British hands. Worse still, if he served the British and then fell back into American hands, he would be a documented traitor.”⁸

Those who refused to renounce their loyalty to Britain and take the oath to the rebel government were to be banished from South Carolina. Under the terms of the banishment act passed by the legislature in early 1777, loyalists “were expected to remove themselves and their families from the state within sixty days or as soon thereafter as they could settle their business affairs and secure passage.”⁹ George Harland Hartley, organist at St. Michael’s church in Charleston, was banished and lost an annual income of £450 ($59,000) from his various musical performances along with nearly two thousand acres of land. His wife accompanied him, as did his mother-in-law, Janet Cummings. Although Mrs. Cummings had not been banished, she chose to leave because her loyalty to Britain “exposed her to many insults from the mobs.”¹⁰

Many other loyalists also left the state voluntarily to escape persecution, without waiting to be officially expelled. Despite continuous harassment from the Whigs, the Rev. James Stuart remained in his pulpit at Georgetown, where loyalists were numerous,
until December 1777. By then he had concluded that “there was no Law, Justice, or Protection for Loyal or even neutral Men.” Believing that his life was endangered, Stuart fled to the West Indies.\(^1\)

Evan McLaurin, one of the leaders of the backcountry loyalists, likewise decided that it was too dangerous to remain in South Carolina and fled to East Florida. Traveling in disguise on the Santee River, McLaurin was discovered, pursued, and nearly captured by the rebels. He lost his canoe, weapons, and clothing, but eventually reached St. Augustine. There McLaurin was commissioned a major in the South Carolina Royalists, a provincial battalion commanded by fellow refugee Joseph Robinson. The influx of loyalists soon increased the strength of the unit to three hundred men.\(^1\)

Another prominent backcountry loyalist, Richard Pearis, also feared for his life, despite Governor Rutledge’s promise of protection. Pearis fled Charleston for the backcountry, where in August he organized four hundred loyalists in the area between the Broad and Saluda Rivers and prepared to march to Florida. The Whigs learned of Pearis’s activities and sent Andrew Williamson’s militia to prevent the loyalists’ escape. Rather than risk an armed confrontation, nearly all of Pearis’s followers gave up on the plan and remained home. Six of his supporters escaped with Pearis to Pensacola, where John Stuart appointed him captain of a loyal unit forming there.\(^1\)

David Fanning had hoped to accompany Pearis to Florida, but was thwarted by the Whigs. He had returned to South Carolina on March 10, 1777, but the Whigs arrested him the next day. Fanning managed to escape and return home, where he was “obliged to


\(^{12}\) Isabella MacLaurin Memorial, April 8, 1783, SCHS; “Memoir of Lt. Col. Joseph Robinson.”

secrete myself in the woods, and was supplied with provisions by some Quakers and other Loyalists in the neighbourhood.” Learning of Pearis’s plan to lead a group of loyalists to West Florida, Fanning gathered some of his associates with the intention of joining Pearis, but was captured when a member of his party betrayed the plan to the Whigs. Fanning was tried for treason, acquitted, then failed in an attempt to escape to East Florida. After three months living in the woods with another loyalist named Samuel Brown, Fanning returned home, where he was repeatedly arrested and imprisoned. Each time he was released or managed to escape, yet by the end of December 1778 he was back in rebel custody, in irons in the jail at Ninety Six.14

One loyalist experienced even greater suffering than Fanning. William Fortune refused to renounce his allegiance to the king in 1777, and as a result was imprisoned eight times, had his home repeatedly plundered, and finally fled to the woods. He emerged only for brief meetings with his wife, who supplied him with food. Fortune did not leave his forest refuge until British forces occupied South Carolina in 1780.15

Some loyalists had enlisted in the state’s Continental regiments, either to avoid persecution or because the Whigs had compelled them to do so by threatening them and their families. These men frequently attempted to desert or to subvert their comrades, and when they were identified, suffered harsh punishment. Private James Orange, captured after deserting, “repeatedly damned the Continental Congress saying he was good English Blood & would support the cause of Great Britain to his last.” Orange received two hundred lashes as his penalty. Four other deserters later “found in arms against the

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14 Fanning, David Fanning’s Narrative, 10-12.
15 Callahan, Royal Raiders, 227.
United States" were executed in 1777, as were three other soldiers convicted of treason and encouraging desertion.  

A few Whigs considered their government’s policies unduly harsh. Gabriel Manigault saw many of his acquaintances expelled from South Carolina and noted that banishment “is exceeding hard on them.” William Hasell Gibbes, an Assembly member from John’s Island and member of the Council, felt obligated despite his fervor for the Revolution to defend “the rights of others who differed from me in this respect.” Gibbes argued that the state’s loyalists should be left unmolested, “provided their behavior was peaceable and that they didn’t interfere with us or thwart our Opposition to British Government.” His colleagues, however, ignored his advice.

The principal reason why most rebels refused to show lenience to loyalists was that the tough policies produced the desired effect: many of the king’s supporters gradually lost their resolve and began to incline toward the rebels. In February 1777, Christopher Gadsden wrote that “we grow more and more united. Numbers of the Theorists join us Daily, as they begin to be convinced we are of the safest side.” Public displays of support for the rebel cause also influenced the loyalists. After watching a celebration marking the anniversary of the repulse of the British attack on Charleston on June 28, 1777, a French visitor noted that the festivities fired the enthusiasm of the rebels while weakening the loyalists’ commitment. “Even the followers of the Royalists and

17 Gabriel Manigault to Gabriel Manigault, Jr., April 30, 1777, “Papers of Manigault,” 6-7.
19 Christopher Gadsden to Thomas Mumford, Feb. 19, 1777, in Richard Walsh, ed., *The Writings of Christopher Gadsden* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1966), 120.
many who are indifferent to the common cause,” he wrote, “see the example set by the others at these affairs and are gradually educated around to their beliefs.”

The banishment, flight, conversion, and execution of numerous loyalists failed to satisfy the Whigs, so in the spring of 1778 the Assembly passed another act to accelerate the political cleansing of South Carolina. The new law required all males sixteen and older to swear allegiance to the state. Anyone who refused would forfeit the right to vote and to conduct business and legal transactions. Those who left the state rather than take the oath were subject to the death penalty if they returned. Dozens of loyalists in the lowcountry promptly sold whatever property they could and sailed for Britain or the West Indies. Edward Rutledge boasted that South Carolina had “sent forth Cargoes” of loyalists into exile, which he described as “a small punishment, tho’ apparently severe, for the many Injuries, they have, and the irreparable ones they would have brought on the virtuous part of our Community.”

Fleeing Loyalists experienced persecution right up to the moment of their departure. While a vessel “full to the brim with Tories” prepared to sail from Charleston, a rebel mob “assembled with Pitch, Tar and other Combustibles, to burn her at the Wharf.” The ship was saved when some of those aboard cut the mooring lines and it drifted away from the dock.

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21 Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 62-64.
Loyalists with good connections among the Whigs, or who had valuable skills, often managed to avoid penalties. Dr. Alexander Garden refused to take the rebel oath and sought assistance from his friend Henry Laurens, who advised Garden to obtain a certificate from a magistrate that would satisfy state authorities. Garden then swore a declaration that he would always promote the best interests of South Carolina, which the Whigs accepted as satisfactory. "Garden was not troubled again and was allowed to go freely about his business."

The only physician in Beaufort, loyalist James Fraser was never asked to take the oath because the townspeople could not afford to lose his services.

Many backcountry loyalists, forced to choose between pledging allegiance to the Whigs or suffering under the new legal sanctions, came up with their own solution to the dilemma. Early in the spring, loyalists began assembling near Ninety Six with the intention of marching to East Florida. By late March, leaders Benjamin Gregory and John Murphy had gathered about four hundred men, all of whom were mounted. A second party canceled their plans to join Gregory and Murphy when rebel militia learned of their intentions. The loyalists set out for the Savannah River, moving rapidly.

At first the Whigs dismissed the loyalists as "no more than a Plundering Party," and sent out a few militia who searched for them without success. But when they realized the strength of the party, rebel leaders panicked. "The back Country is all up in Arms; The Tories ... have risen, and as if informed by the same spirit and moved by the same spring, have put themselves in motion at one and the same time throughout all parts

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of the State,” Gov. Rawlins Lowndes wrote. The loyalists split into several parties as they moved, “plundering robbing and terrifying the Inhabitants” and picking up reinforcements on their route. On April 3 they crossed the Savannah River into Georgia, which put “that Country in a very great Consternation.” Lowndes estimated that the loyalists’ numbers had increased to six hundred men by the time they entered Georgia.\footnote{Rawlins Lowndes to Henry Laurens, April 14, 1778, \textit{PHL}, 13:114.} He sent the South Carolina militia in pursuit, but they accomplished nothing more than to kill and capture a few stragglers.\footnote{William Moultrie to Robert Howe, April 10, 1778, in Moultrie, \textit{Memoirs}, 1:205.}

Continental commander Robert Howe also attempted to intercept the loyalists. On April 6 he ordered Col. Samuel Elbert of the Georgia Continentals to gather as many troops as possible “to prevent the Insurgents, now embodied & marching to East Florida, from joining the forces of that province.” Howe was to treat the loyalists “as Enemies to the united States” and use every means “consistent with the rules of war,” to defeat them.\footnote{Robert Howe to Samuel Elbert, April 6, 1778, Robert Howe Papers, GHS.} Not only did Elbert fail to halt the loyalists, which Howe blamed on the lack of cavalry, but the refugees “Hoisted the British Kings standard, as they passed” through Georgia.\footnote{Robert Howe to unnamed, April 13, 1778, Robert Howe Papers, GHS.} The impunity with which the loyalists moved through Georgia and their summons to join them attracted as many as two hundred Georgians, including a party led by Colonel John Thomas and several rebel deserters.\footnote{Ward, \textit{Between the Lines}, 195.}

The loyalists’ successful march to East Florida convinced many Whigs that the maneuver was part of a larger British plan to attack the southern states. Georgia governor John Houstoun believed that the incursion presaged “the total Reduction” of Georgia.\footnote{John Houstoun to Henry Laurens, April 16, 1778, \textit{PHL}, 13:121-122.} William Moultrie agreed and predicted that an invasion from both Pensacola and St.
Augustine was imminent. Rumors circulated of a simultaneous advance by loyalists and Indians from West Florida and loyalists and British regulars from East Florida.\(^{34}\) Joseph Clay expressed concern at “the very great additional Strength” the British were “daily receiving from the great Defection” in the South Carolina backcountry.\(^{35}\) He warned Henry Laurens that the influx of loyalists was making the British in East Florida “so formidable” that they might soon overrun Georgia.\(^{36}\) Robert Howe also expected “serious Consequences” to follow the loyalists’ junction with the British. Considering the weakness of the southern states and the “Disaffection among the People & that this Infection is still more prevalent in the Back parts of So Carolina,” Howe thought it wise “to prepare for the worst.”\(^{37}\)

Howe’s assessment of loyalist strength was accurate and only the vigilance of the Whigs prevented more of the king’s supporters from reaching Florida. Along the Peedee River, more loyalists from North and South Carolina had assembled in the spring, but rebel militia from North Carolina attacked them. A battle ensued in which several men were killed on each side, including a Whig colonel.\(^{38}\) This battle and constant militia patrols ended the loyalist exodus. A few refugees who slipped through the cordon informed Thomas Brown in April that other South Carolina loyalists “thought proper to postpone their insurrection to a more favourable opportunity, as the rebels upon receiving intelligence of the March of Murphy and Gregory’s party had embodied themselves in every district.” Because the loyalists were poorly armed, they could not overcome the


\(^{35}\) Joseph Clay to Josiah Smith, Jr., [undated, c. March-May 1778]. *Letters of Joseph Clay, Merchant of Savannah, 1776-1783*, CGHS Vol. 8, (Savannah: Morning News Printers and Binders, 1913), 70.


Whigs without the element of surprise. The refugees also brought Brown a message from Robert Cunningham “that 2,500 Men between the forks of Saluda and Broadriver” were prepared to assist Brown “whenever orders are sent for that purpose.” An additional 3,800 men at the Congarees, along the Pedee and Ennoree Rivers, and near the North Carolina border were also reported ready to aid the British.39

Some of these loyalists did attempt to get to Florida; in succeeding weeks, “several other large parties of the disaffected attempted to cross Savannah river,” but the South Carolina militia prevented them from entering Georgia.40 Ten loyalists returned to Georgia in June with a proclamation from Tonyn offering pardon and ten dollars bounty to anyone who came to East Florida with their arms. These men announced that they expected to raise a thousand loyalists in the Carolina backcountry, but the openness of their activities brought them to the Whigs’ attention while they were still in Georgia. Some rebel militia, with the aid of more than twenty Creeks sent by Galphin, caught up with the loyalists and their handful of recruits and killed and captured several.41

The loyalist exodus from the backcountry led Whig officials in Charleston to again administer the state loyalty oath to the town’s inhabitants. Many people, however, stayed at home when the oath was administered rather than swear allegiance to the rebels.42 Other loyalists chose to leave the state rather than take the oath; “two Vessels full of Tories” left Charleston in early May.43

Hoping that some loyalists could be won over to the Whig cause by generous treatment, Gov. Lowndes and the Council issued a proclamation on June 5 extending the

39 Brown to Augustine Prevost, April 10, 1778, RAM, 1:227-228.
41 George Galphin to Henry Laurens, June 25, 1778, PHL, 13:514.
42 John Wells, Jr. to Henry Laurens, April 20, 1778, PHL, 13:162.
time limit for taking the oath to the state by five days. News of this action caused
"unspeakable Uneasiness" among Charleston Whigs, who held a public meeting to
express their opposition to the measure. They denounced both Lowndes and Christopher
Gadsden, who had written the proclamation. The mob threatened the governor, insisted
that they would not allow the proclamation to be published, and intimidated printers into
complying with their demands. They also forbade that "any Magistrate administer the
oath, to any of the recanting Tories." Fresh efforts were made to intimidate loyalists,
leading John Lewis Gervais to conclude that "the Tories will have no peace in this
quarter." Gervais opposed the governor's policy, declaring that "experience teaches us,
they [loyalists] will never be our Friend longer than we are Successfull, in adversity they
will remain our Ennemies, let them take what Oath they please." The response to the proclamation astonished Lowndes, who defended his action
as "the best Policy, and peculiarly adapted to our Circumstances." He refused to
withdraw the proclamation, despite "Intimations that the People were in such a ferment
that fatal Consequences were to be apprehended" if he failed to do so. Some loyalists did
take advantage of the extended opportunity to take the Whig oath, "but the menaces of
the populace have detered many, and frustrated the best plan that could be devised for
Conciliating Peace and Union amongst us," Lowndes noted. Charleston's Whigs were
so blinded by their hatred of loyalists that they refused to recognize that reconciliation
might be more advantageous to their cause than continued hostility.

45 Jerome J. Nadelhaft, The Disorders of War: The Revolution in South Carolina (Orono: University of
47 Rawlins Lowndes to Henry Laurens, June 17, 1778, PHL, 13:479-480.
Still in a frenzy of rage against loyalists, the rebels turned their wrath upon Joshua Brown and two other Quaker ministers who had come from Pennsylvania to visit congregations in the South. The pacifist Quakers were imprisoned at Ninety Six for refusing to take the Whig oath. Convinced that the men were harmless, Henry Laurens asked John Lewis Gervais to intercede and obtain their release.48

Unlike the peaceful Quakers, some loyalists responded to the Whigs' aggressive behavior with violence. In the vicinity of Orangeburgh, a group of loyalists “cut off the Ears of one Prichard a Magistrate, and another Man,” beat a Whig militia captain, and burned the house of an assemblyman. These acts “have thrown all that part of the Country into a general Panick, and so intimidated the Inhabitants that those well affected, are detered from taking any steps for their own Security least ... they should bring upon themselves the resentment of these banditti,” Lowndes wrote. He sent one hundred regular troops to Orangeburgh to reinforce the local militia, ordering the officers “to settle the point of Law, on the spot” if they captured the perpetrators of those acts.49

Backcountry loyalists also sent the Whigs a symbolic message by electing some of their leaders to the state legislature. Voters in the Little River District elected Robert Cunningham to the senate and two other loyalists, Jacob Bowman and Henry O’Neall, to the house of representatives. O’Neall took his seat, along with the required oaths to the state. Cunningham and Bowman, however, chose not to attend the legislature.50

Despite such acts of resistance, loyalism continued to wane in response to the apparent decline in British fortunes and to relentless persecution. John Lewis Gervais noted that the news that France had entered the war on the American side “gave great

48 Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais, Sept. 15, 1778, PHL, 14:312-313.
49 Rawlins Lowndes to Henry Laurens, Sept. 22, 1778, PHL, 14:343.
50 Edgar, Partisans and Redcoats, 44.
Satisfaction to all (except Tories)” in South Carolina, “& even some of those wished to
recant.” Edward Rutledge boasted to John Adams that the French alliance had “worked
wonders in the Minds of Men ... you would still be amazed to see, what a Conversion has
taken place in the political Opinion of Numbers; from the multitude of Disaffected, we
have had whole Hosts of Patriots ... who mean to be firm Friends to our good old Cause.”
Rutledge nevertheless doubted the sincerity of many of these converts, observing that
their newfound Whig principles would last only “until they shall think it for their Interest
to be otherwise.” By October, many other loyalists had also taken the rebel oath, though
not in response to the French alliance. A Whig noted that “the uniform ruin that has
attended all those who professed themselves friends to the British Tyrant, has cured many
of their Toryism.” When the military outlook and rebel persuasion failed to sway the
loyalists, persecution as always proved the best antidote to loyalty.

Whig officials in Georgia moved more cautiously against loyalists in that state, in
part because factional divisions between moderates and radicals paralyzed the rebel
government, and also because there were so many loyalists in the state. Merchant Joseph
Clay complained that the state’s leadership problems “arose in a great measure from so
large a Number of the principal People being either Tories” or having withdrawn from
politics to avoid becoming entangled in factional quarrels. John Adam Treutlen wrote
that “our small friends, the Tories, within our Bowels, are so very numerous & have such
ties of Consanguinity, that all our Efforts against these Enemies of American Freedom

52 Edward Rutledge to John Adams, July 16, 1778, PJA, 6:295.
have hitherto been languid and ineffectual." He suggested that the rebels might have to
"take the treatment of these Men into their own hands" to suppress the loyalists.55

In September 1777, Georgia finally took steps to punish the loyalists when the
Assembly passed "An Act for the Expulsion of the Internal Enemies of this State." The
law was intended to halt the activities of loyalists in undermining the state's defense and
sought to link the loyalists to the Indian menace. Declaring that by providing information
to the British in St. Augustine the loyalists made it possible for the Indians to raid "our
frontier settlements ... sacrificing, in the most barbarous manner, numbers of our worthy
citizens," the Whigs hoped to win popular support for the new law and to inflame
Georgians against the loyalists.56

The act established twelve-member committees in each county and authorized
them to tender an oath of allegiance to Georgia and the United States to all white males
age twenty-one or over. Anyone summoned by the committee had to bring along "two or
more undoubted friends to American independence" to vouch for the suspected loyalist's
Whig principles. Those who failed to satisfy the committee would "be deemed enemies"
and would have to leave Georgia within forty days. They would also forfeit half of their
property to the state, but could sell the remaining half and keep the proceeds. The penalty
for failing to appear before the committee or refusing to accept its verdict was
imprisonment without bail until the offender was forcibly removed from the state. If
someone who was declared an enemy returned to Georgia without permission or was
"found in arms" with the British, "upon conviction thereof, they shall suffer death."57 The
committee at Midway promptly summoned twelve accused loyalists; three refused to

55 John Adam Treutlen to John Hancock, June 19, 1777, John Adam Treutlen Papers, GHS.
appear and gave notice that they would leave Georgia within the allotted forty days. Eight
who did appear failed to satisfy the committee and were banished.58 The law proved
effective, for only the most committed loyalists were willing to endure such harsh
punishments. The threat of death served as a powerful discouragement against taking up
arms for the king so long as the Whigs held power.

Many Whigs, however, still worried that the loyalists remained dangerous.

"[T]hat there are many Disaffected" in Georgia "is past any Doubt – but I believe no
greater proportion than in any other State," Clay noted in October 1777. "Fear from the
very exposed situation of this State has operated very powerfully on many well Affected
Citizens."59 In response to these concerns, the Assembly passed another law in March
1778 "to proscribe over one hundred Georgians and authorize the sale of their
property."60 The act declared 117 people guilty of treason and banished them, leaving
their property liable to seizure and sale to benefit the state.61 Those banished included
two ministers, William Ronaldson of Queensborough, and former Whig John Zubly. The
latter eloquently defended his loyalism in an essay entitled To the Grand Jury, yet his
legal arguments failed to overcome rebel wrath. In addition to banishing him, the Whigs
destroyed his home and threw his books into the Savannah River. He fled to South
Carolina, where he managed to avoid persecution from that state’s Whigs.62 John
Jamieson of St. Paul’s Parish had escaped the notice of the rebel committee in 1777, but
while visiting Savannah in January 1778 the local Whigs charged him with loyalism. He

58 Robertson, Loyalism in Revolutionary Georgia, 8.
60 George R. Lamplugh, "‘To Check and Discourage the Wicked and Designing’: John Wereat and the
1, Jan. 1963, 80.
62 E.R.R. Green, "Queensborough Township: Scotch-Irish Emigration and the Expansion of Georgia, 1763-
refused to take “their detestable and absurd oath,” whereupon the rebels seized half his property and banished him from the state. Before he could leave, the 1778 act went into effect and the Whigs confiscated the remaining half of his property.  

Whig repression succeeded in checking any efforts by Georgia loyalists to openly oppose the state government, but the rebels faced a more serious threat from the refugees in East Florida. Legal sanctions and persecution had driven thousands of loyalists to seek safety there. Some 350 South Carolinians arrived in April 1776, many of them Germans from the Dutch Fork, Orangeburg, and Saxe-Gotha regions. In June another five hundred refugees entered the province. Most were South Carolinians from Ninety Six district, but many were Georgians and a few had made the long journey from North Carolina.

Gov. Tonyn quickly put numbers of the immigrants to good use. He gave Thomas Brown a commission as lieutenant colonel and instructed him to recruit rangers from among the refugees who had escaped to Indian territory. The governor initially planned to use this force to gather cattle in Georgia to alleviate East Florida’s food shortage. Brown increased his force with recruits from the loyalists entering East Florida, creating the battalion known as the Florida Rangers. Tonyn employed this unit to carry out his desire to carry the war to the rebels.

In February 1777, Tonyn dispatched Brown with his Rangers and some Indians to seize cattle in Georgia. Gen. Augustine Prevost, commander of the East Florida garrison, provided 160 regulars to support them; British Lt. Col. Lewis Fuser commanded the combined force. On February 17, Brown with twenty rangers and fifty Creeks and Seminoles attacked Fort McIntosh. The garrison of seventy rebels surrendered the next

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63 Robertson, Loyalism in Revolutionary Georgia, 9.
64 Troxler, “Refuge, Resistance, and Reward,” 569-570, 572-575.
65 Cashin, King’s Ranger, 49, 59, 61.
day after four intrepid rangers stopped a relief column of three hundred men four miles from the fort. Fuser's troops arrived in time for the surrender, and Fuser's rudeness toward the loyalists and Indians angered Brown, who warned Tonyn that such treatment might cause the Indians to withdraw their support. Fuser advanced to the Altamaha River, skirmished with a rebel force there, and decided to return to St. Augustine. Brown's Rangers brought two thousand head of cattle back with them.66

The raid convinced Georgia Whigs that it was necessary to invade East Florida to halt such depredations. Ignoring the objections of Continental commander Robert Howe, the Georgians sent an invasion force overland toward St. Augustine while a second detachment traveled south by sea. The land force faced sporadic resistance from small parties of Indians, but reached the St. Mary's River on May 12, the day they had been scheduled to rendezvous with the invasion flotilla. On the night of May 14, some Indians captured about one hundred of the rebels' horses, provoking a skirmish the next day in which two Indians were killed, scalped, and mutilated by the Georgians.67

The American commander, Col. John Baker, then moved his camp to a safer location at Thomas Creek. On the morning of May 17, Brown with about two hundred loyalists and Indians attacked Baker's slightly smaller force. The rebels retreated – directly into about one hundred British troops advancing to assist Brown. The stunned Americans fled into a swamp, leaving behind three dead and thirty-one prisoners. This victory ruined the rebels' prospects for a successful invasion.68

66 Searcy, Georgia-Florida Contest, 84-88; Cashin, King's Ranger, 61-62.
67 Searcy, Georgia-Florida Contest, 89, 94.
68 Bennett and Lennon, Quest for Glory, 62; Searcy, Georgia-Florida Contest, 89, 94-95; Charles C. Jones, Jr., The Life and Services of the Honorable Maj. Gen. Samuel Elbert of Georgia (Cambridge: Riverside Press for the Georgia Historical Society, 1887), 12.
The seaborne invasion force finally reached Amelia Island on May 18, well behind schedule. The following day some of the island’s loyalist inhabitants attacked a Whig detachment, killing an officer and wounding two men. In retaliation, rebel Col. Elbert ordered his troops to burn all the houses and kill all the livestock on the island. Having learned of Baker’s defeat, Elbert decided that it was too dangerous to put his troops ashore on the mainland to march southward. He then found that his boats were unable to pass through the channel between Amelia Island and the mainland and were too unseaworthy to risk venturing into the Atlantic. On May 26 he decided to return to Georgia.69

After the invaders withdrew, Brown’s rangers, with Creek assistance, renewed their raids into Georgia during the summer and fall of 1777. They attacked a party of twenty-two rebel troops in August, killed fourteen, and then retreated.70 Joseph Clay lamented in late September that the raiders had “for some Months past been continually making incursions into our State,” and “not the smallest Check has ever been given to these People,” other than one incident in which Continental troops drove off a party of rangers in a skirmish on the Altamaha River. Clay could not understand how a force that “never exceeded 150 including Indians” could operate with impunity in southern Georgia. This situation, Clay wrote, “is very much complained of by the Inhabitants & with great reason that they cannot be protected from such an inferior force.”71

Brown struck again on March 13, 1778, capturing Fort Barrington on the Altamaha River. Swimming across the river to achieve surprise, Brown, one hundred rangers, and ten Creeks stormed the fort at dawn. They killed two rebels and took twenty-

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69 Searcy, Georgia-Florida Contest, 92-96.
70 Searcy, Georgia-Florida Contest, 113.
three prisoners along with some artillery; their own casualties amounted only to one killed and four wounded. "Fort Barrington was a great Obstruction to our Foraging, as that difficulty is now removed," it would be easier to procure cattle, Brown reported.72

These successes led Tonyn to conclude that British strength in East Florida was sufficient to conquer Georgia and possibly South Carolina as well. He pointed out to William Howe the "numberless inconveniences from acting always on the defensive" and offered an alternate plan. "With this [St. Augustine] Garrison the Rangers and Indians, the province of Georgia may be taken in possession, which will give a fair opportunity to the loyalists in South Carolina to show themselves," Tonyn wrote. Should the loyalists in the latter state be as numerous as reported, "I should apprehend that province would soon be compelled to subjection," the governor stated.73

Tonyn never got the opportunity to test his plan because once again the Whigs responded to the menace by deciding to invade East Florida. Unless that province were conquered, Clay asserted, "we can have no Security," since the loyalist inhabitants of the Georgia and South Carolina backcountry "are continually backwards & Forwards giving them every information."74 Frustrated by the attacks of Brown’s rangers and "the Acts & Treachery of some among ourselves," John Houstoun agreed that an invasion was the only way to protect Georgia.75 John Faucherau Grimke, a major in the South Carolina Continentals, justified an invasion as necessary to prevent the British from uniting with loyalist refugees like the six hundred who had recently marched to Florida. He had heard rumors that Prevost intended to attack Sunbury as a diversion while other British troops

72 Thomas Brown to Tonyn, March 13, 1778, Carleton Papers, Vol. 9, No. 1014.
73 Tonyn to William Howe, April 6, 1778, Carleton Papers, Vol. 10, No. 1073.
would “March into the Middle Settlements of Georgia to be joined there by ... 1000 or 1200 disaffected Insurgents from the back parts of So. Carolina, No. Carolina & Georgia.”

Christopher Gadsden argued that the large number of slaves in the South Carolina made it necessary for the Americans to occupy East Florida. Free white laborers, Gadsden stated, could not compete with slaves who were hired out by their masters, which he denounced as an “excessively impolitick” practice. The whites thus impoverished, along with “the Scum of all the States from Pennsylvania hitherward ... will naturally flock to Augustine as an asylum and no doubt Britain will give them every Political Encouragement,” he wrote. These desperate people would then harass both Georgia and South Carolina; the only way to prevent this was to deprive them of refuge in St. Augustine. Gadsden was unique among southern Whigs in believing that because slavery denied poor whites economic opportunity, it drove some people into becoming loyalists out of sheer necessity.

Gen. Robert Howe opposed the invasion of East Florida, believing that concentrating the regulars and militia for such an operation would leave Georgia vulnerable to attack from another direction. While conceding that the “daily Incursions from the Partizans of Saint Augustine .... Aided, abetted and Encouraged by some of the Inhabitants” of Georgia and South Carolina, constituted a serious problem, he insisted that invading East Florida would not halt their operations. The rangers' knowledge of the country would enable them to plague Georgia even if they lost their Florida base.

76 John Faucherau Grimke, “Journal of a Campaign to the Southward. May 9th to July 14th, 1778,” SCHGM, Vol. 12, No. 2, April 1911, 63-64.
77 Gadsden to W.H. Drayton, June 1, 1778, Writings of Gadsden, 126-127.
78 Robert Howe to unnamed, April 13, 1778, Robert Howe Papers, GHS.
best plan, Howe advised the Georgians, would be to secure their southern frontier by
establishing strong posts along their southern boundary and keeping scouting parties
operating between the St. Mary’s and St. John’s Rivers, “by which means the terror &
alarm the Enemy delight to spread would be retorted upon them.”

Civil officials dismissed the general’s objections, and Howe reluctantly began to
organize the invasion force. Even before the troops set out, the army was troubled by
dissension in the ranks. Loyalists who had sought relief from persecution by enlisting in
Continental regiments saw the march into Florida as an opportunity to escape the rebels
and join the British. The boldest of these men attempted to persuade their comrades to
accompany them. Shortly before the army marched, a Sergeant Alcock of the Fourth
Georgia Battalion was charged with mutiny and “endeavouring to Enveigle Continentl.
Soldiers to desert with him to the Enemy.” The accusation, however, could not be proven,
as no one could be found to testify against Alcock. The Fourth Georgia, which included
several British deserters, caused problems for Howe throughout the campaign.

The Alcock incident was merely a prelude to similar troubles Howe encountered
when his army finally reached Fort Tonyn on the St. Mary’s River. Three Continental
privates were charged with mutiny on May 13, and the next day a Sergeant Tyrrell of the
Fourth Georgia was tried on charges of mutiny and encouraging others to desert. Tyrrell
was found guilty and on May 21 was executed in front of the whole army. Howe hoped
that this punishment “may have a proper Effect upon the Minds of the Soldiers.”

79 Robert Howe to Governor of Georgia, Feb. 7, 1778, Robert Howe Papers, GHS.
80 Robert Howe Orderly Book, March 26 and 30, 1778, WLCL.
81 Searcy, Georgia-Florida Contest, 141.
82 Howe Orderly Book, May 13, 14, 18, 19, and 21, 1778, WLCL. See also Grimke, “Journal,” 64.
Howe's optimism did not last twenty-four hours, for the next day James Lister, a deserter, was captured and accused of spying, sedition, and urging soldiers to desert. Lister, who may have earlier deserted from the British army, had taken fifteen of his comrades from the Fourth Georgia with him when he deserted. Three of the men soon returned of their own accord, another was killed and ten captured by a detachment sent in pursuit. Also taken was one private of the First Georgia. One of Howe's officers stated that Lister's party intended to go to St. Augustine and that if they had succeeded, it "might by the Example have proved prejudicial to us."

A court martial sentenced Lister and eight other deserters to be executed. Howe had by now concluded that only harsh punishment could prevent an exodus of loyalist sympathizers and other disgruntled soldiers from the ranks. Although the general later partially relented and pardoned three of the men, this time the executions had the desired effect. The Continental units experienced no further problems with desertion or attempted mutiny during the six weeks they remained in East Florida. The loyalists' efforts to escape to the British and induce others to follow, while disruptive to Howe's army, did little to impede the campaign as a whole, and in the end many sacrificed their lives without materially assisting the royal cause.

Howe succeeded in halting desertion among his regulars, but militiamen deserted frequently once they entered East Florida. In early June, thirty Georgians went "off to the Enemy in a body" and individuals deserted often as well. Desertions were also "daily &

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frequent” from South Carolina militia units. Like many of the Georgians, “some Carolinians had invaded Florida to escape from the Whigs.” When Whig officers decided in early July to abandon the campaign and withdraw to Georgia, a dozen men took advantage of their last opportunity to reach the British and deserted.

While loyalists in Whig units struggled to reach the British, their counterparts in the king’s service labored to halt the invading army. Reports reaching American officers indicated that Brown’s rangers numbered 150 men, supported by 150 Indians, while 350 South Carolina loyalists were said to be ten miles north of the St. John’s River on May 21. An informant told the rebels that both Brown’s troops and the South Carolinians “were extremely discontented with their Change of Situation & had expressed a wish to Return.” Prisoners taken by the Americans on June 23 provided a different account, stating that although the loyalist soldiers “had been very discontented & that some of them had threatened to return to Carolina & throw themselves upon the Mercy of their Country,” they had since been “Reconciled.”

The loyalists showed few signs of demoralization in their encounters with the Whigs. Brown first attempted to threaten the invaders by dispatching seventy-five rangers and some Indians to unite with another party of loyalists and strike the Whigs’ rear, but the plan failed when some of the rangers deserted and informed the rebels. Whig troops then attacked and dispersed the party, capturing its commander, Capt. James Moore, and executing him. This forced Brown to burn Fort Tonyn on the St. Mary’s River and retreat. Brown had more success on June 30. Pursued by about one hundred mounted

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87 Wright, Florida in the American Revolution, 57.
Georgians, the rangers turned on the Whigs and, with the help of some regulars, drove off their enemy. At least nine rebels were killed in the encounter.91

This skirmish proved to be the only significant fighting of the campaign. Gen. Augustine Prevost had been “under very little apprehension of the enemy being able to effect any thing of consequence” and his prediction proved accurate.92 The Whig leaders fell to arguing among themselves; Georgia governor John Houstoun and Andrew Williamson, commanding the South Carolinians, refused to take orders from Howe, the officer commanding the naval squadron wanted to retreat, and Howe could not impose a plan that satisfied everyone. On July 14 the Whigs began to withdraw. With them went about fifteen South Carolina loyalists who had deserted on July 1.93

Forced back on the defensive, Howe contemplated yet another invasion of East Florida. He advised Congress that the capture of St. Augustine would end the raids on Georgia and “entirely crush the Spirit of Insurgency and defection too prevalent in the back parts” of that state and South Carolina.94 Meanwhile, Howe prepared for a British attack which he expected to coincide with “the rising of a number of Insurgents” in the two states.95 Such a blow, he warned, would prove “fatal” to Georgia.96 Congress approved Howe’s proposed invasion, but subsequent British actions forestalled the plan.97

Once the rebels had left Florida, Brown’s rangers resumed their raids into Georgia. “We are again very much infested with Tonyns Banditti Stealing our Horses & Negros & doing us all the Mischief they can,” Joseph Clay wrote on September 9. A few

92 Augustine Prevost to William Howe, June 13, 1778, Carleton Papers, Vol. 11, No. 1236.
94 Howe to Congress, Sept. 22, 1778, Robert Howe Papers, GHS.
95 Howe to unnamed, Aug. 18, 1778, Robert Howe Papers, GHS.
96 Howe to Henry Laurens, Oct. 12, 1778, Robert Howe Papers, GHS.
97 Searcy, Georgia-Florida Contest, 157.
weeks later, he complained that “the Floridians & Indians by their Robberies & Murders keep us in a continual State of Alarm.”98

The rebels had not been content to target East Florida; they decided to strike at West Florida as well. Aware of the potential danger, in January 1777 General William Howe ordered John Stuart to organize West Florida’s growing number of loyalists into companies and arm them to assist in defending the province. Stuart promptly formed four companies of men designated the “Loyal Refugees.”99

Despite considerable support in Congress for an invasion of West Florida, Henry Laurens managed to have the proposal shelved for 1777. Laurens believed the invasion would have dire consequences for the Whigs. Loyalists who had fled to that province had already demonstrated their antipathy to the revolution, Laurens noted, and “from Such Men we could expect neither assistance nor Secrecy, on the contrary they would join with numerous tribes of Indians who had not been thought of in the Scheme of attack.” Furthermore, Stuart’s agents could use the invasion to convince the Creeks that the rebels harbored aggressive intentions toward the interior of the continent and thus incite that nation to strike directly against South Carolina and Georgia.100

The next year, however, Congress decided to carry out the scheme, and dispatched about one hundred men under Capt. James Willing, the former Natchez resident, to travel down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to strike at West Florida. Willing’s party landed at Natchez on February 19, 1778, catching the inhabitants completely by surprise. Willing declared all the people in the area prisoners, paroled

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99 Starr, Tories, Dons, and Rebels, 58.
100 Henry Laurens to John Rutledge, Aug. 12, 1777, PHL, 11:444-445.
them, and claimed the region for the United States. Four days later some of Willing’s
troops landed at Manchac, where they again paroled all of the inhabitants.101

Willing’s invasion raised the possibility that a significant number of settlers in the
Natchez region would join the rebels, threatening British control of the Mississippi
Valley. William Dunbar believed that “perhaps one half of the Inhabitants were in the
American Interest.”102 Another loyalist stated that about one hundred Natchez settlers
enlisted with Willing.103 When Willing’s men arrived at Manchac, merchant John
Fitzpatrick noted that “Several” of the inhabitants joined the rebels.104 Gov. Chester
responded to the threat by sending John McGillivray to raise a provincial force at Mobile,
which the governor hoped “might be the nucleus of a permanent military establishment in
West Florida.”105

Meanwhile, Natchez loyalists took matters into their own hands. They petitioned
the governor, declaring that they would break their paroles and resist the rebels if
reinforced by one hundred regular troops, but added that they would not act if the only
assistance they received came from provincial troops or Indians.106 A pair of loyalists
who had fled to New Orleans likewise worked to thwart the rebels. Robert Ross and John
Campbell planted a spy in the home of Oliver Pollock, a merchant who procured supplies
from the Spanish for the Whigs’ use. Ross and Campbell were discovered plotting to
prevent the shipment of supplies upriver to Fort Pitt and were banished from Louisiana.

101 Starr, Tories, Dons, and Rebels, 86, 88.
102 Dunbar, Diary, May 1, 1778, in Rowland, ed., Life, Letters and Papers of William Dunbar, 62.
103 Matthew Phelps, Memoirs and Adventures of Captain Matthew Phelps; formerly of Harwington in
Connecticut, Now Resident in Newhaven in Vermont. Particularly in two Voyages, from Connecticut to the
River Mississippi, from December 1773 to October 1780 (Bennington, VT: Haswell’s Press, 1802), 112.
104 John Fitzpatrick to McGillivray, Struthers, & Co., April 10, 1778, Merchant of Manchac, 289.
106 Starr, Tories, Dons, and Rebels, 106.
But to avoid antagonizing the British, Louisiana governor Bernardo de Galvez halted the shipment.\textsuperscript{107}

Willing had brought loyalist Anthony Hutchins to New Orleans as a prisoner, where he was released on parole. In an effort to sow dissension among the rebels, Hutchins convinced several of Willing’s men that their officers had cheated them out of their rightful share of plundered loyalist property. He offered a $1000 reward if they would capture Pollock and $500 each for Willing and his second in command. However, Hutchins abandoned his plan to seize the rebel leaders when he learned that some of Willing’s men were returning to Natchez.\textsuperscript{108}

Hutchins rushed back to Natchez, where he overcame the reluctance of many inhabitants to break their oath of neutrality and raised a party of about thirty loyalists. In a well-executed ambush, Hutchins’s men defeated an equal number of Willing’s troops at White Cliffs on April 16, killing five rebels and capturing the survivors. Other loyalists at Manchac, led by Adam Christie, united with a small force of provincial troops under Richard Pearis and attacked the rebels there. The fifteen loyalists defeated and dispersed forty Whigs, killing several and taking the rest prisoner. They then withdrew because other rebel parties were in the area, and Christie could not risk battle while encumbered with so many captives.\textsuperscript{109} The inhabitants of Natchez renounced the pledge of neutrality they had given to Willing, restated their allegiance to Britain, and made a pact to “form ourselves into a garrison ... and turn out as universally as necessary, to protect ourselves

\textsuperscript{107} Abbey, “Chester’s Defense of the Mississippi,” 27-29.
and the settlement." Willing and the rest of his force remained in New Orleans, so that aside from plundering, Willing’s chief accomplishment had been to strengthen loyalist sentiment in West Florida.

Indian superintendent John Stuart raised four companies of loyalist cavalry, each numbering about fifty men, in response to the Willing raid. These troops were "constantly employed in the service & defence of this Province," with two companies posted at Manchac, one at Natchez to scout along the Mississippi, while the fourth had some of its troops at Pensacola and the rest among the Cherokees. The troops "behaved with great Spirit, and resolution," Stuart reported.

The loyalists, despite a lack of direct assistance, had contributed much to the British cause. Those who had marched to East Florida had thrown the Whigs into a panic and provided needed reinforcements to that province. Thomas Brown’s rangers had harassed Georgia and helped thwart the 1778 invasion of East Florida, weakening the Whigs and increasing their vulnerability to the coming British invasion. In West Florida, the loyalists had overcome surprise and initial defeat to regain control of the Mississippi Valley. Had it not been for the loyalists’ efforts, the strategic situation in the South at the end of 1778 would have been far less favorable to the British.

Neutralizing the Indians

John Stuart faced two major problems as he worked to obtain assistance from the Indians in 1777 and 1778. First, the repercussions of the Cherokee defeat temporarily took that nation out of the strategic equation and continued to have an effect on the other southern nations. Second, George Galphin’s efforts to win over the Creeks to the rebel

110 Phelps, Memoirs and Adventures, 119.
111 Starr, Tories, Dons, and Rebels, 120.
112 John Stuart to Clinton, Nov. 22, 1778, Clinton Papers, Vol. 46, No. 25, WLCL.
cause exacerbated the divisions in that nation, forcing Stuart to make great efforts to maintain the Creeks’ allegiance. Nevertheless, Stuart managed to obtain some aid from the Indians, which helped the British defeat Whig attempts to invade the Floridas and kept pressure on the Georgia frontier.

With their food supplies destroyed, the Cherokees sent messages to the Whigs asking for peace. In early 1777, Andrew Williamson brought a “large deputation from the lower middle & valley settlements” who had “humbly” come to “sue for Peace.” Whig leaders agreed to meet with the Cherokees at DeWitt’s Corner, South Carolina, on May 7. There, South Carolina representatives Williamson, Leroy Hammond, William Henry Drayton, and Daniel Horry, along with Georgians Jonathan Bryan, Jonathan Cochran, and William Glascock, conferred with six hundred Cherokees, many of whom had come in hopes of receiving presents. On May 20 the parties signed a treaty in which the Cherokees gave up almost all of their land in South Carolina except a small parcel in the western part of the state. The Indians also agreed to release any prisoners they still held, white or black, and to return all horses they had taken. The treaty terms attempted to drive a wedge between the Cherokees and the British by requiring that any whites “who instigated or endeavoured to instigate the Cherokees to the late war or encouraged or aided them,” and were still among them be turned over to the rebels. Anyone else, white or Indian, who attempted to instigate the Cherokees to further warfare, along with any traders unlicensed by American authorities, were likewise to be seized and brought to the rebels. If the Cherokees scrupulously adhered to these terms, all contact between the nation and the British would cease. For their part, the governments of South Carolina and

Georgia promised to open trade with the Cherokees and to pay a reward for each runaway slave the Indians captured and returned to state officials.\textsuperscript{115} After reaching agreement with South Carolina and Georgia, the Cherokees faced additional negotiations with representatives of Virginia and North Carolina. Virginia governor Patrick Henry favored conciliation and instructed his state’s delegates to agree to a new boundary “in the best manner you can for the Interest of the frontier Inhabitants, so that you at the same time do strict justice to the Indians.”\textsuperscript{116} But the negotiations nearly collapsed when on July 2 an “evil minded” white person murdered a Cherokee man named Big Bullet. The Whigs apologized and promised to apprehend the killer. Cherokee leader Oconostota likewise pledged that the crime “shall not spoil the good Talks.” He warned the rebel agents, however, that the British would use the murder to influence the Indians. “Cameron and Stuart will hear of this accident, they will laugh and be pleased at it,” he said. “I shall tell my own people not to mind Camerons & Stewarts Talks.” After a sham investigation, the Whigs professed to be unable to find the murderer and compensated the Cherokees with gifts.\textsuperscript{117}

When negotiations resumed, Cherokee leaders Old Tassel and the Raven spoke for their nation. Both men affirmed their desire for peace and shifted blame for the war on the British agents who kept them “in blindness.” They did, however, protest that the whites had acted as though “they only wanted our land” and had encroached on Cherokee territory so that now the whites had “scarcely given us room to turn round.” When the rebels argued that the encroachments were legal because of the treaty the Cherokees had

\textsuperscript{116} Patrick Henry to Virginia Commissioners, June 26, 1777, in “Treaty of Long Island,” 58-59.
signed with Col. Henderson, the Raven insisted that “fear only made us agree to a settlement at all, but we expected Government would again remedy us.” The rebels then blamed the trouble on the British asserting that the king had granted the lands in question to the settlers, but that Stuart and Cameron had lied about it in order to goad the Cherokees into a war against the rebels.\textsuperscript{118}

This falsehood set the tone for the negotiations; the rebel commissioners had no desire to listen to the Indians’ grievances, wanting instead only to impose the harshest possible terms upon the Cherokees. Eventually the Indians submitted to rebel demands, although the Americans’ intransigence had aroused their suspicions. “It seems mysterious to me why you should ask so much land so near me,” Old Tassel said. “I am sensible that if we give up these lands they will bring you more a great deal than hundreds of pounds. It spoils our hunting ground; but always remains good to you to raise families and stocks on, when the goods we receive of you are rotten and gone to nothing.”\textsuperscript{119} The treaty, signed on July 20, ceded vast tracts of Cherokee land to Virginia and North Carolina, required the Indians to return any prisoners they held, and barred whites from trespassing on the remaining Cherokee land. The Cherokees would be paid for returning runaway slaves. Unlike the treaty with South Carolina and Georgia, this agreement contained no provisions for seizing or barring British emissaries. Under the terms of the two treaties, the Cherokees surrendered over five million acres of land to the rebels.\textsuperscript{120}

Whig leaders continued to pursue a tough policy toward the Cherokees after the treaties had been signed. When South Carolina sent commissioners to mark the new

\textsuperscript{118} “Proceedings at a Treaty,” July 15-16, 1777, in “Treaty of Long Island,” 78-86.
\textsuperscript{119} “Proceedings at a Treaty,” July 16-17, 1777, in “Treaty of Long Island,” 87-91.
boundaries between that state and the Cherokees, Indians whose towns were in the lands just ceded asked permission to remain in their homes. The governor refused their request. In spite of such disappointments, most Cherokees' remained “very pacific.”\(^\text{121}\)

The 1777 treaties with the Cherokees did not put a complete end to hostilities with that nation, however. Dragging Canoe, the most militant Cherokee leader, initially appeared willing to make peace. In reply to a talk the Whigs had sent him in April, he claimed that he had come to “see clear, that Cameron and Stewart have been telling me lies.” The British agents, he said, had “told us that all that the Virginians wanted was to get our Land and kill us.” Dragging Canoe said that he now realized that the white settlers were “the greatest friends we ever had.” But rather than attend the negotiations, Dragging Canoe said that he was going to confront the British agents about their lies.\(^\text{122}\)

The Cherokee leader in fact was just as skilled in duplicity as the Whig agents and used the time he had gained to lead many of the Overhill Cherokees, along with the more militant members of other groups, to the Tennessee River Valley, where they established new towns. Dragging Canoe’s faction, which came to be known as the Chickamaugas after a creek in their new homeland, had about one thousand fighting men. Their leader denounced the treaties that the other Cherokees had signed and pressed the British for arms so he could continue to fight the frontier settlers.\(^\text{123}\) “Repeated attacks were made by the Indians upon the settlements” west of the Appalachians in the summer of 1778, which

\(^{121}\) John Lewis Gervais to Henry Laurens, Nov. 3, 1777; William Henry Drayton to Laurens, Nov. 1, 1777, \textit{PHL}, 12:2, 16.  
^{122}\) Talk of Dragging Canoe, June 8, 1777, “Treaty of Long Island,” 64.  
frequently forced the inhabitants to take shelter in nearby forts until the militia finally
drove Dragging Canoe’s Cherokees away.\textsuperscript{124}

The defeat and dislocation of the Cherokees, along with the large land sessions
they had been forced to make as the price for peace, did not escape the notice of the
Creeks. John Stuart informed Germain in January 1777 “that the fate of the Cherokee
nation had damped” the Creeks’ enthusiasm. Two hundred Cherokees, “entirely naked
and destitute of everything,” had joined Stuart at Pensacola, traveling through Creek
territory where the sight of their forlorn condition demoralized the Creeks.\textsuperscript{125} In March
Stuart noted that some Lower Creeks had met with Galphin, whose reminders of “the
success of the rebels, operated strongly on the minds of those savages.” After returning to
their towns, the Indians who had met with Galphin “began to form a party and to debauch
the minds of many.”\textsuperscript{126} The effects had not faded by June. “The distressed situation of the
Cherokees has been beyond description,” Stuart wrote. “Driven from their habitations
and wandering about destitute of clothes and provisions, many of them perished.” Their
defeat had also affected the Choctaws and Chickasaws, Stuart noted after conferring with
leaders of those two nations. “The fate of the Cherokees is constantly before the eyes of
the other Indian nations and damps their spirits.”\textsuperscript{127}

This situation greatly complicated Stuart’s situation, since he had received orders
from Gen. William Howe to organize the southern Indians under the command of loyalist
refugees and send them to attack the rebels. Howe believed that the loyalists’ ability to

\textsuperscript{124} Samuel Riggs, Pension Application, in Dann, ed., \textit{Revolution Remembered}, 306.
\textsuperscript{125} John Stuart to Germain, Jan. 23, 1777, \textit{DAR}, 14:34-35.
\textsuperscript{126} John Stuart to Germain, March 10, 1777, \textit{DAR}, 14:49.
\textsuperscript{127} John Stuart to Germain, June 14, 1777, \textit{DAR}, 14:114.
distinguish between loyal and rebel inhabitants would enable them to target their opponents when operating against the backcountry settlements.\textsuperscript{128}

Before he could carry out these orders, Stuart had to reverse the effects of the Cherokees' defeat. He instructed Alexander Cameron "to take every Opportunity of inculcating into the Cherokee Indians that they themselves are Principals in this War; that the Defence of them & their Land is one of the greatest Causes of it." Cameron should also remind them that they had gone to war "to do themselves Justice by the Recovery of their Lands," and "to discountenance in them every Idea of their being engaged in a War merely upon our Acct. the reverse being so far true that they began it contrary to your Advice & Opinion."\textsuperscript{129}

It would take some time before Stuart's agents could raise the Indians' morale. Meanwhile, the Whigs seized the opportunity to increase their influence with the Creeks. In December 1776, Lachlan McIntosh sent a message to the Creeks in which he declared that the Georgians and Creeks "are, and should be one People." McIntosh asserted that the British planned to take all the land belonging to both whites and Indians and enslave Creeks and Georgians alike. The Cherokees, McIntosh said, had believed British lies, gone to war, and been driven from their country. He advised the Creeks to send their leaders to Savannah to meet with the Georgia officials; should they refuse, McIntosh would not be able to restrain his men "from going up to your towns & drive you out of your Country as the Carolinians have drove ... the Cherokees."\textsuperscript{130} Whatever benefit McIntosh hoped to obtain from this agreement was undone a few days later when, in

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{129} John Stuart to Alexander Cameron, July 11, 1777, Carleton Papers, Vol. 6, No. 602.
\item \textsuperscript{130} "Talk Sent by Tom Gray to Indians," Dec. 23, 1776, in "Papers of McIntosh," 61-62.
\end{enumerate}
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response to a Creek raid that killed several rebel soldiers, the Whigs seized six Creeks who had been visiting the settlements and imprisoned them in Savannah.131

George Galphin, who had far more influence with the Creeks than McIntosh did, stepped in and summoned the Creeks to a meeting at his home at Silver Bluff, across the Savannah River from Augusta. On June 17, Galphin met with more than four hundred Lower Creeks and threatened that they would suffer a worse fate than the Cherokees if they waged war against the Whigs. Intimidated, the Creeks replied that they wanted peace and claimed that they had been misled by Stuart’s agents.132 Galphin reported that the Creeks “all went back well pleased” and that only three Creek towns opposed the Americans. Their opposition, he said, “is owing to the bad. people we have on the frontier of Georgia that kild. Severall of their people Last winter.” Galphin feared that some Georgians wished to provoke a war with the Creeks, so he tried to keep the Indians away from the settlements from fear that the Georgians would kill them.133

In the autumn Galphin traveled to the Ogeechee River for another meeting with some 350 Creeks. Galphin spent seven weeks with them, from early November into late December, and although he complained of the “fataging time I had of it among a parsile of Drunken Indians,” he was able to report that he had again “Sent them all home well pleased.” He provided the Indians with enough goods to load eighty horses. While conceding that the British still had some supporters among the Creeks, he predicted that “by the Spring we Shall have a good footing in that nattion.” Galphin repeated his

131 Lachlan McIntosh to Robert Howe, Dec. 30, 1776; Lachlan McIntosh to William McIntosh, Jan. 2, 1777; Lachlan McIntosh to Howe, Jan. 7, 1777, in “Papers of McIntosh,” Part 2, 261-262, 264; Lachlan McIntosh to Lyman Hall, Dr. Brownson, and George Walton, Jan. 23, 1777, in “Papers of McIntosh,” Part 3, GHQ, Vol. 38, No. 4, Dec. 1954, 357-358.
132 O'Donnell, Southern Indians, 60; George Galphin to Henry Laurens, July 20, 1777; John Wells, Jr., to Henry Laurens, June 23, 1777, PHL, 11:388, 402.
warning that the Georgians were the biggest obstacle to peace, noting that whites in the
Ceded Lands, the territory acquired in the 1773 Indian cession, had killed five Indians
before the Creeks retaliated by killing a Georgian, and that the whites frequently stole the
Indians’ horses. If the Georgians were not restrained, “it will not be in my power to keep
peace Long,” Galphin declared.134

Galphin’s ability to influence the Creeks troubled British officials, who relied on
that nation’s support to help defend East Florida and maintain pressure on Georgia.135
Elias Durnford, an engineer officer at Pensacola, complained that the Creeks “are much
divided, so that it is not certain what part they may take as Golphin by promises and his
Interest keeps up a party in that nation.”136 John Stuart at first tried to downplay the
effects of Galphin’s diplomacy, asserting that at Galphin’s May conference only “about
200 [Creeks] of little Consequence went,” and “the rest of the Nation was extremely
offended” by their meeting with Galphin.137 But the results of Galphin’s “tampering”
struck home in late September, when Alexander McGillivray, one of Stuart’s agents,
discovered that the Oakfuskee Creeks were “determined to murder Mr. Taitt, Mr.
Cameron,” and an interpreter.138 McGillivray’s warning saved Taitt and Cameron, but the
Oakfuskees plundered them and other British traders, and in early October a Cussita
attempt to murder William McIntosh was thwarted by other Creeks. Two weeks later, the
Cussitas sent a message informing Stuart that they had learned that the Upper Creeks

135 William Howe to Lt. Col. Dickson, May 6, 1777; Augustine Prevost to John Stuart, June 14, 1777,
Carleton Papers, Vol. 5, Nos. 516, 585.
137 Stuart to William Howe, Aug. 23, 1777, Carleton Papers, Vol. 6, No. 649.
planned to remain neutral and that they intended to do the same. Stuart responded by halting trade with the Creek towns who had harassed his agents and traders. \(^{139}\)

Stuart admitted to Germain that Galphin had succeeded in dividing the Creeks so that they would not provide as much support as expected. \(^{140}\) Irritated at that nation’s lack of assistance, Germain expressed regret that they “do not manifest that disposition to act in favor of Government, which we had been taught to expect.” The minister, who was losing confidence in Stuart, advised Gen. Howe to “frustrate the designs of the Agents employed by the Rebels, & secure the future Affection of the Savages.” \(^{141}\)

In addition to Galphin’s Creek adherents, a pro-Spanish faction in the nation also undermined British efforts to maintain their influence. Creek leader Tunape and a large number of other Indians visited Havana in 1777, where they asked the Spaniards to open trade with them. Spanish officials expressed their regret at being unable to comply, but offered to provide specific items requested by Tunape. \(^{142}\)

Despite these difficulties, Stuart managed to convince some Creeks to operate against the rebels. In late March, Creek parties struck in western Georgia, where they killed three men at Clark’s Fort. \(^{143}\) Lachlan McIntosh warned Governor Button Gwinnett that there were too few mounted troops to guard the frontiers and as a result the Indians had been “very troublesome, & kill’d several people in different parts of the State within

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\(^{141}\) Germain to Howe, Sept. 3, 1777, Germain Papers, Vol. 6, WLCL.


\(^{143}\) McIntosh to Robert Howe, April 2, 1777, “Papers of McIntosh,” Part 3, 365.
this Six Mos. past. we are under great apprehension this summer of a Genl. war with the Indians,“ instigated by the British. 144

While Galphin was still meeting with the Creeks in the summer, a party of Cowetas stole several horses, then ambushed a rebel force that pursued them, killing twenty. The Cowetas also attacked a fort on the Ogeechee River and killed two rebels. The Whigs abandoned the fort and the Indians burned it. Another group of Creeks attacked Capt. Thomas Dooley and twenty Continental recruits on July 22. Dooley and three other whites were killed; the rest of the Whigs fled. On July 31 a Creek party killed a woman and four children near the Ogeechee, “the only documented exception in the South” to the Indians’ policy of striking only armed opponents. John Stuart claimed that Samuel Dilkes, whose wife and children were the victims, had repeatedly abused the Indians and that personal revenge motivated the Creeks in this instance. 145

These sporadic attacks helped the British by inciting the Georgians’ rage against the Indians; white hatred of the Creeks was the most convincing argument Stuart could use to keep the Indians’ allegiance. After the summer conference, Galphin had escorted Handsome Fellow and nine other Creek leaders to Charleston to consult with state officials. On their return journey, Thomas Dooley’s troops with some other Whigs seized the ten Creeks, and ignoring Galphin’s protests, imprisoned them at Augusta. The Indians were eventually released and escorted home by some Georgia Continentals. Galphin mollified them by claiming Stuart had sent out the Creek party to kill Dooley in hopes of provoking a war. 146 John Lewis Gervais complained that “a few Georgia people have put

144 Lachlan McIntosh to Button Gwinnett, April 13, 1777, “Papers of McIntosh,” Part 3, 367.
145 Searcy, Georgia-Florida Contest, 112-113.
us at the Eve of a War," just when peace with the Creeks seemed assured.147 "It is impossible to say what will happen when the Handsome Fellow gets Home," John Rutledge wrote, echoing Gervais's concern, "I fear a Creek War will soon take place."148

Whig relations with the Creeks remained tenuous into the autumn. Although a few Creeks occasionally killed settlers on the Georgia frontier, news that the pro-rebel Creek faction had driven Stuart's agents out of their territory and plundered British traders led Gervais to assert that the Creeks "have at last declared in our favour."149 But while the incident had the potential to seriously disrupt Creek relations with the British, the Georgians continued to provoke the Creeks with aggressive actions. "I am afraid the people in the Ceded Land. will undo all we are Doing," Galphin wrote, noting that the Georgians had sent two surveyors onto Indian land to mark out plots. When the Creeks learned of this, Galphin warned, "it will make our Enemies words. true that we want to take all there Land." He urged Georgia officials to restrain their citizens in order to prevent war.150

Georgia’s Assembly, blinded to potential danger by their desire for land, instead considered launching a war against the Creeks. Robert Howe labored to dissuade them, insisting that Georgia lacked the strength to go to war with the Creeks. He also warned them that they would be unlikely to receive aid from the neighboring states, who were working hard to keep the Creeks neutral.151 The Georgians finally abandoned the scheme, although Joseph Clay wrote that "‘twas with the greatest difficulty we cou’d prevent our Assembly Resolving during the last Sitting to break out with the Creeks which if had

148 John Rutledge to [South Carolina delegates in Congress], Aug. 30, 1777, John Rutledge Papers, SCL.
149 John Lewis Gervais to Henry Laurens, Nov. 13, 1777, PHL, 12:16.
taken place we must have been broke up as a State at once.” He found the push for a Creek war especially disturbing because it came “at that very time these People ... were giving us the most convincing Proofs of their Pacific disposition towards us – by driving Stuart’s Deputies out of their Towns & burn’d their Houses.”

Stuart spent the early months of 1778 attempting simultaneously to punish the Creeks for their hostile actions against his agents and to reestablish good relations with them. The cessation of trade led Upper Creek leaders to come to Pensacola to meet with the superintendent. Since they had not participated in the plundering, Stuart told them to carry out their winter hunt. Shortly afterward, six hundred Lower Creeks arrived to make amends. Stuart avoided blaming the Indians as a group; instead, he criticized those Indians who had “misbehaved,” but praised those who had not for their faithfulness. The guilty individuals apologized and asked that the traders be allowed to return. Stuart consented, providing that the rebellious Creeks first permitted his deputies to go back among them. The Oakfuskees did not go to Pensacola, but sent Alexander McGillivray there with a message of apology and expressed their willingness to accept an agent, so long as it was not David Taitt, “who was obnoxious to them.” Stuart instructed McGillivray to bring their leaders to Pensacola for further discussion.

By spring, Stuart had managed to bring most of the Creeks back into the British fold. In March he reported that “at the most pressing solicitation of the Upper & Lower Creeks, Messrs Tait and Mackintosh are returned to their Nations, guarded by strong party of Indians, who are determined to protect them at the risk of their lives.” With his agents back among the Creeks and the trade reopened, except to the pro-American towns,

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Stuart predicted “that every thing in that Nation will be brought into its proper Channel in a very short time.” The “leading chiefs of all the towns in the rebel interest” came to Pensacola in late April “to make their peace.” Stuart believed that only a lack of direct support from British troops made the Indians hesitant to exert themselves more fully against the Whigs.

Stuart’s progress did not satisfy Patrick Tonyn, who planned to use the Creeks and Brown’s rangers to launch a major offensive against Georgia. Conducting his own diplomacy without consulting Stuart, Tonyn had succeeded in keeping the Seminoles and other Creeks living near East Florida “well disposed.” A French visitor estimated that there were only four hundred Indian warriors in the province, but noted that “the English are humoring them and lavishing attention on them.” Tonyn wished to keep the Creeks satisfied until he received approval for his attack on Georgia. Again bypassing Stuart, he had written directly to William Howe to point out “the necessity of employing [the Indians] in some shape.” The governor sought Howe’s permission to invade Georgia using the East Florida garrison, Brown’s rangers, and the Indians. With such a force, Tonyn stated, “Georgia may be taken in possession, which will give a fair opportunity to the loyalists in South Carolina to show themselves ... and if they prove as numerous as hath been given out, I should apprehend that province would soon be compelled to subjection and to own their allegiance to the King.” Howe, less optimistic than Tonyn, did not approve the proposal.

155 John Stuart to William Howe, March 22, 1778, Clinton Papers, Vol. 32, No. 29, WLCL.
156 John Stuart to Germain, May 2, 1778, DAR, 15:113-114.
157 Tonyn to William Howe, Feb. 24, 1778, RAM, 1:197.
159 Tonyn to William Howe, April 6, 1778, RAM, 1:225.
Equally frustrating for the governor was the news that Stuart had met with the Creeks and urged them to remain at peace. Tonyn complained to Gen. Howe that as a result of Stuart’s work, “the object, formed by the rebels, is attained, to make the Indians neutral.” Tonyn had expected hundreds of Indians to come to St. Augustine to assist the rangers in Tonyn’s alternate plan of launching extensive raids in Georgia, but after Stuart’s meeting only one hundred had arrived. Stuart did promise that the Seminoles were ready to provide one thousand men to assist Prevost’s forces whenever they were needed, but this failed to satisfy the governor.

Tonyn had to abandon his strategy when the Whigs invaded East Florida. The Creeks’ contribution to the province’s defense was minimal. The Upper Creeks had planned “to harass and plunder the back settlements” of Georgia while many militiamen were away with the invasion force, but “the rebel party” among the Creeks threatened “to fall upon the [British] traders in the nation and the inhabitants of [West Florida] as soon as the others should turn out.” The pro-British Creeks “entirely quenched the flame which was kindling by the rebel gang,” but were too busy doing so to make the intended raids on Georgia. About twenty Creeks who were in East Florida cooperated with Brown’s rangers; they frequently scouted the American camp at Fort Tonyn, and on June 1 caught and scalped a Georgian soldier who had been traveling alone.

The Whig invasion force also included some Indians, although neither their numbers nor their nation was recorded. Several of them were members of “a Party of Indians and Soldiers” who brought nine deserters “and the Scalp of a Tenth” back to the

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161 John Stuart to William Howe, Feb. 4, 1778, RAM, 1:190.
American lines. These Indians may have been Creeks from the pro-American towns or Catawbas who accompanied Andrew Williamson's militia from South Carolina.

Gen. Prevost complained that the Indians had provided little help during the invasion, noting that "they did not appear to be very forward to assist." He attributed the poor response to the Indians' belief that if the rebels conquered East Florida, it "would only be the prelude to their [Indians'] destruction" if they actively aided the British. Once the invasion had failed, Prevost observed, the Indians "then came very readily to offer their Services and to receive the presents which their good will and friendship merited in their opinion." Despite his dissatisfaction with the Indians, Prevost asked Gen. Henry Clinton to send more presents for them because "their friendship to us in great part depends upon it." Prevost believed that their support would be more reliable if British forces in the province could demonstrate a clear superiority over the rebels.

After the abortive Whig invasion of East Florida, persistent rumors that a Creek attack on Georgia was imminent circulated in that province and South Carolina. Andrew Williamson ordered his militia to prepare for action after receiving a message from Galphin on August 9 that "the Creeks mean to immediately attack the frontier of Georgia." Rawlins Lowndes, who had received a similar warning from Galphin "of a Storm Brewing up in the Creek Nation," worried that "our wild expedition to Florida and impotent taunts, will have a bad influence on our Indian Affairs." Between the Indians and "our own disaffected Inhabitants," Lowndes complained that he was constantly occupied trying "to Counter-act their Plots and watch their movements." On August

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166 Williamson to John Bowie, Aug. 9, 1778, John Bowie Papers, SCDAH.
167 Rawlins Lowndes to Henry Laurens, Aug. 16, 1778, PHL, 14:169.
John Houstoun heard a report that eight Creek towns had declared war on the rebels and that Indians had killed twenty-four people on the Ceded Lands during the previous week. Like Lowndes, Houstoun blamed the failure of the Florida expedition for the Creek attacks. That nation, he said "look’d on with eager Expectation and from every Account were determined as usual to take the strongest Side." The rebels’ lack of success, in his opinion, had convinced many Creeks that the British now had the upper hand.\(^{168}\)

Galphin, however, did not expect a full-scale war with the Creeks, although he had warned that some Creek factions were preparing to strike. He believed that the Whigs still had "rather a majority of the whole Nation in our interest" and reported that pro-American Creeks had assured him "that they will make reprisals at Pensacola & Mobile for whatever mischief the hostile Indians may do on our frontiers."\(^{169}\) Rebel officials soon received information indicating that the Creek threat had been exaggerated, but many Whigs were infuriated by the possibility of Indian attacks. "No terms should be kept with the perfidious Race," John Wells, Jr. wrote. "Fire & sword are the only arguments that can avail with them."\(^{170}\)

Galphin continued to assure rebel officials that the Creeks were under control, but scattered Indian raids across the backcountry in October raised new fears among the Whigs. Andrew Williamson again called out his militia in the middle of the month to defend the frontier, while Rawlins Lowndes expressed concern that Stuart’s "powerful Influence ... operates strongly" among the Creeks.\(^{171}\) Even Galphin himself began to lose hope of maintaining peace. "Stuart at Last has prevailed upon his frinds to Come against


our frontier,” the agent wrote on October 26. Galphin was trying to use other Creeks to
discourage the pro-British faction from attacking, but again blamed the Georgians on the
Ceded Lands for creating the problem. He asserted that “had it not been for the
Imprudence of Some of our one people it woud not been in Stuarts power and all his
presents to have Set the Creeks upon us.” Galphin pointed out that all the Creek attacks
thus far had targeted settlers in the Ceded Lands, while settlements that had not shown
hostility to the Creeks had not been molested. Nevertheless, Galphin urged a tough
response to the raids, writing that some Creeks “will be allways a picking at us till they
get a good Drubing we Can never put up with the Insultes we have reed from them
without Leting them no we are there masters.”

The South Carolina Assembly considered the Creek problem in November, and
concluded that another effort should be made to negotiate peace with that nation, even if
it was necessary to pay the Indians in order to prevent hostilities. But if negotiations
proved unsuccessful, the legislators decided, the Whigs should follow Galphin’s advice
and “carry the War into the Creek country.”

Augustine Prevost had no intention of allowing the Whigs to crush the Creeks.
Reports reaching St. Augustine in October indicated that “the Southern Colonies of
Carolina & Georgia were collecting a large Force on their Frontiers in order to attack the
Creek & Cherokee Indians.” Wishing to prevent a defeat that might deprive the British of
further Indian support, Prevost decided “to effect a diversion both in the lower
Settlements and the Centrical part of Georgia.” To accomplish this, he dispatched Lt. Col.
Fuser with 240 men and a galley to attack the rebel fort at Sunbury, while the general’s

173 Report of Committee, Nov. 10, 1778, Edward Telfair Papers, PERK.
brother, Lt. Col. James Mark Prevost, led a joint land and naval force consisting of a regular battalion and four hundred loyalists to the Altamaha River. Lt. Col. Prevost’s troops “proceeded with so much secrecy and Expedition” that they reached “the heart of the Settlements of the Province of Georgia before the Rebels were apprised of his Arrival.” This force drove the Georgians from several posts, killed Brig. Gen. William Screven in a skirmish, and captured forty men and over two thousand head of cattle. Fuser, however, retreated from Sunbury after deciding he could not take the fort. Fuser’s withdrawal forced James Prevost to fall back as well. He was accompanied by “a number of families attached to Government.” Although Gen. Prevost had been wrongly informed of rebel intentions, the foray demonstrated his commitment to assisting Britain’s Indian allies.

Despite his difficulties with the Creeks, Stuart expressed great satisfaction with the behavior of the other nations. In May and June of 1777, he met with 2,800 Choctaws and Chickasaws at Mobile, where he “admonished them in the strongest manner to unite with the other Nations in the District, in making their mutual Defence a common Cause and forming a Confederacy to support the King’s Cause.” The Chickasaws declared their willingness to shed “their last Blood in His Majesty’s Cause,” a statement that “was received with applause and seconded by the principal Chactaw Chiefs.” Stuart believed that the Indians were sincere and could be relied upon to act when needed.

If Choctaw assistance was required, Stuart worried that it might be hampered because of problems with alcohol consumption in that nation. “Excessive drinking was decimating” the Choctaws in 1777 as British traders inundated their towns with rum.

174 Augustine Prevost to Jeffery Amherst, Jan. 18, 1779, Amherst Papers, WO34/112/3, Microfilm, DLAR.
175 John Stuart to William Howe, June 16, 1777, Carleton Papers, Vol. 5, No. 586; Calloway, Revolution in Indian Country, 222-223.
Choctaw leaders asked Stuart to stem the flow; the superintendent promptly contacted Gov. Chester to demand that restrictions be placed on the sale of rum to the Choctaws.\textsuperscript{176} However, traders still managed to bring rum to the Indians, so in February 1778 Stuart assigned Richard Pearis’s company of loyalists to put a stop to the practice.\textsuperscript{177}

That same month, Stuart reported that the Choctaws and Chickasaws were “perfectly well disposed” and that the five hundred Cherokee refugees at Pensacola, “notwithstanding the severe Chastisement which they lately received, are ready to act when called upon.”\textsuperscript{178} Gov. Chester, however, remained uneasy with the fact that West Florida’s defense rested mainly in the hands of the Indians. He told Germain that he doubted the Indians’ reliability because “many of them seem to be actuated solely by motives of self interest and will receive presents from anybody who will give them.”\textsuperscript{179}

The Chickasaws, who had the responsibility of disrupting rebel shipping on the Mississippi River, had been effective in harassing any vessels that passed. Spanish boats were not exempt from this interference, which led Gov. Galvez to protest to Chester. “Not a boat has come down from Illinois, and not a trapper’s boat, without being fired upon” by the Chickasaws, Galvez complained. In February 1778 he sent an envoy, Jacinto Panis, to Pensacola to demand that Chester end the harassment. In addition to negotiating with Chester, Panis had orders to obtain intelligence that might be useful in the event of war between Spain and Britain. Although Chester told Panis that he had no jurisdiction over the Indians, the governor ordered Stuart to inform the Chickasaws that Spanish vessels must be allowed to travel the Mississippi unmolested. Chester also

\textsuperscript{177} Snapp, \textit{John Stuart}, 193.
\textsuperscript{178} John Stuart to William Howe, Feb. 4, 1778, \textit{RAM}, 1:190.
\textsuperscript{179} George C. Osborn, “Relations with the Indians in West Florida during the Administration of Governor Peter Chester, 1770-1781,” \textit{FHQ}, Vol. 31, No. 4, April 1953, 260.
protested that the Spaniards had been meddling with the Choctaws, inviting some of them to New Orleans and giving them presents. The negotiations ended without Chester and Panis coming to any agreement on Indian issues.\textsuperscript{180}

Chester’s fears that the defense of West Florida could not be entrusted to Indians appeared to be realized when Willing’s expedition sailed down the Mississippi in the spring of 1778. Willing’s vessels passed unnoticed because the Indians had left their observation posts. Stuart had posted a party of Choctaws under the command of one of his agents to watch traffic on the river, but they had returned home and the Indians who were supposed to relieve them had not yet reached their station.\textsuperscript{181} Willing’s men tried to capture Henry Stuart, the superintendent’s brother and deputy, who was at Manchac with a few Indians, but Stuart received warning of the rebels’ approach and escaped to Spanish territory.\textsuperscript{182} With Whig troops seemingly in control of the Natchez region, loyalists worried about the effect it might have on the Indians. Anthony Hutchins wrote that he was “convinced that almost the smallest matter would turn the Chactaw and other Indians against us, who were ever ready to join the strongest side, and who are much caress’d by the Spaniards in the name of their antient friends the French.”\textsuperscript{183}

In response to the raid, John Stuart immediately instructed his agents to assemble as many Choctaws and Chickasaws as they could, put them under the command of white men, and “march to the assistance of the inhabitants.”\textsuperscript{184} Some Chickasaws took post to watch the Mississippi from the mouth of the Ohio to a point below Chickasaw Bluffs to look for rebel reinforcements, while others accompanied British troops and loyal militia

\textsuperscript{181} John Stuart to William Howe, March 22, 1778, Clinton Papers, Vol. 32, No. 29, WLCL.
\textsuperscript{182} John Stuart to William Howe, March 22, 1778, Clinton Papers, Vol. 32, No. 29, WLCL.
\textsuperscript{183} Hutchins to Germain, May 21, 1778, in Abbey, ed., “Intrigue,” 401.
\textsuperscript{184} John Stuart to William Howe, March 22, 1778, Clinton Papers, Vol. 32, No. 29, WLCL.
attempting to drive out Willing’s men.\textsuperscript{185} Choctaw war leader Franchimastabe rushed to Natchez with 155 men, where they spent a month guarding the fort in the event that Willing returned. Farquhar Bethune, one of Stuart’s agents, praised the “regularity and discretion” the Indians displayed while at Natchez, which he said was cause for “universal satisfaction.” When the Indians left, Franchimastabe told the settlers that his people would stand ready to assist if the rebels returned. He also threatened that if the inhabitants desired “to take the rebels by the hand or enter into any treaty with them” the Choctaws would “treat you as our enemies.”\textsuperscript{186}

The rapid Indian response to the Willing raid did not satisfy Chester, who complained to Germain that despite “the great Expense which it has cost the Government for Presents, Provisions, etc. – to attach these Savages .... they cannot when called forth be depended upon.”\textsuperscript{187} Germain shared Chester’s anger and chastised Stuart for the “most unpardonable negligence in the officers you had appointed” in allowing Willing to reach West Florida undetected. It was bad enough that the Indians had not seen the rebels coming, Germain declared, but it was even worse that there were no Indians on hand to oppose the rebels’ landing or to assist the loyalists in defending the province. The money spent on the Indian Department, Germain stated, should surely have been sufficient to engage the Indians to keep “a constant watch” on the Mississippi and have parties ready “of sufficient strength to defeat a much more formidable detachment than that which has been suffered to do so much mischief.”\textsuperscript{188}

\textsuperscript{185} Gibson, \textit{The Chickasaws}, 72.
\textsuperscript{186} O’Brien, \textit{Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age}, 40-41.
\textsuperscript{187} Quoted in Abbey, “Chester’s Defense,” 24.
\textsuperscript{188} Quoted in Starr, \textit{Tories, Dons, and Rebels}, 84.
Germain felt especially bitter over the lack of Indian assistance because he had just been forced to make a considerable effort in Parliament to defend their use against the rebels. In late 1777, Lord Chatham had denounced the “bloody, barbarous, and ferocious” aspects of Indian warfare against the colonists in the House of Lords, while opposition members in the House of Commons also criticized Germain for employing Indians against the rebels. Lord Suffolk, however, defended the practice on the grounds that it was legitimate for the government “to use all the means that God and nature have put into our hands.” Led by Edmund Burke, the opposition renewed its protests against the ministry’s Indian policy in February 1778. Burke called for a halt to the government’s use of Indians, while Germain argued that “the Indians would not have remained idle spectators.... it amounted to a clear undisputed proposition, that either they would have served against us, or that we must have employed them.” Burke’s motion was defeated by a vote of 223-137.

**African Americans: Marking Time**

Although the Whigs in Georgia and South Carolina rigidly enforced the slave codes and remained vigilant to prevent blacks from escaping to the British, enough slaves attempted to reach East Florida or to go aboard British warships plying coastal waters to cause significant problems for the rebels. Henry Laurens told Ralph Izard in June 1777 that “your Negroes are continually deserting the plantations” and going to Charleston, “where I have no doubt many of them would have embark’d in Men of War and other Vessels” had Laurens not been able to recover them. Laurens attributed the slaves’ flight

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191 Quoted in Brown, *American Secretary*, 62.
to two causes: “the Tyranny and Villainy of Overseers and Sometimes to ... their own vicious Designs,” that is, a desire to find freedom with the British.\textsuperscript{193} Unwilling to tolerate such behavior, in August Charleston officials ordered the execution of a slave who had taken three women and two children with him and was “endeavouring to go on board the Men of War.”\textsuperscript{194} Yet not all slaves who reached British warships were satisfied with the conditions they found, for a month earlier nine of them that “the Men of War took are returned.”\textsuperscript{195} These slaves had probably been taken against their will and the British officers, realizing that, allowed them to leave.

While fugitive slaves in South Carolina usually went to the coast seeking refuge with the royal navy, Georgia slaves fled overland to East Florida.\textsuperscript{196} Other runaways concealed themselves in the swamps and forests to await a favorable opportunity to join the British. Before leaving Providence, Rhode Island, to act as agent for a merchant firm in the south, Elkanah Watson was warned of the danger he might face with “the negroes in some of the Southern States in partial insurrection.” He undertook the journey anyway and soon found that the menace was real. “We had been cautioned to be on our guard against the attacks of runaway negroes, in the passage of swamps near Wingan Bay” in South Carolina, Watson wrote. While crossing a swamp in November 1777, “fourteen naked negroes armed with poles, presented themselves in the attitude of hostility, across the road.” Watson and a companion drew their pistols and charged the blacks, who dropped the poles and fled into the woods.\textsuperscript{197}

\textsuperscript{193} Henry Laurens to Ralph Izard, June 9, 1777, \textit{PHL}, 11:350.
\textsuperscript{195} John Lewis Gervais to Henry Laurens, July 26, 1777, \textit{PHL}, 11:405.
\textsuperscript{197} Elkanah Watson, \textit{Men and Times of the Revolution; or, Memoirs of Elkanah Watson, Including Journals of Travels in Europe and America, from 1777 to 1842}. Edited by Winslow C. Watson. (New York: Dana and Company, 1852), 25, 43.
When found by their masters, such fugitives faced severe consequences. In February 1778, Pennsylvanian Ebenezer Hazard witnessed the recapture of a runaway slave near Pocotaligo, South Carolina. While another slave bound the runaway, the master watched from horseback, gun in hand. "The poor Negro's looks, arising from terrible apprehensions of future punishment, were such as I think must have affected a savage," Hazard wrote, yet the master showed no trace of sympathy. After several fugitives belonging to Henry Laurens and other planters were recovered, John Lewis Gervais told Laurens that he would sell one of them as punishment and give the others "a Severe Correction at the Work house."

Even if most slaves remained on their plantations, their insubordinate behavior increased, to the consternation of their masters. In June 1777 a black driver, March, "was very Saucy" when a white overseer accused him of stealing rice. The overseer "laid hold of him, but the Negro proved to be the Strongest & threw him." Other slaves refused to obey the man's orders to help him subdue March, so the overseer left. He returned shortly afterward to find that March had cut off part of his own left hand; March then attacked the overseer with a knife. Only then did the other slaves intervene. March was sent to Savannah to be treated and then lodged in the workhouse.

Despite Whig reluctance to alter the slaves' situation, the vulnerability of the southern states to British attack led the rebels to use slaves in their traditional role as laborers to assist white troops. When rumors of a possible British invasion circulated in South Carolina in late 1777, William Henry Drayton asked the Council "for all the

labouring Negroes belonging to those who had been banished by the abjuration Act,” as well as slaves owned by other prominent loyalists not covered by the act, to work on Charleston’s fortifications. The Council granted the request and Drayton assigned the slaves to dig a channel connecting the Ashley and Cooper Rivers, which would serve as an obstacle to protect the land approaches to the town.201

Robert Howe asked Georgia authorities to provide three hundred slaves “to act as Pioneers” for the army invading East Florida in 1778. The Assembly reduced the number to two hundred, but only fifty-six reported to camp.202 They were assigned to clear roads and perform other forms of heavy labor. One black was killed in a skirmish.203 There is no evidence that any of the slaves tried to escape; perhaps the executions of white deserters intimidated them from making the attempt.

One South Carolina Whig believed that slaves should not only assist the army as pioneers and laborers, but should serve as combat soldiers. Henry Laurens’s son John, an aide to George Washington in Pennsylvania, wrote to his father on January 14, 1778, requesting “a number of your able bodied men Slaves” to be trained as soldiers. The younger Laurens asserted that his plan would both provide badly needed troops and “advance those who are unjustly deprived of the Rights of Mankind to a State which would be a proper Gradation between abject Slavery and perfect Liberty.”204

201 William Henry Drayton to Henry Laurens, Nov. 1, 1777, PHL, 12:1.
203 Bennett and Lennon, Quest for Glory, 75-76, 79. Concerning the man’s death, the authors assert “that black Americans apparently were serving in a combat capacity during the expedition” (79). No evidence exists to support this claim, however. It is more likely that the man was a pioneer or an officer’s servant.
In his reply, Henry Laurens tried to convince his son to reflect on his proposal before pursuing it further. "More time will be required for me to consider the propriety of your scheme for raising a black Regiment, than you seem to have taken for concerting the project," the elder Laurens wrote, because "a Work of this importance must be entered upon with Caution & great circumspection." The elder Laurens cautiously probed his colleagues in Congress to learn their opinions of the plan, but found no supporters. He warned John that slaves might not wish to exchange the "comfortable" conditions of bondage for service far from home, "where Loss of Life & Loss of Limbs must be expected by every one every day." 

John Laurens conceded that he had "that monster popular Prejudice" against him, but insisted that his proposal was for the public good. He countered his father's objections by arguing that most slaves would welcome "being rescued from a State of perpetual humiliation." Furthermore, slavery had conditioned blacks to accept subordination, hard work, and deprivation, making them well-qualified to be soldiers. These arguments failed to convince Henry Laurens, who wrote that "the more I think of & the more I have consulted on, your scheme, the less I approve of it." This reproach caused John to ask his father's forgiveness "for the trouble which I have given you on this excentric Scheme."

Although the Whigs' attitude toward slaves remained largely unchanged, a growing number of loyalists began to recognize that blacks were reliable allies. At the end of June 1778, Louisa Susannah Wells, along with thirteen other banished loyalists,  

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205 Henry Laurens to John Laurens, Jan. 22, 1778, PHL, 12:328.  
206 Henry Laurens to John Laurens, Jan. 28, 1778, PHL, 12:368.  
208 Henry Laurens to John Laurens, Feb. 6, 1778, PHL, 12:412-413.  
209 John Laurens to Henry Laurens, Feb. 15, 1778, PHL, 12:446.
boarded the ship *Providence* bound for England. Earlier in the year, a ship carrying another group of exiles had run aground while leaving Charleston harbor. The passengers on the *Providence* suspected that the white pilot “had been bribed to run that unfortunate vessel on the Shoals.” The loyalists on the grounded ship had to remain in South Carolina for several months, and the people aboard the *Providence* wanted to avoid a similar fate. “For this reason,” Wells wrote, “we chose a Negro Pilot” named Bluff, paying him $100 in rebel currency in addition to his master’s fee. In an effort to reassure the loyalists without making the risky statements that had led to Thomas Jeremiah’s death, Bluff cautiously told them that “he was a true friend to British Manufactures,” which, Wells said, “was as much Loyalty as he durst own.” Bluff got the loyalists safely out of the harbor. In West Florida, the inhabitants also turned to blacks for assistance, and several served on board the naval vessels assigned to defend the province’s rivers.

Britain’s supporters in the South had suffered greatly in 1777 and 1778. Loyalists had been relentlessly persecuted and many of them were banished or voluntarily fled the southern provinces. The Cherokees were forced to make peace, and the Whigs sowed dissension among the Creeks that limited their contributions to the British. Except for a few hardy individuals who escaped to the Floridas or took refuge in swamps, slaves had to accept their lot until new opportunities for freedom appeared. Nevertheless, the king’s supporters had enjoyed some success. Hundreds of loyalists had reached East Florida, joined provincial units, and carried the war back to the Georgians. They had thwarted an attack on West Florida and two invasions of East Florida, and in the latter case caused the

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211 Fabel, *Economy of West Florida*, 38.

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Whigs to squander manpower and resources without achieving anything worthwhile.

Stuart had brought the Chickasaws and Choctaws into action to defend West Florida, eliminated much of Galphin's influence with the Creeks, and helped keep Cherokee resistance alive among the Chickamauga faction. Loyalists, Indians, and slaves awaited only the arrival of British troops to step forward once again and challenge the rebels. That day was nearly at hand.
CHAPTER IV
THE BRITISH RETURN

When France entered the war on the American side in March 1778, British officials were forced to rethink their strategy for subduing the colonies. The ministry could not expect its armed forces to undertake large-scale offensive operations against the rebels, since forces had to be diverted to deal with France as well as possible Spanish intervention. George III and his ministers decided to withdraw some of the troops who had been fighting the rebels and reallocate them in preparation for operations against France and Spain.¹

The British government also reshuffled the army’s command and made a final effort to negotiate peace with the Americans. In February 1778, William Howe resigned and Henry Clinton succeeded him as commander-in-chief in America. Clinton, along with Lord Carlisle, William Eden, and George Johnstone, were appointed commissioners to discuss peace terms with the rebels in the hope that an agreement could be reached before British forces had to face a war against both France and the colonies. The British offer was generous—“everything a colonial heart could desire.” If the Americans renounced independence and agreed to make a voluntary contribution to the cost of

defending the empire, the British government would give up its authority to tax them.² Should the offer be rejected, it would at least quiet those in Parliament who demanded negotiations with the Americans. The commissioners informed Germain in July that the rebels refused to accept the terms and that only force could end the rebellion.³

Germain, who had been skeptical of negotiations from the outset, had advised Clinton in early 1778 that after the summer campaign ended in the north, the army should undertake a southern offensive in October.⁴ As it became apparent that the peace commissioners could not sway the rebels, Germain reminded Clinton that “[t]he Recovery of South Carolina and Georgia in the Winter, or even the latter Province, if the Other requires a greater Force than can be spared, is an Object of so much Importance.”⁵

In accordance with these instructions, Clinton dispatched an expedition to Georgia in November 1778. British troops easily captured Savannah and temporarily occupied most of the Georgia backcountry. But the rapid reaction of numerically superior Whig forces forced the British to retreat to the environs of Savannah. Although Gen. Augustine Prevost thwarted the rebels’ plan to attack the town by launching his own offensive into South Carolina, Prevost’s army was too weak to accomplish anything of lasting importance. The British withdrew to Savannah, where they were besieged in the autumn by a French fleet and a combined Franco-American army. British regulars, assisted by loyalists, Indians, and armed slaves, made a staunch defense that routed the French and rebels. With Savannah secure, Clinton prepared to launch the second phase of the southern campaign, an attack on Charleston.

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³ Willcox, Portrait of a General, 208, 222; Mackesy, War for America, 159; Davies, “Restoration of Civil Government,” 116.
⁴ Smith, Loyalists and Redcoats, 83-84.
⁵ Germain to Clinton, Aug. 5, 1778, Clinton Papers, Vol. 38, No. 42, WLCL.
Resurrecting the Southern Strategy

While the Whigs held control of the southern provinces, loyalist exiles sent a steady stream of proposals to British officials urging the recovery of those colonies. All of the plans relied primarily on the support of loyalists; most also counted on additional assistance from slaves or Indians. Germain's deputy, William Knox, who had lived in Georgia and still owned property there, "served as the most direct channel of influence" between southern loyalists and the ministry. Knox himself favored an offensive in the South and advised Germain that operations there would be greatly facilitated by the aid of loyalists and Indians.6

In August 1777, Governors William Campbell and James Wright and their lieutenant governors, William Bull and John Graham, sent Germain a memorial urging a prompt offensive in the South to relieve the loyalists. Had such an attack been made the previous winter, the authors believed, "a great number of the inhabitants" would have seized "the opportunity of showing their loyalty." In the intervening months, it was certain that "many who were then well-disposed to government have from various motives since changed their sentiments or are under necessity of seeming to have done so." But there were still enough loyalists to help the army restore British authority in Georgia and South Carolina. The writers recommended shifting the focus of the war southward before the "friends of government ... despairing of relief," submitted to the rebels or left for the Floridas.7

Former South Carolina attorney general James Simpson offered his own plan, a proposal for an attack on Charleston which he sent to Germain in September 1778.

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7 Memorial of Lord William Campbell and Others to Germain, [Aug. 1777], DAR, 14:182-184.
Simpson asserted that the conquest of that town would lead to the occupation of most of South Carolina. Afterwards, he suggested, loyalist refugees from the northern colonies could be resettled in South Carolina. There, “when joined to the well affected,” they “would prove much superior, to any Malcontents, who might remain amongst them.”

The following month, Moses Kirkland sent Clinton a detailed proposal for a southern campaign. Kirkland, who was in New York after having fled South Carolina in 1775, proposed that a force of regulars, loyalists, and Indians advance into Georgia from East Florida, while troops from New York attacked Savannah by sea. After taking Savannah, the united army could march to Augusta, open a line of communication with the backcountry of both Carolinas, “and the Friends of Government will flock from all parts to that Post to join his Majesty’s Troops.” John Stuart could assemble the Chickasaws and Choctaws, link up with the Cherokees, and march to the Long Canes district of South Carolina to meet the troops and loyalists. To prevent the rebels from reinforcing Georgia and the Carolinas, Kirkland suggested that the Overhill Cherokees and Shawnees attack the overmountain settlements and the Virginia frontier. This accomplished, a second expedition from New York could seize Charleston.

Kirkland sent a revised version of this plan to the peace commissioners a week later. The most significant alteration was that he assigned slaves a role. Although a slave owner himself, Kirkland proposed to incite a slave insurrection. The labor of slaves provided the crops which allowed the rebels to finance their war effort, he noted. “But the instant that The Kings Troops are put in motion in those Colonies, these poor Slaves would be ready to rise upon their Rebel Masters, and be a great means of compelling

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8 Simpson to Germain, [Sept. 1, 1778], Germain Papers, Vol. 20, WLCL.
them to seek refuge in the interior Provinces.” Apparently Kirkland intended to restore
the slaves to their laborer status once they had ousted their masters, for he made no
mention of what was to be done with them afterward, yet noted that once the rebels were
gone, Britain would benefit from the produce of the southern colonies.10

Continuing to press for a southern campaign, Patrick Tonyn believed that the
rebels were on the verge of collapse and that a blow in the South would prove fatal to
them. “I am certain the four southern provinces are incapable of making any very
formidable resistance, they are not prepared for a Scene of war,” he wrote. A British
attack, Tonyn predicted, “will operate to effect a quick surrender.”11

The peace commissioners, having failed to attain their original objective, turned
their attention to subduing the rebellion and also favored a southern campaign. On
September 21, 1778, George Johnstone told William Smith, a prominent New York
loyalist, that he desired “a Winter Expedition to reduce S. Carolina with the Help of the
Indians and Negroes.”12 The commissioners believed that “a footing gained and kept to
the Southward by assistance of a few troops, back settlers, and Negroes, will show the
Southern Colonys their danger.”13 The British would then have an opportunity to try the
long-desired experiment of restoring civil government in Georgia, which they hoped

10 Kirkland to His Majesty’s Commissioners, Oct. 21, 1778, in Miller, ed., “Backcountry Loyalist Plan,”
212-214.
11 Tonyn to Amherst, Nov. 11, 1778, Amherst Papers, WO 34/111/184, microfilm reel 64, DLAR.
12 William Smith, Historical Memoirs from 26 August 1778 to 12 November 1783 of William Smith
Historian of the Province of New York; Member of the Governor’s Council, and Last Chief Justice of That
Province under the Crown; Chief Justice of Quebec, William H. W. Sabine, ed. (New York: Arno Press,
1971), 23.
13 Proceedings of Peace Commissioners, Dec. 12, 1778, Papers of William Eden, First Baron Auckland,
Microfilm Reel 4, #125, DLAR.
would put the loyalists “in a Condition to defend their Persons and their Propertys, & to
turn against the Ennemys of Peace the Edge of Criminal Law.”

Some of the proposals for southern operations seemed so fantastic as to be
unworthy of serious consideration. When Wright suggested an attack using eleven
thousand troops supported by Indians, Germain dismissed the scheme as useless.

Nevertheless, Germain recognized the importance of offensive action in the southern
colonies and devoted much effort during the winter of 1777-1778 to formulating plans for
operations there. With the assistance of Knox, Germain devised a plan that began with
the recapture of Savannah. A combined force of British troops, southern loyalists, and
Indians would next attack Charleston. Success there, Germain believed, would insure
British control of Georgia and South Carolina and lead to the quick recovery of North
Carolina and Virginia.

When it became apparent that France would enter the war as the rebels’ ally,
Germain issued new orders to Clinton that set the stage for the southern campaign. The
king, Germain wrote, had decided that “the War must be prosecuted upon a different Plan
from That upon which it has hitherto been carried on.” Clinton’s most important
assignments for the upcoming campaign were to bring Washington’s army to battle and
to raid the New England coast. Germain expected these operations to be finished by
October, and at that time, “it is the King’s intention that an Attack should be made upon
the Southern Colonies, with a View to the Conquest & Possession of Georgia & South
Carolina,” Germain explained. “The various accounts we receive from those Provinces
concur in representing the distress of the Inhabitants, and their general disposition to

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14 Carlisle, Clinton, and Eden to Germain, Oct. 16, 1778, Auckland Papers, Reel 4, #60, DLAR.
15 Bellot, William Knox, 146.
16 Bellot, William Knox, 163-164.
return to their Allegiance." Arms would be provided to enable Clinton "to raise & embody the well affected Inhabitants." Germain advised Clinton to attack Georgia as soon as possible, with troops from New York joining the forces in East Florida and the Indians in a three-pronged attack. Once Georgia was secured, Germain believed, backcountry loyalists would be able to reach the army there and invade the interior of South Carolina in conjunction with another expedition from New York aimed at taking Charleston. These maneuvers would lead to the rapid submission of South Carolina.17

With their military manpower already strained before French intervention, British officials agreed that loyalist assistance was essential if the government was to retake and hold several provinces with the limited number of regular troops that could be spared to operate in the South. However, there was some disagreement concerning the actual strength of the loyalists and the manner in which they should be used. George III and his ministers shared the belief that there were large numbers of loyalists in the southern provinces.18 One army officer told General Jeffery Amherst, who had accepted overall command of the British army in 1778, that Americans who supported the king must "disguise their Sentiments, and never will venture to declare for Britain 'till they see a prospect of being placed in Security against their Enemies." If the British were to succeed, they had to adopt the same harsh measures that the Whigs had used against the loyalists. The latter must be put "in possession of the Government and of the Sword. Disarm or expel our Opponents ... Reward Our Friends by the possession of Forfeited Lands, and punish our irreclaimable Enemies agreeable to the Forms of Civil Justice."19

17 Germain to Clinton, March 8, 1778, Germain Papers, Vol. 18, WLCL.
18 Higginbotham, American War of Independence, 354; Hibbert, George III, 161.
19 "Remarks on some Improvements Proposed by an Officer to be made in the Plan of the American War," 1778, Jeffery Amherst Papers, War Office 34/110/144, microfilm, reel 63, DLAR.
Some officers doubted that the loyalists were numerous enough to accomplish such a task. Charles Stuart, son of the Earl of Bute, wrote his father that southern governors had been blinded by the “pretended affection of the people” and failed to see “the political state of the Country, and their own vanity flatter’d by promises of personal attachment induced them not only to listen to the artful and cunning insinuations of even the leaders of fashion, but to declare their Colonies submissive subjects of the Crown.”

Captain Frederick Mackenzie of the 23rd Regiment, reflecting the views of many army officers, expressed the same opinion even more bluntly. “Nothing can be done to the Southward of Pensylvania,” he declared.

Disagreements also arose over the use of Indians and slaves. Although Clinton supported the general plan, he was reluctant to employ Indians to assist his troops. In a discussion with William Smith on May 28, 1779, he expressed “his Dislike of the Savages and their unmanageableness.” Other officers also disliked relying on blacks and Indians. The Inspector General of Provincial Troops and former aide to South Carolina governor Campbell, Alexander Innes, complained to Clinton that loyalist regiments in New York included “Negroes, Mulattoes, Indians, Sailors and Rebel Prisoners ... to the disgrace and ruin of the provincial service.”

Germain had no qualms about using Indians against the rebels, but hesitated to endorse arming slaves. In March 1778 he cautiously advised Clinton that the army might

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20 Charles Stuart to the Earl of Bute, Feb. 4, 1777, in Mrs. E. Stuart Wortley, ed., A Prime Minister and His Son. From the Correspondence of the 3rd Earl of Bute And Of Lt.-General The Hon. Sir Charles Stuart, K.B. (London: John Murray, 1925), 97.
22 William Smith, Historical Memoirs, 110.
23 Smith, Loyalists and Redcoats, 71.
somehow divide the South Carolina backcountry from the lowcountry, which would leave the large slaveholding planters with the choice of submitting to British authority or having to either give up their slaves or have their slaves abandon them. Beyond that the minister was unwilling to proceed. One reason for his reluctance to assign a large role to slaves in the southern campaign was the continued denunciation of such a policy by members of the opposition in Parliament. During debates on the conduct of the war in 1778, Edmund Burke warned of "the horrible consequences that might ensue from constituting 100,000 fierce barbarian slaves, to be both the judges and executioners of their masters." 

Ironically, British officials showed less hesitation to employ blacks on a large scale to bolster the defenses of the West Indies. Slaves built and repaired fortifications on the various islands, repaired naval vessels in ports, and performed other tasks to support the regular troops, while free blacks and mulattos served in some of the island militias and enlisted in the navy. Jamaica also raised a regular regiment of free blacks, although Germain refused to grant the unit official status. Nevertheless, the island's assembly authorized the regiment in April 1782, with the support of the king. A second battalion was quickly raised, and in November recruiters went to Charleston to enlist a third battalion. General Edward Mathew, commanding at St. Lucia, also procured slaves from Charleston and elsewhere to serve in his command. Perhaps Britons found using blacks to fight the French less distasteful than employing them against the Americans.

Necessity was another factor that led to the arming of West Indian blacks, and the needs of the West Indies were a major reason for undertaking the southern campaign. The

war had halted the trade between the islands and the mainland, depriving the West Indies of their traditional source of provisions. The recapture of the southern colonies could provide needed supplies from the mainland. Germain reminded Clinton in August 1778 that the West Indies were suffering from shortages of provisions and lumber, which could be obtained from the southern provinces once Clinton had subdued them.27

South Carolina and Georgia were also economically valuable in their own right. The government was hard pressed to raise the funds necessary to finance the war, and the prospect of revenue from the profitable crops raised in the South made the conquest of that region particularly appealing to Germain.28 One loyalist reported that the annual prewar trade of the two provinces had amounted to £630,000 ($82.75 million) and “in the present State of Things” might now be worth considerably more. The possession of the southern colonies would thus relieve the strain on Britain’s finances while depriving the rebels of valuable resources.29 Charles Jenkinson of the Treasury Department, realizing that Britain might lose some of the colonies, believed that it was wiser to sacrifice New England than the southern provinces with their abundant crops of rice and indigo.30

Given the power of these arguments, Germain’s instructions, and his own inclinations, Clinton dispatched an expedition from New York in November 1778 to capture Savannah. He placed Lt. Col. Archibald Campbell, a Scot with extensive military experience, in command of the troops. Anticipating success, the peace commissioners provided Campbell with a commission as civil governor of Georgia and the authority to

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28 Valentine, Lord George Germain, 366.
30 Higginbotham, American War of Independence, 353.
restore that province to the king’s peace if a significant percentage of the inhabitants declared their allegiance to Britain. In a burst of optimism, the commissioners also gave Campbell a commission as governor of South Carolina in the event he was able to regain control of that province as well.31

Germain expected the southern loyalists to turn out in large numbers when Campbell arrived in Georgia, and his optimism was shared by loyalists in New York. “Our late Accounts from that Quarter give us every Reason to expect the Troops will be joined by very considerable Numbers of the Inhabitants of the back parts of the Carolinas, when they find Georgia will be an Assylum for them,” Germain told Clinton in early December.32 Charles Inglis believed that if southern loyalists received “any Rational Support,” they would “take a much more active Part hereafter than they done hitherto. They have severely felt the Iron Hand of Oppression and Persecution” and now realized that they might “lose every Thing unless the King prevails.” Inglis hoped enough loyalist volunteers would come forward to require all of the five thousand stand of spare arms that Campbell carried with him.33 Another New York loyalist, Daniel Coxe, also expected a large number of Georgians to join Campbell, in which case “the three Southern Colonies of Georgia & the two Carolinas must be completely subjected this Winter.”34 Benjamin Franklin’s loyalist son and former New Jersey governor William Franklin predicted that if Campbell’s “Blow is properly follow’d up ... it will soon be all

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32 Germain to Clinton, Dec. 3, 1778, Clinton Papers, Vol. 47, No. 32, WLCL.
over with Congressional Power in the Southern Colonies.” Clinton, who was more cautious, sent Alexander Innes to accompany the expedition to Georgia, with orders to learn “the Situation of the Country and disposition of the Inhabitants” and carry the information directly to London.

Campbell’s rapid success convinced British leaders that the southern strategy was sound. Support for the ministry’s policy in America had been wavering in Parliament and among the British public since the 1777 defeat at Saratoga, but the easy capture of Savannah in December 1778 and the successful defense of the town the following autumn indicated that further success was probable in the southern colonies. One Briton wrote in the spring of 1779 that as a result of the recent victories in the West Indies and Georgia, “it is the general prevailing Opinion here that peace will take place in the course of this year.” Even opposition writers in London began to think that the fortunes of war had swung in Britain’s favor. Some of the most vocal antiwar newspapers conceded that Campbell had achieved an impressive victory. One opposition paper, while still urging the government to grant the colonies independence, nevertheless proposed that only twelve provinces be given up, and that Georgia be retained.

When Gen. Augustine Prevost crossed the Savannah River in the spring of 1779 and marched to Charleston without encountering substantial opposition, it further confirmed the belief that South Carolina could easily be retaken. Germain told Clinton that Prevost’s campaign, along with “the information I have of the state of South Carolina

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36 Clinton to Germain, Nov. 8, 1778, Clinton Papers, Vol. 45, No. 30, WLCL.
38 Valentine, Lord North, 2:87.
and the disposition of the majority of the inhabitants,” made him optimistic that Prevost
“will find means to effect the reduction of Charleston, and that the province will be
speedily restored to the King’s obedience.” The news that Prevost had not taken
Charleston failed to dampen Germain’s enthusiasm. Seven weeks later, the minister
urged Clinton to attack the town, observing again that Prevost’s almost uncontested
advance and retreat presented “indubitable proof of the indisposition of the inhabitants to
support the rebel government.” An offensive by Clinton’s troops in South Carolina,
Germain declared, would almost certainly “be attended with the recovery of the whole of
that province; and probably North Carolina would soon follow,” allowing Clinton to
restore both colonies to the king’s peace.

The ministry’s supporters responded to the capture of Savannah with new plans
and demands to attack South Carolina. In the summer of 1779 Richard Oswald, whose
connections gave him a great deal of influence in the government, composed a
memorandum in which he asserted that the “partial dismemberment of America” was the
only plan likely to succeed in bringing the rebellion to a successful end. “That prospect is
now in a good train,” he observed, “by the Recovery of Georgia. And if we succeed in
South Carolina, we may hope that the Spirit of the Rebellion will So far Subside, as that
the Outstanding Colonies to the Northward will find it their Interest to listen to terms of
Amnesty.” Oswald considered South Carolina vulnerable due to the weak American
forces there, the difficulty of getting reinforcements from the north, and because “the
nature of the great Estates & Valueable property in Slaves, renders an Obstinate
Resistance more dangerous and alarming to Individuals.” He urged that Prevost’s army

40 Germain to Clinton, Aug. 5, 1779, in Clinton, American Rebellion, 415-416.
41 Germain to Clinton, Sept. 27, 1779, in Clinton, American Rebellion, 423.
be reinforced so that it would be strong enough to capture Charleston, after which the rest of South Carolina would have to submit. Oswald predicted that this would likely be followed by the recovery of North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland.\(^{42}\)

Several weeks later, Oswald elaborated on his plans for South Carolina in a supplementary memo. He now warned that the capture of Charleston would be difficult. “The place is … much stronger than most people imagine,” and the rebel leaders there “are violently Inimical” to Britain, he wrote. But Oswald insisted that success would be worth the effort. After royal authority had been reestablished, the people would reconcile themselves to British rule, so that “the recovery of this single province may be supposed to be opening a way to Settling peace, in some shape, over the whole Continent.” Any delay in making this effort, Oswald believed, could be fatal; the rebels in South Carolina would use the time to improve their defenses, so that “it may never again be in our power to make any, or at least so successful an Impression upon them, as we can do now.”\(^{43}\)

Oswald apparently envisioned the recapture of the southern provinces as a strictly military operation, for he made no mention of any role for loyalists, Indians, or slaves in the undertaking.

Leading Whigs also feared that the British success in Georgia foreshadowed worse consequences to come. At the very least, Henry Laurens expected Campbell’s troops to strip Georgia of its crops, livestock, and slaves, and then withdraw to St.

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\(^{42}\) “General Observations, Relative to the present State of the War,” Aug. 8, 1779, Richard Oswald Papers, WLCL.

\(^{43}\) “Supplement to the Papers of August 1779 Relative to the present State of the War,” Sept. 1779, Oswald Papers, WLCL.
Augustine. However, Laurens thought it more likely that with aid from “Auxiliary forces of Savages and disaffected Persons,” the British would hold their position.\textsuperscript{44}

Clinton remained cautious, the optimism of Britons and the fears of Whigs notwithstanding. He recognized that the loss of Georgia had caused the rebels “no small Consternation, and to apprehend Consequences in a country where besides Indians blacks ye Govt. has many friends.”\textsuperscript{45} However, the general wavered in his determination to follow up on Campbell’s victory. “Our Successes to the Southward, Suggest an attempt against Charles town,” he wrote Germain in April 1779. Clinton then went on to state that he did want to risk sending reinforcements southward when he did not know the location of the French fleet. Furthermore, he had “as yet received no assurances of any favorable temper in the province of South Carolina to encourage me to an undertaking where we must expect much difficulty.” If he sent only a small force to South Carolina, “it might induce a Number of persons to declare for us, whom we might afterwards be obliged to abandon; and thus might destroy a party, on whom we may depend if Circumstances will permit a more Solid attempt in a proper Season.” He concluded that it would be better to wait until October before attacking Charleston.\textsuperscript{46}

Germain also wanted more information regarding the number of loyalists in South Carolina and dispatched James Simpson to Savannah to inquire into the matter. After reaching the Georgia capital, Simpson encountered many acquaintances, most of whom had come to the town under flags of truce seeking “Negroes and other property which had been carried away” during Prevost’s raid on Charleston. Some of these people sought out Simpson “to inquire after Connections and Relations they had in Europe.” In these

\textsuperscript{44} Henry Laurens to William Read, Feb. 9, 1779, \textit{PHL}, 15: 55-56.

\textsuperscript{45} Clinton to Eden, Feb. 14, 1779, Auckland Papers, Microfilm Reel 4, #271, DLAR.

\textsuperscript{46} Clinton to Germain, April 4, 1779, Germain Papers, Vol. 9, WLCL.
conversations, Simpson carefully probed for useful information. He learned that while “there are still too many amongst them who will use all their influence to prevent a restoration of the public tranquility,” many South Carolinians were tired of the war and its disruptions. Simpson told Germain that many loyalists had fled the province, that others “had found means to make their Peace” with the Whigs after years of “almost unremitting persecution,” but that many still hoped that British forces would come to their relief. Simpson warned Germain that although significant numbers of loyalists were willing to aid the British, many would hesitate until they had absolute assurance that the army would protect them.47

Simpson’s report satisfied Germain that the time had come to follow up the victory in Georgia with an attack on South Carolina. The initial test had demonstrated that the southern strategy had been soundly conceived. Its ultimate success now depended on whether it could be equally well executed.

The Invasion of Georgia and the Loyalist Response

Clinton launched the southern campaign in November 1778, when he sent Archibald Campbell with some 2,500 troops from New York with orders to attack Georgia. To support Campbell’s force, Clinton instructed Augustine Prevost to advance into Georgia from East Florida. The fleet from New York reached Tybee Island on December 23.48 Campbell was optimistic; he believed that with additional troops from New York and “a Re-inforcement of 6000 Loyalists from the back Countries, in Conjunction with the Indian Tribes who were attached to Government,” he could occupy

48 Coleman, Revolution in Georgia, 119, 120.
both Georgia and South Carolina.\footnote{Campbell, \textit{Journal of an Expedition}, 7.} Campbell informed Patrick Tonyn and Prevost that after taking Savannah, he planned “to move ... as far up the Country as the Strength and Disposition of the Enemy will admit” to unite with the backcountry loyalists. He asked the two East Florida officials to notify John Stuart of the plan so that the Indians would “make a Diversion in my favour along the Back Woods of Georgia.”\footnote{Campbell to Tonyn, Dec. 5, 1778; Campbell to A. Prevost, Dec. 5, 1778, in Campbell, \textit{Journal}, 11-13.}

On the night of December 25, Campbell sent a company of light infantry ashore to “pick up some of the Inhabitants” who could provide intelligence of the strength and position of the rebel forces. The troops returned the next morning with “a White Overseer and a Black named Peter.” The two told Campbell that Savannah was defended by twelve hundred Continentals and six hundred militia with ten pieces of artillery; three galleys guarded the river approaches to the town. Campbell therefore decided to land at Girardeau’s Plantation and try to capture the town in a surprise attack.\footnote{Archibald Campbell, \textit{Journal}, 20-21. Campbell calls the plantation “Sheridoe’s” in his account.}

Campbell’s troops went ashore on December 29 and quickly drove off the small American force at the plantation. By early afternoon the British army was arrayed opposite the strong American defenses a half mile south of Savannah. While Campbell pondered his plan of attack, a “confidential Slave from Sir James Wright’s Plantation” came to him with information. Campbell, after questioning the man, “found that he could lead the Troops without Artillery through the Swamp upon the Enemy’s Right.”\footnote{Archibald Campbell, \textit{Journal}, 22-26 (quotation 26).}

Almost nothing is known about this slave, whose name was either Quash or Quamino Dolly. He apparently came to Campbell on his own initiative, perhaps out of loyalty to his former owner, Gov. Wright, or from a desire to obtain his freedom by

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assisting the British. Whatever the slave’s motives, Campbell did not hesitate to adopt the
man’s advice as soon as he determined that his information was accurate. The slave
guided a part of Campbell’s force through the swamp into the rear of the rebel lines,
taking General Robert Howe’s troops completely by surprise. The maneuver, which
Campbell supported with a frontal attack, routed the Whigs. About one hundred
Americans were killed and 450 captured; the remainder fled. British casualties numbered
only twenty-six. The slave’s assistance had proven valuable indeed. Campbell’s
victorious troops then marched to Savannah and occupied the town.53

Meanwhile, Prevost had begun his northward advance, entering Georgia on
November 20 with about seven hundred British and loyalist troops. A second force of
over four hundred men moved by sea to Sunbury, capturing the town and its rebel
defenders on January 10, 1779.54 The threat from the Creeks greatly facilitated Prevost’s
march. Governor John Houstoun wrote that Georgia’s defenses along its southern border
had been “particularly weaken’d ... by drawing off the Troops and Volunteers, to the
Westward, in opposition to the Indians.”55 Andrew Williamson had also taken six
hundred South Carolina militia into Creek territory to check the anticipated attack, who
were thus too distant to come to Georgia’s aid.56 The remaining militia in southern
Georgia made “extraordinary Exertions” to assist the planters in removing their slaves,
rather than resisting Prevost’s advance.57

53 Archibald Campbell, Journal, 27-28, 110, Note 58; Alexander A. Lawrence states that the slave agreed
to guide the British for “a small reward,” in “General Robert Howe and the British Capture of Savannah in
1778,” GHQ, Vol. 36, No. 4, Dec. 1952, 317. There is no mention of this in the British accounts, although
it is possible Campbell later compensated the slave for his services; Coleman, Revolution in Georgia, 121.
54 Coleman, Revolution in Georgia, 121.
As both the ministers and military commanders had expected, slaves and Indians had, directly and indirectly, contributed to the initial British success in Georgia. Those aspects of the southern strategy were working, and if the loyalists came forward, it augured well for British prospects of regaining control of the southern provinces.

Some loyalists began turning out as soon as they heard reports that British forces were en route to Georgia. In late 1778, a group of loyalists assembled under a Captain Coleman south of Broad River in South Carolina. The Whigs moved to disperse them, but Coleman attacked first, routing the rebels and killing four. By the time the Whigs had regrouped, Coleman was in Georgia on his way to join the British. The frustrated Whigs contented themselves with burning the homes of several of Coleman’s men.  

Christopher Friedrich Triebner, the Lutheran minister and teacher in the German settlement at Ebenezer, made his way to Savannah the day after its capture and later guided Campbell’s troops to his home town. On January 2, in a sermon “against Rebellion and Licentiousness,” Triebner urged his congregation to submit to the king’s authority. Campbell appointed him a magistrate, and the minister soon found himself busy administering the oath of allegiance to many of Ebenezer’s inhabitants.

On January 4, 1779, Campbell and Admiral Hyde Parker issued a proclamation calling upon loyalists and any other “well-disposed Inhabitants” to unite under the king’s standard. The two officers promised all who joined them “the most ample Protection in their Persons, Families and Effects.” The rebels resorted to intimidation in an effort to prevent people from responding to the summons, which prompted Campbell to issue

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59 Campbell, *Journal*, 34.
61 Proclamation by Hyde Parker and Archibald Campbell, Jan. 4, 1779, Auckland Papers, Reel 4, #235, DLAR.
another proclamation on January 8. Angered that “skulking Parties ... under Colour of the 
Night, have the Audacity to rob, and otherways ill treat those true and faithful Subjects of 
His Majesty,” Campbell threatened severe punishment to “such wicked and destructive 
Enemies.” He also offered a reward of ten guineas (the equivalent of nearly $1,400 in 
2002) for every rebel civil or military officer taken prisoner, and two guineas for ordinary 
rebels.62

Despite this harassment, many Georgians took the British oath. On January 9, 
Campbell organized “several Companies of Militia to patrole the Country” between 
Cherokee Hill and Ebenezer.63 Others guarded the crossing of the Savannah River at 
Hudson’s Ferry; several acted as scouts and spies to keep Campbell informed of rebel 
movements.64 Thomas Manson, an Augusta loyalist, took advantage of the confusion 
created by the British invasion “to make his Escape from the Repeated Insults he received 
from the Populace on Account of his Suspected Loyalty to the British Government.” He 
traveled seventy miles through woods and byways to reach Savannah, where he joined a 
company of loyalist volunteers.65 A British deserter reported on January 12 that two 
hundred loyalists had already offered their services to Campbell.66 “The inhabitants of 
this province are coming in daily here in great numbers wishing to give up their arms and 
take the oath of allegiance to the King,” a Hessian soldier wrote a few days later.67 Dr.

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1780 was worth the equivalent of 137.87 American dollars in 2002, based on information at 
http://eh.net/hmit.
63 Campbell, Journal, 39.
64 Col. Lytle to Benjamin Lincoln, Jan. 22, 1779, Benjamin Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3; Campbell, 
Journal, 51.
6, 2002.
67 “Copy of a letter from Quarter-Master-Sergeant Kitz ... to one of his friends in New York,” Jan. 17, 
1779, “Correspondence of General von Knyphausen, HDAR, Item G.

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Thomas Taylor observed that “people have flocked to the different British posts, have freely taken the oaths of allegiance, and many have joined the King’s army, Thomas Fleming with 100 horsemen, Henry Sharp with some 200 horse and foot, and many others.”68 On January 19, Thomas Robinson asserted that “there is not a Rebbel in Arms in the Govemt, all that New them selves to be gilty Run to South Carolina, and the Rest Com in, Give up their Arms, many of which tuk up Arms in Govmt Sarvis.”69

When Prevost arrived in Savannah, he brought with him 250 Georgians and South Carolinians who had tried to join the British, but “were pursued by the rebels and driven into the wilderness,” where “they had to nourish themselves six days with roots and herbs until General Prevost rescued them.” The British planned to train these men “to be regular soldiers.”70

An exuberant Campbell informed Germain on January 19 that he knew of only two men who had refused to accept the terms of his proclamation of pardon, and these had “hurried off to the Rebels.”71 “I have got the Country in arms against the Congress,” Campbell boasted to peace commissioner William Eden. He asked Eden to press the ministry to “hurry out a Proper Governour for this Province, with every necessary arrangement for the Reestablishment of Legal Government. Its effects at this Juncture, whilst the minds of the People in the neighbouring Provinces are worn out by

68 Thomas Taylor to unnamed, Jan. 18, 1779, in Davis, ed., “Georgia Loyalist’s Perspective,” 131.
71 Campbell to Germain, Jan. 19, 1779, in Campbell, Journal, 43.
persecutions, extortions, & apprehensions; must operate more powerfully than twenty thousand troops.”

When Germain received Campbell’s reports, he was ecstatic, praising the colonel and predicting that “you will be joined by very considerable Numbers, upon your Arrival at Augusta; and be able to form such a Force there, as you may without Hazard, penetrate into” South Carolina. In March, Germain informed Georgian exiles in England who were receiving government pensions that their payments would cease and ordered them to return to the province. The government provided funds for their passage. Recent exiles who had applied for assistance were also given travel allowances and told to return.

Most welcomed the opportunity to do so. Exiled Georgian S.H. Jenkins discussed the news with other southern loyalists living in London; all were “confident that Government will keep possession of Georgia at all events. – God grant it may be so!” Jenkins wrote.

Savannah’s capture also elevated the spirits of New York loyalists, who greeted the official announcement with joy. Rumors abounded that Campbell, reinforced by Indians and loyalists, was already marching on Charleston.

As loyalist morale increased, southern Whigs grew pessimistic, since they feared that the loss of Savannah, combined with loyalist assistance to the British, might prove devastating to the rebel cause. When the news of Savannah’s capture reached the backcountry on December 29, George Galphin wrote that it immediately “DisCoreged the Inhabitents the most of them Says. thy will Lay Down there armes & the rest is Coming

72 Campbell to Eden, Jan. 19, 1779, Auckland Papers, Reel 4, No. 246, DLAR.
73 Germain to Campbell, March 13, 1779, in Campbell, Journal, 80.
74 Norton, British Americans, 112.
75 S.H. Jenkins to John Inglis, June 26, 1779, John Inglis Papers, GHS.
in” to South Carolina.”

One rebel warned his commander on January 7 that Campbell’s troops were “encamped at one Blyths who from his knowledge of the swamp on this [South Carolina] side may probably Introduce a party of the Enemy into our neighbourhood – He being a man long suspected of dissatisfaction to our great & glorious Cause.” Three days later, militia colonel Stephen Bull complained that exchanged British officers had, while in rebel custody, “been Allowed to go at large and had an Opportunity of Conversing & Enquiring from some Tories & Disaffected,” from whom they had probably learned much about the defenses in southeastern South Carolina.

Maj. Gen. Benjamin Lincoln, who had replaced Howe as commander of the Southern Department on January 3, also received several reports that large numbers of backcountry loyalists intended to join the British. “I have been told, that many of the disaffected mean to join the Enemy, if they can get an opportunity,” Andrew Williamson wrote on February 1, “but I have taken every Precaution in my Power to Guard against their wicked Intentions, by Keeping Spies amongst them whom I can depend upon to inform me of their proceedings.” Williamson noted that the loyalists had not yet begun to organize and believed that “we shall be able to Keep them Quiet, especially if we can prevent the Enemy Crossing the Savannah – In Case of such an Event I Scarce make a doubt of their being joined by Numbers of the Tories.” William Moultrie shared Williamson’s concern, telling Lincoln that if the British established a post at Augusta, “they would encrease by the disaffected and possibly by the Indians.”

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78 William Stafford to Benjamin Lincoln, Jan. 7, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3.
79 Stephen Bull to Benjamin Lincoln, Jan. 10, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3.
80 Bennett and Lennon, Quest for Glory, 100.
81 Andrew Williamson to Benjamin Lincoln, Feb. 1, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3.
82 William Moultrie to Benjamin Lincoln, Feb. 8, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3.

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estimated the number of loyalists who had joined Campbell “from Florida the back parts of this state [South Carolina] & of the Georgians,” at between “2 & 3000.”

Henry Clinton was perhaps the only person with an interest in the southern campaign who viewed the situation with calm detachment. Although satisfied with the results in Georgia, he hesitated to approve any hasty movement northward. “I have as yet received no assurances of any favourable temper in the province of South Carolina to encourage me to an undertaking where we must expect so much difficulty,” he informed Germain on April 4. The general’s caution cooled some of Germain’s enthusiasm. Germain continued to emphasize the importance of recovering South Carolina in his correspondence with Clinton, but agreed that the “Assistance of the Loyal Inhabitants is essential to the Success of all Operations” there. Germain also conceded that “it is equally necessary, to avoid being deceived in our Expectations from them.” He therefore decided to send James Simpson to Georgia to assess loyalist strength in South Carolina. Simpson had the “Knowledge of the Country & People” necessary “to detect and prevent Imposition” by those who might supply incorrect information, Germain noted. Simpson had orders to report the results of his investigation to Clinton to help the general plan his next moves in the South.

Campbell, meanwhile, prepared to follow up his initial success by organizing a temporary government at Savannah and then advancing into the Georgia backcountry. Acting in his capacity as governor of Georgia, he created a board of police on January 13 to function as a temporary civil authority. He appointed Louis Johnston superintendent,

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84 Quoted in Valentine, Lord George Germain, 435.
85 Germain to Clinton, March [31], 1779, Clinton Papers, Vol. 54, No. 32, WLCL.
along with two assistants. The board operated until Governor Wright resumed his office and the province's prewar civil government was reestablished.

With his political task completed and Prevost on hand to manage military matters in the capital, Campbell prepared to march to Augusta. Sometime after the capture of Savannah, he had dispatched Colonel James (or John) Boyd to the backcountry. A South Carolina refugee who had accompanied Campbell to Georgia from New York, Boyd had promised to recruit several hundred loyalists in his home region to reinforce Campbell's small army.

Campbell was eager to get to Augusta because he had learned "that Colonel Boyd with a large Body of Loyalists meant to join me." Reports indicated that Boyd had recruited about one thousand men. "Many Loyalists" also came from Augusta to urge Campbell to come to the assistance of the king's supporters there. They assured the British commander that "the very sight of The King's troops in that quarter, would be the means of collecting a considerable number of loyal Subjects ... that would be willing to accompany the King's troops wherever the Service required." Campbell also expected to meet a large force of Indians at Augusta.

On January 24, Campbell left Ebenezer with nine hundred men, intending "to clear that part of the Province of Rebels, and to protect such Inhabitants as chose to return to the allegiance of The King." At various places along his route, Campbell met

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86 “Journal of the Hessian Regiment von Knoblauch,” HDAR, Item W.
88 Robert S. Davis, Jr., and Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Kettle Creek: The Battle of the Cane Brakes; Wilkes County, Georgia (Atlanta: Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1975), 31.
89 Campbell, Journal, 39 (quotation), 45.
numerous people "who promised to form into Companys and give every Assistance possible to promote The King's Service." These people took the oath of allegiance and received arms and ammunition from the British.91 Enough loyalists came forward at Briar Creek to enable Campbell to organize a militia force there.92

As the British continued their advance, Campbell learned that the Whigs planned to execute three brothers who had recently joined the British and had been captured in a skirmish with rebel militia. To alert the Whigs that he would not tolerate such practices, Campbell sent a detachment within sight of the rebel camp to prepare for the hanging of two rebel leaders "notorious for their cruel Treatment of the Loyalists of Georgia." At the same time, Campbell dispatched an officer to the Whigs with an offer to exchange prisoners and a threat to hang six men if the rebels executed their three captives. The Whigs quickly agreed to exchange their prisoners for three men of equal rank.93

Whig troops were unable to offer serious resistance to the British. South Carolina could not assist the Georgians because their militia had to remain in Ninety Six district "to keep the Tories and Indians in subjection."94 Gen. Samuel Elbert commanded the troops who were supposed to oppose Campbell, but Elbert thought himself too weak to make a stand and retreated into South Carolina. Although Lincoln believed that Elbert had acted wisely, he lamented the dangers that might ensue. Should the British pursue Elbert, Lincoln warned, "it is easy to see that many ill consequences will result from such a measure; our supplies will be affected, the Indians uncontrouled, and the Tories have an

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91 Wilson, Encounters, 19.
94 Benjamin Lincoln to Rawlins Lowndes, Jan. 6, 1779, Lincoln Papers, microfilm, Reel 3.
opportunity to triumph over & distress the good inhabitants of these States.” To
prevent such problems, Lincoln reinforced Elbert with Andrew Williamson’s militia and
eight hundred North Carolinians under Gen. John Ashe. “If the enemy are suffered there
to roam at pleasure, in their arms our disaffected inhabitants will find an asylum, and the
Indians, who are too much disposed to mischief, will have at hand stimulators thereto, &
supporters therein; hereby our enemies will augment their force and greatly weaken and
distress us,” Lincoln predicted.

Subsequent events showed that Lincoln’s fears were well-founded. Elbert soon
reported “that the disaffected people are collecting” in the backcountry. Joseph
Kershaw informed Lincoln that some loyalists had “Actuaily rose and attempted to
possess themselves of a quantity of Powder” kept in a fort on Broad River. He predicted
“that if a speedy stop is not put to them they may soon become formidable.”

British troops entered Augusta on January 31, where they “found but a few
families, and some of these had but the female part at home.” But over the next several
days, large numbers of people came into town and took the oath to George III. Campbell
organized them into a militia, appointing as officers men who were “most agreeable to
the generality of the Inhabitants.” Eventually fourteen hundred men who “had joined us
with their Arms; and took the Oath of Allegiance” were embodied in twenty
companies. One of Campbell’s officers complained that the Georgians “could not be
brought to any regularity; therefore no real, substancial Services from them could be

95 Lincoln to Elbert, Feb. 4, 1779, Lincoln Papers, reel 3.
96 Lincoln to Lowndes, Feb. 4, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 3.
97 Lincoln to Lowndes, Feb. 10, 1779, Lincoln Papers, reel 3.
98 Joseph Kershaw to Lincoln, Feb. 18, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3.
99 Wilson, Encounters, 42.
100 Campbell, Journal, 54-56, 58-60.
depended on” for quite some time.\textsuperscript{101} Campbell actually considered many of his new
Georgian militiamen a liability, telling Clinton that “it was our misfortune at this period
to be encumbered with some irregulars from the upper country under the denomination of
\textit{crackers} ... whose motions were too voluntary to be under restraint” and who were prone
to pillage when sent on scouting expeditions. When the Whigs assembled a large force
north of the Savannah River, “the crackers ... found many excuses for going home to their
plantations” in spite of Campbell’s entreaties.\textsuperscript{102}

Campbell tried to accommodate these unusual supporters and began to fortify the
town, intending to establish a post there to support the backcountry loyalists. He told one
American, who forwarded the information to the Whigs, that he had taken command of
the Georgia expedition on condition that the country was to be held, and that to abandon
it would “falsify his honour to the People and deceive them.”\textsuperscript{103}

A steady stream of visitors came to Augusta with information and supplies.
Loyalist scouts brought Campbell regular reports of rebel activities. An emissary from
Wilkes County brought a letter from the inhabitants “offering to surrender several
stockaded Forts on the Frontiers of Georgia” fifty miles from Augusta. Campbell
immediately dispatched eighty men to take the forts and to find Boyd’s loyalists. The
officers brought a letter from Campbell, promising that he would protect the frontier
people from Indian attack. All of the forts were taken without resistance except one,
which the troops captured by storm.\textsuperscript{104} Loyalists from nearby Wrightsborough brought
provisions for the British troops. Campbell also met an Indian leader “who came from his

\textsuperscript{101} Wilson, \textit{Encounters}, 42.
\textsuperscript{102} Archibald Campbell to Clinton, March 4, 1779, \textit{DAR}, 17:74, 75.
\textsuperscript{103} “State of the Enemy in Georgia,” March [15], 1779, Misc. Papers, Series 1, Vol. 1, No. 53, NCSA.
\textsuperscript{104} Campbell, \textit{Journal}, 54-56, 58-60.
Nation to receive and give a Talk." After the British gave their visitor a generous quantity of presents, he returned home.105

In accordance with orders from Gen. Prevost, Campbell dispatched Thomas Brown and the Florida Rangers from Augusta to secure Burke County. Brown’s force, which included Daniel McGirt’s independent loyalist rangers, numbered four hundred men and was reinforced by two hundred Georgians under Col. John Thomas. They attacked 250 rebels who occupied the Burke County jail, but were repulsed. Having been joined by three more parties of loyalists, Brown renewed the attack but was driven off a second time.106

By February 12, notwithstanding the promises he had made to the loyalists, Campbell decided to withdraw from Augusta. The anticipated Creek reinforcements had not arrived, provisions were scarce in the area, and he was unsure if Boyd’s loyalists were coming to join him. With large numbers of rebels gathering across the Savannah River, Campbell also worried that he was too distant from Prevost’s forces and might be cut off. After waiting two days longer for Boyd and the Creeks, the British troops began their return march.107 The rebels followed, but McGirt’s loyalists acted as a rear guard, “way-laying the roads” and keeping the pursuers away from the main British column.108

On the way to Savannah, Campbell received a letter from Gen. Prevost approving the withdrawal. Prevost believed that insufficient loyalist support, rather than the combination of factors Campbell had noted, made it necessary to abandon Augusta. “I always thought that our being able to keep our Post at Augusta depended on the single

105 Wilson, Encounters, 42.
106 Davis and Thomas, Kettle Creek, 21; Ward, Between the Lines, 204; Cashin, King’s Ranger, 85, 88.
107 Campbell, Journal, 64.
108 Lincoln to Williamson, Feb. 16, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 3.
circumstance of the Back-Country People’s Joining heartily in the cause,” Prevost wrote, “as without that we must be certain of finding great difficulty if not impossibility in preserving a communication to such a distance.”¹⁰⁹ In a letter to Clinton, Prevost again expressed disappointment at the lack of support in the backcountry, but attributed it to the fact that “the rebels were already in arms and in possession of all the passes” which prevented the loyalists from “communicating with the King’s troops.” Prevost expected greater success in the future, noting that a majority of the backcountry inhabitants “(even by accounts of rebels) are loyal in their inclinations.”¹¹⁰

Meanwhile, Boyd, with the aid of Zachariah Gibbes, had enlisted about six hundred men and united with a smaller band of North Carolinians. The combined force of between seven and eight hundred men made their way across western South Carolina to join Campbell at Augusta. After entering Georgia, Boyd defeated a smaller rebel force in a skirmish. Whig militia under Andrew Pickens took up the pursuit of the loyalists. Unaware that Campbell had left Augusta or that his own force was being pursued, Boyd continued his march. On February 14 he halted his men for a rest along Kettle Creek, where Pickens with several hundred Whigs attacked them. Although taken by surprise, Boyd fought valiantly until he was mortally wounded. Many of the loyalists, however, had not been able to reorganize after the initial attack and eventually retreated. Pickens, satisfied with what he called “the severest check and chastisement the Tories ever received in Georgia or South Carolina,” paroled most of his prisoners.¹¹¹ Campbell later reported that 270 of Boyd’s men finally reached the British.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Augustine Prevost to Archibald Campbell, Feb. 17, 1779, Misc. Mss., WLCL.
¹¹⁰ Augustine Prevost to Clinton, March 1, 1779, DAR, 17:69.
¹¹¹ Davis and Thomas, Kettle Creek, 33-34, 36-39, 43.
¹¹² Campbell, Journal, 66.
The disaster at Kettle Creek had severe repercussions for the British; afterward, most loyalists in "the upper Savannah River region were fearful of showing their true colors for over a year, until the British capture of Charleston in 1780."\textsuperscript{113}

Whig leaders recognized that Pickens's victory would have a devastating effect on the loyalists. Andrew Williamson felt "great pleasure" at the news,\textsuperscript{114} while Benjamin Lincoln told John Rutledge that "the repulse the tories have met with from Colo. Pickins, must brighten up our affairs in the upper part of the country. It will give peace and quiet to our friends there, open our communication with the Indians, and convince the unfriendly that real support cannot be found but in the arms and affections of their brethren."\textsuperscript{115} Lincoln, however, still feared that the British operations intended to make "this part of the country ... the seat of war for the ensuing campaign." Lincoln believed that the British "must be encouraged to make the attempt from the small resistance they met with in the conquest of so much of Georgia, the expected support from the Indians and disaffected in the back parts of these States, and from the little risque, they suppose, they should run in holding the possession."\textsuperscript{116}

With Campbell's force gone from Augusta and Boyd's followers routed, the Whigs moved troops into Georgia to block any new British effort to seize control of the backcountry. As Williamson explained, the rebels' objective "was to prevent the Enemy crossing Savanna River, and keep open our Communication with the Indians, being well convinc'd" that if the British army managed to enter South Carolina "their Strength wou'd soon become formidable, by the Numbers of disaffected Persons who wou'd

\textsuperscript{114} Andrew Williamson to Benjamin Lincoln, Feb. 20, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3.
\textsuperscript{115} Lincoln to John Rutledge, Feb. 28, 1779, Lincoln Papers, microfilm, reel 3.
\textsuperscript{116} Lincoln to John Rutledge, March 3, 1779, Lincoln Papers, microfilm, reel 3.
immediately flock to their Standard.” If the British tried to invade South Carolina, Whig leaders wanted to force them to attack in the lowcountry, where there were fewer loyalists. This would make it “easier to repel them from thence, than from the back Country where the greater Part of the Inhabitants would join with, and support them.”

The Whigs moved quickly to eliminate the scattered remnants of Boyd’s force and to punish the loyalists who had come forward while Campbell was at Augusta. One party of loyalists who escaped from Kettle Creek was captured by a rebel force under Captain Absalom Beddell. The Whigs immediately hanged seven of their prisoners. Captain William Few, leading a group of rebels that one loyalist described as a “villainous tribe of plunderers,” launched a ruthless campaign to suppress the loyalists. He began “ravaging the country for 30 miles above Augusta, without regard to age or sex, the widow or the orphans cries. Not satisfied with rapine, they have dragged forth the peaceable inhabitants to war, and, worse than the heathen savages of the wilderness, murdered, in cool blood, a Mr. – who refused to join them in their infamy,” an Augusta resident wrote.

Many people who had declared their loyalty only a few weeks earlier changed their allegiance again after Campbell’s departure. Whig officer John Dooly reported on February 16 “that a number of People that has Taken the oath of alegence to the King” now wished to join the rebels, and that some had already done so and fought alongside Dooly’s troops in two skirmishes. Most of these men claimed that “thay ware forced to Take the oath and there is a Good Many Good Men may be Got in if thay Can be pardond.” Dooly asked his superior, Col. Elbert, how to handle such cases, although he

117 Andrew Williamson to John Ashe, undated, enclosed in Ashe to Lincoln, Feb. 16, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3.
118 Hayes, Hero of Hornet’s Nest, 59.
119 “Extract of a letter from Augusta,” Feb. 6, 1779, Royal Georgia Gazette, Feb. 11, 1779.
did not hesitate to express his own opinion that it was better to get these men into the Whig ranks rather than drive them back into the arms of the British. He asked Elbert to reply quickly “as the poor people Seems much Confused at this Time about one party Robing and plundering the other.”

Whig leaders quarreled among themselves over how to treat those who had taken the oath to Great Britain. Some residents of Augusta “had openly cheered the arrival of British troops,” and many rebels disliked the fact that these men were still among them. Whig hardliners wanted Georgia officials to punish suspected loyalists and believed that Gov. John Wereat “coddled Tories.” When Wereat and the council released Joseph Maddock, a Quaker who had been imprisoned for sheltering Boyd, and then asked South Carolina officials to release three other Georgians confined in Charleston for loyalism, the more radical rebels became enraged. A group of Whig officers in Burke County also chose a moderate course and decided to issue a proclamation allowing anyone who had taken the British oath, with the exception of nine men considered particularly obnoxious, to repudiate their loyalism and receive pardon. Those who failed to comply would forfeit their property, “be deemed as Enemies & dealt with accordingly.”

Captured loyalists suffered particularly harsh treatment. Georgia’s civil officials claimed jurisdiction over a loyalist prisoner of war named Fleming and wanted him imprisoned “untill they could have an opportunity of Punishing him for his Treachery,” but finally agreed to his exchange. Andrew Williamson convened a court in April to try twelve loyalist prisoners for various offenses. Two confessed to having been “with the

121 John Dooly to Samuel Elbert, Feb. 16, 1779, Misc. Mss., John Dooly, LOC.
124 Thomas Bee to Benjamin Lincoln, April 9, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3.
Indians in arms” against the Whigs; nine others admitted having either served with the British forces or considering themselves to be British subjects. The court ordered all eleven to be held in close confinement. The twelfth prisoner testified that the British had forced him to take an oath to the king and was released.125

Reports of the cruel treatment of loyalist prisoners led Augustine Prevost to send a protest to Lincoln. Prevost had heard that “many of the Prisoners taken from us are treated with a severity by no means justifyable.” Loyalist captives, whether taken in battle or while “attempting to join the standard of their lawful Sovereign, ought to be consider’d as Prisoners of war,” Prevost stated. If the Whigs insisted on trying loyalists “by new-made Laws,” he declared, “you cannot but be sensible that a prior Right intitles Great Britain to consider every American as a Subject, and consequently things may be brought to a point … that will be productive of dreadful consequences.” Prevost warned Lincoln that his treatment of captured rebels would be determined by the manner in which the Whigs treated loyalist prisoners.126

Whig officials in South Carolina, believing that harsh punishment would be most effective in frightening the state’s loyalists into quiescence, treated those who had joined the British with extreme cruelty. Gov. John Rutledge gathered a force of 2,700 militia “to crush any Insurgents in our back Country, if the people should still continue so infatuated as to attempt to rise.”127 The Assembly passed an “Act to Prevent Persons Withdrawing from the Defense of the State to Join Its Enemies,” which authorized Rutledge to punish

125 Court of Inquiry Proceedings, April 10-12, 1779, Matthew Singleton Papers, SCL.
126 Augustine Prevost to Lincoln, March 28, 1779, Emmet Collection #7404, NYPL.
anyone who had joined the British and did not surrender within forty days; the penalty was death and the confiscation of the offender’s property.\textsuperscript{128}

The Whigs held about 150 loyalist prisoners, including twenty of Boyd’s men, at Williamson’s plantation. Rutledge ordered them to be brought to Ninety Six for trial in hopes “that a speedy Example of the most principal Offenders may have a good Effect, to prevent further Insurrection” in that heavily loyalist district.\textsuperscript{129} The trials began on March 22 and lasted until April 12. Half of the prisoners were released and the court found the remainder guilty of treason. About fifty were reprieved on the grounds that they had either been deceived into joining the British or had lacked “proper information on the nature of our contest with Great Britain.” The remaining twenty or more were sentenced to death.\textsuperscript{130}

To intimidate the numerous loyalists in the vicinity of Orangeburg, Rutledge then ordered the prisoners moved to that town. The twenty condemned men joined other prisoners in what must have been an extremely overcrowded blockhouse. On April 19, Continental Col. John Christian Senf reported that there were forty-three prisoners of war and “132 criminals” – apparently loyalists, since they included eleven officers, at Orangeburg.\textsuperscript{131} Four days later, one prisoner, a free black, was hanged and five other loyalists were sent to Ninety Six “to be there executed.”\textsuperscript{132} Lt. Col. James Prevost attempted to intervene, arguing that the men should be treated as prisoners of war and exchanged and hinting that the British would retaliate if the men were hanged. This failed

\textsuperscript{128} Lambert, \textit{South Carolina Loyalists}, 83.
\textsuperscript{129} Rutledge to Lincoln,” 133-134.
\textsuperscript{131} John Christian Senf to Benjamin Lincoln, April 19, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3.
\textsuperscript{132} John Christian Senf to Benjamin Lincoln, April 24, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3.
to sway the Whigs, who carried out the execution of the five prisoners. The rest of those sentenced to death, however, were reprieved.133

Those hanged at Ninety Six were not the only victims of Whig vengeance. On March 17, William Tweed and Andrew Groundwater were hanged in Charleston after being captured while attempting to join the British. Tweed had been under suspicion since February 20, when his Charleston house burned down; the rebels believed that he had deliberately set the fire in an attempt to burn the town.134 The destruction of Boyd's party and the wave of executions which followed undoubtedly deterred many loyalists from trying to reach the British army.

After leaving Augusta, the British made a brief stand at Briar Creek, where on March 3 they inflicted a crushing defeat on the rebel force that had followed their retreat. James Prevost, who had assumed command of the detachment when Campbell returned to Savannah, feinted against the front of the American position while part of his force made a roundabout march and struck the rebel rear. Routed by the surprise attack, the Whigs suffered between four and five hundred casualties, while the British lost only sixteen men.135 Prevost, however, made no attempt to remain in the backcountry, so the loyalists there remained unsupported.

While British troops held positions to protect Savannah, the area outside their lines became a battleground on which loyalists and Whigs contended for control. Col. John Thomas took 150 loyal militiamen to Burke Country to strike a Whig party in early March, but the rebels defeated Thomas's advance guard, captured other loyalists in the

area, and then withdrew before Thomas could catch them.\textsuperscript{136} Later in the month, a combined force of Georgia and South Carolina Whig militia encountered a loyalist unit and fought a two-hour battle by moonlight. Each side had about two hundred men, but the rebels finally drove off their opponents after killing loyalist Major Spurgin and a few of his men.\textsuperscript{137} Other loyalists took advantage of the South Carolina militia’s absence to raid on the north side of the Savannah River. Gattoes, a fugitive slave, guided the raiders to Black Swamp and the home of his former master, a Mr. Cowper. On the night of March 25, the loyalists attacked the house, capturing several prisoners including Cowper and two American officers. One of Cowper’s slaves summoned nearby rebel troops, but by the time they arrived the loyalists had gone.\textsuperscript{138}

Such raids worried rebel leaders, who feared that South Carolina was vulnerable to a British invasion. Gov. Rutledge labored to assemble a large militia force at Orangeburg, where the men would be in a position to move either to the defense of Charleston or to attack the British in Georgia. Loyalist and neutral sentiment slowed the formation of Rutledge’s force; one thousand men had arrived by mid-April, but two hundred others deserted on the march.\textsuperscript{139} Benjamin Lincoln feared that he might have to withdraw his troops from the north bank of the Savannah River unless he received reinforcements from the north. He believed that Congress had underestimated British strength in the South by considering only the number of British regulars there. That was an error, Lincoln asserted, since it ignored the many loyalists aiding the king’s army. He noted that “there is not that union of sentiment among the inhabitants of this State I

\textsuperscript{136} Leonard Marbury to Lincoln, March 6, 1779, Emmet Collection No. 6665, NYPL.
\textsuperscript{137} Andrew Williamson to [Samuel Elbert?], April 1, 1779, Feinstone Collection, No. 1680, DLAR.
\textsuperscript{138} John Smith to Benjamin Lincoln, March 26, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3.
expected to find; – in the back parts of the country especially there are many disaffected people both in this State and North Carolina, who will be ready to join the enemy the first favorable opportunity, and give every aid to the savages in their power." Lincoln noted that the South Carolina militia lacked the strength to simultaneously support the Continentals, guard the frontier against the Indians, and protect the area "about Orangeburgh, Broad & Saluda rivers, from those more unfriendly men, the Tories." Lincoln’s fears, although well justified, were premature. The British preferred to consolidate their control of Georgia before undertaking operations in South Carolina. Campbell appointed Maj. James Wright, Jr., son of the former governor, to command the provincial battalion the British intended to raise, but few men enlisted. The Georgia Loyalists, as the unit was designated, remained understrength throughout the war. Given the effects of Boyd’s defeat at Kettle Creek and the fact that their position at Savannah isolated the British from their supporters in the backcountry, the lack of recruits is hardly surprising.

The British had more success in civil affairs. Campbell had received permission to return to Britain once the situation in Georgia was stabilized, and before leaving he appointed James Prevost lieutenant governor. Campbell believed that placing the general’s younger brother in that office would facilitate cooperation between the civil and military authorities. James Prevost assumed his duties on March 4. He called on Georgians to assist the British, invited loyalists from other southern provinces to settle in

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140 Lincoln to James Lovell, Apr. 12, 1779, Lincoln Papers, microfilm, Reel 3.
141 Lincoln to William Henry Drayton, Apr. 17, 1779, Lincoln Papers, microfilm, Reel 3.
Georgia, and announced that rebel plunderers would be punished. Prévost’s tenure was brief; Germain ordered Gov. Wright to return to the province at the beginning of March. Wright had instructions to resume his position as governor and call for the election of an assembly as soon as possible, so that the inhabitants of other provinces should “see it is not the Intention of His Majesty & Parliament to govern America by Military Law; but, on the contrary, to allow them all the Benefits of a local Legislature, & their former Civil Constitution.”

Wright arrived in Georgia in July, along with Lt. Gov. John Graham and Chief Justice Anthony Stokes, but decided to delay the Assembly elections. He was unsure if there were enough loyalists to justify convening the Assembly, and advised Germain that the province should remain under military rule until he had time to assess the situation. Germain disagreed, telling William Knox that he doubted Wright’s capacity to govern Georgia. Like Germain, most royal officials and loyalists in the province favored restoring civil government, believing that its success would convince many rebels to return to their allegiance. Wright, however, continued to resist, arguing that continued rebel incursions to within a few miles of Savannah “left the province so much exposed and disconcerted me to that degree” that he postponed issuing writs for elections until March 1780.

The governor correctly understood that the most pressing question in the spring of 1779 was not how Georgia should be governed but whether it could be held. In April,


Lincoln crossed the Savannah River with five thousand troops and marched toward the capital and its outnumbered garrison. Realizing the danger of waiting for Lincoln’s blow to fall, Augustine Prevost rapidly assembled his troops, entered South Carolina, and drove directly toward Charleston. The move forced Lincoln to cancel his plans and hurry back to defend the town.147

Prevost’s invasion force included many loyalists, including seventy under Daniel McGirt.148 Supported by Indians, McGirt’s force operated as raiders independently of the army. On May 3, William Moultrie reported that McGirt’s “parties of horse and Indians, are ravaging the country in a barbarous manner, killing people and burning a number of houses as they go on.”149 In June, some of McGirt’s men stopped at a plantation owned by Eliza Wilkinson’s family. They behaved far better than the wild tales that preceded them had led Wilkinson to expect. “To tell the truth, they behaved to us more like friends than enemies,” she wrote. Still, her opinion of them was not high. “Nothing but the hope of raising themselves on the ruin of others, has induced them to engage in the war against us,” she declared. “I fear principle governs very few. Interest reigns predominant.”150

Many South Carolina loyalists took advantage of Prevost’s invasion to join the British. Robert Ballingall reached the army in early May and served until he was captured by the rebels at the end of the month. The rebels confined him in “a loathsome crowded Gaol” until October, when he was paroled due to ill health.151 Another loyalist who joined Prevost, Jeremiah Savage, was also caught and imprisoned. Thomas Fenwicke, a

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147 Coleman, *Revolution in Georgia*, 126.
148 “Account from Bowman,” May 13, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 3.
151 Memorial of Robert Ballingall, March 13, 1786, Miscellaneous Manuscripts SC7003/AT7003, Box 2, No. 154, NYSL.
planter on John's Island, informed the British of the location of a Whig militia camp; Prevost's troops then attacked and virtually annihilated the rebels there. Several other loyalists also made their way to the British army, although one group in the Camden area who planned to capture a powder magazine were discovered and several of them were jailed.\textsuperscript{152} Prevost had expected a better response from the loyalists and complained that "very few and those of little influence joined the King's standard." The problem, he asserted, was the same one that Campbell had encountered in the backcountry — not a lack of loyalists, but their fear of persecution. He noted that "the most zealous" loyalists were afraid to act because they faced punishments "so severe and awful."\textsuperscript{153}

Prevost's invasion had upset Lincoln's plans, frightened the Whigs, and enabled some loyalists to join the British. But as Lincoln's army rushed toward Charleston, the British general had to withdraw from the vicinity of the town. By the end of June, the British were back in Savannah, except for a detachment that Prevost left to hold Beaufort.\textsuperscript{154}

While the two armies maneuvered across the South Carolina lowcountry, the civil war between Whigs and loyalists flared up anew in Georgia. In late May and early June, Benjamin Few led 150 Richmond County Whigs against loyalists gathering in lower Burke County. Few dispersed "some parties of the Enemy that was there Embodiing against us," capturing several of their leaders. The rebel militia also defeated a small party of Florida Rangers in a skirmish, capturing three. Few believed that these successes would keep the loyalists in check. "I Dont think Any number in that Country will Again

\textsuperscript{153} A. Prevost to Germain, June 10, 1779, \textit{DAR}, 17:143.
\textsuperscript{154} Lambert, \textit{South Carolina Loyalists}, 86.
Attempt to take Up Arms Against us,” he wrote, “as many of them seem Convinced of their Error and have again promised their Allegiance to the United States.”

McGirt made a foray into western Georgia during the summer but was defeated by rebel militia under Col. John Twiggs. A short time later, part of McGirt’s force suffered another defeat while harassing Whigs along the Ogeechee River. Thomas Brown’s rangers, who with some Indians had been raiding in the area, retreated after learning of McGirt’s defeat.

Small victories like these accomplished little as bands of loyalists, often including Indians, continued to strike at Georgia’s rebels. John Wereat feared that “the concerted Invasions of the Enemy’s Irregulars and Indians, who are at this time making different inroads upon us,” might cause large numbers of Whigs to leave the province. Wereat warned Lincoln that the British “will aim at a total subduction of Georgia this Fall,” which if successful would create “a very dangerous situation” in South Carolina. “The great defection of the upper parts of that Country is well known – a circumstance on which the Enemy found the most sanguine hopes,” Wereat wrote. Once the British were established at Augusta, Wereat believed that “the greatest part of the Inhabitants” of Georgia, “worn out with fruitless opposition and actuated by the fear of loosing their all, would make terms for themselves.” Once they had done so, they would proceed naturally “from one step of infamy to another” so that “we have not the least doubt of their joining the Enemy.” The proximity of Augusta to the Indians, he pointed out, would also make

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155 Benjamin Few to Benjamin Lincoln, June 2, 1779, William Few Papers, PERK.
156 Ward, Between the Lines, 205; Lachlan McIntosh to Benjamin Lincoln, Sept. 6, 1779, Feinstein Collection, No. 855, DLAR.
possession of the town of great benefit to the British. He asked Lincoln to send
Continental troops to Georgia to prevent such a disaster.\textsuperscript{157}

In the meantime, Wereat sought to prevent defections by punishing Georgians
who had joined the British. Upon learning that three such men had been captured and
were confined aboard prison ships at Charleston, Wereat asked Lincoln to send them to
Georgia to stand trial. One of the three, James Lambert, had especially angered the
Whigs, “having been a Member of the House of Assembly & a Captain of Militia,” he
was charged “with Deserting with his whole Company to the Enemy.” His two
companions were accused of “crimes of a like nature.”\textsuperscript{158} The Georgia militia contributed
by plundering suspected loyalists, “under an idea of what they call distressing of our
Enemies.” Lincoln asked Lachlan McIntosh to put an end to such behavior because it was
alienating many Georgians and driving some to seek safety with the British.\textsuperscript{159}

Loyalists in South Carolina proved equally difficult to subdue; some escaped to
Georgia and others harassed the Whigs when the opportunity arose. In June, Andrew
Cumming and twenty-three others made their way to Ebenezer, where they joined the
New Jersey Volunteers. When Lt. Col. Prevost learned of Cumming’s feat, he sent the
South Carolinian back across the Savannah “to Pilote some Loyalists to Georgia who
were much distressed by the Rebells.” With five men, Cumming returned to South
Carolina but found on arriving at Orangeburg that the Whigs had learned of his presence
and were searching for him. Deciding to return to Georgia, Cumming and his small band

\textsuperscript{157} John Wereat to Benjamin Lincoln, Aug. 18, 1779, Benjamin Lincoln Papers, PERK.
\textsuperscript{158} John Wereat to Benjamin Lincoln, Aug. 18, 1779, Benjamin Lincoln Papers, PERK.
\textsuperscript{159} Benjamin Lincoln to Lachlan McIntosh, July 15, 1779, Lincoln Papers, microfilm, Reel 3.
eluded pursuit and burned three wagons loaded with rebel supplies. Another group of loyalists, described as “Two Companys of Out Lyers,” frequently sallied from their refuge in a swamp near Saltketcher’s to distress the Whigs.

On September 1, the Comte d’Estaing arrived in Georgia with a French fleet and army, and Lincoln immediately marched American forces to Savannah to unite with his ally. Large numbers of “His Majesty’s well-affected subjects” fled to the town as the French and Americans approached, increasing a population already swollen by refugees from the backcountry. Others who had sworn allegiance to the British after the capture of Savannah, expecting the British to be defeated, joined Lincoln’s army. As the rebels approached Savannah, they wreaked vengeance upon the loyalists, taking “prisoners, negroes, and horses.” During the siege of the town, both French and American soldiers “plundered the country in the most shameful manner,” according to loyalist accounts. They carried off “provisions and stock ... robbed poor people of their bedding and clothes,” and pillaged the homes of absent loyalists.

The loyalists fought back with vigor throughout the siege. They had a powerful incentive to do so, since John Glen, the Whig chief justice of Georgia, had declared that the French and rebels would show no leniency when they captured Savannah. “It was not now a time to use gentle & moderate measures, but to make reprisals and to retaliate,” Glen told a loyalist prisoner.

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161 John Cone to Benjamin Garden, June 26, 1779, Pringle-Garden Family Papers, SCHS.
In addition to the 350 Georgians who served in the militia defending the town, loyalist spies kept Gen. Prevost informed of the situation in the enemy camp. Three South Carolinians crossed the Savannah River with Lincoln’s army and then hurried off to inform Prevost of the Americans’ numbers and position. Some of the soldiers in the rebel army were also loyalists and they provided Prevost with a steady flow of information. A French officer complained that loyalists serving with the Whig militia “continually betrayed us” by giving the British “the most exact account of all our operations.”

Other loyalists operated in the rear of the French and American lines. Rebel troops captured five white men and three blacks who had been stealing horses twenty-five miles above Midway; some of the prisoners were from the Florida Rangers. Three other loyalists were taken at Midway, and an American officer reported that there were “Several villains about us, that has taken to the Swamps.” These men also stole horses from the rebels at “every opportunity.”

French and American troops attempted to storm the British defenses on October 9 and were repulsed with heavy losses. The South Carolina Royalists distinguished themselves by holding their ground against a furious assault. The Royal Georgia Gazette praised the spirit displayed by both regular troops and militia in the town’s defense, while Anthony Stokes declared that the “conduct of the Militia and Volunteers, who went into the lines to defend the town, would do honour to veteran troops.”

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166 Lawrence, Storm over Savannah, 98.
167 John Baker to Lincoln, Oct. 1779, Emmet Collection No. 6696, NYPL.
168 Lambert, South Carolina Loyalists, 86-87.
169 Lawrence, Storm over Savannah, 44.
Governor Wright asserted that the French and Americans had been “defeated by the persevering Resolution & Bravery of the Loyalists.” In his report to Germain, Prevost included the Georgia militia with the regular units of the garrison as deserving praise for their service during the siege. Three militiamen were killed and one wounded in the campaign; four soldiers of the Georgia Loyalists also died in action.

After their attack failed, the French sailed to the West Indies and Lincoln withdrew his troops to South Carolina. Frustrated by the defeat, rebel troops “exacted reprisals throughout Georgia” before crossing the Savannah River.

Loyalists in South Carolina seized the opportunity offered by the British victory to escape to Savannah. Moses Buffington, an ensign in the South Carolina Royalists, wrote his father that several of their acquaintances had recently made their way to Georgia and that more were said to be on their way. These refugees launched frequent raids into South Carolina, often with unfortunate consequences. Conrad Besinger, a deserter from the South Carolina Continentals, was captured on Bull Island in November wearing a British uniform. The Whigs sentenced him to hang. In January 1780, rebel militia captured ten South Carolina loyalists who had been raiding in the state.

Georgia loyalists also renewed their raids in the backcountry after the enemy armies had left. Daniel McGirt’s troops killed several Whig militia officers in a foray from Savannah in October. The rebels managed to disperse one loyalist raiding party in

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170 “Case of Sir James Wright,” 1784, Sir James Wright Papers, GHS.
173 Moses Buffington to Peter Buffington, Sr., Dec. 8, 1779, Moses Buffington Paper, GHS; Proceedings of a Court Martial held at Sheldon, Nov. 6, 1779; Benjamin Garden to Benjamin Lincoln, Jan. 5, 1780; Francis Marion to Lincoln, Jan. 9, 1780, Lincoln Papers, Reel 5.
early December, but failed to capture any of them. Shortly afterward, a rebel officer complained of the trouble caused by "these stragling Parties which are always coming from Midway settlement." Later in the month the Whigs dispersed another group of loyalist raiders, capturing two. Both prisoners were killed while attempting to escape from jail in Augusta.

If circumstances seemed to be improving for loyalists in Georgia and South Carolina, their counterparts in West Florida found their situation deteriorating. In the aftermath of the Willing raid, many settlers along the Mississippi decided that Britain could no longer protect them and moved across the river to Spanish territory, where they took an oath of allegiance to Spain. John Fitzpatrick observed in July that "more or less of the Men are daily deserting to our Neighbours the Spaniards. The Number the Spaniards have now in their Service is 96."

This depletion of loyalist strength weakened the province at an inopportune time. Spain declared war on Britain on June 21, 1779, but Gen. John Campbell, commanding at Pensacola, did not learn of the declaration until September 8. By that time Galvez, who had received notice of hostilities earlier, had already invaded West Florida on August 27. At Baton Rouge, which surrendered to the Spaniards on September 21, 150 loyalists participated in the unsuccessful effort to defend that post. The terms of capitulation required the British to surrender the fort at Natchez to the Spaniards as well. This greatly angered the people there, who had been prepared to resist a Spanish attack. By the time Galvez completed his conquest of the Mississippi River settlements, some five hundred

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174 Lachlan McIntosh to Benjamin Lincoln, Dec. 11, 1779, Benjamin Lincoln Papers, PERK.
175 Richard Parker, Jr., to Benjamin Lincoln, Dec. 11, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 5.
176 George Walton to Benjamin Lincoln, Dec. 25, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 5.
177 Fitzpatrick to John Miller, July 10, 1779, in Dalrymple, ed., *Merchant of Manchac*, 329.
loyalists had taken up arms to defend their homes. All were allowed to return home and remain undisturbed providing they took an oath of allegiance to the king of Spain.\textsuperscript{178}

Gov. Chester and Gen. Campbell quarreled about how to meet the Spanish threat. Campbell believed that West Floridians were "in general, self-interested and without public spirit."\textsuperscript{179} He complained to Clinton of "the little prospect I have of reinforcement or aid from either inhabitants or Indians in case of Pensacola or Mobile being attacked." The people "seem averse and backward to military duty," Campbell wrote.\textsuperscript{180} Campbell wanted Chester to convene the Assembly to pass a militia law, which would facilitate future assistance from the loyal inhabitants. But Chester did not want to deal with the fractious representatives and refused to summon them. In September, forty-nine residents of Pensacola asked the governor and council to allow them to embody as a temporary militia, while in October fifty-eight people in the province's interior requested permission to build a fort on the Tombigbee River and organize a company to patrol their district. Chester and the council approved both petitions. The governor later created two troops of loyalist dragoons to guard the province's shrunken boundaries.\textsuperscript{181}

**The Indian Contribution**

British officials relied upon the Indians to provide crucial assistance when the king's troops finally launched the southern campaign in late 1778. Germain and Clinton expected John Stuart to bring a large number of Indians to cooperate with Archibald Campbell's invasion force, which would enable the British to regain control of the


\textsuperscript{179} Starr, *Tories, Dons, and Rebels*, 147.

\textsuperscript{180} John Campbell to Clinton, Nov. 7, 1779, in Clinton, *American Rebellion*, 436.

Georgia backcountry and perhaps much of South Carolina as well. Unfortunately for Campbell, when he marched to Augusta he found no Indian allies and thus was unable to remain there. The failure of the Indians to rendezvous with Campbell's troops resulted primarily from problems in communication, but it caused British leaders to question the Indians' reliability. Later in the campaign, the Indians would provide valuable assistance to the British, although never at the levels that Germain had expected. Nevertheless, the Indians aided the British cause simply by constituting a potential threat that the Whigs could not ignore.

On December 2, 1778, Germain wrote to Stuart explaining the plan to seize Savannah and march into the backcountry. Germain ordered Stuart "to exert your utmost influence with the Indians of your department to supply a constant succession of parties to act as the commander of the King's troops in Georgia shall direct." Stuart himself, Germain said, should accompany the first party to Augusta and establish his headquarters there. Stuart had not received these instructions by the time Campbell arrived in Georgia – in fact, it was not until December 12 that the superintendent received Germain's dispatches dated July 1 and August 5. These letters indicated that an attack in the South had been planned but did not say when. Stuart assured Germain that he had informed the Indians that troops were on the way and that "it has greatly contributed to secure their affections to the King's interest."  

Meanwhile, Campbell had taken Savannah and marched to Augusta, where he did not find the large number of Indians that Germain had promised would join him. Campbell did not realize that the Indians, albeit indirectly, had already contributed to the

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183 Stuart to Germain, Jan. 11, 1779, DAR, 17:29.
success of his operations. Continental commander Robert Howe noted that Georgia’s
defenses had been “rendered very weak” because he had been forced to detach “a
considerable number of the Regular Troops to the westward, to prevent the Ravages of
the Indians.” This reduced the force available to defend Savannah against Campbell’s
attack.\textsuperscript{184} After replacing Howe, Benjamin Lincoln chose to divert Andrew Williamson’s
South Carolina militia to guard against Indian attack, rather than use the troops to oppose
Campbell’s advance to Augusta. “When we consider that in the back parts of your
Country and the State of Georgia there are a number of disaffected people and that they
are stimulating the Indians to acts of hostility,” Lincoln told Williamson, it was necessary
to employ the militia to protect the frontier.\textsuperscript{185}

Waiting at Augusta for Creek reinforcements, Campbell began to wonder if the
Indians really intended to support the British. If not, he decided that it would be better to
keep them neutral and wrote to George Galphin in late January asking for help “in ...
restricting the Indians to a State of Neutrality.” Although Galphin’s reply seemed
satisfactory, Campbell heard reports that the Whig agent could not be trusted, so he sent a
loyalist spy to make inquiries about Galphin. The spy soon reported that Galphin “was
one of the most violent Rebels in America,” and despite the assurances he had given
Campbell, “he was actually sending a natural Son of his with two Carolina Men to raise
the Indians against us.” British troops intercepted the three emissaries and found letters to
the Creeks “full of every Encouragement that could incite them to War.” That same day

\textsuperscript{184} Robert Howe to President of Congress, Nov. 24, 1778, Robert Howe Papers, GHS.
\textsuperscript{185} Benjamin Lincoln to Williamson, Jan. 12, 1779, Lincoln Papers, microfilm, reel 3.
ninety of Galphin’s slaves escaped to the British. Campbell sent the slaves to Savannah as security for Galphin’s future good behavior.\(^{186}\)

The failure of the Creeks to join Campbell contributed to his decision to leave the backcountry. Shortly after leaving Augusta, he sought to reassure the Creeks by sending them a message asserting that he had not left “from Fear of the Rebels.”\(^{187}\) He told them that although he was disappointed that they had not met him, he would send troops to meet them as soon as he learned they were coming to join him. Meanwhile, they were not to harm any frontier inhabitants who supported the king.\(^{188}\)

Although the Indians had not joined with the troops as expected, as soon as Stuart learned of the plan he had moved quickly to send the Creeks to aid Campbell. Patrick Tonyn had sent Stuart the details of Campbell’s proposed operations, but the letter did not reach Pensacola until the end of January. On February 1, Stuart dispatched David Taitt to the Upper Creek towns to assemble the Indians and proceed to Augusta. Creek leaders promised to provide one thousand men by March 9, long after Campbell had left the backcountry. Taitt asked Campbell to send troops to meet this party before setting out on the scheduled day with only eighty Indians. The number increased to four hundred, along with several loyalists, by the time Taitt reached the Ogeechee River. The party waited several days for British troops to arrive, only to learn from a loyalist that the Whigs had discovered their presence and that at least four hundred rebel militia were moving to attack them.\(^{189}\)

\(^{186}\) Campbell, *Journal*, 52-53, 56.
\(^{187}\) “Heads of Campbell’s Talk to the Headmen and warriors of the Creek Nation,” c. March 1779, Clinton Papers, Vol. 53, No. 40, WLCL.
\(^{188}\) Campbell, *Journal*, 87.
To elude the Whigs, the Creeks divided into at least three parties. Taitt sent one group of Indians and loyalists to operate in South Carolina, where they destroyed an abandoned fort. Intimidated by the growing numbers of rebel militia, many Indians soon returned to their towns, while others made their way to Savannah. On March 29 the Whigs caught and attacked one party of about seventy Creeks, killing six Indians, two loyalists, and capturing three Indians and three loyalists. The rebels scalped the dead Indians and marched with the scalps displayed on a pole. Eventually about 120 Creeks reached Savannah; over the next several weeks other parties arrived and increased the number to three hundred.\footnote{Campbell, \emph{Journal}, 88-90; “Heads of Mr. Tait’s Letter,” June 11, 1779, Clinton Papers, Vol. 60, No. 39, WLCL; Few, “Autobiography,” 349; Williamson to [Elbert?], April 1, 1779, Feinstein Collection, No. 1680; Cashin, \emph{King’s Ranger}, 93.} Whig Joseph Habersham described these operations against the Indians as “a very providential Circumstance, more especially as the Indians were given to understand by the Enemy that they wou’d meet with no Opposition in joining them.” According to Habersham, the Indians complained that “they have been deceived, and are returning in great wrath.” He hoped that this experience would convince other Indians not to assist the British.\footnote{Joseph Habersham to Isabel Habersham, March 5, 1778 [misdated, should be 1779], in Ulrich B. Phillips, ed., “Some Letters of Joseph Habersham,” \emph{GHQ}, Vol. 10, No. 2, June 1926, 146-147.}

Dissatisfied with the Indians’ efforts, Augustine Prevost admonished Taitt, telling the agent that he would “expect more punctuality from the Indian Promises than formerly, it being their Interest to act in Concert with the King’s Troops.” Despite his disappointment, Prevost told Taitt that he still believed that the Indians could “render essential Service if they suffer themselves to be guided” by white men. The general added that he had instructed loyalists in the interior of Georgia “to give all assistance to
the Indians.” Gov. Wright shared Prevost’s disappointment at the Indians’ seemingly lukewarm support and expressed doubts about their commitment to the British cause. After receiving Prevost’s and Campbell’s reports, Germain also stated that he “was surprised to find the Indians not mentioned,” but realized that their delay in responding resulted from the difficulties in communication. He believed that the presence of troops in Georgia would convince the Indians of “His Majesty’s ability to crush his Enemies,” which would prompt them to ignore the rebels and commit fully to supporting the British.

One reason for the Indians’ hesitant response to British calls for aid was Stuart’s incapacity. Gen. John Campbell warned Clinton on February 10 that the Indian superintendent was “in the last stage of consumption” and that his death might lead to “great confusion” in Indian affairs. Stuart died on March 21 and his brother Charles, along with Alexander Cameron, assumed temporary management of the department. Gov. Chester attempted to intervene by appointing his own Indian commissioners, but Germain settled the matter quickly, so that British relations with the Indians underwent no significant change. Germain termed Stuart’s death “a Misfortune,” but noted that “his long Ill-State of Health had disabled him from discharging the active Duties of his Office.” Now that Spain had entered the war, Germain decided to divide the Indian department to deal with that nation in the Mississippi Valley and the American rebels along the Atlantic coast. Germain therefore assigned Cameron to superintend the Choctaws and Chickasaws in West Florida, while Thomas Brown assumed control of

192 “Heads of Prevost to Taitt,” March 14, 1779, Clinton Papers, Vol. 60, No. 40, WLCL.
193 Lawrence, Storm over Savannah, 6.
194 Germain to A. Prevost, March 13, 1779, DAR, 17:85.
196 John Campbell to Clinton, Feb. 10, 1779, DAR, 17:62.
197 O’Donnell, Southern Indians, 82.
Cherokee and Creek affairs. The minister also determined that the superintendents’ duties were “at present, merely Military,” and placed them directly under Clinton’s command.\footnote{Germain to Clinton, June 25, 1779, Germain Papers, Vol. 9, WLCL.} 

Lincoln, unaware that Stuart’s illness provided an opportunity for the Whigs to increase their influence with the Indians, luckily chose the same time to make a new diplomatic effort aimed at detaching the Indians from their alliance with the British. In late January, he urged Williamson to arrange a meeting with Indian leaders, because “it is much easier to keep them in our interest, than to reduce them to terms of reason and a good brotherhood after the hatchet is taken up.”\footnote{Lincoln to Williamson, Jan. 25, 1779, Lincoln Papers, reel 3.} The general advised Gov. Lowndes to do everything possible to provide supplies for the Indians, and also solicited Galphin’s help “to keep the Indians friendly.”\footnote{Lincoln to Lowndes, Jan. 28, 1779; Lincoln to Galphin, Jan. 30, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 3.} Williamson agreed to make an effort at negotiations, since the Whigs could not afford an Indian attack on the frontiers. If that occurred, he warned, it would be impossible to keep the militia “from going Home to protect their families.”\footnote{Andrew Williamson to Benjamin Lincoln, Feb. 1, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3.} 

Williamson and Galphin met with Cherokee leaders at Fort Rutledge in March and received assurances that the Cherokees would remain at peace. Lincoln expressed satisfaction at the successful negotiations, telling Galphin that he was “quite satisfied with the measures you adopted.”\footnote{Lincoln to George Galphin, Apr. 4, 1779, Lincoln Papers, microfilm, Reel 3.} The Chickamauga faction of the Cherokees, however, still refused to participate in discussions with the Whigs. Instead, they attacked the overmountain settlers along the North Carolina and Virginia frontiers. The overmountain militia in return destroyed eleven Chickamauga towns, forcing the Indians to move to
new areas. Nevertheless, the Chickamaugas continued to raid the frontier, often in conjunction with some of the more militant Upper Creeks.²⁰³

Those Creeks who had joined the British in Savannah launched frequent raids into South Carolina and the Whig-controlled areas of Georgia, further disconcerting the rebels. A detachment of Georgia militia pursued one Indian raiding party into South Carolina, bringing on a skirmish in which a rebel Major Ross suffered a mortal wound.²⁰⁴

On April 22 at least thirty Creeks and loyalists, the latter “painted & disguised as Indians,” crossed the Savannah River and burned the house of a Whig officer named Hartstone.²⁰⁵ Whigs worried that the party, and the fifty other Indians reported to be at Abercorn, “will do a great deal of mischief.” William Moultrie asked Gov. Rutledge to send down some Catawbas who “would be of infinite service” against the Creeks.²⁰⁶

Even the Catawbas’ commitment to the Whigs had been called into question, however, as Creek raids fed new rumors of a full-scale Indian attack in the backcountry. Joseph Kershaw visited the Catawba nation to investigate reports that some of the Catawbas had left their lands and joined the British. He found that all but four of the men were present, and the Catawbas were able to account for the whereabouts of the missing men.²⁰⁷ This did little to mollify Lincoln, who grew increasingly worried that a Creek attack was imminent. “I always supposed it would be in the enemy’s plan to bring down, if possible, the Indians on our frontiers,” Lincoln told Galphin.²⁰⁸ “I am of opinion that the principal design of the enemy in bringing out the Indians, is to divert us from the general object, to terrify and keep at home the militia,” the general explained to

²⁰³ Dowd, Spirited Resistance, 55, 56.
²⁰⁴ James Fergus, Pension Application, in Dann, ed., Revolution Remembered, 181.
²⁰⁵ William Moultrie to Benjamin Lincoln, April 24, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3.
²⁰⁶ William Moultrie to John Rutledge, April 23, 1779, in Moultrie, Memoirs, 1:379.
²⁰⁷ Joseph Kershaw, Diary, April 15, 1779, SCL.
²⁰⁸ Lincoln to Galphin, March 29, 1779, Lincoln Papers, reel 3.
Williamson. Without the support of the militia, Lincoln knew that his own army would have a difficult time resisting an attack from British regulars.\textsuperscript{209}

The anticipated attack came at the end of April, not in the backcountry but from lower Georgia as Prevost began a drive toward Charleston. At least one hundred Creeks accompanied the British troops; Prevost employed them, along with loyalist irregulars, as scouts in advance of his main force. One Indian and two loyalist scouts were wounded in one encounter with the Whigs at the Saltketcher River; in another skirmish, Indians pursued and scalped some retreating rebels.\textsuperscript{210}

Such incidents helped Prevost by inducing rebel militiamen to leave the ranks. "The terror excited by the Indians, who wore their war dresses, and wantonly displayed the instruments of torture, with which they were accustomed to aggravate the sufferings of their prisoners, created the most appalling dismay," one rebel declared. "Whigs, of unquestionable patriotism" serving in the militia left their units and rushed home to protect their families from Indian "depredations."\textsuperscript{211}

Creek attacks on the frontier further hindered Whig leaders' efforts to assemble as many militiamen as possible to oppose Prevost. On May 8, Williamson informed Lincoln that most of Andrew Pickens' men had "gone home on Accot of the Indians having made some Incursions on the frontier and killed & Scalped some Persons" in the area. Williamson thought that the Indian danger was less serious than reported and promised to

\textsuperscript{209} Lincoln to Williamson, March 29, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 3.
\textsuperscript{211} Garden, \textit{Anecdotes of the Revolutionary War}, 49.
send five hundred men to assist the army "as soon as the Inhabitants are made Sensible, that the numbers of Indians sd. to be coming down is much exagerated."\footnote{Andrew Williamson to Benjamin Lincoln, May 8, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 3.}

In response to reports that "the Enemy's Indians are ravaging the Country," John Rutledge "wrote pressingly, for the Catawba Indians to come down, as a Match for those of the Enemy."\footnote{John Rutledge to Benjamin Lincoln, May 5, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 3.} The Catawbas promptly dispatched ninety men to assist the Whigs.\footnote{William Moultrie to Benjamin Lincoln, May 21, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 3.}

The Creeks who accompanied Prevost's troops seized a considerable number of slaves in South Carolina and brought many of them to Savannah. They refused Gov. Wright's advice to sell the slaves, although several Creeks traded their plundered slaves for horses. Others took slaves to East Florida, where some Seminole Creeks eagerly exchanged cattle for them. The Creeks' demand for slaves grew sufficiently large to induce some whites to bring plundered slaves into the nation to trade for horses and cattle.\footnote{Saunt, \textit{New Order of Things}, 55, 58; Searcy, "Introduction of Slavery," 29.} David Taitt blamed the "Georgia Volunteers" for the Indians' sudden desire to plunder slaves. During the invasion of South Carolina, Taitt said, these loyalist troops had "set a bad example to the Indians, who cannot now be restrained from taking Negroes."\footnote{"Heads of Mr. Taitt's Letter, June 11, 1779, Clinton Papers, Vol. 60, No. 39, WLCL.}

With Prevost's troops back in Georgia, exhausted Whig militiamen used the possibility of Indian attack as an excuse to demand that they be allowed to return home. At the beginning of July, Williamson told Moultrie that it was "impossible to keep his men in the field any longer." Williamson's militia, Moultrie wrote, "have played the old stale game of Cameron's being in the Cherokees, with a number of white men and
Indians, ready to fall on their part of the country." Moultrie conceded that the militia would have to be permitted to leave as soon as Gov. Rutledge gave his approval.217

Although the Creeks had been active with Prevost and on the frontier, rebel leaders remained uncertain about the Indians’ intentions during the summer. Galphin believed that the Creeks preferred neutrality. At the end of May, Lincoln received a talk from that nation, accompanied by “Beads and White Wing, emblems of their peaceable intentions.” Lincoln advised John Rutledge to send a talk in reply to “confirm them in their present good disposition,” and suggested the address might be more effective if delivered jointly by himself and the governor.218

At Augusta, however, Lachlan McIntosh saw indications in August that “the Enemy mean to Harass us upon every Side by the Savages & themselves untill they get the whole state into their possession, & make an Irruption into Carolina from this quarter.” Most of the militia who had not joined the British, McIntosh wrote, remained “penned up in Little Forts to Secure their Familys from the Savages, to whom they are exposed, & harass them Continually.”219 A few days later, a Whig officer reported that “a number of Indians” had crossed the Savannah River into South Carolina, frightening local residents.220 The same officer reported on August 19 that another “party of painted Villains” had entered South Carolina.221 This group of “twenty Painted White Men & Eighty Indians” burned a house and killed and scalped a Whig militiaman. The raiders also carried off “Most of the Negroes from One of Mr. Cowpers Plantations,” although rebel lieutenant James Moore believed that the loyalist Cowper, who was in Savannah,
may have sent the party expressly to recover his slaves. Moore noted that “the Men are so much Alarm’d at the Indians coming Over (On Account of their families) that Should they make another Attempt & Succeed most every Man will Move their Women & Children & many themselves I am Afraid.”222 The whites accompanying the Indians were undoubtedly loyalist refugees who wore Indian costume to avoid recognition and thus protect their families from Whig retaliation.

The Creeks continued to make “excursions across the Savannah” as far south as Purysburgh, doing “mischief in the predatory way.”223 Whig leaders admitted that they lacked the strength to prevent these raids, which John Wereat believed presaged a new British attack on the backcountry. Should Prevost retake Augusta, Wereat warned, the “great defection of the upper parts” of South Carolina would bring an accession of loyalists into the British ranks, and “the Enemy will find not the least difficulty, whenever they have a mind, of bringing the Savages upon the Frontiers of Carolina.”224 To bolster Whig strength in the region, Lincoln dispatched five hundred Virginia soldiers to Augusta. He also tried to restrain the Georgians, who had recently killed some friendly Creeks. Lincoln urged state officials to do everything possible to mollify the Indians to prevent them from assisting the British.225

The Creeks might have provided even more assistance to the British had a smallpox epidemic not struck their towns in the autumn. Brought south by the Maryland loyalists sent to reinforce Pensacola and passed on to Indian visitors in town, the disease killed many Creeks and incapacitated others. Those who were uninfected fled to the

222 Lt. James Moore to Barnard Beekman, Aug. 18, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 4.
223 Committee of Congress to John Jay, Sept. 1, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 5.
224 John Wereat to Benjamin Lincoln, Aug. 18, 1779, Lincoln Papers, PERK.
225 Lincoln to John Rutledge, Aug. 8, 1779; Lincoln to Georgia Council, Aug. 14, 1779, Lincoln Papers, BPL.
woods to avoid contracting the disease, further reducing the numbers of Creeks that
Brown could employ.  

Those Cherokees who had not signed the 1777 treaty moved southward in August
and launched their own attacks on the South Carolina frontier. Williamson marched
against them with the militia, and a detachment under Andrew Pickens captured “The
Terrapin a Principal Headman of the Outlying Cherokees,” who had led the raiding
parties. Williamson’s militia burned eight Cherokee towns and destroyed at least fifty
thousand bushels of corn. Several Cherokee leaders came to Williamson on August 28
and “pleaded hard to save their Corn and Houses.” Williamson replied that “their bad
Conduct had obliged me to come into their Country with an Army, I was resolved to
Carry destruction through their Towns & Settlemts.” Unless the Cherokee raiders
returned to “the Settled Towns in the Nation and Resided among their Countrymen,”
Williamson said he would disregard their pleas. The Indians accepted the ultimatum.
Williamson hoped the blow would “Secure the peace and quiet of our frontiers” by
intimidating the Creeks as well as the Cherokees.

Just when Indian raids began to place a strain on the Whigs, Gov. Wright learned
that Prevost had jeopardized future cooperation by insulting Creek leaders at an early
August meeting in Savannah. After their talks with the general, the angry Creeks
announced their intention to “return home immediately,” while some declared that “they
had been very ill treated.” Wright asked Alexander McGillivray to find out what had
transpired at the conference. Suspecting that a lack of activity was the root of the

226 Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-1782* (New York: Hill and
Wang, 2001), 114-115.
228 Andrew Williamson to Lincoln, Sept. 22, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 4.
problem, Wright suggested that the Indians “might be of service” if they joined a group of regulars and militia guarding Hudson’s Ferry on the Savannah River, or “if they can’t remain inactive, they might amuse themselves, by going over the River into Carolina.”

Wright later spoke to the Creeks himself and learned that they were eager “to go on any duty or Service that might be required of them.”

Prevost, ignorant of the effects Indian raids had on the Whigs, remained unhappy with the level of Indian support. “Instead of the great assistance expected from the numerous tribes of allied Indians ... not above eighty Creeks have attended the army or appeared in any force anywhere” in the South since the capture of Savannah, he told Germain. David Taitt disputed this obvious understatement of Creek numbers, asserting that the Creeks had been quite effective, given the difficult circumstances under which they had to operate.

Prevost soon moderated his views. Having learned that Cameron was leading a large number of Indians to attack the frontier, he was preparing “to make some movements in favour of the Indians” when the arrival of the French fleet at Savannah forced him to cancel his plans. An estimated eighty Cherokees and Creeks were in town when the siege began; the Cherokees were assigned to guard Hutchinson’s Island, where a large number of civilians had taken refuge, while the Creeks served in the defensive lines. Henry Laurens hoped that a French and American victory at Savannah might prove fatal to the British alliance with the Indians by bringing “disgrace” on the

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229 [James Wright] to [Alexander McGillivray], Aug. 5, 1779, Revolutionary War Papers, Folder 1, SHC.
230 Wright to Clinton, Aug. 9, 1779, Carleton Papers, Vol. 18, No. 2177.
232 David Taitt to Germain, Aug. 6, 1779, DAR, 17:178-183. Taitt was in Savannah at the time Prevost sent his letter and was evidently aware of the general’s comments.
234 Lawrence, Storm over Savannah, 81, 157.
British “in the Eyes of their Savage Connections who will probably take part against them in their Disaster.”

Laurens’s optimism was misplaced, for not only did the British defeat their attackers, but many Indians came to the aid of the king’s troops, although they were too far away to reach Savannah before the siege ended. Two hundred Cherokees arrived in the town on January 6, 1780, bringing four hundred horses. Later that month, one hundred Creeks reached Savannah unmolested by the rebels.

In addition to the French and American attack on Savannah, the British faced another threat in the South in 1779 as Spain prepared to enter the war. While still neutral, the Spanish sought to gain influence with the Choctaws by lavishing presents on them in an attempt to undermine their support for the British. James Colbert, Cameron’s assistant, visited the Sixtowns region in November and found nearly every man wearing medals and coats provided by Spanish agents. Colbert questioned the Choctaw leaders, who assured him of their continued loyalty to Britain. The British subsequently increased the quantity of their own gifts, but many Choctaws from the Sixtowns faction shifted their allegiance to Spain.

Germain had underestimated the effects of Spanish influence with the Indians; instead he had ordered the commander in West Florida, Gen. John Campbell, to undertake an offensive against Louisiana as soon as Spain entered the war. The minister believed that with the aid of the West Florida militia and “a Number of faithful Indians,”

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235 Henry Laurens to Jonathan Trumbull, Sept. 25, 1779, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, WLCL.
236 Richard Parker to Benjamin Lincoln, Jan. 13, 1780; Andrew Williamson to Lincoln, Jan. 25, 1780, Lincoln Papers, Reel 5.
237 Talk for the six Towns Indians to Captain Colbert, Nov. 19, 1779, Carleton Papers, Vol. 20, No. 2436; White, Roots of Dependency, 81, 87-88.
Campbell could easily capture New Orleans. But the Spanish struck first, invading West Florida on August 27 with a force that included 160 Indians from Louisiana.

The timing of the attack was unfortunate for the British, since a party of Creeks had arrived at Pensacola ten days earlier. Campbell had provided them with arms and ammunition and the Indians had gone to Savannah. Their appearance impressed Philipp Waldeck, a German chaplain, who described them as “most wonderfully developed, large and strong.” They would have been a valuable reinforcement for West Florida’s defense had Campbell realized that an attack was imminent. Shortly after the Creeks left, a group of Choctaws arrived. Waldeck described them as “braver in war” than the Creeks, but physically less impressive. He noted that there was no Choctaw interpreter in Pensacola, so that a Creek had to handle the task. Campbell supplied the Choctaws with the arms and ammunition they requested, although his officers angered the Indians by telling them “in rather rough fashion that they must control their people so that they cause no damage.” The Choctaws were still at Pensacola on September 14 when Campbell, ignorant of the Spanish invasion, secured their promise to provide two hundred men for an attack on New Orleans.

News of the Spanish attack forced Campbell to adopt a more genial attitude toward the Indians, many of whom came to Pensacola upon learning that war had broken out in the Mississippi Valley. British officials “clearly see that in the present situation, it is more necessary to flatter them [Indians] so as to keep them friendly,” Waldeck wrote,

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238 Germain to John Campbell, June 25, 1779, Germain Papers, Vol. 18, WLCL.
241 Waldeck, Diary, 129.
242 Waldeck, Diary, 132.
noting that the newly-arrived Indians had demanded gifts. “And if it is not to our advantage, still we must give them presents so that they will not take up arms against us. On the other hand the Spaniards do all they can to draw these savages away from us.”

The Spanish efforts achieved some success when a considerable number of Sixtowns Choctaws later joined Galvez’s force and fought alongside the Spaniards at Mobile.

After the fall of Mobile, some loyalists decided that it was unsafe to remain in West Florida, and during their emigration they developed a new respect for Indians. William Lee hired a trader to guide his family to Georgia through Creek territory. At one point during their journey they spent seventeen days with the Creeks, finding them to be “a very sensible and intelligent people.” Lee quickly came to admire the Indians’ social equality. He concluded that “they are the most happy people in the world” and were not to “be pitied, but rather to be envied.”

The Creeks’ hospitality to loyalist refugees showed their continued commitment to the British, but the Spanish did not relent in their efforts to win Creek and Choctaw support. Galvez received some Choctaw leaders in New Orleans, one of whom alarmed Cameron by later declaring that “whoever gives us the most will be the most regarded.” Lt. Col. Lewis Fuser, commander of the St. Augustine garrison, learned in October that “the Indians recd from the Spaniards presents of great value” and that Spanish agents had invited some chiefs to Havana, “with promises to send them soon back with three ships loaded with goods for them.” If the report were true, Fuser wrote, it

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243 Waldeck, Diary, 134.
244 O’Brien, Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 10.
246 O’Donnell, Southern Indians, 92.
meant that the Spaniards planned to reestablish a post in Florida from where they could
"be at hand to indispose the Indians against us."²⁴⁷

**African Americans in Arms**

The arrival of British troops in Georgia at the end of 1778 provided slaves with the chance to seek freedom by escaping to the king's forces. Many slaves had awaited this opportunity since the start of the war and quickly took advantage of it. Some, such as the slave who enabled Archibald Campbell to capture Savannah with ease, made significant contributions to the British cause. Others, although their individual efforts were less spectacular, also provided valuable support to the British. Their actions demonstrated that slave assistance could be a powerful asset in the ministry's effort to regain control of the southern colonies. However, British leaders still did not adopt a coherent policy for the use of slaves, and it was left to British military and civil officials to determine what role blacks would take in southern operations.

Southern Whigs knew that many of their slaves would flee if the British established themselves in the region. When reports arrived that Clinton had dispatched an expedition to Georgia, the planters began to worry. "If the Ennemy unfortunately got possession of Savannah, there will be an absolute necessity in my Opinion to withdraw the hands from those plantations," John Lewis Gervais informed Henry Laurens.²⁴⁸ Indian agent George Galphin, who lived far up the Savannah River, thought that if the British invaded, he would "be obligd to Send of most of my negros toward the Congerees."²⁴⁹

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The Whigs’ fears were well-founded because large numbers of slaves from both Georgia and South Carolina escaped in the weeks following the British capture of Savannah. On January 20, South Carolinian Nathaniel Hall complained that “thirteen of my negroes have run away, and are gone over to the Enemy.” Two other slaves he owned in Georgia had been taken by the British, while another two had been “carried off by an Overseer of Lord Wm. Campbell,” evidently a loyalist who had taken the slaves with him when he went to join the British.250 The owner of a plantation in Georgia noted on February 5 that “near 50 negroes” had run away.251 Georgian Samuel Stiles wrote that “when Col: Prevoe came to Georgia the first time two of our most valuable Carpenters named Sampson and Sam went to Mcgerts Scouting party,” while a carpenter named Jack, his wife Cumba, and a “Yellow boy” named Swan joined Campbell immediately after the capture of Savannah. Stiles, who had fled to South Carolina, could account for only three of his slaves.252 Oliver Hart observed in mid-February that since the British had arrived in Georgia, “Negroes in abundance” had joined them, including “some Hundreds” who had escaped from South Carolina. “Negroes are a very precarious Tenure, any where near the Environs of Georgia,” Hart stated.253 Many Georgia planters sent their slaves to South Carolina to prevent them from falling into British hands.254 They also carried off loyalists’ slaves when they could. Campbell tried to prevent this. Shortly after taking Savannah, he learned that Whigs were “carrying off a large Body of Negroes to Purisburgh ... which belonged to the Loyalists of Georgia.” Campbell rushed troops to Zubly’s Ferry to interrupt the movement, but they

250 Nathaniel Hall to Benjamin Lincoln, Jan. 20, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3.  
251 Mr. Wright to Benjamin Lincoln, Feb. 5, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3.  
252 Samuel Stiles to William Telfair, Feb. 21, 1779, Edward Telfair Papers, PERK.  
253 Oliver Hart to Joseph Hart, Feb. 16, 1779, Oliver Hart Papers, SCL.  
arrived too late. Seeing many of the slaves on the South Carolina side of the river, Campbell devised a stratagem to recover some of them. A “Confidential Mulatto” with a musket went to the riverbank “with a Number of Negroes ... to call out to the Rebels for God’s Sake to send over the Boats and save his Master’s Slaves from falling into the hands of the King’s Troops.” When the rebels crossed the river, the mulatto fired his musket as a signal to British troops concealed in the trees, who emerged, seized the boats, and crossed the river. They returned with eighty-three blacks.255

Campbell did not explain the reasons for his actions. Undoubtedly he hoped to recover slaves belonging to Georgia loyalists and at the same time to deprive the Whigs of a valuable resource. But the fact that he had many blacks with his troops and used them to execute a complex ruse showed that he considered slaves to be important military auxiliaries. Faced with the dilemma of whether to treat slaves as property or as allies, and without clear directions from his superiors, Campbell, like other British officers in the South, tried to do both.

Unrestrained by such ambiguities, many Whigs tried to recover slaves, either by theft or through official channels. In early February, a South Carolina militia captain and his men, who were supposed to be guarding Hudson’s Ferry, crossed into Georgia during the night, captured “a number of negroes,” then “immediately deserted their post, and returned home with their booty.”256 Benjamin Lincoln received numerous requests from slave owners who wanted flags of truce so they could go to Savannah and demand that British officials return their human property. Although Lincoln provided the flags, he

255 Campbell, Journal, 33-34.
256 Lincoln to John Rutledge, Feb. 11, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 3.
warned one applicant that previous attempts to recover slaves had “proved fruitless,” noting that many people had already given up the effort.257

The experience of an unidentified American officer who accompanied two women, a Mrs. Heyward and Mrs. Pelot, to Savannah in an effort to regain their slaves provides important insight into why British officers refused to return fugitives. When they approached the town by boat, a British patrol vessel met the trio and took them to Commodore John Henry, commander of the naval squadron in Georgia. The American officer told Henry the purpose of their visit, which provoked the latter into a tirade on the issue of slavery. The women’s “idea of recovering Negroes was treated as Chimerical, especially those that deserted” to the British, the officer reported. Henry insisted that such slaves “were free, they were the Kings, he cloathed, fed, & employed them – we cannot answer to return them, there was an idea of Cruelty in delivering of them up to enraged Mistresses who no doubt wd. correct them Severely.” The officer attempted to argue, but Henry would not listen; “he honestly confessed they had & wd. receive every thing that deserted from us.” Henry added that he detested plundering by loyalists who seized and sold slaves because it ran counter to “the idea of freedom which they endeavour to propagate among the Slaves.” The American officer complained to Lincoln that Henry had been adamant to the point of rudeness.258

After getting a glimpse of southern slavery, loyalists in provincial units from the northern colonies also expressed sympathy for the slaves. In a letter to his wife, Lt. Col. Stephen Delancey of New York described his horror at the treatment of slaves and the anger toward slave owners that it inspired. “The Negro’s and Negro Women are

257 Lincoln to Galphin, Feb. 19, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 3.
258 Undated, unsigned letter to “Sir,” [1779], Benjamin Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 5.
inhumanly treated, are two-thirds naked, and are very disgusting to the Eye and another Sense," he observed. He could not accept "the great Cruelty made Use of to the poor ignorant Wretches," and in consequence had developed a revulsion toward white masters. "These circumstances of Cruelty to these People render the Persons who exercise it disagreeable, nay odious to me," Delancey wrote. "When a Set of People can sit down enjoying all the Luxuries of Life without feeling the least Sensation or Compunction for the Sufferings of those poor Wretches ... I must conclude them Obdurate, Selfish, and Unfeeling to the greatest Degree imaginable."259

The statements of Henry and Delancey indicate that many royal military officers in the South felt genuine compassion for slaves and that efforts to take slaves from the rebels and to prevent the return of blacks who had fled to the British often arose from humanitarian motives. Of course, not all British officers were so generous. One, in a statement that reflected widespread opinion in the army, pronounced several slaves taken in South Carolina to be "all a Prize & my property."260 This officer arranged to have a loyalist merchant in Savannah sell the slaves for him and asked the merchant to provide the same service for several other officers.261

Slaves may not have been aware that British officers harbored such sentiments, yet they understood that their chances were freedom were far greater if they reached the king’s forces than if they remained with their Whig owners. Thus the exodus of slaves to the British army continued throughout the winter and spring of 1779. David George, owned by George Galphin, had learned to read and became a preacher at Silver Bluff.

260 Wright to Assistant Commissary Geron, May 13, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 3.
261 Wright to Michie, May 13, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 3. This and the previous letter were evidently intercepted by the Americans. Wright may have listed an eighth slave in this letter, but the name was either crossed out or obscured by an ink blot.
This marked him as particularly dangerous to the Whigs, so when British troops marched into the Georgia backcountry, rebel officials imprisoned George and his wife. Brown’s rangers liberated George, who made his way to Savannah, where his wife supported them by working as a laundress for British officers. While their situation could hardly have been comfortable, George preferred it to slavery and sent his wife and children into hiding when the Americans approached Savannah in the fall of 1779.262

Large numbers of South Carolina Whigs living along the lower Savannah River and near the coast abandoned their plantations because of the proximity of the British, taking their slaves with them. Edward Rutledge believed that removing slaves, “in whose Fidelity” the planters could “place very little dependence,” was the only way to prevent mass escapes unless rebel authorities could adequately protect the plantations.263 William Moultrie agreed, noting that “a great number of negroes” living along the Savannah River escaped to the British in Georgia “in spite of our care.” Moultrie planned to cross the river, recover some of the runaways, and then attack the British post at Abercorn, which acted as a magnet for both slaves and American deserters. The attack, made in early April, failed and cost the rebels two galleys.264 The British repaired both vessels and added them to their fleet. Because of a shortage of seamen, Commodore Hyde Parker assigned twelve blacks to each galley with orders that they be considered as “Ordinary Seamen,” as were the white crew members.265 Thus, in an ironic twist, blacks became crewmen aboard vessels originally sent to recapture fugitive slaves.

263 Edward Rutledge to [Thomas Rutledge?], Feb. 17, 1779, Edward Rutledge Letters, SCHS.
264 Moultrie to Charles Pinckney, April 6, 1779, in Moultrie, Memoirs, 1:364-365.
265 Quarles, Negro in the Revolution, 154.
The flight of so many slaves raised South Carolinians' fears of an insurrection. In Charleston on the night of March 4, "the town was alarmed by the Ringing of the Bells in St Michaels Church Steeple." Several men climbed the steeple, where they "found a Negro man - pretending to be fast asleep, and apparently drunk." Most Charleston residents believed the bells were "intended as a Signal for the Perpetration of some diabolical Plan - it may be for burning the Town - or Perhaps something worse."\textsuperscript{266}

Whenever British forces raided rebel-held territory, they took large numbers of slaves. Although Americans uniformly insisted that the slaves had been stolen, undoubtedly many blacks accompanied the British voluntarily. When British troops landed at Beaufort in February, Gen. Stephen Bull wrote that "they have carried off above 300 negroes belonging to different people."\textsuperscript{267} The rebels frequently accused McGirt's loyalists, a unit that included several blacks, of stealing slaves.\textsuperscript{268} In early March, a rebel Captain McCoy "lost a number of his negroes" to McGirt's rangers.\textsuperscript{269}

To deal with the large number of slaves with the British, Archibald Campbell appointed five men to serve as commissioners of claims. Campbell gave the commissioners responsibility for managing "all the property, real and personal," of both rebels and absent loyalists who were not represented by local attorneys. He instructed the commissioners to appoint overseers to supervise the plantations, slaves, and livestock of such persons, as well as to prosecute anyone who stole slaves or livestock from plantations under the commission's management.\textsuperscript{270} The commissioners began their work on March 15. They observed "that a number of negroes and other effects, the property of

\textsuperscript{266} Oliver Hart Diary, March 4, 1779, SCL.
\textsuperscript{267} Stephen Bull to William Moultrie, Feb. 12, 1779, in Moultrie, \textit{Memoirs}, 1:313.
\textsuperscript{268} Ward, \textit{Between the Lines}, 205.
\textsuperscript{269} Williamson to Lincoln, March 11, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3. In his reply, Williamson gives the captain's name as McKay.
\textsuperscript{270} "Instructions to the Commissioners of Claims," March 5, 1779, Germain Papers, Vol. 9, WLCL.
persons in actual rebellion against his Majesty; as also of others now absent from this province, have been seized and detained under various pretences, by persons who have no authority for the Same,” and ordered “all persons having possession of negroes or other effects, as above described,” to report to their office, where the commissioners would assume control of the slaves and determine what was to be done with them.271 Eventually 250 of these slaves were formed into a pioneer corps for the army.272

Slaves accused of criminal behavior fell under the jurisdiction of Savannah’s temporary civil authority, the board of police. When an overseer, Joseph Weatherly, was murdered in February 1779, the board suspected that two slaves, Charles and Sandy, had committed the crime. The members questioned several other slaves in their investigation and the slaves’ testimony, although often conflicting, strongly indicated that the suspects had indeed committed the crime. But the board did not find the “direct proof” it sought and asked Maj. Archibald McArthur, the army commandant in Savannah, if the suspects should be released or confined until they could be brought to trial. There are no records of McArthur’s response or the ultimate disposition of the case.273

The board also took steps to restore Georgia’s plantation economy by assuring that many slaves continued to work as agricultural laborers. During its brief period of operation, the board appointed sixteen overseers for plantations owned by absentee loyalists. The board granted the overseers wages of £40 ($5200) per year from public funds.274

271 “Commissioners of Claims Office,” March 15, 1779, Germain Papers, Vol. 9, WLCL.
Some slaves who had fled to the British or had been forcibly taken from Whig masters became dissatisfied and returned to their masters. One such slave, owned by rebel official John Walton, grew tired “of the hardships of being away from his family & connections.” He turned himself in to the Whigs at Augusta, where he gave Gen. John Ashe a fairly detailed account of British troop movements.\textsuperscript{275} Between March 1779 and early 1782, when rebel forces surrounded Savannah and made it virtually impossible to leave the town, hundreds of dissatisfied slaves left to seek freedom elsewhere. Many were believed to have gone to East Florida or South Carolina, while others fled to the Georgia backcountry. Some went to or remained in Savannah, where they passed as free. Two slaves who escaped from John Williamson in June 1781 wore military clothing. “Hercules, a black fellow, about 22 years old, wears a soldier’s uniform, red and buff. Jacob, about 19 years old, stout made, wears a Hessian uniform,” Williamson stated in an advertisement.\textsuperscript{276} He did not explain how the two men obtained their uniforms, although it is most probable that they were issued from army stores. Hercules and Jacob may have served with the army before being restored to their master and, unwilling to return to their former bondage, escaped.

If some slaves found that the British provided fewer opportunities for freedom and independence than they had expected, most knew that they could expect no change in their condition from the Whigs. When Campbell’s troops captured Savannah, John Laurens had immediately used the emergency to renew his proposal to arm slaves for rebel service. In February 1779, Laurens told his father that only Spanish intervention “or

\textsuperscript{275} John Ashe to Benjamin Lincoln, Feb. 22, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3.
\textsuperscript{276} This information is compiled from advertisements for runaway slaves in the \textit{Royal Georgia Gazette} from March 11, 1779 to March 14, 1782, microfilm, LOC. The advertisement quoted was published in the June 28, 1781 edition.
the adoption of my black project” could save Georgia, and asked for the elder Laurens’s support for an effort “to transform the timid Slave into a firm defender of Liberty and render him worthy to enjoy it himself.”277 Henry Laurens dropped his earlier opposition in response to the crisis in the South, and in turn solicited backing from George Washington, assuring the general that “had we Arms for 3000. such black Men as I could select in Carolina I should have no doubt of success in driving the British out of Georgia & subduing East Florida before the end of July.”278

Alexander Hamilton, who had become friends with John Laurens while both served on Washington’s staff, lent his support to the proposal. Writing to John Jay on March 14, Hamilton stated that the plan to arm South Carolina’s slaves was “the most rational, that can be adopted, and promises very important advantages.” Hamilton worried that if the rebels did not arm slaves, “the enemy probably will; and that the best way to counteract the temptations they will hold out will be to offer them ourselves. An essential part of the plan is to give them freedom with their muskets.” As an incentive to adopt this plan, Hamilton suggested that South Carolina whites “may be excused from the draft on condition of furnishing the black battalions.” However, Hamilton realized “that this project will have to combat much opposition from prejudice and self-interest.”279

A week later, a congressional committee appointed to examine the situation in the South made its recommendation on the Laurens plan. Observing that lengthy service in the field would deplete the numbers of the South Carolina militia and serve as a “temptation to Negro Slaves to rise in Rebellion or at least to desert to & strengthen the

hands of the Enemy,” the committee first urged Virginia and North Carolina to send assistance to their southern neighbor. Next, the committee recommended that the governments of Georgia and South Carolina consider arming blacks to serve either in existing Continental battalions or in separate units commanded by white officers. Congress would reimburse the slaveowners for the cost of those slaves who enlisted.280

On March 29, Congress approved the committee’s proposal and recommended to South Carolina and Georgia that those states arm three thousand slaves for their defense. Benjamin Lincoln endorsed the plan, telling Gov. John Rutledge that if South Carolina “would so far comply with the recommendation of Congress as to raise two Battalions of Blacks,” the militia could be relieved from their near-constant duty.281

Although John Laurens traveled to Charleston to press the Assembly to adopt Congress’s recommendation, South Carolinians refused to give it serious consideration. Henry Laurens warned his son that “the pride & the naughtiness ... of too many of our fellow Citizens” and “the avarice of others would impel them to revolt from the proposition.”282 One of the handful of representatives who supported enlisting black troops, David Ramsay, noted that the proposal was “received with horror by the planters, who figured to themselves terrible consequences.”283 Christopher Gadsden, the unofficial spokesman for Charleston’s artisans, also denounced the measure. “We are much disgusted here at the Congress recommending us to arm our Slaves, it was received with great resentment, as a very dangerous and impolitic Step,” he wrote.284

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280 Committee Report to Congress, [March 25, 1779], PHL, 15:72-73.
281 Benjamin Lincoln to John Rutledge, July 24, 1779, Lincoln Papers, microfilm, Reel 3.
282 Henry Laurens to John Laurens, Sept. 21, 1779, PHL, 15:169, 172.
284 Gadsden to Samuel Adams, July 6, 1779, Writings of Gadsden, 166.
Despite John Laurens's ceaseless efforts to gain support, the Assembly rejected the plan by an overwhelming margin when it was finally brought to a vote. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney suggested an alternative: offering slaves, along with land and cattle, as a bounty to British and Hessian officers to induce them to desert to the rebels. Lincoln ignored the idea.\(^{285}\) "Prejudice and private interest will be antagonists too powerful for public spirit," Hamilton consoled Laurens. Hamilton declared that a lack of virtue in the southern states "has fitted their inhabitants for the chain, and ... the only condition they sincerely desire is that it may be a golden one."\(^{286}\)

Had South Carolinians chosen to arm slaves when Congress first recommended doing so, they might have been in a better position to defend their state when Prevost's army invaded at the end of April. Instead, the British received another large influx of fugitive slaves as they marched to Charleston, while other slaves fled to Whig-controlled areas. Many of Edward Telfair's slaves escaped when the British entered South Carolina, some of them going to Dorchester and others to Charleston. They were taken up by other Whigs, who refused to return them until Lincoln ordered it. On May 8, Capt. James Moncrief and a party of British cavalry came upon several slaves who the rebels had set to work felling trees to delay the British. With no apparent difficulty, Moncrief immediately employed them to undo the destruction.\(^{287}\)

As the British army advanced, South Carolinians struggled to maintain control over their slaves. Eliza Lucas Pinckney told her son that the British had plundered and burned his house and that his slaves were gone. She did not know "whether they went

\(^{285}\) John Laurens to Alexander Hamilton, July 14, 1779, PAH, 2:102-103; Shaffer, "Between Two Worlds," 181; Charles Cotesworth Pinckney to Benjamin Lincoln, June 28, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 4.  
\(^{286}\) Alexander Hamilton to John Laurens, Sept. 11, 1779, PAH, 2:166-167.  
\(^{287}\) Edward Telfair to Benjamin Lincoln, June 1, 1779, Edward Telfair Papers, PERK; Skelly, "Demonstration Against Charleston," 153.
voluntarily with the Enemy or were taken by force.” The British visited another Pinckney plantation, Belmont, “and distroyed every thing in the house but took none of the Negroes.” Mrs. Pinckney and a neighbor, who also had an estate in the Belmont area, had sent slave emissaries there with instructions that all the slaves should join their masters at Santee, but none came. The Pinckneys had more slaves at Beach Hill, and ordered them to remain there as the place was deemed safe from the British. Eliza Pinckney had doubts, however. “I know not what to do in regard to the Beach Hill and Belmont Negroes unless I could hire a white man to go and fetch them away,” she wrote in frustration, “or whether it would be best to remove them without if they chuse to come away for they all do now what they please every where.” She added that masters on other plantations in the path of the British had ordered their slaves to leave and met outright refusal. Even if her slaves were not seized by the British, she conceded that they might “choose to go to them, and in that case I fear we should not be able to prevent it.”

Hoping to save his family and slaves from Prevost’s troops, Thomas Tudor Tucker sent his sister, in company with another family, into the state’s interior. They had not traveled far when “the Negroes grew insolent & deserted them.” Of the slaves who had remained at home with him, Tucker lost “one valuable Fellow who thought proper to look out for a new Master.” The presence of the king’s army gave slaves unprecedented control over their own destiny. Masters could do little to enforce obedience, for any attempt at coercion was likely to send an angry slave fleeing to the British.

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289 Thomas Tudor Tucker to St. George Tucker, July 10, 1779, Tucker-Coleman Papers, SLSC.
American officers shared the planters' concern over the loss of their slaves. Moultrie, who was attempting to delay Prevost's advance, informed Lincoln that the British had several vessels collecting slaves along the rivers, and urged his commander to "over take them and prevent them carrying away the negroes." Whig officers also diverted militia who might otherwise have opposed the British to keep slaves in check. One unit ranged "to Willtown, Pon Pon, and other places; where they heard the negroes were very unruly, and doing great mischief ... in order to quell them," Eliza Wilkinson wrote. She also worried about her family's slaves; a loyalist riding ahead of Daniel McGirt's rangers told her that McGirt would take the slaves from their plantation when he arrived. Some of McGirt's troops reached Wilkinson's plantation on June 3. Although they did not carry off the slaves, their presence was enough to give her a shock, which she pronounced "terrible to the last degree." The detachment had "several armed negroes with them, who threatened and abused us greatly." The entire slavery-based social order appeared to be crumbling.

In an effort to curb the flight of slaves and loyalists to the British, John Rutledge ordered some of them to be executed. According to loyalist John Wells, in 1779 the governor had taken "the lives of his fellow creatures without a trial or hearing, as their complexions were a few shades darker than his own." This was probably the same incident that rebel soldier James Fergus described in his journal. On May 12, Fergus recorded that "[f]our men, two white and a mulatto and Negro, were taken outside the lines and brought in supposed to be deserting to the enemy. The governor, coming by at

the time, was asked what should be done with them. He said, ‘Hang them up to the beam of the gate,’ by which they were standing. This was immediately done.”

Not all slaves aided the British, however. The first news of Prevost’s invasion that reached the rebels was brought by slaves who remained loyal to their Whig masters. A “sensible faithfull Negro” provided Moultrie with a detailed description of the British army’s encampment near Charleston on May 15. The efforts of one runaway slave to aid the British were undone by another slave in an unusual incident that occurred on May 25. Learning from “a Negroe wench who went to them” that Whig officer Morton Wilkinson was nearby with thirty troops, British officers sent a detachment of sixty men to surprise the rebels. When the British reached the house of a Mrs. Ladson, two miles from Wilkinson’s, one of the Ladson slaves told them that they were four miles from their destination, and that Wilkinson and his soldiers had gone to Charleston. The false report deceived the British, who “through out great threats against the Wench.” The slave then informed Wilkinson of his encounter with Prevost’s troops. Even though the slave had saved him from death or capture, Wilkinson concluded from this affair that “our domesticks are so treacherous” that the British “never want for information.”

When Prevost withdrew from the vicinity of Charleston, large numbers of slaves followed his army, but many fell behind the retreating troops and were retaken by the Whigs. “About three hundred negroes have been taken from the enemy,” Lincoln wrote on May 17. He ordered the quartermaster general to compile a list of the slaves’ names

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293 James Fergus, Pension Application, in Dann, ed., Revolution Remembered, 183.
294 Dillon to Col. John [Bourganin?], undated, April 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 3.
295 William Moultrie to Benjamin Lincoln, May 15, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 3.
296 Morton Wilkinson to Benjamin Lincoln, May 26, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 3.
and owners so their masters could reclaim them. An American officer posted on the Ashepoo River reported to Lincoln on June 25 that British boats were “carrying Negroes and other plunder to Georgia.” Another Whig, who observed the passage of a British column the same day, noted that “Large droves of Negroes march by.” Other blacks remained in South Carolina with loyalist detachments. After a skirmish, American troops captured “four whites and three blacks” near Eliza Wilkinson’s plantation. Another man, described by Wilkinson as “one of the enemy’s Negroes,” was caught trying to elude rebel guards and beaten so badly that Wilkinson “could not help shedding tears.” Sickened by the cruelty, she intervened to halt the beating. She later permitted the man to escape, fearing that if British troops returned and “should find the Negro in such a bloody condition, they would use us very ill.”

After Prevost returned to Georgia, both sides resumed raiding and seized slaves from one another at every opportunity. In July a party of rebel militia skirmished with a British detachment and recaptured about fifty slaves. When the British evacuated Beaufort in September, rebel officer Joseph Barnwell rushed troops to Port Royal Island and “savd about two hundred slaves, whom I have sent of to Return to their respective Owners.” Whig militia also crossed the Savannah River to steal slaves from Georgia. In early August, Lincoln learned that a group of militiamen had plundered slaves there and were en route to Augusta with their booty. The general criticized the act as “a mode of conduct unjust, impolitic, and if not corrected, will destroy every idea of military discipline.” Lincoln asked Gen. Lachlan McIntosh to find the slaves and send them to the

297 Benjamin Lincoln to William Moultrie, May 17, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 3.
298 Capt. Philip Smith to Benjamin Lincoln, June 25, 1779, Lincoln Papers, microfilm, Reel 3.
299 James Hall, Jr. to Benjamin Lincoln, June 25, 1779, Lincoln Papers, microfilm, Reel 3.
301 William Moultrie to Lincoln, July 7, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 4.
quartermaster general "to be disposed of." The officers who had led the raid, Lincoln asserted, were "apeing the enemy in a practice which we reprobate in the strongest terms." At least the British, Lincoln conceded, had made amends "by returning the Slaves belonging to the estates of deceased persons, to widows, minors and Orphans." He feared that rebel plundering might jeopardize this arrangement.\(^{303}\)

The number of slaves stolen by the rebels was small compared to the thousands more that Prevost's army had brought from South Carolina and who continued to flee to the British. This presented a serious problem for Gov. Wright. Having resumed his office, Wright's first inclination was to insure that loyalist slaveowners retain control of their bondspeople. Before leaving England, he and other exiles had asked Germain to order British naval officers not to transport out of Georgia slaves who fled to their ships. They asked the minister to require the navy to turn over the slaves to their owners' attorneys. The loyalists feared that without such a policy, they would never be unable to recover fugitive slaves.\(^{304}\) Wright himself apparently failed to understand the slaves' desire for freedom. After returning to Georgia, he noted with pride that "many of his Negroes ... on their hearing of the Province being retaken and of his Return, made their Escape from the Persons who had bought them, and went back to him."\(^{305}\) He did not realize that these slaves may have returned with expectations other than to resume their bondage.

In July 1779, merchants James Graham and Basil Cowper forced Wright and the Council to reconsider the slaves' situation when they submitted a petition requesting permission to use slaves as payment for debts owed to Britons. The petitioners noted that

\(^{303}\) Benjamin Lincoln to Lachlan McIntosh, Aug. 2, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Microfilm, Reel 3.
\(^{304}\) Memorial of Sir James Wright ... and several other Gentlemen, n.d., Carleton Papers, Vol. 16, No. 1962; Searcy, "1779: First Year of the British Occupation," 176-177.
\(^{305}\) "Case of Sir James Wright," 1784, Sir James Wright Papers, GHS.
“great Numbers of Negroe Slaves have come in of themselves, and are brought into this Province from So Carolina by his Majesty’s Army, Indians and others.” These slaves had been formerly owned by debtors of the petitioners and other British merchants, and in Graham’s and Cowper’s opinion constituted “the only resource left for securing part of their just debts.” Therefore, the petitioners asked that “such property may be delivered up or secured for the payment of British debts.”

After extensive deliberation, the governor and Council made what they believed to be the best possible decision, given the complexity of the situation. They agreed that the constant influx of slaves into the town “seems to be a growing Evil” that required prompt action, but the cases of individual slaves were so different that no single solution could apply. Slaves belonging to Georgia loyalists or to widows and orphans would be restored to their owners, the Council decided, while those owned by loyal South Carolinians would be held in trust for them. Slaves taken by the army fell outside the bounds of civil authority, and the Council left their disposition to Gen. Prevost. Slaves who had fled from rebel masters would be supervised by commissioners, whom the Council would appoint, until such time as appropriate laws might be passed to clarify their situation. All slaves not returned to loyalist owners would be hired out or employed on public works projects. A building would also be designated for the detention of “all such Negroes as may prove unruly or Abscond.”

The problem of Indians claiming slaves proved even more difficult to solve. Wright told the Council that “he considers the Indians being thus possest of Negroes is

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attended with very serious and dangerous Consequences.” The governor had met with Creek leaders and offered to purchase the slaves, but the Indians refused to sell, asserting that Prevost had promised that they could keep any plunder they took during the invasion of South Carolina. Seeing British troops “Seize upon all the Negroes they Could get,” the Indians stated that they only “did the same” and planned to bring the slaves back to their nation. Wright and the Council agreed that they had no authority to interfere with the Creeks in this regard.308

These decisions were compromises designed to accommodate the slaves to some extent without alienating either loyalist slaveowners or Indian allies. They also solved the practical problem of how to obtain some services from the runaways, who had to be clothed and fed at government expense. After receiving Wright’s reports, Germain approved of his handling of the situation. Germain did, however, remind the governor to treat fugitive slaves well in order to encourage others to take refuge with the British.309

Slaves soon proved their value to the British when a French fleet and army arrived in Georgia in September. The enemy’s unexpected appearance forced Prevost to make every exertion to put Savannah in a defensible condition. He brought in slaves from plantations outside the town to work alongside other blacks attached to the army and British troops; the fortifications were completed with a swiftness that astonished French officers.310

Benjamin Lincoln brought his army to join the French in an attack on Savannah, and many of the Americans saw the operations in Georgia as an opportunity to recover

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309 Frey, Water from the Rock, 96.
fugitive slaves. One Whig officer reported that he had retaken seven of his slaves since arriving in Georgia and he hoped to find more when Savannah was taken.\footnote{311} South Carolina officials also tried to convince the French to turn over a former slave named Sampson, who had been taken prisoner when French warships captured a royal navy vessel off the Georgia coast. Upon learning of the seizure, Charleston printer Peter Timothy wrote Lincoln on September 25 that “there was on board a Negro who (tho’ I am averse to sanguinary Punishments) it would, in my Opinion, be highly exemplary to hang up at a Yard-Arm.” Timothy declared that Sampson, a former harbor pilot, had “voluntarily remained with the Enemy, doing them many essential Services to the Injury of the States.” These included piloting Sir Peter Parker’s fleet into Charleston harbor in 1776, piloting Archibald Campbell’s expedition to Savannah, and having piloted British naval vessels that had raided rebel shipping along the southern coast. Timothy insisted that Sampson’s “Treachery and Ingratitude merit Punishment, and there are others to whom he should be made an Example of Terror.”\footnote{312} John Rutledge described Sampson as “very useful” to the enemy, “& hurtful to Us.” The governor asked Lincoln “to get this Fellow secured, & sent hither, in safe Custody, that he may receive the Punishment due to his Crimes.”\footnote{313} Lincoln did not act on the matter, despite further prodding from Rutledge. The general had already been at odds with D’Estaing and probably wished to avoid provoking another dispute.\footnote{314}

While the rebels plotted to recapture and punish slaves, Prevost decided to arm some of the blacks in Savannah to strengthen his vastly outnumbered army. When

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\item \footnote{311} John Jones to Polly Jones, Oct. 3, 1779, Seaborn Jones Papers, PERK.
\item \footnote{312} Timothy to Lincoln, Sept. 25, 1779, Lincoln Papers.
\item \footnote{313} John Rutledge to Lincoln, [Sept. 26, 1779], Lincoln Papers.
\item \footnote{314} John Rutledge to Lincoln, Oct. 10, 1779, Lincoln Papers.
\end{itemize}}
loyalist William Hanscomb volunteered his services, Prevost ordered him to raise a company of black pioneers. These men were later armed to defend the town. Rev. John Zubly noted that “during the siege 8, or more of my slaves were constantly in arms.”

One black soldier, Scipio Handley, was a former South Carolina slave who, fearing that his life was endangered by his support for the British, had fled Charleston in 1775 with Lord William Campbell. After Savannah was retaken, Handley voluntarily went to Georgia from Barbados; when the French and rebels arrived in September, he vowed to do all he could to help defend Savannah, for he expected no mercy if he fell into the rebels’ hands. During the siege, Handley “was Employed at the Armoury Shop, Running grape shot and Carrying them out to the Redoubts and Batteries.” While engaged in this duty he was severely wounded by a musket ball in the leg.

An estimated two hundred armed blacks participated in Savannah’s defense; many of them, along with the Cherokees, guarded Hutchinson’s Island, where many people went to escape the bombardment. Prevost’s decision to arm slaves provoked protests from some Georgians who thought the step “unjustified under any circumstances.” A writer in the Royal Georgia Gazette excused Prevost’s actions as a response to the presence of black troops with the French army, and after the siege another writer conceded that the black soldiers had generally behaved well.

Blacks also contributed to the defense in other ways. Two slaves reached Savannah on September 21 with news that Lincoln’s troops had united with the French

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315 Petition of William Hanscomb to Augustine Prevost, March 30, 1780, Vol. 90, No.29; Return of Loyal Refugees who have come into Georgia for Protection and Assistance, April 15, 1780, Vol. 92, No. 44, Clinton Papers, WLCL.
316 John J. Zubly to unnamed, Nov. 30, 1779, John J. Zubly Papers, GHS.
318 Lawrence, Storm over Savannah, 81-82.
and that the combined army was very strong. Loyalist Elizabeth Lichtenstein Johnston recalled that when shells fell in the town's streets, black children would rush to smother the fuses with sand, and then bring the shells, along with any solid shot they could find, to the British artillerists, who were short of ammunition. For this hazardous service, the children received seven pence for every cannon ball and shell they turned in.319

The most important service blacks provided was guiding reinforcements to Savannah, without which Prevost could not have withstood the siege. Prevost had left Lt. Col. John Maitland of the 71st Regiment with about eight hundred troops at Beaufort when the main British army withdrew from South Carolina. Although the Americans captured a messenger sent to summon Maitland to Prevost's assistance, Maitland learned of the situation and marched to Savannah. The French and Americans were aware that Maitland might make such a move, so D'Estaing ordered French warships to guard the Savannah River and prevent Maitland's detachment from crossing. But twenty miles from the town, when it seemed to Maitland that a crossing was impossible, the British encountered several black fishermen who told them of a passage through the creeks and swamps. This enabled the troops to elude the French blockade and safely reach Savannah.320

According to a French account, Maitland brought many blacks to Savannah along with the British soldiers. One of Maitland's officers, Francis Rush Clark, stated that when the British crossed the Savannah River, they left their sick troops, women, and black baggage handlers on the South Carolina side under the protection of British naval vessels.

320 Lawrence, *Storm over Savannah*, 29, 49.

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Clark did not indicate whether these were the only blacks with Maitland’s force or if there were others who accompanied the troops across the river.321

Those left on the north side of the Savannah River were fortunate because the heavy French and American bombardment killed and wounded dozens of people in the town, the majority of whom were blacks.322 Both races shared the struggle to survive the artillery fire. Anthony Stokes, a Mrs. Cooper, and several African Americans waited out one night’s cannonade in a cellar so packed with rum and supplies that Stokes “could hardly creep in.” On a subsequent night, a shell set fire to the house where Stokes had taken up residence. He and two of his slaves escaped, but eight other slaves perished. Stokes then moved to a more distant house, which was “crowded, both inside and out, with a number of whites and negroes.”323

The town’s defenders and inhabitants withstood the bombardment and repulsed a Franco-American assault on the town, after which the attackers began a withdrawal. Prevost then sent some black troops outside the lines to harass the enemy. On October 16, a British naval officer observed “our armed negroes skirmishing with the Rebels the whole afternoon.”324 This action occurred “on Mr. McGillivray’s plantation,” where the blacks and Whigs fought for control of several buildings. The buildings changed hands several times until a shortage of ammunition “obliged the blacks to retreat in the evening with the loss of one killed and three or four wounded, the enemy’s loss is not known,”

321 “Account of the attack upon Savannah under the orders of the Comte d’Estaing,” by a French artillery officer, Muskets, Cannon Balls and Bombs, 30; Francis Rush Clark to John Strutt, Oct. 27, 1779, Francis Rush Clark Papers, Feinstone Collection, No. 2338, DLAR.
322 Lawrence, Storm over Savannah, 77-78; Francis Rush Clark to John Strutt, Oct. 27, 1779, Clark Papers, Feinstone Collection, No. 2338, DLAR.
323 Anthony Stokes to Mrs. Stokes, Nov. 9, 1779, Muskets, Cannon Balls, and Bombs, 110, 111-112, 116n.
another Briton reported. Two days later, the naval officer wrote that "the armed negroes brought in two Rebel Dragoons and eight horses, and killed two rebels who were in a foraging party." Both French black troops and American slaves took advantage of the confusion following the attack on Savannah to reach the British. During D'Estaing's withdrawal, his black soldiers became insubordinate and began deserting to the British, forcing officers to station guards around their camp. In November, Philip Porcher, a South Carolina merchant and planter, confirmed that he lost 157 of his own slaves, along with seven belonging to other masters, to the British.

Once the French and Americans had departed, many white Georgians decided that it was unwise to keep black troops under arms. On October 23, eighteen residents of Savannah and Christ Church Parish complained to the Council that "a Number of Slaves appear in Arms and behave with Great Insolence, Joined by some white persons." The signers warned of "the dreadful Evils that must arise, if such Proceedings are not checked" and asked that "all Slaves may be immediately disarmed" and their white companions forbidden to trouble anyone. The Council referred the matter to Gen. Prevost. Several prominent loyalists also wrote to Germain urging him not to adopt a policy of arming slaves to fight the rebels because they had already lost many slaves and

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327 Lawrence, Storm over Savannah, 129; Account Book, 1770-1800, typescript pp. 96-97, Philip Porcher Papers, SCL.
328 Petition of sundry Inhabitants of Savannah and Parish of Christ Church, Oct. 23, 1779, CRG, 12:451-452.
feared that if the British formed black military units, large numbers of slaves would leave their plantations in hopes of earning their freedom by serving in the army.\footnote{Jeffrey Robert Young, \textit{Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670-1837} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 78.}

Prevost ignored the complaints and kept armed blacks in the field. Whig colonel Francis Marion learned in December that “several small parties of Negroes” were crossing the Savannah River and “pillaging” on the South Carolina side. He tried to intercept them with mounted patrols but failed to catch anyone.\footnote{Francis Marion to Benjamin Lincoln, Dec. 23, 1779, Lincoln Papers, Reel 5.} At the end of January 1780, a rebel officer sent to procure information on British forces in Georgia reported that “some Armed Negroes & 200 Indians was incampt before Savanna.” The British garrison, the officer added, “had no fresh provisions but what the Negroes plunder” from South Carolina.\footnote{Francis Marion to Benjamin Lincoln, Jan. 31, 1780, Lincoln Papers, PERK.} Rebel officer Daniel Horry reported in mid-February 1780 that in addition to the black raiding parties, the garrison of Savannah included “four hundred Negroes Armed.”\footnote{Daniel Horry to Benjamin Lincoln, Feb. 16, 1780, Lincoln Papers, Reel 5.} Prevost also utilized “Black Pioneer Companies” to continue strengthening Savannah’s defenses after the siege.\footnote{Augustine Prevost to Henry Clinton, Nov. 22, 1779, \textit{RAM}, 2:64.}

Like Prevost, officials in the Floridas also made increasing use of armed blacks in 1779. An account of the regulars and militia available to defend East Florida that year indicated that more than one-seventh of the troops were black.\footnote{Wright, “Blacks in East Florida,” 435.} Gov. Tonyn, however, found that the fourfold increase in the province’s black population since the start of the war presented great difficulties. Loyalist slaveowners demanded the return of their slaves and Tonyn sought Germain’s advice as to how to resolve the situation.\footnote{Tonyn to Germain, July 3, 1779, \textit{DAR}, 17:156-157.}
In West Florida, blacks began to assume a military role as the Spanish threat increased. Shortly after Gen. John Campbell assumed command in the province, he asked Clinton to send him “a company of Negroes” to strengthen his force.336 Apparently he was referring to the pioneer units at New York. When Spain declared war on Britain, Adam Chrystie armed and uniformed his own unit of twenty-two blacks to help defend the province.337 Upon learning of the Spanish declaration in early September, Campbell told Lt. Col. Alexander Dickson that he had authorized an officer to join Dickson at Baton Rouge “with as many men as he can collect – /Regular Inhabitants Indians and even Negroes/” to attack the Spanish.338 Campbell clearly intended to utilize every available man, regardless of race, against the Spaniards. Galvez’s offensive forestalled Campbell’s planned maneuver, but Dickson did employ armed blacks in his unsuccessful defense of Baton Rouge.339

The first stage of Britain’s southern campaign had been generally successful. Many loyalists had come forward to support the British, although the defeat of Boyd’s party at Kettle Creek and the abandonment of those who had declared their allegiance to the king at Augusta, leaving them vulnerable to Whig retribution, prevented many loyalists from openly committing to the British. The Indians had disappointed British officials by providing far less support than expected, yet despite Spanish tampering most of the nations remained committed to their alliance with the king. Perhaps the greatest cause for optimism had been the number of slaves who had come to the British and the

338 James Campbell to Dickson, Sept. 9, 1779, Carleton Papers, Vol. 18, No. 2264.
many contributions they had made of information, labor, and military service. Their assistance augured well for future operations, had either Germain or Clinton been bold enough to arm slaves in large numbers.

The siege of Savannah had clearly demonstrated the potential of loyalists, Indians, and blacks working in cooperation with British troops. Together, these disparate allies had defeated a vastly superior force and preserved Georgia as a base for the next phase of the campaign. Their victory inspired Britons and loyalists alike; Gen. Charles Grey, back in England after serving in the northern campaigns, wrote that “it is the first time I have seen day light in this business.” The campaign indicated that Britain’s supporters in the South, if employed together and in a coordinated manner, might provide the decisive force needed to regain control of the region. Unfortunately for their cause, British officials in London, New York, and Georgia all celebrated the victory but overlooked the significance of how it had been won.

Part 2
CHAPTER V
THE RECONQUEST OF SOUTH CAROLINA

As soon as Henry Clinton received word that Savannah remained in British hands and D’Estaing’s fleet had left the American coast, he immediately launched the long-awaited second phase of the southern campaign, the attack on Charleston. Ever since Archibald Campbell’s expedition had taken Savannah, Germain had pressed Clinton to move against South Carolina. Prevost’s raid to the gates of Charleston had increased Germain’s confidence that Clinton could easily take the town. “The feeble Resistance Major Genl. Prevost met with in his March and Retreat through so great a part of South Carolina is an indubitable proof of the Indisposition of the Inhabitants to support the Rebel Government,” he told the general.¹

Clinton had intended to dispatch troops to attack South Carolina in early October 1779, believing that this would give him the winter and spring to follow up on any victory he might win. A rumored French attack on Jamaica, however, forced Clinton to postpone his plan, and the French and American attack on Savannah caused another delay. In late December, Clinton sailed at last from New York with about nine thousand troops. Bad weather scattered the fleet and the first vessels did not reach Savannah until the end of January 1780. British troops landed in South Carolina in mid-February, advancing cautiously toward Charleston, which they surrounded and captured on May 12

¹ Germain to Clinton, Sept. 27, 1779, Germain Papers, Vol. 18, WLCL.
after a lengthy siege. At a cost of less than three hundred casualties, Clinton had captured the most important town in the South along with over five thousand American soldiers.  

Southern Whigs had been aware that South Carolina was the next British objective and realized that its loss might prove disastrous. As early as February 1779, John Rutledge warned Benjamin Lincoln that all accounts indicated that “this Country will be the Seat of War, and the Enemy, from the disaffection of our People ... expect a Conquest.” A congressional committee informed Lincoln that if the British occupied South Carolina, they would “act on a very different plan from what they formerly have; i.e. to settle the Country as they Conquer it, by securing all those whom they may suppose dangerous and to give the Noted Tories a Considerable command.” David Ramsay noted that Charleston “binds three States to the authority of Congress. If the enemy possess themselves of this town, there will be no living for honest whigs to the southward of the Santee.”

British hopes and Whig fears appeared to be realized after Charleston’s surrender. As British columns advanced into the backcountry without opposition, thousands of South Carolinians swore allegiance to George III. Clinton took steps to organize the loyalists into a militia before leaving the province in early June, and the new commander in the South, General Charles, Earl Cornwallis, prepared to advance into North Carolina. Meanwhile, Congress appointed General Horatio Gates, the hero of Saratoga, to take command of American forces in the Southern Department. Gates promptly chose to

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2 Clinton, American Rebellion, 151; Clinton to Germain, Aug. 21, 1779, Clinton Papers, Vol. 66, No. 13; Sept. 26, 1779, Vol. 69, No. 14; Clinton to unnamed, c. Oct. 26, 1779, Vol. 73, No. 17; Clinton to Germain, Nov. 10, 1779, Vol. 74, No. 35, WLCL; Pancake, This Destructive War, 57, 60, 66.
3 “Rutledge to Lincoln,” Feb. 28, 1779, 134.
4 Committee of Congress to Benjamin Lincoln, March 19, 1780, Benjamin Lincoln Papers, Reel 5.
5 Quoted in David B. Mattern, Benjamin Lincoln and the American Revolution (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 88.
assume the offensive and marched his army into South Carolina, where Cornwallis inflicted a crushing defeat on the rebels at Camden on August 16. Although Gates's campaign ended in disaster, his approach invigorated the demoralized Whigs, who repudiated their oaths to Britain and rallied to partisan leaders Thomas Sumter and Francis Marion. These Whig bands resorted to their usual tactic of attacking loyalists, complicating British efforts to organize their supporters and establish firm control in both Georgia and South Carolina.

Deciding that the occupation of North Carolina would be the best way to secure South Carolina, Cornwallis advanced to Charlotte in September. British Major Patrick Ferguson, inspector general of the loyal militia, marched into western North Carolina to protect Cornwallis's flank. On October 7, the Whigs attacked Ferguson at King's Mountain, killing or capturing his entire force. Ferguson's death in the battle, along with the deaths of so many loyalists and the rebels' brutal treatment of the prisoners, deprived the loyalists of a respected leader and shattered their morale. While many loyalists continued to assist the British, violent Whig persecution, combined with Cornwallis's neglect, seriously undermined their subsequent effectiveness.

Cornwallis also chose not to use Indians, depriving himself of another valuable source of support, although the Creeks, Choctaws, and Cherokees all contributed to the defense of British posts in Georgia and West Florida. Thousands of slaves who came to the British were employed in various capacities, yet once again, Cornwallis devised no policy to take full advantage of their assistance. The ministry's strategy had called for a combined effort of British troops, loyalists, Indians, and slaves to subdue the rebels. But

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Cornwallis, determined to win in the South with British regulars alone, ignored the plan, thus depriving himself of the support on which success had been predicated.

Mobilizing the Loyalists

Clinton did not call on the loyalists for aid when his army landed in South Carolina. He did not want to “expose them to the malevolence of their enemies before I was fully certain of success,” he wrote. Therefore, he “avoided ... every measure which might excite the loyal inhabitants to rise in favour of government, and thus bring danger and trouble upon themselves, at a time when the King’s army, being employed in the reduction of Charles town, could not assist or second their struggles.”

Nevertheless, many Americans joined regular British units during and after the operations against Charleston. Some of these recruits were rebel deserters, others were loyalists. On March 27, the 71st Regiment requested ammunition for ten men who had “Join’d from the Rebels since our Last Return;” two more rebel deserters enlisted by April 28. Another man joined the 71st by May 9, and three others joined the 42nd Regiment; records do not indicate whether these were rebel deserters or loyalist volunteers. Seven loyalists, all of whom were without muskets, enlisted in the South Carolina Royalists on June 6. Several of these men had been in hiding for several years to escape Whig persecution. Because the records do not cover all of the units in South Carolina at the time and the information contained in them is limited, it is impossible to know how many men the regular regiments enlisted. For example, on May 23 and June 21, officers requested a total of eighty-four muskets for the Royal North Carolina Volunteers, a unit

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7 Clinton, American Rebellion, 174.
9 Returns of Arms and Ammunition, March 27, 1780; Apr. 28, 1780; May 9, 1780; Request of Joseph Robinson, June 6, 1780, George Wray Papers, Vol. 4, WLCL.
composed of loyal refugees from that province. But there is no mention of whether these arms were for new recruits or replacement weapons for the veterans. Very probably some of the arms were replacements and others were for recruits. Incomplete as they are, the records show a small but significant number of American enlistments in both British and provincial units in South Carolina.

Other South Carolinians returned to their allegiance when they encountered Clinton's advancing army. Twenty-five inhabitants of Edisto Island came aboard a British vessel to ask for protection on February 14; they were promptly dispatched to collect horses for the army. Clinton, however, soon announced that he did not wish to grant protections unless the applicants demonstrated genuine proof of their loyalty.

Many loyalists were eager to take up arms with the British regardless of Clinton's hesitance. Thomas Harvy and Moses Eastan wrote to Clinton on March 18 on behalf of loyal South Carolinians who were "willing and Ready to Ade and asist In the Behalf of his magisty to Defeet the Reabls." Whig cavalry had been sent to arrest Harvy, Eastan, and their comrades and confine them in Charleston, but the loyalists escaped and hid in the woods. They asked for troops to assist them, promising that soon they would require only ammunition to be able to protect themselves.

In Ninety Six district, a Colonel Moore assembled 150 men and attacked a log house where the Whigs kept a supply of ammunition, but the loyalists were driven off. William Moultrie, learning of another uprising in Colleton district, ordered the militia

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10 Ward, Between the Lines, 174; John Hamilton's request for arms, May 23, 1780; Donald Campbell's request for arms, June 21, 1780, Wray Papers, Vol. 4, WLCL.
12 Thomas Harvy and Moses Eastan to Clinton, March 18, 1780, Clinton Papers, Vol. 89, No. 9, WLCL.
13 Josiah Culbertson, Pension Application, in Dann, ed., Revolution Remembered, 175-176.
there “to disperse the disaffected that are in Arms.” The Whig commander, Col. William Skirving, failed to do so because three of his four companies joined the loyalists. From Camden, Joseph Kershaw warned Benjamin Lincoln that the loyalists there were gathering strength. “We are much threatened here by the disaffected,” he reported. A representative from North Carolina arrived at the British lines on April 19 and informed the officers that many of the inhabitants were “dissatisfied with the oppression of the rebels.” He offered the assistance of “several thousand armed men.”

Loyalists gave passive support to the British by refusing to turn out when Whig officials summoned the militia, while others took a more active role in procuring intelligence. Hessian Capt. Johann Ewald obtained information about rebel positions on March 29 from a loyalist whose son was serving in Lincoln’s army. Asked to explain this paradox, the man told Ewald that the Whigs had forced his son to enlist by threatening the family with banishment and the confiscation of their property. Elias Ball, a loyalist who had accompanied a British foraging party and managed to avoid capture when Whig cavalry surprised the detachment on May 5, rushed to inform Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton of the incident. Ball told Tarleton that the rebels had gone to Lenud’s Ferry, where the British officer overtook them with his dragoons. Tarleton’s attack caught the Whigs by surprise, inflicted over one hundred casualties, and recovered the seventeen British prisoners.

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14 William Moultrie to Benjamin Lincoln, Feb. 26, 1780, Lincoln Papers, Reel 5.
15 Borick, Gallant Defense, 58.
16 Joseph Kershaw to Benjamin Lincoln, March 8, 1780, Lincoln Papers, Reel 5.
17 “Diary kept by Ensign Hartung,” “Hessian Military Reports and Accounts,” HDAR, Item Z.
Although initial indications of loyalist support augured well for British prospects in both South and North Carolina, the situation in Georgia showed that loyalists remained vulnerable to rebel harassment without troops to assist them. Clinton had planned to have a detachment from his army march from Savannah into the backcountry to create a diversion while the main British force attacked Charleston, but later ordered the troops to Charleston to assist in the siege. Gov. Wright warned the general that the change in plan would leave Georgia vulnerable to rebel incursions, and within a few weeks this prediction proved correct.19 “I have received petitions from the very much distressed and loyal inhabitants who have been drove from their settlements in St. George’s Parish and downwards to St. Phillips ... for assistance & protection” as the result of Whig raids, the governor informed Clinton on April 6. Wright appealed to Clinton for aid, warning that Georgia “will be broke up and totally ruined if something is not speedily done.”20

Clinton remained focused on Charleston. With the town’s surrender imminent, he decided that the time was right to call South Carolina loyalists to action. On May 3 James Simpson, acting as Clinton’s secretary, relayed the general’s orders to Richard Pearis and other loyalists with the army to go “amongst the Inhabitants of the interior parts of the province in whose loyalty ... there is much reason to confide,” inform them of the army’s plans, and summon them to its assistance. The emissaries were to give the loyalists “the Strongest Assurances of Effectual Countenance, Protection and Support,” inform them that British regulars would soon march into the backcountry, and have the loyalists gather arms and provisions so that they would be ready to join the troops when the latter arrived. Once they had gathered sufficient strength, the loyalists were also to seize prominent

20 Wright to Clinton, April 6, 1780, *RAM*, 2:111.
Whigs. Should rebel forces block their route of march to join the British troops, the loyalists were to fight their way through such opposition, but were not to undertake any other aggressive action until they had united with the army and been properly organized.21

Charleston surrendered shortly after the emissaries left for the backcountry. In the aftermath of victory, events demonstrated that British expectations of loyalist support in South Carolina had been sound. Two hundred inhabitants of Charleston signed a congratulatory address to Clinton and Arbuthnot.22 Clinton issued a handbill and proclamation to the inhabitants, “well calculated to induce them to return to their allegiance.”23 In the former, the commander-in-chief asked for “the helping hand of every man ... to re-establish peace and good government.” Clinton promised in return “to avoid giving them any trouble but what is necessary to secure them peace, liberty, and prosperity.”24 On May 22, Clinton sought to assure the loyalists that he would protect them by threatening punishment for anyone who continued to oppose British authority or who harassed the loyalists. Noting that generous offers of pardon and protection had been made to the rebels, Clinton warned that any “attempt to hinder or intimidate, the King’s faithful and loyal subjects” would “be treated with that severity so criminal and hardened an obstinacy will deserve” and their property confiscated. The general again promised loyalists that the army would guarantee their security.25 A subsequent proclamation, issued jointly by Clinton and Adm. Marriott Arbuthnot on June 1, offered former rebels “a full and free pardon ... for the treasonable offences” they had committed, except the

22 Borick, Gallant Defense, 231.
23 Tarleton, History of the Campaigns, 24.
murder of loyalists. 26 Clinton and Arbuthnot also pledged that henceforth South Carolinians were to be taxed only by their own assembly, not by Parliament, thereby removing the original cause of the dispute with Britain. 27

The combined effect of the victory at Charleston and the proclamations produced immediate results. "A general revolution of sentiment seemed to take place, and the cause of Great Britain appeared to triumph over that of the American Congress," Tarleton wrote. 28 Only two days after the surrender, a German soldier with Clinton’s army stated that "from what we learn of the disposition of the Inhabitants if the war is prosecuted with vigor in these Southern Colonies Rebellion will suffer a severe Shock in the Course of this Summer." 29 On May 24, twenty-five loyalists, armed and mounted, arrived in Charleston after a ride of one hundred miles from the Orangeburgh district to request ammunition "to secure themselves against the rebels’ depredations." 30 They told Clinton that the district contained "a great many more friends to government ... ready to shew their loyalty by their services against the Rebels by whom they have been persecuted." 31 Others followed them; by May 25, Clinton noted that fifteen hundred armed men had come in to offer their assistance, and some of the most prominent leaders of the rebellion had submitted. These included former governor Rawlins Lowndes, Charles Pinckney, Henry Middleton, and Daniel Horry. 32 "From every Information I receive, and Numbers

26 Henry Clinton and Marriott Arbuthnot, Proclamation of June 1, 1780, in Tarleton, History of the Campaigns, 75.
27 Smith, Loyalists and Redcoats, 131.
29 Letter from Charleston, May 14, 1780, no addressee or signature, in “Sundry Journals of Brunswick Troops,” HDAR, Item HZ.
30 “Diary kept by Ensign Hartung,” “Hessian Reports and Accounts,” HDAR, Item Z. Ewald said the group numbered sixty men, and that they wanted officers as well as arms and ammunition to "take revenge on their neighbors, who had oppressed them very much up to now." Ewald, Diary of the American War, 242.
32 Borick, Gallant Defense, 231-232.
of the most violent Rebels hourly coming in to offer their Services, I have the strongest
Reason to believe the general Disposition of the People to be not only friendly to
Government, but forward to take up Arms in its Support,” Clinton wrote Cornwallis on
May 29. Several days later Clinton made a similar report to Germain. “With the greatest
pleasure,” Clinton announced, he was able to say that “the inhabitants from every quarter
repair to ... this garrison to declare their allegiance to the King, and to offer their services,
in arms, in support of his government.” Those who came in often “brought prisoners,
their former oppressors or leaders; and I may venture to assert that there are few men in
South Carolina, who are not either our prisoners, or in arms with us.”

Confirmation of this opinion came from many other sources. “Since Charleston
has been in our possession, more than 2,000 men have come from the country who have
voluntarily offered their services to His Britannic Majesty,” Hessian Maj. Wilhelm von
Wilmowsky wrote on June 4. Some of these people were from the backcountry, but
almost sixteen hundred lowcountry inhabitants took the British oath in the immediate
aftermath of Charleston’s surrender. In addition, between June 17, 1780 and July 31,
1781, a total of 1,866 people appeared before crown officials in Charleston to swear
allegiance to Great Britain.

James Simpson, who at Clinton’s request had made inquiries to determine the
strength of loyalism in Charleston, at first provided a more cautious assessment.

“Loyalists who have always adhered to the King’s Government are not so numerous as I

33 Clinton to Cornwallis, May 29, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, No. 54.
34 Clinton to Germain, June 4, 1780, in Elizabeth R. Miller, ed., The American Revolution, As Described By
British Writers and The Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 1991),
14.
35 Wilhelm von Wilmowsky to Baron von Jungkenn, June 4, 1780, in Uhlendorf, ed., Siege of Charleston,
419.
36 Lambert, South Carolina Loyalists, 96; Davies, “Restoration of Civil Government,” in Wright, ed., Red,
White and True Blue, 125-126.
expected,” Simpson reported. However, he did find many loyalists along with numerous Whigs who had decided to switch their allegiance. Simpson warned Clinton that the loyalists “are clamorous for retributive Justice” and that this would create disruption in the province “until those People whose persecuting spirit hath caused such calamities to their fellow subjects shall receive the punishment their Iniquities deserve.” Although the situation in town was not as good as Simpson had hoped, he believed that once British authority had been reestablished, most people would support it.37 By July 1 Simpson believed that this prediction had been confirmed. Some zealous Charleston loyalists organized militia companies and arrested between 100 and 150 town residents for alleged parole violations.38

Reports from the backcountry were equally encouraging. On May 30, Maj. John Andre, Clinton’s aide, told Patrick Ferguson that there was “no reason to doubt that the inhabitants’ of the backcountry “are very well disposed to take an active Part” in support of the British.39 Lt. Col. Nisbet Balfour, commanding a British column marching from Charleston to Ninety Six, sent Cornwallis favorable reports of the loyalty of the people he encountered, particularly in the Orangeburg District, where 294 loyalists organized themselves into an association for defense.40 “As to the Militia arming to defend the country, I have not the smallest doubt of it,” Balfour declared.41 From Friday’s Ferry on the Congaree River, Alexander Innes, now commanding the South Carolina Royalists, informed Cornwallis that “the general disposition of the Country” was “as favourable as

39 Ferguson to Cornwallis, May 30, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, No. 58.
40 Balfour to Cornwallis, June [3 or 4], 1780, Memorial of the Companies of Militia of Orangeburgh, June 12, 1780, Ferguson to Cornwallis, June 14, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, Nos. 81, 129, 145.
41 Balfour to Cornwallis, June 6, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, No. 96.
Your Lordship can wish.” Innes had to intervene to prevent some loyalists from avenging
themselves against Whigs who had viciously persecuted them in the past.42

Upon learning of Charleston’s surrender, David Fanning abandoned his neutrality
and joined Robert Cunningham in organizing a group of backcountry loyalists. Fanning
traveled one hundred miles through the region, distributing Clinton’s proclamations to the
inhabitants with considerable effect. “We now found ourselves growing strong, and
numbers flocking daily to us,” he wrote. Fanning and Cunningham took their party to
Whitehall, the home of Gen. Andrew Williamson, where they found that the Whig leader
and his militiamen had submitted to a small party under Richard Pearis. The loyalists
occupied the fort there, taking fourteen swivel guns and the garrison’s arms.43 Joseph
Robinson of the South Carolina Royalists also returned to the backcountry to announce
that relief was finally at hand. He praised his former friends and neighbors for
persevering in their loyalism “notwithstanding all the Vicissitudes, all the exertions of
Cruelty, and all the institutions jesuitically calculated to alienate the minds of the people
from their Duty to their Sovereign.”44

Robert Gray, a loyalist from the Cheraws district, wrote that after the British had
occupied posts in the interior of South Carolina, the “conquest of the Province was
complete.” He estimated that loyalists were “in a number about one third of the whole” in
the province, but comprised half of the population in Ninety Six district, while the people
of Orangeburg district were “almost unanimous” in their loyalty, and “readily took up
arms to maintain the British government.” Many Whigs also took the British oath, some

42 Innes to Cornwallis, June 8, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, No. 114.
43 Fanning, Narrative, 14; Terms of Capitulation, June 10, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, No. 133.
44 Joseph Robinson to his Friends, on the Frontiers of South Carolina, June 27, 1780, Carleton Papers, Vol. 24, No. 2842.
enrolling in the militia, "because they believed the war to be at an end in the Southern provinces & partly to ingratiate themselves with the conquerors, they also fondly hoped that they would enjoy a respite from the Calamities of war."45

"Appearances in this Province are certainly very favourable," Cornwallis informed Clinton on June 2. "I shall most earnestly endeavour to regulate the Government of S. Carolina to act towards the Inhabitants, & to establish such kind of Force as I think most likely to conduce to the essential Good" of the king's service. Cornwallis added "that in a business of such infinite Importance, Regulations must not be too hastily made, nor Professions too easily accepted."46

The repercussions of Clinton's victory also extended to North Carolina, where loyalists inspired by the capture of Charleston began to assemble with the intention of joining the British army. Some eleven hundred loyalists gathered in Lincoln County on June 15, but were defeated by the rebels after "a warm and obstinate Fight." Another group of loyalists, also estimated at eleven hundred, embodied on June 25 at the forks of the Yadkin River, eluded rebel militia, and marched for South Carolina.47

The reports from South Carolina had a significant effect across the Atlantic as well. Since early 1780 Britons had waited impatiently for news of Clinton's operations, while the British press announced that the rebellion was near collapse and that the battle for Charleston was to be the "Armageddon" of the American war, bringing "instant victory" if Clinton succeeded.48 Public morale badly needed a boost. "We are much in want of some Success to keep up the Spirits of the Empire," a young British employee of

46 Cornwallis to Clinton, June 2, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/72, No. 16.
47 Griffith Rutherford to Richard Caswell, June 29, 1780, Misc. Papers, Series 1, Vol. 1, NCSA.
48 Lutnick, British Press and the American Revolution, 156-158.
a merchant house in New York wrote in March.\(^4\) When news that Clinton had captured Charleston reached Britain, “the street celebrations ... were exuberant and wild.” The victory appeared to validate the ministry’s American policy, stifling criticism and inspiring Lord North to seek new parliamentary elections in hope of further strengthening his position.\(^5\) Clinton himself instantly became, according to one observer, “the most popular man in England.”\(^5\)

King George III and Germain shared in the exuberance when they read Clinton’s dispatches. Now that the loyalists were assured “of effectual & permanent Protection,” Germain told Clinton, they “will not hesitate to avow their Loyalty and arm themselves for the Defence of their Country.”\(^5\) Satisfied that South Carolina was securely in British hands, Germain in July ordered all South Carolinians who were in England and receiving financial support from the government to return to the province. Germain’s belief that all of the southern colonies would soon return to their allegiance was widely shared by British political leaders and much of the public in the summer and fall of 1780.\(^5\)

The assessments of the situation in South Carolina made by officials in London, loyalists, and army officers might be dismissed as mere wishful thinking if they were not confirmed by the Whigs. Writing from Camden on May 24, South Carolina governor John Rutledge declared that if the British sent troops into the backcountry, “the disaffected will certainly flock to them, & those who are not disaffected will either


\(^5\) Quoted in Hibbert, Redcoats and Rebels, 321.

\(^5\) Germain to Clinton, July 4, 1780, Germain Papers, Vol. 18, WLCL.

abscond, if they can," or be taken prisoner and put on parole.\textsuperscript{54} William Seymour, a sergeant in the Delaware Continentals, heard reports while his unit was encamped in North Carolina that the British were overrunning South Carolina and "obliging the inhabitants, as they came along, to take the oath of allegiance to the King. In this, indeed, they had not much difficulty, for most part of them" joined the British.\textsuperscript{55} "Vast numbers flocked in and submitted; some through fear, some through willingness, and others, perhaps, through a hope that all things would settle down and war cease," Whig James Collins remembered.\textsuperscript{56} Tarleton Brown, a South Carolina militia captain, described the gloom that overcame the rebels: "The country now seemed to be almost in complete subjugation to the British." Yet had they not been "aided and abetted by those unprincipled and bloodthirsty tools [loyalists]... the enemy would never have gained a solid foothold upon our shores."\textsuperscript{57} North Carolina governor Abner Nash told Thomas Jefferson that British troops posted near at Cheraw Hill were gathering "a considerable Number of new recruits from amongst the Inhabitants."

As promising as the situation appeared for the British, affairs in South Carolina required careful management because those who had professed their loyalty did so for a variety of reasons and therefore many could be easily alienated. Some observers recognized this fact. "The greater part of the rural population of this part of America are, I believe, favorably inclined toward peace, \textit{for they gain nothing by this war}," Hessian

Captain Johann Hinrichs stated. “The safe rule, according to which one can always ascertain whether a man is a loyalist or a rebel, is to find out whether he profits more in his private interests, his mode of life, his way of doing things, etc., when he is on our side or on that of the enemy.” Hinrichs believed that exceptions to this rule were rare, and that only a “small number” of loyalists acted from “love and faithfulness to God and their lawful King.”59 Robert Biddulph believed that a large portion of Charleston’s inhabitants accepted British rule only because circumstances forced them to do so. “The Peace of this Country is fully established,” he wrote, “but there is such a fund of Hatred and Animosity in the Hearts of the People, as Time only can extinguish.”60

In the wake of their disastrous defeat, even ardent rebels had little choice but to reconcile themselves to the new situation.61 William Moultrie explained that demoralized Whigs now sought nothing more than a return to prewar normalcy:

The people quite harassed out and tired of war; their capital fallen, and their army prisoners, no place of safety for them to fly to with their families and property; the British troops in possession of their whole country, and no prospect of relief from the neighboring states; in this situation they thought all further resistance was useless, they therefore readily accepted of the pleasing offers, in hopes they would have been suffered to remain peaceably and quietly at home with their families, and to have gone on with their business undisturbed, as before.62

Whig James Collins found the situation to be more complex than Moultrie described it, asserting that some rebels remained “determined to fight it out to the last let the consequence be what it might,” while others were ready to “give up all for lost” when circumstances appeared unfavorable. Collins also classified loyalists as those who “were

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Tories from principle,” others who “believed it impossible for the cause of liberty to succeed,” and those who “were Tories entirely through fear.” He also identified another group who had no principles of their own, but “pretended friendship to all ... not knowing into whose hands they might fall.” These people, Collins wrote, sometimes acted as British informers once the king’s troops had taken control of the province.63

Either unaware of the complex and conflicting motives that had led people to take the oath of allegiance or believing that he could satisfy everyone, Clinton issued another proclamation on June 3 which later caused the British some difficulty in the province. With rebel forces in South Carolina virtually nonexistent, Clinton saw no reason to keep large numbers of captured Whigs bound by paroles, the pledges they had given not to take up arms again until exchanged. Clinton’s proclamation released from parole everyone except those captured in the operations against Charleston. He considered this “a prudent measure,” believing it would prevent “inveterate rebels” from subverting British authority under the protection of parole. Better, Clinton thought, that all of the inhabitants declare their principles so that they could be identified and dealt with.64 He therefore announced that “it is become unnecessary that such paroles be any longer observed.” As of June 20, all those on parole were to consider themselves “restored to all the rights and duties belonging to citizens” and would be expected “to take an active part in settling and securing His Majesty’s government.”65 Clinton believed he was making a magnanimous gesture that would promote reconciliation, although the Whigs soon came to view the proclamation’s terms in a different light.

63 Collins, Autobiography, 23.
64 Clinton, American Rebellion, 181-182.
65 Henry Clinton, Proclamation of June 3, 1780, in Tarleton, History of the Campaigns, 73.
Before departing for New York at the beginning of June, Clinton established a board of police in Charleston to handle civil matters, but did not fully restore civil government in South Carolina. Although he had promised "the restoration of civil government" in his May 22 proclamation and had brought former North Carolina governor Josiah Martin on the expedition with the intention of appointing him temporary civil governor, Clinton decided that the situation did not yet justify reestablishing civilian rule. He worried that civil officials would interfere with military policy and also repeat the practice of their counterparts in Georgia by treating former Whigs harshly, thus hampering reconciliation.

Clinton's refusal to restore civil government angered many officials, including Germain, Adm. Arbuthnot, and several South Carolina loyalists. Arbuthnot insisted that the province's inhabitants would "continue obstinate from the dread of remaining under Military Law," but would readily submit to British rule under civil authority. Lt. Gov. William Bull believed that the restoration of civil rule would "establish the public Tranquility on a lasting Foundation," while James Simpson asserted that reconstituted civil authority would demonstrate "the superior Advantages and Security" of British government and win over former rebels. On July 4, Germain told Clinton that "the Re-establishment of the Constitution ... cannot fail to have sufficient Influence on the wavering and indifferent among the Inhabitants of Charles Town, to fix them in their Submission to legal Government." Some Whigs feared the effects that the restoration of civil rule in

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67 Willcox, Portrait of a General, 313; Clinton, American Rebellion, 182.
68 Arbuthnot to Germain, May 2, 1780, Germain Papers, Vol. 12, WLCL.
70 Germain to Clinton, July 4, 1780, Germain Papers, Vol. 18, WLCL.
South Carolina would have on their cause; Alexander Hamilton declared that it would “conciliate the greatest part of the people” and “prepare the minds of their neighbours to yield an early submission.” Yet Clinton continually found reasons to delay action, so that in the end civil rule was never restored in South Carolina and an important opportunity to consolidate control was lost.

With civil government a distant prospect, the town’s military commandant, Brig. Gen. James Patterson, and the board of police headed by Simpson as intendant general shared authority in civil matters. In addition to Simpson, Clinton had appointed Robert William Powell to the board to represent Charleston’s merchants, Alexander Wright to speak for the planters, and Lt. Col. Alexander Innes as military representative. Two other prominent loyalists, Bull and Sir Egerton Leigh, also served on the board after their arrival in South Carolina in February 1781, with Bull replacing Simpson as intendant general. The board functioned primarily as a court to settle lawsuits involving debt and other civil matters. Bull described the board’s work as “business of a very complicated and often a delicate nature,” since its decisions had to convince South Carolinians that justice was impartially administered. He and Simpson believed that the board succeeded in this regard.

As commander in the South, Cornwallis supervised both the board of police and the commandant as well as the field army. Clinton had left Cornwallis broad discretion in the exercise of his authority, specifying only that the earl should make the defense of

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71 Alexander Hamilton to Francois Marbois, Sept. 13, 1780, Vandenberg Papers, Misc. Coll., WLCL.
72 William Smith, Historical Memoirs, 284, 296-297.
73 George Smith McCowen, Jr., The British Occupation of Charleston, 1780-82 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 13-14, 16, 18-19; Nisbet Balfour to Germain, Feb. 18, 1781, Leslie Letterbook, microfilm, SCDAH.
74 William Bull to unnamed, Feb. 18, 1782, Shelburne Papers, Vol. 68, No. 127, WLCL.
75 Simpson to Clinton, July 16, 1780, RAM, 2:158.
Charleston and control of South Carolina his first priority, and then, if circumstances permitted, advance into North Carolina if it could be done without jeopardizing the security of South Carolina.\textsuperscript{76}

Cornwallis took prompt steps to assure that those South Carolinians whose private interest outweighed political principles would be drawn back into the royal fold. Loyalist exiles “had their property, or what remained of it, restored.” However, the “havoc made by the Americans” when they controlled the province “often defeated this intention.” Cornwallis also promoted trade, suspending the Prohibitory Act which had banned commerce between the rebellious provinces and the rest of the empire, thereby “allowing merchants to convey to Charles town a variety of manufactures which had been long wanted throughout all the southern provinces, and permitting them to receive payment in the produce of the country.”\textsuperscript{77} The earl, considering trade to be a privilege “exclusively enjoyed” by loyal subjects, prohibited rebels from participating in it, which served as a powerful incentive for many people to take the British oath.\textsuperscript{78} Large numbers of South Carolinians, from interest or loyalism, also found employment in the army’s civil departments. The army quartermaster’s department alone employed 225 civilians.\textsuperscript{79}

Believing that lenience would best win the support of the people, Cornwallis adopted a surprisingly generous policy. He “attempted to conciliate the minds of the wavering and unsteady, by promises and employments.” He ordered the army to avoid plundering or otherwise abusing the province’s inhabitants so as not to alienate anyone.\textsuperscript{80}

However, the earl believed that Clinton’s proclamations had been too generous in

\textsuperscript{76} Clinton, \textit{American Rebellion}, 186.
\textsuperscript{77} Tarleton, \textit{History of the Campaigns}, 89.
\textsuperscript{78} Proclamation of Charles, Earl Cornwallis, July 25, 1780, in Tarleton, \textit{History of the Campaigns}, 125.
\textsuperscript{80} Tarleton, \textit{History of the Campaigns}, 90.
granting protection to "some of the most violent rebels and persecutors." He also saw the danger of allowing disaffected people to serve in the militia, and ordered his subordinates to exclude from the militia all those "who are not sufficiently loyal."

Some loyalists expressed dissatisfaction with Cornwallis’s leniency, worrying that former rebels who declared loyalty without altering their real opinions might endanger the British position in South Carolina. Samuel Carne saw no evidence that “having been steadily Loyal avails more than those Enjoy who shed their fellow Subjects blood, & are since admitted,” he wrote. “Allmost all who Apply are made good Subjects ... God grant we may never find them otherways.” These fears proved well-founded, as the earl’s lenient policy created two serious problems. First, many of those whom he had pardoned without investigating their principles remained ardent rebels and secretly continued to support the rebellion. Second, Cornwallis’s generosity toward former rebels “produced not the intended effect: It did not reconcile the enemies, but discouraged the friends.” Loyalists “reflected on their own losses and sufferings” at the hands of the Whigs, and angrily watched as Cornwallis restored their former persecutors, unpunished, to equality with the most steadfast supporters of the British.

Rallying the genuine loyalists and organizing them into a militia capable of holding South Carolina if and when the British army advanced northward was the lynchpin of British strategy in the South. To accomplish this task, on May 22 Clinton had appointed Maj. Patrick Ferguson of the 71st Regiment to act as Inspector of Militia in the Southern Department. Clinton ordered Ferguson, “without loss of time, to form into

81 Cornwallis to Patterson, June 10, 1780, in Ross, ed., Cornwallis Correspondence, 1:46. Ross spells the recipient’s name as “Pattison.”
82 Cornwallis to Balfour, June 11, 1781, in Ross, ed., Cornwallis Correspondence, 46-47.
83 Samuel Carne to Christopher Rolleston, Oct. 12, 1780, Samuel Carne Papers, SCL.
84 Tarleton, History of the Campaigns, 90.
Corps all the Young or unmarried Men of the Provinces of Georgia and the two Carolina’s” to serve under Cornwallis’s orders. The men were to be formed into companies of fifty to one hundred men, which when possible were to be consolidated into battalions; otherwise the companies would serve independently. Ferguson was to allow the men of each company to elect their commanding officer and to enforce discipline “with great Caution, so as not to disgust the Men, Or mortify unnecessarily their Love of Freedom.” Additional measures intended “to Procure the general & hearty Concurrence of the Loyal Inhabitants” included limited terms of service (a maximum of six months on duty out of twelve) and assurance that militiamen would not be “drawn into the regular Service without their Consent.”

Creating an effective militia in a region that had been under Whig control for five years was a daunting task. “The severity of the Rebel government has so terrified and totally subdued the minds of the people, that it is very difficult to rouse them to any exertions,” Cornwallis later observed. As determined as Ferguson was, he could not personally organize every unit; officers at some of the British posts had to assist in their districts. Even with such aid, Ferguson’s task required “the greatest attention to a multitude of details. The area involved was immense, the problems staggering, and the time limited.” Qualified officers had to be found, the men’s loyalty vetted, and those enrolled given arms and training.

The internal politics of the British army severely complicated Ferguson’s efforts to organize an effective militia. During the siege of Charleston, Clinton had learned that

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85 “Instructions to Major Ferguson Inspector of Militia,” May 22, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, No. 44.
86 Cornwallis to Clinton, Aug. 29, 1780, in Ross, ed., Cornwallis Correspondence, 58.
87 Smith, Loyalists and Redcoats, 137.
the ministry had denied his request to resign his command, which angered Cornwallis, who had expected to replace Clinton as commander-in-chief. With his ambition thwarted, Cornwallis took out his frustration on Clinton, refusing to participate further in planning operations and requesting a separate command. Clinton obliged, but soon the officer corps became factionalized over the issue and Clinton blamed Cornwallis for fomenting this unrest. Because Ferguson had been appointed by Clinton, Cornwallis automatically distrusted his inspector of militia. Lt. Col. Nisbet Balfour, a protege of Cornwallis, disliked Ferguson and perhaps desired the militia command for himself. On May 22, Balfour had visited Clinton and told the commander-in-chief that “it was generally reported that Ferguson was violent tempered and treated his men with harshness” and should not be given command of the militia. Clinton replied that he had heard no such reports and gave no credence to rumors. He attributed Balfour’s remarks to the “infernal party” divisions prevailing in the army.

Clinton had not even left Charleston when Cornwallis and Balfour began plotting to replace his militia plan with one of their own, despite the earl’s dislike of administrative work. Cornwallis preferred to seek victory on the battlefield, rather than devote his energy to organizational tasks that took a long time to produce tangible results. “Probably the chief reason” for his failure to fully mobilize loyalist support in South Carolina was “his distaste for the matter, which admitted of no soldierly approach.” Intent on advancing his own career, Cornwallis undoubtedly undertook the effort to

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90 Wickwire and Wickwire, *Cornwallis*, 171.
create his own plan for a loyal militia so that he, rather than Clinton, could claim credit in
the event of success.

Meanwhile, Ferguson accompanied Balfour to the interior of the province, where
the erstwhile inspector of militia received orders from Cornwallis on June 2 “to take no
steps whatsoever in the militia business” until receiving further instructions; Ferguson
promised to “pay the utmost implicit Obedience” to the order.91 This left Balfour free to
begin organizing the militia. “I have employ’d a faithfull person near Orangeburgh, who
assures me of the loyalty of that district, and propose, empowering him, to raise an
association to take up arms, and keep the peace untill the militia is formed, which I think
there is no doubt of effecting,” Balfour informed Cornwallis on June 6. He assured the
earl that “As to the Militia arming to defend the country, I have not the smallest doubt of
it,” and noted that “Ferguson remains perfectly quiet, since he rec. your letters,” but still
appeared eager to organize a militia upon the original plan formulated by Clinton.
Altogether, Balfour felt satisfied with the progress of the militia, although he observed
that it was difficult to find “men of property, and consequence” to serve as officers.92

Cornwallis recognized the importance of giving commissions to “locally
prominent persons” whose influence would help sway others to actively support the
British. Unfortunately, most leading South Carolinians who had not fled the province or
been banished had cast their lot with the Whigs. Cornwallis therefore chose men like
James Cary of Camden district to command the militia. An attorney and planter who had
immigrated to South Carolina in 1764, Cary’s influence was not great, but he was well
known in the district. Although he had taken the Whig oath, he had never participated

91 Ferguson to Cornwallis, June 6, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, No. 92.
92 Balfour to Cornwallis, June 6, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 96.
actively in the rebellion. Cornwallis found Cary’s loyalty beyond question, but as a militia colonel, Cary’s performance was poor.\textsuperscript{93}

Robert Ballingall proved to be one of the better militia officers Cornwallis appointed. When the British army arrived in South Carolina, rebel officials imprisoned Ballingall. He was released when Charleston surrendered, and on July 20, Cornwallis gave him command of the militia south and west of Charleston, an area expanded in September to include all of St. George’s, St. James’s, Goose Creek, and St. Andrew’s Parishes, along with James Island. While many other militia officers soon came to be scorned by British commanders, Ballingall retained the favor of both Cornwallis, who acknowledged his success “in raising & training the Militia,” and Gen. Alexander Leslie, who praised Ballingall’s “honor, Integrity, and good sense.”\textsuperscript{94}

Despite the lack of qualified officers and Ferguson’s enforced idleness, militia matters had “a promising appearance” in late June. The volunteers “equalled the wishes of their leaders, both as to numbers and professions of loyalty.”\textsuperscript{95} Cornwallis informed Clinton on July 14 that the organization of the militia in “the lower districts” of the province was “in great forwardness.”\textsuperscript{96} This was particularly true in Charleston, where twenty-seven residents petitioned Cornwallis on behalf of the inhabitants for “permission to embody, arm and uniform themselves in a volunteer company” to assist in suppressing “the most cruel and unnatural rebellion that ever disgraced the historick page.”\textsuperscript{97}

\textsuperscript{94} Memorial of Robert Ballingall, Mar. 13, 1786; Balfour to Ballingall, Sept. 18, 1780, Affidavit of Cornwallis, Mar. 14, 1786, Affidavit of Leslie, Jan. 30, 1784, Misc. Mss., SC7003/AT7003, Box 2, 154, 154a, NYSL.
\textsuperscript{95} Tarleton, \textit{History of the Campaigns}, 90-91.
\textsuperscript{96} Cornwallis to Clinton, July 14, 1780, in Tarleton, \textit{History of the Campaigns}, 118.
\textsuperscript{97} Memorial of Sundry Loyal Inhabitants of Charlestown, Aug. 13, 1780, \textit{Royal South Carolina Gazette}, Aug. 23, 1780.
Many loyalists took action without waiting for the arrival of British troops. A British detachment marching through St. Matthew's Parish met twenty of these men on June 5, who had with them a notable prisoner, former Georgia governor John Wereat. The next day rebels arrived "from all quarters" to submit, and on June 10 an entire company of armed militia joined the British.\textsuperscript{98} When troops reached Ninety Six on June 22, they found that local loyalists had already arrested over forty rebels and confined them in the jail. Dr. Uzal Johnson, a New Jersey loyalist, observed that the "friends to Government ... who have just now got the opportunity to retaliate gladly embrace it." He thought this response understandable, given that many loyalists had been "obliged to hide in Swamps & Caves to keep from Prison themselves."\textsuperscript{99}

Despite this promising start, problems quickly arose with the militia, one of which was a shortage of arms, "the most serious" that the British experienced during the war. The problem resulted partly from the army's failure to send adequate supplies of muskets to the south, as well as from British officers' indiscriminate distribution of weapons, which often placed muskets in the hands of men who then joined Whig partisan units. Thus when Col. Ambrose Mills went to Camden on October 1 to procure muskets for his 180 militiamen, he found himself competing with two other militia units and a provincial regiment for "less than 200 old French muskets." Mills received only sixty-one of them.\textsuperscript{100} The shortage became so severe by January 1781 that Balfour informed Clinton that the army was "much distres'd from their being no small Arms in Store, which must be very disadvantageous to the Militia & provincial Establishments & if not soon

\begin{footnotes}
\item[98] Anthony Allaire, Diary, June 5, 6, 10, 1780, Robinson Family Papers, NBM.
\item[99] Uzal Johnson, Diary, June 22, 1780, SCDAH.
\item[100] Bowler, \textit{Logistics and the Failure of the British Army}, 151-153.
\end{footnotes}
supplied will preclude the raising any more Levies of the latter in this district."\textsuperscript{101} Three months later, Balfour again found it necessary to "request in the strongest Manner a further Quantity of small Arm’s" for the militia and new recruits in South Carolina and Georgia.\textsuperscript{102} Arms were essential because the Whigs had long ago disarmed suspected loyalists. From October to December 1780, British officers issued over seven hundred muskets for the militia in Georgetown, Orangeburg, Ninety Six, Beaufort County, and Colleton County. Some of these were replacements for damaged or poor quality weapons.\textsuperscript{103} One officer noted that Ballingall complained "loudly of the last Arms & Powder sent to the Country being very bad."\textsuperscript{104} With insufficient and poor-quality muskets, the militia’s effectiveness was badly impaired.

Some officers also expressed doubts about the sincerity of pledges of loyalty made by former Whigs. Evan McLaurin of the South Carolina Royalists wrote from Ninety Six that he was well aware of "the temper the People hereabout are in at present," and declared that "[Andrew] Williamson is the only man of all those formerly active against us; on whom we could firmly depend" if rebel fortunes improved. McLaurin was particularly worried about dissatisfaction among the inhabitants of the Long Canes settlements, where unrest simmered after British troops seized the people’s horses.\textsuperscript{105}

Such actions alienated both loyalists and former Whigs, while the attitude of many British officers undermined the commitment and morale of many militiamen. Robert Gray reported that "the abuses of the Army in taking the peoples Horses, Cattle & provisions in many cases without paying for them ... disgusted the inhabitants." Gray also

\textsuperscript{101} Balfour to Clinton, Jan. 31, 1781, Leslie Letterbook, microfilm, SCDAH.
\textsuperscript{102} Balfour to Clinton, April 7, 1781, Leslie Letterbook, microfilm, SCDAH.
\textsuperscript{104} Major C. Fraser to Major Traill, Dec. 30, 170, Wray Papers, Vol. 5, WLCL.
\textsuperscript{105} Evan McLaurin to Balfour, Aug. 7, 1780, Emmet Collection No. 6589, NYPL.
noted that “almost every British officer regarded with contempt and indifference the establishment of a militia among a people differing so much in customs & manners from themselves” and made no effort to conceal this opinion, which damaged the spirit of men who, after years of persecution, lacked the confidence necessary for military success and needed encouragement, not derision, from British officers.\textsuperscript{106}

Nevertheless, the organization of the militia continued to go well and gained impetus in mid-June when Cornwallis, satisfied that Ferguson had been sufficiently chastised, allowed him to assume his assigned duties.\textsuperscript{107} Unlike his arrogant counterparts, Ferguson “cultivated a familiarity with loyalists unusual among British officers.” He spent much time conversing “with the country people on the state of [political] affairs ... He was as indefatigable in training them to his way of thinking, as he was in instructing them in military exercises.” His behavior “went far to secure the respect and obedience” of those he encountered.\textsuperscript{108} On June 27, Balfour reported that he and Ferguson had organized militia battalions at Ninety Six, Orangeburg, and adjacent areas with a combined strength of five thousand men.\textsuperscript{109} When Ferguson left Ninety Six on June 23 with forty provincials to begin operations against Whig partisans, more loyalists came “flocking to him from all parts of the Country.”\textsuperscript{110} Affairs appeared equally good in the Camden area, where Lt. Col. Francis, Lord Rawdon, noted that the militia were “not only well disposed, but very zealous.”\textsuperscript{111}

By the end of June, Cornwallis informed Clinton that he felt satisfied with the progress the militia had made so far. For administrative convenience, Cornwallis kept the

\textsuperscript{106} Gray, “Observations,” 141, 144.
\textsuperscript{107} Cornwallis to Ferguson, June 16, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/77, 14.
\textsuperscript{108} Wickwire and Wickwire, \textit{Cornwallis}, 203-204.
\textsuperscript{109} Balfour to Cornwallis, June 27, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 200.
\textsuperscript{110} Johnson, Diary, June 23, 1780.
\textsuperscript{111} Rawdon to Cornwallis, July 7, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 252.
militia districts that the Whigs had drawn.\textsuperscript{112} "As the different Districts submitted I with all the Dispatch in my Power formed them into Militia & appointed Field Officers according to the old Divisions of the Province," he reported. "I invested these Field Officers with Civil as well as Military Power, as the most effectual means of preserving Order and reestablishing The King's Authority in this Country." The earl created two classes of militia. Men over forty years old "and of certain Property, Family or Service," were to remain at home to maintain order except "in Case of an Insurrection or an actual Invasion of the Province." Those younger than forty would serve on terms almost identical to those Clinton had formulated. Cornwallis declared that the militia was "composed of Men, either of undoubted Attachment to the Cause of Great Britain, or whose Behaviour has always been moderate." To prevent prominent former Whigs whose loyalty was doubtful from adversely influencing others, Cornwallis placed them on parole and sent them to the sea islands; anyone else believed to be "notoriously disaffected" had been disarmed, ordered to remain at home on parole, and told that they could provide the army with supplies, wagons, and horses in lieu of militia service.\textsuperscript{113}

Although loyalist support had met British expectations and the organization of the loyal militia was off to a promising start, three factors combined to prevent the loyalists from realizing their potential as an effective force. First, many Whigs continued to resist and resorted to their old tactics of harassing and brutalizing the loyalists, which, in conjunction with defeats inflicted on the loyal militia by these rebel partisans, intimidated the loyalists and demoralized the militia. Second, after witnessing the initially poor performance of the militia and the treachery of some Whig-infiltrated units, most British

\textsuperscript{112} Cornwallis to Patterson, June 10, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/77, 3.
\textsuperscript{113} Cornwallis to Clinton, June 30, 1780, Germain Papers, Vol. 12, WLCL.
officers lost all confidence in the militia and simply stopped employing it, thus depriving its members of the benefits they would have derived by serving alongside regular troops. Finally, the approach of Gen. Horatio Gates with an American army in July renewed the hopes of many rebels, causing them to break their oaths of loyalty and rejoin the fight, which greatly increased the pressure on the loyal militia at a time when its members were still inadequately trained and equipped.

Whigs who gathered in the Carolina swamps and forests to plan resistance recognized the importance of targeting the loyalists. In the northeastern part of the province, partisan leader Francis Marion understood that any delay in striking the loyalists could prove fatal to the rebel cause. Given time to organize and gain experience and cohesion, the loyal militia might soon become formidable. This, above all, was what Marion hoped to prevent. Whigs in northwestern South Carolina adopted a similar strategy. In early June, about one hundred rebels under Cols. Edward Lacey and William Bratton attacked a party of loyalists commanded by Col. Charles Coleman at Mobley's Meeting House near Winnsboro, killing a few and dispersing the remainder.114

The loyal militia suffered a worse defeat on July 12. Cornwallis dispatched Capt. Christian Huck of Tarleton's British Legion and thirty-five dragoons to operate against Whig partisans near the North Carolina border. Huck brought sixty mounted militiamen with him and another three hundred joined him during his march. Rebel partisans launched a surprise predawn attack on the detachment, inflicting about ninety casualties, mostly among the militia. After the battle, the Whigs executed one of their loyalist

prisoners, a militia major named Ferguson, because some rebels alleged that he had murdered a young man without provocation.\textsuperscript{115} A few weeks later, Tarleton found that people in the lowcountry were still "scar'd," yet some militiamen turned out when he summoned them.\textsuperscript{116}

Events in North Carolina compounded the demoralizing effects of Huck's defeat. Continued Whig persecution led hundreds of loyalists there to ignore Cornwallis's instructions to remain quiet until the British army moved north. Instead, eight hundred men took up arms, but were quickly beaten by the rebels. The survivors reached the British post at Cheraws, from whence reports of their defeat "diffused universal consternation amongst the inhabitants of South Carolina."\textsuperscript{117}

Other events involving the loyal militia inflicted short-term damage to the British position in South Carolina and produced long-term harm to the relationship between the British army and the loyalists. Col. Mathew Floyd had organized a militia battalion in the vicinity of the Ennoree and Tyger Rivers, which the British supplied with arms and ammunition. The man who had commanded the rebel militia of that district, John Lisle, noted "for his violent persecution of the loyalists," had fled the province, but was later captured. Taking advantage of the terms offered in Clinton's June 3 proclamation, Lisle pledged allegiance to Britain and was permitted to return to his home, where he became Floyd's second-in-command. Shortly after Huck's defeat, he seized Floyd and led the

\textsuperscript{116} Tarleton to Cornwallis, Aug. 5, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/63, 19.
\textsuperscript{117} Tarleton, \textit{History of the Campaigns}, 91.
entire battalion to join the rebels. This incident, Tarleton stated, “ruined all confidence between the regulars and the militia.”

A second instance of treachery worsened the problem. As British troops concentrated at Camden to meet an advancing American army, Maj. Arthur McArthur of the 71st Regiment ordered Col. Ambrose Mills of the militia to escort over one hundred sick soldiers to Georgetown. After the detachment had marched beyond supporting distance from the British regulars, Whig partisans attacked them. Some of the militiamen mutinied and took their own officers prisoner, including Mills, Robert Gray, and Col. James Cassells. The rebels brought the captives to North Carolina, where they “were put into a dungeon loaded with Irons & treated in the most barbarous manner.” Mills later escaped, and although Cornwallis blamed him for failing to properly screen his recruits, the earl still considered the colonel “a very good man,” who had simply been too credulous regarding people’s professions of loyalty. But the incident confirmed the belief of many British officers that they had erred “in placing confidence in the inhabitants of the country when acting apart from the army.”

Cornwallis had already reached the same conclusion. “The want of subordination and confidence of our militia in themselves, will make a considerable regular force always necessary for the defence” of South Carolina, the earl told Clinton in mid-July. “It is needless to attempt to take any considerable number of the ... militia with us when we

118 Tarleton, *History of the Campaigns*, 93; see also Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 128.
120 Cornwallis to Gov. Abner Nash, Aug. 17, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/79, 23. Nash denied the accusations, although he admitted that he had been unable to obtain information regarding Gray and Cassells, Nash to Cornwallis, Aug. 27, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/63, 70.
advance;" since Cornwallis expected to be joined by many North Carolina loyalists, he
decided it was unwise to bring along "too many useless mouths."  

Efforts to turn the loyal militia into an effective force were further hampered by
the approach of Gen. Horatio Gates and his Continental Army in late July. Gates’s march
toward South Carolina emboldened the Whigs, provoking new outbursts of rebellion.
Gray recalled that Gates’s advance "seemed to be a signal for a general revolt in the
disaffected parts of the back Country." Many people used Clinton’s June 3
proclamation, which had released them from parole, as a pretext to claim that they could
legitimately abjure their oaths of allegiance. Rumors that relief was coming "gave a
turn to the minds of the inhabitants of the southern provinces." Rebels who had
reconciled themselves to defeat now plotted a resurgence, "hostilities were already begun
in many places, and every thing seemed to menace a revolution." Cornwallis feared
that Gates’s arrival "shall shake the Confidence & consequently the fidelity of our
Friends." He later told Clinton that Gates’s advance "very much intimidated our
friends, encouraged our enemies, and determined the wavering against us." In
Balfour’s opinion, the effect was even worse and undermined his confidence in the
loyalists. "In vain we expected, loyalty and attachment from the inhabitants," he wrote,
but "the moment [Gates] came near," they "revolted and joined him." Balfour concluded

123 Cornwallis to Clinton, July 14, 1780, in Ross, ed., Cornwallis Correspondence, 51-52.
124 Gray, "Observations," 141.
125 Rawdon to Cornwallis, July 7, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 252; Lambert, South Carolina Loyalists, 127-128.
126 Tarleton, History of the Campaigns, 91.
127 Cornwallis to Clinton, July 15, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/72, 30.
128 Cornwallis to Clinton, Aug. 6, 1780, in Clinton, American Rebellion, 448.
that there was no difference between loyalists and rebels – “they are the same stuff as compose all americans,” he declared.129

Gates did all he could to encourage South Carolinians who had joined the British to return to the Whig fold. On July 29, he wrote to rebel militia officers asking them to assure the Whigs that his army was marching to their aid and offering pardon to all those who “from the Necessity of protecting their persons and property have been obliged to profess a temporary acquiescence under the British Government.” The following week, Gates issued a proclamation containing his offer of amnesty. The promise of military assistance and pardon induced many who had taken British protection to join the rebels. So, too, did Gates’s orders that he would not honor the paroles of American prisoners unless they had been taken in arms. Any man who had simply given his parole when British forces arrived in his district was to be considered liable for service in the Whig militia and those who refused would be punished.130 By encouraging people to violate their oaths and paroles, Gates subjected them to great risk if they fell into British hands. British officers believed that those who broke their oaths or paroles had to be punished to prevent other South Carolinians from defecting, and thus Gates’s actions inflamed the already volatile situation and fed the spiral of violence in the South.

Col. Thomas Sumter, who raised his own force of rebel partisans and had recently made unsuccessful attacks against British posts at Rocky Mount and Hanging Rock west of Camden, encouraged Gates to seek support from Americans who had taken British protection. He assured Gates’s aide that “the Chief of the Militia Downwards are our friends Ready to do their Duty.” Although conceding that many of those friends “are in

129 Balfour to [Henry Strachey?], Aug. 30, [1780], Sir Henry Strachey Papers, Vol. 1, LOC.
130 Horatio Gates to Cols. Hicks and Giles, Circular, July 29, 1780; “Copy of a Proclamation issued by General Gates, at Pedee,” Aug. 4, 1780, Horatio Gates Papers, Reel 11, microfilm, DLAR.
arms against us,” and admitting that two who had been captured by the British after switching sides had been hanged at Rocky Mount, Sumter insisted that many South Carolinians were eager “for an opportunity to Join the army.”\(^{131}\) After his attack at Hanging Rock, Sumter reported that “Both British and Tories are pannick struck” and expressed his belief that fifteen hundred men could march across South Carolina “with ease.”\(^{132}\)

Gates’s call to arms had the desired effect. John Lloyd estimated that “at least 7/8’s of the People returned to their allegiance” before Gates advanced into South Carolina. But when the inhabitants were summoned to assist the British in repelling the invasion, “great numbers, notwithstanding their professed contrition, and avowed loyalty, left the British, for the American standard, under which, they have since done, and continue to do infinite mischief.”\(^{133}\)

Yet even during this period many loyalists provided valuable service to Cornwallis. As Gates’s troops marched through North Carolina, they were harassed by loyalists who seemed to have “surrounded them on all sides.”\(^{134}\) Whig officer Charles Porterfield reported that the people in the vicinity of Cedar Creek had “gone with the Brittish, with all their baggage & Cattle.”\(^{135}\) At Jenning’s Branch, Richard Caswell with the North Carolina militia worried that he would not be able to keep his advance a secret because loyalists, “which are Numerous in proportion to the Inhabitants of this part of the Country,” would inform the British of his movements.\(^{136}\) Caswell’s fears were well-

\(^{131}\) Thomas Sumter to Thomas Pinckney, Aug. 12, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 11.
\(^{132}\) Quoted in Flood, *Rise and Fight Again*, 302.
\(^{133}\) John Lloyd to [Mark Harford, Jr.], Jan. 20, 1781, John Lloyd Letters, photocopies provided by Gloucestershire Record Office.
\(^{135}\) Charles Porterfield to Gates, Aug. 3, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 11.
\(^{136}\) Richard Caswell to Gates, Aug. 4, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 11.
founded, for loyalists kept Lord Rawdon, the British commander at Camden, fully informed of rebel movements.\footnote{Flood, \textit{Rise and Fight Again}, 292.} On August 5, Caswell also learned that “a Considerable Number of Tories were Collecting” with Rawdon’s army with the intention of attacking his North Carolinians.\footnote{Caswell to Gates, Aug. 5, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 11.}

Other loyalists created problems in the rear of the American army. From Drowning Creek, Continental officer Matthew Ramsey wrote that he was plagued by loyalist partisans operating from swamps, who launched raids intended to prevent supplies from reaching Gates’s army. The loyalists had recently attacked a rebel party and rescued twenty loyalist prisoners; with only fifty men in his command, Ramsey did not dare to challenge them.\footnote{Matthew Ramsey to Horatio Gates, Aug. 9, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 11.}

One bold loyalist, a Camden resident, rode directly into Gates’s camp, where he feigned surprise at finding the American army. The man conversed with Gates, provided some accurate but incomplete information about the British at Camden, then departed with a promise to return with additional intelligence. Col. Otho Holland Williams and other rebel officers suspected the man was a spy and urged Gates to detain him, but the general refused. The mysterious visitor never returned, which confirmed Williams’s suspicions.\footnote{Flood, \textit{Rise and Fight Again}, 311, 313.}

In addition to the contributions of individuals and partisans, the loyal militia also played a role in the Camden campaign. As Tarleton marched his troops from Charleston to Camden in early August, Col. John Coming Ball joined them with twenty-five militiamen, who served as guides and rode ahead to procure intelligence, enabling

\footnote{Flood, \textit{Rise and Fight Again}, 292.} \footnote{Caswell to Gates, Aug. 5, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 11.} \footnote{Matthew Ramsey to Horatio Gates, Aug. 9, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 11.} \footnote{Flood, \textit{Rise and Fight Again}, 311, 313.}
Tarleton to reach his destination without interference from the various Whig parties operating in the area. The Camden district militia was less successful – Sumter attacked forty men guarding Wateree Ferry on August 15, killing seven and capturing the rest, including their commander, Colonel Cary. In other operations Sumter captured more loyalists, one hundred British regulars, and forty supply wagons bound for Camden. Tarleton recovered all the prisoners, wagons, and supplies three days later when he crushed Sumter’s partisans at Fishing Creek.141

Cornwallis relied on the militia, with a small contingent of provincials and British convalescents, to hold the town of Camden when he marched to attack Gates on the night of August 15. Another three hundred militiamen accompanied the British army. The earl placed these men in reserve on his left. During the battle, the Continental troops made a bayonet charge against this flank, causing Rawdon to bring up the militia and other reserves to hold the line.142 The American attack was checked and the militia evidently performed adequately, for while they were not singled out for particular praise after the battle, neither did they receive any criticism.

Cornwallis’s troops routed the rebels, and as the scattered Continentals and militiamen fled northward, emboldened loyalists pursued and captured significant numbers of them. Because many of the fugitives had thrown away their weapons in their

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142 Tarleton, *History of the Campaigns*, 104; Flood, *Rise and Fight Again*, 313, 325, 331. The actual number of loyalist militia who served in the battle of Camden were fourteen officers, eight sergeants, and three hundred rank and file. Their proportion of casualties was the smallest of the units engaged, totaling only two wounded and three missing, which indicates that they must have been committed late in the action and then in a peripheral role. Field Return of Cornwallis’s Army, Aug. 15, 1780, and Return of Casualties, Aug. 16, 1780, Amherst Papers, WO34/ 126/73, microfilm reel 71, DLAR.
flight, they were often unable to resist.143 "Those who escaped the Dangers of the Field knew not where to find protection," General Williams wrote. "The Wounded found no relief from the Inhabitants who were immediately in arms against us, and many of our Fugitive Officers and men were disarm'd by those faithless Vallains." He added that other loyalists had stolen horses and seized supplies during the retreat, while "some of those desperate Rascals have been daring enough to fire upon parties of our Regular Troops."144 Many of those who captured fleeing rebels and American supplies were committed adherents to the British cause, but in other cases, "news of this immense British victory caused many armed men to change their loyalties on the spot."145 Williams complained that many of the men who captured Gates's soldiers had previously "flatter'd us with promises of joining us against the Enemy."146 Those who regretted having broken their oaths seized the opportunity to ingratiate themselves with the British by bringing rebel prisoners into Cornwallis's camp.

The victory at Camden produced a new surge of loyalist sentiment in South Carolina, undoing much of the earlier damage caused by defeat, defection, and Gates's advance. Many inhabitants enlisted in provincial units, including the British Legion, New York Volunteers, and American Volunteers. With the Continental Army again removed as a threat, other loyalists abandoned their reluctance to serve with the militia. By late August, over four thousand men had been enrolled in seven battalions in the backcountry, of which fifteen hundred could be brought into action on short notice. Other battalions,

145 Flood, Rise and Fight Again, 336-337.
although weaker, had been formed elsewhere in South Carolina.\textsuperscript{147} Cornwallis believed that in the wake of his victory, "the internal commotions and insurrections in the province will now subside." He also decided to teach those who had broken their oaths a lesson by inflicting "exemplary punishment on some of the most guilty, in hopes to deter others in future from sporting with allegiance and oaths."\textsuperscript{148}

Yet in spite of the great victory at Camden and Tarleton's destruction of Sumter's force on August 18, the rebels managed to derive some benefits from the campaign. Robert Gray, recently exchanged and working to organize the militia in the Cheraw district, pronounced his task "impossible," because "at least three fourths of the inhabitants" in the region "had taken active parts" in rebellion when Gates had approached. Even among the loyalists, "many had their nearest connections among the rebel refugees and could not be trusted," Gray observed. He did find many reliable loyalists "on Black and Lynch's creek," and along the Little Pedee River. These, however, could not assemble because doing so "exposed their families and property to the resentment of the rebels from Cape Fear who have been indefatigable in persecuting them upon every occasion." Once the Cape Fear River became the northern boundary of British control, Gray believed, these loyalists could be relied upon. Until then, he suggested that a force of mounted regulars, supported by militia drawn from other parts of South Carolina and the North Carolina provincials, could maintain "the publick peace."\textsuperscript{149}

Some British and loyalist officers concluded that it would be wiser to abandon plans to rely upon the militia and instead recruit men for provincial units. Evan McLaurin

\textsuperscript{147}Treacy, \textit{Prelude to Yorktown}, 43, 46; Cornwallis to Germain, Aug. 20, 1780, \textit{DAR}, 18:145.
\textsuperscript{148}Cornwallis to Germain, Aug. 21, 1780, in Tarleton, \textit{History of the Campaigns}, 135.
\textsuperscript{149}Robert Gray to Cornwallis, Sept. 30, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/64, 130.
asked Cornwallis for permission to create a new South Carolina provincial battalion, a plan that won the endorsement of Alexander Innes. The latter told Cornwallis that McLaurin "had a superior plan to any man of this part of the province." Innes said that he disagreed with those who believed forming provincial units would be "detrimental to the Militia." He considered "every man inlisted to serve in a provincial Corps ... a usefull soldier gain’d to the King’s Service," whereas he was "well convinced the Militia on their present plan will ever prove a useless disorderly, destructive banditti." He asserted that men who were of little value in the militia became "different men in a regular provincial Corps." As proof he noted that of thirty-five men he had enlisted in the South Carolina Royalists since June, "no Men cou’d behave with greater spirit," while "their late associates" in the militia "behave in so dastardly and cowardly a manner."  

Tarleton agreed that loyal South Carolinians would be more useful in provincial corps than as militia, although he preferred incorporating them into existing units rather than organizing new regiments. In veteran units, experienced officers could train and lead the recruits, depleted units could be brought to full strength, and "considerable service" might be derived from the recruits, Tarleton believed. Cornwallis thought the idea was worthwhile, and he urged Lt. Col. George Turnbull, commander of the New York Volunteers, to incorporate three companies of South Carolinians into his unit. But Turnbull demurred, believing that the South Carolinians were too unruly.  

By September, Cornwallis also concluded that provincials should replace the militia. He informed Clinton that "as I have found the Militia to fail so totally when put to

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150 Innes to Cornwallis, Sept. 5, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, 30/11/64, 29.
151 Tarleton, History of the Campaigns, 98.
152 Turnbull to Cornwallis, June 14, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 147.
the Trial ... I am determined to try Provincial Corps alone” in the future.\textsuperscript{153} The earl authorized loyalist Maj. John Harrison to recruit five hundred men in the region between the Pedee and Wateree Rivers and form them into a provincial battalion. Cornwallis thought it “extremely probable” that this plan would succeed.\textsuperscript{154} Later, he authorized Robert Cunningham to enlist a second provincial battalion. Harrison’s efforts failed, and while Cunningham appeared “more likely to succeed,” Cornwallis put a stop to the formation of Cunningham’s corps “on finding that all the principal officers of the militia of Ninety-Six were entering into it, by which means I should have been totally deprived of the use of that militia.”\textsuperscript{155} Two weeks later, Cornwallis’s frustration with the militia caused him to reverse himself and order Cunningham to renew the effort to recruit a provincial corps. In October, acting on his own initiative, John Harris Cruger, commanding at Ninety Six, authorized Moses Kirkland to enlist at least four hundred men to serve as provincials for a year.\textsuperscript{156}

The militia’s performance had not been stellar, yet it had not been as poor as Cornwallis described it. Capt. James Dunlap of the Queen’s Rangers led fourteen provincials and sixty mounted militiamen against what he believed was a small Whig party on July 14, only to encounter several hundred rebels. In a charge, Dunlap’s men scattered the Whigs, killing and wounding about thirty. But when the rebels regrouped and counterattacked, the same militiamen who moments earlier had performed so well fled without resisting.\textsuperscript{157}

\textsuperscript{153} Cornwallis to Clinton, Sept. 22, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/72, 53.
\textsuperscript{154} Cornwallis to Clinton, June 30, 1780, in Tarleton, \textit{History of the Campaigns}, 117.
\textsuperscript{155} Cornwallis to Germain, Sept. 21, 1780, \textit{DAR}, 18:173.
\textsuperscript{156} Cornwallis to Balfour, Oct. 7, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/81, 25; Cruger to Balfour, Oct. 24, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/3, 311.
\textsuperscript{157} James Dunlap to Balfour, July 15, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 315.
Patrick Ferguson conceded that the militia had not always met his expectations, but he was certain that with time and training an effective militia could be established. He stated in late July that the militia was “Daily gaining confidence & Discipline.”\textsuperscript{158} Shortly afterward, he explained to Rawdon that “the Men have been so little accustom’d to Military restraints, & become so soon home Sick, that it is almost impossible to assemble any Number of them on a sudden call of danger, or to keep them many days together.” Ferguson lectured them about their poor behavior, which prompted them to draw up and sign a resolution pledging to serve faithfully in the future.\textsuperscript{159} On August 29, Ferguson asked Cornwallis “to observe that the Different bodys of Militia East of broad river that have behaved so ill with the Army, were form’d in a hurry, without the assistance of any officers of the Army to establish order & Discipline, employ’d immediately on Service, & no Scrutiny made into the Loyalty of the Officers or Men.” As a result, many rebels were permitted to enroll, who immediately joined the Whigs when Gates’s army approached. It was “to be expected that a Mungrill Mob without any regularity or even organization, without fidelity without officers, without any previous preparation employd against the Enemy, would bring the name of Militia into discredit,” Ferguson wrote.\textsuperscript{160}

Although Ferguson’s arguments did not alter Cornwallis’s opinion, the earl had no choice but to continue relying on the militia to secure South Carolina. With most of the army at Camden preparing to invade North Carolina and recruitment of the new provincial battalion progressing slowly, Cornwallis had to depend on the militia and garrisons of provincials at Ninety Six and Augusta to defend the backcountry. The

\textsuperscript{158} Ferguson to Cornwallis, July 24, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 360.
\textsuperscript{159} Ferguson to Rawdon, [Aug. 14, 1780]; Resolution of Militia, Aug. 13, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/63, 95, 97.
\textsuperscript{160} Ferguson to Cornwallis, Aug. 29, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/63, 81.
security of the northeastern part of the province between Camden and Georgetown was left to the militia alone, with regulars conducting occasional forays to support them.

Along the Little Pedee River, where loyalists were numerous, Maj. Micajah Ganey assembled two hundred militiamen in late August to attack Francis Marion, whose Whig partisans were operating in the vicinity. Outnumbered four-to-one, Marion relied on surprise and attacked a detachment of Ganey’s militia on September 4. The Whigs routed and pursued the forty-five loyalists, only to be driven off when they encountered Ganey’s main force. After checking his pursuers with an ambush, Marion escaped. His victory encouraged over one hundred men to join him, but news that Ganey’s militia had reassembled and was to be reinforced by other militia units and British troops from the small garrison at Georgetown, forced the Whigs to withdraw into North Carolina.\(^{161}\)

Shortly after the skirmish, one of Marion’s officers resorted to the kind of terror that had proven so effective at suppressing loyalism. Capt. Maurice Murphy and several rebels visited the home of a man named Blackman, and finding that Blackman favored the royal cause, gave him 150 lashes with a bullwhip. When Blackman still refused to recant, Murphy released him. Murphy’s uncle, Gideon Gibson, rebuked his nephew for permitting such cruelty, whereupon Murphy shot Gibson dead.\(^{162}\) Loyalists in the area suffered “terrors & great distress” as small parties of rebels assailed them at every opportunity.\(^{163}\)

Marion soon returned to South Carolina. On September 28, he attacked a post on the Black Mingo River held by forty-seven loyalists commanded by Col. John Coming Ball. The loyalists retreated after a brief exchange of fire with a loss of three killed and

\(^{161}\) Francis Marion to Gates, Sept. 15, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 12; Bass, *Swamp Fox*, 48-51.


\(^{163}\) Cornwallis to Rawdon, Aug. 4, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/79, 8.
thirteen captured; the prisoners were “men of family & fortune” and Marion hoped that their loss “may be a Check to the malitia taking arms against us.” Marion planned to attack another loyalist detachment at Black River Church, but Cornwallis dispatched Maj. James Wemyss with British troops to quell the uprising, which caused so many of Marion’s men to return to their homes that the partisan leader had to retreat once again. Nevertheless, Marion declared that “the Toreys are so Affrighted with my little Excursions, that many is moving off to Georgia with their Effects,” while others had taken refuge in the swamps. British officers confirmed this. “There are hourly people coming in from Peedee, giving dreadful accounts of the depredations committing there by the Rebells,” Robert England wrote. Wemyss noted that in the vicinity of Georgetown, “the whole Country is in Confusion & uproar, all the friends of Government have been plundered of their Negroes” and other property. Three days later, Wemyss reported that the rebels “continue to hunt out, & plunder every friend of Government ... The people here are exceedingly alarmed.”

Assisted by fifty militiamen, Wemyss and his regulars chastised the Whigs, sending the armed bands fleeing and burning about fifty houses owned by men who had broken their oaths to serve with the rebels. He believed that if two hundred regulars were left on the Pedee, they could secure the region against Marion with the aid of the Georgetown and Cheraws militia. Turnbull disagreed, asserting that if “Wemyss cou’d not Establish a Militia when he was there with a Force,” a detachment in the vicinity could not rely on militia support. “Depend upon it Militia Will never do any good

164 Marion to Gates, Oct. 4, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 12.
165 Major Robert England to Cornwallis, Sept. 14, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/64, 57.
166 Wemyss to Cornwallis, July 28, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 377.
167 Wemyss to Cornwallis, July 31, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 395.
168 Wemyss to Cornwallis, Sept. 20, 1780 and Oct. 4, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/3, 80, 184.
Without Regular Troops,” Turnbull declared.\(^{169}\) Balfour advised sending the militia from Orangeburg, which he considered the most reliable, to secure the Pedee region.\(^{170}\)

In the backcountry, Whigs also repeatedly harassed the loyalists. On August 17, two hundred Georgians, South Carolinians, and overmountain men assembled to attack an equal number of loyal militiamen at Musgrove’s Mills. Reinforced the next evening by two hundred South Carolina provincials under Alexander Innes and another one hundred militia, the loyalists attacked the rebels, who were posted on a wooded ridge. Innes was wounded and his troops forced to retreat after suffering heavy casualties.\(^{171}\)

Despite frequent Whig incursions, Ferguson’s work with the militia in Ninety Six district had begun to pay dividends; “his intensive training of some of his Tory companies had turned them into competent soldiers” and earned him the respect of the men.\(^{172}\) On September 12 he led one hundred militiamen and forty provincials to strike three hundred rebels from the overmountain region under Joseph McDowell. Ferguson caught up with the rebels later that day, and the militia fought well in an attack that routed the larger Whig force. The victory had immediate repercussions; two days later many people in the area came in to take the oath of allegiance to Britain.\(^{173}\)

Unable to gain the upper hand in the backcountry against the provincials and militia, the Whigs terrorized individual loyalists whenever the opportunity arose. On September 9 a rebel party captured John Hutchison and Gardiner Williams of Jackson’s Creek. Williams had participated in the defense of Rocky Mount, while Hutchison, loyalist Col. John Phillips believed, had been specifically targeted because “he had been

\(^{169}\) Turnbull to Cornwallis, Oct. 4, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/3, 178.
\(^{171}\) Report of James Williams, Sept. 5, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 12.
\(^{173}\) Allaire, Diary, Sept. 7, 9, 12, 14, 1780, NBM.
very Active with Us in his duty Since the Surender of Charlestown.” Phillips begged Cornwallis to arrange Hutchison’s exchange, fearing that the rebels “will do him Every Injury in their power” and perhaps even hang him.\textsuperscript{174}

Gov. John Rutledge encouraged the harsh treatment of loyalists. In a proclamation issued on September 27, he offered pardon to South Carolinians who had taken the British oath, provided they joined the Whigs within thirty days and agreed to serve six months in the militia. Those who held British commissions or had signed congratulatory addresses to the British commanders were not eligible, however. Rutledge threatened all who refused his offer with banishment and confiscation of their property.\textsuperscript{175} A few days later, Rutledge instructed Sumter to deal sternly with the loyalists. “It will be expedient to apprehend & secure every Subject of the State, who holds any office or Commission under his Britannick Majesty,” Rutledge wrote; “you are not, on any Account whatever to put any Prisoners whom you take that owe Allejiance to the State of So. Carolina … on Parole, but have them properly confined to be tried, as soon as Courts of Law can be held, for so capital an Offence as taking Part with the Enemy.” Rutledge did offer to forgive those “compelled to do Duty, as Militia-Men,” if they proved that they were actually Whigs and had not committed “atrocious” acts while in British service.\textsuperscript{176} The governor justified his policy by accusing the British of having committed atrocities against South Carolina’s Whigs.\textsuperscript{177}

When Cornwallis advanced northward at the beginning of September, he assigned two tasks to the militia. The majority were to guard key posts in the army’s absence and

\textsuperscript{174} Col. J. Phillips to Cornwallis, Sept. 13, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/64, 54.
\textsuperscript{175} Barnwell, “Rutledge, ‘The Dictator,’” 221-222.
\textsuperscript{176} John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter, Oct. 6, 1780, Thomas Sumter Papers, Vol. 1, LOC.
to protect the army's supply line between Camden and Charlotte. A Whig prisoner who escaped from Camden reported that the town's garrison consisted of five hundred militiamen, and those men not currently on duty "were all ordered into Camden" to serve for three months. Other accounts indicated that there were between three and six hundred loyalists at the Waxhaws and about five hundred at Fishing Creek, most of them newly enlisted provincials. The backcountry militia had a more active role: Ferguson was to lead them into western North Carolina to protect the army's left flank. The earl had some doubts about the militia's ability to carry out this task. He told Clinton that while Ferguson believed that his men were reliable, "I am sorry to say that his own experience, as well as that of every other officer, is totally against him." However, Cornwallis also believed that the militia might perform better if used offensively; "if ever those people will fight it is when they attack & not when they are attacked," he told Balfour.

Unfazed by Cornwallis's skepticism, Ferguson set out with five hundred militia and about one hundred provincials in early September. Learning that a Whig force was nearby, Ferguson with forty provincials and one hundred militia attacked and routed the 220 rebels on September 11. They collected recruits as they marched, so that the force numbered eight hundred when it reached Gilbert Town, North Carolina, on September

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178 Cornwallis to Balfour, Sept. 13, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/80, 20; Pancake, This Destructive War, 109, 112.
179 Examination of William Allman, Sept. 20, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 12.
180 William Davidson to Gates, Sept. 24, 1780; Jethro Sumner to Gates, Sept. 24, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 12.
181 Cornwallis to Clinton, Aug. 29, 1780, in Ross, ed., Cornwallis Correspondence, 58-59.
182 Cornwallis to Balfour, Aug. 29, 1780; see also Cornwallis to Cruger, Aug. 27, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/79, 45, 39.
183 Ferguson to Cornwallis, Sept. 14, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/64, 60.
23. There five hundred people took the British oath.\textsuperscript{184} "The Tories were flocking to his standard from every quarter," one Whig stated.\textsuperscript{185}

This marked the zenith for the loyal militia and collapse swiftly followed. The threat Ferguson posed to the overmountain settlements aroused the inhabitants, hundreds of whom turned out to attack the loyalists. Joined by other rebels from the Carolinas, they moved to attack Ferguson’s detachment. Ferguson learned of their approach and withdrew, maneuvering until he reached King’s Mountain, just south of the North Carolina border and twenty-five miles west of Charlotte, where Cornwallis lay with the main army. He dispatched messengers to the earl requesting support but none came. Instead, on October 7 the rebels surrounded King’s Mountain and attacked the loyalists. In a battle lasting less than an hour, the Whigs killed Ferguson and 150 of his men and captured the remainder.\textsuperscript{186}

The defeat in itself was enough to shake the loyalists’ confidence, but the cruelty with which the Whigs treated their enemies shattered loyalist morale. On their march to King’s Mountain, the rebels had begun to display their savagery by attacking four unarmed loyalists, “butchering two young men” and leaving two elderly men “most barbarously maim’d.”\textsuperscript{187} During the battle, the rebels had refused to cease fire when the loyalists tried to surrender, shooting down two men who were waving white flags and wantonly increasing the loyalists’ casualties. When they withdrew from King’s Mountain

\textsuperscript{184} Allaire, Diary, Sept. 15, 20, 23, 24, 30, 1780, NBM; Davidson to Gates, Sept. 24; 1780, Sumner to Gates, Sept. 24, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 12.

\textsuperscript{185} Collins, Autobiography, 50.

\textsuperscript{186} Pancake, This Destructive War, 117-118, 120.

\textsuperscript{187} Ferguson to Cornwallis, Oct. 1, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, 30/11/3, 160.

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with their prisoners after the battle, the overmountain men left over 160 badly wounded loyalists untreated on the field.188

The families of loyal militiamen who lived near the battlefield were the first to witness this carnage. The day after the battle, “the wives and children of the poor Tories came in, in great numbers,” wrote Whig soldier James Collins. “Their husbands, fathers, and brothers, lay dead in heaps, while others lay wounded or dying; a melancholy sight indeed!” Collins himself “could not help turning away from the scene ... with horror, and ... could not refrain from shedding tears.”189 As reports of the slaughter circulated, many loyalists feared that it was too dangerous to provide further support to the British. Most of the men in David Fanning’s small detachment of loyal militia on the western frontier of South Carolina deserted after learning of Ferguson’s defeat.190 Rawdon noted that the disaster had “so dispirited” the loyalists in Ninety Six district that Cruger suspected that they “had determined to submit as soon as the Rebels” arrived in the backcountry.191

The rebels’ treatment of the prisoners further demonstrated the risks loyalists faced if they openly supported the king. On October 14, twelve Whig officers formed a tribunal “to try the Militia Prisoners Particularly those who had the most Influence in the country.” Thirty men were condemned to death for alleged crimes and the executions began in the evening. Nine men, including Lt. Col. Ambrose Mills, “fell a Sacrifice to their infamous Mock jury,” a loyalist prisoner declared. The remaining twenty-one were reprieved.192 The pleas of relatives failed to save the lives of their loved ones. Another prisoner stated that “words can scarce describe the melancholy scene” that transpired

188 Flood, Rise and Fight Again, 356-357.
190 Calhoon, Loyalists in Revolutionary America, 496; Fanning, Narrative, 14.
191 Rawdon to Clinton, Oct. 29, 1780, in Ross, ed., Cornwallis Correspondence, 63.
192 Allaire, Diary, Oct. 14, 1780, NBM.
when the two daughters of one victim learned of their father’s death; they “swoon’d away and continued in fits all night. – Mrs. Mills with a young child in her arms sat out all night in the rain with her husband’s corps[e]”.193

The next day, perhaps fearing that they too might soon be executed, about one hundred prisoners made their escape during a lengthy march. Three more tried to escape on October 17, two succeeding while a third was wounded in the attempt. The wounded man was executed the following morning.194 Given the conditions of the march, it was not surprising that many men risked their lives trying to escape. “Many of our Prisoners were so weariest out that many of them were obliged to give out on the road,” two officers of the New Jersey Volunteers later stated; “they then roll’d them down in the mud – and many of them they left there were trod to death and many of them cut to pieces.”195 The Whigs denied the wounded medical treatment until November 1, nearly a month after the battle, when Dr. Uzal Johnson finally received permission to treat the injured captives. He was bandaging a man named Catchum when Whig Col. Benjamin Cleveland came on the scene and rebuked Johnson, saying that Catchum “was a Damnd Villain & deserved the Gallows.” The infuriated Cleveland then “struck me over the Head with his Sword, and levild me, he repeated his stroke & cut my Hand,” Johnson wrote.196

Such treatment inspired further attempts to escape, so that eventually about six hundred of the captives succeeded in fleeing their confinement.197 Among them was Lt. Anthony Allaire, who escaped with two other prisoners on the night of November 5 and

193 Quoted in Hibbert, Redcoats and Rebels, 284.
194 Allaire, Diary, Oct. 15, 17, and 18, 1780, NBM.
196 Johnson, Diary, Nov. 1, 1780, SCDAH.
197 Treacy, Prelude to Yorktown, 74.
reached safety at Williams's Fort after a seventeen-day journey, during which loyalists provided the fugitives with food, shelter, and guides. Alexander Chesney, a militia lieutenant who had served with Ferguson throughout the summer and fall, also escaped. The Whigs had offered to parole Chesney if he would drill their militia in Ferguson’s manner and threatened him with death when he refused. After reaching his home with aid from loyalist families, “I was obliged to conceal myself in a cave dug in the branch of a creek” with two loyalist cousins, Chesney wrote, since the Whigs controlled the area. When Maj. Jonathan Frost tried to assemble the remaining loyalist militia in the district, the rebels appeared at the rendezvous and captured Chesney and several others. Frost pursued the rebels with other loyalists, hoping to free the prisoners, but was killed in the unsuccessful effort.

The escape of so many prisoners actually benefited the rebels, as the returned captives spread word of the harsh fate awaiting any loyalists who fell into Whig hands. These reports, as much as the defeat at King’s Mountain, discouraged many loyalists from assisting the British. Accounts of the prisoners’ sufferings circulated widely; the Royal Georgia Gazette published a detailed description of the rebels’ “base and infamous proceedings.” Tarleton observed “the depression and fear” that such reports “communicated to the loyalists upon the borders, and to the southward.” The loyalists’ demoralization was also evident to American officers. “Many of the Tories seem disposed to return to their Allegiance, and would submit to any Terms which might be offered to obtain a Pardon,” Col. William Smallwood informed Horatio Gates in late

198 Allaire, Diary, Nov. 5-22, 1780.
200 Wickwire and Wickwire, Cornwallis, 219.
201 Royal Georgia Gazette, Jan. 4, 1781.
202 Tarleton, History of the Campaigns, 166.
October. Smallwood believed that a proclamation offering amnesty to loyalists “would effectively draw at this Crisis numbers from the British Interest.”

Cornwallis, angered by the reports of abuse and recognizing that Whig cruelty to prisoners undermined loyalist morale, threatened to retaliate. He told Smallwood that “the cruelty exercised on the Prisoners taken under Major Ferguson is shocking to Humanity; and the hanging poor old Colonel Mills, who was always a fair, and open Enemy to your Cause, was an act of the most Savage barbarity.” The earl added that he had heard that a Captain Oates of the loyal militia “was lately put to Death without any Crime being laid to his Charge.” Cornwallis demanded that Smallwood put an end to “these most cruel Murders.” Otherwise, the earl declared, it would be necessary for him, “in justice to the suffering Loyalists, to retali ate on the unfortunate Persons now in my power.” Anticipating that the Whigs would blame him for initiating the violence toward prisoners, Cornwallis asserted that he had never permitted any rebels to be executed, except two or three who had enrolled in the loyal militia and then joined the Whigs. The earl later made another protest to Gates, stating that “the officers and men taken at King’s Mountain, were treated with an inhumanity Scarce credible,” and he therefore felt himself “under the disagreeable necessity of making some retaliation for the unhappy men who were so cruelly and unjustly put to death.”

The Whigs ignored Cornwallis’s complaints. Although Gates privately disapproved of the harsh treatment of the King’s Mountain prisoners, he expressed “astonishment, at Lord Cornwallis’s finding fault with a cruelty, he and his Officers are

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204 Cornwallis to Smallwood, Nov. 10, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 12.
continually practicing." John Rutledge had no sympathy at all for the loyalist captives. He described the men Cleveland had executed as some “of the most noted horse Thieves & Tories,” implying that their fate had been well deserved. The governor insisted, without a shred of proof, that the British “have hanged many more of our People” and remarked that “his Lordship has mistaken the Side on which the Cruelty lies.”

The treatment of the prisoners taken at King’s Mountain became the norm for captured loyalists. Robert Gray noted that a militia prisoner was usually considered “a State prisoner ... who deserved a halter” rather than a prisoner of war, “& therefore” the Whigs “treated him with the greatest cruelty.” If not “assassinated” immediately after capture, loyal militiamen were usually confined “without friends, money, credit, or perhaps hopes of exchange.” As a result of such treatment and the murders committed by rebel partisans, the loyalists “became dejected & timid,” Gray noted. Many joined the Whigs because it was the only way a man could “go to sleep without danger of having his throat cut before morning.” Gray believed that if the Whigs had treated captured loyalists as prisoners of war, which was how the British treated rebel militiamen, “many more would have sided with the royal Standard.”

In addition to driving many loyalists into inactivity or even into the rebel ranks, the defeat at King’s Mountain had other important consequences for the British. Ferguson’s death deprived Cornwallis of the officer most capable of making the militia an effective force. One British soldier stated that Ferguson possessed great intelligence

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206 Horatio Gates to President of Congress, Nov. 26, 1780, Gates Letterbook, Gates Papers, Reel 11. William Smallwood, in his reply to Cornwallis, said that while it was his duty “to discountenance Acts of Inhumanity,” those who had abused the prisoners were volunteers, and thus fell outside the Continental Army’s jurisdiction. Smallwood to Cornwallis, Dec. 8, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/91, 19.
and military skill, and declared that Ferguson’s death “frustrated a well concerted scheme for strengthening our army, by the co-operation of the well affected inhabitants, whom he had undertaken to discipline and prepare for active service.” Gray considered the loss of Ferguson a catastrophe for the loyalist cause. “Had Major Ferguson lived, the Militia would have been completely formed,” Gray wrote. “He possessed all the talents & ambition necessary to accomplish that purpose .... the want of a man of his genius was soon severely felt.” Ferguson’s defeat also forced Cornwallis to abandon the invasion of North Carolina and retreat from Charlotte. The army’s withdrawal compounded the dispiriting effects of King’s Mountain on the loyalists while bolstering rebel morale.

Georgia loyalists also came under increasing rebel pressure in the autumn of 1780; they had in fact enjoyed little respite from harassment except for a brief period during the late spring and summer. In February, Governor Wright had informed Clinton that Whig parties continued to raid with impunity. Partisans struck in areas nominally under British control, capturing loyalists and carrying off hundreds of slaves. One group routed a loyalist detachment and killed its commander, while others penetrated within fourteen miles of Savannah.

The arrival of Clinton’s army failed to stop Whig incursions, despite the presence of the garrison at Savannah and 104 men of the Georgia provincials at Abercorn. After an April raid in which the Whigs burned barns and rice and carried off many slaves, Augustine Prevost proposed forming Daniel McGirt’s irregulars into a corps of provincial

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211 Wickwire and Wickwire, *Cornwallis*, 221.
cavalry, believing they were ideally qualified to conduct partisan warfare, but Clinton ignored the suggestion.\textsuperscript{214} As late as May 20, Wright reported that rebel parties from South Carolina were still “plundering, killing, and carrying off the inhabitants within 5 or 6 miles” of Savannah.\textsuperscript{215} Nevertheless, Wright managed to hold elections for the provincial assembly in April. Whig control of the backcountry prevented some parishes from sending representatives, so that only fifteen members attended the opening session on May 9. Wright assured them that the tumults of recent years would vanish under beneficent British rule. The Assembly passed an act barring 151 named rebels from holding civil or military office, and as a gesture of loyalty enacted a duty on exports to be paid to the British treasury. However, the province’s ravaged condition left it unable even to support itself. Parliament provided an annual subsidy of £3000 ($390,000), which proved insufficient to meet Georgia’s expenses.\textsuperscript{216}

After the capture of Charleston, Clinton ordered Thomas Brown to occupy Augusta with his rangers and secure the backcountry. Brown reached the town about June 8, having advanced part of the way on the South Carolina side of the Savannah River. On his march, Brown accepted the surrender of hundreds of Georgia and South Carolina Whigs and paroled them. Many other Georgians came to Augusta and surrendered to Brown there. The inhabitants of the town and surrounding area then petitioned Gov. Wright, asking that he restore the king’s peace in the district.\textsuperscript{217}

\textsuperscript{214} Return of Georgia Loyalists, Feb. 1780, Clinton Papers, Vol. 87, No. 25, WLCL; A. Prevost to Clinton, April 7, 1780, Carleton Papers, Vol. 22, No. 2680.
\textsuperscript{215} Wright to Germain, May 20, 1780, DAR, 18:98.
\textsuperscript{216} Coleman, “Restored Colonial Georgia,” 13; Wright’s Speech to the Assembly, May 9, 1780, and Disqualifying Act of 1780, in Killion and Walker, eds., Georgia and the Revolution, 212-213, 213-220; Furlong, “Civilian-Military Conflict,” 428.
Brown organized the Augusta loyalists into a militia under Col. James Grierson, while Cols. Matthew Lyle and Thomas Waters assumed command of the militia in St. George’s Parish and the Ceded Lands, respectively. By mid-August, Gov. Wright described the situation in the backcountry as “peaceable and quiet,” and he rejected Balfour’s proposal to send British troops to the Ceded Lands to disarm former rebels.218 Brown, however, did not share the governor’s confidence; he worried that “unless a considerable number of the most obnoxious” Whigs in the Ceded Lands “are removed, the loyalists in the neighbouring parishes will not be able to live in peace.”219

Events soon demonstrated the accuracy of Brown’s assessment. Elijah Clarke, whose Georgia Whigs had been operating farther north, attacked Augusta on September 14. By threatening Georgians who had taken the British oath with death if they refused to join him, he assembled about six hundred men and struck so swiftly that Brown did not have time to call out the loyal militia. Brown, his rangers, and several hundred Indians took position in and around a stone house and withstood a siege until September 18, when John Harris Cruger approached with a relief force. Cruger had left the militia to hold Ninety Six and marched to Brown’s aid as soon as he learned of the rebel attack. The Whigs retreated upon learning that Cruger was nearby; Cruger’s troops captured many of the fugitives and the loyal militia captured sixty-eight. Forty-five of the latter group took the oath to Britain and were released, while prominent rebels John Wereat and Samuel Stirk were sent to prison in Charleston. Brown hanged thirteen prisoners found to have previously taken British protection, and Cruger’s troops marched to the Ceded Lands, where they burned the homes and carried off the cattle of some of the men who

219 Brown to Cruger, Aug. 6, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, 30/11/62, 6.
had joined Clarke. Governor Wright, having earlier recommended that “an Army ...
march without Loss of time into the Ceded Lands ... to lay Waste and Destroy the whole Territory,” approved of the destruction. The inhabitants, Wright declared, “have by their late conduct forfeited every claim to any favour or protection.” 220 When Cruger returned to Ninety Six, he left “between 2 & 300 Georgia Militia on the Ceded Lands” to stamp out the last vestiges of rebellion. Cruger considered them “very equal to the task, & exceedingly well inclined.”221

After Clarke’s defeat, Lt. Gov. John Graham traveled to Wilkes County to assess the relative strength of the loyalists and Whigs there. Of 723 male inhabitants, he found 255 (thirty-five percent) to be committed loyalists. Fifty-seven men were neutral, and the remainder were rebels.222

Overall responsibility for securing Georgia and East Florida rested with Lt. Col. Alured Clarke, who replaced Gen. Prevost when the latter returned to England shortly after the fall of Charleston. Before assuming command at Savannah, Clarke visited St. Augustine to inspect the defenses there. He found the fortifications adequate, but the garrison too small to withstand a powerful attacking force. Governor Tonyn assured him, however, that at least 150 inhabitants could be counted on to join in defending the town. 223

In West Florida, the loyalists’ fortunes continued to decline as Bernardo de Galvez pressed his offensive. Recognizing the danger, Gen. John Campbell tried to bolster the province’s defenses by authorizing Adam Chrystie to form two troops of light

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221 Cruger to Cornwallis, Oct. 2, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/3, 170.
222 Robertson, Loyalism in Revolutionary Georgia, 13.
223 Alured Clarke to Cornwallis, Aug. 20, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/63, 50.
dragoons. However, Chrystie had barely begun recruiting when the Spaniards attacked Mobile in late February. Militia from the surrounding settlements evaded the Spanish besiegers and reinforced the garrison. Their arrival raised the defenders’ morale but failed to prevent Galvez from capturing the town on March 14. Seventy militiamen and twenty-eight provincial dragoons from the Royal Foresters who had participated in Mobile’s defense were among the prisoners. Other militiamen accompanied Campbell and a force of British regulars and Indians that marched from Pensacola to assist the defenders, but Mobile surrendered before the relief force arrived. Campbell then withdrew, and a detachment of the Royal Foresters that he left behind to protect the settlers and collect cattle was surprised and captured by the Spaniards shortly afterward.224

The Indians’ Role

Britain’s Indian allies made few significant contributions to operations in Georgia and South Carolina in 1780. This resulted largely from Cornwallis’s reluctance to employ them, although many British officers expressed a desire for Indian assistance against Whig raiders in the backcountry. The Creeks and Choctaws, however, played an important role in the defense of West Florida and could have been even more valuable had Maj. Gen. John Campbell adopted a wiser policy toward them.

Once they learned of the impending British attack on Charleston, Whig leaders feared that Indian cooperation in the backcountry might doom their efforts to hold the South Carolina capital. Benjamin Lincoln worried that rebels on the frontier might provoke an Indian war, so on January 18, 1780, he instructed George Galphin to make sure that the settlers did not attack the Indians and told the Indian agent to prevent the

Georgians from committing “barbarities” against the Creeks, as they had done in the past. In March, Lincoln received encouraging news from Andrew Williamson that the Spanish attack in West Florida had drawn the attention of the Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Creeks in that direction. Those Creeks in the vicinity of the Georgia and South Carolina backcountry, Williamson believed, “are in our Interest except a few Restless fellows … On the whole I believe we have little to fear from that Quarter.”

Williamson’s assessment regarding West Florida was generally correct, but he underestimated the Creeks’ commitment to the British and failed to consider the Cherokees. There were about three hundred Cherokees at Savannah, “holding themselves in readiness” to serve with Clinton’s army, when the British fleet arrived there. Had Clinton followed his original plan to send troops from Savannah into the backcountry, the Cherokees were to have accompanied the British detachment. However, when Clinton ordered those troops to Charleston instead, their commander, Gen. James Patterson, decided to leave the Indians in Georgia. A few Indians chose to go with the British anyway; Uzal Johnson noted that one evening during the march, “two Indian Captains John & James” visited his battalion’s camp. The loyalists seemed amused by their guests, and “smoak’d tobacco & drank grog with those Devils Incarnate.”

Many British officers shared Johnson’s low opinion of the Indians. According to a German officer, Patterson had chosen to leave the Indians in Savannah “because of their

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225 Lincoln to Galphin, Jan. 18, 1780, Lincoln Papers, BPL.
226 Andrew Williamson to Benjamin Lincoln, March 7, 1780, Benjamin Lincoln Papers, PERK.
227 Major General von Huyn to Knyphausen, March 8, 1780, “Correspondence of Knyphausen,” Part 2, HDAR, Item GG.
229 Uzal Johnson, Diary, March 7, 1780, SCDAH.

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Hessian Capt. Johann Hinrichs, having encountered only one Indian since arriving at Savannah, had no personal knowledge of them and apparently based his views on talk he heard in camp. "As soldiers, they are anything but dangerous to one accustomed to balls, lead, and hand-to-hand combat," Hinrichs asserted. "Hiding in bushes and behind trees, waiting to take a shot at someone, and upon meeting with the slightest resistance taking flight with amazing agility, but showing up at another place just as quickly – these are their principal military virtues." Such tactics did no impress Hinrichs, who declared that Indians "cost many times more than real soldiers and do more harm than good."\(^{231}\)

Bored with enforced idleness and in "great dread of the small pox" which had broken out in coastal Georgia, at the beginning of March the Indians told Augustine Prevost that they wished to leave Savannah and return to their homes. Prevost told Clinton that the Indians could not be prevented from leaving "if we wish them to remain our friends." He added that their departure would not affect his ability to defend Savannah, because the Indians "are not people to be employed in the defence of a place; they can not suffer the appearance of being shut up." He also advised Clinton that messages should be sent to halt other Indian parties en route to the town.\(^{232}\) Clinton agreed with Prevost’s suggestions and instructed his subordinate to retain the Indians’ "goodwill & let them understand they are to be called upon shortly."\(^{233}\) In mid-March the Indians left Savannah after promising to return when summoned.\(^{234}\) On their homeward


\(^{231}\) Hinrichs, "Diary," in Uhlendorf, Siege of Charleston, 157, 159.

\(^{232}\) Augustine Prevost to Henry Clinton, March 2, 1780, \(RAM\), 2:96.

\(^{233}\) Clinton to Augustine Prevost, March 8, 1780, \(RAM\), 2:99.

\(^{234}\) Augustine Prevost to Clinton, March 19, 1780, \(RAM\), 2:104.
journey, one group of Indians was attacked by a Whig party that “kill'd four men and one woman and took one man two boys and a girl prisoners.”

Gov. Wright appreciated the Indians more than most army officers did and expressed displeasure at their departure. Believing that Clinton’s cancellation of the march into the backcountry left Savannah vulnerable to attacks from rebels based in Georgia’s interior, Wright urged Clinton to pay closer attention to Indian relations. British officers might consider the Indians “useless in the field,” the governor wrote, but if the Cherokees left Savannah “in disgust, and the Creeks being stop’t and sent home again, most like may be disgusted also,” they might decide to cast their lot with the Whigs. If so, Wright warned, the Indians “would harrass the King’s Troops ... & receive the Rebels amongst them,” and in that case “we could never subdue the rebellion.” In his reply, Clinton ignored Wright’s comments about the Indians and assured the governor that the rebels would be too occupied in South Carolina to menace Georgia.

Clinton did in fact hope that the Indians would cooperate with his forces; at the start of the campaign he had told Thomas Brown that “it was not his intention to expose the Indians unreasonably by incursions into the different provinces in rebellion but to reserve their services for some more decisive blow” when they could receive assistance from British troops.” Later, Clinton asked Alexander Innes to bring “an old sachem and Creek young warriors with you” from Savannah to visit the army’s camp at Charleston. “I wish them to see our army,” Clinton wrote, but reminded Innes to keep the Indians under control on the march northward. Brown, Clinton added, was to remain in

236 Sir James Wright to Clinton, March 18, 1780, *RAM*, 2:104.
237 Clinton to Wright, March 25, 1780, *RAM*, 2:106.
Georgia and keep the Indians there "in good humour." When Charleston fell, Clinton promised to immediately send Brown orders on how to employ the Indians.\textsuperscript{239} In late April, a Lower Creek chief, accompanied by loyalist William McIntosh, finally arrived at the British lines outside Charleston and met Clinton. Johann Ewald wrote that the chief, "Ravening Wolf," had been sent "by several Indian tribes" to learn whether the British were strong enough so "that it was worth the trouble for these nations to venture further into an alliance" with them.\textsuperscript{240} The rebels had told the Creeks that the British army "was in very bad condition in order to get his nation away from supporting the English." Clinton therefore ordered that the chief be given a tour of the British camp and siege lines.\textsuperscript{241} The general regretted that no Cherokee leaders had come; "it would have been of consequence," he stated, perhaps believing that the sight of a powerful British army would encourage them to cooperate more actively in the future.\textsuperscript{242}

After Charleston surrendered, Clinton ordered Thomas Brown to march into the backcountry and take post at Augusta. Brown welcomed the opportunity, since it would place him nearer to the Cherokees and Creeks; he estimated that 360 of the latter were actively assisting the British on the frontier and believed that the pro-Whig Creek faction could now be convinced to align themselves with the British. He appointed Charles Shaw to act as his representative in Savannah, where Lt. Col. Alured Clarke had replaced Augustine Prevost as commandant.\textsuperscript{243}

Once he had established himself at Augusta, Brown informed Cornwallis that he had dispatched messengers to the Creeks and Cherokees with orders to end hostilities.

\textsuperscript{239} Clinton to [Alexander Innes], Feb. 19, 1780, \textit{RAM}, 2:93.
\textsuperscript{240} Ewald, \textit{Diary of the American War}, 231-232.
\textsuperscript{241} Bartholomai, "Diary," in \textit{Diaries of Two Anspach Jaegers}, 135.
\textsuperscript{242} Clinton, "Journal of the Siege of Charleston," 164.
\textsuperscript{243} Cashin, \textit{King's Ranger}, 105, 106.
against the inhabitants of Georgia and South Carolina. Brown asked the earl for permission to demolish Fort Rutledge, which had been a source of irritation to the Cherokees because it was located on their land. He also told Cornwallis that he had promised the Indians that all settlers illegally residing on Indian land would be removed. Brown intended to remedy Whig injustices to the Creeks and Cherokees by enforcing the Indian boundary, regardless of how frontier settlers might react.

In addition, Brown proposed an ambitious plan to attack the overmountain settlements. Wishing to prevent the Creeks and Cherokees “from seeking satisfaction for any losses they may have sustained” at the hands of Georgians and South Carolinians, Brown suggested that “I should order the indians to drive the Virginia & Nth. Carolina Banditti who have forcible possession of their lands at Wattoga, Caen Tuck, & c – I mean Henderson’s settlement as it is generally called.”

Brown discussed these matters with Balfour, who endorsed the destruction of Fort Rutledge in a letter to Cornwallis. Balfour believed that dismantling the fort would allow the Indians to move freely on the frontier, where there were many rebels, and “the nearer the Indians are brought to these gentry the better.” With regard to the proposed attack on the overmountain settlements, Balfour elaborated on Brown’s earlier arguments, but did not offer his own opinion. The overmountain settlers were “a sett of Banditti, who have settled by force upon the lands of the Creeks & Cherokees,” Balfour explained, and “had been allways complained of by the indians, as a grievous encroachment.” Brown had told Balfour that the British had promised to resolve that problem at the first opportunity, and that if they did not take action now, the Indians would be disappointed. Brown therefore

244 Brown to Cornwallis, June 18, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 166.
245 Brown to Cornwallis, June 18, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO/30/11/2, 166.
planned “to warne the people, to leave, these lands in a certain time, and in case of non compliance to take the consequences.”

Brown repeated his request to move against Watauga, telling Cornwallis on June 28 that the Cherokees, who with the Creeks were sending a delegation to Augusta, would press the issue when they arrived. “At this juncture it perhaps will be more politic to secure the affections of our indian allies than to employ them on such services where there is a difficulty of discriminating between friends & foes,” Brown suggested. There would be no such problem at Watauga, because all the settlements there were “the asylum of plunderers & robbers” committed to the rebel cause. Brown also asked for money to assist almost seven hundred Indian families, who were in a “distressed miserable condition.”

Before answering Brown, Cornwallis ordered Balfour to “explain to Col. Brown in the most positive Manner, that I wish to keep the Indians in good humour, but on no Account whatever to bring them forward or employ them.” The earl finally found time to reply to Brown on July 17 with a letter that must have shocked its recipient. “I will in a few words tell you my Ideas & wishes in regard to the Indians,” the earl bluntly announced. They were to be “kept in good humour by civil treatment & a proper distribution of such presents as are sent from England for that purpose, but I would on no Account employ them in any operations of War.” Although he approved the destruction of Fort Rutledge, Cornwallis dismissed the Cherokees’ complaints about the overmountain settlers as “too intricate for us to enter upon” at present; he advised Brown to placate them with a promise to rectify the matter in the future. Nor would Cornwallis

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246 Balfour to Cornwallis, June 24, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 191.
247 Brown to Cornwallis, June 28, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 208.
248 Cornwallis to Balfour, July 3, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/78, 3.
provide funds for the Indian department; Brown would have to make do with whatever presents had been allocated by the government. Since he did not intend “to make any Military Use of the Indians,” the earl declared, he could not “think myself justifyed in suffering the Publick to be put to any considerable Expence about them.” In any case, there was no need for charity. “If their Houses have been destroy’d, the Rebuilding an Indian Hut is no very expensive Affair, and I dare say they will get their usual Crops of Corn this Year.” Cornwallis closed his harsh letter by citing a report from Gen. Campbell in Pensacola that the Creeks there “staid only as long as they could extort presents,” feasted on British provisions, and left just at the time Campbell thought a Spanish attack was imminent.249

In an uncharacteristically rude manner, Cornwallis had made it clear that he considered the king’s Indian allies to be barely worth the expense required to maintain their allegiance. Although his decision undoubtedly saved the British treasury a few thousand pounds, Cornwallis’s shortsighted refusal to adopt Brown’s proposal to attack the overmountain settlements had serious consequences. Had he dispatched Brown to lead the Creeks and Cherokees against the Whigs there, Cornwallis would have removed a dangerous threat to his subsequent operations. Under Brown’s skillful leadership, a series of determined raids, even if unsuccessful in dislodging the setters, would have prevented the overmountain men from harassing the frontiers of Georgia and South Carolina; more importantly, the Wataugans would not have been able to act against Patrick Ferguson’s detachment in the autumn, which had such fatal consequences for the British and loyalists. As Isaac Shelby, who commanded some of the overmountain militia at King’s Mountain, later noted, reports that “these Indians were preparing for a

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249 Cornwallis to Brown, July 17, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/78, 22.
formidable attack upon us” at the time he marched against Ferguson, made him “unwilling that we should take away the whole disposable force of our counties.” The threatened Cherokee attack thus reduced the size of the force Shelby employed against Ferguson; an actual attack might have kept all of the overmountain rebels at home.250

Cornwallis had several reasons for choosing to keep the Indians idle. In Britain, the opposition in Parliament had again assailed the ministry for its Indian policy in the spring of 1780. Members especially criticized the Indian Department’s heavy expenditures. Lord Shelburne accused John Stuart of having reaped enormous personal profit from contracts to supply goods to the southern nations, without any substantial return to the government in the form of Indian assistance. This forced Germain, who was himself concerned with spiraling costs in the Indian department, to order officials in America to reduce expenses.251 Cornwallis also believed that Indians could contribute little to his military operations. He may have been influenced in this regard by James Simpson, with whom he had worked closely in Charleston. Simpson made it widely known that in his opinion and that of many other southern loyalists, the Indians “are not wanted .... With the Troops they are of no Use. To let them loose they would injure Friends as well as Foes.”252 Finally, Cornwallis recognized that assigning the Indians an active role might alienate many backcountry inhabitants, both loyalists as well as former Whigs who had taken the oath to Britain. Acting on Cornwallis’s instructions, Ferguson issued a proclamation when he entered North Carolina in September designed to reassure the inhabitants by denying rebel claims that the British planned to use Indians against

250 Isaac Shelby to the Public, April 1823, “Battle of King’s Mountain October 7, 1780,” MAH, Vol. 4, No. 5, Nov. 1880, 353.
252 William Smith, Historical Memoirs, 155.
them, pointing out instead that “the only Indians employ’d since the Invasion of Carolina are those of Catawbaw by the Rebels.”

If Cornwallis did not wish to use the pro-British Indians, neither did he want the Catawbas to aid the Whigs. Lord Rawdon, arriving at the Waxhaws settlements on June 11, noted that people there feared that “they shall be troubled by the Catawba Indians.” Rawdon reported that the Catawbas had “retired into North Carolina with their families” and movable property after hearing reports that the British troops were accompanied by a party of Cherokees. To prevent the Catawbas from raiding, Rawdon told local loyalists to inform them that if they returned and behaved well, they would receive protection, but if they molested the loyalists, “their settlement shall be utterly destroyed.”

Despite Rawdon’s threats, Thomas Sumter used Catawba territory as the base where he organized his partisans in the summer of 1780. In addition to supplying Sumter’s men with food, the Catawbas contributed many volunteers to the rebel force. According to one estimate, two hundred Catawbas served with Sumter in his attacks against British posts at Rocky Mount and Hanging Rock. Some served with Sumter throughout the southern campaign and others joined William R. Davie’s partisan unit.

Cornwallis thus deprived the British of Indian assistance while the Catawbas continued to aid the Whigs, and it was not long before South Carolina and Georgia felt the effects of the earl’s policy. In August, Evan McLaurin informed Balfour that “a Body of about 300 mountaineers from Wataga” were plundering the South Carolina frontier – the same men against whom Brown had intended to employ the Indians. McLaurin

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253 Declaration of Amnesty to Rebels, Sept. 9, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/64, 62.
254 Rawdon to Cornwallis, June 11, 1780, Cornwallis Papers 30/11/2, No. 123.
warned that the Wataugans “will be a Thorn to us” unless the British built a fort near their settlements, which would provide a secure base from which the Indians could harass them. This, McLaurin believed, would keep the Wataugans home “for fear of exposing their families to the Indians.” If such a step were not taken “we shall not have either a quiet or an honest back Country,” McLaurin declared. “The Indians God knows are good for Little but still they are a Bugbear & then would ly between the Province & the Overhill Settlements so as to interrupt the Intercourse between them.”

The vulnerability of the frontier posts became painfully evident on September 14, when Elijah Clarke attacked Augusta with six hundred men. The rebels opened their assault by striking the camp of several hundred Cherokees and Creeks outside the town; the Indians had come to confer with Brown. The surprise attack drove off the Indians before Brown arrived with his troops to assist them, but the rangers and Indians managed to recapture and occupy a stone house. The next day, fifty Cherokees crossed the Savannah River to reinforce Brown’s besieged force. The Indians and provincials held out until troops from Ninety Six relieved them on September 17. Joining the soldiers and militia in pursuit of the fleeing Whigs, the Indians seized and reportedly scalped several of Clarke’s men. Cruger praised the Indians’ performance in his report to Cornwallis.

The sudden attack on Augusta, and the Indians’ valorous performance in the defense of that post, convinced Balfour that it was necessary to use Indians to protect the frontier. “I own the best mode, of at once stopping all these kind of expeditions, appears to me to be, the employing the Indians, to clear certain districts, where these people retreat to, & resort,” he advised Cornwallis. Balfour noted that Andrew Williamson, who...

256 Evan McLaurin to Balfour, Aug. 7, 1780, Emmet Collection # 6589, NYPL.
257 Cashin, King’s Ranger, 114-118; O’Donnell, Southern Indians, 103-104; Cruger to Cornwallis, Sept. 19, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/64, 77.
had taken protection and was now providing the British with advice, agreed that allowing the Indians to attack rebel partisans, within “certain boundarys ... would certainly effect the purpose.” Balfour urged Cornwallis to act quickly, before the backcountry revolt “gains head, and becomes perhaps too powerful for any of our posts.” Cornwallis chose not to act, depriving himself of an excellent opportunity to convince the backcountry loyalists to cooperate with the Indians, since the latter’s contribution to the defense of Augusta was widely known.

British success in South Carolina had failed to secure the frontiers of that province or Georgia, but placed the rebels at too great a distance to threaten East Florida. Yet Governor Tonyn carefully watched the progress of the Spanish offensive in West Florida. With many troops having been transferred from his province to Georgia, Tonyn relied more than ever on Indians to defend St. Augustine. In July 1780, Germain gave the governor direct authority over the Seminoles, who remained steadfast despite British inability to provide them with adequate supplies and the efforts of Spanish agents to win their allegiance.

British officials in West Florida were in even greater need of Indian assistance as Galvez continued his offensive by attacking Mobile in February. Hundreds of Choctaws had been camped near Mobile until early in the year, “but official stinginess and their own boredom drove them home,” so that only eighteen were present when the Spanish arrived. The British also had problems with the Creeks. In January, Gov. Chester had made an unauthorized grant of Creek lands “to himself and others his Favorites and Dependents,” which provoked the Creeks to plunder some of the province’s inhabitants.

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258 Balfour to Cornwallis, Sept. 20, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/64, 83.
259 Calloway, Revolution in Indian Country, 262; Germain to Thomas Brown, July 5, 1780, DAR, 18:116.
Furthermore, Campbell’s low opinion of Alexander Cameron hampered coordination between the army and the Indian department. Campbell considered the superintendent “no wise qualified ... to act but in a subordinate Degree” and asserted that Cameron was “lost, bewildered ... and unequal to the Task” assigned him.\(^{261}\)

Despite this turmoil, the Indian agents responded quickly to the Spanish attack. Charles Stuart ordered Farquhar Bethune to bring as many Choctaws as possible to relieve Mobile; six hundred Indians were en route when they learned of the town’s surrender, whereupon most returned home. Bethune brought the remaining two hundred to Pensacola. Stuart had remained at Mobile, was captured by the Spaniards, and died of an illness soon afterwards. Alexander Cameron blamed Campbell for the loss of Mobile, complaining that the general’s habit of summoning the Indians every time a Spanish attack was rumored and then dismissing them when the threat failed to materialize had alienated the Indians to a point where they would soon refuse to assist the British at all.\(^{262}\)

Cameron’s assessment of the potentially harmful effects of Campbell’s policy was correct, although the superintendent underestimated the Indians’ tolerance. The Choctaws who went to Pensacola participated in Campbell’s unsuccessful effort to relieve Mobile, covering the flanks of the British column and roving ahead to gather intelligence.\(^{263}\) When Campbell withdrew after learning of Mobile’s surrender, he left fifty Choctaws to keep watch and send warning if the Spaniards marched to Pensacola. Again, however,

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\(^{261}\) John Campbell to Clinton, Feb. 10, 1780, Carleton Papers, Vol. 21, No. 2565.


\(^{263}\) Waldeck, *Diary*, 149, 152-153.
Campbell grew tired of the expense for provisions and presents and dismissed the Indians, thus depriving himself of information on Spanish activity around Mobile.\textsuperscript{264}

In late March, believing that Galvez intended to attack Pensacola, Campbell called upon the Indians for aid. By early April, at the same time that Germain was frantically composing orders for Campbell to unite the Chickasaws, Cherokees, and Creeks to defend what remained of West Florida, nearly sixteen hundred Creeks and Choctaws had arrived in the town. Germain distrusted the Choctaws, whom he suspected harbored pro-Spanish sympathies.\textsuperscript{265} Some officers shared Germain's suspicions. "We can trust the Creeks a bit more than the Choctaws," Philipp Waldeck wrote, because the latter "tend to favor the Spanish." Nevertheless, the Choctaws' martial appearance impressed him. "What a wonderful regiment could be made of them," Waldeck stated. "But would they accept discipline? Discipline is something about which they know nothing. Even the chief does not control them."\textsuperscript{266}

Campbell expressed his appreciation for the Indians' support at a meeting with Creek leaders on April 12 and promised them presents, but he could not restrain himself from criticizing the Creeks for killing some livestock. The Creek leader replied that his people had come to fight the Spaniards, not to get presents. He declared that his people had killed livestock "in youthful exuberance" rather than from hunger. Apparently aware that his remarks had upset the Creeks, Campbell said nothing about the Indians' behavior at a meeting the next day with the Choctaws. Campbell's patience must have been severely strained by May 1, when Waldeck noted that the Indians were committing "all

\textsuperscript{264} Alexander Cameron to Clinton, July 18, 1780, \textit{RAM}, 2:159.
\textsuperscript{266} Waldeck, \textit{Diary}, 154-156.
sorts of excesses. They get drunk and then are unmanageable. Today they even attacked our own outpost.\footnote{Waldeck, \textit{Diary}, 160-166.} Cameron had hoped to keep the Indians active by sending them to harass the Spaniards around Mobile, but Campbell disapproved, fearing they would commit "indiscriminate murder." With nothing to do, the Indians "sold most of their provisions for rum ... and when very drunk they were very insolent and obstreperous," yet Campbell, needing their aid against the Spanish, chose to ignore their behavior.\footnote{Alexander Cameron to Germain, July 18, 1780, \textit{DAR}, 18:120-121.}

If the Indians created problems for Campbell, they created greater difficulty for Galvez, who realized that they represented a serious obstacle to an attack on Pensacola. In an effort to remove the advantage the Indians provided the British, Galvez wrote to Campbell in April suggesting that neither side employ them. Reviewing what he considered the brutal aspects of Indian warfare, Galvez argued that in the interest of humanity the Indians should not be allowed to take part in the conflict. Campbell replied that Indians in British service always acted "under proper leaders" who prevented the cruelties that Galvez described. He rejected the Spaniard's proposal as "insulting and injurious to reason and common sense." Galvez's proposal convinced Campbell that the Indians were indeed an asset to the British.\footnote{Osborn, "John Campbell," 332-334.} Reluctantly, Campbell conceded that the Indians' presence had prevented Galvez from launching his attack.\footnote{Galvez to John Campbell, April 9, 1780, Carleton Papers, Vol. 22, No. 2681; John Campbell to Galvez, April 20, 1780, Carleton Papers, Vol. 22, No. 2692.}

Cameron agreed, telling Gen. Clinton that British retention of Pensacola "is entirely owing to the great numbers of Indians that speedily repaired hither to our assistance." The superintendent remained dissatisfied with Campbell's treatment of the Indians; he complained to Germain that Campbell "thinks they are to be used like slaves..."
or a people void of natural sense."\textsuperscript{271} As Cameron noted, the Indians’ role in protecting Pensacola certainly had not improved the general’s opinion of them. The general sent Germain a litany of his grievances, which included the “unbounded waste” in the Indian department and the need to civilize “these barbarians” by teaching them English concepts of property ownership and settling them in English-style towns.\textsuperscript{272}

Continued disagreements between Cameron and Campbell threatened to paralyze the Indian department. When Cameron asked the general to enlist fifty white men to lead the Indians in battle, Campbell allowed Cameron only four, and soon afterward decided that the expense was unnecessary and told Cameron to dismiss them. Campbell also was parsimonious when Cameron requested presents for the Indians, disgusting the superintendent and his deputies who believed that gifts were essential to keep the Indians’ allegiance. Cameron’s request that one hundred Indians be placed on duty as scouts was refused, and Campbell further advised the superintendent not to receive Creek visitors but to send them to Thomas Brown at Augusta, since Brown was the Creeks’ agent. Cameron believed that Campbell’s actions jeopardized the British-Indian alliance.\textsuperscript{273}

While Campbell and Cameron feuded, many Indians left Pensacola and others listened to the importunities of Spanish agents. The Upper Creeks at Pensacola had begun “to grow sickly” by mid-June and decided to return home, promising that they would be “relieved by fresh parties from different parts of the Nation.” Charles Shaw ordered Alexander McGillivray to accompany the Creeks to their towns to counter growing Spanish influence. According to Shaw, the Spaniards had gained a foothold in two towns

\textsuperscript{271} Quoted in Starr, \textit{Tories, Dons, and Rebels}, 177.
\textsuperscript{272} Osborn, “John Campbell,” 334.
whose inhabitants had been “in the Rebel interest” and “seduced a few of them to Visit Governor Galvez at Mobile, who has promised to load them with Presents and Rum.”

One of George Galphin’s sons was also urging the Creeks to visit the Spanish governor. Shaw advised Thomas Brown to invite “the Chiefs that may lean toward the Spanish interest to visit him at Augusta,” where Brown’s influence might “fix them firmly in His Majestys interest.”

Growing Spanish influence among the Choctaws also troubled British officials. In the fall, Campbell informed Clinton that reports indicated that the Choctaws were “in the greatest torment, tumult, and confusion, from the contest between the British and Spanish parties.” Campbell believed that the British would maintain the Choctaws’ loyalty, but conceded that “our success is far from being clear and certain.”

Unfortunately, Campbell himself remained the most serious obstacle to the maintenance of good relations between Britain and the Indians. On August 26, a party of Choctaws arrived in Pensacola to report that they had met with Galvez and “received presents ... but were dissatisfied with them.” Believing that the Choctaws intended to auction their allegiance to the highest bidder, British officials told them that because they had gone to the Spaniards, they would receive nothing. When the Choctaws apologized and pledged to support the British, they were given presents. Then, to demonstrate their sincerity, the Choctaws killed and scalped three Spanish soldiers they found east of Mobile. The Choctaws brought the scalps to Pensacola, “but received no reward, and for their cruelty ... were treated with contempt.”

274 Charles Shaw to Germain, June 19, 1780, Germain Papers, Vol. 12, WLCL.
276 Waldeck, Diary, 168.
The Spaniards had been part of a truce party en route to Pensacola, and their deaths prompted Galvez to send a letter of protest to Campbell, in which he threatened to allow Spain's Indian allies to retaliate in kind. Campbell in turn reprimanded Mingo Pouscouche, the Choctaw leader. Angered by what he considered a ridiculous consideration for the Spanish enemy, Pouscouche replied that in the future his followers would kill any Spaniard they encountered, regardless of age or sex. In the autumn, Choctaw parties attacked the Spanish near Mobile and brought three scalps and a captured family to Pensacola in a defiant display of their independence. Having learned a lesson, Campbell refrained from comment and obtained the family's release in exchange for presents.277

Farther west, beyond the reach of interference from Campbell or Cornwallis, the Chickasaws guarded the Mississippi River and blocked rebel plans to expand in that direction. They frequently seized rebel vessels trading with New Orleans, boarding the boats and "knocking the crew on the head."278 When Virginia soldiers constructed Fort Jefferson below the mouth of the Ohio River on Chickasaw territory in April 1780 and settlers built homes nearby, the Chickasaws refused to tolerate the incursion. Led by loyalist James Colbert, they drove the settlers into the fort, burned the houses, and harassed the garrison. With their supplies cut off, the defenders faced surrender before the arrival of a relief force saved them. The Chickasaw reaction, however, convinced Virginia officials that the post was untenable. It was abandoned in June 1781. The Chickasaws also rebuffed Spanish efforts to undermine their attachment to Britain.279

The Diverse Experiences of African Americans

277 O'Brien, Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 45-46, Waldeck, Diary, 169-171.
278 Alexander Cameron to Germain, July 18, 1780, DAR, 18:120.
279 Gibson, The Chickasaws, 72; Calloway, Revolution in Indian Country, 227.
The arrival of Clinton’s army in South Carolina gave slaves there the opportunity that they had long awaited to seek freedom with the British troops. Thousands of slaves, sometimes with the encouragement of British officers, escaped to the army. Many did find freedom, although they still spent their days at hard labor, while others found themselves back in bondage under new masters. Despite such disappointments, African Americans contributed consistently and significantly to the British army’s success.

Realizing that fugitive slaves would strengthen the British in their operations against Charleston, Whig John Laurens sought to preempt this by renewing his efforts to arm South Carolina’s slaves. He received considerable support from Benjamin Lincoln, who reminded state officials that the British army’s successful use of black troops at the siege of Savannah proved that slaves could fight effectively. That argument failed to sway the governor and Council, although they agreed to assign slaves to work on Charleston’s fortifications. Lincoln then demanded a reinforcement of two thousand militia for the defense of Charleston, and said that if the state could not provide them, they would have to arm an equal number of blacks instead. Governor Rutledge ignored the request.280 At the end of February, a frustrated Lincoln insisted that Rutledge immediately reinforce his army with “Black Volunteers” or the general would withdraw the Continental troops from Charleston.281 Officials refused to bend to Lincoln’s threat, correctly assuming that he would not carry it out. As the siege progressed, it became increasingly difficult to procure slaves to work on the defenses; one observer noted that

280 Lincoln to John Rutledge, Jan. 30, 1780; Feb. 14, 1780, Lincoln Papers, BPL; Mattern, Benjamin Lincoln, 92; Borick, Gallant Defense, 40, 43.
281 Lincoln to John Rutledge, Feb. 28, 1780, Lincoln Papers, BPL.
"the few Negroes remaining in Town are obliged to be pressed daily, & kept under guard, as the masters as well as the Slaves, were unwilling they should work."282

The Whigs did permit a handful of blacks to serve aboard the state’s armed row galley Revenge because a shortage of white seamen left them no other option.283 In addition, a German officer recorded that his detachment was ambushed four miles from Charleston on March 30 by three hundred rebel “light infantry and Negroes.” If he was correct, the blacks were not part of an official unit. More likely, he mistook black laborers and officers’ servants with the Whigs for soldiers, although there is a slight possibility that a rebel officer may have armed some slaves on his own initiative.284

While the Whigs risked the success of their cause rather than tamper with the institution of slavery, large numbers of slaves threw off their bondage. To them “the arrival of the British army was a liberating moment.”285 One of Clinton’s officers, Lt. Col. James Webster, sent patrols into the countryside to post “placards encouraging Negroes to come into the English lines.”286 Most slaves could not read these notices, but that was not necessary. “Great hordes of Negroes followed the army partially for want of food and partially to escape from their masters,” one observer noted.287 Clinton’s aide, Maj. John Andre, wrote on March 4 that five hundred blankets were needed for blacks who had come to the army.288 Slave women as well as men fled to the king’s troops.

282 Mattern, Benjamin Lincoln, 105.
283 Charles Cotesworth Pinckney to Isaac Harleston, Jan. 20, 1780, Isaac Harleston Papers, SCHS; Bartholomai, “Diary,” in Diaries of Two Anspach Jaegers, 115; John J. Sayen, Jr., “Oared Fighting Ships of the South Carolina Navy, 1776-1780,” SCHM, Vol. 87, No. 4, Oct. 1986, 233. Permission to recruit blacks was granted on Jan. 27, 1780, when the British invasion was imminent.
284 Bartholomai, “Diary,” in Diaries of Two Anspach Jaegers, 124.
285 Frey, Water from the Rock, 118.
288 Borick, Gallant Defense, 100.
Fifteen of fifty-three runaways on John Ball’s plantation were women. One, a slave named Charlotte, escaped on May 10, was returned to Ball, and soon escaped again with fourteen other slaves. Many slave women took their children with them. More than one-third of the slaves evacuated from Savannah in 1782 were women, and nearly one-fourth were children.\textsuperscript{289}

Some slaves who came to Clinton’s army brought prisoners with them. At the end of February, three blacks arrived with a British deserter; they had ignored the soldier’s efforts to persuade them to bring him to Charleston. The deserter’s commanding officer, Maj. James Wemyss, permitted the blacks to testify at the man’s court martial.\textsuperscript{290} An astute black man helped the British capture two Whig officials, Council member Edward Rutledge and the Marquis de Malmedy, a French officer in American service, on May 3. Rutledge, Malmedy, and two other men had fled Charleston by boat, but encountered British troops when they came ashore. Rutledge and Malmedy eluded the soldiers, then met the slave and asked him to lead them past the troops. Instead the man took them to the British lines, whereupon the enraged Malmedy drew his sword and attacked the guide, who defended himself with a knife. Both men were wounded, but the altercation attracted British soldiers who seized the two Whigs.\textsuperscript{291}

Not all blacks went to the British voluntarily; officers repeatedly sent out detachments to gather slaves to assist the army. Many of these slaves had been left behind by their masters, sometimes under the supervision of wives and children, but often


\textsuperscript{290} James Wemyss to John Andre, Feb. 27, 1780, Vol. 87, No. 9, and Feb. 29, 1780, Vol. 87, No. 21, Clinton Papers, WLCL.

\textsuperscript{291} Henry Clinton, “Journal of the Siege of Charleston,” 168; Major James Habersham’s Journal of the Siege of Charleston, Joseph V. Bevan Collection, LOC.
without any white supervision at all. The army's seizure of slaves aroused the enmity of white South Carolinians, who, a Hessian officer wrote, "hated us because we carried off their Negroes and livestock." Loyalists as well as Whigs resented the loss of their slaves, especially when their attempts to recover them failed.

British officers remained uncertain of how to deal with the large number of fugitives flocking to them. Slaves represented a large and valuable pool of laborers for the army and simultaneously diminished the rebels' labor resources. However, far more slaves came to the army than it could possibly employ, and all of the fugitives, whether employed or not, needed to be fed and clothed. Clinton also worried that any attempt on his part to fundamentally change the slave system would alienate white loyalists and make it harder to reconcile former rebels.

Before the army left New York, the British had given some consideration to how they should handle the slave issue once they had control of Charleston. An unnamed official suggested that Clinton "publish a Proclamation relative to Negroes; ordering all such as may come in, to give their Names, together with their Masters Names, and former places of Abode," to the newly appointed civil officials, who would then designate a person to enroll the blacks and provide them with certificates proving that they had voluntarily offered their services. Those blacks who did not have such certificates, except for slaves whose masters resided in Charleston, "must be imprisoned; this will prevent the bad effects found at New York, and put it in the Generals power to make the proper

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293 Ewald, *Diary of the American War*, 202. Additional descriptions of slave-gathering excursions are found on 199, 214.
use of them in labouring for the different departments.” The author intended that the British should make use of African American volunteers, but avoid the difficulties that would ensue if large numbers of slaves fled to the army and then remained in Charleston, or followed the troops, without employment. Having numerous unidentified and unregulated slaves in the vicinity of the army, the author believed, would create problems both for the army and for civilians and could impede the pacification of South Carolina.

Patrick Ferguson submitted his own proposal for using the slaves to fortify key posts, which would enable a limited number of regulars, supported by loyal militia, to maintain control in South Carolina and Georgia. Ferguson suggested that blacks already with the army, along with others seized from rebel owners, could construct the fortifications. These slaves could be “allow’d rebel lands to Cultivate for their Subsistance & half their time for that Purpose,” and spend their remaining time fortifying the posts at little expense to the British.

Clinton had already devised a plan before he received Ferguson’s suggestions. On February 13, the general appointed Lt. Col. James Moncrief and two civilians, George Hay and James Fraser, to act as commissaries of captures. Their duty was to gather “Negroes, Cattle, Rice, Forage, and other Articles serviceable to the Army” from abandoned plantations and distribute them for “the use, Convenience & benefit of the Troops.” In little more than a month, the commissaries reported that they had taken up

296 Unnamed to Capt. Russell, Dec. 22, 1779, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/1, #33, Microfilm, DLAR. The probable author was Andrew Elliott, who wrote several documents concerning military government, civil regulations, and proclamations that were included in a packet with the letter to Russell.
298 Clinton’s Commission to Moncrief, Hay, and Fraser, Feb. 13, 1780, Clinton Papers, Vol. 85, No. 16, WLCL.
317 blacks and assigned them to various military departments. Seventy were employed by the quartermaster general, ninety-six with the engineers, thirty-five with the commissary general, sixty with the artillery, six with the provost marshal, and five in the hospital. The commissaries retained the other forty-five to assist in gathering supplies.\textsuperscript{299}

In early April, Clinton issued additional orders stating that “Negroes will also be Wanting and as their employment will save the Troops much Toyl & Fatigue – The General orders whenever they may be taken from the Enemy they be sent immediately” to one of the commissaries of captures. These slaves would then be apportioned “to each Corps as soon as there shall be enough Collected for the Publick Service.”\textsuperscript{300} By April 28, the number of blacks assigned to the royal artillery as carpenters, collar-makers, and laborers had increased to 154.\textsuperscript{301}

As Clinton intended, black labor freed hundreds of British troops from fatiguing duties and allowed them to participate in the siege operations. He had brought two companies of black pioneers from Savannah and assigned them to repair roads and bridges.\textsuperscript{302} The slaves who joined the army in South Carolina helped British soldiers and sailors carry supplies forward as the army advanced. When the British crossed the Ashley River at the end of March, “Negroes moved the cannons, munitions, and provisions” to the new position.\textsuperscript{303} Blacks also fortified the many positions the army occupied during Clinton’s cautious approach to Charleston. On April 9, 134 African Americans used a

\textsuperscript{299} Commissarys of Captures Return of Negroes Horses &ca, March 17, 1780, Clinton Papers, Vol. 89, No. 1, WLCL.
\textsuperscript{300} Captain [Abraham] Depeyster Orderly Book, Misc. Microfilms Reel 29, NYHS.
\textsuperscript{301} Return of Negroes employ’d in the Service of the Royal Artillery, April 28, 1780, Clinton Papers, Vol. 95, No. 27, WLCL.
\textsuperscript{303} Bartholomai, “Diary,” \textit{Diaries of Two Anspach Jaegers}, 127.
specially designed cart to haul four British gunboats and two flatboats overland from the Ashley to the Cooper River. Other blacks accompanied British and Hessian foraging parties, helping to round up cattle and bring them to the army’s camps. After Charleston’s surrender, Clinton assigned black workers the task of dismantling the British siege works outside the town, and within ten days they completed the bulk of the work.  

The British corps that marched from Savannah to Charleston also employed blacks in various capacities, such as driving cattle and sheep collected from rebel plantations, but they were kept under strict supervision. All African Americans with the detachment were required to carry passes and “March regularly with the Baggage of their Several Battalions.” The troops were also prohibited from allowing refugee slaves to join them; orders stated that “every Negroe Vagabond & Stragler is Positively forbid to follow the Army under pain of the most severe and Immediate punishment.”

As important as slaves’ labor was to British success in the Charleston campaign, the information that blacks provided was of even greater value, even if it was sometimes inaccurate. An escaped slave who left Charleston in mid-February gave British officers a fairly precise estimate of rebel strength, but mistakenly reported that the Whigs planned to attack the detachment marching north from Savannah. Another slave who reached the British a few days later brought an accurate report of Lincoln’s position. As the siege progressed, escaping through the American defensive lines became extremely dangerous, yet blacks continued to make the effort. Duncan, the slave of a Charleston artisan, fled

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305 Uzal Johnson, Diary, March 25, 1780, SCDAH.

306 Anthony Allaire, Orderly Book, March 8, 1780, Robinson Family Papers, NBM.

307 Depeyster Orderly Book, NYHS.
from the town and gave Major Andre a detailed report on the situation of the rebel army and the quantity of provisions in the town. Several blacks reached British lines on April 3 with news that reinforcements from North Carolina had recently arrived in Charleston; they also provided information on Whig casualties. On May 3, five slaves arrived with a report that supply shortages had reduced the defenders to half rations.308

Some information from slaves enabled the British to surprise and defeat various Whig detachments. A black man informed Maj. Gen. Johann Christoph Von Huyn on the night of March 22 that five rebels were lurking less than a mile away. Von Huyn promptly dispatched a patrol to the place his informant had indicated. The Hessians captured four of the five Americans, who had been sent to seize a sentry in order to obtain information.309

While marching to attempt a night attack on Whig cavalry posted at Monk’s Corner, Banastre Tarleton’s troops captured a slave whose information enabled Tarleton to win a crushing victory on April 13. The prisoner, Thomas Johnston, was carrying a military dispatch for the rebels and from the information it contained, along with Johnston’s report, which Tarleton “purchased for a few dollars,” the British commander obtained complete information of the American position. Tarleton put this knowledge to good use in an assault that surprised and routed the rebels. He then sent a detachment forward to capture a second American post at Biggin’s Bridge. The British captured one hundred prisoners, four hundred horses, and fifty wagons loaded with supplies.310 The following night, “two Negroes came in” to Patrick Ferguson’s camp at Monk’s Corner.

310 Tarleton, History of the Campaigns, 15-17.
with information that twenty rebel cavalrymen were concealed in a nearby swamp. Capt. Abraham Depeyster and twenty men found and attacked the Whigs, killing two and capturing one man and five horses.$^{311}$

British officers recognized that blacks' ability to travel between the lines with relative ease could be a problem if some slaves were acting as spies for the rebels. On March 14, Captain Hinrichs warned Cornwallis that "it was very easy, especially for Negroes," to pass between British outposts. Cornwallis promptly tightened security around the army's camps.$^{312}$ Two slaves accused of being rebel spies were tried by a British court martial on March 24. Twelve days earlier, a black man had told Hessian guards on James Island that three Whigs were coming that night to spy on the British army. Following their informant's directions, the Hessians found a boat and two slaves named Fortune and May. Shortly afterward, the troops captured two Charleston residents, John Witta and William Sterling. The whites insisted that they had come to the island to check on their families, but a Hessian standing guard at Sterling's house testified that a second black informant had warned him that he was in danger of being captured or killed by the two Whigs. Sterling and Witta were probably imprisoned, while Fortune and May won acquittal by testifying that "they were obliged by order of their Master to row [the whites] over, which they did, or they would have been severely beat."$^{313}$ British officers' willingness to allow blacks to testify at courts martial, in their own defense or against whites, indicates a growing respect for slaves, who had demonstrated their intelligence and reliability by consistently providing the army with reliable information.

$^{311}$ Uzal Johnson, Diary, April 14, 1780, SCDAH.
$^{312}$ Hinrichs, "Diary," in Uhlendorf, ed., Siege of Charleston, 207.
$^{313}$ Proceedings of Court Martial, March 24, 1780, Clinton Papers, Vol. 89, No. 34, WLCL.
Blacks also assisted the British in other ways. In February, “a captured Negro boy” acted as a guide for Lt. Col. Webster’s detachment on its march to Stono Ferry.314 Hessian Capt. Johann Ewald noted that the boy “spoke such a poor dialect that he was extremely hard to understand.” When Ewald’s troops received orders on February 19 to form three parties and “collect information about the enemy and to hunt up Negroes and livestock,” each party had a black guide, but again problems arose because the troops could not understand the slaves’ dialect. However, during their excursion, the troops found a household slave “who agreed quite sensibly to tell the truth about everything.” Ewald brought the slave to Gen. Alexander Leslie, who found him “to be a great treasure” when he provided detailed information on American strength and positions.315

Finally, slaves fulfilled the role Germain had originally envisioned for them by reducing the number of men available to defend Charleston. When Gov. Rutledge ordered Col. Benjamin Garden to send reinforcements to the town at the beginning of March, he instructed Garden to retain half of his militia “for keeping the Negroes in Order.”316

While blacks’ contributions to the success of the British campaign earned them the respect of many army officers, their plight as slaves won them sympathy as well. During and after the siege of Charleston, Clinton’s troops had an opportunity to observe the conditions of slavery, and often they did not like what they saw. Sgt. Roger Lamb of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers was amazed to find “almost every white man, in this boasted land of liberty, keeping a great number of slaves!” Lamb believed that South Carolinians would be targeted for divine punishment because they promoted “that abominable and

315 Ewald, Diary of the American War, 197, 199, 202.
316 John Rutledge to Benjamin Garden, March 2, 1780, Pringle-Garden Family Papers, SCHS.
notorious traffic, the slave trade. How any people pretending, as the Americans do, to the profession of christianity, can dare to drive on an horrible traffic in the blood of their fellow creatures ... is a dreadful solecism, at which a Pagan may laugh.” Lamb added that his revulsion at this “deplorable evil” was widespread in the army.317

German observers were particularly vociferous in their criticism of slavery. Carl Bauer of the Grenadier Battalion Platte found that slaves who worked as personal servants were “kept well,” but that field slaves were treated “contrary to all humanity.” He described them as naked, underfed, forced to dwell in “miserable huts,” and subject to horrifying punishments. “For little faults they are hung up, tied by both hands, and whipped dreadfully on their bare backs,” Bauer wrote. “In proportion to their crime an iron nail is sometimes tied to the whip.” However, Bauer also believed that slaves were “as obstinate as undomesticated cattle.”318 Lt. Christian Bartholomai expressed “great sympathy” for the slaves' misery and “asked why the negroes on the land are treated so hard and miserably here.” South Carolinians replied that they could only “insure their safety from insurrection and destruction by employing the whip and fear” and declared that blacks were lazy “and must always be driven to work with a whip.”319 Hessian units recruited at least forty-seven blacks in South Carolina, most of whom served as drummers. This was a more consequential contribution than may appear, since the addition of a black drummer allowed a white soldier to return to the combat ranks. Other

319 Bartholomai, “Diary,” in Diaries of Two Anspach Jaegers, 112.
former slaves worked as servants, teamsters, and equipment porters. In general, German soldiers showed a “tolerant attitude” toward blacks.320

Not all of the king’s soldiers looked as kindly upon slaves. When the Queen’s Rangers, a provincial unit, returned to New York after the Charleston campaign, the troops smuggled a slave man and woman aboard ship. When one of their officers, Stephen Jarvis, discovered the slaves, he sold them in New York and distributed the proceeds among everyone in his unit. When Lt. Col. John Graves Simcooe learned of the transaction, he convened a court of enquiry, which reprimanded Jarvis.321

Like the men of the Queen’s Rangers, neither Clinton nor Cornwallis showed any particular sympathy for the slaves. After appointing the commissaries of captures, Clinton took no further action in regard to slaves until May 20, when he informed Cornwallis that he would leave orders to “prevent the Confusion that would arise from a further desertion of them to us.” The commander-in-chief believed that blacks could best be employed “on abandoned Plantations, on which they may subsist.” Until he could devise a better plan to deal with refugee slaves, Clinton authorized Cornwallis to “make such Arrangements as will discourage their joining us.”322 Clinton had no intention of issuing a southern version of his Phillipsburg Proclamation, which he had issued in New York on June 30, 1779. In that document, Clinton announced that “any Negro the property of a Rebel, who may take refuge with any part of this army,” would not be sold or given up to any claimant. Furthermore, he promised “every Negro who shall desert the Rebel Standard, full security to follow within these Lines any occupation which he may

322 Clinton to Cornwallis, May 20, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 38.
think proper." Since slaves were far more numerous in South Carolina than in New York, Clinton probably thought that the army could not employ all those who might come in and preferred them to remain at home where they would not complicate the army's movements or require management and subsistence.

Clinton did permit some of the fugitives to accompany the army to New York. He allowed each regiment to take along ten blacks to be employed as pioneers, as long as their masters had been in rebellion at the time the slaves fled to the army. Clinton also ordered that none of the former slaves were to be taken to New York without their consent. About five hundred South Carolina slaves sailed north with the army in early June. 324

Before leaving Charleston, Clinton took further steps to deal with the slaves. On May 27, he issued a proclamation appointing Robert Power, William Carson, and Robert Ballingall custodians of all fugitive slaves. The proclamation ordered everyone "who may have any slaves belonging to the Inhabitants of this Province in their custody or possession" to "forthwith deliver them" to the three commissioners. Clinton, however, did not explain what the commissioners were supposed to do with these slaves. 325 A week later, Clinton sent Cornwallis and Patterson some suggestions for dealing with slaves. After conceding that the issue was so complex that "it is impossible to settle any thing positive," Clinton reminded the two generals that priority should be given to putting the province's lands back into productive cultivation. He recommended that slaves owned by loyalists should be returned, on the master's pledge that they would not be punished for fleeing. If masters broke their word and punished slaves, the slaves would be forfeited to

323 Proclamation of Sir Henry Clinton, June 30, 1779, Clinton Papers, Vol. 62, No. 28, WLCL.
324 George Wray Orderly Book, June 1, 1780, Wray Papers, WLCL; Frey, Water from the Rock, 124.
325 Clinton, Proclamation of May 27, 1780, Carleton Papers, Vol. 23, No. 2767.
the government. Clinton was more generous toward rebel-owned slaves. These, he said, "belong to the Public; and after serving it faithfully during the war are entitled to their Freedom." Until the war's end, these slaves would work in the various military and civil departments and be provided with "adequate Pay, Provision, and Cloathing." Clinton then offered an intriguing idea: "Why not settle the Negroes on Forfeited Lands after the war?" he asked. In spite of his reluctance to deal directly with the difficult issue of emancipation, Clinton clearly recognized the value of slaves' services and showed a willingness to free at least some slaves and give them the means to support themselves once the rebels had been subdued.

Dissatisfied with these instructions, for reasons he did not express, Cornwallis asked the commander-in-chief for further directions. "All I can do about Negroes is already directed to be done," Clinton replied. "But Care must be taken that they are not ill treated – Something is now in Contemplation." Whatever else Clinton had in mind, he never communicated it to Cornwallis, thus forcing the earl to devise his own policy. Determining the disposition of thousands of slaves was one of the most complex of the many problems Cornwallis faced; Tarleton described the difficulties involved in formulating a policy in a situation where loyalist slaveowners and freedom-seeking slaves were entirely at odds:

It is here necessary to observe, that all the negroes, men, women, and children, upon the approach of any detachment of the King's troops, thought themselves entirely absolved from all respect to their American masters, and entirely released from servitude: Influenced by this idea, they quitted the plantations, and followed the army; which behaviour caused neglect of cultivation, proved detrimental to the King's troops,

326 Clinton to Commandant of Charlestown and Cornwallis, June 3, 1780, Carleton Papers, Vol. 23, No. 2800.
327 "Answers to Several Queries and Memorandums relative to the Command in Carolina," June 3, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/61, 7.
and occasioned continual disputes about property of this description.\textsuperscript{328}

Tarleton, whose father had amassed a fortune in the slave trade, was less sympathetic to slaves than many other British officers, but he accurately pointed out the complexity of the issue. The southern army could not be fed unless slaves raised the necessary crops, and many slaves would not work on the plantations without white supervision. Keeping the slaves in bondage thus served one of the army’s essential needs, yet the British could not be expected to retain the loyalty of people who had come to them seeking freedom only to be returned to their plantations. It was a dilemma that British leaders never solved.

Cornwallis decided to instruct the board of police to appoint three commissioners of claims to settle questions of slave ownership and to manage the slaves who had taken refuge with the British. The board selected Carson and Ballingall, whom Clinton had appointed in May, along with Thomas Inglis, and the trio set about returning some fugitives to loyalist owners, while assigning others owned by Whigs still in rebellion to John Cruden, the commissioner of sequestered estates. Many more blacks were put to work on Charleston’s fortifications or hired out to various departments of the army. Some eight hundred slaves were assigned to the engineer and ordnance departments.\textsuperscript{329} Tarleton approved of Cornwallis’s solution, noting that the commissioners soon “produced arrangements equally useful to the military and inhabitants.”\textsuperscript{330} James Simpson agreed. He pronounced the earl’s plan “perfectly Satisfactory,” but complained that as intendant

\textsuperscript{328} Tarleton, \textit{History of the Campaigns}, 89-90.
\textsuperscript{329} McCowen, \textit{British Occupation}, 1972, 100-101; Frey, \textit{Water from the Rock}, 121.
\textsuperscript{330} Tarleton, \textit{History of the Campaigns}, 89-90.
of the board of police he was still “almost pestered to Death with Vexatious Complaints about the Negroes.”

Cruden, a North Carolina loyalist, had his share of problems as well. He held responsibility for some one hundred plantations that belonged to people in rebellion or absent from South Carolina. These properties were sequestered, which meant that Cruden held them in trust until the government determined whether or not they should be returned to their owners. Meanwhile, Cruden had to manage more than five thousand slaves assigned to put the lands into production to support the army. He had more slaves than he could usefully employ on the plantations, so he hired some out to various army departments and assigned one to carry messages to Cornwallis. Nevertheless, Cruden tried to induce more blacks to join the British by paying cash rewards to those “most forward in coming to the lines.”

Fugitives who found themselves assigned to plantation work or to menial tasks with the army often disliked their new status as much as their previous bondage and rebelled or fled. In July, Nisbet Balfour had to send British regulars to suppress an insurrection on the sequestered plantation of Ralph Izard. Balfour ordered the troops to punish those responsible for the uprising.

Slaves employed by the army departments were assigned separate living areas, received poor quality rations in comparison to white troops, and lacked access to medical care. “Overworked and undernourished, they fell easy prey to disease.” The result, as a Briton attached to the army hospital observed, was that many blacks assigned to work

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331 McCowen, British Occupation, 101, 103.
333 Olwell, Masters, Slaves, and Subjects, 253.
334 Frey, Water from the Rock, 127.
there “have taken the first opportunity of Deserting from their Duty.” Other slaves serving on British naval vessels also fled when sent ashore to get supplies.335

Several of Henry Laurens’s slaves had been taken by the British, but deserted and returned home. These slaves disliked their overseer, and on their return notified James Custer, Laurens’s manager, that they would not serve under that individual again. Custer believed that he had no choice but to grant their request and promised that the slaves could choose the plantation at which they would work.336 Laurens’s literate slave Samuel Massey informed his master that more than fifteen slaves on one plantation had left “with the kings people,” although one had since returned. Massey added that most of the slaves there “can hardly be persuaded to Stay,” but those at another plantation “are all for Staying at home.” 337 The ability to go to the British gave these slaves a great deal of leverage in negotiating the terms of their bondage.

Many blacks simply did not want to remain slaves or live in conditions similar to slavery, regardless of whether their masters were loyalist or Whig, British or American. From the capture of Charleston until the American army surrounded the town and cut off all escape routes in the spring of 1782, large numbers of South Carolina slaves continued to escape white control in search of freedom. George Turnbull complained in September 1780 that work on the fortifications of Camden had been slowed by the slaves’ frequent desertions.338 The fugitives included field hands, artisans, and personal servants, some of the latter belonging to loyalist officers. Most were men, although many women and children also escaped. Some mingled with free blacks, slaves, and refugees in Charleston;

335 Borick, Gallant Defense, 101.
337 Samuel Massey to Henry Laurens, June 12, 1780, PHL, 15:305.
338 Turnbull to Cornwallis, Sept. 22, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/64, 102.
others sought passage to New York or went to rural areas. The risk of flight was so great that one man advertising thirty slaves for sale boasted that they had “never quitted the plantation or their work in the most alluring times.”

In an effort to stop blacks from fleeing, British officials made concessions to placate them. The board of police took the first step in June 1780, ruling in accordance with Clinton’s orders that slaves who had escaped from loyalist owners would be returned, but that they would not be punished. As the army grew more dependent on black labor, Balfour went a step further, issuing an order on February 9, 1781 that no slave “attached to any of the publick departments” could be returned to an owner without the slave’s “own, free consent.” Instead, the government would compensate the owners of slaves who refused to return, paying them one shilling six pence per day for skilled workers and eight pence for laborers. The British army would also feed and clothe these slaves. Even William Bull, who declared that blacks had become “ungovernable,” recognized that they could no longer be treated with the harshness practiced before the Revolution. He personally pardoned two slaves sentenced to death for robbery and suspended the death sentence of a free black convicted of burglary.

Some of the slaves who left the state were carried off by their masters in the weeks following Charleston’s surrender. Both John Lewis Gervais and Gov. Rutledge

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339 This information is compiled from advertisements for runaway slaves that appeared in the South Carolina Royal Gazette, South Carolina and American General Gazette, and Royal South Carolina Gazette from June 1780 to March 1782. The advertisement quoted appears in the South Carolina and American General Gazette, Dec. 13, 1780, microfilm, LOC.

340 Proclamation of Nisbet Balfour, Feb. 9, 1781, Royal South Carolina Gazette, Feb. 14, 1781, microfilm, LOC.

341 McCowen, British Occupation, 101, 103, 105.
attempted to send their slaves to North Carolina, but the evacuation was “Stopped ... by the Tories” and the slaves sent “back to our respective plantations,” Gervais stated.342

Among the reasons loyalists tried to prevent slaves from leaving the province was their desire to reclaim slaves previously confiscated by the Whigs, as well as to alleviate a shortage of labor on their own plantations. William Ancrum, manager of the Colleton estate at Wadboo, informed the family’s heirs in Britain that a shortage of slaves hindered his efforts to make the plantation profitable. The problem, he said, arose “from the desertion of the Negroes, which they have been too much encouraged to, by the smallpox spreading among them & their being under little or no Subjection to the Overseers.”343 Besides smallpox, a “malignant Fever” also broke out in July among blacks in and near Charleston. This disease, which James Simpson said did not appear to affect whites, killed blacks “in great numbers,” further worsening the labor shortage.344

Other loyalists simply wished to seize slaves for themselves. In Ninety Six district, Evan McLaurin reported that there were not enough slaves to work on the sequestered estates because loyalists who had acquired slaves belonging to abandoned rebel plantations “are encouraged to keep them by Persons now in Authority.” He advised Balfour to issue a proclamation that would “enable us to discharge our Duty ... without Irritating those friends who are as fond of Negroes as of the Laws – as the surest method of keeping the Negroes we have together – & of inducing the others to return.” McLaurin also asked Balfour for money to purchase clothing and tools for the slaves, since most of

342 John Lewis Gervais to Henry Laurens, July 6, 1780, PHL, 15:311-312.
343 William Ancrum to James Edward Colleton, July 14, 1780, Margaret Colleton Papers, SCL.
344 Simpson to Clinton, July 16, 1780, Carleton Papers, Vol. 24, No. 2915.
them received no pay for their labor. Unless the slaves' basic needs were met, McLaurin declared, "they may be so neglected that they run away."\textsuperscript{345}

While some loyalists thought themselves entitled to take slaves from rebels as a reward for their fealty, many Whigs took the oath of allegiance to Britain solely in hopes of regaining their slaves. In May, British troops seized thirty-seven slaves owned by John Lloyd, a rebel who had been captured and later released. Although he considered himself "a capital Sufferer by the British," Lloyd took protection so that he could initiate legal proceedings "to get back some of my Negroes."\textsuperscript{346} However, five months later Lloyd gave up all hope of recovering his slaves.\textsuperscript{347}

In rare cases, some South Carolinians preferred not to reclaim slaves for fear that service with the British army had ruined them. Charleston resident Peter Bounetheau owned a black named William, who was "very expert in blowing the French Horn." Maj. Charles Cochran of the British Legion, having heard of William’s talent, borrowed him "for the purpose of blowing a Horn on some particular occasion." However, Cochran did not return the slave as promised and instead William accompanied the Legion during its operations in the interior of the province, which culminated in Tarleton’s victory at the Waxhaws on May 29. When Cochran finally returned to Charleston, he told Bounetheau that William "was so serviceable to the Legion that he positively could not spare him" and offered to provide another slave in exchange for him. Bounetheau demurred, asserting that William was worth much more than a field hand. Bounetheau then accepted Cochran’s offer to purchase William for £100 sterling ($13,000), but Cochran left for England without paying. Finally, Bounetheau petitioned Cornwallis, requesting the

\textsuperscript{345} McLaurin to Balfour, Aug. 7, 1780, Emmet Collection No. 6589, NYPL.
\textsuperscript{346} John Lloyd to [Mark Harford, Jr.], Aug. 8, 1780, John Lloyd Letters.
\textsuperscript{347} John Lloyd to [Mark Harford, Jr.], Jan. 20, 1781, John Lloyd Letters.
promised payment and adding that he did not want William returned, "for as he has been now a long time engaged in a sphere widely different from that of a domestick Servant .... Your Memorialist is apprehensive he may be rendered unserviceable in that line."348

Bounetheau’s fears may have been justified, for many slaves turned against their masters. One man came to Camden and informed Rawdon that his master had been making suspicious excursions into the woods, which led to the capture of two rebel parties who had been stealing “Negroes & Horses belonging to the Army.” The slave must have enjoyed the twist of fate that placed his master “in Gaol; & in Irons.”349

Another slave, Boston King, left his master, found employment with the British army, and later wrote a memoir of his experiences. King’s owner hired him out to a man who abused him badly. On one occasion, the man beat King so violently that he could not work for two weeks; later, King “was beat and tortured most cruelly, and was laid up three weeks,” which led King’s owner to intervene to halt the abuse. Shortly after King recovered, his employer took him from Charleston to the country to avoid the approaching British army. Sometime after the town’s surrender, another slave took a horse King had borrowed from a white man. Since the horse’s owner “was a very bad man, and knew not how [to] shew mercy,” King did not dare confront him. “To escape his cruelty,” King wrote, “I determined to go to Charles Town, and throw myself into the hands of the English. They received me readily, and I began to feel the happiness, liberty, of which I knew nothing before.”

King encountered many difficulties in his new life, including loneliness and a bout with smallpox. The disease raged among the black refugees, killing at least two

348 Peter Bounetheau to Cornwallis, Aug. 3, 1780, Peter Bounetheau Papers, LOC.
349 Rawdon to Cornwallis, July 27, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 369.
thousand of them. To prevent their troops from becoming infected, the British moved all of the infected blacks to an open area a mile from their camp. “We lay sometimes a whole day without any thing to eat or drink,” King stated. But he soon met a soldier from the New York Volunteers with whom he was acquainted, and the man provided King with supplies until he recovered. The British then transported King and two dozen other black convalescents to Camden by wagon, where they were assigned to the New York Volunteers. King proudly referred to the unit as “our regiment.” When his benefactor was wounded in the battle of August 16, King repaid the soldier’s earlier kindness by tending him for six weeks. King then became the servant of a captain in the regiment.

One day King left camp to go fishing and returned to find his regiment gone and replaced by a few loyal militia. King was “greatly alarmed,” but the militia commander, a Captain Lewes, reassured him that he would soon rejoin his unit. Later, Lewes, hoping to gain a slave, asked King if he would accept him as his new master. King refused, whereupon Lewes declared that he had “been long enough in the English service” and was “determined to leave them.” The statement “roused my indignation,” King wrote, and acting on principles of loyalism stronger than those of Lewes, the former slave “spoke some sharp things to him.” Lewes threatened to put King in irons and whip him, so King decided to escape. The next day, Lewes sent King with a boy to get about fifty horses that the captain had stolen from the British garrison at Rocky Mount. Lewes left after the pair brought him the horses, giving King an opportunity to flee. He found his regiment the following day and informed his captain of Lewes’s actions; the British

dispatched a mounted force which recovered forty of the horses and burnt Lewes's house. King remained with the New York Volunteers for another year.\footnote{Boston King, \textit{Memoirs of Boston King}, \url{http://collections.ic.gc.ca/blackloyalists/documents}, July 30, 2001.}  

King's devoted service to the British and his courage in rebuking a white man indicated the extent to which the war had allowed blacks to challenge the boundaries of slavery. Another black or mulatto man who challenged these limits did so by leading his own band of loyalist partisans against the Whigs in northeastern South Carolina. Described only as "Gibson, a coloured man and his party of tories," his conduct, according to the rebels, was "shocking to humanity." Among the alleged atrocities they attributed to Gibson were the murder of a militia colonel and several other Whigs and the burning of houses.\footnote{James, \textit{Life of Marion}, 68.} But perhaps Gibson's biggest offense in their eyes was the fact that he was a black man who not only dared to use force against whites, but had gotten other whites to follow him in so doing.  

The valor of men like Gibson and King did nothing to change Cornwallis's poor opinion of blacks. The capture of twelve black soldiers, probably Continentals from the Maryland and Delaware regiments, at Camden on August 16 angered Balfour. He asked Cornwallis if it would "not be worth while, to convince Blacke that he must not fight against us - to sell them" into slavery.\footnote{Balfour to Cornwallis, Sept. 22, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/64, 96.} Cornwallis approved the proposal.\footnote{Cornwallis to Balfour, Sept. 27, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/80, 48A.} The earl also tried to keep blacks with the army under strict control; on September 27, he repeated orders, issued at an unspecified earlier date, "for Marking all Negroes belonging to the Army, with the Number of the Regt. or the Initial Letters of the Department that Employs them," probably in the form of a cloth badge. Cornwallis instructed his officers to inform...
all blacks that the Deputy Provost Marshal had orders “to take up, & flog out of the
Encampment all those who are not Mark’d agreeable to Orders,” and that those “found
quitting the Line of March in search of plunder” would be executed immediately.\footnote{355}

The situation of blacks in Georgia and East Florida changed little during this time.
Until the imminent surrender of Charleston forced the Whigs to abandon the lowcountry,
rebels occasionally plundered slaves from loyal Georgians’ plantations. In late March, for
example, Whig party attacked farms belonging to Gov. Wright south of the Ogeechee
River and carried off “as many of the negroes as they could.”\footnote{356} British officials may
have attempted to counter such raids by arming slaves, although the evidence is sketchy.
John Lewis Gervais heard a report that Whigs under Andrew Pickens “killed about 60
Negroes in Arms, & some white Men with them,” in an April battle five miles from
Savannah.\footnote{357} Wright did recognize the need to arm blacks to strengthen the weak forces
defending Georgia; in the fall he convinced the Assembly to pass legislation authorizing
him “to order out Negroes to construct such fortifications and works as may be thought
necessary for the security of the town or in any other parts of the province, also in case of
necessity to arm and employ Negroes for our defence.”\footnote{358} Unlike the Whigs, Georgia’s
loyalists accepted the risk of altering the slave system for the sake of their own security.

After taking command in Savannah, Alured Clarke was plagued by slave owners
from South Carolina seeking the return of their property. Former Whigs who had taken
British protection, these people claimed that they were thus entitled to reclaim their
slaves. The blacks objected, telling Clarke that their services “in the defence of Savannah,

\footnotesize{\footnote{356}Augustine Prevost to Clinton, March 30, 1780, \textit{RAM}, 2:107-108.}
\footnotesize{\footnote{357}John Lewis Gervais to Henry Laurens, April 28, 1780, \textit{PHL}, 15:287.}
\footnotesize{\footnote{358}Wright to Germain, Oct. 27, 1780, \textit{DAR}, 18:211.}
and on many other occasions,” along with “the apprehensions they are under of being treated with cruelty in consequence of it,” entitled them to remain with the British. Clarke referred the matter to Cornwallis, although he made his own sympathies clear. Whatever the merits of the masters’ arguments, Clarke wrote, “an attention to Justice, and good faith, must plead strongly in behalf of the Negroes.”

British officers in West Florida, faced with an even greater threat, did not hesitate to use slaves to assist in the defense of Mobile. At the town’s surrender on March 14, the Spanish counted fifty-five armed blacks among the prisoners.

The capture of Charleston had laid the foundation for the reestablishment of British control in South Carolina and Georgia. The loyalists’ response had fulfilled Germain’s expectations, thousands of slaves had flocked to the king’s troops, and the Indians had expressed willingness to attack the Whigs. Lincoln’s army no longer existed, and the defeat of Gates and Sumter in August had removed much of the remaining rebel opposition. If Cornwallis capitalized on these advantages, King George stood to retain at least two of his rebellious American provinces.

Unfortunately, Cornwallis squandered many of these advantages. He refused to use the Indians, thus giving the growing Whig partisan forces free rein to operate against the backcountry loyalists. He delayed the organization and training of the loyal militia because of his dislike of Ferguson, then failed to cooperate with Ferguson during the invasion of North Carolina, thus leaving the loyalists to be slaughtered at King’s Mountain. The defeat, along with constant Whig harassment, weakened loyalist morale.

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359 Alured Clarke to Cornwallis, July 10, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/2, 258.
and reduced the militia's effectiveness. And while the earl accepted the use of blacks in
noncombat roles with the army, he showed no inclination to tap the potential of slaves to
serve effectively as soldiers, which they had demonstrated during the siege of Savannah.

None of this boded well for Britain's ability to secure the southern provinces, nor
did the Spanish attack on West Florida. Nevertheless, the foundation for success, albeit
damaged, was still solid. The question was whether Cornwallis would repair and build
upon it or whether his future actions would result in its destruction.
CHAPTER VI
PRECIPICE

During the period from November 1780 to the end of June 1781, the outcome of the British effort to maintain control of South Carolina and Georgia hung in a precarious balance. Despite the demoralizing effects of Ferguson’s defeat and the cruelties inflicted upon the prisoners taken at King’s Mountain and other loyalists, many supporters of the British remained steadfast in their allegiance. The arrival of Gen. Nathanael Greene to replace Horatio Gates as commander of the American southern army, the destruction of a loyalist party at Hammond’s Store in late December, and Daniel Morgan’s victory over Banastre Tarleton at Cowpens the following month inspired the Whigs. But Morgan’s and Greene’s subsequent retreat across North Carolina with Cornwallis in close pursuit shifted the situation in favor of the British. Many Whigs and neutrals, believing the rebel cause to be lost, took British protection; meanwhile some dispirited Whig partisans left the field entirely or prepared to abandon the fight in South Carolina and withdraw northward to unite with Greene.

But with Cornwallis and his army far to the north and the British and loyalist troops in South Carolina and Georgia generally tied to fixed positions, some rebels took advantage of the opportunity to raid throughout the countryside. Lord Rawdon, who held the field command in Cornwallis’s absence, skillfully employed detachments to keep the rebels in check, while the apparent successes of Cornwallis, first in driving Greene into Virginia and then defeating him at Guilford Court House, North Carolina, in mid-March,
seemed to promise ultimate British success. Yet continued rebel activity demonstrated that the loyalists were still not secure and took a steady toll of the militia. The situation, though fluid, remained precarious for both of the contending parties – whichever side received significant assistance first was likely to gain the upper hand.

In late April, the balance began to tilt in the Whigs’ favor. Cornwallis had withdrawn his troops, who were exhausted from endless marching, lack of supplies, and heavy losses at Guilford Court House, to Wilmington, North Carolina. While the earl pondered his next move, Greene marched his army back to South Carolina. Cornwallis rejected the options of pursuing Greene on land or bringing his troops back to South Carolina by sea; instead, he chose to march into Virginia and unite his depleted command with British forces operating in the Chesapeake. Greene’s return, Cornwallis’s departure, and the realization that the lightning British march through North Carolina had been little more than a dazzling show that had brought the royal cause no substantial benefit, revitalized the rebels. Greene threatened the key British position at Camden, while Whig raiders, inspired by the hope of victory, struck at the posts that guarded the town’s communications with Charleston.

Rawdon fought back capably, defeating Greene at Hobkirk’s Hill on April 26, but he was unable to prevent the Americans escaping with their army intact. The only way Rawdon could create a mobile force strong enough to pursue Greene and destroy the Continental Army was by stripping the British posts of troops, which would then leave those positions vulnerable to partisan attacks. The army might then be cut off from supplies and reinforcements. Rawdon had no alternative except to abandon the interior of South Carolina and Georgia and try to defend a more compact position closer to the
coast. Loyalists wishing to relocate within the shrunken boundaries of British-held
territory had to accompany the troops in their retreat. Those who decided to remain at
home would have to make their own peace with the rebels. Even John Harris Cruger’s
valiant defense of Ninety Six in June did not prevent the evacuation of the town, while
Augusta fell to Whig forces. The loss of the backcountry cut off direct communication
with the Indians, who had remained relatively inactive except in West Florida, where
they fought stoutly in the unsuccessful defense of Pensacola. Blacks continued to support
the British with labor and information, but still constituted an underutilized resource. By
the autumn of 1781, control of the southern backcountry, and with it the balance of power
in the Deep South, had shifted decisively in favor of the Whigs.

Loyalist Persistence

Despite the disaster at King’s Mountain, the subsequent suffering of the prisoners,
and the demoralizing effects of Cornwallis’s retreat from Charlotte, many loyalists
persisted in supporting the royal cause. With the army in winter quarters at Winnsboro,
British officers relied upon the militia to secure most of South Carolina. Balfour assigned
two militia regiments to guard the line of communication between Charleston and
Camden in late October. He considered the units’ combined strength of about four
hundred men inadequate, “but we must do the best we can With them,” he wrote.¹
Balfour doubted that these men were capable of performing strenuous duty, but believed
that they “will surely be enough to guard ferrys, which is the most easy of all services.”²

In the northeastern part of the province, Francis Marion continued his efforts to
destroy the loyal militia. He attacked a party of loyalists near Georgetown in mid-

¹ Balfour to Capt. Blucke, Oct. 25, 1780, John Saunders Papers, HCIL.
² Balfour to Blucke, Oct. 31, 1780, Saunders Papers, HCIL.
October, killing a Lieutenant Evans and mortally wounding a Captain Garner, who Marion described as “the most active persons against us & the head of all the torrys on the Lower part of Peedee.” The Whigs then raided Georgetown, where Colonel Cassells with seventy militiamen occupied a redoubt and refused to surrender. Marion withdrew after paroling several prisoners and noted with satisfaction that most of the loyalists in the region had moved across the Santee River in search of greater security. But Marion’s gains were partially offset by the defection of one of his officers to the British; Col. John Ervin had assumed command of several loyalists and was busily engaged burning the homes of Whigs. Nevertheless, Marion’s success attracted more followers, increasing his force from seventy to two hundred men within a month.

Balfour responded by ordering Col. Samuel Tynes to embody his militia at the High Hills of Santee. Tynes assembled between 150 and 200 men and posted them at Tearcoat Swamp, where he felt so secure that he neglected to station guards around his camp. Marion’s slightly smaller force attacked the loyalists on the night of October 25, achieving complete surprise. The loyalists fled without offering significant resistance. Tynes escaped but was captured shortly afterward. Six of his men were killed, 14 wounded, and 23 captured. The Whigs also seized 80 horses and a large quantity of arms. Many of the demoralized survivors joined Marion’s force.

British officers realized that immediate action had to be taken against Marion and the Whig bands who followed in his wake exacting vengeance. The cruelties of the latter so angered Balfour that he told the commander at Georgetown to look for “an Opportunity of retaliating, upon those Scoundrels, who hang our Friends so freely.”

2 Marion to Gates, Oct. 15, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 12.
3 Marion to Gates, Nov. 4, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 12.
4 Marion to Gates, Oct. 15, 1780; Nov. 4, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 12.
Balfour hoped to capture some of these people “to make an immediate example of before their Eyes.” Cornwallis was just as angry: “Colonel Marion had so wrought on the minds of the people, partly by the terror of his threats and cruelty of his punishments, and partly by the promise of plunder, that there was scarcely an inhabitant between the Santee and Pedee, that was not in arms against us.” The earl ordered Tarleton to take his cavalry and suppress the rebels.

Marion planned to greet Tarleton with a surprise attack, but found the British too well posted. Tarleton moved through the area burning homes and crops; Marion noted that “he spares neither Whig nor Tory.” The partisan leader had no choice but to retreat, since his men were “in great Dread of Tarleton’s Horse” and many refused to turn out.

Tarleton’s presence had the opposite effect on the loyalists. Although Cornwallis recalled him to deal with Sumter before Tarleton had an opportunity to bring Marion to battle, the Legion commander found that his operations “had taken very desirable effect.” At Singleton’s Mills on November 12, the “militia flocked to Lieutenant-colonel Tarleton, and assured him of their friendly dispositions, which they durst not manifest before Marion’s retreat.” Loyalists emerged from their refuges in the swamps and offered Tarleton their services. Unable to provide material assistance, he encouraged them to persevere. Col. Tynes, who had recently escaped from rebel custody, also began assembling his militia to cooperate with another British force in the area.

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6 Balfour to Blucke, Oct. 31, 1780, Saunders Papers, HCIL.  
8 Marion to Gates, Nov. 9, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 12.  
9 Tarleton, History of the Campaigns, 174.  
10 Tarleton to Cornwallis, Nov. 11, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4/96; Tarleton, History of the Campaigns, 174; Marion to Gates, Dec. 6, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 13.
After Tarleton withdrew, Marion planned another attack on Georgetown, but was thwarted by the arrival of “two hundred Torrys under the Command of Captns. Barefield & James Lewis.” The rebels and loyalists skirmished, with some losses on each side. In one encounter, Barefield’s men captured Marion’s nephew, Gabriel Marion. A loyalist killed the prisoner upon learning his identity. The next day, some Whigs captured a loyalist mulatto named Sweat and executed him, believing that it was he who had killed Gabriel Marion. But the rebels soon left the area when they realized that no support from the Continental army was forthcoming. “Many of my people has Left me & gone over to the Enemy,” Francis Marion told Gates in late November, “for they think that we have no Army coming on & have been Deceived, as we hear nothing from You.” Marion added that unless he received support from the army or other militia units, “the Enemy will have the Intire Command of the Country on the North of Pedee.”

The invigorated loyalists acted to realize Marion’s fears. Colonel Tynes and several of his officers joined a small British detachment and Tynes promised to assemble 150 men to secure the High Hills of Santee. James Cassells promised to bring his militia back into action, while three hundred militiamen from Orangeburgh and Pedee took the field against the Whigs. By the end of November, Tynes assured British officers that “he could keep matters quiet with his Militia” in the region.

With Tarleton’s help, the loyalists in the northeastern part of the province had withstood the Whig attacks, but their counterparts in the backcountry also faced severe pressure. Cornwallis took prompt steps after Ferguson’s defeat to strengthen the militia in

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11 Bass, Swamp Fox, 89-90.
12 Marion to Gates, Nov. 21, 1780, Gates Papers, Reel 12.
14 Rawdon to Cornwallis, Nov. 27, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 215.
Ninety Six district, asserting that they needed "considerable Encouragement." He
confided to Balfour that "should the Militia of this Country absolutely refuse to Serve,
the Consequences would indeed be fatal." As an incentive, Cornwallis ordered that three
months back pay be given to those militiamen who "have been in Constant Service." He
also sought a competent commander for them and considered appointing Robert
Cunningham, "who by all Accounts is the most popular Man amongst them."\(^{15}\) Since
Cunningham had decided a few days earlier to abandon his attempt to recruit a provincial
battalion, Cornwallis sought some way to take advantage of his influence with the people.
Cornwallis also believed that the militia would be more effective if it was supported by a
force of provincial cavalry and assigned James Dunlap to raise and command the unit.\(^{16}\)
The earl hoped that a revitalized force might be able to "strike some blow" at the Whigs
to avenge the loyalists "who have been everywhere seized and most cruelly treated."\(^ {17}\)

Moses Kirkland agreed, asserting that "Without giving the Rebells a Suden
Check" the backcountry militia would not recover their confidence. Kirkland had 115
reliable men in his regiment, he reported, but confessed that they were still frightened and
demoralized after King's Mountain.\(^ {18}\) Two days later, having received accounts that the
rebels planned to attack Ninety Six district, Kirkland stated that most loyalists "think it
Needless making any resistance, and the Greater part incline to be hiding in Swamps,"
while others intended to make peace with the Whigs.\(^ {19}\)

\(^{15}\) Cornwallis to Balfour, Nov. 4, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/82, 6.
\(^{16}\) Cornwallis to Balfour, Nov. 1, 1780, Cornwallis to Cruger, Nov. 4, 1780, Cornwallis to Balfour, Nov.
16, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/82, 1, 8, 48.
\(^{17}\) Cornwallis to Tarleton, Nov. 8, 1780, Cornwallis Correspondence, 65.
\(^{18}\) Kirkland to Cornwallis, Nov. 8, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 67.
\(^{19}\) Kirkland to Cornwallis, Nov. 10, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 82.
These pessimistic assessments convinced Balfour that militia was useless. He suggested that if Cunningham would not attempt to raise a provincial corps, Evan McLaurin should be allowed to try. “The idea of militia, being of consequence, or use, as a military force – I own I have now totally given up,” Balfour told Cornwallis. However, Balfour hoped that Cunningham might be able to make the militia more effective, just as Ballingall had done with his regiment. Balfour also urged Cornwallis to find a role for Robert Gray, who “seemes to me, by much the best Militia man I have seen” and “would yet make something” of the militia.  

While Cornwallis struggled to restore the militia’s effectiveness, Sumter’s partisans and smaller groups of Whigs took advantage of the situation by terrorizing the loyalists. Sumter’s foray into Ninety Six district, Cornwallis wrote, resulted in “our friends terrified beyond expression either flying down the Country or submitting tamely to the insults & Cruelties of the enemy.” In the northwestern part of the province, a group of rebels led by William Kennedy, all of whom lived in the woods for fear that they would be captured if they remained at home, waged a brutal campaign against local loyalists. Kennedy was reputed to be so violent that each time someone heard him fire his rifle, they would proclaim “there is one tory less.” In one encounter with his loyalist opponents, Kennedy killed a fleeing man with a rifle shot at 140 yards. “More than half the party of tories were killed” in that skirmish, “not one taken prisoner – for that occured but seldom, the rifle usually saved us that trouble,” a Whig observed. On another occasion, Kennedy was among a party that captured several loyalists, among them a man accused of killing one of Kennedy’s friends. Kennedy and his followers wished to hang

\[\text{Footnotes:} \]

20 Balfour to Cornwallis, Nov. 5, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 27.
21 Bass, Gamecock, 102.
22 Cornwallis to Balfour, Nov. 17, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/82, 55.
the man, but an officer insisted that the loyalist be given a trial first. The captive was sent under guard to a nearby rebel camp, only to find that Kennedy was one of his escorts. The loyalist protested that Kennedy would kill him on the way, a prophecy that was fulfilled when the loyalist allegedly tried to escape and Kennedy shot him down.\(^{23}\)

The militia’s inability to defeat the raiders cost them Cornwallis’s sympathy, as it had Balfour’s. “The Accounts I receive ... of the Supineness and pusillanimity of our Militia takes off all my Compassion for their Sufferings,” he wrote; “if they will allow themselves to be plundered & their families ruined by a Banditti, not a third of their numbers, there is no possibility of our protecting them.”\(^{24}\) He denounced the loyalists as “dastardly and pusillanimous” in a letter to Gen. Alexander Leslie, who had brought a British detachment from Chesapeake Bay to reinforce the army in South Carolina.\(^{25}\) The earl decided to accept Balfour’s advice and authorized McLaurin to begin recruiting a provincial corps as a substitute for the militia.\(^{26}\)

Meanwhile, Cornwallis dispatched Maj. Wemyss and 250 British regulars to drive Sumter from the backcountry. A rapid march enabled Wemyss to reach Sumter’s camp at Fishdam Ford undetected in the early morning hours of November 9. Wemyss ordered an immediate attack, which drove off the rebels, but they regrouped and began firing into the British from the darkness. Wemyss was wounded and in the confusion that followed his troops withdrew. Both sides claimed victory.\(^{27}\) Sumter, however, resumed his attacks on loyalists after the battle, creating “the utmost horror” in the backcountry, so that “all the

\(^{23}\) Daniel Wallace, “Incidents of the Revolution in Union York & Spartanburgh Districts,” undated manuscript, South Carolina Box, NYPL.

\(^{24}\) Cornwallis to Cruger, Nov. 11, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/82, 24.

\(^{25}\) Cornwallis to Leslie, Nov. 12, 1780, *Cornwallis Correspondence*, 69.

\(^{26}\) Cornwallis to Balfour, Nov. 16, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/82, 46.

\(^{27}\) Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 126; Cornwallis to Kirkland, Nov. 11, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/82, 28.
loyal Subjects instead of thinking of self defence are running as fast as possible to Congarees." The panic caused Cruger to join the list of officers who had lost confidence in the militia. "A few of the Inhabitants on Long Cane have been plunderd many more deserved it for their pusilanimous behaviour," he wrote, noting that "about forty to fifty rebels frighten’d the whole regiment, two or three Loyalists are kill’d, & many disarm’d. I think I shall never again look to the Militia for the least support." 

This forced Cornwallis to order Tarleton to suspend his operations against Marion and move against Sumter instead. Tarleton set about the task with his usual energy, pursuing the Whigs and catching them at Blackstock’s on November 20. Another confused battle followed as the rebels attacked Tarleton’s advance guard, other British troops counterattacked without orders, and Tarleton had to lead a cavalry charge to extricate his outnumbered infantry. The battle ended in a draw, but Sumter suffered a severe wound and withdrew afterwards, so that calm was restored in the backcountry.

Cornwallis hoped that Tarleton’s success “will give our friends more Spirit” and his wish was granted. Two days after the battle, Cunningham reported to Cornwallis’s headquarters at Winnsboro, “full of Zeal,” and accepted a commission as brigadier general commanding the backcountry militia. The earl had again reversed himself and decided that the militia in Ninety Six district were the only militia in the province “on which ... we could place the smallest dependence,” but they had been “so totally

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28 Cornwallis to Rawdon, Nov. 13, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/82, 38.
29 Cruger to Cornwallis, Nov. 23, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 181.
30 Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 126-127; Cornwallis to Balfour, Nov. 22, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/82, 81.
31 Cornwallis to Rawdon, Nov. 20, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/82, 71.
32 Cornwallis to Balfour, Nov. 22, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/82, 81.
disheartened since the defeat of Ferguson that, of that whole district, we could with difficulty assemble 100.”

Cunningham made rapid strides in restoring the militia’s morale. About one hundred militiamen joined provincial troops in suppressing the Whigs in Long Canes district and remained behind to secure the area. In December, Cunningham’s brigade mustered a greatly increased strength of 91 officers and 464 men, although many lacked arms. Among them were several veteran officers and men who had been captured by Sumter and escaped during the chaotic November battles. Cunningham’s promotion did cost the militia one officer – Moses Kirkland, who felt he had been slighted and refused to serve any longer.

Cornwallis ordered Tarleton to position his troops near Ninety Six to prevent Whig interference with Cunningham’s efforts. The earl asked Cruger to send “as many of the Militia as possible” to serve with Tarleton. “If any body can put spirit into them he will,” Cornwallis wrote. The loyalists soon felt confident enough to retaliate against the Whigs; “a strong Party of Tories” plundered rebel settlements along the Pacolet River in early December.

Largely through Tarleton’s efforts, the British had restored a degree of control in the backcountry as well as in northeastern South Carolina. However, loyalists in the Camden area did not fare so well, despite the presence of a strong British post in the town. In early November, the militia destroyed much of their remaining credibility with

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36 Cornwallis to Cruger, Nov. 25, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/82, 101.
37 Thomas Brandon to Thomas Sumter, Dec. 4, 1780, Sumter Papers, Vol. 1, LOC.
the British when twelve men allowed themselves to be overpowered by sixteen rebel prisoners, with created new suspicions of treachery among Cornwallis's officers. At the same time, Whig harassment grew so severe in the vicinity of Lynch's Creek and the Waxhaws that many loyalists there prepared to move to Camden for greater security. Whig officers learned of the plan in early November and dispatched some mounted militia to seize the loyalists' property and use it to supply the American troops. Rawdon showed little sympathy for the loyalists' plight, sarcastically noting that "at least a dozen terrified Militia Men" had come to Camden, fleeing from a battalion of North Carolina provincials that one of Rawdon's officers had dispatched to drive off the rebels.

Rawdon devised his own plan to make the Camden district loyalists more effective by forming "a kind of Fencible Regiment," which would be more professional than the militia but not have to perform the long-term duty required of provincials. He intended to form several companies of thirty men each, all volunteers, who would enlist for six months to serve within their home district. The men would be paid for their services, and Rawdon named loyalists Isham Moore and Henry Richbourg as ideally qualified to command the unit.

While Rawdon waited for Cornwallis's reply to this proposal, the some parties of loyalists marched to Lynch's and Cane Creeks to intercept rebel supply wagons and gather provisions. William Smallwood dispatched Gen. Daniel Morgan with five hundred infantry and Col. William Washington's one hundred cavalry to protect rebel supplies.

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38 Turnbull to Cornwallis, Nov. 5, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 25; William Smallwood to Morgan, Nov. 3, 1780, Theodorus Bailey Myers Collection, No. 1022, microfilm, DLAR.
39 Rawdon to Cornwallis, Nov. 19, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 234.
40 Rawdon to Cornwallis, Dec. 8, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 291.
41 Plan for a Corps of Volunteers, [Dec. 8, 1780]; Rawdon to Cornwallis, Dec. 9 and 18, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 294, 298, 355.
and attack the loyalists if possible. This force forced the loyalists to fall back, and
Washington then moved against a strong force of militia at Col. Henry Rugeley’s
plantation north of Camden.42

Ignoring Rawdon’s order to withdraw to Camden, on November 28 Rugeley
placed his men in a fortified building and prepared to resist the Whigs, since reports
indicated that they had no artillery. But Washington mounted a pine log on a wheeled
carriage, and in the darkness deceived Rugeley into thinking the contraption was a
cannon. Washington then demanded Rugeley’s surrender, and the loyalist colonel
reluctantly capitulated; he and over one hundred militiamen were taken prisoner.43
Rugeley was perhaps more intimidated by the Whigs’ threat to put all the defenders “to
immediate death if they did not give up” than he was by the spurious cannon.44

Some rebel militia officers wished to exact vengeance against three of the
prisoners taken at Rugeley’s, whom they described as “Notorious Offenders.” Fortunately
for the captives, Continental officers intervened to prevent any abuse, asserting that the
men were prisoners of war and could not be put on trial for treason.45

While the loyalists in the area surrounding Camden suffered most from the
Whigs, those living near the British army’s main encampment at Winnsboro enjoyed
more security because the rebels seldom ventured too close to so many regular troops.
Local people “peaceably supplied” abundant food for men and horses, and the position
was so secure that Cornwallis dispersed his sick soldiers to nearby plantations to

42 William Smallwood to Nathanael Greene, Dec. 6, 1780, PNG, 6:538-539.
Regiment of the Continental Line,” Papers of the Historical Society of Delaware, Vol. 56 (Wilmington:
Historical Society of Delaware, 1910), 12-13; Stephen E. Haller, William Washington, Cavalryman of the
Revolution (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 2001), 68; Cornwallis to Rawdon, Dec. 2, 1780, Cornwallis
Papers, PRO 30/11/83, 3; Rawdon to Cornwallis, Dec. 1, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 261.
44 Seymour, Journal of the Southern Expedition, 10.
The earl himself became ill, and Rawdon, who assumed temporary command of the army, received a steady flow of intelligence from loyalists that enabled him to monitor rebel activities. When a dependable spy found it too dangerous to go into the rebel camp because too many people there knew him, he sent his niece to obtain information. When rebel plunderers captured loyalist David George and two wagons bound for the British army, George took the opportunity to observe the rebel army and upon his release sent the British a report of its strength and position.

Cornwallis's army might not have even reached Winnsboro without loyalist assistance. During the retreat from Charlotte, "only the exertions of the loyalist militia kept the army wagons moving." Yet instead of appreciating the efforts of the men who wrestled heavily-laden wagons through mud and across rain-swollen streams, British officers frequently abused the loyalists. "In return for their exertions, the militia were maltreated, by abusive language, and even beaten by some officers in the quarter-master general's department," wrote Pennsylvania loyalist and commissary of captures Charles Stedman. He reported that "several of them left the army" in response to such treatment and cast their lot with the rebels.

Like his officers, Cornwallis refused to recognize the loyalists' contributions. Instead, he maintained that they were not doing enough to help him, complaining that "the friends hereabouts are so timid & so stupid that I can get no intelligence." He was exaggerating; David George provided him with another fairly accurate report of rebel strength, positions, and intentions on December 30, and other loyalists also sent a steady

46 Tarleton, History of the Campaigns, 184.
47 Rawdon to Cornwallis, Dec. 3, 1780; David George to Cornwallis, Dec. 11, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/66, 25, 33.
48 Wickwire and Wickwire, Cornwallis, 233.
49 Cornwallis to Tarleton, Dec. 18, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/83, 55.
stream of information to headquarters. Cornwallis also rejected a request to supply muskets to the militia. “I have lost so many Arms by the Militia that I am much afraid of trusting them,” he wrote to explain his decision.

Cornwallis’s criticism notwithstanding, the loyalists had begun to recover and to hold their own against the Whigs. Even Rugeley’s defeat resulted from the colonel’s determination to make a stand against a far superior force. The backcountry militia fought well in a battle on December 12 against Elijah Clarke’s four hundred rebels. Lt. Col. Isaac Allen led 150 provincials and 250 militia from Ninety Six, caught Clarke at Long Cane, and routed the Whigs. A month later, Ballingall’s militia dispersed rebel partisans who had been harassing British posts and loyalists southwest of Charleston.

John Rutledge, who received accurate intelligence from Whig sympathizers, calculated in early December that some 1,040 loyal militiamen were on duty at various posts in South Carolina, not including the militia in Charleston. Rutledge worried that Cornwallis would consolidate his hold on the province by sending “every disaffected person, out of the State with his family, & apply his property to publick use.” Thomas Jefferson was similarly pessimistic. “Georgia and South Carolina are annihilated, at least to us,” he told Maryland governor Thomas Sim Lee in mid-January.

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50 David George to Cornwallis, Dec. 30, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/66, 44. For a sampling of additional intelligence provided by loyalists, see also Rawdon to Cornwallis, Jan. 1, 1781 and Jan. 5, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/67, 3, 12; Rawdon to Cornwallis, Nov. 22, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 175. These are only a fraction of the references to loyalists’ intelligence reports in the collection.
52 H. Barry to Robert Ballingall, Jan. 18, 1781, Misc. Mss, SC7003/AT7003, Box 2, 154a, NYSL.
As Whigs began doubting their ability to regain the southern provinces, many Britons came to believe that the situation had finally shifted in their favor. Frederick Mackenzie, an officer in the New York garrison who had always doubted that the southern campaign could succeed, experienced a surge of optimism in December 1780. He and his fellow officers now had “the most sanguine hopes” that once Cornwallis took the offensive, the war would be brought to a quick end. “I do not see how the Rebellion can possibly exist much longer,” Mackenzie stated. George III was similarly hopeful. “The signal Successes which have attended the Progress of my Arms in the Provinces of Georgia and Carolina ... will, I trust, have important consequences in bringing the War to a happy conclusion,” he declared in an address to Parliament.

The improvement in the British and loyalists’ situation was only temporary, however. On December 2, Maj. Gen. Nathanael Greene arrived in Charlotte to supersede Horatio Gates as commander of the Continental army in the South. Seeking a location where he could better supply his troops and simultaneously threaten the British, Greene marched into South Carolina with most of his troops and camped at the Cheraws. He then dispatched Henry Lee’s Legion to cooperate with Marion. The remainder of his army, under Morgan, moved west to threaten Ninety Six.

Greene found the provisions he sought at the Cheraws, but he received little support from local Whigs, who “were naturally very hesitant to leave their homes to join the army even for a short period of service” because of the large number of loyalists in

56 Mackenzie, Diary, 2:447.
57 Valentine, Lord North, 2:238.
58 Pancake, This Destructive War, 128, 130-131.
"The people are two thirds Tories," an American officer asserted, and Greene himself soon concluded that his army was in the midst of a predominantly loyalist region. "This is really carrying on a war in the enemy's Country," he informed Alexander Hamilton. "For you cannot establish the most inconsiderable Magazine or convey the smallest quantity of Stores from one part to another without being obligd to detach guards for their security." Loyalists seized Greene's couriers so frequently that the general did not dare to express himself fully in his correspondence, and they threatened a mill Greene relied on to supply grain for his troops. Rawdon had "so many persons watching Greene, that I think he cannot make any movement without my receiving early notice of it."

The newfound aggressiveness of the loyalists around Greene's army impressed Robert Gray. Previously, he noted, the approach of rebel troops would send loyalists fleeing great distances or to the swamps to hide. As they recognized that they would have to rely on themselves rather than the British army for protection, however, they became bolder. Now the loyalists "kept hovering round" the Whig camp "in small parties, picked up stragglers & fired upon them from every swamp." Near Georgetown and along the Pedee River, they "cut to pieces" small rebel detachments, "killed their sentries," and otherwise harassed the enemy.

60 Ichabod Burnet to unnamed, Jan. 23, 1781, Ichabod Burnet Letter, SCL.
61 Greene to John Cox, Jan. 9, 1781, PNG, 7:82.
64 Rawdon to Cornwallis, Jan. 11, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/67, 14.
65 Gray, "Observations," 148-149.
Elsewhere the loyalists were equally active. The militia defeated a group of partisans at Long Canes in early December, and a few days later, when the Whigs attacked a camp of provincials and militia near Ninety Six, the king’s troops rallied and routed the rebels. The militia pursued the fleeing Whigs for two miles, taking about ten prisoners and capturing a large number of wagons and cattle. At least thirty rebels died in the battle. Isaac Allen praised the militia’s behavior, noting that they “have been with me in two excursions and behaved extremely well.” He told Cornwallis that he had “a good opinion of their Loyalty and Spirit.” In late January 1781, a Whig officer reported that many loyalists “have embodied within 30 Miles of Head Quarters and for two days have been so troublesome” that Greene had to detach two hundred troops to deal with them. Rebel major Frederick Kimball wrote that in the Camden district, loyalists frequently captured members of his militia, while Rawdon noted that on one occasion sixty loyal militiamen arrived at Camden and requested to be employed against the Whigs. Rawdon had 214 militiamen on duty at Camden on January 1, 1781, of whom 53 lacked arms. Morgan’s troops also found that they had entered a loyalist stronghold when they reached the Pacolet River. “With a few exceptions, the Men are all Tories & the Women all Whores,” one of Greene’s officers wrote.

Greene realized that he had to do everything possible to sustain the Whigs and check the loyalists, or many of the rebels’ lukewarm supporters would revert to neutrality.

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66 Cruger to Cornwallis, Dec. 9, 1780, Dec. 16, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 300, 335.
68 Ichabod Burnet to unnamed, Jan. 23, 1781, Ichabod Burnet Letter, SCL.
69 Frederick Kimball to Greene, Jan. 16, 1781, PNG, 7:135; Rawdon to Cornwallis, Dec. 29, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 419. State of the Troops ... at Camden, Jan. 1, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/103, 3.
70 Edward Giles to Otho Holland Williams, Dec. 29, 1780, Robert Gilmor, Jr. Papers, MHS.
or perhaps even take British protection.  "The enemy are now recruiting in all parts of
this state," he wrote, "and the command of gold, aided by the public distress and loyal
feeling, has been too successful in making one conquest the stepping-stone to another. At
present they are in possession of all the fertile and populous parts of South Carolina."72
Greene therefore instructed Marion to remain active so that "you may frighten the Tories
by these movements to desert the British and lay down their arms."73 Greene likewise
told Morgan that the latter's main objective would be to inspire the rebels and annoy the
enemy.74 Later, he advised Morgan that "the impudence of the tories who are collecting
in different quarters" indicated that the "enemy and the tories both will try to bring you
into disgrace if possible to prevent your influence upon the Militia especially the weak
and wavering."75

Emboldened by the presence of Continental troops, Whigs moved quickly to
suppress the loyalists with yet another campaign of terror. When rebel militia approached
the High Hills, all but twenty of Col. Tynes's militiamen fled from their post.
Abandoning his remaining troops, the "exceedingly frightened" Tynes took refuge in
Camden.76 A few miles south of the Ennoree River, fifty rebels attacked twenty-five
militiamen, seriously wounding four and capturing seven or eight.77 With the militia
unable to protect the loyalists, Greene's aide Lewis Morris, described the violence that
ensued: "The tories, who after the defeat of Genl Gates had a full range, are chased from
their homes, hunted thro' the woods and shot with as much indifference as you would a

71 Ward, Delaware Continentals, 367.
72 Greene to unnamed, Jan. 1-23, 1781, PNG, 7:176.
73 Greene to Marion, Dec. 24, 1780, PNG, 6:607.
74 Greene to Morgan, undated, Myers Collection, No. 867, microfilm, DLAR.
75 Greene to Morgan, Jan. 8, 1781, Myers Collection, No. 869, microfilm, DLAR.
76 Rawdon to Cornwallis, Dec. 8, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 291.
77 Major Archibald McArthur to Cornwallis, Dec. 16, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 339.
buck.” As a result, “they were daily returning to their allegiance and petitioning for protection.”

The carnage horrified Gen. Charles O’Hara, who had arrived in South Carolina in December 1780 with Leslie’s reinforcements, witnessed the effects of the Whigs’ brutality on the march to join Cornwallis. O’Hara wrote that the sights he saw “are beyond description wretched, every Misery which the bloodiest cruel War ever produced, we have constantly before Us .... the violence of the Passions of these People, are beyond every curb of Religion, and Humanity, they are unbounded, and every Hour exhibits, dreadful, wanton Mischiefs, Murders, and Violences of every kind.” O’Hara noted that many loyalists had been forced to flee to the vicinity of Charleston or to Georgia in search of safety. “Desolation and Ravage make rapid progress,” loyalist John Lloyd noted, “and notwithstanding every Military effort and attention, the Loyalists are frequently surprised, killed, taken, or plundered by the incursions of their Neighbours.”

No one was exempt; on the night of December 4, some Whigs found two loyalists ill with smallpox, “shot both the Sick Men in their Beds, tho’ they were incapable of making the least defence; & afterwards murdered the old Man of the House in the same Manner.”

Like O’Hara, Cornwallis was stunned, not only by the Whigs’ ruthlessness, but by their insistence that the British were responsible for the violence. “The accounts of the cruelty of those rascals is really shocking,” he told Rawdon, “and if it is capable of aggravation their impudent accusation of us makes it the more provoking.” In response
to a letter from Clinton in which the commander-in-chief informed the earl that George Washington had protested British acts of cruelty in the South, Cornwallis replied that although he had been "provoked by the horrid outrages and cruelties of the enemy in this district, I have always endeavoured to soften the horrors of war." Cornwallis noted that Gates and other rebel officers had acknowledged his humane treatment of captured and wounded Whig soldiers. This, he said, sharply contrasted with "the shocking tortures and inhuman Murders which are every day committed by the enemy, not only on those, who have taken part with us, but on many who refuse to join them."83

Robert Gray warned Cornwallis that if the Whigs were permitted to "continue this outrage it will be productive of the worst effects." The loyalists, Gray declared, "will lose all confidence if they find themselves doomed to the halter when captives, whilst the rebels" received humane treatment when taken prisoner. Gray noted that one of his best officers, a Captain Oates, had been promptly hanged after the rebels captured him. "Several others have met with the same fate while others have been subjected to rigorous corporal punishments," Gray added.84

The earl responded by writing Greene and threatening retaliation if the Whigs continued their ruthless behavior. "If Truth could be heard, the Feelings of Mankind would decide that in the Southern Provinces, the Rights of Humanity have been invaded by the Enemies of Great Britain," Cornwallis asserted. He pointed out that Whigs had altered some of his letters that they had intercepted to make it appear that he had endorsed a policy of brutality. This was untrue, Cornwallis declared, as "no man abhors Acts of Cruelty more than myself." However, if the rebels continued their savagery, he

83 Cornwallis to Clinton, Dec. 4, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/72, 65.
84 Gray to Cornwallis, Nov. 5, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 98.
warned that he would respond in kind. "The proving to the suffering Loyalists that I am in earnest to protect them, & to retaliate on their inhuman Oppressors, is a duty which I owe to my Country," Cornwallis stated. Greene did not respond.

Privately, Greene held both sides responsible for the situation. "There is nothing but murders and devastations in every quarter," he wrote. "The whole country is in danger of being laid waste by the Whigs and Torrys, who pursue each other with as much relentless fury as beasts of prey," Greene observed while at the Cheraws. "People between this and the Santee are frequently murdered as they ride along the road." But Greene did nothing to halt the savagery, probably because it worked to his advantage. He had noted that some loyalists "are now coming in, in many parts; being tired of such a wretched life."

Greene’s own troops soon demonstrated that they could match the militia in atrocious behavior. When Morgan began his westward movement, 250 Georgia loyalists under Col. Thomas Waters had begun attacking Whigs in the vicinity of Fair Forest Creek. According to some reports, the loyalists planned to fortify a house near the creek and "establish there a Magazine of provisions," but they retreated on learning of Morgan’s approach. Morgan ordered William Washington to pursue Waters with his cavalry and some mounted militia. On December 27, Washington encountered the loyalists at Hammond’s Store. Although in a strong position atop a hill, the loyalists broke and fled when Washington’s cavalry charged them. In the ensuing melee, 150

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85 Cornwallis to Greene, Dec. 27, 1780, PNG, 7:5-6.
88 Higginbotham, Daniel Morgan, 124.
89 Edward Giles to Otho Holland Williams, Dec. 29, 1780, Gilmor Papers, MHS.
90 Haller, William Washington, 80-81.

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loyalists were killed or wounded – “hacked to death or badly mutilated” – and forty captured, while the rebels did not suffer a single casualty. The death toll was exceedingly high given the fact that, as Morgan noted, the loyalists scattered at the start of the engagement “without making any Resistance.” The reason for the large number of loyalist dead was that the rebels murdered both fleeing men and those who tried to surrender. “Washingtons men had in remembrance Some of Mr. Tarltons former Acts and Acted accordingly,” Capt. John Davidson of the Maryland troops wrote, referring to the alleged massacre of Continental troops at the Waxhaws.

The day after the battle, the Whigs put one of the prisoners on trial. He was “found guilty of desertion to the enemy and piloting the Indians on our army, they making great havoc among them; upon which he was hanged on a tree the same day.” When or where this Indian attack occurred was not specified, but its description does not correspond to any actual events at that time.

Sixty loyalists managed to escape the slaughter and reached Fort William with news that Washington was in pursuit. The garrison then abandoned the post and fled to Ninety Six, which was only fifteen miles distant.

Morgan believed that Washington's victory had been “fatal to the disaffected. They have not been able to embody since,” he wrote on January 15. Greene, too, recognized the importance of the battle. “Nothing could have afforded me more pleasure than the successful attack of Lt Coll Washington, upon the Tories,” he told Morgan. “I

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91 Higginbotham, Daniel Morgan, 124.
92 Morgan to Greene, Dec. 31, 1780, PNG, 7:30.
93 John Davidson to Mordecai Gist, Jan. 10, 1781, Mordecai Gist Papers, MHS.
95 Ward, Delaware Continentals, 370; Treacy, Prelude to Yorktown, 77. Ward mistakenly calls the stream “Fairfort Creek.”
96 Morgan to Greene, Jan. 15, 1781, PNG, 7:127.
hope it will be attended with a happy influence upon both Whig & tory, to the reclaiming of one, and encouragement of the other."\(^9\)

Pondering how to capitalize on the victory, Morgan decided that it was essential to maintain his position. "To Retreat will be attended with the most fatal Consequences," he declared. "The Spirit which now begins to pervade the People, & call them into the Field will be destroyed – The Militia, who have already joined, will desert us, & it is not improbable, but a Regard to their own Safety will induce them to join the Enemy."\(^9\) But a few days later, with provisions growing scarce and hearing rumors that Tarleton was approaching, he decided to rejoin Greene and leave militia under Andrew Pickens and William Davidson to check the loyalists. Morgan hoped that Tarleton would ignore the rebel militia and focus his attention on the Continentals.\(^9\)

Cornwallis had indeed ordered Tarleton to pursue Morgan and drive the rebels from the backcountry. The earl planned to march northward with his own troops to prevent Morgan from reaching Greene’s army. After the two forces cut off and destroyed Morgan’s detachment, Cornwallis intended to deal with Greene.\(^10\)

Loyalists greatly facilitated Tarleton’s pursuit of Morgan. Capt. Alexander Chesney, who had been exchanged, arrived from Ninety Six about January 12 to guide the British troops. Tarleton sent Chesney to find Morgan’s force, and when this was done, the British commander sent several loyalists as spies into Morgan’s camp.\(^10\) Other valuable information came from a Whig militia colonel who had been captured by a

\(^9\) Greene to Morgan, Jan. 8, 1781, Myers Collection, No. 869, microfilm, DLAR.
\(^9\) Morgan to Greene, Jan. 4, 1781, Myers Collection, No. 944, microfilm, DLAR.
\(^9\) Higginbotham, Daniel Morgan, 129.
\(^10\) Pancake, This Destructive War, 132-133; Cornwallis to Tarleton, Jan. 3, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/84, 39.
\(^10\) Babits, Devil of a Whipping, 51; Chesney, Journal, 21; Tarleton, History of the Campaigns, 214.
At least fifty loyalists accompanied Tarleton’s detachment, serving as guides and messengers. While the British regulars rested on the night of January 16, loyalists searched for Morgan and brought Tarleton a steady stream of information. The next morning, when Tarleton encountered Morgan’s troops deployed for battle in a field locally known as the Cowpens, loyalists familiar with the area provided him with a detailed description of the terrain.

Believing that Cornwallis’s troops must now be coming up behind the rebels, Tarleton promptly attacked. British troops drove back Morgan’s soldiers, but broke ranks to pursue when they thought the Whigs were fleeing the field. However, Morgan rallied his men, counterattacked, and overwhelmed Tarleton’s force. The survivors and their commander escaped and rejoined Cornwallis.

Contrary to Tarleton’s assumption, the earl had been nowhere near the Cowpens. That was not the fault of the loyalists; Cornwallis noted that “the great assiduity of Phillips and his Militia” and wagons provided by loyal civilians had enabled his army to begin its march on schedule. Loyalist guides had also done an efficient job leading Leslie’s reinforcements forward. Cornwallis, however, had delayed his march without informing his subordinate.

Infuriated by news of Tarleton’s defeat, Cornwallis decided to pursue Morgan in hopes of retaking the British prisoners. Morgan, who was already retreating as fast as his

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103 J. B. O. Landrum, *Colonial and Revolutionary History of Upper South Carolina; embracing for the most part the primitive and colonial history of the territory comprising the original county of Spartanburg* (Greenville, SC: Shannon Printers, 1897), 289; Treacy, *Prelude to Yorktown*, 99; Babits, *Devil of a Whipping*, 53, 81; Higginbotham, *Daniel Morgan*, 135.
104 Pancake, *This Destructive War*, 135-138.
105 Cornwallis to Tarleton, Jan. 7, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/84, 29.
106 Cornwallis to Leslie, Jan. 14, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/84, 61; Babits, *Devil of a Whipping*, 133.
troops could march, linked up with Greene’s force, and the combined American army fled across North Carolina and into Virginia with Cornwallis in hot pursuit. The earl left Balfour in command of South Carolina, with Rawdon to exercise actual control of the troops in the field.\textsuperscript{107}

Unlike the defeat at King’s Mountain, the Battle of Cowpens did not demoralize most loyalists. Instead, Greene’s rapid flight and Cornwallis’s pursuit had the appearance of a British victory. Balfour noted that “the effects of Tarletons misfortunate action, were greatly counteracted & the country saw the decided superiority of our army – who in several skirmishes was successful to a great degree.”\textsuperscript{108} Loyalists therefore continued actively to support the British, while many Whigs believed their cause in the South had been lost beyond retrieval and accepted royal authority.

Some loyalists struck back at the Whigs on the night after the battle, killing Maj. James Dugan of the rebel militia, his brother, and two other men. Chesney gathered his own followers, who had scattered during the battle, and found Robert Cunningham encamped at Fair Forest. Despite Chesney’s urgent appeals for action, “we could not prevail on General Cunningham to use any exertions to embody his brigade of Militia.”\textsuperscript{109} This caused Balfour to consider reinforcing Ninety Six with more regulars, which would enable Cruger to operate more effectively against the rebels. Balfour believed that Cruger’s “being able to detach two hundred men on an emergency effectualy gains the assistance of the Militia who without the aid of troops ... are of no sort of use.”\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{107} Pancake, \textit{This Destructive War}, 157-161.
\textsuperscript{108} Balfour to Jeffery Amherst, March 28, 1781, Correspondence and Papers of Amherst, Microfilm, DLAR.
\textsuperscript{109} Chesney, \textit{Journal}, 22.
\textsuperscript{110} Balfour to Cornwallis, Feb. 2, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/70, No. 26.
The situation in the backcountry, however, was not as bad as Balfour feared. Some loyalists did consider theirs to be a “hopeless cause” after Cowpens and joined the rebels, but most persisted in the struggle.\footnote{O’Hara to the Duke of Grafton, April 20, 1781, in Rogers, ed., “Letters of Charles O’Hara,” 173.} A rebel militiaman declared that after Cowpens “it was now almost Fire & Faggot Between Whig & Tory, who were contending for the ascendancy” in a conflict that raged until late May.\footnote{Babits, \textit{Devil of a Whipping}, 138, 141.}

To many Whigs, including some of the most prominent men in the province, it was their cause that appeared hopeless and they took the oath to Britain. John Rutledge noted that the British “make a great Parade of Mr. [Arthur] Middleton, ’formerly Presidt of the Contl Congress,’ & old Mr. [Gabriel] Manigault having applied to be admitted as British Subjects, wch they have been – Indeed, I fear many will follow their Example.”\footnote{John Rutledge to SC Delegates in Congress, Dec. 8, 1780, in Barnwell, ed., “Letters of John Rutledge,” Part 2, \textit{SCHGM}, Vol. 18, No. 1, Jan. 1917, 44-45.}

Several did. On January 16, 1781, Balfour informed Germain that “many of the principal Inhabitants of the Province, & some who held the Chief Office under the late Rebel powers have reverted to their Loyalty & Declared their Allegiance to His Majesty’s Government.”\footnote{Balfour to Germain, Jan. 16, 1781, Alexander Leslie Letterbook, 1781-1782, microfilm, SCDAH.} Between February 16 and April 9, 1781, a further 210 men swore allegiance to Britain.\footnote{South Carolina Loyalists Oath of Allegiance, 1781, South Carolina Loyalists, South Carolina Box, NYPL.}

British officers took advantage of the promising situation to strengthen the militia and to create provincial cavalry units. Rawdon devised a new plan of “raising Militia Corps upon Pay, which I think will answer well.”\footnote{Rawdon to Cornwallis, Jan. 14, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/67, 20.} In Charleston the militia impressed
observers as being both smartly uniformed and "well disciplined."\textsuperscript{117} Officers in Camden district were busily enlisting men for two troops of dragoons. Stephen Jarvis, a Connecticut loyalist serving in the Queen's Rangers, use a generous enlistment bounty to recruit twenty-six men at Charleston. Maj. Thomas Fraser marched his South Carolina dragoons through Ninety Six district, enlisting several men who had previously served under Ferguson.\textsuperscript{118}

At the beginning of February, Cornwallis sent Rawdon a warning from North Carolina that this respite would not last long. "Some Georgia refugees & other Banditti are assembling at Gilbertown, & Sumpter is again in the field," the earl wrote.\textsuperscript{119} He was soon proved correct, as rebel partisans took advantage of the army's absence to launch a new campaign against loyalists and British posts. Moses Kirkland reported on February 22 that the roads in the Congarees region were "so Infested with small parties of the Rebells" that he had to cancel his intended journey to join Cornwallis.\textsuperscript{120} These were units from Sumter's command, which crossed the Congaree River a few days later to attack British supply lines and raise recruits. Sumter issued a proclamation promising pardon to loyalists who joined him and threatening anyone who refused. "To give weight to these threats," Rawdon wrote, "several persons known to be friendly towards us, were inhumanly murdered; tho' unarmed, & remaining peaceably at their own houses. Either thro' fear or inclination, many joined the Enemy." Rawdon added that "the savage cruelty

\textsuperscript{117} William Charles Wells to James Currie, March 18, 1781, "Letter from Wm. Charles Wells to Dr. James Currie," \textit{SCHGM}, Vol. 26, No. 1, Jan. 1925, 43.
\textsuperscript{119} Cornwallis to Rawdon, Feb. 4, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/85, 1.
\textsuperscript{120} Kirkland to Cornwallis, Feb. 22, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/67, 83.
of the Enemy, who commit the most wanton murders in cold blood, upon the Friends of Government," made it nearly impossible to hire couriers "at any price."\textsuperscript{121}

Dividing his forces into three detachments, Rawdon planned a concerted movement to trap Sumter. While these troops maneuvered, Sumter attacked and captured a wagon train. After the militia escort "laid down their arms," more of Sumter's men reached the scene, and complaining that "they had not discharged their pieces," opened fire and killed seven prisoners. British Lt. Col. John Watson, commanding one of Rawdon's columns, captured six of Sumter's men shortly afterward and retaliated in kind. Watson believed this was the only way to deal with the rebels after finding that so many people, "without arms, and taking side with neither contending party, but residing peaceably in their own houses, have been murdered."\textsuperscript{122}

The capture of the wagon train marked the limit of Sumter's success. Sumter decided to send his booty down the Santee River by boat and ordered loyalist Robert Livingston to pilot the little convoy. Livingston guided the boats directly under the guns of a riverside fort, enabling the British to recover the supplies and capture the rebel guards. The Whigs went on to attack a small post garrisoned by South Carolina provincials, only to be repulsed. Meanwhile, Rawdon's three columns converged on Sumter's force, but the commander of one British detachment disobeyed Rawdon's orders and changed his route of march, allowing the rebels to escape the trap. In his flight, Sumter encountered other British troops and the Whigs were dispersed with a loss of eighteen killed. On March 6, other South Carolina provincials defeated Sumter yet again, killing ten. By the end of the month, Rawdon was able to report that he had put an

\textsuperscript{121} Rawdon to Cornwallis, March 7, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/69, 7.
\textsuperscript{122} John Watson to Marion, March 9, 1781, in Gibbes, ed., \textit{Documentary History}, 3:34.
end to Sumter's threat, while simultaneously quelling Marion's activities with a surprise
attack that captured and destroyed the latter's base.\textsuperscript{123}

During the campaign the Whigs had continued to abuse loyalist prisoners,
prompting Balfour to protest to Marion. Noting that he had received continuous reports of
"the very ill treatment which such of the King's militia whose misfortune it is to be
captured by you are daily receiving," Balfour declared that he had no choice but "to put
in force retaliation of all severities imposed by any of your people on such prisoners of
war; and for this purpose, I have directed the militia to be separated from the continental
prisoners, that they may experience those hardships and ill usages in their full degree,
which too many of ours labor under." Nevertheless, Balfour stated that he would gladly
put an end to such policies as soon as he was assured that captured loyal militiamen were
humanely treated.\textsuperscript{124} Rawdon evidently did not bother waiting for dubious assurances; in
March, Marion accused him of having "hanged three men of my Brigade for supposed
Crimes" and vowed to retaliate against an equal number of British prisoners.\textsuperscript{125}

Marion also responded to a complaint from Watson by indicating that he hoped
the war could be fought according to civilized principles. Watson in turn asserted that if
Marion personally adhered to the laws of war, he must be "ignorant of numberless
transactions" carried out by the Whigs, such as the case of Thomas Wise of the loyal
militia, who had been "whipped almost to death" after being captured. Another prisoner,
Watson wrote, had handed over his pistol "and was instantly shot through the body with

\textsuperscript{123} Bass, \textit{Gamecock}, 130-131; Bass, \textit{Swamp Fox}, 156-157; Rawdon to Cornwallis, March 7, 1781; March
24, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/69, 7, 21.
\textsuperscript{124} Balfour to Francis Marion, March 2, 1781, in Gibbes, ed., \textit{Documentary History}, 3:27.
\textsuperscript{125} Marion to Balfour, March 7, 1781, Emmet Collection No. 6625, NYPL.
it,” then “cut through the skull in five or six places with his own sword.” He died two
days later.\(^{126}\)

Even Gen. William Moultrie, a prisoner since the fall of Charleston, was
sufficiently disturbed by Whig cruelties to join in the protests. After Balfour convinced
him that the rebels had murdered three loyalists, Moultrie wrote Marion that such actions
“cannot answer any good purpose,” and urged him to halt “such unwarrantable
practices,” which disgraced the rebel cause.\(^{127}\)

Although it was difficult for the British to identify the perpetrators of these
crimes, Sumter and his troops were apparently greater offenders than Marion and his
followers. Sumter believed that anyone who did not bear arms in the Whig cause should
be considered an enemy and “treated as their baseness and perfidy authorize.”\(^{128}\)

The most brutal of the Whigs, however, were the overmountain men, as they
again demonstrated by murdering a British officer. On March 23, Elijah Clarke with 180
rebels attacked a British and loyalist force only half as large near Ninety Six. Many of the
British and loyalist troops were killed in the American charge; the remainder took refuge
in nearby houses but soon surrendered. An estimated thirty British and loyalist soldiers
were killed, and forty captured, including their commander, James Dunlap.\(^{129}\) Not content
with this victory, some rebels “forced the Guard” escorting the prisoners and killed
Dunlap. Andrew Pickens, the Whig partisan leader, described the crime as an “inhuman
action.” He dispatched a flag of truce to Ninety Six to inform Cruger of the murder,
relating “with what horror and detestation American Officers looked on the act.” Pickens

\(^{127}\) Moultrie to Marion, April 16, 1781, in Gibbes, ed., *Documentary History*, 3:52.
\(^{128}\) Sumter to Marion, March 28, 1781, in Gibbes, ed., *Documentary History*, 3:45.
\(^{129}\) Benjamin Ford to Mordecai Gist, April 15, 1781, Gist Papers, MHS; Andrew Pickens to Nathanael
offered a $10,000 reward for the apprehension of the murderer, identified as "Cobb an
over Mountain Man." Yet at the same time Pickens tried to justify the crime as retribution
for the "many barbarous massacres" of Whig prisoners taken by loyalists.\textsuperscript{130} Despite
Pickens's obvious sincerity in repudiating Dunlap's murder, most Whigs seemed to have
approved of the crime, as the lucrative reward never led to Cobb's capture. The apparent
ease with which the murderers overpowered Dunlap's guards also hints at their possible
collusion with the killer.

Although the loyalists' determination and Rawdon's skillful operations against
the partisans had checked the Whigs' ruthless onslaught, events took a sudden and
decisive turn against the British at the end of April. After three months of marching and
fighting, Cornwallis withdrew his depleted army to Wilmington, North Carolina. While
the king's troops recuperated, Greene decided to ignore the British army and march his
Continents back to South Carolina. The 5,200 British, German, and provincial troops in
the province greatly outnumbered Greene's force, but the Whigs had two offsetting
advantages. First, the partisans augmented Greene's force by several thousand men, and
second, most of the British troops were tied to fixed posts to protect the communications
between Charleston and the interior. The only way Rawdon could assemble enough
troops to challenge Greene in the field was by weakening the numerous garrisons, which
would then be easy prey to the partisans.\textsuperscript{131}

Cornwallis proceeded to compound Rawdon's problems. Rather than follow
Greene, the earl decided to march to Virginia and unite his troops with the march larger

\textsuperscript{130} Pickens to Greene, April 4, 1781, in "Letters to Greene and Others," 102.
\textsuperscript{131} Pancake, \textit{This Destructive War}, 190; State of the Troops left in South Carolina under ...
Lord Rawdon, Jan. 15, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/103, 15. Most secondary sources give a total British strength
of 8000, but this detailed return gives a total of 5240 officers and men, including sick and wounded, in the
southern district.

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British force in the Chesapeake. Recognizing that this move endangered royal control of South Carolina, Cornwallis convinced himself that if he pursued Greene, he would still arrive too late to assist Rawdon, consoled himself by remarking that "if we are so unfortunate as to lose some of the Outposts and the Country of S. Carolina ... Charleston is not in danger."\textsuperscript{132} Capt. Johann Ewald believed that Cornwallis’s decision would prove fatal to the loyalists. “Why not operate out of one point and use all our force there to be the master of at least one province?” he asked. Ewald declared that the loyalists had been “constantly deceived” and now would be made “miserable” by being left without protection, “yet we still want to find friends in this country!”\textsuperscript{133}

Loyalists reacted in different ways to the news of Greene’s approach. Some fled to British posts for refuge; others hid in the swamps and woods to escape the rebels. The South Carolina Royalists brushed aside Whig partisans and marched from Ninety Six to Camden to reinforce Rawdon.\textsuperscript{134} Large numbers of militiamen likewise showed “great zeal and fidelity, in coming from considerable distances to offer their services” at Camden. Unfortunately, the supply of provisions there was so limited that Rawdon was unable “to benefit by their assistance, excepting only those whose particular situation exposed them to suffer from the enemy, and who were on that account received within the post.”\textsuperscript{135} Loyalists also kept Rawdon fully informed of Greene’s maneuvers.\textsuperscript{136}

Greene immediately concluded that aggressive action was required to prevent the loyalists from making a decisive contribution to the defense of South Carolina.\textsuperscript{137}

\textsuperscript{132} Cornwallis to Balfour, April 24, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/85, 49.
\textsuperscript{133} Ewald, \textit{Diary of the American War}, 299.
\textsuperscript{134} Thayer, \textit{Nathanael Greene}, 342.
\textsuperscript{135} Rawdon to Cornwallis, April 26, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/5, 262.
\textsuperscript{137} Thayer, \textit{Nathanael Greene}, 348.
of the Inhabitants appear in the Kings interest than in ours," He informed Samuel Huntington, president of the Continental Congress. Greene added that the rebel militia "can do little more than keep Tories in subjection, and in many places not that."138

Greene decided to take a position near Camden, where he could hold the British garrison in place while the partisans moved to suppress the loyalists and cut Rawdon's supply lines. In the northeastern part of the province, Marion, Henry Lee, and other Whigs attacked British posts, militia units, and individual loyalists. Micajah Ganey assembled the loyal militia at Drowning Creek to oppose them, but Whigs under Col. Abel Kolb dispersed Ganey's men and hanged a loyalist prisoner named Caleb Williams. Marion sent Col. Hugh Horry and seventy men to intercept a group of loyalists attempting to link up with Watson's regulars, who were operating in the area; instead the Whigs encountered a foraging party and killed two British soldiers and captured thirteen others, along with two loyalists and two blacks. A few days later, forty loyalists attacked Kolb's home, killing him and two other men in retaliation for the hanging of Williams.139 Rawdon dispatched 150 loyalist volunteers from Camden to relieve the pressure on Ganey and Watson by attacking the Waxhaws settlements. They burned buildings and killed several rebels, then eluded troops that Sumter sent to capture them. In reprisal, Sumter's men rampaged through loyalist settlements at Mobley's Meeting House and Sandy Run, "burning and killing."140 Rawdon showed his determination to punish such offenses by hanging "One Smith, for murdering a friend of Government."141

138 Greene to Samuel Huntington, April 22, 1781, PNG, 8:130.
139 Bass, Swamp Fox, 183; Marion to Greene, April 21, 1781; Thomas Wade to Greene, April 29, 1781, PNG, 8:129, 175.
140 Bass, Gamecock, 150-151.
141 Henry Nase, "Diary," April 14, 1781, Nase Family Papers, NBM.
Amidst this inconclusive fighting, Marion and Lee won a significant victory, capturing Fort Watson on the Santee River. The garrison of 130 British regulars and loyal militiamen held out for nearly a week, until the Whigs constructed a log tower that enabled them to fire into the fort.\textsuperscript{142} Among those who surrendered on April 23 were forty “principal torys” whose capture Lee hoped would demoralize other loyalists.\textsuperscript{143}

Whig operations in the backcountry also produced mixed results. When Andrew Pickens reached the Ennoree River with his militia, he found loyalist parties active in the area and said that if he had not arrived when he did, many disheartened rebels would have evacuated the area.\textsuperscript{144} Pickens attempted to attack various detachments of the loyal militia in the area, but all of them managed to elude him and reach Ninety Six. He then planned an attack on Cunningham’s militia, who were near the town, but two Whig parties blundered into each other and mistakenly opened fire, alerting Cunningham. The loyalists then withdrew.\textsuperscript{145}

Sumter had more success along the Broad River. On April 25 he reported that many loyalists in the vicinity appeared ready to give up the struggle and were “hiding out until they Know what terms may be offered.”\textsuperscript{146} To force them to submit, he sent rebel militia “through the Tory Settlements in Both forks” of the river to “Disperse parties of Tories that are Lying out,” although other loyalists were “embodying West of Saluda River.” He prepared to attack them, believing that the defeat of those loyalists would “leave all the Back Country open and Secoure, quite to 96.”\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{142} Pancake, \textit{This Destructive War}, 191-192.
\textsuperscript{143} Henry Lee to Greene, April 19, 1781, \textit{PNG}, 8:120-121.
\textsuperscript{144} Andrew Pickens to Nathanael Greene, April 8, 1781, \textit{PNG}, 8:71.
\textsuperscript{145} Pickens to Greene, May 3, 1781; Pickens to Greene, May 8, 1781, \textit{PNG}, 8:197, 223.
\textsuperscript{146} Sumter to Greene, April 25, 1781, \textit{PNG}, Vol. 8:150.
\textsuperscript{147} Sumter to Greene, April 27, 1781, \textit{PNG}, 8:164.
Whig attacks extended even into the lowcountry, where the partisans enjoyed some success despite the proximity of the Charleston garrison. "The enemy in partys of two & three hundred have over run all the country to the southward" of Charleston, Balfour wrote.\textsuperscript{148} He ordered British troops and the provincial cavalry to assemble at Dorchester, summon the militia, and then move against the rebels, but Whig Col. William Harden struck before this force was ready. Harden’s party captured a loyalist captain and twenty-five militiamen at Four Holes, and a day later killed four loyalists and captured three. The rebels then moved against Fort Balfour at Pocotaligo. After capturing militiaCols. Edward Fenwick and Nicholas Lechmere at a nearby house, Harden demanded the fort’s surrender, threatening that he would give the defenders no quarter if they resisted. Col. Fletcher Kelsall of the militia, who commanded the fort, capitulated; the Whigs took about one hundred prisoners. Other loyalists in the area fled to the swamps. Robert Ballingall arrived shortly afterward with 130 regulars and 40 militia and forced Harden to withdraw.\textsuperscript{149}

Greene’s plan to suppress the loyalists succeeded to a considerable extent.

William R. Davie, the army’s quartermaster general, noted that the Whigs had “overawed the Loyalists who were numerous” in the province.\textsuperscript{150} As always, Whig brutality had its effect. “We are astounded to hear of the most terrible cruelties, that are perpetrated on those who will not be false to the King again,” a Hessian officer wrote.\textsuperscript{151} Balfour noted that the Whigs “have adopted the System of murdering every Militia Officer of ours as

\textsuperscript{148} Balfour to Cornwallis, April 20, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/5, 231.
\textsuperscript{149} Balfour to McArthur, April 10, 1781, Leslie Letterbook, microfilm, SCDAH; William Harden to Marion, April 18, 1781, in Gibbes, ed., \textit{Documentary History}, 3:53-55.
\textsuperscript{151} Von der Malsburg to Knyphausen, April 29, 1781, “Hessian Military Reports and Accounts,” HDAR, Item Z.
well as every man (although unarmed) who is known to be a loyalist. the terror this mode of conduct has struck you will easily suppose," he told Cornwallis, "some immediate stop must be put to it, or the consequences will be very fatal."\textsuperscript{152}

Rawdon realized that if he did not take action, the partisans would sever his supply lines and force him to evacuate Camden, with devastating consequences for loyalist morale. Balfour had already recommended that the British abandon their posts in the interior and consolidate their forces east of the Santee River. Deciding that it would be better to decisively defeat Greene, Rawdon left Camden in the hands of the militia and some armed blacks and marched out to attack the Continentals on April 25. His force included the South Carolina Royalists as well as a many militiamen. Rawdon borrowed a favorite rebel tactic and positioned loyalist riflemen on the flanks of his army as snipers to harass Greene’s troops and pick off their officers. After a hard-fought battle, the British and loyalists drove Greene’s troops from their position on Hobkirk’s Hill. When Watson’s detachment arrived on May 7, Rawdon advanced again in an effort to inflict another defeat on the rebels, but Greene withdrew to avoid combat.\textsuperscript{153}

With Greene’s army still intact and British supply lines threatened by partisans, Rawdon felt he had no choice but to order the evacuation of Camden on May 9. His troops destroyed all the supplies they could not carry with them, leveled the fortifications, and “brought off not only the militia who had been with us at Camden, but also the well-affected neighbors on our route,” with their families, slaves, and possessions.\textsuperscript{154} Many of the loyalist refugees went to Charleston, where “they built themselves huts, without the

\textsuperscript{152} Balfour to Cornwallis, April 26, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/6, 29.
\textsuperscript{153} Balfour to Cornwallis, April 20, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/5, 231; Pancake, \textit{This Destructive War}, 195-200; Ward, \textit{Delaware Continentals}, 432.
\textsuperscript{154} Rawdon to Cornwallis, May 24, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/6, 106.
lines, which was called Rawdontown: many of these unfortunate women and children ... died for want, in those miserable huts.”

The evacuation of Camden left the backcountry isolated and Sumter quickly moved to strike the loyalists there. Some of his troops attacked a loyalist party at Bush River, killing three and capturing twelve. “The Tories are Very uneasee & Will Numbers of them Disert if oppertunity Serves,” Sumter wrote, noting that sixteen loyalists deserted from a British fort in one night. Others were “Coming in fast from the Country & Will in my opinnion Cheifly Give up if We Can hold our Ground a little longer.” When Sumter marched to the Congarees, he found that small loyalist parties were “Troublesom in different parts of the Country,” but their operations were little more than a nuisance and more than offset by the number of men in the area who joined the Whigs.

Cunningham struck back later in the month, sending some of his militia on a raid north of Ninety Six. They destroyed Wofford’s iron works along with other buildings and killed several rebels.

Although the loyalists were “very troublesom over Pee dee & Waccomaw” in early May, they lost any hope of direct British support when Balfour ordered the evacuation of Georgetown. The garrison withdrew on May 23, which, Marion asserted, prevented the loyalists “from destroying our friends.” Yet some loyalists continued to harass the Whigs around Georgetown, forcing Marion to dispatch troops in mid-June to suppress them.
The actions of a few such bands of hardy loyalists could not prevent the collapse of British control in the province. The surrender of the British post at Orangeburg on May 11, of Fort Motte near the confluence of the Wateree and Congaree Rivers on May 12, and of Fort Granby on the Congaree three days later smashed the British hold on the interior of South Carolina. One of Greene’s aides calculated the total of prisoners taken at the three posts to be 10 British officers and 205 men, and 22 loyalist officers and 375 men. The loss of manpower left the British too weak to even attempt to regain control of the lost territory.

With British forces confined to the vicinity of Charleston, Greene took his army to attack Ninety Six while Whigs and loyalists battled each other across much of the province. He could do nothing to stop the bloodshed, lamenting that “not a day passes but there are more or less who fall a sacrifice to this savage disposition. The Whigs seem determined to exterminate the Tories and the Tories the Whigs. Some thousands have fallen in this way in this quarter, and the evil rages with more violence than ever.” Greene feared that if “those private massacres” were not ended soon, “this Country will be depopulated ... as neither Whig nor Tory can live.” A Hessian officer reported that “mounted bands of rebels scour the whole neighborhood” on both sides of the Santee River, “drive the loyalists from their homes – which they destroy after carrying everything away – make all the roads insecure, and have murdered many people.”

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163 Greene to William Davies, May 23, 1781, PNG, 8:298.

164 Major General von Bose to Knyphausen, May 4, 1781, “Correspondence of Knyphausen,” HDAR, Item GG.
Balfour also deplored the cruelty, but like his Hessian colleague, he found the Whigs to be chiefly responsible for it. "The enemy have uniformly murdred in cold blood, all our Militia whom they have been able to get at," he wrote, noting that the surviving loyalists were terrified and did not dare turn out to support the British. Greene's march to Ninety Six, Balfour added, aroused his sympathy "for the miserable districts of Loyalists in the back country ... those poorer people who are indeed our only friends." 165 Cornwallis showed no concern whatsoever for the loyalists; he advised his subordinates to abandon both them and the backcountry. "The perpetual instances of the weakness and treachery of our friends in South Carolina, and the impossibility of getting any military assistance from them, makes the possession of any part of the country of very little use," he told Rawdon. 166 To insure adequate provisions for the Charleston garrison, Cornwallis suggested that Balfour might find it wise to "turn out of Town all parole Men & disaffected People, with their families & many Negroes, & to shut your Gates against many of the poor country people, & all Negroes." 167

Instead, Rawdon and Balfour sought to bolster loyalist morale by issuing a proclamation on May 24 in which they exhorted those in evacuated areas "to stand firm in their Duty and Principles" against "the insidious artifices" of the Whigs. They promised pardon to anyone who had "been force to join the Enemy, as the only Means of preserving themselves and their Families from the savage Cruelty of the Rebel Militia." Loyalists who came to British posts were promised "every Support." 168

165 Balfour to Cornwallis, May 21, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/6, 93.
166 Cornwallis to Rawdon, May 20, 1781, Cornwallis Correspondence, 98.
167 Cornwallis to Balfour, May 3, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/86, 1.
168 Proclamation of Rawdon and Balfour, May 24, 1781, South Carolina Royal Gazette, May 30-June 2, 1781, microfilm, LOC.
Rawdon and Balfour meant what they said and took steps to assist and protect the loyalists. Balfour, aided by generous donations from lowcountry loyalists totaling nearly three thousand guineas ($400,000), created a force of provincial cavalry from the South Carolina Royalists and new volunteers to counter the rebels’ raids. In May, Alexander Chesney, who had abandoned his backcountry home after Cowpens, took three newly raised companies to Dorchester, where a soldier noted that the majority of people remained loyal. Chesney’s troops were assigned to protect sequestered plantations that supplied Charleston. Balfour also ordered loyalist Alexander Stewart to create an independent company on James Island.169

Even more important than these measures was the arrival at Charleston on June 3 of three British regiments with a combined strength of over three thousand rank and file. The reinforcement enabled Rawdon to take his own troops, along with the newly arrived grenadier and light infantry companies, and march to the relief of Ninety Six. Rawdon set out on June 7, and Balfour sent loyalist messengers ahead of the troops to inform the garrison that relief was on the way.170

Greene’s army had been skirmishing with loyalists throughout its march to Ninety Six. After reaching the Wateree River, Otho Holland Williams observed that “we are now farther advanc’d into South Carolina, and particularly that part which is most attach’d to the Kings interest.”171 On May 21, the American advance guard “killed about twelve Tories,” while the main body of Continentals came upon a loyalist encampment and

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169 Rawdon to Cornwallis, June 5, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/6, 174; Chesney, Journal, 23-24, 27; Nase, Diary, May 19, 1781, NBM; Balfour to Alexander Stewart, June 2, 1781, Misc. Mss., SC7003/AT7003, Box 2, 125, NYSL.
170 “State of the Troops Embarked under ... Coll. Gould,” March 18, 1781, Rawdon to Cornwallis, June 5, 1781, Balfour to Cornwallis, June 10, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/6, 155, 174, 208.
171 Otho Holland Williams to Mercy Stull, May 4, 1781, Otho Holland Williams Papers, MHS.
killed another eleven men. Greene also dispatched his light infantry and cavalry “to Surprise a party of tories,” but the loyalists withdrew before the Whigs arrived. Shortly after the cavalry set off in pursuit, another group of loyalists mistook the rebel infantry for British troops and emerged from a swamp, “& being undeceived” captured a Whig soldier. One loyalist was killed in the subsequent exchange of fire. Returning to the scene, Greene’s cavalry killed four more loyalists and captured six. The next day, rebel troops “Surprised a party of Tories within sight of Ninety Six, killing four.

After reaching Ninety Six and beginning siege operations, Greene and his officers found themselves in the midst of hostile territory. Williams asserted that “the Enemy have had such footing and influence in this Country that their Success in putting the Inhabitants together ... has Exceeded even their own Expectations.” Greene wrote that while he was already aware that “a very large majority of the People from inclination were in the Enemys interest” in the province, he believed that in the backcountry “there are five for one against us. The Tories swarm around us and render it extreme difficult to get either forage or subsistance for our Troops.” As many as five hundred loyalists were reported to be concealed in swamps and forests near the American lines. Greene tried to induce them to surrender by offering them pardon, but few accepted. Civil war continued to rage across much of the backcountry. “The Daily deliberate murders committed by pretended whiggs and reputed Tories ... are too numerous & too shocking to relate,” Williams observed.

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174 O. H. Williams to Elie Williams, June 12, 1781, Williams Papers, MHS.
175 Greene to Samuel Huntington, June 20, 1781, PNG, 8:422.
176 Thayer, *Nathanael Greene*, 357.
177 O. H. Williams to Elie Williams, June 12, 1781, Williams Papers, MHS.
Inside the fortifications, Cruger’s 350 New York and New Jersey provincials, aided by 200 militia under Cunningham, resisted stoutly. Another hundred loyalists – women, children, and the elderly – took refuge inside the stockade. Despite his inability to obtain any information from outside, Cruger steadfastly believed that Rawdon would come to his aid.178

As Rawdon marched to relieve Ninety Six, large numbers of loyalists joined the British troops. “The Tories join fast,” Henry Lee informed Greene.179 Another Whig officer reported that people flocked to Rawdon when his troops reached Orangeburg. On June 18, the rebels captured “15 or 18 Arm’d Tories” who had been on their way to meet the British.180 With Rawdon’s army shielding them from the Continentals, other loyalists assembled and attacked the Whigs, causing so many of Sumter’s men to return home to protect their families that the corps temporarily became too weak to take the field.181

On June 17, a bold loyalist rode among Greene’s troops, pretending to be nothing more than a curious farmer until he reached a point opposite the gate in the stockade around Ninety Six, whereupon he raced toward it under a barrage of Whig gunfire. He brought Cruger a message that Rawdon was fast approaching. Realizing that he had no time to await the outcome of his siege, Greene launched a desperate attack the next day, which failed to breach the British fortifications and cost him 150 men. The rebels retreated, and Rawdon arrived on June 21. He tried to bring the Continentals to battle, but Greene took advantage of his head start to keep a safe distance from the British troops.182

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178 Cann, “War in the Backcountry, 10-11; Cruger to Rawdon, June 3, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/6, 213.
179 Henry Lee to Greene, June 22, 1781, PNG, 8:442.
180 John Rudulph to Greene, June 18, 1781, PNG, 8:412.
181 Bass, Gamecock, 184, 187.
182 Cann, “War in the Backcountry,” 10-11; Rawdon to Cornwallis, Aug. 2, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/6, 347; Pancake, This Destructive War, 213-214.
Rawdon returned to Ninety Six, where an examination of its circumstances convinced him that the post had to be abandoned. “But that no proof of attention to our friends might be omitted,” Rawdon explained, “I ordered the principal Inhabitants to be convened; & desired that they should state their wishes.” He suggested that if the loyalists were willing to defend the district against the Whigs, he would leave behind a small force of troops and occasionally send larger detachments to assist them. If the loyalists preferred to leave the area, he promised to settle them on abandoned rebel plantations within the contracted sphere of British control. Most loyalists chose to leave with the British to “be secure against the savage cruelty of the Rebel Militia.” Once they had been resettled, the men promised Rawdon that they would “embody, & make incursions into the disaffected Settlements.”

More than eight hundred men who had served in the Ninety Six district militia were among those who evacuated the area. Other loyalists joined the column as it made its way across the province, while some loyalists sought safety in Georgia or among their Indian neighbors. Before leaving, loyalists in the Long Canes district burned several Whig-owned houses and drove off all the livestock they could not bring with them.

Most loyalists, however, chose to remain at home and make the best of their situation. An informant told Otho Holland Williams that many people around Ninety Six were “averse to going to Cha: Town.” Whig Col. William Henderson noted that very few loyalists along the Pacolet River seemed willing to relocate closer to Charleston. After the evacuation of Ninety Six, Greene expressed satisfaction that the number of

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183 Rawdon to Cornwallis, Aug. 2, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/6, 347.
186 Otho Holland Williams to Greene, July 5, 1781, *PNG*, 8:500.
loyalists who accompanied the British was far less than he had expected.\textsuperscript{187} Yet if many loyalists did not persist in the fight, neither did they abandon their principles. When the Delaware Continentals marched through a settlement along the Broad River on June 24, William Seymour found that the inhabitants made no secret of the fact that they were “all Tories,” although they made no effort to harass the rebels.\textsuperscript{188}

Throughout the final campaigns in the South Carolina interior, the Whigs continued their relentless persecution of the loyalists and, when possible, the latter retaliated in kind. After capturing Fort Motte, rebel troops prepared to hang the captured German militiamen from Orangeburg until Col. William Thomson intervened and ordered the men released. Near Camden, the Whigs captured Capt. Francis Tidwell of the loyal militia, hanged him, and to increase their enjoyment of the spectacle did not tie Tidwell’s hands. The rebels roared with laughter at Tidwell’s vain struggle against the noose; when their entertainment ended with Tidwell’s death, they left the body hanging for three days as a warning to other loyalists. Several loyalists captured in a skirmish near Georgetown were also hanged. Across the province, individually or in small groups, loyalist prisoners suffered death at the hands of the Whigs.\textsuperscript{189}

Levi Smith, an officer in the loyal militia, managed to survive his captivity and tell of the savagery that prisoners encountered. In a “grisly” narrative of his experiences in May and June, Smith recounted how after his capture he was stripped and “forced to run for a mile ahead of his mounted captors” in his underclothes. “When he collapsed, the rebels beat him with the flat sides of their swords.” During his confinement, he watched

\textsuperscript{187} William Henderson to Greene, July 6, 1781; Greene to Thomas McKean, July 17, 1781, PNG, 8:501; 9:30.
\textsuperscript{188} William Seymour, \textit{Journal}, 28.
\textsuperscript{189} Johnson, \textit{Traditions and Reminiscences}, 101-102, 583; Ward, \textit{Between the Lines}, 225; Lambert, \textit{South Carolina Loyalists}, 200-203.
the Whigs hang an officer and two privates of the loyal militia for having collaborated with the British. A Whig officer accused Smith of burning a tavern and ordered him hanged, despite Smith’s protestations of innocence. A rebel soldier, who feared that his brother in British captivity might be executed in retaliation, secured Francis Marion’s intervention to spare Smith. Soon afterward, the Whigs placed fourteen other prisoners in irons and sent them under militia guard to Greene’s camp. The prisoners had not gone far when the militia commander ordered them shot. Thirteen died, and the fourteenth, Joseph Cooper, survived although a rebel stabbed him in the throat with a sword to insure that he was dead. Cooper escaped from the murder scene after the militia left, dragging the corpse of his companion who was still chained to him. Sympathetic women found and freed Cooper, who eventually made his way to Charleston. The Whig militiamen returned to camp and boasted of their deed, frightening most of the remaining prisoners into joining the Whigs. Smith clung to his principles, however, and was later paroled by Greene. He too sought safety in Charleston.190

Rawdon and Balfour could do little to halt the persecution, although they were fully aware that rebel cruelty drove many loyalists into taking up arms with the Whigs. “I am well convinced, that numbers have joined the enemy merely to shield themselves from the atrocious barbarity of the rebel militia, which has been beyond what I have ever heard of among the most savage nations,” Rawdon wrote.191 Balfour renewed his threat to retaliate against the rebel militia prisoners in Charleston. Addressing the captives, Balfour declared that he had repeatedly protested to Whig leaders regarding “the outrages

191 Rawdon to Cornwallis, June 6, 1781, in Tarleton, History of the Campaigns, 481.
committed by the American Troops” and “the rigourous treatment, in many cases extending to Death, which the Loyal Militia, when made Prisoners, most invariably experience.” Since American officers had “wholly Neglected” his pleas, Balfour announced that he had no alternative except to use the prisoners he held “as Hostages for the good usage of all the Loyal Militia, who are or may be made Prisoners of War.”

The prisoners answered that they were willing to accept the threatened punishments for the good of their cause, but a day later sent a more moderate reply in which they expressed mortification at the treatment some captured loyalists had received. However, they insisted that such cruelty was not sanctioned by American officers and attributed the violence to ignorance of the laws of war on the part of Whigs and loyalists alike.

Unlike the Whigs, many loyalists held Greene responsible for the savagery. “The deliberate murders committed in cold blood, under your influence and direction in the Carolinas in the space of two months, exceed the number ever committed in any war recorded in the history of Europe,” a writer in the Royal Gazette asserted in an essay addressed to the American commander.

Greene, in fact, had been trying to halt the carnage, albeit with little success. In early June he learned that Col. Leroy Hammond’s regiment of Whig militia was “murdering and plundering the Inhabitants not in arms in a most barbarous and cruel Manner” along the Saluda River. Greene assured the victimized people of his “detestation of such a practice” and promised to stop it. He then ordered Andrew Pickens to take “proper Measures” to halt Hammond’s depredations and suggested “capital punishment”

192 Balfour to the Militia Prisoners of War, May 17, 1781, Feinstone Collection, No. 74, DLAR.
193 Stephen Moore and John Barnwell to Balfour, May 18, 1781, Feinstone Collection, No. 954, DLAR; Moore, Barnwell, Samuel Lockhart et al to Balfour, May 19, 1781, Stephen Moore Papers, SCL.
195 Greene to the Inhabitants Upon the Saluda, June 5, 1781, PNG, 8:349.
for anyone guilty of plundering and murder. "The Idea of exterminating the Tories is not less barbarous than impolitick; and if persisted in, will keep this Country in the greatest confusion and distress," Greene stated. He urged Pickens to set an example by attempting to win over loyalists to the rebel cause, even if it angered "the most worthless part of the Whigs." 196

Greene's intentions were good, yet he could not always control even his own Continental troops, let alone the militia. Henry Lee's Legion contributed significantly to the carnage, despite Lee's own criticism of South Carolinians as worse than "the Goths and Vandals" in plundering and murder. The "bloodletting" practiced by the Legion in retaliation for alleged British atrocities "blurred the distinction between policy in war and cruelty for its own sake." 197

Faced with a choice of death or switching allegiance to the Whigs, most loyalists opted for the latter, especially after the British evacuated the interior of South Carolina. By the end of June, loyalist morale was on the verge of complete collapse, and British hopes of retaining control in the South were evaporating along with it.

The situation in Georgia was equally bad. Small Whig parties continually raided the backcountry; in November the provincial council complained of "the many cruel murders and depredations which are daily committed on His Majesty's peaceable and loyal subjects." 198 Gov. Wright himself noted that rebel galleys were raiding along the

196 Greene to Pickens, June 5, 1781, PNG, 8:350.
198 Address of Council of Georgia to Governor Wright, Nov. 21, 1780, DAR, 18:231.
coastal rivers, plundering property and slaves at every opportunity. Since the army had no troops to spare, he did his best to counter the attacks with militia.\footnote{Wright to Cornwallis, Nov. 20, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 166; Clarke to Cornwallis, Jan. 26, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/5, 64.}

Whig activity intensified in January 1781 as the rebels attempted to interrupt the flow of supplies to Augusta by attacking vessels on the upper Savannah River. Thomas Brown dispatched a force of Rangers and militia to the South Carolina side of the river to drive off the Whigs, but the rebels ambushed this detachment. The militia fled and the Rangers surrendered. The Whigs then executed the provincial officer and five other prisoners. One man escaped and informed Brown, who sent a larger force of forty Rangers, thirty Indians, and more militia to strike the rebels.\footnote{Cashin, \textit{King's Ranger}, 126; Robertson, \textquotedblleft Second Occupation of Augusta,	extquotedblright 437-438; Brown to [Cruger?], Jan. 23, 1781 [misdated 1780], Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/62, 2.} Brown followed with forty more Rangers and an equal number of militia and Indians, and was later joined by another one hundred militiamen. This force camped at Wiggan's plantation, where about five hundred rebels assaulted the militia posted on Brown's left flank. The militia, "without returning a shot ... fled into camp in the greatest disorder & confusion imaginable," but the rangers and Indians still repulsed the rebel attack. Later the Whigs attacked again, and once more the militia fled, except for ten men. Again the rangers and Indians restored the situation with a charge that dispersed the rebels. Five Indians and five Rangers were killed.\footnote{Brown to [Cruger?], Jan. 23, 1781 [misdated 1780], Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/62, 2.} Brown then scoured the surrounding area, recovering many of the goods plundered from the supply ships and burning the houses where he found such items. He asked Balfour to assist him by sending the South Carolina militia to patrol the north bank of the Savannah, and Balfour promised to send what aid he could.\footnote{Cashin, \textit{King's Ranger}, 127; Balfour to Thomas Brown, Feb. 9, 1781 [misdated 1782], Leslie Letterbook, microfilm, SCDAH.}
Brown received a small reinforcement in late January when thirty loyalists from the overmountain settlements made their way through Cherokee territory to Augusta, but this was not enough to enable Brown to halt Whig raids.\textsuperscript{203} In mid-February, South Carolina rebels entered upper Georgia and "assassinated eleven people, some of them in their beds." Those murdered, Wright noted, "were such as had very early shown their loyalty and ... had been most active and useful in reducing the rebellion."\textsuperscript{204} Brown sent two parties of militia, each numbering one hundred men, under Col. James Grierson and Maj. Henry Williams, to find the rebels, but the raiders escaped, leaving only a few stragglers to be captured by the militia.\textsuperscript{205}

The elusive rebels continued to launch attacks on Georgia throughout March and April, inflicting grievous losses on the loyalists. Whigs murdered several people in the Ceded Lands, as well as thirty-five others in the environs of Augusta, where the garrison proved unable to protect the region's inhabitants.\textsuperscript{206} The Quaker settlement at Wrightsborough, "known to be prosperous, largely pro-British, and unwilling to defend itself, became a favorite target." The rebels killed several of the pacific Quakers, killed or carried off two thousand cattle, and burned a plantation and grist mill.\textsuperscript{207}

With some understatement, Wright reported in late April that the situation in Georgia had "taken a very unfavourable turn," as the Whigs continued to murder "Pickt Men and such as they thought were most firm in their loyalty." The attacks, Wright observed, came without warning so that the militia had no time to assemble to protect the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Brown to [Cruger?], Jan. 23, 1781 [misdated 1780], Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/62, 2.}
\footnote{Wright to Germain, March 5, 1781, \textit{DAR}, 20:73.}
\footnote{Cashin, \textit{King's Ranger}, 127-128.}
\footnote{Edward J. Cashin, "Nathanael Greene's Campaign for Georgia in 1781," \textit{GHQ}, Vol. 61, No. 1, Spring 1977, 48.}
\footnote{Ralph C. Scott, Jr., "The Quaker Settlement of Wrightsborough, Georgia," \textit{GHQ}, Vol. 56, No. 2, Summer 1972, 220.}
\end{footnotes}
people. The "unheard of Cruelty of the rebels was so shocking that the generality of the people took to the Swamps for shelter against these worse than Savages, who say they will Murder every loyal Subject in the Province." Wright asked Cornwallis for troops to protect the loyalists, remarking that if left undefended, they were "doomed to death and distru ction," which was "poor encouragement for them to persevere in their loyalty." Many loyal Georgians also hoped that Georgia's defenses could be strengthened; they told the governor that "our means of Defence have been considerably lessened by the cruel and wanton Murders of near one hundred Men, who have fallen a Sacrifice for their Loyalty." The land communication with Charleston had been severed and rebel parties were "daily making Inroads to within a few Miles of Savannah," they observed. They suggested that Wright reinforce the militia at Ebenezer and raise two troops of provincial cavalry to improve the situation.

The Whig raids were followed by a full-scale attack on Augusta in May. When Greene moved to besiege Ninety Six, he ordered Henry Lee's Legion to unite with militia under Elijah Clarke and Andrew Pickens and drive the British from the Georgia backcountry. On May 21, Lee captured Fort Galphin and its garrison of loyal militia at Silver Bluff on the South Carolina side of the Savannah River, then joined Pickens and Clarke who had already surrounded Augusta. Brown, with his rangers, militia, and several Cherokees, Creeks, and Chickasaws, gallantly defended the town until June 5, when rebel artillery emplaced in a tower overlooking Fort Cornwallis made further resistance hopeless. After Brown surrendered, Lee sent him to Savannah with an escort of

208 Wright to Cornwallis, April 23, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/5, 247.
209 Address to Governor Wright, May 4, 1781, Sir James Wright Papers, PERK.
Continents to prevent the rebels from murdering their longtime nemesis. Nevertheless, Brown’s guards received so many threats en route that they feared for their own lives.210

Col. Grierson was not so fortunate as Brown. Pickens had sent most of the loyalist prisoners across the Savannah River for their own protection, but confined Grierson in an Augusta dwelling. On June 6, a Whig rode up to the door of the house “and without dismounting Shot [Grierson] So that he Expired Soon after.” The murderer rode away, and shortly afterward Henry Williams, who was also in the house, “was Shot at and badly Wounded in the Shoulder.”211

Dr. Thomas Taylor, a loyalist, believed that Grierson’s murder could have been prevented and the killer caught. On the day of Grierson’s death, Taylor endured “bitter curses” from the Whigs when he brought the colonel some water. Grierson told Taylor that “his Life was threatened & if not remov’d from the Place where he then was he was certain the Threat would be executed.” Taylor passed this information to Brown, who in turn informed Lee. Lee did nothing. After the murder, rebel troops undertook what Taylor described as “a sham Pursuit ... for a few Minutes after the Murderer but he was permitted to escape.” Taylor added that many other loyalists shared Grierson’s fate. “It would transcend Belief were I to recount the Murders committed by these Wretches upon the unhappy Tories all over the Country,” he wrote. The barbarity of the rebels, Taylor asserted, was four times worse than anything Indians were capable of doing.212 Grierson and Williams were not the only intended victims; Richard Pearis later wrote that he too “had been nearly assassinated by the Rebels” after his capture at Augusta.213 Greene

210 Cashin, King’s Ranger, 131-137.
211 Pickens to Greene, June 7, 1781, PNG, 8:359.
213 Richard Pearis Loyalist Claim, Aug. 22, 1783, SCHS.

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denounced the murder and offered an exorbitant reward of one hundred guineas (nearly
$14,000) for the killer’s capture. Not surprisingly, however, none of the many rebel
witnesses identified the criminal.  

The fall of Augusta sent hundreds of loyalist refugees fleeing to Savannah, where
Wright armed as many as he could and sent them to garrison the fortifications at
Ebenezer. Other loyalists hid in swamps, while a few continued to fight the Whigs. On
June 19, Elijah Clarke reported that he had to divert some of his militia to Wilkes County
because “Outliers & Indjans” were “Burning Robing & Destroying” the Whigs there.

The loyalists’ actions paled in comparison to the onslaught the Whigs unleashed
once they had regained control of the interior of Georgia. William Lee, a loyalist who had
fled West Florida after the Spanish captured Mobile and bought a farm in Richmond
County, about one hundred miles from Savannah, found himself in the midst of the
rebels’ campaign of vengeance. The Whigs “committed great depredations upon the
loyalists, by plundering their houses, and very frequently killing them,” he wrote. Many
people escaped to Savannah or Charleston, while “others sheltered themselves in the
woods, and were many of them caught and killed, even when begging for life, upon their
knees!” Reluctant to leave his pregnant wife, Lee remained peaceful and hoped the rebels
“would let me alone.” The Whigs soon disabused him of that notion when a party called
upon him, carried off much of his property, and left after warning him that if he did not
join them or leave the province within a day, they would kill him. Lee hid in the woods
until his wife safely delivered their daughter, then made his way to Savannah.

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214 Proclamation of Greene, June 9, 1781, PNG, 8:370.
215 Wright to Germain, June 14, 1781, DAR, 20:161; Coleman, Revolution in Georgia, 135-136.
216 Clarke to Greene, June 19, 1781, PNG, 8:414.
East Floridians, despite fears of a possible Spanish attack, remained immune to the hardships encountered by loyalists to their north and west. The province actually prospered, becoming self-sufficient in the production of both grain and cattle. East Florida produced more naval stores than there were ships available to export them, and Patrick Tonyn planned to build a town and fort on the St. Mary’s River.218

While East Florida thrived, West Floridians faced the loss of the remainder of their province to Spanish conquerors. Gen. John Campbell knew that Bernardo de Galvez would move against Pensacola after seizing Mobile and did everything possible to strengthen his position. In addition to improving Pensacola’s fortifications, Campbell bombarded British officials with pleas for assistance.219 When aid failed to arrive, Campbell decided to disrupt Galvez’s plans by attempting to recapture Mobile in January 1781. The loyalist Royal Foresters participated in the campaign, which resulted in a failed assault on Mobile after which the British force returned to Pensacola.220

Galvez arrived at Pensacola with a powerful force of Spanish and French troops and warships on March 9, and by the end of the month had begun siege operations. Hoping to create a diversion that might force Galvez to lift the siege or at least to detach part of the Franco-Spanish army, Campbell took steps to instigate a loyalist uprising at Natchez. Three Natchez residents, John and Philip Alston and John Turner, wished to oust the Spaniards from the area and had sent an emissary to Campbell asking for his support. Although some people at Natchez believed that the three secretly planned to turn control of the district over to the Americans once the Spanish were defeated, Campbell

218 Tonyn to Germain, Dec. 9, 1780, DAR, 18:253.
219 Campbell to Germain, Nov. 26, 1780, DAR, 18:232-234.
220 Haarmann, “Spanish Conquest of West Florida,” 120.
authorized the trio to resist the Spanish and provided their emissary with commissions to raise a force among the Natchez inhabitants.\(^{221}\)

Many people along the Mississippi had come to accept Spanish authority and were reluctant to participate in a rebellion, but the Alstons and Turner convinced two influential settlers, John Blommart and Jacob Winfree, to support the revolt. Blommart and Winfree helped to assemble some two hundred loyalists and a few Indians to attack Spanish Fort Panmure at Natchez. The fighting began on April 22 and lasted until the Spanish commander surrendered his seventy-six troops on May 4.\(^{222}\)

Meanwhile, Galvez had tightened his noose around Pensacola. Despite the efforts of the defenders, whose number included over forty of the Royal Foresters and about one hundred of the town's inhabitants serving as militia, Campbell surrendered on May 10.\(^{223}\) When the victorious loyalists at Natchez learned that Pensacola had fallen, they realized that they could not resist the large force that Galvez would undoubtedly bring against them and surrendered to a small Spanish detachment that arrived at Natchez on June 22. The Spaniards treated the rebels with leniency. Galvez granted amnesty to most of them, but imprisoned Blommart, Winfree, and other leaders. Blommart was tried and convicted of rebellion and had his property confiscated.\(^{224}\)

With the entire province in Spanish hands, West Floridians had to choose between submission to Spanish authority or flight. Some took refuge with the Choctaws; a larger


\(^{223}\) Starr, *Tories, Dons, and Rebels*, 190-191.

\(^{224}\) Haynes, *Natchez District*, 137, 140; Caughey, “Natchez Rebellion,” 60, 63-68.
number made their way to Chickasaw territory, where they cooperated with the Indians in operations against the Americans and Spaniards along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.  

West Florida loyalists, although few in number, had fought hard to defend the province and suffered much as a result. As some later stated in a petition to Parliament, they had contributed funds to build fortifications, “formed themselves into volunteer companies for their defence,” sortied to sea to attack rebel privateers, and “joined and did duty with his Majesty’s troops ... formed themselves into provincial corps, and were employed upon the most dangerous services, till the reduction of the province.” Many “had their plantations plundered and burned” by Willing’s raiders; “others had their properties laid waste, and large stocks of cattle destroyed” during the fighting against the Spanish. Many lost property to the Spaniards as a penalty “for having contributed to the public defence,” while those who fled the province after the Spanish conquest forfeited their lands. Altogether, they paid a high price for their loyalty to king and country.

The Indians Rejoin the Battle

Despite being ignored by Cornwallis and alternately courted and mistreated by John Campbell, the southern Indians stood ready to assist the British when needed. Thomas Brown and Alexander Cameron had done an excellent job of assuaging the Indians’ hurt feelings, which was fortunate because Cornwallis finally took the advice of his subordinates and called upon the Indians for aid in December 1780; Campbell also needed their help to defend Pensacola. The crisis in West Florida reduced the number of Indians available to serve in Georgia and South Carolina, since the Creeks divided their efforts between the two areas.

If Cornwallis had seen no value in using Indians during the summer and fall of 1780, John Rutledge remained aware of the threat they posed. When Daniel Morgan marched into the South Carolina backcountry in December, Rutledge advised him to send a “confidential person” to George Galphin, who, Rutledge said, still possessed great influence with the Creeks. Rutledge wanted Galphin to warn the Creeks that the Spanish were moving against the Floridas and that American forces with French aid would soon recover South Carolina and Georgia. Therefore, the Creeks should “get all the Goods they can from the British, but, by no Means ... take up the Hatchet, or kill any of our People, for if they do so, as soon as the English are beat, We shall fall upon them.” Rutledge hoped that this message would intimidate the Creeks, since reports indicated that a large number of them were with Brown at Augusta and intended “to act agst. our people.” The governor suggested that if Morgan recaptured Ninety Six, he should then move against Augusta because the British “will hold their Influence over the Indians, whilst they keep that place.”

Rutledge’s information was correct; Cornwallis had already authorized Brown to order the Indians to attack the overmountain settlements to prevent the inhabitants from reinforcing Greene. Brown informed the earl on December 17 that the Cherokees and many Upper Creeks “have cheerfully agreed to attack the plunderers & banditti” in that region. Cherokee leaders promised Brown that they would move against the rebels immediately and continue to fight as long as they were supplied with arms and ammunition. Brown assigned “a proper number of whitemen & traders to head the different war parties,” which would be under the overall command of Brown’s deputies. Brown added that some Cherokees had recently attacked rebel boats on the Ohio River

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227 John Rutledge to Morgan, Dec. 22, 1780, Myers Collection, No. 1017, Microfilm, DLAR.
that were headed to New Orleans for supplies, “killed the guard,” and sent the captured women and children to Augusta.\(^{228}\)

Cornwallis had evidently made his decision with great reluctance, since it was not until December 29 that he told Balfour that the time had come to inform Clinton “of my having employed the Indians, as there will be a considerable expense attending it.”\(^{229}\) Cornwallis himself wrote to Clinton the same day, explaining that he had “directed Lieut.-Colonel Brown to encourage the Indians to attack” the overmountain settlements. “The good effects of this measure have already appeared,” the earl noted. “A large body of the mountaineers marched lately to join the Rebels ... but were soon obliged to return to oppose the incursions of the Indians.” Cornwallis pointed out that if Brown’s reports of their behavior were accurate, the Indians’ “humanity is a striking contrast to the shocking barbarities committed by the mountaineers.”\(^{230}\) Cornwallis was pleased with the Indians’ help, telling Rawdon that Brown “seems to have cut out work enough for the Back Mountain men with his Indian friends.”\(^{231}\)

The Indian attacks did succeed in preventing many militia units from joining Greene’s army. In late December, Greene learned that the Cherokees had “murdered a number of Inhabitants on the frontiers of N. Carolina” and that the militia of that state had “marched against their lower towns.”\(^{232}\) Some Cherokee attacks struck South Carolina as well. “The Cherokees ... have lately killed some people on the Frontiers of

\(^{228}\) Brown to Cornwallis, Dec. 17, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 345.
\(^{229}\) Cornwallis to Balfour, Dec. 29, 1780, Cornwallis Correspondence, 75-76.
\(^{230}\) Cornwallis to Clinton, Dec. 29, 1780, Cornwallis Correspondence, 76.
\(^{231}\) Cornwallis to Rawdon, Dec. 28, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/83, 89.
\(^{232}\) Greene to Samuel Huntington, Dec. 28, 1780, PNG, 7:9
No. & So. Carolina, which has prevented, & will prevent, them from turning out,” John Rutledge wrote.233

Although the Cherokee attacks deprived Greene of reinforcements, they resulted in another catastrophe for that nation. The Whigs received advance notice of the impending attack from Joseph Martin, Virginia’s agent to the Cherokees, and state officials decided to launch a preemptive strike. Col. John Sevier assembled two hundred militia in December and marched against the Cherokee towns. After routing a Cherokee party in a battle in which sixteen Indians were killed, Sevier advanced to the Tennessee River and burned a Cherokee town. Joined by another four hundred men under Arthur Campbell, the rebels continued their march, burning Hiwassee Old Town and Tellico, killing a few Cherokees and suffering a handful of casualties before returning home. Altogether, the Virginians destroyed at least ten Cherokee towns and several smaller villages totaling over one thousand dwellings, along with over fifty thousand bushels of corn. They reported killing twenty-nine Cherokee men and capturing seventeen prisoners, mostly women and children.234

By February 8, Campbell was able to inform Greene that the Cherokee threat to Virginia had ended. The militia had, Campbell boasted, “dealt out to them, not a few of the miseries that were designed for us. The Over Hill Country were chiefly made a Field of desolation, the Families dispersed in the Mountains to starve.” Not surprisingly, Campbell reported that “the Cheifs were greatly humbled” and wished to make peace.235

235 Arthur Campbell to Greene, Feb. 8, 1781, PNG, 7:258.
Greene replied that he welcomed the opportunity to make peace "on the most generous & liberal principles." He promptly appointed commissioner to meet with the Chickasaws as well as the Cherokees and to arrange a settlement.

Campbell’s assessment proved to be overly optimistic. The Cherokees renewed their attacks in March, but again paid a high price and achieved little. Once again their operations limited the reinforcements available to Greene. On March 10, a Maryland officer noted that some of Campbell’s overmountain militia had recently joined Greene, “but the indians having lately done mischief in his country was not joined by many of his countrymen from the mountains indeed it has prevented a greater number of fine fellows from joining us.” In April, Greene found that his army was short of lead because supplies expected from North Carolina had been diverted for that state’s militia to use against the Cherokees. Campbell himself apologized on April 23 because he could not send the militia Greene had requested since his county was “Pressed hard by the Indians.” In Campbell’s opinion, this was part of a deliberate “scheme of the British General ... to employ some of our best Militia in opposing the Indians, in order to facilitate his operations in the low Country.” Unless Greene could cut off the Cherokees’ access to Brown at Augusta, Campbell warned, that nation would never keep the peace. Indian attacks also prevented some South Carolina militia from joining Greene at the siege of Ninety Six. On May 24, Col. Robert Anderson said they he could not aid Greene because most of his men had been sent to the frontier in the wake of Indian attacks there.

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236 Greene to Arthur Campbell, Feb. 26, 1781, PNG, 7:351.
238 Benjamin Ford to Mordecai Gist, March 10, 1781, Gist Papers, MHS.
239 Thayer, Nathanael Greene, 339.
240 Arthur Campbell to Nathaniel Pendleton, April 23, 1781, PNG, 8:136-137.
241 Robert Anderson to Greene, May 24, 1781, PNG, 8:307.
The Whigs responded with another invasion of Cherokee territory. Sevier burned fifteen Middle Cherokee towns in March, which convinced some Cherokee leaders to undertake peace negotiations.\textsuperscript{242} Two months later, other Cherokees announced their desire for peace to North Carolina officials and asserted that only a few of their people still wanted to assist the British. Some Whigs, however, thought it might be advantageous to ignore the peace offer and continue to attack the Cherokees in order to “make them cede lands.”\textsuperscript{243} Brown learned of the rebels’ campaign from Indian refugees and denounced the savagery of the Whig militia. “Men, women and children thrown into flames, impaled alive or butchered in cold blood!” he recounted.\textsuperscript{244} As usual, these draconian tactics had demonstrated their effectiveness by forcing the Cherokees to submit.

Brown received some Indian help in his operations against rebel partisans in January, but his messages of encouragement in the spring failed to convince the badly beaten Cherokees to continue fighting. He sought assistance from the Creeks, who could provide little support because most were engaged in the defense of West Florida. A few Creeks, Cherokees, and Chickasaws participated in the defense of Augusta and were taken prisoner when the garrison surrendered.\textsuperscript{245}

Britain’s Indian allies were not alone in their suffering during this period; the pro-rebel Catawbas also experienced hunger and the destruction of their homeland. In December 1780, “General” New River, the Catawba leader, visited Greene’s headquarters with a letter of introduction from Gates, which testified to that nation’s

\textsuperscript{242} Calloway, \textit{Revolution in Indian Country}, 205.
\textsuperscript{243} Robert Lanier to Greene, May 27, 1781, PNG, 8:317.
\textsuperscript{244} Cashin, \textit{King’s Ranger}, 125.
\textsuperscript{245} Cashin, \textit{King’s Ranger}, 130, 133, 136.
loyalty to the Whigs. New River asked Greene for supplies because his people were in great want and complained that the Catawbas had been mistreated by whites in upper South Carolina. New River wanted Greene’s permission to settle his people in the vicinity of Charlotte. But before Greene could consider the proposal, Cornwallis’s advance into North Carolina forced the Continental army to retreat. Unwilling to face British wrath for their support of the rebels, the Catawbas accompanied Greene in his flight to Virginia. They returned to South Carolina a few months later, only to find that the British had burned their homes and carried off their livestock.246

In East Florida, Patrick Tonyn did all he could to maintain good relations with the Seminoles so that he could rely on their aid if the Spanish attacked the province. To discover Spanish intentions, Tonyn sent a loyalist to Havana, ostensibly to discuss a prisoner exchange. The emissary learned that after the Spaniards captured Pensacola, “it is determined to attack this province, for which purpose preparations are making.”247 The governor wished to retain the Seminoles’ goodwill by supplying them with provisions, but he lacked the funds to purchase them.248 He had to apply repeatedly to Alured Clarke for bread, meat, and rum from government stores, along with the wine, coffee, and sugar that Cowkeeper personally favored. “I have no fund whatsoever for Indian contingencies,” Tonyn complained, despite the fact that Germain had made the governor responsible for relations with the Seminoles and that it was essential to give them “the usual hospitable and friendly reception.”249 Clarke, who was in St. Augustine, shared Tonyn’s fear of Spanish attack and therefore agreed to provide the requested goods, but

246 Gates to Greene, Dec. 10, 1780, and note, PNG, 6:560; Brown, Catawba Indians, 266-267, 270; Merrell, Indians’ New World, 216.
247 Tonyn to Cornwallis, Jan. 29, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/67, 35.
248 Tonyn to Clarke, Jan. 29, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/67, 44.
249 Tonyn to Clarke, April 30, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/5, 274.
noted that provisions were in such short supply that little could be spared "without manifest Risk to the security of the Garrison." Tonyn then appealed to Clinton for the supplies and funds required to preserve the Seminoles' allegiance.\textsuperscript{250}

Clinton approved the expense for the Indians without complaint, particularly in West Florida where he told Campbell that "it is absolutely necessary to keep those people in good humor," regardless of the cost.\textsuperscript{251} Yet Campbell continued to deny the Indians presents and supplies "unless he calls them upon actual service," Alexander Cameron complained. Cameron noted that the Choctaws had been acting on their own initiative against the Spaniards, which prevented them from hunting, and therefore they believed they were entitled to food, clothing, and presents. Campbell, however, denied Cameron's request for these items, telling the superintendent to purchase the goods with his own funds. Campbell, said Cameron, "does not understand anything of Indians or their affairs he thinks they are to be used like slaves or a people void of sense."\textsuperscript{252}

Despite Campbell's stubborn stinginess, the Choctaws continued to provide valuable service in the fight against the Spanish. Cameron proudly reported at the end of October that those Choctaws who had flirted with Galvez had come to Pensacola, turned over all their Spanish flags, commissions, and medals to Cameron, and recommitted themselves to the British alliance. To demonstrate their sincerity, they harassed the Spanish around Mobile. The Choctaws were so effective, Cameron stated, that "not a Spaniard can venture out of sight of the fort but they knock up and carry off his scalp," forcing the Spanish to cross the bay to obtain fresh water.\textsuperscript{253} Upon learning of the

\textsuperscript{250} Clarke to Tonyn, May 1, 1781, Tonyn to Clarke, May 4, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/6, 17, 43.
\textsuperscript{251} Clinton to Campbell, Oct. 21, 1780, Carleton Papers, Vol. 26, 3079.
\textsuperscript{252} Cameron to Germain, Oct. 31, 1780, \textit{DAR}, 18:220-222.
\textsuperscript{253} Cameron to Germain, Oct. 31, 1780, \textit{DAR}, 18:219-220.
Choctaws’ activities, Campbell sent eight loyalists from the Royal Foresters to lead 130 Indians in an attack on one of the Spanish posts at Mobile. This party assaulted the fort on October 28, but the loyalists fled when the Spaniards opened fire with cannon. The Choctaws showed more courage, advancing close to the fort, killing several Spanish soldiers, and burning nearby houses before retreating.254

In mid-November, Campbell learned that a Spanish attack was imminent and wrote to Cameron and Brown requesting that they immediately send as many Indians as possible to Pensacola. Explaining the strategy he intended to use against the Spaniards, Campbell told Brown that the Indians “have it still in their power, by frequent attacks & constant alarms, in short by continually harassing & hanging on the enemy’s rear, in case of siege, greatly to impede the operations, if not totally defeat & disconcert the designs of any force they can send against us.”255 When a hurricane devastated the Spanish invasion fleet, Campbell sent word to the agents to have the Indians return home. Campbell again asked for Creek help against a rumored Spanish attack in January 1781, and again canceled the request when British officials promised to dispatch reinforcements from Jamaica. Campbell’s actions angered the one thousand Creeks who were on their way to Pensacola when they learned they were no longer wanted.256

Rather than wait for the Spanish to attack Pensacola, Campbell decided to disrupt Galvez’s plans by seizing Mobile. Over 400 Choctaws joined 160 British and German regulars, 200 Pennsylvania and Maryland provincials, and a handful of West Florida loyalists in an assault on January 7, 1781. The attack broke the Spanish lines, but the commanding officer, Col. Johann von Hanxleden, was killed, other German and British

254 Starr, Tories, Dons, and Rebels, 182; O’Donnell, Southern Indians, 104.
255 Campbell to Brown, Nov. 15, 1780, Carleton Papers, Vol. 26, 3149.
officers were killed or wounded, and the ranking officer, a Maryland loyalist, called off
the assault. With the command system disrupted, no one signaled the Indians to join the
attack, but led by Cameron’s deputies, John McIntosh and Farquhar Bethune, the
Choctaws fired on the Spaniards from concealment, which covered the withdrawal of the
regulars and provincials. Their fire drove back some of the defenders, who tried to reach
a boat and escape, but the Choctaws pursued the Spaniards into the water and took at
least forty scalps before breaking off the action. Ignoring the pleas of Choctaw leaders to
renew the attack, the white officers decided to return to Pensacola. Some British officers
later blamed the Choctaws for the failure of the expedition, although there was not a
shred of evidence to support their allegation.257

The long-awaited Spanish attack on Pensacola finally materialized in March
1781, when Galvez arrived with a powerful fleet and four thousand troops; he would later
be joined by an additional three thousand Spanish and French soldiers, and a few
Choctaws from the Sixtowns faction. Campbell could muster only fifteen hundred
British, German, and provincial troops, along with some armed blacks, militiamen, and
Choctaws and Creeks. One Spanish officer estimated the Indians’ strength at one
thousand, although the actual total was probably half that number. Yet Campbell chose to
conduct a passive defense with his own troops, relying on the Indians to oppose the
Spanish advance.258

The knowledge that their security depended on the Indians made some loyalists
uneasy. James Bruce, the collector of customs at Pensacola, understood that if the Indians

257 Haarmann, “Spanish Conquest,” 120-121; Starr, Tories, Dons, and Rebels, 183; O’Donnell, Southern
258 O’Donnell, Southern Indians, 113; O’Brien, Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 10; Francisco de
Miranda, “Miranda’s Diary of the Siege of Pensacola,” Donald E. Worcester, trans., FHQ, Vol. 29, No. 3,
January 1951, 176.
did not come to West Florida's defense, "the consequences to us will soon be fatal."259

Yet when the Indians arrived to aid in the town's defense, Bruce complained that the only alternatives to leaving Pensacola's noncombatants exposed to Spanish bombardment were to "trust our women & children etc. to the power of the merciless savages in the woods," or accept Galvez's offer to provide them with sanctuary during the siege.260

While Bruce valued the military assistance of the Indians, he could not overcome fears of their alleged barbarism.

The Indians began proving their worth shortly after Spanish troops came ashore. On March 19, a group of Indians led by a British officer captured a Spanish boat, killing ten of the crew and bringing one survivor to Pensacola.261 Three days later, the Indians struck the Spanish camp in the evening, shooting "at the troops that were around the fires, killing three and wounding four of our soldiers," wrote Galvez, "not leaving us at peace until morning."262 After a raid behind Spanish lines on March 25, Indians brought twenty-three captured horses and two scalps into Pensacola; two days later they drove off five boatloads of Spaniards attempting to land. On March 28 the Indians again attacked Galvez's troops, but were driven off after some skirmishing in which four Indians were wounded. Galvez reported that three of his troops had been seriously wounded in the affair.263

Galvez advanced his army closer to Pensacola on March 30 and again met fierce Indian resistance. Soon after the Spanish began their march, "a large group of Indians

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emerged from their hide-outs in the woods, firing rapidly.” Galvez brought up artillery and attacked, driving the Indians back. Seeing an opportunity to defeat the Spaniards, Campbell dispatched some of his own troops and fifty armed blacks with artillery to reinforce the Indians. A four-hour battle ensued, after which the mixed British force withdrew. Spanish casualties were three killed and twenty-eight wounded, while British losses totaled one Indian killed and two Indians and one black wounded. The Indians returned to town with several trophies, including drums, scalps, and the head of a Spanish soldier. Choctaw leader Franchimastabé believed that the foray could have been more successful had Campbell given the Indians more substantial support.

The near-constant Indian attacks delayed Galvez’s operations and forced his troops to undertake additional work “to construct the entrenchment that was necessary for all camps because of the Indians.” As one Spanish officer noted, “being in the midst of woods and surrounded by savages who hid in the forest and insulted us at all hours, this operation was indispensable.” However, fortifications did not prevent the Indians from attacking the camps. They struck again on the night of April 5, wounding two soldiers and “disturbing the whole army” throughout the night.

Skirmishing continued throughout the month, with the Indians continuing to play the major role for the British, receiving only occasional assistance from regular troops and armed blacks. Several groups of Indians made their way through Spanish lines to reinforce Pensacola, including a small Creek party that on its way to the town captured a

266 Galvez, “Combat Diary,” 183.
Spanish boat and killed three crewmen.²⁶⁹ Fifty Chickasaws attacked Galvez’s camp before entering British lines on April 27 with “a great number of scalps, firelocks, and bayonets” as trophies.²⁷⁰

In a final, desperate effort to drive off the Spaniards, Campbell dispatched all of his Indian auxiliaries on May 7 with orders “to endeavour to get upon the rear of the enemy’s encampment.”²⁷¹ However, the warriors were unable to pass around the lines and instead attacked a Spanish outpost. A short skirmish ensued in which the Indians were driven off; they returned to Pensacola with ten scalps and one prisoner. It was their last battle. On May 8 a Spanish artillery shell struck the powder magazine in the redoubt that anchored Campbell’s defenses, virtually annihilating the defenders. Spanish troops seized the position, and Campbell opened surrender negotiations. The Indians did not wait to be taken prisoner; they simply disappeared into the forests outside the town and returned home.²⁷²

Although the Indians had borne most of the burden of Pensacola’s defense, Campbell downplayed their contributions. When the Spanish landed, Campbell wrote, “no Indians could be got to oppose them,” yet at the same time he observed that the Spanish force was too strong to attack with his own troops. Campbell described the Indians’ attacks upon the Spanish as producing “more noise than advantage.” Overall, Campbell declared that the Indians were “of very little use,” and during the siege he even suspected that they intended to betray the British. “I fear much they are secretly and

²⁷⁰ Farmar, “Journal,” 323.
underhand instigated and encouraged to this conduct in short there is no dependence on
the present set of our savage auxiliaries," he asserted. In subsequent reports, Campbell
continued to blame the Indians for his inability to hold Pensacola.

Cameron defended the Indians against Campbell's criticism and instead blamed
the general for the defeat. If Campbell had followed his advice, Cameron insisted, two
thousand Indians would have been on hand to defend Pensacola, rather than five hundred.
Campbell's habit of repeatedly summoning and dismissing the Indians, along with his
refusal to provide them with the goods they requested, convinced many of them that the
general did not respect them or value their contributions. Cameron expressed pride in
the Indians' behavior during the siege. "The Indians in general ... behaved with great
spirit and attachment," he told Germain, "and had we but as many more of them ... we
would have driven the whole Spanish army into the sea. No men could behave better than
they did." Most of Galvez's officers probably would have agreed. In the entire
campaign, a Spaniard wrote, the body of an Indian killed on the battlefield was "the only
one dead or alive that we have been able to take during the siege."

The loss of Pensacola, and the Whigs' capture of Augusta a month later, "signaled
the end of effective functioning of the Southern Indian Department." St. Augustine,
Charleston, and Savannah were the only remaining British posts in the South, and except
for the Seminoles in East Florida, the Indians could not reach these places without
undertaking a long and hazardous journey through rebel-controlled territory. No means

273 Campbell to Clinton, April 9, 1781, in Rush, Spain's Final Triumph, 94-96.
274 Campbell to Clinton, May 7, 1781, and May 12, 1781, in Rush, Spain's Final Triumph, 97, 101.
275 Michael D. Green, "The Creek Confederacy in the American Revolution: Cautious Participants," in
William S. Coker and Robert R. Rea, eds., Anglo-Spanish Confrontation on the Gulf Coast During the
American Revolution, (Pensacola: Gulf Coast History and Humanities Conference, 1982), 71-72.
276 Cameron to Germain, May 27, 1781, DAR, 20:150.
277 Miranda, "Diary," 194.
existed by which the British could provide their allies with arms and supplies. At the end of May, the Indians were already “in the utmost distress for goods among them and particularly ammunition,” Cameron reported. Whether the British could derive further support from the Indians under such conditions, or even maintain the alliance, was an open question.

**African Americans: Steady Support**

During the last months of 1780 and the first half of 1781, blacks continued to aid the British in a variety of ways, providing labor, intelligence of Whig movements, and sometimes armed assistance. The British withdrawal to Charleston and Savannah limited slaves’ opportunities to join the king’s troops. Some blacks were unhappy to find that fleeing to the British had not improved their condition and escaped again or rebelled. In general, however, most African Americans remained a reliable source of support to the British, although neither civil nor military officials had yet devised an official policy for dealing with the slave issue.

Information provided by slaves kept the British informed of rebel plans and often enabled British troops to defeat the Whigs. Slaves provided Cornwallis, Rawdon, Tarleton, and other officers with useful intelligence throughout the fall and winter of 1780. The British thwarted Francis Marion’s plan to capture six British schooners which were transporting supplies on the Santee River when some blacks informed the British of Marion’s intentions. In January 1781, a slave informed a detachment of the Queen’s Rangers of the location of Col. Peter Horry’s rebel partisans. The Queen’s Rangers

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promptly marched to attack Horry, routed the Whigs' advanced guard, and then dispersed the main rebel force.\textsuperscript{280}

Blacks ran great risks when they procured intelligence for the British, as the fate of one man captured in the vicinity of Greene's army made clear. "Yesterday the famous Majr. Gray, the infamous Spy, and Notorious Horse thief, lost His Mullato Head. it is exhibited at Cherraw Hill as a terror to Tories," an American officer reported.\textsuperscript{281}

Most slaves, however, continued to perform the more mundane tasks of laborers on fortifications and plantations. At Ninety Six, slaves worked to strengthen the defenses, a process hampered during the winter of 1780-1781 because, Isaac Allen noted, the "Poor naked Blacks can do but little [in] this cold weather."\textsuperscript{282} When Greene began his siege of the post several months later, Cruger organized slaves into "a sort of labor battalion."\textsuperscript{283} Their duties included improving the fortifications and, on at least one occasion, following the provincials in a sally against the American siege lines, where they gathered up the Whigs' entrenching tools after the troops drove off Greene's soldiers. After the rebels cut off the defenders' water supply, Cruger sent naked blacks on nightly forays to a stream outside the fortifications to get water for those besieged in the fort. This desperate measure enabled the defenders to hold out until Rawdon relieved them.\textsuperscript{284}

In October 1780, Balfour ordered the commanding officer at Georgetown to fortify the town "by callg. in all the Negroes, you want" to construct defenses. When the

\textsuperscript{280} For examples, see Cornwallis to Tarleton, Nov. 14, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/82, 45A; Tarleton to [Tumull?], Nov. 5, 1780; Rawdon to Cornwallis, Nov. 13, 1780; Rawdon to Cornwallis, Dec. 1, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 63, 110, 236; Bass, \textit{Green Dragoon}, 110; George W. Kyte, "Francis Marion as an Intelligence Officer," \textit{SCHM}, Vol. 77, No. 4, Oct. 1976, 224; Bass, \textit{Swamp Fox}, 129.

\textsuperscript{281} O. H. Williams to Morgan, Jan. 25, 1781, Myers Collection, No. 1072, microfilm, DLAR.

\textsuperscript{282} Allen to Henry Haldane, Dec. 29, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 426.

\textsuperscript{283} Ward, \textit{Delaware Continentals}, 447.

work was completed, Capt. John Saunders returned the slaves to their masters. Work on the defenses at Savannah proceeded “very fast” in November, since the governor and Council had ordered planters to provide four hundred slaves for the work. At Augusta, Thomas Brown took advantage of a law passed by the Georgia Assembly in the spring of 1781 to impress slaves to strengthen the forts there. Some of these blacks remained in Fort Cornwallis during the subsequent siege, repairing damage inflicted by the attackers. One slave was killed during the battle, and the Whigs kept the remainder after Brown surrendered.

As important as the slaves’ efforts were in bolstering British defenses, blacks would have contributed much more had not a variety of factors limited their usefulness. Disease, Whig raids, the slaves’ own opposition to performing plantation labor, and the continued failure to establish any kind of consistent policy toward blacks prevented the British from taking full advantage of their slave supporters.

Epidemic disease claimed the lives of numerous slaves and incapacitated others. An outbreak of smallpox at Camden in late 1780 killed many slaves, caused others to flee, and greatly delayed the construction of fortifications. In February 1781, loyalist William Burrows wrote that thirty slaves on his lowcountry plantation had died from smallpox and camp fever and worried that he was “in danger of losing several more.”

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285 Balfour to Blucke, Oct. 25, 1780; G. Benson to Saunders, Feb. 26, 1781; [Saunders?] to [Balfour?], Feb. 26, 1781, Saunders Papers, HCIL.
286 Clarke to Cornwallis, Nov. 29, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 236.
288 Turnbull to Cornwallis, Nov. 3, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 14.
289 William Burrows to unnamed, Feb. 27, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/105, 4.
Rebel raiding parties carried off slaves whenever they could. Robert Muncreef, who had already found it “impossible to employ the Negroes to advantage” for want of a boat to carry products to Charleston, complained in February 1781 that his situation had grown even worse: his estate’s “Stock is much exposed as well as the negroes to a sett of Plunderers who go about in parties & distress the different plantations exceedingly.”290 A month later, Sampson Neyle reported that Whig raiders “took off 41 of my Negroes,” although twenty-four escaped and returned to him.291 “The rebels carried off above 160 of the best of my Negroes and many belonging to other loyal subjects” near the confluence of the Santee and Wateree Rivers, William Bull lamented in June. These raids prevented the lowcountry plantations from producing an appreciable quantity of crops in 1781, which forced John Cruden to purchase food for the slaves, overseers, and loyalist refugees living on the sequestered estates.292

Slaves assigned to plantation labor often resented their situation, having expected more than a simple change of masters when they fled to the British. This dissatisfaction led to an insurrection on John’s Island in January 1781. Several slaves, angered when a white overseer took corn they believed was theirs, attacked him with farm tools. In the ensuing altercation, the overseer killed one slave and injured two others before escaping. Balfour dispatched the loyal militia to restore order. Seven of the slaves were tried for their part in the revolt; one was sentenced to death, a second to branding, and the remaining five to severe whippings.293 Such punishments did nothing to improve relations between blacks and loyalists or to strengthen the slaves’ attachment to the

290 Robert Muncreef to Allen Swainston, Feb. 17, 1781, Margaret Colleton Papers, SCL.
291 Sampson Neyle to John Sandford Dart, March 3, 1781, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/105, 5.
293 Olwell, Masters, Slaves, and Subjects, 149-150.
British cause. Unrest among plantation slaves persisted; in March, Bull noted that with so many white men having left their plantations for military service, “all attention to the care of their Negroes was relaxed, the slaves became ungovernable” and “the code of laws calculated for the government of that class of people could not be carried into execution.”

Without guidance from London, civil and military officials did not consider themselves authorized to establish a slave policy of their own. They continued to devise solutions as problems arose, which never seemed to fully satisfy either slaveowners or slaves. James Simpson told Germain in December 1780 that the board of police in Charleston had been inundated with demands from loyalists that their slaves be returned. Some of the slaves in question had been seized by the Whigs to penalize recalcitrant loyalists; others had been taken by rebel raiders. Simpson declared that the board “should have been glad to have been excused interfering in a matter of so much moment if it could have been delayed.” However, the loyalists were “urgent and clamorous” and had evidence to back their ownership claims, so the board finally relented and ordered all such slaves returned to their owners. Simpson never explained the reasons for the board’s reservations, although they probably hesitated to return some slaves who were serving with the army; they may also have been reluctant to alienate the slaves themselves.

Civil officials also encountered problems with ship captains and military officers over the disposition of slaves. Many of the former carried off slaves when they sailed from Charleston, a practice the board of police tried to halt by fining a captain who had concealed eight blacks aboard his Jamaica-bound vessel in March. Cruden criticized

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army officers for continually requisitioning slaves from sequestered estates for duty with various military departments, thus making it more difficult to make the plantations productive.296

Army officers could not even agree among themselves on how to deal with blacks. In November 1780, when Col. William Mills and his loyal Cheraws militia accompanied Maj. James Wemyss in an expedition along the Black and Peedee Rivers, Wemyss ordered that “all the Captured Negroes were to be put under the Care of Colonel Mills.” According to a witness, “all the Negroes that were taken on that Expedition were either Captured by the Troops or came in of their own Accord.” Wemyss ordered Mills to send the slaves “southward out of the reach of their Rebel Masters.”297 Either Mills could not control the slaves or he used them to harass suspected rebels. Balfour informed Cornwallis that Mills had “three hundred negroes he is carrying across the country pillaging & robbing every plantation he comes to” and asked the earl to put a stop to the plundering.298 Mills insisted that Wemyss had given him one hundred slaves as compensation for losses suffered at the hands of the Whigs; he said that the other 160 slaves he had with him were intended for Cruden’s sequestered estates.299 Cornwallis, however, declared Wemyss’s action “null & void,” observing that while Mills’s “sufferings may be great ... He does not deserve from us any distinguished favour.”300

The large number of blacks with the army in the field also troubled Cornwallis. On December 15, 1780, he informed Tarleton that “there were rather more black

297 Deposition of Ephraim Harrison, Nov. 21, 1780, Emmet Collection #6820, NYPL.
298 Balfour to Cornwallis, Nov. 17, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 149.
299 Col. William Mills to Cornwallis, Nov. 28, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/4, 229.
300 Cornwallis to Balfour, Dec. 11, 1780, Cornwallis Papers, PRO 30/11/83, 36.
attendants, both male and female, than I think you will like to see,” with the British Legion’s convalescents at Winnsboro.\textsuperscript{301} In early January, Cornwallis repeated his orders of September requiring blacks with the army to wear identification badges. At the same time, however, he declared that he did not wish to inconvenience the troops by enforcing the restrictions “relative to Negroes” and asked only that battalion commanders insure that all blacks with their units were placed under the direction of an officer who would be responsible for their conduct. The officers must have complied slowly and reluctantly, because Cornwallis thought it necessary to repeat the orders on January 24.\textsuperscript{302}

When Gen. Alexander Leslie arrived in South Carolina to reinforce Cornwallis, his detachment included a large number of blacks, some of whom had joined the British during their foray in the Chesapeake. These blacks accompanied Leslie’s troops on their march to join Cornwallis and were joined by other slaves along the way. The numerous blacks impeded Leslie’s progress, so on December 27 he issued orders that “All Blacks, or people found in the Camp, not belonging to Offrs. or Deptmts.” were to be immediately placed in confinement.\textsuperscript{303}

At Charleston, army officers had fewer reservations about employing blacks and hired many to work in the various departments. A list published in March 1781 showed 652 blacks employed by the army as laborers, artisans, teamsters, and nurses. Others found work with the navy repairing and maintaining ships. Fifty-six blacks were employed in the Royal Artillery Department in April 1781, 60 the following month, and 74 in June. All were classified as laborers except a handful who were listed as non-commissioned officers. Of these, there were two sergeants in April and one in May and

\textsuperscript{301} Cornwallis to Tarleton, Dec. 15, 1780, in Tarleton, \textit{History of the Campaigns}, 206.
June; King Staniard held that rank each month. Two blacks held corporal’s rank in April and May and four in June; Ned Garorie (or Arorie) and a man named Washington held that rank throughout the period.\textsuperscript{304} Clearly, some British officers believed that a few blacks could be trusted in positions of responsibility.

Rumors reached Greene in February that the British had “ordered two Regts of Negroes’s to be immediately embodied,” but in fact British officials made little use of armed blacks despite the deteriorating military situation.\textsuperscript{305} To hold Camden while he marched to attack Greene’s army outside the town, Rawdon “had the redoubts all manned with Negroes & Tories,” but this was only a temporary expediency. At Pensacola, John Campbell augmented his force with an estimated fifty black “foot soldiers.”\textsuperscript{306} When the town surrendered to the Spaniards, the articles of capitulation stipulated that all “free Negroes, mulattoes, and mestizos will be maintained in their status” and that all slaves who had worked on the British fortifications would be returned to their masters. Any blacks “who during the siege have been absent through fear” were to be returned to their owners when found.\textsuperscript{307}

The assemblies in Georgia and East Florida both passed bills that allowed the governors to arm slaves. Georgia representatives authorizing Wright to do so should an emergency arise, yet even after the fall of Augusta no attempt was made to arm blacks.\textsuperscript{308} The first Assembly ever elected in East Florida convened in late March, and the next month they approved a slave code based on those of Georgia and South Carolina.

\textsuperscript{304} Olwell, \textit{Masters, Slaves, and Subjects}, 254; General List of Negores [sic] Employed in the Royal Artillery Department, Returns of April, May, and June, 1781, Wray Papers, Vol. 6, WLCL.  
\textsuperscript{305} Greene to George Washington, Feb. 28, 1781, \textit{PNG}, 7:370.  
\textsuperscript{307} Articles of Capitulation, May 9, 1781, in Rush, \textit{Spain's Final Triumph}, 89, 90.  
\textsuperscript{308} Samuel Mathis to William R. Davie, June 26, 1819, SCL; Coleman, \textit{Revolution in Georgia}, 139.
Believing that the code's provisions for the trial of slaves were too oppressive, Tonyn and the Council withheld their assent. The Assembly refused to conduct any further business until its version of the code was approved, but finally agreed to refer the matter to officials in London, who eventually ruled in favor of the Assembly.\(^{309}\)

In May, representatives passed a militia law that permitted the provincial government to draft slaves to serve as either laborers or soldiers. Owners would be compensated one shilling per day for drafted slaves; Tonyn considered this a burdensome tax on slaveholders, since he calculated the actual value of a slave's labor at four or five shillings per day. Masters who refused a request to provide slaves would be fined £50 ($6500). Slaves serving in the militia were to be whipped for minor breaches of discipline, whereas whites guilty of the same infractions would be fined. However, no racial distinctions were made for capital offenses, such as sleeping on duty. The law provided rewards in the form of clothing, medals, and money for slaves who demonstrated particular valor, but made no promise of freedom in exchange for service.\(^{310}\)

While British slave policy remained ambiguous, southern Whigs stubbornly clung to their belief that blacks were nothing more than property and deserved to be treated as such. When Daniel Morgan marched toward Ninety Six in December 1780, Gov. Rutledge saw an opportunity to recover some of his slaves who were in the area. He suggested that if Morgan moved nearer the town, the slaves could be recaptured and sent

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to Charlotte. After Morgan’s victory at Cowpens, Rutledge again raised the issue. “I am in great Hopes,” he wrote Morgan, that the general’s success “will afford a good opportunity of bringing away my Negroes.” Rutledge indicated that Andrew Pickens and other rebel militia officers would help Morgan recover the slaves and prodded the general to act “as soon as possible.” If he did not regain his slaves quickly, Rutledge declared, it would be too late for them to plant a crop and he would be unable to earn any profit from their labor for the year.

At Cowpens the Whigs did capture about seventy blacks who had accompanied Tarleton’s detachment. Pickens distributed eight slaves, five men and three women, as booty to some of his militiamen: three rebels received two slaves each for their services and two others were each awarded a single slave. Other blacks were captured in the days following the battle when Whig militia seized part of the British baggage train, including “horses, negroes, wagons and all other property” east of Broad River. A second band of militia captured twenty-seven blacks and twenty-two whites. The former were undoubtedly returned to bondage as spoils of war.

Thomas Sumter took the use of slaves as booty a step further in May 1781, when he decided that slaves seized from loyalist owners should be given as bounties to men who enlisted in South Carolina military units. Sumter considered this an ideal method of gaining recruits for his force and Rutledge concurred. Sumter set the value of a healthy adult slave at $400 and the worth of those over forty or under ten years of age at half that amount. A private would receive a bounty of one prime slave for a ten-month enlistment,

311 John Rutledge to Morgan, Dec. 22, 1780, Myers Collection, No. 1017, microfilm, DLAR.
312 John Rutledge to Morgan, Jan. 25, 1781, Myers Collection, No. 1019, microfilm, DLAR.
313 Higginbotham, Daniel Morgan, 142; Receipts given by Andrew Pickens as agent for the American troops, Jan. 24, 1780 (misdated, should be 1781), Andrew Pickens Papers, SCL.
314 Babits, Devil of a Whipping, 134, 135.
while lieutenants would receive one and a half slaves, captains two, majors three, and a colonel three and one-half. Nathanael Greene approved the plan, observing that “it will have its advantages” so long as care was taken to insure that the slaves used as bounties came only from loyalists. He immediately authorized Sumter to take the blacks captured at Fort Granby “belonging to the Tories or disaffected” and apply them “to the fulfilling your contracts with the ten months Troops.” Francis Marion, however, feared that awarding slaves to recruits would promote plundering and increase the violence of the loyalist-Whig conflict. He therefore refused to implement the policy in his brigade.

In the eight months following the Battle of King’s Mountain, the British position in the Deep South had deteriorated dramatically. Nathanael Greene’s invasion of South Carolina, combined with partisan attacks on British supply lines, made it impossible for Lord Rawdon to hold the backcountry. Thomas Brown’s surrender at Augusta similarly broke the British hold on the interior of Georgia. The loyalists, who had persisted admirably in their support for the British despite defeat and violent persecution, either had to withdraw to the coast with the British or submit to the rebels. Not surprisingly, loyalist morale underwent a precipitous decline in the wake of this disaster. Little help had come from the Indians, even though Cornwallis had finally authorized their use. The Creeks and Choctaws fought well in a losing effort at Pensacola but were not available to take part in the battle against the Whigs. Alone, the Cherokees could do little more than distract the rebels. And the loss of both Augusta and Pensacola, which isolated the

315 Bass, Gamecock, 144.
316 Greene to Marion, May 17, 1781, PNG, 8:276-277.
317 Greene to Sumter, May 17, 1781, PNG, 8:278.
318 Bass, Gamecock, 145.
Indians from the British, raised doubts as to whether the Indians would remain participants in the struggle. Neither the ministry nor army officers were yet ready to arm slaves to meet the emergency; blacks continued as usual to perform dutifully in supporting roles. Rather than tamper with the institution of slavery, British civil and military officials looked to Cornwallis for a victory that would save the situation in the South. The earl, too, wanted to bring on a decisive battle and had marched to Virginia to seek it.
CHAPTER VII
BRITISH COLLAPSE

The last eighteen months of the war in the South saw continued fighting between the king’s supporters and their Whig opponents, but no reversal of the decline in British fortunes. On the contrary, the surrender of Cornwallis’s army at Yorktown, Virginia, in October 1781, and Parliament’s subsequent decision to end the American war insured that defeat was inevitable, no matter what efforts loyalists, Indians, and slaves might make. Yet in spite of their all-but-hopeless circumstances, all three groups stood firm in their allegiance to Britain until the very end.

Loyalist morale, which had plummeted in the spring of 1781 after British troops withdrew from the southern backcountry, recovered in the summer. In both Georgia and South Carolina, loyalists within the British lines provided important service in the militia and emerged to launch punishing raids against the Whigs. Those loyalists who had not withdrawn to Savannah or Charleston with the British also attacked the rebels when opportunity offered, challenging Whig control in both provinces and straining rebel resources. Only after the British government made clear that it would make no further effort against the Americans did loyalist resistance begin to subside, and even then some loyalists were willing to continue the fight had British officials permitted them to do so. Whig offers of pardon, in combination with continued persecution and threats to confiscate loyalists’ property, did induce some people to submit to the rebels. However,
thousands preferred to leave their homes when the British evacuated the southern provinces rather than sacrifice their principles.

The loss of Pensacola and Augusta severed the lines of communication and trade between the British and their Indian allies. Nevertheless, the southern Indians persisted in their commitment to the alliance. Choctaws and Creeks traveled hundreds of miles across rebel-controlled territory, fighting when necessary, to pursue cooperation, while the Chickasaws continued to fight the king’s enemies in the west and the Cherokees raided the Georgia and Carolina frontier. The great distance separating the British and Indians, however, along with the passive military policy adopted after Cornwallis’s surrender, made effective British-Indian operations impossible. Thus the Indians’ efforts were wasted, serving only to bring down Whig retribution on the southern nations. Even worse, the ministry ignored the Indians’ interest at the peace negotiations and ceded all of the land between the Appalachians and the Mississippi to the new United States, so that the Indians would be forced to seek accommodation with their vengeful enemies.

Those slaves who had committed themselves to the British rarely considered the question of changing allegiance; for them, the choice between returning to bondage under rebel masters or gambling on the possibility of freedom with the British was no choice at all. They continued to serve wherever royal officials assigned them. The dire military situation in late 1781 even gave a few South Carolina slaves the chance to take a new role in the conflict. As members of a cavalry unit commonly known as the “Black Dragoons,” former slaves served in combat, providing an effective auxiliary force that horrified the Whigs. The Dragoons and thousands of other blacks left South Carolina and Georgia in the British evacuation, some to find freedom and others to continue in bondage.
The Loyalists: Destruction, Accommodation, or Flight

As British officials struggled to salvage their position in South Carolina in the summer of 1781, they remained uncertain as to whether they could still rely on loyalist support. Nisbet Balfour believed that it was possible to establish a defensive perimeter from Lord's Ferry on the Santee River to Orangeburg and from there south along the Saltketcher River to the Savannah River. “By this it is conceived that we may be able to cover the richer Parts of the Province & it is also proposed to place the Loyalists from the back Country upon the Lands of those, who have so often revolted against us,” he wrote. However, Balfour questioned the reliability of the loyalists, declaring that “the Efforts of our Friends” were “so Pusillanimous, that I fear that Country must be totally ruined & torn to pieces without one single advantage here after to be reaped from the boasted Loyalty” of the South Carolinians.1 John Cruden did not think Balfour would reap the expected benefits from the plantations within the proposed zone of British control, declaring that Whig raids had already ruined the sequestered estates, while many overseers “and other persons employed ... on These Estates have been murdered,” and many others had fled to escape the Whigs’ wrath.2 James Simpson had lost confidence in the loyalists and blamed them for the recent military reverses. The loyalists’ desire to avenge the wrongs they had suffered earlier, Simpson declared, had driven large numbers of South Carolinians, who might otherwise have accepted British rule, to take up arms with the Whigs.3

Yet others found reason for optimism. William Bull told Germain at the beginning of July that “there is great reason to hope that the gloomy representations of

1 Balfour to [Wright?], July 20, 1781, Carleton Papers, Vol. 31, 3633.
2 Narrative and Observations of John Cruden, June 1, 1781, Misc. Mss. SC7003/AT7003, Box 2, NYSL.
the state of the province ... will soon clear up and open a more pleasing prospect.” Bull noted that many loyal and neutral South Carolinians had abandoned the rebels, so that Greene’s army “begins now to melt away.” A few days later, the *Royal Gazette* published the names of 211 men who desired to take the oath to King George. They were instructed to report to the board of police on July 12 to “receive certificates” of their loyalty, which would entitle them to their full rights as British subjects.

Whig observers also found it difficult to assess the loyalists’ attitude. In mid-July, Andrew Pickens had to dispatch some of his militia to check a mixed force of loyalists and Indians that had been raiding in the Long Canes area, while some of his other troops sought another loyalist force commanded by William Cunningham. Pickens also worried about the large number of loyalists who were escaping to Indian territory, evidently to join the Creeks and Cherokees in attacking the rebels. Less than a week later, Pickens noted that some loyalists had launched raids from Indian territory and expressed concern that “the Tories from Orangeburgh” might also launch attacks; however, he also stated that loyalists in the Ninety Six area “are giving up very fast.” Gen. Isaac Huger did not think that the Orangeburg loyalists posed much of a threat, reporting that they “are much displeased, several have sent to me saying they would come in” if Huger could assure their protection. Some of these people also provided Huger with useful information.

Henry Lee believed that if Greene offered the loyalists full pardon, their resistance would

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5 *South Carolina Royal Gazette*, July 7-11, 1781, microfilm, LOC.
8 Isaac Huger to Col. Lewis Morris, Jr., July 26, 1781, *PNG*, 9:86.
evaporate. Greene agreed and ordered his subordinates to give loyalists every incentive to join the Whigs, including pledges of protection and the right to keep their arms.9

Other rebel leaders did not notice any decrease in loyalist resistance, despite the violence the Whigs employed against their opponents. "Such scenes of desolation, bloodshed and deliberate murder I never was a witness to before!" Continental Maj. William Pierce wrote. "Wherever you turn the weeping widow and fatherless child pour out their melancholy tales to wound the feelings of humanity. The two opposite principles of whiggism and toryism have set the people of this country to cutting each other's throats, and scarce a day passes but some poor deluded tory is put to death at his door."10

To retaliate against the Whigs for their cruelty, and also to send a message to those who had taken British protection about the dangers of deserting to the rebels, the British hanged Col. Isaac Hayne of the Whig militia on August 4. Hayne had commanded a rebel party that captured Andrew Williamson near Charleston a month earlier; although Williamson had not taken an active role with the British, the very fact that he had taken the oath to George III made him a traitor in the eyes of most rebels. Balfour had sent a detachment of loyalist cavalry in pursuit of Hayne and these men had defeated the Whigs, killing ten or twelve, released Williamson, and captured Hayne. At his trial, Hayne argued that he had taken the British oath only because the illness of his family placed him under duress, and furthermore, that the oath became invalid after the Whigs regained

9 Henry Lee to Greene, July 29, 1781; Greene to Lee, July 29, 1781; Greene to Pickens, July 30, 1781, PNG, 9:102, 103, 109.
control of the area in which he lived. Rejecting these arguments, Balfour, with Rawdon’s concurrence, sent Hayne to the gallows.\(^{11}\)

With unabashed hypocrisy, the rebels denounced the execution of Hayne as an “open violation of all the laws of humanity and justice.”\(^{12}\) Greene vowed to retaliate as soon as the Whigs captured a British officer of high rank.\(^{13}\) In response to Greene’s threat, Balfour asserted that any such action by Greene could not be justified, since Hayne’s situation was far different than that of military prisoners of war. Therefore, Balfour stated, Greene would only provoke the British to retaliate in kind and a cycle of vengeance might begin. Balfour also reminded Greene that British officers had shown great forbearance by refusing to retaliate in kind “when Lieut: Tulker of the Loyal Militia was publickly executed” and “when Colonel Grierson & Major Dunlap fell, without attempts to secure them, by the hand of Licensed & protected Murderers.”\(^{14}\) Upon learning that some members of Parliament had described Hayne’s execution as murder, several South Carolina loyalists wrote to King George expressing support for the decision to hang Hayne, and enclosed a list of 299 South Carolina loyalists murdered by the Whigs to show which side was guilty of greater cruelty.\(^{15}\)

As Balfour had hoped, Hayne’s execution did intimidate many men who had joined the Whigs after taking protection to return to the loyalist fold. John Rutledge reported that Hayne’s death “had the Effect wch the Enemy foresaw, & expected ... indeed, a much greater Effect than you can conceive.” Most of the “Protection Men” in

\(^{11}\) Balfour to Clinton, July 21, 1781, Leslie Letterbook, microfilm, SCDAH; Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 204-205.
\(^{13}\) Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, 205.
Col. Harden’s regiment of Whig militia “again submitted themselves, to the British Government,” reducing Harden’s force to less than fifty. Fortunately for the rebels, Rutledge wrote, Greene’s proclamation threatening retaliation had “removed the Apprehensions” of the remaining militiamen. But if Greene did not keep his promise to execute a British officer, Rutledge warned, “our Militia will be dispirited, & fall off—Indeed you cannot suppose, if the British offer ’em Pardon, for having joined us, (wch. they do, if they will quit us,) that they will adhere to our Cause, if We refuse to support ’em, by Retaliation.”

Inspired by the defections from the Whig militia, the loyalists continued to resist, complicating Greene’s situation. In early August, sixty men attacked a detachment of Lee’s Legion near Orangeburg and freed seventeen prisoners; accounts indicated that an increasing number of loyalists were coming to the town to cooperate with Isaac Allen’s battalion of New Jersey provincials. Another party of 150 loyalists began attacking the rebels in the Drowning Creek-Pedee River area. Greene complained in frustration that the southern war was far different from that in the north, where “most of the people are warm friends, here the greater part are inveterate enemies.” He told Washington that the southern army was too weak to regain control of South Carolina, in part because the British had the aid of “near 1000 Militia Tories,” who, “being such exceeding good marksmen, will not be the least useful.” Later, Greene revised his estimate and asserted that at least two thousand loyalists were serving in the militia in the fall of 1781.

17 Lee to Greene, Aug. 8, 1781; Thomas Wade to Greene, Aug. 9, 1781, PNG, 9:150-151, 156.
18 Greene to Joseph Reed, Aug. 6, 1781, PNG, 9:136.
19 Greene to Washington, Aug. 6, 1781, PNG, 9:139, 140.
Greene decided that aggressive action might improve his circumstances, so in late August he left his encampment in the High Hills of Santee and advanced toward Charleston. At the same time the British army under Lt. Col. Alexander Stewart, who had assumed command when illness forced Rawdon to return to England, marched to the Santee River. Learning of Greene’s approach, Stewart fell back, but Greene caught up with the British and attacked them on September 8. After a hard-fought battle in which both sides suffered heavy losses, Stewart held the field and forced Greene to retreat. The next day, however, Stewart withdrew and shortly afterward abandoned Orangeburg and other advanced posts to concentrate his forces around Charleston.21

Stewart’s withdrawal allowed the Whigs to claim victory. Gov. Rutledge therefore considered the time opportune to punish anyone who refused to commit to the Whig cause. “Every man who refuses serving when called upon must be deemed an enemy and taken prisoner and sent to the British ... and must not be permitted to return,” he ordered. “All their property must be taken care of for the use of the State.” Individuals holding British paroles, but who had not been under the command of an American officer at the time such paroles were issued, were to join the rebel militia or be classified as enemies and punished. Anyone entering the British lines without permission from Whig officials “must be treated as carrying intelligence to the enemy and suffer accordingly.” Rutledge exempted no one. “Any woman who will go to town or in the enemy’s post without leave, must not be permitted to return,” he declared.22 His punitive measures also included “the wives and families of all such men as are now with and adhere to the enemy.” All of these people were to be forcibly removed from their homes and sent into

21 Alexander Stewart to Cornwallis, Sept. 9, 1781, DAR, 20:227; Pancake, This Destructive War, 216-217, 220-221.
the British lines. Although he was aware that this policy would cause much suffering, Rutledge asserted that the “blame can only be imputed” to their relatives who supported the British “and to the British commanders, whose conduct ... justifies this step.”23 There was to be no middle ground in the final phase of the struggle.

Some Whigs believed that unnecessary cruelty toward loyalists, particularly the seemingly endless murders, would prove counterproductive. If everyone who took the oath to Britain was “punished with death,” Christopher Gadsden wrote, “the natural consequence will be, that they will ... either withdraw with their effects from the Continent, or being driven to dispair will become our determined enemies.”24

Rutledge partially relented in late September, deciding that an offer of pardon to loyalists “would be well-timed at this juncture.” He hoped the offer would convince “many, to return to their allegiance and behave well, which would not only deprive the British of their services, but turn those services to our advantage.” The governor excluded those who held royal commissions or had signed addresses congratulating Clinton and Cornwallis on their victories.25 Loyalists who took an oath of allegiance to the Whigs and agreed to serve six months in the militia would be fully pardoned, preserve their property, and their wives and children would not be forced to go within the British lines.26 Loyalists within the rebel lines who did not swear the rebel oath within thirty days, however, were nonetheless to be compelled to serve in the militia. Rutledge instructed Sumter that anyone who might “insist on their being British Subjects, & therefore, refuse

24 Christopher Gadsden to SC Delegates in Congress, Sept. 17, 1781, Writings of Gadsden, 176.
to do Militia Duty, may take their choice, either of doing it, or going into the Enemy’s Lines, & if they will not go, & refuse to do Duty, they must be tried, & fined.”

Henry Lee believed that neither pardon nor threats would induce the loyalists to submit unless they were convinced that the Whigs held firm control in the state. “In a contention for the confidence of a people, alternately the subjects of each contending power, it is a matter of the highest consequence to preserve the appearance of superiority, if in reality inferior,” Lee declared, “for such decisive weight has interest in the conclusions of the heart, that the man must believe he will ultimately receive protection from your arms before he can persuade himself to become your avowed assistant.”

Even without British support, however, loyalists effectively challenged the rebels in many parts of South Carolina, making it impossible for the Whigs to maintain more than a semblance of control. One rebel officer wrote on September 20 that he had “been much alarmed by the Tories” who had recently raided along Lynch’s Creek, “where they had made robberies and shed blood.” The Whigs failed to locate that loyalist band, so they set off in search of another two hundred loyalists said to be “in full march to destroy or carry our stores at Black Mingo.” These loyalists proceeded as far as Waccamaw, did “a deal of mischief,” and withdrew before the rebels arrived. Yet another party “came down Britton’s neck, and carried off some horses,” which forced the rebels to leave a detachment to guard “against the Tories” in the area.

Along the border between North and South Carolina, other loyalists continued to plague the rebels. “Upwards of 300 hovers” near Little River, Col. Peter Horry reported

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27 John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter, Oct. 9, 1781, Sumter Papers, Vol. 2, LOC.
in late September, adding that they had recently driven off one militia unit sent to check
them and put heavy pressure on others. Hector McNeil was said to have between 1,000
and 1,500 men in the field in North Carolina.30 A few days later, Francis Marion
informed Greene that the "Cheraw Regt is so Disturbed with the torrys I am affraid they
will not come out" and many rebel inhabitants had fled the area. McNeil, Marion added,
had recently given the Whigs "a flogging, killed 11 and wounded & took 30."31 On
September 27, Marion sent more bad news; loyalists in the Saltketcher region had also
become "very troublesome."32 Fortunately for the Whigs, the next day Horry announced
that their militia had defeated McNeil's loyalists and killed their commander, greatly
reducing the loyalist threat in the northeastern part of the state.33

If McNeil's defeat and death damaged the loyalists' position, Cornwallis's
surrender to a combined Franco-American force at Yorktown on October 19 devastated
whatever hopes they retained that the British might yet regain control of the South. In
London, Parliament responded to the news by voting, in January 1782, to halt offensive
military operations against the colonists. Although George III remained determined to
prosecute the war, the ministry's loss of support in Parliament led to Germain's
resignation in February, and the next month Lord North also resigned. Lord Rockingham,
the new chief minister, and the Earl of Shelburne, secretary of state for the colonies, were
both sympathetic to the Americans and opened peace negotiations.34

Inspired by Washington's success, Greene marched his army toward Charleston
in mid-November. Loyalists informed the British of his approach, but the newly arrived

30 Peter Horry to Greene, Sept. 20, 1781, PNG, 9:379.
31 Marion to Greene, Sept. 23, 1781, PNG, 9:386.
32 Marion to Greene, Sept. 27, 1781, PNG, 9:403.
33 Horry to Greene, Sept. 27, 1781, PNG, 9:406.
34 Pancake, This Destructive War, 233-235.
commander of the southern district, Gen. Alexander Leslie, chose not to contest Greene’s advance. Finding the morale of his soldiers poor, Leslie ordered the evacuation of the post at Dorchester, forty miles from Charleston, and also withdrew the troops and loyalists from Wilmington, North Carolina. The only opposition Greene encountered during his march came from loyalists. “Twenty or thirty tories were killed wounded and taken in the different skirmishes,” he wrote.

If the disaster at Yorktown had demoralized the British, it galvanized the loyalists into taking a more active role against their enemies without expecting the army to assist them. William Bull noted that the people in and around Charleston were “with great alacrity laying in large supplies of wood, grain etc. in order to avoid any distress which the want thereof may occasion to them or may weaken the necessary and obstinate defence of the town” and continued to show “a steady attachment to the British government and loyalty to the King.” On November 1, 150 loyalists went to Charleston to obtain “clothes, blankets and arms.” They also brought four wagons to carry the expected issue of ammunition, which they apparently intended to use against the rebels. At Orangeburg, the loyalists “kept Sumter pretty much within his pickets,” and their leader, Henry Giessandanner wrote to Leslie asking for aid to drive out the rebels. Sumter sent an officer to arrest Giessendanner, but the loyalist escaped. Efforts to get other Orangeburg loyalists to accept Rutledge’s offer of amnesty brought so few converts

35 Pancake, This Destructive War, 237; Lee, Revolutionary War Memoirs, 523; Leslie to Clinton, Dec. 1, 1781, DAR, 20:267-268.
37 Bull to Germain, Nov. 11, 1781, DAR, 20:259.
that Sumter declared in frustration that “Nothing but the sword will reclaim them!”

Greene found that “the Tories are getting troublesome and insolent,” not only around Orangeburg but “in the Forks of Edisto, and even up as high as the ridge towards Ninty Six.” He suggested that Sumter and Pickens establish a post at Orangeburg to “check their insolence and prevent supplies from going to Charles Town,” if Sumter thought that the state troops and militia were adequate for the task. Yet another group of loyalists was active at the forks of the Saluda River, endangering Whig forces there.

In accordance with Greene’s instructions, Sumter marched toward Orangeburg, skirmishing with loyalists along his route, only to blunder into a powerful force of loyalists who had launched an offensive from Charleston. The combined strength of the loyalist parties was about five hundred men, under the command of Gen. Robert Cunningham. The loyalists dispersed Sumter’s advance guard, harassed the Whigs in the area for more than a week, and then separated. Cunningham withdrew toward Charleston with some of the troops, while William Cunningham with nearly one hundred men and Hezekiah Williams with two hundred set out on different routes for the backcountry, easily eluding rebel pursuit.

William Cunningham’s detachments defeated their Whig opponents on several occasions. They forced one rebel party to surrender at Tarra’s Spring, after which Cunningham allegedly executed all but two of the prisoners. Cunningham later surrounded another rebel force in a house at Hayes’s Station, forced them to surrender by setting the building on fire, then executed three men who earlier had participated in

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whipping Cunningham’s brother to death. Other loyalists also identified and killed some of the prisoners who had committed cruelties against them or their families.

Cunningham’s troops also burned mills, houses, and crops. Meanwhile, Williams’s party captured a Whig post at Whitehall as well as a wagon train; among the teamsters and guards taken prisoner was Andrew Pickens’s brother John. Williams later turned John Pickens over to some Cherokees, who allegedly burned him to death. Some loyalists chose to go to Cherokee territory and to continue harassing the Whigs from there, but Cunningham and Williams returned to Charleston with most of their men in December, defeating some of Sumter’s troops along the way.44

Cunningham’s raid encouraged other loyalists to strike at the rebels, and Whig leaders feared that loyalist attacks would jeopardize the army’s intended operations. Sumter reported that on November 22 loyalists attacked a rebel foraging party near Orangeburg, killing four men, capturing four, and taking twelve horses.45 “I am convinced you have No Idea of the Number of tories that is between this and Charlestown,” Sumter wrote Greene from Orangeburg. “Which when Collected will be a Great Reinforcement to the enemy” unless something was done to defeat them or win them over to the rebels.46 In addition to the numerous loyalists outside British lines, Greene learned from a reliable informant that “there is in Charlestown not less than 1000 Tories who bear Arms.”47

The Whigs’ fears soon proved to be exaggerated. Leslie’s refusal to provide the loyalists with military assistance, combined with the rebels’ ruthless retaliation for the

44 LeRoy Hammond to Greene, Dec. 2, 1781, PNG, 9:651; Lambert, South Carolina Loyalists, 208-209; Waring, Fighting Elder, 103-104; Bass, Gamecock, 212-213.
45 Sumter to Greene, Nov. 23, 1781, PNG, 9:615.
46 Sumter to Greene, Nov. 24, 1781, PNG, 9:623-624.
47 Greene to Otho H. Williams, Dec. 2, 1781, PNG, 9:650.
havoc Cunningham had wrought, resulted in a collapse of loyalist morale. Sumter’s men scoured the woods and swamps around Orangeburg, killing or capturing several loyalists. A few began to come into the rebel camp and surrender, while others fled west of the Edisto River. Greene and Sumter agreed that a combination of intimidation and offers of pardon would induce many loyalists to submit and this strategy had immediate effect.\textsuperscript{48} As it became clear that no help could be expected from the British army, “the people disheartened by being unsupported, gradually made a submission to the enemy,” a loyalist officer wrote.\textsuperscript{49}

On December 9, Sumter reported that “Considerable Numbers” of “the Outlying Tories, Who are much terified by So Many parties being out,” had surrendered. He allowed most of them to return to their homes, but worried that “from the Temper of the people,” abetted by many militia officers, “I fear Many of them Will be privately Injured.”\textsuperscript{50} Many loyalists decided to take the risk, since it was no greater than the danger they faced if they continued to resist. More than two hundred had given up by December 19 and another fifty had been captured. Sumter noted that “there is Still a Great many lying out,” but he believed that they would soon surrender. “The Number and Retchenedness of the Women & Children Cant be Conceived,” he observed, adding that it was “Utterly out of the power of Many to Move, or Subsist much longer where they are.”\textsuperscript{51}

Some of the afflicted loyalists sought refuge within the British lines; others submitted to the Whigs. Upon arriving in Charleston, Leslie found the loyalists’ distress

\textsuperscript{50} Sumter to Greene, Dec. 9, 1781, \textit{PNG}, 10:24.
so great that he said he would have “to get my heart Steeled” in order to be able to focus on his other responsibilities.52 Their sufferings, Leslie declared, were “beyond belief.” Yet while he lamented his inability to provide the loyalists with more than a fraction of the financial relief they required, he also questioned their military value.53 He complained of the expense involved in supporting “the Several Regiments of militia from Camden, and Ninety Six,”54 even though their 750 men comprised a significant percentage of his total force.55 In addition, he informed Clinton that the South Carolina provincials “are mostly deserted;” only 120 men remained in early December.56

Leslie tried to reduce defections by issuing a proclamation assuring the loyalists that his army was committed to their protection. He attempted to win back those who, “partly through Dread of the Cruelty of their Enemies, and partly from false Representations being made to them of the State of Publick Affairs,” had cast their lot with the Whigs, and at the same time threatened to inflict “the severest Punishments” on anyone who had taken British protection and later took up arms against royal authority.57 The proclamation had little effect, for less than two weeks after it was issued, Leslie noted that “people are daily quitting the town and great part of our militia are with the enemy .... the whole of the country is against us but some helpless militia with a number of officers, women, children, Negroes etc.”58

The loyalists’ fading morale and their frequent desertions came as welcome news to the Whigs, who gained confidence as they realized that their opponents “have lost their

52 Alexander Leslie to the Earl of Leven, Nov. 29, 1781, Alexander Leslie Papers, 26/9/512, NAS.
53 Alexander Leslie to the Earl of Leven, Dec. 14, 1781, Leslie Papers, 26/9/512, NAS.
54 Leslie to Clinton, Dec. 4, 1781, Carleton Papers, Vol. 34, No. 3927.
55 Lambert, South Carolina Loyalists, 220.
56 Leslie to Clinton, Dec. 4, 1781, Carleton Papers, Vol. 34, No. 3926.
58 Leslie to Clinton, Dec. 27, 1781, DAR, 20:287.
spirit & their hopes.” Whig judge Aedenus Burke noted in late January 1782 that about one hundred loyalists from Charleston and the backcountry districts recently deserted to the Americans. “The Tories are turning arrant Rebels,” he exulted.59 Edward Rutledge believed that many people in Charleston were ready to surrender, asserting that “99 in 100 of them would come out if they thought they would be received.”60

One factor encouraging the loyalist exodus was the confiscation legislation passed by South Carolina’s reconstituted Assembly in early 1782. Designed both to raise revenue for the state government and to punish loyalists, the confiscation act seized the property of those whom the Assembly considered the most notorious loyalists, and assessed a twelve percent fee on the estates of lesser offenders. The law, clearly “legislation of revenge,” also banished most of those whose estates were confiscated.61 Those subject to confiscation or amercement included people who had signed congratulatory addresses to British officers, banished loyalists who had returned to South Carolina after the capture of Charleston, men who held civil or military commissions under the British, “& some others who have been guilty of extraordinary Offences.”62

Even some ardent Whigs considered the new law unduly harsh. Edward Rutledge favored limited confiscation and protested when the list of those subject to the act grew to “an amazing Length.”63 Although Burke believed that “the men who are the objects of it should never be received into the bosom of this Country,” he opposed confiscation because it threatened the rights of all citizens to be secure in their property and would

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61 Nadelhaft, Disorders of War, 77.
also create unnecessary hardship by bringing “many families & their children to beggary & ruin.”Arthur Middleton shared Burke’s concern: “I cannot approve of the inhuman Sentence of visiting the Sins of the Fathers upon the guiltless women, Children ... It is a Doctrine suited only to the Climates of Despotism.”

If some Whigs disliked the confiscation act, they were nevertheless satisfied with its results. Only a few days after the legislative committee released its confiscation list, the information filtered into Charleston, where the names of 222 people subject to confiscation were eventually published in the *Royal Gazette.* In response, Whig officials began receiving “several broad Hints” from loyalists in the town, “wishing that we wd permit they would return to their Countrymen.” “The Confiscation Act began to work on them some time since,” Burke noted in May, “and continues to sweat them considerably.” American Maj. William Pierce believed that Burke had understated the loyalists’ reaction, declaring that the confiscation act had “put the tories into a state of insanity, and all they want is the gibbet and halter to put an end to their existence.”

Loyalists denounced the confiscation act as yet another example of the Whigs’ atrocious behavior. One writer called the law “an unprecedented injustice” which revealed the rebels’ true motives: “the desire of power” and “a lust after the wealth of others.” William Bull stated that confiscation was “cruel to the loyalist” and added that members of the rebel Assembly had vied with one another in promoting “an excess of

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65 Arthur Middleton to Burke, April 7, 1782, “Correspondence of Middleton,” Part 2, 29.
66 *South Carolina Royal Gazette*, March 16-20, 1782, microfilm, LOC.
69 William Pierce to St. George Tucker, April 6, 1782, in “Southern Campaign of Greene,” 441.
70 “A Suffering Loyalist” to the printers of the *Royal Gazette*, July 12, 1782, *South Carolina Royal Gazette*, July 10-13, 1782, microfilm, LOC.
of their confiscated property.\textsuperscript{72}

Despite the threat of confiscation and the decline in British fortunes, many loyalists still refused to submit to the Whigs. Leslie noted in late January 1782 that people came into Charleston every day seeking protection.\textsuperscript{73} Having kept his militia in the field until the British army withdrew into the lines around the town, Robert Ballingall was one of those who abandoned their homes to seek safety with the British. The Whigs immediately took their vengeance; his “Plantation and House was plundered, his negroes & Effects carried off,” and his property seized by state officials.\textsuperscript{74}

Other loyalists remained outside the lines and harassed the Whigs when opportunity offered. On January 2, 1782, near Gov. Rutledge’s plantation, Pennsylvania Continentals who had recently arrived to reinforce Greene realized that their ammunition wagons had fallen behind during the march. Fearing that “the Tories, who are very numerous, should take them,” troops were sent back to escort the wagons to camp. That night loyalist raiders fired on the guards, but failed to capture the wagons.\textsuperscript{75} A few days earlier, a Pennsylvania officer noted that in a “German settlement” south of the Congaree River, where his regiment had camped, the inhabitants were, “like the greater part of this country, all Tories.”\textsuperscript{76} However, these loyalists generally avoided combat with regular

\textsuperscript{71} Bull to Germain, March 25, 1782, \textit{DAR}, 21:50.
\textsuperscript{72} Frey, \textit{Water from the Rock}, 137.
\textsuperscript{73} Leslie to Clinton, Jan. 29, 1782, \textit{RAM}, 2:388.
\textsuperscript{74} Memorial of Robert Ballingall, Mar. 13, 1786; Affidavit of Balfour, Mar. 10, 1783; Affidavit of Leslie, Jan. 30, 1784, Misc. Mss., SC7003/AT7003, 154, 154a, NYSL.
troops, focusing their attacks on individuals and small parties of militia. Their raids sparked vicious little battles in which neither side gave quarter.\textsuperscript{77} In addition to the casualties they inflicted, these diehard loyalists often forced Greene to divert troops from his main force. For example, the rebel general had to send a militia company to the Beaufort area in January “to protect and guard that part of the Country ... from the ravages of the Tories.”\textsuperscript{78}

As usual, the Whigs responded to this harassment by unleashing a torrent of violence upon any loyalists they could find. The “inveterate hatred & spirit of Vengeance” the rebels displayed shocked Burke, although he attempted to justify it by claiming that it had been inspired by the earlier “cruelty of the British.” He noted that South Carolina women “talk as familiarly of shedding blood & destroying the Tories as the men do,” and observed that one member of the Assembly “kept a tally of men he has killed on the barrel of his pistol, and the notches amount to twenty-five. I know another who has killed his fourteen, &c. &c.”\textsuperscript{79} Burke asserted that the Whigs were so consumed with vengeance that “you cd. not enter a Company that some do not talk of hanging many hundreds.” If the laws against murder, theft, and house-burning were enforced, he declared, “I may venture to affirm, there are not one thousand men in the Country who cd. escape the Gallows.”\textsuperscript{80}

Amidst the carnage and chaos, the loyal militia continued to serve and often performed well in cooperation with regular troops. The South Carolina Royalists comprised part of a force that inflicted a costly defeat on the rebels outside Charleston in

\textsuperscript{77} Aedenus Burke to Arthur Middleton, Jan. 25, 1782, “Correspondence of Middleton,” Part 1, 192.
\textsuperscript{78} Greene to Joseph Vince, Jan. 3, 1782, PNG, 10:155.
\textsuperscript{80} Aedenus Burke to Arthur Middleton, May 14, 1782, in “Correspondence of Middleton,” Part 1, 200, 201.
January.\textsuperscript{81} On February 24, Col. Benjamin Thompson, a New Hampshire loyalist who commanded the British cavalry during his brief stay in South Carolina, emerged from the British lines to attack and rout Marion’s brigade. Thompson praised the “spirit and intrepidity” the militia demonstrated in the battle. “No men behaved with greater gallantry,” he wrote.\textsuperscript{82} John Cruden had formed his own loyalist cavalry unit in October 1781 to protect the sequestered plantations. Before the troops were ready, Cruden realized that they would not be strong enough to resist Greene’s army, so he instead financed the construction of galleys and assigned the erstwhile cavalrmen to these vessels. The troops and galleys succeeded in covering some of the plantations long enough for their produce to be shipped to Charleston. When Leslie’s army retired within the town’s defenses, however, Cruden had to abandon the sequestered plantations that lay outside British lines.\textsuperscript{83}

Encouraged by the performance of his loyalist troops, Cruden then devised a plan to enlist seven hundred of the refugees in Charleston and form a corps of marines to raid along the coast. He brought the proposal to Balfour, who replied that he lacked the authority to approve the plan and suggested that Cruden seek permission from Clinton. Cruden wrote to Clinton on February 19, explaining that he would provide his marines with vessels, augment their numbers with “a few Companys of determined Negroes,” and send them to raid the coastal inlets, capturing or destroying rebel privateers and merchant ships. He even offered to equip this corps at his own expense.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{81} Lambert, \textit{South Carolina Loyalists}, 221.
\textsuperscript{82} Benjamin Thompson to Leslie, Feb. 25, 1782, \textit{RAM}, 2:404-405.
\textsuperscript{83} Narrative of John Cruden, [1782], South Carolina Loyalists, South Carolina Box, NYPL.
\textsuperscript{84} John Cruden to Sir Henry Clinton, Feb. 19, 1782, in Crary, ed., \textit{The Price of Loyalty}, 292.
An even more ambitious plan was proposed by the Earl of Dunmore, former governor of Virginia, who arrived in Charleston in late December. During his stay in Charleston, Dunmore "endeavoured to procure the best information of the state of affairs." These inquiries convinced him that loyalists were numerous enough to retake control of the southern colonies if properly led. Dunmore asked Germain for permission to recruit a loyalist force separate from the regular military establishment, with which he would carry out this plan.85 However, by that time both Clinton and Germain knew they were about to be replaced and took no action on the proposals. Their successors rejected both plans.86

By the spring of 1782, the loyalists were ready to join in an offensive to retake the interior of South Carolina. "If ever our army take the field they will give a powerful assistance," Robert Gray wrote. "Ninety-Six & Orangeburg Districts would be recovered by their own inhabitants & they would not be easily dispossessed again."87 But when it became clear that the British had ruled out any further aggressive action, the loyalists offered to take matters into their own hands.

On April 1, a rebel spy who had just left Charleston informed Greene that the loyalists hoped to launch an attack against the rebels. "The refugees and most respectable inhabitants have had two or three meetings," the informant reported, "and addressed Gen. Leslie to request he would make use of 1200 of them as soldiers, and go out and attack the army you command."88 Additional information reached Greene on April 11 that "the Refugees are pushing the General [Leslie] very hard" for permission to undertake an

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85 Dunmore to Germain, Feb. 5, 1782, DAR, 21:36-37.
87 Gray, "Observations," 158.
88 Unnamed to Greene, April 1, 1782, in Gibbes, ed., Documentary History, 3:288.
offensive. Greene initially believed the reports and expected an attack.\(^8^9\) Many American officers, however, doubted that Leslie would approve of such a measure.\(^9^0\)

Parliament’s prohibition of offensive action in the colonies did prevent Leslie from authorizing an attack by the loyalists in Charleston, but those outside British lines persisted in fighting the Whigs despite the apparent hopelessness of their situation. In the vicinity of Georgetown, loyalist activity had become such a threat by early March that Marion advised Peter Horry to remove the vessels and supplies at the town to safety at Black Mingo “and send a guard there for their protection from the Tories.”\(^9^1\) A few days later, Marion instructed Horry to build a redoubt at Black Mingo for greater security in the event that loyalists mounted a surprise attack.\(^9^2\) Farther inland, along the Little Pedee River, loyalists burned the house of Whig Col. Abel Kolb on April 28, then executed Kolb after he surrendered because “he had been so notorious a villain.”\(^9^3\) Two weeks later, another party of loyalists operating in the area captured Col. Hezekiah Maham, one of Marion’s best officers, in his own home. Maham and his fellow prisoner, a rebel lieutenant, “expected nothing else then to be torturd in the Most Horrid Manner,” but to their surprise the loyalists paroled them.\(^9^4\)

South and west of Charleston other loyalists also challenged the Whigs. Gen. John Barnwell, commanding rebel militia in that region, told Greene in March that he could not defend the area adequately and that two of his regiments were unable to leave their home districts to do duty elsewhere “or the Torys will destroy every thing.”\(^9^5\)

\(^8^9\) Greene to Marion, April 12, 1782, PNG, 11:36.
\(^9^0\) Josiah Harmar to Otho Holland Williams, April 10, 1782, Williams Papers, MHS.
\(^9^1\) Marion to Peter Horry, March 7, 1782, in Gibbes, ed., *Documentary History*, 3:264.
\(^9^2\) Marion to Peter Horry, March 13, 1782, in Gibbes, ed., *Documentary History*, 3:271.
\(^9^5\) John Barnwell to Greene, March 6, 1782, PNG, 10:458.

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Greene himself noted that Georgia and the Carolinas “are still torn to pieces by little parties of disaffected who elude all search, and conceal themselves in the thickets and swamps from the most dilligent pursuit and issue forth from these hidden recesses committing the most horrid Murders and plunder and lay waste the Country.” He asserted that “altho their collective force is not great yet they do a world of mischief and keep the people in perpetual alarms and render traveling very unsafe.” However, Greene believed that the Whigs were gaining the upper hand against the loyalist raiders.96

British observers also commented on the fierce nature of the fighting behind rebel lines, but believed that it was growing in intensity. Robert Biddulph wrote that “the War has driven both Parties to that State of Animosity that they fight whenever they meet with’t prospect of Advantage, like two Species of Animals whose Nature it is to work the Destruction of each other.”97

Biddulph’s assessment of the situation proved more accurate than Greene’s as loyalist activity continued unabated throughout the spring. Shortly after Greene had declared that loyalist activity was subsiding, a raiding party captured a Whig messenger carrying military dispatches, and on April 10 a rebel officer complained that Greene’s correspondence was frequently being intercepted.98 Another Continental officer described the area around the army as “Totally abandon’d to the Torys, and the Roads Dayle infested by those Miscreants.”99 Near Orangeburg, one party based in Dean’s Swamp ambushed a Whig force that was attempting to root them out. Recovering from the unexpected assault, the Whigs counterattacked, but managed only to drive the loyalists

96 Greene to Robert Morris, March 9, 1782, PNG, 10:469.
98 Major John Wallace to Greene, March 26, 1782, PNG, 10:542; Mordecai Gist to John Sterett, April 10, 1782, Gist Papers, MHS.
deeper into the swamp at the cost of many casualties. At the end of May, loyalists on a foray from Charleston captured a rebel lieutenant, two other men, and several horses.

Some loyalists demonstrated a growing willingness to cooperate with blacks against the rebels. "Two hundred of those persons called Refugees including some Negroes Armed" left James Island in late April and on two successive nights "plundered all the Inhabitants on Ashly River Neck" for a considerable distance. Expecting further attacks, residents of the area begged Greene for protection.

Greene’s aide, Maj. Ichabod Burnet, conceded that the Whigs had proved unable to suppress loyalist partisans. "The disaffected are numerous and their Situation so desperate," he wrote, "that they confine themselves to their private haunts and conceal themselves in the Swamps from whence they issue forth and murder and rob every person on the road." The danger was so severe that "in the greatest part of the three Southern States it is unsafe to travel without an escort of Dragoons." This was made plain on May 7 when only three loyalists succeeded in capturing and burning six wagons filled with supplies for Greene’s army; the raiders also took most of the horses. The repercussions of the attack were felt long afterwards. A month later, a rebel officer reported that he was unable to ship provisions from North Carolina to Greene’s army because after news of the incident spread, no one could be found to drive the wagons.

When the flow of supplies finally resumed in late May, Greene found it necessary to send Lt. William McDowell with a detachment of Continentals to the Congaree River to guard a shipment of clothing coming to the American army. McDowell reported that "the Tories

100 Johnson, Traditions and Reminiscences, 548-549.
101 Marion to Greene, June 1, 1782, PNG, 11:278.
102 Thomas Farr to Greene, April 27, 1782, PNG, 11:127.
103 Maj. Ichabod Burnet to Charles Pettit, April 12, 1782, PNG, 11:38.
104 Capt. William Pierce, Jr., to the Officer Commanding at Orangeburg, May 8, 1782; Capt. Abner Crump to Greene, May 8, 1782; Col. Thomas Wade to Greene, June 11, 1782, PNG, 11:172, 173, 321.
was very troublesome" in that area. After marching a mere twenty-five miles from Greene's camp, McDowell reported that he was “in the midst” of a loyalist stronghold.  

Emboldened by their ability to operate with impunity virtually within musket shot of the Continental army, some loyalists plotted to seize its commander. A woman who lived on Ashley River concocted the bold plan of luring Greene away from his camp and arranging his capture. She invited the general and his wife to her home for dinner, then notified British officials in Charleston of the time and location of the gathering so that troops could be dispatched to capture the American commander. The scheme nearly succeeded, but a rebel in Charleston happened to witness the woman’s meeting with British officers and somehow deduced its purpose. On the evening of April 29, this man managed to leave Charleston, reached the woman’s house, and interrupted dinner to warn Greene, his wife, and two aides that “he was not safe in that place, for there was a plot laid for him.” Greene immediately left “and had not been gone twenty minutes when the house was surrounded by a number of the British Horse.” The commander of the detachment was “sadly disappointed” to learn he had so narrowly missed his quarry.  

The Whigs’ continuing inability to establish control of the province had an effect on both Greene’s own troops and the civilian population. William Peters, the general’s steward, was angered by the army’s lack of success and constant supply shortages and opened a correspondence with loyalists in Charleston. He eventually agreed to enlist other disgruntled American soldiers for British service, but was caught and sentenced to death. At the same time, many former Whigs who had taken British protection chose to await the outcome of the ongoing struggle before recommitting themselves to the rebels.

Edward Rutledge derisively referred to such people as “protection Gentry” and complained that “not one in ten ... will do any Duty at all. The Reason is plain; if the Enemy should again get the Country, they can do what you & I cannot, that is, they can turn back again, & live as easy under one Government as another; Curse on such Politics & such Principles!”\(^{108}\)

The British, too, had problems with lukewarm supporters. A steady stream of disheartened loyalists trickled out of Charleston, avoiding both the British posts intended to keep them in the town and American patrols attempting to prevent their escape. Leslie complained to Clinton that “some of the leading people of our militia” were escaping to the rebels “and persuading others to follow them.”\(^{109}\) In a three-day period in late April, between thirty and forty people made their way back to their homes from Charleston. Edward Rutledge thought that they would be allowed to stay “if they are peaceably inclined; if not, the People in that part of the State will soon make their Situation very uncomfortable.” But Rutledge believed they had suffered enough misfortune to discourage them from acting in support of the British. “The Tories in general seem heartily tired of their Situation,” he concluded.\(^{110}\) An officer in Greene’s army agreed. “The loyalists in Charles Town and upon the islands within its vicinity are very much dissatisfied with their situation,” he wrote. “They complain bitterly of their ill-usage, and desert every day to the American standard.”\(^{111}\)

Leslie attributed the loyalists’ desertion in part to the cruel treatment prisoners received from the Whigs and appealed to Greene to halt the brutality. When the Whig

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\(^{108}\) Edward Rutledge to Arthur Middleton, April 14, 1782, Edward Rutledge Letters, SCHS.

\(^{109}\) Leslie to Clinton, March 12, 1782, \textit{RAM}, 2:418.

\(^{110}\) Edward Rutledge to Arthur Middleton, April 23, 1782, in “Correspondence of Middleton,” Part 2, 14.

\(^{111}\) William Pierce to St. George Tucker, April 6, 1782, in “Southern Campaign of Greene,” 441.
commander failed to send a satisfactory response, Leslie threatened retaliation. On May 18, he reminded Greene that he had received no answer to his complaint that Capt. House of the loyal militia was confined in irons at Orangeburg, and pointed out that two other militiamen, Henry Johns and James Nix, were similarly confined. "Having thus on principles of humanity" failed to effect their release, Leslie issued an ultimatum, stating that unless the three loyalists were released, "immediate orders will be given for retaliating, to the extent of its rigours, their treatment on the persons" of an equal number of rebel prisoners, "in which I shall not discriminate between civil or military characters."

Such a severe response was necessary, Leslie said, to "evince to His Majestys faithful subjects in this province, that their interest and security, will be at all times, with me, a principal object of consideration."\(^{112}\)

Although a Charleston merchant noted that "militia Duty is ... severe on the inhabitants," many loyalists continued to serve with the faithfulness Leslie had noted\(^ {113}\). Hundreds helped to man the defensive lines around Charleston, and the militia provided about half of the 750 troops stationed on James Island\(^ {114}\). Yet Leslie and his subordinates understood that a factor more important than fear of Whig cruelty was working to undermine loyalist morale. At a meeting on April 15, British officers observed that Charleston residents "are mostly of doubtful principles, many desirous by every means to make their peace" with the rebels, and thus "there is too much reason not implicitly to

\(^{112}\) Leslie to Greene, May 18, 1782, Leslie Letterbook, SCDAH.

\(^{113}\) John Hicks to Thomas Dickson, Jr., May 27, 1782, in Robert Earle Moody and Charles Christopher Crittenden, eds., "The Letter-Book of Mills & Hicks (Nathaniel Mills and John Hicks), August 13\(^{th}\), 1781 to August 22\(^{nd}\), 1784, at Charles Town (South Carolina), Saint Augustine (East Florida), New York (New York), and Granville (Nova Scotia)," \textit{NCHR} Vol. 14, No. 1, Jan. 1937, 62.

confide in the attachment of the Militia.” The officers agreed that persistent rumors that Charleston would soon be evacuated were the principal cause of this disaffection.115

Given added credence by the withdrawal of two British regiments from Charleston at the end of April, reports that the evacuation of the province was imminent, combined with offers of pardon, convinced many loyalists to cease resistance.116 One especially dangerous band of “Out Lyers,” which had killed many Whigs including a member of the Assembly and defied all efforts to defeat them, agreed in mid-May to return to their homes after Gov. John Mathews sent them “terms of pardon & reconciliation.”117

In the Pedee region, Micajah Gainey and sixty-five of his men renewed their activities in May, forcing Greene to detach Marion to quell them. Greene hoped that Marion could convince the loyalists to submit without bloodshed. Gainey also preferred to avoid further combat and sent representatives to Marion asking what peace terms the Whigs were willing to offer. At a conference on June 7, Marion and Gainey reached an agreement. The loyalists pledged to lay down their arms, give up all their military supplies, captured property, and prisoners, take an oath to the United States, and conduct themselves peaceably. In return, Marion promised them full protection for their persons and property. Any loyalists who chose not to comply were given until June 25 to go into the British lines. The black loyalist partisan, Gibson, and David Fanning and his troops were exempted from the treaty, but managed to reach British-held territory.118 Marion

115 Meeting of a Board of Field Officers, April 15, 1782, Leslie Letterbook, microfilm, SCDAH.
117 Aedenus Burke to Arthur Middleton, May 14, 1782, in “Correspondence of Middleton,” Part 1, 201.
118 Marion to Greene, May 21, 1782; Capt. William Pierce, Jr., to Marion, May 24, 1782, PNG, 11:232, 238. Articles of a Treaty between General Marion ... and Major Ganey, June 7, 1782, in Moultrie, Memoirs, Vol. 2, 419-421; Bass, Swamp Fox, 236-237; Lambert, South Carolina Loyalists, 205-206; James, Life of
permitted some loyalists to go to Charleston, he explained to Greene, because they “had
Committed so many Enormaties that my men woud kill them tho they had been pardon’d,
& they ware so Attached to the British that they woud never Comply With any terms,”
but instead take to the swamps and “give us a Great deal of trouble to subdue them.” The
effect of the treaty justified this concession. Twenty men from the Lynch’s Creek area
and thirty from the Cheraws promptly “came in & submitted” after learning that the
agreement also applied to them. Marion believed that the treaty would finally pacify
northeastern South Carolina.119 Despite doubts as to whether most of the inhabitants in
the Pedee region agreed with Gainey’s actions, Leslie approved of the agreement because
it restored “tranquility” and prevented unnecessary loss of life.120

By the time he learned of the treaty, Leslie knew that further loyalist resistance
was futile. On June 11, Leslie received orders from Gen. Sir Guy Carleton, who had
replaced Clinton as commander-in-chief in America, to evacuate Charleston, Savannah,
and East Florida as soon as adequate shipping was available.121

Leslie tried to conceal the news as long as possible, but finally published the
evacuation order on August 7.122 The announcement threw the loyalists into a panic, and
news of their consternation soon reached the American lines. Col. Tadeusz Kosciuszko
heard that the evacuation orders had caused “Great terror and confusion among the Tories
and the Inhabitence of the Town.”123 Lewis Morris told his father that “you cannot
possibly conceive the confusion despair and distresses which prevail” in the town. Morris

Marion, 166-167. The treaty is misdated 1781 in Moultrie, and Lambert also uses that date, although the
Greene Papers clearly indicate that this occurred in 1782.
119 Marion to Greene, June 9, 1782, PNG, 11:313-314.
120 Leslie to Greene, June 30, 1782, PNG, 11:383.
121 Leslie to Carleton, June 11, 1782 (two letters of this date), Carleton Papers, Vol. 42, Nos. 4771, 4772.
122 Lambert, South Carolina Loyalists, 250.
123 Kosciuszko to Otho Holland Williams, [1782], Williams Papers, MHS.
stated that many loyalists “are determined to throw themselves upon the mercy and protection of their country,” but those “whose crimes are too atrocious to be pardoned” intended to seek refuge in East Florida.\(^{124}\)

In succeeding days, “a prodigious number of refugees” left Charleston.\(^{125}\) They included militiamen and civilians “of all ranks and denominations” who sought “to make their peace with the State.” Lt. William McDowell of Greene’s army, on guard duty at the American outposts, was “much troubled” when nearly three hundred people entered Whig lines to seek pardon from Gov. Mathews.\(^{126}\) Three militia deserters told John Laurens that “their Comrades do duty with reluctance & are anxious only for opportunities to escape.”\(^{127}\)

Mathews encouraged the exodus by offering amnesty to loyalists; with victory certain, the Whigs’ desire for vengeance began to wane. “The minds of men are growing more cool, & subsiding into calmness,” Aedenus Burke observed. The governor still wished to prosecute loyalists accused of serious crimes, but only through proper judicial proceedings. He asked Burke to convene a special court at Orangeburg to try about one hundred loyalists.\(^{128}\)

Although state officials encouraged loyalists to flee Charleston, Greene ordered his troops to turn back the refugees in the hope that food shortages in the town would speed the British evacuation. Maj. Ebenezer Denny of the Pennsylvania Continentals, whose soldiers guarded a bridge over the Ashley River in October, disagreed with the general’s policy. “Many poor devils had taken protection and followed the British in” to


\(^{126}\) McDowell, “Journal,” 327.

\(^{127}\) John Laurens to Major Burnet, Aug. 10, 1782, John Laurens Papers, SCL.

the town, Denny wrote, "and those people sick of their situation — they were anxious to get back to their old places of abode in the country. Some very miserable objects came out — whole families, battered and starving." Denny felt such pity for these loyalists that he sent an appeal to headquarters, expecting that "upon my representation, leave would be given to let them pass." Greene, however, would not relent, a decision Denny considered "an unnecessary cruelty." Nevertheless, many American officers apparently ignored Greene's orders. In November, a Continental officer estimated that an average of thirty people per week were leaving Charleston and believed that more refugees would have reached American lines had British patrols not prevented their escape.

Some loyalists who preferred to remain in Charleston sought to ingratiate themselves with the Whigs by acting as spies. One unnamed informant, an English-born "Gentleman," made his private peace with the rebels by providing them with information on such matters as the quantity of provisions in Charleston and the positions of British troops. A Maryland officer wrote that he had "several capital spies in town, who furnish me ... with every interesting intelligence," including "accurate returns" of British strength. Col. Edward Fenwick of the loyal militia became one of Greene's most reliable informers. The American commander praised Fenwick for the valuable service he had provided, and Greene promised "to use all my influence" to have Fenwick's citizenship and property restored after the war.

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130 William Seymour, Journal of the Southern Expedition, 41.
133 Greene "To Whom It May Concern," Aug. 14, 1782, PNG, 11:545.
British merchants in Charleston also decided to make their own accommodation with the Whigs. At an August 8 meeting, they appointed ten men to represent them and petitioned Leslie asking what measures had been taken to provide for their security after the army evacuated the town. If Leslie could not guarantee their safety, they asked his permission to open private negotiations with Mathews. Leslie’s aide replied that no provisions could be made for the merchants’ security and approved their plan to negotiate. The merchants then requested permission from Mathews to remain in Charleston for eighteen months after the British evacuation to sell their stocks of merchandise and collect outstanding debts. Mathews consented to their remaining, but only for six months.\(^{134}\)

Outside British lines, loyalists continued to control some parts of South Carolina into the summer of 1782, but began to surrender after learning that the British army was to leave Charleston. In mid-July, Mathews observed that the state government still could not exert its authority in many areas and that each region outside Whig control served as “a nest for a great part of the devils in the British service.”\(^{135}\) Once news of the planned evacuation circulated, however, rebel officers reported that the loyalists became “quiet and peaceable” and “are joining us very fast.”\(^{136}\)

As gloomy as their circumstances appeared, many loyalists chose to continue fighting. Just two days after Gainey and Marion came to terms, Greene ordered Marion to rush his troops to the Santee region. “The Tories in that quarter are doing Great Mischief,

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\(^{134}\) Proceedings of the Merchants & Citizens of Charlestown, Aug. 8, 1782; Major Wemyss to the Merchants and Citizens, Aug. 10, 1782; Memorial and Petition of the Committee representing the Merchts. & other Citizens of Charles town to Governor Mathews, [Aug. 11, 1782]; Mathews’ Answers to Proposals, Aug. 14, 1782, George Chalmers Collection, LOC.

\(^{135}\) John Mathews to Francis Marion, July 18, 1782, in Gibbes, Documentary History, 2:200.

\(^{136}\) Col. William Davis to Francis Marion, August 24, 1782, in Gibbes, ed., Documentary History, 2:212.

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& distressing all the good people” in that area,” Greene wrote.137 Andrew Pickens had to
leave many of his militiamen behind when he marched to join Greene’s army in late July,
because “several parties of Tories” began raiding in the Long Canes district, requiring
many men to remain to protect their crops and families.138 After Pickens returned to Long
Canes in early September, he reported that the area was again in “Allarm & Confusion”
as the result of loyalist attacks. The Whigs, however, eventually killed or drove off most
of the raiders.139

Other loyalist bands met a similar fate. Learning that as many 1,500 loyalists were
concealed in swamps near the Edisto River, Greene ordered Sumter to circulate offers of
pardon along with false rumors that the Americans were to receive substantial
reinforcements in hopes of inducing them to surrender. These tactics led many loyalists to
submit, many of them women and children. Others remained in their hideouts, so Sumter
assigned several Catawba Indians to hunt them down, but the Catawbas could not find all
of them. In Ninety Six district, the Whigs used dogs to track loyalist partisans and
succeeded in killing and capturing several men who had been raiding in the area.140

Angered by the Whigs’ confiscation laws, some Charleston loyalists in September
“solicited Gen. Leslie for leave to go out into the Country and make reprisals of all
property they could lay their hands on to compensate themselves for what they had lost.”
British merchants, busily trying to negotiate their own agreement with American
authorities, “remonstrated with Gen. Leslie against sending expeditions to the Country
and Plundering property.” Leslie refused to authorize the proposed raid. When David

137 Greene to Marion, June 9, 1782, PNG, 11:311.
138 Pickens to Greene, July 23, 1782, PNG, 11:452.
139 Pickens to Greene, Sept. 7, 1782, PNG, 11:633-634.
140 Thayer, Nathanael Greene, 388-389; Ward, Between the Lines, 176.
Fanning left Charleston that same month "to endeavour to accomplish some vile Purpose," rumors circulated that he intended "to carry the Head" of Greene, Marion, or another prominent Whig back to Leslie. The report, however, proved completely false.\textsuperscript{141}

Other loyalists believed that with the help of armed slaves, they could retain control of Charleston after the British troops departed. On August 5, John Laurens sent Greene intelligence from Charleston indicating that a committee of diehard loyalists planned to ask Leslie for "Arms Ammunition &c for the defence of Charlestown which they promise to undertake with the aid of Negroes." The plan, Laurens said, "resembles the desperate unavailing efforts of a drowning man."\textsuperscript{142} Several days later, Whig Capt. William Wilmot heard a similar report; his informant asserted that the loyalists wished to make their appeal to Carleton in person and insisted they could "defend themselves in the Town" with the aid of "all the Neggros now in their Lines."\textsuperscript{143} Perhaps as an offshoot of this plan, a "party of Whites & Blacks" emerged from Charleston in September and burned houses and carried off provisions in the Goose Creek area.\textsuperscript{144}

All of these schemes came to naught after failing to win Leslie's approval. On October 10, the first stage of the evacuation began as almost 1,100 men of the South Carolina Royalists, King's Rangers, and Royal North Carolina Regiments embarked for St. Augustine. They were accompanied by loyalist civilians, family members, and slaves. Later in the month, another five hundred loyalists sailed for Nova Scotia. A few wealthy loyalists chartered ships and left the province.\textsuperscript{145} Chaos reigned in Charleston in late

\textsuperscript{141} Thomas Farr to [Nathanael Greene], Sept. 9, 1782 [misdated 1783], "Revolutionary Letters," \textit{SCHGM}, Vol. 38, No. 1, Jan. 1937, 9-10.

\textsuperscript{142} John Laurens to Greene, [Aug. 5, 1782], \textit{PNG}, 11:490.

\textsuperscript{143} William Wilmot to Ichabod Burnet, Aug. 8, 1782, \textit{PNG}, 11:507.

\textsuperscript{144} Sarah Detolleare to Greene, Sept. 10, 1782, \textit{PNG}, 11:641.

November as preparations were completed for the last phase of the evacuation. "It is impossible to describe, what Confusion people of all denominations, seem to be in at the thought of the Approaching evacuation," a loyalist soldier wrote. Some people bought up all the goods they could, others tried to make sure they had a place on the transports or "went from house to house" trying to collect debts, while "the Young Ladies" were heartbroken at the thought of being left in "the power of the Merciless and Insolent" Whigs. Leslie and his officers managed to restore sufficient order to get the ships loaded, and on December 14 the fleet carrying 3,794 whites and 5,333 blacks left Charleston as American troops entered the town.

While the evacuees set about rebuilding their lives in England, Jamaica, Nova Scotia, or other British colonies, those loyalists who remained behind often found that their sufferings were far from over. Upon entering Charleston, Gov. Mathews appointed Daniel Stevens sheriff of the town, giving him orders to arrest and confine anyone he found who was named in the banishment and confiscation acts. Stevens arrested a total of 126 loyalists, who were confined until they could be put on trial.

In the backcountry, groups of Whigs gathered at night to strike at those loyalists they considered most obnoxious. "Wherever we found any Tories, we would surround the house, one party would force the doors and enter sword in hand, extinguish all the lights," and then "commence hacking the man or men that were found in the house, threatening them with instant death," James Collins recalled. While the attack took place inside, other Whigs "would mount the roof of the house and commence pulling it down; thus the dwelling house, smoke house and kitchen, if any, were dismantled and torn down."

146 Nase, Diary, Nov. 27, 1782, NBM.  
147 McCowen, British Occupation, 149n; Lambert, South Carolina Loyalists, 255.  
Collins noted that the attacks were meant to intimidate rather than kill: sword blows were deliberately misdirected at furniture and other objects. "There were none of the poor fellows much hurt, only they were hacked about their heads and arms enough to bleed freely." But this was enough to extort promises from the victims that they would leave the state and never return, which was the object of these assaults. "I never knew an instance of one that failed to comply," Collins stated, "and numbers put off without any such measures."\textsuperscript{149}

A far worse fate befell a loyalist named Love, who had participated in William Cunningham's raid in the winter of 1781. Love had been accused of killing rebel prisoners in Ninety Six district. When he returned to Ninety Six in 1784, he was promptly arrested for the crime. At his trial, Judge Aedanus Burke dismissed the charges on the grounds that Love was immune to prosecution under the terms of the peace treaty between Britain and the United States. Love was released, only to be immediately retaken by a party of local men, who prepared to hang him. The prisoner, "urging in vain the injustice of killing a man without a trial," was reminded by his captors that "he should have thought of that when he was slaughtering their kinsmen." The execution was duly carried out.\textsuperscript{150}

Prominent loyalists with ties to leading Whigs often avoided the severe punishments inflicted on their less well-connected counterparts. Philip Porcher's estate was placed on the confiscation list, but Porcher remained in South Carolina after the British evacuation. He and other loyalists petitioned the Assembly in January 1783 for permission to remain in the state and for the restoration of their property. Although some

\textsuperscript{149} Collins, \textit{Autobiography}, 66-67.
\textsuperscript{150} Aedanus Burke to Gov. Guerard, Dec. 14, 1784, Aedanus Burke Papers, SCL.
of the petitioners were “Confined in the Provost,” legislators allowed Porcher to stay at
the home of a relative. He “amongst others having great many Powerfull Friends,” a
legislative committee recommended that Porcher’s estate be restored; he and about
seventy other loyalists were permitted to return to their homes on bail and a decision
concerning their estates was postponed. Porcher was eventually permitted to retain his
property, but many other loyalists lost their homes and possessions, were denied
permission to return to the state, or were imprisoned when they tried to do so. One Whig
asserted that the confiscation laws had made South Carolina “a very Distressed and
disagreable” place.151

Georgia loyalists suffered the consequences of defeat and evacuation five months
earlier than their counterparts in South Carolina, despite putting up a fierce resistance of
their own in the final months of the war.

The first months following the Whigs’ capture of Augusta had been relatively
quiet as the rebels worked to consolidate their hold on the Georgia backcountry and Gov.
Wright labored to undo the damage to the British position in the province. Wright noted
that Augusta’s surrender had dampened the spirits of Georgia loyalists and that the
backcountry militia at Ebenezer could be kept at their post only with difficulty. He asked
Balfour to send five hundred regulars from Charleston to assist in recapturing Augusta;
otherwise, Wright warned, nearly eight thousand people in the backcountry, most of them
loyalists, would be lost to the British. When Balfour effectively shelved the proposal by
referring Wright to Cornwallis, who was so distant that it might take months to receive a
reply, Wright formulated his own plan. The Savannah militia and two hundred regulars
from the town’s garrison would advance to Ebenezer, unite with the four hundred militia

there, and with the aid of another two hundred men Wright expected to join along the
march, seize Augusta. Wright set about strengthening his forces for this mission, forming
three new troops of cavalry while recently exchanged Thomas Brown rebuilt his depleted
Rangers. Many of the recruits were refugees from the backcountry.  

Several loyalists who had escaped punishment by enlisting in Georgia’s rebel
forces also devised a scheme to strike at the Whigs. Twenty men led by John Goodgame
and William Simmons contacted Clarke in the summer of 1781, informing him that they
intended to kill their commander, Col. James Jackson, then capture Gov. Nathan
Brownson and his Council and carry them to Savannah. Clarke allegedly sent a small
party to the vicinity of Augusta to aid the plotters, but the plan failed when a rebel soldier
overheard the conspirators, insinuated himself into the conspiracy, and revealed the
details to Jackson. The participants were arrested, three of the leaders hanged, and the
remainder pardoned in exchange for their confessions.  

These men were not the only victims of Whig cruelty. In mid-September, a
Hessian officer noted that the rebels “do nothing but murder, plunder, lay waste by fire
and the sword, and drive away the women and children within our lines; who belong to
those who will not side with them.” Six weeks later, Whig troops overwhelmed a guard
of fifteen militiamen at James Butler’s plantation near the Great Ogeechee River. The
victors then “barbarously murdered” six loyalists, including one man dragged from his
sickbed when the Whigs set Butler’s house on fire. Another account put the loyalists’

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152 Wright to Balfour, July 27, 1781, and Aug. 16, 1781, RAM, 2:306, 315; Cashin, King’s Ranger, 142,
144.  
153 William Omer Foster, Sr., James Jackson, Duelist and Militant Statesman, 1757-1806 (Athens:
University of Georgia Press, 1960), 17-18; Royal Georgia Gazette, Sept. 20, 1781.  
154 Friedrich von Porbeck to Sovereign, Sept. 18, 1781, “Matters Concerning the Garrison Regiment von
Wissenbach in America, 1780-1783,” HDAR, Item BZ21.  
155 Royal Georgia Gazette, Nov. 8, 1781.
death toll at eleven. A party of the King's Rangers avoided a similarly bloody fate on November 2 when rebel Capt. Patrick Carr, whose penchant for murdering loyalists had made him infamous, killed a man while the Rangers were in the process of surrendering to Whig militia. The Rangers promptly resumed the fight and withstood the rebel attack.\textsuperscript{156}

The violence caused many loyalists to flee the backcountry or conceal themselves. Wright informed Clinton on October 16 that "upwards of 500 Country People, have quitted their Families," gone to Savannah, "and have taken Arms in Support of Government & a great many more, have been, and still Skulking about, and hiding in the Swamps."\textsuperscript{157} These people struck back at the Whigs whenever opportunity offered; some parties attacked rebel troops in the vicinity of Augusta during the summer. Partisans in the Ceded Lands killed eight Whigs in a skirmish on September 1. Other loyalists on a foray from Savannah attacked a rebel force at Heard's Mill on September 10, killing three and capturing seventeen. Another raiding party succeeded in killing Myrick Davis, president of the state Council, on December 7.\textsuperscript{158}

Shortly afterward, the loyalists' situation deteriorated. After defeating Cornwallis at Yorktown, Washington had dispatched Gen. Anthony Wayne and the Pennsylvania Continentals to reinforce Greene, and Greene ordered Wayne to take his troops to Georgia and assume command there. In response, Clarke evacuated Ebenezer and concentrated his forces closer to Savannah. Most of the militia accompanied the


\textsuperscript{157} Wright to Clinton, Oct. 16, 1781, Carleton Papers, Vol. 33, No. 3829.

\textsuperscript{158} \textit{Royal Georgia Gazette}, Sept. 20 and Sept. 27, 1781; Nathan Brownson to Greene, Dec. 15, 1781, \textit{PNG}, 10:59.
retreating British troops.\textsuperscript{159} So did large numbers of panic-stricken civilians. Once the rebels took control of the area, they were said to “ill-treat the male inhabitants who have remained behind in the most murderous manner almost killing them, and take their negroes away, if they will not go over to their side.”\textsuperscript{160} In January, Georgia troops under James Jackson raiding the environs of Savannah encountered a camp where the Whigs held about two hundred loyalists, many of whom were wounded. Only Jackson’s intervention prevented his men from slaughtering the helpless prisoners.\textsuperscript{161}

Many loyalists nevertheless left the British to take their chances with the rebels because at the same time Wayne’s troops arrived, so too had details of the surrender terms Cornwallis signed at Yorktown. On December 20, Clarke wrote Clinton that “the tenth article of the capitulation of Yorktown,” in which Cornwallis had effectively abandoned the loyalists with his army to the whims of the Whigs, “has made a very alarming impression on the minds of the people in general ... I have just grounds of apprehension that it will amount to so considerable a defection of the militia – if our situation should become more critical – as to leave us but very little hopes of any material assistance from them, many having already gone off.”\textsuperscript{162} Clinton therefore instructed both Clarke and Leslie to assure the loyalists that in all cases army officers would give them the same consideration that was given to British troops.\textsuperscript{163}

While the British were trying to reassure their supporters, the Whigs made overtures of their own to Georgia’s loyalists. Hoping to end the bitter internecine warfare,

\textsuperscript{159} Coleman, \emph{Revolution in Georgia}, 141; Nase, Diary, Dec. 8, 1781, NBM.
\textsuperscript{160} von Porbeck to Sovereign, Jan. 1, 1782, “Matters Concerning the Garrison Regiment von Wissenbach,” HDAR, BZ30.
\textsuperscript{161} Foster, \emph{James Jackson}, 21.
\textsuperscript{162} Clarke to Clinton, Dec. 20, 1781, in Clinton, \emph{American Rebellion}, 591.
\textsuperscript{163} Extract of the minutes of a council of war held at New York, Jan. 17, 1782, in Clinton, \emph{American Rebellion}, 592-593.
Greene instructed Wayne to invite them to join the Americans and to protect those who accepted the offer. “Try by every means in your power to soften the malignity and deadly resentment subsisting between the Whigs and tories,” Greene advised, “and put a stop as much as possible to that cruel custom of putting people to death after they have surrendered themselves prisoners.”

Wayne relayed this advice to Gen. John Twiggs of the Georgia militia and Gov. John Martin. The general recommended to the latter the “expediency of opening a wide door for the reception of such Citizens, as have taken protection or joined the Enemy.” A generous policy, Wayne predicted, would secure the gratitude of repentant loyalists.

He had already found that many Georgia loyalists had lost hope and wished to make their peace with the Whigs. In late January 1782, Wayne’s troops captured “a few armed tories who Immediately inlisted for the war” with the American forces. Another fifteen loyal militiamen and their commanding officer surrendered on January 22 and also joined the Whigs.

Martin pronounced Wayne’s suggestion “extremely just and humane, and such as good policy at this crisis would undoubtedly dictate.” Martin noted that he had made similar proposals to the Assembly, “which were entirely disregarded.” The governor attributed the legislators’ refusal to pardon loyalists to the bitterness engendered by the war. “Owing to the repeated injuries and distresses those very characters have brought upon the virtuous citizens of this State, nature would not be nature could it immediately forget injuries like those,” he wrote.

164 Greene to Wayne, Jan. 9, 1782, Anthony Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 14, HSP.
166 Wayne to Greene, Jan. 23, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 15.
Greene urged Wayne “to hold out encouragement to the Tories, to abandon the enemy’s interest,” regardless of the policy of Georgia’s assembly. Even though Wayne had no power to issue pardons, Greene advised him to “promise to do all in your power to procure it, which will be nearly to the same amount.” Greene promised to do everything possible to assist Wayne in that regard.\textsuperscript{168}

Wayne, in turn, continued to prod Martin on the issue. On February 20, the governor relented and issued a proclamation offering loyalists pardon in exchange for military service with the Whigs. Taking advantage of a network of Whig sympathizers in the town, Wayne had the proclamation circulated in Savannah, with immediate results. During the following weeks many loyalists, including prominent persons such as Sir Patrick Houstoun and Maj. David Douglass, members of the militia, and a unit of thirty-eight provincial cavalrmen, abandoned resistance and came into the rebel lines.\textsuperscript{169} These defections irritated Clarke, who took steps to prevent deserters from leaving Savannah. “The enemy have filled the Swamps round their works with tories, Indians & armed negros to prevent desertions,” Wayne observed.\textsuperscript{170} With the incentive of a two-guinea bounty ($275) for each captured deserter, the loyal militia patrolled the area just outside British lines and by the end of April had considerably reduced the number of desertions.\textsuperscript{171}

Gov. Wright chafed as he watched loyalism in his province crumble while the military authorities refused to take action. In January, Clinton had rejected the governor’s

\textsuperscript{168} Greene to Wayne, Feb. 4, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 15.
\textsuperscript{170} Wayne to Greene, March 11, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 15.
\textsuperscript{171} Von Porbeck to Sovereign, March 1, March 27, and May 1, 1782, “Matters Concerning the Garrison Regiment von Wissenbach,” HDAR, BZ36, BZ39, BZ52.
plan to retake Augusta and also denied a request for reinforcements on the grounds that Savannah was not seriously threatened.\textsuperscript{172} The Assembly pressed Wright to do something to defend Georgia, noting in a petition dated February 23 that the rebels had been "continually committing depredations, and murders upon His Majesty’s loyal Subjects ... and have within these few days past, cruelly put to death many of our Constituents, for no other cause than their Loyalty and attachment to Government."\textsuperscript{173} Wright had already appealed to Germain’s deputy, William Knox, in the hope that the ministry might order the army to act, but to no avail.\textsuperscript{174} "This Province has been Shamefully Neglected," Wright later complained to Carleton.\textsuperscript{175}

If the loyalists who clung to their cause suffered for their allegiance to George III, those who had joined the Whigs found their situation equally unpleasant. On March 8, Gov. Martin was forced to send Maj. Douglass to Wayne for protection because "many of his Countrymen are very inveterate against him" and had threatened to kill the loyalist officer. Martin believed that if he had not intervened, Douglass "wou’d have been Murderd." A few days earlier, the governor told Wayne, another former loyalist "was coolly and deliberately murderd at noon day, in the streets of Augusta" by someone who claimed that the victim had been involved in the death of the murderer’s father. The people refused to comply with Martin’s demand to arrest the killer.\textsuperscript{176} Martin declared that at the present time "it is morally impossible to carry the laws fully into effect. Plundering and killing have heretofore been frequent." He expressed his determination

\textsuperscript{172} Clinton to Wright, Jan. 6, 1782, Carleton Papers, Vol. 35, No. 4042.
\textsuperscript{173} Georgia Assembly to Wright, Feb. 23, 1782, Carleton Papers, Vol. 36, No. 4145.
\textsuperscript{175} Wright to Carleton, June 1, 1782, Carleton Papers, Vol. 42, No. 4716.
\textsuperscript{176} John Martin to Wayne, March 8, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 15.
“to crush these horrid practices in future.” The governor wrote that “if justice is prevented, and every man to be a judge in his own cause, there will shortly be no safety in this country.” He also informed Wayne that “the many daily murders committed, in which women & children are not excluded,” required him to employ the militia to prevent such crimes, and thus limited the number of men Martin could send to assist the Continentals.

The violence irritated Wayne, who warned Martin that if people who came to the Whigs expecting protection were “exposed to this cruelty,” they “will act against us.” The general did not need more enemies, since his own troops were few and he was disappointed with the loyalists who had enlisted in the Whig forces, calling them “an unprincipled banditti.” Wayne told a friend that of all the problems he had encountered since his arrival in Georgia, “what is yet more difficult than all” was “to make Whiggs out of tories, & with them wrest their Country out of the enemy.”

Not every loyalist desired to become a Whig, and those who did not launched occasional attacks marked by retaliatory violence. In the spring of 1782, five loyalists captured former Whig governor John Adam Treutlen at his home, “carryed him some Distance into a Swamp,” and “barbarously murder’d him.” Some loyalists harassed the rebel army’s lines of communication and one party raided Augusta, where they captured and paroled three Whigs, although they failed to capture Gov. Martin because he was

177 John Martin to GA Delegates in Congress, March 14, 1782, in “Letters of Governor Martin,” 295.
179 Martin to Wayne, March 14, 1782 (second letter of this date), in “Letters of Governor Martin,” 298.
181 Wayne to Greene, Feb. 28, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 15.
183 Jenkin Davis to Henry Muhlenberg, March 18, 1783, “Muhlenberg’s Georgia Correspondence,” 435.
away from home at the time of the raid. Daniel McGirt’s troops ranged across Georgia with the objective of capturing rebel property; on March 23, Martin reported that McGirt had “collected a large property belonging to this State consisting of negroes, horses, cattle, etc.” The raids resulted in frequent skirmishes, with losses on both sides. As the evacuation of Georgia approached, however, many loyalists outside the British lines surrendered to the rebels or made their way to Savannah.

Some of the loyalists who submitted to the Whigs did so in hopes of retaining their property because the Georgia Assembly passed a confiscation law in May 1782. Whig Joseph Clay described the act as “pretty general, perhaps more so than sound Policy wou’d dictate.” It pronounced 277 people guilty of treason, only 61 of whom had been named in the similar act of 1778. The assembly appointed thirteen commissioners to supervise the confiscation and sales of the loyalists’ property.

Wright learned of the law in early June, and promptly wrote to Wayne to remonstrate against it. The governor argued that confiscation “must Raise Animosities instead of Healing & Conciliating.” He also asked the general to allow an officer to carry a similar message to the rebel governor. Wayne sympathetically replied that he, too, wished “to heal Animosities,” but that the matter “being of Civil resort precludes me from interfering.”

Throughout the spring and early summer, Clarke ignored confiscation and other matters relating to the loyalists and focused on carrying out his orders to evacuate

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184 Martin to Wayne, May 3, 1782, in “Letters of Governor Martin,” 309; Cashin, King’s Ranger, 149.
186 James Jackson to Wayne, May 10, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 16; Wayne to Jackson, April 27, 1782, James S. Schoff Collection, WLCL.
188 Lambert, “Confiscation of Loyalist Property in Georgia,” 82-83.
189 Wright to Wayne, June 5, 1782, Anthony Wayne Papers, WLCL.
190 Wayne to Wright, June 7, 1782, Wayne Papers, WLCL.
Savannah. Preparations were completed in early July and the last of the garrison and refugees boarded the transport ships on July 11. Many loyalists who had decided to remain behind were grief-stricken. “Nothing Can Surpass The Sorrow, which many of the Inhabitants express’d at our departure,” a loyalist soldier wrote.191 Robert Biddulph called the evacuation “an Act which of all others hurts the Pride of Loyalists all over the Continent, whilst it absolutely Ruins the Inhabitants affected to Government.”192 Altogether, between 2,500 and 3,100 whites, and 3,500 to 5,000 blacks left Georgia at the evacuation, with most going to East Florida and Jamaica. The evacuees comprised between fifteen and thirty-three percent of the province’s prewar white and black populations, respectively.193

To the very end Wright protested the government’s policy in Georgia. From the evacuation fleet at Tybee, he informed Carleton that only the latter’s lack of knowledge of the situation could have led him to insist on abandoning the province. Wright found it difficult to believe that “when a reinforcemt of 4 or 500 Men would have effectually held the country,” it had been given up and the loyalists left to suffer. The “distress and misery brought on His Majesty’s Loyal Subjects here, you cannot conceive,” Wright concluded.194 Members of the Assembly echoed the governor’s sentiments, asserting that the loss of the province “hath not been owing to any want of attention or exertions on the part of the Civil Government or of the loyal Inhabitants.” Rather, military officers in the garrison, jealous at having to share power with civil officials, had undermined the

191 Nase, Diary, July 11, 1782, NBM.
193 Robertson, Loyalism in Revolutionary Georgia, 15; Coleman, Revolution in Georgia, 145. Robertson gives figures of 2500 whites and 4900 blacks, Coleman 3100 whites and over 3500 blacks, but also cites a contemporary estimate of 5000-6000 black evacuees.
194 Sir James Wright to Sir Guy Carleton, July 6, 1782, in Report on American Manuscripts, Vol. 3 (Hereford: for His Majesty’s Stationery Office by Anthony Brothers, 1907), 11.
authority of the governor and Assembly and ignored the province’s defense. As a result, the writers declared, the rebels had gained “full possession” of Georgia, “the friends of Government either Murder’d or obliged to fly for protection within our narrow Lines & many well affected, compell’d to join the Rebels as the only means left them to save their own lives & their helpless families.” In the previous year, the authors stated that over two hundred loyalists had “been cruelly murder’d in cold by their inhuman enemies attended with circumstances of wanton barbarity that would disgrace a savage.”

This barbarity did not end with the departure of the British. Learning that the evacuation of Savannah was imminent, rebels at White Bluff that “embodyed & are already striking at the Tories” even before the British left. Loyalists fought back, and although by mid-August many had surrendered, others were “still sculking about their homes.” One band led by Sam Moore, which a rebel officer described as an “infernal set of outlaws,” frequently murdered and robbed Whigs while eluding the militia.

Gov. Martin assured Greene on August 9 that “my endeavors shall not be wanting to soften the resentment of parties and correct the abuses which the confusion and disorders of war have given rise to.” In an effort to halt the raiding which had broken out along the border with East Florida, Martin sent a delegation to St. Augustine to ask Gov. Tonyn for an agreement to end the warfare. Tonyn accepted the proposal and by

195 [Georgia Assembly] to unnamed, [1782], Loyalist Papers, GHS. This letter is unfinished. It appears to have been composed shortly before the evacuation of Savannah, and when the authors realized it would not accomplish its purpose, they did not complete it. The salutation indicates it was to be sent to a prominent British official.
196 James Jackson to Wayne, June 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 17.
198 John Martin to Nathanael Greene, Aug. 8, 1782, in “Letters of Governor Martin, 316.
mid-September both governors had issued orders prohibiting cross-border incursions.\textsuperscript{199} Gangs of bandits on both sides of the border, however, ignored these orders and continued “plundering both sides indiscriminately.”\textsuperscript{200}

In the backcountry, Patrick Carr noted that the “Tories keep dropping in every day. Their number increases up here and is very large.”\textsuperscript{201} Martin ordered Carr to capture any loyalists he could and send them to Savannah, along with “any women that harbour those fellows.” Those who could not be captured, the governor ordered, should be dealt with as Carr thought proper, an invitation to greater violence.\textsuperscript{202}

The continuing civil war, along with wartime deaths and the flight of thousands of loyalists, left Georgia devastated. The town of Queensborough lost so many of its inhabitants that it ceased to exist.\textsuperscript{203} Lachlan McIntosh asserted on October 30 that plundering “has grown to such a Higth, by a Lawless, Savage and unprincipled Banditti, that no Man is Safe one Night in His House in any part of this State[,] travelling a Mile upon the Roads, or even in the Town of Savannah.” He asserted that this criminal behavior had both disgraced the American cause “and nearly depopulated & ruined this fine Country.”\textsuperscript{204} In the spring of 1783, one observer reported that the town of Ebenezer was still “in a most deplorable Situation,” with nearly two-thirds of the inhabitants either having left with the British or been killed during the war. Those few remaining were impoverished and the buildings damaged.\textsuperscript{205} Noting that Georgia Whigs were still

\textsuperscript{199} John Martin to Patrick Tonly, Aug. 15, 1782; Martin to Col. Cooper, Sept. 17, 1782, in “Letters of Governor Martin,” 320, 328.
\textsuperscript{200} John Martin to Col. Cooper, Sept. 17, 1782, in “Letters of Governor Martin,” 328.
\textsuperscript{201} Patrick Carr to John Martin, Aug. 22, 1782, in “Letters of Patrick Carr,” 339.
\textsuperscript{202} John Martin to Patrick Carr, Aug. 28, 1782, in “Letters of Governor Martin,” 323.
\textsuperscript{203} Green, “Queensborough Township,” 197.
\textsuperscript{204} Lachlan McIntosh to Nathanael Greene, Oct. 30, 1782, in “Letters to General Greene and Others,” Part 2, SCHGM, Vol. 16, No. 4, October 1915, 148-149.
\textsuperscript{205} Jenkin Davis to Henry Muhlenberg, March 18, 1783, “Muhlenberg’s Georgia Correspondence,” 434.
persecuting loyalists months after the evacuation of Savannah, British Gen. James Patterson declared that the sufferings of that state's loyalists demonstrated that "prayers and tears can't obtain from the enemy pardon for the Crime of Loyalty."206

Intensive lobbying by Gov. Tonyn and the Assembly spared East Florida from evacuation in 1782, so that it was the only southern province in British hands at the end of the war. This must have surprised Tonyn, who since the fall of Pensacola had expected a Spanish attack on St. Augustine. The governor had worked strenuously to strengthen the province; but at the end of December 1781, he could muster only 300 militia to support the garrison of 436 regulars. Tonyn could not even arm all of the militia. He had distributed the muskets available to him earlier to Brown's Rangers, and Lt. Col. Beamsley Glazier, commander of the garrison, refused to supply the militia from the army's stores.207

Fortunately, the Spaniards did not attack, and the Whigs in Georgia were too preoccupied with the British forces at Savannah to concern themselves with East Florida. Affairs in the province remained relatively quiet until the arrival of Carleton's orders that East Florida be evacuated sparked a firestorm of protest.

Neither Tonyn nor the East Floridians could understand why the ministry wished to abandon a province that had been steadfastly loyal and was not menaced by the enemy. On June 14, 1782, the inhabitants composed a petition to Leslie, explaining the hardships they would suffer as a result of evacuation, East Florida's economic importance to the empire, and its utility "as an Asylum for Refugees" from the other southern provinces.208

Five days later, the Assembly expressed similar objections to Tonyn; on June 20, they

206 James Patterson to Amherst, Sept. 13, 1782, Correspondence and Papers of Amherst, microfilm, DLAR.
208 East Florida Proprietors to Leslie, June 14, 1782, Carleton Papers, Vol. 42, No. 4793.
passed a resolution declaring their intention to defend the province even if the troops were withdrawn. Tonyn, after informing the Assembly that he would request arms so that the inhabitants could hold East Florida on their own, forwarded the Assembly's petitions and resolutions to Carleton and Leslie, accompanied by his own letters of protest.209

In response to the protests, Leslie suspended the evacuation and Carleton approved of the decision. The fate of the province had not yet been decided at the peace negotiations, and its proximity to Savannah made East Florida a convenient destination for the evacuated Georgians and South Carolinians. Thousands of refugees came to the province, which was ceded to Spain the following year. The Spaniards permitted the British inhabitants to remain until the summer of 1785.210

West Florida had been under Spanish control since May 1781, although some Britons and loyalists hoped that the province could be recovered. Robert Ross, a British merchant who had traded at Natchez and New Orleans, proposed to Lord Dunmore that a British army attack the latter town. The capture of New Orleans, Ross believed, would not only deal a serious blow to Spain, but would also enable the British to reestablish a presence at Natchez, where Ross believed the loyalists could maintain control. Possession of Natchez would also enable the British to retain their ties to the Choctaws and Chickasaws.211 Dunmore liked the idea and submitted a revised version to the ministry, proposing that the various provincial units be united to form an army capable of

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209 East Florida Assembly to Tonyn, Tonyn to East Florida Assembly, June 19, 1782; East Florida Resolution by William Brown and His Excellency's Answer, Tonyn to Carleton, Tonyn to Leslie, June 20, 1782, Carleton Papers, Vol. 42, Nos. 4809, 4810, 1816, 4818, 4819.
conquering the Mississippi Valley as far north as the Ohio River. The conquered territory
could then be organized into a new province where displaced loyalists could reside.²¹²

West Floridians unwilling to wait in the vain hope that the ministry would send
troops to assist them instead left the province. After the fall of Pensacola, a large number
of loyalist families decided to make their way to Georgia. The seven-hundred mile
journey took them through Choctaw and Creek territory; the Indians provided the
starving travelers with food once they were convinced that the bedraggled people were in
fact loyalists. Upon leaving Creek territory the group split into two parties; one passed
through East Florida and reached Savannah 149 days after they had set out. Their leader,
Sereno Dwight, joined the British army along with many of the other men. The second
group, less fortunate, was captured by the rebels.²¹³

A few other loyalists took to the woods and occasionally harassed the Spanish
along the Mississippi. John Turner, commanding a small force of ten whites and three
blacks, captured a Spanish vessel on April 19, 1782, but only he and one black escaped
when the crew revolted and overwhelmed their captors. Apparently, this convinced
Turner to abandon his efforts, although other loyalists in the area continued to cooperate
with James Colbert and the Chickasaws.²¹⁴

**Too Little, Too Late: The Indians’ Final Effort**

After the capture of Augusta, Whig officer Lewis Morris had predicted that the
victory “will lead to the most happy consequences as it was a place from whence all
orders to the western tribes issued and from whence they were supplied with goods and

²¹² Dunmore to Sydney, Aug. 24, 1782, Thomas Townshend Papers, WLCL.
²¹⁴ Gilbert C. Din, “Loyalist Resistance After Pensacola: The Case of James Colbert,” in Coker and Rea,
eds., *Anglo-Spanish Confrontation*, 161.
the implements of war.” With the town in Whig hands, he wrote, the region “will enjoy peace and tranquility.”\textsuperscript{215} Unfortunately for the rebels, Morris was completely wrong.

By the summer of 1781, the Cherokees had suffered more than any other southern Indian nation, yet they persisted in their support of the British. In the summer of 1781 they launched another round of attacks in the backcountry, which provided indirect assistance to the British by depriving the rebels of the services of the overmountain militia. Isaac Shelby had promised Greene that he would march to join the army in mid-July, but the outbreak of hostilities with the Cherokees led Shelby to conclude that it was “impracticable to draw any force from here” until the Indians were defeated. The Whigs won a quick victory and a peace treaty was signed on July 29. Shelby then set out to join Greene with seven hundred men, only to turn back upon learning that the British had withdrawn from the South Carolina interior.\textsuperscript{216}

The defeat caused another rift among the Cherokees. While Oconostota and other leaders discussed peace with the Virginians in Williamsburg, the Raven journeyed to Savannah in August to confer with Thomas Brown. Brown was in Charleston, but the Raven left a message assuring the superintendent of the Cherokees’ loyalty. Some Cherokees provided even stronger proof when they attacked a Whig party in Georgia in late August, killing several men.\textsuperscript{217}

Another party of Cherokees and white traders was on its way to Savannah when two pro-rebel Creeks informed Gen. John Twiggs of the Georgia militia of its approach on December 1. Twiggs found and attacked the group, capturing nearly two hundred

\textsuperscript{215} Lewis Morris, Jr., to Lewis Morris, June 7, 1781, “Letters to General Lewis Morris,” 487.
\textsuperscript{216} Isaac Shelby to Nathanael Greene, Aug. 3, 1781, in “Letters to General Greene and Others,” Part 1, 104.
horses and a vast quantity of deerskins. He claimed to have killed twelve whites and twenty Indians. Seven women and two children were taken prisoner. "I am led to believe this Action will be attended with infinite good consequences to the Southern States, as it will be the means of stopping all Trade from that Nation to Savannah, or any Military Stores being sent them," Twiggs wrote.218

Thomas Brown was equally aware that British inability to supply the Indians might put an end to their assistance. While noting in early December that "the indians in general are steady in their attachment to His Majesty's interest" and that the Cherokees "have been warmly engaged" against the overmountain settlements," he noted that both they and the Creeks were in dire need of goods. The two nations, Brown observed, "depend solely on Government for supplies of ammunition clothing etc." Brown was busy assembling the needed items, which had to be sent "on packhorses by a circuitous route of 600 miles."219

Brown’s troubles increased when Indian agent Alexander Cameron died on December 27. Germain rejected Brown’s offer to place all of the southern nations under the latter’s supervision and instead appointed John Graham, the lieutenant governor of Georgia, to succeed Cameron. Graham had no experience dealing with Indians and his appointment angered Cameron’s deputy, Farquhar Bethune, who felt he deserved the promotion. Graham’s unfamiliarity with Indian affairs and strained relationship with Bethune further complicated British relations with the Choctaws and Chickasaws.220

218 John Twiggs to Greene, Dec. 16, 1781, PNG, 10:66.
Most Whigs were unaware of these difficulties and their response to the sporadic Indian raids was out of all proportion to the actual threat. Earlier, Twiggs had complained that “fear of the Indians” had kept many Georgians at home who would otherwise have been available to serve against the British.\textsuperscript{221} On December 1, Governor Brownson warned Greene that an Indian war would “add to our difficulties which are now almost insupportable” and expressed his fear that William Cunningham’s raid into the backcountry was intended as “a diversion in favour of the Indians.”\textsuperscript{222} Greene agreed that the rebels’ position in the South would be endangered if the British managed to get the Indians to act in force. “Great industry is ... made use of to spirit up the savages,” he noted, “which I fear will be but too successful, as the Enemy can furnish them with such Articles as they want, and we cannot.”\textsuperscript{223}

Upon taking office as governor of Georgia, John Martin took immediate steps to eliminate the threat of Indian attacks on the exhausted and almost defenseless state. Martin sent a talk to the Creeks on January 11, 1782 in which he combined veiled threats and professions of friendship with denunciations of Thomas Brown and the British. Informed the Indians that a large American army was in South Carolina and would soon drive the British from Charleston while the Spanish attacked St. Augustine, Martin insisted that the Georgians desired “to live in peace and friendship with our old friends and brothers, the Creeks.” He attributed Creek hostilities against Georgians to a few “mad people and the Tories” instigated by “Brown’s lying talks,” thus indicating that he was not holding the whole nation responsible for past conflict. Martin advised the Creeks to prove their friendship by returning all the prisoners and livestock they had captured.

\textsuperscript{222} Nathan Brownson to Greene, Dec. 1, 1781, \textit{PNG}, 9:644-645.
\textsuperscript{223} Greene to Thomas McKean, Dec. 9, 1781, \textit{PNG}, 10:18.
and by sending down “all those Tories, bad people, and King’s men that are among you making mischief.” The governor concluded by emphasizing that the Americans did not want Creek assistance and that once the British left the Georgians “will then love you as friends ... and you shall share our riches and happiness with us.”

Anthony Wayne assisted Martin in the effort to neutralize the Indians. On January 27, Wayne learned that a party of Creeks was en route to Savannah and dispatched Col. James McKay to intercept them. McKay soon encountered the group of “about 30 mounted Indians & tories” with over ninety pack horses. One of the whites was Joseph Cornell, an influential Indian trader. Cornell told his Whig interrogators that about three hundred Choctaws were also on the way to Savannah, but were eighty or ninety miles behind his party. He added that between two and three hundred Creeks under British agent William McIntosh had left Coweta Town about a month earlier intending “to create a diversion on one of the frontiers of Georgia.” Wayne initially considered Cornell “a dangerous villain.” But the trader’s cooperation convinced the general that Cornell could be trusted, whereupon Wayne sent him and another man to the Creeks and Choctaws with a talk. Wayne declared that the Indians could avoid bringing destruction upon themselves by ceasing to support the British and explained that he had spared Cornell and the twenty-six Indian prisoners as a demonstration of his good intentions.

Rather than fight the approaching Choctaws, Wayne detached Maj. John Habersham with sixty South Carolina dragoons and some Georgian militia to find the Indians. Upon encountering them, Habersham had orders “to send home the women &

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225 Wayne to Greene, Feb. 1, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 15.
227 Wayne to Greene, Feb. 1, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 15.
228 Wayne to Mr. Anderson, Feb. 25, 1782; Wayne to Mr. Cornell, Feb. 25, 1782, Anthony Wayne Letters, Chester County Historical Society.
Children & keep their principle warriors as hostages, assuring them of the friendly disposition of the Americans, & the deception of the Enemy – who have wickedly and Wantonly endeavoured to promote a war between them and a people who never Injured them." But if the Indians wished to fight, Habersham was to tell them that the Whigs were prepared to move against them.229

Habersham set out on January 30 and immediately ran into problems with the militia and its commander, the notorious Patrick Carr. After a night of heavy rain, Carr’s men refused orders to march on February 1, insisting that the bad roads would kill their horses. Habersham “did not venture to expostulate with them, knowing it would not avail.” He would have preferred sending Carr and his men off. “Indeed had it not been that I was certain they would plunder the Inhabitants in our rear, I should have been glad to have got free of such a disorderly set,” Habersham wrote. Later that day, two of Carr’s men encountered a party of Indians they believed to be Chickasaws, one of whom the Georgians killed. On February 2, Carr’s men captured eleven more Indians, evidently all Choctaws. Habersham then decided to deceive the Indians by pretending to be Thomas Brown, and in this guise he dispatched one of the prisoners to bring the rest of the Choctaws into the rebel camp.

Habersham’s ruse brought another Choctaw and a white loyalist to the Whigs on February 3. These men assured the American commander that the rest of the Indians would come in the next day. But on February 4 the only arrival was a single Indian envoy, who reported that one of the Choctaw leaders had become ill and that the Indians were returning home. Habersham wanted to pursue the Choctaws, “but on sounding the Militia, I found them bent on going to the Scots settlements, in the Southern part of this

229 Wayne to Greene, Feb. 1, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 15.
State, in quest of plunder." This convinced Habersham that he could no longer rely on the militia's assistance; to compound the problem, the state troops demanded to be discharged. Forced to abandon his planned pursuit, Habersham sent two Indians and an interpreter to find the Choctaws. They had instructions to bring the Indian leaders and twenty of their men to Habersham's camp the next day.

Habersham marched on the evening of February 4 to find forage, bringing along the twelve Indians still with him. To maintain the pose that he was Brown, Habersham did not place the Choctaws under restraint. One of the Indians disappeared on the march and another the next day. Habersham sent men to look for this second absentee, but the Indian could not be found. That night Habersham received disturbing news that boded ill for his expedition. A report arrived that some of the Georgia militia "had met with an Indian, whom they carried into the woods, tied to a tree, shot and afterwards cut him to pieces. I was now pretty certain that the two missing Indians ... were treated in the same way," Habersham stated.

The ten Indians with Habersham clearly came to the same conclusion because they disappeared from the camp during the night. "I could not now entertain a doubt that the Indians were apprised of our being Americans," Habersham wrote. This was confirmed when he learned that one of the Indians spoke some English and that the militiamen "had several times thrown out threats in their [Indians'] presence and abused them." Thus the vicious behavior of the Georgians wrecked Habersham's plan to deceive the Indians into entering his camp, where they could be disarmed and captured or convinced to return home. With his strategy ruined, Habersham's only option was to pursue the Choctaws, but the militia refused to assist him. Instead, they created more
trouble. Three rebels subjected a suspected loyalist to “barbarous treatment,” while others “completely plundered” the loyalist Scottish settlement at St. Andrews, where they “killed eleven Men.” Loyalist partisans retaliated by twice ambushing Habersham’s troops on their return, wounding one man. The savagery of the militia had completely sabotaged the expedition, causing Habersham to lament his failure as well as the injury done to “my reputation as an Officer, and my feelings as a Citizen.”²³⁰

Wayne overlooked the vicious behavior of the Georgians and instead blamed the desertion of the militia for Habersham’s failure. Had the expedition succeeded, Wayne told Gov. Martin, it would have secured Georgia from “an Indian Invasion.” Yet the general still hoped that “we have convinced the savages that the British can’t support them & that they are now upon their return to their own Country.”²³¹ Some Choctaws did reach Savannah at the end of February, much to Wayne’s disappointment, but he still believed that the British “will not be able to derive much service” from the Indians.²³²

Wayne’s prediction soon proved to have been too optimistic. In late March, Whig troops captured letters that indicated “to a Certainty that every measure is attempted to draw down the Creeks & other Indians.” The Choctaws, Wayne declared, had “already commenced hostilities” by killing and scalping a rebel dragoon. The Whigs had in turn “taken a Chickasaw chief & I expect that the party he commanded are by this time either killed or Prisoners.” Wayne said that he would hold this Indian “as a Victim, who together with the first British Officer that fall into our hands will eventually be sacrificed to the Maner of that brave unfortunate Dragoon.” Wayne asserted that such retaliation was justified because the British had displayed the dragoon’s body in Savannah and

²³⁰ John Habersham to Anthony Wayne, Feb. 8, 1782, Anthony Wayne Papers, PERK.
²³² Wayne to Greene, Feb. 28, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 15.
paraded his scalp through the town. Whether the events in Savannah had actually occurred or were merely rumor, Wayne abandoned his intentions of dealing humanely with the Indians and adopted a policy of brutality instead. He determined “to prevent any more Indians getting in” to Savannah and “to strike them going out.”

Andrew Pickens similarly expressed frustration with his inability to halt Indian raids. Early in 1782, the Cherokees, assisted by loyalists, renewed their attacks on the rebels; one raiding party killed several people and burned some houses in Ninety Six district. Pickens countered by mounting a winter campaign against the Cherokees, which destroyed their towns east of the Appalachians. To his dismay, however, Pickens found that “the Indians had removed from their towns with their provisions.” Since he had relied on capturing supplies to feed his militia, this unforeseen setback left the rebels hungry as well as physically exhausted. This, along with the failure to receive expected reinforcements from North Carolina and the overmountain settlements, forced Pickens to end his incursion. “We were well nigh perishing,” one participant wrote. The abortive offensive also deprived Wayne of reinforcements since Gov. Martin dispatched Elijah Clarke and eighty men to assist Pickens. Martin then withheld additional troops to protect the Georgia backcountry from “the frequent alarms on the frontiers, by the Indians and Tories.”

Pickens believed that his operations would have succeeded “had it not been for the Tories that went up under Col. Williams and others small parties that has since gon

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233 Wayne to Greene, March 25, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 15.
234 Wayne to Major Moore, March 30, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 16.
236 Letter of Andrew Pickens, no date given, in Hayes, *Hero of Hornet's Nest*, 327n-328n.
237 Hayes, *Hero of Hornet's Nest*, 149.
up" to Cherokee territory to cooperate with the Indians. Pickens warned that "unless some Spirited meassures are taken and Immediately Carried into Execution against the Cherokees and Tories that are harboured in the nation – this part of the Country must be Evacuated for some time.” In response, Gov. Rutledge approved a combined attack by militia from North and South Carolina and the overmountain settlers against the Cherokees and loyalists.240 Once Pickens had defeated the Cherokees, he hoped to strike the Creeks too. In a letter to Martin soliciting assistance from Georgia for his offensive, Pickens declared that he "would wish at the Same time to carry my Idear further than the Cherokees if possible, I mean to the Coweatus."241

While Pickens worked to assemble his expedition, Brown ordered further Indian attacks against the Whigs. He observed that the Cherokees had demonstrated "manly, spirited perseverance,” despite the “wanton bloody outrages ... committed by the rebels” against them, and had forced “all the inhabitants over the mountains to live in blockhouses for their security.” However, their efforts and those of the other nations “have not been productive of any other essential advantage other than preventing any very considerable reinforcements from the back country to Green’s army.”242 To increase the pressure on the rebels, Brown in February instructed his newly appointed deputy to the Cherokees, Col. Thomas Waters, to “send out from time to time as many Indians as you can possibly collect to harrass and annoy” the enemy. Brown also ordered Waters to

240 Andrew Pickens to Elijah Clarke, Jan. 25, 1782, Emmet Collection No. 6670, NYPL.
241 Andrew Pickens to Gov. John Martin, June 22, 1782, Andrew Pickens Papers, SCL.
242 Brown to Germain, April 6, 1782, DAR, 21:55.
place his assistants in command of the raiding parties and that all “refugees ... must be employed” in what Brown envisioned as a joint Indian-loyalist effort.\textsuperscript{243}

Brown’s plan accomplished little. On April 2, Elijah Clarke and his militia attacked a group of Creeks and loyalists west of the Oconee River. The outnumbered raiding party scattered. The Whigs pursued them, killed a few Indians, and captured two loyalists, who were promptly hanged. One week later, a rebel force under Maj. Francis Moore encountered about twenty Indians and a few loyalists near the mouth of the Altamaha River. The Indians and loyalists took refuge in a log house and repulsed their attackers, killing Moore and two of his men; another drowned trying to escape across the river. A party of Whig militia skirmished with fifteen Choctaws on May 2. Three Indians were killed before more arrived and forced the rebels to retreat. Several other Indian raiding parties launched attacks in the vicinity of Augusta later in the month, then quickly withdrew before the Whigs could mount an effective pursuit.\textsuperscript{244}

A Creek attempt to reach Savannah resulted in the two largest battles of the campaign in May and June. Learning that Emestisiguo, the most ardent British supporter among the Creeks, was advancing to Savannah with 150 warriors, Brown sent a detachment of provincials and militia to the Ogechee River to meet the Indians. The loyalists drove back Whig troops in the area on May 19 and shortly afterward Brown joined them with 340 additional soldiers. Wayne also sent reinforcements and attacked

the loyalists. Brown defeated the Whigs, but seeing no sign of the Indians withdrew to Savannah the next day.245

Emestisiguo’s party did not approach Savannah until late June. In the early morning of June 24, the Creeks encountered Wayne’s Continentals encamped for the night at Gibbons’s plantation and launched a surprise assault. According to Brown, who received his information from Creek participants, the Indians attacked the rebels twice, driving Wayne’s troops from their camp, overrunning the American artillery, and destroying “a great part of their ammunition tents & baggage.” The Creeks successfully resisted three charges made by the Continentals after Wayne rallied his troops. Brown reported the Indian losses as seventeen killed, wounded, or captured, compared to an estimated seven American officers and about one hundred soldiers killed and wounded. The most serious loss to the Creeks, Brown wrote, was their horses; the animals “took flight at the noise of the musketry & ran off in the night.”246 The Americans claimed to have killed eighteen Creeks and two loyalists, while losing five killed and eight wounded. Among the dead was Emestisiguo. Most of the Creeks took advantage of the confusion to evade the rebels and were able to reach Savannah.247

The morning after the battle, Gen. Thomas Posey of the Virginia Continentals saw a number of Creeks near the rebel position. On Posey’s approach, the Creeks, thinking the troops might be British, sent forward twelve men to confer with them. The Whigs seized them and the rest of the party fled. Posey brought the captives to Wayne, who became enraged when he saw them and ordered their immediate execution. Posey

245 Cashin, King’s Ranger, 151.
246 Thomas Brown to Alexander Leslie, July 1, 1782, Emmet Collection No. 6673, NYPL.
247 Wayne to Greene, June 24, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 17; Nelson, Anthony Wayne, 175-176; Cashin, King’s Ranger, 152; O’Donnell, Southern Indians, 123.
protested that it was inhumane to kill them, especially considering the circumstances of their capture. But Wayne would not relent and the Indian prisoners were murdered.\textsuperscript{248}

The Creeks had given their lives in vain because preparations for the evacuation of Savannah were already well advanced. Wayne feared that the Indians would either try to fight their way out of town before the British left or that the British would transport the Indians by boat to the west side of the Ogeechee River, from whence they would raid the backcountry on their way home. "I have every reason to Apprehend that they will endeavour to avenge their blood they have lost, by shedding that of the Innocent & defensless Women & Children in their route," Wayne stated. He ordered the Georgia militia to Sunbury to protect the inhabitants there.\textsuperscript{249}

The Indians, however, decided to sail to St. Augustine in the evacuation fleet. About 200 Choctaws and 250 Creeks accompanied Brown and Graham to East Florida.\textsuperscript{250} Brown was uncertain of what he should do with the Indians; Leslie had sent no orders other than to see that "the strictest economy may be preserved" in the Indian department.\textsuperscript{251} Brown praised the Cherokees and Creeks for their "fidelity and attachment to His Majesty’s interest,” but realizing that the war was over, he asked Carleton if the general thought it worthwhile to purchase the Indians’ neutrality since their military services were no longer required.\textsuperscript{252} Graham likewise lauded the “spirit ... good order and regularity” that the Choctaws had displayed throughout their service with the British;

\textsuperscript{249} Wayne to Carr, June 26, 1782, Feinstone Collection, #1650, DLAR.
\textsuperscript{250} “Journal of the Hessian Regiment von Knoblauch,” HDAR, Item W; Lt. Col. Beamsley Glazier to Alexander Leslie, Aug. 25, 1782, Emmet Collection No. 6733, NYPL.
\textsuperscript{251} Leslie to Brown, Aug. 4, 1782, Leslie Letterbook, microfilm, SCDAH.
however, he proposed to Carleton that they and the Chickasaws should continue “to harrass the Spanish” in West Florida.253

After the British evacuated Savannah, Whig leaders tried to convince the Creeks to shift their allegiance to the Americans. In a message to the leaders of both the Upper and Lower Creeks, Gov. Martin pointed out that the Americans had clearly won the war and therefore Creek interests could be best served by abandoning their alliance with the British, who had “basely deserted” the Creeks. The governor offered the Creeks peace and a generous supply of trade goods if they would “deliver up all the commissaries & traders. Likewise all our negroes, horses & cattle that are among you.”254 Wayne cooperated with Martin in the effort to make peace with the Creeks, sending Tactor of the pro-American Tallassees back to his people in late July with presents and a message of friendship.255 A second messenger Wayne dispatched to the Creeks was seized by pro-British warriors and the documents he carried were turned over to Brown.256

Some Creeks continued to harass the Whigs. One group of ten warriors who had been captured by Wayne’s troops in August escaped and avenged an earlier wrong inflicted on their friend Thomas Brown. After escaping, these Indians “went straight to Thomas Graham’s house ... & killed him,” Patrick Carr reported. Graham was “the most active man in tarring and feathering Brown” in 1775.257 In the fall of 1782, three thousand Creeks visited St. Augustine to consult with Brown and to express their willingness to continue the struggle. Brown gave them presents, but advised them to

253 John Graham to Sir Guy Carleton, July 20, 1782, RAM, 3:30.
254 John Martin to the Tallassee King & the Head Men and Warriors of the Upper and Lower Creek Nation, July 19, 1782, in “Letters of Governor Martin,” 313-315.
255 Wayne to Greene, July 28, 1782, PNG, 11:471.
256 Wayne to Greene, July 28, 1782, PNG, 11:471; Brown to Leslie, July 1, 1782, Emmet Collection No. 6673, NYPL.
come to an accommodation with the Americans. Some Creeks offered to leave with the
British when East Florida was evacuated, but Brown suggested they would do better to
remain on their lands and turn to the Spaniards for support. Meanwhile, several Creek
leaders had gone to Augusta in October for talks with the Georgians, which proved
inconclusive. Martin did not attend the meetings and was not optimistic about reaching an
agreement, noting that the Indians “have by no means complied” with the demands he
had made earlier.

While the Creeks’ war against the Americans petered out with a mixture of
sporadic fighting and hesitant negotiations, Cherokee participation in the Revolution
ended in a cataclysm of violence. In the summer of 1782, Col. Thomas Waters had led
the Cherokees and loyalists in another series of attacks in the backcountry, which spurred
Whig officials to launch Pickens’s long-delayed offensive against the Cherokees. On
September 16, an eager Pickens assembled his troops at Cherokee Ford on the Savannah
River. The Cherokees, he told Greene, “are a people who only can be brought to
measures by fear or Necessity” and he hoped this time to punish them severely.

Pickens set out two days later with five hundred South Carolinians and Georgians,
while another force advanced against the Cherokees from North Carolina. After crossing
the Chattahoochee River, the Whigs captured two Indians, one of whom agreed to guide
them. Moving through the woods to avoid being sighted, Pickens’s troops reached and
attacked a Cherokee town, but “gave a great many of the Indians an opportunity of

258 Cashin, King’s Ranger, 157, 160-161.
260 Cashin, King’s Ranger, 155.
261 Pickens to Greene, Sept. 7, 1782, PNG, 11:,634.
262 Pickens to John Martin, Oct. 26, 1782, Joseph V. Bevan Collection, LOC; Pickens to Elijah Clarke,
Sept. 2, 1782; Pickens to Henry Lee, Aug. 28, 1811, Thomas Sumter Papers, Lyman C. Draper
Manuscripts, microfilm reel 1VV, LOC.
making their escape” because his principal objective “was to get the white men that was in the Nation and bring about a peace with the Indians.” About fifty Cherokee women and children, plus a few men, were captured. Pickens sent three of the male captives to tell the Cherokees that he promised to halt his march and release the prisoners if the Indians released their white captives and all the slaves they had taken.

One Whig participant described a much more violent battle than Pickens reported. The troops, this soldier asserted, had orders “to kill all who had the appearances of warriors, to save the old men, squaws & children.” Taken by surprise, the Cherokees “ran in the greatest consternation in every direction” with the Whigs in pursuit, “cutting down the Indians with their swords.” When the slaughter ended, seventy-seven Indians, a loyalist, and a black were dead and another forty-six Indians captured. The rebels then destroyed all the crops before advancing to a smaller town, where they captured five loyalists. A hastily organized tribunal sentenced them to death, but Elijah Clarke interceded to have four of them spared on condition that he would return them to Georgia for trial. The fifth, charged with murder and burning houses, was hanged.

Pickens had sent his message to the Cherokees on September 25, threatening them with further destruction if they did not make peace. Frightened by the devastation the Whigs had already inflicted, the first Cherokee leaders arrived for negotiations five days later. Pickens formally presented his demands on October 17. He insisted that the Cherokees return all prisoners, slaves, horses, and other captured property and that they seize any loyalists and British agents still among them and turn them over to the Whigs.

263 Pickens to John Martin, Oct. 26, 1782, Bevan Collection, LOC.
264 Andrew Pickens to Elijah Clarke, Sept. 2, 1782; Pickens to Henry Lee, Aug. 28, 1811, Thomas Sumter Papers, Lyman C. Draper Manuscripts, microfilm reel 1VV, LOC.
265 “Pickens’s Campaign of ’81,” Thomas Sumter Papers, Lyman C. Draper Manuscripts, microfilm reel 3VV, LOC. Although the memoir is dated 1781, other documentary evidence indicates that it is actually an account of the 1782 campaign.
In addition, the Cherokees had to surrender all of their land claims south of the Savannah and east of the Chattahoochee Rivers as the price for peace with South Carolina and Georgia. The Cherokees agreed to the terms and signed the Treaty of Long Swamp the same day. As a sign of their good intentions, they also turned over six loyalists to Pickens. Waters and most of his men, however, escaped and made their way to East Florida. For the Cherokees, their last battle ended like the first, with defeat and the loss of their land.

The Seminole Creeks fared far better than the Cherokees, not only preserving their land but also avoiding further combat. Since the surrender of Pensacola, Patrick Tonyn had understood that “the aid of Indians will be of the utmost importance to us” if the Spaniards attacked East Florida as expected, and the governor had labored to keep the Seminoles’ friendship. He “employed them as scouting parties along the coast” to give advance warning of a Spanish invasion. The only battles involving the Seminoles in the last months of the war were those Tonyn fought with the army and the ministry to secure a generous supply of presents for his Indian allies.

If the Seminoles never had to fight the Spaniards, the Creeks, Choctaws, and Chickasaws maintained constant pressure on the Spanish in West Florida. In December 1781, Brown informed Leslie that the “Upper Creeks carry on their operations against the Spaniards” at Pensacola and Mobile, despite Spanish officials’ “many ineffectual attempts by promises & presents to detach the Indians from His Majesty’s Service.” Creek pressure was so severe, Brown reported, that the troops at Pensacola could “draw

266 “A message sent to the middle Grounds by Charles Beaman,” Sept. 25, 1782; “A Talk delivered by General Pickens to the Head men of the Cherokee Nation,” Oct. 17, 1782, Bevan Collection, LOC; Hayes, Hero of Hornet’s Nest, 162; Pickens to Elijah Clarke, Sept. 2, 1782; Pickens to Henry Lee, Aug. 28, 1811, Thomas Sumter Papers, Lyman C. Draper Manuscripts, microfilm reel 1VV, LOC.
no subsistence from the country & are compelled to live on jerked beef ... from Mexico.  

The Spanish also offered the Choctaws bribes to switch their allegiance to Spain, but without success. Instead, Farquhar Bethune sent raiding parties to carry off the cattle around the Spanish posts. Inspired by the lack of Spanish opposition, Bethune suggested that if the Choctaws and Chickasaws received adequate ammunition, with the help of two troops of cavalry formed from loyalist refugees, a major attack could be made along the Mississippi “and the whole country reduced to the utmost distress.”

The Chickasaws, under the leadership of loyalist James Colbert, were already attacking the Spanish along the Mississippi. Colbert, who had lived with the Indians since his youth, began his operations in the spring of 1782 in hopes of forcing the Spanish to release eight loyalists still imprisoned for their role in the Natchez Rebellion. Colbert and the Chickasaws made travel so hazardous that few Spanish vessels dared venture upriver from New Orleans. Their most successful attack took place on May 2, when they seized vessels carrying munitions, provisions, and the wife and children of the lieutenant governor of Illinois. Colbert released his captives on parole so that they could arrange their exchange for the loyalist prisoners. The Spaniards did release a few of the loyalists, then launched an unsuccessful attack on the Chickasaws. Colbert’s force of Indians and loyalists continued to harass the Spaniards into 1783. Eventually, however, the

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Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creeks all followed the Cherokees’ example and opened peace negotiations with the Spanish and Americans.²⁷⁰

**African Americans: From Bargaining Chips to Soldiers**

When the British army withdrew to the environs of Charleston, many South Carolinians began trying to reclaim their slaves, who were often scattered throughout the South. Robert Heriot, a paroled American prisoner in Charleston, sought his missing slaves so that they could be sent to his plantation at Georgetown. He learned that three of them were in North Carolina, where they had been “reserved for me,” and found a fourth in town. Another, Jac, had vanished, while Mingo had been employed by the British “on the public works, but I understand is run away from them.”²⁷¹ On his journey south from Philadelphia, Aedenus Burke stopped at Yorktown, Virginia, and there took possession of “several Negroes” belonging to his Carolina friends, who had been with Cornwallis’s army. One, however, owned by Arthur Middleton, escaped aboard a British vessel.²⁷²

Gen. Isaac Huger of the South Carolina militia took time from his duties to search for his slaves, only to learn that the British had taken most of them. Huger tried without success to find a white man to escort his remaining slaves to safety in Virginia. He also expressed concern at Sumter’s seizure of 150 slaves belonging to Lt. Gov. William Bull, probably because Huger feared that Sumter’s actions would provoke retaliation in kind by the British and the loss of more Whig-owned slaves.²⁷³ Sumter, however, continued to

²⁷¹ Robert Heriot to Polly Heriot, June 9, 1781, Robert Heriot Correspondence, SCHS.
seize slaves to distribute as bounties to his troops and quickly accumulated a surplus.274

In December, Gov. Rutledge advised Sumter to put a group of blacks the latter had recently taken “in charge of some person, of honest character,” to care for them and insure that “they do not escape to the Enemy,” until the state government called for them.275

Rebel officials assigned some unclaimed and loyalist-owned slaves to repair some of the deterioration that resulted from years of wartime neglect. In early December, a party of blacks was sent under guard to repair the road between Ferguson’s Mill and Orangeburg. The captain commanding the guards received orders to “prevent the Negroes from defecting” as well as “to repel any attack that may be made on them by the disaffected Inhabitants who may desire to interrupt them in their duty or steal them from their masters.”276

The Whigs had good reason to fear the loss of their slaves because British and loyalist parties had made repeated forays from Charleston to capture blacks. On September 28, Greene had informed Sumter that “the enemy ... are collecting all the Negroes they can.”277 Six weeks later, Francis Marion reported that several raiding parties took “a great number of Negroes out of St Stephens and St Johns” counties.278 Marion initially thought the British wanted the slaves to work on Charleston’s fortifications, but was puzzled when raiders carried off “women and children, who will

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274 For examples of slaves seized by Sumter and distributed as bounties to his troops, see Petition of Anne Lord, Feb. 5, 1783; Petition of Joannah Boylstone and George Boylstone, Dec. 12, 1793; Petition of Ann Summerall, Jan. 29, 1791; Petition of Sarah Armstrong, Nov. 30, 1792, in Kierner, *Southern Women in Revolution*, 32, 44, 78, 83.
275 John Rutledge to Thomas Sumter, Dec. 25, 1781, Sumter Papers, Vol. 2, LOC.
276 “Warrant to Repair the Road to Orangeburgh,” Dec. 7, 1781, Otho Holland Williams Papers, MHS.
be of no use to them in Charleston and will use up provisions." Evidently the British intended to use some of these slaves as laborers, while loyalists sought slaves as compensation for the property they had been forced to abandon. Depriving the Whigs of slaves also made it harder for them to raise the crops needed to feed the militia and Greene's army.

A significant percentage of the seized slaves found themselves among the increasing number of blacks working directly for the army. By October 1781, the Royal Artillery Department employed 90 blacks, 85 of them as laborers. King Staniard continued as sergeant, assisted by four corporals. The number peaked at 95 in January 1782, then declined slightly; there were 86 men on the rolls in September.

In addition to these laborers, the royal artillery relied upon fifty-seven wagon drivers from the Horse Department to transport guns and supplies. Most or all of these were apparently black, since the muster roll lists first names such as Quamino, Monday, Bristol, Pompey, and Mingo. The artillery department also employed skilled blacks, although most of these appear to have been hired from loyalist owners, whereas most of the laborers and teamsters were apparently fugitives who had fled to the British. A return of skilled black workers dated April 21, 1782 shows eight carpenters, a wheeler, two smiths, and ten sawyers, for a total of twenty-one men. Skilled workers who maintained the artillery train consisted of a mixed group of whites and black craftsmen. Pay, however, was generally lower for blacks. White workers received three shillings per day, blacks only two, except in the case of sawyers, who were paid two shillings per day.

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279 Marion to Greene, Nov. 14, 1781, PNG, 9:573.
regardless of race. Blacks working for the army often had their families with them; one muster roll listed fifty-two women attached to the artillery department.\textsuperscript{281}

British officers also turned to loyalist masters in the fall of 1781 to procure slaves to strengthen the defenses around Charleston. The army advertised in the newspapers for slaves to perform this task, instructing masters to have them report each morning to an official from the engineer department for assignment. The promised pay was one shilling per day, which apparently went to the masters rather than the laborers.\textsuperscript{282} General Leslie later established a fixed scale of payment to loyalists whose slaves worked in the various departments. Masters received eight pence per day for laborers, eighteen pence for skilled workers; women’s work was valued at half the rate of a male laborer. The slaves received clothing “made up in Uniform” along with a direct allowance of two dollars per month for artisans and one dollar for laborers, on condition that their overseer gave them a “Certificate of their deserving it.”\textsuperscript{283}

Hired, seized, and refugee slaves still did not meet the army’s insatiable demand for labor, so officers turned to John Cruden, who had abandoned the sequestered properties he managed when the army withdrew to Charleston and taken his slaves within British lines. Cruden “amply supplied the Public Departments” with able-bodied males, but retained responsibility for supporting the “Women, Children, and Infirm.” The cost of

\textsuperscript{281} Muster Roll of the Horse Department attending His Majesty’s Field Train, Oct. 1, 1782, Wray Papers, Muster Rolls.; Return of Negroes, April 21, 1782, Wray Papers, Vol. 8; Muster Roll of the Civil Branch attending His Majesty’s Field Train of Artillery in Charleston, Aug. 8, 1782, Vol. 9; Sept. 28, 1782, and undated, Vol. 10, Wray Papers; Muster Roll of Civil Branch, Oct. 1, 1782, Wray Papers, Muster Rolls; Return of Negroe Wenches and their Children belonging to the Artillery Dept., Nov. 5, 1782, Wray Papers, WLCL. There are only 52 names on the list, although the last is numbered 53; there is no name listed at No. 15, nor are any children listed on this return.

\textsuperscript{282} Olwell, \textit{Masters, Slaves, and Subjects}, 254.

\textsuperscript{283} Instructions for the Office Established to receive the Pay of Negroes Employed in the different Departments, n.d., Leslie Letterbook, microfilm, SCDAH.
clothing, medical care, and food for these people nearly bankrupted him, even though
“provisions was purchased of the cheapest kind, and issued as sparingly as possible.”

While slave women and children often proved to be more burden than benefit to
the British, many of the men sometimes provided more assistance than simple labor. The
roster of a company of fifty-four black laborers listed the particular information each man
possessed, such as knowledge of certain roads and wooded areas. This information
indicates that these men may have been called upon occasionally to carry messages or
procure information for the army.

Black spies and messengers comprised a key component of British intelligence
operations. Henry Lee discovered in August that a loyalist behind rebel lines was using
“two of his Negroe fellows” to send a steady stream of information to Balfour in
Charleston. Lee also learned that one black had offered to lead the British across the
Santee and through the swamps to make a surprise attack on Greene’s camp. Boston
King thwarted a planned rebel attack on the British post at Nelson’s Ferry by carrying a
message through Whig lines to another British detachment at Monk’s Corner, which
promptly marched to the aid of the threatened position. The officer to whom he delivered
the message welcomed him “with great kindness” and praised King’s “courage and
conduct in this dangerous business.” The British paid King a three shilling reward for his
services, a sum that the former slave considered paltry in view of the risks he had
taken.

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284 Narrative of John Cruden, [1782], South Carolina Loyalists, South Carolina Box, NYPL.
285 Quarles, Negro in the Revolution, 144.
286 Lee to Greene, Aug. 18, 1781, PNG, 9:203.
287 Thayer, Nathanael Greene, 374.
288 King, Memoirs.
Angered by the harm blacks were doing to the rebel cause, Gov. Rutledge issued orders in September to punish slaves who helped the British. “Severe examples must be made of all negroes who carry any provisions of any kind, aid or assist, or carry any intelligence to or for the enemy,” he wrote; “agreeably to the laws of this State all such negroes shall suffer death.” The governor’s threats had little effect, for two months later Greene decided that kindness toward slaves might work better than threats. Greene told Henry Lee to insure that Whig troops did not abuse “the Negroes from whom the enemy get all their best intelligence and who will be either more or less useful to them as they are treated well or ill by us.”

Of even greater concern to Greene was the growing possibility that the British might augment their forces by arming large numbers of slaves. In August, Greene believed that “four or five hundred Negroes may be calculated upon” to fight alongside the British and loyalists. By December, he learned that the British had finally begun to organize black military units. “An attempt is ... making to Arm the Negroes and some are now in service,” he reported.

Balfour had been considering ways to procure more assistance from slaves since the summer, but even the limited plan he had suggested then provoked an outburst of furor among loyalists in New York when it became known. “There is an Absurd and exasperating Promise of Freedom and a Gratuity to Slaves who will inform against their

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291 Greene to Washington, Aug. 6, 1781, PNG, 9:139.
Masters Strange Defect of sound Policy!” raged William Smith when he heard Balfour’s proposal. James Simpson pronounced the idea “Madness.”

But others believed that the best means to retrieve British fortunes in America was to abandon all reservations and arm large numbers of blacks. An anonymous writer calculated the strength available to the rebels and concluded that black troops would give Britain a decisive advantage in the war. He estimated the population of the thirteen colonies at 2.4 million, of which 600,000 were “Negroes or Slaves.” Assuming that one in four people were capable of bearing arms, the rebels had a potential fighting strength of 460,000 men and the blacks 150,000. However, the writer calculated that the war had already incapacitated about 50,000 whites and that the number of whites available for military service would be further reduced because many farmers and artisans made indispensable contributions as civilians, while merchants and the propertied class would not fight. Therefore, since slaves were “desirous of recovering their freedom, and are ever ready to embrace an opportunity of doing it,” and their numbers would not be diminished by merchants, artisans, and others who could not or would not serve, “more fighting Men might be raised among them upon proper Encouragement than among the Whites.”

Although the writer did not say so explicitly, he clearly believed that armed slaves could provide the manpower needed to defeat the rebels.

Loyalists and British officers in South Carolina had come to the same conclusion. When Greene’s army advanced in mid-November and forced the British to evacuate their post at Dorchester and to withdraw into the fortifications of Charleston, “the most active

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294 “A View of the present Strength of America in respect to Her Number of Fighting Men,” 1781, British Museum, Egerton Mss. 2135, transcripts, LOC.

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negroes were called to arms and enrolled" to meet the emergency295. The new policy was limited and almost furtive. Only a fraction of the many slaves with the army were armed, and neither Leslie nor Balfour ever mentioned the black units in correspondence with their superiors.

John Laurens saw the British decision to arm blacks as an opportunity to revive his cherished plan to enlist slaves to serve in the Whig forces. He proposed that South Carolina use the promise of freedom after the war to recruit 2,500 slave soldiers. Greene, who was eager to increase the strength of his army, lent his full support.296 Laurens intended to bring the proposal before the Assembly, and Greene urged Gov. Rutledge to help secure its passage. "The natural strength of this country in point of numbers, appears to me to consist much more in the blacks, than the whites," Greene observed. "Could they be incorporated, and employed for it's defence, it would afford you double security. That they would make good Soldiers I have not the least doubt."297 After consulting with the Council, Rutledge replied that the decision would be left to the legislature. He also reminded Greene that the previous proposal to arm blacks had been overwhelmingly rejected.298

Pressured by Laurens, who declared that "unless they are goaded upon the subject" state officials would do nothing, Greene again addressed the governor.299 "I cannot help repeating my recommendation of raising some black regiments for the more effectual protection and security of this country," the general wrote. He conceded that this "remedy may be disagreeable," yet it was preferable to having the province again

295 Ward, *Delaware Continentals*, 476.
296 Greene to Robert Livingston, April 12, 1782, *PNG*, 11:35.
overrun by the British. To emphasize this danger, Greene asserted that the British “are now arming a considerable body of negroes and I am well informed that they determine to compleat them to the number of 3,000.”

Laurens managed to have the matter brought up for a vote in the Assembly on February 4, but his proposal was overwhelmingly defeated. Only Laurens, David Ramsay, and fourteen others voted for the measure. “By all the rest it was execrated,” Burke wrote. He noted that the use of slave soldiers was becoming a divisive issue between the northern and southern states. “The northern people I have observed, regard the condition in which we hold our slaves in a light different from us. I am much deceived indeed, if they do not secretly wish for a general Emancipation, if the present struggle was over,” Burke declared.

Leading the opposition to Laurens’s proposal were John and Edward Rutledge, Jacob Read, and Christopher Gadsden, and nearly one hundred other representatives supported them. Edward Rutledge described the contest over the bill as a “hard Battle” and said that although Laurens and his allies had “pushed the matter as far as it could well go,” upon hearing the debate “people in general returned to their Senses” and opposed arming slaves. Rutledge confessed to being “very much alarmed on the Occasion” and expressed a hope that the issue “will rest for ever & a day.”

A Continental officer agreed with Rutledge’s assessment, writing that the “fears of the people started an alarm, and the force of interest annihilated the scheme.” Another added that “prejudices against the measure are so prevailing that no

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300 Greene to John Rutledge, Jan. 21, 1782, Myers Collection, No. 1209.
303 William Pierce to St. George Tucker, Feb. 6, 1782, in “Southern Campaign of Greene,” 439.
consideration could induce them to adopt it." In a letter to George Washington, Greene asserted that the Assembly had rejected the plan "not because they objected to the expence ... but from an apprehension of the consequences." Laurens sarcastically remarked to Alexander Hamilton that he could not succeed in the face of overwhelming odds, "having only reason on my side and being opposed by a triple-headed monster ... of Avarice, prejudice, and pusillanimity."

Informing Greene that the Assembly had rejected Laurens's plan, South Carolina's new governor, John Mathews, offered instead to provide the army "with a Sufficient number of Negroes, as Officers servants, Pioneers, Waggoners, Artificers &c." However, state officials wanted Greene's assurance that the Continental Congress would count those men toward the quota of troops the state had been asked to furnish. In other words, the state government refused to provide the army with black troops, but it wanted black noncombatants counted as white soldiers. Greene replied that the army could use four or five hundred blacks to serve in the capacities Mathews had specified, but only if they were employed "upon such terms as will engage their fidelity .... unless the Negroes have an interest in their servitude, I am persuaded they will be of little benefit." The general suggested that the state clothe the blacks and pay them the same amount that Continental soldiers received.

In addition to providing slaves to perform noncombat duties with Greene's army, the legislators approved their own version of "Sumter's Law," the practice of distributing slaves as an enlistment bounty. Their plan called for the formation of two Continental
battalions, with each recruit to receive "the enormous Bounty of 1 Negroe for each Year" served, Edward Rutledge explained. He wished, however, that Congress would send more troops to South Carolina, which would "let us save two Negroes out of three."  

Contrary to what Rutledge implied, Gov. Mathews in March 1782 assured Sumter that an adequate supply of slaves was available to provide bounties for the recruits. The commissioners of confiscation had assumed control of loyalists' slaves and "wish to get rid of the Negroes as fast as possible," Mathews wrote. He instructed Sumter to assemble recruits in parties of twenty and send them to him with "an Order on me for a Negroe each."  

The loss of their land and slaves angered many loyalists, who sought to reclaim the latter or at least replace them with other slaves. Some, like James Penman of John's Island, sought the help of Whig officers in recovering their slaves. Penman had left thirty slaves behind when British troops evacuated the island, "flattering himself that this Sort of property would not be molested." The rebels, however, carried off his slaves, and Penman appealed in vain to one of Greene's officers for their return.  

Most loyalists turned to Gen. Leslie, requesting that he seize slaves from the Whigs in retaliation for the confiscation act. On March 27, Leslie ordered Maj. Simon Fraser of the provincial cavalry to pursue a rebel party and recover slaves stolen from loyalists as the first step in the general's plan to secure compensation for the loyalists. Leslie's aide explained to Fraser that "the principal business to prosecute, is, the collecting of all the Slaves, who belong to those, in arms against the British government."  

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310 John Mathews to Thomas Sumter, March 4, 1782, Sumter Papers, Vol. 2, LOC.  
311 Major Augustine Prevost to Arthur St. Clair, March 15, 1782, St. Clair Papers, Box 1, Folder 11, Microfilm, DLAR.
Fraser was to circulate word throughout the country that if slaves of rebel masters came to the British, "it is the determination of the General never to return them to their masters, but to take care of them and their familys, and that they may depend upon the generosity of the English Government should they behave with fidelity during the course of the war." The aide told Fraser to send all blacks who came in response to this offer to Haddrell's Point, where they would receive Leslie's directions.\[312\]

Leslie informed Clinton that he had been "induced to make this movement in order to convince the loyalists of my desire ... to counteract the effect of the sanguinary laws lately passed by the rebel assembly against them."\[313\] Leslie also explained his actions to Greene and offered to discuss the issue of confiscation. The British general stated that he had watched the state's proceedings regarding confiscation "with deep concern," hoping that "Humanity, as well as Policy, would have Arrested their execution." Now that the Whigs had begun to carry out their confiscation measures, Leslie believed that he had no choice but to counter them by "seizing the Negroes of your friends, that restitution may be thereby made to such of ours, as may suffer under these oppressive and ruinous resolutions." He proposed to send commissioners to meet with rebel leaders to discuss the issue.\[314\] Greene replied that the matter was "of civil resort" and referred Leslie to Gov. Mathews.\[315\] Greene then ordered Francis Marion to warn the people of "the enemies intentions."\[316\]

The warnings had little effect, as parties of British troops carried off large numbers of slaves. The *Royal Gazette* announced in March that in a recent raid the troops

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312 Edward Scott to Major Simon Fraser, March 27, 1782, Leslie Letterbook, microfilm, SCDAH.
314 Leslie to Greene, April 4, 1782, *PNG*, 10:582-584.
315 Greene to Leslie, April 4, 1782, *PNG*, 10:585.
316 Greene to Marion, April 6, 1782, *PNG*, 10:589.
had seized three times as many slaves from the Whigs as had recently been lost to them. "The Rebels will therefore find that their Estates, not those of the Loyalists have been confiscated by the Assembly at Jacksonborough," the newspaper asserted. On March 29, Marion reported that British troops were in St. James Parish, "taking all the negroes from every place." Another officer noted that in early April the British had made two raids into St. Thomas Parish, from which "they carried off 150 negroes." John Laurens denounced the British "excursions" as having "no other object than the stealing Negroes" and hoped that pressure from Whig civil and military officials would force Leslie to "renounce his project of kidnapping."

Greene sent troops to oppose the British raiding parties, but occasionally these men engaged in the very practice they had been ordered to stop. Pennsylvania soldiers returning from a failed attempt to intercept a British force themselves "began to plunder the negroes" along the Cooper River on April 3. They were stopped when a soldier from Lee’s Legion shot one of the Pennsylvanians.

Although British officers kept no record of how many slaves were forcibly seized and how many willingly accompanied the raiding parties, many Whigs feared that their slaves would take the opportunity to escape if British troops were in the area. In May, a rebel militia officer removed the slaves from the Gaillard plantation "for the sake of Security," but John Fauchereau Grimke suggested that they be brought back, "as there is little difference in the two Situations & it would be impossible to restrain the negroes

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317 Frey, Water from the Rock, 137.
318 Marion to Greene, March 29, 1782, PNG, 10:561.
319 Mordecai Gist to William Smallwood, April 5, 1782, Mordecai Gist Papers, MHS.
320 John Laurens to Thomas Bee, April 14, 1782, Thomas Bee Papers, LOC.
from running away from either place."\textsuperscript{322} Slaves belonging to planter Thomas Farr threatened to go to Charleston "whenever I cannot feed them." In turn Farr, who owned about a hundred slaves, asked Greene to take no more provisions for the army from his plantation, which had only a two-month food supply left.\textsuperscript{323}

While his troops collected some slaves to be used as pawns in the dispute over confiscation, Leslie at last officially proposed to arm others for the defense of Charleston. He did so in response to growing pressure from loyalists and from the former governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, who had made his own attempt to arm slaves in 1775.

Dunmore, who had recently arrived in Charleston, saw the large number of blacks with the British and immediately recognized their military potential. He recommended arming ten thousand slaves as "the most efficacious, expeditious, cheapest, and certain means of reducing this Country to a proper sense of their Duty." Furthermore, he asserted, blacks "are perfectly attached to our Sovereign, and by employing them you cannot desire a means more effectual to distress your Foes." Dunmore suggested that the government pay slave recruits an enlistment bonus of one guinea and one crown (over $150), and free them when the war ended.\textsuperscript{324} The government would also compensate loyalist masters whose slaves were enlisted. Other slaves would labor behind the lines to provide the black soldiers with supplies. Dunmore sent this proposal to Germain on February 5, along with his plan to create a separate loyalist army; he apparently envisioned the two forces cooperating to drive the rebels from the southern provinces. By the time the letter reached England, however, Germain was out of office. The plan ended up in the hands of Lord Shelburne, who did not reply until June 5. He stated that Gen.

\textsuperscript{322} John F. Grimke to Col. Starke, May 2, 1782, Grimke Family Papers, SCHS.
\textsuperscript{323} Thomas Farr to Greene, June 14, 1782, in PNG, 11:329.
\textsuperscript{324} Wilson, \textit{Loyal Blacks}, 27.
Carleton had received instructions concerning black troops and would respond to Dunmore's proposal.\textsuperscript{325}

In the interim, Dunmore had sent loyalist Edmund Fanning to London with a request that the governor be given "Command of all the Provincials ... and Liberty to raise several Corps of Blacks upon the Promise of Freedom." Dunmore himself went to New York and presented his case to Clinton. Despite Dunmore's insistence that "the King's Affairs are recoverable" if the army would adopt a policy of "more War and less Conciliation," Clinton rejected the plan.\textsuperscript{326} Frustrated, Dunmore gave up and sailed for England. A similar proposal to train blacks in Charleston as soldiers and use them to retake some of the southern provinces was advanced by John Morison, a loyalist who while in India had previously trained sepoys (native troops who served under British officers). The ministry ignored his suggestion.\textsuperscript{327}

Lacking Dunmore's boldness, Leslie did not suggest the use of black soldiers to Clinton until March 12. Lt. Col. James Moncrief, the highly-respected engineer officer, added his endorsement the next day. He proposed forming an entire brigade of black troops.\textsuperscript{328} Desperate loyalists also embraced the idea; on March 30, Leslie sent Clinton an address from the loyalists requesting that slaves be armed and asked the commander in chief "how far the measure of arming the negroes should be carried into execution."

Leslie declared his own support for such a measure: "It is an object of great importance to establish a plan upon this subject, and to determine in what manner their officers should be appointed and on what terms their freedom should be given them." He suggested

\textsuperscript{326} William Smith, \textit{Historical Memoirs}, 497-498.
\textsuperscript{327} Quarles, \textit{Negro in the Revolution}, 151; Wright, \textit{Florida in the American Revolution}, 120.
\textsuperscript{328} Leslie to Clinton, March 12, 1782; James Moncrief to Clinton, March 13, 1782, \textit{RAM}, 2:417, 419.
Moncrief "as a very proper person to be at their head, being well acquainted with their disposition, and in the highest estimation amongst them." Leslie indicated that if the plan was to be effective, he needed Clinton's immediate approval. Neither Leslie nor Moncrief mentioned the troops of black cavalry that had been in the field since late 1781, perhaps because they feared Clinton would order the unit disbanded. Leslie did ask Lt. Col. Benjamin Thompson, a New Hampshire loyalist who was going to New York, to explain the need for black troops to Clinton. In a letter sent with Thompson, Leslie insisted that arming slaves "will soon become indispensably necessary shou'd the war continue ... in this part of America."  

Thompson was an excellent choice for the mission, because in addition to having served as Germain's assistant, he had commanded and trained the black troops during his stay in South Carolina. When Thompson arrived in Charleston in December 1781, Leslie placed him in command of the cavalry, which consisted of "five weak Troops" of regulars, "Two strong Troops of Mounted Militia, and a Seapoy Troop (Gens de Couleurs) that will act with us occasionally," Thompson noted. He immediately began training his men to instill "order and attention to discipline." After some time spent in lengthy marches and mock charges, Thompson took his cavalry on a sweep of the area near Dorchester on January 23, 1782, in which they scattered a rebel unit and took five prisoners. "Capt. Smarts Seapoy Troop" was placed in the rear of the column. Thompson praised the performance of his soldiers on this expedition, without distinguishing between whites and blacks.

329 Leslie to Clinton, March 30, 1782, RAM, 2:435.
330 Leslie to Clinton, March 1782, RAM, 2:438.
331 Benjamin Thompson to Germain, Jan. 11, 1782, Germain Papers, Vol. 15, WLCL.
332 Benjamin Thompson to Germain, Jan. 24, 1782, Germain Papers, Vol. 15, WLCL.
Eventually, the black cavalrmen became known to loyalists and Whigs alike as the “Black Dragoons” and were one of the most active British units in the last months of the war. Their operations showed both the advantages and disadvantages of using black soldiers. While they did a creditable job in a variety of roles, including foraging, capturing deserters, and combat, they aroused great enmity among rebel civilians and soldiers.

William Mathews, who lived a short distance from Charleston, was enraged when the Black Dragoons visited his home on the night of January 17, 1782. Guided by a runaway slave from a nearby plantation, the black troops commanded by “one John Jackson” surrounded Mathews’s house and demanded entry. Mathews complied and provided the soldiers with food and drink. After they had refreshed themselves they left, declaring “that had I not been an Invalid they would have fired the House & cut me in Peices.”333 In August, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney complained that the Black Dragoons “are daily committing the most horrible depredations and murder in the defenceless parts of our Country.”334 And just over a week before the evacuation of Charleston, Thomas Bee wrote Gov. Mathews “at the request of several inhabitants of the Goose Creek neighborhood,” soliciting protection “from the ravages of the Black Dragoons who have been out four times within the last ten days plundering & robbing between the Quarter House and this place.”335 Former lieutenant governor William Bull, a slave owner and

333 William Mathews to Gideon White, April 26, 1782, Gideon White Collection, microfilm, HCIL.
335 Thomas Bee to Mathews, Dec. 9, 1782, Thomas Bee Papers, SCL.
opponent of the use of black troops, sympathized with the Whigs. He declared that the
“savage nature” of blacks made it inevitable that they would commit depredations.336

The mere sight of armed blacks infuriated rebel soldiers as much as it did
civilians, leading to several violent encounters. On April 21, an American cavalry patrol
battled a British mounted force between Dorchester and the Quarter House. The British
unit included white troops as well as the Black Dragoons.337 During the fighting, some
American soldiers singled out March, a former slave who had been “extremely active, &
very troublesome,” and “cut him” and two or three other black troops “to pieces.”338
Edward Rutledge praised the rebel soldiers’ behavior. “Besides dispatching so infamous a
fellow, I have my hopes that others will be prevented from following his Example, if they
are not, I hope they will meet his Fate,” he wrote.339

Francis Marion encountered the Black Dragoons, operating with a loyalist unit, in
a late August skirmish near Biggin’s Bridge. About one hundred white cavalymen and
“some Coloured Dragoons” charged the rebels, but Marion had posted some of his men
to fire into the British right flank, which forced the attackers to withdraw.340 In another
skirmish, some of Marion’s troops “encountered a party of twenty-six of the British black
dragoons, and cut them to pieces.”341 Marion fought the Black Dragoons again in October
and this time captured some. He then asked Gov. Mathews what he should do with his

337 Seymour, *Journal of the Southern Expedition*, 35; E. Rutledge to Middleton, April 23, 1782,
“Correspondence of Middleton,” Part 2, SCHGM, Vol. 27, No. 1, Jan. 1926, 14; Tilden, “Extracts from the
Journal of John Bell Tilden,” 225. Tilden’s account states that the initial American encounter was with
“one of ye British negro Captains and his Troop,” who were attacked and fled, and that the encounter with
the larger British force came afterward.
338 E. Rutledge to Middleton, April 23, 1782, in “Correspondence of Middleton,” Part 2, 14. Rutledge
stated that March was once “the Governor’s Man,” apparently the slave of John Mathews. The encounter
took place “near Mrs. Izard’s Gate.”
black prisoners. Mathews replied that since “the negroes you mention ... were taken in arms, they must be tried by the negro law; and, if found guilty, executed” unless the court recommended clemency or they were pardoned by him. Such lenience, however, was unlikely. “Exemplary punishments on such notorious offenders will have a very salutary effect,” Mathews declared.342

Animosity toward the Black Dragoons was not limited to southerners. Even northern soldiers, who were often sympathetic to the plight of slaves, expressed disgust with the Black Dragoons. Col. Lewis Morris of New York lamented the condition of “the poor unhappy blacks who, to the disgrace of human nature, are subject to every species of oppression while we are contending for the rights and liberties of mankind.”343 Yet he wrote admiringly of the “slicing Captain,” a Continental officer who craved a confrontation with the black soldiers. “Fortunate for the poor black dragoons that he did not fall in with them,” Morris stated.344 Capt. Walter Finney of the Pennsylvania Line gloated that a skirmish between the rebels and “a Negro Captn. Nam’d Smart, and some of his Affrican Banditty” had resulted in the Americans “Dissecting” Smart.345 Polish-born Col. Tadeusz Kosciuszko seemed to harbor a particular enmity for the black cavalrymen. He constantly tried to bring the Black Dragoons to battle, although he succeeded on only one occasion.346

In addition to fighting and foraging, the Black Dragoons patrolled the lines to deter or capture deserters. Low morale and inactivity among the soldiers resulted in high

345 Boyle, ed., “Revolutionary War Diaries of Walter Finney,” 137. Finney’s entry is dated April 21, 1782, but refers to several encounters between British and American parties during the two previous weeks.
rates of desertion, especially among the three Hessian regiments in Charleston. During October 1782, forty-six Hessians deserted. But desertions practically ceased after three fugitives from the von Benning regiment “were pounced upon by the Black Dragoons” in the early morning of October 31. Two of the deserters were killed, and although the third escaped, few soldiers dared make the attempt afterward. The Dragoons received a bounty of two guineas ($275) for each deserter, living or dead, that they brought back to the British lines.347

Leslie apparently organized a second black unit shortly before the British left Charleston, since Kosciuszko informed Greene on November 14 that the British had formed a black corps. These troops were posted on Charleston Neck and may have been armed for the specific purpose of holding the lines while British and provincial soldiers were withdrawn to prepare for the evacuation.348

A few blacks carried arms as individuals attached to British units or fought as partisans alongside white loyalists. Capt. Alexander Campbell evidently armed his servant, since the unnamed man died in battle with the rebels in April 1782 after “making a most gallant defence.” The man’s actions merited a flattering newspaper report, indicating that many loyalists had come to accept, and even admire, the military service of blacks.349 “Two White men & some Negroes” wounded Whig Capt. Richard Gough and a companion behind rebel lines on July 13 and escaped unscathed.350

Blacks had also served aboard British naval vessels since the beginning of the war and did so until the evacuation of Charleston. Most were crew members of the armed

348 Kosciuszko to Greene, Nov. 14, 1782, PNG, 12:181.
349 Olwell, Masters, Slaves, and Subjects, 257.
350 Marion to Greene, July 16, 1782, PNG, 11:447.
galleys that protected the inland waterways.\textsuperscript{351} When the Whigs captured the galley
\textit{Balfour} at the end of September, they found a roster of “Blacks on Brd” which contained
the names of two free men, five slaves, and “Moses a good friend.”\textsuperscript{352}

The captain of the \textit{Balfour} was unusual in compiling such a list, since British
officers rarely kept records or made reports of the black soldiers and sailors. Thus it is
impossible to say with certainty how many blacks served in combat roles. Greene’s
estimate, made in April 1782, that “not less than 700 are said to be armed and in Uniform
at this time” in South Carolina, was undoubtedly exaggerated.\textsuperscript{353}

The contributions black spies and informants made to British operations often
proved as valuable as those made by black soldiers. Greene always worried that blacks
were furnishing the British with intelligence of his army’s strength and position. On
January 29, he ordered his officers to carefully watch “all unknown characters coming
into camp, particularly Negroes among who Spies are suspected.”\textsuperscript{354} Thomas Farr warned
the general on March 13 that a “Mulato Servant” belonging to John McQueen, another of
Greene’s informants, was probably a spy for the British.\textsuperscript{355}

Benjamin Thompson questioned slaves he encountered during his February 24
march to strike the rebels outside Charleston, and received information that enabled him
to mount a successful attack.\textsuperscript{356} But when Kosciuszko planned to surprise British parties
operating outside Charleston in September, he had to cancel his attack when “two
Negroes Coming from Town” spotted his concealed troops and “went down and told the

\textsuperscript{351} Tadeusz Kosciuszko to Greene, Dec. 26, 1781, Feinstone Collection, No. 710, DLAR.
\textsuperscript{352} “Papers taken in the Galley \textit{Balfour},” Sept. 31 [sic], 1782, Mordecai Gist Papers, MHS.
\textsuperscript{353} Greene to George Washington, April 15, 1782, \textit{PNG}, 11:65.
\textsuperscript{354} Greene’s Orders, Jan. 29, 1782, \textit{PNG}, 10:277.
\textsuperscript{355} Thomas Farr to Greene, March 13, 1782, \textit{PNG}, 10:495.
A slave thwarted Kosciuszko yet again on November 14, in what may have been the last combat in South Carolina. The colonel led a small force to attack a party of British troops cutting wood on James Island. Instead of taking the British by surprise as Kosciuszko had expected, the rebels marched unsuspectingly into a volley of musket fire that killed one man and wounded several others. The Whigs were certain that the slave whose information led Kosciuszko to make the attack had arranged the ambush.

Blacks who provided information to the British ran great risks. Officially employed as a guide in the quartermaster’s department, a former slave named Harry served primarily as a “very serviceable” spy for Lord Rawdon and later for Balfour. In late November, Harry set out from Monk’s Corner to get intelligence of the rebel army, in what proved to be his last assignment. Captured by some of Marion’s men, Harry “was beheaded & his head set upon a Stake” near Greenland Swamp.

On rare occasions, slaves acted as clandestine messengers for the rebels. A Whig sympathizer living behind British lines used his slave, Prince, to deliver intelligence reports to Kosciuszko. Prince’s knowledge of the countryside around Charleston enabled him to slip past British outposts into the Whig lines. Prince was clearly a willing participant in the scheme; he could easily have escaped to the British and received a reward for the information he carried.

As Gen. Leslie observed the faithful service of thousands of blacks in many important roles, he became increasingly sympathetic towards them, which soon provoked a serious dispute with Whig officials. Initially, Leslie had hoped to use the slaves in

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357 Kosciuszko to Greene, Oct. 1, 1782, PNG, 12:7.
British possession to convince state authorities to ameliorate the confiscation laws in exchange for the slaves’ return, or if that failed, to compensate the loyalists for their confiscated property. He therefore tried to prevent his officers from carrying off slaves when two regiments were sent from Charleston to the West Indies in May 1782. Having learned that “a number of Negroes the property of Persons in this Province ... are now embarked on board the different Transports contrary to a general Order of mine,” Leslie demanded that the blacks be sent ashore and turned over to Col. Ballingall, the commissioner of claims for Negroes.361

Gov. Mathews had ignored the overtures Leslie had made through Greene in April to negotiate the issue of slaves and confiscation. In mid-August, however, Mathews learned that the British intended to take away all of their supporters when Charleston was evacuated, and the governor correctly assumed that former slaves were included. This prompted him to dash off a letter to Leslie threatening retaliation if the British refused to return Whig-owned slaves. “It is well known that there are also a considerable number of the Negroes and other property of the Citizens of this State, that are in possession of the Officers and other persons belonging to the Army under your command,” Mathews wrote, “and others that are employed in the various departments of your Army, who are lyable to be removed from the State with the Army.” If these blacks were evacuated, the governor warned Leslie, state officials would “seize on the whole of the debts due to the Subjects of Great Britain, and to those whose estates are Confiscated,” which, according to Mathews, far exceeded the value of the slaves that would leave with the British.362

361 Leslie to O’Hara, May 3, 1782, Leslie Letterbook, microfilm, SCDAH.
362 John Mathews to Leslie, Aug. 17, 1782, Emmet Collection #6829, NYPL.
Anticipating that the matter would soon come to a head, Leslie had already taken steps to resolve it. In late July, he wrote Carleton asking what he should do with the slaves in the event Charleston were evacuated. Leslie noted that “many negroes” had provided valuable services to the army and had been promised their freedom. Leslie found it necessary to issue such orders because some loyalists were pressing him for permission to sell slaves from the sequestered estates and keep the proceeds as compensation for their property that had been confiscated by the rebels. These people saw every slave that left the province as a potential financial loss. Leslie asked Carleton for directions on this subject. He also reminded his commander that there were many slaves “who have voluntarily come in, under the faith of our protection.” These blacks, Leslie declared, “cannot in justice be abandoned to the merciless resentment of their former masters; I shall form these under some regulation, and make an appointment of proper Officers to superintend them.” They could then be sent to East Florida or the West Indies, as Carleton might direct, “where their past services will engage the grateful attention of Government to which they will continue to be useful.”

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365 Leslie to Carleton, Aug. 10, 1782, Leslie Letterbook, microfilm, SCDAH.
366 Leslie to Carleton, Aug. 10, 1782 (second letter of this date), Leslie Letterbook, microfilm, SCDAH.
Carleton left the fate of the slaves to Leslie's discretion. Regarding sequestered slaves, Carleton stated that the matter "is left to Genl. Leslie's decision, to act as he judges best." Those slaves who had joined the British of their own accord and been promised freedom were to have it; "the others left to the General's decision." Later, Carleton asked Leslie to recruit two hundred blacks at Charleston for military service in the West Indies, at wages of sixpence per day.

After receiving Carleton's reply, Leslie considered himself authorized to open direct negotiations with the Whigs to resolve the slave issue. Mathews accepted the offer and appointed Edward Rutledge and Benjamin Guerard to represent the state. Leslie chose Alexander Wright and James Johnston to act for the loyalists. On October 10, 1782, the negotiators came to an agreement. The treaty stipulated that all slaves with the British who belonged to citizens of South Carolina "shall be restored to their former Owners, as far as is practicable, except such Slaves as may have rendered themselves particularly obnoxious on Account of their Attachment and Services to the British Troops, and such as have had specifick Promises of Freedom." Slaves thus excepted would be "fairly valued by a Person to be chosen on each Side" and their owners compensated by the British government. Slaves returned under the agreement would not be punished by the state for having escaped to the British, and officials would advise slave owners to forego punishing their slaves as well. Loyalists were permitted to take their slaves with them at the evacuation, and the state pledged to allow both loyalists and

368 Carleton to Leslie, Sept. 10, 1782, Carleton Papers, Vol. 49, No. 5575.
British merchants to collect debts owed them by South Carolinians so long as the agreement remained in force.\footnote{369}

Neither side was satisfied with the agreement. Christopher Gadsden thought it was “so particularly careful of the great negro owners” that most South Carolinians might “think their honor and safety sacrificed to that particular species of property!” He implied that throughout the war, large slaveholders had put their personal welfare ahead of the public good and were now being rewarded for doing so. “Their interest has indisputably occasioned more danger to the State than their fellow citizens, with less of that kind of property,” Gadsden declared.\footnote{370} Loyalists, for their part, denounced the treaty as unfair to rebel-owned slaves who “have borne arms in our service.” In an address to British officials, many loyalists insisted that it would be inhumane to their owners. The loyalists’ motives were not entirely altruistic – they wanted the British government to pay those slaves’ value into a fund to compensate loyalists for their wartime losses. Leslie replied to the petition with a pledge that the number of such blacks and their families returned to the rebels would be kept “within the narrowest possible limits.”\footnote{371}

The dispute over the agreement had barely begun when the treaty itself was repudiated. Mathews appointed commissioners to identify slaves in Charleston and send them back to their owners, but the Whig agents immediately ran into difficulties. The first group of refugees was preparing to sail, and British naval officers refused to allow the commissioners to board their vessels and search for slaves. Instead, the captains gave their word that there were no blacks subject to the agreement on their ships. Leslie tried
to resolve the controversy by sending Carleton a request to have the admiral at New York order naval officers to permit the Whigs to search the ships. However, it would take weeks to get an answer from New York, and in the meantime the commissioners searched privately owned vessels and claimed 136 slaves. British officers approved the return of only 73 and declared the rest exempt under the terms of the treaty.372

As Leslie explained to Carleton, “officers long in this country look on negroes as their property, and the slaves are exceeding unwilling to return to hard labour, and severe punishment from their former masters.” It was difficult to press the matter because “every department, and every officer, wishes to include his slave into the number to be brought off. They pretend them spys, or guides, and of course obnoxious, or under promises of freedom from Genl. Prevost, Ld. Cornwallis, Ld. Rawdon, or some other officer of rank, or free by proclamation.” Leslie feared that if the rebels were compensated for all of the slaves retained for these reasons, it would “amount to a monstrous expense.”373

The seventy-three slaves claimed by the Whigs never left Charleston. While the commissioners searched for slaves, some of Greene’s troops captured three British soldiers just outside the town’s fortifications. Leslie believed that a truce was in effect to permit the transfer of slaves, accused Greene of violating it, and refused to allow any slaves to leave the British lines until the rebels returned the prisoners. When Mathews learned of Leslie’s actions, he became angry and informed the general that the treaty was dissolved.374

Whigs blamed British greed for the collapse of the agreement. Thomas Farr had heard reports in June that British officers were taking “the first Negroes they meet with”

and selling them “for whatever money they can obtain” to Spaniards who came to
Charleston from Havana to purchase slaves.\textsuperscript{375} An informant told Marion in November
that the British wished to retain as many slaves as possible in order to “Gratify an
Infamous avarice, which must be accompanied with a like breach of Faith, to the poor
unfortunate negroes who will be carried from hence, into a Thousand times (if Possible)
worse Bondage, than they Experience here.”\textsuperscript{376} William Moultrie agreed, asserting that
the opportunities to profit “from the sale of plundered negroes, were too seducing to be
resisted by the officers, privates and followers of the British army.” He accused Moncrief
of transporting over eight hundred slaves to the West Indies and selling them for personal
profit, and estimated that a total of 25,000 South Carolina slaves were lost during the
war.\textsuperscript{377} The figure represents about one-fourth of the state’s pre-war slave population, but
more conservative estimates put the number at approximately 13,000.\textsuperscript{378}

Amidst all the accusations of greed and larceny, few Whigs considered that the
slaves themselves might have had a preference. One rebel informant, however, did
question several blacks in Charleston and found that “none Inclines to go home.”\textsuperscript{379}

Leslie did make an effort to return some slaves to Whig owners after Mathews
abrogated the treaty. In November, he appointed a board of officers headed by Maj.
Thomas Fraser to determine which slaves had voluntarily come to the British and which

\textsuperscript{375} Thomas Farr to Greene, June 21, 1782, \textit{PNG}, 11:355.
\textsuperscript{376} “97” to Francis Marion, Nov. 4, 1782, Horry’s War Letters, Peter Force Collection, Series 7E,
microfilm, DLAR.
\textsuperscript{377} Moultrie, \textit{Memoirs}, Vol. 2, 350-351.
\textsuperscript{378} Philip D. Morgan, “Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760-1810,” 111; Allan Kulikoff, “Uprooted
Peoples: Black Migrants in the Age of the American Revolution, 1790-1820,” in Berlin and Hoffman, eds.,
\textit{Slavery and Freedom}, 144.
\textsuperscript{379} “100” to unnamed, Nov. 8, 1782, Horry’s War Letters, microfilm, DLAR.
had served as soldiers or in other capacities.\textsuperscript{380} The board evidently identified a few slaves whom they decided should be returned, since on November 25, Whig officers sent a small force of troops to Charleston "to escort the Negroes from the lines."\textsuperscript{381}

In the last months before the British left Charleston, rebel soldiers directed most of their efforts to securing slaves. Because provisions were scarce in Charleston, Leslie sent out foraging parties that invariably returned with considerable numbers of slaves. Greene urged his subordinates to do everything possible to the British expeditions, as "the more scanty we can render their supplies of provisions the sooner [the evacuation] will take place and the fewer Negroes they will have it in their power to take with them."\textsuperscript{382} In obedience to Greene's orders, John Laurens led an attack on one raiding party in late August. Laurens lost his life in the battle and the British still succeeded in carrying off all the slaves from two nearby plantations.\textsuperscript{383} A few weeks before the evacuation, Gov. Mathews asked Greene to order that "all Negroes ... not belonging to the inhabitants found in the town, be detained" when Continental troops entered Charleston, until Mathews determined what to do with them.\textsuperscript{384} Greene complied with the request.\textsuperscript{385}

The victorious rebels found few slaves to arrest when they marched into the town. As many as two thousand had gone to St. Augustine in October, more than fifty had sailed for Halifax with the army's heavy artillery that same month, and 5,327 left in the December evacuation. Others made their way overland to East Florida or Indian territory.

\textsuperscript{380} Leslie to Carleton, Nov. 18, 1782; Commission for the Examination of Negroes, n.d., Leslie Letterbook, microfilm, SCDAH.
\textsuperscript{381} Major Swan to Mordecai Gist, Nov. 25, 1782, Mordecai Gist Papers, MHS.
\textsuperscript{382} Greene to Marion, [Aug. 9, 1782], PNG, 11:510.
\textsuperscript{383} Mathews to Arthur Middleton, Jr., Aug. 25, 1782, "Correspondence of Middleton," Part 3, 71.
\textsuperscript{384} Mathews to Greene, Nov. 17, 1782, PNG, 12:198.
\textsuperscript{385} Greene to Mathews, Nov. 18, 1782, PNG, 12:205.
William Bull put the total number of blacks who left South Carolina with the British in the final months of the war at nine thousand.386

Thousands of other blacks had already left Georgia after steadfastly supporting the British despite the deteriorating military situation. The small number of British regulars in Savannah led Lt. Cols. Alured Clarke and Thomas Brown to arm slaves for the defense of the town. In early January 1782, a rebel prisoner, who had enlisted in the Georgia Royalists to avoid confinement on a prison ship, deserted and informed Whig officers that Savannah’s garrison included “about 150 Negroes armed & equipt as infantry, commanded by Coll: Brown.”387 These men comprised more than ten percent of the troops under Clarke’s command.388

By spring, substantial numbers of black soldiers joined Indians and loyalists in forays against the rebels. A Whig officer described a British raiding party that emerged from Savannah on April 2 as “a motly crew ... consisting of British Hessians Indians and Negroes.”389 Later that month, black foragers succeeded in driving a large quantity of cattle into Savannah, where there was a severe food shortage.390 Rebel troops encountered “a strong party of Indians & Negroes” two miles from town in late May and defeated them, killing “three Indians & one Negroe.” The same day a second rebel unit “broke up a Guard of Tories & Negroes at White Bluff,” all of whom managed to escape.391

On May 23, Anthony Wayne advanced his army within sight of Savannah,

386 Lambert, South Carolina Loyalists, 254-256; Quarles, Negro in the Revolution, 167.
387 Deposition of Mark King, Jan. 5, 1782, GHS.
388 Quarles, Negro in the Revolution, 149.
389 James Jackson to Wayne, April 3, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Removed Box.
390 Rebecca Read to Wayne, April 29, 1782; James Jackson to Wayne, April 16, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 16.
hoping to provoke a battle, but Clarke responded by “advancing a few Indians & negroes
to the skirt of a swamp from whence the commenced a scattering and ineffective fire.”392

Blacks who had remained outside Savannah also harassed the Whigs in company
with loyalists and Indians. “Some outlaying negroes” and a white loyalist plundered
several houses on the night of March 24 and “had the insolence to fire two Guns” at an
American sentry early the next morning. Rebel troops captured the group, but all of the
prisoners managed to escape.393 A rebel scouting party searching for Indians in early
April surprised the camp of “six White Men & some arm’d Negroes;” three whites and “a
few” blacks escaped and the rest were taken prisoner.394

Many Georgia loyalists remained uncomfortable with the idea of arming blacks.
In a petition to Gov. Wright, they complained that Daniel McGirt’s troops were
plundering people without distinction and noted that McGirt, “not Content with
Employing his Gange in the sole business of Robbery, had, & now has a Great number of
Negroes arm’d.” The petitioners alleged that McGirt had procured these blacks “from the
Kings or Superintendents stores” under false pretenses.395

Georgia’s Whigs disliked the idea of black soldiers even more than the loyalists
did. After the South Carolina Assembly had rejected John Laurens’s proposal to arm
slaves, Greene sent copies of his correspondence with South Carolina officials on the
subject to Gov. Martin in hopes that the Georgians might adopt the plan. Martin replied
that he agreed in principle and promised to bring the matter before the Assembly. He also
warned Greene that “the raising of a body of blacks I am sure would answer every

393 James Jackson to Wayne, March 25, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 15.
394 Captain Jno. Lyon to Wayne, April 13, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 16.
395 Memorial of Cols. Simon Munro & Roger Kelsall, Sept. 6, 1781, in Davis, ed., Georgia Citizens and
Soldiers, 177-178.
purpose intended; but, am afraid it will not go down with the people here.” Nevertheless, Martin promised to do all he could to “carry it into effect.” Wayne also argued on behalf of the proposal, telling Martin that “this measure will become a matter of necessity if the report is true of the enemy forming a black Corps in Charlestown and Savannah.”

Greene made another appeal to the Georgians in June, asking them to form “a black Regiment” in order to meet the state’s quota of troops. “It appears to me that you have no other resource but trying the experiment of raising a black Corps,” Greene told Martin, noting that neither Georgia nor South Carolina had been able to enlist a sufficient number of white soldiers. Greene declared that he was so convinced of “the practicability success and advantage of the measure that I cannot help wishing to see it attempted.”

Like their counterparts in South Carolina, the members of Georgia’s Assembly refused to approve the use of black troops and instead opted to distribute slaves to recruits as an incentive to enlist. In May, representatives voted to give every man who enlisted for three months’ service “a Bounty of 20 Guins ... to be paid in Negro’s.” The following month, the Assembly decided that recruits for the state cavalry should also “be paid the bounty out of the Negroes provided for that Purpose,” while loyalists who switched their allegiance and assisted the Whigs would receive one slave each.

Slaves became in effect the currency of the financially-strapped state government, and officials routinely diverted manpower from military duty in order to gather slaves. To pay for horses purchased for the State Legion, Martin sent troops to seize slaves from loyalists’ plantations near Savannah. All slaves thus taken were to be sent under guard to

396 John Martin to Greene, March 15, 1782, PNG, 10:506-507.
398 Greene to Martin, June 8, 1782, PNG, 11:308.
399 Joseph Clay to Greene, May 13, 1782, PNG, 11:189.
400 Foster, James Jackson, 17.
Augusta to be appraised and applied to the cost of the horses. In addition, having learned that many loyalist-owned slaves had "been feloniously carried out of this State" to South Carolina, Martin issued a proclamation on May 3 authorizing Capt. John Green to recover such slaves for the state's use. The governor ordered all civil and military officers to assist Green in this endeavor. Martin also asked the governor of North Carolina, where authorities had recovered some slaves belonging to a Georgia loyalist, to "have the said negroes disposed of as speedily as possible ... for the benefit of this State."

Martin was not without a personal interest in such matters. He had repeatedly asked the Assembly to grant him some sort of financial assistance, since the state had no cash to pay salaries to its officials. The Assembly eventually awarded him ten slaves from confiscated estates to support his family, and Martin promptly asked the commissioners of confiscated property "to select ten prime slaves" for him. If the price of slaves was not excessive, Martin told the commissioners that he would like to purchase six more.

When Georgia's leaders discovered that the British were in the process of evacuating Savannah, they immediately tried to prevent the removal of Whig-owned slaves. The Assembly demanded that Alured Clarke take steps to insure "that no negroes or other property" belonging to Americans should be taken from the state. If the British did carry off such slaves, the legislators threatened that loyalists who remained in Georgia might suffer and slaveowners would be reimbursed for their lost property "out of

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debts owing to British Merchants.\textsuperscript{405} The Assembly also sent commissioners to Savannah to negotiate for the return of the slaves and asked Wayne to pressure Clarke for his cooperation.\textsuperscript{406}

Clarke brushed aside the rebels' demands. "My intentions went no farther than to assist any of the Inhabitants of the neighbourhood of Savannah in the recovery of Such Negroes as had recently absented themselves from the service of their owner," he informed Wayne, "and this I have done in every instance within my power, though not altogether wth the Success I could have wished."\textsuperscript{407}

Several months after the evacuation of Savannah, Gov. Martin made another attempt to regain slaves claimed by Georgians. In November, he appointed Col. John Eustace and Maj. Peter Deveaux as his representatives, and sent them to Charleston to meet with Leslie. The pair brought Leslie a letter from Martin, in which the governor stated that all reports indicated that Carleton had "directed the immediate restoration of such slaves as have eloped from the citizens of the United States, and have followed the armies and fleets of his Brittanic Majesty." Martin understood that there were many such slaves belonging to Georgians in Charleston and asked Leslie to assist Eustace and Deveaux in "that humane and generous purpose" of restoring these slaves to their owners. Leslie, however, refused to cooperate.\textsuperscript{408}

About five thousand blacks, possibly as many as six thousand, left Savannah in the evacuation. Most went to East Florida or Jamaica; a few went to Indian territory or

\textsuperscript{405} Resolve of Georgia Assembly, n.d., Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 17.
\textsuperscript{406} Richard Howley to Wayne, July 4, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 17.
\textsuperscript{407} Alured Clarke to Wayne, July 21, 1782, Wayne Manuscripts, Vol. 18.
\textsuperscript{408} John Martin to Leslie, Nov. 6, 1782, Emmet Collection No. 6743, NYPL.
Spanish West Florida. Nearly all slaves traveled in vessels provided by the British government and were sometimes allowed to choose their destination. David George was an exception. Because he wanted to be sure that he and his family went to Charleston, he saved money to pay for their passage on a private vessel. Unfortunately, some British soldiers robbed him. George earned more and sailed to Charleston, where he met a British major who “was very kind” to him. The officer found places for George and his family aboard a vessel bound for Halifax.

Blacks who went to East Florida typically found themselves laboring to establish new plantations for loyalist refugees. In the late autumn of 1781, Gov. Tonyn and his Council had engaged in a bitter dispute with the Assembly over how slaves accused of crimes should be tried. Tonyn and the Council advocated jury trials before provincial judges, while the Assembly wished to leave such cases to local justices of the peace. Both sides, however, did agree on the role of slaves in defending the province. Officials asked the inhabitants to provide ten percent of their slaves to work on the fortifications; when progress appeared too slow, many masters allocated twenty percent of their slaves to the project.

With Spanish attack still a possibility in 1782, the Assembly authorized Tonyn to arm every male in the province if an invasion occurred. Tonyn estimated that in addition to the white inhabitants, “about five hundred negroes might be trusted with arms.”


Wilson, Loyal Blacks, 42.

George, “Account of the Life of David George.”

invasion occurred, however; Spain acquired the province without bloodshed in the 1783 peace treaty.\footnote{Tonyn to Carleton, Oct. 11, 1782, Carleton Papers, Vol. 51, No. 5850.}

Through the months leading to the British evacuations of Georgia and South Carolina, the loyalists, Indians, and slaves of the deep South colonies had for the most part remained faithful to king and country. Neither defeat, loss of their property, nor fierce persecution swayed them from their allegiance. Even in the seemingly hopeless atmosphere that followed the disaster at Yorktown, all were willing to continue the fight; in fact, loyalists advocated aggressive action in an effort to turn the tide against the rebels. Loyalists cast aside old prejudices and proposed to make common cause with slaves and Indians against the king’s enemies. Many loyalists, and some British officials, believed with considerable justification that, even in 1782, it was not too late to reverse the military situation in the South. Deprived by Parliament and the Shelburne ministry of leadership and the British army’s support, however, the king’s American supporters never got the chance to try. The British government had chosen to admit defeat, and loyalists, Indians, and blacks had no alternative but to accept the outcome.
CONCLUSION

As the war came to a close, tens of thousands of the king’s southern supporters struggled to establish themselves in new homes or to adjust to new conditions in their old homes. For many, postwar life would be an endless battle fought with few resources against circumstances they had not made and could not control. Some would achieve a fairly comfortable new existence, a few would thrive, but none would escape the stigma of defeat and of their association with a cause that had become equated with tyranny. This stigma would endure and continue to tarnish their reputations for more than two centuries after the last loyalist, Indian, and slave who fought alongside the British had departed this world.

The loyalists had been slandered by their Whig neighbors as treacherous, cruel, and self-serving even before the first shots of the Revolution had been fired in Massachusetts; these accusations had grown more shrill and more frequent over the course of the war. In the last years of the conflict, many Britons added their voices to this chorus of denunciation. Members of Parliament who had opposed the war, and some generals and politicians who had directed it, began to seek excuses for Britain’s defeat and found the loyalists convenient scapegoats. The loyalists, these people charged, were liars and cowards, who had encouraged the British government to wage war in America with promises of support, and then shrank from battle, preferring to let the king’s troops do the fighting for them.
Although this characterization of the loyalists has persisted to the present day, many British officials who were in a position to judge staunchly defended the loyalists from their critics. Maj. Patrick Ferguson declared repeatedly that the loyalists were courageous and committed and needed only confidence to improve their effectiveness. Sir Henry Clinton argued that the loyalists had never been given a fair chance to prove themselves because the army had never given them adequate support. And Lord Rawdon, after serving more than a year in South Carolina, testified to “the fidelity of the Loyalists” and criticized the “inhuman disregard with which they have been repaid.”

“It has been the fashion to say,” Rawdon wrote, “that the Loyalists were few in number; & that their activity in our cause was never such as ought to have a claim upon our gratitude.” However, he asserted, his extensive experience in the South enabled him to refute this “most unjust opinion.” Rawdon pointed out that over five thousand whites had left Charleston at the evacuation, “all of whom had sacrificed their possessions thro’ attachment to us.” In addition, “[a] very considerable number” of loyalists chose to remain in South Carolina, “preferring the hazard of the Whig’s vengeance, to the danger of the Seas, at that inclement season, in such miserable Craft” as were provided for them. “This List of Sufferers,” he declared, “surely is not to be reckoned small.”

Concerning the accusations that the loyalists had not exerted themselves in the king’s behalf, Rawdon explained that many difficulties had arisen in employing them. “It does not seem as if Lord Cornwallis had ever thought it necessary before his Victory over Gates to embody any of the Country People; on the contrary, the Proclamations of that Date enjoin a quiet residence in their several districts,” he wrote. After militia units had

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1 “The attitude of the Loyalists in America and particularly in the south.” Undated, but after 1782; authorship attributed to Lord Rawdon. Alexander Wedderburn Papers, Vol. 1, 46, WICL.
2 Ibid.
been organized, keeping them in the field for any length of time proved impractical. The subsistence of both loyalists and British troops in South Carolina “depended on the cultivation of the Country, which was already grievously wasted” by the ravages of war; thus “the most serious distress must have been entailed upon us by such a number being withheld from the tillage of their Farms.” The drawback to this was that when loyalists stayed at home to raise crops, they were vulnerable to surprise attack by rebel partisans.3

When embodied, Rawdon insisted, the loyalists fought well, if not always successfully, and demonstrated remarkable persistence in the face of adversity. “If a succession of misfortunes diminished the numbers & broke the spirits of these people, the circumstance does not weaken the testimony of their attachment,” he declared. Rawdon added that even in eastern South Carolina, where loyalists were far fewer in relation to the Whigs than in the backcountry and therefore “were more exposed to powerful efforts of the Enemy: Yet on several occasions they manifested a fidelity, which in other instances would have been universally extolled. A number of them fell in unsuccessful skirmishes; & still more of them were murdered in detail.” The weight of evidence, Rawdon concluded, proved “that in the Two Carolinas we had numerous Friends, who, to the hazard of their Lives, to the sacrifice of their Families, to the utter ruin of their Possessions, adhered to us under every change of Fortune.”4

Gen. James Murray believed that the ministry may have overestimated the number of loyalists in the colonies, but that the key problem was the army’s inability to mobilize more than a fraction of the loyalists. Murray attributed this in part to the constantly shifting military fortunes: the number of professed loyalists increased when

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3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
the army was successful and declined in times of defeat. In addition, he pointed out that "the haughtiness of our Officers," along with differing views on how the war should be conducted, impeded cooperation between the army and the loyalists. He identified the worst problem, however, as a lack of sustained support from the king's troops. "Our Evacuation of places, & leaving" loyalists "to the vengeance of the Rebels after they had been induced to discover themselves, have rendered many of them hitherto Cautious," Murray observed. The loyalists could hardly be expected to make greater exertions in light of "the disgusting Experience they have had of Us."5

Another British officer, Frederick Mackenzie, agreed with Murray. Although he often criticized loyalists for their failure to turn out in support of the army, Mackenzie conceded that such behavior was to be expected. On numerous occasions, he noted, the army had arrived in a region, called on the loyalists to join them, and withdrawn shortly afterward, "abandoning the people to the fury of their bitterest Enemies." If the loyalists became hesitant to declare themselves after such incidents, they had good reason for their reluctance.6

Many loyalists held similar opinions. Pennsylvanian Joseph Galloway, an exile in London, blamed British officers for first failing to employ the loyalists and then leaving them exposed to Whig brutality. "Instead of rejecting the loyal force of the country, and daily sacrificing it to the savage barbarity of rebellion, enjoin our Generals to embrace it with zeal and cordiality, and to make use of its aid in suppressing the rebellion," he suggested in a 1782 plea to continue the war. Galloway insisted that there remained "multitudes of our fellow subjects, attached to us by principle, and groaning under the

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5 James Murray to Lord George Townshend, Sept. 1, 1782, Feinstone Collection, No. 992, DLAR.
6 Mackenzie, Diary, Vol. 2, 581-582.
horrid tyranny and cruelty of the usurpers," who stood “ready to unite in the proper measures for delivering themselves from their present slavery, and for restoring the government of your Sovereign.” He asked what measures had been taken “to embody, arm, and support the loyalists,” or to inspirit them, and provided his own answer: “There has been scarcely one!” Galloway singled out Cornwallis for particular criticism, asserting that the earl failed to secure South Carolina and instead raced off into North Carolina like “a winged Mercury” in futile pursuit of Greene’s army.7

Gov. James Wright also placed much of the blame for the loss of the southern provinces on Cornwallis, while defending the efforts of Georgia’s loyalists. Georgia “was Peopling very fast the latter End of the year 1780. when great Numbers of Loyal Subjects were Flocking in, to Settle, Expecting His Majesty’s Protection, and Safety, from the Tyranny & Oppression of the Rebellion. – and When the Loyal Subjects in that Province, were beginning to Raise their Drooping Spirits, & to Collect & Improve the Remains of their Scattered & almost Ruined & lost Property,” Wright remarked. “But alas! ... before the Minds of the People were Settled, & wholly Reconciled to a return of their Allegiance,” most of the British troops were withdrawn from Georgia. Encouraged by the weakness of the British garrison and Cornwallis’s disappearance into North Carolina, the rebels began “to Raise Commotions ... & assassinated & Otherwise Cruelly Murdered, as Many Loyalists as they Could come at, & upwards of an Hundred Good Men, in the Space of one Month, fell Victims to their Loyalty, & the Cruelty of the Rebels.”

Overpowered and without aid, by June 1781, 1,400 people had sought refuge in

Savannah. Wright noted that his pleas for troops had been ignored, even though in his opinion five hundred regulars would have been sufficient to resurrect loyalist spirits and retake the province.⁸

Even a few Whigs recognized the steadfast commitment of many southern loyalists. William Pierce observed that large numbers of people had “been uniform in their opposition, and have favored the British measures through all the mutations of fortune. Such men appear to have a fixed principle for the governing rule of their conduct, and, although they stand confessed my enemies, yet I cannot help admiring and esteeming them.”⁹ Capt. Tarleton Brown of the South Carolina Whig militia likewise acknowledged that the loyalists had made significant contributions to the British cause, albeit in harsher terms. Had the British not been “aided and abetted by those unprincipled and bloodthirsty tools ... the enemy would never have gained a solid foothold upon our shores,” he fumed.¹⁰

In addition to such testimony, the very nature of the war in the South demonstrated that loyalists there were numerous, courageous, and steadfast in the face of brutal persecution. Long before British troops established a foothold in Georgia or South Carolina, loyalists in both provinces took up arms to oppose the rebels, turning the contest into a genuine civil war that continued long after officials in London ordered a cessation of operations against the Whigs. In dozens of small battles and untold numbers of skirmishes, loyalists fought rebels without either British prompting or British support.

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¹⁰ Brown, Memoirs, 9-10.
Nevertheless, the negative myths about the loyalists became widely accepted. In Britain, the views of politically influential critics like Earl Cornwallis and Gen. Charles O’Hara gained more credence than those of lower ranking officers or the discredited Clinton. Across the Atlantic, the victorious Whigs found that the stereotype of the greedy, vicious, craven loyalist made an ideal villain in the epic story of the glorious American cause. Loyalists could also be made to shoulder the blame for the cruelty that had marred what the Whigs considered a virtuous struggle. By portraying the loyalists as instigators of the murders and hangings that characterized the war in the South, Americans could justify their commission of such crimes as legitimate acts of vengeance against a ruthless foe.

Eventually myth became accepted as truth. The British government’s southern strategy was considered doomed from the outset, since it depended on loyalists who were not there. The few loyalists who did come forward alienated the people by murdering and plundering across South Carolina and Georgia, but were too cowardly to face rebel troops in the field.

Once the myths are pruned away, however, the historical record tells a very different story. It is an account of people who remained loyal to their king and suffered greatly for their allegiance. Beginning in 1775, loyalists were beaten, tarred and feathered, imprisoned, harassed, and sometimes murdered. Their property was seized; they were banished from their lifelong homes or fled voluntarily to escape the rebels’ wrath. Yet their loyalty to Britain remained unshaken. When British troops finally arrived in the South, some loyalists, intimidated by five years of savage persecution, hesitated to declare themselves. But many thousands came forward and served faithfully throughout
the war. Whig partisans launched a campaign of violence more brutal than the loyalists had previously experienced, yet the king’s supporters persevered. Their neighbors and the British officer they trusted most were slaughtered at King’s Mountain and the survivors were forced to undergo the eighteenth-century equivalent of the Bataan Death March, but the loyalists soon returned to the field. When Nathanael Greene forced the British to abandon the Georgia and South Carolina backcountry, thousands of loyalists left their homes and marched hundreds of miles to Savannah and Charleston rather than forsake their principles. Others remained behind and continued the fight from the woods and swamps. After Parliament ordered an end to offensive operations against the rebels, the loyalists pleaded unsuccessfully with British officers for permission to carry the fight to the Whigs. The loyalists’ story is one of fidelity, courage, and persistence in the face of adversity, and it is every bit as heroic as the story of the Whigs’ fight for independence.

Like the loyalists, Indians also found themselves cast as villains in the Revolutionary saga. In the eyes of most Americans, this was hardly a new role; the Indians who allied themselves with the British in the Revolution merely added another chapter to a story of hostility and violence that had begun in 1607. Whether alone, or in partnership with France or Britain, the Indians had always been considered bloodthirsty savages blocking Americans’ path to land and wealth in the west.

Again, Britons joined Americans in denouncing the Indians. From the start of the war, members of the parliamentary opposition had assailed the ministry for employing the barbaric, murderous Indians against the rebels. Even Lord George Germain came to criticize the Indians in the latter years of the war, declaring that their feeble military contributions were out of all proportion to the expense incurred in supplying them. Rarely
did anyone in Britain try to defend the Indians. Galloway made one of the few attempts to
do so, replying to those who accused them of savagery that if the Indians had “killed in
war a few rebels, who, they know, will deprive them of their country, and of their
existence as a people as soon as they are independent, the rebel states have with yet more
cruelty and less justice murdered in cool blood four times as many loyalists.”

To add injury to insult, the Shelburne ministry completely ignored the Indians’
interests during the peace negotiations and in 1783 ceded all of the territory from the
Appalachians to the Mississippi – land claimed by the Indians – to the new United States.
This betrayal shocked the southern nations. Alexander McGillivray drew up a protest on
behalf of the Creeks, Cherokees, and Chickasaws, asserting that since the Indians had not
been a party to the agreement, they did not consider themselves bound by it. McGillivray
observed that the Indians had not given Britain any authority to dispose of their lands,
“unless fighting by the side of [the king’s] soldiers in the day of battle and Spilling our
best blood in the Service of his Nation can be deemed so.”

If the Indians’ wartime assistance did not meet British expectations, most of the
blame lay with the ministry and the generals. True, the Cherokees had gone to war
against John Stuart’s orders in 1776 and suffered a defeat that made other nations
reluctant to commit to the British alliance. But the Cherokees had nevertheless waged
sporadic warfare against the Whigs into 1782. The Creeks and Choctaws helped forestall
one Spanish attack on Pensacola and bore the largest burden in the defense against the
1781 siege, even though Gen. John Campbell’s arrogant attitude resulted in fewer Indians
turning out to assist the British. The Chickasaws maintained a fairly effective blockade of

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11 Galloway, Fabricius, 1094.
12 Dowd, Spirited Resistance, 93.
the Mississippi River throughout the war, while the Seminoles were the bulwark of East Florida’s defense. The Cherokees and Creeks disappointed Germain by launching few raids on the southern frontier, but in the early years of the war they realized that without British support, launching a war in the backcountry could accomplish nothing of significance. When the Cherokees and Creeks announced their readiness to fight in 1780, Cornwallis rejected their offer. By the time the siege of Pensacola ended and the Creeks were available to assist the British elsewhere in 1781, the king’s troops and loyalists had been driven from the backcountry, making effective cooperation impossible. Yet even when the Indians did not provide direct support, the threat of attack caused the Whigs to divert substantial numbers of militia to the frontier, complicating the Continental Army’s manpower shortages, although British commanders failed to take advantage of this.

Slaves, too, made important contributions to the royal cause, but quickly became the forgotten member of the trinity of Britain’s southern supporters. The Whigs, having denominated themselves defenders of liberty, preferred not to dwell on the fact that thousands of their slaves, over whom they claimed to exercise a benevolent paternalism, had seen the British army as the real agent of freedom. These slaves had served the king as laborers, spies, messengers, and occasionally as soldiers in hopes of securing their release from bondage.

Only a small percentage of slaves who joined the British earned their freedom after the war. The Black Dragoons, for example, became the nucleus of a 264-man unit that arrived in St. Lucia in December 1782 and “became a permanent part of the British West India military establishment” the following year.13 Other free blacks went to the

West Indies, Britain, or Nova Scotia, while most of those who left Savannah and Charleston remained enslaved on West Indian plantations.¹⁴

But if few blacks realized immediate gains from their service, they and their descendants benefited in the long term. American independence “helped the cause of abolitionists in both Britain and the United States: it more than halved the number of slaves in the British Empire” and divided slaveowners on the mainland from those in the Caribbean, thus weakening the proslavery lobby in Parliament. In 1833, Parliament abolished slavery throughout the British empire.¹⁵ Those slaves who had gambled on finding freedom with the British had finally won, whereas those who remained with the liberty-loving Whigs would have to wait another thirty years and to endure a bloody war.

Given the valuable contributions of loyalists, Indians, and slaves to the British during the war in the South, why did the southern strategy fail? One reason was strategic: when Cornwallis took his army into Virginia and allowed Greene to bring the Continental troops back to South Carolina, it became impossible for the British to hold their widely scattered outposts and made withdrawal to the coast inevitable. Even then, the British could have recovered had not Cornwallis’s surrender at Yorktown led Parliament to put an end to offensive operations in America. A major flaw in policy was a second reason. Although the ministry counted on support from loyalists, Indians, and slaves from the beginning of the war, neither Germain nor anyone else devised a plan to bring the three peoples together in the king’s service. As a result, these incompatible allies fought separate wars against the Whigs (and occasionally against each other), while the British army also often fought in isolation. Thus the efforts of the British army and its supporters

¹⁴ O’Shaughnessy, An Empire Divided, 244; Frey, Water from the Rock, 192.
¹⁵ O’Shaughnessy, An Empire Divided, xii.
were diffused rather than concentrated, making the task of regaining the southern provinces much more difficult.

A third reason for the British failure to derive full support from loyalists, slaves, and Indians lay with the Whigs. While British officers hesitated to punish rebels who had violated their parole or committed atrocities, the Whigs showed no such compunction. Anyone who challenged rebel authority was likely to suffer terribly. Loyalists were shot, hanged, beaten; rebel militia burned Indian towns and crops, killed Indians regardless of age or sex, and sold captives into slavery; slaves caught assisting the British faced whippings, hanging, even beheading. This relentless cruelty, as intended, intimidated many supporters of the British into remaining inactive.

But could the large number of loyalists, Indians, and slaves who were undaunted by Whig terrorism have fought side by side? They could have, and sometimes did. Since 1776, some backcountry whites had fought alongside the Cherokees, and by 1782 the two groups cooperated with considerable effectiveness. The same was true of whites and blacks. The Black Dragoons rode into battle alongside white militiamen, and parties of blacks and whites raided behind Whig lines late in the war. During the siege of Savannah, loyalists, Indians, and slaves fought together and successfully defended the town against a vastly larger force, an important lesson for the future had anyone in the ministry or military command bothered to heed it. If Germain and the generals had followed Lord Dunmore’s advice and brought every supporter of the king, regardless of race, into action against the rebels, victory in the South was well within the British grasp. British officials needed only to explain the need for such a policy, secure cooperation, and then sort out everyone’s situation after the war was won.
There remains one other intriguing possibility, which would have spared the ministers from dealing with complex racial issues and might have won the war. Had the government chosen in 1776 to strike at what it knew was the soft underbelly of the rebellion, the southern provinces, rather than to direct a blow at the heart of the Revolution in the north, it is hard to imagine how the Whigs could have succeeded.

In this hypothetical scenario, Gen. William Howe brings his massive invasion armada to Georgia and South Carolina in the summer of 1776. Five thousand British troops land at Savannah, while Howe and the remaining 25,000 soldiers follow Clinton’s route and attack Charleston. Both towns would have fallen within days, and powerful British columns could have advanced into the backcountry and North Carolina with little opposition. The loyalists, emboldened by this show of force and not intimidated by five years of persecution, take control of the provincial governments. Because the Whigs have been deprived of five years to establish the civil and military machinery of government, there is little basis on which to build partisan resistance. Far to the north, George Washington faces a dilemma. Does he risk marching southward to aid the rebels there or hold his ground in case the British mount a later strike in New York or Pennsylvania? If he chooses to march south, it is hard to imagine many New England soldiers agreeing to undertake the trek when British forces are nearby in Quebec and Nova Scotia. And it would have been almost impossible for the poorly trained and disciplined, inadequately supplied Continentals to make such a march. Had the army not evaporated along the way, the exhausted, hungry soldiers would have offered only feeble opposition to Howe’s regulars. British troops might have been at the Susquehanna River, facing almost no organized resistance, by the spring of 1777.
Such a plan, of course, would have had to originate in London, as would a policy to unite loyalists, Indians, and slaves into an effective force to operate in conjunction with British troops. That British officials never addressed the matter was not the fault of those in the Deep South colonies who fought so valiantly for King George. Without adequate guidance from the government, and often ignored by the generals whom they were supposed to assist, loyalists, Indians, and slaves made significant contributions that enabled the British army to come within a hairsbreadth of retaining Georgia, South Carolina, and the Floridas. Their achievements, however, have never been properly recognized; instead they were unjustly made the scapegoats for defeat.
LIST OF BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ABBREVIATIONS

AHR .................. American Historical Review

BPL .................. Boston Public Library, Boston, MA

CGHS ............... Collections of the Georgia Historical Society

CRG .................. Colonial Records of Georgia

DAR .................. Documents of the American Revolution

DLAR ................ David Library of the American Revolution, Washington Crossing, PA

EHR .................. English Historical Review

FHQ .................. Florida Historical Quarterly

GHQ .................. Georgia Historical Quarterly

GHS .................. Georgia Historical Society, Savannah

HCIL ................ Harriet C. Irving Library, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton

HDAR ................ Hessian Documents of the American Revolution

HSP .................. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

JAH .................. Journal of American History

JSY .................. Journal of Southern History

LHQ .................. Louisiana Historical Quarterly

LOC .................. Library of Congress, Washington, DC

MAH .................. Magazine of American History
MHM ................. Maryland Historical Magazine
MHS ..................... Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore
MVHR .................. Mississippi Valley Historical Review
NAS .................... National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh
NBM ..................... New Brunswick Museum, St. John
NCHR .................. North Carolina Historical Review
NCSA .................. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh
NYHS .................. New York Historical Society, New York
NYPL .................. New York Public Library, New York
NYSL .................. New York State Library, Albany
PAH ................... Papers of Alexander Hamilton
PERK ................... Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, NC
PHL ................... Papers of Henry Laurens
PJA ................... Papers of John Adams
PMHB .................. Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography
PNG ................... Papers of Nathanael Greene
PRO .................. Public Record Office (United Kingdom)
PTJ ................... Papers of Thomas Jefferson
RAM .................. Report on American Manuscripts
SCDAH .................. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia
SCHGM .................. South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine
SCHM .................. South Carolina Historical Magazine
SCHS .................. South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston
SCL .................. South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, SC

SHC .................. Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

SLSC .................. Swem Library Special Collections, College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA

WLCL .................. William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, MI

WMQ .................. William & Mary Quarterly
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