

Murder and Mayhem: How the Creek Murders Affected British Policy on Indian Affairs in Georgia during the American Revolution

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On that infamous date of December 16, 1773 a group of disgruntled Whigs disguised as Native Americans protested the tax on British tea by quietly dumping boxes of the precious commodity into the dark and gloomy waters of Boston Harbor. The incident, which came to be known as the Boston Tea Party, has received a great deal of attention by historians of the Revolution as it inaugurated a year of heightened tension between the rebel colonists and the British administration. More precisely, it prompted the passage of the Coercive or “Intolerable” Acts in Massachusetts Bay. As significant as these turns of events are, when historians focus too much of their attention on the vicinity of New England, they miss a significant part of the pre-Revolutionary story. Less than ten days after the famed Boston Tea Party transpired, another dramatic incident unfolded further South—one which greatly attenuated America’s already estranged relationship with the Crown, thereby pushing the colonies one step closer to Independence.

December 25, 1773. A hunting party of six Creek Indians from the Lower Creek town of Coweta attacked and murdered a man named William White and his family at their new settlement on the Ogeechee River in the colony of Georgia. Less than one month later, a larger party of about twenty Coweta Creek Indians conducted a second raid. This time, the roving band killed a man named Shirrol along with four other white males and two black slaves. Together, the two incidents collectively became known as the Creek Murders. After years of vacillating by the Georgian government respecting colonial-Indian affairs, the killings forced Governor James Wright and other royal officials in the southern colonies to define their position vis-à-vis the Native Americans. By doing so, a decisive fissure between the settlers of the backcountry and British authorities was precipitated in the critical twelve months leading up to the War for Independence.

Even before the initial English settlement in Georgia in the year 1732, Indian relations with Europeans in North America were based on a strange mix of trade, mutual assistance, mistreatment, exploitation, and fear. The Indian tribes inhabiting the Southeast made use of the fighting among the French, Spanish and English by promising alliances and trading furs in exchange for European goods, especially rum, guns and ammunition. As the demand for leather increased in Europe, the most sought after commodity by European traders became the skins of the white-tailed deer.¹ According to anthropologist Charles M. Hudson, the tribe most successful at taking advantage of the European quest for colonial supremacy were the Lower Creek Indians “who sometimes

¹ Kathryn E. Holland. *Deer Skins and Duffels* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 87.

accepted gifts from several European powers, making promises to all.”² They were, however, particularly close to the British because of the unreliability of the French and Spanish. The Creek Indians also happened to have had a reputation for providing the highest quality of deerskins.³ Along with trading goods, at times tribes would work for Europeans traders as hunters, slave catchers, mercenaries, and burden-bearers.

The intimate associations between the whites and the natives often led to embittered relations and even war. The Creek Indians worked alongside the English in the early 1700s but then in 1715 initiated the Yamasee War due to British mistreatment and exploitation. The conflict ended with the English driving the Creeks off the land near the Savannah River. In 1736 James Oglethorpe established Augusta because of Creek complaints about English mistreatment in the Carolinas.⁴ Augusta soon monopolized the deerskin trade. Thus Georgia quickly became enmeshed in a profitable trade network with the Creek Indians. As trade strengthened the economy of Georgia, the government pushed to acquire more land, leaving the Creeks to choose between keeping their hunting grounds—which they needed to satisfy the demand for skins—or risk losing access to the European goods upon which they had become so dependent. Indeed, land acquisition was often the cause of major disputes between natives and the newcomers during the early colonial period; by 1773 the contestation of land was still *the* predominant issue between the British colony of Georgia and her Creek neighbors.

One of the first accounts of the Creek Murders was reported by John Stuart, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Southern Colonies. In a letter dated February 3, 1774, Stuart informed Major-General Frederick Haldimand, the acting Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in North America, that the trigger for these murders had to do with the controversial issue of land. He spoke of White and Shirrol’s settlements being in the newly ceded lands of the fledgling colony.⁵ These lands, which were part of a negotiation between Governor James Wright, John Stuart, and the Cherokee and Creek nations in spring of 1773, were originally prized hunting grounds for the Creek Indians. Reluctantly, the Creeks agreed to cede a portion of their lands, a small rectangular area beyond the Ogeechee River, in exchange for ammunition and debt relief.⁶ In 1773 ammunition was vital to the survival of the Creek Indians because they were involved in a war with the Choctaws who inhabited the regions that would become present day southern Mississippi. Clarifying the situation to Haldimand, Stuart argued that the Creeks “had some reason to complain that our promises were not complied with and they were cheated in the quantity of ammunition promised them as payment for the land which

² Charles M. Hudson, “The Genesis of Georgia’s Indians,” in *Forty Years of Diversity: Essays on Colonial Georgia*, ed. Harvey H. Jackson and Phinizy Spalding (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 40.

³ Holland. *Deerskins and Duffels*, 88.

⁴ Edward Cashin, “From Creeks to Crackers,” *The Southern Colonial Backcountry*. Edited by David C. Crass, et. Al (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1998), 70.

⁵ John Stuart to Maj.-General Frederick Haldimand, Charleston, 3 February 1774, in *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783 (Colonial Office series)*, ed. K. G. Davis. vol. 8 (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1775), 34.

⁶ Edward J. Cashin, “Sowing the Wind: Governor Wright and the Georgia Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution,” in *Forty Years of Diversity: Essays on Colonial Georgia*, ed. Harvey H. Jackson and Phinizy Spalding (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 240.

they ceded.”⁷ In a separate communiqué penned just over a week later, Stuart relayed the same message to the Earl of Dartmouth telling him that “it appears that those Indians complained of our not having punctually performed our promise and agreement at the late congress by sending into their respective towns the stipulated quantity of ammunition.”⁸

News of these murders quickly engendered panic throughout the colony. In response to the January murders at the Shirrol settlement, Governor Wright sent out a company of militia to protect the remaining settlements in the area.⁹ When Lieutenant Grant led 30 of the militia men on a rescue mission to the Shirrol property, the group was ambushed by the hunting party responsible for the Shirrol murders. In unfortunate circumstances, Lieutenant Grant, leading the pursuit on horseback, was shot and overtaken by the Indians. Grant was promptly tortured, scalped, strung from a tree, and left for dead. The inability of the Georgian militia to subdue the Indians wreaked havoc throughout the province. Stuart declared that “the panic which seized all the inhabitants of that part of Georgia” could hardly be expressed—“all the militia deserted and the people everywhere abandoned their settlements, many left their wives and children who crowded down to Augusta for protection.”¹⁰

Governor Wright considered the desertion of the area to be a major blow to colony’s fortunes. He personally wished for the lands ceded in the New Purchase of June 1773 to facilitate further settlement, the development of profitable plantations, and the expansion of trade.¹¹ To promote Indian trade Wright encouraged those interested in settling, promising that “in general every thing will be done in the power of [the] Province to establish good order in the said settlement and to promote the interest and happiness of the settlers on the said lands.”¹² Although Indian trade was still important to the Georgian economy, Wright particularly had agriculture in his mind for the new lands. In his Proclamation to the Province on June 11, 1773, Wright stated that the lands were “of the most fertile quality, and fit for the production of wheat, *Indian* corn, indico [sic], tobacco [sic], hemp, [and] flax.”

There were, however, those who wanted to settle the land but not participate in the plantation economy or develop relations with the Indians. Governor Wright and other

⁷ Stuart to Haldimand, 3 February 1774, in *Documents*, 35.

⁸ John Stuart to Earl of Dartmouth, Charleston, 13 February 1774, in *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783 (Colonial Office series)*, ed. K. G. Davis. vol. 8 (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1775), 49.

⁹ Governor Sir James Wright to Earl of Dartmouth, Savannah, 31 January 1774, in *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783 (Colonial Office series)*, ed. K. G. Davis. vol. 8 (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1775), 30.

¹⁰ Stuart to Haldimand, 3 February 1774, in *Documents*, 35.

¹¹ Cashin, “Sowing the Wind,” 241.

¹² Georgia. Governor, “[Proclamation. 1773 June 11] Georgia. By His Excellency Sir James Wright, Baronet, captain-general, governor, and commandar [sic] in chief, of His Majesty’s said province, chancellor, vice-admiral, and ordinary of the same. A proclamation,” Savannah: Printed by James Johnson, 1773. *Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 12786 (filmed)*. Accessed online, 10 December 2009: [http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/Evans?p_action=doc&p_theme=eai&p_topdoc=1&p_docnum=1&p_sort=YMD_date:D&p_product=EVAN&p_text_direct-0=u433=\(%2012786%20\)u433ad=\(%2012786%20\)&p_nbid=G54H56EJMTI2MDQzNzQwMy4yNjc4MDA6MT0xND0xNTIuMTQuMjIyLjE2NQ&p_doref=](http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/Evans?p_action=doc&p_theme=eai&p_topdoc=1&p_docnum=1&p_sort=YMD_date:D&p_product=EVAN&p_text_direct-0=u433=(%2012786%20)u433ad=(%2012786%20)&p_nbid=G54H56EJMTI2MDQzNzQwMy4yNjc4MDA6MT0xND0xNTIuMTQuMjIyLjE2NQ&p_doref=)

British colonists disparagingly referred to those backcountry settlers as “Crackers,” and the Indians called them “Virginians,” even though many were from the Carolinas.¹³ Pricing the land too high for them to obtain purchases, Wright attempted to exclude the newcomers from settling the area. As J. Russell Snapp explains, “since the ceded lands would cost six pence per acre, only those who were ‘something better than the common sort of Back Country People’ would inhabit it.”¹⁴ In response to the exorbitant prices, these “country bumpkins” began squatting; and in the aftermath of the Creek Murders, colonists interested in trade with the Creeks panicked. Only the illegal “crackers” were left behind, quickly spreading throughout the Georgia upcountry.

The Creek Murders had more than just a local impact. As far south as St. Augustine, Lieutenant-Governor John Moultrie considered the incident to be “an alarming event to the southern colonies in North America in general and to this infant one in particular.”¹⁵ Like Georgia, East Florida considered itself weak and incapable of dealing with a major Indian uprising, should one occur. Moultrie stated in a letter to the Earl of Dartmouth in February that “with these small powers and the weak state of the colony,” East Florida could at best take a defensive position and possibly be forced to cede valuable plantations along the buffer zone.”¹⁶ In general, Moultrie feared that the actions of the Creek nation would spark a larger Indian war throughout the Southeast. Stuart, too, feared the augmentation of hostilities and wrote to Major-General Frederick Haldimand asking for more presents for the Indians as a means to “gain the principle chiefs to our interest and prevent a coalition of the different nations.”¹⁷ Although by March 1774, no such uprising had yet occurred, Haldimand remained apprehensive and so related Stuart’s concerns about a potential pan-Indian alliance to the Earl of Dartmouth. He stated in a letter dated March 2, 1774 that, “it is not yet become a general affair, but...originates in the discontent of a disaffected part of the nation who may endeavour [sic] to draw the rest into a quarrel with us.”¹⁸ In the months preceding the spring of 1774, British authorities in the southern colonies were greatly dismayed by the prospect of an anti-British coalition of native tribes.

In his article entitled “Sowing the Wind,” historian Edward J. Cashin, claimed that “the Creek crisis in 1774 hastened the political maturity of the backcountry.”¹⁹ This development of political mobilization in the backcountry of Georgia held true for both Governor Wright and the backcountry settlers. Worried about the local and regional repercussions of the Creek Murders, particularly the desertion of the frontier, Governor Wright took action to preclude further hostilities. Wright’s first response to the murders was to put a halt to Indian trade altogether. On January 31, 1774, Wright relayed his

¹³ Cashin, “Sowing the Wind,” 236.

¹⁴ J. Russell Snapp, *John Stuart and the Struggle for Empire on the Southern Frontier* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 120.

¹⁵ Lieut.-Governor John Moultrie to Earl of Dartmouth, St. Augustine, 21 February 1774, in *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783 (Colonial Office series)*, ed. K. G. Davis. vol. 8 (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1775), 54.

¹⁶ Moultrie to Earl of Dartmouth, in *Documents*, 55.

¹⁷ Stuart to Haldimand, 3 February 1774, in *Documents*, 36.

¹⁸ Maj.-General Frederick Haldimand to Earl of Dartmouth, 2 March 1774, in *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783 (Colonial Office series)*, ed. K. G. Davis. vol. 8 (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1775), 58.

¹⁹ Cashin, “Sowing the Wind,” 242.

decision to close the frontier in a letter to the Earl of Dartmouth. "A total stoppage of the trade," he stated, "will have the best effect possible as they will soon feel the want of a supply which may bring them to reason." He also informed the Earl that he "wrote to the governor of Carolina and of East and West Florida to acquaint them with what has happened and to desire them to stop the trade" as well.²⁰ True to his word, he gained the support of the other governors in southeast and thus prevented further settlement and trade in the ceded area.²¹ Wright's decision to implement a trade embargo with the Indians produced mixed results for the colony. Those Georgians who favored economic exchange with the Indians either reluctantly gave it up, or quietly participated in clandestine activities. As an unintentional side effect of his order, the "Crackers" in the backcountry, who were never interested in the trading practices of Georgia, found favor with Wright's new ruling. To the dismay of the governor, unauthorized person continued to settle in the contested region and provoke further hostilities with the Indians. This unintended relationship between the backcountry settlers and the government, however, was short lived.

In March 1774, a settler named Thomas Fee murdered an Indian called Mad Turkey in Augusta. Governor Wright, worried that the incident would irritate the already unstable situation with the Creeks, issued a proclamation in which he set an award of one hundred pounds sterling for the capture of Fee who fled to South Carolina. On this occasion Wright also found it necessary to further command that "all persons whomsoever [are] not to molest, assault, or insult any Indian or Indians whatsoever;" that if they continue to do so, they "may depend on being prosecuted to the utmost rigor of the law."²² Wright then wrote to the governor of South Carolina asking for his help in returning the fugitive. South Carolina promptly put up an award of two hundred sterling for Fee's capture, thereby demonstrating loyalty to Georgia. These proclamations seemed to ease tensions between the Creeks and Georgians when the two sides held a conference later that month in Savannah to discuss the Creek murders. With evidence that the governor was doing everything in his power to bring justice to the murder of Mad Turkey, Emistesege, a headman of the Upper Creeks, promised to speak with the Creek Nation about bringing satisfaction to the murderers of White and Shirrol.²³

²⁰ Governor Sir James Wright to Earl of Dartmouth, Savannah, 31 January 1774, in *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783 (Colonial Office series)*, ed. K. G. Davis. vol. 8 (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1775), 31.

²¹ Cashin, "Sowing the Wind," 242.

²² Georgia. Governor, "[Proclamation. 1774 Mar. 28] Georgia. By His Excellency Sir James Wright, baronet...A proclamation. Whereas I have received information that a certain Indian, named or usually called Mad Turkey, of the Upper Creek Nation...was, on the twenty-fourth of this instant March, most cruelly and inhumanly murdered, in the town of Augusta...by on Thomas Fee...Given...as Savannah, the twenty-eighth day of March on thousand seven hundred and seventy-four..." Savannah: Printed by James Johnson, 1773. *Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 12786 (filmed)*: [http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/Evans?p_action=doc&p_theme=eai&p_topdoc=1&p_docnum=1&p_sort=YMD_date:D&p_product=EVAN&p_text_direct-0=u433=\(%2042608%20\)u433ad=\(%2042608%20\)&p_nbid=J50U52JFMTI2MDQ3MTQ0NS40MzIzNzc6MT0xMjoxNTIuMS4yMjIuMzI&p_doref=](http://infoweb.newsbank.com/iw-search/we/Evans?p_action=doc&p_theme=eai&p_topdoc=1&p_docnum=1&p_sort=YMD_date:D&p_product=EVAN&p_text_direct-0=u433=(%2042608%20)u433ad=(%2042608%20)&p_nbid=J50U52JFMTI2MDQ3MTQ0NS40MzIzNzc6MT0xMjoxNTIuMS4yMjIuMzI&p_doref=) (Accessed online 10 December 2009).

²³ Governor Sir James Wright to Earl of Dartmouth, Savannah, 12 March 1774, in *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783 (Colonial Office series)*, ed. K. G. Davis. vol. 8 (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1775), 90-95.

The people of the backcountry, on the other hand, were not happy with the government's response to the murder of Mad Turkey. As Emistesego pointed out at the conference before agreeing to speak with his people, the government of Georgia had earned a reputation for not controlling the unruly behavior of whites in the frontier. People who came down from Virginia and the Carolinas were well aware of the inability of the government to enforce order along trade routes in Indian territories. When two governments issued proclamations for the capture of Thomas Fee who killed one Creek Indian, they became outraged by the severity of the punishment. In May Fee was captured in South Carolina, but instead of complying with their government's wishes, a mob released Fee from his captors in order to prevent his punishment.²⁴ Relations between the back country and the British authorities in the south further deteriorated as the Georgian government continued to work with the Creek Indians to bring satisfaction to the Creek murders in hopes that killing the murderers would prevent further hostilities and potential war.

While the British authorities in the southern colonies feared a general uprising from the surrounding Indian nations, they were willing to concede that the Indians responsible for the Creek Murders did not represent the nation as a whole. As early as January Governor Wright acknowledged that the incidents were the doings of a non-representative group of Creek Indians, and that the general Lower and Upper Creek nations did not receive word of the disturbances until January 19, 1774. Despite this acknowledgment however, the British feared how the larger Creek Indian tribes would react to the incident. Stuart related to the Earl of Dartmouth in February that at first it appeared that "the Upper Creeks particularly and indeed the nation in general were entirely unacquainted with the intention of committing any act of hostility and greatly disapproved of what they then understood to have been done."²⁵ Although a propitious start, the British could not rest easy on the tribe's general disapproval of the actions alone, and proceeded with their intentions to end trade with the Indians. British-Indian relations improved vastly in May 1774 after the Creek headsmen who accompanied British officials to Savannah in March finally agreed to rectify the situation. In an August 2 letter to the Earl of Dartmouth, John Stuart reported:

We saw the difficulty or impossibility of obtaining satisfaction in the full extent of our stipulations and treaties, and therefore we judged it most proper to acquiesce in having the four chiefs or leaders of the murtherers [sic] punished with death. Emistisiguo, [one of the chiefs], when he parted with us was of opinion that our demand was reasonable and would be complied with, and the satisfaction required was accordingly agreed upon by the chiefs in council.²⁶

²⁴ Governor Sir James Wright to Earl of Dartmouth, Savannah, 24 May 1774, in *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783 (Colonial Office series)*, ed. K. G. Davis. vol. 8 (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1775), 116-117.

²⁵ Stuart to Earl of Dartmouth, 13 February 1774, in *Documents*, 49.

²⁶ Stuart to Earl of Dartmouth, Charleston, 2 August 1774, in *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783 (Colonial Office series)*, ed. K. G. Davis. vol. 8 (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1775), 156.

By October, “Governor Wright was delighted with the success of his embargo when the Creeks put to the perpetrators to death and sued for peace.”²⁷ Together, the parties signed a treaty on October 20, 1774 and trade was reconvened. As a secondary condition, the Creeks agreed to stop molesting the settlers and their cattle in exchange for the Governor’s promise to prevent settlers from trespassing in the Oconee-Ogeechee strip.

Just as Governor Wright’s decision to stop trade in the backcountry garnered mixed results among his constituents, so too did the treaty signed on October 20, 1774. While the treaty pacified the local Indians, it further alienated the overlooked, but increasingly significant settlers of the Georgia backcountry, traders and crackers alike. These upcountry inhabitants particularly enjoyed the fallout from the murders because they wanted all dealings between the colony and the Indians to end. When the government opted to reopen trade with the Indians in October, however, the settlers interpreted the move negatively—opining that the government sacrificed their own interests in favor of the Indians. One of the major complaints the colonists had against the treaty was that Wright promised to strengthen laws governing Indian trade and land settlement. The small-scale salutary neglect that previously governed the backcountry would end. In November 1774 Lieutenant Governor Bull of South Carolina followed in Wright’s footsteps and issued a proclamation to “revoke all former *Indian* Trading Licenses, and require [traders] to take out new ones, by which they are to be subject to the observance of such Regulations as have been thought necessary for carrying on the trade in a manner which may secure publick [sic] peace.”²⁸ The inhabitants voiced their sentiment in a petition to the governor subscribed by “the Inhabitants of the Parish of St. George, and St. Paul, including the ceded lands in the Province of Georgia.”²⁹ Edward J. Cashin claims in his article that when the disgruntled inhabitants did not receive a positive response to their petition from the governor “the backcountry was ready to join in the Continental Association against trade with England.”³⁰ In January 1775 Governor Wright attempted to pass legislation that would prevent further settlement beyond the Ogeechee River and severely punish encroachments by persons disregarding the law.³¹ Having authority on his side, however, ultimately proved futile. As the conflict erupted into an all-out war, the American Revolution would demonstrate that Governor Wright made the wrong decision to favor the Indians over a growing part of his constituency.

In retrospect, the British authorities in Georgia probably overreacted to the actions of the Creek Indians in late 1773. First of all, the murders were thought to have been committed by a small hunting party of Creek Indians who stole some of White’s horses. Stuart reported to the Earl of Dartmouth in February 1774 that White “and a neighboring settler named Shirrol pursued and overtook two Creeks with the horses which the Indians

²⁷ Cashin, “Sowing the Wind,” 242.

²⁸ Lieutenant Governor Bull, “Proclamation of Lieutenant Governor Bull. Trade Opened with the Creek and Cherokee Indians. Revokes all Indian Trade Licenses, and requires new ones to be taken out,” *American Archives* Series 4 vol. 1 (1774): (accessed online 10 December 2009).

²⁹ Cashin, “Sowing the Wind,” 243.

³⁰ Cashin, “Sowing the Wind,” 243.

³¹ James Wright, Baronet, Governor of Georgia, “Meeting of the Assembly, Speech of Governor Wright to both Houses,” *American Archives* Series 4 vol. 1 (1774): (accessed online 10 December 2009).

refused to give up; whereupon White shot one of them.”³² Although this scenario proved to be incorrect, Governor Wright and Superintendent John Stuart recognized that the incident was a small conflict involving one group of Creeks not the nation as a whole. The fact that the larger Creek nation was “unacquainted with the intention of committing any act of hostility” made it even less likely that a general Indian war would have broken out as a result of the incident.³³

In addition to their lack of knowledge regarding the episode, the Creeks were involved in a war with the Choctaws at the time the murders occurred. Although the clash meant that they desperately needed the ammunition promised to them in the New Purchase, it seems unlikely that they would have engaged in a war on two fronts simultaneously. The prospect of them generating from the event an anti-British coalition also seems unlikely because of their antipathy toward their Cherokee neighbors at the time as well. The Cherokees were the initial group who suggested ceding to the British the Oconee-Ogeechee strip in 1773. Although the land was jointly claimed by the Cherokees and the Creeks, the Cherokees, who had no interest in the land that the Creeks used as hunting grounds, offered it to the British as a method of repaying debts. Thus, it is highly unlikely that they would have joined forces with the Cherokees, who one Creek chief blithely dismissed as “mocking birds who commonly changed their notes as they changed their situation.”³⁴

Regardless of whether royal officials actually believed that the Indians would form an anti-British coalition in the months preceding the Revolution, their actions in 1774 in response to the Creeks ultimately hastened their defeat. In preferring Indian interests over those residing in the backwoods settlements, Governor Wright alienated a growing yet increasingly vociferous segment of his province. This decision, although not the primary cause, certainly contributed to the drift of the fledgling colony away from Albion, at a critical juncture when the province was wavering back and forth in its allegiance. Less affected by the “Intolerable” Acts than the New Englanders, the backcountry settlers of Georgia sided with the Whig cause for very different, but no less significant reasons. While other factors, ranging from constitutional concerns and the specter of slave insurrections no doubt helped push southern colonists further away from the British government, it would be unwise to discount the importance of Creek Murders as one of the many bonds that snapped in the critical year leading up to Georgia’s Independence.

³² Stuart to Earl of Dartmouth, Charleston, 13February 1774, in *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783 (Colonial Office series)*, ed. K. G. Davis. vol. 8 (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1775), 48.

³³ Stuart to Earl of Dartmouth, 13 February1774, in *Documents*, 49.

³⁴ Stuart to Earl of Dartmouth, May 6 1774, in *Documents*, 110.