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Alexander McGillivray, the last king of
the Creeks

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of the Creeks

W. A. Hunter

ALEXANDER MCGILLIVRAY

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ATLANTA, GA.
FOOTE & DAVIES COMPANY
PRINTERS AND BINDERS
1908



ALEXANDER MCGILLIVRAY

THE LAST KING OF THE CREEKS

I come to tell you of one of the most remarkable men born in the two Americas. For a sixth of a century his fame and his influence permeated civilization on both sides of the sea. Outside of his other influence, next after John Sevier and James Robertson, he had most influence in fashioning the history of the State of Tennessee while these two were trying to build and that one to destroy. So Tennessee arose in history as land is formed and fashioned by the meeting of the waters. During his control, embracing 16 years, he held in his hand many of the leading policies of the United States, especially of the States of North Carolina, the so-called State of Franklin, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. He was entangled in the policies of Great Britain, France and Spain, in reference to the absorbing questions of these Western wilds then rife in those lands. His mind came in fierce and constant conflict with the leading diplomats of the world, including John Sevier, James Robertson, William Blount, President Washington, John Jay, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and the leading diplomatists of England, France and the Spains, and amid those conflicts his abilities rose resplendent. His policy was strongly tending towards success when it was thwarted by his death. He was King of the Creeks, and, in a sense, had control of all the Indians of the South. The consuming object of his life was the preservation of the Indians as an independent nation,—the establishment of the "Kingdom of the Muscogee." After his death all of his far-seeing policies were ruined by the foolish rashness of Tecumseh; by the nation entering into open war under the inspiration of the British, at that time in conflict with the United States. After the calamity had become fixed, and the hope of the Kingdom of the Muscogee had passed away, it became a mouthword among his adherents that "Before the

Black Spirit could destroy the Creeks, he had to kill McGillivray."

The McGillivrays are a small clan in the highlands of Scotland, and still exist in that country. We are taught that the word signifies "Children of the freckled men." They still reside in the vicinage of Dumnaglass. Lachlan McGillivray was a red-headed, freckled-face boy, who ran away from his servitude as an apprentice, and took refuge in a ship bound for the new continent about the year 1740. He landed in the then principal city of America, Charleston, South Carolina, with only a King's shilling in his pocket. On the same day he procured employment as a driver of horses, which were accustomed to carry goods to and from the Indians far away in the Western woods, whose headquarters were near Montgomery, Alabama. It was this commerce with the Indians for which the nations of Europe schemed and many times fought. It was this commerce that settled and conquered the Western world. The influence of a desire for freedom of conscience for the white man, and for proselyting the Indians to the Christian religion, was in my opinion entirely infinitesimal in that settlement.

Let us take one glance at the then situation of the Old World: Spain, by reason of the discovery of Columbus, claimed the whole of the Western continent, and by might and main was holding what she could. I speak of the Spain of three and one-half centuries ago,—the first nation upon whose dominions it was claimed that the sun never went down. Then that austere monarch, Charles (of Germany the 5th, of Spain the 1st) the greatest depositary of municipal power on earth, was threatening his uncle, Henry VIII. of England, into silence, holding Italy with a mailed hand in subjection, routing and ruining France, trying with might and main to quiet that irrepressible tongue of Martin Luther, convening Diet after Diet to determine ecclesiastical questions, for the discussion of which the people of that date appear to have been morbidly hungry. While other monarchs were replenishing their empty coffers with taxes wrung from unwilling people, he was building and filling "Castles de Oro" with spoils basely rested from the Incas and Montezumas of the New World. I speak of the land of the olive and the vine, of the paintings of Murillo, of the literature of Don Quixote, with blessed Sancho

Panza, of the devotion of Loyola, of the language of music and of love, of the gay cavalier and the dark eyed Senorita, in the midst of all which, and in spite of all which, sat grim and dark the Spanish Inquisition. I speak not of the Spain of to-day, which has lost every foot of her possessions in the New World, and is now reeling and tottering to her fall.

England, by a frail title, was holding by her goods and her bayonets a thin line along the Atlantic Ocean from Florida to the St. Lawrence, although her royal grants were generally bounded on the west by the "South Seas," wherever that might be found to be. Her title to this dominion was based under the law of nations, upon the fact that Sebastian Cabot, under authority of Henry VII., sailed along the coast from Florida to Newfoundland and back again.

La Belle France was claiming and holding all the St. Lawrence and the Lake regions, with tributaries, and afterwards, by reason of the discovery of the Mississippi River, was claiming the whole valley drained by its waters. For about 62 years the Alleghany mountains were her eastern boundary, during which time what is now Tennessee was part and parcel of New France. She had the best title by the law of nations.

Poor Portugal was claiming what she could grab of the common boodle, and pocketed a royal share in the Southern continent.

His Holiness, the Pope of Rome, was endeavoring to quiet the situation by interposing his right to own the world and the fulness thereof, by partitioning all this disputed domain by definite boundaries among the irritated claimants, so that each might know his respective dominion. That partition never became effective. His division of the domain was, by lines of latitude and longitude, favorable to Spain.

In the meantime the Indians throughout the continent sought to maintain their home and hunting ground against all comers. This claim was rooted in the unique and foolish land policy of England, inherited by the United States. In theory it was that, although England, later the United States, was entitled to the country by reason of discovery and conquest, yet the absolute title of the land belonged to the conquered nation, an *imperium in imperio*. Such an anomaly never existed before in the world,

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and probably never will again. It originated from a custom of the early settlers upon the seaboard submitting to a species of blackmail, by which they were enabled to occupy land by license rather than undergo the expense and danger of purchase or military enforcement of the title they claimed. This practice in early days was not recognized by the English Government, which claimed the right of title in fee, and always granted without any incumbrance. As practiced it was construed that the Indian nation owned the absolute title to the land, which they were forced, by fair means or foul, to sell the Government whenever desired, and at whatever price offered. About the middle of the 17th century this curious doctrine was recognized by the English Government, having been brought about by the device of the elder Pitt, at that time in charge of the State Department. The title and claim of France extended about half-way up the State of Maine northward as far as discovered, westward up the St. Lawrence, embracing a considerable boundary of land contiguous to the river to the watershed of the Alleghany mountains, thence down those mountains to the southwest, so as to include the whole of the Mississippi valley. This claim was substantiated, not only by actual settlements, but by forts extending for intervals from the mouth of the St. Lawrence, skirting the Mississippi, to New Orleans. At the second treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, October, 1748, which ended the war of the Austrian succession, in which the English and French were involved in long and bloody conflicts in the New World, a question of the boundary therein was not recognized and determined, and Pitt, of England, conceived the idea of securing this vast domain for his Government, and he supported it by every possible dollar and man. At the same time Madame de Pompadour, who was "the biggest man in France," wearied of the burthen of protecting the French claims to that country, and this gave opportunity to England to right heartily improve it. In pursuance of this scheme expeditions were encouraged to capture Fort Duquense (now Pittsburg) from the French. In this effort Major Washington was defeated, and later Braddock, was completely defeated and slain before this object was obtained. The English, after much preparation and expense, threw a force far into the confines of the Indians, and erected a fort on the Little

Tennessee River, christened it after the name of Lord Loudon, at that time in command of the English forces in America, some 22 miles to the southwest of Knoxville. That little spot of ground for five years was the most notorious place in the world. It was finally captured under the influence of the French.

In reply to the inquiry of the French government as to why these incursions were made, while the two Governments were at profound peace, Pitt in his diplomacy took the position that the land really belonged to neither party, but to the Indians, and that his occupation was with license from the various tribes so as to evade the conclusion that the English were guilty of acts of open war. His theory has always continued down with the colonies to the United States, and has been the foundation of all the pseudo-sentimentality in favor of "Lo! the poor Indian." In no other instance in history have tears been wasted over the wrongs of the conquered country from the day of the Hittites down to the Philipinos. It has cost this country four hundred millions of treasures and thousands of lives, and the cancer still lives. This theory never had the approval or sympathy of the pioneers, and the Government has always been unable to enforce it.

The boundaries were agreed upon, and guaranteed again and again by treaties executed in most solemn form, but the treaties were constantly ignored, and the lines continually changed as the result of European diplomacy, or of some insignificant clash of arms. To illustrate: The boundary of Florida, a Spanish dominion, was the 31st parallel of north latitude. During the Revolutionary war, Spain also being at war with England, an insignificant battle occurred at Pensacola, in which the Spanish arms were successful, and by which she claimed that her lines were extended half-way up the State of Alabama, and this claim worried our Government and people many a long year. Within our history, the site of "Hickory Ground" near Montgomery, Alabama, the headquarters and one of the homes of McGillivray, has been within the domain of a half dozen tribes of Indians, of England, of Spain, of France, and of the United States, before it peacefully rested in the State of Alabama. It has taken many troublous years to quiet these conflicting lines in

peace, until now happily we hear nothing more important than the re-running and re-marking of State lines.

The bone of contention through all these terrible times was the valuable trade with the Indians, at which we will give one passing glance.

In those days it was transported on small native ponies, one pack on each side of the horse and one on top, weighing in the aggregate from 120 to 180 pounds. It consisted of blankets, brilliant cloths, trinkets, ammunition, and—commoner than all—taffai, a mean rum. Such articles were exchanged at extravagant rates, as high as 400 per cent. for the return barter of skins (of which millions and millions were exported), peltry, strained wild honey, and millions of casks of hickory nut oil, which was ravenously devoured by the epicures of the cities of Europe—all were important articles of their commerce. This last article was prepared by the Indians crushing the nuts and boiling the fragments in water, and then gathering the oil from the top with a feather.

This particular caravan to which this freckle-faced boy had joined himself consisted of about 150 horses and 16 men. It headed from Charleston to Hickory Ground, the present site of Wetumpka, Alabama. The drivers were dressed in coon-skin caps, hunting shirts, a square cloth coming up to and under a belt before and behind, buckskin leggings and moccasins. This was the ordinary raiment of the pioneers who went back into the wilderness. Such a caravan would start early in the morning, each horse having a bell well "grassed," and travel in trot, single file, along a road deeply worn in the ground, until a rest was needed, after which the journey would be continued until sundown, when the horses were unloaded, the grass taken from the bells, and they were allowed to gather such forage during the night as they might be able. When an unfordable stream was reached rafts were found or made for the freight, and the horses would swim to the other bank. No material for rafting has ever been found superior to dried cane.

Young Lachlan had so pleased his employer that he presented him, in addition to his wages, a jack knife, which at the Hickory Ground he traded to an Indian for eight skins, which on his return to Charleston he traded for more knives. On his

second return to Hickory Ground he determined to remain there, to gather up supplies for traders as a "middle-man," and soon had a prosperous business in collecting goods for the traders.

As time wore on he married an Indian maiden, Seahoy Mautchand, the daughter of the King, by right of her mother. In all uncivilized nations genealogy is counted through the female line; it is more reliable. Her father was rated as an accomplished French officer, and young McGillivray married her by the established customs and ceremonies of the Indians. They had five children—two boys and three girls. This man, though his ancestors had much to complain of against the Kings of England, was always loyal to King George, and accumulated much wealth, most of which was afterwards confiscated by the United States. He was in Savannah when it was recaptured by the patriots, and gathering of his substance what he was able, abandoned his wife and children and sailed back to Scotland, and, so far as is known, cut off all connection with the New World. There is a legend that his mind was embittered by jealousy of his son, who had become a powerful king, by right of his mother, while he remained an Indian trader.

His eldest son was Alexander, the subject of this sketch. You will see by his genealogy that he was one-half Scotch, one-quarter French, and one-quarter Indian—a rare combination of blood. By inheritance through his mother he had right to the office of King of the Muscogees. By the custom of that nation the highest officer was known in English as a King. Under him was a Chief, who had control of all military operations. Many writers erroneously style McGillivray as a Chief. He had a higher dignity. At that time the Creek nation was dominant in the South, as were the Iroquois in the North. The name "Creeks" arose from the nature of the country in which they then lived, where the waters of the rivers gathered together; just as for a long time the Cherokees, who lived in the present boundaries of Tennessee were called "Overhills." The Indian name of the Creeks was the Muscogees. They came as far as traceable from Western Mexico, and were expatriated by their conflicts with the Spaniards, during their conquest of that country, stating that they could not withstand "men riding on buffaloes without horns, with hair on their bodies (the Indians

use no beard) and thunder and lightning in their hands." In their transmigration they pursued the tribe Alabamas, down the Red River, up the Mississippi and the Ohio, beyond which river they lived as a migratory tribe at the time DeSoto made his wonderful incursion through the South. Still following their enemy, the Alabamas, they drove them southward, through now Kentucky and Tennessee, whence the mound builders had already been extirpated, until they entirely defeated and absorbed them into the country of the Creeks, a region of wonderful fertility. By such conquests the Creeks claimed title to what is now Kentucky and Tennessee, in addition to their homes in and around Alabama. The Cherokees, a tribe of smaller stature and lighter complexion, never had title beyond the Tennessee River, except such as would come from predatory excursions through that region. They were under the domination of the Creeks.

When the boy, Alexander, was thirteen years of age, his father took him from the "Hickory Ground" to Charleston, S C., where he placed him under the tuition of a relative, the Rev. Farquhar McGillivray, a Mr. Sheed and a Mr. William Henderson, coming from the region of his nativity, and all learned Scotchmen, who were by him regularly salaried for the purpose of educating his son. With the exception of a short time, when he was in a counting house in Savannah to learn the usages of trade, he remained under the tuition of these gentlemen for 20 years, a studious and apt scholar. The ambition of his father was to make him the most learned man in America. It is probable that he did. He was familiar with Hebrew; he spoke Latin and Greek like a vernacular; was taken through the learning of philosophy, mathematics and the sciences, and took great delight in botany. He seemed to take much enjoyment in examining and differentiating lichens.

Let us now move to the year 1776. The Revolutionary war is rife throughout the colonies. This young man—the most polished and learned in the metropolis, is imbued with loyalty to King George, and the time is now ripe for him to return to his boyhood home and his Kingdom. He had been long expected by his people, and they met him with adoration—far, far higher than if he had spent his time among them. They also knew that he was bringing with him the wisdom of the white man, for

which they were in desperate need. Upon his arrival, in order to confirm his office without question, he adroitly ordered an election throughout the tribe to confirm and strengthen him in his title. It was unanimous in his favor. His ambition in life was already fixed. His first necessity was to find a man of military ability for his Chief. That man was found in Colonel Leclerc Milfort, a French officer of high education and military ability. It required considerable finesse to have a foreigner made chief military officer. It was arranged that Colonel Milfort should marry the King's sister, Jennette, which made him Indian, and of royal blood, by right of his wife. He thereupon took charge of the military department of the Creek Indians; he managed it with consummate skill and ability until the death of the King, when he like many other Europeans, abandoned his wife and children and returned to France, where he wrote a book of his experiences, of high value and authority, and afterwards was killed in battle in Austria, where Madame de Pompadour was helping her "very dear friend," Maria Theresa, to regain her dominion of Silesia.

Alexander, the King, now entered upon the work of his life, to found and establish the Kingdom of Ocmulgee as one of the nations of the earth. No map has ever yet shown the boundaries of that inchoate kingdom. Its capital was Hickory Ground, now within the State of Alabama; its eastern boundary was to have been as far within the State of Georgia as practicable—say midway the State. On the southern side it was to be bounded by the Spanish dominion, now the present State of Florida. Its western boundary was to have been the Mississippi River, at that time the French line. On the north it was to extend as far as practicable, so as to include the States of Tennessee and Kentucky. It was an island of civilization entirely surrounded by hostilities, where his only hope of success was rooted in the chance of compelling his coterminors to throttle each other by the throat. On the east was the United States, and particularly the State of Georgia, with the citizens of which he was in constant conflict, who, with or without treaties, were constantly absorbing his lands. On the south and west were France and Spain, whom he held in check by disseminating animosity between them. His greatest trouble was from the north, where were the

Cumberland and Watauga settlements, Knoxville then not having been christened. He saw with the ken of a prophet that either his Kingdom or the two North Carolina settlements must perish. He early recognized the fact that no treaty could protect him, and that he must make it dangerous for those who would trespass into his domain. He was constantly making treaties with these advancing hordes, which he and others looked upon as temporary diplomatic advantages, but he knew, as he frequently said, that the contest would finally be settled "by the best gun and the longest sword." Under Colonel Milfort the whole tribe was taken into military education and regularly drilled, using as much civilized military tactics as were practicable with such a people. Under this discipline these Indians far exceeded as soldiers any others on the Western Continent, and we have found by sad experience that they were the best soldiers and the hardest fighters of the Indians. Alexander, the King, taught them to cultivate lands, to own slaves and to marry among the whites. A marriage with a negro was held to be a disgrace. Such an Indian was driven or evolved out of the tribe, and took refuge in Florida, where he was known as a Seminole (which means a "renegade"), all remaining under the acknowledged authority, however, of the King.

To properly understand the condition of affairs of the Creeks in the year 1776, two additional factors must be noted.

A discordant element in McGillivray's dominions, and indeed through all the United States, was General William Augustus Bowles, a name sadly familiar to the pioneers of that period. In addition to his animosity to the patriots, he was bitter and malignant against the King, and harbored hopes of supplanting him in his office and dignity. He had enlisted in King George's army as a tory from the State of Maryland, a common, ignorant soldier. By some means he became known to and favored by Governor Dunmore, of the province of Virginia. He was a low, heavy man of extraordinary natural endowments, brave, bold and shrewd. Governor Dunmore had captured a sailing vessel belonging to the great merchants, Panton, Leslie & Company, freighted largely with American silver, and had appropriated the treasure. Complaint was made to the home government,

which ordered a restoration to be made. In this circumstance was rooted a bitter feud and animosity on the part of the Governor of Virginia against the said firm of merchants. In a retaliatory spirit he sent this man Bowles to erect a rival store on the Altamaha River, to break and injure their current Indian trade. This newcomer soon affiliated with and married among the Creeks. He was exceedingly affable, was an expert in all their sports, and became personally very popular. He always remained a strong friend of King George's cause. After he had committed several overt acts of treason against the rightful King, and had openly defied him, after the execution of the New York treaty, to be hereinafter mentioned, McGillivray made a mysterious visit to New Orleans, after which a band of soldiers was sent to Bowles' residence, which took him prisoner and sent him to Castle Moro in Havana, whence he was later forwarded to Spain. In a letter written by President Washington to Mr. Jefferson, in which he speaks of and lauds McGillivray for his good work and friendship to the State, he mentions this news about Bowles, adding that he had that day been credibly informed that Bowles had been hung in Spain — much, I have no doubt, to the ease of the President's mind. This, however, was a mistake. Instead of being hung, Bowles, by the Spanish authorities, was exported around the cape to Manilla, and there placed in close confinement; whence he afterwards made his escape and went to England, where he was lionized by the authorities there; and later made his way across the ocean to Canada, where he lived for a time as a hero and finally returned to the Creek Nation, styling himself the "Director of the Creeks." Again McGillivray had him arrested and sent again to Moro Castle, where he died in the dungeon—probably by assassination. This pretender, so often mentioned in history, was always a pest to everybody, except the English.

The other factor was the said firm of Panton, Leslie & Company. William Panton was a Scotchman, who had come to America much like Lachlan McGillivray, and had organized and developed the largest business of merchandise in America before or since. They owned five sloops engaged constantly in their freightage; they had stores and warehouses on the St. Mary's,

at St. Augustine, on the Altamaha, at New Orleans, at Chickasaw Bluff (now Memphis), and various dependent branches, one of which was at the "French Lick" (now Nashville) on the Sewanee River. Their principal store and depot was at Pensacola, in Florida. In heart, Panton was a confirmed royalist, but when in the dominions of France, he was French, and when Spain captured Pensacola from the English, he was Spanish. The accounts of their business and the extent of their wealth seem almost to be fabulous. After the deaths of McGillivray and Panton, it was developed by litigation in the United States Court at New Orleans that McGillivray, by a secret contract, was entitled to one-third of their profits. This firm was a puissant factor in the policies of the Southern States, tending everything political and military to getting and holding the trade of the Indians.

During the same year let us take a glance at the conditions surrounding what is now Tennessee. To properly understand these conditions we must go outside of many of our State histories which have appeared in print. It is impossible for a people to understand history as they make it; it is like considering a range of mountains. To understand the beauty, the repose, the strength, the trend, you must stand far away from it. I hope to live until some young Tennessean shall rise with a call to write a history of Tennessee; no State so rich in material, none so neglected. During the war of the Revolution, our doughty forefathers went wild in enthusiasm and affection for France and Spain. We are now beginning to learn that these nations did not want our colonies to be free. In their practical wisdom they dreaded the birth of a republic in the New World. It was intended and hoped that England would finally coerce her colonies into submission, and the contrary result was a great surprise and a Pandora's Box for them. The sole motive of each of these two governments, in their actions during our Revolutionary War, was hatred of England, and not love of America. I incline to the opinion that Lafayette personally desired the success of the colonies, and afterwards gloried in the result, but his master, Louis, certainly did not, as may be plainly seen from his instruc-

tions lately brought to light. We also now know that a potent factor in the conclusion reached by England in abandoning the struggle was a hope that the colonies in process of time, by action and example, would work the death of those two governments in the New World, and at the same time strengthen her own. In the one hundred years that problem has now worked out its solution. In accordance with this general situation, the early writers of Tennessee history, industrious and crude, only recorded the turnings of the little wheels, without finding the main springs that furnished the force that made these little wheels go round. The burthen of all their labors is to demonstrate that the prime object of Spain, France and England was the destruction of the Watauga and Cumberland settlements. I am satisfied that Alexander McGillivray was the mainspring of all these movements.

The general war was begun and waged along the Atlantic Coast. The settlers of Tennessee, far beyond the mountains, were in warm and active sympathy with the patriots, and several times, without pay or emolument, crossed the mountains in aid of that cause, and finally at King's Mountain, turned the tide in favor of American Independence. A few tories drifted among them, as they drifted all along the frontiers of the United States, but their presence in this particular spot raised such a commotion that they were put down with unflinching and prompt force, thereby causing much notoriety, from which several shallow writers have been persuaded that these settlements were nests of tories. In other places, their presence went without notice, and no historical criticism has been made. Although for many years France had been the principal owner of North America, yet by the treaty of Paris in 1767 she ceded her right to England up to the Mississippi River, and west of that river to Spain. The latter domain was later recovered by her. The tenure which held the States together under the Confederation was exceedingly frail.

The men of the frontiers then had a custom to furnish their own government, or go without it. The attachment of the seaboard to the mountain region was feeble because of the expense and annoyance of protection. As to these settlements the

grand motives of France and Spain, especially the latter, in the light of which every political act will be seen to have been consistent, were: First, to have a dismemberment of the Mississippi valley from the Atlantic States, or, failing in this, Second: to entice the citizens to cross the Father of Waters and become loyal and prosperous subjects of His Most Catholic Majesty. A third scheme also existed on the part of the pioneers, to forcibly capture, on private account, more or less of the territory of Spain. There is no doubt but that one or more of these schemes was favorably considered by our prominent pioneers. Many of them removed beyond the Mississippi for final settlement. Aaron Burr, one of the ablest and most dangerous Americans, as was charged, contemplated an attempt under one of these schemes, and came to dishonor. Sam Houston afterwards invaded Texas and wrested it from Mexico, successor to Spain, and was afterwards received with adulation as a member of the Senate of the United States, which had at an earlier date expelled William Blount on the charge of planning a similar enterprise. Some day some Senator of Tennessee will win renown by an effort to have that resolution of expulsion expunged. As now understood, it was gross injustice. Both France and Spain, especially the latter, did much to injure the settlements in now Tennessee, but primarily they had no motive to work to their disadvantage, and were driven to this conduct by the pressure from McGillivray.

There is a natural love in the white man for land. He knows that out of its dust he was formed; out of it comes his subsistence, and into its breast he will be received. In early times many of the prominent men, from Washington down, were practical surveyors. An English satirist has written that "all of the rebel generals were either common surveyors or tavern keepers." The claim of the white man to the land of Tennessee is derived from a charter made by Charles II. of England, given as a reward to five of his court favorites in London. The northern line of North Carolina was recited to begin at a white stake at Currituck Inlet on the Atlantic Ocean, north 36 degrees 30 minutes; thence west to the South Seas. His right to make such a deed was, to say the least, under the law of nations, very questionable. By treaty afterwards, the South Seas were located at the Mis-

Mississippi River. It is further claimed that Colonel Johnson, an English officer, at Fort Stanwix in New York (now Rome), made a treaty with the Five Nations, by which they ceded to the King all their lands north and east of the Cherokee, now Tennessee River. Inasmuch as it is highly probable that none of these bargainers had ever set foot in Tennessee or Kentucky, it is difficult to trace this claim to anything valid. The best support given in favor of it is an affidavit made by an Indian Agent named Crogan that some Cherokees attended that treaty at Fort Stanwix, and delivered to the Five Nations some skins, which they had carried with them, stating that they had killed the game north of the Big River, and that the skins belonged to them. What title Charles II. had, as stated above, passed to North Carolina, and this was ceded by the treaty of peace to the United States.

On the other hand, the Indians never had any conception of the individual ownership of land, any more than the white man now has of the ownership of the Tennessee River or the Atlantic Ocean. Their idea was that the land belonged to the tribe, but that any portion of it could be used as necessities might demand, until abandonment, when it could be taken by the next comer. The Muscogees claimed that no such statement had ever been made by strolling Cherokees at Fort Stanwix, but that if made, it was not effective to pass title to the land. They furthermore claimed that the Cherokees had no right to lands north of the Tennessee River, and that they had come up from Florida and had never gone beyond the "Overhill" settlement, while *they*, on the other hand, had driven the Uchees and Alabamas from Tennessee and Kentucky, as we now know them, into Alabama, when they disappeared by absorption and assimilation; and thereby that the area of those States belonged to them by conquest.

There was direct conflict as to most of the proposed Kingdom of Ocmulgee between McGillivray and the State of Georgia, which claimed the land westward to the Mississippi River, down to the Florida line, which line continually floated up and down the continent. In order to strengthen her contested right she granted most of this land to citizens for homes, so that they

might possess the same. She granted many millions of acres to the Yazoo Company, so prolific of political scandal in our early history. For many years it was the keenest reproach to charge one with being a "Yazoo man." She also issued a three million grant to the Tennessee Company, composed of Cox and associates, in which Governor Sevier was involved, in the northern portion of Alabama, bounded on the north by the Tennessee River.

McGillivray soon saw that it was a case of political life and death with his Kingdom. He was in continual broil with the Georgians on the east, who were settling on his lands, and whom he was scalping; but his greatest danger was from the Cumberland and Watauga settlements. As against these he went to New Orleans and held a conference with the officers of the French and Spanish governments and entered into secret treaties, lately revealed, that these settlements were to be extirpated. While getting assistance and influence for this result, he also undertook the task to disseminate animosities and enmities between the English, French and Spanish, while he, as much as was within his power, would remain in apparent peace with all. He sent trusted emissaries north, south, east, and west; he watched with concern the growing animosity in Georgia, Kentucky and Tennessee with the United States; he incited and watched the machinations of Spain against the Western settlements, and the conflicts between France and Spain, on the one side, and England on the other. He inaugurated and maintained voluminous correspondence with the representatives of all the surrounding governments, in which he, as a friend of each particular one, manifested amazing shrewdness, capability and diplomacy. During his whole career with most of his correspondents he inspired and maintained confidence, with the exception, so far as is known of three men—John Sevier, of East Tennessee, Andrew Pickens, of South Carolina, and James Robertson, of the Cumberland. The latter, to placate his friendship sent two messengers to him from Nashville—Andrew Ewin and James Hoggart, to interview and sound him as to his purposes, at his capital at Cusseta. Hoggart was completely captivated by him,

but Ewin returned home burdened with suspicion. Robertson had sent by them as a present a fine silver mounted rifle.

Having been unable to obtain a personal interview with Andrew Pickens, of South Carolina, he addressed him a letter, which is entitled to be graded as a State paper. A quotation from it is as follows:

"How the boundary and limits between the Spaniards and the States will be determined, a little while will show, as I believe that matter is now on foot. However, we know our limits and the extent of our hunting grounds. As a free nation, we have applied, as we had a right to do, for protection, and obtained it. We shall pay no attention to any limits that may prejudice our claims, that were drawn by an American and confirmed by a British negotiator; yet, notwithstanding we have been obliged to adopt these measures for our preservation and our real necessity, we sincerely wish to have it in our power to be on the same footing with the States as before the late unhappy war, to effect which is entirely within our power. We want nothing from you but justice. We want our hunting grounds preserved from encroachments. They have been ours from the beginning of time, and we will maintain them against every attempt that will be made to take them from us."

General James White, of Knoxville, having been appointed by congress Superintendent of the Creek Indians, entered into negotiations with this King, from whom, on the 8th of April, 1787, he received the following in reference to the disputed boundary line in Georgia:

"There are chiefs of two towns in this nation, who, during the late war, were friendly to the State of Georgia, and had gone at different times among those people, and once, after the general peace, to Augusta. They there demanded of them a grant of lands belonging to and enjoyed as hunting grounds by the Indians of this nation, in common, on the east of the Oconee River. The chiefs rejected the demands of the people that those lands were the hunting grounds of the nation, and should not be granted by two individuals, but a promise was extorted from them that on a return to our country they would use their influence to get the grant confirmed. Upon their return, a general convention was held at Tookabatcha, when these two chiefs were

“severely censured and the chiefs of 98 towns agreed upon a talk to be sent to Savannah, disapproving in the strongest manner of the demand made upon their nation, and denying the right of any two of their country to make concession of land, which could only be valid by the unanimous voice of the whole as joint proprietors in common. Yet these two chiefs, regardless of the voice of the nation, continued to go to Augusta and other places within the State. They received presents and made promises. We warned the Georgians of the dangerous consequences that would certainly attend the settling of the lands in question, but these lands were soon filled with settlers. The nation, justly alarmed at the encroachments, resolved to use force to maintain their rights, but, being averse to the shedding of the blood of a people whom we would rather consider as friends, we made another effort to awaken in them a sense of justice and equity, but we found from experience that entreaties could not prevail, and bands of warriors were sent to drive off the intruders, and were instructed to shed blood only where self preservation made it necessary.

“I aspire to the honest ambition of meriting the appellation of a preserver of my country, equally with the chiefs among you, whom, from acting on such principles, you have exalted to the highest pitch of glory; and if, after every possible effort made to obtain redress of grievances should prove fruitless, a recourse to arms to obtain it be a mark of the subject and not of the soldier—what subjects must the Americans be, and how much undeserved applause have your Cincinnatus and your Fabius obtained? If a better name had been necessary in such a case to distinguish that Chief, ‘The Man Killer,’ or ‘Great Destroyer’ would have been the proper appellation.”

In a letter sent by these same two messengers, Hoggart and Ewin, James Robertson, in all complaisance, stated to the King that he had had the satisfaction of registering to him a deed for a town lot in Nashville, and requesting to know his pleasure, whether or not he should enter in his name two or three tracts of fine land. The good old pioneer was petting the tiger before he should spring.

McGillivray made many treaties with the United States solemnly defining the boundaries of his dominions, and guaranteeing to

his nation the land forever, but these treaties brought him no peace or relief. The settlers invariably crossed the line and made their homes. Sometimes they had the warrant of State grants, and sometimes they had nothing. The influence of Washington and his cabinet, congress and officials, was generally exerted in favor of the observance of these treaties, but without avail. In Lexington, Kentucky, Washington was burned in effigy; in Georgia he was denounced in a placard nailed upon a tree. In fact, there arose a judicial conflict in that State that almost amounted to a conflict in arms with the General Government. Washington, in his perplexities, seriously contemplated settling the whole matter by declaring war against the Creeks, as was done at a later date, but the treasury was so depleted that he was compelled to resort to diplomacy. Rather than have war, McGillivray was entreated by letter and by special messenger, again and again, to adjust the matter in some way by agreement, so as to stop the flow of blood. Personal conferences were requested of him at times and places, and the commissioners were kept waiting to meet him for months and months without his appearance. In describing this condition he wrote to his friend Panton:

"In this do you not see my cause of triumph in bringing these "conquerors of the Old and the masters of the New World, as "they call themselves, to bend and supplicate for peace at the "feet of a people whom shortly before they despised and marked "out for destruction?"

After repeated and persistent efforts Governor Blount, from Knoxville, finally prevailed upon him, representing all antagonism to the white people, to meet at Knoxville for a grand treaty, on the 2nd of July, 1791. To this McGillivray assented, and drilled his representatives over and over again as to their duties, and the treaty was accordingly held. The place was at the mouth of First Creek in that city, and was arranged with all of the pomposity which the courtly Blount could devise. In many respects it was the most important treaty ever made between the whites and the Indians. Every effort was made to impress upon the large attendance of Indians the importance and dignity of the occasion. A temporary throne was erected under a canopy on the banks, of the river, upon which Governor Blount, as the representative

of the United States, was seated. Trooper Armstrong was Chamberlain of the occasion. Carpets were spread upon the surrounding space. Armstrong led the chiefs, man by man, into the presence of his Excellency, and presented them respectively, with an account of his dignity and deeds of heroism. After these prolix ceremonies had ended, they entered into a negotiation for a settlement of the troubles existing between the two parties. The instructions drilled into the Indian representatives by the master mind of McGillivray was that they should reclaim as much of the land towards Kentucky as they might be able, and to have a positive and solemn treaty that the boundaries should forever remain inviolable. The treaty was finally concluded, by the terms of which the Indians were entirely successful, and Governor Blount was over-matched. Most of the territory was then occupied by actual settlers; yet it was solemnly agreed that all portions of that territory between Southwest Point (now Kingston) and the mouth of the Duck River, extending northward to the Kentucky line, a large part of the present State of Tennessee, should be surrendered back to the Indians and remain their territory inviolable forever; that the settlers located thereupon should be made to remove, and upon failure, that the Indians should have license to remove them. These settlers had regular grants for such lands from the State of North Carolina. The treaty also included within its cession the millions of acres that had been granted by the State of Georgia to the Tennessee Company, known as "Cox & Company," in which many of the settlers in now East Tennessee were interested. For the settlement of these domains much elaborate preparation had been made. On the confluents of the Tennessee many boats had been built, and parties organized to float down to this territory for the purpose of permanent settlement. In this scheme were many of the pioneers of this country, notably as a leading spirit, Andrew Jackson, of subsequent renown. His ambition and purpose was to locate and promote upon it a metropolis of the South, and to that end a site was selected and surveys made for a great metropolitan city christened "York Bluff." It was at the crossing of the great highway from the North to the South over the Tennessee River, and is now the present site of the city of Sheffield, in the State of Alabama. This was the first "boom town" in

America, the plot of which, in the handwriting and demarcation of Andrew Jackson, is at Tuscumbia, Alabama.

This important treaty was confirmed by the Senate of the United States, the announcement of which, as should have been expected, met with an outburst of denunciation upon the part of the settlers of the country involved. They had been literally cut off from civilization, and surrendered apparently to certain destruction.

Governor Blount, prompt to carry into execution the theories and conclusions indulged in and arrived at by the President and his cabinet, issued his proclamation warning the settlers to take no part in the settlement of the territory granted by the State of Georgia—definitely announcing that the Creek Indians had governmental authority to remove any such settlers, which meant scalps and deaths. Upon the promulgation of this proclamation, much to the disgust of John Sevier and James Robertson, this proposed settlement was abandoned, and the glowing prophecies as to "York Bluff" reached no further than paper. As you will recall, the ambition of Jackson to found such a city, afterwards located at Memphis, then "Chickasaw Bluff," but partly on the ground of delay of developing, was afterwards as a metropolis outrun by St. Louis and later by Chicago.

Notwithstanding this treaty, the incessant efforts of McGillivray were towards destruction of the Watauga and Cumberland settlements, and by virtue of his absolute control of the Indian trade, the officers of Spain and France were bent to that purpose. While it was impossible for Colonel Leclerc Milfort to organize and conduct the military force so far distant from the base of supplies, as the next best means he directed countless hordes of marauding bands of Indians to infest and devastate the country. Such warfare was waged for many years, with murder, rapine and desolation in its train. Nearly all of the original settlers and their children sooner or later were killed. The officers of France in the North and of Spain in the South and West contributed such aid as they were able in this predatory warfare. The earliest histories of Tennessee go no further than to detail the disasters that followed this plan, comprising unnumbered deaths and captivities. The settlers, headed by Sevier and Robertson, well knew from their experience that relief could only

come from an invasion into the Creek territory. Such wars must always be carried "into Africa." However, they were solemnly cautioned by the Secretary of War, through Governor Blount, again and again to take no active measures against the Indians, except in self-defense, and by no means to cross the boundary lines; that is, if a few marauding Indians should murder a household, men might gather and pursue them to the treaty lines, and then return, empty, home. Such restrictions in the face of common prudence irritated the settlers beyond endurance. John Sevier always professed great tenderness for the forms of law, but never allowed them to swerve his conduct. He always attacked the enemy when he saw it was necessary, notwithstanding anything which some man in the East had written and agreed to. In reference to a prevalent sentimentality in favor of "Lo! the poor Indian," his mouthword was that he thought it was "very wrong to kill the Indian and after you are certain you have done it, you should be sorry."

How those old settlers fretted and chafed under such restrictions can never be appreciated. In the depths of despair, General Robertson wrote to John Sevier an account of the condition of the Cumberland settlement, and appealed to him for instant aid and succor. He told him how these marauding bands of Indians were continually infesting the country; how they had killed most of the pioneers with whom he was acquainted; how his own house had been attacked and his son shot down under his own eye, and how, under the regulations of the Knoxville treaty, they could only wait for other attacks. The letter reached John Sevier at Southwest Point (now Kingston), where he was a refugee from the collapse of the State of Franklin; but such an appeal to such a man could not be fruitless in such a cause. Sevier did not write to him that he had troubles of his own in his immediate front, and that the State of Franklin, of which he was the executive head, was in the pangs of dissolution, and that he was at that time a refugee from the forms of law, but, on the contrary, he wrote him that he would organize a band of 1,500 men and strike such blows as would give him relief. This was done as expeditiously as men could be gathered in a frontier situation, and without orders, without pay, and contrary to law,

he crossed the treaty lines and destroyed some 36 towns of the enemy as far south and west as is now Rome, Georgia. Such movements very much lessened, but did not entirely abate the danger. For many years, every day was a day of life and death to the settlers. Spies and troops were continually on the move for warning and defending.

Robertson, being no longer able to withstand the storm in his region, organized a force in Middle Tennessee and pursued the Indians from one of their raids to one of their towns, known as Cold Water, now the city of Tusculum, Alabama. He destroyed that town and slaughtered the men, women and children. Upon his return, fearing that he might have offended the French, he wrote a conciliatory letter to Colonel Cruzat, the French officer in the Illinois country, bemoaning that in the attack upon Cold Water some French traders had been killed, but explaining that three boat loads of their goods, which had been captured, had been preserved, and upon proof that they were not contraband of war, would be delivered to him. The French officer cared nothing for the matter unless the King of Ocmulgee would take it up. Such an expedition was in the teeth of the orders of Henry Knox, Secretary of War, and William Blount, Governor of the Territory. On the report of this expedition, the Governor was filled with shame and regret, and immediately summoned Robertson to Knoxville, and upon a conference held upon that subject, James Robertson tendered his resignation as a Brigadier General of the United States Army.

At that time it was well understood in this Western World that either our settlements or McGillivray's Kingdom were to go down. The pioneers, especially Robertson, entered into a course of dalliance and diplomacy with McGillivray, and with the officers of France and Spain which surrounded us. Robertson always regarded McGillivray with supreme distrust and suspicion, although the correspondence between them was apparently of the most cordial nature. His single mistake was a confirmed idea that he was being oppressed by the English and French officers, as his letters, now in the Historical Society at Nashville, show that he was continually trying to placate them. He regarded the occlusion of the Mississippi River at Natchez

as an act of hostility to the settlers. It was a burning sensation in the log cabin town of Knoxville, and was afterwards reported from that place to the First Consul of the French by an emissary sent to reconnoitre. That action was not intended to be an act of hostility to the pioneers, but one of hostility against the United States. It was a temptation to the Western settlements to separate themselves from the seaboard, or in case of failure, to seduce them to remove across the river and become citizens of Spain. Public opinion on the seaboard did not support the settlers in their desire for the free use of the river. There was a widespread preference that these back men should be forced to send their trade to the seaboard, to New York, to Philadelphia, to Baltimore, rather than to enrich the Spaniards at New Orleans. Such desires were later accomplished by means of the railroads. There was a time when the Eastern States were willing to exchange the claim for a free navigation on the Mississippi River for a paltry right to fish on the banks of Newfoundland.

This trouble with the Creek Indians where the pioneers would not be bound by solemn treaties, nor the advice of Washington and his cabinet, and Thomas Jefferson and William Blount and John Jay, gave the President lasting concern. By means of letters and gifts, supported by a special confidential messenger, he finally succeeded in inducing McGillivray to agree to go to New York, the then seat of Government, for a personal interview. Such action, with a prospect of pacification, was hailed with delight throughout the United States. Shortly before taking this masquerade, as the great friend of the white man, McGillivray gratified himself by writing to his friend Panton that a body of his soldiers had lately gathered a few straggling Cherokees and attacked an expedition of Franklinites, allowing only three men to escape, and expressed the hope that by such means the coming of peace would be hastened.

With much pomp and ceremony, McGillivray, accompanied by thirty of his principal chiefs, began their journey as special favorites of the President. Their progress was anticipated and greeted all along the way as friends of the United States. At that very time his hordes were murdering and scalping men, women and children in Middle and East Tennessee. Countless

throng gathered to greet him in his progress. Every night's camping place gave him an ovation. At Guilford House, N. C. (now Greensboro), while a ceremonial reception was being tendered to him, a Mrs. Brown, of that neighborhood, broke through the throng, embraced his knees, convulsing the audience with emotion, and stated to the listening spectators that he was her saviour, and that he had ransomed her and her children from the Creeks and sent them home in safety. This good lady, afterwards drawn into the current of the Western tide, settled at the mouth of White creek, near Nashville, Tenn., and lived to a highly respected old age.

At Richmond, Virginia, delay had to be taken to partake of a celebration of several days; the same thing occurred at Fredericksburg. At Philadelphia three days were in a like manner consumed. The party left their horses at Elizabeth and crossed to New York in boats, where the then new Tammany Society, in the full dress of their order, received these heroes in splendor, and marched them up Wall street by the Federal Hall, where congress was then in session, to the house of the President, who met them as they were introduced, man by man, with all high ceremony. The party then visited Henry Knox, the Minister of War, and Governor Clinton, where a sumptuous and elegant entertainment at the City Tavern finished the day. The members of Tammany Hall, including the Sachems and Sagamores, were costumed in the paraphernalia of Indians, with horse tails, ornaments and paint, to honor this greatest Indian King, to an extent far beyond a "one dollar plate" or a "twelve dollar plate" banquet. After the ceremonies had consumed several days, during all of which McGillivray was affable and observant, the sharpest intellects of the nation met him in diplomacy to conclude the treaty of August 7, 1791, which has become a landmark in history.

The terms of that treaty will forever testify of the ability and shrewdness of McGillivray. It was solemnly agreed that the Oconee River should forever remain a permanent boundary between the Creeks and the citizens of the United States, and that the citizens on the one part should not cross the same without the consent of the other.

This treaty was afterwards confirmed by the United States Senate, and became in law the permanent eastern boundary of the Kingdom of Ocmulgee. It was therein agreed that the title of the Creeks to the country which they occupied should forever be held sacred and invincible by the United States of America; in addition to which a certain sum of money should be paid to each of the attending chiefs, and a yearly stipend forever thereafter, and that the people should remain forever at peace.

So much was fair and favorable to McGillivray, but at the same time and place a secret treaty was entered into, by which it was agreed that McGillivray should be paid a certain additional sum of money, statements of the amount of which, being in conflict, range from \$15,000 to \$100,000; that he should be commissioned, as he was, a Brigadier General of the United States, and made Indian agent to represent the Government among all the Southern Indians, for which he was to receive a certain annual salary agreed upon. In addition to, which he obligated himself, after the expiration of two years, to turn the trade from his partners, Panton, Leslie & Company, to the Americans on the west of Altamaha, St. Mary's and Charleston. At that time the United States, France and Spain in the Western world were all on the alert against each other. It is now made manifest that at this time he was a colonel of the French army, and drawing pay as such, and also a colonel of the Spanish army, and drawing pay as such!

As might have been expected, this treaty, when promulgated, was received, like that of Holston, by the Georgians with great denunciation, and was followed by great consternation throughout the western borders. The land yielded to McGillivray was claimed of right by the State of Georgia: she had issued numberless grants for it and many of her citizens had their homes there. Washington and his adherents strongly supported the treaty. Jefferson, in writing of it, described it as "drawing a line between the Creek and the State of Georgia in enabling the Government to do as it will do justice against the offending parties."

Through all of these complications McGillivray consistently urged and perfected his plans to educate his people as a military power and accustom them to the habits of civilization. He was preparing himself for the struggle of his life when the storm

should come. In the winter of 1792-93 he went to New Orleans and Pensacola to pacify the authorities in those places in reference to his visit to New York, and the treaties then and there made. At Pensacola in February, 1793, in the fiftieth year of his age, he was stricken with pneumonia and a wasting fever, and in that town on the 17th day of February, his remarkable life came to a close. With Masonic honors he was buried in the garden of William Panton, amid the thrilling emotions and grief of French, Spanish and Indian acquaintances.

By his death the keystone of his arch that he was building dropped away. I have had the mournful interest of standing at his unmarked grave. Standing there, there is a temptation to regret that his sword was "ungirt ere set of sun."

Upon his death the Creeks were non-plussed as sheep that had lost their shepherd. Col. Milfort abandoned the continent and went to Europe; the firm of Panton, Leslie & Company soon dissolved, and later the possessions of France and Spain in that quarter were lost to them forever.

The troublous question between the United States and Georgia upon one side, and the Creeks upon the other, continued for several years. Washington and succeeding Presidents tried in vain for peace without resort to war. In the efforts to adjust these matters the most distinguished citizens of the United States were selected to have conferences concerning, and make adjustments of these disputed questions. John Sevier was persuaded by President Monroe to visit that nation for a conference, and died on that duty at Fort Decatur at Tookabatcha. So likewise the friend of his lifetime, James Robertson at Chickasaw Bluff (now Memphis) in similiar service, gave up his life.

Later, as you all recall, as a last resort, war was declared, and to prosecute that campaign the General and most of the soldiers went from Tennessee. The lifetime dread of McGillivray had been verified; Tennesseans were to become the avengers of Watauga and Cumberland. William Weatherford, quite a young man and a nephew of McGillivray, was the military leader of the Creeks. You will all recall generally the hot and bloody campaign that resulted—Tallahatchie, Emuckfau, Fort Mims and the Horseshoe.—by which the power of the Creek nation was broken, and the danger from them as an enemy perished forever. Award-

ing all bravery and prowess to the American soldiers, weakened as they were by surrounding circumstances, it must not be forgotten that in every battle fought between the Indians and General Jackson, the Indians had inferior numbers, except at the attack upon Fort Mims, which was utterly destroyed by the Indians, and that in the battle at Tallahatchie, in which they were unsuccessful, the Indians charged four times in open field, in regular line of battle, without a parallel in all Indian warfare.

This William Weatherford is the same young man who, soon after the battle of the Horseshoe, at which the glory and power of his nation went down forever, made his way to the tent of General Jackson and upon his name being announced, was asked by the General how he dared to come into his presence after the slaughter of men, women and children at Fort Mims, to which he began his celebrated response by these words: "General Jackson I am not afraid of you because I am the Chief of the Creeks." The interview resulted in the General introducing him to Mrs. Jackson, commending him as the bravest Indian he had ever known.

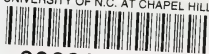
Among the forces of the Indians at the battle of the Horseshoe was a baby nephew of McGillivray, whose mother after the defeat bore him for two nights and a day through the wilderness, and finally into Florida. The translation of his Indian name was "The Packed One," in the Indian tongue "Osceola." In after years he gave the United States much concern, and with whose history you are more or less familiar.

I have spoken of the influence which the Creeks had in the formation of the history of Tennessee. I will mention another matter well known to your Tennessee fathers, the influence of the Creek campaign which absolutely controlled military and civil promotion for many years in this State. Jackson was thereby made President, of undying renown. Governors, up to and including Carroll, judges, officers of militia, and sheriffs rooted their popularity in their experience in the Creek war. Every campaign resounded with the heroism at Emuckfau and the Horseshoe, and no man who had failed to enter that campaign in those days was ever able to open the door to political renown.

I subjoin such personal description of McGillivray as has been handed down to us:

He was a tall, spare man, with quick nervous movements, with long tapering fingers, facile with a pen, large dark eyes, high cheek bones, a firm, well developed chin, a beetling forehead that widened as it extended upward, and a head covered with heavy black hair worn straight back. He had the reputation of great personal sympathy and kindness. He was on the alert ever to relieve distress. He maintained three dwelling houses, at each of which he kept open door, with free entertainment, for all comers, and was said to have amassed a wonderful fortune for those days. Many of his descendants and kinsmen still live in the Southern States. Among the Indians he has always been held in reverential renown and great regret has always been expressed that circumstances compelled him to sleep in the sands of the Seminole. Such was the greatest Talleyrand of American History.

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