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THE SOUTHERN BOUNDARY COMMISSION, THE CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER, AND THE FLORIDA SEMINOLES, 1799

by JACK D. L. HOLMES

WHEN THE PRESSURE OF European affairs mounted during 1795, Spain's Minister of State, the erratic Manuel de Godoy, was persuaded to sign the Treaty of San Lorenzo (Pinckney Treaty) with the United States in an effort to neutralize that power in the approaching struggle with the English. Whatever its utility to Spain in Europe, this treaty marked the beginning of the end for Spain's North American empire by yielding control over the Mississippi and by surrendering the strategic posts north of the thirty-first parallel and east of the Mississippi.

President Washington appointed the experienced surveyor Andrew Ellicott in 1796 as his commissioner to draw the thirty-first parallel in cooperation with a Spanish boundary commission. Appointed as Spanish commissioner was the Mississippi scientist-planter William Dunbar, but he was shortly replaced by Stephen Minor. By May 31, 1798, Governor-General Manuel Gayoso de Lemos had met with the boundary commission near Clarksville and had agreed to the astronomical observations which established the initial point of the thirty-first parallel on "Union Hill." The boundary commission gradually began moving eastward to Mobile, erecting markers along the boundary line. By 1799, the commission had reached the Chattahoochee River where mounting Indian opposition changed markedly the character and progress of the line.

An early indication of Seminole resistance to the advancing tide of white settlers in Florida was furnished by the hostile activities of bands of "bandetti" among the tribe who effectively halted the commission near the confluence of the Flint and Chattahoochee rivers in 1799. The journals, diaries, and correspondence of those connected with the southern frontier at that time clearly indicate the emergence of the Seminoles as a major threat to white settlement.

The boundary commission had already been menaced by the Choctaws after the initial point along the thirty-first parallel had

THE SOUTHERN BOUNDARY COMMISSION 313

been agreed upon in May 1798. The commissioners had suffered unfavorable weather, a lack of money and supplies, and the mounting opposition of the Indians as they wended their way toward a confrontation with the bellicose Lower Creeks.¹

The Choctaws' opposition was allayed somewhat by the get-tough policy of the Spanish Governor-General of Louisiana and West Florida, Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, who warned that regular troops and militia would be used to punish the Indians for any insult to the American or Spanish boundary commission members. The Creeks were not intimidated by such statements. The commissioners encountered no Indian opposition as long as they operated in the domain of the Choctaws, but when they reached the Tombigbee, where the Creek territorial claims began, the story was different.²

Ellicott, realizing the serious nature of the opposition, called for aid from the American commissioner to the Creeks, Benjamin Hawkins. Earlier conferences at Colerain led Ellicott and Hawkins to believe the Creeks would support the boundary commission with warrior escorts as far as Seminole territory at the Chatahoochee River.³ William Panton, the British merchant who controlled trade with the Indians, wrote Governor Gayoso in 1798, "I do not find that the Creeck Nation have given their assent to the running of the Line betwixt Spain & America, neither does it appear that they have given an absolute negative." According to Panton, "they grumble about it from one end of the Nation to the other, but are seized with a kind of Stupor and are undecided what to do, whither to resist or permit it. . . ." ⁴ The following spring Panton wrote, "After some hesitation the Chiefs present agreed to let it [the boundary line] be extended to Chatahoochty but as the Country beyond that belongs to the Seminolia Indians, they recommended an other talk . . . on the Chatahoochty

1. The background and activities of the boundary commission are recounted in Jack D. L. Holmes, *Gayoso: the Life of a Spanish Governor in the Mississippi Valley, 1789-1799* (Baton Rouge, 1965), 231-37.

2. R. S. Cotterill, *The Southern Indians* (Norman, 1954), 125.

3. Negotiations concluded at Colerain, July 29, 1796, are described in the *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, 2 vols. (Washington, 1832-1834), I, 586-616. A brief summary is in Cotterill, *Southern Indians*, 114-16.

4. Panton to Gayoso, July 19, 1798, D. C. Corbitt (ed.-trans.), "Papers Relating to the Georgia-Florida Frontier, 1784-1800," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, XXV (March 1941), 68.

with those tribes, most of whom will fall within the Spanish limits.”⁵

At the Escambia River, the boundary commission split into two parties: one continuing overland to the meeting point near the Chattahoochee, the other going to Pensacola and from there up the Apalachicola River by water to rendezvous with the first party. Ellicott remained at Pensacola unaware of the increased harassment which the land party suffered at the hands of the lurking Seminoles. Ellicott stayed at Pensacola during April, May, and June 1799. In a letter to his wife he described the frontier village:

This country is hot both day and night, and cursed with poverty, and muskittoes; - The inhabitants of this town have to import earth to make their gardens with. What Bartram has described as a Paradise appears to me like purgatory, but somewhat worse! A Principality would not induce me to stay in it one hour longer than I can possibly avoid it. - If it had not been for pride I would certainly have ran away from it six months ago. It might do for a place of Banishment.⁶

Similar comments were expressed in his official report to Secretary of State Timothy Pickering:

This sandy country is intensely hot both night and day and was it not for the sea breezes which commonly set in about 10 o’Clock in the forenoon would be altogether insupportable. - Man, and almost all other animals that inhabit it lose their vigour, and enterprize and become languid: and if they were not constantly goaded by the muskettoes, and flies, into motion would generally become lethargic. - White men are much more affected than black; but even the lat[t]er fall far short of the blacks in our country in manly athletic exercises. And notwithstanding the exertions of the French, British and Spanish governments, the country on the sea coast is yet in a state of infancy, or rather decrepitude. . . . The beauties which Bartram and other travellers have discovered are merely imaginary,-they have no existence in truth.⁷

5. Panton to Gayoso, May 12, 1799, *ibid.*, (June 1941), 162.

6. Catharine Van Cortlandt Mathews, *Andrew Ellicott: His Life and Letters* (New York, 1908), 169-70. Additional biographical information and bibliographical references on Ellicott in Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone (eds.), *Dictionary of American Biography*, 21 vols. (New York, 1928-1936), VI, 89-90.

7. Ellicott to Timothy Pickering, June 18, 1799, Southern Boundary, U.S. and Spain, Andrew Ellicott mss., U.S. National Archives, Record Group 76, 3 vols., III. Cited hereafter as Ellicott, Southern Boundary.

As much as Ellicott disliked Pensacola, he soon wished he was back there under the protection of Commandant Vicente Folch y Juan's garrison. Ellicott left to meet the other commissioners on June 20. In the meantime, the Seminoles had adopted guerilla tactics to harass the commission; at one point armed encounter seemed unavoidable. Evidence of what occurred is contained in the correspondence of Ellicott,⁸ Stephen Minor,⁹ and Benjamin Hawkins.¹⁰

On August 21, Ellicott wrote an account of his activities in the Chattahoochee camp, which goes considerably beyond the information recorded in his journal,¹¹ and sheds much light on the Chattahoochee situation and the Seminole dispute:¹²

"The boundary between the U.S. and his C.M. was extended to this river some weeks ago, and the Astronomical Journal for this point was closed yesterday. The weather has been uncommonly unfavourable. There has not been more than ten clear days at this place since the 24.th of June last. We are constantly deluged with rain: Our tents and bedding have not been completely dry since our arrival here.-

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8. Ellicott's correspondence to Pickering in *ibid.*, I-III; to his wife, in Mathews, *Ellicott, passim*; to Gayoso and other Spanish officers, Archivo General de Indias, Papeles procedentes de Cuba. Cited hereafter as AGI, Cuba, legajo 215-b and other legajos, most of which are cited in Holmes, *Gayoso*, 174-264.
 9. Stephen Minor was born in Green County, Pennsylvania (then part of Virginia), February 8, 1760, and died at Natchez, November 29, 1815. An American volunteer who fought under Captain William Pickles in West Florida, Minor joined the Spanish service under Bernardo de Galvez in 1779 and fought at Manchac, Baton Rouge, Mobile, and Pensacola. After the war he was named adjutant of the Natchez fort where he served until his interim-appointment as governor in 1797. He was the leading Spanish boundary commissioner from the withdrawal of Dunbar in 1798 until 1801. Later named commandant of the Spanish post of Concordia (opposite Natchez), he evacuated that post to the Americans in 1804. He was a leading Mississippi planter and at one time president of the Bank of Mississippi.
 10. Biographical data on Hawkins in Merritt B. Pound, *Benjamin Hawkins - Indian Agent* (Athens, 1951); Johnson and Malone, *Dictionary of American Biography*, VIII, 413; *Letters of Benjamin Hawkins, 1796-1806, Collections of the Georgia Historical Society*, 10 vols. (Savannah, 1840-1916), IX; Benjamin Hawkins, "A Sketch of the Creek Country in 1798 and 1799," *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society* (Savannah, 1848) III, part I.
 11. Andrew Ellicott, *The Journal of Andrew Ellicott* (Chicago, 1962 edition), 213-17.
 12. Ellicott to Pickering, August 21, 1799, Ellicott, *Southern Boundary*, III.

“Our business has been very much delayed by the Indians, we have already held these treaties with them at each of which they affected to be perfectly satisfied but the result has constantly been the loss of our provision, and horses, and a great encrease of the expense ¹³ - In the whole of our business with the Indians I have constantly been directed by our agents, who I am confident have done their duty. - After arriving at this place, and finding the disposition of the Uphales, and Seminoles, I had serious thoughts of relinquishing a further prosecution of the business on account of the expense which would necessarily be incurred, by the delays owing to so great a number of our horses being stolen by the Indians, and the probability of losing the greater part of the remainder between this, and S.¹ Mary’s, which event would effectually put an end to our operations, and reduce us to the necessity of of [*sic*] carrying our apparatus and baggage on our backs to some settlement in Georgia - Upon dropping some hints to the foregoing effect to the Spanish Commissioner ¹⁴ I found him totally adverse to it. - From that circumstance, I saw that the attempt to proceed must be made, and that it may be attended with some degree of certainty, I have this night written to Col. Hawkins to join us immediately at the mouth of Flint River, which is supposed to be about twenty miles below our present encampment: - the survey down the River was finished yesterday, but the return has not yet been made. - The opinion of Col. Hawkins will have great weight with us, and from his influence with the Indians I am not yet without some hopes of success. - I do not apprehend any personal danger from them, nor think any other opposition will be attempted than the stealing of our horses, deranging our instruments, and carrying off every thing from our Camp they can lay their hands on: On each of those particulars [*sic*] we have suffered considerably and had I not have been an instrument maker myself, our business would have terminated some time ago: Under this censure of the Indians I would not be understood to include the Upper Creeks. - They have uniformly behaved well, except the Talesee King, commonly

13. This was no small point with Ellicott. Before 1798 he had already spent \$12,000 above the \$30,000 voted by Congress for the completion of his task. Holmes, *Gayoso*, 177; Pickering to Ellicott, April 26, 1798, Ellicott, *Southern Boundary*, II.

14. Stephen Minor.

called the Tame King,¹⁵ - he has constantly been divided in his opposition, fortunately his influence is but trifling [*sic*], he is a great Medal Chief, and a pensioner of the U.S. - Upon a report being spread, that some of the lower towns, and Seminoles, intended plundering our Camp, and abusing us, a considerable body of the Upper Creeks armed themselves, and almost flew to our assistance - the lower towns, and Seminoles were alarmed, but the protection cost us a large quantity of flour, and beef.-

"The lower towns, and Seminoles, are perhaps a set of the most unprincipled villains in existance [*sic*], while partaking of hospitality, they will secret and carry off every article of value which they can lay their hands on belonging to their entertainer. - Much the greater part of those Indians are on the Spanish side of the line. The Spanish government has no agent with them, nor has any thing been done from that quarter to prevail upon them to listen to reason, or explain the nature of our business, except what has been done in our camp by Maj.^r Minor. The agents of the U.S. on the contrary have been indefatigable in their exertions in favour of both Governments.-

"I shall write to you more fully the first leisure moment I have, and send on the astronomical journal which at this place has been very lengthy.¹⁶ - I am positively almost worn out by the excessive heat of this country, want of sleep, long laborious calculations in which I have no assistance, added to the worst of all plagues, that of Indians;-It was not till after eight o'Clock this evening that I got them all out of my tent, and this is the third letter since that hour which I have written and copied.-At three hours since, which will be near three o'Clock in the morning, I shall observe an immersion of the first satellite of Jupiter if it should be clear-immediately after the observation I shall call up my people, load our canoes, and proceed down to the mouth of Flint River. -

"If the Indians had complied with their stipulations at Colerain, the boundary would have been completed with ease next month."

15. The Tame King's reaction to the boundary commission is mentioned in Cotterill, *Southern Indians*, 126.

16. Ellicott's astronomical and thermometrical observations on the Chatahoochee and Flint, May 9, 1799-September 17, 1799, are in Ellicott, *Journal*, appendix 85-115. Compare with those of Minor, July 30-August 15, 1799, in AGI, Cuba, legajo 2355.

Stephen Minor lacked the experience of Ellicott in scientific and surveying matters, but he was a keen observer of political, economic, and Indian events. He had been sent by Gayoso in 1792 to pave the way for the important conference at Natchez which welded several of the Mississippi tribes into a defensive-offensive alliance, and the following year was widened to include nearly all the southern Indian nations. Minor knew Indian customs, and, since he was known to be a protege of Governor-General Gayoso, he was the recipient of much affection and respect. Minor's report of August 5 forms an interesting compliment to that of Ellicott:¹⁷

"After innumerable, unforeseen difficulties we arrived at this camp on the 25.th of last month, not having been able to leave the work before the 2.^d because of the strong southeastern winds which have blown for a space of two weeks previously. On the 8.th of the present month we arrived almost opposite to the mouth of this river, but we were three days employed in trying to find the true navigable channel, deceived by the large number of branches through which it empties into the Gulf, despite having on board a man whom Don Vicente Folch¹⁸ recommended as a good pilot, although actually he had no more knowledge of the coast than I did. Our old pilot, Mathias, had remained ill in the Hospital of Pensacola.¹⁹ The coast seems clean and free of rocks, low, but very flat. It has three good ports: the Bay of Santa Rosa, that of San Jose, and that of San Andres. Doubling the cape of San Blas, the island of St. George can be seen as well as Dog Island and several other smaller ones which form the Bay of Apalachicola, in which there are a large number of sand bars and

17. Minor to Gayoso, August 5, 1799, *ibid.*, translated from Spanish by the writer.

18. Folch, commandant of Pensacola, was born in Reus, Tarragona (Spain). His campaigns included Africa, Algiers, and Mobile, the last of which he commanded from 1788 to 1792. He reconnoitered Tampa Bay in 1793, and led a small detachment of ships defending the Mississippi River against a possible French invasion the following year. After serving as commandant of San Fernando de las Barrancas (Memphis) during 1795 and 1796, he assumed command of Pensacola, where he remained until 1811. He died at Havana on November 8, 1829. Jack D. L. Holmes, "Three Early Memphis Commandants: Beauregard, Deville Degoutin, and Folch," *Papers of the West Tennessee Historical Society*, XVIII (1964), 14-26.

19. An account of the Pensacola hospital in 1799 is given by Vicente Folch, June 8, 1799, AGI, Cuba, legajo 160-a.

oyster banks when the water is at low tide. Dog Island is located eight miles south of the mouth of this river, situated in North latitude 29 degrees, 3 minutes, 6 seconds.²⁰

"After we entered the Chattahoochee we mistakenly took a branch which led us to a small lake of fresh water, and we wandered up and down three days before finding the principal channel, the navigation of which had always been described to us by those who claimed to know it well, as offering no difficulty whatsoever, which formed a wide bay of sorts until its confluence with the Flint, and in which the tides can be noted even farther above. We have learned that all this is entirely false. The greatest width of the river is no more than 200 yards. The current in general is rapid and ten miles above the entrance the tides are no longer perceptible. It is so twisting that we were unable to ascend under sail for more than one or two miles by the most direct route, and we have seen ourselves forced to ascend by means of a tow-line to the sloop, almost inch by inch. The boat is presently at the Indian village Hicawash, about 50 miles below this camp, although within a few days I hope to find it at the mouth of the Flint River. Nevertheless, in order not to defer the operations on the line, we have rented a number of canoes to carry up the instruments, baggage, etc. The distance from the Gulf to the confluence of the Flint is something over 120 miles via water. The boundary line cuts the river more than thirty miles above the Flint and passes through the middle of an Indian village, the lands on both banks of its western river ascending over swampy lands covered with beautiful cypress groves. Because the land is generally flooded, it is not suitable to cultivation. On ascending, we frequently find high bluffs which are never covered by water, although the pines groves are suitable for various settlements. At Hicahah, 50 miles below this camp, the lands begin to be better. Actually, those along the bank are of excellent quality and ought to be extremely fertile since we have found along them cane-brakes

20. Minor's description of the coast followed the instructions of Gayoso, who wrote, "Remember that You promised me a plan of all the Coast with all the outlets &c I do not relinquish my Claim to this engagement. Send me a Copy as far as Panzacola & in an other sheet will continue the rest as far as St. Mary's. Sound as you go along the Coast & keep a private journal for that part of the voyage." Gayoso to Minor, April 25, 1799, Gayoso mss., Louisiana State University Archives.

equal in size to those of the Mississippi. Unfortunately, they are no more than a narrow band which never extends more than a mile in width, from which point all is pine-barren. Nevertheless, there is a place to form the most beautiful settlements. Now from one side to the other of the river along almost the entire extent of the road to this camp may be found Indian plantations on which may be seen good fields of corn, rice, peas, beans, potatoes, melons, watermelons, cucumber, etc., and most of them have chickens, pigs, and cattle in abundance. Some of them have very good herds with various Negro slaves, indicating to me that they live in reasonable comfort. The river abounds with various delicious fish. All these details convince me that white settlements in these areas would prosper greatly. I am sure that on the eastern bank of the Mississippi there are no better lands on which to raise cattle.

“The weather since we have been here has been constantly overcast and rainy, so that it has been necessary to delay our astronomical observations and it continues thus without promising improvement, so that I fear that we will find ourselves delayed here several days longer, much to our consternation.

“Only with difficulty can Your Excellency form an idea of how disagreeable and unfortunate our situation is. We are camped next to an Indian village, and below it is another one. Our camp, our tents, are continually filled with Indians, who are not only not desirable guests, but who are the most skillful and subtle thieves that I have ever seen. Not only have they robbed us of a large number of our horses, but they have also pillaged many articles from the tents. They take as much as they can carry when they come to see us if we do not watch them carefully. Moreover, we are forced to give daily supplies to a considerable number. Presently we have ninety among us.

“Before our surveyors arrived here, a party of sixty Indians led by a chief called Kuiache or Kuiage, crossed the river with the intention of robbing our people of all they had and forcing us to halt in drawing the line. Those absent had informed them that they went in a direct line to the mouth of the Flint River where it intersected this road in such a manner that they didn't encounter our people, who arrived at this village while the Seminoles were looking for them 30 miles farther down. At their arrival, their chief received them in the most friendly manner

and informed them of the design of the war party which was seeking them, advising them to camp in his vicinity and promising them all the protection possible. Later, the Seminoles from below appeared in our camp in large numbers. They behaved in the most insolent fashion by making the most terrible threats. Twelve chiefs of the nearby villages above and below the camp, who are our friends, conferred among themselves and, being informed that a large number of chiefs and warriors were disposed to oppose our running the line across the river, they said it was absolutely essential to have a conference with these chiefs, not only to settle the business, but also to recover our stolen horses, and they offered to send a message to each one of them to invite them to meet here within twelve days, which they presently did, inviting them to meet with the chiefs of the villages above this camp on the 8.th of the present month. In this interval the principal chiefs and warriors of the hostile villages have maintained conversations constantly against us, determined amongst themselves to rob us of whatever we brought and force us to turn back. These words, their insolent and insubordinate conduct with us, their intention of attacking us, and their daily depredations came to the notice of our friends, the Creeks, from above, who after having consulted with Durouzeaux, our agent or interpreter in the nation, they determined to send to our assistance a party of 80 of their best warriors, led by two of the most resolute and experienced chiefs, completely armed and equipped for war. We have had this news from Mr. Barner, who received it in a letter from Durouzeaux.²¹ Barner is the first subaltern of Colonel Hawkins, superintendent of the Indians, who sent news to us because he was obliged to go to Fort Wilkinson on public business.

“I should observe to your Excellency that in Pea Creek the parties of the surveyors were found by a detachment of Upper Creeks, who had come to relieve the escort, which had accompanied them from Koenekuik.²² But, as the hostile designs and threats of the Seminoles reached camp before their arrival, it was judged desirable that they all remain there for greater security, and it is the reason why they have paid a larger number than

21. James Darouzeaux was described by Hawkins as “an old residenter and interpreter in the nation.” *Letters of Hawkins*, 170.

22. Coenecuh was commonly but erroneously called the Escambia River. Ellicott, *Journal*, 200.

those who agreed at the beginning. All have conducted themselves in a manner that does them much honor. They have served us in everything on all occasions and they have been ready to give, in whatever difficulty, all the assistance which they have been able to, and obeyed the orders that they have been given.

"The foregoing should be sufficient to give your Excellency a complete idea of our business. As soon as our conference with the Seminole chiefs is concluded, I shall give your Excellency a dispatch containing the results with an account of all that happened since our departure from Koenikeuk. These despatches I will send in the sloop *Castor*, together with the despatches from Power to the Intendant.²³ For this effect, I propose to send this boat within a few days.

"Permit me, your Excellency, now to observe that not having received an answer to my letters, I find myself in the most cruel perplexity. It is true that I received from your Excellency a friendly letter in which you assure me you remain satisfied with the measures that I was going to take relative to this expedition and that you would write me officially on the matter through Power, who arrived in Pensacola without a single letter. Whatever it may be, I should represent to your Excellency that I find myself very embarrassed and it is impossible to continue without having on hand the necessary funds for it, and it would be madness, and even dishonorable to turn back under the present circumstances as we have negotiated them. On the first of May I had only 523 *pesos* left after, as the occasion presented, I have had to borrow from our own people in order to pay the necessary costs, promising them to return their money before I left this place. We owe them four months back-pay to September 1.st, and I am unable to find how they will be paid, nor how to conduct this business without money. They are unable to take leave without being paid, and if your Excellency does not provide by sending me the necessary funds before I leave for St. Mary's River, it is more than probable

23. Juan Buenaventura Morales, intendant ad-interim of Louisiana, had a stormy career which involved him in almost continual disputes with governors, officers, and officials of Spanish Louisiana and West Florida. Born in Malaga in 1756, he came to Louisiana as an officer in the tobacco receipts section of the royal treasury. His service was spent at Malaga, Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Mobile, Pensacola, and Havana. A brief account of his career is in his service sheet, February 28, 1796, AGI, Cuba, legajo 565. For his quarrels with Gayoso, see Holmes, *Gayoso*, 200-29.

that the King will have to pay several thousand *pesos* more which could be saved. In addition, I ought not to press forward without receiving instructions on what I ought to do with the horses and other public effects on concluding the operations of the line.

“Mr. Ellicott has agreed with me that we change to the chain the distance from the mouth of the Flint River to that of the St. Mary’s in a direct line eastward, so as to be able to insure it as close as possible in case some difficulty presents itself to impede our making the necessary observations at its origin. Afterwards we will run and assure the line from the head of St. Mary’s to the mouth of the Flint, and finally a third line to correct this one, which operations will produce the true royal dividing line. We understand that the country through which we are to travel is impenetrable because of the thick, extended cypress groves with which it is covered. Part of the year it is almost completely under water, while in the other season you can’t find a teaspoon of water for more than twenty miles. Thus, the intermediate season is the only time that it is passable. From here your Excellency can form an idea of the difficulties which we will have to overcome and of the time which we would necessarily take. The distance is at least two hundred miles. When I consider all these circumstances, I fear sometimes that the expedition will last even more than another year. If, unfortunately, this be the case, I reiterate my petition to your Excellency that I made in Pensacola concerning the sums necessary to conclude it, for your own judgment.

“At this very moment four of our men have come to me requesting leave, which I certainly would have had to extend to them, if I had the money, since I could have rented Negroes here which would have been of equal service and at less price. If, when we finish this matter, I have no funds to pay the people, I shall be forced to subsidize them and pay them.”

Minor also wrote Gayoso an official dispatch on August 14, from the same camp which, he reported, was 386 1/16 miles from the Mississippi. Except for some descriptive passages, it contained little new information:

“In order to supply the camps it has been necessary to buy and rent canoes in which to transport the supplies, instruments, and other effects of the commission. The entrance is found at

more than forty leagues distance from the confluence of this river with the Flint and the line falls at ten leagues further North, passing through the center of an Indian village called Clisteofa. Many Indian villages can be seen along the banks of the river and notwithstanding the numerous cypress bogs and swampy land along both banks, there is no dearth of sites ideal for the establishment of towns. There is no country more suited for the cultivation of all species of livestock, especially cattle. . . .

“It is impossible to appreciate the disappointment, the embarrassment and the uneasiness which we find ourselves in here. We are surrounded and threatened by Indians. Not content with taking, virtually by force, their daily rations, whenever they enter the tents they take away everything they can carry. . . .

“The Seminoles have appeared repeatedly in our camp and behaved with the greatest insolence and insult. The Chiefs of this neighborhood have advised us that other Seminoles are resolved to oppose the continuation of the line, and that it is indispensable to conduct a conference with them as much on this matter as for persuading them to return the horses which they have stolen from us, and accordingly we have invited all the chiefs to a conference on the 8th of this month, and all have answered us that they will meet in this camp on the set day. Nevertheless, it seems that they have agreed among themselves to ravage us completely and force us to retreat. Their hostile plans, their daring and unusual conduct, their threats and their thefts have come to the attention of our friends the Creeks from above; and they, having consulted on the crisis with our interpreter in the nation, have decided to send eighty warriors. This determination of the Creeks was disclosed by a letter which Mr. Bernard, first assistant of Colonel Hawkins, received from Mons. Durouseaux, interpreter of our nation to the Creeks, a copy of which I have already sent you.

“It is essential to advise your excellency that on the 18th of June two chiefs and twelve warriors of the same nation arrived at our camp on Pea Creek to relieve an equal number of those who had accompanied us from Koenekeuch River; but after informing them of the contrary and unfriendly menaces of the Seminoles, they considered it prudent to join the escort for the greatest security for both commissions. I ought to add that they have behaved with the greatest fidelity and zeal in all occasions and

have given us unequivocal proof of their support in fulfilling all they have been asked to do. . . .

“What has been written above was on the 5th of the current month. The same day thirty of the warriors mentioned in Mr. Durouseaux’s letter arrived and the following day the rest came in. On the 8th Kiniachic Panie and other Seminole Chiefs met at the camp and joined at the Plaza in the vicinity with neighboring chiefs and those of the upper villages; but nothing was accomplished in the meeting because of the opposition of Kiniachic and the absence of the Yufalies chiefs. The latter arrived the following day and held another assembly on the same day, but nothing was decided again and we were further frustrated in having Kiniachic attract several followers by his maneuvers. They met again on the 11th. Observing that Kiniachic was using his efforts to disrupt and destroy the expedition, and fearful that he would succeed in his attempt, I sent him word through Mr. Barnard that I was not unaware that he was inciting the other chiefs to oppose the line’s being drawn, and consequently he was resisting the sovereign will of the King of Spain, and as he lived in His Majesty’s territory, and had received from him his medal, he ought to consider himself a Spaniard and our friend; but that his conduct was that of an enemy. For all his Nation had not only agreed that the line be drawn, but they had also agreed to help us in its execution and in sending an escort of two chiefs and twenty warriors for the protection of both commissions, yet only he was found opposed to what the Creek Nation had agreed on with us and with the United States.

“That the Upper Creeks had complied with their obligations according to the Treaty of Colerain; and that some time ago they had returned to their homes - those who had accompanied us from the Koenekueh River. That now it was up to him to hasten to join us with his warriors to the St. Mary’s River, that before his Nation I named him Kiniachic, Chief of Our Escort, and that I wanted no one else to come but him. But that first it was necessary to return to us all the horses that those of his village had stolen from us. That it was hateful for him to give specious reasons to excuse himself and them, for we would not accept any excuses, and that if he refused to do so, I would inform the first governor-general of these provinces of his conduct and all the Spanish commandants that he should never be admitted to any of our posts

in the future, that he would never be given a single gift, that all commerce, all trade between his people and the Spaniards would be suspended, and that finally he would have his medal taken away and his rank as Chief.

"Kiniachic became upset and confused and answered not a word, this discourse having made the impression that was desired, for without opposition or debate whatever, they resolved unanimously to continue the line without opposition or impediment whatever for their part; and they set the following day for informing the commandants of the commission of that decision. The 12th Andrew Ellicott and I attended the conference and the assembled Chiefs told us that, 'They consented that the Line be continued; that they would relieve the escort with another composed half of Seminoles and the rest of Upper Creeks, and they would return to us the horses which they had stolen.' Then addressing Kiniachic with a stern visage, I told him, 'Are you really a man of honor and truth?' He replied that he was. 'Should I have confidence in you that you will fulfill your promises?' He answered yes. 'Then,' I told him, 'come here and give me your hand.' And thus the treaty was concluded. Nevertheless, the same day they stole five horses from us. But as soon as Kiniachic returns to his village, surely he will order them returned to us with the rest.

"I believe that the results of this conference will allay all the fears and difficulties and opposition, not only from Kiniachic, but also from the rest of the chiefs.

"The insolence, hostile disposition and obstinacy of Kiniachic originate in the information spread some short time ago by a white man who passed through the Seminole villages, to the effect that Bowles²⁴ was soon to arrive with two large ships loaded with presents and merchandise for the Creeks.

"You will see in the paragraph from the Philadelphia newspaper of May 7, of which I include a copy in my personal letter today, that this rumor has some basis. Nevertheless it is necessary to confess that it has little truth in it. For if Bowles had left Lon-

24. Biographical data on Bowles in [Benjamin Baynton], *Authentic Memoirs of William Augustus Bowles Esquire* (London, 1791); "The Life of General W. A. Bowles, A Native of America - Born of English Parents, in Frederic County, Maryland, in the Year 1764," *Public Characters for 1802* (London, 1803); Elisha P. Douglass, "The Adventurer Bowles," *William & Mary Quarterly*, 2d Series, VI (1949), 3-23; and Johnson and Malone, *Dictionary of American Biography*, II, 519-20.

don on February 21 to come to this land, he would have appeared already.²⁵

"The only expense occasioned by the conference which we have just concluded with the Seminoles consists in extraordinary rations of flour, meat, whiskey and salt which we supplied them with, amounting on some days to 419, with some small presents of coffee, sugar, rum and wine for the Chiefs and their families."²⁶

Minor's optimism at settling the dispute with the Seminoles was not warranted. The following month in a letter to William Panton, he wrote: "I wish I had the time to acquaint you with all the difficulties and obstructions the Seminoles have been endeavoring to throw in our way, but it would take a volume. Sufficient it is to say that on the 11th they consented to all our demands, and stipulated to furnish a guard for our protection. However, the very same day they stole five horses from us. This is really encouraging and calculated to inspire confidence in their good faith. . . ."²⁷

Subsequent hostilities and increasing menacing activities by the Seminoles in September succeeded in accomplishing the Indians' ambition: to stop the boundary commission at all costs. Not even the good offices of Benjamin Hawkins could protect the commission from Indian attacks. In a letter to Panton, Hawkins described these incidents:

Irwin arrived here the 4th of this month and proceeded on the next day. . . . I returned here early in this month from a visit to the Commissions at the mouth of Flint river. Just after they had finished their observations there and had fixed the day for their movement to the source of St. Marys they

25. The American frontier officers were likewise interested in Bowles' movements. Captain Bartholomew Schaumburgh, commandant of Fort Stoddard on the Tombigbee River, and Major Thomas H. Cushing, commander of American troops on the Mississippi and Alabama rivers, exchanged news on Bowles' whereabouts, supposed plans, and possible effects on the American frontier. Schaumburgh to Cushing, August 31, 1799, Jack D. L. Holmes, (ed.), "Fort Stoddard in 1799: Seven Letters of Captain Bartholomew Schaumburgh," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXVI (Fall-Winter, 1964), 238-39. Cushing to Schaumburgh, February 12, 1800, *ibid.*, 251.
26. Minor to Gayoso, No. 81, August 14, 1799, AGI, Cuba, legajo 2355, translated from Spanish by the writer.
27. Minor to Panton, [September 1799?], portion of a manuscript belonging to Marie de Vergas, from a typescript copy owned by Mrs. C. Grenes Cole, New Orleans.

were visited by twenty mischief makers from Talasee, who created a momentary alarm. This banditti aided by some Semanoles stole fourteen horses and plundered a vessel of property of the value of 3 or 400 dolls. I met them on the night of their arrival in the vicinity of our camp with the armed force under command of Capt. Boyer, rebuked them for their improper conduct and ordered them to return home and to conduct themselves agreeable to the voice of their nation. They for a short time seemed obstinately bent on mischief but determined as soon as they discovered we possessed the means and were determined to punish them. . . .

The next day I sent out some chiefs for the stolen horses and they [-----] the hole and brought a message from this Banditti; that they should return home, that what they had done did not [two words torn from mss] with themselves, that they had been out for, that the greatest part of the mischief done was by Indians in our neighborhood and that they had taken but two horses which they returned.

I advised Mr. Ellicott with his unwieldy accumulation of baggage to go round by water, and for Major Minor to go through with their escort by land. When they shall have ascertained the source of St. Marys and completed their observations there, they can with a few hands under the direction of a surveyor and guarded by Indians trace out this point of the boundary and put up the mounds.²⁸

Some few days after this on our march to St. Marys we were visited by the Semanoles who stole some horses from us and altho' they returned the most of them this separation [sic] determined me to call on the chief of the lower towns for fifty warriors arrived. And I met the chief attending with the Indians of the escort for this force, as soon as he delivered my message to the Cowetahs and Cusetahs²⁹ they ordered out their warriors and added 150 to the requisition and sent them to receive such orders as I might give.

The escort proceeded and has by this arrived in safety . . . [words torn] . . . returned a few days past, and brought with them ten of the stolen horses, and report that they alarmed the mischief makers very much.

I have now the great towns of this [Nation?] convened at Cupituh [Coweta?], this little affair has agitated the whole

28. In most cases, the boundary commission used mounds of earth, surmounted by wooden markers, with which to indicate the thirty-first parallel, but near Mobile they erected a stone marker still in existence today. Jack C. Gallalee, "Andrew Ellicott and the Ellicott Stone," *The Alabama Review*, XVIII (April 1965), 92-105.

29. The towns of Coweta and Cusseta are listed as two of the twelve mother towns of the Lower Creeks in *Letters of Hawkins*, 171.

THE SOUTHERN BOUNDARY COMMISSION 329

nation and roused the well-disposed into action and I expect much good will result from it. . . .³⁰

In a later report to the Secretary of War, Hawkins wrote:

. . . the officers of his Catholic Majesty have no just cause of complaint against the Creek nation, and have received substantial and repeated proofs of a disposition here friendly and determined to carry their national engagements into effect. On the 17 September, 1799, a banditti from Talassee, in this agency of 21 only, went to the Simanolees and there, conjointly with the Simanolees, insulted the Commandants of Spain and the United States, at their encampment on the Spanish side of the Line of Limits in East Florida near the confluence of Flint and Chattahoochee. I called on the chief, being myself a witness to the fact, to punish immediately the leader and his associates in an exemplary manner; they sentenced the leader to be roped and whiped, his property destroyed, and his associates whiped; and this sentence was carried into effect on him and three of his associates by 72 warriors, under directions of their great chief, and in presence of Mr. Cornell, one of my assistants and interpreters. The whole was reported to the Commissioners, to the Secretary of War, and to the Governor of Pensacola, with such assurances as were proper on my part.³¹

Andrew Ellicott gives a brief description of the events which befell the boundary commission during September,³² but he omits considerable information which was included in his rather lengthy report to the Secretary of State:

"It is with the most sensible mortification I have ever yet experienced that I have to inform you of our failure in part of our business owing to the Hostile disposition of the Indians.- By what secret spring this people has been brought forward I shall not undertake to determine;-but I give you as correct a statement of facts and all the information I received antecedent to our retreat from our Camp near the Mouth Flint River, as I am able.

"The morning after the arrival of Co.¹ Hawkins at Pensacola we waited upon Gov.^r Folch who in very short time informed us

30. Hawkins to Panton, October 14, 1799, Panton-Forbes Papers, Special Collections, Mobile Public Library.

31. Hawkins to Secretary of War, May 8, 1802, in *Letters of Hawkins*, 417.

32. Ellicott, *Journal*, 217-33.

that he had to give audience to two Seminole indians. - Upon this we withdrew to Major Minors quarters which were within the Governors inclosure and in a few minutes saw two Indians go into the Gov.^r ⁸ house. Major Minor followed and heard their conversation with the Governor.

"In less than an hour Minor joined us and observed they gave strong talk in opposition to the running of the line and that they were Seminoles. The subject then passed over. - On our arrival at the head of Pensacola Bay which was about 8 o'clock in the evening Co.¹ Hawkins went on shore to meet the Mad Dog Chief ³³ who we were informed had just arrived. The Mad Dog informed the Co.¹ that two indians had just gone to the Tallesees with bad talks from the Governor. - Co.¹ Hawkins told him it was impossible: - that the two Indians he alluded to were Seminoles, and had gone on to their nation. - An Indian standing by observed that the Mad Dog was right that he himself saw the two Indians at Pensacola and conversed with them and that they were Tallesees.

"The Mad Dog wanted immediately to come on board and give Major Minor and myself the information but Col. Hawkins put him off till the next morning when he came on board our vessel and gave each of us the information and proposed sending a runner after them, but as Major Minor still continued in the opinion that the Mad Dog was mistaken and that the two indians were actually Seminoles no more notice was taken of it at that time. Of our Treaty with the Indians at Millers place on Coe, ne, cuh and the assemblage of the Tallesees at Pensacola last June I have allready pericularly [*sic*] informed you - by the assemblage of the Indians at Pensacola we were detained at that place till the 24.th of June when we proceeded to the Bar, but could not cross it on account of head winds till the 2.nd of July. - On the 4.th about Noon we arrived in St. George's Sound but could not find the navigable mouth of the River till the 13.th when we proceeded up with a fair wind about 20 miles. We then warped for three days when I left the vessel and proceeded up the river in a small canoe with the instruments and arrived at camp on the 25.th

"Mr. Timothy Bernard, one of our Deputy agents arrived five days before me. - We found the work would be suspended till

33. On the activities of Mad Dog, see Cotterill, *Southern Indians*, 106, 117, 129, 137-38.

the Chiefs could have a meeting and an explanation from us respecting the nature of our business. - This meeting took place the beginning of August and the Indians departed apparently well satisfied. - But previous to our arrival they assembled in considerable numbers to stop and plunder our surveyor, but his movement was so rapid that he had arrived at the river and was well posted before their main body had crossed and their skies were looking out too low. - Their depredations upon our horses began at Co, e, ne, cuh and continued till our final retreat.- from this circumstance added to their uniform stealing and insolence I frequently doubted their sincerity, and as frequently communicated those doubts to our agent M.^f Bernard who on his part had none. - Before I left that camp to proceed to the mouth of Flint River M.^f Burgess lately one of our depty. agents and interpreters, informed me confidentially that we should certainly be plundered on our way to S.^t Mary's, and requested me to write to Co.¹ Hawkins to join us immediately as his influence would effect our safety if any man could do it, this I did on the 22.nd of August. - On the 23.rd Major Minor and myself proceeded down to the mouth of Flint River. - A few days after we had been encamped Major Minor dismissed his Military escort agreeably to instructions which he received from the late Gov.^r Gayoso ³⁴ as early as the 14.th of May last, he also discharged almost the whole of his Labourers, and sent away part of the baggage of their department, and the only valuable part of their apparatus. ³⁵ - As soon as this was done he became very impatient to set out for S.^t Mary's. - In one of our conversations upon that subject I told him the work must be done before we left that place, that the Geographical position of the mouth of Flint River could not be accurately determined before the morning of the 14.th of that month (September) supposing the weather to be very favourable and more over that I was desirous of seeing Co.¹ Hawkins before I ventured upon a journey the success of which was in my opinion at best but doubtful, and further that M.^f

34. Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, former governor for the Natchez District (1789-1797), was governor-general of Louisiana and West Florida from August 1797, until his sudden death from yellow fever on July 18, 1799. See Holmes, *Gayoso*; and Jack D. L. Holmes, "Gallegos notables en la Luisiana," *Cuadernos de Estudios Gallegos* (Spain), XIX, No. 57 (1964), 103-10.

35. Gayoso to Minor, April 25, 1799, Gayoso mss., Louisiana State University Archives.

Anderson had reported to me that our remaining number of horses were not sufficient supposing no more to be stolen to transport baggage, stores and apparatus to S.¹ Mary's. - but that he was differently situated at present. - His Military escort dismissed, almost the whole of his labourers discharged, part of the baggage and the valuable part of their apparatus sent away, which was not the case with me. - To which he answered, 'I suppose you will be angry, but I must now tell you those men of yours are no longer necessary.' - I replied that my situation from some circumstances were embarrassing, that M.^r Gillespie ³⁶ was back on the correction if we went on before his arrival he and his party might be plundered and abused, that they would have no place to retreat to, nearer than Pensacola, or S.¹ Mary's. ³⁷ - That some money was wanting, for which I had sent to Pensacola. - and further that I had the most valuable apparatus upon the continent to account for ³⁸ and had no idea of trusting it under present apperances [*sic*] to the mercy of the indians.

"That I was similar to a passed pawn in the game of chess, and conceived it prudent to be supported by a piece before I made a move, and if Co.¹ Hawkins on his arrival, should think apperances favourable, I would immediately proceed. - About this time M.^r Burgess paid us a visit. - After dinner he took me into the observatory and asked me this question, 'Did you write to Co.¹ Hawkins while at the upper camp?' to which I answered in the affirmative. 'You have says he not written as pointedly as necessary or he would have been here before this time, you must write again immediately, and procure support which may be had from the Cowetas, and if this is not done you will positively be plundered on your way to S.¹ Mary's. You may think me a fool, but mark the end.' - I told him that I could add nothing to the letter which I had written to Co.¹ Hawkins, and if he was well, I was confident he would be with us in a few days, - on the 14th he arrived. - He was of the opinion that every thing was in a good train, and that we might go on with

36. David Gillespie was surveyor pro-tempore for the United States boundary commission and later chief surveyor, replacing Thomas Freeman. Ellicott to Gayoso, November 24, 1798, AGI, Cuba, legajo 215-a.

37. Ellicott probably meant St. Marks instead of St. Marys.

38. Ellicott described the equipment used in his part of the observations in Ellicott, Southern Boundary, III; and Ellicott, *Journal*, Appendix, 44-48.

safety. - I then yielded up my opinion, arranged the *Astronomical Journal*,³⁹ that it might be understood if any accident should happen to myself, and it be preserved, and began to make the necessary preparation to move on the 20th - On the 17th early in the morning we received a message from Indian Willy a man of property who lives on the Chat, ta, ho, cha several miles above its junction with Flint River to the following effect.- 'Gentlemen I have sent my Negro to inform you, that about 20 Indians lay near my place last night they intend mischief.- many more are behind, they call themselves Choctaws be on your guard and remember that I have nothing to do with it.- my negro goes at midnight.' Altho' this information was not slighted it was not pointedly attended to.- About 2 o'clock in the afternoon some of our Indian escort were sent over the river to make discoveries.- They returned in two or three hours without making any, some were satisfied but I was not, the information from Burgess still kept possession of my mind.- About sundown we received intelligence that a number of strange Indians had just crossed the river;-a few minutes after one of our Indians reported that he had met a number of strangers who refused either to speak to or shake hands with him. - My escort was immediately called to arms, and my son⁴⁰ and Labourers who were armed with rifles joined them. - The Big Lieutenant who commanded our Indian escort, was directed to go and halt the strangers, and demand their Business and give us immediate information.

"They halted a short time, and declared their object was to plunder the camp, scatter the people, and let them go home what way they pleased.

"They then proceeded to within about 200 yards of our camp where they were again halted by our Indian escort and interpreter, the evil disposed were then joined by some others, particularly by the long warrior and some of his people, in whose neighbourhood we lived, and who we before supposed to be well inclined.- Untill that instant we but little dreaded a direct attack, our

39. Ellicott's *Astronomical Journal* for the Chattahoochee is in Ellicott, *Journal*, 89-115; cf. Minor's observations made with the short sector, July 30-August 15, 1799, AGI, Cuba, legajo 2355.

40. Andrew A. Ellicott, the eldest son, was seventeen when he accompanied his father on the boundary expedition. Mathews, *Ellicott*, 234-35.

situation now became serious. - A variety of opinions were brought forward. Major Minor and myself thought a compromise the most prudent and safest measure, for if we should beat them for the present, they could reinforce and renew the attack and by taking the remainder of our horses, render our retreat impracticable, in short that the commencement of hostilities would occasion the destruction of all our party. - At that instant we received information that the whole number of Indians armed, and determined to plunder our Camp, did not exceed thirty, my armed party, including Labourers, amounted to at least 40.- Co.¹ Hawkins then requested Cap.^m Bowyar to arrange his men in the best manner he could, and march them near the Hostile indians this was done with uncommon expedition and the enemy found a party much stronger than themselves directly between them and our Camp. - and at about 20 yards distance, Co.¹ Hawkins stepped forward, and addressed them.- They persisted in plundering the Camp, and declared if we let them do it quietly, they would shed no blood, but that vengeance should follow resistance.

“The Co.’ told them we would trust to that, and if any one of their party should attempt to remove any article from the Camp, he should instantly be put to death, and that if the party attempted to march one inch further, it would be instantly fired upon.- They then became more mild, and at length agreed to remain quiet till the next morning when they would hold a Talk; but that they were determined to carry their plan of Plunder into effect, which they would be able to accomplish, as their strength was constantly increasing. - Upon the assurance of their remaining quiet till the next morning our armed party marched back and guarded the Camp till next morning. - About 3 o’clock in the afternoon of the arrival of the Indians, Major Minors riding horse, with another very valuable one, were stolen from within two hundred Yards of the Camp upon which I immediately ordered all the horses belonging to our party, to be brought up and tied in the Camp, when we found 8 or 10 already missing.- The Spanish horses were also collected, and put in a pen made for that purpose near to the Spanish side of the Camp.- The Hostile indians kept moving about in small parties the whole night about gun shot from our tents.

“They threw down the contractors ⁴¹ Bullock-Pen and let his cattle out and opened the Pen which contained the Spanish horses, and haltered four of them, but were drove away with two only. - Three of my horses broke loose, and ran without the camp, and tho every exertion was made to bring them back, the indians mounted them, and rode them off. - A small party collected the contractors cattle, and secured them a second time.- In this manner the night was spent.- From suspicion that we should meet with some difficulties at that place, I detained a small Schooner, which was in the employ of our Commissary M.^r Anderson, it lay at our landing, about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from our Camp. - The U.S. Schooner was too large to ascend the river, and I had ordered it to Appalachy a few days before, and wait for further orders.- The loading of the principal part of the small schooner had been taken to our Camp several days previous to the alarm.- The fate of the Schooner we did not learn till early in the morning of the 18th when we were informed that it had been plundered about midnight, that the sails were cut to pieces, and the running rigging carried away, upon receiving this information my son, with two of the labourers, armed with their rifles, went to repossess the Schooner, - on their way, they saw a small party of armed Indians who fled at their approach.- As they drew near to the vessel they discovered three armed Indians preparing to go on board the Schooner, no doubt to complete the work they had begun in the night.- Seeing their numbers were equal our party sprung forward with a whoop in the indian manner.- At which the Indians fled with precipitation into the woods.- Our people then repossessed the vessel, and upon examination, found a keg of powder, about 20 lbs. lead which had been overlooked.- The Indians stripped the people on board of all their cloathing, even the handkerchiefs from their heads, and necks, with all their bedding.- The public property taken was of no great value, 12 or 15 Guns, which wanted repairing, a Case of Claret, a small quantity of Brandy, and Ginn, a chest of axes, and other tools, with a few blanketts are the principal articles.- We waited impatiently till 9 o'clock A.M.

41. The American contractor for the boundary commission was Charles Anderson; for the Spaniards, George Cochran. An interesting contract for supplying the commission between Cochran and Gayoso (similar to that of Anderson's), was dated New Orleans, June 1, 1798, AGI, Cuba, legajo 2365.

of the 18th but heard nothing of any Indians coming to the conference. - We then called upon the Big Lieutenant, who has already been mentioned, and asked his opinion of our present situation; he answered 'it is far from being Good.- The Indians on the river about us have taken the Talks of the hostile Tallesees, that he had no dependence but upon his own, and our people with them he thought he could take us safely to St. Marks.'- Upon receiving this information Major Minor, and myself, thought it best to retreat.- It was agreed that he should proceed by land to Colerain, if not followed for the two first days by the Indians. - but in case he was to proceed to S.^t Mark's and wait for a vessel to carry him, and his party to S.^t Mary's.- The vessel he had hitherto used, was discharged, I believe by order of the late Gov.^f Gayoso.

"To render his journey as safe, as possible, I sent Captain Bowyer with all my escort, a corporal and three Privates excepted, with him.- I went on board the small schooner, in which I put the apparatus with the principal part of the baggage of our party; and a small quantity of provisions, determined to force my way down the river if opposed. I had the corporal and three already mentioned with my son, and seven or eight expert riflemen.- The Pack-horses moved at 4 o'Clock P.M. of the 18th and the Schooner was under weigh at 5 o'Clock the same afternoon, I had eight oars, and 15 armed men but my chief dependence was on those already mentioned. Immediately after we left the shore, it began to rain, but we soon made such a covering with our tents, the cut sails, and some oil cloths, that the people and their arms were kept dry, we proceeded down the River till after dark when we stopped for fear of injuring the vessel against logs. - The next next [*sic*] morning before day, altho' it was raining, the moon gave us so much light as to enable us to proceed, and about 11 o'clock in the forenoon of the 19th we passed the lowest indian village on the river. The rain continued without intermission, and so heavy, that it would have been impossible for the Indians to attack us with success in open canoes, and they have no other.

"It did not cease raining till we came near S.^t George's Sound on the 21st where we stopped to repair the sails, and rigging of the vessel.- Before I left camp, I wrote a letter to

M.^f Gillespie to be forwarded to him by Co.¹ Hawkins, who proposed to remain on Flint River a few days and endeavour to give a more favourable turn to the disposition of the Indians.- I likewise sent a message to the people on board the U.S. Schooner to meet me with all possible expedition in S.¹ George's Sound.- Thus ended this disagreeable business alarming because we had Savages to deal with. - It was to my party, (who a few days before we had been declared useless), that both camps were indebted for their safety, and public and private property to a considerable amount, together with a great number of valuable papers, and important documents, were preserved. - The Spanish party was too small to make even the shew of resistance, those few however behaved with great firmness, to which I must add that it is my opinion that the Spanish Commissioner, and his party are as much in the dark respecting the conduct of the indians, as we were, and if any thing improper has been done by other officers of his Catholic Majesty, it has been kept secret from them.

"There may perhaps be some light thrown upon the subject by the following facts. - *First* in May last Major Minor received instructions from Gov.^f Gayoso to dismiss his escort on his arrival at the Chat, ta, ho, cha, and return himself to Pensacola, and wait there til he could be furnished with a passport from the Bahama Islands, that he might be enabled to go with safety round Florida Point, to S.¹ Mary's by water.- That their surveyor should go by land, and carry on an east line till it intersected the Appalachy, after which he should proceed on to the source of S.¹ Mary's. After that point was determined, the work might be considered as complete. - These instructions were shewn separately to Co.¹ Hawkins, and myself, What the Col.^o comments on them were I know not.- Upon the Majors asking my opinion, I answered nearly as follows.- 'I do not wonder at Gov.^f Gayosos giving those instructions, I only wonder how he came to think of them!- That delay appeared yet to be in contemplation. - which was evident by his the Majors being directed to return to Pensacola and wait for a Bahama passport, and the Gov.^f appeared contented with having an East line carried on till it intersected the Appalachy, a piece of business wholly inconnected [*sic*] with ours, and embracing an absurdity, because

in all probability an east line would pass a number of miles north of the source of the Appalachy.' - The Major was not pleased with the instructions, and wrote to Gov.^r Gayoso on the subject, who dispensed with that part relative to his returning to Pensacola to wait for a passport and the Surveyor carrying on the East line. - his directions relative to the Military escort were certainly improper, it was a subject which by the Treaty ⁴² rested with the Commissioners. - *Secondly* the two Indians which Gov.^r Folch informed Co.^l Hawkins and myself were Seminoles, were two Tallassees, and brothers in law to his interpreter Antonio.- *Thirdly* Instead of going to the Seminoles they returned home to their own town.- *Fourthly* Immediately after their return the Tallesee King, with about 200 of his people proceeded to Pensacola, and menaced our surveyor and his party. Of their proceedings at Pensacola, I have already given you an account.- *Fifthly* the Party who came down to plunder us were a part of those who came to Pensacola with the Tallesee King. *Sixthly* Gov. Folch last June promised Co.^l Hawkins and myself, that he would send agents among the Indians, particularly to the Seminoles to quiet their minds.-this he has not done! *Seventhly* The information given to Mr. Seagrove ⁴³ by the Indians relative to the design of the U.S. and Spain upon their persons, and lands, which they say they had from the Commandant at S.^t Marks, ⁴⁴ does not appear to be true so far as it respects that officer; but is certainly so with regard to the Interpreter.- This I have from M.^r Lawrence, one of M.^r Panton's clerks, who was present at the time of the conference.-

42. A reference to the Treaty of San Lorenzo (Pinckney's Treaty) of 1795.

43. Seagrove was American agent to the Creeks from 1791. Daniel M. Smith, "James Seagrove and the Mission to Tuckaubatchee, 1793," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, XLIV (March 1960), 41-55.

44. Commandant of St. Marks was Thomas Antonius Ignatius Guillelms Portell, born in Gerona, Cataluna (Spain) on February 12, 1739. He fought during the African campaigns of Oran and Algiers and in the siege of Gibraltar before coming to America in 1780. Named commandant of New Madrid in 1791, he was transferred in 1796 to the command of St. Marks. His surrender of the fort to Bowles on May 19, 1800, received newspaper publicity, an angry retort by Portell, and his subsequent court-martial and dismissal from the army. Jack D. L. Holmes, ed., *Documentos ineditos para la historia de la Luisiana, 1792-1810* (Madrid, 1963), 111, fn; A. P. Whitaker, *The Mississippi Question, 1795-1803*. . . . (New York, 1934), 169-70; *South-Carolina State Gazette and Timothy's Daily Advertiser*, March 11, 1800.

Eighthly had the officers of his Catholic Majesty been as careful in having agents with the indians to cooperate with ours, in keeping up a good understanding, and allaying their fears, and suspicions.-our business would have been completely successful. ⁴⁵

- *Ninthly* The injudicious circulation of the reports respecting the escape of M.^r Bowles, and his design of coming into this country, has had a panicious [pernicious?] effect.- *Tenthly* The Indians complain that the Spaniards are already marking out their land near Pensacola, and when they remonstrated against it, they received for answer.- 'You have already been told that when the line was run, the land on the south side of it would belong to Spain, and that on the other side of it to the U.S.'- This is indian information and tho it may be false in the first instance, the effect is equally bad with those who now believe it.

"The foregoing statement of facts was drawn up at the mouth of the Chattaho, cha, whilst some of my people were repairing the rigging of the vessel; at the moment I closed the last paragraph, two letters were put into my hands, which appeared of considerable importance, and induced me to write

"Particularly to Co.^l Hawkins, a copy of the letter is inclosed and marked A which likewise incloses copies of the letters alluded to, with a copy of a letter of mine to Gov.^r Folch.

"In consequence of the arrival of M.^r Bowles in the Nation, I am of the opinion that no more can be done at present in completing the boundary, than to discover the source of the S.^t Mary's and determine its Latitude, and Longitude correctly, the position of the mouth of Flint River being already fixed, and at some future day, those points may be joined.

"My Astronomical Journal at our two last points is very lengthy or I should have sent on a copy of it.- I have taken a survey of the Chat, ta, ho, che, from the 31st Degree of North Latitude down to the mouth of Flint river the Latitude of which is 30° 42' 42.8" so that part of the Southern Boundary of the U.S. extends at least 17' 17.2" South of 31 Degree of N. Latitude.

45. Ellicott is in error. Gayoso ordered the frontier officers to do all they could to allay Indian fears over the boundary commission and even authorized the use of force against them if necessary to protect Spain's commitments to the United States on the southern frontier. Gayoso to Minor, June 6, 1798, and Gayoso to Prince of Peace (Manuel Godoy), No. 22, June 6, 1798, Archivo Historico Nacional Madrid, Spain, Seccion de Estado, legajo 3900.

"I have just learned with great satisfaction that M.^r Gillespie has completed the correction between the Chatta, ho, cha and the Co, e, ne, cuh and joined the party on the way to S.^t Mary's.- Several more Horses have been taken.

"My passage from the mouth of Chatta,ho,cha to this place was truly disagreeable, being part of the time at sea, in an open boat, and detained 13 days by a violent easterly wind on dry Islands of sand, which was blown about like snow filled our Blanketts, and fell in great quantities in what little victuals we had, which for seven days was dry bread and coffee except what few fish were caught.- On my arrival at this place which was on the morning of the 7.th- I was informed that the Indians had taken my riding horses, which I directed to be sent here that I might still have it in my power to proceed thro' the country by the way of S.^t Augustine if it should appear the most eligible.- I have now no alternative left.- One of the horses is a remarkable fine one and perhaps not inferior to any one in the two Floridas.

"The Southern Creeks, commonly called Seminoles, with the Tallesees and some individuals in the Upper Towns are certainly hostile towards the U.S. and nothing but the firm language of our Executive will prevent a war with them if encouraged by M.^r Bowles. - But I am far from being certain what part he will act.

"I know he dreads a war with our Country, but his ambition may get the better of his prudence, and if that should be the case, many of the young men who are under no controul from their Chiefs, and panting for war names will certainly join him.- Neither have I any faith in their being restrained by the officers of his Catholic Majesty agreeably to Treaty.

"They have not been educated in the habits of candour and plainness like our Hawkins, whose indefatigable exertions have been equally directed to the Benefit of both Nations.- Many of the most sensible and best informed of the Chiefs, look upon the loss of their Country as inevitable, and that it will be brought about by the bad conduct of their young men, who equally abhor restraint and despise advice, such people are only brought to reflection by being beaten - and as we have men enough underpay at present, it might probably be done now, and at a less expence than at any future period.

"This instant 8 o'clock in the evening of the 8th two of my men who were three miles up the river, at M.^r Pantons store, with his people, arrived being driven away by the Indians, the valuable property had been previously brought in to the Fort.- We prepared to defend the vessel.

"The Indians began the war whoops in the morning and we frequently bear it at this time.- I am not certain whether it is the Spaniards or our party or both that are the objects of their dislike. I have five Cowetas with me, who continue firm, they conceive themselves in much danger.

"At 9 o'Clock a piece of artillery was discharged at an indian. - I have only to add that we have been politely received and hospitably treated by the commandant of this Fort, whose protection if necessary I am sure we may rely on. . . .

"P.S. Oc.^{br} 12.th The Indians have been quiet for two days and propose a conference in a day or two." ⁴⁶

The experiences of Ellicott, Minor, and the members of the boundary commission are worthy of noting. Within a year Bowles would strike at Fort San Marcos and, with his Seminole allies, capture it. Although a Spanish expedition would be able to recapture the post and take Bowles prisoner, the Seminoles had been aroused. ⁴⁷ The rapidly growing Seminole hostility toward white men, particularly Americans, was generated by their reaction to the joint boundary commission at the Chattahoochee in 1799.

46. Ellicott to Secretary of State, October 9, 1799, original and duplicate in Ellicott, *Southern Boundary*, III.

47. Contemporary newspapers were filled with stories about Bowles and the Seminoles. See the *Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser*, January 21, 1800; *The Augusta Chronicle and Gazette of the State*, January 25, 1800; *Savannah Georgia Gazette*, May 29, 1800. Governor Enrique White of East Florida wrote of Bowles' arrival to Panton, November 20, 1799, Panton-Forbes Papers, Special Collections, Mobile Public Library; and Commander-in-chief-of-Engineers Joaquin de la Torre proposed firm defenses against Bowles, [1800], AGI, Cuba, legajo 1659. In all these accounts, the role of the Seminoles is clearly seen.