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CAPTAIN YOUNG'S SKETCH MAP, 1818

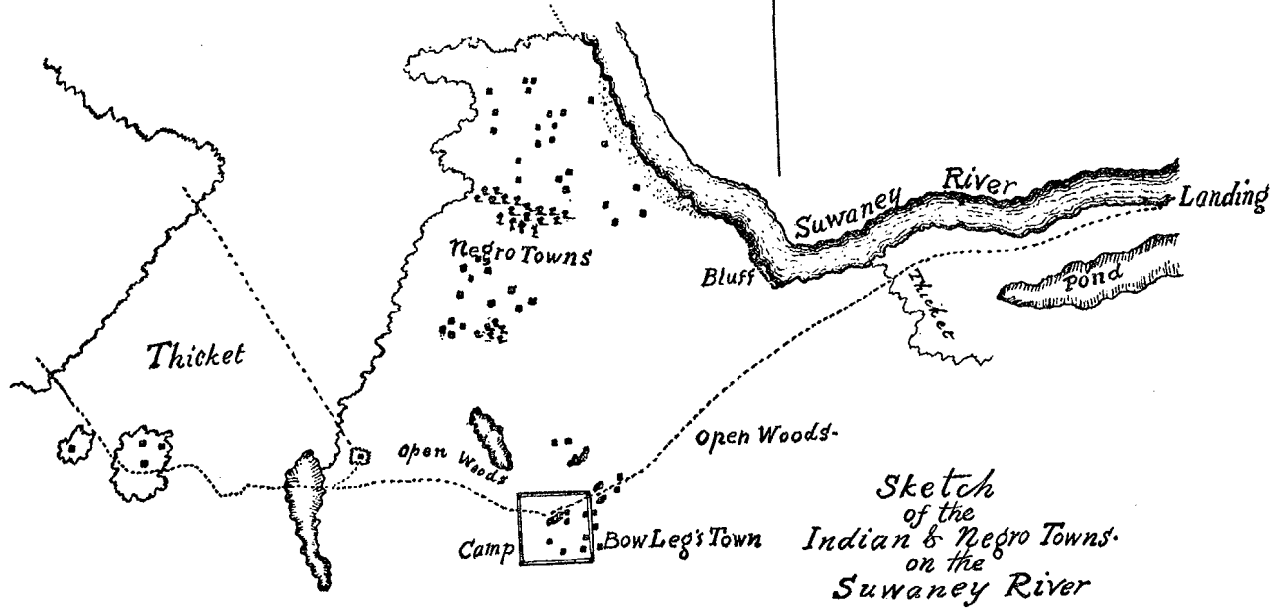
by ALAN K. CRAIG * AND CHRISTOPHER S. PEEBLES **

RECENTLY A MANUSCRIPT MAP entitled "Sketch of the Indian and Negro Towns on the Suwaney River" was found during a search of the National Archives and Records Service documents section by A. P. Muntz, chief of the cartographic branch.¹ This map (RG77:L 247-94) is included in a selection of signed and dated maps filed in the records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers² pertaining to military activities in northern Florida in the vicinity of the Suwannee River. Almost all are dated 1839, and were rendered by officers of the "topographical engineers" contingent assigned to military forces commanded by Brigadier General Zachary Taylor in Florida during the Second Seminole War. It is believed that this sketch map was made by Captain Hugh Young, an assistant topographical engineer. Young, a Tennessean, was a regular officer in what was known in the early part of the nineteenth century as the Corps of Topographical Engineers.³ At that time engineers were the most prestigious branch of the military and enjoyed special privileges.⁴ In 1818, Captain Young, General Andrew Jackson's adjutant-general prepared a special report entitled "A Topographical Memoir on

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1. The authors are indebted to A. P. Muntz, Chief, Cartographic Branch, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, for his cooperation with the request for information on early maps of northern Florida.
2. Record Group 77.
3. According to a brief notation in Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, 2 vols. (Washington, 1903; reprinted Urbana, 1965), I, 1067, Young served from February 19, 1817, until his death, January 3, 1822. This is in error, however, since there is correspondence from Young in the National Archives and Records Service, Washington, after this date. In a letter, written in 1820 to Adjutant General Daniel Parker, Young notes that he had served in the army for three years but that he had never received a regular appointment or commission.
4. It was during this early period that the corps motto *Essayons* was adopted and incorporated into the design of special uniform buttons. These distinctive buttons can still be worn and are used by a few officers of the corps who are aware of this tradition.



Sketch
of the
Indian & Negro Towns.
on the
Suwaney River

Scale of two inches to a mile.

East and West Florida with Itineraries." This was turned over to the general, who was then encamped at Fort Gadsden. On May 5, 1818, Jackson transmitted Young's report and sketches to Secretary of War John C. Calhoun in Washington, and eventually they were filed with the official military archives. This document has been analyzed by Dr. Mark F. Boyd, and it was published with his notes in earlier issues of the *Florida Historical Quarterly*.⁵

Captain Young notes in his memoir that a map accompanies his report but this document has never been located. It is evident from Young's description that he is not referring to the sketch map illustrated, but rather to a generalized small-scale map showing the principal places mentioned in his memoir. From that portion of his report (Part II, *Itineraries*) dealing with terrain features encountered in Jackson's deployment of his forces along the west bank of the Suwannee River, it would appear that this sketch map illustrates the relationships described in the following passage from Young's memoirs:

Cross path in the seventeenth mile-five and a half miles to Sahwanee Towns through a country a little rolling with a large mixture of oak for three miles when the path enters the thicket bounding the towns on the N.W.-Thence to the first cabin is half a mile from which to Bow-leg's Town where the camp was established is one mile and three-quarters.⁶

Since the two British agents, Robert Ambrister and Alexander Arbuthnot, were both involved in incidents that occurred in this general locale, the sketch map may have been prepared to help government officials visualize the geography of the scene at the time of their military courts martial that had been convened in St. Marks by Jackson. Otherwise, the map shows the location of a victorious, if somewhat minor skirmish between Andrew Jackson's Tennessee militia force and the Seminole Indians and their Negro allies.

Although the sketch map described here was filed with other

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5. An introduction to the *Memoir* was read in part before the Tallahassee Historical Society by Mark F. Boyd on March 8, 1934. Mark F. Boyd and Gerald M. Ponton (eds. and annotators), "A Topographical Memoir on East and West Florida with Itineraries of General Jackson's Army 1818." By Captain Hugh Young, *Corps of Topographical Engineers U.S.A., Florida Historical Quarterly*, XIII, Part I (July 1934), 16-50; Part II (October 1934), 82-104; Part III (January 1935), 124-64.
6. *Ibid.* Part III, 148-49.

maps associated with the Second Seminole War, it is believed that it does not belong to that period of Florida history. A careful examination by Muntz of the map paper discloses a watermark dated 1810, so it is obvious the paper was utilized after that date.⁷ Correspondence in Florida's territorial papers indicates that a few years later surveyors were chronically complaining about the lack of good quality mapping paper.⁸ Preserving paper stock seven or eight years does not seem improbable, but a thirty-year delay between manufacture and use does seem unlikely if the alternative assumption is made that it was drawn *ca.* 1839.

In any event, the map almost exactly conforms to the quoted passage by Young, i.e., a "thicket" is shown to the northwest of Bowleg's Town, and it is indeed one-half mile along the dotted trail from the edge of the thicket to the "first cabin." From this point it is exactly "one and three-quarters of a mile to Bow Leg's Town" and most significant of all—the word "Camp" appears opposite the stockade surrounding Billy Bowleg's fortified village where Captain Young states that Andrew Jackson had established a camp for his troops.⁹ There is no record of any subsequent military camps being located on this same site. In fact, the only point of divergence between this sketch map and Young's memoir manuscript is in the spelling of the name of the river which he usually writes as "Sahwannee" rather than "Suwaney" as is shown on the map. This minor inconsistency may be the result of some capricious idiosyncrasy in spelling, or it may reflect the fact that it was not actually Captain Young himself who drafted the map.

Considered in its entirety, the evidence strongly suggests that it was indeed Captain Hugh Young who was the author of this sketch map. The hiding place of the historically more important map drawn by Young of the whole of Florida has not yet been ascertained, but if there is any association with this lesser product, experience now suggests that it may yet repose in the records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers.

7. A. P. Muntz to Christopher S. Peebles, June 15, 1965 in author's file.
8. Clarence Carter (ed.), *Territorial Papers of the United States: Territory of Florida, 1824-1828*, 26 vols. (Washington, 1956-1962), XXIII, 415.
9. Since there were no subsequent military operations conducted from this same location, it must be concluded that the camp referred to on the sketch map was the one made in 1818 by Jackson's forces and mentioned by Young in his *Memoir*.