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CAPTAIN HUGH YOUNG'S MAP OF JACKSON'S 1818 SEMINOLE CAMPAIGN IN FLORIDA

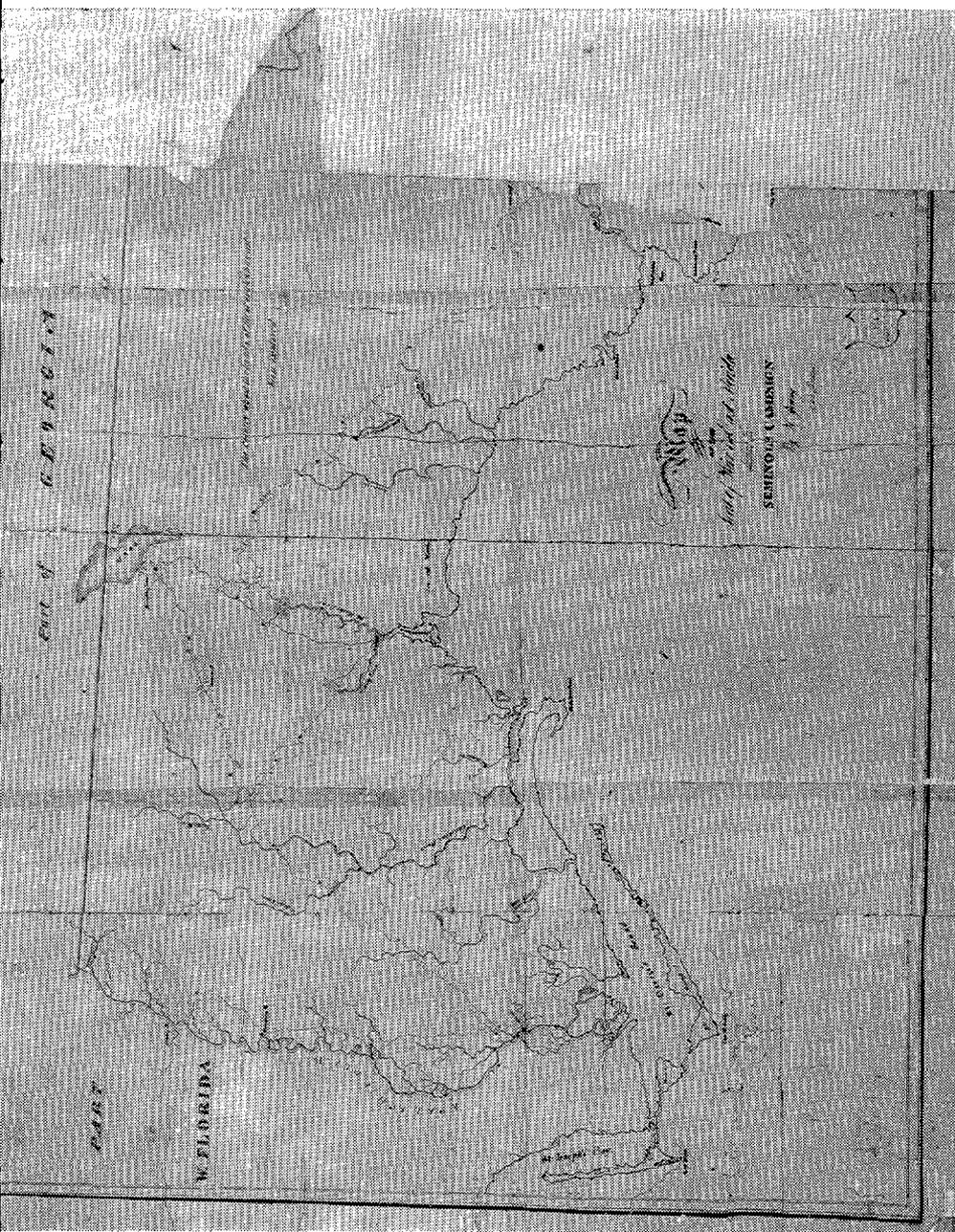
by ALCIONE M. AMOS*

RECENTLY on a visit to the cartographic division of the National Archives in Washington, the author was shown the map drawn by Captain Hugh Young of the United States Army Corps of Topographical Engineers to accompany his "A Topographical Memoir of East and West Florida With Itineraries [of General Andrew Jackson's Army, 1818]." The "Memoir," written in 1818, was published in 1934-1935, in the *Florida Historical Quarterly*.¹ The map had become separated from the "Memoir," and previous efforts to locate it were not successful.² The map is a fragment of a topographical sketch captioned "Map of the Seat of War in East Florida during the Seminole Campaign, by H. Young, Top. Engineer."

In correspondence written by Jackson and Robert Butler, his adjutant-general, there are indications that Captain Young drew several sketch maps of the area covered by Jackson and his expeditionaries.³ But, the fragment of the Young map re-

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1. Hugh Young, "A Topographical Memoir on East and West Florida With Itineraries of General Jackson's Army, 1818," ed. Mark F. Boyd and Gerald M. Ponton, *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XIII (July 1934), 16-50; (October 1934), 82-104; (January 1935), 129-64. See also Ernest F. Dibble, "Captain Hugh Young and His 1818 Topographical Memoir to Andrew Jackson," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, LV (January 1977), 321-35.
2. *Ibid.*, 21; Alan K. Craig and Christopher S. Peebles, "Captain Young's Sketch Map, 1818," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XLVIII (October 1969), 176-79.
3. In a May 5, 1818, letter to Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, General Jackson wrote: "For a detailed account of my movements from that period [March 25, 1818] to this day, you are respectfully referred to the report prepared by my adjutant general, accompanied with Captain Hugh Young's topographical sketch of the route and distance performed." Jackson to Calhoun, May 5, 1818, *American State Papers: Military Affairs*, 7 vols. (Washington, 1832-1861), I, 701. Robert Butler, Jackson's adjutant-general, closed his detailed report of the campaign, dated May 3, 1818, with the statement: "The assistant topographical engineer will furnish a topographical report of the country through which the army operated; and I refer you to the enclosed sketches



Captain Hugh Young's Map.

produced here, is the "accompanying map" he mentioned in the first part of his "Memoir," which dealt with that area of Florida between the Apalachicola and the Suwannee rivers, known at the time as East Florida.⁴ In the lower right corner of the fragment is a June, or January, 26, 1820, note stating that "this is the condition in which received it." The missing part, the note proves, disappeared over 150 years ago.

Prior to Jackson's invasion in 1818, little was known about Florida and its inhabitants. Young became the first American to examine its terrain in depth and to write a detailed account of the people. The difficulties encountered by Young in collecting data are noted at the beginning of the "Memoir": "The material from which the following report has been prepared were collected under all the disadvantages attending researches made during the operations of a very active campaign in an enemy's country. The author being engaged every day's march in surveying and measuring the route of the army, was unable to make many excursions, but every opportunity of examining the country was seized on and to his own observations, he was fortunately able to add much useful information obtained from a person who has long resided in the country."⁵

The person referred to by Young was probably William Hambly or Edward Doyle, both of whom had close but often unfriendly contact with the blacks and Indians while serving as agents for John Forbes and Company, the noted trading firm located on the banks of the Apalachicola River.

Little biographical information about Hugh Young has been uncovered. It is known that he was a native Tennessean who became an assistant topographical engineer with the rank of captain on February 19, 1817, a year before he accompanied Andrew Jackson and his Tennessee militia on their expedition into Florida. Probably, he returned to Tennessee following the

for information of our order of movement." Butler to Brigadier General Daniel Parker, May 3, 1818, *ibid.*, I, 704. In another letter to the secretary of war, Jackson informed him that "A topographical sketch of the country, from the Appalachicola [sic] to Pensacola Bay, accompanies this. Captain Young will prepare, as soon as practicable, a topographical memoir of that part of the Floridas on which my army has operated, with a map of the country." Jackson to Calhoun, June 2, 1818, *ibid.*, I, 708.

4. Young, "Topographical Memoir," 21.

5. *Ibid.*, 20.

First Seminole War and was living there when he died of unknown causes on January 3, 1822.⁶

Young's work was of little importance to Americans who came to Florida after the First Seminole War, despite the fact that they possessed only the vaguest knowledge of the topographical characteristics of the area. His report and map were filed away and never made public, despite the fact that Young had expressed the "hope that the information . . . will prove interesting and useful— this memoir containing the only correct account which has been given of a section of country now rising rapidly into political importance."⁷

The main importance of Young's work is, of course, historical. A comparison of his map with a modern one shows just how accurate he was in his calculations. Young for his time was an exceptional topographical engineer.

To place the Young map in its proper perspective, one must examine the First Seminole War and the steps leading up to it. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Florida had been precariously held by Spain for approximately three centuries, with the exception of a brief period between 1763 and 1783, when the area was under British rule. But the territory was mainly inhabited by Indians and fugitive black slaves from plantations in American territory adjacent to Florida. Because of this, most Southerners considered the Spanish territory a threat to their well-being. Also at the time, American expansionist sentiment was mushrooming, and Florida was considered a logical objective for land-hungry settlers.

An attempt to annex Florida forcibly was made between 1812 and 1813 by a group of Americans, mainly Georgians, who styled themselves "patriots." However, the effort was unsuccessful, partly because of a timely alliance of blacks and Indians with the Spanish. The nonwhites fought several

6. Francis Bernard Heitman, *Historical Register of the United States Army From Its Organization, September 29, 1789, to September 29, 1889* (Washington, 1890), 717; *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, From Its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903*, 2 vols. (Washington, 1903), I, 1067; Thomas H. S. Hamersly, comp. and ed., *Complete Regular Army Register of the United States For One Hundred Years, (1779 to 1879)* (Washington, 1880), 883. Although these sources suggest Young died on January 3, 1822, Craig and Peebles contend he lived on after that date. See "Captain Young's Sketch Map, 1818," 176, footnote three.

7. Young, "Topographical Memoir," 21.

skirmishes with the Americans, inflicting severe casualties, before they themselves were finally defeated and their villages plundered and burned.⁸

In late July 1816, American forces attacked a fort situated on the east bank of the Apalachicola River occupied by black fugitive slaves and a few Indians. Known as Negro Fort, the installation had been built by the British during the War of 1812. Abandoned after the war, the fort was occupied by blacks and Indian protectors. Then the Indians, with the exception of a very few, moved out, leaving the operation in control of the black runaways. Located as it was on the water route being used by supply boats going to Fort Scott, a new American outpost just across the Georgia border, Negro Fort was considered a threat. That the fort was in Spanish territory did not deter the American attack, during which a shell, fired from one of the gunboats, hit a powder magazine, causing an explosion which killed about 250 of the 300 men, women, and children inside the installation. The survivors went back into slavery.⁹

The situation along the frontier continued to deteriorate. Early in 1817 American authorities near the border began receiving intelligence that blacks living among the Indians in the settlements of Chief Bowlegs on the Suwannee River had been engaged in military drilling and were threatening to give the Americans "something more to do than they had at Apalachicola [*sic*]," alluding to the destruction of Negro Fort. At about the same time, Kenhagee, the leader of the Mikasuki Seminoles, refused to allow American troops to transit his lands in pursuit of fugitive slaves. In November of the same year Chief Neamathla of the Indian settlement of Fowl Town, in Georgia near the Florida border, warned American troops at Fort Scott to steer clear of his area and "not to cross or cut a stick of timber on the east side of the Flint [River]." When General Edmund B. Gaines, the commandant, heard the warn-

8. For detailed information about the attempt to annex Florida to the United States by force, see Rembert W. Patrick, *Florida Fiasco: Rampant Rebels on the Georgia-Florida Border, 1810-1815* (Athens, 1954).

9. For official reports about the destruction of the Negro Fort on the Apalachicola River, see Jairus Loomis to Commodore Daniel T. Patterson, August 13, 1816, in *American State Papers: Foreign Relations*, 6 vols. (Washington, 1833-1859), IV, 559-60.

ing, he requested that Neamathla come to the fort to discuss the issue. The chief refused, saying that his warning stood and that there was nothing else to discuss. Gaines responded by sending 250 men to arrest Neamathla and his warriors. The troops entered Fowl Town on the morning of November 21, engaged the Indians, and in short order killed and wounded a number of them and drove those remaining into the surrounding swamps.¹⁰

Retaliation was not long in coming. On November 30, an American transport boat carrying forty soldiers, seven army wives, and four children was attacked by a band of Indians and blacks as it slowly moved up the Apalachicola toward Fort Scott. All aboard were killed except six soldiers who plunged into the river and swam to safety and one woman who was captured. A few days later, a convoy of five American boats laden with military supplies and traveling up the same river came under attack -and suffered severe casualties. The convoy was forced to halt in midstream, where it remained under siege until troops from Fort Scott finally arrived days later to extricate it.

In addition to these attacks it was reported that groups of Indians were roaming the Georgia countryside, stealing livestock, abducting slaves, and killing indiscriminately. Hysteria and fear among Americans increased with every depredation committed by the rampaging hostiles.

As the year drew to a close, the war department concluded that the situation could not be allowed to continue unchecked. Consequently, in late December 1817, General Andrew Jackson was ordered to proceed from Tennessee to the frontier and to adopt the necessary measures to terminate the conflict. With him went more than 1,000 troops, including Captain Young. On arriving at Fort Scott the following March 9, the Jackson command was joined by several hundred regular troops, militia volunteers, and friendly Creek Indians. The expeditionary force of about 2,000 men moved out the next day, heading south into Florida. After five days of marching along the Apalachicola,

10. The account of the episodes that took place before Jackson's invasion of Florida in 1818, and the details of his campaign against the Indians and blacks are based on information obtained from volume one of *American State Papers: Military Affairs*. Whenever other sources were used, they were indicated in the notes.

the army reached the site of the destroyed Negro Fort. There Jackson ordered one of his aides, James Gadsden, lieutenant of engineers, to construct a temporary fortification to protect badly-needed supplies expected to come up the river any day from New Orleans. The installation was named Fort Gadsden.

On March 26 Jackson renewed his operations, heading northeast toward the settlements inhabited by the Mikasuki Seminoles. As Young indicated on his map, these villages were located on the west shore of the body of water designated "pond" (today's Lake Miccosukee). The force reached the Ochlockonee River (which Young identified in his map as Okllokina River) on March 29, constructed nineteen canoes and began a crossing that was completed the next morning. On the evening of March 30, Jackson ordered a company of Tennessee volunteers and some 200 Creeks to attack an Indian village called Tallehassa. The settlement, described by Young as being "handsomely situated on a hill and consisted of ten or twelve houses with a large clearing cultivated in common" had been evacuated by all inhabitants except two who were taken as prisoners.¹¹ Later, one escaped before the detachment rejoined the main force.

As Jackson's army neared Kenhagee's town, the first of the Mikasuki villages, on April 1, it was joined by a detachment of nearly 400 Tennessee volunteers led by Lieutenant Edward Elliott and a party of friendly Creeks commanded by Chief William McIntosh. Shortly thereafter the force surprised a sizable number of Indians herding cattle near a pond about a mile and a half from Kenhagee's town. Before the outnumbered Indians could retreat into the nearby swamps, fourteen were killed, several others wounded, and four women captured. One soldier was killed, and four others wounded.

Jackson continued his advance but found Kenhagee's town abandoned. The Indians had left behind in the village square a number of scalps suspended on a red pole. They were recognized as those of the victims of the boat ambush on the Apalachicola the past November. In a nearby dwelling the soldiers found nearly 300 more scalps, all male, which, according to Adjutant-General Butler, "bore the appearance of having been the

11. Young, "Topographical Memoir," 143.

barbarous trophies of settled hostility for three or four years past.”

The command moved out of Kenhagee’s town the same day and continued its pursuit of the retreating Indians. It reached the shores of the “pond” as darkness approached, and Jackson ordered a halt for the night. The next morning a large detachment was sent to the other side of the lake to attack the villages situated there. But those settlements too were found abandoned. The Americans, led by General Gaines, burned dwellings and collected booty as they swept through the settlements. Another red pole filled with hanging scalps was discovered in one of the evacuated villages. And near the same locality a small unit engaged a party of hostiles, killing one black and taking three prisoners. By the time the Jackson command had completed its search-and-destroy sweep through the Mikasuki towns, less than a score of hostiles had been annihilated. But 300 dwellings had been burned to the ground and nearly 3,000 bushels of corn seized, along with other plunder.

When Jackson received intelligence that some of the Indians and blacks had fled to Fort St. Marks, a Spanish installation, he directed his march toward it on the morning of April 15, arriving there on the evening of the next day. Jackson demanded that the fort be surrendered without delay, but the Spanish commander rejected the ultimatum. Fort St. Marks was seized without resistance the next morning. Captured was Alexander Arbuthnot, a Scottish trader who had lived with the Indians for about a year and who, according to Jackson, was “suspected as an instigator of this savage war.” Arbuthnot was arrested and held on charges of “exciting and stirring up the Creek Indians to war against the United States.”

Within a day or two after taking over Fort St. Marks, Jackson, as an example to other Indians, ordered the summary hanging of two hostile Creek chiefs considered by him to be “the prime instigators of this war.” The two Indians had been lured aboard the flagship of a fleet of American vessels carrying supplies for the force. The ship, flying the British flag to deceive the chiefs, had arrived in the vicinity of Fort St. Marks a few hours before Jackson arrived. Arrangements of the naval

force to rendezvous at Fort St. Marks had been made before the general left Fort Gadsden.

On April 9 Jackson, leaving a detachment at Fort St. Marks, headed east for the settlements of Seminole Chief Bowlegs on the Suwannee River. Part of the outline of the route taken by the command to the Suwannee settlements is missing from the Young map. According to Young's topographical description in his "Memoir," the missing part dealt with an area between a marsh identified as "live Oak Swamp" and the Suwannee Settlements.¹²

En route to their destination, elements of Jackson's command encountered on April 12 a group of rebellious Creek Indians. Thirty-seven Indians were killed and more than 100 others, mostly women and children, were captured, along with a number of horses and pigs, several hundred head of cattle, and a quantity of corn, which were divided among the command's Indian allies. Jackson's loss was three killed and four wounded. Moreover, the white woman who had been captured by the Indians during the boat massacre the past November was rescued. The defeated Indians were remnants of the Red Stick faction of the Creek Nation, which, under the leadership of an Indian named Peter McQueen, had fled into Florida after suffering a decisive defeat at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend on March 6, 1814.

Continuing their march, the soldiers a few days later surprised a small party of Indians consisting of two men, one woman, and two children. The woman and one man were killed; the others were captured, the surviving man and one of the children having been wounded.

Jackson had hoped to launch a surprise attack against the Suwannee settlements. His troops were carrying rations for eight days, and he knew they would need corn and other supplies to sustain themselves and their mounts. He realized that the Indians would flee with the needed commodities if they had any inkling that he was approaching. Consequently, when six Indian reconnoiters were spotted just ahead of the site where he had intended to make camp on the afternoon of April 16, Jackson quickened the pace of the march. But what he did not

12. *Ibid.*, 147-49.

know was that the Suwannee Indians and blacks had long been aware of his impending arrival. They had been informed by Alexander Arbuthnot, who, several days before his capture, had sent a letter to his son aboard their schooner anchored in the Suwannee a few miles from Chief Bowleg's town. The letter warned that the Americans were well-armed and that their purpose was to destroy "the black population of the Suwany [*sic*]." At the same time, Arbuthnot asked his son to plead with Bowlegs not to resist Jackson; such resistance would be futile. In addition to Arbuthnot's warning, a woman refugee from the destroyed Mikasuki towns had fled to the Suwannee settlements where she recounted the devastation she had witnessed.

Once it became known that Jackson was advancing, a group of blacks set out from the Suwannee settlements to engage him, but they met so many panic-stricken Mikasuki refugees enroute that they became spiritless and returned to the Suwannee to reassess their situation. Since the black settlements were situated on the west bank of the river— the side the expeditionaries would reach first— the leaders ordered the women and children and as much property as possible into hiding in the swamps east of the Suwannee. Apparently Bowlegs and most of his Indian followers decided to join the blacks in the swamps because few of them participated in the upcoming encounter.

The last horses were being taken across the river when the six Indian reconnoiters returned with the news that an attack by the Jackson army was imminent. Accordingly, some 200 or 300 black warriors and a handful of Indians took up positions on the river's west bank. They hoped to delay the whites long enough to allow the women and children to reach the swamps.

The encounter on the Suwannee was brisk. Since Captain Young as a rule was not concerned with the military aspects of the Jackson expedition, he made no mention of the engagement in his "Memoir." But a black participant would remember years later that the outnumbered forces opposing the invading army fought as long as they had dared. The effort, however, was in vain because, as the black explained, the Americans and Creeks "came too hot upon them, and they all ran to save

their lives."¹³ The blacks and Indians threw away their arms and plunged into the river, where they became difficult targets for the American and Indian sharpshooters, who were aiming at their slightly discernible heads popping out of the water in the dusk of the afternoon sunset. Meanwhile, on the battlefield lay the bodies of nine blacks and two Indians who had been killed in the combat. Two other blacks were taken prisoner.

The next days were filled with mopping-up operations on the east side of the Suwannee; three Indians were killed and five blacks and nine Indian women were captured. Several once-prosperous Suwannee villages were plundered and burned and a former British marine officer, Robert C. Ambrister, who had been living among the blacks on the Suwannee, was apprehended. Ambrister, who was elsewhere during the battle, was surprised when he returned to the settlement with two companions, a white man named Peter B. Cook, who had worked for Arbuthnot as a clerk, and a black slave.

On April 25 Jackson returned to Fort St. Marks, where Arbuthnot and Ambrister were executed after a court-martial found them guilty of inciting and aiding the Indians and blacks against the United States. Before leaving St. Marks for Fort Gadsden, Jackson discharged the Georgia militia and the Creek Indians under McIntosh and assigned a few troops to remain behind to garrison the Gulf coast settlement.

Jackson had every reason to believe that the will and the power of the Indians and blacks of Florida to wage war against the Americans had been crushed. But after his arrival at Fort Gadsden, he received word that the Spanish in Pensacola were welcoming Indians and providing them with arms and other supplies. Thus, instead of returning to Tennessee, Jackson headed for Pensacola. He reached there on May 24, and after a brief and futile resistance by the Spanish garrison, his troops occupied Fort San Carlos de Barrancas on May 28, 1818. Leaving behind a small force to garrison the fort, Jackson began his return to Tennessee.

Even though the occupied forts were returned to the Spanish a few months later and Jackson's activities in Florida were criticized by many, the fate of the Spanish province had been sealed. In February 1819 the United States and Spain con-

13. *House Reports*, 27th Cong., 2nd sess., no. 723, p. 4.

cluded a treaty which transferred Florida to the United States. The treaty was ratified in July 1821, and from that time on the Indians and blacks of the area came under the jurisdiction of the United States.