THE ADMINISTRATION OF HENRY ELLIS: ROYAL GOVERNOR OF GEORGIA, 1756-1760

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Charles Everett Russell

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By

Charles Everett Russell

AN ABSTRACT

Submitted to the College of Science and Arts
Michigan State University of Agriculture and
Applied Science in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History

1957

Charles E. Russell

ABSTRACT

Ellis was born in county Monaghan, Scotland, in August, 1721. Little is known of his early years, although he later devoted his attention to scientific research. In August, 1756, the Crown appointed him lieutenant-governor to replace John Reynolds. He came to Georgia during a crucial time in the colony's history and was given a warm welcome. Ellis brought to the colony youth, vigor and confidence, qualities required to solve Georgia's problems.

When Ellis arrived in Georgia, the political scene was not encouraging. The most serious problem he faced was a troublesome group of Reynolds's supporters remaining in the government. He judiciously dissolved the political factions opposing his administration. His success in political affairs eliminated much of the usual conflict between royal governors and Commons Houses. After establishing his influence with the Council and Commons House, Ellis turned to problems of finance, public works and the lack of settlers. Although hampered by the French and Indian War and a desperate financial condition, the colony began to grow and prosper. The colony's production and population increased substantially.

The Indian problem, common to all colonies, was skillfully handled by Ellis. He gradually assumed leadership in Indian relations for the southern colonies. Insufficient funds kept him from taking an offensive role in the French and Indian War and later the Cherokee War. Instead, he was successful in pacifying the Creeks. His leadership and skill in Indian relations prevented much destruction to his colony and the entire southern frontier.

Ellis often placed the welfare of Georgia before that of other colonies. His vigorous policy on behalf of Georgia often resulted in disputes with Governor Lyttleton of South Carolina. However, in Georgia he won respect for his position and authority. He retained the affection of the people, at the same time upholding royal authority.

Governor Ellis, suffering from the oppressive heat, left Georgia in the fall of 1760 to regain his health. He left Georgia in a state of political calm. A solid foundation had been established for the next governor.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Henry Ellis was the second royal governor of Georgia. He was appointed lieutenant-governor by the Crown in August of 1756, and held the position until 1758, when he was appointed governor. He retired in November of 1760. He came to Georgia during a crucial time in the colony's history. The colony was poverty stricken, virtually unprotected, and threatened with war with the French and the Indians. The colony's many difficulties were aggravated by political factions and unrest in the government. He solved the delicate political problems facing the colony, and through his leadership it was strengthened defensively and began to grow and prosper.

Ellis was born in county Monaghan, Scotland, in August, 1721.[1] Little is known of his early years with his parents Francis and Joan Ellis. He studied law at the Temple, but never became a lawyer. Instead he devoted his attention to scientific and geographical research. His love of the sea led him to study hydrography, and in 1746, at the age of twenty-five, he joined an expedition in search of a northwest

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[1]Knowledge of Ellis's early years is derived from The Dictionary of American Biography and The Dictionary of National Biography, the only places where he is treated.

passage. Although he had no experience in northern waters or climates, he served as agent for the committee sponsoring the voyage and as unofficial hydrographer and surveyor. The voyage failed, but Ellis gained a reputation from a book about the voyage which he worte in 1748.[2] It was eventually published in four languages and was followed by a second about the advantages of the northern passage in 1750.[3] In 1748, he was elected a fellow in the Royal Society and between 1751 and 1758, he contributed several papers to the Society's Philosophical Transactions.[4]

In 1732 when Ellis was only twelve years old, Georgia was founded largely through the efforts of James Edward Oglethorpe and Dr. Thomas Bray as a buffer state to protect South Carolina from the Spanish at St. Augustine and as a haven for debtors then languishing in English prisons. It was established under a charter, which vested the management of the province for twenty-one years in a Board of Trustees with twenty-one members. It was bounded by the

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[2]Henry Ellis, A Voyage on Hudson's Bay by the Dobbs Galley and California in the years 1746 and 1747 for Discovering a North-West Passage, (London: 1748).

[3]Ellis, Consideration on the Great Advantages which would arise of the North-West Passage, (London: 1750).

[4]Ellis, "On Dr. Hales's Ventilators; also the Temperature and Saltness of the Sea, Etc.," Philosophical Transactions (London: 1809), X, 195-96; "On the Heat of the Weather in Georgia", ibid, (London: 1809), XI, 277-78.

Savannah River on the north and the Altamaha River on the south, and extended westward from the Atlantic to the Pacific South Seas. The colony relied on Parliamentary appropriations for its maintainance until 1751, when Parliament in an effort designed to force the Trustees to relinquish their charter refused to grant further support. The Trustees' appeal to the Crown for aid was rejected and in 1752, the charter was surrendered to the Crown and Georgia became a royal colony.

As a royal colony Georgia would now have the same kind of government as other royal colonies. The governor was the central figure in the colonial government. He was appointed and commissioned by the Crown and could be removed by the Crown. He was the civil and military commander of the colony. He appointed officers not elected or appointed by the Crown. He convened and could dissolve the General Assembly. He also acted as part of the legislature when he initiated bills in the General Assembly. His approval was required of all legislation passed by the Commons House and he had the power of veto. Together with the Council, he granted land in the new colony. He was assisted by the Council of twelve men appointed by the Crown. They acted as a sort of cabinet to the governor. A Commons House of nineteen members was elected by freeholders. The Commons House was a legislative body with power to levy taxes and control

expenditures. All legislation passed by the General Assembly and approved by the governor was subject to veto by the Crown. The governor and Council comprised a court of appeals, and there was a general court of a chief justice and three associates, a court of admiralty, and numerous minor courts presided over by justices of the peace. A provost marshall, a chief justice and a secretary appointed by the Crown assisted the governor. There was a two year interregnum when a president presided, and in 1754, the royal governor was appointed.

John Reynolds was Georgia's first royal governor, arriving in Savannah in October, 1754. A former captain in the Royal navy, he was received with much jubilation, and he immediately began to set his government in order. To assist him he appointed William Little, a friend and former surgeon in the Royal navy, as his private secretary, and in the latter part of his administration it was charged by his foes that he turned many of his duties over to Little.[5] His haughty manner and tactless rule soon aroused opposition and in short time he was quarreling with his Council and the Commons House. A strong opposition party was formed. Feeling among many in

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[5]"Memorial and Remonstrance of His Majesty's Council to Governor Reynolds concerning William Little," Proceedings and Minutes of the Governor and Council. Colonial Records of Georgia, ed. Allen D. Candler, (Atlanta: 1904-1908), VII, 251-54, 262-64. Hereafter G.C.R.

the Council and the Commons House became so bitter that legal action was taken against Little and charges against Reynolds were sent to England. In a memorial presented to the Board of Trade by Alexander Kellet, the provost marshall, and signed by all but one of the Council, Reynolds was charged with attempting to bypass the Council, failing to control the power of the Commons House, overruling the courts, and altering legislative minutes to cover illegal activities. This complaint against him led the Board of Trade in August, 1756, to recall him to England and answer the charges against him, and Ellis was appointed lieutenant-governor during his absence.

Before Ellis left England he familiarized himself with the situation in Georgia. He corresponded with the Board of Trade and Benjamin Martyn, agent for Georgia, and learned of the destitute condition of the colony. To help alleviate inadequate defenses, he asked that five hundred muskets be sent to the colony. He arranged for more Indian presents to be sent as soon as possible, and fifteen hundred pounds worth were sent.[6] Ellis arrived in Charlestown, South Carolina, in January, 1757. He was greeted warmly by William Henry Lyttleton, the governor, and other

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[6]Board of Trade to James West, Nov. 3, 1756, Unpublished Georgia Colonial Records, (Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia), XXXIV, 206. Hereafter U.G.C.R.

officials of the colony. He spent most of his time with Lyttleton learning what he could about colonial government. They arranged for an efficient exchange of correspondence, which later was used often by both men.

In February, 1757, Ellis arrived in Savannah, the capital of the colony. He made the trip from Charlestown by sea. Following the coast line to the mouth of the Savannah River, he sailed past the lighthouse on Tybee Island and on up the river to Savannah. Besides being the capital, Savannah was the largest town and principal port of the colony. It was founded and planned by Ogelthorpe in 1733, and was situated upon a sandy bluff surrounded by trees and overlooking the river. It was a favorable site about eighteen miles from the sea. The river at this spot formed a halfmoon, and its banks were almost forty-five feet high. The town contained about one hundred and fifty wooden houses and most of the colony's public buildings which were greatly in need of repair. The greater part of the houses were small and old with fences and wooden chimneys. The church building was in decay and soon became a menace to human life. The jail was too small, and there was no school house. The one substantial building was a silk filature, which also had served as the Council chamber. The fort that had been built in 1737 was in ruins, and the town

was defenseless when Ellis arrived.[7] Neither were there forts on the southern and western frontiers. Indeed, the colony was virtually unprotected at the beginning of his administration.[8]

Ellis was given a warm welcome. He was greeted with a "tremultuous demonstration of joy,"[9] which included bonfires, fireworks, parades, and the hanging of Little in effigy. Less than four years before Reynolds had been accorded a similar welcome, now he was despised by the people. Ellis reported to Lyttleton, "I see my predecessor insulted and neglected, whilst I am courted and distinguished;"[10] cautiously adding that, "By anticipating a little I Fancy I see myself quit the stage with the same treatment; so little permanent is popular applause."[11]

Ellis was thirty five years old when he began his administration. He was young, vigorous, vain, confident and shrewd. His mature intelligence and

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[7]John P. Corry, "The Houses of Colonial Georgia," Georgia Historical Quarterly, XIV (Sept. 1930), 181-201.

[8]Henry Ellis to Board of Trade, Aug. 1, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 57.

[9]Henry Ellis to William Henry Lyttleton, Feb. 18, 1757, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan, William Lyttleton Papers. Hereafter Lyttleton Papers.

[10]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 18, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[11]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 18, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

travels gave him added experience in dealing with people. The problems facing Ellis would require all of his native abilities. His major problem was to establish his influence over the Council and Commons House. When this was accomplished, he could approach the problems of inadequate defenses, insufficient money, a lack of settlers, and pacifying the Indians.

Chapter II

EASING POLITICAL TENSIONS

When Governor Ellis arrived in Georgia, the political scene was not encouraging. Discontent and dissatisfaction with the previous administration were widespread.[1] Ellis reported to the home authorities that "Few approached me that were not inflamed with resentment and liberal in invectives urgent that I should take some immediate and very violent steps such as a total change of public officers and the dissolution of the Assembly and . . . offered some very cogent reasons for this procedure."[2]

Perhaps the most serious problem Ellis faced was a troublesome group of Reynolds's supporters which remained in the government. Reynolds, with the help of Little, attempted to form these supporters into a strong opposition party against the Governor. His objective was to regain the governorship. Before the new Governor arrived in Georgia, Reynolds told the Commons House that no increase in taxes was needed.[3] However, when Ellis became governor, the

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[1]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 4-6.

[2]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 4-6.

[3]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 5-6.

taxes were one-third short of meeting expenses.[4] The deficit would have to be made up from "the contingent money which was to be reinbursed out of that to be raised the present year altho' they were sensible it would be inadequate to the ordinary expenses of Government exclusive of such Debt."[5]

Reynolds dissolved the first Commons House before any taxes had been voted. The colony was in debt when the second house met, and the people were able to provide only the current year's expenses.[6] Little used the public debt as a weapon against Ellis and urged the Commons House to usurp the governor's power to audit the accounts and issue the public money. According to Ellis, the Commons House had elevated its position to that of the Commons House of South Carolina, which he regretted. The check which Ellis thought the Governor and Council ought to have had over that body was undermined.[7] Of those people who held bills against the government, only friends of Little were paid; his opponents went unpaid.[8] Since taxes had not been

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[4]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 5-6.

[5]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 5-6

[6]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 5-6.

[7]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 5, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 21-22.

[8]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 5, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 21-22.

collected for some time, the government's bills were paid with the contingent money granted annually by Parliament to help maintain the colony. For months the expanded power of the Lower House was unchallenged. But by January, 1758, Ellis reported to the Board of Trade that "The reducing of things to their proper bounds has been a great object with me & not the least difficulty I have had to combat, tho 'tis a satisfaction that my endeavours have not been altogether fruitless."[9]

The maneuvers of Reynolds and Little to regain power embarrassed and angered Ellis. He was forced to explain the indebtedness of the colony and, at the same time, ask the Commons House for increased taxes.[10] Furthermore, Reynolds continued to place "his Creatures" in every public office even after he learned of Ellis's arrival in America.[11] And before he gave up his office, he had the Council recommend officers for the newly raised troops, and the Commons House recommend "Commissions of Peace;" all "to embarrass a future Governor."[12] The filling of positions with pro-Reynolds men meant the new Governor would have to work with officials hostile to him.

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[9]Ellis to Board of Trade, Jan. 1, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 144.

[10]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 5, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 23-29.

[11]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 5, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 28-29.

[12]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 6.

Ellis learned that an address had been drawn up against him in the spring of 1757, "that has been sufficiently tortured by the Sages of that August House."[13] When the address was presented he reported to Lyttleton that he thought it "foolish & fulsome enough."[14] Little's meddling hand was also in this latest plot and, according to Ellis, he made a strong impression on many of the Commons House.[15] Ellis was a shrewd politician and utilized public opinion. Writing to Lyttleton, he noted that if the Commons House failed to follow his instructions, he would make them appear "odious to the people & their dispersion will be of course a popular act."[16] But for a time it seemed that the faction in the Commons House might prove pernicious to his administration, since Little strongly influenced many of its members.[17] Ellis reported to Lyttleton that the Commons House was "complained of by all who approach me, perhaps justly, but I am aware of Party prejudice."[18] The second elected Commons House was in session when Ellis arrived in Georgia.

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[13]Ellis to Lyttleton, June 22, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[14]Ellis to Lyttleton, June 22, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[15]Ellis to Lyttleton, June 23, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[16]Ellis to Lyttleton, June 22, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[17]Ellis to Lyttleton, June 23, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[18]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 18, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

The first Commons House had been unpopular with Reynolds and he had shortly dissolved it. Ellis charged that the second Commons House had been formed by "very irregular & improper means," and contained a faction led by Reynolds and Little.[19] According to him, threats were used, as were promises to create new offices and alter old ones in order to produce a Commons House that would follow Reynolds and Little regardless of the welfare of the constituents.[20] They were, according to Ellis, "implicit tools of Little who it was preconcerted should be their speaker."[21]

Adding to the confusion, Little called on Ellis one day to inform him that it would do no good to disolve the House, since he had taken steps to have the same members returned to office.[22] Soon after this incident Little sent a letter to the House, the contents of which are not quite clear, designed to injure Ellis's relations with that body. Ellis planned to use the letter as justification, if needed, to break up "the Cabal" by dissolving the House.[23] For awhile it appeared

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[19]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 5.

[20]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 5.

[21]Ellis to Board of Trade, Jan. 1, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 144.

[22]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 14.

[23]Ellis to Lyttleton, June 22, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

Ellis would have to dissolve the Commons House because of factionalism. Instead, he adjourned it for a month to allow "passions to cool." By continually adjourning and proroguing the Commons House, while at the same time acquainting the people with his plans by this seemingly moderate treatment, he gradually won support in and out of the legislature.[24]

The problem was not that the house was composed entirely of villains intent on his ruin, but rather that the agitation of Little continued even after Reynolds left the colony for England. The members of the House were "Not dishonest in their private character but easy credulous & equally disposed to good or evil."[25] Although he perceived that they had not done anything "unConstitutional," he charged them with "an opposition to my measures in order to justify the conduct of their friends lately in power."[26] Since eleven of the nineteen are reported to have owed their jobs to Reynolds and Little, some opposition should not seem too surprising.[27]

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[24]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 5, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 24.

[25]Ellis to Board of Trade, Jan. 1, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 144.

[26]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 14.

[27]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 14.

By the middle of July, 1757, Ellis had high hopes that the Commons House would bend to his "will and satisfaction" without having to apply strong pressure upon it. The house was in good spirits, and it passed his first bills without the trouble he anticipated. He triumphantly reported to Lyttleton that he had "totally frustrated & disconcerted a conspiracy that was formed under the late Administration, to disturb mine by obstructing all my measures. Some I have conquered by address," he added, and "others by a reasonable & spirited opposition & resentment, so that hydra faction seems to be at present subdued."[28]

After almost a year in Georgia, Governor Ellis approached his problem more philosophically. He reported how the quiet and harmony in the legislature

> is a great mortification to the few particans [sic] that Reynolds left behind him, who of late have been very active in their endeavours to embroil me & have not failed to represent my actions very uncandidly, in regard to which however, I have no other concern, but least my friends should be imposed upon, & think unworthily of me, for I can depend that time will do justice, agreeable to the old, but excellent proverb, 'that error is daily losing an advocate, while Truth is gaining one.'[29]

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[28]Ellis to Lyttleton, July 8, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[29]Ellis to Lyttleton, Jan. 21, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

Ellis's political problems were not confined entirely to his struggle with the Commons House. A small faction in his Council was potentially troublesome. The trouble began when two members refused to take their seats during Reynolds's administration. The vacancies were filled by James Reid and Patrick MacKay.[30] Noble Jones, one of the declining councilors, was suspended as Chief Justice of the General Court, and MacKay was recommended for that office. When Ellis became governor, the two reluctant councilors made an appearance desiring their seats on the Council. The new Governor was sure Reid and MacKay planned to cause trouble, so he removed them, reporting to Lyttleton that he thought the councilors "lately & improperly introduced."[31] The Governor then accepted the two members who had "absented themselves," but now desired to return to the seats.[32] Ellis also removed MacKay as Justice of the General Court.

After his rejection from the Council, MacKay, with Little's help, began a campaign for election to the Commons House. Ellis thought that once in the House he would scheme to be chosen speaker and head a faction

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[30]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 4.

[31]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 18, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[32]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 4.

against him.[33] The letter Little had written to the Commons House was to have been presented by MacKay after his election to the House.[34] Ellis described Reid to the Board of Trade as "a person of no consequence of small fortune moderate abilities & no interest in the Country; yet these objections are trivial in comparison to those which lie against MacKay."[35] Ellis described the latter as "a very artful person & of no good character."[36] He thought the plan was designed to cause a disruption of government. This would provide a motive for the restoration of the Reynolds's administration. But MacKay was "disdainfully rejected by the people at several Elections where he offered himself a Candidate,"[37] and retired in disgust to his plantation. It appears that he was a leading antagonist of Ellis's administration, for with his retirement things seemed to run more smoothly.[38]

It could be expected that Ellis would have more influence with his Council since it was appointed by

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[33]Ellis to Board of Trade, July 8, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 42-43.

[34]Ellis to Board of Trade, July 8, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 42-43.

[35]Ellis to Board of Trade, Feb. 19, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 260-262.

[36]Ellis to Board of Trade, July 8, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 42-43.

[37]Ellis to Board of Trade, Feb. 10, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 262-268.

[38]Ellis to Board of Trade, July 8, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 42-43.

the Crown than with the Commons House, elected by the freeholders. He reported that should he once lose control of the Council through "the introduction of violent & disaffected Members every thing must fall into confusion."[39] Ellis was sure this would happen if a person like MacKay, who was "Universially disliked" were allowed a place on the Council. Later, Reid and MacKay were renominated by the Board of Trade for the Council and Ellis faced this problem. He could see no reason for their nomination in view of his adverse report to the Board of Trade, and he wondered if it was the result of influential friends in London or the loss of his report.[40] He vigorously protested the appointments and the Board of Trade finally accepted his advice. He reported to the Board of Trade that "It would be a great evil were those unhappy times revived; & this my Lords would certainly be the Case should that Gentleman be again called upon the Theatre invested with any degree of power or influence."[41] When Ellis rejected MacKay from his Council and suspended him from the bench, and he received no confidence from the people, the Cabal was dissolved, and Ellis was given "an opportunity of undeceiving the people & reconciling their jarring humours."[42]

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[39]Ellis to Board of Trade, Feb. 10, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 262-63.

[40]Ellis to Board of Trade, Feb. 10, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 260-62.

[41]Ellis to Board of Trade, Feb. 10, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 262-63.

[42]Ellis to Board of Trade, Feb. 10, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 260-62.

Ellis often received no help from his councilors. Several members were out of the colony for long periods and never fulfilled their duties, while others were indifferent to their office. He reported that William Clifton, the King's attorney, and William Knox were the only members possessing any talent for defending the prerogative of the Upper House, "& except for Sir Pat. Houstoun & Mr. Powell there is not the zeal for his Majestys Service to be found."[43] The qualifications for councilors were the same as in other colonies. In denouncing Reid as a person of small fortune, Ellis gives some indication of what they were. He also recommended persons he thought qualified: Captain William MacKenzie, a settler from North Carolina, who was honest, worthy, understanding, and strongly recommended by Governor Dobbes; and possessed of "sufficient fortune."[44] And there was William Butler, Esq., "a considerable planter of good parts."[45] The councilors were considerable land owners, and received some of the larger landgrants. Men like Jonathan Bryan and James Habershan, Sr. represented what little aristocracy there was in the colony.

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[43]Ellis to Board of Trade, Feb. 10, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 263.

[44]Ellis to Board of Trade, Feb. 10, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 264.

[45]Ellis to Board of Trade, Feb. 10, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 264.

Patience, tact and diplomacy characterized most of Ellis's relations whether they were with the Board of Trade, the Indians or the Commons House. The factions that Ellis faced in the Commons House and in his Council certainly would have restricted the success of his administration had they not been early removed. Once factions had been cautiously and judiciously removed and a satisfactory influence in the Council and the Commons House was established, he could seek improvement for the colony's poverty-stricken condition.

Chapter III

SOLVING INTERNAL PROBLEMS

After establishing what he considered a satisfactory influence with the Council and Commons House, Ellis turned to problems of finance, the silk culture, the lack of settlers, and various minor problems. In his first letter to the Board of Trade, he reported that the colony had been greatly misrepresented. Although the colony had made little progress, it was "evidently capable of great improvement." It possessed fine rivers, good lands for growing rice and indigo, and "silk seems to be no longer a matter of curiosity."[1] When he returned from an early inspection of the colony, he voiced satisfaction with the manner in which the frontier was being settled and improved. He was convinced of the colony's great potential.[2] Nevertheless, he was aware that the colony's poverty, weak defenses and fear of Indian attacks caused insecurity to life and property which discouraged many potential settlers.[3]

Ellis hoped to move the government to a site twelve miles up the Ogeechee River and south of Savannah,

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[1]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 12.

[2]Ellis to Lyttleton, May 1, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[3]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 9-10.

in the early months of his administration.[4] He had examined the area on his first inspection tour of the colony. He described the site as of the proper elevation, dry, healthy, with rich soil and a good harbor, well settled and easily fortified.[5] The southern part of the colony he reported was more thickly populated than around Savannah and much improvement could be seen, especially at Sunbury on the Midway River. He estimated the cost of moving the government at about two thousand pounds. The move would be financed with the profits from silk and the sale of a vessel condemned by Reynolds.[6] But the plan was not popular and Ellis soon dismissed the idea.

Ellis estimated that the population of the colony was between four and five thousand whites, of which about seven hundred were able to bear arms. There were also approximately two thousand Negroes.[7] He reported to William Pitt that most of the people were poor, and "I am content there are not ten men in the Province that are worth £500 each."[8] The people,

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[4]Reynolds had had a similar idea, but dismissed it as being too unpopular with the people.

[5]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 5, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 18.

[6]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 5, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 30.

[7]Ellis to William Pitt, Aug. 1, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 58.

[8]Ellis to William Pitt, Aug. 1, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 58.

he claimed, were so poor that they could not supply the fort at Augusta, and South Carolina had to do it.[9] In many cases the people were in debt to merchants in South Carolina.[10] The colonial government was also in debt. He estimated the colony's imports from England at about forty thousand pounds sterling annually, which he thought would increase as the colony grew.[11] Imported goods included nails, hardware, cheap yard goods, pots and pans, silks, ribbon, fine linens from Scotland, and, of course, rum from the northern colonies. Rum was both expensive and scarce, but this did not lessen the demand for it. Exports consisted of rice, indigo and lumber products such as barrel staves. As much as three thousand pounds of indigo was shipped from Savannah at one time by a single merchant.[12]

The scarcity of specie in Georgia made some kind of currency necessary if the colony was to have a medium of exchange. Without an adequate medium of exchange,

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[9]Ellis to Lyttleton, April, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[10]Ellis to Lyttleton, April, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[11]Ellis to Board of Trade, Oct. 22, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 99.

[12]"The Letter Book of Thomas Rasberry, 1758-1761," Georgia Historical Quarterly, ed Lilla M. Hawes, XL, (Sept. 1956), 281-298; XL, (Dec. 1956), 391-398. Georgia women wore dresses of "handsome Patterns and good Colours," and bright flowered hats. The man's wardrobe included the traditional dark colors, fancy silk vests of gay colors, white gloves and silk hats.

the colony was forced to accept the currency of other colonies, especially South Carolina. Early in Reynold's administration a currency act was passed and about twenty seven hundred pounds in paper currency was issued without royal approbation. The act contained a clause to call in and sink the issue by 1762, and although Ellis approved of the original act,[13] he reported that the money "passed exceeding heavily & bore a very large discount."[14] Ellis charged Reynolds with allowing the currency to depreciate by refusing to accept it as payment for government fees.[15] Ellis announced that he would accept the paper money for fees and also grant bills of exchange for it, using the contingent money and the silk profits as security.

The colony not only suffered from a scarcity of specie, but an imposing debt had been accumulated, for which Ellis blamed Reynolds. Ellis thought the emission of paper currency would solve both problems. In 1757 an act to discharge the public debt and restore the colony's credit was passed and sent to the Board of Trade.[16] The act was similar to Reynolds's, except

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[13]Ellis to Board of Trade, April 24, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 291-292.

[14]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 5, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 22-23.

[15]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 5, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 22-23.

[16]Ellis to Board of Trade, July 8, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 43-44; April 24, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 294.

that it was more comprehensive. Ellis sought to provide a currency, pay off the provincial debt, and provide certain services without using taxes. Ellis believed these objectives would be met by issuing "paper Bills to the amount of the debt & appropriating the Interest of the Loan aforementioned for calling in and sinking them."[17] Ellis justified the act in his report to the Board of Trade. He noted that the practice of issuing bills which were recalled and sunk within a limited time, and which the treasurer was obliged to accept had been used by every colony in America.[18] In addition, he claimed that Georgia's currency had an unusually unique feature; no person was compelled to accept it and there was a visible security "for its being made good when the possessors of it may think proper to require it."[19] Therefore, the Governor believed Georgia's paper money would be superior to the currency of other colonies. However, the Governor's claims of uniqueness were not accurate because most American colonies had the same features for their currencies.

Ellis was certain that a paper currency was needed in Georgia.[20] Evidence indicates that many merchants,

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[17]Ellis to Board of Trade, April 24, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 294.

[18]Ellis to Board of Trade, April 24, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 292-293.

[19]Ellis to Board of Trade, April 24, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 292-293.

[20]Ellis to Board of Trade, April 24, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 295-296.

traders and planters in the colony agreed with the Governor. With paper money, planters and merchants could purchase Negroes which improved the land and the colony's agricultural production. Exports and imports would also be increased. Without paper money, the colony would be forced either to sell its goods in South Carolina, or have the Carolinians send their currency into the colony to purchase them. The former was expensive and the latter Ellis thought undesirable because he considered their currency unsound.[21] Apparently Ellis's disapproval of South Carolina's currency was designed to magnify the need for his own colony's money.

In stressing the colony's need for a paper currency and the interest derived from it, Ellis cited to the Board of Trade the wretched condition of the colony's public works. The church building was in such disrepair that it was dangerous to worship there, and the lighthouse on Tybee Island constantly needed repairs. The danger to the colony because of the lack of a public magazine, he claimed, was so great, "that any Negro or other ill disposed person had it in his power (with a fire brand) not only to destroy all the Records but disarm the Province at one blast."[22] The hope of

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[21]Ellis to Board of Trade, April 24, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 292-295.

[22]Ellis to Board of Trade, April 24, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 292-295.

improving the colony's dreadful condition and the advantages of increased trade greatly stimulated Ellis to issue paper currency. However, neither his royal instructions nor the Board of Trade approved it.

The emission of paper currency by Georgia, the Board of Trade informed the Governor, conflicted with the spirit of the Currency Act, which was passed by Parliament in 1751. Although the Currency Act applied only to New England, the Board of Trade was reluctant to agree to any colonial emission of paper money. The colony's act issuing paper currency was not directly disallowed, but strong dissatisfaction was shown in a letter to Ellis from the Board of Trade.[23] The fear of causing economic confusion by injuring the credit of the currency already in circulation saved the act from direct disallowance.[24] Instead, the Board of Trade advised the Crown to suspend a disallowance until Ellis could supply them with more information. At the same time they ordered the Governor to retire the currency, "or, in case you think a paper Currency of absolute necessity, passing another Act for substituting a Currency in the place of it, upon the plan and according to the

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[23]Board of Trade to Ellis, Ap. 21, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXXIV, 233-234.

[24]Board of Trade to Ellis, Ap. 21, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXXIV, 233-234.

terms prescribed in the aforementioned Act of Parliament."[25] Ellis's problem was to win the Crown's approval of an existing currency, which was deemed vital by the people of Georgia. He reported that the people in general were so well satisfied with their paper currency that even the Crown's approval would not have strengthened its credit.[26] Meanwhile, the people remained in suspense as to the fate of their paper money which had been current for nearly three years. When Ellis left the colony in 1760, the matter was still unsettled.

Silk was one of the colony's first enterprises, and mulberry trees were a common sight when Ellis arrived. The silk produced in Georgia was of excellent quality, and many believed it might become the chief export.[27] Although Parliament consistantly encouraged silk production, Ellis reported that it still faced many problems. The colony's climate was not particularly suited for the production of silk. There was a scarcity of poor people "who seem perculiarly calculated for this undertaking."[28] Planters owning slaves found it more profitable to plant

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[25]Board of Trade to Ellis, Ap. 21, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXXIV, 233-34.

[26]Ellis to Board of Trade, Ap. 24, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 295-96.

[27]Ellis to Board of Trade, Jan. 1, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 146.

[28]Ellis to Board of Trade, Ap. 24, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 299-300.

rice and indigo which guaranteed a certain profit. But after expressing doubt as to its survival, Ellis became a promoter of the silk culture.[29]

Ellis visited the silk filature in Savannah and met one Otterlinghe, the superintendent. Although the filature badly needed repair, it had once been the town's most substantial building and used as the council chamber. A feud developed between Otterlighe and the Reverend John Martin Bolzius, the minister at Ebenezer, over the possibility of operating a filature at Ebenezer.[30] Bolzius thought that another filature was necessary to extend a knowledge of an art he considered too confined. Otterlinghe, whom Ellis described as "naturally jealous," disagreed. He claimed that one filature could handle all the cocoons produced at that time. Perhaps his real reason for not wanting another filature was a fear of being replaced if someone were trained to operate a filature.[31] Ellis avoided involvement in the dispute, but he did think Otterlinghe would be a "short liver" and since he was the only person capable of managing the filature, an assistant should be trained.[32] Apparently he had little success in persuading Otterlinghe

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[29]Ellis to Board of Trade, Ap. 24, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 299-300.

[30]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 13.

[31]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 25, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 38; Jan. 1, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 146.

[32]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 25, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 38.

to train a successor, nor was he successful in introducing the people to scientific methods of preserving the eggs. He finally concluded that only time could influence unscientific minds.[33] He attacked the traditional idea of a bounty for the planting of mulberry trees as a "misapplication of public money" since they were being used as ornaments and feed for poultry and cattle.[34] He preferred a bounty on cocoons. In 1757, five thousand pounds of cocoons were produced and by 1759 production reached twelve thousand pounds.[35] But a fire in 1758 destroyed the filature and most of the wound silk,[36] and the growing importance of rice, indigo and lumber products made competition increasingly difficult. Ellis remained a firm supporter of the silk culture, but it gradually diminished, never fulfilling the expectations of those who introduced it in the colony.

The lack of settlers was a serious handicap to the colony's expansion, and one of the first problems Ellis attempted to solve.[37] Much of the colony was owned

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[33]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 25, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 38.

[34]Ellis to Board of Trade, Ap. 24, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 297-299.

[35]Ellis to Board of Trade, July 26, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 297-299.

[36]Ellis to Lyttleton, July 21, 1758, Lyttleton Papers; Ellis to Board of Trade, July 20, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 226.

[37]Four hundred Catholic Acadians had been forced to leave Nova Scotia for religious reasons. Ellis wondered why these immigrants were ill treated in his colony and many were "suffered to leave" when settlers were desperately needed. He asked the General Assembly for relief for them and proposed that the few who remained be given an opportunity to settle in Georgia.

by absentee landowners who neither settled nor improved the land. A bill was passed by the General Assembly repossessing land held by absentee owners unless they filed for a new claim and received a new grant from the Crown.[38] The repossessed land could be regranted to settlers. Ellis encouraged this bill not only for its immediate and beneficial consequences, but for political reasons as well. The bill was popular with the people, and by approving it, he strengthened his position in the colony.[39] To help the people living in the back-country to acquire additional land, a bill was passed allowing them to file affidavits with a justice of the peace instead of appearing in Savannah.[40]

The attempt to attract more settlers to Georgia led to one of Ellis's most controversial bills: the so-called asylum act. The act granted insolvents seven years' protection from their creditors.[41] All financially distressed persons were covered by the act, except recent immigrants from South Carolina, whom Ellis suspected would take unfair advantage of the act.[42] The colony's great need for settlers could be partially

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[38]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 18, 1758, Lyttleton Papers; Ellis to Board of Trade, Feb. 18, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 172.

[39]Ellis to Board of Trade, Feb. 18, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 172.

[40]G.C.R., VII, 600.

[41]Ellis to Board of Trade, July 8, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 43.

[42]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 5, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 24.

solved by granting relief to past settlers who had fled to escape their creditors.[43] The Gray settlement[44] on the southern frontier was composed of many such people. Morever, it might eventually prove useful to have these people under his control. There was also the fear that many settlers on the frontier might take advantage of similar protection offered by the governor of St. Augustine.[45] The asylum act seemed popular and might have helped people find their debtors,[46] as well as giving the debtors a chance to recuperate, but the Crown disallowed it.[47] Ellis apparently altered his opinion concerning the bill and was not dissatisfied with the Board's action. He reported,

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[43]Ellis to Board of Trade, Aug. 1, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 50-51.

[44]Edmund Gray, "a pretended Quaker," was thought to have fled Virginia to escape the authorities. He arrived in Savannah about the same time as Governor Reynolds. He became active in politics and was elected to the Georgia General Assembly, along with several friends. Charges of fraud surrounded the election and Gray was recalled. He and his friends then left Savannah in disgust. Gray led his followers south through Georgia and across the Altamaha River. They settled at New Hanover in the territory between Georgia and Florida, then controlled by South Carolina. The settlement, considered illegal by South Carolina, grew and threatened to cause havoc on Georgia's southern frontier, until finally the Crown in 1757 ordered the settlement removed. Most of the settlers found refuge on Cumberland Island.

[45]Ellis to Board of Trade, Aug. 1, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 50-51.

[46]Ellis to Board of Trade, Aug. 1, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 50-51.

[47]Ellis to Board of Trade, Ap. 24, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 291.

"it [the act] has not been attended with the advantages which were expected as very few hitherto have taken the benefit of it."[48]

The first session of the Commons House under Ellis's administration produced much better results than he dared anticipate.[49] The feared attempt of a disgruntled Commons House to embarrass him by refusing to cooperate never fully materialized. Some difficulty was encountered in restoring to the governor and Council the right to audit the accounts and issue public money.[50] But patience and splendid conciliatory addresses reduced factions to unity, securing passage of all his early legislation.[51] He early insisted that the taxes must be doubled in spite of the colony's poverty, and the Commons House responded generously by more than doubling the taxes.[52] The passage of his first bill, for fortifications on the frontier,[53] indicates the beginning of cooperation between Ellis and the Commons House, although the colony's

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[48]Ellis to Board of Trade, Ap. 24, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 291.

[49]Ellis to Lyttleton, July 8, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[50]Ellis to Board of Trade, Aug. 1, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 51-2.

[51]Ellis to Lyttleton, July 8, 1757, Lyttleton Papers; Ellis to Board of Trade, Aug. 1, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 51-2.

[52]Ellis to Board of Trade, July 8, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 44.

[53]Ellis to Lyttleton, July 8, 1757, Lyttleton Papers; Ellis to Board of Trade, May 5, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 24; July 8, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 43.

weak defenses were a factor in its passage. His good legislative record seems to indicate that once early political difficulties were smoothed and a degree of control established, legislation was willingly passed. His increased influence so diminished his political difficulties that a warm relationship soon emerged between Ellis and the General Assembly.[54]

Working with the Commons House, Ellis obtained legislation providing a watch for Savannah; a patrol for the colony; a more frequent muster of the militia; licensing and regulating public houses to prevent Negroes and Indians from buying liquor; and the prevention of provisions and cattle being sent to St. Augustine, which undoubtedly found their way into the hands of French privateers.[55] Later bills were passed dividing the colony in parishes and establishing the Church of England; regulating Indian affairs (which gave Ellis exclusive authority in dealing with the Indians); and one prohibiting Negroes being taught handicrafts in order to encourage skilled labor in the colony.[56] An act allowing "HouseKeepers and Traders" to serve on "Petty Jurys" without owning the required land was passed,

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[54]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 15, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 281.

[55]Ellis to Board of Trade, July 8, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 43-44; Ellis to Lyttleton, July 8, 1757; July 20, 1757; Feb. 18, 1758; Dec. 17, 1758, Lyttleton Papers.

[56]Ellis to Board of Trade, Feb. 18, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 173; Mar. 31, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 185-186.

disallowed by the Crown, and then revised by the Colony.[57] Revised, the bill shortened the time between the balloting for jurors and the holding of court, and fixed "the qualifications of a Grand Juror, greatly above that of a Petty Jury Man." The alteration satisfied the objection of Matthew Lamb to the first bill. Ellis and the Council seemed satisfied that all objections had been removed from it.[58] To ease the plight of struggling settlers, an act "for the easy and speedy Recovery of small Debts and Damages" was passed, disallowed by the Crown, and then revised a few months before Ellis's departure from Georgia.[59] The church was repaired, a public magazine was built in Savannah, legal fees of magistrates and constables were fixed, the wooden chimneys so common in Savannah were prohibited as a fire hazard, and the Tybee lighthouse received its share of attention. Nearly fifty acts passed by the General Assembly received royal sanction,[60] and the domestic situation improved during his administration. Obviously, his fine legislative record was a factor for his promotion to governor in 1758.

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[57]Ellis to Board of Trade, Ap. 24, 1760, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 289-290.

[58]Ellis to Board of Trade, Ap. 24, 1760, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 289-290; Aug. 25, 1760, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 456-457.

[59]Ellis to Board of Trade, Ap. 24, 1760, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 289-290; Aug. 25, 1760, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 456-457.

[60]Charles C. Jones Jr., History of Georgia (New York, 1883), I, 524-530.

By the third year of his administration, the colony's population had risen from five thousand white people to seven thousand, and the Negroes numbered over two thousand. The militia had grown to about twelve hundred, an increase of five hundred. He reported production doubled, although the increase was not so evident since much was smuggled to South Carolina in small boats and did not appear on the customs records.[61] To William Pitt he reported that "Everything remains quiet here, and the Colony is in a thriving Condition, under many circumstances of insecurity."[62]

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[61]Ellis to Board of Trade, Jan. 28, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 256.

[62]Ellis to W. Pitt, Feb. 12, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 267.

Chapter IV

PROBLEMS WITH THE INDIANS

All of the colonies experienced trouble with the Indians at various times. Some colonies managed to solve the problem temporarily, none solved it completely, while others failed entirely. During the formative years in Georgia, Oglethorpe held the Indians in check with a strong armed force. Reynolds, the first royal governor, had no strong armed force, which resulted in a dangerous situation. When Ellis replaced Reynolds as governor, England was involved in the French and Indian War. Constant French pressure upon the Indians to attack the English greatly intensified the already serious problem. Virtually surrounded by Indians, Georgia's vast unprotected frontier was practically an invitation to attack. From Fort Mobile on the Gulf of Mexico to Virginia on the north, the Creeks and Cherokees formed a solid line of potential destruction. Beyond these two large and powerful nations were the Chickasaws and Choctaws. The Chickasaws were friendly, but the Choctaws were often in league with the French. The Cherokees were usually friendly to the English. But unsatisfactory trading relations and the lack of substantial English military assistance against the French caused them to become increasingly restless, especially in Virginia and South Carolina. This

large and powerful nation, when unfriendly, posed a considerable threat to Georgia's northwestern frontier.

Geographically nearer and perhaps even more powerful than the Cherokees were the Creeks. Located directly to the west, they constituted the colony's greatest Indian threat. Ellis feared that cooperation between the Cherokees and Choctaws with the French would lead to an attack upon the colony.[1] However, reasonably friendly relations were maintained with the Creeks and Chickasaws. Numerous minor incidents occured, but in many cases they were provoked by dishonest traders or over zealous settlers. Ellis directed his efforts towards pacifying the Indians, maintaining a friendly trade and above all keeping them from a French alliance.[2] Ellis averted a direct clash and won the respect of many Indians by combining diplomacy, tact, and acquiescence when necessary. Indeed, his appointment as governor in 1758 was the result of his successful Indian policy.

Attempts were made by Reynolds to strengthen the colony's defenses and distribute sufficient presents to the Indians, but he lacked the necessary funds. His foes charged that he made many blunders, and lacked the patience and tact necessary for

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[1]Ellis to Lyttleton, Nov. 11, 1757, Lyttleton Papers; G.C.R., VII, 549.

[2]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 25, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 36-7.

friendly Indian relations.[3] When gifts became unobtainable, he discouraged the Indians from visiting Savannah. Ellis reported that when he arrived there were a few Indians in town, but Reynolds seemed to ignore them.[4] The new Governor began his Indian policy by inviting Acouthla, headman of the Indians then in town, to call on him. Ellis presented the chief with a Captain's commission, and distributed what gifts he could find to his followers.[5] He also announced that a prize of twenty shillings would be rewarded for an enemy scalp and forty shillings for a prisoner. Well pleased, the Indians left town to spread the news that a new governor with presents was in Savannah. After receiving his commission from the Crown, Ellis requested a large quantity of presents for the Indians, which arrived in May of 1757, aboard the H. M. S. Captain Leslie.[6]

Ellis attempted to strengthen his Indian relations by inviting the Indians to Savannah. He hoped to overcome Reynolds's earlier blunders with a proper

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[3]Board of Trade to James West, n.d., U.G.C.R., XXXIV, 200.

[4]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 18, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[5]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 11; Ellis to Lyttleton, May 1, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[6]Ellis to Lyttleton, May 24, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

talk and gifts.[7] Apparently the offer of gifts was sufficient, because before long numerous Creek hunting parties were visiting Savannah to pay their respects to the new Governor.[8] In April and May of 1757, conferences were held with large parties of Creeks.[9] Ellis cautioned the Indians not to trust the French "who delight in blood and do not tell the truth."[10] The French, he emphasized, were the enemies of the Indians, while the English were the Indian's trader and friend. The reward for scalps and prisoners was repeated at these meetings with the added admonition that prisoners were preferred. When advised by Lyttleton that an Indian called the Handsome Fellow and a group of his Upper Creek followers would soon leave Charlestown, Ellis invited them to Savannah.[11] Early in the fall of 1757, a Lower Creek called Cowkeeper arrived in Savannah with fifty of his followers, and was received by Ellis and the Council.[12] This was the largest group of Indians received by him to date. He lavishly entertained

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[7]Ellis to Board of Trade, Aug. 1, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 54.

[8]G.C.R., VII, 540.

[9]G.C.R., VII, 566-68.

[10]G.C.R., VII, 566-68.

[11]G.C.R., VII, 597-98.

[12]G.C.R., VII, 626-27.

the Indians and invited them to his own house.[13] He thought that although the expense was great the generous treatment should continue. Therefore, he asked the Board of Trade for an annual fund to pay the expense of entertaining the Indians and for more presents.[14]

After Cowkeeper left town, Ellis went to Port Royal where he met Lyttleton and Lieutenant Colonel Henry Bouquet, commander of the military stationed in South Carolina and Georgia. Together they discussed Indian relations.[15] Leadership in dealing with the southern Indians was discussed at length. Ellis's position was delicate inasmuch as Georgia was considered by many as an appendage of South Carolina, and had no jurisdiction over the land south of the Altamaha River. At the meeting, Lyttleton claimed that he should take the lead in the Indian relations of both colonies, since South Carolina was better able to impress the Indians with a show of power than Georgia.[16] With his colony impoverished and

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[13]Ellis to Board of Trade, Sept. 20, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 93.

[14]Ellis to Board of Trade, Sept. 20, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 93.

[15]Ellis to Board of Trade, Sept. 20, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 92.

[16]Ellis to Board of Trade, Sept. 20, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 92.

relying heavily on South Carolina for aid, Ellis yielded.[17] But Ellis, who thought himself an able leader, did not care for a subordinate role. He reported to the Board of Trade that his colony looked better than at any time since Oglethrope left.[18] Nevertheless, he did not push the matter, and proposed that the chiefs of the Creek nation visit Charlestown where a good impression could be made.[19] The visits to Charlestown rarely occured, however, and Lyttleton's influence with the Creeks gradually declined.

Ellis realized that the fate of Georgia depended largely upon action by Indian allies against the French.[20] Thus, early in August of 1757, he informed Lyttleton that he was sending Joseph Wright into Creek country to invite the chiefs to visit Savannah.[21] Wright was instructed not to negotiate with the Indians. His mission was to inform them that the Governor had "lately come from the Great King" and was desirous to

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[17]Ellis to Board of Trade, Sept. 20, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 92.

[18]Ellis to Board of Trade, Sept. 20, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 92.

[19]Ellis to Lyttleton, June 22, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[20]Ellis to Lyttleton, June 22, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[21]G.C.R., VII, 643-44; Ellis to Lyttleton, Aug. 7, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

talk with them and present "some tokens of the Great King's regard."[22] No special effort was made to persuade the Indians to go to Charlestown first. However, they were not hindered if they desired to visit Lyttleton. If they did go to Charlestown, they were asked to return by way of Savannah avoiding the settlements as much as possible. No doubt, Ellis's action upset Lyttleton. After an exchange of letters, Ellis advised Wright not to bring the Indians directly to Savannah, but send them to Charlestown if possible.[23] Samuel Pepper, the Indian agent for South Carolina, also tried to persuade the Creeks to go to Charlestown, but with little success. Later, Ellis informed Lyttleton that he thought the Indians were no longer inclined to have conferences at Charlestown. He blamed Indian agent Pepper, claiming that he was not highly regarded by either traders or Indians.[24]

With relations between the two colonies strained, Ellis wrote Lyttleton a conciliatory letter saying, "I can assure you Dear Sir that I have no sort of ambition of being the negotiator with the Indians . . . I have neither the abilities or the means of support

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[22]Ellis to Lyttleton, Aug. 7, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[23]Ellis to Lyttleton, Aug. 25, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[24]Ellis to Lyttleton, July 20, 1757, Lyttleton Papers; Ellis to Board of Trade, Nov. 25, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 114.

that character effectually."[25] All he had intended, he assured Lyttleton, was to avoid appearing negligent in matters so vital to his colony.[26] Lyttleton again asserted his primacy in Indian relations, but it was Ellis who actually played the leading role. By the middle of October of 1757, Wright had persuaded a large group of Upper and Lower Creeks to visit Savannah.[27] The Indian visitors, led by Wolf King and Toguiki, traveled across Georgia for the first official meeting between Ellis and the Creek nation.[28] The Governor arranged for Captain Milledge to meet them at Fort Argyle on the Ogeechee River and conduct them through the settlements. Preparations were made in Savannah for a military welcome with cannon, flags and a display of the fort militia under Colonel Jones.[29] Ellis had not exaggerated the financial state of his government, for the lumber to build cannon platforms was borrowed from the widow Papot. However, the Council later thought it best to purchase it from her, since it would cost almost as much to cart it

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[25]Ellis to Lyttleton, Aug. 25, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[26]Ellis to Lyttleton, Aug. 25, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[27]G.C.R., VII, 644; Ellis to Lyttleton, Aug. 25, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[28]G.C.R., VII, 647.

[29]G.C.R., VII, 644.

back again.[30] Within a mile of the town, the Indians were met by Captain Bryan, conducted into town, given a cannon salute, and marched through rows of militia to the Council Chamber.[31] Ellis used the occasion to impress upon them the evils of the French and at the same time telling them that England was their true friend. Then he distributed the presents "knowing that would made them go much further & be better received."[32]

In a few days there were over a hundred and fifty Indians in Savannah. On November 3, 1757, Ellis met with representatives from twenty-one different towns in another formal ceremony.[33] To this large gathering he read a letter from George III, denounced the French, and distributed more presents. Both Ellis and the Council seemed well pleased with the conferences during which a treaty was signed with the Creeks.[34] Ellis claimed the treaty was signed at the request of the Indians to indicate their desire to remain

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[30] G.C.R., VII, 670.

[31] G.C.R., VII, 644-45.

[32] Ellis to Board of Trade, Nov. 25, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 115.

[33] Ellis to Board of Trade, Nov. 25, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 115; G.C.R., VII, 657-67.

[34] Ellis to Board of Trade, Nov. 25, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 115; G.C.R., VII, 657-67.

neutral in any war between France and England.[35] The treaty also repudiated certain claims to lands and islands held by the Bosomworths, ceding the lands instead to the Crown.[36]

Ellis reported to Lyttleton that this was the largest Indian reception yet given in Georgia.[37] He expressed regret that the Indians had not first gone to Charlestown, but added that neither Wright nor he had used any "art or persuasion to prevail on them to come here in preference to Carolina."[38] The misunderstanding was blamed on Wright's not having received Ellis's later instructions to send the Indians directly to South Carolina.[39] He promised not to negotiate any particular matters with the Indians and to urge them to continue on to Charlestown.[40] The Wolf King might have gone to Charlestown had there been a suitable boat available. Ellis certainly wanted to be rid of him because of the great expense. However, he could not offer to send

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[35]Ellis to Lyttleton, Nov. 11, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[36]Ellis to Board of Trade, Nov. 25, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 114.

[37]Ellis to Lyttleton, Oct. 31, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[38]Ellis to Lyttleton, Oct. 31, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[39]Ellis to Lyttleton, Oct. 31, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[40]Ellis to Lyttleton, Oct. 31, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

the chief by boat, and arrangements with Lyttleton remained incomplete. The Indians finally left town "extremely well pleased."[41]

In the early meetings Ellis made no effort to persuade the Indians to make war on the French. The French had Indian allies along the Mississippi River, and "it would only cause a civil war in the Nation."[42] Such a war would destroy trade and jeopardize his defenseless colony. He thought the kindness shown the Creeks would have an effect on the Choctaws, "a numerous nation bordering upon the Creeks & hitherto in alliance with the French."[43] By the end of 1757, the Choctaws were making overtures to the colonial government, and John McGillivray, an Indian trader, reported that they wanted trade and peace with the English.[44] Although the Governor felt the reports somewhat exaggerated, he prepared for a meeting with them.[45]

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[41]Ellis to Lyttleton, Oct. 31, 1757; Dec. 10, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[42]Ellis to Board of Trade, Nov. 25, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 155.

[43]Ellis to Board of Trade, Dec. 7, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 121.

[44]Ellis to Board of Trade, Dec. 7, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 121; Ellis to Lyttleton, Dec. 2, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[45]Ellis to Board of Trade, Dec. 7, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 121; Ellis to Lyttleton, Dec. 2, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

Ellis summed up relations in his first year in Georgia when he reported to the Board of Trade, "Everybody seems satisfied and at ease--No new alarms have arisen . . . But our weakness renders this quiet extremely precarious, exposing us to the attacks of the many enemies & the caprice & insolence of the Creek Indians.--'Tis true they have . . . been more orderly than usual & as far as I can penetrate they are inclinable to observe a neutrality between us and the French, tho' they are incessantly teized [sic] by them."[46]

Friendly relations with the Creeks depended upon a satisfactory solution for the Bosomworth claims. Mary Musgrove, known as the Princess Couseponekeesa, married the Reverend Thomas Bosomworth. As Mary Bosomworth, she held claims to Sapelo, Ossabaw, and St. Catherine's Islands and a narrow strip of land near Savannah. When the Creeks ceded to Oglethorpe all the lands between the Savannah and the Altamaha River as far as the tide flowed, they retained a small strip near Savannah. Mrs. Bosomworth secured the islands and this strip from the Creek chief Tomichichi in 1737, and later obtained formal deeds from the Creeks.[47]

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[46] Ellis to Board of Trade, Oct. 22, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 99-100.

[47] See John R. Alden's John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier, 1754-75. (Ann Arbor: 1944), for a good summary of the complete problem.

The lack of proper legislation prevented the colony's ownership of the land, and forced Ellis to recognize her claims. An earlier attempt made by Reynolds to settle the matter in the courts with Little serving as judge failed.[48]

Ellis made no attempt to settle the problem independently. He avoided taking the case to court.[49] The fear of a decision favorable to the Bosomworths persuaded Ellis to avoid a trial.[50] Ellis, therefore, asked for a Chief Justice "capable of asserting the rights of the Crown" because unsettled the case was "exceedingly injurious to the prosperity of the Colony."[51] Unless the case was solved, Mrs. Bosomworth could agitate the Indians and keep them unfriendly toward the English. The treaty with the Creeks in November, 1757, and renewed in June, 1758, ceding the lands to the Crown was ineffective. However, it seemed to make the Bosomworths more receptive to compromise. Ellis indicated his indecision on this matter by requesting the Board of Trade to send him suggestions or instructions.[52]

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[48]Ellis to Lyttleton, April, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[49]Ellis to Board of Trade, Oct. 22, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 100-01.

[50]Ellis to Board of Trade, Oct. 22, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 100-01.

[51]Ellis to Board of Trade, Oct. 22, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 100-01.

[52]Ellis to Board of Trade, Dec. 7, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 120-21.

Obviously the Governor wanted to settle the "very disagreeable" affair, and reported that action taken to detach Indian interest from the Bosomworths only increased their efforts "to embroil us by poisoning the minds of the Savages."[53] The Bosomworths tried to take advantage of the colony's plight but Ellis thought that a compromise might be reached. Although the treaty with the Creeks did not produce a solution, it did weaken the position of the Reverend and his wife. By June of 1758, Ellis advised the Board of Trade that a compromise was "the most prudent, speedy & effectual method of terminating it [Bosomworth affair] with advantage both to the Crown & the Colony."[54] He cared little who owned the disputed lands as long as they were annexed and regulated by the colony.[55]

By compromising Ellis hoped to avoid alienating the Bosomworths, who still had many supporters, especially among the Indians.[56] Furthermore, they might prove valuable in case Spain entered the war.

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[53]Ellis to Board of Trade, Jan. 1, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 145.

[54]Ellis to Board of Trade, June 28, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 220.

[55]Ellis to Board of Trade, June 28, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 220.

[56]Ellis to Board of Trade, June 28, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 222.

Their influence with the Creeks would be valuable in getting them to fight Spain. They had been useful in the past and "no one was better qualified to negotiate such succours than Mrs. Bosomworth."[57] Finally, in July of 1759, Ellis worked out a final agreement with the Bosomworths. They received two thousand and fifty pounds from the sale of Sapelo and Ossabaw Islands; ownership of St. Catherine's Island; and an annual compensation for services Mrs. Bosomworth supplied as "Agent and Interpretess to the Creek Indians."[58] This solution not only settled a difficult problem, but gained for Ellis a valuable ally in future Indian relations.[59]

Ellis was not always so fortunate in the matter of allies. He was suspicious of the Indian agent system and had no confidence in agents not appointed by himself. Pepper, the agent for South Carolina, is a good example of the Governor's disapproval of Indian agents. Ellis charged that the South Carolinian was unfit for his job, since he excited the

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[57]Ellis to Board of Trade, June 28, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 222. Mrs. Bosomworth had been employed as agent and interpreter by General Oglethorpe upon numerous occasions.

[58]Ellis to Board of Trade, June 7, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 390-415.

[59]Ellis to Board of Trade, June 26, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 306-07; G.C.R., VIII, 160-67.

Indians and caused the traders trouble.[60] He doubted the skill of Edmund Atkin to handle Indian affairs, although he had never met him.[61] Atkin, a merchant and councilor from South Carolina, was appointed southern superintendent of Indian affairs by the Crown, and began his duties in October of 1756 with the Cherokees in Virginia and the Carolinas. Ellis did not meet him until early in October of 1758, although he was aware of his activities and expected him in Savannah before that time. He admitted after their meeting that he might have been hasty in his judgment. Later, he again expressed doubt in Atkin's abilities to handle Indian affairs.[62] Claiming that he had been neglected by Virginia officials, Atkin announced to Ellis his intention to travel into Creek country. Ellis saw no need for such a trip. The Creeks were peaceful for the moment, and Ellis suggested to higher authorities that it would be wiser for Atkin to return to Virginia where the Cherokees seemed on the verge of war.[63]

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[60] Ellis to Board of Trade, Nov. 25, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 114.

[61] Ellis to Lyttleton, Sept. 5, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[62] Ellis to Lyttleton, Oct. 17, 1758, Lyttleton Papers.

[63] Ellis to Lyttleton, Oct. 17, 1758, Lyttleton Papers; Ellis to Board of Trade, Oct. 25, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 233.

Atkin insisted on traveling into Creek country. Thus, Ellis commissioned him a justice of the peace and gave him an escort to Fort Moore near Augusta. During his stay in Augusta, lasting until the spring of 1759, Atkin obtained many gifts to give to the Indians.[64] He requested authority to suspend trading licenses, but the Governor could see no reason for it, adding that "I am afraid he [Atkin] is rather of too hasty & sanguine a temper to deal properly with the people he intends to reform."[65] However, Ellis was willing to grant added powers "in order to speed up things," providing Lyttleton would grant the same powers.[66]

A few weeks later, Ellis changed his mind on the score. He advised his Council that Atkin had enough authority, and suggested that should Lyttleton grant any new powers "his co-operating with Mr. Lyttleton might not be Necessary."[67] The Council agreed in part but preferred that Ellis conduct his own business with Lyttleton. Although Ellis might have preferred greater independence in Indian affairs, he did assure

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[64] G.C.R., VII, 826.

[65] Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 24, 1759, Lyttleton Papers.

[66] Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 24, 1759, Lyttleton Papers.

[67] G.C.R., VII, 826.

Atkin, who was by this time an agent of South Carolina, that he would inform the traders to respect his commission and at the same time confirm any new powers granted by Lyttleton. But the feud continued between Ellis and Atkin concerning the Creeks. Ellis thought that trouble would result from Atkin's visit into "the peaceable system of the Creeks," while Atkin called the situation "a pernicious one."[68] Ellis wanted to maintain a peaceful status quo in the Creek nation at all costs.

Ellis wasted no opportunity to condemn Atkin's actions, and charged that his "dilatoriness in going to the Creeks . . . forewarned the French" in time for them to supply gifts for the Indians.[69] He disapproved of trade negotiations made by Atkin and charged him with "disgusting the Choctaws" and slighting the Creeks.[70] In September of 1759, Ellis's charges seemed justified when Atkin was attacked by one Tobacco-Eater, a Lower Creek, while addressing an Indian gathering at Tuchabatchie. The Governor reported to Lyttleton that the attack was Atkin's

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[68]Ellis to Lyttleton, Mar. 13, 1759, Lyttleton Papers.

[69]Ellis to Board of Trade, July 26, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 308.

[70]Ellis to Board of Trade, July 26, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 308; Ellis to Lyttleton, Aug. 27, 1759, Lyttleton Papers.

fault, since he used "provoking Words and much Abuse."[71] Apparently the attack resulted from a misunderstanding of the address rather than general discontent.

Shortly after the attack on Atkin, Ellis held a conference with a party of Lower Creeks with Mrs. Bosomworth as interpreter. They reaffirmed their friendship for the English and denied any plan to join the Cherokees against the English.[72] They charged that Atkin caused them to miss the winter hunts when he delayed an appointment. When he finally arrived, he exhibited an haughty attitude.[73] The Indians expressed relief that Atkin was unharmed by the attack, but showed greater concern for "the King's Paper in his Pocket" than for his personal welfare.[74] In June of 1760, a conference with the Creeks produced further complaints against Atkin. Old Bracket, headman of Tuchabatchie, sent a talk delivered by a half-breed called Mad Dog, charging Atkin with abusing the Lower Creeks. He was accused of giving presents intended for them to the Choctaws, and calling them Frenchman and refusing their hands.[75]

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[71]Ellis to Lyttleton, Oct. 16, 1759, Lyttleton Papers.

[72]G.C.R., VIII, 160-68.

[73]G.C.R., VIII, 160-68.

[74]G.C.R., VIII, 160-68.

[75]G.C.R., VIII, 319-20.

Ellis reported to the Board of Trade, "I can without any prejudice to Mr. Atkin assure Your Lordships, that he appears very ill calculated for the employment he is in."[76]

Tempted by many opportunities to impress the large groups of Creek warriors in Savannah during the fall of 1757, Ellis generously destributed gifts. The Governor was forced to modify his policy, however, because of the increased expense.[77] The Indians expected more than he could provide. He estimated that at least fifteen hundred pounds was needed to provide an adequate supply of presents. The Indians would not believe the gifts were exhausted nor would they cease to expect the colony to repair their guns and saddles. Presents and kind treatment were the Governor's solution to the Indian problem, and he reported that money could not be more wisely used.[78] The French also sought the Indians as allies. The Governor reported that the Creeks were the most formidable tribe of Indians in the south and "while

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[76]Ellis to Board of Trade, Jan. 6, 1760, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 330.

[77]Ellis to Board of Trade, Jan. 1, 1758, U.G.C.R, XXVIII, 146.

[78]Ellis to W. Pitt, Feb. 28, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 181.

they are at peace with us, they are a good Barrier against the French and Spanish."[79]

By March he reported that he had entertained twelve hundred and eighty Indians, much to the displeasure of the out settlers. As the Indians passed through the settlements, they often begged from the settlers, a practice which upset the men and frightened the women.[80] But outside of a few disgusted settlers, Ellis could report to the home authorities that the colony enjoyed perfect tranquillity, adding that "I have indeed been fortunate in accommodating most of the differences that subsisted between this colony and the Creek Indians, and the influence I have acquired amongst them, add greatly to our security."[81] Nevertheless, much depended upon Ellis's ability to pacify the Creeks and keep them from becoming too friendly with the French and the Cherokees.

The Cherokees were unable to form an alliance with the Creeks or the Chickasaws in the first years of Ellis's administration. It appears the Cherokees feared a war with the Creeks.[82] Minor incidents

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[79]Ellis to W. Pitt, Feb. 28, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 181.

[80]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 28, 1758, Lyttleton Papers.

[81]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 31, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 185.

[82]Ellis to Board of Trade, Nov. 9, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 242-43.

occured and the Creeks scalped several Cherokees. Ellis reported that the unexpected blow threw the Cherokee nation into consternation and they immediately became more friendly with Virginia traders.[83]

There is no doubt that Ellis exercised much more influence over both Creeks and Cherokees than Lyttleton, and on several occasions he felt compelled to explain the numerous visits of the Creeks to Savannah as "mere visits of ceremoney & good friendship" adding that "we talked of nothing important in our formal meeting."[84] In late summer of 1759, even the Cherokees indicated that they would prefer to settle their differences with South Carolina through Ellis rather than with Lyttleton. Lyttleton demanded an explanation and Ellis wrote that he had no "ambitions of distinquishing" himself in regard to the Indian question, nor did he wish to "fish in troubled waters."[85] Later, he hinted that it was his influence that caused Cherokees to come to Charlestown just before the Cherokee War in late 1759.[86]

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[83]Ellis to Board of Trade, Nov. 9, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 242-43.

[84]Ellis to Lyttleton, Mar. 29, 1759, Lyttleton Papers.

[85]Ellis to Lyttleton, Sept. 25, 1759, Lyttleton Papers.

[86]Ellis to Lyttleton, Oct. 11, 1759, Lyttleton Papers.

Actually the Cherokee War caused little damage to Georgia. But, as a precaution, Ellis sent Captain Milledge with reinforcements for Fort Augusta. The new Governor's aim from the beginning of his administration was to keep the Creeks from aligning with the Cherokees and the French, and he was relatively sucessful. There were a few incidents in Georgia, when a few Upper Creeks went on the warpath, but the Creek nation remained friendly. Before he left Georgia, Ellis was successful in gaining the friendship of many Upper Creeks. In October of 1759, Ellis held a conference and made a powerful talk in an attempt to persuade the Creeks to ally with the English in the war with the Cherokees.[87] He promised them peace, abundant trade, and non-interference with their hunting grounds.[88] The Indians seemed pleased with the talk and after promising to remain peaceful, sent runners to their towns and also to the Cherokees to spread news of the conference. Ellis reported to Lyttleton that he thought the unrest among the Cherokees would not influence the Creeks to break off peaceful relations with the English.[89]

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[87]G.C.R., VIII, 169-70.

[88]G.C.R., VIII, 169-70.

[89]Ellis to Lyttleton, Oct. 11, 1759, Lyttleton Papers.

The reward for scalps was increased to " Trading Gun, three Pound of Powder, six Pound of Shot, a Blanket, a Flag, a pair of Indian Boots, and a Cag containing four Gallons of trading Rum."[90] Ellis told Lyttleton that Georgia was so weak that he could only act defensively.[91]

Lyttleton managed to get a treaty with the Cherokees, but it did not last long. When the Cherokees renewed their attacks and murdered several settlers, Ellis increased his campaign to agitate the Creeks against them. He gave his agents one thousand pounds credit for goods to be used for this purpose.[92] Ellis obtained the assistance of some Creeks and Chickasaws as scouts. The Bosomworths were useful in persuading some Lower Creeks to wage war against the French and "even prevailed on a party to go out against them and bloody the path."[93] Several such parties were outfitted by Ellis's government and in April, Whelhofkee and Tupahotkee, leaders of a war party of Lower Creeks, arrived in Savannah singing war songs and bearing several enemy scalps. After a lavish ceremony with Mrs. Bosomworth again interpreting,

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[90] G.C.R., VII, 248.

[91] Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 4, 1760, Lyttleton Papers.

[92] Ellis to Board of Trade, Feb. 15, 1760, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 333.

[93] Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 15, 1760, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 345.

Ellis gave presents to the Indians and they appeared pleased. Afterwards, the Governor requested more funds for gifts to the Indians and advised that such money would reap rich dividends.[94] Whelhofkee and Tupahotkee said they could not go to war until the wives could be cared for and Ellis did not press the matter and used the occasion to hand out gifts.

In May, members of a Creek war party told him of a battle with the Cherokees and produced a scalp. The headman of the party had been mortally wounded, but had ordered them to tell the Governor that he had died fighting as a friend of the English.[95] Ellis thought that the Cherokees did not want to force the issue in Georgia fearing that the entire Creek nation might enter the war against them. He hoped that some Creeks would be killed so that they would wage a war of revenge.[96] The greatest trouble came from the Upper Creeks who were accused by "Stampfinger (Coweta Headman) Warriors King; & Sustonagehoboye" headmen of Lower Creek towns, of letting the Cherokee transport English prisoners through their country.[97]

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[94]Ellis to Board of Trade, Ap. 16, 1760, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 369.

[95]G.C.R., VIII, 295-97.

[96]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 15, 1760, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 381.

[97]G.C.R., VIII, 308-14.

In June of 1760, several traders were murdered in Upper Creek towns. Ellis feared that the whole tribe might defect if held responsible for the act, so he placed the blame on the French and Cherokees.[98] He reported to the Board of Trade that "By these temporate Measures, I am hopeful, that if we shall not be able to establish the peace of this Colony on a lasting foundation, we may at least keep the Creeks quiet for some time; which in our present Circumstances would answer some very important purposes."[99] Lyttleton also approved the plan. Ellis's strategy produced results. In late June of 1760, ten Indians from the Upper and Lower Creek nation arrived in Savannah with two written talks; one from Gun Merchant of the Upper Creeks; and the other from Old Stumper, (the Guardian of Togulki Son of Malacki) of the Lower Creeks.[100] The Indians described the murders as unfortunate incidents, but assured the Governor that the action was not "a concerted thing of the Nation in general."[101] They gave their regrets and assurances of continued friendship, but added that it might be prudent not

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[98]Ellis to Board of Trade, June 7, 1760, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 384.

[99]Ellis to Board of Trade, June 7, 1760, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 384.

[100]G.C.R., VIII, 325-26.

[101]G.C.R., VIII, 325-26.

to insist on punishing the murderers. Ellis mildly protested but did not press the Indians too far on the matter. Instead he promised them continued trade and seemed to be satisfied with their sincerity and friendship.[102] The only damage to the colony by the raids of the Cherokees and Upper Creeks seems to have been to crops while some people were forced to leave their plantations temporarily. By July of 1760, the danger was passed and Ellis ordered that the militia be dismissed from duty until further orders. Conferences with the Choctaws and Creeks continued and in the fall of 1760, he could report that both nations "still behaved with much civility" toward the English.[103]

Ellis's wise diplomacy and patience frustrated French attempts to lure the Creeks into a war alliance. In place of armed strength he was forced to use frequent Indian conferences, generous quantities of presents and a friendly tolerant attitude toward visiting Indian parties. He gradually took the lead in Indian relations with the southern Indians, much to the chagrin of Governor Lyttleton of South Carolina. His leadership, mild manner and conciliatory conversation prevented much unnecessary

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[102]Ellis to Board of Trade, July 10, 1760, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 443-44.

[103]Ellis to Board of Trade, Oct. 20, 1760, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 443-44.

aggravation of the Indians. He succeeded in pacifying them and at the same time won their respect and friendship. His leadership in Indian relations prevented much destruction in the southern colonies, just as it lessened the damage to Georgia. His successes won him the praise of the home authorities.[104]

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[104]Board of Trade to Ellis, Nov. 24, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXXIV, 317-18.

Chapter VI

RELATIONS WITH SOUTH CAROLINA

Governor Ellis first arrived in Charlestown in January, 1757, while enroute to Savannah. He was greeted warmly by Lyttleton. After this initial meeting, most of the business between the two colonies was conducted by letter. The letters are revealing. Oftentimes the men were friendly and attempted to play upon each other's vanity. Nevertheless, the correspondence is a good source of information concerning the many disputes between the two governors.

Georgia was founded in 1732, as a buffer state to protect South Carolina's southern frontier. The territory occupied by Georgia in 1757 had been literally carved out of South Carolina. Its northern boundary was South Carolina proper, while a strip of South Carolina territory between Georgia and Spanish Florida formed its southern boundary. Ellis vigorously protested this arrangement.[1] Georgia, younger and less prosperous, was not considered as important as South Carolina. Indeed, some Carolinians considered it an appendage of South Carolina. This fact made Ellis's problems more difficult and his disputes with Governor Lyttleton frequent.

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[1]Ellis to W. Pitt, Feb. 12, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 266.

Georgia, he reasoned, would be a great acquisition for the French. They could use it as a convenient base to raid the South Carolinian frontier.[4]

Some effort to fortify the colony was made by Reynolds. Forty men were organized into the colony's troop of Rangers.[5] Reynolds intended to increase the force to two hundred and fifty men, but his plans never went beyond the paper stage. Reynolds had failed to secure permission from the Board of Trade when he established the Rangers. Nor did he inform the Board of his action.[6] The result was that the Board did not allow funds for the operation.[7] Later, an attempt was made to obtain assistance from the Earl of Loudoun, Commander-in-Chief in America. When this failed, the troops were supplied by means of negotiable certificates, a type of paper money, which acquired credit "from a prevailing notion that the Crown would discharge them as it had done those issued in the last war by Mr. Oglethorpe."[8] However, the captain of the Rangers was forced to support himself, while his men relied "upon the honor of the

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[4]Ellis to Lyttleton, June 23, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[5]Reynolds to Lyttleton, Feb. 3, 1757, Lyttleton Papers; Ellis to William Pitt, Dec. 10, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 140.

[6]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 9.

[7]Board of Trade to Ellis, Ap. 21, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXXIV, 222-23.

[8]Ellis to William Pitt, Dec. 10, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 140.

government for their reinbursement."[9] The Board of Trade, ignorant of Governor Reynolds's actions, informed Ellis that "some Difficulty has arisen on Account of its being a Service not provided for in any Estimate."[10]

Ellis disliked some efforts made by Reynolds to arm the colony. Writing to the Board of Trade, he complained that the late Governor had "waited to the last to begin anything and then appointed the officers and every other step that could deprive me of the means of obliging any person in the execution of this measure should it take place."[11] He particularly disapproved of Reynolds raising the Rangers without providing for the expense. Nevertheless, Ellis decided that it was wiser to retain them and face the problem of how to pay for them. His first thought was to wait for orders from Loudoun or the home authorities.[12] Later he decided to write a draft on Loudoun for a hundred pounds to pay the troops. If this failed, the Governor or the Council should assume the obligation. The Council thought it an "ill precedent" to assume the risk of

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[9]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 18, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[10]Board of Trade to Ellis, Ap. 21, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXXIV, 222-223

[11]Ellis to Board of Trade, Mar. 11, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 8-9.

[12]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 18, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

paying the bill.[13] Ellis also proposed sending them north to wait on General Abercomby, the commander-in-chief of the military until 1758, because it would relieve the colony of an onerous financial burden.[14] But the Rangers were badly needed in the colony. In the winter of 1757-58, there were but a few troops in the colony. Ellis reported that, "'Tis greatly to be wished a Troop or two of these Rangers were kept on foot during the present War, being well calculated for this Country service especially in case of Indian disturbances as they can shoot on horse back & ride full speed thro' the Woods."[15] Finally, a draft was obtained from Loudoun until Ellis should receive orders from home authorities. When Loudoun sailed for England in 1758, support of the Rangers fell upon Ellis's private fortune.[16] Repeated letters to Abercomby brought no assistance, and Ellis continued to support them until the Board of Trade assumed the responsibility late in his administration.[17]

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[13] G.C.R., VII, 503.

[14] G.C.R., VII, 842.

[15] Ellis to Board of Trade, Jan. 1, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 145-56.

[16] Ellis to Board of Trade, May 20, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 217.

[17] Ellis to Board of Trade, May 20, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 217

Another aspect of the same problem was the need to fortify the colony. An extensive fort building program was begun by Oglethorpe, but most of this work was in ruins when Ellis began his administration. Therefore, one of the first projects started by Ellis was the construction of five new forts. The necessary legislation was passed, and the work was begun late in 1757.[18] The five forts were planned for the strategic areas of Darien, Augusta, Midway, Ogechee, and Savannah. The principal fort was planned for Savannah to protect the town from sudden Indian attacks, and also "to engage the people's attention to something of more importance than cabal & party . . ."[19] A tax of one shilling was levied to complete the work on the fort at Savannah. The entire town was to be fortified with "a large ditch twelve feet wide, a breastwork of earth five feet high within the bastille and ten feet without, faced with spikes to prevent scaling."[20]

In August of 1757, the Governor received a letter from Lieutenant Charles Taylor describing the fortifications

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[18]Ellis to Lyttleton, July 8, 1757, Lyttleton Papers; Ellis to Board of Trade, May 5, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 24; July 8, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 43.

[19]Ellis to Lyttleton, Ap. 1757, Lyttleton Papers; Ellis to Board of Trade, July 1, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 52.

[20]Ellis to Board of Trade, July 1, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 52.

on St. Simon's Island and Cumberland Island.[21] The fort at Frederica, on St. Simon's Island, was so dilapidated that it could not withstand a "faint & irregular attempt of an Indian enemy."[22] The five cannon in the fort were not in firing condition nor could they be moved readily. Twelve pieces of artillery were stored near the fort, but they could not be moved on their rotten carriages. In all, there were thirty-five pieces of good ordinance in or near Frederica, but many more had been neglected and the elements had taken their toll. Gunpowder for the cannon had been exposed to the wet weather, and much of it was useless. Taylor also reported a "deplorable lack of muskets."[23] The cannon at Fort Simon, on St. Simon's Island, had been carried away by the Spanish in Oglethorpe's time. Fort Williams, on Cumberland Island, had the greater part of its ramparts demolished by a hurricane, and was in little better condition than the other forts.[24]

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[21]Lieutenant Charles Taylor to Ellis, Aug. 13, 1757, The Papers of Colonel Henry Bouquet, eds. Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent, Pennsylvania Historical Commission (Harrisburg, 1941), Series 21631-21632, 55-57. Hereafter Bouquet Papers.

[22]Ellis to Lyttleton, Aug. 13, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[23]Ellis to Lyttleton, Aug. 13, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[24]Lieutenant Charles Taylor to Ellis, Aug. 13, 1757, Bouquet Papers, pp. 55-57.

Early in 1758, Ellis made a second inspection of the colony's southern frontier. The new fort on the Ogeechee River impressed him, and he described it as "a quadrangular figure each side measuring 100 yards constructed with thick Logs set upright 14 feet long 5 whereof are sunk in the earth & has 4 little Bastions pierced for small & great Guns which would make it very defencible."[25] A battery of eight guns was erected at Sunbury "in a very proper situation for defending the River."[26] Ellis's report went on to describe Frederica as being in a "ruinious condition" after a recent fire, and "time has done almost as much for the fortifications."[27] However, he thought the fort's location was of strategic importance for a defensive position on the west side of St. Simon's Island and on the chief and most southern branch of the Altamaha River. The river would be ideal as a harbor since large ships could sail up the river as far as the town, while the river's many bends made pursuit virtually impossible without drawing heavy fire from shore batteries. Ellis also thought that Fort Williams was strategically located.[28] He reported to the Board

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[25]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 20, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 215.

[26]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 20, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 215.

[27]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 20, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 215.

[28]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 20, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 215.

of Trade that with three thousand pounds he could repair Fort Williams. Frederica could be "rebuilt with solid & lasting materials as well as be rendered very strong" with the ten thousand pounds. Ellis concluded, "until these things are done I apprehend this province & I believe I may add the next will be very insecure."[29]

Ellis seemed more interested in the colony's southern frontier. He was content to allow South Carolina to supply the fort at Augusta, but the South Carolina General Assembly urged that Georgia supply the fort.[30] Ellis, who often sought what was best only for Georgia, contended that his colony's economic condition would not allow it. He reported that, "'Tis with the utmost difficulty that the smallest sum can be raised."[31] Ellis negotiated with the authorities in America and at home in an effort to enlist greater aid for his colony. He theorized that if Georgia fell to the French or the Indians, the other southern colonies would be threatened. Therefore, in the south, a strong Georgia was the keystone of the arch. The aid needed by Georgia would have to come from either the colonies or the home authorities, and he was not hesitant to request aid from both.

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[29]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 20, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 216.

[30]Ellis to Lyttleton, April, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[31]Ellis to Lyttleton, April, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

In the summer of 1757, he asked Lyttleton to request one hundred men from Lieutenant Colonel Henry Bouquet, commander of the troops in the southern colonies, "to quiet the minds of our people," but added that he could not support them.[32] Bouquet had recently arrived in Charlestown with a number of regular troops, and four hundred militia. He expected more from Virginia, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina. Bouquet's duty was to defend the three southern colonies using Charlestown as a center of operations. He was too busy to visit Georgia immediately and advised Ellis to build new forts. Ellis was promised a hundred men if Georgia could supply them with transportation and food.[33] In August of 1757, a company of Virginia militia was sent to Georgia, but they stayed only a few months. In January of 1758, the Governor reported that the colony was defended by the Rangers, a few irregulars, and a detachment of about sixty men from one of South Carolina's independent companies.[34] Bouquet seemed willing to help, but apparently lacked enough forces. It was Ellis's idea to garrison the major towns of Georgia, especially Savannah and Frederica. However, Bouquet

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[32]Ellis to Lyttleton, July 10, 1757; Sept. 5, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[33]Bouquet to Ellis, July 14, 1757, Bouquet Papers, pp. 31-32.

[34]Ellis to William Pitt, Dec. 10, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 140.

advised him against this as it seemed a waste of manpower.[35] Instead, Bouquet promised reinforcements when they were needed. Since Bouquet was also trying to obtain money from Loudoun, but with little success, he advised Ellis that there would be no rum provided for the troops.[36] This was an important morale factor for troops sent to remote Georgia.

Although Georgia did not directly fight the French, there were numerous encounters with French privateers. French ships were able to sail up and down the Georgia coast without opposition. Georgia had no warship. Ellis reported to Lyttleton that a French privateer had been sighted from the Tybee lighthouse at the entrance of the Savannah River.[37] The ship chased several English ships and caused great alarm in Savannah and other towns on the southern rivers. There was fear that French ships might sail up the rivers and raid the plantations.[38] The only defense that could be provided these people was a warning system set up on the islands off shore.

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[35] Bouquet to Ellis, Sept. 17, 1757, Bouquet Papers, pp. 98-99.

[36] Bouquet to Ellis, Sept. 17, 1757, Bouquet Papers, pp. 98-99.

[37] Ellis to Lyttleton, July 8, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[38] Ellis to Lyttleton, July 10, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

Ellis offered two solutions to the danger of French privateers. The English warships stationed at Charlestown should drive the French out to sea.[39] Less subtle in his report to the Board of Trade, Ellis suggested that Georgia was a natural location for a naval station inasmuch as the French used St. Augustine as a base for supplies.[40] Ellis was thinking solely of Georgia's welfare and saw no importance in having the English fleet stationed so far north. He complained that the "Captains of the King's Ships stationed at Charlestown" were not helping to protect Georgia's coast from the French. He claimed that they would go no further south than the sand bar of Charlestown, while the captain of one privateer "had the insolence to threaten dismantling Fort Williams & Frederica."[41] He also pointed out to the Board of Trade that the harbor at Charlestown was not properly suited for warships, being shallow, intricate and having a sand bar.[42] The port was remote from French and Spanish ports and shipping lanes. Furthermore, Charlestown was "attractive to men of pleasure."[43]

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[39]Ellis to Lyttleton, June 5, 1758, Lyttleton Papers.

[40]Ellis to Board of Trade, Aug. 1, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 55; Jan. 28, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 254.

[41]Ellis to Board of Trade, July 20, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 227-228.

[42]Ellis to Board of Trade, July 20, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 228.

[43]Ellis to Board of Trade, July 20, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 228.

Certainly no town in Georgia could boast of being a pleasure spot. A port in Georgia would be valuable because the English fleet in the West Indies had forced French shipping from New Orleans and "their Suguar Islands" to pass closer to the Georgia coast making it an easy target for an English fleet.[44] The French also would be forced to stop using St. Augustine as a supply port.[45] Although his pleas went unanswered and the English fleet remained at Charlestown, he never ceased requesting warships be sent to Georgia.

The presence of French privateers along the Georgia coast complicated the colony's relations with St. Augustine. French ships regularly used St. Augustine as a port of supply. The Spanish bought the provisions from settlers in southern Georgia.[46] Even the colony's southern magistrates were suspected of helping the Spanish obtain cattle which were later supplied to the French.[47] The situation became so serious in June of 1760, that the General Assembly prohibited shipping between Georgia

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[44]Ellis to Board of Trade, July 20, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 228.

[45]Ellis to Lyttleton, June 23, 1758, Lyttleton Papers.

[46]Ellis to Lyttleton, Sept. 6, 1758, Lyttleton Papers.

[47]Ellis to Lyttleton, June 5, 1758, Lyttleton Papers.

and all parts of the Spanish or French dominion on the north side of the Bay of Mexico.[48]

Ellis foresaw increased trade and travel between Louisiana and Canada. The increased intercourse would require protection by a settlement near the Gulf of Florida. The logical place for this settlement, the Governor reasoned, was Frederica.[49] He talked to Loudoun about the matter. The Governor listened intently in 1757 when a man named Moore came to him seeking a commission to take fifty men and a party of Chickasaws and attack the French.[50] The idea was not carried through because Lyttleton feared a French counter-attack and advised against any harsh moves. However, in 1769, Ellis advocated to William Pitt an expedition against Fort Mobile, "which I am persuaded might be attempted with success . . . the Fort at Mobile I am informed is but weak, constructed of Brick, mounts but fourteen Cannon, and is Garrisoned by about 600 men."[51]

Georgia's role in the Cherokee War was defensive, with Ellis desperately trying to pacify the Creeks and protect South Carolina's southern frontier.[52] Georgia

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[48] G.R.C., VIII, 324.

[49] Ellis to Lyttleton, Sept. 5, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[50] Ellis to Lyttleton, May 5, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[51] Ellis to William Pitt, Ap. 16, 1760, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 373.

[52] Ellis to Board of Trade, Sept. 5, 1760, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 461.

was not involved directly in the fighting with the Cherokees, but Ellis did have a plan of action should this happen. The militia, the main force of which was stationed along the southern frontier to intercept escaping Negroes, was provided with arms.[53] In case of war with the Cherokees, twenty of the soldiers stationed at Frederica were to be sent to Savannah and the Rangers at Savannah would be sent to strengthen Augusta. The Rangers at Barrington on the Altamaha River were to entrench. The plan was approved by Lyttleton and Ellis's Council.

Further military preparations were made by the colony in February of 1760. The General Assembly provided the Governor with funds for two hundred militia, and several new forts were started.[54] A general muster was called in the colony. The militia, which included a few Negroes, was to remain in the colony as defensive strength.[55] At no time did Ellis seriously think of using them as an offensive weapon. For this purpose he sent for the Creek chiefs. He was certain that their aid would be forecoming. In a letter to the Governor of South Carolina, Ellis confidently stated that, "I am upon very good terms with them [Creek Indians],

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[53]Ellis to Lyttleton, Nov. 25, 1759, Lyttleton Papers; G.C.R., VIII, 160.

[54]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 16, 1760, Lyttleton Papers; G.C.R., VIII, 250-51.

[55]G.C.R., VIII, 250-51; G.C.R., VIII, 324.

and there is not the smallest dispute between them and this Government."[56]

Ellis's main accomplishment in defending Georgia was not his ability to win battles, but in staying out of them. His government lacked the men and weapons to wage an offensive war. The one weapon he did possess was the ability to understand the Creeks. He won their respect and friendship and then used it as a balance against the French and the Cherokees. The colony's financial condition was handicapped by the failure of the home authorities to provide adequate funds and supplies. Therefore, throughout the war, Ellis had to rely on assistance from South Carolina.

[56]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 4, 1760, Lyttleton Papers.

Chapter V

PROBLEMS OF DEFENSE

The possibility of a French attack upon Georgia during the French and Indian War placed great pressure upon the colony. Rumors indicated that the French planned to invade the colony in the spring of 1757.[1] The Georgians were in no position to defend themselves against the French. The colony lacked money, men, arms, and a warship. So great was the danger and so desperate was Georgia's condition, that Ellis reported, "the only probable hope of Assistance that can arise, must be from the friendly disposition of the Indians."[2] Before he sailed for Georgia, he requested gifts for the Indians, five hundred muskets and a warship. The Indian presents and arms reached the colony in May of 1757, three months after Ellis. The new Governor made good use of the presents, but the muskets were not the type he wanted. He complained that the guns were too heavy and clumsy and "will be managed with difficulty in this warm country."[3] Ellis further requested that other colonies supply him with regular troops because Georgia was open to attack.

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[1] William Wilkins to Lyttleton, Nov. 24, 1756, U.G.C.R., XXVII, 215.

[2] Ellis to Board of Trade, Oct. 5, 1756, U.G.C.R., XXVII, 285-286.

[3] Ellis to Board of Trade, May 25, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 36.

In 1758, Ellis began licensing South Carolina traders in Georgia and on its frontiers. Lyttleton claimed Georgia lacked jurisdiction over the area.[2] Ellis replied that South Carolina traders hampered his efforts to eliminate unlicensed trading among the Creeks.[3] Ellis believed that the licensing of traders was necessary to quench the flow of provisions into Florida, and prevent Indian disturbances in the colony's settlements. Provisions smuggled into Florida gradually found a place aboard French privateers operating off Georgia's coast. Therefore, Ellis thought it important to halt all trade in the settlements.[4]

Complaints from worried settlers forced Ellis to attempt preventing traders from attracting large groups of Creeks into the settlements. In March, 1758, the Georgia Commons House called the Governor's attention to the inconveniences caused by the trading problem.[5] Trouble was precipitated by South Carolinians, who had arrived in the colony at this time. The Commons House reported that legislation regulating trade with

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[2]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 28, 1758, Lyttleton Papers.

[3]Ellis to Lyttleton, Mar. 17, 1758, Lyttleton Papers.

[4]Ellis to Lyttleton, Ap. 13, 1758, Lyttleton Papers.

[5]Ellis to Lyttleton, Mar. 17, 1758, Lyttleton Papers.

the Lower Creeks was being impaired by South Carolina traders.[6] The Commons House requested Ellis to inform Lyttleton that South Carolina traders were causing trouble to Georgia's Indian trade. Ellis sent this information to Lyttleton and constantly informed him of incidents arising from Creeks passing through Georgia settlements to trade with the Carolinians.[7] Apparently, he took for granted the right to license South Carolinians trading on Georgia's frontiers. The dispute produced a strained relationship between the two men. Lyttleton was annoyed with Ellis's prohibitions on trade. He requested Ellis to confine his activities to Georgia.[8] Ellis replied that he was only endeavoring to halt unlicensed trade in the settlements and along the frontiers.[9] Ellis's major concern was to enforce the laws passed by his legislature and to prevent trade detrimental to Georgia. Lyttleton was interested in retaining control of his colony's trade.

Ellis was aware that the Indian trade was necessary. Trade was used to combat French influence among the

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[6]Ellis to Lyttleton, Mar. 17, 1758; Ap. 13, 1758; May 3, 1758; Lyttleton Papers.

[7]Ellis to Lyttleton, Mar. 17, 1758; Ap. 13, 1758; Lyttleton Papers.

[8]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 28, 1758, Lyttleton Papers.

[9]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 28, 1758; Ap. 13, 1758; Lyttleton Papers.

Indians. He did not blame the Indians for the trouble and related to Lyttleton that, "the Indians have done nothing through ill nature, but merely from necessity & want, we cannot therefore justly blame them, but those who have drawn them into the Settlements."[10] The Georgia ban on trade was openly ignored by South Carolinians. The Indians continued to travel across Georgia to trade along her northern border. When the trouble persisted, Ellis proposed that trade in the settlements be banned in both colonies.[11] However, Lyttleton, not sharing Ellis's tolerant view of the Indians, was reluctant to adopt his plan.

The Cherokee War was another source of friction between the two governments. The first argument to develop was over the deployment of Chickasaws settled in the Augusta area. A second issue was the jurisdiction of several companies of South Carolina militia stationed at Georgia forts.

In October, 1759, Ellis was informed that South Carolina agents were attempting to persuade the Chickasaws to leave Georgia and help South Carolina in the war against the Cherokees.[12] Ellis was dismayed

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[10]Ellis to Lyttleton, Ap. 13, 1758, Lyttleton Papers.

[11]Ellis to Lyttleton, Ap. 13, 1758, Lyttleton Papers.

Ellis to Lyttleton, Nov. 25, 1759, Lyttleton Papers; G.C.R., VIII, 172-175

at such action, which he and his Council thought would weaken Georgia's northwestern frontier, and "destroy the present Peace and Tranquillity of this Province."[13] After an empty threat to use the Georgia militia, Ellis let the matter drop.

Several companies of the South Carolina militia were stationed in Georgia during Ellis's administration. Early in 1760, there was a dispute over the command of these troops. Ellis thought that they came under his authority as long as they were in Georgia. Ellis claimed, however, that some of the militia officers did not regard themselves under his authority.[14] He regarded Lyttleton's command of these troops as an encroachment upon the territorial sovereignty of Georgia and inconsistant with his royal commission as commander of the King's forces in Georgia. He admitted that during the time of the Georgia Trustees the governor of South Carolina did command these troops.[15] He pointed out, however, that the command went to Reynolds when Georgia became a royal colony. This was by virtue of the Crown's royal commission to him.[16]

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[13]Ellis to Lyttleton, Nov. 25, 1759, Lyttleton Papers.

[14]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 4, 1760, Lyttleton Papers.

[15]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 4, 1760, Lyttleton Papers.

[16]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 4, 1760, Lyttleton Papers.

In a spirited letter to Lyttleton, Ellis described matters as being "on a wrong footing" concerning the command of Fort Augusta.[17] The situation at Fort Augusta was particularly delicate, because the fort formed an important link in the defense of both colonies. Ellis claimed command of the fort because it was in Georgia, and apparently he had been promised command in an earlier meeting with Lyttleton at Beafort.[18] With both governors diametrically opposed on the issue, Ellis exclaimed that he "would sooner Command a Cockboat, than be ViceRoy of Mexico under such degrading circumstances."[19] Lyttleton promoted Lieutenant Shaw of the South Carolina militia to major in an effort to acquire full command of the fort. Ellis, in reprisal, threatened to promote Captain Milledge of the Georgia militia to lieutenant colonel, making him the senior officer. However, the fort remained under the command of South Carolina, much to the chagrin of Ellis.[20]

The settlement at New Hanover, below the Altamaha River, caused trouble to both Georgia and South Carolina.

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[17]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 16, 1760, Lyttleton Papers.

[18]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 16, 1760, Lyttleton Papers.

[19]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 16, 1760, Lyttleton Papers.

[20]Ellis to Lyttleton, Feb. 16, 1760, Lyttleton Papers.

The settlement was organized by Edmund Gray, a would-be Georgia politician and a fugitive from justice in Virginia. The Gray settlement was considered illegal by both Georgia and South Carolina. Lyttleton particularly disliked the idea of the outlaw settlement being in his domain.[21] Many of the "outlaws" had fled Georgia and South Carolina to evade their creditors. The settlement, located south of Georgia, was rightly under the jurisdiction of South Carolina. Ellis showed keen interest in the settlement. Lyttleton had to remind Ellis repeatedly that Georgia lacked jurisdiction.

Ellis met Gray for the first time on an inspection tour of the colony in 1757. He characterized Gray as an odd person who was neurotic, and disliked by most whites.[22] The Indians, however, were quite impressed with Gray. He was called a "pretended Quaker" by Reynolds and accused of "dirty" politics.[23] Ellis, who had many dealings with the man, further described him as an "unintelligible character, shrewd, sagacious, & capable of affording the best advise to others, but ridiculously absurd in every part of his own conduct."[24]

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[21]Lyttleton to Board of Trade, Sept. 15, 1754, U.G.C.R., XXVII, 293.

[22]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 5, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 19-20; Ellis to Lyttleton, May 1, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[23]Ottolenghe to Martyn, Nov. 25, 1754, U.G.C.R., XXVII, 87-88; Reynolds to Board of Trade, Feb. 28, 1755, U.G.C.R., XXVII, 126.

[24]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 20, 1758, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 216.

Ellis planned to use the settlement. He wanted Gray to settle farther south, on the St. Mary's River, and promised him a license to trade with the Indians.[25] By encouraging them to settle farther south, Ellis planned to use Gray and one Alexander, a companion of Gray, as tools to improve the colony's Spanish and Indian relations.[26] Ellis reported that Gray and Alexander both had considerable influence with the Lower Creeks.[27] The location of the settlement, near the Spanish colony, was strategic. The outlaws could furnish Ellis "with early intelligence & may be considered as a Kind of advance post or barrier against the Spaniards & their Indians."[28] The Governor of St. Augustine also sought similar services from Gray, but without success.[29] Reminded by Lyttleton that he was involving himself in South Carolina affairs, Ellis replied that his intervention was necessary to the welfare of Georgia. However,

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[25]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 5, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 19-20; Ellis to Lyttleton, May 1, 1757, Lyttleton Papers; G.C.R., VII, 548.

[26]Ellis to Lyttleton, May 1, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[27]Ellis to Lyttleton, May 1, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[28]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 5, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 19-20; Ellis to Lyttleton, May 1, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

[29]Ellis to Board of Trade, May 5, 1757, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 20-1; Ellis to Lyttleton, May 1, 1757, Lyttleton Papers.

the settlement threatened to cause a quarrel with neutral Spain. In 1757, the Crown ordered that English settlers be removed from the territory south of the Altamaha River. Ellis was instrumental in relocating them on Cumberland Island as a reward for their services.[30]

Georgia's relations with South Carolina were handicapped by Georgia's weak financial condition and her reliance upon South Carolina for assistance. Ellis's vigorous and independent actions involving Georgia in South Carolina affairs did little to strengthen his colony's relations with her northern neighbor.

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[30]Ellis to Board of Trade, Jan. 28, 1759, U.G.C.R., XXVIII, 253; Ellis to Lyttleton, Nov. 22, 1758, Lyttleton Papers.

Chapter VII

CONCLUSION

Governor Ellis left a record of many accomplishments in Georgia. Appointed lieutenant-governor to replace the combative John Reynolds, he was faced with political problems which required careful handling. He judiciously dissolved the political factions opposing his administration. He proceeded to mold his government into a workable unit. His success in political affairs eliminated much of the conflict between governor and Commons House experienced by other royal governors.

During his administration, the colony attempted an extensive program of public works, but was hampered by the war and a desperate financial condition. Nevertheless, the colony did show signs of developing its great potential. The colony's production, primarily agricultural and lumber products, was doubled. The population increased by two thousand. The colony began a period of prosperity that was to flourish during the next two decades.

Focusing his attention upon the Indian problem, he gradually assumed leadership in Indian relations for the southern colonies. His skillful handling of Indian affairs won him the praise of the home authorities. He was limited by insufficient funds and could not provide for Georgia's defense during the French and

Indian War. Ellis was forced to rely on assistance from South Carolina, although the colony had been founded to protect the southern frontier.

Perhaps his major fault was in placing the welfare of Georgia before that of other colonies. He was successful in viewing the Indian problem in relation to all the southern colonies. However, his suggestions to station the English fleet in Georgia and garrison the colony's forts with troops needed elsewhere, indicates his inability to see many problems in a broad prospective. His vigorous policy on behalf of Georgia often resulted in disputes with Governor Lyttleton of South Carolina.

In governing the colony the confident young Governor sought cooperation before command, and won not only cooperation, but respect for his position and authority. Possessed of patience and tact, he cautiously waited until passions cooled before acting. He was judicious and sought to avoid antagonizing people unnecessarily. As Governor, he upheld royal authority and retained the affection of the people.

Governor Ellis left Georgia in the fall of 1760 to regain his health. Away from the oppressive Georgia heat, he fully recovered his physical strength, and received a commission as Governor of Nova Scotia. He left Georgia in a state of political calm. A solid foundation had been established for the next governor.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The main sources used in the research and preparation of this thesis are unpublished colonial records and letters. The Unpublished Georgia Colonial Records (Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Ga.) contain the correspondence of the governors, Board of Trade papers, and other official documents concerning the colonial history of Georgia. Ellis, a prolific writer, corresponded frequently with the Board of Trade during his administration. The letters give his opinions and suggestions concerning the problems facing him and a general description of the colony. The royal commissions and instructions to the governors are given in these records. The William Henry Lyttleton Papers (William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Mich.) contain the correspondence of Governor Ellis to Governor Lyttleton. The letters, some seventy-five pieces, give subjective expression of Ellis's ideas and opinions. The letters give an interesting account of relations between Georgia and South Carolina. Indeed, the Lyttleton Papers are the only source for many of the disputes between the two governors. The William Knox Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor) contain about thirty letters of Ellis to Knox, mostly after his return to Europe. The General Thomas Gage

Papers and the Shelburne Papers (Clements Library, Ann Arbor) contain several letters of Ellis. The Loudoun Papers (Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California) contain about twelve letters.

There is no biography of Ellis, but there are two books written by him A Voyage on Hudson's Bay by the Dobbs Galley and California in the years 1746 and 1747 for Discovering a North-West Passage (London, 1748), and Consideration on the Great Advantages which would arise of the North-West Passage, (London, 1750). He also wrote several articles for the Royal Societies' Philosophical Transactions, "On Dr. Hales's Ventilators; also the Temperature and Saltness of the Sea, Etc.," and "On the Heat of the Weather in Georgia."

The main printed source, Allen D. Candler, ed., The Colonial Records of Georgia (Atlanta, 1904-1916), contains the Proceedings and Minutes of the Governor and Council, October 30, 1754 - March 6, 1759, vol. VII (1906); Journal of the Proceedings of the Governor and Council, March 8, 1759 - December 31, 1762, vol. VIII (1907); Journal of the Commons House of Assembly January 7, 1755 - December 16, 1762, vol. XIII (1907); and Journal of the Upper House of Assembly January 7, 1755 - December 16, 1762, vol. XVI (1907). The correspondence between Ellis and Lieutenant Colonel Henry Bouquet in Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald N. Kent,

eds., The Papers of Colonel Henry Bouquet (ser. 21631 and 21632, Harrisburg, Pa, 1941) gives some information concerning the military situation in Georgia. The Knox Papers also appear in the Report on Manuscripts on Various Collections (Historical Manuscripts Commission, London, 1909), vol. VI. Gertrude S. Kimball, ed., The Correspondence of William Pitt, when Secretary of State, with Colonial Governors, and Military and Naval Commissioners in America (2 vols., N. Y., 1906) contains letters from Ellis, Reynolds, Lyttleton and others. The Georgia Historical Society, Collections (Savannah, 1840-1916) are a valuable source for the study of Georgia.

Of the special works on southern colonial history, John R. Alden, John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier: A Study of Indian Relations, War, Trade, and Land Problems in the Southern Wilderness, 1754-1775 (Ann Arbor, 1944) is invaluable. The many problems facing the colonial governors are adequately covered. Verner W. Crane's The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732 (Ann Arbor, 1929 and revised in paperback, 1956) is a definitive treatment on the period covered and is excellent for the formative years of the southern colonies. The religion of colonial Georgia is treated in Reba C. Strickland's Religion and the State in Georgia in the Eighteenth Century (N. Y., 1939). An unpublished thesis, William W. Abbot III, "Georgia Under the Royal Governors 1754-1775" (Duke University, 1954) is the best work of its kind to date.

Percy Scott Flippin, "Royal Government in Georgia," Georgia Historical Quarterly, vol VIII (Mar. 1924) - vol. XIII (Mar. 1929) covers all the problems of colonial Georgia. There is a brief section on Ellis. E. Merton Coulter, "Mary Musgrove, 'Queen of the Creeks: A Chapter of Early Georgia Troubles,'" Georgia Historical Quarterly, vol. XI (Mar. 1927), 1-30, and Marguerite B. Hamer, "Edmund Gray and His Settlement at New Hanover," Georgia Historical Quarterly, vol. XIII (Mar. 1929), 1-12, deal primarily with the problems, and not Ellis. The physical setting of Ellis's administration is described in John P. Corry's "The Houses of Colonial Georgia," Georgia Historical Quarterly, vol. XIV (Sept. 1930), 181-201. Thomas Rasberry's Letter Book, the property of the Georgia Historical Society, is being edited by Lilla M. Hawes, "The Thomas Rasberry Letter Book," Georgia Historical Quarterly, vol. VIII (Sept. 1956). The series contains valuable information concerning trading, merchants, wearing apparel, etc., but is not completed.

Newspapers often give valuable contemporary information on a wide variety of subjects. The South Carolina Gazette (1732-1775) is important in any study of the southern colonies. The Georgia Gazette, though not in existence until 1763, is still important.

Among the general works, Herbert T. Osgood's The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century

(4 vols., N. Y., 1924), vol. IV, gives a good summary of Ellis and Georgia, and the relationships between the southern colonies. Coulter's Georgia: A Short History (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1947); and Charles C. Jones's History of Georgia (2 vols., N. Y., 1883), are adequate. A brief, but good survey of the colonial government, is Albert B. Saye's A Constitutional History of Georgia, 1732-1945 (Athens, Ga., 1948).

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