

## SPECIAL RESEARCH SOURCES FOR GEORGIA AND THE OLD "SOUTHWEST"

By Robert S. Davis

*"GEORGIA FEVER" -- Hanover, VA, 12 of June 1783: "Dear Sir: This leaves us in tolerable good health at present. Thanks be to God. How long we may continue so, I cannot tell, as we have a strange disorder raging in these parts at present. Some say it is not fatal, but only the effects of frenzy and imagination (but this I know, it is very catching). The effects of it are as follows (not only men, but women feel the effect of this disorder). They are at first somewhat thoughtful and melancholy, and after some time, appear pretty cheerful. Then appear to be in a frenzy, and after turning around a few times, they stand still with their faces somewhat toward the South, and then you will hear them utter with a loud void: "GEORGIA!" Was this word repeated only for a day or so, and then something else, I would not think much of it, but this is the last you hear and night and the first in the morning. It is called here the GEORGIA FEVER. Not all the sleep nor dreaming will make them repeat any other word ... (Courtesy Dale Couch)*

For other sources for Georgia research see Robert S. Davis and Ted. O. Brooke, *Georgia Research* (2012) and the column "Questions & Answers" in the *Georgia Genealogical Society Quarterly* and for background on the southern frontier see the books by Thomas D. Clark but especially his *Frontiers in Conflict: the Old Southwest, 1795-1830* (1989).

### **I. Sources relating to Whites among the Indians**

A. Records of the early trade with the Indians include *The Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents Relating to Indian Affairs*, 3 vols., (1955) and Theresa M. Hicks, *South Carolina Indians and Indian Traders* (1998); also see the series of indexes called *The Early South Carolina Newspapers: ESCN Database Reports* and Robert Paulett, *An Empire of Small Places: Mapping the Southeastern Anglo Indian Trade, 1732-1795* (2013).

B. "Cherokee Indian Letters, Talks, and Treaties, 1786-1838," "Creek Indian Letters, 1782-1839," WPA typescripts (1939) ; and the "Creek Indian Letters, Talks, and Treaties, 1705-1839" (1939) at the Georgia Archives, Morrow and on microfilm available through the LDS family History Centers and in the library at Wallace State College in Hanceville, Alabama

C. Related volumes of records have been abstracted and published by Sharron Ashton, Rowena McClinton, C. Daniel Crews, Richard W. Starbuck, Don Shadburn, Charles O. Walker, and Mary B. Warren. Many important records of whites among the early Creeks and Cherokees are in the National Archives and Records Administration but have never been published or indexed; see for example *Bureau of Indian Affairs Special Files, 1807-1904* (National Archives microcopy M574).

D. The National Archives at Fort Worth has petitions filed in the court in Fort Smith, Arkansas, for citizenship in the Indian nations that include depositions on whites and Indians living in Georgia before the Cherokee removal.

E. Reminiscences of the life among the Creeks: Thomas S. Woodward, *Woodward's Reminiscences of the Creek, or Muscogee Indians* (1859) and George Stiggins, *Creek Indian History* (1989).

**II. Alabama and Florida Territorial Papers.** The Alabama Department of Archives and History has all of the official papers of all of Alabama's governors, territorial to almost the present; the papers are arranged by governor and usually chronologically with no index.

A. *American State Papers*. This series of early federal publications and others have been scanned onto the Internet at the Library of Congress' American Memory (free) web site: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/hlawquery.html>. The federal land grant and claims volumes have been reprinted with an all inclusive index.

B. *Territorial Papers of the United States, 1789-1883*. This well indexed series of books, arranged by territory, has been reprinted and is widely available.

C. *Residents of the Mississippi Territory*. These well indexed volumes by Jean Strickland include census, tax, petition, land, military, and other records of what is today Alabama, Mississippi, and West Florida, 1782-1820. For East Florida records also see the ongoing index project being prepared by the University of Florida: <http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/digital/collections/EFP/index.htm> and for West Florida visit the holdings of the West Florida Archives of the University of West Florida.

D. Passports by Governors of Georgia to travel through the Creek Indian Lands, 1785-1820. The only documented and comprehensive publication of these genealogically valuable records is Dorothy Williams Potter, *Passports of Southeastern Pioneers, 1770-1823* (1990) which also includes a number of important records of whites among or passing among the Cherokees; also see "Settlers on the Georgia-Cherokee Frontier, 1829," *Georgia Genealogical Society Quarterly* 24 (1988): 25-29 and

**The Georgia passports are also published in Mary Givens Bryant, *Passports Issued by Georgia Governors*, 2 vols. (1964), which includes some documents missed in the Potter book (and vice versa); also see "Some Gems from the Telamon Cuyler Collection," *Georgia Genealogical Society Quarterly* 52 (Winter 2016): 307-14 for some passports missed in both publications.**

E. Cahaba Land Office Records. Most of the names that appear in these claims, frequently made by Georgians, for land in Alabama can be found in Marilyn Barefield, *Old Cahaba Land Office Records and Military Warrants, 1817-1853* (1986).

F. Books on the [southern] Federal Road that ran from Macon, Georgia, to Alabama include Helen deLeon Southland, *The Federal Road through Georgia, the Creek Nation, and Alabama, 1806-1836* (1989) and Jeffrey C. Benton, *The Very Worst Road: Travelers' Accounts of Crossing Alabama's Old Creek Indian Territory, 1820-1847* (1988); also see Charlotte Adams Hood, *Jackson's White Plumes: an Historical and Genealogical Account of Selected Cherokee Families who supported Andrew Jackson during the Creek Indian War of 1813-1814* (1995).

G. Importation of slaves to Georgia for resale was illegal for most of Georgia's early history as a state. Individuals could, however, bring slaves into the state for their own use other than resale, see Dawn Williams, *Slave Importation Affidavit Registers for Nine Georgia Counties, 1818-1847* (2012). The same records but for Richmond County are being prepared for public use on the Internet by the Richmond County Genealogical Society.

H. Many Georgians settled in Spanish East Florida after the American Revolution, what became the Florida territory after 1819. Their names appear in records indexed on the site of Special Collections of the University of North Florida:

<https://www.unf.edu/library/specialcollections/> and also in the holdings of the St. Augustine Historical Society. Roman Catholic Church and Spanish records of St. Augustine sometimes include genealogical information on these people, see for example, the records of the St. Augustine Diocese that have been indexed and digitized in the Ecclesiastical & Secular Sources for Slave Societies, Vanderbilt University: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/esss/spanishflorida/project.php>

### **III. Civilian Records.**

A. Indian Depredations Claims. Georgians sued the Creek Indian nation for losses sustained by Indian attacks. Often the claims contain detailed personal information from the American Revolution and later on persons and places. Successful claims were paid by the state of Georgia from money that otherwise would have gone to the Creek Indians by treaty. The Georgia Archives, Morrow, has indexed typescripts of these records and copies of this microfilm are available through LDS Family History centers and in the library at Wallace State College, Hanceville. The claims have been abstracted in Donna B. Thaxton, ed., *Georgia Indian Depredation Claims* (1988); also see Richard S. Lackey, *Frontier Claims in the Lower South* (1977). For the history of the Indian depredations claims see Larry C. Skogen, *Indian Depredation Claims, 1796-1920* (1996).

B. Letters of Application and Recommendation, 1797-1877. The National Archives and Records Administration have microfilmed often genealogically valuable letters to the presidents of the United States by persons seeking political appointments. These files, arranged by president and then alphabetically by appointee, are available on microfilm at many libraries including the national Archives at Atlanta and Wallace State College, Hanceville, Alabama.

C. Registers of Federal Employees and Agents, 1816-1825. These bi-annual published lists of all government employees can be found at the Alabama Department of Archives and History and other very old and very large libraries. For most employees, including thousands of persons who received appointments as postmasters, these registers give state or foreign country of birth.

D. Kenneth Scott, *British Aliens in the United States during the War of 1812* (1979).

E. Georgia's early federal court case files survive and are well indexed. These should be used at the National Archives at Atlanta in Morrow across the parking lot from the Georgia Archives.

F. The Georgia Archives has indexes to and indexed typescripts of various legislative minutes of the late 1700s and early 1800s that could also be consulted. The indexed transcript of the **House of Assembly minutes, January 6-February 4, 1789, is not on the shelf and must be requested as DOC 7561.**

G. Letters received by Georgia's governors are widely scattered among numerous libraries as a result of war and theft. Most of these documents that survive at the Georgia Archives are filled (usually) in alphabetical order in a collection called File II NAMES, see Robert S. Davis, *Georgians Past* (1997).

H. The Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscripts Library of the University of Georgia Libraries in Athens has the largest collection of incoming correspondence of Georgia governors in its Telamon Cuyler Collection (Mss1170, part 1 Historical Manuscripts). It has an online inventory: <http://hmfa.libs.uga.edu/hmfa/view?docId=ead/ms1170.series1-ead.xml> Partial indexes to this collection include: John D. Stemmons, *Georgia Petitions, 1778-1782 and Georgia Petitions, 1785-1794* (2004); and Robert S. Davis, *A Researcher's Library of Georgia* (1991), vol. 2, 179-94.

I. Judy Kratovil, *Georgia Governor's Journals, 1789-1798: County, State, and Militia Officers* (2000).

#### **IV. Military Records.**

A. Enlistments in the United States Army, 1798-1914. The United States Army recruited thousands of Georgians for the War of 1812 (1812-1815) and the War with Mexico (1846-1848). Reproduced as *Registers of Enlistments in the U. S. Army, 1798-1914* (National Archives Micropublication M233), these records usually provide each soldier's county and state of birth; age; and physical description. This whole microfilm publication is included on the databases Ancestry.com and Ancestrylibrary.com as U. S. Army, Register of Enlistments, 1798-1914. All of the men in these records born or enlisting from Virginia to 1815 are published in Stuart Lee Butler, *Virginia's Soldiers in the United States Army 1800-1815* (1986).

B. "Georgia Military Affairs, 1779-1842." These nine volumes of indexed typescripts prepared by the WPA include many lists that can substitute for lost census and county records. The typescripts are at the Georgia Archives and on microfilm available through LDS Family History Centers and in the library at Wallace State College; also see Murtie June Clark, *American Militia in the Frontier Wars, 1790-1796* (1990); Virgil White, *Index to Volunteer Soldiers, 1784-1811* (1987) and *Index to Volunteer in Indian Wars and Disturbances, 1815-1858* (1993); and Judy Kratovil, *Index to War of 1812 Service Records for Volunteer Soldiers from Georgia* (1986).

C. Pensions. Virgil White has published indexes to all veterans whose service was claimed by them or their widows for purposes of applying for federal pensions from the American Revolution to 1860. The claims themselves must be seen or copies ordered from National Archives and Records Administration, 700 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20408-0001.

D. Index to Bounty land claims, 1776-1855. The National Archives and Records Administration (see above) is currently preparing a comprehensive index to federal claims for military bounty land to 1855 made by veterans, widows of veterans, and heirs of veterans for militia, volunteer, and regular army service. A claim filed by a soldier briefly describes his service; a claim by a widow also gives vital records details on her husband's death and her marriage; and a claim by heirs includes a list of all known heirs.

## **V. Newspapers.**

A. Newspaper databases. Several subscription databases exist to newspapers exist that include stories from Georgia. The free online Digital Library of Georgia includes several Georgia newspapers for Albany, Americus, Atlanta, Columbus, Macon, Milledgeville, Savannah, and many other cities with more to be added. Newspaperarchive.com and Genealogybank are available by subscription and 19th Century Newspapers is at major libraries such as the Woodruff Library of Emory University and the Tennessee State Library and Archives in Nashville, and through personal subscriptions to the New England Historic Genealogical Society.

B. Savannah. Georgia's only newspapers, 1763-1786, were in Savannah but they covered almost the whole state. Most of the issues that survive from then until the 1820s were indexed as a set of typescripts by the WPA in the 1930s. This index is available at the Georgia Archives, Georgia Historical Society, and the University of Georgia Libraries, with selected issues indexed to 1845. Microfilm of this index is available through LDS Family History Centers and at the library at Wallace State College. Elizabeth Kilbourne has abstracted and published genealogical information from Savannah newspapers for 1763 to 1806 (so far). The previously mentioned Digital Library of Georgia has online free access to word searchable images from three Savannah newspapers beginning in 1809.

C. Augusta. Alice O. Walker has published indexes to the *Augusta Chronicle*, 1786-1830. The subscription web site Augustaarchive includes some of those same and many later issues of that newspaper.

D. Milledgeville. Various indexes and other sources have attempted to index the *Georgia Journal*. Fred Hartz and Tad Evans abstracted the genealogical data in the *Georgia Journal* starting with 1806. Evans has also abstracted many other early Georgia newspapers. Abstracts of early newspapers for Clarke, Hancock, and Wilkes counties have also been published.

## **VI. Miscellaneous.**

A. The John H. Goff Collection at the Georgia Archives in Morrow has extensive files on early Georgia roads, ferries, and forts that can be useful in understanding places mentioned in old records; also see John H. Goff, *Placenames of Georgia* (1975).

B. Revolutionary War pension claims frequently give details of migration and other information about the years immediately after the American Revolution, including in depositions by witnesses. The subscription site Footnote.com is preparing a more comprehensive index to these claims than what has existed before. Claims made by veterans of the American Revolution in the south have been transcribed on the free website southern campaigns of the American Revolution.

C. The Lyman C. Draper Collection contains tens of thousands of documents relating to the people and history of the southern frontier but especially relating to the American Revolution in Kentucky, South Carolina, and Tennessee, although often memoirs and other documents include information on Georgia. This collection is widely available on microfilm. A comprehensive guide is Josephine Harper, *Guide to the Draper Manuscripts* (1983) although comprehensive indexed calendars of the materials that Draper gathered that related in anyway to Daniel Boone, King's Mountain, and Thomas Sumter have also been published.

D. The University of Alabama and the University of Georgia have placed on the Internet free access to thousands of old Georgia and southeastern maps at the following web sites respectively:

<http://alabamamaps.ua.edu/historicalmaps/index.html>

<http://www.cviog.uga.edu/Projects/gainfo/gamaps.htm>

E. A number of records in the National Archives of the United Kingdom in Great Britain in Kew document migration to and from Georgia from colonial times to the years after the American Revolution. The Georgia Archives has microfilm of most but not all of the claims filed by Georgians who remained Loyal to the King and often these papers include names of neighbors. All of these records are abstracted in Mary Warren's Kindle book *British Georgia Loyalist Claims* is available from Amazon. Almost all of these

claims are at least briefly abstracted, including the claims where pages have not been microfilmed in Peter W. Coldham, *American Migrations 1765-1799* (2000) and Gregory Palmer, *Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution* (1984).

Claims filed by British merchants for money owed to them from before the American Revolution (Treasury Office T 79) often document migration to other states. These claims are abstracted in the North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal, Georgia Genealogical Magazine, and Virginia Genealogist. A index to claimants is in Coldham, *American Migrations, T 79, the claims by American merchants who remained loyal to Britain during the American Revolution, has a crude index in Coldham, American Migrations, pp. 823-29.* These claims are widely available on microfilm including at the Library of Congress, the Library of Virginia, the North Carolina Archives, and the library of Wallace State College at Hanceville.

The East Florida Claims Commission files (Treasury Office T 77), including claims filed by many Georgians, are listed in Coldham, *American Migrations*, pp. 818-22, but have not been microfilmed. Copies of the claims can be ordered from the National Archives of the United Kingdom:  
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records>.