

Fort William Cumberland Island 19<sup>th</sup> June 1786

Sir

We beg leave to inform your Honor, that these frontier parts of the State have been lately attacked by enemies of different kind - The one composed of Robbers from W. Florida - formerly in the British Service - carrying off the Horses of the inhabitants to the number of 7 or 8 - which were however very fortunately and speedily recovered by the particular alacrity of one of our Settlers, M<sup>r</sup> Nath<sup>l</sup> Ashley - who - / not contented with regaining his own and his neighbours property - but fearing farther mischief from the noted villainy of these robbers - which were discovered to be Pyeburn & Haig / went in pursuit of them assisted by some of his neighbours - and after several days cautious travelling - to preserve their tract- came up with them at a place called Kearney's Cow-penns - They judged it most prudent - seeing the villains well armed - To wheel off and waylay them at a certain place - where they knew they must necessarily pass - On being demanded by M<sup>r</sup> Ashley to surrender - they both prepared for defence - but M<sup>r</sup> Ashley immediately shooting Pyeburn dead on the Spot - The other /Haig/ received successively the fire of M<sup>r</sup> Cowin and M<sup>r</sup> Bolton from musquets loaded with Swan shot - at the distance of from 8 @ 10 paces - He gave an Indian Hoop - disencumbered himself of his baggage - and made the best of his way for a swamp a small way off - this M<sup>r</sup> Ashley perceiving threw down his own rifle - run up - caught that of Pyeburns and pursued him - but before he could with certainty fire Haig gained the Swamp - A hard shower of Rain and night intervening prevented their further attempts untill next

morning - when they discovered his tract very plainly marked with blood about Breast high on bushes - the place where he had waltered during the night in Mud and Gore - his farther tract from this place to a run of water - from which notwithstanding of a diligent search for several hours - they could not discover the smallest vestige of his having attempted to depart - We are happy in being able to assure your Honor of the authenticity of this intelligence - and in the thought that this early Check being given to their attack upon us - may deter others from making depredatory incursions on the frontiers of the State -

The other enemies alluded to - although they have not positively committed any act of cruelty on the persons or carried off the property of any of the inhabitants under your Honors immediate government Yet - your Honor must allow that we have great reason to apprehend - that the mischief was as likely to have fallen on us, as on these who have received the Blow - this matter happened about a fortnight ago - when J. Weed was surveying lands on the Banks of St. Mary - immediately opposite to the place where three Indians painted black scalped a female Child about 8 years of age - they run off at the appearance of some men who were alarmed by the cries of the child - but returned next night - plundered and carried away 8 Horses - This circumstance joined to the several reports we have received from different parts of the State - determined us to put the Militia in the best posture of defence they would admit of - They had previously been embody'd on the 30<sup>th</sup> of last month - a few days after the robbers had made their first appearance among us

It was agreed to divide the County into two districts - the one to consist of the main - the other of Cumberland Island - when the following were unanimously chosen J. Weed to command the former & A. Semple the latter / J. Weed Senior Officer /. As the number of inhabitants on the main was greater and the ground more extensive - it was judged expedient to have an officer expert in the Woods - also appointed to assist J. Weed Weed - Nathaniel Ashley was unanimously elected for this purpose - these regulations - we hope will not be deemed improper by your Honor - and should we in this have made any deviation from established rule we trust it will be construed in the most favorable light -

The inhabitants of that part of the Country more immediately on G. Sittilla and N. side of crooked river are posted about 30 miles up the former on the south side - and are employed in making a stockade fort for their defence - The Settlers on the south side of Crooked and those contiguous to St Mary are directed to make another in the Vicinity of Mr Pengree - about 40 Miles up that River - the distance between these being only 10 or 12 miles will render an intercourse of the whole less difficult - One of us will set out to morrow with a draft of one half of Semple's company - a three pounder Carriage Gun - and what ammunition he can procure for this purpose -

However we beg leave to acquaint your Honor that notwithstanding we have tried by these and other methods - we judged the the best adapted to raise the Spirit of the People - / which had sunk to such a degree on their knowledge of the Child being scalped that a number of Families had removed to the Island / Yet we have but small prospect of making any tolerable defence - should the Indians come in any force against us - Our whole Body consisting of only between 40 & 50 Men - and these in

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general but poorly armed - the whole entirely destitute of Provisions -  
excepting what small quantity of Corn - M<sup>r</sup> Pengree & J. Weed extra of  
what will support their families untill the present Crop is gathered -

We are extremely anxious to know the certainty of our  
situation - and feel ourselves not a little hurt - / should a war with  
the Savages be thought probable / - that we have never received the  
smallest hint of it from any officer in the State - and our great distance  
from the Seat of Government redoubles our apprehensions that it may have  
commenced - and the intelligence of it - may have unfortunately been  
miscarried - In this - we rest assured - that your Honor is perfectly  
convinced - / should these our apprehensions be well founded / that a  
swarm of refugees will come from West Florida - to assist the Indians  
and it is too probable they will make this County the Canal to enter  
into the more interior parts of this Country - from which they have been  
banished by the Laws of the State - But we rely on your Honor's sending  
us such relief and assistance as your Honor may judge conducive to its  
general interest - which it is our earnest wish may flourish under your  
administration

We are - with great respect

Sir

Your most Obedient and  
Most Humble Serv<sup>ts</sup> -

Jacob Weed  
Alexander Semple

Justices of the Peace for the  
Counties of Glynn & Camden

The Hon<sup>ble</sup>

Edward Telfair Esq<sup>r</sup>

ENDORSED

Letter  
Alex<sup>d</sup> Semple 19<sup>th</sup> June 1786.  
Indian Dep: