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Colonel Charles Colcock Jones, LL.D.
HISTORIAN OF GEORGIA



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William Augustus Bowles

See Milford's - Memoirs of Lewis
Milford - MSS of Library of A. H. W. New Orleans
GENERAL WILLIAM AUGUSTUS BOWLES. 161
Person as last mentioned
Milford among Indians
1775-1800

General William Augustus Bowles was born in Frederick County, Maryland, in the year 1764. During the American Revolution, he joined the British army, in which he soon obtained a commission. After the battle of Monmouth, he sailed, with his regiment, to Jamaica, and from thence to Pensacola. At the latter place, in consequence of some neglect, he was deprived of his commission, and dismissed from the army.

A party of Creeks having come to Pensacola for the purpose of receiving their annual presents, being on their return to their nation, Bowles concluded to join them, and accordingly accompanied them to their home. Here he resided for some time, during which he made great proficiency in the Indian language, and married the daughter of one of the chiefs. On the 9th of May, 1781, when Pensacola surrendered to the arms of Spain, Bowles commanded the Creek Indians, whom he had brought there to assist the English. His services upon that occasion were acknowledged by the commander of the British army, and he was reinstated in his former rank. After the surrender of West Florida to Spain, he was allowed to return with the garrison to New-York, where he joined a company of players, and then sailed for the Bahama Islands. Here he remained some months, following the profession of a comedian, as well as that of a portrait painter, thus exhibiting the versatility of his talents. The Governor of the Bahamas, Lord Dunmore, appointed Bowles as an agent to establish a trading house among the Creeks. He returned to the nation, and established a commercial house upon the Chattahoochee; but it was of short duration, for Colonel McGillivray sent him word to abandon the enterprise,

162

and leave the country in twenty-four hours, on pain of being deprived of his ears. He fled to New Providence, and from thence was sent to England, for the purpose of asking aid to enable him to repel the aggressions of the Americans. His applications were successful, and he returned to America; and having taught his warriors the art of navigating the Gulf of Mexico, he began a system of piracy upon the vessels of Pantón, an Indian merchant, against whom he had long entertained the most inveterate hostility. His success in piratical enterprises, and other circumstances, gained him great popularity among the Creeks, and he was elected commander-in-chief of their armies. For a long time Bowles continued to annoy Georgia, doing every thing in his power to prevent the settlement of her difficulties with the Indians. He denounced Colonel McGillivray as a traitor, and exerted his utmost power to prejudice the Indians against him. In 1792 he was taken prisoner by the Spaniards, and sent to Madrid. The Spanish government endeavoured to conciliate him but was unsuccessful, and he was finally sent to the island of Manila, from whence he made his escape, and, after various fortunes, obtained a schooner, in which he navigated the Gulf and siezed many Spanish vessels. After this he proceeded to the Creek Nation, interfered seriously with the policy of Colonel Hawkins, and captured the fort at St. Marks. At a feast given by the Indians to which he had been invited, he was made a prisoner, according to a preconcerted plan, by Colonel Hawkins and the Spanish authorities, who places him in a canoe full of armed warriors. They then rapidly rowed down the river. Col. Hawkins and John Forbes, of Pensacola, were in the town, but were concealed, until Sam McNac, a half-breed, had caused

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Bowles to be made a prisoner. Arriving at a point in the present Dallas County, Alabama, the canoe was tied up, the prisoner conducted upon the bank, and a guard set over him. In the night the guard fell asleep, when Bowles gnawed his ropes apart, crept down the bank, got into the canoe, quietly paddled across the river, entered a thick cane swamp, and fled. At the break of day, the astonished Indians arose in great confusion, but fortunately saw the canoe on the opposite side, which Bowles had foolishly neglected to shove off. Swimming over to that point, they got upon his track, and by the middle of the day once more made him a prisoner. He was conveyed to Mobile, and from thence to Havana, where, after a few years, he died in the dungeons of Moro Castle*.

(Whites Historical Collections, - pp. 163, 164)

L. F. Hays.

Billy Weatherford and Sam Meniac with 1500 Indian Warriors aided Col. Hawkins in the arrest of Bowles at Hickery Ground.