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JOURNAL OF THE CAMPAIGN TO THE
SOUTHWARD.

May 9th to July 14th, 1778.

By
John Fauchereau Grimké.

[The parchment bound volume in which this Journal was kept, has been lent to this Society by Mr. Norwood S. Hastie, a descendant of Major John F. Grimké, with the kind permission to print its contents. The volume is a folio, has about 600 pages, and contains, besides the Journal, "Rules for the Formation of Troops," (which were printed by Grimké in pamphlet form), his "Orderly Book" from August 24, 1778, to May 10, 1780, "Journal of the Siege of Charlestown," which has been partially printed in Moultrie's *Memoirs*, and the "Proceeding of Court of Inquiry held at Purisburgh, 13th March, 1778;" this was the court-martial of Brigadier-General John Ash of North Carolina.

A note written by the Hon. Thomas S. Grimké on a fly leaf of the book, states that the "Journal," and part of the "Rules for the Formation of Troops," are in the handwriting of Judge John F. Grimké, his father; the rest of the book was evidently written by clerks after Major Grimké was appointed Deputy Adj.-General, on August 24th, 1778.

The "Campaign" of which the Journal treats was the disastrous expedition undertaken by Brigadier-General Robert Howe, of N. C., in 1778, against the British on the St. Mary's in Florida. The troops taken by General Howe on this expedition were 600 South Carolina Continentals under Col. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, five hundred Georgia Continentals under Col. Samuel Elbert of Georgia, and a large body of militia from both States. The South Carolina militia were commanded by Colonels Andrew Williamson and Stephen Bull, while the Georgia militia were commanded by Gov. John Houston in person. The Order Book of Col Samuel Elbert was printed in 1902, and is in *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society*, Vol. 5.]

May 9th. 1778.

9: The General¹ arrived this day in Camp² when the line turned out & Rec^d. him with the Usual Salutes & discharge of Field-Pieces.

The Army Stationed here is composed of the 1. 2. 3 & 4 Regiments of Infantry, a Detachment of Light Horse & Two Companies of Artillery from the State of Georgia. Detachments from the 1. 3. & 6 Regiments with a Detachment of Artillery from the State of South Carolina. The Troops were in general very ragged in their appearance.

10: The Georgia Troops formed into a Brigade under the Command of Col^o. Samuel Elbert: The Carolina Infantry under Col^o. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney formed the Second Brigade. The Georgia & Carolina Artillery composed One Corps under Major Romand.³

Neither the Lines nor the Stockade are finished; the former are too Extensive to be defended by the small number of men we have here, & the Stockade too small for those who defend the lines to Retire into.

The weather is exceedingly Sultry; the Centinals are therefore ordered to be relieved every hour, as the excessive heat is supposed to Contribute to the Disorders prevailing in camp, as well as the Constant Fatigue the men have had in throwing up defenses of this Post.

12: Col^o. Elbert & Pinckney with an Escort of 20 men crossed the River to Reconnoitre the ground about S^t. Savilla bluff, three miles up the River, & choose a proper Situation for an encampment. They Reported that the Post was advantageously situated & could be easily defended. The bluff is about 60 perpendicular feet from the River, flanked on each side by deep lagoons, & Retires on the fourth side into into a Pine-barron of a pretty even surface. Three Redoubts on a Crown-Work without Curtains (that a grand Division Could march thro' the Intervals) would make this Post very Strong, & would serve to Cover the Army in their Retreat.

13: Col^{os}. Elbert & Pinckney again crossed the River

¹Robert Howe.

²Camp at, or near, Fort Howe on the Altamaha.

³Major Roman de Lisle, one of the French Officers alluded to later in the Journal: see *Order Book* of Samuel Elbert, p. 107.

with an Escort to Reconnoitre a place three Miles lower down the River than Fort Howe. The ground was not so advantageous, they Reported, as S^t. Savilla, being an Old Field well Cleaned in the form of an Oblong Square, & Surrounded by a Swamp thickly wooded, which would afford excellent Shelter for the Enemy to Approach, alarm & attac Us whilst we should be exposed to their fire. The advantages attending this Situation are not Comparable to those of S^t. Savilla, the latter requiring but few works to render it defensible & strong, besides which the probable healthiness of the Place, the fine Springs of Water & the benefit which would arise from having a good Hospital Established there, gives it an incontestable Preference to Reed's bluff. But the former is nearer to the River S^t. Illa,⁴ & it would be more easy to transport Our baggage down to the River to Reed's bluff than to Convey it either by land or against the Stream to S^t. Savilla. The Swamp opposite Fort Howe is about One Mile thro' & is become so hard by the Continuance of dry weather that a Road can be cut thro' with very little labor & difficulty.

The Engineer, Captⁿ. Senf,⁵ is ordered to Survey the roads leading thro' the Swamp opposite Fort Howe to S^t. Savilla & to Reed's bluff, also to Report from which of those two Posts, upon examination, a road for Our Retreat could be most easily made thro'.

The Remainder of the 1st. & 6th Regiments are arrived from S^c. Carolina after 14 Days March from Charles Town, in good health & Spirits.

14: A firing having been heard towards Darien last night of heavy pieces of Cannon, it is conjectured the Enemy have attacked our Galleys, in consequence of which a Detachment of 27 Rank & File under Lt. Lining & another Sub, is ordered to march with Expedition to render them assistance should it be necessaryy.

15: The Alarm which was heard towards Darien night before last, is Reported to be only the falling of trees, the woods being on fire.

⁴Satilla River.

⁵Col. John Christian Senf, who was later the engineer of the Santee Canal.

The Carolina Galley &° a Schooner laden with stores are said to be arrived at Tybée.

A large boat with Stores taken out of the Prizes captured at Frederica arrived this Morning from Sunbury.

The Camp was alarmed at 11 O Clock last night by a Centry of One of the Out Piquets firing a Gun at a Person who (he says) was advancing upon him & adds that the Man darted into the Woods immediately: The Whole Army was Ordered to Return to their Tents & to be ready to turn out upon the first alarm.

16: Four Men were Sentenced this Day by a General Court Martial to run the Gauntlope [sic]; Two thro' each Brigade, which was Executed accordingly: their Crime was Desertion. The French Officers in the Army were much offended by this Sentence & declared that the Two French Men would much rather be hanged or shot than undergo So disgraceful a Punishment. The offenders however did not possess such a delicate Sensibility, & preferred Life & the disgrace to the choice their Country men had pointed out for them.

17: The Line was turned out last night upon an alarm being given, which proved a false one.

18: Accounts have been rec^d. that Col^o. Jones of the Militia of this State had seized a number of Cattle from the Continental Commissaries, who had purchased them for the Use of the Army.

A Variety of Reports are circulated in our Camp respecting the Enemy in East Florida; The most authentic are that the troops in Augustine are distressed for provisions & that the Inhabitants subsist chiefly by fishing. —The Garrison consists of three Battalions of the 6th. Regiment, a Detachment from the 16th & a Company of the train of Artillery chiefly Germans amounting to 700: or 800: men. They would willingly desert as their hard treatment & the Cause they are engaged in have disgusted them with the Service: but their apprehensions of being compelled to serve in our Regts & the great distance from their Head Quarters to Ours & the Numerous & difficult Rivers they have to pass have as yet restrained them. Gen: Prevost it is said intended to attac Sunbury by way of a Diversion, whilst He

should March into the Middle Settlements of Georgia to be joined there by a number of Scophilites supposed to Amount to 1000 or 1200 disaffected Insurgents from the back parts of S°. Carolina, N°. Carolina & Georgia. All accounts agree that the Enemy will oppose our passage over S°. Marys in defense of Fort Tonym; & that they are fitting out a 20 Gun Ship to be commanded by Capt. Mowbray & cutting down two Vessels to be rigged & to be served as galleys.

19: A Detachment of 150 Men from each Brigade is Ordered to cross the River early on Thursday Morning.

20: A Letter rec^d. by Col°. Pinckney from Cap^t. Mowbray of the S°. Carolina Galley at Savannah, informs us that He had Orders from President Lowndes not to proceed farther, but that as He was anxious to go upon the Expedition He expected to procure permission & was rigging the Galley with latteen Sails. He had delivered the Stores and Provisions to Commodore Bowen.

21: Sergeant Tyrrel of the 4th. Continental Battalion in Georgia was this Morning Shot to Death for Mutiny & an attempt to enveigle the Party under command of Lieu^t. Frazer of the 3^d. Con^t: Geo: Battalion who was detached to Darien to guard up Some provisions. The whole Army was under Arms & the Criminal met his fate with a Spirit & Resolution that would have done Credit to & was more worthy of a better Man & a proper behaviour. The Execution Guard & the Reserve failed in putting him to immediate Death: A Single Man therefore marched up & blew his brains out.

The General has fixed upon Reids bluff for an Encampment, the Engineer having reported that a road may be much more easily made thro' the Swamp to Reids bluff than to S°. Savilla & also that it is much more practicable to cut a road thro' the Swamp opposite Reids bluff than thro the Swamp opposite S°. Savilla. The Detachment therefore of 300 Men ordered on the 19th. being reduced to 100: from each Brigade marched to Day & took possession of the ground: The Baggage will be transported by water. There is a good house at this Encampment which will serve as an Hospital to Our Numerous Sick.

The Regular force in Florida is Detached in the following Manner—60 at S^t. Johns, where they are erecting a battery & mounting two 42 Pounders (taken in Hatter, bound to Charles Town S^o Carolina) 300 at S^t. Marys, 80 to the Southward of Augustine & 320 in Augustine, besides which Browns Rangers amounting to 150 Men are at S^t. Marys in Fort Tonym & 350 Scopholites from the State of S^o. Carolina are Stationed upon the head of Trout Creek 10 Miles distant from S^t. Johns on the North side of the River.

Their militia does not exceed 100 fighting Men & they have not more than 150: renegade Indians engaged in the Service. The Informant (Bennet by Name) who was brought from Florida by one of our Scouting Boats, adds that the Scopholites^o were extremely discontented with their Change of Situation & had expressed a wish to Return. Gen: Prevost however had been amongst them & pacified them for the Present:— a general dissatisfaction had also prevailed amongst Browns Rangers who had threatened to Desert from him in a body: They declare that could they be Secure in their Persons & the Plunder they have gained by their incursions into the Southern States, that they would turn their arms against the Floridians. They had not as yet heard that the Carolina Troops had joined the Georgians at Fort Howe—

Accounts are rec^d. from Augusta that Col^o: Williamson had taken 30 Scophilites in arms, Prisoners, & a number of Cattle & that he had Marched against a body of One Thousand more who, dispersed themselves upon his approach, their attempt to cross Savannah River having been frustrated.

22: This Morning One Lister who had deserted on the 19th inst: with Sixteen Privates of the fourth Geo: Cont: Battalion commanded by Col^o: John White returned to Fort Howe. He said that a party of them had been picking Haws & that loosing their way in the woods one proposed crossing the River, assuring the rest that he was well acquainted with the woods on that Side

^oTory refugees from the Carolinas; so called from the former leadership of Col. Joseph Scofell, or Cofell, against the Regulators.

of the River & could lead them back safe to Fort Howe. Having acceded to this proposal, they crossed accordingly; but He (Lister) perceiving they did not direct their course towards the Fort pretended he was tired, when they quitted him & that he immediately Returned. He said the men did not talk of Deserting until they crossed the River. Upon Private & Separate Examination of three Men who had gone off with Lister it appeared that their Intention was to Desert, but they Repenting of their bad Conduct, returned the Same Evening of the 19th. Lister, they said, was at the head of the party & that he posted the Centinels whilst they were crossing the River. Those Men had Scarcely past their Examinations when the the Party under L^t. Turner returned bringing with them all the Deserters except Two, One of whom they killed: the other was left sick in the woods, & who it is supposed perished there. A Drum-Head General Court Martial was instantly held when it was proved that Lister had persuaded some of the Men to Desert & that he did not quit them until they were Overtaken by One of the Parties detached after them. He was condemned to be hanged, but it was so late before his Tryal was finished that the Execution was deferred until the morning.

This Lister had been a Sergeant in Burgoynes light horse and deserted from them after the battle of German-Town: He served as a volunteer in the 2^d: Cont: Geo: Battalion & had a few days before been confined in the Main Guard upon a Suspicion of Caballing & Tampering with the Men & declaring with some Vehemence "by God, My Lads, the business must be done." Col^s. Elbert & Pinckney being appointed to enquire into this Matter did not think the grounds of Accusation sufficient to Condemn him before a General Court Martial: They therefore Reported that it was their Opinion he should be released from Confinement & that in such a Manner that it Should not appear that he was in the least Suspected. This Recommendation was accordingly complied with.

23: This Day were hanged Lister & one Fitzgerald who had deserted by himself on the 21st: ins^t: Lister acknowledged that he had induced two of the Men to Desert, but

the rest, he said, were equally willing as himself to go off.—
The line was paraded to see the Execution.

24: Morrison, Claire Powell, Neigle & Connor were shot this day for Dersertion: the Remainder of Listers party were pardoned. These Examples were necessary to put a stop to the encreasing Evil & deter others from a Crime so heinous in its Nature & prejudicial to Service, particularly as we were about marching into the Enemy's Country, where, had it continued, the Consequences would have been fatally destructive to the Army. By Letters rec^d this day we are informed of an attempt of Governor Houston to take from the Regular Army 200 b^{ls} of Rice to supply the militia under his Command. At the same time he Ordered the Galleys to Escort the Provision boats to Beards bluff 40 Miles higher up the Alatomaha than Fort Howe, leaving Our Stores & Provisions unprotected, besides diminishing the quantity of Rice already too Small.

A Letter from Col^o. Taarling D: L: M: G: gives an account of his Meeting with every Obstruction & impediment from the Militia, They having refused to let him hire Pack-Horse-Men & having engrossed all boats, horses & Waggon.

25: The General having requested of the assembly of Georgia 300 Negroes to act as Pioneers, they voted him 200 & appointed Commissioners who were to see them forwarded to the Generals Camp: At last Ensign Wylly is arrived with 56 hands instead of the 200 voted.

26: Cap^t. Senf, the Engineer cleared the road this day from Fort-Howe to Reids bluff.

News is rec^d. this Day that 8 Men, all Irish, had run away with a boat which was sent to Reconnoitre in Frederica Sound & to the Southward. The Lieu^t. who commanded having landed by himself, the boatmen took that opportunity of heaving off, with a M^r. Blunt a Surgeon in the Fleet,, whose cries alarmed the Lieut. & who upon his instantly Returning discharged his Piece at the boat but ineffectually.

27: The Remaining part of the army crossed the Alatomaha this day, leaving the Artillery, One Captain, Two Subalterns, 2 Sergeants & 36 rank & file with the sick at

Fort-Howe & encamped with the other Detachment at Reids bluff.

Orders were left with Major Romand to finish the Field-Pieces & Waggon with the Utmost Expedition.

28: In the Morning early a Courier arrived from Col^o Jack of the Minute Men, acquainting the General that he was about 20 miles from Beards bluff on the Alatomaha (60 Miles higher up than Reids bluff), where he Expected to be in two or three days and requested that a quantity of Rice might be sent to Beards bluff by Water: He adds that he has 500 Men with him and that the Govern^r had Returned to Augusta for a Reinforcement of Militia. The General replied to him that it was impossible for a Canoe carrying one single barrel of Rice to go so high up, the River being quite low with the Extreme drought. The Person who gave this intelligence to the General assured him that if the River was deep enough it must proceed from heavy rains when the rapidity of the Current would prove an insurmountable Obstacle to the rowing up of boats of any burthen. The General desires in concluding to know his determination.

It is currently Reported that the President of South Carolina has given preptory Orders to Col^o. Williamson of the Militia not to cross Savannah River unless Georgia is actually invaded. This has given much satisfaction to the Carolina Officers as they cannot think there will be occasion for them in the present Campaign.

29: Cap^t: Senf proceeded to clear the road 4 miles to S^t: Illas: He sunk Several wells & returned in the Evening.

We have rec^d. an account that Doctor Blunt who was taken away on the 26 inst: is returned; the Deserters having endeavoured to persuade him to go with them Willingly & that on his refusal they threatened to kill him which He believes they would have put into Execution had they not been prevented by One of the Party who appeared to be their Chief. They therefore set him on Shore & permitted him to Return which he accomplished with much difficulty.

30: The Engineer & D: Q: M: G: with an escort

cleared the road to S^t: Illa 6 miles farther today & returned in the Evening.

The General visited Fort Howe in the afternoon and inspected the preparations under Major Romand: They proved to be in great readiness the Ammunition Waggons being already finished & the Baggage Waggons would be completed in a few days. The General returned to Reids bluff.

31: Hard rain all day.

(To be continued.)