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APR 26 1985

LETTERS, JOURNALS
AND WRITINGS OF
BENJAMIN HAWKINS

VOLUME I · 1796-1801

EDITED BY C. L. GRANT



THE BEEHIVE PRESS
SAVANNAH · GEORGIA · 1980

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SHORTLY AFTER his arrival in the Creek Country, the newly-appointed Indian Agent, Benjamin Hawkins, said of himself: "He does not want money & he has the happiness of being one among a few chosen friends who have at all times justly estimated each other."¹ These few words go far to explain why a man in the midst of a successful career would leave it behind and spend the last twenty years of his life in the rather thankless position of representing the United States among the Indians.

Certainly little in his early years gave any indication that such a dramatic change might occur in the life of Benjamin Hawkins. Born August 15, 1754, in the area of north central North Carolina that became Warren County, he was one of six children, the third of four sons. His father, Philomen Hawkins, was a self-made man who achieved a prominent position in that frontier society and, by raising tobacco and speculating in land, acquired a modest fortune. His mother, Delia Martin, was active in the community; she was described as very fat and as having more political influence than any man in the county.² The other Hawkins sons all became substantial citizens, raising large families, among whom were numbered militia generals, state legislators, a governor and a member of Congress. By the time of the American Revolution, the Hawkins family was one of the most influential in that section of the colony.

Information is scarce concerning Benjamin's childhood. Although some of his letters were long and detailed, he seldom reminisced and included no comments about his family or early years. It is known that his education was under way by the time he was twelve, because his father and the widow of a neighbor named Macon prevailed upon Charles Pettigrew to open a school in the nearby court house, primarily for the Hawkins and Macon children. Either Benjamin and his older brother Joseph had already been exposed to some schooling or Pettigrew was an excellent teacher, for by 1773 they, along with Nathaniel and John Macon, were ready for college. As was customary with Presbyterian sons in that area, they chose the College of New Jersey at Princeton, known as a good Presbyterian seminary, "the hot-bed of strictly Calvinistic tenets."³

Benjamin's college education came to an abrupt end during his senior year in mid-1776, when British troops, pursuing American forces across the state, approached the town. According to the President of the college, Dr. James Witherspoon, faculty and students fled, leaving most belongings behind. Obviously Hawkins was considered trustworthy for he drove the "chair" in which Mrs. Witherspoon made her escape. Where he went and how long the flight lasted are unknown.

How well Hawkins had performed in his course work—with its emphasis on Latin, Greek and mathematics—is also unrecorded. However, by the time of his de-

parture from college had achieved proficiency in French and, as his later correspondence illustrates, had become familiar with the Classics. Also, his penmanship, spelling and grammar were certainly superior to those of most of his contemporaries. By the standards of the day the young North Carolinian was well educated.

Within a few months Hawkins was with the Continental Army and, recommended by President Witherspoon based upon his knowledge of French, had joined the staff of General George Washington as an interpreter. Otherwise, evidence concerning his service is conflicting, for no official record of military service has been found. According to several accounts he was at the Battle of Monmouth in the summer of 1778, perhaps as a civilian volunteer, yet another source has him living quietly at home shortly before.⁴ Following the winter of Valley Forge numerous junior officers were sent home as surplus and perhaps the same thing happened to him. At any rate, his direct relationship to the military was over for the time being, although his association with the Commanding General would be renewed in later years.

Rather than returning to Washington's staff, Hawkins apparently decided on a political career and in 1778 was elected from Bute (later Warren) County to the state legislature. During his one-year term the assembly named him a commissioner to handle nearly £1,000,000 in bills of credit for paying the debt the state incurred in raising troops. Despite his youth and relative inexperience, Hawkins must have been successful, for he was named commercial agent for the state shortly thereafter. In his new position he was to travel abroad in an attempt to barter tobacco for needed war supplies; fluctuating prices and the precarious state of North Carolina's finances were to hinder his efforts.

For some months in 1780 Agent Hawkins was in the West Indies where he experienced mixed success. Yet he was later named a member of a three-man Board of Commissioners and served in various capacities as representative of the state even after the cessation of hostilities.⁵ Although still under thirty, he had exhibited considerable administrative ability, honesty and devotion to duty during those years.⁶

Recognition of his services came with his election to Congress under the Articles of Confederation which were finally adopted in 1781. According to the Articles, each state was to elect from two to seven members on an annual basis with no member eligible for more than three terms in six years. Thus Hawkins's service was not continuous, but he was elected to four terms during the eight-year existence of the Confederation government, declining reelection in 1788. Between terms he again represented his county in the 1784 legislature.

Hawkins's experiences in Congress were rather typical under that "firm league of friendship" which served as the first constitution of the United States. Congressmen came and went—or often did not appear at all. Since each state was entitled to a single vote, a majority of the delegation was needed for the vote to count. Yet at times Hawkins was the only North Carolina congressman present, and at other times, when Hugh Williamson was also in attendance, the two could not agree and the state's vote was

lost. Nor was Hawkins's financial situation very promising. Congressmen were paid by the states and North Carolina was often remiss in paying the \$150 to \$200 monthly salaries. By 1783 Hawkins reported that he was reduced, without much success, to borrowing in order to meet his normal expenses in Philadelphia. It is not surprising that members of Congress frequently resigned to accept state or local positions which seemed to offer more prestige and a regular income.

Although Congressman Hawkins took an active part in legislative proceedings, serving on numerous committees, preparing reports and being relatively regular in attendance, his congressional career was not particularly distinguished. Generally he tended to support the interests of his state and his section (a combination of South and West) over those of the nation. He was especially interested in the question of western lands, navigation of the Mississippi and relations with other nations, Spain in particular, in the Southwest. Apparently he realized almost from the beginning that the government under the Articles of Confederation was not adequate to settle these matters and favored a strengthening of the central government.⁷ Further legislative experience convinced him that, if the government were to survive, some pressure on the states was necessary in order to induce them to pay their allotted appropriations. Nor was he particularly alarmed by Shays' Rebellion, for he informed Jefferson that, if a constitutional convention resulted, the rebellion would be "a blessing."⁸ For these reasons he has been numbered among the conservatives, although he obviously pursued an independent course in Congress on numerous occasions.⁹ By 1787 he was convinced of the need for a change in government and, unlike most North Carolinians, definitely was in the ranks of the Federalists who supported ratification of the new constitution.¹⁰

During these years Hawkins maintained contact with many of the nation's leaders including Washington, his former Commanding General, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. While in the state legislature in 1784 he reported to Washington at length concerning the local problems in raising revenue and completing western land cessions. When political opponents attributed selfish motives to his stand in favor of the state's cession of the lands, he was defeated for reelection to the legislature—his only defeat at the polls.¹¹ Jefferson and Madison had both served in Congress during Hawkins's various terms, and he shared their views on most issues. Also, as early as 1786, he was passing on his knowledge of the Indians and their languages to Jefferson, then serving in Paris.¹²

Hawkins was back in Congress as the movement which led to the Constitutional Convention gathered momentum. After the Annapolis Convention in 1786, he joined the majority in rejecting a New York resolution calling for a convention but supported the successful congressional call for such a meeting. The momentous gathering was set for the second Monday in May, 1787, in Philadelphia. However, when his state chose delegates Hawkins was not included, possibly because of his association with the Treaty of Hopewell, which was proving unpopular in North Carolina. Nevertheless, he continued to attend Congress for the remainder of his term and was a staunch sup-

of the Constitution during the unsuccessful ratification struggle in his home

By 1783 Hawkins had become interested in the condition of the Indians, now a part of the new nation. The Articles of Confederation empowered the Congress to regulate trade and manage affairs with those Indians who were not "members of States, and that the legislative right of any state, within its own limits be not infringed or violated." This grant of authority was in addition to the general provision that allowed Congress to make treaties and alliances. Based upon these provisions, numerous congressional committees were concerned with Indian problems, although few had much success. Hawkins served on several of these, most notably a committee on Indian Affairs which reported in October, 1783. The members realized that land pressures were building among the whites but recognized the dangers of attempting to settle Indian land problems by force. They recommended, therefore, a conference with all the tribes to inform them of the terms of the Treaty of Paris and to settle such problems as the transfer of prisoners, regulation of trade and protection of white settlers on Indian land. Although Hawkins's contributions, if any, to these recommendations were not recorded, their general tone accorded with his later attitudes.¹⁴

Based in part on the committee's report, Congress made several, usually abortive, attempts to settle matters by treaty. Fearing the possibility of an alliance between Alexander McGillivray, the Creek leader, and the Spanish, it set up a Commission charged with making a "lasting peace" with the southern Indians. Since the states concerned, South Carolina and Georgia, were reluctant to recognize the right of Congress to deal with these Indians within the territory claimed by them, the national Commission faced almost insurmountable obstacles. Nevertheless, the five-man Commission (which included Hawkins and Andrew Pickens of South Carolina, who would serve together on numerous occasions in the future) carried on negotiations with the Creeks and other southern tribes during the next year.

After numerous delays, the Commissioners met with a few Creeks at Galphinton, South Carolina, in October, 1785. When no additional Indians appeared, Hawkins and his colleagues departed, feeling that the small delegation did not represent the Creek people.¹⁵ As soon as the congressional delegation was out of the way, the Georgia representatives agreed to a treaty whereby the Creeks surrendered the lands between the Ogeechee-Oconee and the St. Mary's and confirmed the Treaty of Augusta, which the Creeks had previously repudiated.¹⁶

A somewhat more success resulted from a convention with the Cherokees at Hopewell, North Carolina, a month later. With Hawkins serving as chairman, an agreement was reached and a treaty which ostensibly contained no new land cessions was agreed upon by a large Cherokee delegation (almost 1,000 actually attended). But Indian surpluses of land was what North Carolinians were expecting, and opposition immediately developed, probably resulting in the state's failure to name Hawkins to its next national convention.

Two more Hopewell treaties signed with the Choctaws and a handful of Chickasaws in January, 1786, completed the Commission's work. Both treaties were unpopular with whites since little land was acquired. As Hawkins's name was most prominently mentioned in connection with the negotiations, he bore the brunt of white displeasure and many Georgians would never quite forgive him. On the other hand, he had cultivated a great interest in the Indians, gained considerable experience in dealing with them and earned a reputation among them as a friend who could be turned to in time of need.

During the remainder of the decade relations with the Indians scarcely improved for the central government. A congressional ordinance of 1786 reasserted the national right to deal with the Indians, but the states were not impressed. The most important need was for a treaty with the largest and most warlike tribe in the South, McGillivray's Creeks. Thus, one of the most pressing problems confronting the new President in 1789 was the lack of an accord with the Creeks, who seemed about to go to war with Georgia at any time. Several attempts at conferences had proved futile, and a vast land sale by the Georgia legislature late in 1789 to the Yazoo Land companies had further complicated the situation. Probably feeling that another commission would be no more likely to succeed, President Washington decided to invite McGillivray to the capital for personal negotiations. This strategy produced results when McGillivray and twenty-three chiefs made a triumphal visit to New York in 1790 and agreed to the first treaty between the United States and the Creeks.¹⁷

Meanwhile, Benjamin Hawkins had begun the last phase of his political career. After voting against ratification of the Constitution in July, 1788, North Carolina remained outside of the Union for some months.¹⁸ In November of the next year, with the new federal government in operation, a second convention (of which Hawkins was a member) reversed the verdict and North Carolina became the twelfth state to ratify.¹⁹ Soon the state legislature selected Samuel Johnston and Benjamin Hawkins to represent the state in the Senate. By lot, Hawkins was awarded the full term, taking his seat January 13, 1790.²⁰

During those early years under the Constitution no political parties existed, and most men elected to the First Congress were Federalists in the sense that they had favored ratification of the document and assumed without question that George Washington would be the first President.²¹ Of course, Hawkins was a Federalist in those terms. Most accounts of the period also place him in the ranks of those who were followers of Alexander Hamilton and his emerging Federalist Party. Yet an examination of Hawkins's senatorial record does not indicate any particular adherence to that political philosophy. Most definitely it is difficult to see how, based upon his legislative career, he could be characterized as "aristocratic, conservative, proud and wealthy."²²

As had been his habit as a member of the Confederation Congress, Senator Hawkins was regular in attendance and served on numerous committees. Apparently he was not an effective speaker and seldom took the floor for that purpose.²³ What in-

since he wielded was off the floor in the committee rooms or in correspondence. In the First Congress was groping its way, largely without party organization or precedent, most influence was of a personal nature. Here his friendship with the President, Secretary of State Jefferson and Representative Madison undoubtedly played an important part.²⁴

From the first days of his term, Hawkins indicated that he would be inclined to follow an independent course. The North Carolina Assembly, as would be the custom of long state legislatures for many years, spent considerable time drawing up instructions for its senators; these instructions were indicative of the dominant state rights beliefs of the members. When Hawkins and Johnston showed little inclination to remain in close contact with the legislature on those matters, a vote of censure was passed citing their lack of "exertion." In their defence the senators maintained that they were not restricted by legislative instructions but were bound to pursue a course in line with the "general interests of the Union."²⁵

Actually Hawkins's legislative record should not have aroused undue opposition. For the most part he voted for measures favoring Western interests.²⁶ The major exception to this course was his support of the excise tax, particularly that on whiskey, which would be increasingly unpopular in back country areas. In view of his long belief in governmental fiscal responsibility, he probably supported the measure to raise revenue for the government. His votes for placing the capital in Baltimore on the Potomac, for a non-impertation act toward England, as well as his votes against the Bank of the United States, an increase in naval appropriations, the appointment of John Jay as Envoy Extraordinary to England and the sale of western lands to a group of speculators led by Mannaseh Cutler, should have pleased the majority of his constituents.²⁷

The conclusion that Hawkins was a member of the emerging Federalist Party is no doubt based on several factors. His long and cordial friendship with the nominal head of the party, President Washington, contributed. Also, his resistance to legislative instructions and the resulting censure seemed to indicate that he was out of sympathy with his republican constituents. Then, as his term was to expire in 1795, he was not a candidate for reelection and was succeeded by a former blacksmith and outspoken critic of Washington, Timothy Bloodworth.²⁸ On the surface, the outcome seemed to be a "reaction" against conservative control and a part of an anti-Federalist sweep, which climaxed two years later when all but one of the state's thirty-one congressmen were Jeffersonian Republicans. Actually Bloodworth's victory seems to have been the replacement of a Republican-leaning independent representative of the state's more established areas with a radical spokesman for the farmer and frontiersmen. Certainly within a few years, as he would indicate on numerous occasions in his correspondence from the Creek Country, Hawkins was a Jeffersonian Republican and all sounded as though he had always been one.

At the expiration of his term on March 3, 1795, Benjamin Hawkins's career as

an elected official came to an end. Whatever thoughts he may have had regarding his political future are unknown. Just past forty, he was not ready for retirement. At any rate, two considerations were to determine his future: his loyalty to President Washington and his experience with the Indians. These factors would alter his life and he would thereafter be closely connected with Georgia and the neighboring Indians.

Most Georgians had never been willing to accept the Treaty of New York, since it did not recognize the agreements reached at Galphinton (and confirmed at Shoulderbone in 1786) and seemed to bestow permanency on the territorial settlements. As was typical of most Americans, the idea of "civilizing" the Indians as stated in the treaty was unpopular, for it would obviously hinder western migration. The people of Georgia were anxious to void the New York treaty or come to terms more to their liking with their Creek neighbors.

Alexander McGillivray, the most important Creek leader until his death in 1793, had other ideas. Not only did he refuse to negotiate with state officials, but he was in contact with the Spanish in Florida and often threatened war. On the frontier, neither whites nor Indians were likely to be bound by treaties or surveyed boundary lines, and border clashes, robberies and murders were common. In addition, adventurers like William A. Bowles, who would later cause Hawkins great difficulties, and the Spanish to the south constantly kept the Creeks and other tribes agitated and viewed the barely-contained American westward surge with great apprehension.

By early 1795 the situation in the South had become so explosive that President Washington reported the matter to Congress. Georgia had passed two acts which were regarded as violations of existing treaties and laws. In the previous December, Creek land had been offered by the state to former state troops and settlers without regard to Indian claims. Secondly, in January the legislature restated the state's claim to land to the Mississippi and authorized the sale of millions of acres to several companies for pennies an acre. This act—the "Yazoo Fraud"—touched off disputes and judicial proceedings which would last for years. Georgia's claim to the land had to be clarified immediately. Thus two Georgia congressmen were named to request the President to act. Professing to be embarrassed by the whole matter and possibly not knowing the best course to follow, Washington delayed action. But in June, he informed the Senate of his decision, which was to request confirmation of a Commission to negotiate with the Creeks. As members of this new body, the President nominated Hawkins along with Andrew Pickens and George Clymer of Pennsylvania. It was to hold a conference with the Indians the following May at Colerain, residence of the current Creek Agent, James Seagrove, and site of a United States factory.

In view of Hawkins's later career as Indian Agent the negotiations conducted at Colerain were very important. Not only did the terms of the treaty form a significant part of the guidelines under which he would operate but he dealt with numerous men, red and white, some for the first time, who would play key roles in his future. Edward

Price had recently been appointed factor at Colerain and would be on friendly terms with Hawkins the former. Former Senator James Jackson was one of the Georgia delegation in attendance and would later serve as governor. Timothy Barnard was selected as an interpreter. Among the Creeks in attendance were such Chiefs as Tustunnuggee Thlucco (Big Warrior), Furbatchee Micco (White-bird King), and the half-breed chief Alexander Cornell (Oche Haujo), who would be one of Hawkins's most valuable assistants for years. Equally important, the future agent emerged from the conference with a deeper interest in the plight of the Indians and a growing reputation as the one white man they could trust. On the other hand, white Georgians were more inclined to suspect anyone who defended Indian rights.

Lack of prior preparation, Indian suspicions and the late arrival of the other Commissioners resulted in a delay of nearly a month in the opening of the conference. However, amidst much festivity and assurances by the Creek chiefs that they spoke for the entire nation, negotiations began. Less than two weeks later agreements were reached which hopefully settled outstanding disputes between the Creeks and the United States but none between the Creeks and Georgia. The Treaty of Colerain reaffirmed the Treaty of New York and called for marking the boundary line specified in that treaty. The Creeks gave permission for two trading or military posts in their territory, each to have a five-mile-square tract of land. These posts would be south of the Altamaha and on the Oconee. Also the Creeks were to furnish an escort for the American and Spanish Commissioners who would be surveying their mutual boundary as determined in negotiations just concluded. The lands of the Cherokees and Choctaws as designated in the Treaties of Hopewell would be respected and the Creeks agreed to surrender "prisoners, negroes or property" as called for in the New York accord. In return the Indians would receive \$6,000 in goods and the services of two blacksmiths and strikers (assistants who did the hammering).²⁹

The Georgia Commissioners objected strenuously to the terms of the treaty, probably reflecting the sentiments of most of their fellow citizens. Numerous protests were published and the controversy continued in the press well into the summer and early fall, even attracting the attention of grand juries.³⁰ Benjamin Hawkins, as chairman of the Commission and its best-known member, was the object of much of the criticism.

With his assignment completed, Hawkins journeyed to the capital to report to President Washington. Unfortunately, neither the time nor the circumstances of their meeting was recorded, yet Washington was no doubt pleased with the result. The treaty was put before the Senate where it was ratified early in the following year. Despite an amendment to the treaty denying any intention on the part of the national government to violate the rights of the state, only Georgia remained dissatisfied.

At some point in their discussions, the President and Hawkins talked about the necessity for assigning competent men to serve among the Indians. Washington had expressed a desire several years earlier for an "eligible" plan for promoting their civilization and had impressed on Congress that "the employment of qualified and trusty

persons" who would actually live among the Indians as agents would help "preserve peace and good neighbourhood."³¹ Now, in 1796, there was a need for such a person because the Superintendent for Indian Affairs in the South, William Blount, had been elected Tennessee's first governor.

Again, the records are silent on how Washington and Hawkins arrived at the decision that the latter would be the man for the appointment. Some fifteen years later an anonymous newspaper account had Hawkins voicing the President's earlier opinion, adding that an agent appointed would have to make a great sacrifice and reside among the Indians. Washington supposedly said: "You have on no occasion heretofore refused your services when necessarily called for by the general government, I wish you to sacrifice a few years of your life in making the experiment which you have suggested, and try the effects of civilization among them." Thus put on the spot, Hawkins accepted.³²

It seems doubtful that the North Carolinian would make such an important decision in haste. Several accounts indicate that his family was opposed to his acceptance, especially when his prospects for further success in national politics or as a private citizen were promising. Loyalty to Washington was a factor, but perhaps Absalom H. Chappell, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, came closest to the reason why Hawkins accepted when he attributed it to "that Indian fascination" which affected the lives of many individuals before and since the year 1796.³³ In the true spirit of the Enlightenment, here was an opportunity to uplift the "noble savage" for the betterment of all mankind. A man of Hawkins's temperament could scarcely resist.

By November the newly-appointed Agent was on his way to assume his duties. He apparently had been ill for quite some time and traveled slowly, but he arrived at the home of Andrew Pickens near Hopewell, South Carolina, on the 19th. As they were not to begin determining the boundary lines called for at Colerain until the next spring, Hawkins decided to journey around the Creek territory, getting acquainted with the people and looking over the land. As his correspondence shows, he adapted quickly to Indian life (despite the fact that he was past forty and had numerous physical ailments) and obviously enjoyed his new surroundings. His lengthy letters as well as the *Sketch of the Creek Country* and other "sketches" reveal an acceptance of Hawkins by the Indians quite unusual on the frontier. In return he was the benevolent father to his "children" and usually could sympathize with all Indians except for the "mischief makers."

Throughout the two decades that followed, Hawkins felt that his principal mission was the conversion of the Indians to a "plan of civilization." While the Agent had been in the Senate, President Washington had presented to Congress his ideas for dealing with the Indians. Not only should they be treated justly and fairly, the Chief Executive believed, but "such rational experiments should be made for imparting to them the blessings of civilization as may from time to time suit their condition."³⁴ Although Congress responded in part with a revision of the "Trade and Intercourse"

Act of 1790, the exact details of any "plan of civilization" were never spelled out further than in the instructions to the agents, which included "the introduction of the Arts of husbandry, and domestic manufactures, as means of producing and diffusing the blessings attached to a well regulated civil Society."

As Hawkins interpreted his mission, the plan meant converting the Indians from unstable, restless hunters to self-sufficient tillers of the soil. Land was to be individually owned, fenced and cultivated. All fruits, vegetables and livestock adaptable to the area were to be grown, and the Indians were to learn home industry, the rudiments of counting and the value of money. Only by accomplishing these "blessings" would the Indians be able to survive and live at peace with their white neighbors. Failure to follow this plan, as he constantly reminded his "red charge," would bring about "ruin to their land."

Included in the plan, as Hawkins envisioned it, was also a complete change in Indian family relationships. Civilization would not only require individual land ownership but the male would become a partner who would work side-by-side with the female. The Agent maintained that, rather than weaken family ties, as most Indian men believed, this new arrangement would strengthen the bonds between husband and wife. Since for the first time they would be treated as equals under this new relationship, it is little wonder that Hawkins's popularity among the Indian women was always great!

As he supervised Indian affairs directly under the War Department, Hawkins was required to operate within the administrative framework erected by Congress and the various Secretaries of War. Furthermore, being the highest ranking civilian official of the Federal government in the territory, it was essential that he maintain cooperation with other civil and military officers in the area and with the nearby state governors, especially the chief executive of Georgia. Fortunately, with rare exceptions, the Agent's contact with these men was usually pleasant, and he considered most of them friends. He asked and gave advice freely and attempted to keep them informed not only concerning their immediate assignments and problems but on world conditions.

Perhaps the official most relied on by Hawkins was the U.S. factor in charge of the trading house (or factory) in Creek Country. The factory system had been established by Congress at the suggestion of President Washington to promote commerce with the Indians. It would result in better relations, Congress hoped, and it might divert the profitable English and Spanish trade with the Indians. Thus, a factory had been established at Colerain in 1796 under Edward Price. (The other factory in the South was in Cherokee Country at Tellico.) After Hawkins arrived—and no doubt through his influence—the factory was moved to Fort Wilkinson and later to Ocmulgee Old Fields in 1806 and Fort Hawkins in 1808.³⁵

In addition to the factor, a large number of white or half-breed traders, supposedly licensed by the Agent, traded with the Indians. These men, mostly illiterate, were a mixed lot: some were honest and hardworking, others were virtual outcasts from

white society, prone to violence, liquor and cheating their customers. A few of the former became wealthy and respected, whereas most of the latter were constantly in debt. All were of continuing concern to Hawkins.³⁶

The Agent's other duties were based on treaties with Spain and the various Indian tribes and on congressional acts, particularly the Trade and Intercourse Act of 1796. According to that act, passes were required for traveling in Indian territory, and penalties were specified for offenses committed by whites, including settlement on Indian land; traders were to be licensed, horses could not be bought or sold without a special license, and an annual limit of \$15,000 for presents given by the Agent was prescribed.³⁷ The Agent was to keep a record of travelers passing through and a journal of activities, and to correspond regularly with the War Department.³⁸ There can be no doubt that Hawkins conscientiously complied with all of the rules and regulations and expected his subordinates to do the same.

As the nearest American governmental official, Hawkins also believed that it was his duty to maintain friendly relations with Spanish officials to the south. Although he was convinced that Spanish policy towards the Indians and the British was timorous and vacillating and that the Floridas and Louisiana would fall to the United States in due time, he cooperated at every opportunity and attempted to keep the Spanish officials informed. He maintained friendly contact with the leading trading establishment in Spanish territory, the British firm of Panton, Leslie & Company, and its successors. Obviously he considered William Panton a close friend and was saddened when a rumor of his death was circulated.

The other officials with whom Hawkins worked closely were his assistants and interpreters. Timothy Barnard and Alexander Cornells remained with him throughout most of his tenure and retained his confidence and trust. Barnard had been in the Creek Country for years, was married to a Creek woman who bore him a large family and was known and respected by red and white alike. Cornells was an illiterate half-breed Creek chief (Oche Haujo). Other assistants often mentioned were William Hill (who committed suicide in 1806), Sackfield Maclin, Nimrod Doyell (Doyle) and Christian Limbaugh. The last, apparently a German of some education, was accused of stealing late in 1815 and fled to Florida, an occurrence which must have been a blow to the Agent, who had often recommended him in vain for a higher salary and always spoke highly of him. With all of his assistants, Hawkins maintained close ties and there is no indication of any friction among them.

When first appointed Hawkins was given the title "Principal Temporary Agent for Indian Affairs South of Ohio." Initially his authority extended to all Indians living in the area bounded by the Ohio, the Mississippi, Spanish Florida, and the established states. For the most part, this was the territory occupied by the four nations, Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw and Choctaw. Such a vast area was too much for one official and temporary agents were appointed over the Chickasaws and Choctaws (John McKee had been Agent to the Cherokees since 1794). Throughout his tenure the Creeks re-

remained directly before Hawkins while the "temporary" was dropped on his reappointment by President Jefferson. In the meantime, a dispute had arisen over jurisdiction, since the newly-created post of governor of the Mississippi Territory included superintendence of the Indians. When the matter was finally clarified in 1803 Hawkins's responsibilities were reduced to those of Agent to the Creeks and Seminoles within the boundaries of the United States. Since he had always been primarily concerned with the Creeks, the change did not seem to reduce his activities.

During his first years in Creek Country, Hawkins established no permanent location for his agency. His predecessor, James Seagrove, had maintained his residence at the edge of the territory at Colerain, in part apparently from fear of the Indians. The act of 1796, however, called for the Agent to "live among the Indians," a stipulation with which Hawkins was in thorough agreement. Therefore, he spent his time in the heart of Indian territory and, as his letters indicate, moved around considerably, although he seemed to prefer Fort Wilkinson. Not until the spring of 1803 did he decide on the Flint River as a location for his headquarters and home, which would be the center of activity among the Creeks for the next thirteen years.

The site selected for the agency was an excellent one, accessible to the Indians and to the Georgians and located on a navigable river. Across the river was a small military post, Fort Lawrence, while a day to the east was Fort Hawkins. Soon the agency became the focal point for the entire region with both reds and whites going out of their way to visit or make use of its facilities. Hospitality was dispensed lavishly and, weather permitting, it was usually humming with activity.

Throughout his life Hawkins was an enthusiastic agriculturalist and his correspondence is filled with references to plants or animals, exchanges of cuttings or seed, condition of crops, planting advice, descriptions of climate and soil and related matters.³⁹ Now that he had chosen a permanent residence he began to build a model farm. Not only would it satisfy his horticultural desires and help to sustain a growing family but it would set an example for the Indians and show them the benefits of civilization. By 1809 his efforts were so successful that he could report production of a large number of fruits and vegetables as well as cattle, sheep, hogs and goats. Several mills were in operation and various artisans such as blacksmiths, hatters, tanners and weavers were kept busy.⁴⁰ A contemporary sketch shows an orderly community dominated by the main house, which was surrounded on two sides by orchards and on a third by the Flint River.

The only element missing was a mistress of the manor house. Throughout his life Hawkins appears to have been attractive to and attracted by women, yet there is no indication that he had any serious attachments. When he went into Creek Country he had thoughts of following the usual custom of taking a native wife but changed his mind when he reached the conclusion that a white husband invariably became a slave to his Indian wife and her family. Therefore, in spite of numerous offers from Indian women, he avoided entanglements and instead took a white common-law wife soon

after his arrival. Little is known about her except her name—Lavinia Downs. They probably met at the Colerain factory while Edward Price was factor. Possibly Price sent her to Hawkins in response to the Agent's request for someone to superintend his household. At any rate, at least six children were born to the couple, daughters Georgia, Carolina, Cherokee, Virginia and Jeffersonia, and a son James Madison.⁴¹ There is no evidence that it was not a happy arrangement and the Agent referred to her as Mrs. Hawkins. Finally, believing that he would not recover from an unspecified illness contracted on the first day of 1812, Hawkins insisted that a marriage ceremony be performed by the two Moravian missionaries living at the agency.

His Calvinistic origins notwithstanding, there are few references in his correspondence to indicate Hawkins's religious beliefs. He apparently never attempted to change the beliefs of the Indians, nor did he criticize their religious rites. He cooperated fully with the Quakers in their attempts to assist the Indians, probably because their views of "civilizing" them coincided so closely with his "plan of civilization." That he was in religion, as in so many other ways, a man of the Enlightenment seems clear from a letter written while in the Senate at the arrival of word of the execution of Louis XVI of France:⁴²

I am an advocate for French democracy. I think of, speak of and view every thing they do with a friendly anxiety for their success. That they will ultimately succeed, I have not, nor never had the least doubt, since the National Convention was vested with full powers.

The time is come when reason will be an over match for superstition. The idea the British government will concede points to the dissenters or Catholics is a mere mockery as it implies a right to withhold them. The barrier attempted to be opposed to the rights of man, will serve to enlighten the people and to establish them. Kingcraft and priestcraft have had their day. Things are changing and the rights of man will be established on the ruins of both. As I expect verification of this prediction in the course of the present century, and you may suppose, I arrogate to myself somewhat of the prophetick, I here enter my protest against having received any lights from the book which we read so much and believe so little, "in which falsehoods are asserted for truths, absurdities advanced that contradict common sense and promises bestowed on actions manifestly unjust, and all said to be revelation from God."

These sentiments would seem to place him among the deists, in good company with Jefferson, Franklin and Washington.

Much of Hawkins's time was necessarily taken up by those he called his "red charge." Teaching them to live a settled, agricultural life would not be enough to insure peace and "good neighbourhood." It would also be necessary for them to adopt some type of governmental structure that would produce national responsibility and mutual trust. In addition to the division between the Upper and Lower Creeks,