

GEORGIA IMAGINED, *GEORGIA ILLUSTRATED*:

READING THE LANDSCAPE, 1717-1859

by

CHRISTOPHER ROLAND LAWTON

(Under the Direction of John C. Inscoe)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is built around William and T. Addison Richards's *Georgia Illustrated* (1842), the first travel book about the Deep South to be written and published within the region. To create a context for understanding the book and its authors, I begin by exploring how and what antebellum non-Southerners thought they knew about the state. The first two chapters trace the roots of their shared knowledge to 18<sup>th</sup>- and early-19<sup>th</sup> century travel texts in which Georgia was repeatedly documented as an idea rather than a reality. Through this process outside observers cast the state as a distant and dangerous Other in order to reify their own sense of self and home. I then use this construct to examine *Georgia Illustrated* through a post-colonial lens, as a case study of how one set of residents found a voice, imagined themselves as they wanted to be seen, and responded.

The meaning of *Georgia Illustrated* is inextricably intertwined with the lives of its authors and their history in the now-forgotten college town of Penfield. To tell this story is to reconstruct the world of the bookstore their family operated there, the role of books in their lives, and their lives in what was, at the time, an aspirational cultural and intellectual center. Perhaps most importantly, it is also to reveal a fleeting moment of antebellum possibility. *Georgia*

*Illustrated* not only promoted the state's landscape as being as quintessentially American as Northeastern locales, but also dismissed regional stereotypes by proclaiming the existence of a vibrant Southern intelligentsia. Northern presses lavishly and widely praised the book at the time of its publication, and it launched the careers of its creators. Yet within a decade of its publication, the shifting political climate left no place for a book that denied the hallmarks of regional distinctiveness. The rise and fall of *Georgia Illustrated* mirrors the rise and fall of a certain strain of antebellum Southern intellectuals, filled with brilliant potential, yet ultimately suffocated by both the stereotypical imaginings of outsiders and the political posturing of their own neighbors.

INDEX WORDS: Antebellum Georgia, Colonial Georgia, Landscapes in Art, Travel Writing, History of the Book, Southern Sectional Identity, Postcolonial Theory, T. Addison Richards, William Carey Richards, Adiel Sherwood, Penfield, Ga.

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## DEDICATION

For my daughter,  
who came into the world just after I started this Ph.D. program;  
for my mother,  
who left it just before I finished;  
and for my father,  
who stuck by me through it all.  
With love.

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My research for this project was made possible by the support of multiple institutions. An Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship from the American Philosophical Society allowed me to spend a summer voraciously reading through their unmatched collection of 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century travel accounts of Georgia. A Dissertation Fellowship from the Gilder Lehrman Institute

allowed me to spend ample time in Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library, as well as in the New York Historical Society, the New York Public Library, and the University Archives of New York University. A John Eugene and Barbara Hilton Cay Visiting Scholar Grant from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill provided me with the luxury of many fruitful days in the Southern Historical Collection. The erudite scholars of the St. George Tucker Society were kind enough to welcome into their midst, read my work as part of the Cleanth Brooks Dissertation Forum, and respond with a barrage of comments that significantly fine-tuned my approach to this project. I have also benefitted from substantial time in the Georgia Archives, the Atlanta History Center, the Special Collections Library at Mercer University, the Greene County Probate Court, and especially the Hargrett Library at the University of Georgia.

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—INTRODUCTION—

***THE VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE LANDSCAPES OF GEORGIA ILLUSTRATED***



T. Addison Richards, *Self Portrait*, oil on canvas (1840)

Addison Richards was twenty years old and full of grace. And lust. The object of his affection that spring of 1841 was the daughter of family friends, the child of a wealthy Augusta merchant. Yet Addison's home was with his parents, seventy miles away, in the tiny college town of Penfield, Georgia. So he did what so many young men in his situation have done: he wrote her passionate letters.

A contemporary self-portrait of Addison reveals much about its artist as a young man. Nowhere in the background of the painting are the signs of class and gender that so frequently appear in other portraits of antebellum Southern men. There are no allusions to history or industry, nature or agriculture, social refinement or mastery of the hunt. He has fashioned himself instead as a floating head above a body lost against its background. He is all intellect and perhaps, noting the only other bright spot in the painting, a touch of heart. And so when this twenty-year-old sat down to pen a love letter to his much-desired belle, he brought to the table a sense of self—and of what he could offer her—defined by the belief that he was uncommonly bright, voluminously well-read, and exceptionally gifted with both the writer’s pen and the artist’s brush. He could not, he wrote, send her the usual trite letters of “the parasite or courtier,” but would rather engage with her in a “chat epistolary” filled with references to poetry, literature, and lofty ideas.<sup>1</sup>

Such an excess of talent was surpassed only by Addison’s determination to succeed. At age twenty, other than garnering the affections of a young woman in Augusta, his ambition had a very narrow focus. He and his twenty-two year old brother William had just embarked on the publication of the first-ever journal of literature and art devoted to the Georgia landscape. Through this unprecedented venture, they hoped to bring national attention to the intellectual life, natural beauty, and touristic potential of their home state. They also wanted to make themselves famous. The first issue of *Georgia Illustrated* was released in the winter of 1841, and its appraisal in the national press was nothing short of glowing. New York reviewers were effusive in their praise. They cheered Addison and William for their “magnificent publication”

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<sup>1</sup> T. Addison Richards to Anne McKinne, 9 March 1841, Jackson and McKinne Family Papers (1817-1871), Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

and declared it “superior to any previous American production,” and even European volumes, which “cannot, in the slightest degree, bear with it in comparison.”<sup>2</sup>

Addison relished his moment in the sun. He and his brother had all but guaranteed their careers and future successes. The ground beneath his feet looked fertile, the road ahead clear and straight; nothing could stand in his way. With these glowing reviews fresh in his mind, and his self-confidence swollen, he turned with more than a bit of swagger towards his beloved and told her why the project was so remarkable. He and William had started the work and would continue to do it because it needed to be done. After all, he remarked, quoting a verse from Charles Lamb he claimed he would never forget:

It is *we* who make the world. No sky is blue.  
No leaf is verdant. It is our vision which hath the  
azure and the green. Tis that which expands or  
causes to diminish, things in themselves ever the  
same. Tis our imagination which lifts earth to  
heaven & robes our women in the garbs of angels.  
And is this not better than if [we] were to measure,  
with the square & rule, & to fashion our enjoyments  
by the scanty materials, the clay, before us, instead  
of subliming them to the uttermost sketch of our  
immortal capacity.

“Yes!” he scrawled with a firm hand below the passage, “I’ll do my best.”<sup>3</sup>

If this were merely an expression of one ordinary young man’s penchant for bombast, there would not be much of a story to tell. But he penned this letter as he and his brother were in the process of making a serial that would soon become a book, the first and only published by Georgians about the cultural and intellectual bona fides of their own home state. His affinity for

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<sup>2</sup> “Literary Review,” *The Ladies Companion: A Monthly Magazine Dedicated to Literature and the Fine Arts* XIV (January 1841): 148. The final quotation is taken from *The New-Yorker*, which received and reviewed both a prospectus and an advance issue of *Georgia Illustrated* several months before its formal publication and release. “Georgia Illustrated,” *The New-Yorker* 10, no. 9 (14 November 1840): 141.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Charles Lamb, “Valentine’s Day: A Homily for the Fourteenth of February,” in *Elia: Essays that Have Appeared Under that Signature in the London Magazine* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Carey, 1828), 81



such an obscure but suggestive passage, one that he had taken on as a sort of mantra, seems to have memorized, and could recall at will, signifies that there was something much larger and more complex at work. Certainly Addison's echoing of Charles Lamb speaks to his grand ambitions. It also opens a very provocative door onto the heat and flash of one brilliant moment, in one specific place, in which it indeed seemed possible to "make the world."

There are two important, interrelated issues that can be deduced from Addison's letter. This dissertation traces them both. First, it burrows into the rich and dense loam of Penfield, Georgia, to explore the large and small worlds the brothers inhabited and the ways in which those concentric circles of existence directly informed their work. It is not just that Addison and William Richards had seemingly unlimited potential in 1841, but their family was economically and socially on the rise in a new and thriving college town. Penfield seemed like it was on the verge of becoming one of the most culturally and intellectually important places in the state. Georgia seemed poised for greatness, too. For most of its citizens, the opportunity before them seemed to be shaped by their ability to conquer nature, plant an agricultural empire, and build cities like wild mushrooms sprouting up across the vast forest floor. They dreamed broadly, if in rather prosaic measures, of stamping a white and ordered Christian civilization onto the wilderness. Yet to a certain few, such as the Richards brothers—men of intellect, erudition, and a certain sense of themselves and of what was possible in the dayspring of such a nascent society—this dream also meant molding their new civilization into something more ethereal, more aesthetic.

Addison and William intended for *Georgia Illustrated* to overcome the "scanty materials" of the state's past by "subliming [it] to the uttermost sketch of [their] immortal capacity." This agenda, or rather their belief in the need for it, raises substantive questions about

how Southern spaces were imagined and what they meant in the antebellum United States.

Therefore, on a slightly more theoretical plane, the second issue this dissertation explores is the long and complex history of ideological constructions of Georgia—in promotional, scientific, touristic, and literary accounts—especially as created by non-Georgians during the first century of its existence. The most negative and damning aspects of those published accounts were often picked up and repeated in the texts of others. They eventually became accepted as factual and common knowledge and largely shaped public perceptions of Georgia among a vast readership that had never been.

*Georgia Illustrated* was designed and published as a corrective to these longstanding denigrations. It was an attempt to move out from beneath what the Richards brothers believed was a shadow that had hung over the state and the lives of its inhabitants for too long. Addison commented in his letter to the young woman in Augusta that they had embarked upon the project because it needed to be done. He told her it was possible because he and William could make the world around them appear not as it was, scanty and made of clay, but rather as ethereal and glorious as they thought it should be. His remarks seem on their surface like proclamations of power and possibility. Indeed, they captured his celebratory mood in a moment when all seemed possible. Yet they also reveal the existence, far deeper down, of roots of disillusionment with the status quo.

If Georgia had been incorrectly imagined for too long, as Addison suggested, its reputation had real world consequences for him and his brother. They had enormous ambitions and aspired to national renown in the arts and literature. It would be a difficult climb if no one ever corrected the prevailing national myths of Georgia—and the South in general—as a less-than-equal space from which only local, regional art and literature could arise. On the other

hand, if *Georgia Illustrated* could successfully demonstrate that the state was fundamentally connected to intellectual and aesthetic trends in national culture, that it was both capable of producing erudite individuals who could represent it as such and of showing why it was worthy of such representations, Addison and William might achieve the fame they sought. The state might shed its desperately medieval reputation. The region as a whole might seem a bit more culturally progressive. Their images of themselves and their images of the state were thus deeply interwoven and mutually beneficial.

Their ambitions seem remarkably clear, focused, and grand. They are even more astonishing when one recalls that the creators of *Georgia Illustrated* charted them and were hard at work on them when they were only twenty and twenty-two years old. Rather than toiling in apprenticeships, however, they proclaimed themselves fully-blossomed professionals: Addison, an artist and writer; William, a writer and editor. Their abilities to conquer these logistical concerns, the difference between merely fantasizing about creating something like *Georgia Illustrated* and making it so, speak to their place within a vibrant intellectual community both in their small university town and webbed across the state. They could not have done it alone. Of paramount importance were their family and especially their father, who became a publisher in order to put out their work. Beyond them, in Penfield and beyond, Addison and William were surrounded by thinkers, scholars, and writers; by preachers, politicians, and wealthy planters; individuals who encouraged, nurtured, and guided their project to fruition. Although the existence of this community is not explicitly spelled out in *Georgia Illustrated*, its presence is discernible in nearly every essay and image.

For a moment in early 1841, it must have seemed too easy. The first serial issue of *Georgia Illustrated* was met not with derision in the New York press, but was instead celebrated

as an overdue and necessary work. The Northeastern cultural establishment seemed willing to accept everything they had to say.<sup>4</sup> If William and Addison had previously believed that the world outside their windows needed to be remade in an idealized image of itself, it must have seemed now, as Addison bragged, that others deemed them quite proficient at the job. His letter to the young belle in Augusta was written at exactly this moment when it appeared as though he and his brother were destined for great success.

Over the next months they produced a total of six issues. Every issue contained two essays, all except for one addressing a distinct location within the state. The majority of the essays were written by one or other of the brothers, although a few were penned by invited contributors who were either associated with the sites in question or, it seems in one case, an important patron. Each essay was paired with an image by Addison which had been reproduced for the work as a full-page, steel plate engraving. The technology required to mass-produce engraved images was still highly specialized and expensive in the early 1840s. Writing, designing, typesetting, and the final assembly of each edition was done in Penfield, but high-quality printing required contracting with one of only a very few New York firms capable of handling such business. Even so, the Richardses went far beyond what was being turned out by large-scale magazines by choosing the famed fine-art engraver James Smillie, of the firm Rawdon, Wright, Hatch, and Smillie, to transform Addison's images into prints.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Reviews of *Georgia Illustrated* will be address in chapter 6. It received positive reviews or mentions in the following magazines: *The New-Yorker* (14 November 1840); *The Knickerbocker, or New York Monthly Magazine* (December 1840); *Godey's Lady's Book* (June 1841, October 1853); *The Ladies Companion* (December 1840, January 1841); *The Family Magazine; or, Monthly Abstract of General Knowledge* (1 May 1841); *The New World; a Weekly Family Journal of Popular Literature, Science, Art and News* (28 May 1842); *The Magnolia; or Southern Monthly* (June 1842, December 1842); *The Literary World* (21 October 1848); *The Southern Quarterly Review* (September 1850), *DeBow's Review of the Southern and Western States* (March 1851), *The United States Magazine, and Democratic Review* (April 1851); and *Graham's American Monthly Magazine of Literature, Art, and Fashion* (November 1854).

<sup>5</sup> For James Smillie's role as the engraver, see the review of *Georgia Illustrated* in "Literary Notices," *The Family Magazine; or, Monthly Abstract of General Knowledge*, vol. 8 (1 May 1841): 280. For the history of illustrated

Soon after the first issue was released, William would later explain, the nation underwent a financial downturn that “proved so disastrous and appalling” that the number of subscriptions never matched the enthusiasm of the praise. “We did what we could,” he wrote, “and we have the satisfaction of knowing that . . . praise was the least award the public could make to its merits.”<sup>6</sup> Still, with every confidence that they were engaged in a nationally-important project, and on the verge of achieving the professional renown they desired, Addison, William, and Reverend Richards made a momentous decision. Rather than simply closing the journal, they would invest even more money and effort and reconfigure it into a single, bound volume.

The book version of their work, *Georgia Illustrated in a Series of Views, Embracing Natural Scenery and Public Edifices*, appeared on the market in 1842. Structurally it was almost identical to the journal. The full-paged, steel plate engravings of Addison’s images were still produced by James Smillie in New York, and the book was still published and assembled by the Richardses in Penfield. The essays and images were exactly the same as those as had previously appeared in the journal and they were reprinted in the same type, although their order was rearranged to alternate between chapters on buildings and those on nature, and a table of contents was added. Yet for all that was physically similar, the metamorphosis of *Georgia Illustrated* from a journal into a book also created an enormous but intangible change. Its transformation into a single bound volume helped clarify and expand its meaning. Flimsy individual sheets of what was essentially a serialized travelogue suggested a subject in which a reader might have taken a passing interest whenever a new issue arrived in the mail. Published as a whole,

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publications in the United States, see Frank Luther Moss, *A History of American Magazines, 1741-1850*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 390.

<sup>6</sup> William C. Richards, “L’Envoi,” *The Orion: A Monthly Magazine of Literature and Art*, Vol. 1, no. 6 (September 1842): 400.

however, the text staked out an authoritative position within the realm of nineteenth-century travel writing.

This dissertation examines *Georgia Illustrated* as a book, rather than in its journal form, and locates it within the long history of what had been written about Georgia prior to its publication. This is an important path to trace because it ultimately explains *Georgia Illustrated*'s importance as the first travel book written or published by southerners and focused exclusively on the Deep South. Its celebration of Georgia in both word and image was, quite simply, an attempt to reclaim the state's reputation after more than a century of its having been very publicly misunderstood and dismissed by outsiders. The harsh judgments began soon after the first colonists arrived, when they and critics in Britain realized the distance between Oglethorpe's grand rhetoric and the situation on the ground. From the colonial era through the first decades of the early republic, Georgia was endlessly excoriated in a barrage of derivative texts and a few images published by culturally-blinded British and Northeastern travel writers, map makers, politicians, and anti-slavery activists. By the 1820s and 30s, as the cultural arbiters of the Northeast merged their ideas of region and nationalism, the state was saddled with the reputation of being a less-than-wholly-American place.

Many of those who wrote about Georgia during the course of that first century had never set foot in the colony or state, while the others saw precious little of it. Still, all of them cast wide nets in making authoritative judgments on the entirety of the state and its population. Their texts consistently reveal more about the cultural fears and aspirations of the place each writer called home than they do about their subject, but they do so by the implied contrast of an unwritten England or the Northeast against a Georgia that was imagined and written about in a most disparaging light. In the worst of their accounts, it was nothing more than an unhealthful

and unattractive space filled with plantations and indolent planters, abused slaves, and ignorant poor whites. It looked like nothing so much as an aesthetic, cultural, intellectual and moral wasteland.

Yet for all of this imagining by outsiders, Georgians themselves in the 1820s and 30s had a very different sense of the place in which they lived. Like the rest of the nation during those decades, perhaps even more so, Georgia was a world in flux. Massive population increases, agricultural advances, and the development of infrastructures of travel and commerce opened new lands, reclaimed others from their original Cherokee and Creek inhabitants, and made a large number of Georgians extraordinarily rich. They planted towns across what was once a forest wilderness and marveled as some blossomed into cities. They built mills and warehouses, churches and theaters, libraries, primary schools, academies, and an unprecedented number of new colleges and universities.<sup>7</sup>

This was the Georgia in which Addison and William Richards came of age. They knew the alternatives to it well. As adolescents they had emigrated with their family from Britain, where their father had owned nothing, profited little, and been held down by social conventions

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<sup>7</sup> For an overview of the history of the state, see James C. Cobb, *Georgia Odyssey* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997). For the changes that reshaped Georgia during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, see Michele Gillespie, *Free Labor in an Unfree World: White Artisans in Slaveholding Georgia, 1789-1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000); Mart Stewart, *"What Nature Suffers to Groe": Life, Labor, and Landscape on the Georgia Coast, 1680-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996); Timothy James Lockely, *Lines in the Sand: Race and Class and Lowcountry Georgia, 1750-1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001); Anthony Gene Carey, *Parties, Slavery, and the Union in Antebellum Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997); Jeffrey Robert Young, *Domesticating Slavery: The Master Class in Georgia and South Carolina, 1670-1837* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); and David Williams, *The Georgia Gold Rush: Twenty-Niners, Cherokees, and Gold Fever* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993). See also Megan Kate Nelson, *Trembling Earth: A Cultural History of the Okefenokee Swamp* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005); Jacqueline Jones, *Saving Savannah: The City and the Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008); Daina R. Berry, *"Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe:" Gender and Slavery in Antebellum Georgia* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Jarrett Burch, *Adiel Sherwood: Baptist Antebellum Pioneer* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2003); Julia Floyd Smith, *Slavery and Rice Culture in Low Country Georgia, 1750-1860* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985); Spencer Bidwell King, Jr., *Georgia Voices: A Documentary History to 1872* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1966); Bertram Holland Flanders, *Early Georgia Magazines: Literary Periodicals to 1865* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1944); and E. Merton Coulter, *College Life in the Old South, As Seen at the University of Georgia* (1928; reprint, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1973).

and kept from becoming the man he aspired to be. Yet in Penfield they watched him spread his wings and become all that and more. It was not just that he and their neighbors were landowners and slave owners, or that they lived in a county in the center Georgia's plantation belt that also had more spindles in its mills than anywhere else in the state. But rather, that all of this came together in a place, in a community, amongst a group of individuals gathered around a university that they themselves had made. They aspired not only to wealth and comfort, but to intellectual prowess and cultural sophistication. It was not a question of whether one could possibly "make the world;" Addison and William were surrounded by men who believed they had done it..

Despite these substantial developments, little had been done to rectify the discrepancies between the state's reputation among outsiders and how its elite white citizens saw their home. Advances in print media in the 1820s and 30s and the subsequent spread of mass-market magazines, almost all of which were published in New York, had made ever-more of Northeast visible and known to ever-larger numbers of people. Yet Georgia remained largely excluded from the national dialogue about vibrant and important American places. Adiel Sherwood, the Richards's friend and neighbor in Penfield, made perhaps the first sustained effort to counter this with his *Gazetteer of the State of Georgia* (1827, 1829, and 1837). The book was a careful accounting of the population numbers, town locations, and infrastructure statistics of the state. Nowhere in its pages did it play to or even acknowledge the expected character types of the indolent planter, the ignorant poor white, or the abused and broken slave. Unfortunately, neither did it address ideas or culture, or offer any sense of what Georgia looked like or meant to its citizens. It was useful if one needed to determine how to get from one town to another, but it certainly did not offer an impassioned or meaningful response to the inaccurate myths of place created by generations of others. Sherwood's contribution, however lopsided, was more than



offset by the work of Charleston literary light William Gilmore Simms. Simms set his novel *Guy Rivers: A Tale of Georgia* (1834) in the state, but in a part of it he had never seen.

Fortunately for him, the vast majority of Americans knew nothing of it either. So when he cast north Georgia as a hideously ugly and dangerously corrupt wilderness, in order to reinforce his theme of what was noble and civilized in conservative Charleston society, most audiences took him at his word. These confused expectations were so nationally prevalent that when Georgia's own Augustus Baldwin Longstreet published *Georgia Scenes* (1835) one year later, a compilation of humorous short stories about ignorant and violent poor whites during the early years of the Republic, reviewers and audiences cheered him for accurately portraying what they assumed was the current condition of the state and its inhabitants.

*Georgia Illustrated* at long last stood up to this series of increasingly codified tropes by which Northerners by the 1830s had come to know the state and to expect to read about it. Its pages contained no dangerous forest wildernesses or miasmatic swamps, no vicious criminals or ignorant poor whites, no indolent planters or abused slaves, no plantations and no decaying log cabins. Not only did the book avoid addressing those loaded subjects, those hallmarks of Georgian identity as crafted by others, but it also attempted to wipe them out completely.

It is charming that Addison quoted Charles Lamb to a young woman with whom he was smitten; every twenty-year-old should believe that they can remake the world as they think it should be. It is shocking, however, to find that he and William made Lamb's maxim into the methodological core of their book. Even more radical is that they, barely beyond adolescence, were speaking not only for themselves but also heavily influenced by and speaking for the economically- and intellectually-elite communities in which they orbited, and what they were saying was a denial that there was anything distinctive about the South. Georgia, they boldly

proclaimed, looked just the rest of America. Its intellectuals, artists, writers, and arbiters of culture had mastered the same texts and spoke the same Romantic, transcendental languages. To prove their point, *Georgia Illustrated* offered twelve very carefully and purposefully selected image/text pairings by which one could know the state. Half of the subjects focused on structured reflections of civilization: Christ Church and the Revolutionary War monument in front of it in Savannah, the city of Columbus, Oglethorpe University near Milledgeville, the Medical College in Augusta, the Georgia Female College in Macon, and the Brownwood Female Institute in La Grange. The remainder were aesthetically-worthy landscapes suitable for touring by sophisticated nature tourists: Tallulah Gorge and Toccoa Falls, the falls of the Towaliga in Henry County, the “Lover’s Leap” on the Chattahoochee River near Columbus, and two distinct views of the Rock Mountain (known today as Stone Mountain). Every one of those subjects, especially as presented, could have been in the Northeast.

The Richards brothers’ book is worth analyzing because it is neither simply another gazetteer, nor merely a repository of folk knowledge about local sites. If the book was going to attract an audience beyond their own front door, if it was going to speak to national culture and politics, it would need to broach its subject in a relatively sophisticated fashion. And it did. Rather than plantation houses, poor white shacks, or slave cabins, its presentation of the buildings and landscapes of Georgia challenged the very categories by which many Northern readers believed they could understand the South. The text and images of *Georgia Illustrated* eschew the fundamental structures of knowledge espoused by volume after volume of outsider accounts. Instead, the book locates the topography of Georgia within the philosophical conventions of the sublime and the picturesque. It is an attempt to de-politicize the state, and even the region as a whole, by wrapping it in mantle of aesthetic experience and asking readers

and tourists to explore it, as they would any other tourist site, only along such lines. William laid this in no uncertain terms out on the very first page:

The pencil of the artist, and the pen of the typographer, will find ample and fitting themes for their choicest delineations in Georgia. Inferior to few of her sister states in extent of territory, and second to none in the productiveness of her soil, the chivalry of her sons, and the beauty of her daughters; she may also claim equality with any of them in the profuse display of natural beauties.<sup>8</sup>

There is indeed something radical about two antebellum Georgians writing a book in which they promoted their home state as being more similar to New York or Massachusetts than it was different. Admittedly, it would be difficult to contemplate *Georgia Illustrated* without at least acknowledging the sectional crisis looming in the distance. But to cast the book and its authors as plot points in a declensionist narrative of the antebellum period is to miss the true worth of their stories. Rather, the key to reading the book and analyzing its historical significance is to see it from its authors' eyes. Addison and William Richards were boisterous young men in 1841. Their sense of what was possible, their seemingly limitless prospects, was the youthful drive of a nation, a region, and especially a state in the throes of rampant growth and expansion. Their book is a record of that moment of possibility, of its authors' belief in the potential of what could be. The Georgia that these young men wrote about and illustrated was neither a static vestige of past, nor a harbinger of the Confederate future, but rather America itself in the continual act of growing and becoming.

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<sup>8</sup> William C. Richards, "Introduction," to William and T. Addison Richards, *Georgia Illustrated in a Series of Views, Embracing Natural Scenery and Public Edifices. Engraved on Steel by Rawdon, Wright, Hatch, and Smillie. From Sketches Made Expressly for this Work by T. Addison Richards. Accompanied by Historical and Topographical Sketches by our own Writers. Edited by William C. Richards*, (Penfield, Georgia: W. & W.C. Richards Publishers, 1842), 1. Bound editions of *Georgia Illustrated* are currently housed in the rare-book collections of 30 state and university libraries across the United States, and one copy is in the National Art Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

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*Georgia Illustrated* was the bombast of Addison's love letter writ large. As in that document, though, making such bold pronouncements required the Richards brothers to willfully ignore the less appealing elements of the world around them. Representing themselves, their state, and even their region within the context of nationalism required them to know, and then to decide not to know, the long and humbling history of what outside observers had written of Georgia. They never addressed those critiques head-on, but in rather more subtle and pervasive ways through their choice of subject matter and how they presented it. Their book essentially declared that what had been recorded in the past did not matter now. Georgians had finally arrived at the moment they were able to represent themselves and they were not going to waste it by writing trite letters of "the parasite or courtier" to the nation. No, they were in search of a "chat epistolary;" they had something bigger to say.

Addison and William's Georgia was not a distant land on its way out of the Union, but rather a place fighting to be in. Their unexpectedly nationalistic words and images ask us to reconsider our assumptions about place and identity in the antebellum South. As the meaning of their work is not readily available on its surface, it is also a reminder of how much richer and more nuanced our picture of the period can be when viewed through the often-underutilized lenses of art history, material culture, literary history, and theories of landscape and place. As the methods of these disciplines undergird my work throughout the following chapters, it is perhaps worth a few pages here to explain why. My goal is not to lay out a comprehensive historiography, but rather to offer a map to the approach I have taken in exploring Addison and

William's book in the context of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century constructions of Georgia as an idea, a text, a landscape, and a place.<sup>9</sup>

Historians of the antebellum South have occasionally seemed reticent to embrace alternative approaches to the discipline, although what has been lacking in quantity has certainly made up for in quality. Relatively recent books by Mark M. Smith on the impact of clock-time on the rhythms of plantation life, Maurie D. McNinnis on material culture and class in Charleston, and Charlene Boyer Lewis on elite whites at the Virginia Springs, have provided excellent examples of what is possible when new approaches are applied to the rich storehouse of what has already been written by social, political, and economic historians. Above all, Michael O'Brien's masterful volumes have revealed that the mind of the planter class was much more intellectually progressive and drew its knowledge from much broader, deeper, and more international currents than previously expected. My work draws heavily on his scholarship and was especially informed by his contention that "the Old South was a different and evolving version of what an American modernity might have come to look like." Like his cast of characters, however, I have

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<sup>9</sup> My understanding of how to read the landscape as a construct rooted in class and culture, and how to interpret it according to theories of 'place,' is enormously indebted to the following: Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (1974; reprint, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Kent Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993); Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995); Edward S. Casey, *Representing Place: Landscape Painting and Maps* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); David Black, Donald Kunze and John Pickles, eds., *Commonplaces: Essays on the Nature of Place* (New York: University Press of America, 1989); Paul Groth and Todd W. Bressi, eds., *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); Nadia Lovell, ed., *Locality and Belonging* (London: Routledge, 1998); J.E. Malpas, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Roberto Dainotto, *Place in Literature: Regions, Cultures, Communities* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); and John Brinkerhoff Jackson, *The Necessity for Ruins and Other Topics* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), and *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

had to look beyond the boundaries of my own field for methodological and regional models on which to build.<sup>10</sup>

Many of the works most similar to this project were written by cultural historians of the nineteenth-century Northeast. Kenneth John Myers, Graham Clarke, Robert McGrath, and especially Barbara Novak and Angela Miller, along with numerous others over the past several decades, have traced the connections between the paintings of the Hudson River school, Romanticism, tourism, nature writing, and both regional and national identity. John Sears, Dona Brown, and Eric Purchase have explored the ways by which specific sites such as Niagara Falls, the Catskills, and the White Mountains were transformed over the course of several decades from natural occurrences into “landscapes” into cultural shibboleths. These scholars have all suggested that the development of tourism at such places, and the attendant representations of

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<sup>10</sup> Michael O’Brien, ed., *All Clever Men, Whom Make Their Way: Critical Discourse in the Old South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 25. Much has been written during the past few decades on intellectual life in the antebellum South. The best of it has greatly expanded what was previously dismissed as the limited worldview of planters, writers, and thinkers. My analysis of *Georgia Illustrated* was informed by the deeply divided works of scholars such as Rollin Osterweis, Eugene Genovese, Drew Gilpin Faust, Michael O’Brien, Adam Tate, and Masahiro Nakamura, among numerous others, as to the roles of played by romanticism and conservatism in shaping and reflecting antebellum elite culture. These trends are discussed in chapters four and five of this dissertation. For representative works in the field, see Rollin Osterweis, *Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949). Eugene Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made: Two Essays in Interpretation* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969; reprint, Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1988); *The Slaveholder’s Dilemma: Freedom and Progress in Southern Conservative Thought, 1820-1860* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992). Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholder’s Worldview* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Drew Gilpin Faust, *A Sacred Circle: The Dilemma of the Intellectual in the Old South, 1840-1860* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985). Michael O’Brien, *Rethinking the South: Essays in Intellectual History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988); *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810-1860*, 2 vols., (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004). Adam L. Tate, *Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals, 1789-1861: Liberty, Tradition, and the Good Society* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2005). Masahiro Nakamura, *Visions of Order in William Gilmore Simms: Southern Conservatism and the Other American Romance* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2009). For important approaches to writing the cultural history of the period and region, see Mark M. Smith, *Mastered by the Clock: Time, Slavery, and Freedom in the American South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Maurie Dee McInnis, *The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); and Charlene M. Boyer Lewis, *Ladies and Gentlemen on Display: Planter Society at the Virginia Springs, 1790-1860* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001).

them in mass-market publications, contributed to the creation of a Northeastern zeitgeist in which that region's landscape came to be seen as singularly representative of the nation.<sup>11</sup>

To the extent that these landscapes became part of the American vernacular and gave shape and form to Northeasterners' idealizations of their own small corner of the continent, they also became touchstones for regional representation across the rest of the nation. Lawrence Buell has suggested that this was neither fortuitous circumstance nor without consequence. In his telling, the national fascination with the landscape in the nineteenth century was the corollary of the elite's interest in Romanticism and its tricking down to merge into prevailing middle-class myths of the social contract. Artists and writers who brought the emblem of the landscape—and its sacred places—so prominently into the dominant cultural dialogue of the 1830s and 40s were merely reinforcing the authority of existing power structures. Their texts and images sold aestheticized and idealized Northeastern nature as a means of conveying and implicitly endorsing what Buell calls “the grid of complex society” hidden beneath their surfaces. The South, however, was excluded from these regional-cum-national representations of nature and therefore lacked the appearance of having cultural or political authority.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps the most original and important recent book on the causes and results of this regional displacement is Susan-Mary Grant's *North over South: Northern Nationalism and*

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<sup>11</sup> On art, tourism, and regional identity in the Northeast, see Kenneth John Myers, “On the Cultural Construction of Landscape Experience: Contact to 1830,” in David C. Miller, ed., *American Iconology: New Approaches to Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Graham Clarke, “Landscape Painting and the Domestic Typology of Post-Revolutionary America,” in Mick Gidley and Robert Lawson-Peebles, eds., *Views of American Landscapes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Robert L. McGrath, *Gods in Granite: The Art of the White Mountains of New Hampshire* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001); Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting, 1825-1875*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Angela Miller, *The Empire of the Eye: Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics, 1825-1875* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1993); John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); .Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995); and Eric Purchase, *Out of Nowhere: Disaster and Tourism in the White Mountains* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1999). The reference to turning wilderness into profit is from Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 36.

<sup>12</sup> Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination*, 35.

*American Identity in the Antebellum Era* (2000). Grant argues that Northern anti-slavery interests—especially as would eventually take root in the Republican Party—both manipulated popular knowledge of the South and then fed on the results of that vilification. The connection here is that while other scholars have looked at the late-1830s and 1840s and seen the Northeastern landscape being proclaimed as normative, or representations of it as endorsing the structures of power in an increasingly urbanized Northeastern society, Grant also finds the political mind of the region being deeply affected by cultural manipulations intended to provoke widespread outrage over slavery. One result was a large coterie of Northern writers and thinkers who in the 1820s turned a blind eye to slavery and applauded the South as a distinct-but-American region, but who arrived in the mid-1840s questioning whether slavery was a sectional blight and whether the South could possibly contribute anything useful or important to the Union.<sup>13</sup>

None of the large-scale cultural shifts described by the aforementioned scholars could have been possible prior to the 1830s because they required a functioning informational infrastructure to communicate them. As Karol Ann Peard Lawson makes clear in her work on mass-market magazines in the Early Republic, the increase in the availability of print media at that time was accompanied by a sea-change in the type of information being presented. Popular magazines during the first two decades of the nineteenth century were most commonly interested in conveying statistical, quantifiable information about the variety of places that constituted the new nation. They were engaged in what Benedict Anderson has termed the rise of “print capitalism,” which effectively transformed countless individual locales into a national community. This transformation happened because of the ability of the printed text to share

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<sup>13</sup> Susan-Mary Grant, *North over South: Northern Nationalism and American Identity in the Antebellum Era* (Lawrence: The University of Kansas Press, 2000), especially 81-110.



information over large expanses of space and thus create a sense of connectedness between otherwise completely disconnected individuals.<sup>14</sup>

The problem with the sort of nationalism theorized by Anderson and attempted by the magazine writers and editors addressed by Lawson is that, according to Yi-Fu Tuan, “affection cannot be stretched over an empire, for it is often a conglomeration of heterogeneous parts held together by force.” The attempt to convince citizens across a vast swath of space that they share the same culture, values, or even landscape associations is destined to fail, writes W.H. New, because it “cultivates a notion of cultural unity . . . which is scarcely people’s actual experience.” In the wake of nationalism’s inevitable failure, regionalism flourishes. Lawson thus traces a shift, concurrent with the point at which nationalistic rhetoric became unsustainable in commercial Northeastern publications, and informed by the nation-wide embrace of Romanticism in the 1820s, in which the national subjects and informational nature of those earlier magazine articles were replaced with very specific, and specifically aestheticized, Northeastern nature. Earlier lessons about shared places of national community were replaced by the message that only certain locales were worth knowing. It is not coincidence, then, that the large cast of Northern characters in Grant’s study all had radically different views of the South by the mid-1840s then they did in the 1820s.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Karol Ann Peard Lawson, “An Inexhaustible Abundance: The National Landscape Depicted in American Magazines, 1780-1820,” *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 12, no. 3 (Fall 1992): 305. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991).

<sup>15</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (1974; reprint, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 101. W.H. New, “Beyond Nationalism: On Regionalism,” *World Literature in English* vol. 2, no.1 (1984): 13; quoted in Roberto M. Dainotto, *Place in Literature: Regions, Cultures, Communities* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 4. Eric Kaufmann has also suggested how the earlier trend towards the egalitarian “naturalization of the nation” was transformed during the 1830s and 40s, in mass-market magazines, into a celebration of only certain types of specifically-located landscapes. Eric Kaufmann, “‘Naturalizing the Nation’: The Rise of the Naturalistic Nationalism in the United States and Canada,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 40, no. 4 (October 1998): 667.

Grant's book is focused on the result of these political and social changes to the regional self-definition of the antebellum North. Part of that self-definition was dependent upon what Northerners believed was the lack of one in the South. When the dominant print media ceased being concerned with enforcing nationalism in the 1820s, and books and articles about commonalities with the South stopped being profitable and fell out of publication, it created a void. Trickling into the small space that still remained in the 1830s was quick, cheap and easy ephemera that catered to what Northern audiences wanted to see rather than what they needed to know. And what they wanted was entertainment rather than scholarship; what they wanted was what they got from the half-known worlds in William Gilmore Simms and Augustus Baldwin Longstreet: someplace exciting to read about, someplace different and exotic from their own neighborhood, someplace non-North.

Art historians such as John Michael Vlach, Angela Mack and Stephen Hoffius, and David Miller have explored paintings and prints of plantation houses, scenes of slavery, and Florida's and Louisiana's swamps as the most visible and expected tropes of the South as a world apart. Miller's complex analysis of swamp imagery reveals how deeply these images of "other" were ingrained into the Northern psyche in the 1850s and rattled middle-class fears of social and economic forces beyond their control. Vlach's discussion of planter-commissioned paintings of their own homes makes clear, however, that such imagery spoke to a very different American cultural mood in earlier decades. Considering the work of these scholars side by side is a reminder that while the markers of Southern distinctiveness eventually became iconography embedded in the heated political dialogue of the sectional crisis, they were not in the 1830s or early 1840s.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> John Michael Vlach, *The Planter's Prospect: Privilege & Slavery in Plantation Paintings* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Angela D. Mack and Stephen G. Hoffius, eds., *Landscape of Slavery:*

Unfortunately, the gravitational pull of the 1850s and 60s is often hard for historians to escape. This is nowhere more readily apparent than in their consideration of what antebellum non-Southerners recorded of the South. Susan-Mary Grant bemoans the fact that historians have remained “reluctant to utilize the full range of travel accounts” because they are regarded as “limited in both outlook and argument” and their influence is believed to be “slight at best.”<sup>17</sup> The problem she identifies, and with which scholars have struggled, is that travel texts are mainly records of what their authors identified as distinct and thus worth recording about the places they traveled. For historians who already know what happened in 1861, there seems to be little groundbreaking information in a regionally-dismissive travel account from 1840.

Three books during the past decade have considered travel writing about the antebellum South. Only the first chapter of Michael Price’s *Stories with a Moral: Literature and Society in Nineteenth Century Georgia* (2000) deals with travelers prior to 1860, but he offers a solid overview of where they went and what they saw, and suggests that the benefit of the material is that it offers “insight into the process of social development” in the state. Likewise, Kevin O’Donnell and Helen Hollingsworth’s collection of selected texts, *Seekers of Scenery: Travel Writing from Southern Appalachia* (2004) implies that the historical worth of travel accounts is that they offer first-hand accounts that cumulatively suggest how places have changed over time. In both cases the authors appear to have come to the material seeking evidence of regional distinctiveness and, reading those texts only a surface level, they found it. Neither book questions the larger cultural implications underlying the traveler accounts, their accuracy, nor

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*The Plantation in American Art* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008); and David C. Miller, *Dark Eden: The Swamp in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

<sup>17</sup> Susan-Mary Grant, *North over South*, 13.

whether they potentially reveal more about the travelers than the people and places they recorded.<sup>18</sup>

John Cox begins to address these issues in *Traveling South: Travel Narratives and the Construction of American Identity* (2005). Building off Grant before him, he asserts that scholars have been myopic in their inability to see that travel and travel writing were fundamental to American national identity. To that end, he conducts a carefully literary analysis on several well-known travel accounts from individuals as diverse as William Bartram, J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, Frederick Douglass, and Frederick Law Olmsted. Cox's reading of these travelers reinforces the cultural shift visible in the work of Grant and others, with the earliest ones in search of elements that endorsed nationalism and the latter group unable to see the South as anything but a troublesome and potentially dangerous sore on the national body politic. In other words, Cox finds that they had agendas. Those agendas he locates within the context of the Northeastern publishing establishment, hinting that writers in that time and place could not help but to be influenced by earlier published accounts of Northern travelers in the South. Quoting another scholar on the subject, he notes they were "'tied together by the threads of a discursive fabric they had come to weave themselves.'" <sup>19</sup>

This vague suggestion about the interconnectedness of travel texts raises serious questions about the ways by which knowledge of non-local places was constructed, legitimated,

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<sup>18</sup> Michael Price's book presents an excellent overview of several travelers through antebellum Georgia. However, I disagree with his contention that "by the mid-1820s slavery had taken center stage in traveler narratives." My first two chapters take a longer view of the travel texts he addresses and others, considering outsider writing about Georgia from 1714 on, but I do not find responses to slavery painted with such a broad brush across so many texts. The time will come when critiques of slavery will dominate nearly everything non-Georgians write about the state, but to suggest that it was already underway in the 1820s seems to overplay that hand. Michael E. Price, *Stories with a Moral: Literature and Society in Nineteenth-Century Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 1, 9. See also Kevin E. O'Donnell and Helen Hollingsworth, eds., *Seekers of Scenery: Travel Writing from Southern Appalachia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004).

<sup>19</sup> Carolyn Porter, "Social Discourse and Nonfiction Prose," in *Columbia Literary History of the United States*, ed. Elliot Emory (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 349; quoted in John D. Cox, *Traveling South: Travel Narratives and the Construction of American Identity* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2005), 8.

and transmitted to others. It is striking, then, that Cox does not push another step forward to consider their travelogues within the framework of colonialism as laid out by Edward Said. A major element of Said's foundational work, *Orientalism* (1978), is that British colonialism created a system in which travelers looked out at the non-British world, ignored the reality of meaningful existence there, reduced it into a series of knowable signs, and repeatedly wrote those signs into travel narratives of displacement and control. In other words, foreign spaces were written about as being distinctively inferior in order to reinforce what was (idealized as) good, stable, and superior at home. There is certainly much to critique in Said's relatively monolithic view of "Orient" versus "Occident," but his framework for understanding travel writing is exceptionally useful in approaching texts on the antebellum South. Incorporating Said's postcolonial theory not only creates a context for Cox's travel writers, and even Grant's Northern travelers, but it is one of the keys to understanding both Michael Price's antebellum chroniclers and my own reading of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts on Georgia.

Travel writing only works because it is metonymic; the author must make selected details stand in for the entire landscape or culture he wishes to unveil. For the nineteenth-century author, however, the choice of which details took on that task was always informed by biases rooted in his or her own past. Prior to the rise of postmodern discourses, the act of choosing and the fiction of metonymy were hidden from the reader's eyes. Said refers to the success of this literary act as the adoption of a "textual attitude." He declares that despite the lessons of Cervantes in *Don Quixote* that the application of book knowledge of life to actual reality will only lead to folly or failure; it is a shortcoming of the human condition that we prefer to invest authority in texts rather than engage in disorienting encounters with other peoples and cultures. More troubling still is that the textual attitude instantly reappears when we confront the

unknown, causing us to return to our own past experiences and search for explanations in what we have read. As one recent scholar explains, “Tourists-as-readers and readers-as-tourists are exposed to literature in a dynamic sense, as it carves out the ways in which we see and structure the world.”<sup>20</sup>

With this in mind, it is possible to see that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travel texts about Georgia seemed to guarantee their own accuracy and authenticity and acquired a type of representational power not available to most other literary forms. A thoroughly enmeshed and completely unchallenged “textual attitude” thus transformed a first writer’s personal biases into a reality in which the second travel writer operated. The second travel writer then found elements in his travels to confirm the reality he expected to find, and so wrote about them and thereby influenced the third traveler. This reached far beyond the small realm of travel writers, though, because the “textual attitude” ensured the books they produced were often accepted as factual by educated readers across Britain and, later, the American North.<sup>21</sup>

Historians have often looked in earnest at early travel accounts of Georgia and, lacking an appropriate theoretical framework with which to approach them, accepted their rhetoric at face value. I contend there is a better way. Viewing those texts through the lens of postcolonial theory provides an adequate starting point from which to evaluate how knowledge of place was constructed and why it was constructed in the manner it was. It also allows us to acknowledge

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<sup>20</sup> Mike Robinson, “Between and Beyond the Pages: Literature–Tourism Relationships,” in Hans-Christian Anderson and Mike Robinson, *Literature and Tourism: Reading and Writing Tourism Texts* (London: Continuum, 2002), 40.

<sup>21</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 70-111. Said’s model has recently come under criticism for its failure to embrace what are now seen as hallmarks of modern post-colonial theory, namely gender and economics. See John Carlos Rowe, “Edward Said and American Studies,” *American Quarterly* vol. 56, no. 1 (March 2004): 33-48. See also Steve Clark, “Introduction,” in Steve Clark, ed., *Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 10-12. On travel writing and imperialism, see Paul Fusell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Barbara Korte, *English Travel Writing from Pilgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations*, translated by Catherine Matthias (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000); and James Schramer and Donald Ross, eds. *American Travel Writers, 1776-1864*, vol. 183 of *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1997).

that nothing on the surface is quite what it seems. Once we have dispensed with the search for what eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers wanted us to see as signs of regional distinctiveness, we are able to explore deeper and more complex layers of meaning hidden inside their works. Applying the methods of Said's postcolonialism and Grant's history of the displacement of the South to those travel accounts reveals that there was far more at stake in those textual and visual mappings than simply the folk records of Southern life. It becomes apparent that Georgia was from its very beginnings seen as a landscape available to be invented, manipulated, and used as a vessel to hold the ever-shifting needs of the individuals who wrote about it and the cultures from which they came. And perhaps more than any of the other original colonies, Georgia continued to be used in similar ways long into the nineteenth century.

One of the reasons the same invented, repeated themes in travel accounts of Georgia carried so much weight is that they went largely unchallenged for more than a century. The author Adiel Sherwood, Addison and William Richards's family friend, felt the need to defend his fellow citizens and their predecessors for their lack of action in his 1837 *Gazetteer*. They had been too busy constructing civilization out of the wilderness, he remarked, to have the "literary leisure" to write prose or poetry, to contribute words or images to the print culture that was defining the nation.<sup>22</sup> Yet without those outward expressions of meaningful life within their borders, Georgians appeared to outsider eyes to be no different than any other subaltern population. Edward Said, summing up the mindset that made colonialist literature and art possible, quotes what he calls Karl Marx's "little sentence" of subjective truth: "'They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented.'"<sup>23</sup> In the absence of published evidence to the

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>23</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, epigraph.

contrary, Georgia remained available to be represented as suited the needs of whoever was doing the representing.

Sometimes, though, the subaltern wrote back.



## —CHAPTER ONE—

### **CONTESTING “THE MOST DELIGHTFUL COUNTRY OF THE UNIVERSE”**

Long before Oglethorpe dreamed of Georgia, Sir Robert Montgomery had Azilia on his mind. He had never seen North America. He knew nothing of the southern colonies other than what he had read. What he had read, the only thing he could have read, was promotional literature written by others who also had little or no firsthand experience of that which they described. Still, it was fun to fantasize about the endless possibilities for wealth and fame in the southern forests. So in 1717, when the Lords Proprietors of South Carolina sought a buffer to their south to protect their investment from French, Spanish, and Indian attacks, Montgomery leapt to action. He imagined a new world carved out of the wilderness, penned a proposal for his own colony, and drew a map. His “Margravate of Azilia” would be a quasi-principality stamped over 400 square miles of what he claimed was “the most delightful country of the Universe” between the Savannah and Altamaha rivers.<sup>1</sup> It would be an improbably square colony, at the center of which would be an improbably square city, three miles on each side. At the center of the city would be a castle. At the center of the castle would be Montgomery, elevated to the otherwise obsolete medieval title of margrave, lording over it all.

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Robert Montgomery, *A Discourse Concerning the design'd Establishment Of a New Colony to the South of Carolina, in the Most Delightful Country of the Universe* (London: N.p., 1717), 5. For the British push to settle the land between South Carolina and Spanish Florida, see Kenneth Coleman, “The Southern Frontier: Georgia’s Founding and the Expansion of South Carolina,” *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (1972): 163-74. The South Carolinians had invaded Spanish Florida in 1702 and 1704, effectively pushing the Spanish border closer to St. Augustine, and had proposed English settlement of the area in question in 1708 and again in 1713. Montgomery’s plan for Azilia was the first time the rhetoric was committed to paper in a definitive design for colonization. For the history of the region prior to English settlement, see Dennis B. Blanton and Robert A. DeVillar, eds., *Archaeological Encounters with Georgia’s Spanish Period, 1526-1700* (Kennesaw, GA: Society for Georgia Archaeology, 2010).

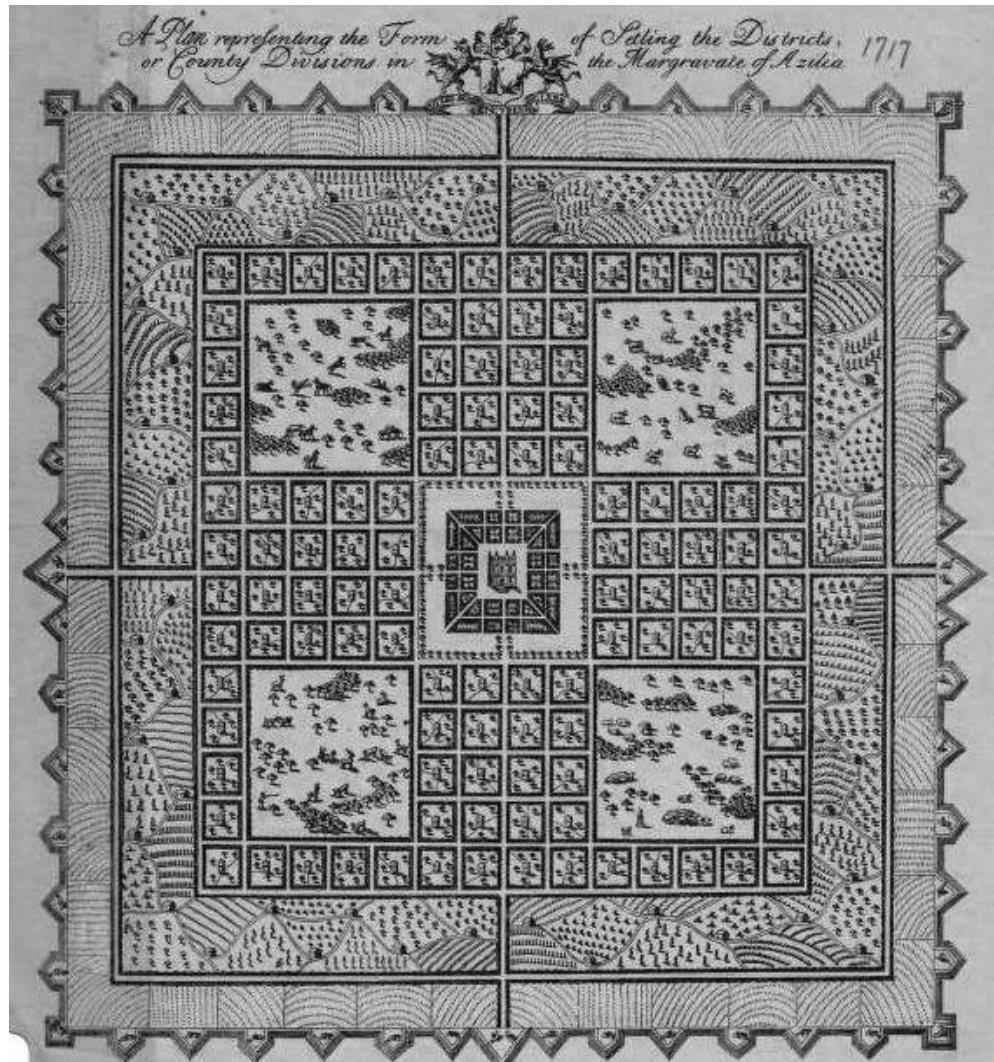


Figure 1.1. Robert Montgomery, “A plan representing the Form of Settling [sic] the Districts, or County Divisions in the Margravate of Azilia,” (1717)

South Carolina’s proprietors granted Montgomery’s extraordinary request and gave him three years to bring it to fruition. He quickly published a promotional tract to draw investors and colonists to his fanciful fiefdom in what he called “*our future Eden*.” In it, he hawked an imagined landscape nestled snugly between geographically-defined boundaries: rivers at the north and south, the Atlantic at the east, and the Appalachian Mountains at the west. The accompanying map promised geometric order and reason clamped down on an otherwise order-

less and empty space. Borders would surround borders. Each uniform quadrant of Azilia would contain a sixteen-square-mile commons in which livestock would flourish for the benefit of all. Those park-like commons would be enclosed by rows upon rows of uniform mile-square estates. At the center of each identical estate would be a house inhabited by a gentleman-farmer-soldier and his large family, who, in exchange for free passage and title to the land, owed their allegiance to the margrave. They would collectively defend the colony and serve as a buffer for South Carolina. They would also make themselves and Azilia's investors rich on endless harvests of potash, silk and wine.

Montgomery's plan was pure poetry. It had little to do with geographical fact, but he did not know and did not care. He did not know that it was impossible to inscribe an enormous square onto the landscape he had chosen. He did not know that the Appalachians were more than 120 miles to the northwest of Azilia's proposed location. He did not know that the terrain there was anything but uniform over the distances he suggested. Rather than firsthand experience of the land between the Savannah and Altamaha rivers, which would have taught him these things and so much more, he had absolute faith in what he had read. He hoped his potential investors would, too.

Montgomery's greatest concern was that investors' past experiences with questionable colonizing schemes might have left them leery of "gay Descriptions of new Countries" and fearful of finding "the *Picture* drawn beyond the *Life*." He assured them this would not be the case with Azilia. He guaranteed the accuracy of what he sold by citing "our English Writers" as the source of his information. Foremost among that group was certainly John Lawson, who had recently pronounced the land ripe for development in his 1714 natural history of the neighboring Carolinas. In comparison with European locations of similar latitude, Lawson found the low

country “not so hot as in other places to the Eastward,” absent the earthquakes that ravage “Italy and other Summer-Countries,” and completely free from the “pestilential Fevers, which Spain, Barbary, and the neighboring Countries in Europe, &c. are visited.” Development should proceed at once, he concluded, as the environment “is very agreeable to European Bodies, and makes them healthy. . . .”<sup>2</sup>

After promising in his introduction not to oversell Azilia, Montgomery did just that. Lawson’s temperate and agreeable environment sounded nice, but one of the benefits of imagining his own dream colony in an unseen world was that Montgomery could write it however he wanted it to be. And it was so much more compelling to ratchet up the rhetoric. Who could be sure that he was not being guided by divine providence towards a new Eden? After all, he slyly noted, knowledgeable English writers were now “universally agreed” that the land in question was “the most amiable Country of the Universe.” He had read, and so he repeated, that the soil was exceptionally fruitful, the fish and fowl unprecedentedly bountiful, and the climate so perfect that there was “no Excess of Heat, or Cold.” Educated and thoughtful settlers would also find themselves “entirely charmed” by Azilia’s natural beauty, which “present[s] a thousand Landskips to the eye.” “Nature has not bless’d the World,” he promised, “with any Tract, which can be preferable to it, that *Paradise*, with all her Virgin Beauties, may be modestly suppos’d at most but equal to its Native Excellencies.” For those who read his argument still did not get it, or who remained foolish enough not to believe, Montgomery at last pushed it up to a higher authority. Azilia, he concluded, “lies in the same Latitude with Palestine

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<sup>2</sup> John Lawson, *The History of Carolina; containing the Exact Description and Natural History of that Country: together with the Present State thereof* (London: W. Taylor, 1714), 87.

Herself, That promis'd Canaan, which was pointed out by God's own choice, to bless the Labours of a favourite People.”<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, God's thoughts on real estate are sometimes difficult to discern. The Margravate of Azilia failed. Montgomery could not raise enough money and not a single ship ever set sail. The land between the Savannah and Altamaha rivers reverted to the proprietors of South Carolina in the early 1720s. Several years later it was given to the newly-created Trustees for Establishing the Colony of Georgia in America. When James Edward Oglethorpe and 110 colonists finally set foot on the land that would become Savannah in February 1733, they were, like Montgomery before them, fully expecting to implement a grand vision that would transform an unknown wilderness into Eden and make the world anew.<sup>4</sup>

The Azilian moment is not an aberration, but rather suggests a fitting model for how to interpret what was written and known of Georgia throughout the first century of its existence. Both Azilia and Georgia were ideas, legal entities, places created out of the imaginations of well-meaning but aspirational English men. Those men gained their knowledge of the land they would colonize almost exclusively from what others had written. They believed in the authority of published books, especially books by other English gentlemen, and they relied on the cultural dominance of that textual system to promote the visions of Azilia, or Georgia, they had to sell.

Because Azilia never materialized, it is easy to see that Montgomery's understanding of the land between the Savannah and Altamaha rivers was completely based on fictitious descriptions he had read. The story of Georgia is no different. Although it is harder to see

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 4, 6, 5, 7.

<sup>4</sup> For Oglethorpe and the first colonists, see Julie Sweet, *William Stephens: Georgia's Forgotten Founder* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010); Edward J. Cashin, ed., *Setting out to begin a New World: Colonial Georgia* (Savannah: Beehive Press, 1995); Phinzy Spalding, *Oglethorpe in America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984); Kenneth Coleman and Milton Ready, eds., *Original Papers, Correspondence to the Trustees, James Oglethorpe, and Others, 1732-1735* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1982); and Mills Lane, ed., *General Oglethorpe's Georgia: Colonial Letters, 1733-1743* (Savannah: Beehive Press, 1975).

because the words written about it are now cemented to the extra weight of history, published accounts of Georgia during its first century are no less poetic, imaginary, or improbable. When knowledge was grounded in the published word of a biased few, reality was malleable and easy shaped to fit the needs of those who held the pens.

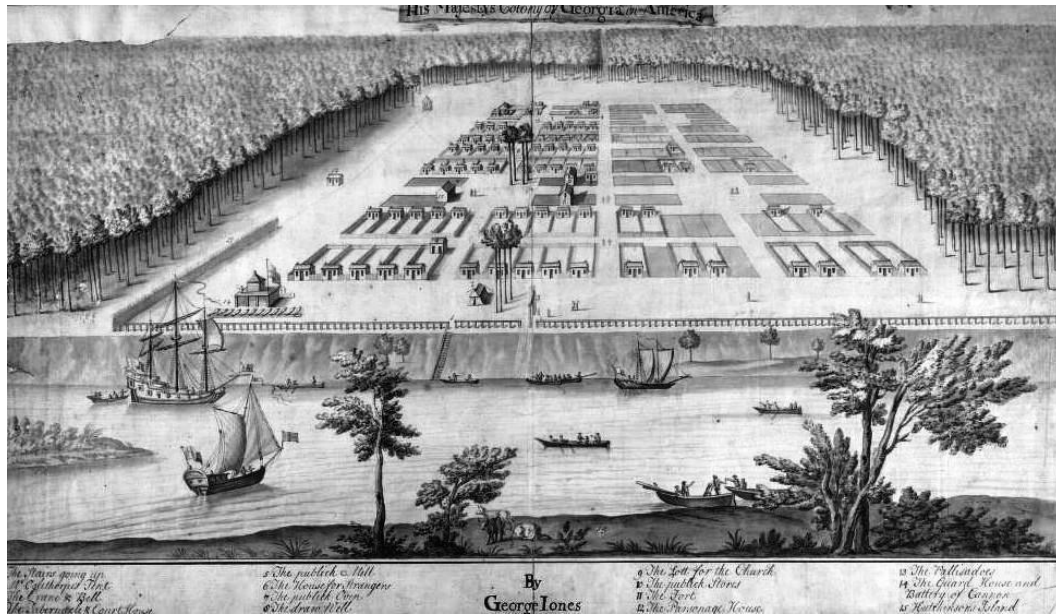


Figure 1.2. George Jones, “His Majesty’s Colony of Georgia in America,” (1734).

Over the next century after Montgomery, British and American speculators, travelers, and writers—none of them Georgians—wove a dense trans-Atlantic web of contradictory dialogue about something they hardly knew or understood. Time and again their texts were regurgitations of what they had read elsewhere, liberally peppered with their own interpretations of what they had witnessed in fleeting glances and brief travels within Georgia’s borders. Their texts not only investigated a landscape and its people, but contributed words, ideas, stereotypes to a collective definition of place. All told, they created nothing so much as confusion, from the 1730s through the 1830s, about what Georgia was.

The first strands of that confusion were woven into the recycled fabric of Georgia from the start. Oglethorpe's plan toned down the scale and bombast of his predecessor, but a London-published 1734 drawing reveals a nascent colony not structurally dissimilar to what Montgomery had planned for Azilia. The Savannahians had carved a rectangular enclave out of the forest beside the Savannah River. They had divided the space into uniform quadrants, each containing uniform rows of houses surrounding uniform commons spaces. The only thing missing was Montgomery in a castle at the center.

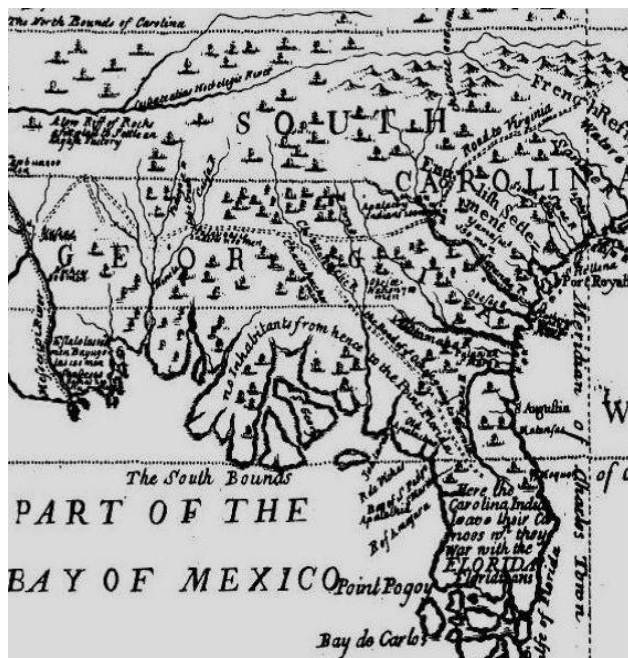


Figure 1.3. Attributed to James Edward Oglethorpe and Benjamin Martyn, “Georgia and South Carolina,” (1732), detail showing “Georgia” written to the Mississippi River  
 Figure 1.4. Richard Seale, “Georgia, Part of Carolina,” (1741), detail based on Oglethorpe’s changes showing the Altamaha River connected to the St. John’s River

Rather than his contemporary legend as a man of vision coupled with clear and rational leadership, Oglethorpe was a huckster for the colony he would make. The extraordinary effort he went through as a real-estate promoter is clear in his influence over the maps of Georgia

produced in the 1730s and 40s. In the first image put forth by Oglethorpe and Benjamin Martyn, secretary of the Georgia Trust, the name of the colony was stamped across a wide swath of land stretching from the Savannah River on the north to the Altamaha River on the south, and from the Atlantic to the Mississippi and then, implied here by the continuation of dotted lines, westward across the continent. This was an accurate representation of the extent of what was contained in the Georgia charter, but Oglethorpe soon grew fearful that he would upset anti-colonialist forces in Parliament with a map so boldly depicting the true extent of the colony's territory. He solved the problem on subsequent maps by having the size of the name "Georgia" reduced to fit within the space between the Atlantic Ocean and the Flint River. He also had all signs of French settlement, which had so threatened the South Carolinians, cartographically confined to the trans-Mississippi west. He ensured that the Spanish presence in Florida appeared almost nonexistent and depicted their fort at St. Augustine substantially further south than its actual location. Perhaps most extreme of all, in the mid-1730s he began asserting that the Altamaha River ran far south of its actual course to connect with the St. John's River in Florida. This completely fictitious imagining of geography, which appeared on maps through the 1740s, allowed Oglethorpe to claim that Georgia's border was more than fifty miles south of where it had been originally set.<sup>5</sup>

Oglethorpe designed marketing materials to sell Georgia as he wanted it be, rather than as he knew it was. He not only manipulated the maps, but his claims about the Altamaha were made after he had arrived in the colony and knew the lay of the land. He not only appropriated the designs of his predecessors, but he also lifted their rhetoric and proclaimed its truthfulness.

*His New and Accurate Account of the Provinces of South Carolina and Georgia* (1733)

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<sup>5</sup> These cartographic and political issues were first uncovered in Louis de Vorsey, "Maps in Colonial Promotion: James Edward Oglethorpe's Use of Maps in 'Selling' the Georgia Scheme," *Imago Mundi* 38 (1986): 35-45.



reaffirmed—if not outright stole—Lawson’s rubric by claiming that new settlers would celebrate the temperate climate and long growing season, without ever suffering “the intense heats of Spain, Barbary, Italy, and Egypt. . . .” Better still, he wrote that Georgia had the finest climate in all of North America, lacking the sharp seasonal changes in weather that supposedly afflicted every other colony. He reassured potential settlers that they would find the environment, as Montgomery had imagined it to be, “healthy, being always serene, pleasant and temperate, never subject to excessive heat or cold.”<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps the most seductive aspect of his 76-page account was his assertion that such base climatological reports obscured the qualities that made Georgia unique. Fine weather was a pleasant selling point, but it paled in comparison to the colony’s other and slightly more specious offerings. Oglethorpe asserted that an average family, laboring but a few hours per day in the rich Georgia soil, could earn six times the annual income they would in London. His most striking argument, trumping even his guarantees of comfort and fortune, was his repetition of other authors’ speculation that children reared in the colony’s “Antediluvian” climate would live for at least 150 years. This was no mere outpost of the rising British empire, nor simply a bulwark against the colonial reach of Spain, but a place that could “only be fitly described by a poetical pen.” Georgia as recounted here was a landscape fresh from the hand of the Creator. It was a new world in which all things were possible and all righteous men could redeem themselves. It was a place where,

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<sup>6</sup> Anonymous (James Edward Oglethorpe), *A New and Accurate Account of the provinces of South Carolina and Georgia: With many Curious and Useful Observations of the Trade, Navigation, and Plantations of Great Britain, compared with her most powerful Maritime Neighbors in Ancient and Modern Times* (London: n.p., 1733), 49, 50. For much of the past century this anonymous tract was mistakenly attributed to Benjamin Martyn, the secretary of the Trustees. Rodney Baine’s 1994 book on Oglethorpe’s publications finally set the matter to rest. He marshals ample evidence to support his assertion that Oglethorpe not only wrote and published the book, but was also commonly known to have done so, both during his lifetime and through the early nineteenth century. Rodney Baine, ed., *The Publications of James Edward Oglethorpe*, with a Foreword by Phinizy Spalding (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 200-204.

So sweet the air, so moderate the clime,  
None sickly lives, or dies before his time.  
Heav'n sure has kept this spot of earth uncurs'd,  
To shew how all things were created first."<sup>7</sup>

It was, quite simply, Eden rediscovered.

At the heart of this text and all others of the period is the promise famously made by the Trustees, in their 1732 appeal, that Georgia was an insect-free environment with pure air, ample streams, and soil rich enough to indefinitely support a multitude of settlers who would easily produce unprecedented quantities and varieties of food. A 1737 traveler to the new colony wrote, echoing Montgomery before him, that it was truly "Canaan" rediscovered, possessed as it was of the "finest land," the "finest water," and "the pleasantest climate in the world." Another pronounced it "a fine healthful country," in which "the weather is mostly serene and clear [and] you seldom or never hear of coughs or wheasings [sic] there." Others still remarked that Georgia was "happily situated in a Climate parallel to the best parts of the Old World," which made possible a "happiness of the climate and soil for habitation and planting," in which "no general illness has at any time prevailed." Even the threat of alligators was mitigated by Francis Moore's assurances that not only were their scales not "musket proof," but that the reptiles were not "worth a shot" as they were easily killed with sticks found lying on the ground.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 51, 52. The text notes that other scientific observers had speculated the average Georgian child would have a lifespan of over 300 years. Oglethorpe warned his audience against such "conjecture," however, and suggested instead a more conservative estimate of 150 years. All of this was written before the colonists set sail for Georgia in late 1732, and was published soon after they had arrived in Savannah. Once on the ground, Oglethorpe quickly saw the error of his ways and came to regret his speculative literary flights of fancy. Phinizy Spalding argues Oglethorpe spent much of his first return trip to London, in 1734, in the embarrassing position of trying to withdraw his earlier promises about Georgia's environment. As will be explored throughout the first half of this chapter, it did not work. See Phinizy Spalding, *Oglethorpe in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 24.

<sup>8</sup> Georgia as "Canaan" is in Anonymous, *A New Voyage to Georgia. By a Young Gentleman. Giving and Account of His Travels to South Carolina, and Part of North Carolina* (London: J. Wilford, 1737), 41, 52-53. "A fine healthful country," is in Anonymous, *A Description of Georgia, by a Gentleman who has resided there upwards of seven Years, and was one of the first settlers* (London: C. Corbet, 1741), 3. Georgia as parallel to the "best parts of the Old World" comes from Mark Catesby, *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands: containing the figures of birds, beasts, fishes, serpents, insects, and plants . . .* (1754; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition London: Benjamin White, 1771), i; the "happiness" of its climate is in John Oldmixon, *The British Empire in America, containing the*

What is most remarkable about these earliest published accounts is they skipped merrily along in a direction counter to the experiences of many colonists. Five years in, Georgia still looked nothing like the Promised Land. Oglethorpe and the Trustees had spent much of the time futilely attempting to stem the tide of disgruntled and hungry residents who had begun to complain of “the impossibility of living in this place.” The Savannahians, for their part tired of being individually ignored, took to sending group petitions to London. “We have most of us settled in this colony in pursuance of the description and recommendation given of it by you in Britain,” they unanimously asserted, before claiming to have discovered little truth in what they once read. Their concerns were even more directly summed up by one young 1736 arrival who noted his dismay at having been “so poisoned by the glaring colors in which Oglethorpe had in his printed books displayed the prospects of his new colony.” Instead of a fruitful and prosperous land, the colonists found a hard reality in which they were lectured against hunting and prohibited from touching the Trustees’ cattle, but where, according to their petition, “none of all those who have planted their land have been able to raise sufficient produce to maintain their families.” Oglethorpe’s colony may have been marveled at in London for growing in size and increasing in number, but life on the ground in Georgia was often tenuous at best.<sup>9</sup>

The marketing push for emigration was so strong that when the Trustees realized that murmurs about these complaints were being heard by their detractors, they called for and published an “Impartial Inquiry” to refute the accusations. The book contended that the charges

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*History of the Discovery, Settlement, Progress and State of the British Colonies on the Continent and Islands of America* (London: J. Brotherton, 1741), 539; and “no general illness” is in Anonymous, *An Impartial Inquiry into the State and Utility of the Province of Georgia* (London: np, 1741), 157. For alligators, see Francis Moore, *A Voyage to Georgia, Begun in the Year 1735. Containing An Account of the Settling the Town of Frederica, in the Southern Part of the Province; and a description of the Soil, Air, Birds, Beasts, Trees, Rivers, Islands, &c. . .* (London: Francis Moore, 1744), 118.

<sup>9</sup> The colonists’ petitions to the Trustees are quoted in Edward J. Cashin, ed., *Setting Out to Begin a New World*, 63-64, 71. For an excellent consideration of the gulf between the Trustees’ vision and the colonists’ reality, see Mart Stewart, *“What Nature Suffers to Groe”: Life, Labor, and Landscape on the Georgia Coast, 1680-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 53-86.

were nothing more than the propaganda of Spanish forces who wanted to reclaim the colony as their own.<sup>10</sup> Instead of acknowledging the threat of disease, or alligators, or especially the potential for starvation, colonialist British accounts of Georgia continually followed this model and focused exclusively on what might be rather than what was. The anonymous author of the *Impartial Inquiry* wrote that the soil was exceptionally “fruitful and productive of almost every thing requisite for subsistence.” John Oldmixon promised his readers in 1741 that the colony “twill soon become the most thriving English Settlement.” The author who claimed to have rediscovered “Canaan” on the Georgia coast explained that any right-minded observer would be overwhelmed by the extraordinary opportunities the colony provided. He noted that Savannah was thriving, more than doubling its size every few years, and numerous villages had already sprung up to the west of the city in the interior of the colony. “There never was any one place settled,” he wrote, measuring the colony against the world, “which had ever the prospect of proving so advantageous to England as this.” Cutting straight to the heart of the matter, another author guaranteed his readers that Georgia was the one place where, “if Persons . . . be not sottibly foolish, or supinely negligent, they cannot fail of improving their own Fortunes . . .”<sup>11</sup>

British boosters wrote of early colonial Georgia as an empty space, a constructed idea, devoid of meaning save what they invented of it in order to increase their return on investment.

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<sup>10</sup> Anonymous, *An Impartial Inquiry into the State and Utility of the Province of Georgia*, 153-154.

<sup>11</sup> The “fruitful and productive” soil is in Anonymous, *An Impartial Inquiry into the State and Utility of the Province of Georgia*, 158. The “most thriving English Settlement” is in John Oldmixon, *The British Empire in America*, 537. Georgia as “advantageous to England” comes from Anonymous, *A New Voyage to Georgia*, 52. And “if Persons . . . be not sottibly foolish” is in Daniel Coxe, *A Description of the English Province of Carolana. By the Spaniards call'd Florida, and by the French, La Lousiane* (London: Oliver Payne, 1741), 72. Almost all of the earliest British texts referenced in this chapter included long lists of what could be grown and hunted in Georgia. The list provided in Anonymous, *A New and Accurate Account of the provinces of South Carolina and Georgia*, 50-51, is representative of the type. Among the potential natural products listed are mulberries, peaches, apricots, nectarines, oranges, lemons, apples, pears (of the fruit, he notes: “some of these are so delicious, that whoever tastes them will despise the insipid watery taste of those we have in England”), grapes, corn (which yields “an amazing increase, an hundred fold is the common estimate, though their husbandry is so slight, that they can only be said to scratch the earth and merely to cover the seed.”), cattle, fowl, deer, elk, bear, wolves, buffaloes, wild-boars, hares, rabbits, fish (“no part of the world affords more variety or greater plenty”), rice, pitch, tar, turpentine, timber, oak, cypress, fir, walnut, ash, and sassafras.

The extent to which this conceit was played out is perhaps most visible when their rhetoric is gathered together and held up to the light of day. Considering their publications together allows a peek at the mechanisms at work behind the curtain. They followed the same standard rhetorical lines, cited each other as authorities, and stumbled over one another to craft florid descriptions of something few of them knew much about. Their strategy of literary consultation and borrowing was not only an intellectual standard practice of the time and place in which they lived and worked, but also shaped writing on Georgia for the next century to come.

“The ugly fact,” modern novelist Cormac McCarthy once noted, “is that books are made out of other books.”<sup>12</sup> McCarthy was referring to contemporary fiction, but his assertion is equally applicable to much earlier colonial and travel volumes. In all cases, writing begets writing, texts grow out of texts. Or, to locate this idea in the more formal terminology of Edward Said, imperial British authors and their intellectual heirs were subject to and promulgators of what Said referred to as the “textual attitude.” The textual attitude was the gravitational force that directed the tenor and purpose of travel writing between the early-seventeenth and the mid-twentieth centuries. It promised its adherents that knowledge gained from books was worthy of the highest level of confidence, should shape how readers experienced the outside world, and needed to be corroborated and passed along in future volumes. Moreover, it cajoled readers and writers alike into believing their own fictions. Texts built on the backs of other texts were vindicated as the products of aggregate knowledge, collaborative documents that were collectively responsible for writing a place into being.

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<sup>12</sup> Cormac McCarthy, interview with Robert B. Woodward, “Cormac McCarthy’s Venomous Vision,” *New York Times Magazine*, 19 April 1992, 36; quoted in Richard Gray, *A Web of Words: The Great Dialogue of Southern Literature* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007), 1. Gray argues that 20<sup>th</sup>-century Southern literature from William Faulkner to Barry Hannah was engaged in a decades-long internal dialogue with itself, played out through the external dialogues of its characters, all in the service of writing the South into being. See Gray, 14-44.

Early British writers had no framework for—or interest in—considering what Georgia meant to those who inhabited it. Edward Said and others since have revealed that the conquest of the non-Occident invariably required the submersion of native experience beneath the colonialist needs of outsiders. This was readily apparent from the dawn of Georgia’s creation, from the first fanciful dreams of Montgomery to the moment that the complaints of starving colonists were deemed less relevant than the poetry of Canaan rediscovered. Most early writers who passed through—too quickly, if at all—saw only what other promotional texts prepared them to see and hastily pronounced judgment based upon the political climate in which they wrote. Had they used their texts to give voice to the collective knowledge of locals, they would have laid down ever richer layers of meaning in a shared quest to fully and accurately define a place. Instead, their varied interpretations did nothing so much as create a gallery of flickering two-dimensional images, a series of competing mirages that seemed to play out across an otherwise empty landscape. Georgia for them was always a space available but largely unknown. They noted its borders, labeled its landscape, posited it in the realm of ideas, and were content to leave it a vague and malleable concept rather than a definite reality.

The form and purpose of this pretense began to shift as Georgia’s future became more secure. Once the gears of imperial expansion were well entrenched in Savannah and beyond, there was less of a need for puff pieces to drum up colonial settlement. No less a figure than Edmund Burke struck one of the first blows in 1758, with the charge that earlier accounts of the American South had been “undoubtedly much heightened in the first descriptions for political reasons.” Georgia fared worst of all in his review of the colonies, having been falsely elevated time and again by what he called “a most exaggerated and flattering description.”<sup>13</sup> Long before

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<sup>13</sup> Edmund Burke, *An Account of the European Settlements in America. In six parts*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. 2 (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1758), 209, 265. Burke was not alone in his criticism of earlier promotional and travel writing. The

Edward Said schematized the textual mechanics of colonialism, Burke shed light on the inner workings of the process. His criticism unwittingly called attention to the ways by which British writers spurred development during the 1730s and 40s by embellishing Georgia's worth.

It was only with the publication of Burke's book, however, that British writing about Georgia openly took on the full mantle of colonialism. Travel accounts after the 1750s were no longer burdened by the weight of having to secure a new colony's potential for future growth.<sup>14</sup> Georgia was instead available to be reimagined once again, but still textually useful only as a concept rather than a lived-in place. In this new incarnation, it was used to reassure British readers of what was good and civilized about England by providing them with an image of a less-good and less-than-civilized Other.

Burke's critique may seem on its surface to be little more than rallying cry for balance and reason, but those who followed in his footsteps tipped the scales too far in the opposite direction. The number of British travel texts trickled to a halt in the years leading up to the Revolution. The few published during the period make clear that post-Burke, and in response to

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Royal Society, trying to regain control over what they believed was the anti-intellectual fluff of too many colonial promoters /travel writers, had spent decades complaining of the "Pomp of Words" and calling for a writers to embrace a "natural way of Speaking." Quoted in Michael Kraus, "Literary Relations between Europe and America in the Eighteenth Century," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 1, No. 3 (July 1944): 211. On Burke in the House of Commons trying to dissuade his countrymen of their naïve views of America, and the ways in which his political career and his travel writing informed, and were informed by, his texts on philosophy, see Robert Lawson Peebles, *Landscape and Written Expression in Revolutionary America: The World Turned Upside Down* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 26-27, 146-147.

<sup>14</sup> A decade after Oglethorpe's arrival, all of Georgia contained less than 2000 white inhabitants. By the time Burke published his treatise in 1758, six years after the Trustees' charter was returned to the Crown, the population had swelled to over 6,000 whites and 3,000 slaves. By the time of the Revolution, the population had swelled to over 50,000, including more than 20,000 slaves. That massive population explosion, well underway at the time Burke wrote, was driven by the admittance of African slavery, rum, saleable land, and the granting of far larger tracts than were initially allowed. All told, these radical changes remade the colony into a place that no longer in any way resembled Oglethorpe's new world Canaan. So removed from the protective cocoon that surrounded it when it was imagined as mankind's best hope for salvation, Georgia became just another real-world, dirty colony whose every success and failure was subject to the critical analysis of British politicians and writers. For just a few of the accounts of the development of colonial Georgia, see Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia, 1730-1775* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1984), especially 74-87; Kenneth Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History* (New York: Scribner, 1976), 223-228; and Trevor Reese, *Colonial Georgia; a Study in Imperial British Policy in the Eighteenth Century* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1963), 48-52.

the hardening political attitudes of the time, British writers took a radical turn in how they chose to write about Georgia. Rather than countering the exaggerations and flattering descriptions in the works of their predecessors with precise recordings of place, they opted instead for equally unflattering descriptions and exaggerations of it as a dangerous and worthless space.

Robert Rogers gave voice to this conceptual, pro-British/anti-American shift in his 1765 account of his travels through North America. He found issues to complain about in each colony, ranked the South as generally inferior to the North, and disliked Georgia most of all. It was, he wrote, largely a “territory lying waste and uninhabited,” that was, “if possible. . . more severely inserted than South Carolina, with all manner of venomous and poisonous animals. . . .” W.A. Young’s *The Ancient and Present State of North America* (1776) repeated Burke’s allegation that the first decades of writing about the colony had been dishonestly shaped by “exaggerated and flattering descriptions.” He promised his readers, however, that such rose-colored fictions had been proven false by the fact that Georgia was “still but indifferently peopled, though it is now forty years since its first establishment.”<sup>15</sup> Never mind that the colony was in rebellion against the crown, he seemed to say, it was simply a useless spot of Earth not worth having.

Georgia was the youngest American colony at the time of the Revolution. It had sixty-two years less history than South Carolina, the next most recent colony, and 126 years less than Virginia, the oldest. Those long decades of development and exploration of the other twelve colonies allowed for a more careful and thorough consideration of them as lived-in places. The other colonies had amply demonstrated their capabilities and shortcomings. They had

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<sup>15</sup> Robert Rogers, *A Concise Account of North America: Containing a description of several British colonies on that continent* . . . (London: J. Milan, 1765), 144, 148. W. A. Young, *The Ancient and Present State of North America . . . And a particular Description of the Air, Soil, Commerce, Manufactures, and Present State of the English Settlements from Hudson's Bay to the Gulf Of Mexico*. (London: J. Whitaker, 1776), 245 248.



transcended the myths that surrounded their foundings and existed instead as proven economies and societies. British authors appear to have determined that criticism of the other original colonies would read as disingenuous when held up against what was commonly known of those places. But Georgia was new. British audiences knew it, imagined it, only as a literary construction, a textual exaggeration, a falsely-inflated investment scheme. Georgia had only ever been documented by the British as an idea rather than a reality. It was thus easily reduced to literary rubble by those British authors looking to expand their nation's field of battle.

Even after the Revolution had erased the sparkle of colonialism from the British eye, British writers apparently felt no need to change their tone on Georgia. John Davis, who spent more than four years traveling through the United States, echoed Burke's concern for exaggeration in his 1803 account of his journeys. Davis promised readers that his text was exempt from the "various persecutions" that defined the works of his predecessors. He would not, he declared, dedicate a single line to complaining about mosquitos and other pests, or inventing false epithets about those he met or the land he traversed. Yet his admitted willingness to leave the worn tropes of his predecessors behind simply meant that he was forced to come up with new and unique lines of criticism. He never saw anything of the state other than Savannah, but deemed it a "desart [sic] scene," ravaged by "violent" winds, not worthy of further exploration. It was a bizarre and otherworldly realm, a spectacle in which "the streets are so insupportably sandy, that every inhabitant wears goggles over his eyes, which give the people the appearance of being in masquerade."<sup>16</sup> Without once disparaging his dinner or lodgings, the residents or the pests, his point was still clear: Georgia lacked the seriousness and respectability, the environmental and cultural health, that were, for Davis, hallmarks of the civilized world.

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<sup>16</sup> John Davis, *Travels of Four Years and a Half in the United States of America; During 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801, and 1802* (London: T. Ostell, 1803), 5, 109.

Those writers that came after Davis inflated the rhetoric and escalated the literary assault on the newly independent colonies to unprecedented levels. As the United States and Britain grappled with one another through the years before, during, and after the War of 1812, British travel writing became an ever more forceful expression of presumed cultural, economic, and political superiority. For example, Charles W. Janson's *The Stranger in America* (1807) is a none-too-flattering treatise on what had become of England's estranged offspring. The author's political motivations are readily apparent in the text. Three-quarters of his book is devoted to the Northeast. While nothing in the United States could compare favorably with his homeland, he clearly preferred the Northern climate, social structure, and politics over those of the South. He took a more generous stance with the Northern states because of what he deemed the region's importance to British economic interests. Moreover, he asserted that the sections deserved to be judged separately, as "the people of the northern and southern states differ as much in manners as in climate . . . ." and were ultimately spread over an area, "too extensive to be subject to one general government."<sup>17</sup>

Janson saw Georgia as the prototypical southern state and his disdain for its men and means was intended to cast a pall over the entire region in the eyes of his audience. His relatively short account of the South is thus introduced and purposefully tainted by a fiery denunciation of the state.<sup>18</sup> The subsequent hundred-plus pages spread his criticism out across the landscapes of the region and the stereotypical character types that inhabited it. He recoiled at the sights and sounds of every Southern environment. He condemned every Southerner as either

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<sup>17</sup> Charles William Janson, *The Stranger in America, 1793-1806* (London: James Cundee, 1807), 37.

<sup>18</sup> Janson begins his introduction the South by exclaiming, "We have now before us, reader, a state fraud – land speculations by wholesale – a scene of chicanery and iniquity hitherto unknown in the history of nations." Janson, *The Stranger in America*, 272. His censure of Georgia apparently stemmed from his outrage at the Yazoo Land Fraud. Janson condemned the corrupt citizens and government of Georgia, and their equally corrupt southern allies in Congress, who he declared willingly ruined a number of honest men by failing to pay restitution to the original investors.

a shiftless poor white or a fraudulent and greedy planter. He was horrified by what he claimed to be a lack of work-ethic evident in both, stemming from their desire to distinguish themselves from the laboring slave.<sup>19</sup>

Slavery had been largely ignored in the writings of Janson's predecessors. Perhaps this was a result of the earliest writers' need to promote the colony without criticizing the machinery that made the British Empire run. When the institution of slavery was acknowledged at all, it was simply and briefly mentioned without much comment. Edmund Burke went further than most when he offered an apologia in 1758. He noted that Georgia's founders had initially envisioned a colony without slaves, but "the load was too heavy for the white men" and required the labor of those better "seasoned" to the climate. Robert Rogers, writing seven years after Burke, was far more typical of his countrymen in that he saw little need to address the institution in the colony and noted it only in mentioning that lightning and thunderstorms often destroyed Georgia planters' crops and homes, as well as "killing their slaves and cattle, in both of which they abound."<sup>20</sup>

Janson's book, however, was published soon after Parliament voted overwhelmingly in favor of ending the British slave trade in March, 1807. The Slave Trade Act prohibited the transportation of slaves on British ships, but it would take another twenty six years before slavery was abolished throughout the Empire. For an abolitionist like Janson, who saw only a half-victory in 1807, there was no better time to prod his countrymen on the legality and morality of slavery, and there was no better example of the horrors of the system than Georgia. He

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<sup>19</sup> Janson's condemnation of both rich and poor white Southerners for a lack of work-ethic was shared by numerous British writers over the following half-century. For a discussion of British views about Southern labor, see Jack K. Williams, "Georgia As Seen By Ante-Bellum English Travelers," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXXII, No. 1 (March 1948): 161.

<sup>20</sup> Edmund Burke, *An Account of the European Settlements in America*, 266; Robert Rogers, *A Concise Account of North America*, 144.

lambasted it as the worst of the former colonies, and the worst of the Southern states, for more than doubling its number of slaves in the recent past. The South as a whole was nothing more than a vile region, typified by Georgia and South Carolina, where “the swamps and lowlands are so unhealthy, that they cannot be cultivated by white persons. Here, however, the negro is compelled to work, uncovered, through the sun’s meridian heat . . . while his pampered master can barely support himself in the shade of such a relaxing atmosphere.”<sup>21</sup> The American North was no match for his native shores, but Janson promoted it as the home of an industrious and moral populace. It was a lesser model of what a far-superior England could be if it broke off the mantle of slavery in its remaining colonies. The South, on the other hand, was a withering den of immoral and lazy thieves. Writing about its dangerous climate was simply the most efficient means of signifying an environment out of balance—morally as well as physically.

Janson’s text moved slavery to the center of the international dialogue on Georgia. This allowed him to condemn both Georgia and the United States while simultaneously celebrating England and prodding it towards abolition. It also set the stage for a generation of politically-motivated British travel writers who commented on the United States in the years following the War of 1812. One who was particularly influenced by his text was British army lieutenant Francis Hall, author of *Travels in Canada and the United States in 1816 and 1817*. Lt. Hall spent most of his time in the Northeast, only traveled as far south as Charleston, and never got off the boat that brought him down the coast. Yet in the tradition of numerous other British travel writers of the time, most of whom never visited the South but wrote about it anyway, Lt. Hall offered a description of Georgia based on what he had read in other British travel journals.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Janson, *The Stranger in America*, 364.

<sup>22</sup> Both Janson and Hall fall within Walter B. Posey’s chronologically category of British writers that never traveled further south than Savannah, and never went inland, yet consistently pilfered the writings of their predecessors and contemporaries in penning their own accounts of Georgia. See Walter B. Posey, “The Lower Southern Frontier,

Without telling his reader that he had no personal basis for the statements he made, he condemned the low country as “a noble monument of what human avarice can effect: its soil is a barren burning sand . . . overflowing into pestilential marshes, which exhale a contagion so pernicious as to render sleeping a single night within its influence . . .an experiment of utmost hazard.”<sup>23</sup>

Hall’s was an infernal vision that reads as if it could have been written by Dante himself. The southern low country was cast as a cauldron of decay, disease, and suffering that no proper Englishman in his right mind would ever willingly visit. If Janson, circa 1807, could barely conceal his pro-British sentiment regarding the Americans as overly spoiled, patricidal children, then Hall, coddling the English ego in the wake of their second loss in 1815, raged against the former colonies as lands never worth having in the first place.

Both Janson’s and Hall’s texts recognized that Britain needed the industrial base in the northeastern states, which made it unwise to raise their ire. Yet the far-less developed landscapes of South Carolina and especially Georgia offered easy targets for a naval officer with a nationalistic axe to grind. Hall reviled not only the Hadean landscape, but also and with equal severity what he contended were the willingly damned souls that inhabited it. Slaves were condemned for their laziness. Far worse were the lower class whites, all of whom were “brutal and depraved,” and who, along with their upper class brethren, possessed “vindictiveness” and a “native ferocity of their hearts.” Worst of all were the planters, who lived off of ill-gotten gains,

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1806-1815,” in Thomas Clark, ed., *Travels in the Old South: A Bibliography. Volume Two: The Expanding South, 1750-1825, The Ohio Valley and the Cotton Frontier* (Norman, Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), 172. Culver H. Smith likewise contends that it was common for British travel writing about the South during this early period to contain sections drawn not from personal experience, but rather from accounts given in other British books. Smith explains that these repeated but perhaps inaccurate biases may have played an important role in fermenting British popular opinion, by alleging to give an authentic account of the Southern land and character, and therefore may have hastened the War of 1812. Culver H. Smith, “The South in Expansion, 1816-1825,” in Clark, *Travels in the Old South . . . Volume Two*, 213-217.

<sup>23</sup> Lieutenant Francis Hall, *Travels in Canada and the United States in 1816 and 1817* (London and Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1818), 244.

displayed a false hospitality to their fellow man only when it benefited their own social position, and displeased God through their frivolity. Among their numerous sins, particularly troubling to Hall and his audience—who were interested in travel books ostensibly because of their efficacy in documenting the non-English world—was that, “information will at first be sought, that it may be useful; it will afterwards be perused for the pleasure of acquisition only. The planter has therefore been ever reckoned among the least enlightened members of society; but says a proverb, *Those whom the devil finds idle, he sets about his own work.*”<sup>24</sup>

In the works of Janson and Hall, Georgia and her sister states were angrily rebuked as places run afoul of the laws of both God and civilized man. The rhetoric of these early travel narratives was intended to admonish the informed traveler that there was absolutely no reason to go and nothing to see of honest, industrious, god-fearing civilization in the Deep South. Each of these books was informed by the pro-British and anti-slavery agendas of their authors, and those agendas were served by eschewing the hard facts of travel and experience in a specific place for abstract monologues on the relative shortcomings of an inaccurately and unfairly essentialized space.

British anti-Georgia writing reached its pinnacle in the years surrounding the War of 1812. Janson, Hall, and others of their kind achieved literary renown because they hit on the right topic at the right time. The British publishing industry blossomed during this period. This lucrative new field of business required unprecedented numbers of new books to fill the shelves of ever-more readers. Politically expedient, and thus easily marketed, exposés about the United States reaffirmed what British reading audiences wanted to believe about themselves and their home. Propounding a lesser—and now foreign—American citizenry and terrain allowed

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 278.

publishers and authors to make the Sceptered Isle and its subjects seem all the more glorious and undeniably right in their anti-American cause.

In the same decades that Davis, Janson, Hall, and their countrymen were nursing the wounds of defeat, the arbiters of American national identity were just getting to work. British writers responded to the fracturing of their empire by launching wide-scale criticisms of a place their forbearers had just recently celebrated. For American writers, on the other hand, the Revolution was a clarion call to draft a new country into being. Faced with the task of inscribing shared meaning across divergent populations, of welding together multiple identities of place into a unified national landscape, they approached the challenge by following the patterns embedded in their cultural DNA. For example, British writers of the 1740s had rebutted criticism of the Georgia landscape by claiming that all such spurious rumors were fabricated by Spaniards who wanted to reclaim their land. In turn, post-Revolutionary American writers refuted contemporary British criticisms of Georgia as the biased grumblings of sore losers.

As early as 1789, Jedidiah Morse's much-celebrated *American Geography*, the first comprehensive geographic account of the new nation, noted that the state was "rising fast in importance." The book was largely a compilation of the notes of unidentified others, but Georgia was the one Southern state the Morse traveled to and explored in preparing the text. In the mid-1780s, having just completed divinity school and in search of information for his planned book, Morse accepted a temporary position at the Congregationalist church in Medway, Georgia. He later transformed these experiences into an account that revealed him to have been pleased with what he found in the state, if not completely at ease in an environment so different from his Massachusetts home. The low country "at particular seasons of the year . . . cannot be esteemed salubrious," as "the long continuance of warm weather produces a general relaxation of

the nervous system.” He was concerned by what he saw as “indolence” among some of the planters there, especially “as they have no necessary labour to call them to exercise.” Still, he identified issues within every state and Georgia’s seemed no worse. His few concerns aside, he ultimately judged it to be a place that was “very pleasant,” “safe and convenient,” and contained “the best soil.” Its inhabitants, he noted, displayed “an open and friendly hospitality” and lived lives of “good health” in an environment that “was not really so unhealthy as has been commonly represented.” Moreover, Morse’s book went to pains to note that Georgia was a well-populated, aesthetically pleasing place that had “the most flattering prospects” for contributing to American intellectual and literary life.<sup>25</sup>

Morse’s work was followed by what quickly became one of the most famous and best-regarded books of the new republic. William Bartram’s *Travels* was drawn from his scientific explorations of the Southeast in the mid-1770s, but its 1791 publication instantly transformed it into a foundational document of “nature’s nation.”<sup>26</sup> Bartram was a Pennsylvania-born naturalist who, unlike most of the other writers considered here, had little concern for recording the spread of civilization or judging the cultural worth of the places he saw. His journey and indeed his

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<sup>25</sup> Jedidiah Morse, *The American Geography: or, A view of the present situation of the United States of America* . . . (Elizabethtown, N.J.: Shepard Kollock, 1789), 444, 445, 450. Morse toured the coastal regions and the area around Midway, Georgia, in 1786. It was the only Southern state he visited, and he was less kind to places he had not seen. For example, Robert Lawson-Peebles notes that Morse’s speculative remarks on the lack of work ethic and religion in Williamsburg, Virginia, made symbolic of what he believed were the failings of the larger South, raised the public ire of Virginia senator St. George Tucker. Still, *American Geography* was enormously popular and was widely regarded as mission statement of what the United States would be. It was also published in several London editions and received glowing reviews in English press: the *Monthly Review* (August 1791) claimed “We must no longer consult British writers but have recourse . . . to the Americans themselves.” Quoted in Michael Kraus, “Literary Relations between Europe and America”: 222. See also Robert Lawson Peebles, *Landscape and Written Expression*, 64-67.

<sup>26</sup> The phrase comes from the seminal work on the meaning of land to the American mind: Perry Miller, *Nature’s Nation* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967). There is an extensive literature on Bartram and his account of Southern flora and fauna. For the most recent and relevant examples, see Dorinda G. Dallmeyer, ed., *Bartram’s Living Legacy: The Travels and Nature of the South* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2010); and Edward J. Cashin, *William Bartram and the American Revolution on the Southern Frontier* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007). The argument that Bartram’s support of the Revolutionary cause was couched in his descriptions of nature comes from Cashin. He also reinforces the extent to which Bartram was influenced in his travels and his expectations by earlier books, as well as the influence his book had on numerous Romantic writers and poets in this country and in England.



book were devoted instead to creating a botanical map of a land previously unmapped. Yet his scientific enquiry is notable for more than just its science; Georgia in Bartram's telling was repackaged for American audiences as a moderated version of the antediluvian Eden of earlier British writers. His text carefully eschewed any mention of the Revolutionary politics of his era in order to avoid displeasing his patron in London. Still, his descriptions of the natural world made him one of the earliest proponents of the idea that divine providence could be discerned through the study of the American landscape. He rode through "the most marvelous forest I had ever seen" while traveling from Wrightsboro to Augusta. Heading inland, he found himself faced with a scene worthy of the pens of poets, and described it as such:

How gently flow thy peaceful floods, O Alatomaha!  
How sublimely rise to view, on thy elevated shores, yon  
Magnolia groves, from whose tops the surrounding expanse  
is perfumed, by clouds of incense, blended with the exhaling  
balm of the Liquid-amber, and odours continually arising  
from circumambulant aromatic groves of Illicium, Myrica,  
Laurus, and Bignonia.

In passage after passage, he cast Georgia as perfect combination of the finest refinements of hard earned civilization and a pristine wilderness in which one could still find traces of the hand of God. "O thou Creator supreme . . ." he wrote, marveling at the natural grandeur before him, "how infinite and incomprehensible thy works! Most perfect, and in every way astonishing!"<sup>27</sup>

Although Bartram was far more interested in Georgia than Georgians, he nonetheless left a written record that belies other writers' later claims that the state was largely an empty and unmapped space. In both letters to his patron, and later in *Travels*, he made clear that he was almost always within riding distance to comfortable lodgings and hospitable hosts. He found central Georgia to be a place where "the generous and true sons of liberty dwell." He largely

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<sup>27</sup> For the quotes on the forest, the Altamaha, and divine nature, see William Bartram, *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida*. . . . (Philadelphia: James and Johnson, 1791), 33, 40, 47.

regarded the planters he met along the coast to be “genteel and polite,” and compared them to Greek gods whose brilliant conversation demonstrated “the celestial endowments of the mind.” Despite his personal disapproval of slavery, perhaps as a means of sowing national harmony, he nonetheless found the conditions of slaves and the success of the system to be evidence of the “industry, humanity, and liberal spirit of the Southern people.”<sup>28</sup> He unequivocally argued that Georgia may have been far removed from New England in both geography and culture, and may have even seemed strange and exotic to readers in Philadelphia and London, but it was not (as Robert Rogers had labeled it) a “territory lying waste.” Rather, in terms of its landscape and its population, as a model of what could be when civilization was brought to Eden, Bartram’s Georgia was an ideal of what the United States should be.

Bartram’s willingness to overlook slavery in favor of nationalism brings up another of the most fascinating early American texts to offer commentary on Georgia: John Pope’s *Tour through the Southern and Western Territories of the United States* (1792). Pope was a wealthy Virginian who, following his service in the Revolution, sold his enormous landholdings in favor of a completely urban existence in Richmond. Little is known about his personal life, but it appears that like some of the best Virginia minds of his generation he was conflicted about slavery. In any case, he was more forthright about it than most. Traveling through Georgia introduced him to a beautiful landscape, “but,” he noted, “when I turn my View toward the numerous Herds of poor miserable Slaves, whose Powers of Body are worn down amidst Stripes and Insults, in clearing Woods and draining Marshes, my very Soul revolts and sickens at the

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 31, 3, 198, 197.

Thought.”<sup>29</sup> He was not sickened enough to devote more than a few sentences to criticism of the system before moving on, but it was more than most could muster.

Pope may have been a closet abolitionist, or perhaps just a conflicted slaveholder with a conscience. Either way, he made clear that his comment on was in no way intended as a criticism of his fellow Southerners. His book instead revealed the first strains of an emerging sectional awareness and a slight defensiveness about where and how the ‘real’ America was being made. Pope suggested that rational minds could disagree about the institution of slavery while simultaneously agreeing on the national worth of the Southern states. He complained that several decades worth of British texts had “misrepresented the whole State of Georgia, together with all Persons and Things whatsoever.” Philadelphia cartographer Joseph Scott likewise noted in his *United States Gazetteer* (1795) that British accounts of the former colony were meant to “mislead the unwary”—those outside of Georgia—from the reality that it was “considerable and flourishing.” Pope charged that the politically-motivated authors of such volumes had been wrong in their repeated willingness to judge the state based on (unnamed) “little Towns, which appear to have been very lately erected.” Instead, he was certain that all truly civilized observers would recognize that “every Rank and Class of People” in cities such as Augusta, Milledgeville and Savannah, were “permeated [by a] . . . wonderful Spirit for Building.” Those fellow citizens who would remove the shackles of British intellectual colonialism would instantly see that coastal Georgia was neither a waste land, nor an indifferently peopled desert, nor an otherworldly space in which mysterious inhabitants masqueraded in eye goggles. Rather, Pope promised that a clear view and fair analysis would reveal that “it is, and ever will be, a Place of

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<sup>29</sup> John Pope, *A Tour through the Southern and Western Territories of the United States* . . . (Richmond: John Dixon, 1792), 78.

Opulence, so long as human Nature shall require Food and Raiment, or, Commerce spread her Canvass to the Wind."<sup>30</sup>

If British writers had begun to note sectional differences even prior to the Revolution, at least in terms of topography and environment, American writers after it struggled to weave sectional distinctiveness into a narrative of unification. Like Morse, Bartram, and Pope before him, Andrew Ellicott informed the readers of his 1803 travel text that believing in differences between states was tantamount to ascribing accuracy to British imperial imaginings. Ellicott had previously served five years as U.S. Commissioner for determining the boundaries of French Louisiana and had traveled extensively through the American South. After making clear his credentials and his experience of the region, he offered what he undoubtedly believed should be the definitive interpretation of Georgia. Oglethorpe's colony had been wrongly attacked in England, from the moment of its founding until the present, by those who were "illiberal, idle, and envious." Moreover, Ellicott noted that he personally agreed with those like Pope who condemned slavery as "extremely disagreeable," but also shared in the sentiment that "it will nevertheless be expedient to tolerate it."<sup>31</sup> Then, like Pope before him, he quickly moved on.

The environment was far less sensitive a topic than slavery, so Ellicott focused the majority of his attention on it. He took issue with those British writers who had denounced the Southern environment as less healthy than the North. He warned his countrymen that believing such libelous claims only played into British hands and was a threat to national security.

Americans needed to ignore false divisions between the states and regions and recognize instead

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 73-74, 81. Joseph Scott, entry for "Georgia," in *The United States Gazetteer: Containing an Authentic Description of the Several States: Their Situation, Extent, Boundaries, Soil, Products, Climate, Population, Trade, and Manufactures*. . . . (Philadelphia, F. and R. Bailey, 1795), np.

<sup>31</sup> Andrew Ellicott, *The Journal of Andrew Ellicott, Late Commissioner on behalf of the United States . . . For determining the Boundary between the United States and the possessions of His Catholic Majesty* . . . (Philadelphia, Budd and Bartram for Thomas Dobson, 1803), 153.

that "the variety of diseases in our southern country is not so great as in the middle and northern states." "A reluctance to admit truth," he wrote, "is little less injurious than the propagation of falsehoods, and the longer we contend that the climate of the middle and some of the northern states, is incapable of generating the malignant fevers of the southern states . . . the longer we shall be in danger of suffering by those scourges." This argument was seconded a year later by C.F. Volney, an expatriate Frenchman whose *View of the Soil and Climate of the United States* claimed that Yellow Fever should be considered "as congenial to the northern as well as the southern states" <sup>32</sup>

The strongest assault in the war of words was launched just as the Treaty of Ghent brought lasting Anglo-American peace. James Kirke Paulding, the famed Manhattan novelist who would ultimately become Secretary of the Navy, published a scathing response to the British in 1815. His small volume on the biases he observed in British texts complained of travelers who had been:

sent out to this country [and] who . . . were paid by England for the degrading work of collecting materials for misrepresenting our national character and manners. Poor and contemptible Grub-street writers have been dressed out as gentlemen, and employed to explore the United States for solitary instances of barbarism, whence to draw universal conclusions of national corruption and wide-spread depravity.<sup>33</sup>

The writer who most stoked Paulding's ire was Charles Janson, and he gleefully dismantled his criticism by turning it back on its author. Paulding accused Janson of being a fraud, a debtor who had made a "hasty peregrination" through the American South in order to

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 267, 293-94. C.F. Volney, *A View of the Soil and Climate of the United States of America* . . . (Philadelphia: J. Conrad & Co., 1804), 240.

<sup>33</sup> James Kirke Paulding, *The United States and England: Being a Reply to the Criticism of Iniquin's Letters* (New York: A.H. Inskeep, 1815), 8.

outrun the “bailiff at his heels” at the behest of his angry creditors. The Englishman surely invented everything he wrote, Paulding claimed, as he traveled at great speeds and experienced the region only by peeking “anxiously out the back of the stage.” In response to Janson’s accusation that Southern planters were lazy, corrupt, and depraved, Paulding countered that all educated Americans knew they were “hospitable, liberal, and warm-hearted.” Where Janson asserted that his knowledge had been gained while dining at their tables, Paulding dryly noted, “we doubt [it] most vehemently.” “A man must be himself a gentleman who is invited to sit down at table with their wives and daughters,” he wrote, but Janson was an “unlucky fugitive” who “did not keep the very best company.” An English accent and imperial airs were little more than the tools of a con-man who was most accustomed to “the manners of the kitchen, the bar, and the stable.” Janson would have never qualified for admission into any “true gentleman’s parlor,” as the world of Southern refinement was “too much out of his sphere.” Moreover, Paulding was convinced that had Janson ever been introduced to the world of the low country planters, he would have found himself utterly “incapable of describing what he saw on account of its novelty.”<sup>34</sup>

For all this, the heart of Paulding’s attack had little to do with his assertions that Janson had outdistanced the law, evaded his creditors, or even escaped back to England. Instead, Paulding’s biggest complaint was that Janson had “published his book in that golden age of literature . . . [when British reading audiences were] mad for that miserable tittle-tattle, dignified by the name of travels, and which consisted in the retail of the tavern scandal, authentic anecdotes picked up among stage drivers and hostlers, together with a garnishing of the traveller’s own teeming invention. . . .”<sup>35</sup> Janson’s contemptible act of “fraud” was neither his

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 20, 46.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 21.

personal debt, nor his failure to actually explore the South, but rather his willingness to take advantage of a literary genre that had once hinged on the presumed veracity of its authors.

A decade later, James A. Jones again took up fellow-New-Yorker Paulding's cause in his text, *Letter to an English Gentleman, on the Libels and Calumnies on America by British Writers and Reviewers* (1826). "It must be conceded," he wrote of the preceding decades, "that the surest road to ministerial patronage, and the applause of British reviewers, [was] the publication of libels on the United States. A single article in their derogation, was as good as a Bank of England note for a thousand pounds."<sup>36</sup> Moreover, if Paulding deplored what he saw as merely a British cultural bias, Jones accused British publishers of something far more manipulative and sinister. He claimed that, almost without exception, British travel texts since the American Revolution had been produced only to buttress the conservative political cause. As the thinly-veiled the political tracts of the Tory aristocracy, they had far less to do with documenting the United States than with threatening what would happen to Britain if Parliament adopted liberal governmental reforms.

Jones was even more troubled by what he saw as the hypocrisies that pervaded British writing about slavery. If Paulding wrote in generalizations about Southern life, Jones claimed to speak from ample experience gained over four years in the region. He had consulted multiple British travel accounts as part of his education as a Northern man about to move South. That education had left him ready "to believe that the slaves were exceedingly ill used, and expected to see as many dramatic scenes acted in the house of a southern slave-holder, as were acted in imperial Rome." "But," he wrote of his time in Georgia and elsewhere, "I saw no such thing." His experiences directly contradicted what he had read, and he found the vast majority of slaves

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<sup>36</sup> James A. Jones, *A Letter to an English Gentleman, on the Libels and Calumnies on America by British Writers and Reviewers* (Philadelphia: H.C. Carey & Lea, 1826), 21.

“treated in most instances with great kindness and forbearance, well clothed, well housed, and well fed.” Most importantly, they were “happier, far happier, than the poorer classes in European countries . . . [and especially] the labouring manufacturers in England.” Jones then turned the table back on the British and raised a criticism that would be echoed by pro-slavery supporters for the next three decades: “It is apropos to inquire why you do not emancipate your slaves in the West Indies. They certainly have as powerful claims on your pity and benevolence as ours – nay, greater . . . Before you extend your philanthropy and commiseration to those kept in bondage with us, be sure that they may not usefully be called into action where they are eminently needed.”<sup>37</sup>

Paulding’s and Jones’s challenges to British travel writing are worth recognizing not only because they reinforce the extent to which all of the aforementioned texts were germinated from one another, but also because they openly draw attention to the role of cultural politics in the creation, transmission, and reception of what was deemed to be “knowledge” of a place. The authors of earlier tracts on Georgia labored in a nascent publishing industry cloaked beneath the noble-sounding agendas of science and literature. Burke may have called on his countrymen to tone down their “most exaggerated and flattering description[s],” but none of his fellow writers challenged one another’s credentials or motives. Yet the rampant growth of the publishing industry during this period, and the complexities of trans-Atlantic politics, made it increasingly difficult for the chroniclers of American spaces to believe that they were still part of a polite gentleman’s club of writers. In terms of economics and culture, there was too much at stake.

Even if British writers vacillated on how and why they wrote about Georgia, their texts served a single purpose. Earlier works outwardly functioned as propaganda to endorse and encourage territorial investment and imperial expansion. Later tracts hid their true agendas

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 33-34.



behind the façade of critical analysis of the failures of post-Revolutionary America. But eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British travel volumes, no matter what their ostensible purposes, were ultimately all component parts in the development of British national identity. Labeling Georgia either for what it would be or had not become was a means of reifying all that England already was. Following the Revolution, however, and especially by 1815, travel texts by Americans also became fundamental to how Americans defined and defended themselves. Once subjects had become citizens, once they became truly post-colonial, their national identity hinged on challenging every British criticism and redefining American space with an American voice.

Paulding's and Jones' texts reveal the extent to which travel writing had escaped its once-limited bounds and become fundamental to nineteenth-century knowledge of place. Their books took advantage of an expanding market of readers to launch near-instant replies to published British criticisms, to bicker in print over whose writers lied more, whose labor systems were more humane, whose nation was better. Perhaps more importantly, they also allowed the light of day to shine in on the mechanisms of Othering at work beneath their entire literary genre. British travel writing had long functioned on its ability to essentialize diverse populations and locations. In the words of one mid-nineteenth century American writer, that literary process had largely defined and limited what was known about the United States because of a "national egotism so characteristic of England, which regards foreign countries and people exclusively through the narrow medium of self-love."<sup>38</sup> Rather than ignoring the very nature of this business as a matter of course, Paulding and Jones took it to task. They decried the spate of British writers who had filled their pockets by peddling stereotypes. They claimed that those works amounted to little

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<sup>38</sup> Henry Tuckerman, *America and Her Commentators, With a Critical Sketch of Travel in the United States* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1864), 266.

more than a waste pile of texts written by talentless foreign hacks, each borrowing its predecessor's rhetoric and then ratcheting it up just enough to be able to re-attract the same audience. In essence, in recognizing that each new definition of place was informed by all those that had been previously published, Paulding and Jones identified what post-colonial scholars have termed the textual attitude. Speaking for their countrymen as the subjects of this essentializing and othering, they made clear that Americans did not like it and would not let it stand.

Paulding's and Jones's very public arguments with British travel writers had an unintended effect. Their passionate pleas for authenticity in literatures of place made them iconoclasts of the genre. In revealing the biases that existed behind a century of British writing, in proclaiming a new post-colonial voice in American self-definition, they inadvertently forced a structural shift in American travel writing, as well. Their criticisms took root because improving relations between the United States and Britain after 1815 provided a hospitable climate. As a result, writers on both sides of Atlantic proceeded through the 1820s with slightly more caution in how they wrote about the United States in general and Georgia in particular.

## —CHAPTER TWO—

### ***IMAGINING THE “WILD AND LITTLE KNOWN”***

Henry S. Tanner’s 1823 *New American Atlas* is a paean to industry and geography wrapped in the finest mantle of the bookmaker’s art. The large folio volume contains full-page maps of every state, each elaborately rendered in a wide array of colors, each seemingly authenticated by its corresponding text. The atlas attempts to account for every important boundary line and rail line, wagon road and turnpike, river and stream, natural wonder and bustling city. It was the first book of its kind, according to Tanner, “to exhibit to the citizens of the United States a complete geographical view of their own country. . . .”<sup>1</sup> Yet it was not complete.

Tanner noted that his comprehensive mappings of the majority of states were fully “deserving of confidence” because they were drawn from many of the most respected and up-to-date surveys.<sup>2</sup> He underscored his dedication to accuracy and authenticity by way of a long introduction that paired each map with a corresponding text that identified which surveys were consulted in its creation, when they were made, and why. To modern eyes, those multiple surveys, repeated evaluations, and recordings of places originally charted long ago reify an ideology of nation-making. They function as quantitative guarantees that important work had been done. Their very existence, by asserting their need to exist, implies a half century of change driven by population growth, agricultural and industrial expansion, and cultural formation. Tanner’s decision to prominently reference them in his atlas transformed raw

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<sup>1</sup> Henry S. Tanner, *A New American Atlas, Containing Maps of the Several States of the North American Union* . . . (Philadelphia, H.S. Tanner, 1823), 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

geographical data into knowledge of a finer grain. His maps were representational latticeworks of the natural and built elements that transformed once wild and unknown spaces into ordered, named, and knowable places. Tanner lavishly recorded each state not only as a geographic entity, but also as a fully participatory partner in the political and economic engine of the nascent United States.

In a book that purported to be the definitive expression of geographical knowledge of the United States, a source by which citizens could know their country, Georgia alone of the original colonies remained partly unknowable. Tanner's map is rendered in great detail along the coast and the Savannah River. County boundaries and county seats, roads, rail lines, and rivers there are accurately presented. But information on the remainder of the state is sparse at best, and in some cases completely wanting. The map acknowledges the existence of "Rock Mountain," which would soon become one of the best known geographical features in Georgia, but locates it approximately sixty miles north and east of its actual location. Counties from east to west across the interior of the state are depicted with fewer and fewer details. Counties to the far north and especially the far south fare worst of all. Their depictions are devoid of information save for the names of rivers. Tanner's map renders them lifeless, voids not worth knowing, spaces that have yet to meaningfully contribute to the making of an American place.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> My understanding of the difference between "space" and "place" comes from the work of Kent Ryden and especially Yi-Fu Tuan. See Kent C. Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993), 208. See also Yi Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 4, 54, 73. Joseph Flay explains that the "human indexing" of space, which transforms it into "place," requires someone to be in it and account for it as changes over a discrete period of time. Without change over time, static space is lifeless. It is only through lived experience through the passage of time that the mapping of place becomes possible. Flay thus argues that no map is ever a completely accurate record, but rather a record of a specific place at a specific time. The empty sections on Tanner's map of Georgia, the absence of human indexing, implied that sections of Georgia were meaningless spaces. Joseph Flay, "Place and Places," in David Black, Donald Kunze and John Pickles, eds., *Commonplaces: Essays on the Nature of Place* (New York: University Press of America, 1989), 3, 5-6.



Figure 2.1. Henry S. Tanner, detail of map of “Georgia and Alabama,” in *A New American Atlas* (1823).

If Tanner’s omissions were anomalous occurrences, unconnected to larger issues of representation, there would be little to explore. But they were not. The information contained in his atlas, and especially the information left out, sheds light on the development of what came to be the dominant interpretation of Georgia among outsiders in the dawn of the age of mechanical reproduction. Tanner and his cohorts functioned in an era when published maps and textual accounts were the only means by which the vast majority of people could know anything about

the world beyond their doorsteps. Their documents now seem like infinitesimally small elements in a much larger story, but at the time of their publication they were widely believed to have preeminent authority to define place out of space.

The lack of visual information in Tanner's map of Georgia was made exponentially worse by a lack of corresponding textual information. Whereas the maps of other states were painstakingly authenticated through documentation of sources, Georgia was not. Tanner explained this absence of accuracy by pushing it back on the Georgians. He charged that they had recently commissioned several new surveys of the counties he left blank, but would not share them for his project. He complained, "On reviewing the documents which I have been able to collect for this part of my work, I have to regret the want of such as relate to those surveys in the state of Georgia. . . . No efforts have been wanting, on my part, to obtain copies of those surveys, which, notwithstanding the promise of assistance of those upon whom I depended most for aid, I have as yet been able to procure." And finally, he concluded that his "complete geographical view" would not be adversely affected by the inclusion of incomplete information on Georgia.<sup>4</sup>

Modern geographers disagree. Maps containing empty spaces are maps that lack meaning. As one scholar notes, ascribing meaning requires embracing the concept that places can only be "distinctively human spaces," defined by a "community of interests." The failure of the mapmaker to convey that information, or the traveler/writer to recognize it, means that "indeterminate terrain or space remains as chaotic or devoid of character as any point of desert or open sea."<sup>5</sup> Tanner's map unabashedly embraced the notion of indeterminate terrain, yet it also offered a substantial improvement over what had been previously recorded. For example,

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<sup>4</sup> Henry S. Tanner, *A New American Atlas*, 15.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen H. Daniel, "Reading Places: The Rhetorical Basis of Place," in Black, Kunze and Pickles, eds., *Commonplaces*, 17.

William Winterbotham's *American Atlas*, published in London in 1795 and expanded to include a Georgia map and reproduced in the United States by John Reid in 1796, depicts the state as little more than a vast swath of meaningless ground.

Reid was clearly guided by Oglethorpe and Martyn's 1732 map in creating his updated topographical depiction of Georgia. He inscribed the names of new, legally-bounded spaces onto the territory just south of the Savannah River, implying that during the intervening sixty-four years those small areas had been reclaimed from local Indians and brought under the control of white bodies and white laws. Like Oglethorpe and Martyn's map, however, he was quite content to leave the majority of Georgia blank. His map was published seven years after Jedidiah Morse quite publicly informed the world that Georgia was safe, healthy, well-populated, and "fast rising in importance." It came four years after William Bartram noted that he found there a "most perfect" landscape on which "the generous and true sons of liberty dwell." But Reid clearly did not believe them. Instead, he produced a map that proclaimed without additional comment that "the latest Authorities" had apparently deemed the state devoid of notable white civilization.<sup>6</sup>

Reid's Georgia is a place in name alone. It is a nullity, an abyss meagerly inhabited by undifferentiated Indian tribes. In contrast, Tanner's empty spaces appear slightly less empty. His accompanying textual explanation of the sources and limits of his knowledge of the state is a small step towards inscribing meaning onto its landscape. Tanner reveals little about life and

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<sup>6</sup> Winterbotham's atlas did not contain a map of Georgia, but Reid included it in his revised edition of 1796. His map depicts the state's original boundaries, which stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. This is noteworthy because his atlas was published just as the state entered into a series of real estate transactions, known ever since as the Yazoo Land Fraud, that quickly brought it national scorn. In 1795, the state of Georgia sold to numerous individuals (as investors in The Georgia Company, The Georgia Mississippi Company, and the Tennessee Company) a huge tract of land stretching from the Mississippi River to the Tom Bigby River in present-day Tennessee and Alabama. Elite whites, who profited handsomely from the sale, then overwhelmingly chose James Jackson as Governor in the election of 1798 because of his pledge to declare it illegal and void. Once in office, Jackson reclaimed the land and immediately refigured into the treaty between Georgia and the federal government, again benefiting the state and its most elite citizens.

experience in Georgia. His atlas falls far short of recording it as a legitimate and meaningful place. Viewed beside Reid, however, his work demonstrates the process by which understanding of place is developed over time through the slow accretion of selectively chosen knowledge.

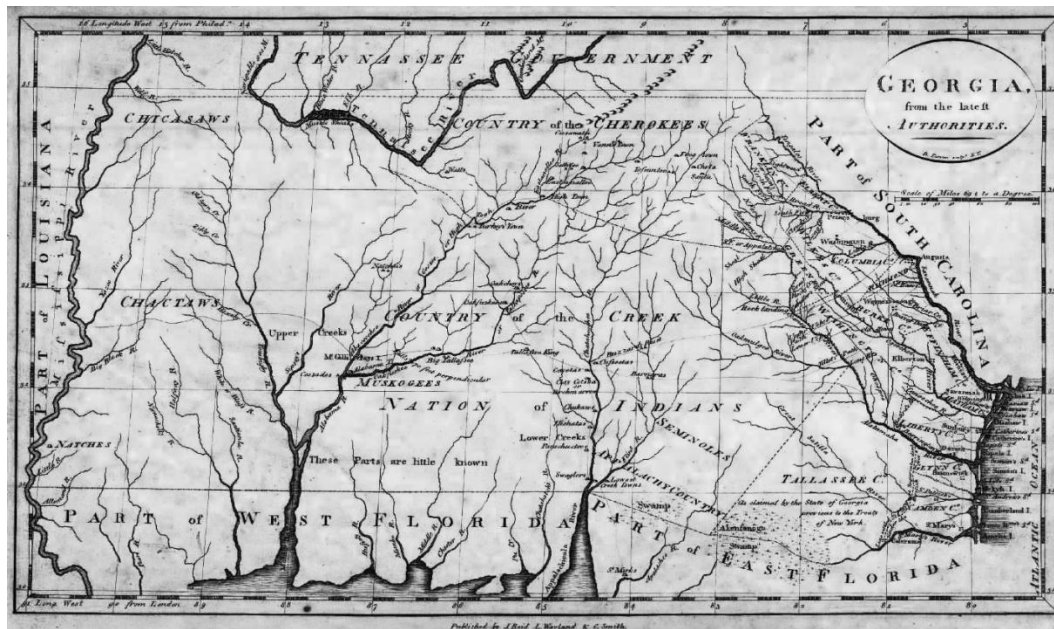


Figure 2.2. John Reid, “Georgia, from the latest Authorities,” in *An American Atlas* (1796).

Yet even if Tanner overlaid some small information onto Reid’s blank template, his accounting remained incomplete. This is worth noting because there were real-world implications associated with such an omission. The lack of place-specific information about interior Georgia in what claimed to be the definitive atlas of the United States, ca.1823, meant that Captain Basil Hall, the famed British travel writer, could legitimately expect he would find nothing meaningful when he arrived in that “indeterminate terrain” several years later. Consequently, the section on Georgia in Hall’s 1829 travel account of the United States described his movement immediately westward from Savannah as a journey into “the wild and little known parts of the continent.” Despite his later admission that the state was largely



passable on clearly defined roads, Hall noted that moving into its interior left him uncomfortably disoriented. It was, he wrote, as if he suddenly found himself lost without any means of navigation in a “trackless ocean.”<sup>7</sup>

Hall’s account of Georgia is remarkable for two reasons. First, it was famous. Frances Trollope dedicated an entire chapter to Hall’s book in her *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832) because, she claimed, it had defined both how British readers saw the United States and how Americans saw themselves. She had been in the middle of her own American tour at the time Hall’s book was published and wrote that she witnessed the book being read and discussed “from one corner of the Union to the other. . . . in city, town, village, and hamlet, steam-boat, and stage-coach.” The cultural wave it made, she noted, was “perfectly unprecedented in my recollection upon any occasion whatsoever.”<sup>8</sup> The second reason, especially important when considered in light of both the book’s fame and the empty spaces in Tanner’s atlas, was that Hall paired his narrative with eight etchings of Georgia. His etchings were the first set of images of the state ever mass produced and they made it visually knowable to a vast audience on both sides of the Atlantic. By coupling his analysis of the state with the first-ever images, Hall veritably guaranteed the authenticity of what he wrote. His words and images set the standard for what most outsiders thought they knew about Georgia for decades to come.

This chapter will offer a close reading of Basil Hall’s Georgia, as given visual form through his etchings, to trace the codification of the state as the realm of “the wild and little known.” But before turning to an analysis of his images, it is important pause and note that it did not have to be that way. Hall’s categorization of the state hearkened back to an age before his

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<sup>7</sup> Captain Basil Hall, *Travels in North America, in the Years 1827 and 1828. By Captain Basil Hall, Royal Navy. In Three Volumes.* (Edinburgh: Cadell and Co., 1829), 3: 214, 252.

<sup>8</sup> Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832; reprint, with an introduction by Richard Mullen, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 313.

own. Georgia in the late 1820s was not quite Philadelphia, but neither was it the terra incognita it was in British imaginations of a century earlier. Tanner's map inadvertently reinforced those old confusions by implying that change came slowly, if at all, below the Savannah River. Hall picked up on this theme, authenticated it by acknowledging it, and carried it forward because it made for an easy and expected narrative that would sell books. But he did not have to; it was not his only choice. Georgia at the time he rode through it was in the midst of a massive transformation in terms of settlement, population, and infrastructure. Tanner may have chosen not to know it, and Hall not to record it, but those changes had been chronicled by at least a few astute writers.

As the era of Anglo-American bad feelings finally subsided by the mid- to late-eighteen-teens, a new breed of travel texts emerged that were less overtly political than their predecessors, acknowledged the existence of other travel books, and often went to great efforts to at least appear to distance themselves from past biases. The authors of such volumes sought to demonstrate a new level of accuracy by renouncing the specious claims of the past and assuring their readers of a fair documentation of place. One of the roots of this changing approach grew from the work of John Melish, an expatriate Scottish mapmaker and travel writer who had settled in Philadelphia in 1811. Like many of his colleagues, Melish's work was published on both sides of the Atlantic. His *Travels through the United States of America* first appeared in Philadelphia in 1812, but the real coup came when it was corrected, expanded, and published in Philadelphia, London, and Belfast in 1818. Melish used the preface to that revised edition to connect with English reading audiences, explaining that he had been a successful business owner in Glasgow until he was in his forties. He then challenged his former countrymen on what they had written, read, and believed of the United States. To bolster his authority on such matters, he

concluded the preface with a pointed letter from Thomas Jefferson in which the former president noted his “extreme satisfaction” with the book and applauded “the candour with which you have viewed the manners and conditions of our citizens, [which] is so unlike the narrow prejudices of . . . English travelers preceding you.”<sup>9</sup>

Melish’s revised text appeared in London in the same year as Lieutenant Francis Hall’s *Travels in Canada and the United States*. Their contemporaneous volumes offer a glimpse at the competing interpretations of Georgia that faced reading audiences in the decade before Basil Hall hammered it down with a series of what appeared to be factual images. Whereas Lieutenant Hall, like Charles Janson before him, freely reviled a state he knew almost nothing about and had not seen, Melish’s criticisms of Georgia are carefully grounded in descriptions of where he traveled, how he got there, and what he saw. For example, he noted that he initially thought Savannah would be a disappointment because many British writers had said so. Unlike his predecessors and contemporaries, though, he allowed himself to spend ample time in the city considering the both hard facts of its spaces and the intangible elements of its internal life. Through this process he “soon got familiarized to the place, and even fond of it,” and tempered his initial judgments. “The situation in Savannah,” he finally determined, “is favorable for both health and commerce.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> John Melish, *Travels Through the United States of America in the Years 1806 & 1807, and 1809, 1810, & 1811; Including an Account of Passages Betwixt America and Britain, and Travels Through Various Parts of Britain, Ireland, and Canada. With Corrections and Improvements Till 1815* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1818), vii. Beyond a mere appreciation for his travel text, Jefferson thought so highly of Melish’s work as a cartographer that he prominently hung his large-scale 1816 map of the United States in the entrance hall to Monticello. See M.E. Wolfgang, “John Melish: An Early American Demographer.” *Pennsylvania Magazine* 82 (1958): 65-81.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 36. Allan Nevins notes in his brief remarks on Melish that he arranged his travels to allow him to explore the places he had read about in books and confirm or challenge the accuracy of those accounts. Allan Nevins, comp. and ed., *America through British Eyes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), 48. Michael Price contends that Melish traveled to Georgia with the hope of establishing himself in the cotton trade, but eventually decided against the endeavor because of his belief that the newly opened Georgia backcountry was growing apart from the needs of the world market. Melish felt that he saw in Middle Georgia the rise of an economy based on yeoman farms and

Melish's willingness to distance himself from the echoing biases of many British writers simultaneously dismantled past textual attitudes and unintentionally created new ones.<sup>11</sup> His comments on Savannah were repeated verbatim two years later by British author Daniel Blowe, who informed his readers of his *Geographical, Historical, Commercial, and Agricultural View of the United States* (1820) that "the situation of Savannah is favourable for both health and commerce."<sup>12</sup> Charles Janson and Lt. Francis Hall relegated the land between Savannah and Augusta to the position of hell on earth and damned its inhabitants, but Melish found the climate "comfortable," the land "well cultivated." Blowe likewise reported that the climate of the area was "very pleasant [and] healthy," and the land "well cultivated."<sup>13</sup> Janson and Lt. Hall derided citizens of the state as amoral and willfully ignorant, but Melish found the majority of people he met "civil [and] well-bred," "hospitable," "polite," "affable" and "well informed." Blowe once again followed suit and pronounced the majority of Georgians "affable in their deportment, and polite and hospitable to strangers."<sup>14</sup>

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domestic production, rather than international market forces. Michael E. Price, *Stories with a Moral: Literature and Society in Nineteenth-Century Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), pp. 15-21.

<sup>11</sup> Perhaps the most outspoken critic of the entire system was Francis Wright. Wright was a well-heeled, well-educated Scottish intellectual, a radically free thinker, a staunch feminist, and a close family friend to both Frances Trollope and the aging Marquis de Lafayette. She was also a bit of an iconoclast among early nineteenth-century British travel writers. Wright took the opportunity in her *Views of Society and Manners in America* (1821) to offer a rare comment on what she saw as the unfair anti-American bias perpetuated by most male British writers of her generation. Singling out her predecessors by name, she noted that many of them had "not always done justice either to [Americans'] character or their manners" simply because they did not care for the weather they encountered, or the lodgings they found, or even just the chairs they sat in when they penned their notes. If more British writers on the United States would check their delicate egos before they wrote, she believed it "would save volumes of misstated facts and misrepresented characters, and keep the peace not only between man and man, but nation and nation." Francis Wright, *Views of Society and Manners in America; In a Series of Letters from that County to a Friend in England, During the Years 1818, 1819, and 1820 . . . From the First London Edition, with Additions and Corrections by the Author* (New York: E. Bliss and E. White, 1821), 59.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel Blowe, *A Geographical, Historical, Commercial, and Agricultural View of the United States of America; forming a complete Emigrant's Directory through every part of the Republic* (London: Edwards and Knibb, 1820), 505.

<sup>13</sup> Melish, *Travels Through the United States*, 36, 45. Blowe, *A Geographical, Historical, Commercial, and Agricultural View*, 506-507.

<sup>14</sup> Melish, 45, 50. Blowe, 506.

Melish's most radical challenge to others' dismissive interpretations of Georgia stemmed from his thoughts on the spread of education in the state and the intellect of population. Janson and Lt. Hall unabashedly denounced Georgians as a mob of uneducated con-men, or at least the idle-brained puppets of evil. Melish noted instead that many people he met possessed "a considerable taste for literature." He claimed that, contrary to what he had read in other travel books, his experiences demonstrated to him that "a great deal of attention has been paid, in Georgia, to education." He cited the state as one of the most progressive in the nation, in which "very considerable funds have been appropriated" to keep "the college at Athens amply endowed," and to "establish and keep up an academy in every county." Blowe again regurgitated what he read and noted that Georgians were "in general well-informed, and have a considerable taste for literature."<sup>15</sup> These assertions were reinforced a second time in British traveler Adam Hodgson's *Letters from North America* (1824). Hodgson, like Melish and Blowe before him, wrote that his experience of travel belied what he had read in earlier published accounts. He was both surprised and impressed by what he found to be the level of cultural literacy of the average citizen. While traveling west from Savannah through the interior of the state, far from the realm of planters or urban elites, Hodgson stopped for the night at a non-descript inn where,

Here, as usual, I found several books on the chimney-piece; among which were a Bible, a Testament, a Hymn-book, a book of Geography, Kett's *Elements*, Lord Byron's Poems, and the *Life of Harriet Newell* . . . I mention these books, as they form a sort of average of those which you generally find lying about the country inns, and which are frequently mere stragglers from no despicable library in the landlord's bed-room.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Melish, 50, 208. Blowe, 506. Melish's account of the educational impulse in the state was fairly accurate, but he quite misstated the condition of the University of Georgia. According to Thomas Dyer, the university during the 1812-1818 span of Melish's first and second editions had "no experienced faculty members, only a small number of students, and inadequate financial resources . . . [and was] in great jeopardy." Thomas Dyer, *The University of Georgia: A Bicentennial History, 1785-1985* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 23.

<sup>16</sup> Adam Hodgson, *Letters from North America, Written During a Tour in the United States and Canada* (London: Hurst, Robinson, & Co., 1824), vol.1, 108. For an exceedingly brief consideration of Hodgson's place among other British travelers, see Jack K. Williams, "An Evaluation of Seventeen British Travelers to Ante-Bellum Georgia,"

With the exception of William Bartram, few chroniclers, British or American, had ever ventured beyond the areas immediately surrounding Savannah and Augusta. Melish, Blowe, and Hodgson did. They traveled further and looked closer. They wrote detailed accounts where they went both along the coast and through interior of the state. They challenged expected characterizations of Georgia as an intellectual backwater by suggesting that it was populated with thriving communities of readers and thinkers. Most importantly, they recorded a place that by the mid-1820s was fast becoming settled and civilized.

Melish, Blowe and Hodgson may have added a new strain of thought to the ongoing dialogue about Georgia, but their texts were not enough to counterbalance the weight of past and present biases against the state. For example, their shared thoughts on the educational and literary interests of Georgians were challenged by a famous contemporary book that asserted that “in all respects, the residents . . . are inferior in education to their northern counterparts.”<sup>17</sup> Hodgson wrote of finding roads and towns, houses and inns, literature, politics and ideas across the state. Yet his book was published in the shadow of Henry Tanner’s attempt at the definitive atlas of the United States, in which parts of interior Georgia were depicted as uncivilized and unknown. Hodgson headed inland from the cities of the coast and found endless personal libraries containing works of science, literature, poetry. Basil Hall rode out of Savannah four years later and characterized instead it as a passing into “the wild and little known.”

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*The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXXV, No. 4 (December 1951): 308. In his chapter on southern education, Grady McWhiney contends that southern schools were primitive when compared to those in the north. He explains that even if Georgia maintained a state university and academies in every county, the academies were often as poorly conducted as the non-state-regulated elementary schools. Grady McWhiney, *Cracker Culture: Celtic Ways in the Old South* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1988), 193-217. See also Williams, “Georgia As Seen By Ante-Bellum English Travelers,” 166.

<sup>17</sup> Duke Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, *Travels of His Highness Duke Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach Through North America in the Years 1825 and 1826* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, & Carey, 1828), p. 293-294. Bernhard’s account was so well known by Americans, and so detested by Georgians, that novelist William Gilmore Simms recalled hearing stagecoach drivers complain about it while he was traveling through coastal areas of the state in 1831. See Price, *Stories with a Moral*, 26.

By the time Basil Hall's leather boots first touched Georgia red clay in March 1828, the state already had several strikes against it. It not only lacked the breadth of credentials of place that existed for other states, as demonstrated by Tanner's atlas, but existing accounts of it were also highly contradictory as to what was to be found within its borders. This lack of an authoritative narrative meant that Hall had his choice of what kind of Georgia he was going to see and record. He could have chosen to continue the progress made by Melish, Blowe, and Hodgson and sought out even the slightest cultural and intellectual similarities between developing Georgia and the world he left behind at home. Instead he chose to see what he expected and needed to see in order to reinforce how extraordinarily non-British it all was.<sup>18</sup> In short, he chose the kind of Georgia that sold books.

For an astute travel writer like Hall, the existence of contradictory published accounts of the Georgia presented nothing so much as a shimmering opportunity. Not only could he publish his own interpretation of the state with confidence that it would meet little or no challenge from other outsiders, but he could also bolster his claims of accuracy by pairing it with a completely new—and carefully constructed—type of visual evidence. None of his predecessors had ever produced pictorial documents to support their rhetoric, but Hall did. His predecessors offered a century of blank maps and a deluge of words. They had each overstated their own accuracy, but had collectively created nothing more than an indeterminate haze of apocryphal and often

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<sup>18</sup> Whereas Hall's text merely alluded to the possibility that he consulted other travel accounts and maps in preparing for his American sojourn, his wife's diaries were all the more definite. She recounted in some detail how they spent a large portion of their passage from England creating detailed travel journals for each place they would visit. They decided the locations in advance based on where other travelers had been and the types of experiences they had documented. Long before they set foot on the continent, the Halls had already mapped much of where they would go, how they would get there, and, based on what others had previously published, what they expected to see when they got there. Margaret Hall, *The Aristocratic Journey: Being the Outspoken Letters of Mrs. Basil Hall During a Fourteen Months' Sojourn in America, Prefaced and Edited by Una Pope-Hennessy* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1931), 23.

contradictory knowledge about what Georgia might or might not be. Hall saw possibility in the confusion. He could make himself the authority; he could have the final say.

Eighteenth-century travel texts functioned on the willingness of their contemporary readers to place faith in the accuracy of the written word. Yet by the 1820s, too many contradictory travel volumes had created too many competing and untrustworthy accounts of Georgia. An outside observer at the time would have had no way of guaranteeing the authenticity of what they read. Hall found a solution to this problem in the Camera Lucida. The optical device, patented by a fellow British aristocrat in 1807, allowed him to make a precise line drawing of whatever he placed in front of his machine by superimposing its image over a sheet of paper. He brought a Camera Lucida in London, sailed with it across the Atlantic, and hired assistants to haul it behind him as he rode across Georgia.

Developments in commercial printing during the late 1820s reduced the costs associated with transferring drawings to etchings. This allowed publishers to reproduce images and include them in bound books on a previously-unprecedented scale.<sup>19</sup> Hall believed he could harness these advances in mechanical reproduction to create a niche for himself in the publishing industry. He published a separate volume of his Camera Lucida images at the same time as his text, in 1829, and marketed it as an essential companion book to his travelogue. Others could

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<sup>19</sup> Perhaps the most relevant discussion of how the Camera Lucida works is found in George Dollond and Captain Basil Hall, *Description of the Camera Lucida, An Instrument for Drawing in True Perspective, and for Copying, Reducing, or Enlarging Other Drawings . . .* (London: Gaultier, 1830), 5-12. Hall also include remarks on his Camera Lucida, including instructions from the merchant from whom he purchased it, as an appendix to volume 3 of his *Travels in North America*. For a more contemporary evaluation, see John H. Hammond and Jill Austin, *The Camera Lucida in Art and Science* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1987), 78-95. For printing technologies and the transformation of the publishing industry in the mid-nineteenth century, see Georgia B. Barnhill, "Transformations in Pictorial Printing," in Robert Gross and Mary Kelley, eds., *A History of the Book in America*, vol. 2, *An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society in the New Nation, 1790-1840* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 424-440; and Dona Brown, "Travel Books," in Gross and Kelley, *A History of the Book*, 449-464. For the rise of illustrated books and their role in the creation and dissemination of a new 'type' of knowledge, see Maurice Samuels, "The Illustrated History Book: History between Word and Image," in Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeannene M. Przyblyski, eds., *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 238-246.



float words into the ether, but Hall proclaimed that he had created the first concrete visual record of the state. Or at least, images of select places and people that appeared to guarantee the accuracy of his writings.

Most Georgians had never seen a Camera Lucida before and mistook the contraption for the tool of a geographer. Hall did not completely disagree. Instead, he believed that his ability to accurately reproduce what he saw made an unprecedented contribution to the scientific knowledge of place. “No reduction, enlargement, or embellishment, has been allowed in any instance,” he wrote as a way of introducing the images, “but the very lines traced on the spot . . . in order to preserve, as far as possible, the character of truth.” The narrative offered in his *Travels in North America* was another contribution to a long tradition, he seemed to say, but the true contribution to the project of documenting the world only came when that narrative was considered in tandem with the companion images. The very title of that connected volume, *Forty Etchings, From Sketches Made with the Camera Lucida*, implied a mechanical and scientific accuracy of the visual information contained within. The nineteenth-century reader was assured, even before they turned past the title page, that the book contained pure, mechanically recorded knowledge rather than interpretations filtered through the eyes and prejudices of Basil Hall. As a proper English traveler and writer, he was always in search of “striking or beautiful views,” but those aesthetic desires were tamped down by his self-proclaimed duty as a man of science. The “correct representations” made possible by the Camera Lucida not only reinforced the presumed accuracy of his written interpretations, but were able to “place new scenes more distinctly before us than the most elaborate, or the most graphic verbal description can ever hope to accomplish.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Captain Basil Hall, *Forty Etchings, From Sketches Made with the Camera Lucida in North America in 1827 and 1828* (Edinburgh: Cadell and Co., 1829), 24, 1.

Of the forty etchings suggested by his title, his eight views of Georgia accorded it more attention than any other state save New York. If images of Niagara Falls are excluded, however, Georgia is depicted far more frequently than any other place. The Halls did not spend more time there than elsewhere on their journey. He did not dedicate more space to it than to other states in his travel text. Yet he seems to have recognized that his book of images offered him the opportunity to pictorially record a place that had no history of visual documentation. Moreover, he made the state the critical juncture in a graphic disquisition on wilderness and civilization in the United States.



Figure 2.3. Captain Basil Hall, “The Village of Rochester,” in *Forty Etchings* (1829).  
 Figure 2.4. Captain Basil Hall, “The Mississippi Overflowing its Banks,” in  
*Forty Etchings* (1829).

Hall’s schema functioned on an axis that ran from northeast to southwest. He baldly laid out the poles of it in two images that specifically ascribed to the prevailing aesthetic philosophy of the time: Rochester, New York, occupies the beginning of the book and is portrayed as a picturesque village. The etching depicts it as a controlled environment, safe, knowable, and relatively sophisticated. The flooded Mississippi delta, on the other hand, introduces a sublime and dangerous landscape to the book’s end. It is barren, threatening, dominated by an

uncontrollable river and scarred by the blackened remnants of dead trees. Far more interesting to Hall than either of these extremes, however, was the state of Georgia as the liminal space between them. To that end, he recorded what he needed of it like a novelist inventing details to fit a predetermined character type.

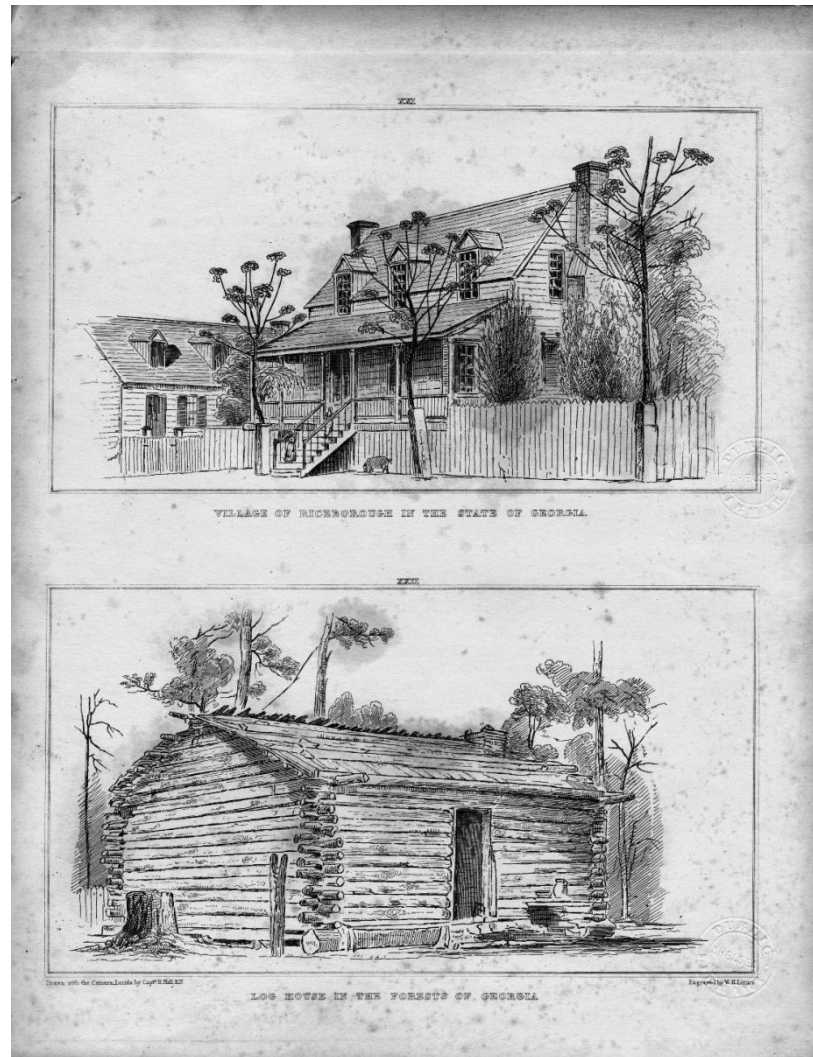


Figure 2.5. Captain Basil Hall, “Village of Riceborough [sic] in the State of Georgia,” and “Log-House in the Forests of Georgia,” in *Forty Etchings* (1829).

The entire spectrum of what Hall wanted to see in Georgia is made evident in his first two Camera Lucida images of the state. The uppermost etching depicts what he deemed a typical house in Riceboro, a “very pretty” low country village located in the vicinity of Savannah. He remarked in the accompanying caption that the local citizenry took “great pride in the ornamental dressings of their dwellings.”<sup>21</sup> As evidence, he offered an image of a handsome two-story house surrounded by a neatly fenced and carefully embellished yard. The purposeful placement of three Pride of India and multiple decorative shrubs reinforce the extent to which civilization has been cultivated here. Two little girls in bonnets and aprons, perhaps slave children, stand peacefully on the front steps as if waiting to greet arriving guests. A domesticated hog saunters slowly down the street. Every shutter is secured, every gate is latched, and nothing challenges its rightful place in precise order.

Riceboro was the only low country residence that Hall depicted in *Forty Etchings*. As such, it served as a surrogate for Savannah and the remainder of the surrounding area, which he had pronounced in his travelogue to be “striking” and “very tastefully laid out.”<sup>22</sup> It also implied that reasonable men had transformed the small area of the Georgia sea coast from a wild space into a most civilized place. Not only had Canaan been rediscovered there, but over the course of a century it had been cleared, planned, planted, and thoroughly remade according to the precepts of Anglo-American society. The ordered and well-known world of the low country was of little interest to Hall, though, compared to the void space he believed began at its boundaries. His travel text used the realm of the planters simply to set up his turn towards the “wild and little

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<sup>21</sup> Captain Basil Hall, *Forty Etchings*, 30. According to the 1820 census, Riceboro and surrounding rural areas of Liberty County had approximately 1,600 white inhabitants and 5,200 slaves. After Savannah and Chatham County, which had more than double the population, Liberty was one of the most populous of the low country counties. U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Fourth Census, 1820, Liberty County, Georgia, *USGenWeb Archives*, usgwcensus.org.

<sup>22</sup> Captain Basil Hall, *Travels in North America*, 3: 202-203.

known.” The first of his etchings of Georgia likewise advanced the text’s trope of movement into uncharted terrain. Riceboro’s precision and order was only particularly useful for him when played off the chaos—real or imagined—that was the interior of the state.

Most eighteenth-century travelers to Georgia saw little other than Savannah and Augusta, and perhaps a few of the surrounding coastal counties. Bartram alone ventured through the interior of the state, proving at least that it was possible, but the vast majority of those who came after him held to the established, if exceptionally limited, coastal routes. Travelers by the second and third decades of the nineteenth century consistently retraced the footsteps of their predecessors then heading west to the growing cities of Milledgeville and Macon, before quickly exiting the state on their way to New Orleans.<sup>23</sup> Yet Basil Hall was determined not to limit his experience of Georgia, or his opportunity to craft a good book, by so severely truncating his explorations.

He hired a well-appointed carriage and driver to chauffeur him, his wife, their toddler daughter and her nursemaid across the interior of the state. Following immediately behind them at all times was a large wagon packed with London-made traveling beds, baskets of English provisions, a Camera Lucida, and multiple trunks filled with their clothing and personal items, maps, travel journals, diaries, pens and ink. The three members of the Hall family and all of their belongings, along with one nursemaid and two hired drivers, thus set off in search of something that other travelers had not seen. The wild and unknown was about to become documented and known.

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<sup>23</sup> Hall noted in his travelogue that had he not hired a carriage to transport his family through Georgia, he would have been compelled to follow the exact same route as his predecessors: “If we had not chosen to adopt this plan, we must have taken the steam-boat up the Savannah River to Augusta, and from thence have proceeded in a stage-coach to the westward . . . but we then should have seen nothing of the interior of the country in a quarter very little visited.” Captain Basil Hall, *Travels in North America*, 3: 213. For a more detailed accounting of antebellum travel routes, see James W. Patton, “The Cotton South, 1826-1835,” in Clark, *Travels in the Old South . . . Volume Three*, 9. See also Smith, “The South in Expansion,” 216.

The image of a fastidious frame house in Riceboro denotes the upper limit of what Hall was willing to admit of civilization in Georgia. Its visual counterpart, depicting a crude log cabin in the interior forests of the state, suggests the other end of his spectrum. Unlike the home of low country planters shown above it, the rudimentary structure has no windows or shutters, no porch or balustrade, no external stairs, street, or neighborhood. The markers of domesticity in the Riceboro image have been replaced here by a single water pitcher and bowl beside a door carelessly left open. Instead of decorative gardens suggesting nature brought under the controlling hand of man, the cabin is surrounded by pine trees in various states of untamed growth and decay. Hall noted in his travel narrative that he had seen numerous log cabins as he journeyed through United States, but they were normally constructed of notched logs carefully patched with mud or plaster. In Georgia, however, he was dismayed to find that “no such refinement was thought of” and the spaces between the logs were often left unsealed. “I remember,” he noted in the text accompanying the image, “upon one occasion being able, while lying in bed, to thrust my arm between two of the logs into the open air!”<sup>24</sup>

In the text accompanying these first images of the state, Hall was far less interested in addressing either structure than he was a slave who approached him while he was recording the cabin. He noted that he instructed the slave to look through the Camera Lucida, but the man stepped away. “I laughed at him,” he wrote, “and said he was afraid of being bewitched.” “No! no! massa, not for that I no look,” the man responded, before confiding in Mrs. Hall, who was waiting in the shade, that ““That man there . . . wanted me to look through that thing he has got – but I was afraid he would ask more money for the sight than I have to give’ . . .”<sup>25</sup> Hall’s choice of dialect is an attempt to infantilize the slave, to cast him as an instantly recognizable and

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<sup>24</sup> Captain Basil Hall, *Forty Etchings*, 30.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

wholly inferior ‘other,’ but the young man’s response demonstrated that he was clearly aware of the ways of the modern world. It also indicated that he and his fellow residents of the interior of the state were well accustomed to the presence of travelers, tourists, chroniclers, and showmen in their midst.

It is worth noting here that Hall followed the introductory remarks of his narrative of travel through Georgia with a thirty-page discourse on what he believed to be the relative evils and occasional benefits of slavery. He informed his readers that he personally had a great dislike for the institution but was equally opposed to the politics of staunch abolitionists. This was a moderate position that he shared with many of his predecessors, dating back to Burke in the 1750s, although he was unique among them in dedicating so much space to the topic. Hall wrote that he came to the United States expecting to condemn the “hideous moral evils” of slavery, but his experience in Georgia meant that his judgments were, at the time of publication, “becoming rather less clear than I fancied they had formerly been.”<sup>26</sup>

In many ways, his long discourse on slavery in Georgia was a meditation on a similar passage in James Fenimore Cooper’s *Notions of the Americans* (1828). Cooper was the best known American author of the 1820s, and he became one of the most famous men on either side of the Atlantic Ocean after the 1826 publication of his *Last of the Mohicans*. London readers two years later eagerly embraced his two-volume exposition on his countrymen. Although the book was published while the well-read Hall was in the United States, its reputation and its author’s enormous fame make it highly likely that he familiarized himself with it prior to writing and publishing his own travelogue one year later.

Cooper focused the bulk of his text on the Northeast and mid-Atlantic, but turned his attention to Georgia when addressing the issue of slavery. He remarked that the state was

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<sup>26</sup> Captain Basil Hall, *Travels in North America*, 3: 204.

notable for having one of the largest proportions of slaves as a percentage of its population (nearly 50%, according to the 1820 census). Rather than excoriating slaveholders for this growth or the excesses of their power, Cooper launched instead into a lengthy defense of the institution as it existed. “There is not now, nor has there ever been,” he explained, “any power to emancipate the slaves, except that which belongs to their masters.” Moreover, those masters were not anything like the lazy and debauched lords of terror written about by English authors such as Charles Janson and Lieutenant Francis Hall. Quite to the contrary, they were generous, concerned for the well-being of those entrusted to their care, and desirous for a solution to the problematic system they had inherited. There was not a single country in Europe, he wrote, where the peasantry did not morally and physically suffer more than American slaves, who were comparatively “far better instructed, better clothed, and better fed.” The brunt of his argument, however, was a stealth critique of European rhetoric on abolition, which he found “as useless as it is suspicious.” After nine pages of what he believed was incontrovertible evidence, Cooper offered this final summary of his position:

The slave holders of the present day (viewed as a body) are just as innocent of the creation of slavery, as their fellow citizens of New York or Connecticut; and the citizens of New York and Connecticut are just as innocent of the creation of slavery as the citizens of London . . . [who choose to forget they] were parties to the original wrong [but] have contributed nothing to the measure they urge so much.<sup>27</sup>

Hall wrote that he had arrived in Georgia with a sense of dread and resignation after having witnessed slave markets in Washington and South Carolina, but a year later was willing to re-evaluate his position in light of Cooper’s well-known treatise. Accordingly, the bulk of his long discourse on slavery in Georgia is a detailed accounting of the task system of labor, the

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<sup>27</sup> James Fenimore Cooper, *Notions of the Americans: Picked up by a Traveling Bachelor*, vol. 2 (London: Henry Colburn, 1828), 342-345, 351.



abilities of slaves to participate in local market economies to earn their own money, and the ways in which they were housed, clothed, and fed. With all of these factors considered, Hall concluded that slaveholders had been unfairly maligned. Most of them had inherited the system, rather than entered into it by choice, and operated it in most humane way they could in order to care for their families and their human chattel. He claimed to have observed that the successful among them always acted according to “generous and politic principles,” whereas the outrages rallied against by abolitionists were “most frequently” committed by impatient and greedy “new comers from the Northern States . . . or from England.”<sup>28</sup>

For all their similarities, there is an important difference how the two authors positioned their comments on slavery. Cooper’s defense of the system came holistically, as part of a larger defense of American culture, and fit seamlessly into the later section of his text. Hall, however much a meliorist on slavery he spun himself to be, located his exposition at the very beginning of his section on Georgia. He introduced his travels through the state with the remarks that he and his family were “sinking into the wild and little known,” a “trackless ocean” of space. To then follow those remarks with his only extended discussion of slavery is to address the institution as something other than a political or even humanitarian issue; it is instead a useful marker of a land still progressing forward from its original savage state. Hall used its mere existence to signify his entrance into the wild and not-yet-civilized spaces of the United States. He used it to quickly

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 206. It is worth noting that Hall quickly shifted positions and took a much more aggressive stance against slavery by the time the third edition of his popular book was published in 1830. In that volume, he prefaced his remarks on Georgia with the text of an 1829 Act regarding the quarantine of non-Southern ships arriving in Georgia ports. He not only reproduced the text of the Act in its entirety, but he also italicized what he found to be its most egregious elements. He could no longer tacitly approve of the institution of slavery in the face of the legislature’s decision that all free blacks employed on arriving ships must be immediately jailed, at the expense of the ship’s captain, while the vessel was quarantined for 40 days. He was horrified that white crew members could be fined and whipped if they attempted to teach Georgian slaves to read, or if were found to be carrying materials that might incite slaves to revolt against their masters, while free black crew members could be executed for the same offenses. This was a radical shift, to be sure, but it was also firmly in keeping with Cooper’s assertion that slavery sometimes inspired “oppressive laws,” but that they were often repealed when enlightened pro-slavery men brought them out into the light of day. Cooper, *Notions of the Americans*, 2: 346.

remind his readers that he was a gentleman who, for his edification and theirs, had removed himself from the polite drawing rooms of London to a muddy wilderness, an otherworldly territory that even American mapmakers could not define.

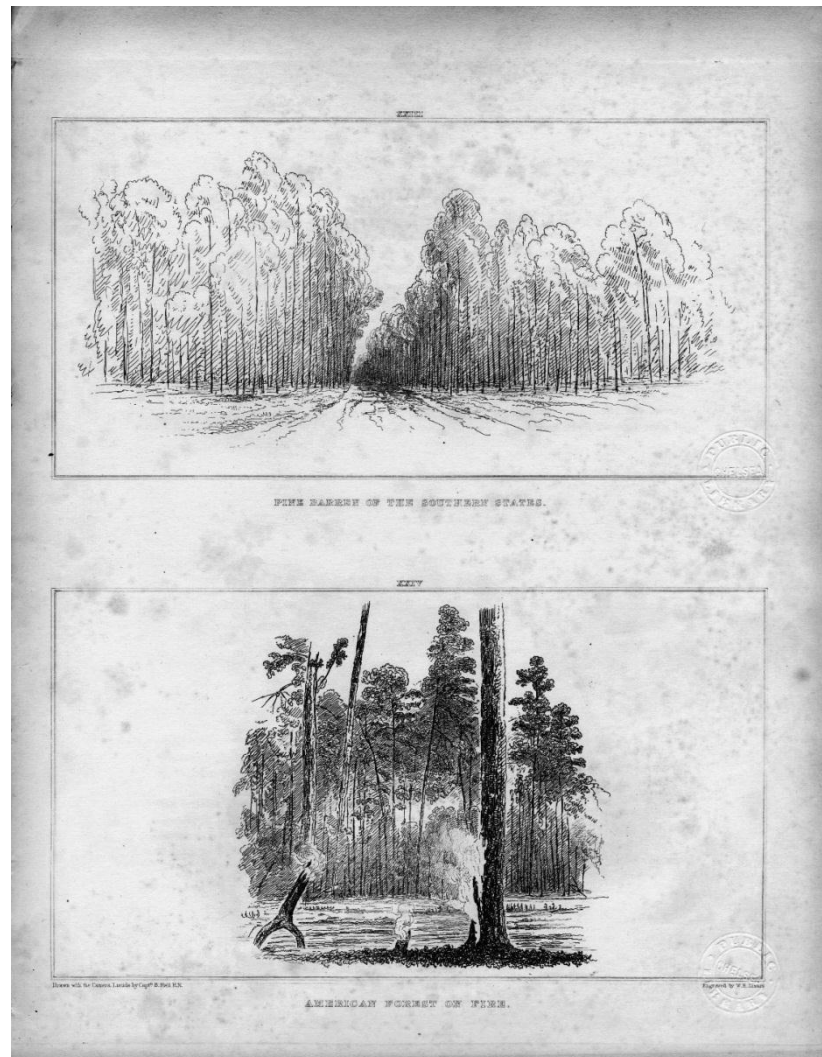


Figure 2.6. Captain Basil Hall, “Pine Barren of the Southern States,” and “American Forest on Fire,” in *Forty Etchings* (1829).

Lest his audience question how a century-old former colony could still be “wild and little known,” Hall’s second set of images of Georgia offered up the interior of the pine forest. He

estimated in his Southern travelogue that he passed through more than 500 miles of woodlands between Washington and South Carolina. He repeatedly complained that he found the whole of it absolutely boring and, other than noting that they passed through Fayetteville, NC, he made almost no mention of where they went or what they saw. There was little to spur his imagination in what he deemed the undifferentiated sameness of endless miles of pine trees. Strangely, then, it was Georgia that finally forced him to reckon with the enormity and meaning of the American wilderness. Bartram wrote nearly a half century earlier that he found there “the most marvelous forest” he ever seen. Hall found himself equally in awe, recording that in the interior of the state, “we came to high knolls from which we could look over the vast ocean of trees, stretching, without break, in every direction, as far as the eye could reach; and I remember, upon one of these occasions, thinking that I never before had a just conception of what the word forest meant.”<sup>29</sup>

Like his first set of Georgia scenes, Hall’s forest images again play on themes of the safety of development versus the dangers of wilderness. The uppermost of his second set of prints depicts a straight and navigable road slicing through a vast pine barren. The image challenges Hall’s rhetoric of a “trackless ocean” in the corresponding section of his travelogue. After all, he, his family, and their servant traveled across Georgia comfortably enclosed in a comfortable carriage, followed closely by a wagon overburdened with the furniture and trunks and baskets of personal items they had brought from home. Neither of these vehicles could have passed through the untouched wilderness that Hall described. Instead, and as recorded by the *Camera Lucida*, his journey through the interior of the state was only possible because countless others had quietly preceded him. Interior Georgia was passable, knowable, and economically viable, at least to its inhabitants, long before Hall’s entourage rolled through.

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<sup>29</sup> Captain Basil Hall, *Forty etchings*, 26.

The relative safety of the forest road is countered by a corresponding image that restates the threat of wild Southern nature. He noted in his travel text that his interest in the forests of Georgia was “a good deal heightened by an immense tract of it being on fire.”<sup>30</sup> The most fascinating scene he witnessed became the subject of the lower of his two etchings. He was transfixed by the sight of a pine tree with flames erupting from its base, hidden in its core, and then erupting again midway up the trunk. That the lower half of the tree was “roaring away like a blast furnace” was all the more interesting to him because “its top was waving about in the air, a hundred feet above . . . as if nothing remarkable were going on below.”<sup>31</sup> The potential danger of the forest fire is emphasized by the etching’s proximity to the image of the log cabin on the preceding page. Although the Camera Lucida could not have recorded it, and while it is not mentioned in the textual description of the event, the focal point of the etching is a momentarily-balanced tree limb as it falls to the ground. The extraordinarily anthropomorphic form of the burning branch point is an abrupt reminder that the wild and little known is often dangerous and scary. As such, it reinforces Hall’s oft-repeated contention that the civilized and orderly is always safer and preferable to its rather savage alternative.

This theme of wilderness in various stages of being tamed is played out again in Hall’s third set of etchings of Georgia. The lower image depicts the “embryonic” development of what would become the city of Columbus on the far western edge of the state. The city was not represented on Henry Tanner’s 1823 map and it had not figured into the travel accounts of any of Hall’s predecessors. John Pope had complained as early as 1792 of the rash of foreigners willing to devote undue attention to “little Towns, which appear to have been very lately erected” in unfairly defining and judging Georgia. Hall followed suit. He virtually—and visually—ignored

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<sup>30</sup> Captain Basil Hall, *Travels in North America*, 3: 250.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

the better developed cites of Macon and Dublin in the interior of the state. Producing an image of Columbus, however, allowed him to proudly note that he was the first to record a place that was “heretofore unknown” and “had not yet worked its way to the maps and road-books.”<sup>32</sup> Doing so allowed him to display his bona fides as an explorer and recorder of the unnamed and unknown.



Figure 2.7. Captain Basil Hall, “Swamp Plantation on the Banks of the Alatomaha [sic],” and “Embryo Town of Columbus on the Chatahoochie [sic],” in *Forty Etchings* (1829).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 270, 287. The quotations here are taken from his descriptions of the Yam Grandy Creek and the city of Macon, although Hall repeatedly used variations of this phrasing to celebrate his being the first, he believed, to record multiple locations throughout the state.

The land that would become Columbus had been part of Creek Territory until 1827. By the time Hall and company arrived less than a year later, nearly one thousand people had swarmed onto the as-yet unassigned land “like birds of prey attracted by the scent of some glorious quarry.”<sup>33</sup> Hall commented that state agents expected that number to quadruple within the following two months in advance of the official land lottery. In the meantime, he wrote, these Columbians-to-be had participated in an “extraordinary experiment in colonization,” and speculatively marked off future lanes and avenues, homes, hotels, and businesses:

At least sixty frame houses were pointed out to me, lying in piles on the ground . . . ready to answer the call of future purchasers. . . . Anvils were heard ringing away merrily at every corner; while saws axes, and hammers were seen flashing amongst the woods all round. Stage-coaches, traveling wagons, carts, gigs, and the whole family of wheeled vehicles, innumerable, were there. Grocery stores and bakeries were scattered about in great plenty – and over several doors was written, ‘Attorney at Law.’<sup>34</sup>

The image of Columbus depicts what Hall deemed the “most populous and best cleared part of the city.” His comment, played against the notion of an “embryo town,” was certainly intended in jest and would have been taken as such by most of his intended audience. To refer to this haphazard cluster of tree stumps and seven and a half tiny houses as a “city” would have evoked chuckles in most quarters of London and Edinburgh, Philadelphia and New York. Yet for all the Camera Lucida image reveals Columbus not to be, it also unveils a wholly aspirational and democratic moment of self-creation that audiences on both sides of the Atlantic would have read as being uniquely American. The sign for a future hotel hangs on a tree in the distance, waiting, Hall noted in his travelogue, for both a proper sign post and a proper hotel. Temporary but neat houses line the sides of what would become a main thoroughfare. Compared to the log

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 286.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 285.

cabins of the forest, and despite the fact that most of them would be dismantled, moved, and rebuilt after the land lottery, the structures depicted here have neat walls, squared windows and doors, and solid roofs.

The implication of Hall's image is that, like cells joining together to form a fetus, the gestation of an American town began when enough isolated rural cabins joined together to make a community. Unlike their deep-woods brethren, though, the citizens of this new entity were a civilizing influence on one another. "Here you are in the centre of the city!" remarked the state agent who toured the family through the area depicted in the image. Hall found the comment worth mocking, but could not convince himself that it was untrue. It seemed quite possible, he conceded, "in a very short time" this crude path through the woods would become "a street sixty yards wide, and one league in length."<sup>35</sup>

The benefits of conquering the wilderness are all the more clear when the image of Columbus is viewed –as Hall intended it to be– in conjunction with his etching of a large-scale rice plantation. In the uppermost scene of the page, Hall recorded the elaborate system of levees, ditches, and floodgates that had resulted from decades of land cultivation along the Altamaha River. He celebrated this project as one that had transformed a landscape that was once "utterly inhabitable," into plantations of the "utmost fertility" that rewarded their owners with "extraordinary luxuriance."<sup>36</sup> This evaluation is given visual form by way of an image that depicts an orderly scene of fences and bridges, slave cabins and labor; a smoothly-functioning world of investment, profit, and growth. The etching belies Hall's own initial judgments, based on what he had read, of the low country as an environment "waiting to devour any one [sic] who should come near." He had arrived expecting to find the "pestilential marshes" and "barren

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 283-284.

<sup>36</sup> Captain Basil Hall, *Forty Etchings*, 28.

burning sand” of Janson, Lt. Hall, and others of their persuasion. Yet his sole example of a coastal plantation reveals a judgment of the landscape much closer to those of Ellicott and Volney, Melish and Blowe, all of whom ultimately deemed it healthy and ripe for agriculture and commerce.<sup>37</sup>

Hall noted in the text accompanying the image that this model plantation was called “Hopeton;” his wife noted in her diary that both she and her husband thoroughly enjoyed their stay with its erudite owner. Given Mrs. Hall’s glowing reviews of their time at Hopeton, it is striking that her husband eliminated all signs of elite life from both his text and the image. James Hamilton Couper, the owner of the plantation, was one of the wealthiest men on the Georgia coast. The large home he constructed on Hopeton was described elsewhere as “a large substantial three storied building” approached through formal gardens and “an avenue of great live oaks.” As confirmed by Mrs. Hall’s diary account, Couper was an elegant host and a voracious reader who possessed what was reputed to be the largest personal library in the state. Yet Hall very consciously focused his attention on the extraordinarily engineered rice fields there rather than the ways by which that slave labor in those fields benefitted his friend Couper. He chose to record nothing of Hopeton’s learned owner, its elaborate main house, or its dedicated library. In their place, he set the Camera Lucida in an elevated position and, looking down upon the world below, drew rice fields and slave cabins.<sup>38</sup>

Recording elite life in Georgia would have challenged the specifically liminal role Hall assigned the state in his narrative of wilderness and civilization. Even worse, pairing of the main house at Hopeton with the cabins of Columbus would have communicated the social and

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<sup>37</sup> Captain Basil Hall, *Travels in North America*, 3: 214.

<sup>38</sup> The description of Couper’s house comes from his granddaughter; quoted in T. Reed Ferguson, *The John Couper Family at Cannon’s Point* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1994), 167. Mrs. Hall’s account of Hopeton and its owner is addressed in James E. Bagwell, *Rice Gold: James Hamilton Couper and Plantation Life on the Georgia Coast* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2000), 120.



economic distances between the elite few and the masses. It would have emphasized the presence of an ersatz aristocracy by using the presumed cultural inferiority of the common man to demonstrate the sophistication of planters like Couper. It would have acknowledged the falsity of constructing Georgia as an Other by admitting that there were respectable places within its borders and admirable men among its citizens. Hall steered clear of that mark, however, so that his comparison of Columbus and Hopeton spoke only to their varying degrees of land cultivation. The paired etchings offered purportedly scientific proof that Georgia remained an idea more than a place, a symbol for wilderness in the early stages of being conquered, a little known space still in the process of being made.

Educated Georgia planters were consciously avoided in both Hall's travelogue and images, and slaves were largely ignored, but poor whites earned his sustained attention for being, he believed, so decidedly inferior. He stopped far short of reinforcing Janson's contention that they were all shiftless and greedy, but neither did he endorse Bartram's view that here lived the "true sons of liberty." They were cast instead as a simple and unmannered race desperately in need of proper, paternal British guidance. For example, when his entourage reached a raging river in the interior of the state, Hall suggested that their hired driver try to ford it with an empty carriage so as to determine whether the family and their belongings could make it across. Although the driver protested that he knew the local waterways and would not cross because he was afraid of "being washed away, drowned, or bedeviled," Hall simply "took no notice" and started to unload the luggage. The poor fellow and his horses almost drowned while attempting the crossing, but Hall ignored his plight. He took great pleasure instead in noting that his toddler daughter "was at ecstacies (sic) at what she saw" and "clapped her hands, and jumped about."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Captain Basil Hall, *Travels in North America*, 3: 268-269.

Those who willingly inhabited “the wild and little known” were interesting to observe and provocative to write about, but they were not his peers.

Hall’s fourth and final pair of images of Georgia reinforced his refusal to see the inhabitants of the state as his social or intellectual equals. They were instead but children in his mental mapping of the stages of mankind, a step removed from the savage and wild. The lower etching shows two chiefs of the Creek Nation and a white squatter who had recently moved onto their former land. The two chiefs are presented as anachronisms. Outfitted in a mix of western and native dress, they are defined as being decidedly out of place in the modern world. One of them, the text notes, died soon after having his image recorded. Their diminished position in Hall’s hierarchy of civilizations is reinforced by the armed white man who stands behind them. If this etching were simply a recording of types, the squatter would have existed in a separate visual realm from that of the Indian men. Instead, all three are presented as volumetric forms that cast shadows and occupy a unified and shared space. The seated chiefs, symbols of a vanishing way of life, thus appear to be dominated by the white man and all he represents.

Perhaps even more important than Hall’s commentary on the Indians is his denunciation of the white Georgian for being barely a step removed from their world. He makes abundantly clear that this “squatter,” representative of all those who promised to one day make Columbus a reality, was not simply an English gentleman draped in the garments of the frontier. He was instead, the text notes, a “Cracker” who lived “almost entirely by hunting and shooting” alone.<sup>40</sup> In the absence of a discussion or images of elite and educated society in Georgia, or more than a perfunctory hint that there might be a middle class in places like Riceboro, Hall’s record makes it appear that the state was largely populated by others of this man’s ilk. Some were transitory, while others lived in set locations. Some survived by hunting, while others farmed the land they

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<sup>40</sup> Captain Basil Hall, *Forty Etchings*, 30

owned or inhabited. Some could see the stars when they slept at night, while others had sealed walls and glazed windows. Yet none of them were worthy of this British aristocrat's unequivocal respect.



Figure 2.8. Captain Basil Hall, "A Family Group in the Interior of the State of Georgia," and "Chiefs of the Creek Nation & A Georgian Squatter," in *Forty Etchings* (1829).

The representation of the squatter only takes on its full meaning when viewed in conjunction with its companion image. The family group in the etching above is the counterpart

to their fellow “Cracker” in the scene below. Together they make up the totality of Hall’s judgment on the lives of what he deemed typical Georgians. The squatter moved ever westward from Savannah to open the land with his musket and his ax. Families followed in his wake and settled those newly-available spaces, grew crops and livestock and children on that fertile earth, and began to make a civilization in the “wild and little known.” As demonstrated by the young son in the family image, who wears the same hat as the squatter in the other, those children eventually continued the march westward to clear and settle places like Macon and Columbus and beyond.

Hall found these individuals noteworthy for their unsung roles in the building of a nation, but it did not temper his ultimate judgment that they were his barefooted inferiors. He appreciated their hospitality and sometimes found them rather charming, but also thought them quasi-comical in their failed attempts to emulate proper society. For example, the father figure at the center of the image turned down the money Hall offered for his hospitality in favor of having himself and his sons recorded by the Camera Lucida. The man, “who, by the way, chose his own attitude” in mimicking the pose of a gentleman, was portrayed as a bit of an egocentric fool for vetoing much-needed financial remuneration in favor of stoking his useless pride. He was a simpleton, a gullible rube with stars in his eyes at the possibility that the images “would probably be seen in the Old Country, a thousand leagues and more from his dwelling in the forest.”<sup>41</sup> Hall described the woman of the house as just as much of a bumpkin. She is said to have sagged under a “capacious corporation,” unlike his own slender and elegantly attired wife, bundled into an ill-fitted dress hiked up high enough to reveal, “a pair of feet and ankles, in perfect keeping

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid. Mrs. Hall was far less gentle in her judgment of aspirational Americans. He husband publicly wrote of them as comical figures, but she privately recorded that she and Basil struggled daily with how to tell their hosts “that they are not within a hundred degrees of the polish and refinement of English society.” Margaret Hall, *The Aristocratic Journey*, 23.

with a couple of brawny arms.” “She was, for all the world” he wrote in a humorous jab meant to reaffirm his connections with cultured society, “like Sir John Falstaff disguised as the Old Woman of Brentford.” Moreover, she and her family lived in a tiny cabin that “would not have made up in size one butler’s pantry,” that contained only one washbasin and one towel for all to share, and in which “everything looked and felt damp and dirty.”<sup>42</sup>

At one level, Hall’s account was a mere continuation of the colonialist discourses of his predecessors. It was an imaging of place by an outsider who deemed the local inhabitants incapable of explaining themselves. It reinforced the cultural bonds of the reading class by suggesting all that was noteworthy about life in the metropole and by focusing on the less-than-noteworthy aspects of the world of the subaltern. “The higher the culture,” he wrote, “the richer the fruit, the flowers, the perfume.”<sup>43</sup> Georgia could never be England. Damp and dirty spaces, after all, make for unpleasant odors.

Over the course of its first century of existence, Georgia had been repeatedly reinvented to suit the needs of its chroniclers. It was imagined as Eden rediscovered by its earliest promoters and investors. It was then denounced as Hell on Earth by those who needed a single landscape to represent all they disliked about the United States in general and the South in particular. With the poles already claimed, writers by the 1820s could only invent a new space for themselves and their works by proclaiming that they were the first to view the state from a point of neutrality. Georgia was thus recast as a space unknown but perhaps marginally knowable, a middle ground available to be recorded and redefined by the purportedly scientific tools and elevated minds of select outsiders. Basil Hall saw himself as a pioneer among this new breed of traveler/writer.

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<sup>42</sup> Captain Basil Hall, *Travels in North America*, 3: 259, 262-263.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 276.

This, then, is the other level on which Hall's work needs to be considered. His book identified Georgia as a "trackless ocean" of meaningless space in order to declare its own importance in making it knowable. His Camera Lucida images were the first mass-produced visual records of the state and, as such, seemed to guarantee the neutrality and truthfulness of his account. They fell far short of their claim to offer the definitive representation of place, but they were extraordinarily important in that they dramatically changed the limits of knowledge of that place. They added a new and cohesive layer of understanding on top of the dense web of words that had been written. Georgia now had an image. It could be seen. His choice of what to represent may have been biased and remarkably limited. His interpretations of what he saw may have been biased. But the existence of those eight etchings is an immovable signpost along the road to what outsiders knew of the state. Any accounts of it afterwards had to contend with the fame of Hall's books and answer to what he recorded.

Perhaps the best indication of the effect of Hall's images on general knowledge, or at least popular culture, was how they resonated into the 1830s. His vision of "wild and little known" Georgia was one of the most compelling parts in a book that quickly became an international best-seller. Reading audiences clamored for more exposure to it, not for the sake of edification or to correct misrepresentations but purely for entertainment. Authors and publishers complied, with the result that in Hall's wake, two of the most popular works of American fiction were William Gilmore Simms' *Guy Rivers: A Tale of Georgia* (1834), and Augustus Baldwin Longstreet's *Georgia Scenes* (1835). Each book became a national bestseller for Harper and Brothers and made the literary reputation of its author.

The New York press widely hailed *Guy Rivers* as superior to the work of any other novelist and noted that it surpassed even James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* in

terms of style, narrative, and cultural importance. Longstreet's collection of short stories was originally published in Augusta, but quickly reprinted by Harper's, which marketed it to national audiences in more than a dozen printings and editions between 1835 and 1860.<sup>44</sup> Both authors were Southerners—Simms from South Carolina and Longstreet from Georgia—and both knew the reality of at least some parts of the fast-developing state of which they wrote. Yet neither fictionalized Georgia as a place of erudite and progressive citizens pushing the boundaries of civilization ever south and west. Instead, both chose to play into public expectations for a stereotypical stage set of stagnant backwardness that would sell books.

Simms' *Guy Rivers* is the story of young Ralph Colleton, who sets off from his comfortable existence among the South Carolina elite to prove himself worthy of his beloved by making a name on the Tennessee frontier. Unfortunately, he never makes it further than north Georgia. The region had been transformed by an influx of poor whites following the widely-publicized discovery of gold and the opening of several highly profitable mines in the late 1820s. Simms cast it as all too desperate, dangerous, and uncivilized. Thus, as Colleton rides through "ragged ranges of forest, almost untrodden by civilized man," in a region marked by a "gloomy and discouraging expression," he is waylaid by the ruffian Guy Rivers and shot.<sup>45</sup> He is rescued from the forest floor and nursed back to health by a local gentleman named Mark Forrester, but when Forrester is eventually killed by Guy Rivers, Colleton is falsely accused of his murder.

The end of the novel finally sees the death of Guy Rivers and the restoration of Ralph Colleton to proper society, but only after a long series of plot twists and turns that reinforce

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<sup>44</sup> Nakamura, *Visions of Order in William Gilmore Simms*, 4. Kimball King, *Augustus Baldwin Longstreet* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1984), 92.

<sup>45</sup> William Gilmore Simms, *Guy Rivers: A Tale of Georgia* (1834; reprint, ed. with and introduction by John Caldwell Guilds, Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1993), 1. Guy Rivers was fictitious, but Simms connected him from the start with the Pony Club, a real group of men who were known in the late 1820s and early 1830s for mugging travelers and stealing their horses. Rayburn S. Moore, "William Gilmore Simms's *Guy Rivers* and the Frontier," in John Caldwell Guilds and Caroline Collins, eds., *William Gilmore Simms and the American Frontier* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 55-57.

Simms' message about the anchor-less nature of life in north Georgia. His larger agenda in *Guy Rivers* and multiple other novels and poems is a conservative one. Unlike most other American Romantic writers, who created characters that promoted the individual agenda over the confines of the communal or the corporate, Simms suggested that the well-lived life was found only within the tight bonds of families and social and religious institutions. Colleton could not and did not find his rightful place in the universe by heading into the wilderness, but rather by returning to where he left it and embracing the structures of South Carolina's planter society.<sup>46</sup>

In order for this message to come through in the novel, to make his case for the heights of civilization in South Carolina, Simms needed to craft its antithesis. Generations of British writers, from Edmund Burke to Charles Janson to Basil Hall, had played the same game. They had imagined Georgia as they needed it to be in order to reinforce, by implied comparison, what they deemed good and right in England. Like them, Simms accomplished this task by turning his imagination to a landscape he did not specifically know, but about which he had heard and read. He had never been in north Georgia, but its reputation as wild and little known space preceded it. As one recent scholar has noted, the region presented him with a tempting "alien territory" which he could literarily shape into a stage set to best support his narrative and serve his cause.<sup>47</sup>

Ralph Colleton's journey chronologically begins in luxury and comfort among the elite of South Carolina. He is nestled in a place "famous for its wealth, lofty pride, polished manners, and noble and considerate hospitality." Yet because he is confused about what life there requires of him, he heads off into north Georgia and sinks immediately into a little-known "wild empire

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<sup>46</sup> Nakamura, *Visions of Order*, 104-109.

<sup>47</sup> David W. Newton, "Voices along the Border: Language and the Southern Frontier in *Guy Rivers*: A Tale of Georgia" in Guilds and Collins, *William Gilmore Simms*, 121. Simms had traveled across the middle of Georgia in 1831, from Augusta to Columbus, but had never set foot in the northern section of the state prior to the publication of *Guy Rivers*. For his imagining of the region based on what he had read, see Nakamura, *Visions of Order*, 103; and Moore, "William Gilmore Simms's *Guy Rivers* and the Frontier," 55.



of the forest—a wilderness.” His first impressions of it, which stay with him and the reader throughout the book, are of the “uninviting and unlovely character of the landscape.” It is a place that evokes “sterility and solitude,” and quite simply, “waste.” Simms has not only evoked Hall’s interpretation of the interior of the state as a “trackless ocean” of space, but has pushed past it to offer a literary vision that is closer in keeping with Hall’s image of the Mississippi delta. There is nothing of the condition of liminality in the “brown, broken” landscape he describes, only the sublime and dangerous.<sup>48</sup>

Simms carries his imagining of wild Georgia even further in his descriptions of the lack of civilization in the area. Certainly Hall had laughed about single-standing ramshackle cabins he found in the woods, but his text and images also documented his belief in engineered rice paddies and the carefully plotted, if not yet built, embryo town of Columbus. Simms, however, scrapes the bottom of what Hall had offered without so much as a suggestion of future progress. Hall marveled—with a tinge of condescension—at the gestation of democracy in the wilderness. Simms has instead only a grouping that “consisted of thirty or forty dwellings, chiefly of logs; not, however, so immediately in the vicinity of one another as to give any very decided air of regularity and order to their appearance.” There are “no public squares, and streets laid out by line and rule, marked conventional progress in an orderly an methodical society; but, regarding individual convenience as the only object in arrangements of this nature, they took note of any other, and to them less important matters.”<sup>49</sup>

As a resident of the state, Augustus Baldwin Longstreet was far less critical of Georgia’s appearance than the South Carolinian Simms. He knew from experience that it was neither a “broken” landscape, nor one of “sterility” or “waste.” Nowhere in *Georgia Scenes*, then, does he

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<sup>48</sup> Simms, *Guy Rivers*, 36, 6, 2-3, and 5.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 44.

criticize either its natural or built environments. Instead, the short stories that make up his book take the position that the state should be known for “its undulating grounds, its luxuriant woodlands, its sportive streams, its vocal birds, and its blushing flowers.” Yet it is what happens in that literary landscape that connects his work to both Simms and Hall. Hall’s Georgians were planters and squatters, they lived in polite frame houses and crude log cabins, scratched dirt roads across vast forests and planned a grand future city at a place they called Columbus. Their state was not yet on par with New York, but they were all actively engaged in making it so. Simms’ Georgians are not. As a literary device rather than a three-dimensional representation of a living community, they exist solely to suggest everything the Colletons and their South Carolina neighbors were by functioning as the opposite: they were “chiefly those to whom the ordinary operations of human trade or labor had proved tedious and unproductive—with whom the toils, aims, and impulses of society were deficient of interest.” Longstreet’s Georgians, at least at first blush, appear to be somewhere in the middle. Some of them are in the midst of building a state, but the natural order there, Longstreet suggests, is repeatedly subverted by the animalistic impulses of the masses of poor whites who inhabit it.<sup>50</sup>

For example, Simms describes his Georgians, denizens of a “ludicrous wildness,” as people “with more tongues than brains.” They are “not of a sort to produce cheerfulness and merriment,” but rather spent their days engaged in pursuits that “were savage, and implied a sort of fun which commonly gave pain to somebody.”<sup>51</sup> Longstreet likewise sees a “moral darkness” covering the characters in his tales. When he describes two friends as “the very best men in the

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<sup>50</sup> Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, “Georgia Theatrics,” in *Augustus Baldwin Longstreet’s Georgia Scenes Completed: a Scholarly Text*, ed. David Rachels (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 4. Simms, *Guy Rivers*, 45. For an insightful analysis of Longstreet’s text and the ways in which presents bourgeois designs challenged by the uncontrolled impulses poor whites, see Scott Romine, *The Narrative Forms of Southern Community* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 27-35.

<sup>51</sup> Simms, *Guy Rivers*, 55, 47, and 49.

county,” he quickly stops to inform his reader that “in the Georgia vocabulary,” this has nothing to do with their characters or their contributions to their community, but merely means that “they could flog any other two men in the county.” When another man provokes a fight between them simply to entertain himself, these friends quickly lose their tempers begin to brawl. At the end of the vicious fight, when their friendship is restored, one has had a third of his nose bitten off and the other has lost his left ear, part of his cheek, and his left middle finger.<sup>52</sup> There is no need to cite the “wild and little known” after one man has gnawed off another’s nose; it is more than implied.

Although contemporary audiences failed to see it, Longstreet attempted to suggest a key distinction between his construct of Georgia and those of his predecessors. Hall’s images have a date associated with them. They unequivocally assert that this was how the state appeared—at least to Hall—when he looked upon it in 1828. Simms likewise set *Guy Rivers* in the present. Yet Longstreet states on his title page, in his preface, and repeatedly in his text that his scenes were drawn from frail and fading memories of Georgia in the early years of the Republic. Whatever “darkness” hung over the land then, he says, had disappeared long before he published his book. It is only because Georgia had changed, become modern, progressive, civilized, mapped and known, that he felt compelled to remind “readers of the present day” of what once was.<sup>53</sup>

Unfortunately, and as will be addressed in the following chapters, audiences in the 1830s ignored this distinction. As a result, they saw only that Simms’ and Longstreet’s stories trafficked in the same “damp and dirty” spaces that Basil Hall had brought into view. All three

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<sup>52</sup> Longstreet, *Georgia Scenes*, 4, 33-34, and 41. For the ways in which class was implicated in violence, see Kenneth Greenberg, “The Nose, the Lie, and the Duel in the Antebellum South,” *The American Historical Review* 95, no. 1 (February 1990): 57-74.

<sup>53</sup> Longstreet, *Georgia Scenes*, 3.

books appeared to record the same place, in the same general manner, and confirm each other's accounts of it. Together, they effectively cemented Georgia's popular reputation as a less-than-civilized backwater.

### —CHAPTER THREE—

#### ***THE VIEW FROM REV. RICHARDS'S BOOKSTORE***

William Carey Richards was born on an unseasonably warm London day, in the late autumn of 1818, the first child of a young Baptist preacher and his even younger wife. An ocean away, Adiel Sherwood bid his parents farewell that autumn and rode away from the family farm in upstate New York. He had just completed his graduate studies in theology and was headed to Georgia in search of a healthful climate and the opportunity to convert the unchurched. A week after William Carey's second birthday, his parents surprised him with the greatest gift any boy could ask for: a baby brother, whom they named Thomas Addison. Still an ocean away, Adiel Sherwood spent the autumn of 1820 making a name for himself by spearheading the creation of the Georgia Baptist Convention. Meanwhile, the Richards family continued to expand, left London for the Oxfordshire countryside, immigrated to the United States, lived briefly in upstate New York, moved to Georgia, and finally settled in the Greene County village of Penfield sometime around 1835. Adiel Sherwood and his own expanding family spent the intervening years in the same small area of neighboring Greene and Madison counties, and then moved briefly to Washington, D.C., before he accepted a position at Mercer University in Penfield in 1838. None of this is anything more than coincidence. Yet the chance biographical overlay of their lives is fundamental to understanding the work produced by the Richards brothers' as they grew from boyhood to manhood and set out to make their careers.

Sherwood figures into this story because he was a well-known man. His theological writings and role in church leadership made him one of the most respected theologians in the

state by the 1830s. His manual labor school in Eatonton was so successful that it inspired the Baptist Convention to create Mercer Institute as a duplicate. When Mercer was elevated to university status several years later, Sherwood was offered and rejected the presidency. Yet all of this pales in comparison to the thing for which he was best known, then and now: the publication of *A Gazetteer of the State of Georgia*.

The book was the outcome of a diary he began keeping when he first rode into the state in 1818. Unlike professional travelers of the time, the young Baptist preacher had a different set of criteria for judging what he saw. Georgia was going to be his home. He had no political or personal motives for over- or under-playing the health of the country, the extent to which it had been developed, or the education and manners of its inhabitants. He scrawled in his diary his admiration for the beauty of the landscape he crossed and the hard-working and civilized people he met. To his eyes, they had built an empire along what was once a wilderness coast and were, by 1818, in the process of conquering the interior of the state. He had no interest in essentializing Georgia for the easy consumption and judgment of outside readers. Instead, he saw before him a moment of possibility, of building the world anew, of forging a Baptist utopia in Canaan rediscovered. He welcomed the opportunity to be a part of it, to be a Georgian.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Julia L. Sherwood and Rev. S. Boykin, *Memoir of Adiel Sherwood, D.D. Written by his Daughter*. (Philadelphia: Grant & Faires, 1884), 107-108. The notion of becoming a Georgian is crucial here. Both Sherwood and the Richardses were born elsewhere, but embraced Georgia and spoke for it as locals without any apparent sense of contradiction. Their ability to do so is a reminder of what historian Michael O'Brien has referred to as the "mutability" of life in the American South prior to the 1850s. Long before it became the part of the Confederacy, and especially before it was falsely reimagined as the mythic "Old South," Georgia was nothing so much as a landscape constantly being reshaped by frenetic growth and development. In the wake of massive interstate and international immigration, and intrastate population shifts, communities were ever in flux, expanding, dividing and expanding again. The 1840 U.S. Census records for Georgia did not list the place of birth of each free white, but that information is available for many counties for 1850. Bibb County had one of the highest non-Georgia born populations in 1850, with nearly 30% of white residents of the city Macon having been born out-of-state; the vast majority of that group was from Northeastern states, or England, Scotland, Ireland, or Germany. Greene County was rather more homogenous, but still counted roughly 11% of its white population as having been born out-of-state. Of that 11%, approximately half came from North Carolina, South Carolina, or Virginia. The other half came from largely from New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Vermont, Massachusetts, or England and Scotland. The county also included white residents who had been born in Ireland, Germany, Wales, Spain, Gibraltar, Mexico, and

Sherwood's thinking about his diary changed several years after his arrival in the state. By the mid-1820s he had decided to expand his private document and turn it into something public. He left no record of what precipitated his desire to publish a statistical guidebook to Georgia, other than noting that "no one acquainted with the state had ventured to write anything on the subject."<sup>2</sup> Perhaps, then, he intended his volume to counter the long publication history of outsiders imagining the state as they needed it to be rather than as it was. Perhaps he intended it as an answer to the most recent and reputable of those texts, Henry Tanner's definitive *New American Atlas* (1823), which pronounced large sections of the state as little more than unknown wilderness. Or perhaps he intended it as a simple expression of local pride in what had been accomplished and built in just a matter of years. In any case, he soon set to work combining his own observations with a careful statistical and geographical accounting of every county and town in the state, as well as every important road and stage line between them.

The previous two chapters sought to trace Georgia as a concept rather than an actual place, a literary trope imagined and written by those more concerned with what it could represent, or how many books it could sell, than with documenting the advance of civilization

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the Bahamas. Georgia was a place, typical of O'Brien's characterization of the larger South during this period, "alive with different voices, multiple accents . . ." Identity within these mutable and fluid communities of former outsiders was based on where one's allegiances lay, and where one called 'home,' rather than where one was born. See Michael O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 1: 2, 413. Census information compiled from U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Seventh Census, 1850, Bibb County and Greene County, Georgia. For a concise, but excellent evaluation of the earliest strains of "Southern" political identity in 1819, and cultural identity more than a decade later, see David Moltke-Hansen, "Between Plantation and Frontier: The South of William Gilmore Simms," in Guilds and Collins, eds., *William Gilmore Simms and the American Frontier*, 3-12.

<sup>2</sup> Adiel Sherwood, *A Gazetteer of the State of Georgia: Embracing a Particular Description of the Counties, Towns, Villages, Rivers, &c., and Whatsoever is Usual in Geographies, and Minute Statistical Works; Together with a New Map of the State*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., enl. and impr. (Washington City [i.e., Washington: D.C.]: P. Force, 1837), 1. Sherwood not only published one of the earliest gazetteers or guide books in the country, but also the very first dedicated to any southern state. Although multiple new volumes appeared in the 1830s and 40s, the only other state-specific books in existence prior to Sherwood's 1829 second edition were: Thomas Greenleaf's *Geographical Gazetteer of the towns in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts* (1784), Jeremiah Spofford's *A Gazetteer of Massachusetts* published (1828), James Dean's *Alphabetical Atlas, or Gazetteer of Vermont* (1808), Noah George's *Pocket Geographical and Statistical Gazetteer of the State of Vermont* (1823), Zaddock Thompson's *Gazetteer of the State of Vermont* (1824), John Pease's *Gazetteer of the States of Connecticut and Rhode Island* (1819), and H.G. Spafford's *Gazetteer of the State of New York* (1813, 1824).

within its borders. Yet this is a different story. It is the story of the Georgians, themselves; people who, notwithstanding the conscious efforts of outside writers to cast their state as a static backwater, lived lives shaped by rapid expansion of the Deep South. This chapter attempts to reconstruct some small bit of the aspirational intellectual environment in which William and Addison Richards would produce *Georgia Illustrated* in 1841 and 42. It begins years earlier with their fortuitous meeting of Adiel Sherwood in the mid-1830s, then considers their renewed association in Penfield after 1838. They came together in a newly-built town, around a newly-created university, at a newly-opened bookstore. They understood Georgia not as a place set in stone but a protean landscape onto which civilization could be imported, stretched into new spaces, and made permanent. They recorded Georgia not as it was, not as it would be, but as it was becoming.

The initial move towards self-definition came with Sherwood's first edition of *A Gazetteer of the State of Georgia*, which was privately published in a limited number of volumes in 1827. The effort was a great success and the edition quickly sold out. A prominent Philadelphia publishing house then contracted with him to release a second edition in 1829. It was identical to the first, but now professionally produced in a run of two thousand copies. Sales were again brisk, the edition sold out, and Sherwood noted in his diary that he earned roughly \$1000 from the venture. Numerous publications began to cite his work, often reproducing entire passages verbatim, including, among others, the *American Almanac* (1831), *The Encyclopedia Americana* (1831), *A New Gazetteer . . . of North America* (1832), and *Hinton's History and Topography of the United States* (1834). Based on Sherwood's swelling reputation and the *Gazetteer's* proven sales record, a Washington, D.C. publisher contracted with him to release an expanded and revised third edition in 1837. He temporarily moved his family from Georgia to



the capital, in part to oversee the publication, and promised his wife a new carriage from their continued windfall.<sup>3</sup> By the 1830s, Sherwood had come to be considered an authoritative source of information on the state.

Most other writers had failed to see or record the rapid and dramatic changes underfoot in Georgia. Sherwood did. Each edition of the *Gazetteer*, individually and especially collectively considered, is a record of the exponential growth that radically reshaped Georgia between 1820 and the Civil War. A hint of that growth is instantly visible upon comparing Henry Tanner's 1823 map with the one created by Sidney Morse and published by Harper and Brothers in 1842. The number of counties had grown exponentially, towns had sprouted from one edge of the state to the other, and the entire landscape was crisscrossed by rail lines and wagon roads. United States census numbers, which Sherwood happily repeated, suggest the outlines of the story: the state contained thirty nine counties and approximately 341,000 inhabitants at the time of his arrival in the autumn of 1818. According to the 1830 census, that number had more grown to ninety counties and approximately 517,000 persons in the years between the *Gazetteer's* second edition and the arrival of the Richards family in Georgia in the mid-1830s. According to the 1840 census, there were ninety-three counties and 691,000 inhabitants by the time William and Addison Richards published *Georgia Illustrated* in 1842. The growth never abated, and Georgia contained 132 counties and over one million inhabitants in 1860. Slaves remained a near

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<sup>3</sup> Much to Sherwood's dismay, the third edition did not sell as well as its predecessors. The *Gazetteer* remained unpublished again until a fourth edition was released in 1860. That volume was nearly identical to the 1837 edition, with the few additions noted later in this chapter. Sherwood noted in its introduction that his sole reason for re-releasing the volume, twenty three years after its last publication, was as a response to the recent works of Rev. George White. White claimed that his *Statistics of Georgia* (1849) and *Historical Collections of Georgia* (1854) were the first statistical guides to the state. Sherwood countered that not only had his *Gazetteer* been the first, but also that White was a plagiarist. He demonstrated that White had lifted his source material, his statistics of counties, towns, and roads, and often his exact words, from the *Gazetteer*. This last version, then, was released solely to restore Sherwood's name and reputation. For Sherwood and White, see Jarrett Burch, *Adiel Sherwood: Baptist Antebellum Pioneer in Georgia* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2003), 206. For Sherwood's account of what he earned from the second edition, and his plans for the profits from the third, see Sherwood and Boykin, *Memoir of Adiel Sherwood*, 236, 253.

constant 40 to 44% of the total population throughout the period, with approximately 150,000 slaves listed on the census of 1820 expanding to approximately 462,000 slaves listed on the census of 1860.



Figure 3.1. Sidney E. Morse, map of Georgia, from *Morse's North American Atlas* (1842). The marks around Greene County are my own and are included for purposes of identification.

Sherwood's statistical defense of Georgia was more than just the promotion of someone else's deeds. Indeed, he was actively involved in facilitating the changes that were reshaping the

state. In 1828, the same year that Basil Hall recorded his image of typical Georgians as ignorant backwoods rubes, Sherwood published a tract defending the reputation of his fellow citizens. He broadcast his concern that they had been too often maligned, especially in terms of intellect, in a response to critics of Baptist education. In a small pamphlet on the subject published in Milledgeville that year, he thrice repeated his complaint that outsiders assumed that he and his fellow citizens were simply “*ignorant Georgians*.”<sup>4</sup> To the contrary, he countered, those churches and organizations in the state that had embraced the Baptist cause of missionary work and education were “abundantly blessed during the past year and now the Lord is adding to them daily!”<sup>5</sup>

At the forefront of the institutions Sherwood had in mind was the academy he ran in Eatonton, where he would soon begin a manual labor school. Others clearly concurred. The manual labor pedagogy required students to spend a portion of each day engaged in agricultural activities to strengthen their bodies and benefit the school.<sup>6</sup> Sherwood’s Eatonton venture so inspired his fellow members of the Georgia Baptist Convention that they quickly began planning to open a church-affiliated manual labor school in neighboring Greene County. At the 1829 meeting of the convention, Josiah Penfield of Savannah endorsed the idea by donating \$2,500 for the creation of the school if an equal amount could be separately raised. Adiel Sherwood and Jesse Mercer, a leading light among Baptists in the state, joined with several other men and quickly came up with the funds. Four-hundred-and-fifty acres were purchased seven miles north of Greensboro, the Greene County seat, and the new town of Penfield became a legal entity. The

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<sup>4</sup> Nehemiah (Rev. Adiel Sherwood), *Strictures on the Sentiments of the Kehukee Association*. Originally published in a series of essays in the *Statesman*, at Milledgeville, Ga. (Milledgeville, GA: Clark and Ragland, 1828), 3, 4, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>6</sup> On manual education, see Jarrett Burch, *Adiel Sherwood*, 126-142.

state legislature passed a charter for the school and Mercer Institute, named in honor of its principal benefactor, came into being later that year.<sup>7</sup>

Creating a school on paper was a whole different beast than building one in the woods. Mercer's money started the project, but the school's founders were dedicated to creating and maintaining a debt-free institution. By 1832 the town of Penfield had been laid out and the first structures of the Institute began to rise, slowly at first, from beneath the trees. A visitor to the site of the nascent village that year recorded that it presented a "beautiful" prospect for the future, but remained "almost in a primitive forest state." Mercer Institute consisted of little more than a big name and two partially-completed log cabins. The executive committee met in front of them, the visitor noted, and held their planning meetings seated on a log.<sup>8</sup> Several months later, with the cabins completed and a new brick dining hall beginning to take shape, the committee placed their first advertisement in the *Christian Index*. They were seeking to educate all "pious young men, who are called to the Gospel Ministry, and have been licensed by the church to which they belong . . .," but conceded that "as we have no reason to believe that this class of pupils will fill up the school; it will receive, in addition, as many young men of good moral character as can be provided for, irrespective of religious sentiments." Those young men would pay \$9 per term for tuition plus yearly fees of \$30 for board and \$6 for washing. They would spend their mornings studying "reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography and

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<sup>7</sup> For the founding of Mercer, see Thaddeus Brockett Rice, *History of Greene County, Georgia, 1786-1886*. (1961; Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Company, 1979), 202, 240-253, 343. See also Spright Dowell, *A History of Mercer University, 1833-1953* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1958).

<sup>8</sup> Ira O. McDaniel, "Short Sketch of Mercer Institute," quoted in Sherwood and Boykin, *Memoirs*, 269.

history,” and three hours every afternoon engaged in agricultural labor to benefit their bodies and the school’s finances.<sup>9</sup>

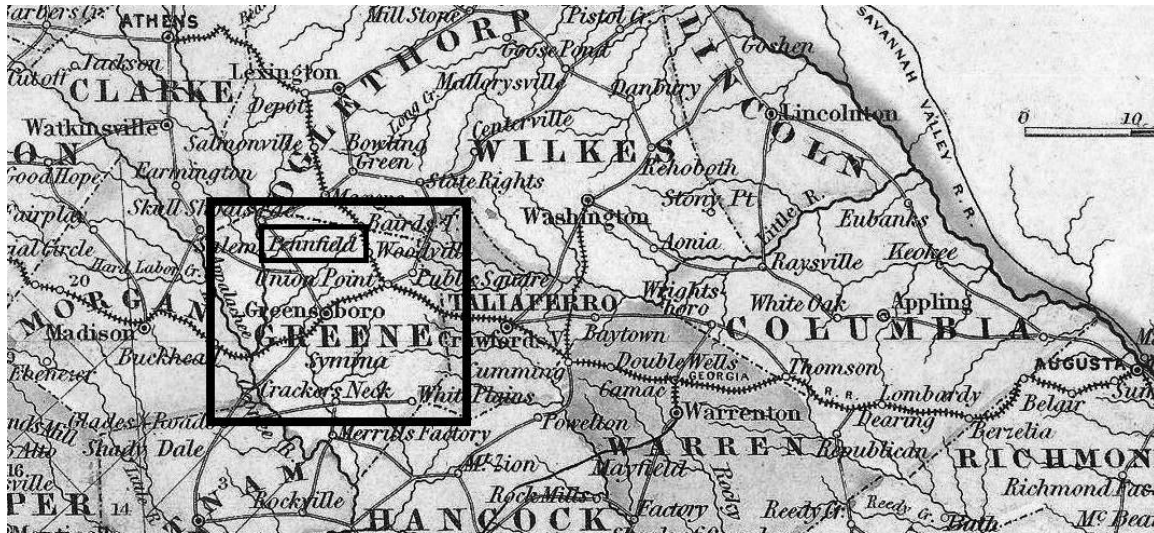


Figure 3.2. Detail of map of Georgia showing Penfield in Greene County, from G. W. Colton's *Atlas of the World Illustrating Physical and Political Geography* (1855).

Mercer Institute may have been little more than a few cabins in the woods in 1832, but, to the eyes of those Georgians who cheered it as it opened its doors and shuddered to a start in 1833, it was yet another accomplishment in the making of an educated populace. Sherwood defended against the stereotype of the “ignorant Georgian” by proudly declaring in the 1837 *Gazetteer* that over 50,000 students were currently enrolled in academies and institutes, colleges and universities across the state.<sup>10</sup> Greene County’s residents had ample reason to count themselves among the leading architects of this educational infrastructure. Union Academy was founded there, in the county seat of Greensboro, as early as 1786. It lasted as the sole outpost of

<sup>9</sup> *The Christian Index* (10 Nov 1832): 301; quoted in Jarrett Burch, *Adiel Sherwood*, 143. For an overview of the development of Penfield, see Rice, *History of Greene County*, 243-53, 343. See also Sherwood and Boykin, 269; and Burch, *Adiel Sherwood*, 44, 47.

<sup>10</sup> Sherwood, *Gazetteer*, 43.

intellectual development for several decades, until settlement and wealth finally made their way to the region. The 1820s saw a veritable building boom for educational institutions in the county. By the time Mercer's cabin doors opened to students in 1833, it was the fifth educational institution to call Greene County home.<sup>11</sup>

Like Basil Hall's version of the city of Columbus congealing out of nothing more than the dreams of its founders, Penfield became a place because of the efforts of its residents-cum-investors to make it so. An entry in the Mercer account book alludes to the hardscrabble conditions of that first year, noting an expenditure to put a single glass window and a chimney on the cabin occupied by Billington M. Sanders, the school's steward, and his family. By 1833, however, Rev. Sanders was the principal of the flourishing institute. He had moved into his own lodgings, a fine stewards hall had been built for his replacement in that post, and two larger halls had been constructed to serve as classrooms and, on their ground floors, dormitories for students. If village and school in 1832 were little more than a series of lines scratched in the dirt, by the following year they were well on their way to become a reality.<sup>12</sup>

Within five years of the opening of the institute, several dozen families had moved into its vicinity and were actively, purposefully making a village out of the former wilderness. There is no record of exactly when or why the Richards family arrived, but, as will be addressed more fully later in this chapter, they were likely there by the mid-1830s. They were thus part of the initial group of settlers that quite forcefully pulled civilization up from the forest floor. Land was cleared. Streets were laid out and graded, and sidewalks were added. Houses and stores were built, gardens were planted, and life took hold in Penfield.

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<sup>11</sup> Rice, *History of Greene County*, 202. Union Academy was founded in Greensboro in 1786, and was followed by Brockman United Academy in 1826, Lafayette Hall Academy in 1827, Mercer Institute in 1829, Thornton Academy in 1831, White Plains Academy in 1834, and the Penfield Female Academy in 1837.

<sup>12</sup> For an overview of the development of Penfield, see Rice, *History of Greene County*, 243-53, 343. See also Sherwood and Boykin, 269; and Burch, *Adiel Sherwood*, 44, 47.

Understanding the Richards family's life in Penfield is integral to understanding the book that William and Addison produced there in 1842. Yet making sense of the family requires first tracing them back to their roots in England. In other words, the story of *Georgia Illustrated* begins in another century and on another continent from the time and place of its publication. It begins, quite oddly, with England's 1689 Act of Toleration and the ways in which it shaped the early life of William and Addison's father and influenced what he desired for his children. This act of Parliament allowed registered Dissenters the freedom to worship, in preapproved locations and forms, but it severely limited access to higher education for those not affiliated with the Church of England.<sup>13</sup> For Baptists like the senior William Richards (hereafter referred to as Rev. Richards), this meant that the doors of the England's universities were closed and tightly locked. No matter what his intellectual proclivities or ambitions, England would not allow him to rise.

In 1821, Rev. Richards was twenty-five years old and struggling to make a life. He was deeply interested in books and the transmission of knowledge, but his faith prevented him from attaining an education. He was trained for a career as a Baptist pastor, but could not find a position near his home. He had a wife to support, and the dreams of two toddler sons to nourish, but his own aspirations were being slowly crushed in the tight confines of urban London. And then salvation came, or at least a little breathing room, in the form of a job offer. When he accepted the pastorate of an historic Baptist church in Hook Norton, Oxfordshire, Rev. Richards embraced the opportunity to build a new and better life for his children.<sup>14</sup> He extracted his wife and his three- and one-year-old sons from a crowded neighborhood beside the Thames and set

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<sup>13</sup> For Baptists and higher education in England after 1689, see Alan P.F. Sell, *Philosophy, Dissent, and Nonconformity, 1689-1920* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2004), 132-137. My sincere thanks to Professor Kirk Willis for drawing my attention to the limits placed on Rev. Richards as a young man in England.

<sup>14</sup> Rev. John Paul Taylor, et al., "A History of Hook Norton Baptist Church" (Hook Norton, Banbury, Oxfordshire: Hook Norton Baptist Church, 2010, photocopied), 20. My sincere thanks to Rev. John Taylor for willingness to help me sift through William Richards' history in Hook Norton. His multiple e-mails on the subject, and the unpublished manuscript he sent me, were invaluable in locating the Richards family prior to their emigration to the United States.

them down seventy miles away, in a picturesque village, in the same pastoral English countryside that had nourished generations of his ancestors.<sup>15</sup> He also put them at the heart of a flourishing Baptist community on the fringe of one of the world's greatest universities. Hook Norton had a written history stretching back over a thousand years, a towering 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century Anglican church, and lanes upon lanes of two- and three-story stone houses. Its Baptist church, dating to the 1640s, was one of the oldest in Britain.<sup>16</sup> It had approximately 1,350 residents when the Richards family arrived in 1821, and almost sixty more when they left a decade later. And the vast majority of them were involved in the industries that dominated the Oxfordshire economy, all driven by the growth of Oxford University: paper making, book printing, and book binding.<sup>17</sup> As far as villages go, it was a beautiful, thriving, bustling place to be.

Hook Norton must have seemed idyllic for the young preacher and his family. Its rolling hills and rich valleys, its high grasslands and river-side wetlands, must have offered them a pleasing alternative to the dirt and congestion of the metropolis. Free from the constraints of city life, young William and Addison spent their childhoods enmeshed in nature. It was, however,

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<sup>15</sup> Rev. Richards was born in 1796 in either the County of Berkshire, the birthplace of his father, or in metropolitan London. He married Anne Gardner in that city's Westminster neighborhood in 1817. Westminster, which stretches along the Thames River from St. James's Park and to Hyde Park and Kensington, was a center of Nonconformist worship. The couple's first two children, William Carey and Thomas Addison, were born there in 1818 and 1820, respectively.

Rev. Richards' move to Oxfordshire brought his family to county neighboring the Berkshire home of his ancestors. While this was a homecoming of sorts, it also took them away from the companionship of his brother Robert. Robert remained a resident of Westminster through 1836. Following the death of William and Robert's father in 1836, Robert, his family, and his mother immigrated to the United States and briefly settled in Penfield before ultimately moving to New York City.

My sincere thanks to Sharon Orren, whose husband is a descendant of Robert Richards, for sharing her excellent genealogical research and knowledge of Richards family history.

<sup>16</sup> For the architectural history of Hook Norton, see Cherwell District Council, "Hook Norton Conservation Area Appraisal, May 2007," <http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/media/pdf/f/5/pdf3331564282493557916.pdf> (accessed 20 June 2011), 12-25.

<sup>17</sup> The lesser economic drivers of the county economy were specialty manufacturers of glass, wool cloth, and ale. It appears that, despite large rural areas of rolling pasture lands, most county residents made their living as small-scale producers of items related to the Oxford University and its press, rather than in agricultural pursuits. William Page, ed., *A History of the County of Oxford*, vol. 2 of *Victoria County Histories* (London: Archibald Constable Co., Ltd., 1907), 213-293.



nature of a very specific type. They grew up in a time and place that largely disdained the wild and untouched in strong favor of the pastoral and controlled. They were products of a culture that for more than a century had mastered the aestheticization of the natural world. They were heirs to a British philosophical tradition that had veritably written nature into being out of a void of wild nothingness, created it as a schematized and enculturated system through which the learned classes encountered the non-metropolitan spaces that surrounded them.<sup>18</sup>

By the time the Richards family came to the rolling hills of Oxfordshire, the English rural countryside was no longer feared, dismissed, or even simply ignored as the benighted realm of Other. Rather, nature had been philosophized, reimagined and remade into a safe healing balm for the wounds inflicted by the modern world. There were no longer just pasture lands in Oxfordshire, but scenes. The village of Hook Norton capitalized on this trend and on the beauty of its surrounding landscape, with the construction of a private asylum in the late-1820s. The large brick structure offered its world-weary, but paying, patients the opportunity to find solace in aestheticized nature. William and Addison, then, were introduced to the natural world as a place to be celebrated and beloved when it was made un-natural, tamed, and packaged as a series of intellectually-stimulating landscape views.

The natural and cultural attributes of Oxfordshire seem to have set in motion the gears that led to both the Richards family's life in Penfield and the creation of *Georgia Illustrated* so many years later. The Act of Toleration had severely limited Rev. Richards's opportunities for a formal education, and he appears to have been a young man without much connection or potential for success as a marginalized Non-Conformist in London. In Hook Norton, however,

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<sup>18</sup> Elisabeth K. Helsinger, "Land and National Representation in Britain," in Michael Rosenthan, Christiana Payne, and Scott Wilcox, eds., *Prospects for the Nation: Recent Essays in British Landscape, 1750-1880* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 13-16, 21-27. For an edited overview of the relevant works of Addison, Priestly, and Burke, see Andrew Ashfield and Peter de Bolla, *The Sublime: A Reader in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 62-68, 119-123, and 131-143.

he took charge of an historic church, ministered to its congregation, and deftly managed its finances. Perhaps inspired by the publishing work of his friends and neighbors, or perhaps to fulfill his own ambitions, he researched and transcribed an 18<sup>th</sup>-century Baptist text and compiled a list of British ministers administering the Ordinance of the Last Supper. He also became the head of the church-affiliated school. It was not Oxford, but at least his children and those of other local Non-Conformists could be educated.<sup>19</sup> Life in Oxfordshire offered him a bit more opportunity to spread his intellectual wings, but also reinforced the fact that he could not get any closer to a university than to stand in its shadows.

Rev. Richards spent ten generally efficacious years in Hook Norton before resigning his position. There is no record of why he left. The village grew during his time there. His work among the congregation was successful. His family bloomed: sons Jabez and Samuel were born in 1821 and 1824, respectively, and daughters Catherine, Ellen Jane, and Amelia followed in 1826, 1829, and 1831. Yet soon after Amelia's birth, according to a note in the church records, sometime "about June 20, 1831," the young preacher and his expanding family simply "went away."<sup>20</sup> Perhaps it was the difficulty of feeding seven offspring ranging in age from thirteen years and one month. Perhaps it was the limitations placed on Baptists in a society that considered them disloyal outsiders. Or perhaps it was the realization, gained after a decade at the periphery of Oxford, that he and his children would forever be barred from the hallowed halls of the academy and the opportunity to be book writers rather than book makers. Whatever the reasons, the family packed their belongings and set sail for the United States.

Autumn 1831 found the Richards family settled in the village of Hudson, New York. Rev. Richards served as the pastor to the local Baptist church there. A last child, a son named

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<sup>19</sup> Taylor, et al., "A History of Hook Norton Baptist Church," 20.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

Henry, was born there. And it was there that ten-year old Addison and his twelve-year old brother William were brought into the beating heart of the idealized American countryside. Hudson was a picturesque village alongside the river of the same name, and was quickly becoming a point along the Northeastern “Grand Tour” being developed by innkeepers and railroad companies for Americans of a certain class and education who, like their English brethren, sought out aestheticized nature. Between its rolling hills and river vistas, its quaint village, and its position as a developing site for landscape tourism, it must have seemed to have been the American cousin of Hook Norton.

The Richards family arrived there a matter of months before the English-born, American painter Thomas Cole returned from a tour of England and settled on a farm five miles outside of Hudson. From his studio there, Cole spent the next decade and a half producing the foundational works of American landscape painting. He was an intellectual, artistic, and literary force to be reckoned with. His work alongside the river gave rise to several generations of artists-cum-writers, collectively known as the Hudson River School, who followed his lead in both celebrating and commodifying New England’s most beautiful and provocative tourist locations. Young William and Addison were barely teenagers during the few years they spent in Hudson. There is no indication that they knew Cole or any of his followers during their overlapping years there. But Addison had apparently developed an interest in art while in Hook Norton, and had written a (now-lost) ship-board account, accompanied by water color illustrations, of his voyage to the United States. It is not impossible, then, to imagine him being aware of one of the most famous American artists, and a fellow English transplant, to boot, living a scant five miles from his front door. If nothing else, Cole’s existence outside of Hudson would have meant that

William and Addison were surrounded in their daily lives by the zeitgeist of nature aestheticized, commodified, and made into the lingua franca of American intellectual culture.

The Richards family once again packed their belongings and bid farewell to New York in 1834. After brief stays in Baltimore and Forsyth County, Georgia, they settled in the village of Penfield sometime in late 1835 or early 1836.<sup>21</sup> There is no record of why they chose Penfield, but perhaps it offered Rev. Richards and his offspring the opportunity to make up for all that had been kept from him in England. Baptists there were not labeled as outsiders, but were a thriving and fundamental element of religious life. Rather than being legally prevented from attaining an education, they were instead among the leaders of the cause in the state. Penfield's Mercer University was both a Baptist school and, according to Sherwood's *Gazetteer*, the second largest and most successful institution of higher education in the state after the University of Georgia.

Settling in Penfield brought the Richards family into contact with Adiel Sherwood. At the time, he lived in a neighboring community, served as the pastor of the nearby Greensboro Baptist Church, and worked closely with the leadership of the school.<sup>22</sup> He and his family then

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<sup>21</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Sixth Census, 1840, Greene County, Georgia. See also Rice, *History of Greene County*, 243-53. B.D. Ragsdale's history of Mercer has the Richards family in Penfield shortly after the school opened, but I cannot definitively place them there before 1836. Ragsdale, *Story of Georgia Baptists*, Vol. 1, *Mercer University, Penfield Period and Related Interests* (Atlanta: Atlanta Baptist Convention, 1932), 241. *The Christian Index* of 31 October 1836 identified William and Addison's father, Adiel Sherwood, and Jesse Mercer as having worked together at a "minster's meeting" the previous July; quoted in Dr. Samuel Boykin, *History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia, Compiled for the Christian Index*, vol.1, (Atlanta: Jas. P. Harrison & Co., 1881), 246. William Richards also published a poem, recounting a baptism he witnessed before moving to Georgia, in a January 1836 edition of the same newspaper. See William Carey Richards, "A Baptismal Scene," *The Christian Index* (28 January 1836): 38. Although Wendy Venet does not cite either of these records in her brief biographical sketch of the family, my assumption that the Richardses were in Penfield by 1836 is in keeping with her findings. Wendy Hamand Venet, *Sam Richards's Civil War Diary: A Chronicle of the Atlanta Home Front* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 4. In January 1836, William was 17 years old, Addison was 15, Jabez was 14, Samuel was 12, Catherine was 9, Ellen was 7, Amelia was 5, and Henry was 3.

<sup>22</sup> Greensboro Baptist Church was founded by Sherwood and Jesse Mercer, perhaps the most prominent Baptist in the state. As will be discussed later in this chapter, they were principally responsible for the creation of Mercer Institute in Penfield, which became Mercer University several years later. Even if Sherwood did not live in Penfield until 1838, he had constant and exceptionally close connections with the elder Mercer, the local Baptist churches, and the school, all of which brought him into the daily life of the community. William and Addison's father was clearly knew Sherwood prior to Sherwood's move to Washington D.C. in late 1836, as the two men were linked with Jesse Mercer in an article in the local newspaper earlier that year. A strong relationship continued between the

moved to Washington, D.C in late 1836 so he could oversee the publication of the third edition of his *Gazetteer* and join the faculty at Columbia College. After the book was published, and when the school's finances began to fail in the autumn of 1838, Sherwood accepted an offer to move to Penfield and become Professor of Sacred Literature at Mercer University. Even if he had only casually known the Richards family after their arrival in Penfield in the mid-1830s, he was definitely connected with them once he moved the village in 1838. The easiest of those connections to trace involve Mercer University, participation in the Georgia Baptist Convention, the founding and leadership of the Penfield Baptist Church, the sale of real estate from one family to another, and a number of shared friends and neighbors.

Rev. Richards and his family thrived in Penfield. He was successful by most measures, and like his neighbors, his success was inextricably intertwined with that of his community. Most importantly, he opened and operated a bookstore in the center of town that served the university, the community, and even the region at large.<sup>23</sup> Beyond that, he successfully petitioned the United States government to create a post office in Penfield in 1837, located in the bookstore, and became its postmaster.<sup>24</sup> When a Female Academy was chartered and its

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men after Sherwood moved to Penfield in late 1838. Rice, *History of Greene County*, 118, 249. See also Sherwood and Boykin, *Memoir of Adiel Sherwood*, 254-55; and The Christian Index, *History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia: with Biographical Compendium and Portrait Gallery of Baptist Ministers and Other Georgia Baptists* (Atlanta: Jas. P. Harrison & Co., 1881), 473-477.

<sup>23</sup> Rev. Richards' bookstore was located on Penfield's main street, in a building shared with Colclough and Sharp's General Store. Although the buildings are long since gone, a record of the store's location is preserved in a unlabeled document in the William Richards file, Tarver Library Special Collections, Mercer University. See also Rice, *A History of Greene County*, 243-253. Scholars of antebellum publishing have noted that many booksellers often shared space with general stores, likely because of a congruity in the types of merchandise they sold. Rev. Richards not only sold books, but like many of his counterparts across the antebellum United States, did a brisk business in papers, writing implements, and general supplies for the academic institutions in his area. On the bookstore and the general store, see David D. Hall, *Cultures of Print: Essays in the History of the Book* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 44. See also Michael O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 1: 476.

<sup>24</sup> Samuel Richards diary entry for 01 July, 1842, "Penfield, Geo. Post Office Excitement!" explains how Rev. Richards petitioned the government in 1837 and had served successfully until his position was challenged by "48 country crackers" put to the task by "Dr. Brown," who wanted the post for himself. Samuel noted with enormous satisfaction that his father retained his title after "63 respectable citizens" of the town sided with his father against this class-based challenge from those for whom "the sight of any thing in the form of a letter seldom, if ever, greeted their eyes." Dr. Brown's interest in the position was certainly driven by economics. Samuel Richards diary, Atlanta

imposing two-story edifice opened next door to his home on the village's main street in 1838, he served a year as its principal. When Jesse Mercer retired from his position as pastor of the nearby Powelton Baptist Church in 1837, on his recommendation the congregation hired Rev. Richards in his place. When the population of Penfield was large enough to support a church of its own, separate from the school and from those of neighboring communities, Richards and Sherwood were among its founders. When delegates were annually selected to attend the Georgia Baptist Convention, Richards and Adiel Sherwood were frequently sent. When neighboring, rural communities needed "ministering brethren" to ordain their pastors, Richards and Sherwood went. And so when it was decided in May 1838 to elevate Mercer from an institute to a university, it is not surprising that Richards and Sherwood were among those chosen for its first board of trustees. According to one early historian of the school, those trustees "represented the flower of the citizenship of Georgia . . . Most of them were well-known and highly esteemed."<sup>25</sup> Oxfordshire must have seemed far, far away.

These benefits to the university and the community were also of benefit to the Richards family. Income from the bookstore and Rev. Richards' other professional pursuits was substantial enough that rather than enrolling William at Mercer, where he could live at home for free and work at the bookstore, he was sent to earn his A.B. at Hamilton Literary and Theological Institute (renamed Madison University in 1846, then Colgate University in 1890) in

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Historical Society. Ronald Zboray comments on the lucrative nature of being a postmaster during the 1840s, as Americans increasingly became a nation of readers and letter-writers, and the amount of correspondence carried by the postal service increased fivefold. Zboray, *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 112. It also highlights some of the tensions between the village South and the surrounding agricultural county, as identified in Darret B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman, *Small Worlds, Large Questions: Explorations in Early American Social History, 1600-1850* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 231-272.

<sup>25</sup> "Original Church Minute Book of Powelton Baptist Church," Powelton Baptist Church file, Tarver Library Special Collections, Mercer University. Penfield Baptist Church Records, 11 May 1839, Tarver Library Special Collections, Mercer University. Rev.s Richards and Sherwood travelling is in *The Christian Index* (21 May 1840): 325. For the reputation of the first trustees, see Dowell, *A History of Mercer University*, 55.

upstate New York. There was even enough money that William was able to travel between Penfield and New York with relative ease, and was frequently at home with his family when school was not in session. There were other outward signs of the family's growing success, as well. They owned at least two buggies, a carriage, and enough horses to use at least two of the vehicles at the same time. They socialized freely and at elaborate parties with the wealthiest planters in their community. They had at least four slaves by 1840, but appear to have either purchased or leased more in the years that followed. Their closest neighbors, all affiliated with the university and the church, were all prominent families; the five nearest households owned a total of 37 slaves. In January of 1841, Rev. Richards even purchased nearly thirty acres of investment land, stretched along three blocks of Penfield's main street, from recently-retired university president Billington M. Sanders. Some of it he then sold to Adiel Sherwood and others, who built homes and businesses on it; some of it he gave to his sons Addison and Jabez, perhaps as an investment in their future; and some of it he kept and built on. By 1842, the family, now including William's new wife, had moved from their home next to the Female Academy to a new and larger house at the opposite end of the main street. Beside it, he allowed his younger sons to plant a substantial orchard of fruit trees.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> For the reputation, experience, and cost of attending Hamilton, see *An Historical Sketch of Madison University, Hamilton, NY* (Utica, NY: D. Bennett, 1852), 2-6. Perhaps William did not receive land in 1841 because Rev. Richards was currently paying for his education, while neither Addison nor Jabez seemed to be headed for college. Addison eventually received his formal education in the later 1840s after moving to New York and enrolling at the National Academy of Design. Jabez does not appear to have earned a college degree. Samuel, who only turned 17 in 1841, attended Mercer University but did not graduate. Rev. Richards later assisted Jabez and Samuel in forming their own successful bookstore in Macon and, later, Atlanta. These issues will be addressed more fully in chapter five. For the real estate transactions, see Greene County, Georgia, Deed Book, "B.M. Sanders to William Richards," 13 January 1841; "William Richards to Adiel Sherwood," 26 August 1841; "William Richards to T. Addison Richards and J.J. Richards," 11 September 1841. For Rev. Richards' larger house, see the construction debt filed by carpenter John Holtzclaw in Greene County, Georgia, Deed Book, "William Richards to John G. Holtzclaw," 16 June 1841. For the planting of orchards of apple and plum trees, see Samuel Richards's diary, 22 March 1843, Atlanta Historical Society.

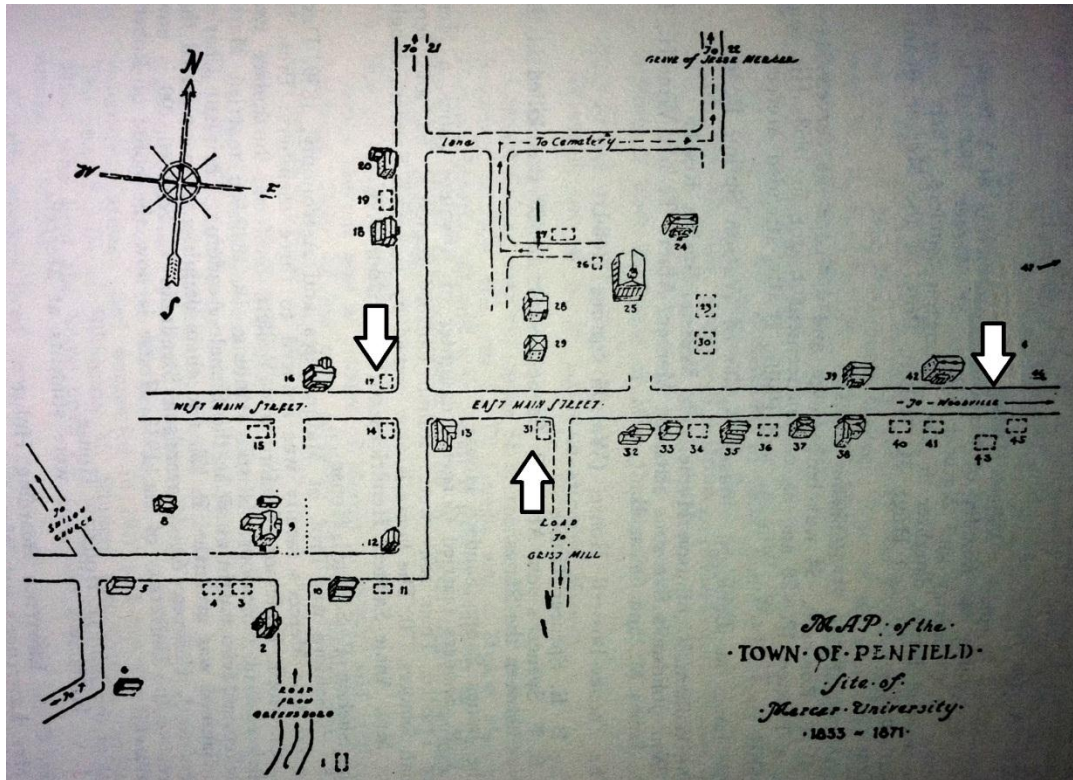


Figure 3.3. Map of Penfield, from Thaddeus B. Rice, *History of Greene County* (1961). The arrows are my own and, read left to right, mark the locations of the Richards family's first house beside the Female Academy, the bookstore, and the Richards family's second house.

At work beneath these outward signs of relative comfort were the Richards family's deep commitments to each other, their community, and that community's larger mission of cultivating what Addison later termed "mental culture." He sketched out what this looked like in a letter written on a cold and rainy Tuesday night in March 1841. His father and William had spent the morning and early afternoon working at the bookstore. Later in the day, the entire family gathered in the drawing room to joyfully celebrate sister Ellen's twelfth birthday. They gave her a tea party, teased her greatly, and snacked on fruits, candies, and younger sister Amelia's "Lilliputian" contribution of raisins served in orange peels. They sang songs, played party games, and laughed a lot. Now, after a formal dinner and even more conversation, they all



gathered in front of the fireplace. Night fell. The curtains were drawn. The house and all its residents were quiet, save for the family cat, “repose[d] in cozy indolence on the rug,” purring so loudly that she was “distinctly audible” to everyone in the room. And the self-educated local bookseller, his wife, and their well-educated offspring engaged in their ordinary evening pursuits. Addison explained:

Father is writing letters – mother is reading – Brother William is perpetuating poetry; Catherine & Ellen are preparing their weekly compositions, the subject of the one “Religion” & of the other “The calamities arising from Fire!” Amelia and Henry are putting a Georgia political puzzle together on the chair; – Jabez is pouring over Ainsworth’s popular tale of ‘Guy Fawkes;’ – Samuel, unfortunately, has been absent since my arrival and (witness this sheet) your truant ‘A’ is writing to an absent friend. I shall hardly have time however to finish this epistle, before these studies will cease & after the usual 20 minutes at the ‘family alter,’ we separate for the night.”<sup>27</sup>

Rev. Richards’ many successes were all predicated on the unflagging belief that his children’s futures, as well as the future of their state, required a staunch commitment to intellectual and cultural development. He was not alone. Indeed, like most of their neighbors in Penfield, it was the perpetual advancement of intellectual culture that made his family’s lives possible. Mercer University grew from log cabins to brick buildings out of the desire to refute the stubborn myth of the “ignorant Georgian.” Penfield grew from raw earth to streets and sidewalks, houses and stores, from empty space to a meaningful place, as a consequence of Mercer. It was purposefully planned, built, and inhabited by an exceptionally literate citizenry. Those individuals gathered together on campus, in church, and in Rev. Richards’ bookstore, and

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<sup>27</sup> T. Addison Richards to Anne McKinne, 9 March 1841, Jackson and McKinne Family Papers (1817-1871, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

bonded around a shared and fiercely supported belief in the benefits of knowledge.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, they saw those locations as a veritable factory from which they could export their message and spur the development of similar intellectually-minded communities elsewhere.

Jesse Mercer set this process in motion in 1833 when he acquired the *Christian Index*, the oldest and one of the most prominent religious newspapers in the nation. Within several years he had moved its offices from nearby Washington to Penfield. In 1834 he began publishing the *Temperance Banner* there, too. Each publication soon had several thousand subscribers. By the end of the decade, the village was also printing all county legal notices and advertisements. Its presses were soon turning out thousands of copies of the two newspapers, multiple individual book titles on Baptist theology, and even a locally-written legal and biblical defense of slavery. Penfield had gone from wilderness to refined village in less than a decade. By the mid-1840s, it was widely regarded as having replaced Greensboro as the cultural and intellectual center of the county.<sup>29</sup>

Penfield's sole bookstore was one of the main bridges across which all of this information flowed back and forth between the university, its immediate community, and the larger world. It was where local residents received and sent their mail. It was where they purchased writing tablets and fine papers, pens and ink, and other academic supplies. It was where they paid their subscriptions and acquired the latest issues of the local newspapers. Most

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<sup>28</sup> Others across the village South came together for economic purposes, and social historians have convincingly argued against overplaying other unifying factors among varieties experience and interest within those groups. Yet in places like Penfield, like the other educational villages across Georgia, there appears to have been an internal community of members who shared not only same space but also a unified idea of why they were there. There was a remarkable degree of cohesion within the village. Darrett and Anita Rutman, *Small Worlds, Large Questions*, 41, 231-272.

<sup>29</sup> For a brief accounting of Penfield-based publications during antebellum period, see Arthur Ray Rowland, *A Preliminary Checklist of Penfield, Georgia Imprints, 1840-1856, Using the WPA Files and Other Sources* (Augusta: RR Books, 2003), 5. Ray's preliminary count lists more than 60 separate titles produced in Penfield during the years in question. Except for *Georgia Illustrated* and family friend Patrick Mell's *A Treatise showing that slavery is neither a moral, political, or social evil* (1844), all of the remaining titles had to do with Baptist theology. For the jealousy of Greensboro residents, and especially merchants, over the rapid rise of Penfield, see Rice, *History of Greene County*, 253.

importantly, it was the only source for the books read by its proprietor and his children, his neighbors and their children, and the faculties and students of the academy and the university. Rev. Richards sold not only to his friends and acquaintances in the village and the county, but also to customers much further afield. In keeping with a business model shared by other booksellers of the time, he periodically sent his elder sons out in a wagon packed with books, on sales trips to cities, villages and even crossroads throughout Georgia and South Carolina.<sup>30</sup> One South Carolina resident even wrote to a friend in Penfield, Richards family neighbor Iveson Brookes, asking him to use the enclosed money to purchase a hard-to-find volume from Rev. Richards.<sup>31</sup> Surely, the bookstore's reputation was strong.

Rev. Richards had been prevented obtaining an education in England. He spent a decade in Oxfordshire staring out from the shadows, close but always a whisper of faith away from the great university. There he and his children owned nothing, made nothing and, he likely feared, ultimately would be nothing. But in Penfield anything was possible. His bookstore was a gathering point around which intellectual community of scholars coalesced. And he was a prominent man in their midst.

A Brown University student traveling to Georgia in early winter 1839 later recalled how nervous he was to leave the safety of Augusta for what he had read was the wild interior of the

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<sup>30</sup> Undated entry in Mercer University Minute Book, Tarver Library Special Collections, Mercer University; quoted in Rice, *A History of Greene County*, 252. "Our Agent," *The Christian Index* (14 July 1843): 441. Samuel Richards made multiple mentions of these sales trips with William in his diary; see, for example, entries for 25 July 1842, 26 September 1842, 15 November 1842, and 9 July 1843. Michael O'Brien explains that antebellum Southerners commonly acquired their reading materials and writing supplies from travelling book sellers. William was often successful in selling the books he brought with him, even if by auctioning them off, but occasionally met with populations who had no patience for his profession. Samuel frequently derided those individuals as "ignorant," but the individuals themselves often had more convincing explanations. O'Brien quotes Francis Lieber's complaint that among his learned neighbors "there is the strongest anti-pedarism and anti-book agent disposition. We are here so pursued with agents, and people have been so often deceived in books or maps, that they will no longer nibble at the fly." He also records James Henry Hammond's similar frustration that, "our people . . . are seduced by agents of all sorts of trashy publications who throng the country into subscriptions that exhaust their means . . ." O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 1: 473-475.

<sup>31</sup> B.M. Ware to Iveson L. Brookes, 29 September 1840. Iveson Lewis Brookes Papers (Correspondence 1839-1842), Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

state. His concerns were laid to rest when he passed his first day and night out of the city in Penfield. By sheer chance, the first person he met was William Richards. The two young gentlemen found they had much in common. William took him for a buggy ride out into the surrounding “red southern hills.” He showed him the highlights of civilized society in the village. He even introduced him to Adiel Sherwood. The Brown student was awed by the elder theologian and writer, whose work he apparently knew and respected, but William was at ease with this family friend. Sherwood, for his part, was “unpretentious” and polite.<sup>32</sup>

Their interaction provides a rare, fascinating glimpse into the daily life of Penfield’s residents. It is a reminder that they were all part of a community that came together on their streets of Penfield, in the halls of their university, and around the shelves of their bookstore. Adiel Sherwood prayed, preached, and conducted business with Rev. Richards. His *Gazetteer* was undoubtedly available at the bookstore; as were Jesse Mercer’s newspapers; as were books by other Penfield residents and Richards family friends, such as Patrick Mell’s treatise on slavery, S.P. Sanford’s mathematical textbook, and dozens of other titles relating to Baptist theology. Billington Sanders sold a large tract of Penfield real estate to his friend and fellow church member. Prior to his retirement from the presidency of Mercer, he authorized the university’s purchases of books and supplies from the bookstore; after his retirement, he sat there for several days while Addison painted his portrait. Iveson Brookes, a wealthy South Carolina planter and friend of future president James K. Polk, moved to Penfield in the late-1830s, he explained, “for the purpose of effecting the Education of a large family of children.” He soon owned a substantial plantation in the county, built a residence beside the Richards family in Penfield, and became a university trustee. He worked with Rev. Richards on the leadership of the Penfield Female Academy, and acquired books from his next door neighbor for himself, his

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<sup>32</sup> Rev. S.P. Whitman, “A Reminiscence,” in Sherwood and Boykin, *Memoir of Adiel Sherwood*, 265.

children, and even far-off friends.<sup>33</sup> Elsewhere across the village South bookstores may have been of secondary importance to most residents, at best, but in Penfield it was a fundamental part of what bonded the community together and how they functioned.

As a recent historian has pointed out, bookstores served as a fluid boundary between high and low culture, between the “metropolitan” and the “local” impulses in everyday antebellum life. They were places that facilitated simultaneous conversations about the mundane aspects of customers lives and the lofty ideas they had garnered from—or hoped to garner from—books. They were where idealized cultural elements, imported from far-off cities, were brought down to and integrated on a local level. They were where residents of small towns acquired pages of words that sometimes entertained them, sometimes educated them, and often challenged them to reassess who they were and what they would or would not be.<sup>34</sup>

In the case of Rev. Richards’s venture, the bookstore was a place that both shaped and reflected community interests and knowledge. The academically-minded residents of Penfield likely agreed with the advice in Charles Verle’s *Moral Encyclopaedia* (1839), who argued that “among the various means of acquiring knowledge, books hold a prominent station; they are our best instructors, and do more perhaps to form our intellectual faculties, and moral habits, than all means together.”<sup>35</sup> Their work of acquiring and transmitting knowledge demanded that their local bookseller provide them with books on theology and philosophy, math and science, and he

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<sup>33</sup> For Penfield authors Mell and Sanford, among others, see P.H. Mell, Jr., *Life of Patrick Hues Mell, by His Son* (Louisville, KY: Baptist Book Concern, 1895), 48, 184; Burch, *Adiel Sherwood*, 144, 175; and Rowland, *A Preliminary Checklist*, 5. Addison painting B.M. Sanders’s portrait is in Samuel P. Richards diary, 23 January 1843, Atlanta Historical Society. Iveson Brookes on his reasons for coming to Penfield, as well as his involvement in the community, are in Iveson Brookes to Dr. W. Hooker, undated 1843 letter, Iveson L. Brookes Papers, 1792-1884, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina. For Brookes and President Polk, see Iveson Brookes to “Bro. Slade, near Columbus, Georgia,” 20 March 1849, Iveson Lewis Brookes Papers (Correspondence 1849), Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. See also Sherwood and Boykin, *Memoir of Adiel Sherwood*, 281.

<sup>34</sup> Hall, *Cultures of Print*, 7, 32.

<sup>35</sup> Charles Verle, *Moral Encyclopaedia* (New York: E. Wilkins, 1839), 238; quoted in Zboray, *A Fictive People*, 129.

complied. But if the reading patterns of his children are any indication, he also sold those texts alongside a vast array of literature, poetry, and travel books.<sup>36</sup>

Rev. Richards expanded his business in early 1840 in a most significant way. The decision was a natural one for him as a bookseller, a generous one for him as an adoring father. Penfield had brought him personal and professional success. Meanwhile, his two eldest sons had grown into ambitious, inspired, passionate young men. They dreamt of things that would have been off limits to their father a quarter century earlier in England. They dreamt of higher education, of not merely associating with intellectuals but ascending through their ranks, of not being men who sold books but men who wrote them. Rev. Richards had provided them with love and encouragement, faith, education, investment land, and on-the-job training in the bookstore. Now he embraced a new opportunity to set up his sons in the lives they desired. He marshaled the tools, knowledge, and resources he had gained in his years as a bookseller. He put his money and his name, his very reputation, into supporting their dreams. He would become a publisher; the sole authors in his stable: William and Addison.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> A sampling of the first year of Samuel Richards's diary reveals him and his brothers reading a wide array of books from their father's store, including U.S.-published biographies of Washington and Franklin, European travel books, multiple works by James Fennimore Cooper, multiple other works of European fiction, multiple unnamed books, and a biography of Lord Nelson. Some of the literature and poetry that William and Addison read and referenced will be addressed in the following section. The breadth of genres available in Rev. Richards's store is in keeping with a shift in the production and dissemination of printed material, just beginning around 1840, that accompanied the rise of several large, national publishing houses. There are no extant business records for his store, but Rev. Richards would have been fairly typical for the period in offering both locally-written and published books and newspapers, as well as popular titles from firms such as Harper Brothers in New York. On the booksellers and the unprecedented amount of printed material that flooded the South beginning in the later 1830s, see Zboray, *Fictive People*, 137; Hall, *Cultures of Print*, 44; Michael Winship, "Manufacturing and Book Production," in Scott E. Casper, Jeffrey D. Groves, Stephen W. Nissenbaum, and Michael Winship, eds., *A History of the Book in America, Vol 3: The Industrial Book, 1840-1880* (Chapel Hill: American Antiquarian Society and University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 42-48; and especially O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 1: 476, 488.

<sup>37</sup> The decision to begin publishing books in addition to selling them was not unique to the Richards family. It was a natural and relatively common step for antebellum booksellers to expand in this direction as their businesses succeeded and grew, at least until the combination of expanded rail lines and the rise of powerful national publishers (such as Harper and Brothers, Appleton's, and Carey & Lea) all but put an end to the practice by the 1850s. Rev. Richards was rather exceptional, though, in publishing and selling the work of his own sons. David Hall notes that the move into publishing was far more common among New England booksellers, who had substantially larger reading audiences at their disposal, than those in the South. Hall, *Cultures of Print*, 60.

## —CHAPTER FOUR—

### GEORGIA ILLUSTRATED: CONSTRUCTING CIVILIZATION

“It is not down in any map, true places never are.”

—Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (1851)

Adiel Sherwood was looking for a bit of poetry. His *Gazetteer* was groundbreaking as a geographical and statistical record of Georgia. Its great contribution was not just that it located plot points on a map, but that it used that information to imply the extent to which individuals had cleared land, built and lived in thriving towns, and created meaningful spaces out of their local environments. But a statistical guide, however innovative and useful it was, could not capture the soul of it. The *Gazetteer* could not lyrically express the art of daily life, of topographical, personal, and communal memories created over lifetimes, of the scent of the trees, the feel of the air, the grandeur of the view. It could not, in short, capture the essence of place.

Sherwood addressed this issue head-on in the introduction to the 1837 third edition of the *Gazetteer*. To those who would question why his volume was not more literary, more artful, he conceded, “the answer is, that the author has no *ambition*, even if he had the *talent*, to write such a work. . . .” Like other publications of the sort, his was “not designed to be a *learned*, but a *useful* book. . . .” His agenda was to fill in the yawning chasms of doubt created by the dismissive and inaccurate texts of previous interpreters of the state. It was to refute what had been written of the environment and people of Georgia by constructing a scaffolding of geographical and statistical data to demonstrate the state’s safety and healthfulness, productiveness and civilization. It would have to fall to a next generation of Georgians to faithfully fill in the spaces. Some future writer, poet, or artist would have to offer up a more

refined volume, a counterpart to the prosaic *Gazetteer*, to finally cement Georgia's rank as a viable, authentic, three-dimensional place within the American nation.<sup>1</sup>

Sherwood's *Gazetteer* was the first book in which a Georgian spoke up for the transformations that had drastically reshaped contemporary Georgia. It was a resident voice expressing local pride in local places, and as such it began the process of refuting a century of inaccurate and biased outsider accounts. He acknowledged this mission in the introductory remarks to each of the first three editions: the work had to be undertaken, the book had to be written, because "no one acquainted with the state" had yet produced anything of the sort. By the time of the third edition, once his own name and the reputation of his book had been secured, Sherwood went a step further and suggested how future authors might build on what he had started. He advocated for a next generation to further the cause by producing a counterpart volume on the state that was both "more elegantly written" and offered a "greater display of learning" than his own.<sup>2</sup> Several years later, his young friends William and Addison Richards did just that.

Rev. Richards' two eldest sons were hard at work by the autumn of 1840, following the advice—or challenge—of their neighbor. William was just barely twenty-two; Addison, two years younger. The fruit of their labors was to be a serialized travelogue, essentially short monthly pamphlets of several pages each, titled *Georgia Illustrated in a Series of Views*. The first issue was mailed out to subscribers and reviewers from Penfield in January, 1841. In introducing the new periodical, William seconded Sherwood's complaint and noted that most of what had been previously written came from the pens of foreigners. No "mere passenger" could ever truly appreciate the beauty and civility of the state. Rather, he suggested, true intellectual

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<sup>1</sup> Sherwood, *Gazetteer of the State of Georgia*, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



and aesthetic understanding could only come from “turn[ing] aside from the public haunts, and explor[ing] less frequented vicinities.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, finding meaning and beauty in Georgia required one to put aside all comparisons with other places and embrace and explore the state as would a local.

“The richest gems of the earth,” William counseled his readers, “are revealed only to the eye of those who seek them.” But because travel was time-consuming and expensive, especially for those who lived in other states or regions, he humbly offered up the pages of his serial as an alternative. He and Addison would be their surrogates and do the heavy lifting required to find those “richest gems.” Sherwood’s *Gazetteer* had simply offered the entirety of the Georgia landscape, unfiltered. Its pages upon pages of figures were dry, unenticing, perhaps even overwhelming for most readers who had neither the time nor tools to evaluate and analyze the information. *Georgia Illustrated*, on the other hand, would choose the “choicest” scenes and present them in a learned and elegant manner. It would “advance the literary interests . . . [and] promote a taste for the fine arts” by taking its readers to the most important locations in Sherwood’s book overlaying his statistical accounts with prose, poetry and art.<sup>4</sup> It would, it promised, at long last record Georgia as a living, breathing, thriving place.

Yet for all its grand declarations, *Georgia Illustrated* was also a small family venture rooted in the time and place of its publication. William and Addison were spurred on in their undertaking by the 1837 *Gazetteer* of their family friend. They told the editors of the New York-based *Ladies Companion* that they modeled their work after various (unnamed) English travel volumes, which they knew from the shelves of their father’s bookstore. Rev. Richards expanded his business to become their publisher, and he made William his partner. William edited

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<sup>3</sup> William C. Richards, “Introduction,” in *Georgia Illustrated*, 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 2.

*Georgia Illustrated*, Addison illustrated it, and the brothers wrote most of its essays and solicited others from like-minded individuals across the state.

Their intention in 1841 was to produce a refined monthly journal, each brief issue containing two full-page engravings by Addison and two related essays. These they sold in part from the Manhattan offices of their contract printers, but mostly from their father's bookstore, from the back of his traveling book wagon, or mailed out from his post office. They sold them for fifty cents an issue or subscriptions of five dollars per year. The editors of *Ladies Companion* noted that the suggested price barely covered the cost of reproducing images and that "a large circulation will be needed to repay the proprietor." Still, they were so enthusiastic about the work, and so confident of its success, that they wished "good speed" to its creators and declared they had no doubt that "it will receive [the necessary support] both at home and abroad."<sup>5</sup>

William and Addison's project received glowing endorsements in some of the leading magazines in the nation, but a lack of subscriptions ultimately kept it from continuing beyond its first six issues. In late 1841 Rev. Richards and his sons decided to terminate the serial and republish the extant material as a single volume. Their decision to bring the images and texts together as a book rather than a series of short essays and disconnected views changed the meaning of the work. Instead of suggesting an open-ended parade of words and disconnected images floating in some directionless intellectual ether, the book version of *Georgia Illustrated* (1842) locked them down under one cover and transformed them into something definite and

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<sup>5</sup> "Georgia Illustrated," *The Ladies' Companion, a Monthly Magazine; Devoted to Literature and the Fine Arts* (December 1840): 98. Publication and subscription information for *Georgia Illustrated* as a journal is also included in "Georgia Illustrated," *The New-Yorker*, vol. 10, no. 9 (14 November 1840): 141; and "Literary Notices," *The Family Magazine; or, Monthly Abstract of General Knowledge*, vol. 8 (01 May 1841): 280.

important. It offered its readers an unprecedented panoramic vision of the state as it was known, understood, and appreciated by its own residents.

This chapter and the next will present a deep reading of the book William and Addison produced. *Georgia Illustrated* is composed of an introduction and twelve brief essays, totaling forty four pages of text, paired with twelve steel-plate engravings by Addison. The subjects alternate between natural and man-made sites, with no apparent consideration given to relative locations or the proximity of one site to another. While this interchanging pattern gives structural vibrancy to the volume, it is monotonously repetitive as a system for analyzing the work. It is far more productive to instead divide those sections and reorganize them along thematic lines, to group them and consider them as two series of data points by which William and Addison chose to document their state. Chapter Four will therefore consider their focus on the construction of civilization as illustrated by the cities of Savannah and Columbus, as well as at four institutions of higher education: Oglethorpe University, the Medical College of Georgia, Georgia Female College, and Brownwood Female Institute. Chapter Five, quite separately but also interconnectedly, will explore their promotion of nature and tourism in the state at Tallulah Gorge and Toccoa Falls, two smaller waterfalls, and Rock Mountain (now known as Stone Mountain).

Like the *Gazetteer* before it, *Georgia Illustrated* denied the static interpretations of its predecessors and instead celebrated a state transformed by decades of change and finally coming into bloom. It radically declared in a firm voice that Georgia was neither a divine garden nor a barbarous desert, but rather a site where the South was at last achieving parity with the North. To tell the story of the book is to tell the story of its authors' youthful enthusiasm for an idea, a landscape, their home. It is to capture them in a moment of innocence as they grew into

manhood, found their own voices, and set out to make careers for themselves. This is worth doing because the book they produced captured Georgia in its own moment of innocence, as it matured enough to be defined on its own terms by its own people, who celebrated themselves for having made a civilized place out of the wilderness.

Defining Georgia on their own terms meant that William and Addison produced a beautiful and highly-selective work of art rather than comprehensive scientific record. Outside travelers/writers had failed to see the proverbial forest for the trees; the brothers saw instead only the most picturesque stretches of verdure and willfully ignored everything else. They remained completely silent on every one of the disquieting aspects of the world they knew. They overlooked the vast majority the state in which they lived in favor of a brief sampling of its most attractive circumstances and views. William commented in his introduction that there were “scenes of loveliness . . . among the green savannas and dense forests of the ‘low country,’” but not one of them appeared in the book.<sup>6</sup> Neither did marshes, alligators, nor trees hung with Spanish moss. Neither did plantations, cotton or rice fields, nor slave markets; nothing, in short, that was distinctively Southern. Instead, over the course of twelve essays and related engravings, *Georgia Illustrated* managed to cover only very particular views of two cities, four institutions of higher education, four waterfalls, and one mountain in two different views. William and Addison’s book offered compelling evidence that Georgia had been misconstrued and misrepresented by generations of outside observers, but in place of those earlier versions they offered only an idealized rendering of what they and other intellectually-minded Georgians wanted to imagine it to be.

What they wanted it to be was civilized, cultured, educated, evolved to the point that Georgians could finally speak for themselves and, in speaking, proclaim their state to be equal to

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<sup>6</sup> William C. Richards, “Introduction,” in *Georgia Illustrated*, 1.

anywhere else in the Union. Adiel Sherwood began this process. His *Gazetteer* challenged outsider accounts of Georgia by laying down a new breed of locally-informed textual and geographic credentials. Given the opportunity, however, he alluded to nothing that even hinted at Southern distinctiveness. His Georgia was not exotic and different, but rather common, knowable, and as safe and familiar as the landscapes and towns of New England. William and Addison then added elegance and erudition to the record, along with a vision of what at least part of the state looked like and meant to its citizens. And what it looked like was America.

There are six sections in their book dedicated to what had come from a century of building Georgia. Considered collectively, those sections are a natural extension of what Sherwood had begun. Each also continues the envisioning of a place started by Basil Hall's *Camera Lucida*, but focuses on entrenched markers of civilization rather than symbols of a barely nascent social order. Although each contains a full-page image by Addison, only the two sections dedicated to Savannah and Columbus were written by the brothers. The remaining four, all dedicated to educational institutions across the state, were written by invited contributors who were affiliated with those schools.

William's remarks on Savannah appear relatively lackluster when compared with his other essays in the volume. This was perhaps a result of the fact that so many others had written so much else about the city, yet something had to be printed to go alongside Addison's image of the Greene/Pulaski Monument and Christ Church. Not even four decades had passed since Englishman John Davis denounced Savannah as an otherworldly "desart [sic] scene" in which "every inhabitant wears goggles over his eyes." Basil Hall later challenged this, noting that he began his exploration of the state there and found it "very tastefully laid out" and "particularly striking," especially for its "several tall spires . . . mingling pleasantly enough with the grove of

trees planted in the streets.” Sherwood had written of the city in approving yet purely statistical terms in the first three editions of his book. Savannah, by his account, was remarkable for the rapid expansion of its economy during the first three decades of the nineteenth century, predicated upon massive increases in shipments of cotton, rice, and tobacco, and the ways by which its citizens had used this financial boon to beautify their city. Yet other than noting the number of inhabitants, newspapers and important buildings, he offered only that the city was “regularly laid out,” “ornamented” with a number of shade trees, and overall notable for its “splendor and beauty.” William followed suit and commented that the city was “laid off in a regular manner,” around a series of squares where “a number of trees are planted . . . [to create] a beautiful appearance.”<sup>7</sup>

Addison’s engraving gives visual form to Hall’s tall spires nestled among the trees. Rising up at the center of the image is a marble obelisk, the city’s 1825 monument to Revolutionary War generals Nathanael Greene and Casimir Pulaski. It framed by a pair of trees that part to reveal it as if were a hidden treasure, a gem of art and history in the midst of a pastoral city.<sup>8</sup> Visible behind it to the left it is the Bank of the State of Georgia, and to the right, Christ Church. This recently constructed house of worship, William noted in his text, was exactly modeled after two ancient temples on the Acropolis. It is an exemplar of architectural “grace” and “chaste simplicity,” built by a citizenry that shared the “exquisitely refined taste of the Athenians.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Captain Basil Hall, *Travels*, 202-203; Sherwood, *A Gazetteer of the State of Georgia*, 158-159; William C. Richards, “Pulaski Monument—Christ Church—Savannah,” *Georgia Illustrated*, 19.

<sup>8</sup> As William noted in his text, the cornerstone of the monument was laid by General Lafayette during his visit to the city in 1825. The obelisk remained a monument to both Greene and Pulaski until a second monument, dedicated solely to Pulaski, was raised on Monterey Square in 1853. The obelisk in Addison’s engraving has been known ever since as commemoration only of Nathanael Greene.

<sup>9</sup> William C. Richards, “Pulaski Monument—Christ Church—Savannah,” 20.



Figure 4.1. T. Addison Richards, “Pulaski Monument—Christ Church [Savannah],” in *Georgia Illustrated* (1842).

The level of refinement credited to those citizens is made abundantly clear when Addison’s image is considered against a related engraving from one of the most popular illustrated books of the period: Nathaniel Parker Willis and William H. Bartlett’s *American Scenery*. Willis and Bartlett’s essays and engravings had been released in serial form in London

from 1837-1839, then published as a bound and completed volume in 1840. William took on this volume in his introduction, remarked that it was “the best collection of American Scenery now extant,” but noted, despite the fact that Willis was an American, that it was the “production of [an] English artist” (Bartlett), “published in London” by the “English Press.” *Georgia Illustrated*, on the other hand—and despite the fact that its creators were themselves created in England and lived there for the first decade of their lives—was “thoroughly and exclusively American in its design and execution.”<sup>10</sup> Moreover, *American Scenery* contained no mention or image of any location further south than Virginia. The sole American monument depicted in the volume was one newly-erected in Baltimore, ostensibly in honor of Washington, but intentionally located on land “divided into building lots” to spur the development of the west end of the city.<sup>11</sup>



Figure 4.2. W.H. Bartlett, “Washington’s Monument at Baltimore,” in N.P. Willis and W.H. Bartlett, *American Scenery* (1840).

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<sup>10</sup> William C. Richards, “Introduction,” in *Georgia Illustrated*, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Nathaniel Parker Willis and William Henry Bartlett, *American Scenery; or, Land, Lake, and River: Illustrations of Transatlantic Nature*, vol. 2 (London: George Virtue, 1840), 92.



Bartlett's figures are drawn from across the economic divide, including men in fine suits and top hats, men in shirtsleeves and vests, and, in the foreground, a man carrying a broom. They walk carefully across the uneven ground of a garish investment project, through a landscape gashed and gouged and cleared in preparation for the buildings that would come, and appear to dream only of what might be. Yet Addison and William's Savannahians are comparatively further along in every part of the process. They stroll peacefully across the park-like setting of one of their city's famous squares, beneath mature trees and an ancient-looking obelisk, before ancient-looking temples to Christianity and American finance. Here, the book implies, is an American Acropolis, a place formed—as Bartram had it—by “the true sons of liberty,” where the God of Abraham and the gods of the Revolution are seamlessly comingled with modern economies and ancient ideals.

If Addison's engraving played on the long history and entrenched culture of Savannah, his image and text of Columbus celebrated the miracle of what had been recently carved out of the wilderness on the opposite side of the state. Thirteen years earlier Basil Hall rolled into an unknown clearing in the woods and promptly snickered at a resident's suggestion that he was standing in what would soon be the center of an expansive city. His Camera Lucida image displayed nothing more than a grouping of log cabins and few stakes in the ground. But Hall's resident was right. Sherwood's *Gazetteer* noted one year later that the city already contained “about 100 framed buildings most of which were finished and neatly painted, besides two good brick buildings that were under way.” He reprinted this dry account in his 1837 edition, along with a short addendum that noted that the previous eight years in Columbus had seen a fivefold increase in population and the construction of all “the usual public buildings.”<sup>12</sup> These were useful statistics, to be sure, but they gave little substance to the true extent of what had occurred

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<sup>12</sup> Sherwood, *A Gazetteer of the State of Georgia*, 156.

in that clearing beside the Chattahoochee. It was in this context, then, that Addison accepted Sherwood's call for something "more elegantly written" and introduced a bit of art and poetry into the mix.



Figure 4.3. T. Addison Richards, "City of Columbus," in *Georgia Illustrated* (1842).

His engraving of Columbus depicts a family group on a hill across from the city. As with their counterparts in the image of Savannah, they inhabit not a wilderness in the process of being tamed, but a pastoral estate already made. Addison noted in his text that the view was taken from the property of Dr. S.M. Ingersoll, and it is undoubtedly he, his wife, his children, and his slaves—barely visible in their dark dresses and head scarves—who people the scene. Ingersoll was one of the founders of and most prominent men in the city, one of its largest landholders,

owner of its mill, and master of an enormous plantation on the Alabama side of the Chattahoochee.<sup>13</sup> He is depicted here standing atop a park-like hill on his land, gesturing towards both a steamboat that ascends the river and, as if rising by the force of his sheer will, the metropolis itself. His raised arm draws the attention of his family and viewer alike to the remarkable world he and others have made.

Prominently placing Ingersoll's name and image in his record of Columbus was a shrewd move on Addison's part. The well-dressed figures and their slaves instantly signify that even on its westernmost frontier, Georgia had become a place of refinement. Name dropping also allowed him, by association, to stake a position for himself among the elite. Earlier chroniclers of the state such as Charles Janson had been subject to doubt and ridicule for claiming to have had access to the most prominent families, but Addison circumvented the matter altogether by putting forth visual proof of the circles into which he was invited. And they were very specific circles, at that. Dr. Ingersoll was widely reported at the time to be a close friend and associate of Samuel F.B. Morse. Morse's father, Jedidiah, had written of one of the first and best-known geographical guides to the United States, ca. 1789, in which he argued that Georgia possessed "the most flattering prospects" for contributing to American intellectual and cultural life.<sup>14</sup> Samuel F.B. Morse, even beyond his fame for the invention of the electromagnetic telegraph, was professor of art at New York University, one of the most famous painters in the United States, and president of the National Academy of Design. Given William and Addison's agenda of promoting the intellectual and cultural life of Georgia, and especially considering Addison's enormous aspirations as an artist, it seems rather likely that he had ulterior motives for so prominently depicting Ingersoll in his image of Columbus.

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<sup>13</sup> For details of Ingersoll's prominence in Columbus and beyond, see Nancy Telfair, *A History of Columbus Georgia 1828-1928* (Columbus, GA: T.J. Peddy, 1929), 85-88.

<sup>14</sup> Jedidiah Morse, *The American Geography*, 450.

One of the surest ways the brothers could demonstrate their intellectual and cultural credentials was by publishing words and images that both stood on their own and demonstrated a mastery of what had come before. William noted in his introduction that one of their goals for *Georgia Illustrated* was to master the form of numerous travel books, especially illustrated ones, which had emanated from the British presses. Chief among these was Willis and Bartlett's *American Scenery*, which did not address Georgia, but he also alluded to others that remained unnamed. Addison commented in private letter that Willis' poetry was on his mind while working on the book, as was the work of Scottish poets such as Robert Burns.<sup>15</sup> Without reading too much into his literary tastes, it is perhaps sufficient to suggest that he was thinking of Scottish poets because he and William were carefully studying William Beattie's *Scotland Illustrated in a Series of Views* (1839). That book, one of several English publications during the 1830s and 40s bearing the title of "\_\_\_ Illustrated," was a successful model of what William and Addison aspired to create. Beattie's introduction to the book explained its necessity as a means of correcting the false imaginings of outsiders, who knew only the Scotland of antiquated myths. Englishmen dreamt of wilderness there, but, Beattie wrote, "Canals have been dug, towns enlarged, villages have sprung up, [and] agriculture has reclaimed the waste and reaped the fruit of her productive labor."<sup>16</sup> Work had been done, cities expanded, civilization made.

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<sup>15</sup> T. Addison Richards to Ann McKinne, 9 March 1841, Jackson and McKinne Family Papers (1817-1871, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>16</sup> William Beattie, M.D., *Scotland Illustrated in a Series of Views* . . . (London: George Virtue, 1839), 2.



Figure 4.4. Thomas Allom, “Coldstream,” in William Beattie, *Scotland Illustrated in a Series of Views* (1838).

One of the first engravings in *Scotland Illustrated* is of the town of Coldstream on the bank of the River Tweed. The image is the work of Thomas Allom, beside Bartlett perhaps the most famed illustrator of English travel books of his generation, and a man whose career Addison undoubtedly admired.<sup>17</sup> Allom’s Coldstream shimmers quietly in the background of the scene. It appears as little more than a series of buildings nestled beneath verdant hills, made visually relevant here only as viewed from the perspective of the figures in the foreground. Considered in light of this antecedent, Addison’s “Columbus” appears a carefully structured attempt to visually demonstrate his knowledge and mastery of the works of his predecessors. Moreover, it proclaims the extent to which American landowners were able to far surpass their European kin. While Allom’s farmers are dressed in the clothes of their caste, bound to the land, and kept distant from the village in the background, Addison’s portrait of Ingersoll presents a man who tamed the wilderness, built a city, and reaped the enormous benefits of that venture.

<sup>17</sup> Allom contributed to or was solely responsible for “Illustrated” volumes on Scotland, the castles and abbeys of England, the Lake District, France, Belgium, Turkey and Italy, the Pyrenees, Syria and the Holy Land, and China, among others. For his career and fame during the 1820s, 30s, and 40s, see Diana Brooks, *Thomas Allom: Catalogue of an exhibition held at the RIBA Heinz Gallery, London, Mar. 26-May 9, 1998* (London: British Architectural Library, RIBA, 1998.)



Yet Ingersoll's story was not that of some idealized European peasant farmer. The benefits he reaped did not come from cutting hay. He had not tamed the wilderness with his own hands. He was a Southern planter. The fertile garden at his feet and the city on his horizon were funded by an abundance of cotton and built on the backs of slaves. Addison knew this reality, lived it, inhaled it with every breath he had ever taken in the state of Georgia. And yet like many white Americans in 1841, South and North, he was content to ignore it. Slaves appear in his images in *Georgia Illustrated* (here, as well as in images of Oglethorpe University and Rock Mountain), but they are never more than staffage figures.<sup>18</sup>



Figure 4.5. Detail of T. Addison Richards, “City of Columbus.”



Figure 4.6. American Anti-Slavery Society broadside (1840).

<sup>18</sup> The phrase “staffage figures,” commonly used by artists in the nineteenth century and by art historians today, refers to small, decorative images of animals and humans in landscape paintings and prints.

The Columbus image inadvertently raises serious issues about the extent of what William and Addison knew versus the limitations of what they were willing to represent. They lived in a household that contained at least four slaves in 1840, in a neighborhood where each of their closest neighbors owned even more, in a county at the heart of Georgia's black belt. Even if the Richards family and their immediate neighbors in Penfield used most or all of their slaves for domestic tasks, they were surrounded by an agricultural and manufacturing system that looked far more imposing. Greene County in 1840 had more horses and livestock than most counties in the state, produced more wheat and corn, and its mills contained more than two thirds of the state's cotton spindles. All of this ran on the lives and labor of an enormous number of slaves: nearly 12,000 in 1840, more than all but eleven other counties in the state.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the overwhelming numbers of slaves they saw and interacted with in their daily lives, William and Addison quite consciously turned a blind eye to them in *Georgia Illustrated*. They did not represent or write about them, other than to use them as symbols of civilization and wealth, because like the vast majority of American citizens at the time, they were products of a national culture of whiteness that taught what to see and what not to see. Slaves were invisible in their eyes. Few American outside of the South prior to the mid-1830s had seen images of slavery other than the generic-but-politically-benign figures used in newspaper advertisements seeking to recapture runaways. As the abolition movement gained ground during that decade, William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator* and especially the *Almanac of the American Anti-Slavery Society* began to publish pictorial evidence in support of their positions. Broadsides such as "Illustrations from the Anti-Slavery Almanac for 1840" sought at long last to make the horrors of slavery visible. But while that organization's treatise, *Slavery As It Is* (1839), sold nearly

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<sup>19</sup> Census information compiled from U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Compendium of the Sixth Census, 1840*. Only the following counties had a greater population of slaves: Burke, Chatham, Hancock, Henry, Meriwether, Monroe, Muscogee (location of Columbus), Richmond, Stewart, Talbot, and Troup.

100,000 copies in the United States, and despite their broadside depictions of egregious violence against slave bodies, change was slow in coming. Attention would not truly be paid for at least another decade.<sup>20</sup> Sherwood saw no threat and largely ignored both slavery and abolitionists in his 1837 *Gazetteer*, mentioning only that Georgian planters should vacation in their own state, rather than traveling “north of the Potomac” with their “servants,” because “abolitionism is so rife in some of the Northern States.”<sup>21</sup> It was not still rife enough in the early 1840s, however, for William and Addison to feel a need to address it in their book. And not a single one of the New York journals that glowingly reviewed *Georgia Illustrated* in the wake of its publication even mentioned the book’s avoidance of slavery at all. No one seems to have noticed.

The engraving of Columbus is the sum of these many parts. Ingersoll and his wife are able to leisurely survey the world he has made because a female slave tends to the small child by their side. She is represented as little more than an anthropomorphic shape, almost indecipherable from her surroundings. Certainly Addison, like so many of his generation, relegated her to a position far below what he imagined as his own. Still, placing her in the image allowed him to tacitly acknowledge how many Georgians cultivated their land and made their money. It also allowed him depict her as well-dressed, to place her in the vicinity and implied trust of the Ingersoll family, and therefore to challenge the few contemporary images of naked, beaten, and hunted slaves. There is not a word about slavery in all of *Georgia Illustrated*, but in images such as this the message is clear: nowhere to be found are the ill-treated cogs in a vast

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<sup>20</sup> My thoughts on historical invisibility and my language are taken directly from Anne Firor Scott. Scott explained in her 1984 presidential address to the Organization of American Historians: “Because our minds are clouded, we do not see the things that are before our eyes. What clouds our minds is, of course, the culture that at any given time teaches us what to see and what not to see.” Anne Firor Scott, “On Seeing and Not Seeing: A Case of Historical Invisibility,” *The Journal of American History* vol. 71, no. 1 (June 1984): 19. On the dearth of antebellum images of slavery, see John Michael Vlach, *The Planter’s Prospect*, 67-89. See also Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780-1865* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 14-18, 38, 78-85; and Rebecca Cahill McIntyre, “Promoting the South: Tourism and Southern Identity, 1840-1920,” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alabama, 2004), 73-75.

<sup>21</sup> Sherwood, *Gazetteer* (1837), 151.



agricultural machine, as imagined by the abolitionist press, but only much-beloved and trusted servants such as existed in the finest households of Boston or New York.

Addison included the slave woman here not because he was concerned with the person she was, but rather because she was an emblem of the wealth and power of her master. Her master, in turn, beyond what including his image could potentially do for the young artist's career, was included because he was emblematic of the development that had reshaped Georgia. Addison used the text accompanying his image to capitalize on these themes of wealth and progress, and he expanded them into a grand tapestry of art, history, literature, and, as a convenient byproduct, the display of his own erudition. His five-and-a-half-page essay on the city of Columbus was the longest in the entire book. And like his engraving, which stunningly updated Hall's image of an embryonic encampment in the woods, it asserted that a decade and a half of (white) ambition and (unnamed) labor had transformed "the impervious and trackless desert of yesterday" into a navigable, fertile garden.<sup>22</sup>

The few writers who commented on the city since Basil Hall witnessed its creation had taken notice of these changes, but none wrote of Columbus as anything more its individual parts. Englishman James Logan passed through the in the mid-1830s, ignored the slaves who built the place, and remarked only that it was "a rising town," with "several large brick stores," and a hotel that was "extremely dirty."<sup>23</sup> The New York publishers of *The North American Tourist* (1839) incorporated ample information from Sherwood's statistical guide in noting that Georgia was in the throes of rapid growth and expansion. That remarkable development, they suggested, had produced history-less but thriving places such as the new city of Columbus. It was a wellspring of capitalism, where "the stores are well supplied and the warehouses filled with

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<sup>22</sup> T. Addison Richards, "City of Columbus; A Letter to the Editor," in *Georgia Illustrated*, 36.

<sup>23</sup> James Logan, *Notes of a Journey Through Canada, the United States of America, and the West Indies* (Edinburgh: Fraser and Co., 1838), 172.

cotton, and the place with planters and strangers, giving life and animation to trade.” The defining characteristic of the city, they concluded after several brief lines in which they avoided any mention of who picked the cotton or stocked the warehouses, was the appearance of “wealth easily acquired.”<sup>24</sup> Yet Addison seems to have taken Sherwood’s complaint to heart. He understood that none of these outside chroniclers were well acquainted with the state. He also appreciated his neighbor’s concession that the *Gazetteer* lacked the poetry to give life to that which it described. Faced with blank pages and countless possibilities, then, he took full advantage of opportunity before him and gave meaning and voice to the city. It was, he claimed in word and image, not merely a rising town with all the usual buildings, but “the tasteful residence of refinement and opulence.” It was a place where, thanks to the hard work of men like Ingersoll (if not those they owned), “the wilderness has blossomed as the rose.”<sup>25</sup>

Distinguishing himself from his predecessors, who had at best only pieced together thin topographical records of Columbus over the past thirteen years, Addison prided himself on being able to dig deeper. He claimed to be the first chronicler of the city to “look beyond the surface of things” and write a travel account, an essay of place that appealed to “the reflecting mind.”<sup>26</sup> His instincts told him that understanding Columbus meant understanding that its history did not begin with the deeding of land in 1828. So while he, too, dutifully noted the number and function of new buildings, he also couched them in the foundations of the Indian past.

The worth of recognizing this history was not in what the Creeks had built, which Addison quickly dismissed as nothing more than a few temporary wigwams, but in what they believed. Stories of “their imaginary Great Spirit” and the lesser deities who formed and controlled local nature were nothing more than “pretty fictions” to one schooled in the Baptist

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<sup>24</sup> *The North American Tourist* (New York: A.T. Goodrich, 1839), 466-467.

<sup>25</sup> T. Addison Richards, “City of Columbus,” in *Georgia Illustrated*, 36.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

faith. But a “reflecting mind” also appreciated that they proclaimed “the existence of an All-controlling Power.”<sup>27</sup> Addison had no concern for what had become of the Creeks or the specifics of their religion, but took solace in his ability to compress aspects of their faith beneath the banner of Christianity. Most important of all, he celebrated their faith for being based upon “consciousness and adoration of nature’s wonders,” a concept which allowed him to see in it both a prefiguration of Transcendentalist thought and an approach to the natural world that was in line with his own interests and agenda as an aspiring landscape artist. In his analysis, the removal of Georgia’s first inhabitants and the subsequent blossoming of white settlement was simply divine providence playing out in this corner of the American wilderness.

Evoking the Indian past also allowed Addison to suggest just how much change had occurred over a relatively short period of time. It added a rich layer of complexity, of local knowledge, a history that Columbians lived with every day even if English travelers and other non-Georgians knew nothing of it. It made even more compelling his attention to the sheer magnitude of what had been built there in order to update, if not wholly refute, Basil Hall’s image of log cabins in the woods. The Columbus Richards recorded was now a city of “pretty gardens” that offered the visitor “many pleasant walks and rides in every direction.” It had, he wrote, echoing Sherwood’s statistical account of the place, “many fine buildings,” including a towering brick court house “equal to any in the state,” or perhaps even better because of its two “fine Grecian Doric porticoes.” It had five churches and an equal number of banks, including one “after the style of the Athenian Temple of the Winds,” as well as “an unusual number of chaste and elegant mansions.” It had cotton and wool factories, “one of the finest cotton warehouses in Georgia,” four good hotels, and was serviced daily by a dozen steamboats, and countless coaches arriving from and departing in every direction. All told, it was a situation

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

promising “future growth and ultimate importance,” a neo-classical site of both “civilization and mental culture.”<sup>28</sup>

This is the core difference between Addison Richards’s Columbus and the city first recorded by Basil Hall and subsequently acknowledged by writers like Logan and the publishers of *The North American Tourist*. Hall’s words and image told a quaint story about backwoods Southerners struggling to create a town. Logan and the *Tourist*, and to an extent even Sherwood, accounted for what those settlers built, but failed to ascribe meaning to it. Addison spun his essay in a different direction. Yes, he too listed the number and types of buildings, but he alone couched his statistical recitation within the Romantic rhetoric of divinity rediscovered in American nature. He offered not a haphazard group of random individuals on a chance spot of land, but rather a team of noble figures acting in accordance with the precepts of classical history, the sad beauty of the native past, and the plans of God. Outsiders who saw only individual parts of Columbus missed what Addison aimed to capture in his long view: a glistening white city on a hill.

One of the most endearing aspects of Addison’s essay on Columbus is that it was written in the form of an extended letter to William. It is the only essay of the sort in the book. Its unique framework not only differentiates it from the remainder of the book, but also demonstrates the brothers’ creativity and ability to work within a series of formats. Most notable of all is that it does this rather inconspicuously, blanketing their agenda in a gauzy layer of charm and intimacy. This is at work from the opening paragraph, where Addison claimed his sole purpose in writing was not to create a travel essay on Columbus but to offer “proof of continued love” for his “dear brother.” He then proceeded to demonstrate the strength of that fraternal affection by engaging in subtle but sustained teasing. William was engaged to be married

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 39-40.

several months after the date of Addison's letter, and his younger brother took every opportunity to poke at this sensitive subject. He noted that he was sending along a drawing of the falls on the Chattahoochee, known as "the Lover's Leap," which, he slyly reminded William, "is your favorite haunt." Even better, he commented on the beauty of some of the small islands in the Chattahoochee favored by "the city fair and their gallant beaux," and remarked it would have interested William, "were your heart as free as in days ago" as it was "just such a spot, mon cher frère, as would please you."<sup>29</sup>

The inclusion of these playful remarks in an essay written in the guise of a personal letter effectively invited the antebellum reader to share in a private moment between two young brothers. The information about Columbus was thus repackaged, made to seem less like a treatise and more like an informal note on what locals knew and travelers would find. To modern eyes, it is also a reminder of what a personal venture *Georgia Illustrated* was. Everything in the book brings us back time and again to the world in which William and Addison lived, what they knew, and what they aspired to be. After all, the essay's passages on "refinement and opulence," "the reflecting mind," and "civilization and mental culture" revealed as much about its author as they did his subject. Neither brother could have authoritatively identified and commented on those elements of society if he did not already associate with them.

Long before they became authors, William and Addison were readers. Much of what they wrote was influenced by what they lived and knew and read. At their father's store they were surrounded and inspired by a family and neighborhood of thinkers and writers, a community of Georgians interested and invested in the advance of the "reflecting mind," and by shelves and shelves of books. Some of those books were standard Baptist fare. More importantly, there were works of literature and poetry, biography and history, science and travel

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 35, 36, 38-39.

accounts. They came from the pens of authors as far away as Europe and as close in as Penfield's main street. To put it bluntly, they modeled their book on other books, included images inspired by other images, and frequently quoted obscure and unidentified lines of poetry.

For example, Addison included the phrase "every dear scene of enchantment more dear," in his chapter on Columbus. The line appears midway through the essay, but is set apart from the rest of the text, placed in quotation marks and printed in a different font. It was clearly intended as a private aside, a secret code decipherable only by those who deemed themselves adherents of "mental culture." Precious few readers would have been able to identify it as a line from the Irish poet Thomas Moore, in a poem which had appeared in the September 1839 edition of *Blackwood's Magazine*. Perhaps a few more would have picked up on Addison's subtle references to Jonathan Swift elsewhere in the essay, but the conceit remained the same.<sup>30</sup>

William and Addison's proclamations of intellectual and cultural connectedness lead directly to the heart of the book they produced. There is nothing remarkable about two young men puffing out their chests. On the surface, their bravado reads as little more than an attempt to make a space for themselves at a table of educated and refined adults. Hidden from view, however, is that they, and especially their father, also understood how fortunate they were to be able to stake out such a position.

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<sup>30</sup> Thomas Moore, "The Meeting of the Waters," in *Blackwood's Magazine* 46 (Sept 1839): 374. It is worth noting that Addison's essay is in the form of a letter dated April 1841, which is a matter of weeks after the private letter in which he referred to his sister's "Lilliputian" party decorations. The nearly-simultaneous references to Jonathan Swift in *Georgia Illustrated* and in Addison's private letters are certainly not coincidental. The distance between William and Addison's private lives and what appeared in their book was a short one, indeed.

Neither Addison nor William seems to have been concerned that the publication of their book came on the heels of Edgar Allan Poe's satirical essay, "How to Write a Blackwood Article." In this mockery of the intellectual pretensions of his fellow authors, Poe skewered those who peppered work with random bits of poetry, italicized foreign phrases (Addison remarked on "la belle nature") and fleeting literary references. If Poe's essay marks the rise of a more progressive approach to literature, William and Addison remained firmly entrenched at the conservative end of the spectrum. As will be addressed presently, they incorporated all the elements Poe criticized in almost every one of their chapters in *Georgia Illustrated*.



Figure 4.7. T. Addison Richards, “Oglethorpe University,” in *Georgia Illustrated* (1842).

Rather than dedicating any of the remaining four sections on civilization in *Georgia Illustrated* to cotton warehouses or mills, businesses or government, cities or plantations, or even libraries or theaters, they instead focused exclusively on educational institutions. Their choice to include essays on Oglethorpe University, the Medical College of Georgia, Brownwood Female Institute, and the Georgia Female College seems a natural one for these young residents of a college town. It speaks volumes to what they understood as the hallmarks of civilized societies and the seedbed of the “reflecting mind.” There is a remarkable level of symbiosis between their reasons for being interested in “mental culture,” as the offspring of a man who was previously excluded from it, and as young men whose lives were dictated by it in Penfield, and the needs of contemporary Georgians to express and celebrate the educational impulse that had recently transformed their state. The decision to focus on educational institutions was also a strong

defensive push against what had been previously published and was widely-believed of the state. It was a bold challenge to the oft-repeated stereotypes of Georgia as a moral and intellectual backwater, a cultural void of plantations and rude cabins, indolent planters, abused slaves, and degenerate poor whites.

Addison's four images of academic institutions were intended to permanently refute past rumors about the lack of intellectual drive in the state. His engraving of Oglethorpe University is typical of the entire group. Here, as with the images of other schools, the focus is on the depiction of the main building as a neo-classical temple to the mind. Arrayed before it is a series of exceptionally elegant and well-mannered figures. They are not average students on an average day, as Addison clearly had no interest in depicting the realities of college life, but rather a series of adult patricians on display. They stroll, stop and engage in polite conversations, or even ride by in elegant carriages driven by finely-dressed slaves. One man, perhaps a slave waiting for his owner, even takes a moment to lovingly scratch the head of a dog. All told, they are a series of potent visual cues suggesting the extent to which education in the state had already produced a generation of highly refined and genteel ladies and gentleman.

Such claims spoke not only to the intellectual and cultural aspirations of the Richards family, but also to the rehabilitation of many of their fellow Georgians who remained a bit sensitive about having been repeatedly cast as academically inferior Americans. Basil Hall suggested as much in his account of the state, and especially in his etchings of Georgia's inhabitants. Yet Adiel Sherwood noted that the hardest label to remove was not pasted on by generations of outside travel writers, but rather, and quite unintentionally, by one of Georgia's most famous authors. By the time the 1837 edition of the *Gazetteer* was released, former Greene



County-resident Judge Augustus Baldwin Longstreet's *Georgia Scenes* (1835) had become one of the best known books about the state.<sup>31</sup>

Longstreet's humorous tales presented his fellow Georgians, almost without exception, as the wild and violent, ignorant and crude denizens of a backwards world. The most famous characters in the book repeatedly mocked and challenged all outward signs of civilization and learning. For example, the story "The Turn Out," centers on a group of respectable adults gathered to cheer on their children as they physically attacked their male teacher in an attempt to earn a day off from school. More damning still was the story's description of the schoolhouse: it was nothing more than "a simple log pen, about twenty feet square, with a door-way cut out of the logs, to which was fitted a rude door made of clapboards, and swung on wooden hinges." Inside this ramshackle structure, which the besieged teacher insisted was an "Academy," was "a large three inch plank, (if it deserve [sic] that name, for it was wrought from the half of a tree's trunk, entirely with the axe,) attached to the logs by the means of wooden pins," which "served the whole school for a writing desk."<sup>32</sup>

Edgar Allan Poe extolled Longstreet's genius in an 1836 review, writing that the book presented an "an exquisitely discriminating and penetrating understanding" of Georgia's residents.<sup>33</sup> But Longstreet never meant it that way. He complained in the foreword to a subsequent edition of the book that, "The design of the 'Georgia Scenes' has been wholly misapprehended by the public." He explained that the stories were intended as neither "fancy sketches," nor as a commentary on modern life in the state, but rather a folk history of "the first

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<sup>31</sup> First printed in regional newspapers, Longstreet's short, humorous stories quickly gained so much fame that they were published in Augusta as bound volume in 1835. That volume was so popular that the rights to it were then purchased by Harper and Brothers, the most successful publishing house of the period, and subsequently re-released in 23 separate editions between 1840 and 1897. Rachels, *Augustus Baldwin Longstreet's Georgia Scenes Completed*, 269.

<sup>32</sup> Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, "The Turn Out," in Rachels, ed, *Augustus Baldwin Longstreet's Georgia Scenes completed*, 49, 52.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 343, n191.

fifty years of our republic in the course of which . . . the Southern States underwent almost an entire revolution.” More directly to the point, he admonished all who would put current stock in his characterizations that “at this date hardly a trace of the society of the first thirty years of the republic is to be found.”<sup>34</sup>

One of Longstreet’s most public allies in this position was none other than Adiel Sherwood. The two men had become close friends in the 1820s, before either published the books that made them famous. Judge Longstreet, a devout Methodist, was so fond of Sherwood that he even asked him to baptize him during an 1827 Baptist revival in Greene County. Sherwood consented, but was ultimately prevented from the task when others reminded both men that such an action was against the precepts of both churches. Longstreet moved away from Greene County later that year, but returned to its vicinity in 1840 when he was elected president of Emory College (later Emory University) in nearby Oxford, Georgia. Over the next two decades he went on to serve in that role at Centenary College in Louisiana, the University of Mississippi, and finally South Carolina College (later University of South Carolina). Still, accidental heresies and academic peregrinations aside, the two men remained friends throughout their lives. It was only natural, then, that when Longstreet’s intentions and Georgia’s developing culture were threatened by the misunderstandings of others, Sherwood rushed to their defense.<sup>35</sup>

It was a position Sherwood likely felt required to take, even beyond the defense of a friend, as he had himself been very selectively quoted in John Howard Hinton’s *History and*

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<sup>34</sup> Quoted in O.P. Fitzgerald, *Judge Longstreet: A Life Sketch* (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1891), 164-165. Several modern scholars have convincingly argued that Longstreet would have ‘read’ differently to audiences divided according along lines of class and geography. For example, Michael O’Brien claims non-elite, non-Southern audiences would have likely misunderstood the author’s “double bluff” and imagined Longstreet and his characters, representative of all Georgians, as uneducated, uncivilized hicks. Elite Southern readers, however, would have read his folk language and folk tales as a strategy that mimicked the vulgar as a means of reasserting both Longstreet’s gentility and theirs. O’Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 1: 419. See also Kristie Hamilton, *America’s Sketchbook: the Cultural Life of a 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Literary Genre* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1998), 75; and Scott Romine, *The Narrative Forms of Southern Community*, 24-64.

<sup>35</sup> Sherwood and Boykin, *Memoir of Adiel Sherwood*, 232-233.

*Topography of the United States* (1830). Hinton was a London pastor and an anti-slavery activist who made little effort to hide his disdain for the state as an immoral backwater. As evidence, he cited two authoritative sources: a former governor of Georgia, and Adiel Sherwood. The “late governor, Henry Ellis,” Hinton noted, had once written that though he had traveled the world, he ““never felt such heats any where as in Georgia.”” Ellis had ultimately concluded that few people died unnatural deaths because of the heat and climate, but said of life in Georgia ““one can scarce call it living.”” Hinton failed to mention, however, that Ellis was a royal governor sent to a colony whose climate and people he despised, who served only from 1758 to 1760, and who fled back to London to denounce his experiences there. Likewise, Hinton failed to quote any of Sherwood’s boastful information about the progress of education in the state, and instead merely recorded, ““In 1801,’ says Mr. Sherwood, ‘only about six academies had been incorporated in the state.’” Though he acknowledged that ample resources had since been devoted to education, and that Sherwood said it now ““seemed to be more appreciated,”” he focused instead on Sherwood’s contention that there remained in Georgia ““thousands who . . . know not a letter.””<sup>36</sup>

Sherwood vehemently reasserted in the 1837 *Gazetteer* that the state’s old reputation as a realm of closed minds was a vestige of the past. The very purpose of his guide, after all, was to demonstrate that Georgia was far more civilized than it had been even twenty years earlier. He ignored Hinton’s misuse of his work, but suggested that the progress of education was most clearly attested to by considering the information in the *Gazetteer* against a careful and historically-sensitive reading of the “vivid picture of our *former* manners and customs. . . . [by] the pen of Judge Longstreet.” To reinforce the point he made it again elsewhere in the book,

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<sup>36</sup> John Henry Hinton, *The History and Topography of the United States*, vol. 2 (1830; Boston: Samuel Walker, 1843), 463, 464.

reminding readers of the “much favored” *Georgia Scenes* that it “represents customs and manners of *former* days – days when there was less refinement than now.”<sup>37</sup> That refinement had not yet produced a full generation of Georgia writers, although—as noted in his call for someone to document the state with learning and elegance—Sherwood was certain it was on coming soon. It was simply a bit further out on the horizon than elsewhere in the nation, but this was a byproduct of the fact that Georgians had been busy making a state: “Our fathers and brothers have been compelled, while they have felled trees and cleared our lands, to stand sentinel, the one for the other.” “Literary leisure,” Sherwood explained, “[had] not been afforded them.”<sup>38</sup>

The core of Sherwood’s argument was that Georgia was no longer a wild and little known, a trackless ocean, a wilderness of unmannered men, but a civilized incubator of “mental culture.” He thus celebrated his friend Longstreet for rather famously creating a literature of place, but simultaneously demanded that his reputation should be as the writer of charming fictions about the long lost past rather than accurate portrayals of the present. Longstreet agreed, even if no one believed him. The ramshackle cabins and log desks were disappearing. The violent citizenry wallowing blissfully in the mire of their own ignorance was disappearing. The ax-wielding and land-clearing fathers and sons were disappearing, replaced by a new generation that worked tirelessly to ensure that Longstreet’s Georgia was but a memory. The *Gazetteer* went to great lengths to statistically demonstrate the extent to which that new generation had plowed what had been cleared, profited from what they planted, and enthusiastically invested in

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<sup>37</sup> Sherwood, *Gazetteer* (1837), 43, 84. Italics mine. Sherwood had been much less convinced of the state’s refinement in the first two editions of his *Gazetteer*. Rather than being convinced that former customs were fading, he admonished his readers in 1829 for their lack of interest in common school education: “Why is it that school-keeping is so disreputable an employment in our State? . . . If learning is honorable, you cannot separate the teacher from a share in it. But how inconsistent is it in parents to desire their children to rise to stations of honor, and yet provide no means for their permanent education!” Sherwood, *A Gazetteer of the State of Georgia*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: J.W. Martin and W.K. Boden, 1829), 193.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

education. “In no country,” Sherwood wrote in 1837, “is the spirit of education more roused up. In 1829, the estimate was that about 27,000 pupils attend our academies and schools; now more than 50,000 are gathering knowledge from those fountains.”<sup>39</sup>

Sherwood’s defensiveness, which reverberated through *Georgia Illustrated*’s essays on and images of higher education, sheds light on one of many small spaces in which sectional distinctiveness fomented during the 1820s and 30s. The United States had only eighteen colleges and universities at the end of the eighteenth century, but nearly five hundred by the Civil War. While most Northern schools during this period pushed away from the legal mechanics of their foundings and functioned as private denominational institutions, as all colonial colleges had been, almost all new Southern schools remained under auspices of their respective state legislatures. Northern critics quickly latched on to the fact that those legislatures were eager appear culturally and intellectually progressive, and created colleges by decree with abandon, far outpacing the North, but then consistently failed to adequately fund the schools (with the sole exceptions of South Carolina College and the University of Virginia) or support liberal expansions of their curricula. They increasingly denigrated Southern colleges, which frequently imported faculty and administrators from the Northeast, as the poor relations of their own increasingly idealized bastions of higher education. Despite the fact that William and Mary was the second oldest college in the nation, that the University of Virginia had more faculty than almost any other school in the nation, or that the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill had the highest tuition in the nation, the schools from New Jersey to Massachusetts collectively and quite pointedly decided in the 1820s that they alone would set the standard for all higher education in the United States. Southern schools during that decade were thus completely excluded from the nation’s first associations of higher education. This cultural and regional bias

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 43.

also translated into the rejection of South Carolina College's application to host the South's first Phi Beta Kappa chapter.<sup>40</sup>

Sherwood's concern for documenting the rapid spread of education, and especially the attention lavished on it by the Richards brothers, should be read as a reflection of this developing sectional awareness. Northern criticism of the failure of Southern legislatures to fund what they put on paper certainly resonated with many Georgians, who were aware that their Revolutionary founders had chartered the first state university in the nation but were then surpassed in building it. But, as Sherwood and the Richards brothers made clear, that citizenry was also aware that they had eventually made up for lost time and now widely believed they should be accorded respect as one of the most educationally progressive states in the nation. They took pride in having shed what Longstreet depicted as the educational vestiges of the frontier, with approximately 50,000 white students in common schools across the state by 1840. By then the citizens of the state had also created and funded 180 academies, existing below the collegiate level but above the common school, and they would increase that number to 242 by 1860. Perhaps most importantly, although only the University of Georgia existed during the first decade of the nineteenth century, the state could boast of having chartered and built eleven colleges and universities by 1840, and would go on to have thirty-two in operation by 1860.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Roger L. Geiger, "Introduction: New Themes in the History of Nineteenth-Century Colleges," in Roger Geiger, ed., *The American College in the Nineteenth Century* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000), 1, 9, 16-21. For a broad overview of that changes that took place in higher education between 1800 and 1860, see Robert L. Church and Michael W. Sedlak, "The Antebellum College and the Academy," in Lester F. Goodchild and Harold S. Wechsler, eds., *The History of Higher Education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Old Tappan, NJ: Pearson, 1997), 131-135, 139-141. Michael Sugrue argues that the educational biases of the North were no small issue, and indeed played heavily in the rise of Southern defensiveness during the 1820s and early 1830s. His excellent analysis of South Carolina College during this period not only reveals much about the ways that regional identity was formed and taught in the years leading up to the Nullification Crisis, but also how the proponents of Nullification later became the parents and influential teachers of those who lead the Secession movement. Michael Sugrue, "'We Desired Our Future Rulers to be Educated Men': South Carolina College, the Defense of Slavery, and the Development of Secessionist Politics," in Geiger, ed, *The American College*, 93-110.

<sup>41</sup> For an overview of education in Georgia between 1840 and 1860, including the numbers of students and schools, see Spencer Bidwell King, *Georgia Voices: A Documentary History to 1872* (1966; reprint, Athens: University of

Sherwood's *Gazetteer* gave evidence to these claims by identifying the colleges and universities, as well as some of the most important academies within the state. Although he would go into much greater detail about each institution when the *Gazetteer* was published again in a fourth edition in 1860, when the need for regional defensiveness had been ratcheted up to critical levels, he was content in 1837 to merely acknowledge their existence. It is from this void of detailed information that *Georgia Illustrated*'s sections on education grew. Sherwood mentioned in 1837 only that Oglethorpe was located on the periphery of Milledgeville, the state capital and a thriving town that contained three presses turning out, he estimated, nearly seven thousand newspapers per week.<sup>42</sup>

*Georgia Illustrated* overlooked such merely suggestive comments and contained instead an essay by Rev. Professor Samuel K. Talmage, Oglethorpe's president, that delved into the details. Talmage was born in New Jersey, graduated from Princeton, and first came to Georgia for a missionary trip in 1825. Sixteen years later he was a committed Georgian and the just-appointed president of one the state's newest universities. His exceptionally dry account of Oglethorpe is a slow, but prideful record of what had been accomplished at the school. Over the course of three uninspired pages he noted the history of its charter, its affiliation with the Presbyterian Church, its semester system, and its growing roster of 125 students. He noted the campus contained lecture halls and recitation rooms, dormitories, a library and a museum, all rather oddly blessed with "an abundant supply of cold water" because of their proximity to the Oconee River. Its main building was of the "Grecian-Doric order, without and within," and

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Georgia Press, 2010), 203-230. On the nationwide spread of common schools and the corresponding decrease in illiteracy rates during the early antebellum period, see Ronald Zboray, *A Fictive People*, 103-109, 196-198. The results of the exceptional spread of common schools, academies, and colleges and universities across the state are quantified in the U.S. Census results of 1840 and 1850. Roughly 1 in 5 white adult Georgians were functionally illiterate in 1840, but a decade of educational expansion had reduced that number to 1 in 13 by 1850. This is noteworthy, but was still exceptionally high when compared to an average of 1 in 156 white adults in the Northeast.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 199.

contained “the finest college Chapel in the United States.” In a full refutation of Longstreet’s “Academy” in the woods, Talmage concluded that Oglethorpe was well on its way to fulfilling the goal of its founders to “make it equal to the best Institutions in the land . . . [and] a rich blessing to the southern country.”<sup>43</sup>

There are a few lines in Talmage’s essay that are so strikingly different from the remainder of his text that they appear to have been either spoon-fed to him or inserted after the fact. The heavy hand of his editor first reveals itself when his essay breaks from a parched discussion of Oglethorpe’s charter to remark upon the surrounding “beautifully undulating country, of the most varied and romantic kind, abounding in hill, valley, and forest.” More relevant here, it appears again at the end of the essay to ensure that the reader understands how Talmage’s details fit into the book’s larger narrative of place. The size and layout of the buildings, classrooms, museum, and library, collectively prove the book’s larger theme that the residents of Georgia had “not been backward in sustaining the cause of education.”<sup>44</sup>

Similar passages occur at least once in each of *Georgia Illustrated*’s remaining essays on academic institutions, none of which were attributed to either William or Addison. These passages ensured a uniformity of purpose among the essays so that each commented in similar ways upon both the built and natural environments of the state. Dr. P.F. Eve’s excruciatingly dry essay on Augusta’s Medical College of Georgia, where he was a professor of surgery, focused entirely on the minutiae of the school’s history, the acquisition of its scientific equipment, and the cause of medical education in the United States. Yet it also contained a line echoing Addison’s language about Columbus, reminding the reader that Georgians were enormous

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<sup>43</sup> Rev. Professor Samuel K. Talmage, “Oglethorpe University,” in *Georgia Illustrated*, 7, 8. For the founding of Oglethorpe, Talmage’s biography and the details of his presidency, and the conditions of the campus during those early years, see Allen Tankersley, *College Life at Old Oglethorpe* (1951; reprint, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 6-16.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 7, 8.



supporters of education because they were determined to promote “mental vigor and intellectual advancement.”<sup>45</sup>

In the same vein, Rev. George F. Pierce, president of Georgia Female College in Macon, noted in his essay on the school that “Education has been for several years past, the theme of public discussion and of private thought in the state of Georgia.” He claimed that the public clamor had been so great, and the support of the legislature and the churches so substantial, that over the past few decades “the princely sum of six hundred thousand dollars or more, has been accumulated for educational purposes.” A state less interested in intellectual advancement might have been conservative with those funds, but Georgia went so far as to fund a number of academies for female education and to create the first female college in the nation. “A female college is a novelty,” Pierce acknowledged, but lectured the rest of the nation that “the plan is feasible.”<sup>46</sup> Most directly to the point, J. Sutherland Lewis’s remarks on his own Brownwood Female Institute outside of LaGrange concluded by expressing what he felt were the sentiments of all progressive Georgians: “The Platos and Aristotles of antiquity, and the Miltons of modern time; the men who have held, longest and firmest, the scepter of thought and the sway of the

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<sup>45</sup> P.F. Eve, M.D., “Medical College of Georgia,” in *Georgia Illustrated*, 42.

<sup>46</sup> Rev. George F. Pierce, “Georgia Female College,” in *Georgia Illustrated*, 13, 14. Christine Anne Farnham argues quite beautifully that the cause of female college education in the antebellum South was rooted in the desire of the planter class to demonstrate their wealth by funding the creation of colleges for their daughters. Schools like Georgia Female College, which became Wesleyan Female College in 1843 (now Wesleyan College) were fundamental to the remaking of white antebellum womanhood and the creation and institutionalization of the ‘belle’ mystique. Christine Anne Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 19-20, 120-145. For a fascinating take on the conspicuous consumption of education among Southern elites, and the gendered and spatial rules of its display, see Charlene M. Boyer-Lewis, *Ladies and Gentlemen on Display*, especially 104-118, 127-151. The dismissal of Georgia’s—and the South’s—leading role in higher education for women is evident in the fact that the those schools were all but ignored when the United States Bureau of Education created a ranking system for women’s colleges at the end of the nineteenth century. The “Seven Sisters” colleges of New England, which like every women’s college outside of the South were only created after the Civil War, were consecrated as “Division A” schools. The groundbreaking and even-then educationally-progressive Southern colleges, along with everything else in the nation, were ranked as “Division B.” See Geiger, *The American College in the Nineteenth Century*, 29. This bias has unfortunately carried forward to the present, with a frequently cited volume on the history of American higher education mistakenly claiming “The first women’s college (Vassar) was not founded until 1865.” Robert L. Church and Michael W. Sedlak, “The Antebellum College and the Academy,” in Goodchild and Wechsler, eds., *The History of Higher Education*, 132.

mind; the self-crowned with brilliant immortality—asked no higher pursuit than the education of youth.”<sup>47</sup>

Addison’s corresponding engravings were tightly bound into this editorially-enforced overselling of the role of education in the state. As with Oglethorpe, he presented each as an expansive academic institution nestled into an exquisitely beautiful landscape. The Medical College, the Female College, and Brownwood Institute were all depicted as simultaneously both old and new, vestiges of the best that the history of western civilization had to offer brought to bear amid the recently-made lush gardens of Georgia. His images suggested the extent to which the champions of intellectual advancement, those possessed of “reflecting minds,” had collectively sought to build something that looked historically permanent on top of a very recently constructed past. Whether those structures recalled neoclassical monuments or gothic country estates, all were meant to “invest the sober utility of our times with the grace and gallantry of the romantic ages. . . . [and] suggest a fine association and a beautiful moral.”<sup>48</sup> The lesson is clear: the people and places of the past may have looked like those depicted by Basil Hall, but things had changed. With their gaze solidly locked on the future, and their purse strings tied to the spread of higher education across their state, contemporary Georgians were actively remaking the world beneath their feet.

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<sup>47</sup> J. Sutherland Lewis, “Brownwood Female Institute,” in *Georgia Illustrated*, 35.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.



Figure 4.8. T. Addison Richards, "Medical College of Georgia," in *Georgia Illustrated* (1842).  
 Figure 4.9. T. Addison Richards, "Georgia Female College," in *Georgia Illustrated* (1842).



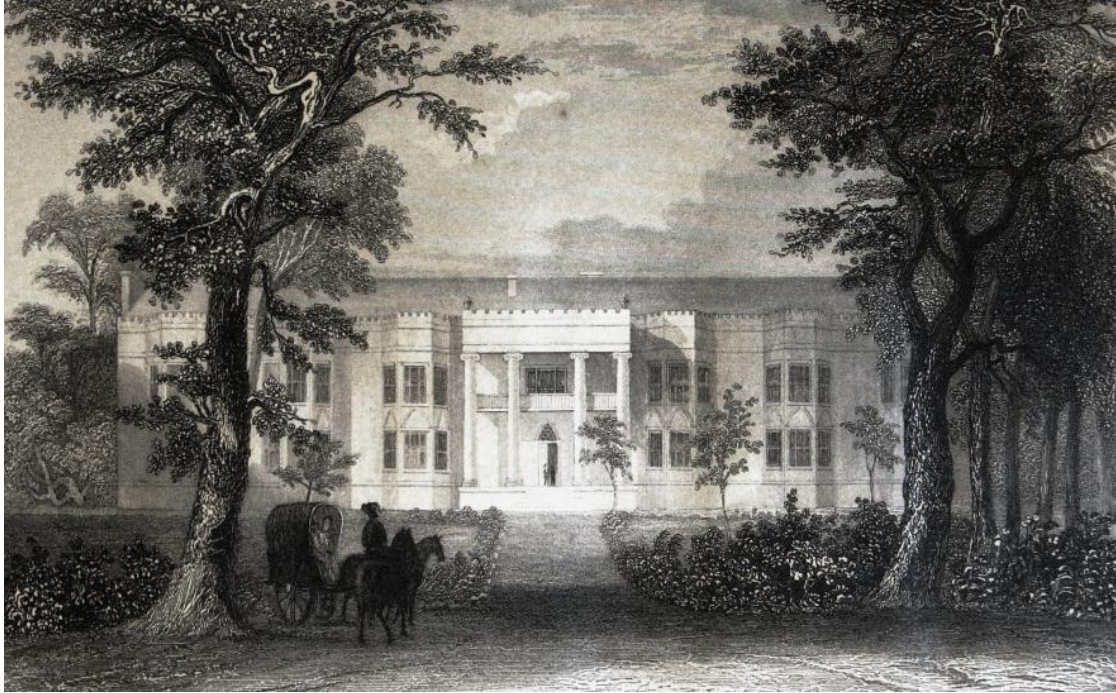


Figure 4.10. T. Addison Richards, “Brownwood Female Institute,” in *Georgia Illustrated* (1842)

There are some notable absences in the book, namely the University of Georgia in Athens, Emory University in Oxford, and especially Mercer University in Penfield. The exclusion of these schools and communities, among others, suggests that William and Addison’s decisions in this area were primarily driven by aesthetic concerns. Addison’s images came first. The accompanying texts are prosaic, lifeless, solicited from individuals associated with each school for the purpose of quantifying the work that had already gone into creating it. Alternative texts about UGA, Emory, or Mercer would have served the same purpose and produced the same general results. It therefore seems that the schools in *Georgia Illustrated* were chosen not because they were more important than others in the state, but rather because they collectively created a visual type. The brick façade of the University of Georgia’s main building, like similarly austere structures at Emory and Mercer, could not possibly convey the same visual

message about the cultivation of intellect and culture as the elaborate, white, neoclassical temples that Addison chose to depict.

Still, even if William and Addison chose to focus on educational institutions other than Mercer to suggest the state's future, their attention to education was closely connected to their present. It is impossible to reconcile their accounting of civilization in the state without considering that the book was inspired, written, published, and sold in the university village of Penfield. As suggested earlier, Penfield matters because it was their home. It was a community they helped to create and build. It was where they lived, worshipped, and learned. It was where they befriended Adiel Sherwood, read his *Gazetteer*, and were introduced to the stories of former Greene-county resident Augustus Baldwin Longstreet. It was the place of their father's dreams, the bit of American ground where he made up for what could not be in England. It was where he became a university trustee. It was where he opened a bookstore, made his sons exceptionally well-read, published their book, and set them on the path to careers among the intellectual elite. In short, Penfield was the filter through which William and Addison knew Georgia and represented it to the world.

Neither Penfield nor Mercer University is ever mentioned in *Georgia Illustrated*. There is no history of their simultaneous creation, no celebration of their contributions to "mental culture," no accompanying image. Yet the story of town and school is the story suggested by each of the educational institutions in the book. There was nothing in Penfield in 1830: no university, no bookstore, no houses or barns, not even a person. There was just land. And a vision of the future predicated upon building a school, a town, and a civilization out of the wilderness. Likewise, the schools accounted for in *Georgia Illustrated* were completely new entities that spoke to the very recent progress of higher education across the state: the Medical

College was only founded in 1830, Oglethorpe in 1835, Georgia Female College in 1836, and Brownwood Institute in 1837. Save for the Medical College in Augusta, a city whose history dated back to the state's early colonial settlement, the development of each of the remaining schools was part and parcel of the development of the town that surrounded it. It is not possible to separate them out; the schools and their communities came into being at the same time, grew from the same roots, and nurtured one another.<sup>49</sup>

William and Addison understood this because they lived it, and they endorsed it in their book. Their repetition of images and key phrases about education makes apparent that they envisioned a tightly-woven web of educational, intellectual, and cultural centers being stretched across their state. To represent a few of those places was essentially to represent them all. Penfield and other academic villages were, to borrow a phrase from a prominent historian, “nodal points” along which an external community of reflecting minds gathered and identified itself.<sup>50</sup> Addison's essay on Columbus gave voice to those who affiliated with this emerging coterie of the mind and searched out its existence elsewhere. The sections on academic institutions in *Georgia Illustrated* further supported this cause by identifying several of its coordinates and labeling elements in each that connected it to the whole.

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<sup>49</sup> The most comprehensive account of any single institution of higher education in antebellum Georgia is found in Thomas G. Dyer, *The University of Georgia: A Bicentennial History, 1785-1985* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1985). See also E. Merton Coulter, *College Life in the Old South, As Seen at the University of Georgia* (1928; reprint, Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1973). Coulter's dissection of the antebellum college “type” has been most recently reconsidered through the lenses of gender and social performance in Robert F. Pace, *Halls of Honor: College Men in the Old South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004). For an equally astute consideration for the expectations of antebellum women enrolled in higher education, as well as a history of Georgia Female College and the institutions that followed it, see Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle*. For a brief history of the founding of Emory University and its years in Oxford, Georgia, see Charles C. Jarrell, *Oxford Echoes* (Macon: Wesleyan Christian Advocate, 1967). For the founding of Oglethorpe University, see Allen P. Tankersley, *College Life at Old Oglethorpe*.

<sup>50</sup> Darrett B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman, *Small Worlds, Large Questions*, 39-42, 47. The Rutmans suggest that the identification of communities requires the identification of “nodal points” around which like-minded individuals gathered. In their telling, those nodal points are geographically bounded within a relatively small landscape of meaning. The story of Penfield and the other academic villages across Georgia offers the possibility that the villages themselves were nodal points which, when read together, identify a community bound together not by geography but a shared commitment to the elevation of the mind.

Sherwood had endorsed the same strategy, had attempted to make this mutable community into something definite and tangible, several years earlier. Oglethorpe University, he noted, was at the edge of a growing town that already included five doctors and fifteen lawyers, thirty-four stores, three “good” hotels, and most importantly, was served by three presses that turned out six to seven thousand newspapers per week.<sup>51</sup> He celebrated the Medical College for being part of a bustling city that also contained three newspapers, as well as a fine theater, lower schools and academies, several “splendid” hotels, a hospital and an asylum, and an anatomical museum “equal, if not superior, to that of any other Medical College in the United States.”<sup>52</sup> Georgia Female College, with its “fine view of the city,” overlooked a community of even more stores, even more merchants and bankers, even more doctors and lawyers, all of whom funded two weekly newspapers, and, even more, “two good bookstores and two book binderies . . . [and the] Macon Lyceum and Library Society.”<sup>53</sup> His statistics, like the visual and textual information in *Georgia Illustrated*, suggest nothing so much as efforts of Georgians to equal up to some collectively imagined ideal of what civilization should be. Both books proclaimed that the realm of the reflecting mind was not a *fait accompli*, but rather a concept in the process of being made at an ever-expanding, though still limited, series of intellectual outposts across the state.

Perhaps one of the most provocative things that Sherwood did in the *Gazetteer* was to suggest that some future poet or artist would create a new, more “learned,” and “more elegantly written” record of the state once the spread of culture made it possible. Little more than three years later, his young neighbors answered the call. William and Addison wanted to claim a space for themselves among the intellectual elite of the nation and were all too happy to display their elegance and learnedness at every possible turn. They did this in part by quoting poetry,

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<sup>51</sup> Sherwood, *Gazetteer* (1837), 199.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, 122-123, 197.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 188.

making art, and writing of culture. They also did it by connecting with a level of progressive thought that seems to have escaped their elder neighbor. Sherwood celebrated the tangible and the built. William and Addison agreed, but like many other reflecting American minds of their generation, they also innately believed that the advance of civilization had to be paired with the ability to periodically, temporarily retreat into nature. The Georgia landscape had no place in Sherwood's *Gazetteer*; William and Addison gave it a voice, an image, and equal space in *Georgia Illustrated*.



— CHAPTER FIVE —

**GEORGIA ILLUSTRATED: CONSTRUCTING NATURE**

In the summer of 1840, William, Addison, and several other members of the Richards family took a road trip. The brothers were searching for landscape scenes to include in *Georgia Illustrated*; everyone else, for a bit of fun. The group traveled first from Penfield to Henry County, nearly seventy five miles to the southwest, because they had been told there was a waterfall there that they needed to see. From there, they continued another seventy five miles to the southwest to Columbus. Addison would return there a year later to compose the image of Dr. Ingersoll and his family overlooking the city, but on this trip they were, according to William, strictly “in pursuit of the beauties of Nature.” By the time they returned home, Addison had sketches for scenes of waterfalls on the Towaliga and Chattahoochee rivers and William had notes for two accompanying essays.<sup>1</sup>



Figure 5.1. T. Addison Richards, “The Falls of the Towaliga,” in *Georgia Illustrated* (1842).  
Figure 5.2. T. Addison Richards, “The Lover’s Leap,” in *Georgia Illustrated* (1842).

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<sup>1</sup> William C. Richards, “The Falls of the Towaliga,” in *Georgia Illustrated*, 21.

There is much to be said about the aesthetic conventions and intellectual traditions employed in their works and what each was meant to convey. But from the start what jumps out from William's texts on the two falls and Addison's image of "the Lover's Leap" is their interest in foregrounding their status as Georgians recording their home state. In his essay on the Towaliga, William noted when they went, why they went, and exactly what they did while they were there. He recounted how a torrential thunderstorm came upon them just as they arrived at the falls, how the traveling party had to take shelter in a nearby mill, and afterwards, while Addison made sketches of the falls, how they—children of a Baptist minister—all lost themselves in thoughts about God and nature. Likewise, his entire essay on "the Lover's Leap" is centered on a conversation their sister had there with their cousin about whether the Chattahoochee was aesthetically superior to the Hudson River, what they did while Addison drew the falls, the wonderful time they had with the family friend who hosted them in Columbus (identified here simply as "Dr."), and how much fun they had when—as shown in Addison's image—they spent the afternoon fishing.

The essays and images relating to the Towaliga and "the Lover's Leap," like Addison's letter from Columbus elsewhere in the book, are a reminder of the deeply personal nature of *Georgia Illustrated*. William and Addison traveled together and often with other members of their family. They went where their friends and neighbors recommended, or where they had acquaintances to host them and show them around, and they knew the state they chronicled in a way no outsider ever could. Had they written of nothing but their own experiences living in the state, their book would have been nothing more than a diary. Had they failed to mention their life there at all, their book would have read no differently and been able to proclaim no more authority than accounts written and published in New York or London. Instead, and especially

in their essays on nature, they selectively wove themselves into the narrative. Acknowledging their travels, their family and friends, their conversations, and even where and when they enjoyed fishing allowed William and Addison to label themselves with a bit of good-natured, provincial authenticity. This, then, allowed them to slip unnoticed from their stated agenda of merely illustrating Georgia, to proclaiming for it something much larger and more provocative.

Travelers and writers before Sherwood and the Richards brothers only saw in Georgia what they expected to see, based on what they had read in other travel accounts and glimpsed on incomplete maps. As a result, those outside chroniclers had been largely unable to connect with or ascribe value to a place they predetermined to be completely foreign to their understanding. Even when buildings or towns seemed recognizable as types to them, the land itself was ignored, at best, or too easily generalized and reviled. The psychologist and philosopher William James famously articulated this concept, albeit three quarters of a century later, in remembering a journey he once took through the mountain South. Like so many of his predecessors in travel, James' initial response to the region in the 1890s was predicated on what had been already written and mapped. He thus found the land before him to be nothing more than a meaningless ocean of undifferentiated space. He wanted it to be available to be judged according to his own culturally-determined criteria, and he made it so. Those predetermined measures allowed him to pronounce it a landscape at once uninhabited but already dangerous, unproductive but already ruined.<sup>2</sup>

What makes James's treatise noteworthy is that he was ultimately able to look self-critically at the ways by which his vision was shaped by external forces. He noted that it was

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<sup>2</sup> William James, "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings," in *Talks to Teachers on Psychology: And to Students on Some of Life's Ideals* (1899; New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1925), 231. For a thorough analysis of James, see Kent Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993), 36-40.

only when he could embrace the perspective of the local, who saw the land in terms of lived experiences upon it, that he could recognize the failure of his initial judgment. No outside observer can ever compete with an inhabitant in terms of knowledge of a place, no matter what their credentials, because, he wrote, “the spectator’s judgment is sure to miss the root of the matter, and to possess no truth. The subject judged knows a part of the world of reality which the judging spectator fails to see, knows more while the spectator knows less.”<sup>3</sup> James came to understand that his vision had been occluded by ascribing too much authority to the incomplete accounts of other non-locals. Maps and the biased interpretations of outsiders barely hint at the parameters of space, at best, but the true meaning of a place lies significantly deeper. Only those who have lived on that ground, grown their own roots in it, can understand.

William and Addison Richards could not have known the work of William James, but his argument mirrors theirs in *Georgia Illustrated*. Their claim for the benefits of local knowledge was fully on display in the book’s essays on what had been built in the state. But the real coup of their book, less readily understandable on the surface, requiring a more careful reading of what was at work behind their images, was in their selective envisioning of the Georgia landscape. Almost all other chroniclers had ignored it, and a haughty few angrily dismissed it, but none had fully considered it in its own right. More importantly, none except for Bartram and perhaps Morse had ever expressed it as contributing to, or even fitting within, the developing ideology and iconology of the national landscape. Yet William and Addison did. And they did so by proclaiming the accuracy of their representations based on their local knowledge, while modeling their every pen stroke not on what they saw or what they knew, but on the dominant trends in landscape art and writing.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

*Georgia Illustrated*'s images of and essays about the Towaliga and "the Lover's Leap" might seem at first glance to be quick and accurate recordings of what the brothers witnessed on their trip. They are not. They are instead carefully constructed signs that convey deeply encoded messages about both the places represented and the cultural credentials and intellects of those who represented them. William and Addison were not unskilled locals who accidentally strung together a few pretty pictures and words. They had educated themselves well in the art and literature of the period and expressly understood that their target audience expected to be able to read the landscape like a text. They knew that audience, if they were going to pay attention at all, required the work to convey something bigger and more profound than simply that Georgia had waterfalls. They knew that audience, if they were going to pay money for these pages of pictures and words, wanted art and literature. They knew that audience wanted to see new landscapes and read new descriptions, but wanted them to adhere to dominant aesthetic category of the "picturesque sublime" that had been made famous by other artists during the previous two decades.<sup>4</sup>

So they included the sublime, but only gently so that Georgia never appeared dangerous. William quoted poems by Wordsworth and a lesser-known British poet he discovered in a volume by William Cullen Bryant, and described the thunderstorm at the Towaliga where "lightnings rent the cloud-curtains of the sky, and darted earthward their empurpled fires, each flash casting a sickly glare over the gloomy landscape." Addison likewise portrayed the small

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<sup>4</sup> Most American writers and artists during the first half of the nineteenth century were deeply wedded to the aesthetic categories of the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque, as expounded upon by eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century English and Scottish philosophers. In her excellent analysis of picturesque travel writing, Beth Lueck traces a direct line from the writings of William Gilpin and Uvedale Price to Washington Irving, James Kirke Paulding, Henry David Thoreau, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, among numerous others. She argues that American writers in the 1830s, especially Hawthorne and Poe, found it especially difficult to fine purely "picturesque" scenes according to Gilpin's rubric and so developed an indigenous aesthetic category of the "picturesque sublime" in order to better express the simultaneous beauty and wilderness of American nature. Beth Lynne Lueck, *American Writers and the Picturesque Tour: The Search for National Identity, 1790-1860* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 4-16.

river not its usual placid state, but as the Deluge momentarily revisited in the wake of an extreme storm. Yet such scenes of sublimity were thoroughly quelled by William's picturesque descriptions of travel on polite outings with family and friends to places where they had respectable fun, but where they also mediated on God, history, and the "almost unearthly glory" of parts of the Georgia landscape. Addison, too, closely adhered to conventions and made certain that areas of darkness were balanced by ample light, rushing water by calm, tightly enclosed spaces by grander views, and any suggestions of harsh wilderness by domestic pairings of gentle male and female couples.<sup>5</sup>

It is tempting to say that mirroring the dominant aesthetic ideals and applying them to a place that had previously been written about only by outsiders made William and Addison the first truly post-colonial voices to speak from antebellum Georgia. It is perhaps more important, if less grand, to also note that it reveals them to have been closely in tune with the same forces that influenced numerous other young artists and writers of their generation. They were part of a broad American intellectual coterie whose understanding of the culture in which they lived was shaped by more than a decade of Romanticism, and its attendant disciplines of picturesque travel writing, transcendental thought, and increasingly popular and available images of nature. As a result, they embraced the advance of civilization at the same time that they sought out a mythologized natural realm, a series of aesthetically-pleasing landscapes in which they could

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<sup>5</sup> William C. Richards, "The Falls of the Towaliga," 23; and "The Lover's Leap," in *Georgia Illustrated*, 30, 31. William quoted and cited Wordsworth's poem, "The Fall of the Aar-Handec," which was available in *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth. The First Complete American, From the London Edition. In One Volume*. (New Haven: Peck & Newton, 1836), 134. He also quoted Andrew Norton's poem, "The Scene after a Summer Shower," which he likely knew from William Cullen Bryant, *Selections from the American Poets* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1840), 254.

temporarily return to a what they imagined was a purer, more primal, more mystically sublime experience.<sup>6</sup>

The artist Thomas Cole, who the brothers may have known personally from their time in New York, and whose towering reputation they certainly knew of, famously summarized this Romanticist position in his “Essay on American Scenery” (1836). “The wilderness,” he asserted, “is *yet* a fitting place to talk to God.” They were living in an increasingly urban age defined by the spread of capitalism, a nation where “a meager utilitarianism seems ready to absorb every feeling and sentiment, and what is sometimes called improvement in its march makes us fear that the bright and tender flowers of the imagination shall all be crushed beneath its iron tramp.” Yet Cole was certain there was a reason why Eden had been rediscovered on the North American continent, why the civilizations built there butted up against and needed to continually coexist with Nature. Americans would be well advised, he counseled, “to cultivate the oasis that yet remains to us,” to preserve and reconnect with the grandeur of the landscape lest they become individuals who spend their lives meaninglessly “toiling to produce more toil—accumulating in order to aggrandize.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> To be clear, there was no cohesive or sustained landscape tradition in the United States prior to the mid- to late-1820s. Artists and writers before then had dabbled in it and briefly incorporated elements of nature into works in other genres. Until the arrival of Romanticism as a cultural force in the 1820s, however, there simply was not fertile ground in which it could grow. Romanticism was a style of art, literature, and intellectual life that developed on the Continent and in England in the very late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as a challenge to the pretensions of Neoclassicism. Whereas the Neoclassical embraced the public, the staid, and the formal, Romanticism celebrated the private and the internal, the meditative, and the transformative. Young American elites, engaged in a spell of renewed Anglophilia beginning in the 1820s, found it thoroughly modern and highly seductive. Figures like Cole, Emerson, and others, built careers by repackaging and reclaiming it as an indigenous article of American faith. In their hands, Romanticism reclaimed nature, previously the realm of the wild and threatening, into a national treasure and place of personal salvation.

For American Romanticists’ challenge to older, puritanical notions of the wilderness as a dangerous moral vacuum, as well as their literary location of American identity in nature, see Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination*, 15-21, 56-63. For the role of this intellectual shift in the development of representative American Renaissance writers, see David Leverenz, *Manhood and the American Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 1-8, 42-71

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Cole, “Essay on American Scenery,” *The American Magazine* 1, no.1 (Jan. 1836): 2, 3-4.

In a nation of toil and accumulation, there was nothing radical about recording the growth of cities or the creation of educational institutions. Indeed, it was all but expected. Sherwood's *Gazetteer* was, as he himself noted, a "useful" book in accounting for those developments. Subsequent *Georgia Illustrated* chapters on what had been built in the state carried this mission boldly, lyrically, visibly forward. Yet it was only in combining those chapters with others on the touristic potential of Georgian nature that William and Addison's book fully came into its own. Their words and images not only created an unprecedented visual record of their state, but also carefully aligned their construction of place with what was expected, or at least favored, in the art and literature of the time. Their Georgia was not wild, but rather—as depicted in the image of the Towaliga—the most antediluvian landscape to be found in the nation. It was not a little known and dangerous void, but Eden reclaimed, remade, and becoming as civilized as any other American place. Their Georgia, in short, offered the best of all worlds sought out by the most thoughtful readers and travelers of their time: it contained an unparalleled and transcendent nature in which the learned observer could reconnect with the Divine, the civilized infrastructure necessary to get there, and the intellectual base necessary to properly understand and appreciate it.

The problem facing them was not that Georgia was little known, as Hall had suggested, but that, as Longstreet and Sherwood discovered, it was too well known in all the wrong ways. The citizens, towns, institutions, and even the very landscape of it had been deeply stained by the harsh rhetoric of generations of writers. That alone would have made *Georgia Illustrated* provocative. Even if the past had simply faded away, if no one had ever read Robert Rogers' judgment of it as "territory lying waste" or seen Hall's images of mind-numbingly tedious forests, the hill that Addison and William had to climb was increasingly steep. Their chapters on



nature in Georgia were radical, not because Americans were unused to reading about nature, but because writers and artists like Cole had already proclaimed Northeastern nature to be synonymous with America. There was nothing else. No other region could compete, offered an alternative, or had the intellectual/literary infrastructure to mount a challenge.

These claims of regional exclusivity are apparent in most of the art and literature of the period. To take one prominent example, they appear on every page of Nathaniel Parker Willis and William Henry Bartlett's *American Scenery* (1840). The book began with a map of the Northeast, the only map it contained, and 108 of its 119 engravings/essays were dedicated to Northeastern subjects. Of the remaining eleven images, seven addressed Washington, D.C., and Mt. Vernon, two addressed the city of Baltimore, and only two were dedicated to the natural landscapes of Virginia. Even then, Willis noted, the inclusion of Harper's Ferry and the Natural Bridge were merely intended to "vary a little the monotony" of Northeastern subjects covered in the book; they were brief diversions he hoped his readers would find "not [to] be uninteresting." There was little room for William and Addison's Deep South in the pantheon of quintessential American places when the arbiters of national culture and identity had overlooked even the mid-Atlantic and paid little attention to the site of the nation's first colonial roots in Virginia.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, by the late 1820s, literature, tour books, and art entrenched an American version of the centuries-old European "Grand Tour." The first generations of travelers interested in seeing the United States, mostly urban Northeasterners of substantial wealth, were directed to focus on the cities and aesthetically-pleasing wilds nearest to them: the Hudson River valley to

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<sup>8</sup> Nathaniel Parker Willis and William Henry Bartlett, *American Scenery; or, Land, Lake, and River: Illustrations of Transatlantic Nature*, vol. 1 (London: George Virtue, 1840), 65. For the ways by which mid-nineteenth-century educators, historians, and artists increasingly dismissed the history of Virginia as the first colony and the well-spring of American politics and culture in favor of the imagined "pilgrim" roots of Massachusetts and the larger culture of New England, see Ann Uhry Abrams, *The Pilgrims and Pocahontas: Rival Myths of American Origins* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 37-48, 109-137.

the Catskills, Lake George, the Erie Canal, the Connecticut Valley, and especially the White Mountains and Niagara Falls. Backed by the burgeoning canal, railway, and steamboat industries, these locales were quickly created as tourist attractions at first to cultivate and then fulfill the growing needs of a genteel class who could afford travel and were willing to temporarily substitute an exploration of their own national back yard for excursions to Europe. The commercial development of these Northeastern spaces fed wide-eyed consumers on the myth that these were not sites for tourist vacations, but rather places for pilgrimage. As a result, the more tourists who went, saw, and believed that they did so out of patriotic duty rather than commercially-manufactured desires, the more the Northeast became known as the quintessential American landscape.<sup>9</sup>

Multitudes of American artists and writers soon came to realize that this new tourist class was composed of the same affluent individuals who made up their audience. Those who had the ability to travel out into nature and to read its requisite aesthetic and moral lessons were also those who had the interest and ability to purchase picturesque tour books and literature, prints and paintings that celebrated the same spectacles of the American wilds. Even better, the advent of increasingly affordable print technologies and the subsequent rise of mass-market periodicals allowed artists and writers to sell these landscape sensibilities to the middle classes. The average American could not afford distant and sustained travels, but eagerly and in substantial numbers paid for books, magazines, and art prints that provided them with the opportunity to emulate elite culture. At the heart of this venture were Thomas Cole and landscape painters who followed

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<sup>9</sup> Richard H. Gassan notes that tourism as an industry began in the United States only in the late 1810s. It was largely confined during its first two decades to the Hudson River valley and New England because those areas were easily accessible for affluent travelers from New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. Richard H. Gassan, *The Birth of American Tourism: New York, the Hudson Valley, and American Culture, 1790-1830* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), 2-8. See also Dona Brown, *Inventing New England*, 23-31; and John F. Sears, *Sacred Places*, 4-5, and 12-19.

him, who were informally but famously known as the Hudson River School for their choice of subject matter among the rivers and mountains of upstate New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont, and eventually Maine. The vast majority of them built their reputations by making images of, and occasionally writing about, Northeastern tourist attractions.

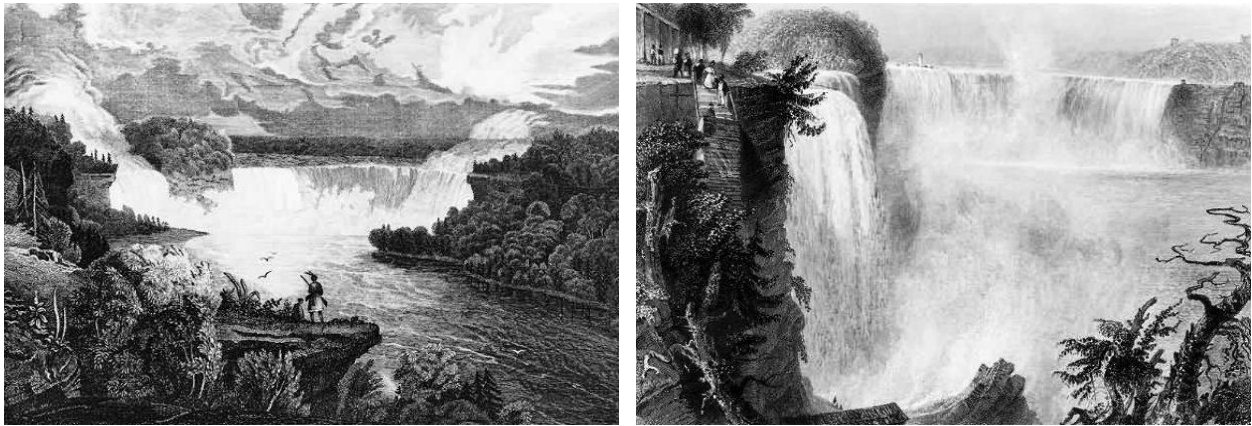


Figure 5.3. Engraving after Thomas Cole, “A Distant View of the Falls of Niagara,” in Hinton, *The History and Topography of the United States* (1832).  
 Figure 5.4. William Bartlett, “Niagara Falls (From the Top of the Ladder on the American Side),” in Willis and Bartlett, *American Scenery* (1840).

Their privileging of regional nature is perhaps nowhere more easily seen than in images of the best-known American landmark that appeared in two of the best-known books on the United States published in the decade prior to *Georgia Illustrated*. Niagara Falls was widely regarded as *the* symbol of the American sublime: its sheer size was seen as offering evidence of the bounty of the continent, and its unmatched force recalling the primal power of divine Creation. An engraving of Thomas Cole’s painting, *Distant View of the Falls of Niagara* (1830), used as the frontispiece to the second volume of the 1832 edition of Hinton’s *History and Topography of the United States* (1832), offers its viewer a broad vista in which such

implications are still present. Cole has tamed the dangerous aspects of the locale by creating a safe distance between the viewer's vantage point and the roar of the falls. On a large rock in the foreground are the silhouettes of two Native Americans, one standing, who, like an aboriginal, New World Adam and Eve, bear witness to the power and glory of the world anew. At once they both return a wild-ness to Niagara that was long gone by the 1830s, and remind the viewer that falls could be safely viewed by any modern tourist.<sup>10</sup>

This second point was reinforced by William Bartlett's engraving of the falls in *American Scenery*. In "Niagara Falls (From the Top of the Ladder on the American Side)," Bartlett brings his viewer in close to the torrent of the falls to communicate that commercial development had long since made Niagara safe. Native Americans had been removed from the area. Industry had brought in roads, a mill, warehouses, and freight lines. There were now ample lodgings for travelers, an elevated viewing platform known as Terrapin Tower, boat rides below the falls, and, as depicted, sturdy stairways to the bottom. Women in polite dress could spend days leisurely exploring the tamed sublime. Niagara had been reclaimed from its original inhabitants to make it a wholly American locale, and had been renovated from its original state to make it accessible and safe for tourism.

Nathaniel Parker Willis challenged this locational hegemony just ever so slightly in his introduction to *American Scenery*. He suggested that the future artist or writer interested in recording American landscapes must stop rehashing the same old Northeastern haunts and instead "must feed his imagination on the *future*" and keep "perpetually reaching forward." Perhaps this was merely a way of preventing others from retracing his steps and potentially challenging the sales of his book, or perhaps it was sage advice from one professional to another. In either case, he suggested that there was much else to be seen, recorded, and ultimately woven

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<sup>10</sup> For nationalism versus regionalism in the visual arts, see Angela Miller, *The Empire of the Eye*, 210, 215.

into the national fabric. “Every mile upon the rivers, every hollow in the landscape, every turn in the innumerable mountain streams,” he wrote, “arrests the painter’s eye, and offers him some untouched and peculiar variety of an exhaustless nature.”<sup>11</sup>

Herein lies the radical nature of the Richards brothers’ venture. If Niagara and the Northeast had already been recorded, celebrated, and sanctified *ad infinitum*, William and Addison boldly offered Georgia as something new. They had already demonstrated how far the state was reaching forward by their focus on higher education, which simultaneously reinforced the progress of the present and cast an eye toward what would come from intellectually elevating the next generation. Now they suggested the same thing for the landscape. The Northeast was already known, and in creating the infrastructure to make it known it had become altered, used, corrupted. Niagara was no longer a majestic primeval garden, but a commercial tourist attraction selling the semblance of one. Cole himself bemoaned the fact that “with the improvements of cultivation the sublimity of the wilderness should pass away.”<sup>12</sup> But Georgia, or what the Richards brothers thought they understood of it through the filter of life in Penfield, was fresh and new. It seemed to be all future. And spurred on by what they read in Sherwood, by what they read in Willis, by what they saw as the opportunity in their father’s bookstore, it must have seemed to them an idea whose time had come. It was a place, William noted in the introduction to *Georgia Illustrated*, that now needed “only to be known, to be universally admired.”<sup>13</sup>

“The scenery of Georgia,” William promised his readers, comparing it with the Northeast, “is not less beautiful and attractive. . . . There may be, it is true, but one Niagara . . . but there are other cataracts . . . which, in general features, very far surpass it. There are such in

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<sup>11</sup> Willis and Bartlett, *American Scenery; or, Land, Lake, and River: Illustrations of Transatlantic Nature*, 1: 1-2.

<sup>12</sup> Cole, “Essay on American Scenery,” 5.

<sup>13</sup> William C. Richards, “Introduction” in *Georgia Illustrated*, 1.

Georgia.”<sup>14</sup> This book, he seemed to say, was not an attempt to usurp the reputation of the Northeast’s premiere natural attractions, but rather to introduce a few previously-unknown alternatives. For Addison’s part, he did this by carefully repeating some of the most salient visual traditions of Northeastern representation. In his “Essay on American Scenery” Cole wrote that artists who sought to represent the transcendent and archetypal in American nature should focus their attention very specifically on images of mountains, water (especially waterfalls), trees, and sky.<sup>15</sup> Addison’s landscape images in *Georgia Illustrated* hit every mark.

His deference to the representational traditions created by Cole’s landscape imagery is on display in two of the most striking scenes depicted in *Georgia Illustrated*: Tallulah Gorge and Toccoa Falls. Both natural wonders are located in the far northeastern portion of the state in what had once been Indian Territory. Creek and Cherokee cessions in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries had gradually given some of the surrounding area to Georgia, although the land directly around Tallulah and Toccoa was not ceded by the Cherokee until nearly 1819. Still, it was not until the discovery of gold in the region a decade later that a strong state and federal push removed all remaining Cherokees from the area. It was only in the mid-1830s that the falls suddenly came available for white touristic consumption.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Cole, “Essay on American Scenery,” 5-10.

<sup>16</sup> E. Merton Coulter remarks in his history of the gorge that the removal of Indians and the creation of Habersham and Rabun counties were at first “transactions . . . merely on paper,” that surveyors did not enter the area until the early 1820s, and that most mapmakers and writers did not even acknowledge Tallulah for at least another decade after that. E. Merton Coulter, *Georgia Waters: Tallulah Falls, Madison Springs, Scull Shoals and the Okefenokee Swamp* (Athens: Georgia Historical Quarterly, 1965), 8-21.



Figure 5.5. T. Addison Richards, "Tallulah Falls," in *Georgia Illustrated* (1842).

Figure 5.6. T. Addison Richards, "The Fall of Toccoa," in *Georgia Illustrated* (1842).

Tallulah and Toccoa are located approximately fifteen miles apart. They function as a geographic and aesthetic pair; one would be remiss to consider one without incorporating the other. Addison's images of the falls clearly intend them to be grouped together. His depiction of the pair reveals a natural landscape in North Georgia that hints at the dangerous and sublime, but once again, and as a matter of challenging all that had been previously written and rumored by outsiders, pulls back from that reading to suggest that this was the realm of the safely picturesque. Tallulah Gorge is a thousand-foot deep chasm at the bottom of which a powerful

river roars over a quick succession of substantial waterfalls. Yet Addison's image of the gorge seen from below, as the river in the distant background slides gently and silently over its falls, significantly diminishes the sublime danger of the site. He does not acquiesce to the overwhelming strength of nature here, but merely proclaims that it is visible from the safety and security of an acceptable vantage point for tourists.

In homage to his famous predecessor, Addison included a Native American couple on a large rock in the foreground of his Tallulah scene. Cole was the first and only painter in the United States to repeatedly include Indians—either a single figure or a pair—in his landscape scenes. His figures in scenes of Niagara and elsewhere definitively mark the location and ensure that every viewer understood that this second Eden was only possible in the United States; or, more to the point, in the American Northeast. But they are also a carefully response to the concerns of socially-conservative Northeastern elites who felt their authority threatened by the changes reshaping the nation.

Cole was deeply under the influence of James Fennimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) when he made his first and subsequent tours up the Hudson River and across to Niagara in the late-1820s. So too were his first important patrons, all wealthy Northeastern Protestants, all from former Federalist families, and all explicitly interested in using their money to influence American culture against the sway of Jacksonian democracy. Those patrons made explicit reference to Cooper's book when writing to the young artist about where to travel and exactly what to paint. They wanted pre-modern Indians in authentic-looking dress, and Cole readily complied. His pre-modern figures were not mere decorations, but communicated something larger and more important. They were, as they appeared at first blush, visual elegies for a lost world. They also masqueraded the social agendas of his elite patrons beneath carefully



constructed aboriginal costumes. It was a potent combination. Cole's figures looked nostalgic and even somehow democratic, but promoted the belief that there was a divinely-ordained racial, ethnic, and economic hierarchy of man. In addition, they justified Native American removal as a necessary evil in order to make possible the property rights, marshaling of natural resources, and wealth and power of elite whites who in turn could spend their time and money touring nature and commissioning paintings of it.<sup>17</sup>

Cole's figures were always costumed, pre-modern, dredged out of his imagination of some primitive past and, as in the image of Niagara, set in a famous landscape setting which he had scrubbed clean of any indications of modernity, industry, and tourism. Addison's Indian figures at Tallulah, however, wear relatively modern dress and inhabit a still-pristine landscape that appears true to form. The young man appears to have been hunting or fishing, but now reclines on the rock while his female companion relaxes easily at his side. Though they were intended to be recognized as vestiges of a quickly disappearing past, they appear nestled in an environment in which they are at peace, not at all threatened by their surroundings, not having struggled to get there, and quite pleased with their day's outing. They were a visual suggestion that unlike the hollowed-out and sadly nostalgic version and distant version of history being offered by Cole for the Northeast, the United States was still actively being made in Georgia.

They also allowed Tallulah to be represented as a site reclaimed from dangers both human and

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<sup>17</sup> Ellwood Parry, "Cooper, Cole, and *The Last of the Mohicans*," in Mary Louise Krumrine and Susan C. Scott, eds., *Art and the Native American: Perceptions, Realities, and Influences* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 147-152. See also Brown, *Inventing New England*, 58-59; and Gassan, *The Birth of American Tourism*, 64-69. In his fascinating article on the depiction and meaning of property rights in antebellum landscape paintings, Alfred Brophy argues that Cole, like so many others who promoted the transcendental power and nationalistic implications of the Northeastern landscape, was conflicted about having to record an idealized nature that was, in reality, actively being altered and perhaps permanently destroyed by property owners, industrial development, and the courts. Alfred L. Brophy, "Property and Progress: Antebellum Landscape Art and Property Law," *McGeorge Law Review* 40, no. 3 (2009), 635-639, 653-654. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Professor Brophy for his interest in my work and his most useful suggestions about expanding the framework in which images of the landscape are considered.

geological, now a perfectly safe and respectable locale at which to comfortably and securely sit and consider the forces of nature.

Addison's engraving of nearby Toccoa pushes this reading of the landscape even further. The image presents a picturesque scene in which four smartly-attired figures expend a peaceful moment basking in the lush vegetation and elegant ease of a nearly two-hundred-foot waterfall. A man and woman, he in a fashionable suit and hat, and she in a polite dress and bonnet, stand at the edge of the river and gaze up at the thin, gentle, seemingly safe ribbon of a water that charms their well-refined senses and, at worst, sprays them with a fine mist. The man's raised arm draws the viewer's attention to a second figure group in the shadows on top of the rock to his left. Like the couple at Tallulah, although now well-dressed in contemporary clothing, the male fishes in the pool below the falls while a second figure, perhaps a female, relaxes beside him. These four figures are clearly socio-economically secure whites, educated in the landscape aesthetics valued by their class, who have come to an area they now deem safe in search of noteworthy nature.

No less a figure than Basil Hall inadvertently shed light on the connection between class, nature, and tourism when he noted in his travelogue that American culture was awash in "words, words, words," about democratic "sensibility and romantic scenery," but that true appreciation of the landscape required the cultivation of a wealthy and educated leisure class to own and contemplate it. The figures in Addison's engraving of Toccoa, like those in Bartlett's view of Niagara, like those who read Willis and Bartlett's book, like those who owned paintings and prints by Cole and others, were expected to possess what the eighteenth-century British writer Archibald Alison neatly summed up as "taste." Alison, whose *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (1790) was reprinted in New York in 1830, held that individuals of proper

breeding and education should be able to witness individual elements of nature and connect them to what Sir Joshua Reynolds had earlier deemed their “representative general ideas.” That is, persons of “taste” should be able to see a waterfall, or a mountain, or a forest, not as an individual occurrence, but as part of a part of an aesthetic “type” as determined and agreed upon by others of their class. The great unwashed masses of tasteless others, whose ill-bred intellects remained “feeble or slow,” lacked the ability to craft the necessary learned “associations” between a random object, its type, and art and history. As Emerson explained in *Nature* (1836), “a single object is only so far beautiful as it suggests . . . universal grace,” yet “few adult persons can see nature” because few are able see beyond the individual object.<sup>18</sup>

It is worth noting here, lest these class-based qualifications seem to be corruptions of some otherwise organic thing, that there are no pure, authentic, unmediated landscapes. In the words of one modern scholar, “landscape is already artifice in the moment of its beholding, long before it becomes the subject of pictorial representation.” Land exists separate from humans, but a “landscape” cannot. Landscapes are inventions, class- and culturally-determined constructs, and are inseparable from their beholders. Laborers who toiled in the dirt, as Emerson pointed out, could not see the land as anything more than the site of their labor. Seeing a landscape—at least as the process was conceived of through the 1830s and early 1840s—required both the means to travel and the education to properly appreciate what was found. One needed to possess

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<sup>18</sup> Captain Basil Hall, *Travels in North America*, 1: 123-125. Archibald Alison, *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* (New York: G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1830), 33, 24. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*, in Carl Bode, ed., *The Portable Emerson* (New York: Penguin, 1981), 18, 10. On the use of “representative ideas” in landscape imagery to legitimate English and American political authority, see John Barrell, “The Public Prospect and the Private View: The Politics of Taste in Eighteenth-Century Britain,” in Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell, eds., *Landscape, Natural Beauty, and the Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 81, 85-87, 96.

enough landed property to have the leisure to remove oneself from daily labor and be able to cultivate the “taste” and knowledge necessary to view landed property as an abstract ideal.<sup>19</sup>



Figure 5.7. William Bartlett, “Silver Cascade,” in Willis and Bartlett, *American Scenery* (1840).

The rise of nature tourism was a direct result of the imprint of Romanticism on the dominant forces in American intellectual and cultural life. It required first and foremost the uniform education of elites so that when they traveled, they could identify aesthetically pleasing

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<sup>19</sup> W.J.T. Mitchell, “Imperial Landscape,” in W.J.T. Mitchell, ed., *Landscape and Power*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 14. Emerson, *Nature*, 43. Angela Miller explains that the ability to move “from the local to the transcendent,” to understand descriptions or images of a particular landscape in spiritual or national terms, was the privilege of those who possessed a social class and aesthetic education “several moves from the crassly utilitarian.” “The national landscape,” she writes, referring to the antebellum construction and use of Northeastern nature, “was only accepted and understood by a certain aesthetically and ideologically conditioned sector of the public capable of making the leap beyond literalism. . . . The gap between those capable of grasping the cultural abstractions necessary to aesthetic appreciation and those with more mundane concerns was thus a measure of social differences in the mid-nineteenth century.” Angela Miller, “Everywhere and Nowhere: The Making of National Landscape,” *American Literary History* vol. 4, no. 2 (summer 1992), 214-215. See also John Barrell, “The Public Prospect and the Private View,” 90-91. For the ways in which tourism and landscape viewing eventually became at least slightly more democratized, see Kenneth John Myers, *On the Cultural Construction of Landscape Experience: Contact to 1830*, 71-74, 77.

scenes. As a privilege of their class, they were then expected to be able to mentally construct those individual bits of American land into a universalized landscape in which they and others like them could find meaning.

By visually pairing Tallulah and Toccoa and creating a similar, image for each, Addison was able to put his ability to identify the “universal” on display. He was able to succinctly demonstrate the rich bounty and representative types that Georgia had to offer sensitive landscape viewers. Most importantly, he was able to weave them into a commentary on what the northern part of the state had been and was becoming. The Indian past, he implied, had given way to a new age of safe and accessible tourism for elite, educated, white admirers of nature. This is even more readily apparent when his engravings are considered alongside a rather similar waterfall scene from Willis and Bartlett’s *American Scenery*. Willis described the “Silver Cascade,” located in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, as worthy of inclusion in their book because “its course from among the deep forest, whence it springs issue into the light, is one of singular beauty.” It is pure chance that there are formal similarities between the actual Tallulah, Toccoa, and the Silver Cascade. Addison likely had only so many options of how to represent steeply vertical waterfalls, and William remarked in his essay that his brother simply recorded Tallulah from the spot that provided “the grandest conception of the extent and depth of the tremendous gulf.” Yet the rush of the water over the rocks, the framing of the trees, the position of the artist, and especially the inclusion of two well-dressed couples at the base of the falls all reinforce the fact that the creators of *Georgia Illustrated* had a very specific agenda in mind.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Willis and Bartlett, *American Scenery; or, Land, Lake, and River: Illustrations of Transatlantic Nature*, 2: 28. William C. Richards, “The Falls of Tallulah,” in *Georgia Illustrated*, 11.

Addison's images of Tallulah and Toccoa suggest that Georgia, even at its grandest and most extreme, was a place to be neither feared nor renounced. The accompanying texts solidified this message, reinforced the variety and quality of landscape scenes available to tourists in just one small portion of the state, and confirmed the visual cues that the best and brightest there understood exactly how to see and appreciate the natural world around them. Free of the crowds and industry that both made and plagued Niagara, and completely new and surprising to tourists unlike any part of the White Mountains, Tallulah and Toccoa were instead presented as authentic Edenic landscapes, places capable of inspiring the most exacting observer.

No chronicler of the state even mentioned either of the north Georgia waterfalls in publication until nearly the 1830s. William Gilmore Simms dryly remarked in *Guy Rivers* that the whole of north Georgia, which he had not seen, was just plain "uninviting and unlovely." A surprisingly fairer evaluation came from the English pastor John Howard Hinton, whose *History and Topography of the United States* expressed little love for a slave state he had never seen, either, but who nonetheless noted without elaboration that there was supposedly a pair of "interesting falls" to be found in the former Indian areas. The New Jersey-based Bishop Davenport had precious little to say of Georgia in his *New Gazetteer, or Geographical Dictionary, of North America* (1832), and what he wrote he copied from Sherwood's 1829 edition, but he too suggested that there might be something to see in the mountainous north of the state as it reportedly "abounds in sublime and picturesque scenery."<sup>21</sup>

Sherwood transformed his language on the falls in his 1837 edition, not because he was a closet transcendentalist but rather because he was a religious man who could not otherwise express the sublime grandeur he witnessed at Tallulah. Both falls deserved to be "celebrated,"

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<sup>21</sup> Simms, *Guy Rivers*, 3; Hinton, *History and Topography of the United States*, 463; and Bishop Davenport, *A New Gazetteer, or Geographical Dictionary, of North America and the West Indies . . .* (Baltimore: George McDowell and Sons, 1832), 110.

and he believed Toccoa was “one of the most beautiful cascades in the world,” but it was Tallulah Gorge that left him “shuddering and trembling.” “No one,” he wrote in one of his less poetic moments, could “look around without a deep feeling of awe and reverence of the Almighty.”<sup>22</sup>

This sentiment was echoed in Caroline Gilman’s well-known 1838 volume, *The Poetry of Traveling in the United States*. Like Sherwood, Gilman was born in the Northeast and first came to Georgia as a young adult. She and her husband moved to Charleston in 1819, where he spent the next forty years as the pastor of that city’s Unitarian church. Gilman and her husband purchased slaves and became members of polite society. She also wrote several novels, founded and edited a nationally-known journal for young adults, and became famous for her travelogue. Convinced that fellow-Charlestonian William Gilmore Simms had mischaracterized the north Georgia he invented for his “interesting novel,” Gilman asked a friend—identified only as “S.G.B.”—to explore the region in 1835 and produce a “faithful description” of what he saw and experienced. Gilman then reproduced S.G.B.’s description in its entirety in *The Poetry of Traveling*. S.G.B. noted the difference with Simms from the start, when he entered the northern portion of the state from South Carolina, “not like the hero of ‘Guy Rivers,’ on horseback, with pistols at my saddle bow . . . [but] more peaceably along in a clumsy stage.” Unlike the dark and dangerous realm encountered by Simms’ protagonist, Ralph Colleton, he found the area “beautiful,” dotted with “very pretty” villages, and most importantly, “I learned that warm hearts and cultivated minds can live in log cabins.” Above all else, he was thrilled by the landscape that Simms had described as “unlovely” and found the region surrounding Toccoa and Tallulah to be, simply, “magnificent.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Sherwood, *Gazetteer* (1837), 152.

<sup>23</sup> Caroline Gilman, *The Poetry of Traveling in the United States* (New York: S. Colman, 1838), 287, 288-289, 295.

Simms set his novel in an inhospitable north Georgia wilderness that appeared nearly devoid of meaningful existence or the hallmarks of civilization. Sherwood found that preposterous and counseled his fellow citizens to spend their summers there, as there was “no part of the world with a finer summer climate.” He saw no need to take a grand tour of Europe or the Northeast, or even to travel to Niagara; Georgians should go to Tallulah and Toccoa instead and “spend [their] own money in [their] own state.” Gilman’s friend, in turn, noted that he arrived at Tallulah and easily found a hotel “highly acceptable to way-worn travelers.” After a good night’s rest there he set off for the gorge and was promptly taken aback by the “savage grandeur of the scenery around.” Standing beside “the awful gulph [sic]” he found that, like Sherwood before him, he could think of nothing other than the divine power. He thus concluded his remarks on the sublime and picturesque at Tallulah with a “Hymn of Praise” he wrote while observing the falls:

The forest, Lord, is thine;  
Thy quickenening voice calls forth its buds to light,  
Its thousand leaflets shine,  
Bathed in thy dews and in thy sunbeams bright.  
Thy voice is on the air. . . .

Father! these rocks are thine,  
Of thee the everlasting monument,  
Since, at thy glance divine,  
Earth trembled, and her solid hills were rent.<sup>24</sup>

If Tallulah made S.G.B.’s heart race, nearby Toccoa left him placidly reflective on the passage of time. He found there a “glassy, transparent stream, rippling and sparkling over the projecting brow of a rock, then falling, without other interruption, in a pellucid curtain.” It was a scene at once “so mighty, yet so gentle.” S.G.B. soon found he could not help but to sit on a rock and lose himself in thought about the removal of Creeks and Cherokees from Georgia, the

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<sup>24</sup> Sherwood, *Gazetteer* (1837), 151, 44. Gilman, *The Poetry of Traveling*, 296, 299.



rise of the United States, the power of divine providence, and his own mortality. Gazing at the falling water and the rainbows in the mist, he was able to transcend the local and connect with greater truths:

The ages pass away,  
Successive nations rise, and are forgot,  
But on thy brilliant course thou pausest not,  
Mid thine unchanging spray. . . .

Here does a spirit dwell  
Of gratitude, and contemplation high,  
Holding deep union with eternity.—  
O loveliest scene, farewell!<sup>25</sup>

*The Poetry of Travel*'s eleven pages on Tallulah and Toccoa are longer and far more evocative of place than either of the related essays in *Georgia Illustrated*. If the thoughtful but brief consideration of the Indian past in Gilman's book was an influence on Addison's image of Tallulah, and if almost all earlier chroniclers of the gorge could not help but to find God in nature there, William had none of it. He was happy, however, to display the depths of his knowledge and the breadth of his—or his father's—bookshelf. S.G.B's homemade poetry was quaint, but William clearly thought the educated landscape reader wanted something more erudite and professional.

Richards opened his remarks on Tallulah with appropriated lines of poetry that suggested at once both the aesthetic worth of the falls as a picturesquely sublime scene and a suitable and necessary place for the inspiration of artists:

On scenes like these the eye delights to dwell;  
Here loud cascades, and there the silent dell;  
Mountains of towering height, fantastic shape,  
At whose broad base, terrific chasms gape:  
. . . Varied by light and shades' perpetual change,  
The enraptured Artist finds an endless range.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 300, 304.

Yet in keeping with his pattern throughout the book, he left these lines completely unidentified. His repeated decision to provide not even the names of the poets he quoted suggests that William believed his intended audience should have been sufficiently well-read to identify the sources on their own. In this case, they should have known that these lines were lifted from the introduction to Henry Gastineau's *Wales Illustrated in a Series of Views* (1830). A page later he quoted another poet on falls flowing "In one impetuous torrent, down the steep." He did not, however, identify that he had extracted the passage from Scotsman James Thompson's poem "Summer," which had been published in an American volume in 1832. And he ended his remarks by commenting that Tallulah was even more beautiful and healthful than the climate of "of Araby, of Araby the blest," which he borrowed from Milton's *Paradise Lost*.<sup>26</sup>

William's decision to leave the poets and poems unidentified speaks to his expectations about the education, cultural sensitivity, and class of his audience. Those idealized readers were supposed to be able to not only identify the poems, but also to understand the message behind the quotations. Each of the poems appears at first glance to refer to Tallulah, but none do. In a literary twist on Addison's appropriation of images of the Northeastern landscape, William played with the poems to suggest the interchangeability of Tallulah and Wales, or Scotland, or anywhere else, and therefore the existence important "universal" types of picturesque and sublime landscape scenes in Georgia.

With this larger agenda in mind, and given that Gilman's book had already addressed many of the details of Tallulah, William offered almost no other information on the falls or additional analysis of his own. His essay conspicuously avoided history and he made no

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<sup>26</sup> Henry Gastineau, *Wales Illustrated in a Series of Views*, vol. 1 (London: Jones and Co., 1830), 1. James Thompson, "Summer," in J. Grigg, ed., *The Works of Cowper and Thompson, including many Letters and Poems Never Before Published in this Country* (Philadelphia: J. Grigg, 1832), 18. "Araby the blest" is in John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667; reprint, New York: Signet Classics, 2003), 92.

mentioned of the figures in Addison's engraving. The remainder of his remarks read as nothing more than an extended advertisement for tourism in the area. The surrounding north Georgia landscape was a "rich treasure-house of scenes" that would "entranc[e] the gaze of the astonished beholder." The nearby village of Clarkesville was ideal for a long stay, as "a prettier village the upper part of Georgia cannot boast." In this "romantic location," one would find "courteous hospitality" and an atmosphere of "salubrity." The falls themselves are mentioned only to say that they were caused by the river running through a "deep abyss," where it "frets and foams with ever varying course." Viewing it will fill the observer with "deep and unutterable emotions" that looked something like "admiration amounting to awe" He also noted that one could find suitable-but-rustic lodging at Tallulah Falls Hotel and, from there, head out with an experienced guide for an afternoon of excellent hunting. Finally, he concluded:

The varied beauties of the Falls of Tallulah  
are not seen in a hasty glance, or a brief visit.  
There the poet might find themes for song, and  
the artist for the pencil. . . . To dwellers of our  
cities, who tire of . . . their ceaseless clamor of  
business . . . to the fair maiden . . . to all who  
have an eye to see, an ear to hear, and a heart to  
feel and appreciate the beautiful and sublime in  
Nature, —we say visit Tallulah.<sup>27</sup>

William's comments on the falls are yet another reassertion of the class-consciousness at the heart of *Georgia Illustrated*. He was not addressing himself to the yeomen or poor whites who lived in the north Georgia mountains, or anywhere else in the state. Instead, his comments were directed at those who could fully understand the synchronous implications of what he wrote and what Addison drew and who, in a show of that understanding, would financially support the venture. Cole incorporated the designs of his patrons into his works because making paintings was his calling, but selling them was his business. Willis and Bartlett recorded already famous

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<sup>27</sup> William C. Richards, "The Falls of Tallulah," 9, 10, 11, and 12.

Northeastern tourist attractions according to the prevailing aesthetic conventions of the time because they wanted to sell books. William and Addison's decisions about what, where, and even who to include in their book were based on the same criteria.

Like Cole and countless others before them, William and Addison cast their nets around the people whose support was likely to benefit their project. This explains Addison's image of Dr. Ingersoll, his essay on Columbus, and William's piece on "the Lover's Leap." It explains why they included dry sections on institutions of higher education written by people affiliated with those schools, when they could have done it better themselves. It also explains why, given the sizable amount of work that went into Addison's images of the two waterfalls and William's essay on Tallulah, they allowed the "Hon. R. M. Charlton" to write the essay on Toccoa.

The Charltons were an exceptionally prominent Savannah family. Judge Thomas U.P. Charlton, who had died in 1835, had an exceptional career as Attorney General of the state, member of the state legislature, judge, and mayor of Savannah. William made reference to him in his essay on Tallulah, where he playfully noted that the Judge Charlton had visited the gorge and had been so surprised at the depth of it that he quickly ran back from the edge and hugged a tree. The judge's son, Robert M. Charlton, had followed his father in the law, the state legislature, the judicial bench, and the Savannah mayor's office. Within a decade he would become a United States Senator.<sup>28</sup>

R.M. Charlton's essay on Toccoa was both the shortest in the book and perhaps the least interesting to read. The best he could do, he acknowledged, was but a "meager description" of a waterfall that "reminded me more forcibly than any other scene I had ever beheld, of the poetic descriptions of a fairy-land." At a loss for functional vocabulary, much less poetry, he concluded

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<sup>28</sup> The dry prose of Charlton's essay is all the more remarkable for fact that he had just published a book of poetry in 1839. Evert A. Duyckink and George L. Duyckink, *Cyclopedia of American Literature*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner, 1855), 435.

merely that it was 186 feet tall and “indeed beautiful, surpassingly beautiful.” What is remarkable here is that Addison’s image of Toccoa was one of the most important and complex (visual) texts in the book, yet it was paired with a slight, bumbling essay by a man who claimed he could remember little of the falls, as “many years, both of joy and sorrow, have aided in effacing [it] from my mind.”<sup>29</sup>

The presence of Charlton’s essay is a bold reminder that William and Addison, as they acknowledged from the start, were deeply connected to the places about which they wrote. Unlike the lowbrow, local authenticity later imagined by William James, however, the brothers demonstrated that there was a class-based hierarchy of meaning among those who inhabited any given place. James faulted himself for trying to apply any outsider’s vision to a land he didn’t know. William and Addison made clear, however, that even those who lived inside antebellum Georgia were highly selective about what they were willing to see and how they wanted to present themselves.

Whether in Addison’s appropriation of NE landscape images, William’s deep play on poetry, or even the inclusion of a mediocre essay by an elite sponsor of their work, the result was the same: they extracted the very essence of multiple strains of Northeastern landscape ideology and condensed it down into a small, tight, cohesive package. The message neatly wrapped inside was that land was a space shared with the masses; but the landscape, an ideological construct that required a formal education to understand and ample leisure and financial resources in order to explore, belonged to the elite. *Georgia Illustrated* allowed Georgians to finally define themselves, but only according to a vision of place acceptable to the state’s intellectual and economic elites. William and Addison Richards were mouthpieces for communicating that

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<sup>29</sup> Hon. R.M. Charlton, “The Fall of Toccoa,” in *Georgia Illustrated*, 17.

agenda. Their book was a collection poetry, art, and transcendental language that continually reinforced the social order of the world in which they lived and in which they aspired to success.

*Georgia Illustrated* was woven from the threads of visual and literary selectivity, regional and personal ambition, and class-consciousness. Some passages in the book were less successful in simultaneously incorporating all of these strains of thought, others more so. It was in the two sets of overlapping images and essays on Rock Mountain, however, that William and Addison mastered their materials and brought them together in a tight and seamless fabric. Rock Mountain (known today as Stone Mountain) was the only location the brothers deemed worthy of representing twice. It was the only location where one of the essays took the form of a work of fiction. It was one of only two locations (the other being the Lover's Leap) where William and Addison clearly included themselves in the images. It was also a relatively unknown location and a completely unique topography that allowed them the opportunity to show off both their literary and artistic abilities and the sublimely picturesque wonders that awaited tourists in Georgia. In short, Rock Mountain was important to them.

Henry Tanner first made cartographic mention of the mountain on his map of Georgia in the *New Atlas of the United States* (1823). The area was still populated by Cherokees at the time he charted it and Tanner, as previously noted, complained that he had no access to accurate surveys. As a result, his "Rock Mountain" appears in Hall County, on the outskirts of Gainesville, approximately sixty miles northeast of its actual location. Nearly twenty years later, William and Addison apparently found this inaccuracy so troubling that each of them in their essays explicitly identified the accurate location of the mountain. It was the only place in the book to receive such geographical details. "This remarkable scene," William wrote flatly, "is in the county of Dekalb." Addison, on the other hand, drove the point home. He had his fictional

characters engage in a conversation about it so that between them they addressed that Rock Mountain was the sole mountain in the county, the county “was named in honor of one of revolutionary heroes . . . the gallant Baron De Kalb,” the county seat was named Decatur, and Decatur is “a pleasant ride of but eight miles” from Rock Mountain.<sup>30</sup> No one could possibly mistake the location of it again.

Perhaps one of the reasons the brothers deemed it necessary to be so specific about the mountain’s location is that of all the sites they recorded, it was the last from which Cherokee tribes had been removed. Other chroniclers had accounted for Savannah and Riceboro, Columbus, the university towns, and even Tallulah and Toccoa. No one noted the Towaliga in Henry County, but even William and Addison seemed only mildly interested. But Rock Mountain, like Tallulah and Toccoa, was fundamental to their packaging of Georgia nature as a tourist attraction. And in the early 1840s, barely a decade into white habitation of the land, almost no one had written or recorded anything about it. Other than the inaccurate blip on Tanner’s map, the only brief mentions of Rock Mountain prior to *Georgia Illustrated* were in Sherwood’s 1837 *Gazetteer*, and in slightly more detail, in *The North American Tourist* (1839).

Sherwood, for his part less than interested in aesthetic types, had almost nothing to say on the subject. He devoted fifteen short lines to Rock Mountain, which was enough space only to note its location, its height and circumference, and comment that a British officer visited it in 1788 recorded that there was an ancient-looking stone fortification on its summit. The New York-based editors of *The North American Tourist* were a bit more florid, if not slightly dismissive, in their account of what they referred to as a “solitary stupendous mountain . . . [that is] so much of a curiosity in that part of the world.” Even still, they noted that “It is said to be an

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<sup>30</sup> William C. Richards, “The Rock Mountain,” in *Georgia Illustrated*, 6; T. Addison Richards, “The Rock Mountain, (North Side),” in *Georgia Illustrated*, 25.

immense outline of solid and barren rock, towering far above the high hills around it.” Standing on its summit, one could reportedly look down upon the clouds, which “float lightly and shroud the rough features of the rocks, and occasionally collect in masses and emit flashes of electricity, followed by the reverberating peal of thunder, dying away in distant echoes, and giving new features of sublimity to the scene, much to the gratification of the contemplative traveler.”<sup>31</sup>

William, being perhaps a bit more accustomed to “that part of the world,” turned immediately to proclamations of local knowledge and his personal experiences of the place. His essay began by recounting a night comfortably spent at the “Rock Mountain Hotel,” where they instructed a slave to “waken us before dawn, that we might ascend the mountain, and from its summit, behold the rising of the sun.” Using a plank path that had been laid from the base to the summit, the traveling party was able to easily climb the entire mountain in the moonlight. They soon arrived at the summit and were promptly awestruck by the scene: “The fair moon shone brightly,” William remarked, and “The stars looked from their silent thrones in silent beauty. There was no sound of earth, or air, to break the deep stillness which prevailed.”<sup>32</sup>

The sun rose and in the clear, crisp light of day, William was overjoyed at being able to see what he estimated was 30 miles in each direction, including mist rising off the Chattahoochee and, even further in the distance, the silhouettes of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Such a view brought philosophy and poetry flooding into his mind, especially that which celebrated the presence of the Divine in nature. As a result, and again expecting that appropriately educated readers would follow along, he peppered his account with unidentified lines which took from Felicia Hemans’s *Hymns on the Works of Nature, for the Use of Children* (1827), the same James Thompson poem he quoted in his essay on Tallulah, and the *Lady of the Lake* by Sir Walter

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<sup>31</sup> Sherwood, *Gazetteer* (1837), 223. *The North American Tourist*, 482, 483.

<sup>32</sup> William C. Richards, “The Rock Mountain,” 3.



Scott. Then, noting that his pen could not “adequately describe the beauty and majesty of the scene,” he remarked simply that the entire traveling party grew a bit peckish and “descended to the hotel with sharpened appetites for our morning meal.”<sup>33</sup>



Figure 5.8. T. Addison Richards, “Rock Mountain,” in *Georgia Illustrated* (1842).

Rock Mountain may have been barely known to New York editors. A decade earlier it might have looked like a scene out of Basil Hall’s *Forty Etchings*, a world of defeated Indians and ignorant and dirty squatters, but William’s point was that those days were long gone in “that part of the world.” It was civilized now, completely accessible, and ready and waiting for tourists. As visual proof of the safety and the propriety of such an outing, Addison’s first

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<sup>33</sup> William C. Richards, “The Rock Mountain,” 3, 4. Mrs. Felicia Hemans, *Hymns on the Works of Nature, For the Use of Children* (Cambridge: Hilliard, Metcalf & Company, Printers to the University, 1827), 15. James Thompson, “Summer,” in J. Grigg, ed., *The Works of Cowper and Thompson*, 13. Sir Walter Scott, “The Lady of the Lake,” in *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by J.W. Lake (Philadelphia: J. Crissy, 1838), 126.

engraving of Rock Mountain presents two well-dressed gentlemen standing in the light of sunset at the foot of a large and well-cleared path. Behind them are recognizable the forms of two other well-dressed figures on horseback, all four evidently returning from a polite afternoon climb. The view was taken from the western approach to the mountain which, due to its gradual incline, William noted, was far less stunning than the approach from the north. Nonetheless, it allowed viewers to see the view from the porch of the Rock Mountain Hotel. It also allowed Addison to emphasize again that their target audience was not comprised of locals, such as those beside the cabin in the foreground. Those figures, perhaps slaves who worked at the hotel, are merely subservient bodies, designated as being more closely connected to the goats that surround them than the elite white men who utilize their labor.

Also visible in Addison's engraving is a 165-foot observation tower that had recently been built on Rock Mountain's summit by a local landowner. Like Terrapin Tower at Niagara Falls, "Cloud's Tower" (named for its proprietor) was built to provide tourists an even more spectacular view than nature alone could afford. William was less than impressed. It was "a unique and curious exploit," to be sure, but he thought it was too tall. Ascending it did not enhance one's view, but, he felt, transformed nature's perfection into a scene of "monotony." Rock Mountain was the perfect height for the educated viewer to compose aesthetically correct mental landscape scenes, but there could be no picturesque sublime in the view from the top of the tower as "the plantations and settlements appear small amid the sea of foliage."<sup>34</sup>

William clearly applauded the development which had taken place here, but he was also adamant that more needed to be done. Every other section of the book was designed to reflect elite culture in Georgia as being homogenous with that of the Northeast. Yet, curiously, there is

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<sup>34</sup> William C. Richards, "The Rock Mountain," 5. For the history of the tower and the first glimmers of tourism at the mountain, see Paul Stephen Hudson and Lora Pond Mirza, *Atlanta's Stone Mountain: A Multicultural History* (Charleston: The History Press, 2011), 41-44.

a distinctly different tone at in the last paragraph of William's essay on Rock Mountain. He thought it admirable that the proprietor of Cloud's Tower had built a large banquet room into its base, and he thoroughly enjoyed its "excellent piano forte." The entire venture seemed to be a step towards creating a place that wealthy tourists would want to visit. He was critical, however, about the type of progress being made and that more had not been done. One hotel and a good piano over the course of a decade hardly counted as building the infrastructure for an elite Grand Tour in Georgia. If his fellow educated citizens truly wanted to demonstrate that their state was equal to New York or Massachusetts, they needed to do what had been done there and capitalize on the enormous gifts of nature with "enterprise and taste." They "would be liberally rewarded" for adding a larger and more refined hotel, preparing "choicer viands for the palate" of their guests, and compiling "for the intellectual taste, a well selected library." "Improvement is the order of the day," William lectured, "and it is needed at Rock Mountain."<sup>35</sup>

There was no harsher language or judgment in *Georgia Illustrated*, but the message was clear. Rock Mountain was an exceptional natural site and was worthy of the level of attention paid to mountains and waterfalls in the Northeast. It simply was not going to earn that attention or respect in its current state. Goats and old cabins might have been charming, but a bad observation tower and a small hotel could not possibly compete with what William had in mind. Certainly Georgians could build something more substantial, a place where refined tourists could dine well, sit on a terrace and sip tea, read inspirational works of literature and philosophy, and simply mingle with others of their same class and interests. It would be a place like the one described in those same terms by Harriet Martineau, in her reminiscence of a stay at the Mountain House in the Catskills, reproduced in Willis and Bartlett's *American Scenery*. It would be a place where one could, as Martineau remembered of her own journey, marvel at the stars

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 6.

“bright overhead” that had “conquered” the sky, then lose one’s breath when the sun rose to reveal an endless view towards distant horizons shaped by mountains and rivers. “What human interest sanctifies a bird’s-eye view,” she asked, then answered: “To the rustic it is less bewitching than a paddock with two cows. To the philosopher, what is it not? . . . [It] is a picture of life; the epitome of the human universe.”<sup>36</sup>



Figure 5.9. William Bartlett, “View From the Mountain House, Catskill [NY],” in Willis and Bartlett, *American Scenery* (1840).

Bartlett’s accompanying image depicted groups of well-dressed adults doing exactly what Martineau described: enjoying a leisurely afternoon socializing, having tea on the terrace, and generally appreciating the view. As with Niagara, these mountains had been made secure long ago by settlement and industry. But, as William seemed to imply in compelling his fellow Georgians to action, the infrastructure of tourism there was barely two decades old. As the creators of a book designed to promote the landscape, he and Addison understood that *American Scenery* and other similar volumes trafficked in images of staid permanence to advertise what

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<sup>36</sup> Harriet Martineau, “The View From the Mountain House, Catskill,” in Willis and Bartlett, *American Scenery*, 2, 102-103.

were, in truth, recently-made tourist attractions. It was a goal they shared, even if it was a method they could not copy.

Instead of permanence, *Georgia Illustrated* was a Romantic celebration of transition and flux. The book suggested neither that the state had as permanent or comprehensive a travel infrastructure as the Northeast, nor—save for William on Rock Mountain—that it needed one to compete. Rather, it promised the willing traveler an experience based on witnessing a place in the throes of becoming something else, something grander than it once had been, something that would eventually look like the Northeast but did not just yet. Given that the bedrock audience for landscape art was composed of class-conscious elites, it also promised that Georgia could be transformed while preserving the conservative racial, social, and economic order that marked its past.

Infrastructure would be built as increasing numbers of genteel tourists made it necessary. Until then, William and Addison were content to sell the natural beauty of the state. Their expectation was that remarkable nature alone would attract refined landscape viewers who, in keeping with the precepts of picturesque touring, were perpetually in search of new and interesting scenes. Neither Tallulah nor Toccoa had to be grander than Niagara. Rock Mountain did not have to surpass the endless vistas of the White Mountains or the Catskills. Rather, as *Georgia Illustrated* attempted to make clear, they just needed to be understood as equally beautiful in general, perhaps superior in certain aesthetic respects, and wholly suitable and available as much-needed alternatives.

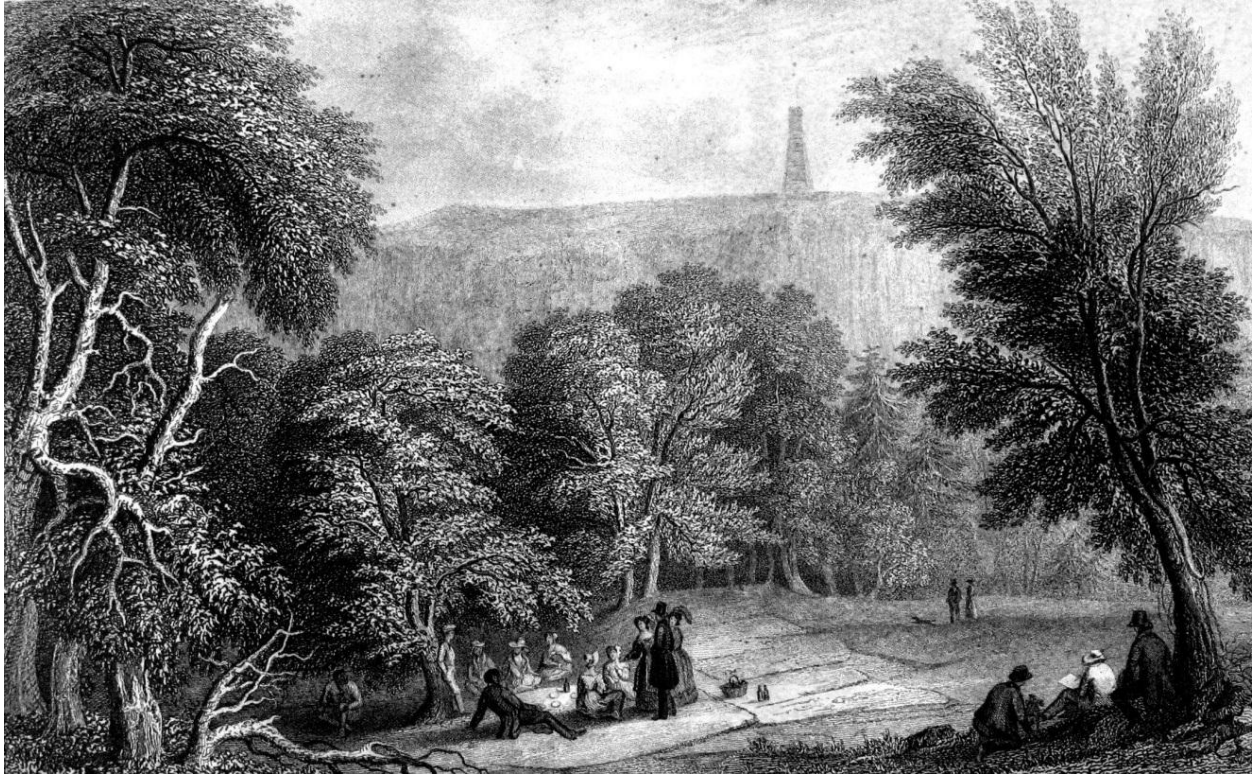


Figure 5.10. T. Addison Richards, “Rock Mountain, (North Side),” in *Georgia Illustrated* (1842).

Addison merged these ideas with the other overarching themes of the book in his image of the north face of Rock Mountain, along with the essay he wrote to accompany it. As a result they are his clearest, most direct and most successful contributions to the work. His essay tells the fictitious story of a character named Leila Delamore, a young woman who left Savannah several weeks earlier to travel with friends “in search of the picturesque.” She did not expect to find it in Georgia. Fortunately for her, the group’s itinerary consisted of several of the places addressed in *Georgia Illustrated*. The story begins with Leila and her dashing beau, a gentleman named Harry, on the evening before her first visit to Rock Mountain. Strolling “through the quiet streets of Decatur,” Leila tells Harry that life in the low country had not prepared her to find such charming cities in north Georgia: “I have pictured in my mind many

an ideal villa, embosomed in a shady grove, but never before saw a populous village thus favored.”” She and her family had always believed that the state’s most attractive landscapes were to be found in its coastal empire, but certainly not in the upcountry. Yet this trip had opened her eyes, and Leila realizes how foolish she and so many other planter families had been. ““I little thought Georgia could exhibit so profuse a display of nature’s beauties, as those which have greeted my vision, and indeed engraven their image on my heart, during the past few weeks,”” she tells Harry, but declares it is ““impossible, that you have aught to show me, that can eclipse the gentle beauty of Toccoa . . . or Tallulah’s solemn grandeur.” Harry responds with a laugh and promises her that she will retract those words when she lays eyes on Rock Mountain the next day. He tells her that he has “gazed upon the wonders of the old world and the new, and drunk in the beauties of Europe’s magic scenes,” and still finds he “can proudly contrast, the attractions of my own . . . native State, with the beauties of foreign climes.” He cannot, in fact, think of anywhere besides Georgia so blessed with such scenes, “redolent of poetry as those which have recently crossed our path in such rapid succession.”<sup>37</sup>

The next day finds the group of traveling friends at the mountain, checking into the hotel, climbing to the summit, enjoying a picnic, and as night falls—in a reiteration of William’s complaint— laughing at the horrible selection of books in the hotel. More importantly, two of the main themes of Addison’s agenda are revealed. First, while talking about the composition of the mountain, Harry tells Leila that uneducated people used to believe that it was the fragmentary remains of an ancient explosion in space, a “visitant from some other member of the starry host—a meteoric fraction of a world dismembered” that crashed into the earth. But science, he

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<sup>37</sup> T. Addison Richards, “The Rock Mountain, (North Side),” 25, 24. As the 1840 Census for Chatham and surrounding counties contains no families with the surname of Delamore, my assumption is that Addison’s essay here is a work of fiction. No last name is given for Leila’s friend Harry, and no other character in the story individually identified beyond the group.

explains, has proven that the mountain is made of granite, a most common and most American material. Second, Addison concluded his text with a poem, his own, which states that even the most apprehensive tourist will ultimately leave this natural marvel uttering the words:

Farewell proud mountain-rock;  
we've read this truth upon thy brow,  
Thy wondrous architect is God  
– His monument art thou!"<sup>38</sup>

To those Georgian planters who insisted on seeing Europe, or taking the Northeastern Grand Tour, or even just vacationing at resorts or springs elsewhere, Addison's essay promised that traveling within the state was easier, more meaningful, and as aesthetically stimulating as anywhere else in the Old World or New. To those Americans who looked askance at Georgia as an intellectual and cultural backwater, as the lost remnant of an ancient world, completely out of place in the modern landscape, Addison's essay promised that the reality of life in contemporary Georgia looked nothing like false ways it had been popularly imagined a century ago. There was nothing distinctively, or at least stereotypically, Southern about it. It was not a little-known wilderness, not a territory lying waste, but a vibrant place filled with life and energy and marked by the same forces that were transforming the rest of the nation. It was instead wholly American ground, shaped by the hand of the Divine, waiting to speak its message to those who could—and would—read its landscapes.

Addison's engraving takes this point a step further and once again reasserts that the brothers were advertising not just the existence of landscapes for touring within the state, but also the existence of a home-grown intelligentsia who were qualified and capable of seeing,

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 28. Although these last lines are apparently Addison's own, he, like William, included several other unidentified bits of poetry in his narrative. They are, in order, Robert Pollock, "The Course of Time, A Poem, In Ten Books" in *The Poetical Works of Heman, Heber, and Pollock. Complete in One Volume* (Philadelphia: J. Griggs, 1831), 28; and Samuel Rogers, "The Pleasures of Memory," in John Frost, *Select Works of the British Poets, in a chronological series from Falconer to Sir Walter Scott* (Philadelphia: Thomas Wardle, 1838), 235.



reading, and understanding those sites. The north face of Rock Mountain fills the background of the scene, capped by Cloud's Tower, but is so indistinct that it offers no more detail than a beautiful setting for what takes place in front of it. There, at the far left of the meadow, is a male slave. He is seated behind and beneath several curving tree branches that visually corral him within his given space. Barefooted and wearing relatively tattered clothes, he cautiously looks sideways at the white revelers to his left. That group of seven women and three men, all of whom completely ignore the slave, occupies the center of the scene. They are well-dressed, well-mannered, and deep in conversation after the conclusion of a picnic lunch, as signified by the basket and the bottles to their left. In the distance beyond them is a wandering couple who have stepped away for a bit of privacy. And at the far right of the image, depicted in a highly-visible white coat and large hat, surrounded by two other men who observe him drawing this very scene on a large sheet of white paper, is Addison Richards.

Addison's inclusion of himself in the scene, along with William, family members and friends, was a purposeful reminder of how deeply connected they were to the work they produced. The book was their first and best, if not only, chance to say something unexpected and potentially game-changing about who and what Georgia was and what it had to contribute to the culture of the nation. The book was their chance to speak for the existence of intellectual communities across the state, to proclaim themselves part of one, and to bring success and renown to both Penfield and their father's bookstore. It was their opportunity to shine, to demonstrate that they had studied well and mastered the tools of their trades, and to make names for themselves as contributors to American art and letters. *Georgia Illustrated* was not an accidental project that they cobbled together on a slow weekend at the bookstore, but rather—to paraphrase Harriet Martineau—a picture of their lives; the epitome of their human universe.

## — *EPILOGUE* —

A quick and tidy ending to this story would conclude in 1842. Frozen in that exceptional moment in time, *Georgia Illustrated* would appear to be destined for the great success implied by the fanfare with which it was reviewed in the most significant Northern periodicals of the day. William and Addison would appear to be on the verge of reframing popular knowledge of Georgia, jump-starting nature tourism within the state, and becoming prominent contributors to the intellectual and cultural life of the nation. Toccoa and Tallulah might surpass Niagara in the number of annual visitors; Penfield might become the new Cambridge; Addison might get the girl. But unfrozen, the world comes in fast. Nothing stays the same; nothing turns out quite as it would have seemed.

At twenty years old Addison did not know this, perhaps could not see it, when he sat down to write bombastic love letters to a wealthy merchant's daughter in Augusta. She needed him in her life, he suggested, because he was smarter and more talented than most. He and his brother had set out to remake the world as they wanted it to be—a Georgia more erudite, more picturesque, more refined, and in which they were well-respected men—and for a brief moment, anyway, it looked like they had succeeded. Not a single review published by a New York, Philadelphia, or Washington editor in 1841 or early 1842 questioned the accuracy of *Georgia Illustrated* or the authority of the very young brothers behind it. None mentioned its highly selective depictions of the state or held them up against what had been written or seen before; none challenged its representations of slaves or its lack of plantations, poor whites, monotonous forests, or miasmic swamps. Instead, they cheered.

The *Ladies Companion* highly recommended *Georgia Illustrated* to its readers for being a “truly beautiful” work that rendered the state “a credit to our common country.” The editors could not say enough about Addison’s landscapes, calling them “the most delicious gems of art we have ever witnessed.” In a subsequent review of the engravings, they lauded them as “certainly the greatest *chef d’oeuvres* of the art which have ever emanated from the American burin.” *Godey’s Lady’s Book* was a bit less effusive in its praise, but remarked nonetheless that “the work is well worth the patronage of the admirers of beautiful engravings.” The editors of the *New-Yorker* were compelled to admit that they had learned that “few districts possess more romantic or beautiful scenery than the State of Georgia, and we hope this work, which promises to make the topography of the State familiar to the country, will be well supported.” *The Family Magazine* concurred and said that *Georgia Illustrated* revealed “a state rich in picturesque and romantic views . . . [that] far surpasses anything of its kind hitherto attempted in this country, and rivals in beauty the imported works.” The *Knickerbocker* thought it of “the highest order of excellence,” and added “the work has our warmest wishes for success.” And the *New World* referred to the book as “a beautiful work,” which had made its creators “very favorably known to the Northern public.”<sup>1</sup>

No one in Penfield—and indeed very few in Georgia—had ever received such glowing national recognition. Neither brother was able to ignore their press. The writer Mary Elizabeth Moragne, who hosted William at her family’s Abbeville District, South Carolina home in July 1841, noted in her diary that an evening spent in his company was an evening engaged in a rare

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<sup>1</sup> All of these journals were published in New York, except for the Philadelphia-based *Godey’s Lady’s Book*. The reviews, in the order in which they appear here, are from the following sources: “Literary Review,” *The Ladies Companion: A Monthly Magazine Dedicated to Literature and the Fine Arts* XIII (December 1840): 98; XIV (January 1841): 148; and XVI (March 1842): 247. “Editor’s Book Table,” *Godey’s Lady’s Book* 22, no.6 (June 1841): 283. “Georgia Illustrated,” *The New-Yorker* 10, no. 9 (14 Nov 1840): 141. “Literary Notices,” *The Family Magazine; or, Monthly Abstract of General Knowledge* 8 (01 May 1841): 280. “Literary Record,” *The Knickerbocker, or, New York Monthly Magazine* 16, no. 6 (December 1840): 548. “The Literary World,” *The New World; a Weekly Family Journal of Popular Literature, Science, Art and News* 4, no. 22 (28 May 1842): 352.

“communion of mind.” In the wake of his departure, she despaired having to “descend from . . . [an] intellectual bliss” that was not possible with most other young men. Yet as much as she enjoyed his company, she also noted sharply that the reviews of *Georgia Illustrated* had clearly gone to William’s head. He was a kind man, she wrote, and “the chief charm of his appearance is symplicty [sic] & native goodness, yet”:

I came to the conclusion that the excessive compliments already paid to the young editor had fallen upon no callous ear—he evidently magnifies the importance of a builder of the ‘monument’ as he calls his work—of course he thinks, & very justly, too, that ‘twill be a monument to his name. His enthusiasm is almost childish with respect to his undertaking—he thinks of making it quite unique—indeed, ‘quite the thing.’<sup>2</sup>

Addison was no less confident in his abilities and shared his older brother’s conviction that they were on the verge of achieving something monumental. As previously suggested, one can practically hear the early reviews of *Georgia Illustrated* ringing in his ears. They are the soundtrack to which he wrote his Augusta belle, bragged about his enormous potential, quoted Charles Lamb, and told her he intended to engage with her in a “chat epistolary.” Yet the world moved on. Glistening crystalline moments became ordinary days, became long months, became a lifetime, and in the end Addison—and his brother—missed the mark. Their goals were judged by some as too idealistic, too lofty, too out of touch with life on the ground among both Georgia’s yeomen and its elites.

In Addison’s case, his relationship with the young woman in Augusta ultimately shriveled and died on the vine. Her male cousin gleefully noted its demise in a letter to her, lambasting “Richards” for his “affectation” and “pedantry” in writing her anything he would

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<sup>2</sup> Mary Elizabeth Moragne, *The Neglected Thread: A Journal from the Calhoun Community 1836-1842* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1951); quoted in Kate Esary Russell, “William Carey Richard and the *Orion* (MA thesis, University of Georgia, 1987), 12-13.

dare deem an “epistle.” No doubt the young painter’s letters were “literary feasts,” he sarcastically remarked, driving the final nail into the casket, but a true Southern gentleman had no business writing such things to a young lady. Addison and his overly-intellectual sort wrote only for their own self-serving “display of rhetoric or erudition,” while a man of real breeding and manners—such as himself—wrote simply and honestly to express his “sentiments as they well freely from the heart.”<sup>3</sup> This criticism of cultural sophistication cuts close to the bone in the matter: although it took nearly two decades to fully play out, the Richards brothers eventually found that the more verbose chest-thumpers among them, across the antebellum South but especially in the North, had no interest in the literary and artistic claims they staked for Georgia.

If neither brother was able to see this in the halcyon days of 1841, William had begun to sense its approach on the horizon in 1842. In March of that year, following the transformation of *Georgia Illustrated* from a serial into a book, he released the first issue of a monthly literary magazine he called *Orion*. He and his father published it, he edited it, and Addison illustrated it. Though it lasted only two years, *Orion* was in many ways an expansion of what they had attempted in its predecessor. Rather than simply focusing on the Richards’s experiences in or observations of their home state, *Orion* would send Addison “from Virginia to Louisiana to make drawings of such scenery as may be worthy of delineation.”<sup>4</sup> It was first and foremost a literary magazine, however, and William set his sights on making it a repository of the best writing in the South. In the very first issue he neatly summarized his vision for the work and grandly announced that his goal was to aid in “the advancement of the literature of the South—we will not say Southern literature, for we have a decided distaste for such local expressions, as

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<sup>3</sup> W.E. Screven to Ann McKinne, 10 March 1843, Jackson and McKinne Family Papers (1817-1871), Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>4</sup> William C. Richards, “Our Illustrations,” *Orion* 1, no.1 (March 1842): 56. William’s stated goal was for the magazine to “furnish one splendid original southern landscape in every number,” all “made exclusively by our brother, Mr. T. Addison Richards.”

if literature were of a different character in the South and in the North. It is the same everywhere except in degree and in tone, and its advancement, its elevation in the South, is the proper object of our desires and efforts.” It was essentially a refocusing of the agenda behind *Georgia Illustrated*: as he explained in the July issue later that year, “we labor for the advancement and refinement of intellectual taste and habit in the South.”<sup>5</sup>

Whereas *Georgia Illustrated* was aimed at a very specific national audience and made brief but substantial waves in the Northern press, *Orion* barely made a ripple. Northern editors had nothing to say about a regional magazine intended to reflect Southern culture back to Southerners. The New York *Knickerbocker* briefly mentioned it once and noted that it was “neatly printed, well supplied, and admirably embellished . . . under the care of Mr. Richards, the late editor of ‘Georgia Illustrated,’” but soon both of William’s publications had lost the attention of cultural arbiters outside of the South. In the autumn of 1842, with his literary career foundering, he and his new wife moved thirty miles from Penfield to nearby Athens, home of the University of Georgia, and began making more pragmatic plans for their future: they opened a private high school for girls. Addison made several trips to Manhattan during this period to arrange for the engraving of *Orion*’s images and to search out additional funding for the magazine’s publication. He also began to investigate how he might move there permanently to build a career as an artist. It was a daunting proposition. Not only did he fail to find financial backers for a Southern magazine, but more importantly, he saw little room in the New York art circles for a Southern artist. He decided instead that he was better appreciated in Georgia, followed his brother to Athens and, in his own nod to prudence, made arrangements to open an

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<sup>5</sup> William C. Richards, “Our Southern Contemporaries,” *Orion* 1, no.1 (March 1842): 63; and “Editor’s Department,” *Orion* 1, no.4 (July 1842): 248. For the history of the *Orion* and especially William’s views on regionalism versus nationalism in literature, see Bertram Holland Flanders, *Early Georgia Magazines: Literary Periodicals to 1865* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1944), 72-74. See also Edward L. Tucker, “Two Young Brothers and Their *Orion*,” *Southern Literary Journal* 11, no.1 (Fall 1978): 67-70.

art school. Despite the Richards brothers' continued efforts to proclaim cultural equality between North and South, the blossom had begun to fade.<sup>6</sup>

By November 1842, William had apparently had enough of Northern disinterest in his and Addison's work, which he now saw as the result of bias against the South, and published the first regionally-defensive essay in the *Orion*. "The Georgian in New York," was written not by his brother, who had ample experience on which to draw, but by an unidentified contributor from Savannah. Nonetheless, it was an unprecedentedly harsh cultural criticism from a publisher who had previously spouted nationalism and thrived on New York's attention. The very first line of the essay was a veritable admission that *Georgia Illustrated* had changed nothing. It advised Georgians that "if you wish to preserve a high estimate of your native land, and self, take my advice and stay at home." Otherwise, it continued, "you will find . . . your self estimation considerably worsted, and you will ascertain . . . that you think more of your own state, than those north of you do." The essay concluded three pages later with the author rejoicing to return home after encountering New York officials who thought him ignorant simply because of where he was from. He found that it was almost impossible for a wealthy Georgian to purchase life insurance from any of the reputable New York firms because, as one agent told him, "We rank Georgia as extra hazardous . . . and would rather not take the risk, at any rate." When the author protested that he lived in a healthful place, the agent informed him that true hazard was not the climate but the people. He was ultimately able to purchase a very small policy, a fraction of what was available to New Yorkers, but only after signing a document stating that the policy

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<sup>6</sup> *Knickerbocker* XIX (May 1842): 496; quoted in Flanders, *Early Georgia Magazines*, 86. William's marriage and move to Athens, as well as Addison's multiple trips to New York, are addressed in their brother Samuel's diary entries from July 1842 through April 1843. Samuel notes that William and Cornelia rented a house in the vicinity of the Cobb family, which would have placed them near modern-day Prince Avenue. Samuel Richards diary, 04 July 1843, Atlanta Historical Society. Notices for William and Cornelia Richards's high school can be found in the *Athens Southern Banner* beginning on 28 October 1842 and appear regularly thereafter. The same newspaper later noted that "Mr. T. Addison Richards . . . has taken the apartments formerly occupied by [the artist] Mr. George Cooke." *Athens Southern Banner*, 24 March 1843.

would not pay if he killed himself, if he was killed in a duel, or if he was killed by the “Justice” for breaking the law. Most pointedly of all, he remarked that he had quarreled with New Yorkers who spoke fearfully of “Georgia fever” and believed “that if it killed all the Georgians, it would be a benefactor to mankind.”<sup>7</sup>

“The Georgian in New York” is not a critically important essay. Scholars who have considered the *Orion*’s contribution to American literature have not mentioned it. Historians have not cited it as a crucial text in the sectional fragmentation of the antebellum United States. Yet given its appearance at just the moment that the Northern presses stopped garlanding William with accolades, just as Addison had returned empty-handed from the publishing houses and art galleries of Manhattan, just as the brothers were beginning to consider what else they might do with their lives, it is too important to overlook. William’s willingness to publish it speaks to his growing awareness that the lines of praise he had read the year before represented the personal opinions and professional courtesies of a few well-read Northern editors, but nothing more. *Georgia Illustrated* entertained a small segment of the reading public for a short time, during a fleeting moment in which such entertainments were even possible, but it did not meaningfully reshape the way that outsiders thought about Georgia.

If William sensed that the moment was passing in 1842, it must have been abundantly clear by 1844. That year, Philadelphia-based *Graham’s Lady’s and Gentleman’s Magazine*, one of the most famous in the nation, began appropriating Addison’s images without so much as a line of attribution or a single mention of the book. *Graham’s* editors, it is worth noting, had favorably reviewed *Georgia Illustrated* in 1841. In an odd twist, however, they did so in connection with a new travel book by Captain Basil Hall. Hall, they wrote, was “one of the most

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<sup>7</sup> “The Georgian in New York,” *Orion* 2, no.1 (November 1842): 6-8.



agreeable of writers. We like him for the same reason we like a good drawing-room conversationalist—there is such pleasure in listening to his elegant nothings.” His account of “every corner of the globe” was easy and fantastical enough to make the average reader “forget, for a while, the dull business of life.” Yet they had clearly forgotten what Hall had depicted of Georgia little more than a decade earlier; perhaps they had never paid attention. In any case, they saw no irony in noting two lines later that William and Addison had published a series of “views [that] are selected with taste, and give us a high opinion of the scenery of Georgia.”

*Graham’s* editors in 1841 were particularly pleased with *Georgia Illustrated* for not being the product of a foreign press. They specifically noted that, unlike Willis and Bartlett’s *American Scenery* and other British publications which they felt had misunderstood the American landscape—again missing the connection with Hall, the Richards brothers had produced an American book, about an American place, that would “encourage the arts, foster a love for the beautiful, and acquaint the public with some of the loveliest gems of our native scenery.” To that end, in 1844 they began reproducing Addison’s images as their own. Over the course of the next three years, without ever once crediting either Addison or his book, they published six scenes from *Georgia Illustrated*: Brownwood Female Institute, Georgia Female College, the Pulaski monument in Savannah, Tallulah Falls, the north face of Rock Mountain, and finally Toccoa Falls, which they misidentified as the “Lover’s Leap” on the Chattahoochee. Only with this last image did they even acknowledge the others, noting simply that they had collectively made up “a fine series of Georgia views that we are running through the magazine.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Reviews of Captain Bail Hall’s *Patchwork* and William and Addison Richards’s *Georgia Illustrated* appeared in “Review of New Books,” *Graham’s Lady’s and Gentleman’s Magazine* XVIII, no.4 (April 1841): 204. The image of Brownwood Female Institute was reproduced in the issue for May 1844; Georgia Female College in August 1844; the Pulaski monument in Savannah in September 1844; Tallulah Falls in April 1845; Rock Mountain in August 1845; and Toccoa (misidentified as the “Lover’s Leap”) in May 1847. The remark about a “fine series of Georgia views” is from the caption accompanying the engraving of Toccoa, *Graham’s* XXX, no. 5 (May 1847): 295. The question of how *Graham’s* reproduced the images without attribution is an interesting one, given that William

*Graham's* ran its last *Georgia Illustrated* image in 1847. After that, they had little to say or show of the state save for quoting a few travelers in the later-1850s about bad roads, dangerous environments, and morally corrupt people. Those changes were not instant, however, and *Graham's* shift during the 1840s is worth putting in context. At issue is that *Georgia Illustrated* was published at a rare moment when it was possible not only for Southerners to proclaim their intellectual and cultural connections with the Northeast, or even want to do so, but also for Northeastern editors to cheer them for doing it. It occurred at a point in time so fleeting that by late-1842, William felt it necessary to publish an essay pointing out that the average New Yorker had paid no attention to either his book or published responses to it. By 1844, the *Orion* had folded and *Graham's* had started to pilfer Addison's images without William's text, not to educate their audiences or endorse the Richardses' nationalism, but simply because they were unique scenes that might entertain their readers.

Although Addison and William could not see it at the time, as their heads swelled and their hearts raced, the tide of history had already begun to pass them by even as the glue was drying on *Georgia Illustrated's* binding. Within a matter of months of their stunning repackaging of Georgia, Englishman James Silk Buckingham published a two-volume travel account of *The Slave States of America* (1842) and pushed the reputation of the state back towards its old, familiar, contested territory. Addison and William's twelve highly-selective images and accompanying short essays were simply no match for Buckingham's nearly 240 pages dedicated to his travels through the state. He left behind a comprehensive record of the

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registered the copyright for *Georgia Illustrated* in New York in 1841. *Graham's* later reprinted William's essay on Rock Mountain (not in the same issue as any image), and credited him as the author, but this does not indicate that there was a larger agreement between them. For the specifics of early copyright law in the United States, especially the ways in which it was strengthened in 1831 and reinforced by a series of Supreme Court cases in the late 1830s, see Meredith M. McGill, "Copyright," in Robert A. Gross and Mary Kelley, eds., *A History of the Book in America, Vol 2: An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society in the New Nation, 1790-1840* (Chapel Hill: American Antiquarian Society and University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 202-206.

landscape across which he journeyed, its flora and fauna, the towns and cities he visited, and the people he encountered. He offered careful analysis of his experiences, admitted that he wrote with strong anti-slavery and anti-abolitionist biases, and freely noted that he found both remarkable and horrifying elements in Georgia. If it was not the “wild and little known” sublime terror imagined by some of his predecessors, neither was it the picturesque tourist paradise being sold by his young contemporaries.

Buckingham’s long exposition on the state deserves to be analyzed on its own, but it is perhaps sufficient to note that he was exceptionally fond of Savannah, Macon, and Athens and wrote long passages on each. He appreciated Savannah’s many “handsome and commodious” homes, liked the city’s hotels, and was enamored with its elites. Unlike the “coldness, formality, and reserve of the north,” he found the city’s populace “characterized by great elegance in their deportment; the men are all perfect gentlemen in their manners . . . while the ladies are not only well-educated, but elegant in their manners.” Macon was equally attractive to his eyes, civilized to his sensibilities, and had a comfortable hotel in which to lodge. Buckingham was highly impressed with the large stone buildings of and 150 students of the Georgia Female College, which he pronounced “not inferior to any of the female academies of the North” and possessing teachers as competent “as those of the best schools in Europe.” Even better was Athens, a combination of the finest elements of Savannah and Macon, and he deemed it “very elegant and highly intellectual.” He spent more than a week as a guest of most prominent families in town and lectured several times at the university, where he found “the gentlemen . . . superior to those usually seen in such assemblages at the North, and their conversation was remarkable for its intelligence.” After a long discussion of Athens’s classical name, its classical architecture, and its classic society, Buckingham finally concluded that it would soon “exercise an Attic influence

on the surrounding country, which in time may rival that of the Athenians of Greece over the people of the Peloponnesus.”<sup>9</sup>

If these passages in *The Slave States* seemed to endorse what appeared in *Georgia Illustrated*, there were significant other portions where Buckingham’s narrative demonstrated just how highly selective William and Addison had been. He deemed the roads in the interior of the state “the worst we had yet traveled over . . . being formed apparently by the mere removal of the requisite number of trees.” He lashed out at “the filthy condition” of some of the smaller towns through which he and his wife passed, especially one where he was sickened by the “the coarse and broken plates, rusty knives and forks, and large junks of boiled pork, and various messes of corn and rancid butter, [which,] added to the coarse and vulgar appearance and manners of most of the guests, made the whole scene the most revolting we had yet witnessed in the country.”<sup>10</sup>

Even more troubling for an avowed abolitionist like him was the condition of slaves across the state. He devoted more than twenty pages to his criticism of the institution. Despite his admiration for the manners and refinements of the planters, he made it clear that he deplored their willingness to condemn their fellow humans to a lifetime of forced labor “when their only crime was that they were a darker colour than the race that held them in bondage.” He systematically challenged what he saw as the fallacies used by slaveholders to deprive slaves of freedom, education, and hope, which caused an otherwise-capable people to remain “not a single step in advance of their sable brethren on the banks of the Niger, or the plains of Senegal.” Even worse in Buckingham’s eyes was that slavery also created an enormous underclass of ignorant

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<sup>9</sup> James Silk Buckingham, *The Slave States of America*, 2 vols. (London: Fisher, Son, & Co., 1842), 1: 122-123, 195; and 2: 92-95.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 1: 188, 189-190.

poor whites in Georgia, the majority of whom could never overcome the “dirty, repulsive, and disagreeable” conditions into which they were born.<sup>11</sup>

English geologist and writer George W. Featherstonhaugh, who twice settled for extended periods in the United States, thoroughly challenged Buckingham in his *Excursion Through the Slave States* (1844). Like Buckingham he was opposed to slavery but sympathetic to the plight of the slaveholder. Even still, he was convinced that the institution had ruined Georgia by creating a large, violent, immoral underclass of poor whites. He dismissed Columbus as a vile town which, as a result, was “swarming with drunken Indians and young prostitutes, both Indian and white, a sufficient indication of the manners of the place.” Augusta, like Savannah and other sizeable cities in the state, was said to be filled “with at least one hundred dram-shops and dirty taverns . . . [and] crowded with men all upon a level in greediness and vulgarity.” “In short,” Featherstonhaugh wrote in a final judgment on Georgia, “there is nothing [there] to detain a traveler who is in search of anything that is rare and interesting, but everything conspires to make him anxious to take to the roads again, be they ever so bad.”<sup>12</sup> Three years later he followed up with a second book in which he clarified his position, explaining that the state had been ruined by a:

contemptible state of society . . . in which the people you are obliged to deal with attempt to deceive you upon every occasion, and, perceiving your dependence upon them, swagger and swear, and attempt to bully you if you say a word. These bad habits and vices . . . grow out of the combined causes of climate and slavery. The climate makes them too indolent to help themselves, and slaves being at hand to do all menial and laborious offices, they

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 1: 134; and 2: 246.

<sup>12</sup> George W. Featherstonhaugh, *Excursion Through the Slave States, from Washington on the Potomac to the Frontier of Mexico*. . . . New York: Harper & Brothers, 1844), 155.

acquire, from their earliest years, extravagant ideas of their own importance.”<sup>13</sup>

If Northern reading audiences in the early- to mid-1840s were curious as to what Georgia looked like and whose accounts of it were accurate, both their interests and their source materials soon began to change. As the national political mood shifted and began to harden around issues related to the spread of slavery, popular Northern magazines began to back away from their earlier support of William and Addison’s Southern nationalism. *Graham’s Magazine* stopped printing Addison’s images or any other neutral information about Georgia after mid-1847, the year Featherstonhaugh’s second and more-explicitly abolitionist book was published. The August 1849 edition of the *Knickerbocker* included a six-page essay that recounted an anonymous Northern traveler’s recent experiences in Georgia. Entitled “Interior Georgia Life and Scenery,” it confirmed that William and Addison had been right nearly a decade earlier about the existence of beautiful landscapes in the state. It paraphrased *Georgia Illustrated*’s story about Judge Charlton, repeatedly called Toccoa “beautiful,” and unequivocally claimed that Tallulah presented “the finest view of mountain scenery in the United States.” Yet the essay also made clear that Georgia was nothing like the Northeast and its landscape could not sustain polite tourism. Instead, it was a place in which one should travel only if “armed with a pistol and bowie knife,” for the people were “generally poor, ignorant, and licentious.”<sup>14</sup>

The Richards brothers disagreed. By the late-1840s and early-1850s, however, William was losing touch with the unbridled enthusiasm that had propelled *Georgia Illustrated* forward. His goals seem to have shifted from wanting to fundamentally alter national culture to something more local and manageable. During his time in Athens he served as the principal and science

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<sup>13</sup> George W. Featherstonhaugh, *A Canoe Voyage up the Minnay Sotor; with an Account of the Lead and Copper Deposits in Wisconsin; of the Gold Region in the Cherokee Country; and Sketches of popular Manners; &c. &c.*, 2 Vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1847), 2: 251, 195.

<sup>14</sup> “Interior Georgia Life and Scenery,” *Knickerbocker Magazine* 34 (August 1849): 113-118.

lecturer for the private girls' high school he had founded; he and his wife, the main teacher at the school, started a family; and he owned and operated a bookstore that served the university community. From the offices above the bookstore he edited the *Orion* from 1842 to 1844, and another regional magazine, the *Southern Literary Gazette*, from 1848 to 1853. This latter publication was his final attempt to promote the literature and art of the South. It was, he wrote in the first issue, a journal "that shall be avowedly sectional in its purpose . . . [as] We love the South—for here all our interests for life are centered . . . [and] We labor to promote Southern literature—because it has been mournfully neglected." But as the rhetoric about Georgia as a dangerous land filled with ignorant and violent people grew, William found that a magazine of elegant literature could not answer the call. He also found that he had no taste for politics. In 1853 he turned the *Southern Literary Gazette* over to a colleague. In 1855, he and his young family left the South for good. They landed in Rhode Island before finally settling in Chicago, he became a Baptist pastor like his father before him, and he never published anything about the South or Southern art or literature ever again.<sup>15</sup>

Where William left off, even fell out of the historical record without so much as a comment why, Addison eventually returned to their cause with increasing vigor. He had left Athens in late-1844 to move to Manhattan, become a student at the National Academy of Design, and—perhaps assisted by his connections in Columbus—take up residence in the same New York University building as Samuel F. B. Morse. After two years of study, he set out on his own as a painter in 1846. He was quite successful in this venture and in 1848 was elected an

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<sup>15</sup> William C. Richards, "For the Southern Literary Gazette," *Southern Literary Gazette* 1 (13 May 1848): 1; and (27 May 1848): 24. For the history of the bookstore and the two journals he edited there, see *Athens Southern Banner*, 28 November 1844; 02 January 1845; 06 January 1846; and 03 February 1848. See also Russell, "William Carey Richards and the *Orion*," 17-19; and Flanders, *Early Georgia Magazines*, 97. For William's growing distaste for politics, see Tucker, "Two Young Brothers," 66.

Associate member of the National Academy. He soon joined the inner circle of the artists known as the Hudson River School, and become a close friend to and informal student of Thomas Cole.

Addison's blossoming career was rooted in his newfound reputation as a prolific painter of New England landscapes, even though he alone of his New York colleagues also continued to paint the landscapes of the South. Yet his Southern scenes were decisively ignored during his early years in New York. It was not until the early-1850s that Addison earned fame enough to publicly proclaim their worth, and critics prior to that point simply added his name to the list of young artists following on Cole's trail. The English artist and critic John Antrobus, summarizing the New York art world, even went so far as to lament what he saw as a glaring absence among the subjects of respected American painters. "Artists roam the country of the North, turning out pictures of its scenes and scenery by the hundred yearly," he complained, "but none come to glean the treasures with which the grand and beautiful country of the South and its peculiar life abound."<sup>16</sup>

In 1851, however, Addison was elevated to full Academician. In 1852, he was elected Corresponding Secretary of the National Academy of Design. With these newly-acquired credentials well in place, he turned at last to face a truly national audience. Illustrations and small texts in William's *Orion* and *The Southern Literary Gazette* had helped his brother, but they only ever reached a regional, albeit regionally prominent, audience. In 1853, however, Addison stepped back onto the national stage with the publication of an illustrated article on

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<sup>16</sup> Entry for "Richards, Thomas Addison," in Peter Hastings Falk, ed., *Who Was Who in American Art* (Madison, CT: Sound View Press, 1985), 516. For his residences in New York and the connection with Morse, see Chancellor's Records for T. Addison Richards, University Archives, New York University. See also General Joshua L. Chamberlain, LL.D., ed., *Universities and Their Sons: New York University. It's History, Equipment, and Characteristics. With Biographical Sketches and Portraits of Founders, Benefactors, Officers, and Alumni* (Boston: R. Herndon Co., 1901), 72-73. For his relationship with Thomas Cole, see T. Addison Richards to James Lawson, 9 August 1847, James Lawson Papers (1847-1861), South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; and T. Addison Richards to Charles Lanman, 14 February 1848, Box 5 (1841-1853), Chancellor's Records, University Archives, New York University. John Antrobus is quoted in Angela Miller, *Empire of the Eye*, 239.



“The Landscape of the South” in *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*. Given the torrent of Northeastern subject matter coming from the pens and brushes of his of Hudson River School colleagues, and especially considering the shifting trends and hardening voices in popular writing about Georgia, it is of little wonder that he opened the article by exclaiming: “But little has yet been said, either in picture or story, of the natural scenery of the Southern States . . . This ignorance is not likely to be enlightened by the reports of tourists.”<sup>17</sup> In other words, one needed a local guide to reveal the true worth of the Southern landscape. Fortunately, Addison just happened to be available.

Like *Georgia Illustrated* before it, “The Landscape of the South” avoided overt references to slavery, plantations, or poor whites. Indeed, most of the essay dealt with Southern places outside of Georgia, such as the mountains and rivers of the Carolinas, but uniformly presented them as landscapes completely devoid of human interaction. All were readily available to the tourist in search of solitude, safety, and aesthetically pleasing views of American nature. Even when he dared to mention the existence of South Carolina and Georgia rice fields, Addison discussed them only as if they were benign and naturally-occurring spectacles rather than the result of the labors of slaves:

The monotonous level of the landscape hereabouts throws the whole burden of interest upon the dreamy atmosphere and the luxuriant vegetation, and well, too, do they sustain it. Even in mid-winter, the countless evergreens lend a *riant* air to the scene, while it is scarcely possible to describe its summer lavishness of beauty. Naught of grace and richness can be imagined which is not seen in the vast rice fields, from the earliest budding of the young plant, to the golden tinting of the ripened grain: in the venerable groves of massive oak whose forms are barely discernible in their wealth of

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<sup>17</sup> T. Addison Richards, “The Landscape of the South,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 36, no. 6 (May 1853): 721.

trailing moss and vines: and in the ghostly and impressive aspect of the forest swamps and dark lagunes [sic].<sup>18</sup>

“The Landscape of the South” was *Georgia Illustrated* wrapped in a slightly different package. Rather than Toccoa and Tallulah alongside Rock Mountain and the Chattahoochee River, it offered Toccoa and Tallulah alongside Saluda Gap in South Carolina and North Carolina’s French Broad River. Yet the language and the message were fundamentally the same as they had been a decade earlier. Everything in the essay was designed to encourage nature tourism while completely avoiding the heated moral and political issues of the day. If northern travelers could be convinced to appreciate the South’s beautiful landscapes, without getting caught up in issues of slavery, perhaps they would be eventually willing to accept the region as an equally American contributor to national well-being.

Either Addison could not see that he was trying to hold back a surging tide in 1853, or he was so convinced of the importance of his project that he simply did not care. Yet he was quickly drowned out by articles and books by anti-slavery activists who took to writing about Georgia with a level of vitriol eerily reminiscent of British texts from the 1810s. A Vermont school teacher who identified himself only as “H. Hodges” laid out a stinging response to “The Landscape of the South” in an 1855 essay in *Putnam’s Magazine*. His purpose in writing, Hodges explained, was to warn his fellow Northerners against published journal accounts and travel books that looked favorably upon Georgia. He had been misled by such texts into thinking that perhaps it was just as civilized and safe and quintessentially American as the North, but he was wrong. “Imagination,” he wrote, had “formed a false picture of perpetual blooms and the never-ceasing songs of birds – falsely; ay, how falsely.” Instead, he claimed to have found

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 730.

nothing in the state but “neglected fallow-grounds, overlaid with pine-knots and alive with lizards . . . [where] the climate seemed but the slow fever of a wasting land.”<sup>19</sup>

Massachusetts resident Charles Parsons likewise took on those who would idealize Georgia in *An Inside View of Slavery; or, A Tour Among the Planters* (1855). He was an abolitionist who had his very famous friend, Harriet Beecher Stowe, write an introduction to the book and attest to its accuracy. Parsons recounted the take of “Mr. L. . . . an active businessman in New England, whose credibility no one will question,” who had taken a job in Georgia because he had a “favorable opinion of slavery” and believed what he had read about the state’s healthfulness and culture. Mr. L eventually returned home to New England at the behest of his worried mother, a staunch abolitionist, but, Parsons noted, later learned that all twelve of his young, white, male friends who remained in Georgia had died from the climate or as a result of violence associated with slavery. Parsons added that he himself had almost died there because of the “enervating climate” and a lack of “suitable food” over a roughly two-hundred mile span. White Georgians in his telling were largely illiterate, exceedingly lazy as a result of slavery, frequently drunk, and fond of bragging about their academies and colleges although, he remarked, even the colleges could not equal up to the common schools in Massachusetts. There were, after all, “more books, and more men of liberal education, and more business talent in the city of Portland [Maine] . . . than in the whole State of Georgia.”<sup>20</sup>

Connecticut’s Frederick Law Olmsted made three trips through Georgia and the other Southern states from late-1852 through 1854. Olmsted’s mission was to explore slavery as it existed and he sent detailed letters of his travels to the editor of the *New-York Daily Times*, who published them instantly as a series in 49 installments on “The South.” Olmsted then

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<sup>19</sup> H. Hodges, “A Pedagogue in Georgia,” *Putnam’s Magazine* 5 (February 1855): 187-192.

<sup>20</sup> Charles G. Parsons, *An Inside View of Slavery; or, A Tour Among the Planters*, with an Introductory Note by Mrs. H.B. Stowe (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1855), 40-42, 114, 233-236.

reworked the letters and published the first third of them as the book, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, in 1856. He prided himself on his objectivity, was far less critical of slavery as he found it in Georgia than many other writers during the decade, and indeed avoided the hyperbole of Hodges and Parsons. His experience in the state, however, was largely confined to what he witnessed on the plantations of a single host, a prominent planter here referred to only as “Mr. X.” Over the course of nearly eighty pages he offered ample evidence that his host was a rather benevolent figure whose slaves were well-clothed, well-cared for, allowed certain unexpected freedoms (such as marriages between plantations) and protected from extreme violence. If Olmsted had a larger criticism of Georgia, it was—as numerous others had pointed out—that slavery had enabled what he saw as an excessively large population of poor and depraved whites. Despite what others had disparaged about the environment of the state, he argued that “there is no part of Georgia which equals, in poverty of natural agricultural resources, Cape Cod in Massachusetts. But there is hardly a poor woman’s cow on the cape that is not better housed and more comfortably provided for than the majority of white people in Georgia.”<sup>21</sup>

The abolitionist Rev. Philo Tower published *Slavery Unmasked* (1856) in the same year as Olmsted’s book. He had no interest on the effects of slavery on anyone except for slaves. Slavery in Georgia, he wrote, was “dark as death and wicked as Hell, and I know it to be so, for I have seen it with my own eyes.” He claimed to have witnessed depraved whites of all classes living in a society defined by leering white men and “degrading” labor for black women. It was a desperate existence of whippings, beatings and near-drownings, of starvation, deprivation and constant psychological intimidation. But such things needed to be reported, to be publicly associated with Georgia, he asserted, because “facts . . . are stubborn things, most unmistakably

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<sup>21</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, With Remarks on Their Economy* (New York: Dix and Edwards, 1856), 418-439, 538.

so; they speak out with a tongue of fire sometimes, which burn their way down to the conscience way down into the heart and soul, of even slaveholders occasionally, and sometimes of slavery apologists also, though rarely, for they are the hardest of the two.” That Tower wrote such a different text about the same subject in the same place at the same time as Olmsted is remarkably telling. It is a reminder that William and Addison may have been as selective as their predecessors in defining Georgia, but those that followed them were no less so.<sup>22</sup>

After years of professionally skirting the issue, by the late-1850s Addison could no longer avoid Northern perceptions of life in the South. As his career blossomed, he had continually turned his attention back to the South and found sources of inspiration in its previously unrecorded landscapes. Much as the landscapes of New York, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire were the natural choice of many of his Hudson River School colleagues, he too chose to depict the region he knew best. Although he often joined his famous friends on sketching trips in New England, unlike them Addison also went home to Georgia. When those famous friends displayed paintings of and published articles on the Northeastern tourist attractions they had visited, Addison alone also contributed scenes of the American South. Yet until the end of the 1850s, those scenes were devoid of any acknowledgement of or commentary on slavery.<sup>23</sup>

He seems to have been pushed out of his comfortable self-censorship by the prevailing political winds and by the editors of *Appleton's Illustrated Handbook of American Travel*, who

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<sup>22</sup> Rev. Philo Tower, *Slavery Unmasked : Being a Truthful Narrative of Three Years' Residence and Journeying in Eleven Southern States* (Rochester: E. Darrow & Brother, 1856), 182, 184, 198.

<sup>23</sup> For Addison's painting career, see Mary Levin Koch, "The Romance of American Landscape: The Art of Thomas Addison Richards," *Georgia Museum of Art Bulletin* 8 (winter 1983). See also Louis T. Griffith, "T. Addison Richards: Georgia Scenes by a Nineteenth Century Artist and Tourist," *Georgia Museum of Art Bulletin* 1 (fall 1974). For a listing of Addison's paintings, see James Yarnall and William Gerdts, eds., *The National Museum of American Art's Index to American Art Exhibition Catalogues, From the Beginning through the 1876 Centennial Year*, vol.4 (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1986), 2942-2950. In addition to more than a hundred paintings of the expected Northeastern locations, Addison exhibited multiple landscapes of Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama, as well as numerous "Southern Scenes" and one titled "Southern Bayou."

hired him to write and illustrate their first edition in 1857. In the section of the book dealing with South Carolina, Addison was at long last forced to publicly reckon with human bondage. Given his background in Penfield and his family's dependence on slave labor, it is of little wonder that, when pressed, he came down on the side of the slaveholders. Noting that Southern masters were generally kind, he remarked that the slaves he saw in South Carolina had well-ordered cabins, "tasteful gardens," and that "every man has all the material and time at his command to make himself and his family as comfortable as he pleases."<sup>24</sup> No matter what his private life had been, it had at least been private. Now Addison was on record as the kind of apologist that Rev. Philo Tower and so many others despised.

The brief mention in *Appleton's Handbook* gave way to a lengthy article on "The Rice Lands of the South" in the November 1859 issue of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. It was a second chance to remake the claims that had been so quickly drowned out in 1853. Unable to return to the agenda he and William first embraced in 1841, Addison unwittingly became a spokesman for the most stereotypical and anti-intellectual elements of Dixie. He opened the article with ten pages on the landscape, as he had done in his earlier mention of rice fields in *Harper's*, along with miniscule details about the processes involved in rice production. Eventually, there was nothing left to say about the aesthetics of the scene and he had to reckon with the bodies that made it possible. "To cultivate these lands by white labor," he wrote, "would be, unquestionably, at an immense sacrifice of life." In contrast, African slaves, whom

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<sup>24</sup> T. Addison Richards, *Appleton's Illustrated Handbook of American Travel* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1857), 255. Wellington Williams wrote an earlier Appleton's edition, titled *Appleton's Southern and Western Travellers' Guide; With New and Authentic Maps* (1850), but the vast majority of book was devoted to the devoted to the western states. Cincinnati and other similar locations received long descriptions with illustrations and maps. Georgia, on the other hand, received only four un-illustrated pages in total; Savannah, Augusta, and Milledgeville were the only locations within the state mentioned by name.

he referred to as “laborers” were said to be well-suited to the work, enjoy it, and live happily as a result.<sup>25</sup>



Figure 6.1. T. Addison Richards, “Planting the Rice,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* (1859).  
Figure 6.2. T. Addison Richards, “Negroes at Home,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* (1859).

As evidence of the “comparatively light labor” performed by “each component person,” he included an engraving of seven women and one man at work planting rice. They are well-attired in patterned dresses and “the fashion of the ever-changing [wide-brimmed] hat.” They appear to work happily and in partnership with one another, without strain or burden, and are, according to Addison, as aesthetically connected to the field as is “the special and unique vegetation in flower and tree.” When their labor was done, usually before two o’clock in the

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<sup>25</sup> T. Addison Richards, “The Rice Lands of the South,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* XIX, no. cxiv (November 1859): 731.

afternoon, as with all “laborers” in the rice fields, they were all free to “saunter home, or wherever [they] listeth.”<sup>26</sup>

“Each family,” he explained, “has a house . . . of its own,” and “their house is their castle.” The second engraving depicts a family group in front of their neat and orderly home. The two parents are seated in happy and relaxed positions; the four children appear playful but polite, and the girls are dressed in clean white dresses. The entire scene is one of ease. If Philo Tower claimed to have witnessed torture and pain on the Georgia landscape, Addison claimed that there was nothing of the sort in the rice fields he knew. The slaves depicted here, he explained, “are constitutionally joyous and insouciant; and it is often a pleasure to witness their glad, thoughtless recreations.” In short, he might have been employed to depict one of the more notorious locations for slave labor in the Georgia, but that did not mean he could not make it all just a bit more picturesque.<sup>27</sup>



Figure 6.3. T. Addison Richards, “Planter’s Mansion,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* (1859).

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 731-732.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 732, 733.



After dedicating a few pages to slaves in order to explain how they, too, were part of the aesthetics of the landscape type to be seen in the Georgia low country, Addison turned a far more interested eye on the world the planters had made. He thought Northern readers might think it “disagreeable” that the plantation home depicted in the article was not as “lavishly adorned” as legend would have had them expect. Such was the reality of life on a rice plantation, he explained, and it required the outside observer to “truly account for it by the nature and circumstance of the case.” The owners of rice plantations did not build extravagant mansions in the low country because “even the wealthiest of people” there chose “‘to live out of doors;’ that their very houses, ever wide open, are themselves ‘out of doors.’” Yet, Addison proclaimed with a hint of satisfaction, the invited guest at the low country planter’s mansion knew what the distant observer could not see:

books, though not showily exposed, are forthcoming for indoor entertainment, and the best of pianos may be opened to good purpose, while your hosts, old and young, are at leisure and command to talk with you intelligently and heartily upon any theme, from the state of the Union to the state of the crops, or to fight over again bold encounters with bear and alligator, or with the quiet adversaries of the chess and the back-gammon boards.<sup>28</sup>

Addison’s *Harper’s* article ultimately gave text and image to what had been missing from *Georgia Illustrated* for nearly twenty years. His choices of what to depict and how to depict it may have been as highly selective in 1859 as they were in 1841, but they brought his body of work closer to at least one complete possible version of what Georgia was, what it looked like, and what it meant to those who inhabited it. His version of it was, as it always had been, a world of books and music, erudite conversation and deep ideas, and a deep appreciation of beautiful nature. What is troubling, though, is that to Northern editors and readers in 1859, that version

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 735-736.

likely appeared as an easily-defined space filled with plantations, slaves, and miasmic swamps. In conceding to the wishes of *Harper's* editors and finally creating images of slaves in a plantation landscape, Addison seems to have acknowledged what William recognized several years earlier, before he walked away: *Georgia Illustrated* was a bold attempt to remake themselves and their world as they wanted it to be, but it failed. In its wake the only two options were to either write about the South with a focus on slavery, or write nothing at all.

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William Richards experienced the final fracturing of the Union from his home in Providence, Rhode Island; Addison, from his home in Manhattan. A thousand miles south, in Macon, Georgia, their younger brother Samuel recorded his experiences of it in his diary. In October 1860, as he cautiously noted local murmurings about the coming presidential election, Samuel recorded that his biggest concern was carefully framing a pair of photographs of his brothers and sisters-in-law that he hoped to hang in his living-room.<sup>29</sup> Two months later, however, Samuel had begun to contemplate the future he and his family faced, writing on 25 December, “Christmas Day . . . . We made our little folks happy this morning in finding that good old Santa Claus had not passed them by. Poor children – they ought to enjoy life now – the days of trouble and care will come soon enough.” In January he took umbrage at William’s support of Lincoln, and by August was calling his brother “a fanatic” for the pro-Union sermons he was giving across the Northeast and his refusal to look sympathetically upon the South. By September 1861 he believed that he was expressing the feelings of his entire family when he criticized William for his “blindness and infatuations,” and proclaimed, “Our family hitherto has been united in feeling and affection if not bodily presence but now we are widely separated

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<sup>29</sup> Samuel Richards diary, 17 October 1860, Atlanta History Center.

indeed and have nothing in common . . . he may bid a final adieu to the South; she will have no use for those who have forsaken her in her time of need and gone over to aid and comfort her enemies.” Samuel had significantly less venom for Addison, simply because he was not nearly as vocal as William in his opposition to the Confederacy. The diary reveals that Samuel wrote him frequently during 1861 and 1862, imploring him to return home to be with his family during their time of need and suggesting numerous ways that he might travel safely under a flag of truce.<sup>30</sup>

William went on to become a theologian, author, and speaker of some acclaim, publishing at least sixteen additional books and articles through the remainder of his life. Yet none of them ever again dealt with South, or the promotion of its intellectual life or landscape. Addison mostly put down his pen and settled into a career as a teacher and painter of, with a few minor exceptions, the same northeastern landscapes as his Hudson River School colleagues. Samuel Richards’s diaries imply that William largely stayed away from Georgia after the war, while Addison made periodic trips back to visit family and renew the bonds that had been strained. William died and was buried in Chicago in 1892; Addison was laid to rest in Rhode Island in 1900.

William and Addison Richards ended their careers and their lives far away from the South. They alone among their parents’ sons are missing from the Richards family plot in Atlanta’s Oakland Cemetery. That their remains are not shrouded by red Georgia clay is all the more telling because, for well over a decade, they were among antebellum Georgia’s most ardent boosters. William and Addison began their careers by championing a de-politicized method of viewing, writing about, and understanding the South. The aesthetics of landscape viewing and

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, entries for 25 December 1860, 19 January 1861, 31 August 1861, and 07 September 1861.

philosophies of tourism were to have taken the place of judgments about plantations, cotton, and slavery. Yet what seemed plausible in the early 1840s most likely seemed naïve a decade later, and utterly foolish a decade after that. In the increasingly divisive climate of antebellum sectionalism, it appears fewer and fewer readers were willing to set aside the economic, moral and political issues of the day in favor of beautiful nature. The brothers tried again and again, but to no avail; the moment was fleeting at best, and it passed them by.

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