

SCOTS TRADERS AMONG THE SOUTHEASTERN NATIVE PEOPLE

Why was this trade so important to the English and Scots? With the union in 1707 vast markets opened to Scottish entrepreneurs. About 1709 to 1720 a plague infected European cattle herds. It is said that during this time, half of France's cattle herds died. This plague spread to the whole of the continent of Europe. The result of this plague was that England banned all imports of cattle and cattle hides from Europe.

This caused major shortages in the English leather trade, thus causing an increased demand by England for colonial deer hide. The two major ports for deer hides were Charles-town in S.C. and Savannah, Georgia.

Augusta, Georgia would become a center for the deer skin trade. But not before overcoming stiff competition from their South Carolina neighbors such as The Windsor Store run by Martin Campbell or The Archibald McGillivray Company.

McGillivray had taken in other traders and partners but he remained solely in control. When McGillivray retired in 1744, Patrick Brown took over as director, he moved the company to Augusta, Georgia as Patrick Brown and Company. A new partner joined Brown in the 1740's. This was John Rae and the firm became known as Brown Rae and Company. This company soon dominated the deerskin trade in the Southeast colonies.

Among the traders for Brown Rae and Company was Lachlan McGillivray

from Dunmaglass, Scotland. Lachlan McGillivray was a kinsman of Archibald McGillivray. Lachlan had come to Georgia in 1736 as an indentured servant.

Brown Rae and Company became so powerful that they felt they were a law unto themselves and were referred to as "The Gentlemen of Augusta" in a letter dated Feb. 13, 1750 to the trustees of the Colony of Georgia. The company told Colony of Georgia that the company knew best the Indian trade and had been trading longer than Georgia had been settled and to leave them alone when it came to Indian trade. The Colony of Georgia was not happy with The Augusta Company. It sent the majority of its hides to Charles-town, S.C. to be shipped as opposed to Savannah, Georgia. At the end of this letter The Augusta Co. stated, "We assure your honours, we are the only way to keep the Indian friendships and trade with the Colony" Your most obedient servants, Brown Rae and Co.

In 1750 council member Henry Parker told the trustees of Georgia, 140,000 pounds of deerskins came down the river annually to The Augusta Company and were then shipped to Charles-town to be shipped to England and all but a trifling went to Savannah. The Colony of Georgia almost took Brown Rae and companies licenses to trade with Native American people.

How big was the trade in deerskins? In his book "A History of Appalachia", Richard B. Drake 2001 states that between 1699 and 1715 about 54,000 deerskins were shipped from Charles-town, S.C. annually. Between 1739-1761 which was the height of this deerskin trade, an estimated 1,250,000 deer were killed to supply the leather trade. Donald & Davis in his book, "An Environmental

History of The Southern Appalachians” 2000 stated that from 1739 to 1761, Charles-Town, S.C. records show exports of 5,239,350 pounds of deerskins and between 1755 and 1772, 2.5 million pounds of deerskins were shipped from Savannah, Georgia.

What did it take to produce these prodigious amounts? Traders, trading post, and of course Native Americans to trade with. Each trader had to have a license or work for a trading company with a license. This license was issued to trade with a particular tribal group. Between 1751-1754, there were 37 licensed traders with the Cherokee, 7 licensed to trade with the Chickasaw, 2 licensed to trade with the Choctaw, and 35 licensed to trade with the Creek people. Add to this the army of traders who worked for those who held the license.

Among the Cherokee were such men as James Beamer, John Beng, James Butler, John Cary, John Forbes, Nathaniel Gist, John McDonald, John McCarty, Henry Morris, James Spalding, A.B. Wyatt and James Hicks. Note most of these men were Scots, sent to the various native groups by companies such as Brown Rae and Company. Most of the men sent to the hills to trade were young, single, and wise in the ways to survive in the wilderness.

The native peoples took to the young Scots traders because they admired their manly sports and their willingness to accept native customs, and not look down on native peoples. The young Scots also understood the tribal structure of clans and bonds of kinship, as it was their way also.

Marriage among these young Scots to women of Native American background

brought these young Scots into their wives clan and acceptance into the tribal group which was a great advantage over French and Spanish traders who tended to stay socially with their own people. One other thing the Scots traders did was to establish set prices for trade items.

As stated before, Brown Rae and Company was a major force in the deerskin trade. But there were other Scottish traders such as Macartan and Campbell or Crooke, MacIntosh and Jackson to name a few. It also did not hurt that many political appointees in Colonial government were Scots, such men as William Johnson and John Stuart as Indian superintendents, governors such as James Glen, George Johnstone and James Grant.

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