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Felice McIntosh
Effie S. Jackson
Journalist.
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Interview with Mrs. C. J. Hindman,
1201 East 20th Street, Tulsa
Felice McIntosh Hindman

THE McINTOSH ASSASSINATION

Mrs. C. J. Hindman nee Berry, whose grandmother was Rebecca McIntosh Haggerty Spire, has a file covering the McIntosh history. One set of torn clippings gives the following detailed account of the murder of General William McIntosh. It is from the pen of Dr. R. J. Massey, a Georgia historian. He reports it as it was told to him. These clippings are from The Constitution; Atlanta Georgia, October 11, 1903.

The receipt of a letter from Chessie McIntosh, attorney-at-law at Checotah, Ind. T. and superintendent of schools for the Creek Indians at that place, revives a memory of a most tragic event in the earlier history of Georgia.

The communication is faultless in diction and elegant in chirography and reveals the fact that the writer and three brothers- Freeland McIntosh, Cub McIntosh and D. N. McIntosh- are grandsons of William

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McIntosh the old Creek chief who was murdered by the Creek Indians near Columbus, Ga., for making a treaty with the United States Government disposing of their country east of the Mississippi River in exchange for the present Creek reservation in Indian Territory.

The full details of the movement that resulted in the death of old General William McIntosh is perhaps not generally known to the younger generation of Georgians.

He was a half-breed of the Muscogee or Creek Nation, and was born at Muscogee, an Indian town near the present city of Columbus, Ga. His father was Captain William McIntosh, a Scotchman and uncle of Governor George M. Troup, one of Georgia's greatest statesmen. His mother was a native of unmixed Indian blood. Having been thrown into the society of the more polished people and having been the associate of our officers in the war of our southern border he had acquired all the manners and much of the polish of a gentleman.

At the battle of Autossee, in 1812, General Floyd speaks highly of McIntosh's bravery and he also distinguished himself in the battle of the Horse Shoe, in which connection General Jackson speaks of him as Major

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McIntosh. For several acts of gallantry in the Florida campaign he also signalized himself.

THE FATAL TREATY

Among his people were two strong opposing factions on the subject of ceding to the United States Government their lands in Western Georgia and Eastern Alabama. General McIntosh led the party in favor of cession. Ho-po-eth-le-yo-he-lo, John Ridge, John Ross, and other chiefs were foremost in opposition to this move. There were several meetings and councils held, and much bitterness of feeling existed between the two parties. At this time at the north there was a growing sentiment that the Indians should remain in Georgia and Alabama, and be permitted to try the experiment of independent government. They seemed to have forgotten that in former years in their own country the Indian title to land had, as a matter of policy, been extinguished. When it came to a question of Georgia's rights, a pseudo-philanthropy seized them in the shape of strong sympathy for the poor Indian regardless of the sacred duties of the federal government toward an individual state. Among the Indians many white persons had settled. These also

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opposed the movement and a council was held ^{with} Commissioners from Georgia at the Indian Spring, and a final agreement was entered into that the Creeks should cede their land, for which the government was to give them acre per acre and a large bonus in money and an annual stipend for many years. All the Indians were to move to the new hunting grounds ~~at~~ the cost of the United States Government. In this trade McIntosh's own possessions, a place in Carroll County known to this day as the "McIntosh Reserve", was excepted. I have been at several different times on it myself. It is at Moores bridge, in Carroll County, ten miles east of Carrollton, and presents one of the most beautiful landscapes in Georgia.

At this council several eloquent speeches were delivered by the Indians. Among other things, McIntosh, realizing the trend of events said:

"Will you go and live with your people, increasing and happy about you? This mighty nation has become dwarfed and it will only be a matter of time when there will be no game in this country and they will be without food. Some of the young men have been to look at the

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proffered land beyond the great river. It is good and the game abundant. Will you stay and die with them here and leave no one to follow you or come to your grave and weep over their chief? Beyond the Great River is the bright sun and the sky as blue and the water as clean and as sweet^{as} they are here. To love the ground is mean: to love the people is noble."

In this strain he continued for two hours addressing himself to Ho-po-eth-le-yo-ho-lo, recounting much good from the move. His talk met with great approval among the braves.

MCINTOSH OPPOSED.

At this juncture Ho-po-eth-le-yo-ho-lo arose and turning his back upon McIntosh gave the Indians^a talk. "Leave to us what little we have" he said, "We sell no more. Let us die where our fathers died. Let us sleep where our kindred sleep. And when the last is gone then take our land and with your plows tear up the mould over our graves and plant your corn above us.... There will be no one to weep at the dead. No one to tell the traditions of our people...Who says it is mean to love the land? To keep our hearts in the grave as we do the Great

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Spirit? It is noble to love the land where the corn grows and which was given us by the Great Spirit." Turning to the whites he said "We are few and weak. You are many and strong, and you can kill us. Take our homes. But the Great Spirit has given us courage to fight for our homes, if we may not live in them. We will do it. This is our talk. And our last talk."

Arising, he wrapped his blanket around his shoulders, and he and his braves left the council so that the counsellors and McIntosh might do as they pleased. McIntosh agreed that his people should be ready to move within twelve months. The council broke up and McIntosh went home.

The disaffected braves soon decided that McIntosh should be assassinated. For the particulars of the affair I am indebted to old man Doonan, who once lived near Carrollton, and to an intimate friend of Tawny Moore, who was interpreter on the occasion. Hincbe Mabry, one of the first settlers of Carroll and an old neighbor of my father's also the late Dr. John G. Westmoreland, a noted physician of Atlanta, materially assisted me; James Hull of Cincinnati, and Thomas L. McKinney, of Washington City,

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and my good old friend Mrs. Walker, who was raised on an adjoining plantation to the "McIntosh Reserve" gave me some interesting data. Of course much of this is traditional, but getting it from so many sources, I am satisfied of its correctness. Since they all substantially confirm each other, I shall adopt Mr. Pickett's account as given from James Moore, the interpreter.

THE ASSASSINATION

Hopoethlaycholo planned the murder, but did not lead. He gave orders for his men to meet at a certain spot on an appointed day. They were to stealthily surround McIntosh's house during the night and at day-break set fire to it and as he ran out fire upon him. Each warrior was furnished with a bundle of sticks. He was to throw away one every day, and when all were thrown away but one, that was the day of attack. For any brave to reveal this he was to meet certain death. How well these men performed their duty is told by James Moore, or as he was more particularly known "Jimme Tawny".

He declares the memory of James Moore was good although he had reached the age of 78. A portion of the

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Indians marched from the Indian village in which he was then living. He saw them start and witnessed their return.

The Okfuskees and the Tookbatachas had become indignant. A secret council resulted in the selection of the bravest warriors of the nation to consummate the killing. The party consisted of 170 men, one-half of whom were from the town of Okfuskee, led by Manowah, an old fighter who had encountered Jackson at the battle of Horse Shoe. The other half were from the town of Tookbatacha, commanded by Tuskehadjjo, with whom went Ho-po-eth-le-yo-ho-lo ostensibly as a private. They marched on foot, one before the other in the most cautious and noiseless manner. Their route lay across the country from the Tallapoosa River to the Chattahoochee, and their destination was the residence of General McIntosh, situated upon the bank of the latter stream. Arriving in the neighborhood of that place, toward the close of the second day, the party observed, from a concealed position, two persons riding along a trail. These proved to be General McIntosh and his son-in-law, Hawkins. They could have been easily killed,

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but their lives were spared for the moment to preserve a consistency so common in all the plans of the Indians. They had determined to kill McIntosh in his own yard, in the presence of his family and to let his blood run upon the soil of that "reservation" which the Georgians had secured to him in the treaty which he had made with them.

Pursuing their way for a short distance, but still in view of the party, McIntosh bid Hawkins good evening, wheeled his horse and rode back on the trail toward his residence. Although he was then alone the Indians declined to kill him. Hawkins, who had been to pay his father-in-law a visit, continued to ride homeward. The unconscious and ill-fated McIntosh rode on to his residence.

The expedition remained in the woods until three o'clock in the morning, secreted within a half mile of the house. I have mentioned that James Hutton, the son-in-law of the person who gave me this account, was one of this expedition. He went along as an interpreter to converse with any Americans who might be at McIntosh's house. He was instructed to assure them that neither

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their persons nor property would be disturbed- a wise arrangement, for this was a public house and usually filled with American travelers, who were exploring the new lands or who roamed over the nation to gratify a curiosity not then uncommon. Travelers were usually lodged in an outhouse in the yard, and thither Hutton and two Indians repaired.

HOME FIRED

They found a peddler in one bed and Ohilly McIntosh, the son of the General, in another. The latter sprang to his feet, jumped out at a window and as he ran off several guns were discharged at him without effect. He made his way to the river and escaped. The peddler who was operated upon by the double fear of losing his life and his wares, was a most wretched man, until assured by Hutton that neither would be disturbed. His goods were removed into the yard, and the house in which he had slept was set in flames. In the meantime the principal body of the assailants had surrounded the main building, and the light wood being immediately kindled and a torch placed under it, the flames threw a bright light over the yard and exhibited to the astonished

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family of McIntosh in the light of the conflagration the hideous forms of those who were to murder him.. They frequently shouted with much exultation, "McIntosh, we have come. We told you if you sold the land to the Georgians, we would come."

McIntosh, upon the first discovery of the assailants had barricaded his front door and stood near it. When it was forced, he fired on them, and at that moment one of his steadfast friends, Tom Tustinugee, fell lifeless upon the threshold. His body was riddled with balls. McIntosh then retreated to the second story with four guns in his hands, which he continued to discharge from the window. He fought with great courage, though his end was near, determined to sell his life as dearly as possible. He was at this time the only occupant of the burning house, for his wives, Peggy and Susannah, who had been dragged into the yard, were heard imploring the savages not to burn him up but to get him out of the house and shoot him, as he was a brave man and an Indian like themselves.

McIntosh now came down to the first story, and was received with salutes of the rifle until, being

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pierced with many balls, he fell to the floor, was seized by the legs and dragged down the steps to the ground. While lying in the yard and while his blood was gushing from his wounds, he raised himself on one arm and surveyed his murderers with looks of defiance. At that moment an Okfuskee Indian plunged a long knife to the hilt in the direction of his heart. He brought a long breath and expired. The party after this plundered the house, killed the stock, and committed other depredations, as described in the public papers of that day.

HAWKINS ALSO KILLED.

On the evening when McIntosh took leave of Hawkins upon the trail the latter continued to his residence, as related. He was followed by chosen warriors who were instructed to take him a prisoner that night. His house was on one of the branches of the Tallapoosa, which the Indians surrounded just before the break of day. They ordered him to come out. He refused, but after defending himself to no purpose he was secured with ropes and kept alive until the fate of McIntosh became known: then he was killed and his body thrown into the river. The Indians marched back to Tallapoosa with the scalps of

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these men. That of McIntosh which was suspended upon a pole in the public square of Okfuskee, was the spectacle for old and young who danced around it with shouts of joy.

It seems it was customary among Indians, especially chiefs, to have a plurality of wives, and it developed that General McIntosh had a couple, - Peggy from the Creek, and Susannah from the Cherokee nation, who lived together in the most endearing friendship toward each other, and who shared equally the affections of their husband, the general.

They immediately wrote to Messrs. Campbell and Meriweather, United States Commissioners, for aid in their distress. Also a pathetic appeal for aid was sent to the commissioners by Mrs. Jane Hawkins, daughter of William McIntosh and wife of Samuel Hawkins, who was assassinated the same night. She wrote that the Indians after killing her father, had taken all of his money and as much of his property as they could carry off, and had destroyed the rest, leaving the family neither clothes nor provisions. She was not permitted to bury either her father or her husband.

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INDIANS INSULTED WIDOW

"After I was stripped of my last frock but one, humanity and duty called on me to pull it off and spread it over the body of my dead husband, which was allowed no other covering, which I did as a farewell witness of my affection. I was 25 miles from any friend, but sister Katherine who was with me, and we had to stay all night in the woods, surrounded by a thousand hostile Indians, who were constantly insulting and frightening us. And now I am here with one old coat to my back and not a morsel of bread to save me from perishing or a rag of a blanket to cover my poor little boy from the sun at noon or the dew at night. I am a poor distracted orphan and widow."

Within a few years after the perpetration of this sad tragedy, all of the principal chiefs opposed to the cession of the land to the government were at one time and another assassinated, and it was several years before the Indians were removed from Georgia.

In small detachments the United States army began its operations, making prisoners of one family after another, and gathering them into camps. No one ever

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complained of the manner in which the work was performed. Through the good disposition of the army and the provident arrangements of the commander, less injury was done by accidents or mistakes than could reasonably have been expected. By the end of June nearly the whole nation was gathered into camps, and some thousands commenced their march to the west- the heat of the season preventing any further emigration until September, when 14,000 were on their march.

The journey of 600 or 700 miles was performed in four or five months, the best arrangements were made for their comfort; but from the time-May 23,- when their removal commenced to the time when the last company completed its journey, more than 4000 persons sank under their sufferings and died.

MCINTOSH WAS COURTLY

Referring to McIntosh's being public, I will state that during the early twenties of the last century before her marriage my mother lived in Columbia County, Georgia, and was in the habit of visiting a married sister who lived in Greensboro, Alabama.

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The McIntosh reserve lies directly between these two points, almost in a straight line. The house was famous for good cooking, the best of fare; neatness and clean linen, and she always made a point of staying the night there. She declared that white women might have profited by the teaching of Peggy and Susannah, and that no two sisters ever seemed more affectionate toward each other than these two Indian squaws.

I have often heard her remark that for courtly manners, genteel bearing and the general polish of a gentleman, she had never met anyone, white or Indian, who excelled General McIntosh. She referred to Chilly, the general's son, as one of the handsomest men she had ever seen. The ease and courtliness of the father seemed to have been transmitted to the son.