

GEORGIA VS. SOUTH CAROLINA

The Battle Over Slavery In the American South

by Fred Haight

Forward

Even many thoughtful people will tend to project the post facto geographical divisions of the Civil War, backwards, onto American Colonial history. They then fall victim to their own prejudice: that nothing both important, and good, could have originated in the American South.

The history of the South is far more complex than most would believe, and is determined by the battle over ideas, not geography. The Anglo-Dutch financier oligarchy moved into the Carolinas to combat the republican tendencies in New England, because the area south of Virginia was empty—at least of English colonies! James Edward Oglethorpe (1696-1785), the republican founder of Georgia, moved further south, to fight that oligarchy, to outflank them. Georgia was the first colony to ban slavery, and the last to legalize it! If Oglethorpe had succeeded, the South might have led the way in overthrowing slavery.

The author must acknowledge his debt to the late, great, historian H. Graham Lowry. Without his seminal work, How the Nation Was Won: America's Untold Story (EIR, 1988), none of the history herein would have been intelligible. Each time recourse to that work was necessitated, my respect for it grew.

My First Encounter

Like many Americans, I had heard the origins of the State of Georgia, dismissed, casually, as: “Founded as a prisoners’ colony, like Australia.”

You can imagine my surprise, when I found out, on a tour of Savannah, that General Oglethorpe, had, to the extent he brought over prisoners at all, brought, not criminals, but men he had personally campaigned to free from the virtual slavery of Britain’s debtors’ prisons! The slander of a prisoners’ colony, I learned, came largely from South Carolina and Virginia.

As the tour went on, I found that Oglethorpe had also wel-

comed persecuted Lutherans, Moravians, and Jews¹, and had limited individual land ownership to 500 acres.

He had also established excellent relations with Native Americans. We saw, in one of Savannah’s beautiful squares, a huge rock, placed in honor of Oglethorpe’s friend, the Yamacraw leader Tomochichi, which claims to be the first monument erected by people of European descent to a Native American.

“But,” I asked my guide, in what I thought was the definitive question, “surely he did not dare to oppose slavery as early as 1733?” “Oh yes,” she replied, “General Oglethorpe banned slavery; he believed that no man should do the work of another.”

Why had I never heard of this? Why were even leading historians of the American System unaware? Thus began a journey.

I found many books on the subject, though the main centers are Oxford University and Georgia. There are some serious historians around, who do painstaking research. Yet, they stop short, and refuse to make a conceptual leap that demands to be made: It is as if their minds were subject to an invisible electric fence—subtle, yet political, “peer review” control, which says: “Thus far may ye go, and no farther.”

So, they treat the story of Georgia as if a fairy tale, separated from the rest of history, and as a *most gallant*, but ultimately failed project. The subject then turns to the reason for the failure, with the main cause being: Oglethorpe himself! Because the project was defeated, it is dismissed,

1. Enthusiasm for the Georgia project was high, and early on, a ship of London Jews arrived. They had set sail without permission; the government was angry, and demanded their return. Oglethorpe refused, citing how a doctor on board had cured many colonists of fever, refusing any personal remuneration. The Temple Mickve Israel became the third-oldest Jewish congregation in America, and the oldest in the South.



James Edward Oglethorpe, founder of the colony of Georgia, succeeded in banning slavery in the colony, by outfoxing the British imperial oligarchs, who were intent on crushing the infant American Republic in the cradle. Here, Oglethorpe's statue, in Augusta, Ga.

as a mere footnote in history. The story of Georgia is important, not in and of itself, but in its contribution to the understanding of *what the New World—America—was!*

The New World Conspiracy

Lyndon LaRouche has made history intelligible, as a history of *ideas*—not names, places, and dates—with his discovery that history, for millennia, has been governed by the fight between: an oligarchical conspiracy, which prefers to use such forms as the empire, to rule over a dumbed-down, superstitious population, and herd them like cattle under an agrarian, *fixed* system; and a republican conspiracy, which prefers forms of government such as the true republic, or true commonwealth, sees mankind as being made “in the image of God,” and “born equal”; and seeks to bring forth the divine potential of creative reason that is innate in every human be-

ing. This requires a scientific, industrial, *changing* society.

The idea of the New World was such a republican conspiracy, designed to outflank the entrenched European oligarchy, by founding better societies in the Americas. Great literary works, such as Thomas More's *Utopia*, Rabelais' *Pantagruel*, and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, all centered upon this idea. In the New World, this exalted image of mankind could be realized, and the bondages of feudal serfdom be broken, the which was impossible in Europe, with its entrenched oligarchy. The oligarchy would do anything to stay these developments, and the spread of slavery was one of their most blunt, yet cutting weapons.

Who Was ‘General’ Oglethorpe?

My first step, was to find out more about James Edward Oglethorpe, and his relation to republican circles: He could not have come out of nowhere! The information is scant, but does exist.

His father, Theophilus Oglethorpe, was a friend of Pennsylvania's founder William Penn. Both men were opponents of the Venetian takeover of England, known as the Glorious Revolution (1688-89), organized by John Locke and his then-deceased mentor, the First Earl of Shaftesbury. Oglethorpe and Penn were among a group of 17 individuals charged by Mary, the wife of William of Orange, with High Treason, for their opposition to the Orange coup.² Increase Mather was in England at the time, fighting for the Massachusetts Bay charter, and met frequently with Penn. He would be likely to have known the elder Oglethorpe.

James' mother, Eleanor Wall Oglethorpe, was a trusted agent of the republican conspirator Jonathan Swift, in the Court of Queen Anne, in 1710-14.³ These are precisely the years that Graham Lowry identifies as “The Republican Offensive of 1710,” when Swift worked Queen Anne's Court, to deploy Governors Hunter and Spotswood, to improve New York and Virginia.⁴

James Oglethorpe was a Member of Parliament, engaged in what we would today call “civil rights”:

1. He wrote a pamphlet called *The Sailor's Advocate*, opposing the notorious press gangs, which kidnapped poor people for naval service.

2. He personally brought an escaped slave, known as Job Jallah, from Maryland to England, and later had him repatriated, with the help of many others, to his native city of Bunda, in Ghana, under his rightful Muslim name, Ayoub ibn Soli-

2. Amos Ashbach Ettinger, *James Edward Oglethorpe: Imperial Idealist* (London: Clarendon Press, 1936).

3. *Ibid*, p. 57

4. Graham Lowry, *How the Nation Was Won, America's Untold Story, Vol. 1, 1630-1754* (Washington, D.C.: Executive Intelligence Review, 1988). Lowry uncovered “one of the best kept secrets in history”: the role of Jonathan Swift in the republican, New World, conspiracy.

man Ibrahim, and with a gift of many agricultural tools.⁵

3. He headed a parliamentary committee to investigate debtors' prisons, and managed to get tens of thousands of prisoners freed. This action had a personal side to it. The laws of England at the time stated: "*The person of the debtor is the property of the creditor until the debt is discharged.*" The prison system was so corrupt, that if a debtor's family did not have enough money to bribe prison officials, they were locked up in shackles, in such close quarters that they could barely move. Next, they were cast into the area where prisoners with smallpox were confined, where they caught the disease and usually died.⁶ This hideous fate had struck Oglethorpe's friend Robert Castell, who had gone into debt to publish a book that revived the Classical architecture of Vitruvius, and failed to sell.⁷

Many of the Georgia trustees had been part of Oglethorpe's parliamentary committee on the "State of the Prisons in This Country." Several were Anglican clergy. They had a strong connection to the music and other activities of the composer G.F. Handel, which is not coincidental.⁸ Oglethorpe himself showed a unique quality of personal leadership. He was a Classical scholar, who knew Plato and Shakespeare well, but led by personal example: In Savannah, he slept in a tent for months. He would not be housed until everyone else was.

The Georgia Project

The Georgia project is usually portrayed as an Anglican charity mission. Such charity projects, to relocate the "poor" to the Americas, did abound, and the people involved ranged from well-meaning, to sinister (the latter saw it as a means to get rid of "undesirables"). There was a sanctimonious attitude of pity, at the time, but the problem was genuine. The South Sea financial bubble had burst, around 1720, and tens of thousands were made destitute. A flavor of the era can be captured in Oglethorpe's first letter on seeing the Americas from on board the *Anne*:

We have lost none of our people except ... [two children] both of whom had been half starved through want before they left London, as many others were who are recovered with food and care. But these were so far gone, that all our efforts to save them were in vain.⁹

5. Thaddeus Mason Harris, *Biographical Memorials of James Oglethorpe*, 1841; available online, at Project Gutenberg e-books.

6. Webb Garrison, *Oglethorpe's Folly: The Birth of Georgia* (Lakemont, Georgia: Copple House Books, 1982).

7. Some experts are convinced that Oglethorpe's plans for Savannah were drawn from Castell's work. If so: a sublime revenge.

8. "Diary of Viscount Percival," *English Historical Review*; Oxford, 1921.

9. *Colonel Oglethorpe's Georgia: Colonial Letters 1733-37* (Savannah, Georgia: Beehive Press, 1975).

The oligarchy had been enraged over developments in the Americas for some time. So, to counter the opposition of their main adversary, the de facto prime minister, Robert Walpole, the trustees couched the argument for an unwanted new colony within this framework:

1. A new colony was necessary to provide a buffer zone between Carolina, and the Spanish to the south.

2. The poor, who were considered dregs in London, would be productive in Georgia, and could export wealth back home.

The 21 trustees would pay for it, by raising charitable contributions, but in 21 years it would revert to a Crown Colony, so that the Crown would have the best of all possible worlds: getting to keep it, without having paid for it.

Slavery would be outlawed. Oglethorpe, and at least some of his trustees, saw slavery as a moral abomination; but, in order to "sell" this idea to others, they argued that the slaves might run away and join the Spanish, who would offer them freedom, if they would only fight the English. They also exploited a fear that all racists share: "They now outnumber us in South Carolina!"

The Trustees would not have any personal property or interests in Georgia (unlike Carolina's Lords Proprietors, who were given over 20% of the land).

Colonists would be landholders, but would not be able to sell their land. They were allowed 50 acres each, or up to 500, if they had servants. No plantations were to be established, and no oligarchy. Persecuted sects, such as Salzburg Lutherans and Moravians, were to be welcomed.

It still took two years to get the Crown's approval. Oglethorpe used the Anglican charity cause, of relocating the poor, as the only available means to begin a new colony, at a time when that was the last thing the oligarchy wanted. He certainly cared for the downtrodden, but neither was he naïve. He personally interviewed over 300 families, to find the 35 that would make the journey to America. He was not looking for the most needy, but those who would make the best colonists. He sought out as many skilled people as he could find.¹⁰

Oglethorpe set sail as soon as he could, and surprised even his closest allies, when he boarded the *Anne* himself, shortly before it departed, in December 1732. He knew that he had to lead the effort *personally*, if it were to have any hope of success. None of the other 20 trustees ever set foot in Georgia, and his was the only charity mission to the Americas that ever left its origins on paper! This move has been characterized as "a rash decision, made in haste."¹¹ That characterization overlooks what he knew to be the tenuous nature of the agreement he had obtained. He had to move fast, before Walpole backed out.

10. Garrison, *op. cit.*.

11. *Ibid*



Library of Congress

As soon as Charles II was placed on the English throne, with the 1660 Restoration of the monarchy, the oligarchy moved to reverse the freedoms, and the industrial development in the American colonies—especially in Massachusetts. By 1647, the 27-year-old colony's Saugus Iron Works was out-producing anything in England!



One problem that would plague Oglethorpe was pointed out early on by Benjamin Franklin, who noted that his project relied on “families of broken shop-keepers, and other insolvent debtors, many of indolent and idle habits, taken out of the jails, who, being set down in the woods, unqualified for clearing land, and unable to endure the hardships of a new settlement, perished in great numbers.”¹²

While there is truth in Franklin’s observations, there is a much larger story to be told. Oglethorpe had a greater purpose in mind than the Anglican charity mission. His parents had fought against Shaftesbury and Locke’s 1688 coup. He was going to the new world to combat the earlier crimes in Caro-

lina. He knew what the American colonies represented strategically, and that the spread of the slave-based Carolina model had to be stopped, even if the only means available, were a rearguard attempt. But, he did not fail just because of the usually cited reasons. Conspiratorial attacks were run against Oglethorpe personally, and against his colony.

I began to realize, that the Georgia project would not come into a deeper perspective, without a deeper understanding of what Oglethorpe was fighting, in Carolina.

The Strange Case of Carolina

Now we must step back in time, to the previous century.

Lowry documents, that as soon as the 1660 Restoration took place, under King Charles II, the oligarchy moved to reverse the freedoms, and industrial development in the Americas, that it had been ineffective in preventing, during the chaotic Cromwell years. Massachusetts was a special concern. By 1647, the 27-year-old colony’s Saugus Iron Works was out-producing anything in England! In 1664, Charles II issued secret orders demanding to bring “that people to an entire submission and obedience to our government. . . .”¹³

Here, we shall examine the other side of the Restoration’s assault.

In 1662, eight wealthy noblemen, all *organizers* of the Restoration of the monarchy, petitioned Charles II, for a huge tract of land, which they called Carolina. They were led by Anthony Ashley Cooper, later, Lord Ashley, and then, the first Earl of Shaftesbury. The other seven were: Sir John Colleton, George Monck, Sir William

Berkeley, Sir John Berkeley, Sir George Carteret, Sir Edward Hyde, later Earl of Clarendon, and William, Earl of Craven. Barbados sugar planter Sir John Colleton, and his son Sir Peter were to play key roles.

In “The Anti-Newtonian Roots of the American Revolution” (*EIR*, Dec. 1, 1995), historian Philip Valenti covered the “Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina,” written in 1669, by Shaftesbury and John Locke, so I will not elaborate here. Suffice it to say that they were a bizarre mixture of slavery, feudalism, theocracy, and pseudo-democracy: the latter masking an iron-fisted Venetian-style dictatorship by the eight Lord Proprietors. Though they were never ratified by the legislature

12. Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography* (New York: Modern Library, 1944)

13. Lowry, *op. cit.*

(no American colonists could tolerate such a seemingly unintelligible, yet clearly evil atrocity), the question arose in my mind: What exactly did these guys have in mind for Carolina, from its inception, that *required* such a dictatorial state?

Sugar and Slavery

In order to understand Carolina, one must understand the sugar colonies. Sugar production began about 1640 in Barbados, and soon expanded. By the 1650s, Barbados was called “the richest colony in English America,” and was the world’s leading sugar producer. At first, the labor force was small. When Shaftesbury was part owner of a plantation in 1646, it had only 205 acres, and was attended by 21 white indentured servants, and 9 black African slaves.¹⁴

As sugar plantations expanded, they became more lucrative, and brutal. They required a labor force averaging 100-150 slaves per plantation, as compared to 20 for tobacco, or 35 for cotton. A slave, once on the plantation, could expect to live only seven to ten more years. The super-rich slaveowners could make fabulous profits, if they could insure a steady replacement of slaves.¹⁵

As a larger labor force was needed, black slaves were imported in great numbers from Africa. They soon replaced indentured servants, and outnumbered the white population of Barbados. Small landowners were squeezed out as the plantations grew in size, and between 1643 and 1666, the total number of landholders was reduced from 8,300 to 760. By 1685, there were four times as many black African slaves in Barbados as there were European settlers. The settlers became so fearful of being outnumbered, that slaves could be branded with a hot iron in the face, for the mildest opposition to a “Christian.”¹⁶

The plan for Carolina, *from the start*, was to bring over sugar planters, with their slaves, and build up a slave-based plantation economy. As soon as the Carolina charter was granted, in 1663, a group of 200 Barbadian planters formed the “Corporation of Barbados Adventurers,” led by Sir Peter Colleton. They submitted proposals to the Carolina Lord Proprietors, for the settlement of a colony, and requested dictatorial powers of self-government, *all before Shaftesbury even met John Locke*. (If you are going to establish a colony with a slave population that outnumbers the owners, you *will* need dictatorial powers.) They did come over, and did buy land with, guess what? Sugar! One thousand pounds of sugar purchased 500 acres. Carolina was too far north to grow sugar, so rice and indigo were planted instead.¹⁷

14. Warren Alleyne and Henry Fraser, *The Barbados-Carolina Connection* (London and Basingstoke: MacMillan Publishers Ltd., 1988).

15. Unpublished paper by EIR researcher Judy Hodgkiss, “Sugar: How the U.S. Was Sold Down the River,” 1994.

16. Alleyne, *op. cit.*

17. *Ibid.*

TABLE 1

Population of South Carolina

	Number of Slaves	Total Population	Percent of Population Enslaved
1708	3,000	9,500	31.5%
1724	32,000	46,000	69.5

Source: Slaveryinamerica.org

In 1670, in an effort to accelerate immigration to Carolina, the “Barbados Proclamation” was issued by the Lord Proprietors, which announced that they had provided a frigate, the *Carolina*, to transport people and their servants, and that every settler would get 100 acres free, plus another 100 acres for every servant (white or black), brought over. *By 1671, Barbadians comprised about half the settler population of South Carolina.*¹⁸

South Carolina¹⁹ followed the Barbadian model in the growth of slavery (see **Table 1**).

By 1708, 31.5% of the population of South Carolina was black African slaves, but the number is deceptive. Another 15% were Native American slaves, thus, nearly half of the population was enslaved! By 1724, 69.5% of the population was black African slaves.

Everything that I have presented so far, has been documented by others. But, *all* of the historians I have encountered, see the spread of slavery as *inevitable*, and attribute it to the growth of “capitalism.” Here is where the “electric fence” comes in, again. Whether they know it or not, they have adopted the view of Karl Marx, who used the term “capitalism” to obscure the difference, described by Henry Carey, in his 1851 *Harmony of Interest*, between the republican American system, and the oligarchical British system.²⁰

But, if the growth of capitalism means industrial growth and well-being, Massachusetts was the most industrialized colony, and had the highest overall standard of living; yet, by 1708, it had only 550 black African slaves, mostly domestic servants. Not surprisingly, the Commonwealth was the first to abolish slavery.²¹ Does the growth of capitalism mean

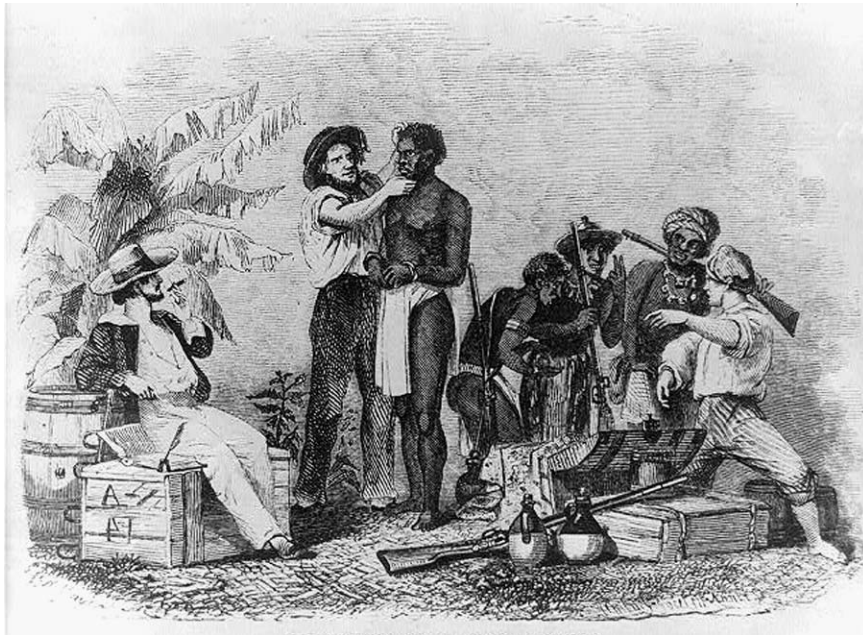
18. *Ibid.*

19. Carolina did not officially divide into North and South until 1729. But, there was always a difference. The southern part had the marshy lowlands conducive to rice plantations.

20. For Carey’s full statement, see Marcia Merry Baker and Anton Chaitkin, “Henry Carey, and William McKinley: American System vs. British Free Trade Looting,” at: http://american_almanac.tripod.com/carey95.htm

21. In 1780, Massachusetts adopted a constitution, whose Article I, began with the words: “All men are born free and equal.” A court case came up in 1783, over an escaped slave, Quock Walker, as to whether “all men,” meant *all* men.

In his instructions to the jury, Chief Justice William Cushing said: “It



In contrast to Oglethorpe's Georgia colony, the slave system thrived in the Carolinas and Virginia, where it was exceedingly brutal. By 1705, a law in Virginia asserted that: "All Negro, mulatto and Indian slaves within this dominion . . . shall be held to be real estate. If any slave resist his master . . . correcting such slave, and shall happen to be killed in such correction . . . the master shall be free of all punishment . . . as if such accident never happened." Here, a slave is inspected by his potential owner.

then, as in the English system, merely increasing financial gain? Even then, like Dick Cheney and his Halliburton, the Lord Proprietors were as greedy as can be, and loved making money; but, their *primary* motivation was political, and their primary *mission*, was to build a plantation economy based on slavery, an oligarchical dictatorship, in order to *destroy* the republican cause, and the image of man associated with it, that was growing in the Americas. South Carolina represented, not the advance of capitalism, but a deliberate step backwards!

American System historian Anton Chaitkin discovered the role played by South Carolina in the buildup to the Civil War, almost 30 years before the first shots were fired on Fort Sumter.

"The enemy responded with a 'popular uprising' . . . which posed 'Southern' interests against the North and threatened to dissolve the Union. . . . This 'popular uprising' . . . took place

[slavery] has been a usage . . . of the British government respecting the then Colonies, . . . a different idea has taken place with the people of America, more favorable to the natural rights of mankind, and to that natural, innate desire of Liberty, with which Heaven (without regard to color, complexion, or shape of nose-features) has inspired all the human race. . . . Our Constitution of Government . . . is totally repugnant to the idea of being born slaves. . . . Slavery is inconsistent with our own conduct and Constitution; and there can be no such thing as perpetual servitude of a rational creature. . . ."

The jury convicted Walker's purported "owner," Nathaniel Jennison, of assault and battery. Thus, slavery ended in that state, 80 years before Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.

entirely within the state of South Carolina, where people were trained and rehearsed for a war against the United States. . . ."²²

The Parallel Case of Virginia

During the same period, Virginia followed the South Carolina plantation model. The crop was tobacco, not rice, but the slaves came from the same place: Barbados. This should not be surprising: it was part of the plan. One of the eight Lord Proprietors of Carolina, was the governor of Virginia, Sir William Berkeley.²³

The slave population increased dramatically in Virginia, as in South Carolina. In 1640, thirty-three years after its founding, there were no more than 300 black slaves in Virginia, mostly servants. By 1680, there were 3,000, and by 1710, out of a total population of 78,000, there were 23,000. The laws institutionalizing slavery in Virginia were passed between 1661 and 1705. Before that, there were no clear laws distinguishing indentured servants from slaves. Some blacks lived

as freemen, and slaves had right to a hearing if abused.

All of that changed with the introduction of the plantation economy. Laws were passed that slavery was life-long, and hereditary. In 1682, a law establishing the racial distinction between servants and slaves was enacted, and by 1705, a brutal law was passed in Virginia:

"All servants imported and brought into the Country . . . who were not Christians in their native Country . . . shall be accounted and be slaves. All Negro, mulatto and Indian slaves within this dominion . . . shall be held to be real estate. If any slave resist his master . . . correcting such slave, and shall happen to be killed in such correction . . . the master shall be free of all punishment . . . as if such accident never happened."

Many crimes have been committed against humanity by the oligarchy; but, was there ever anything as evil, as the assertion that the mere possession of a darker skin, qualified one as *real estate*, to be murdered at will? Lyndon LaRouche has written that the origin of the idea, that simply having a darker

22. Anton Chaitkin, *Treason in America* (New York: New Benjamin Franklin House, 1984), p. 166-167. Chaitkin refers to the "Nullification Crisis" of 1832. South Carolina also led a little-known dress rehearsal for secession in 1850-51, known as the "First Secession Crisis."

23. Berkeley is often quoted for his remarks in opposition to education of the general public: "I thank God, there are no free schools, nor printing; and I hope we shall not have, these hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience, and heresy, and sects." He had played a key role in preventing expansion westward in the 1640s.

skin, made one “fair game,” originated as a Venetian reaction against the 15th-Century Renaissance. If humanity had moved forward, in its realization of all men being equal, the oligarchy would have to respond, by implementing a greater *dehumanization* than ever. For the oligarchy, inequality had to be preserved, in whatever form.

Thank God that Jonathan Swift and his friends, sent Alexander Spotswood to become governor of Virginia in 1710!

Who Was Shaftesbury?

Lowry writes that the attacks on Massachusetts under Charles II were part of an attempt to create a centralized colonial empire. Shaftesbury’s activities in Carolina suggest to me, that he was a key player. It would be telling, if he turned out to be involved with the attacks on Massachusetts.

K.D.H. Haley’s biography, *The First Earl of Shaftesbury*, is candid enough on this point:

“Shaftesbury was ... appointed to almost every committee of the privy council on any commercial or colonial subject. ... As such he was the nearest thing to a Minister for colonial affairs that England had yet seen.”²⁴

And sure enough, his Lordship was involved in the actions against Massachusetts. Lowry cites the founding of the *Lords of Trade and Plantations*, in 1675, after Shaftesbury’s fall, as the institution created to loot the colonies, but destroy New England. Before this, you had the *Council on Trade and Plantations*, which was created by Shaftesbury. He had been appointed to two moribund institutions, the Council on Trade, and the Council on Plantations, in 1660, the year of the Restoration, with the assignment of overseeing their resuscitation and unification. He served as president of the *combined* Council on Trade and Plantations, and appointed John Locke, as its secretary.

In 1671, the question of Massachusetts came up before his Council. Haley quotes an attendee of the meetings: “Our fear there, was of their *altogether taking from dependence on this nation* ... some of our council were for sending them a menacing letter ... which those who understood the touchy and peevish nature of that colony were utterly against” (emphasis added).²⁵

Haley continues: “The issue of the way in which the colonies were to be controlled was also raised by the requirement that the ... Council should study all colonial laws and recommend their approval or *annulment* to the King and Privy Council.... This the council emphatically did not do.... A possible means of *control*, was thus neglected....” (emphasis added).²⁶

War with the Dutch prevented Shaftesbury’s council from acting.

24. K.D.H. Haley, *The First Earl of Shaftesbury* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*

Privatizing/Centralizing Colonial Control

In 1671, Shaftesbury reorganized the Royal African Society (RAS), so that it would have a monopoly over the African slave trade. Shaftesbury invested £2,000, thereby becoming the third-largest stockholder. On his advice, John Locke invested £400. Other investors include the Earl of Craven, Sir George Carteret, and Sir Peter Colleton: all of the Carolina adventure.

They were making sure that the supply of slaves, needed to expand the institution of slavery to the Americas, would be sufficient. By 1680, the RAS monopoly was shipping 5,000 slaves a year. By 1700, England led the world, shipping 20,000 slaves per year!

Besides Carolina, Virginia, and the RAS, some combination of the Carolina Lord proprietors, were involved in:

- The Bahamas: In 1670, six of the Carolina Lord Proprietors, including Shaftesbury, were given the Bahama land grant, and became Lord Proprietors of the Bahamas. They tried to introduce a slave-based plantation system there, but failed, so they got involved with the pirates instead.
- Bermuda: In 1671, Shaftesbury became governor of the Somer’s Isle Company, which ran the island.
- Hudson’s Bay Company: When founded in 1670, Shaftesbury became deputy governor. Peter Colleton was also involved.
- New Jersey: Carolina lord proprietor, George Carteret was given the Royal Charter. Fortunately, when he died, William Penn and associates, bought out his widow.

All of these cases involved *grants* of large tracts of land, to a small cabal of private investors. *Privatization is not new!* Then, as today, privatization led not to competition, but monopoly. The great wealth accumulated by the proprietors was secondary to their political mission. (If greed and monetary gain were the primary motivations, why just give away so much land?) Shaftesbury showed little interest in the East India Company, or any of the older British colonies. *His assignment was the Americas!*

The Battle in Georgia

The other problem that beset Georgia, besides the question of work, as identified by Benjamin Franklin, was that every time Oglethorpe was away, the enemy went to work, and things got worse. This battle can be best related through first-hand narrative.²⁷

The colonists landed in early 1733, and set to work. In August, after having spent a few months in Charles Town, South Carolina, Oglethorpe returned to Savannah, and reported:

“When I returned from thither, I found the people were grown very mutinous and impatient of labour and discipline.... By degrees I brought the people back to discipline

27. Colonel Oglethorpe’s *Georgia: Colonial Letters 1733-37* (Savannah: Beehive Press, 1975). Unless otherwise specified, all quotes are from these letters.

but could not revive the spirit of labour. Idleness and drunkenness were succeeded by sickness. To remedy this I first sent away the Negroes who sawed for us, for as long as they continued here our men were encouraged in idleness.”

He did remedy it, and 13 months later, in September 1734, colonist William Bateman was able to write to Oglethorpe:

“There could be no description of any place (without the malice of hell itself) be made so dismal as the people of that town [Charles Town] endeavor to make of Georgia. Though in short a person may soon see through their artifice, and see that it is fear only of the great progress that has already been made in Georgia in so short a space of time, will greatly damage their trade and force them to be more industrious ... for of all the places I have ever yet been at I never see the inhabitants so *indolent*, so proud nor so malicious as themselves....

“I arrived here.... When, instead of finding what I heard at Charles Town, I found more ground cleared, more houses built and in a more regular manner than it was possible for me to conceive or believe, more especially when I consider the short space of time ... and that the majority of the people were not used before to any hard labour. They tell me that all America could never boast the like before.”

But, in May 1734, Oglethorpe left for England, and did not return until February 1736. During that time, conspiratorial operations were run against Georgia. Thomas Christie, recorder for the colony wrote to Ogelthorpe:

“We raise the envy of the people of Carolina, by whom we suffer many aspersions and false reports ... and they get all our money in the bargain ... and with the advantage of their Negroes, report that we need not sow any corn or rice, for they will always undersell us.”

Colonist Robert Parker wrote to the trustees in December 1734, that there were now too frequent courts, and shocking punishments (the trustees had outlawed lawyers in Georgia). He also reports that there became “a profligacy of wealth,” and that a group of 30-40 freemasons had developed. Even a conspiracy to burn down Savannah was identified!

During this period, the colonists were organized to demand slaves. In 1735, the Trustees countered the demand, by getting parliament to pass “The Negroe Act,” banning slavery in Georgia. While it was for Georgia only, and for none of the right reasons, it was a victory for the trustees.²⁸

In February 1736, Oglethorpe returned. On the one hand, he found that progress had been made. He wrote to the trustees: “Things go well here, considering the ... disappointments which I acquainted you with.” Trader Samuel Everleigh, wrote: “There’s a vast alteration at Savannah for the better. The generality of the population are grown there very industrious.... The majority have built their lots....”

But, Oglethorpe also found that operations had been run, to turn Native Americans against him. In May, he wrote:



Oglethorpe befriended the Yamacraw leader Tomochichi (shown here with his nephew Toonahowi in an 18th-Century engraving), who presented him a gift of a Bison skin, with an Eagle painted on the inside. The Bison signified strength, Tomochichi explained, and the Eagle, swiftness; but, the Bison skin could provide protection, and the Eagle feathers were soft; and signified love. Thus, the same strength which the English used to crush the Native Americans, could also be used to love and protect them.

“[S]ome private men have taken great pains to incense the Indians against the Spaniards and against the colony of Georgia particularly.... What vexed the Uchees was that some of the Carolina people swam a great herd of cattle over the Savannah [River] and began a plantation on the Georgia side, not far from the Uchees’ town. The Uchees, instead of taking Captain Green’s advice, and beginning hostilities with us, sent up their king and twenty warriors with a message of thanks to me, for having ordered back the cattle and sent away the Negroes....”

One of Oglethorpe’s greatest successes was in his positive relations with Native Americans. This has always been an important battleground between republican and oligarchical factions.

He knew that misplaced missionary zeal had played a role, in many disasters, including South Carolina’s Yamacree massacre of 1715, and that Native Americans saw the missionaries, as a wee bit hypocritical.²⁹ The Yamacraw tribe did

28. Phinizy Spalding, *Oglethorpe in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

29. Some missionaries saw evangelization as a pathway to freedom, but, in 1732, the Bishop of London ruled: “No consideration of propagating the Gos-

express a desire to be instructed in Christianity, but Oglethorpe kept the missionaries away from them. When the young John Wesley expressed his zeal to “convert the heathen,” Oglethorpe refused him, saying that there were plenty enough sinners in Savannah to keep him busy.³⁰ His own approach was ecumenical: He chose to highlight aspects of Native American culture, which might even serve to embarrass European monarchies:

“There is no coercive power in any of their nations. Their Kings can do no more than *persuade*. All the power that they have is no more than to call the old Men and their captains together, and to propound to them, without Interruption, the Measures they think proper. After they have done the speaking, all the others have the Liberty to give their Opinions also; and they reason together till they have brought each other into some unanimous resolution. These conferences of great Difficulty have sometimes lasted two days, and are always carried on with temper and Modesty. . . . They are thorough Masters of true eloquence; and making allowances for what they suffer through badness of interpreters, many of their Speeches are equal to those we admire most in the Greek and Roman writings. . . . They speak mostly through Simile and Metaphor, and their Similes are quite new to me.”³¹

The Revolt

In November 1736, Oglethorpe sailed for England, only to return to Georgia, in September 1738. While he was gone, the enemy wasted no time. The Spanish were being incited to war, and the demand for slaves was increasing. Two months after his return to Georgia, he wrote a letter from Fort Frederica, indicative of his fighting spirit, to his friend and fellow trustee, George Heathcote, in which he said:

“I am here in one of the most delightful situations as any man could wish to be: a great number of debts, empty magazines, no money to supply them, numbers of people to be fed, mutinous soldiers to command, a Spanish claim and a large

pel of God, or saving the Souls of men, is to make the *least Abatement* from the temporal Profit of the Masters. . . . The freedom which Christianity gives, is a freedom from the bondage of Sin and Satan . . . but as to their *outward* condition, . . . makes no manner of Change in it. . . .”

30. Phinizz Spalding and Harvey H. Jackson, eds., “Oglethorpe as Parson and Squire,” *Oglethorpe in Perspective: Georgia’s Founder After 200 Years* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1986) Jackson.

31. Taken from the 1733 document: “Some Description of the Indians in Georgia,” reprinted in: *Publications of James Edward Oglethorpe*, Rodney F Baine, ed. (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1994). The metaphor Oglethorpe cites, is quite beautiful: Tomochichi, the Yamacraw chief, presented him with a gift of a Bison skin, with an Eagles’ head and feathers painted on the inside. The Bison, Tomochichi explained, represented irresistible strength, like the English; and the Eagle, the swiftness, with which the English had crossed the ocean. On the other hand, the Bison skin could provide warmth, and protection, and the Eagles’ feathers were soft; and signified love. Thus: the same strength, which the English could use to crush their Native American friends, could also be used to love and protect them. The choice was theirs.

body of their troops not far from us. But as we are of the same kind of spirit, these difficulties have the same effect upon me as those you met with in the City had upon you. They rather animate than daunt me.”

In December, 121 Savannah colonists signed a petition demanding two things: the legalization of “Negroes,” and the right to hold their land in “fee simple.” The colonists were landholders, but they had been wisely restricted from being able to sell their land. “Fee simple” would allow them to sell, in order to buy slaves.

Oglethorpe rallied his forces: The Salzburg Lutherans, from New Ebenezer, wrote a letter to him, saying:

“We are told by several people after your arrival that it proves quite impossible and dangerous for white people to plant and manufacture any rice, being a work only for Negroes, and not for European people. But having the experience of congregation we laughed at such a tale, seeing that several people of us have had in the last harvests a greater crop of rice than they wanted for their own consumption. . . . The manufacture of rice will be an easy and profitable thing”

The Highland Scots in Darien, near the Spanish forces, wrote the “Darien Petition,” to Oglethorpe, entreating him not to implement slavery. It made the usual arguments about joining the Spanish, and like the Lutherans, said that they were laborious: but, in its fifth article, stated:

“It is shocking to human Nature, that any Race of Mankind and their Posterity should be sentanc’d to perpetual Slavery; nor in Justice can we think otherwise of it, that they are thrown amongst us to be our Scourge one Day or other for our Sins: And as Freedom must be as dear to them as it is to us, what a Scene of Horror must it bring about! And the longer it is unexecuted, the bloody Scene must be the greater. . . .”

The premonition of the Civil War is chilling. Some historians are stunned by this article, and say that this was the first time that the argument that black people have human rights, was made in the Americas. Yet, the same historians will question whether the statement was due to Oglethorpe’s personal influence. There is no doubt! Without him, no one could have protested the introduction of slavery: It would never have been banned in the first place.

Also of interest, though seldom cited, is the third article of the Darien Petition:

“We are not rich, and becoming Debtors for Slaves, in Case of their running away or dying, would inevitably ruin the poor Master, and he become a greater Slave to the Negroe-Merchant, than the slave he bought could be to him.”

Oglethorpe showed great insight into the question, with his assessment of the 121 Savannah petitioners, in a letter to the trustees:

“After many consultations what clamour to make, they at last fell upon a petition for Negroes and to have their land in fee simple. Mr. Williams a merchant who has grants from the Trust of 1500 acres, promised . . . to let them have Negroes, if they could sell or mortgage their land for them. . . . This was a

bait for all those to sign, who think if they can BUT get a credit never care how they can pay.... Others, because they had run out all they had.... and spent what they got ... in taverns, fancy that if they get a new credit for Negroes, they may live upon their labour.... Mr. Williams may turn this to his advantage as a Negroe merchant, but all the labouring poor white men will be starved by it.... The land in this colony will soon be in the Negroe merchant's hands who furnishes them....

"It is with great difficulty that I carry on here. Mr. Williams is very angry and hath got the poor people of Savannah, many of whom are deeply in debt to him, to sign the petition for Negroes, which affirms that white men cannot work in this province. This assertion I can disprove by hundreds of witnesses, all the Salzburgers, the people at Darien, many at Frederica and Savannah and all the industrious in the province. The idle ones are indeed for Negroes. If the petition is countenanced, the province is ruined. Mr. Williams and Dr Tailfer will buy most of the lands at Savannah with debts due to them, and the inhabitants must go off and be succeeded by Negroes. Yet the very debtors have been weak enough to sign their desire of leave to sell.... I believe the idleness of the town of Savannah is chiefly owing to their seeing the Negroes in Carolina."

Again, the question of work emerges. How ironic that some of the very people that Oglethorpe had saved from debt slavery, now became advocates of chattel slavery, and were getting themselves into debt all over again, in order to avoid, work! Oglethorpe wrote to the trustees in January 1739:

"I have already written on the issue of Negroes and shall only add that if we allow slaves we act against the very principle by which we associated together, which was to relieve the distressed. Whereas, now we should occasion the misery of thousands in Africa, by setting men using arts to buy and bring into perpetual slavery the poor people who now live there free. Instead of strengthening we should weaken the frontiers of America.... As soon as your resolution is known [to reject the petition] the idle will leave the province and the industrious will fall to work, many of whom wait till they see the event of this application."

The trustees rejected the petition; Oglethorpe wrote to them:

"The order relating to Negroes is arrived and published and hath a very good effect ... and quelled the troublesome spirit. The remainder of the idle-walkers and Dr Tailfer are preparing to leave the colony, but several industrious people are settling."

However, Oglethorpe's problems were increasing. The Spanish had been incited to war against him, and several battles ensued, which kept him away. In 1741, The British Parliament cut off funds and split the colony in two. Retired parliamentarian William Stephens was given charge over Savannah, while Oglethorpe was relegated to his military command in Fort Frederica. In July 1743, Stephens was made president of

all Georgia. His son, Thomas, became a leader of the "Malcontents," those demanding slavery and fee simple.

Oglethorpe wrote to the trustees in February 1743:

"It was not 'till after the war obliged me to be upon the frontier that the laws for the welfare of the colony and the Trustees orders were disobeyed at Savannah. There has been since my coming away nothing but continual complaints between the magistrates and inhabitants and between each other. Those disputes have been kept up by the Spanish emissaries, *of whom it seems to be apparent young Stephens is one*" (emphasis added).

That same year, Oglethorpe returned to England under court-martial, and never returned. Slavery was "legalized" by Parliament in 1750, although it had already been practiced for some time. In 1752, Georgia became a crown colony. The trustees' experiment was over.

Much has been written about why Georgia failed, but one problem that I see, which no one else has identified, is the trustees' acceptance of the idea, that Georgia could get along without manufactures, and the colony survive by producing olive oil, silk, and wine, combined with the Indian trade.³² I doubt if they were opposed to industry, but the oligarchy would not tolerate a new manufacturing colony. None of these luxury items did well in Georgia, and if you are going to compete with slave labor, then industry, where one man can do the work of 100, is the only way to do it!

Epilogue

Oglethorpe continued to be active in England. In 1776, he wrote a long letter to the abolitionist Granville Sharp, insisting that slavery existed in Georgia because of the machinations of the British government, not the trustees, and that the trustees had refused to condone slavery, because it was: "Against the Gospel as well as the fundamental law of England."³³

In the same letter, in response to David Hume's assertion, that Africans were capable of neither liberty nor government, he wrote:

"Ha! What a Historian! He must never have heard of Shishak, the Sesostris, of Hannibal or of Tirhaka, king of Ethiopia, whose very name frightened the mighty Assyrian monarch."

On June 1, 1785, to the horror of the British press, John Adams was received as the First Minister to the Court of St. James from the newly established United States of America. The last public act of the 87-year-old Oglethorpe, was to greet him, on June 5, and express his regard for the Americas, and his "happiness, to see the conflict resolved." On June 30, he passed away.

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32. He did not mean current, positive law, which endorsed slavery. He went back and studied the previous 500 years of English law.

33. "An appeal for the Georgia Colony," reprinted in Baine, p. 165.