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THE JOURNAL OF CAPTAIN ISAAC L. BAKER¹

CONTRIBUTED BY C. F. ARROWOOD

[The first leaf of this Journal is torn vertically from top to bottom, so that on the first and second pages no complete sentences remain. It is evident that Captain Baker and his company left Nashville, Tennessee, on July 15, 1814, and, following the route taken by General Jackson's forces the autumn before, marched by way of Franklin, Tennessee, to Huntsville, Alabama. See J. S. Bassett, *The Life of Andrew Jackson*, map following page 88.]

Journal

12 o'clock marched with my [company]
from Coleman's spring near
Left one sick man, David
at the Cantonment — encountered
Harper 10 miles from Nashville
July 16th

The *Journal* of Captain Isaac L. Baker is owned by Miss Celeste Jones of Houston, Texas. Miss Jones is a relative of the writer of the *Journal* and it is by her kind permission that this transcript has been made and offered for publication.

The *Journal* bears its writer's name, and the date line, "Henry Clay's Law Office, Lexington, Ky., 1812." I have taken no liberties with spelling, and have transcribed words through which lines have been drawn as well as sentences begun and left unfinished. I have occasionally supplied a comma when Captain Baker has used a dash, but only in those cases where I felt sure that the meaning of the passage could not be affected by the substitution.

Isaac L. Baker was a native of Kentucky. He attended Transylvania University, and while there formed an intimacy with Stephen Fuller Austin. Austin left Lexington, apparently in the spring of 1810, and Baker continued as a student there, later entering the law office of Henry Clay. Letters passed between the two friends; four of Baker's letters to Stephen F. Austin appear in *The Austin Papers*. The first was written from Transylvania University, July 1st, 1810. The last is dated "Camp 4 miles below New Orleans, Jan'y 5th 1815." (See *The Austin Papers* in the *Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1919*; Vol. II, Part I, pages 174-176, 178-179, 183-185, 245-247.)

Baker was appointed to the army on July 6, 1812, with the rank of ensign in the Second Regiment of Infantry. He participated in the fighting about Frenchtown and, at the River Raisin, was captured by the Indians, and taken to Detroit, where, a week after his capture, he was ransomed by an American and allowed to return to the American lines. *Niles' Register*, Volume 4, pages 67, 68, 94, and 95 carries his story of his capture and release and of the events about Frenchtown between January 22, and February 25, 1813. On April 25, 1813, he was made captain in the Forty-fourth Infantry, and subsequently assisted in enlisting men for his regiment in Tennessee. During the late summer of 1814 he with Captain Butler and a part of the Forty-fourth joined General Jackson at Fort Jackson and accompanied him to Mobile. He was soon placed in command of his regiment and served with great gallantry before New Orleans. His conduct in the fighting of December 23, 1814, won him a

Franklin² early. 8 miles
en days provisions for
[w]as joined by Capt Amelongs³
8 miles toward the
of Duck River and
near a Mr. Collin's
Frank A. Martin deser-
ning.
uly 17th
ogers deserted early in
Advanced sixteen miles
amped at Fleming's for
ht.
ly 18th
Garrison and Humphrey Pope
Decamped but owing to har[d]
d roads and the low condi-
the sick. Advanced no

brevet rank of major, and mention in General Orders of January 21, 1815. *Niles' Weekly Register* of Saturday, February 25, 1815, page 404, of Volume 7, and A. L. Latour's *Historical Memoir of the War in West Florida and Louisiana, Appendix*, p. cxxxv, carry the citation. He commanded his regiment in the famous fight of January 8, 1815. After the war he was made captain in the First Infantry. He resigned May, 1817, and resumed the practice of law. He was a highly successful attorney in Louisiana until his death in 1837.

Of Captain Baker's conduct after the battle of Frenchtown, McAfee says, in his *History of the Late War in the Western Country*, page 244: "Ensign I. L. Baker, who had been taken by the Indians on the 22nd and had witnessed many of their subsequent barbarities, was brought to Detroit and ransomed by an American Gentleman at that place before the march of prisoners. General Winchester directed him to take charge of the wounded, who were left at Sandwich. He continued there until the 15th of February, discharging, in a very able and assiduous manner, the duties required in that situation. During his stay he obtained a variety of information concerning the conduct of the allies, which he afterwards reported to General Winchester."²

Eaton and Reid in their *Life of General Jackson*, page 305, Walker in his *Jackson and New Orleans*, page 188, Latour in his *Historical Memoir of the War in West Florida and Louisiana*, all speak in high terms of his able and gallant bearing in the fighting of December 23, 1814, before New Orleans. Reference has been made to General Jackson's citation in General Orders of January 21, 1815. The passage referring to Baker is as follows:

"The 7th regiment was led by major Peyre, and the 44th by captain Baker, in the action of the 23d, in a manner that does these officers the highest honour. They have continued through the campaign to do their duty with the same zeal and ability with which it was commenced."

²Franklin, Tennessee, southeast of Nashville.

³Ferdinand Louis Amelung. Born in Germany; Captain of Louisiana Volunteers; appointed Captain in the 44th Infantry, 11 March, 1814; transferred to the 1st Infantry, 17 May, 1815; resigned from the army, 7 January, 1819; killed in a duel, 1820.

and Nail's Spring where
mped for the night. 10

19

agraves deserted this

About mid day

company under Capt.

and went forward to

de 27 miles from Nail's

My 1st Lt Dupuy⁴ and a

ng party were stationed

acquired 5 fine recruits

was brought into

apt Amelung's camp this evening.

[Here the second page of the *Journal* ends. The leaf following has been torn out, and when the narrative is resumed it is with the events of some days later, probably of July 25th. From this point the *Journal* is in excellent condition, and with the exception of a very few words, is perfectly legible until we reach the portion concerned with August 10 to 20, 1814, where the ink is so faded that the *Diary* cannot be read.]

Colo Pope's family and others and after 2 days stay left them with much regret—a regret produced not only by my being about to quit society for a term but very much heightened by the intrinsic worth of my acquaintances.

26th July

Left Huntsville⁵—made 13 miles and a half this day. Crossed Flint River in the evening after which we saw no more of the fine land which characterizes Madison County. Isaac Sutherland deserted this day.

27th July

Marched eleven miles and a half into the Cherokee country. Stayed all night at a very fine Spring near one Ashburns—much detained this day by the waggons. This evening a part of

⁴Noel Gaspard Dupuy, First Lieutenant of Louisiana Volunteers, November 27, 1812; First Lieutenant, 44th Infantry, March, 1814. Resigned from the army, June, 1815. He was cited in General Orders, January 21, 1815, for gallantry in the fighting before New Orleans. The mention is as follows: "Lieutenant Dupuy of the 44th, although severely wounded in this action, * returned in time to take a share in all subsequent attacks."

⁵Of December 23, 1814.

⁶Huntsville, Madison County, Alabama. The Flint River was reached as Baker marched southeast toward the Tennessee.

Capt Hammond's⁶ company of Rangers came to Ashburn's to turn him off the Indian Lands as they had done many others. Next morning they burnt his house. Wells a soldier deserted about 12. o'clock.

28th July

Arrived at Tennessee River 10 miles about 12 o'clock—found a party of Cherokees preparing to go on to the great Treaty to be held at fort Jackson about the 4th of August. with the Creek Indians & Genl. Jackson. Was much detained in getting my waggons over the river to Fort Deposit⁷ where after supplying my men with provisions and my waggons with forage I proceeded three miles on towards fort Strother where I camped in some Indian field[s] near Mussells.⁸ There is no fortification at Deposit.

29th July

Colo A.P. Hayne Inspect.⁹ Genl to Genl. Jacks & the gen's aid Capt. Butler¹⁰ passed me this morning. We decamped early and passing old fort Deposit and a fine spring near it we in six or seven miles ascended a very high hill which brought us on a long Ridge¹¹ for twenty miles destitute (with one exception) of running water. After having made about 17 miles this day we encamped for the night having for the greater part of the day traversed very poor country.

30th July

Advanced 10 miles further when we descended the mountain by a very steep route—two miles further found a very fine spring of

⁹Hammond, see Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*.

¹⁰Fort Deposit had been laid out October 22, 1813, at the mouth of Thompson's Creek on the Tennessee River. This fort was Jackson's base of supplies for the campaign against the Creeks, 1813-14. In Colonel Wm. H. Powell's *List of Officers of the United States Army, 1776-1900*, the fort is said to be at the mouth of Honeycomb Creek. See Bassett's *Life of Andrew Jackson*, p. 93.

¹¹Mussel Shoals, no doubt.

¹²Colonel Arthur P. Hayne was made Inspector General of the 7th Military District 12th of April, 1814.

¹³Captain Thomas L. Butler.

¹⁴The Sand, or Raccoon Mountains. Baker and his command crossed also the Lookout Mountains on their way to the Coosa.

water—came three miles in advance of it and encamped for the night.

31st July

Came eight miles to Canoe Creek a fine large stream said to be the boundary between the Cherokee & Creek Nations. Advanced about six miles further when one of my waggons breaking down I encamped for the night.

August. 1st

After marching a mile we reached the Coosee¹² river and in five more arrived at Fort Strother's Genl. Jackson's station camp during the last fall and winter. After taking in four days provisions and repairing the waggons we crossed the Coose one mile below the fort and encamped for the night.

August. 2d

18 miles from fort Strother came to Chocoloco or shoal creek a fine large stream. Advanced 1½ miles to a good spring where we encamped for the night.

Aug 3d—1814

Marched seven miles to Talladega¹⁴ where the friendly Indians had built a fort early in the war and near which Genl. Jackson's army defeated the hostile Creeks on the morning of the 9th of November last.¹⁵ We saw many of the skeleton's still on the field. 2 miles further passed Taladega Creek—a fine flush stream—ten miles further crossed another large creek. One mile in advance of which we camped for the night. The country we passed through today a small district about Talladega excepted was covered with pine and indifferent.

¹²The Coosa. See Bassett, *Life of Andrew Jackson*, pp. 96ff, and *The Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, Letter to Thomas Pinckney, February 4, 1814.

¹³Fort Strother was located on the upper Coosa near the Ten Islands. It was laid out by Jackson about the first of November, 1813, and served as his base until after the battle of Tohopeka, in March, 1814.

¹⁴Talladega. See map following page 88 in Bassett's *Life of Andrew Jackson*. This village was thirty miles south of Fort Strother.

¹⁵Battle of Talladega. See Bassett, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-99.

August. 4th

Marched thro a poor piny country about 17 miles and camped for the night at Catala's old fields near some fine little creeks about five miles from fort Williams.¹⁶ I went to the fort this evening to attend to provisions and sent my waggons in this night!

August. 5th

Marched about 11 o'clock this morning as soon as the provision wagon returned. Traced the site of an old circular fortification containing about 5 acres regularly entrenched—one part of it flanked by a creek. It lies about 5 miles from Catalas town. Advanced 8 miles in front of it and encamped.

August 6th

Passed yesterday and today through a very mountainous country. I advanced with my company about 17 miles today passing several sites of old villages which had been burnt by general Jackson in his progress. My waggons halted three miles in rear of me for the night having no forage—the horses being weak & the country mountainous.—I met Lt. Donaldson with about 30 Rangers who had gone out as Genl. Jackson's life guard returning—they encamped just by me for the night.

August. 7th

My waggons coming up we resumed the march. We met Colo Russell of the 20th Infy. late Lt. Colo of the 3d going on to Virginia to join his regt. this morning. Advanced about 14 miles this day and encamped on a pine ridge near a very fine branch of good water.

August. 8th

Arrived about mid day at the falls of the Coosa which obstruct all navigation—four miles further arrived at fort Jackson¹⁷ where we found the 3d Regt. Iy. and 2 companies of () Regt. of Malita encamped & a vast number of Indians Cherokees

¹⁶Port Williams was on the Coosa, fifty-nine miles below Fort Strother. See *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, Vol. I, p. 465.

¹⁷Fort Jackson was laid out at the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers. It was near the site now occupied by Montgomery, Alabama.

Creeks and Choctaws attending the treaty or Capitulation.¹⁸ The Indians had been hesitating some time about the terms this day gave general Jackson a favorable answer to his propositions.

August, 9th

The treaty signed this day & my company attached by genl orders for the present to the 3d Regt. Lewis Hoskins a boy of my company died this evening about 10 o'clock.

10th August.

Orders issued to move at one tomorrow down the Alabama—the Genl. & Staff the 3d Regt. & my company—my company to form a crew for Genl. Jackson.

11 the August

Left fort Jackson today

[Here the ink is so faded that for more than a page and a half one can read a word here and there only. These few words, taken in connection with what has gone before and what comes after make it clear enough that the expedition was proceeding by easy stages, by boat, down the Alabama, and that Captain Baker observed the country through which he was traveling with his usual interest. When the entry of August 19th is reached the writing in once more legible.]

August 19th

Resumed our voyage our voyage halted for the night on the Right Bank of the River a little below old fort Mims. About midnight two of my soldiers Thomas Seagraves & Lewis Crouch died.

August 20th arrived at Fort Stoddert¹⁹ about 10 o'clock. The general with many of the officers visited Mount Vernon 3 miles off where a part of the 39th were stationed. They had been very unhealthy. Out of the Regt. 600 strong there was not now half the number for duty. It is a high pleasant situation in the pine woods and has *fine water*. Colo Boyce of the 5th Regt. late Lt. Colo of the 2d visited the general this night, He was on his way to the north to join his Regt.

¹⁸Treaty with the Creeks. See Bassett, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-125.

¹⁹Stoddert. See Bassett, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

August 21st.

We started at ten o'clock and by seven in the evening had got within a league of Mobile when appearance of a Rising storm drove us into a creek for harbour where we laid for the night. The River which from the junction of the Alabama & Tomb [igbee]

[Here the manuscript is torn across the page, on the other side of the sheet the narrative continues.]

General Ja[ckson]

head quarters in the town of Mobile.²⁰

On the voyage I was much pleased with general Jackson. He is certainly one of the most accessible men in the world and I do not believe that he has a fault which does not spring from warmth of his heart. He took great interest in observing the soil situation etc of the country adjacent to the Alabama, and why should he not. It was him who by his indefatigable exertions secured this territory to the *Union*. His information is extensive and for a man who still retains so much so much of the philanthropy of youth his acquaintance with mankind correct and extensive. There is none of that phlegmatic dross in his composition which so often envelops some great strong minds and renders them difficult to be roused. He is temperate Industrious and liberal and inclined naturally to be courteous to every man without respect to grade or condition.

[Here the Journal comes to an end, and there follows an incomplete sketch of Jackson's career during the summer of 1814, and some account of his character and the forces under his command. The style differs slightly from that of earlier entries, but there is nothing which cannot be explained as the result of his change of aim and of the conditions under which he was writing. The Journal is a brief chronicle of the events of each day, noted while on the march or in temporary camp. The Sketch seems to have been written from General Headquarters in Mobile during August or early September, 1814. It is worthy of note that Baker does not refer to Jackson's later military exploits: there is no mention of the first Florida campaign nor of the operations about New Orleans.]

Genl Jackson appointed a Major Genl. in the army. The 7th

²⁰Mobile. Eaton and Reid, *Life of General Jackson*, page 209. "Captains Baker and Butler with the regular troops lately enlisted advanced to Mobile, where they arrived in fourteen days."

Mil. Dist. assigned him. He proceeds to Ft. Jackson. His treaty with the Creek Indians. He proceeds with his regular troops to Mobile. Established his head Quarters there.

Genl Jacksons success against the Hostile Creeks turned the eyes of the nation upon him. Hitherto known as a man of ardent mind and warm passions—although from the commencement of the War with Britain he had been anxious to enter the Regular army yet the jealousy and fears of those in power preferring phlegmatic plodding men.

General Jacksons complete success against the Creek Confederacy turned the eyes of the Nation upon him. The American Government at the commencement of the war with great Britain selected phlegmatic plodding men to head her armies. Jackson hitherto known as a man of ardent mind and warm passions was neglected by the jealousy and fears of those in power. As Major General of Tennessee he evinced those grand qualifications which should always characterise the commander and his success gave him claim to military distinction which could not be resisted even by the mistaken policy of the government. General Armstrong now at the head of the War Department satisfied of his ability for command gave him the best appointment in the gift of the Nation and assigned him the 7th Military District as his theatre of action. This District composed of the States of Tennessee and Louisiana and the Mississippi Territory comprehended a great portion of the country occupied by the Creeks. A treaty was to be completed with those tribes and who was so well calculated for a commissioner on the part of his country as him who had conquered that refractory people. He was designated sole commissioner on the part of the United States.

About the 1st of June 1814 Jackson published his appointment as Major General in orders and assumed the Direction of the 7th Mil. Dist.

No man could have come into command under more favorable auspices. Independent of his reputation the conduct of Brigadier General Flournoy who had been in command since the Departure of Major General Wilkinson for the north the preceding summer had been very offensive to the Army. A want of that unaffected

liberality so characteristic of the true soldier and a distinct knowledge of the Military profession was loudly complained of. With all the Department of authority he is said to have been possessed of no one of those rare qualifications which render power agreeable. Very different was the character of his successor. He had held the highest offices that his fellow citizens of Tennessee could bestow. Fortune had smiled upon him in a succession of victories won at the head of armies that adored him—yet the man remained as nature had fashioned him—pure and incorruptible. He needed not the hauteur and assumed dignity that clothes little great men to shroud him from the observation of the world. He was accessible to all and no man unless under his immediate displeasure could feel more illly at ease in the presence of his equal than with him. Affable and generous to an excess he had a facility in winning the rough heart of the soldiers a happy faculty which few possess. Having never served in a subaltern capacity in a regular army he was but indifferently acquainted with 'duty and Detail'—but as those came more immediately under the direction of his staff the want of this minutia could not be urged as solid objections to the man created by nature with the head to plan the soul to dare and the hand to execute.

The Regular troops of his District were composed of some of the Best corps in the American service. The 2d Regt. of Infantry had existed for 12 years without a change of organization. It had in it many excellent officers and its soldiers had mostly seen from five to twenty years of service. The 3rd Ly was by no means inferior to the 2d. Its officers almost without exception were young men of education and respectable connections from the States of N. & S. Carolina and Georgia. Possessed of a proper Emulation they suffered no corps to excel theirs in neatness and discipline. Many of the officers and soldiers had belonged to the famous consolidated regiment organized by Genl. Pike when a Lt. Colo. and in which they had acquired an excellent knowledge of Duty. It had the reputation not without reason of being the best corps in the American Army.

The 7th Infantry was also in the District. Since its organization in 1808 it had been almost constantly cut up into detachments. This for a lapse of time added to the inattention of its field officers prevented it from making the appearance or en-

joying the reputation of the 3d. However under the direction of Colo Purdy and afterwards under Major Gilran that part of it stationed usually in the Neighborhood of Orleans became distinguished for its appearance and acquaintance with duty. Its officers and soldiers were most from the Western States which certainly grows as fine a race of men as any section of the globe.

The 39th Regt. of Ly had greatly distinguished itself in General Jackson's last action with the Creeks. At that time the ability of its Colo and Lt Colo had made it a very respectable corps but the short enlistments made of its first recruits and the unhealthy situation, Mount Vernon, assigned it in the spring of 1814 came so near completing its dissolution that it made no great figure afterwards.

The 44th Ly had just been organized. The officers were principally from Louisiana. At the time genl Jackson assumed command it had not more than 200 men one half of which had been recruited in Tennessee.²¹

Five Artillery companies mostly incomplete composed the Balance of the Regular force then in the Dist. They were all of the old army and well versed in duty.

²¹Baker and Dupuy had enlisted a part of the 44th Infantry in Tennessee and had marched their men half the width of Tennessee and the length of Alabama.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE TEJAS OR ASINAI INDIANS,
1691-1722

II

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH

BY

MATTHE AUSTIN HATCHER

[Punishments]

The punishments they use and inflict upon the delinquents consist of whippings, according to the crimes. For murder, they give the criminal so many licks that he rarely recovers his senses. If he has shot someone with an arrow, or if he has committed a personal offense, dealing, perhaps, a mortal blow to the *cañdí* or to one of the family of this official—such as his father, mother, sons, or relatives, he receives the death sentence. I have not seen the punishment myself, but it is such a common thing among them that even the children know about it. If a person shoot another with an arrow or does something else like it, one can be sure that the punishment will be inflicted and that it will result as described above.

[Marriage Customs]

The custom they follow when a man takes a wife is not very commendable. In some ways the arrangement seems a good one; but I have found that it is not very binding. If a man wants a certain woman for his wife who he knows is a maiden, he takes her some of the very best things he has; and if her father and mother give their permission for her to receive the gift, the answer is that they consent to the marriage. But they do not allow him to take her away with him until they have first given notice to the *cañdí*. If the woman is not a maiden, there is no other agreement necessary than for the man to say to the woman that if she is willing to be his friend he will give her something. Sometimes this agreement is made for only a few days. At other times they declare the arrangement binding forever. There are but few of them who keep their word, be-