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Notes taken from the lips of Col Robert James of Clarke County Ala by A. J. Pickett

Relative to Zachariah McGirt & Weatherford.

Zachariah Mc Guitt & family having a wife & 8 children were inmates of Fort Mims - On the morning of the 29th of August 1813 Mc Guitt took two of his negroes & proceeded up Tensaw lake in a boat to his farm - About 12 o'clock when there, engaged in gathering corn & pumpkins he heard a heavy firing in the direction of the Fort & he immediately knew that Weatherford & his party who had long been expected had now arrived & had attacked the garrison He was some two or three miles off and he listed at the firing with great anxiety & pain - The firing continued with increased noise until about 3 o'clock when it apparently ceased for some time - Again it commenced & continued for some two hours more - Until it finally ceased & he could only hear a gun now & then at intervals - Mc Guitt becoming very impatient to learn the result of the battle & the fate of the garrison now ordered his negroes to throw out the provisions from the boat & row on rapidly towards the scene of action - In going down the lake he heard the firing again commence with increased noise & it continued till late in the evening - He run his boat in some thick cane & then lay until only one gun could be occasionally heard at intervals, presently all firing ceased - He then saw immense volumes of smoke rise up which was presently succeeded by bright flames of fire - He now knew all was lost. About sun down, leaving his negroes in the boat, he slowly & cautiously approached the Fort alone - Here all was gloomy & horrible - Dogs in great numbers were running about all over the woods, alarmed & making no noise Seeing the Indians had left the Fort & that every thing was silent ~~about~~, he returned, got his two negroes & ~~rela~~ came back to the fatal spot. This was about twilight - An awful sight was before him - Here, where for five preceding hours one of the most deadly fights had been carried on, amidst the roar of guns & shouts of savages, all was now hushed in awful silence - At a distance ~~about half~~ on the east side, the shouts of the murderers could be distinctly heard & their camp fires seen - Mc Guitt stood aghast at the sight - It was painfully exciting - Here among a garrison of 553 persons, now lying in

in piles in the sleep of death, some still bleeding, all scalped & mutilated, and smoked with fire - here among these heaps of the slain, lay ~~by~~ the body of his wife and eight children - there McGirth & his two faithful slaves hunted for the bodies of their friends - In vain they turned over pile after pile & looked into face after face - He searched diligently all over the ruins of the fort, but the curtains of night had now overshadowed the place & he late in the night, departed from horrible scenes, with a heavy heart, not only bereft of his wife, his children & his happiness, but denied the painful task of entering their bodies - ~~Some~~ Arriving at Fort Sloddart he there joined an expedition under Kenedy who was dispatched by Claiborne to bury the dead at Fort Mims - and having again reached fort mims, after the most minute search, he collected the bodies of a woman & eight children comprising his family and buried them ~~with~~ in the general vault. a hole.

McGirth was now alone in the world The hostiles ~~had stripped~~ in the course of one evening had stripped him of ~~all~~ every the objects his affections & afterwards took his property - Desperation took possession of his soul. He joined the side of the americans & was employed several times in carrying dispatches from the Commander of the South Alabama force to Fort Hawkins, now for in the state of Georgia. His route lay through the hostile region & in every thicket he was liable to be spying upon by a lurking foe. To preserve his life & fulfill his office, he had to ~~disguise~~ disguise his person - He painted himself like a hostile warrior & shaved his head - Mounted upon a good horse with 3 peeks of shelled corn for him the animal & 2 quarts of cold flour for himself, this fearless man solitary & alone, pursued his journey over this hostile land. He was successful in his missions and after making two or three trips a friend accosted him one day in the streets of Mobile & told him there were some people at the wharf who wished to see him - Going down there, he saw in a canoe a woman & seven children - naked & nearly starved to death, he was asked if he knew them - He replied no - He again exam

them without recognition - The woman now threw off her blanket & exposed her her face & person - It was his wife and around was his seven children which he imagined he had buried months past ~~at Fat Mens~~ upon the smoking ruins of Fat Mens. Mr Gritts was pleased, surprised, alarmed & nearly bereft of his, being overwhelmed with all these sudden emotions - His wife and all his children safe one, a son, were now before him and again restored to his care & affection

Many years before the fall of Fat Mens an indian lad nearly starved to death, homeless & friendless call'd at Mr Gritts house - Mrs Mr Gritt took care of him & raised him as an adopted son. He grew to be a stout athelete man & for some unaccounted cause left Mr Gritts family & joined Weatherfords party. While the bloody Malee was going in the Fat, this man was bold & active in killing the unfortunate inmates - With uplifted tomahawk he was slaying the women & children when he came across his foster Mother Mrs Mr Gritt surrounded by her children - He suddenly stoped - Pity & gratitude took possession of his savage soul - He determined to save them by claiming them as his slaves - Thrusting them in a corner, he nobly made his heart a rampart for their protection - ~~Late in the~~ The next morning this noble savage placed his ~~adopted~~ assumed Mother ~~upon~~ & her children mules & carried them up among the upper creeks at Hickory Ground - Here he maintained them for some time & guarded their persons from the assaults of the hostiles - When the indians were preparing to fight Jackson at the Horse Shoe this man told Mrs Mr Gritt that she must take care of herself in future - He might get killed in battle & he must in future provide for herself - Soon afterwards he lay among the slain at Tehopeca. Mrs Mr Gritt now deprived of her only friend & in a hostile land took her children & fled on foot for the old Tensaw settlements - Arriving here with her children she found all the country deserted - she placed her children in a rude hut constructed by their hands and one day while grubbing

potatoes, was discovered by Capt Blue's Spy Company & captured. Telling the soldiers her name they informed her that her Husband was alive & in Mobile - They placed her & her Children all of whom were naked & nearly starved to death upon pack Horses & reaching Blakely embarked them in canoes & it was on this occasion that Mc Geth saw them at Mobile -

Weatherford - his private life &c.

William Weatherford was a good citizen and was much respected by his neighbors in South Alabama - He did not like to allude much to the fall of Fort Mims, but used sometimes talk to his intimate friends about it & regret the destruction of the women & children & observe that he endeavoured to restrain his warriors & save their lives but could not.

One instance will be mentioned of his coolness & courage in after life. About the year 1820, a collection of people took place at the sale of Duncan Henderson's effects in the lower part of Monroe County - Several of the people became intoxicated - An old man by the name of Bradbery, a Blacksmith, the father of Capt Bradbery who died from a wound received at Barshi Creek, was insulted by George Fisher & ordered to bring a pitcher of water for the company from the Spring Bradbery good humoredly refused to do so, upon which Fisher broke the Pitcher over his head. Bradbery retreated to the Kitchen, among several females engaged in preparing dinner for those who attended the sale, & asked their protection. The women upbraided Fisher for abusing the old man who was now bleeding from his wounds. James Caller now came and ordered Bradbery out - & when the old man passed out of the Kitchen Fisher attempted to strike him a murderous blow with a plow beam. The old man being abused & threatened by both Fisher & Caller now ran for the woods. Caller overtook him & with an immense Knife raised in his hand, plunged it in at the top of his back & it went

thrust his body - The poor, unoffending old Bradbery, whose son had in several battles fought bravely for his country, now tumbled over lifeless - a murdered man -

~~Fisher & Caller stood off about 40 paces from the Company & with their knives flourishing in the air swore the~~ Altho the morals of the people of that day were exceedingly loose & murder was not uncommon, yet this atrocious & unjustifiable act filled the spectators with horror & a justice of the Peace Henderson cried out in a loud voice summoning various persons to take the murderes. all declined, for Fisher & Caller were 40 paces distant flourishing their knives & threatning to kill the first man who would attempt to take them.

William Weatherford was there, and had witnessed the bloody affair - He always kept in the outskirts of crowds & never was known to be in the midst. On this occasion he observed his usual position - Becoming exasperated at the audacity of the murderes & the timedity of the by=standers, he now rose up in a majestic manner & with an angry voice & stern ~~face~~ look, said, there "I suppose are white man's laws - you stand by & see a man killed & wont avenge his blood - If that murdered man lying there had but one drop of indian blood in him I would in=stantly kill his murderes even at the risk of my life" Justice Henderson was pleased with his brave speech and urged him to take them - Weatherford paused and asked Henderson about the white man's laws & the consequences of his attempting it - Henderson satisfying him upon this point, Weatherford now drew forth from his bosom a long silver handled dirk & deliberately raising it above his head fixed his eagle eye up Caller & walked firmly towards him - Caller cowerd at his approach & his hand, containing the bloody knife, fell to his side. Weatherford seized him by the collar & said to the bystan=ders here tye the d-d rascal. ~~In [illegible]~~ Turning round

to Fisher he threw his knife over his head & fixed upon him his tyger look - Fisher gin up & said, "I will will not resist you Billy Weatherford".

The Bystanders were afraid to take these murderers to jail after being secured - Weatherford & William Siseman, another half breed volunteered & ~~absolutely~~ actually carried them to Claiborne to jail - ~~Here~~ they had their trial & were acquited unjustly. shame to say

Weatherford was six feet high - well formed & weighed about 165 lbs. He died in the fall of 1826 from overfatigue in a desperate Bear hunt - He resided many years in the lower part of Monroe County on the East side of the Alabama ~~upon the~~ near little river - had about 40 slaves, was a good farmer - had no education - seldom got drunk & may have been called a temperate man - He was strictly honest very neighbourly & kind, but stern inflexible in his purposes - fond of the Chase & fine horses - He had a high forehead keen black eyes, very heavy eye brows from white teeth - remarkably gentleel in his persons, dressed like a white man -

Jack Weatherford & his half brother David Tate was in Fort Pearce, near Mim's & through the influence of Weatherford that fort was not attacked & their lives were saved

Weatherford's wife became sick while he was encamped at the Holy ground & hearing of the approach of Claiborne, he removed her to the Autauga side, 2 miles ~~from~~ now in the Dutch Bend & placed her in a tent - two days after the battle she died - Taking his only child, ~~his rifle~~ about 12 months old his rifle & a little negro girl named Abigail ~~on her~~ he departed on his Grey steed for the Hickory Ground settlements.

Big W. Glen I & Hawkes were together in tent discovered him & said Ah Billy Weatherford ~~we~~ you are here are you we have got you at last - Hear said He was a trait & bid him not to sheak to him - Set in his horse Jackson come running out commenced abusing him in high terms - How come he to kill the women & children & other murders & how dare him to come in his lines Weatherford looked him in the eye & listened attentively what he had to, "He did not come to beg his own life, but for the slooving Hostiles in the woods as for himself he asked no body any odds - he was a man & a warrior - he done what was duty to his country that he would fight still if had men - Jackson made no reply heard him out walked in his tent & said that was fellow - He returned invited him to get down - As he had voluntary come in, he should ~~have~~ leave so & take [illegible] advantages him - He then got I the deer [illegible] invited him to drink - They then set down & talked about how many Hostiles were out &c &c Weatherford promised to bring him - He ~~asked~~ got all the to come in about them - then went to Claborn got all in them - Here a party of Chactaws ~~[illegible]~~ in their way to Pensacola finding at Claborn at Claborn determined to kill - Russell sent him off before day with some drogoons to Fort Jack

Notes in relation
to
Weatherford & Back
McGillis –