



Mary Musgrove: Beloved Woman of the Creeks

Coosaponakeesa



In 1700, *Coosaponakeesa* was born at Coweta on the Ocmulgee River. Her Muskogean- Creek name translates to “Lovely Fawn”, but to generations she is known by her Christian name Mary Musgrove. Her father was Edmund Griffen, a British Indian trader; her mother was the sister of the powerful Brim, Chief Mico (leader) of the Tuckabatchees or Lower Creek Indians, making “Lovely Fawn” an Indian Princess.

When Mary was about sixteen years old she married an Indian trader, John Musgrove, whose surname she has become known by. From the two worlds Mary straddled, her talent as an interpreter was remarkable.

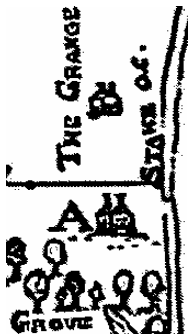
Oglethorpe’s Interpreter



In 1733 Oglethorpe and 116 emigrants set out to found the colony of Savannah. At Yamacraw Bluff, he solicited Mary Musgrove’s help as an interpreter for his meeting with the Yamacraw chief, Tomochichi. Oglethorpe realized that Mary could offer information and alliances he needed to secure British interests. Her services were hired at a salary of one hundred pounds sterling (about \$500) per year.

Mary assisted Oglethorpe in establishing treaties and in securing warriors to fight the Spanish. She supplied the struggling colonists with meat, bread, and liquor. When fighting broke out between the Spanish and British in 1742, Mary influenced the Creeks to aid the British forces, which led to the defeat of the Spanish on St. Simon’s Island.

Marriage & Property



Plat map of “The Grange” circa 1830s

Mary remarried twice after Musgrove’s death in 1735. Her second husband, Captain Jacob Matthews, died in 1742. Her third marriage to Thomas Bosomworth (1744) was fraught with political strife regarding his debts and gaining official recognition of large property grants, including Sapelo, St. Catherine’s, and Ossabaw Islands, from the Creeks to his wife, making her the largest landowner in colonial Georgia.

Throughout her life Mary owned three trading posts: “The Cowpens” or “The Grange” on the Savannah River, “Mount Venture” on the SanSavilla Bluffs, and “The Forks” located where the Altamaha River forms. These resources and her influence and skill used in creating of the colony of Georgia make Mary Musgrove a woman of great historic value.