

Bound for the USA:
The Fourteenth and Fifteenth
British Colonies and the Deep South.

The true history of the long and bloody struggle
of East Florida, West Florida, and the deep south
to become part of The United States of America
– or not!

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Dedicated to the memory of the men and women who found here a savage wilderness and by the grace of God and their faith, courage, toil, and sacrifice to the future built here a great nation – and to the education of those to whom that great legacy is entrusted.



This beautiful early French map reveals very little about what became the deep south of our United States, simply a blank space; a testimony perhaps to the ferocity of the southeastern Indians.

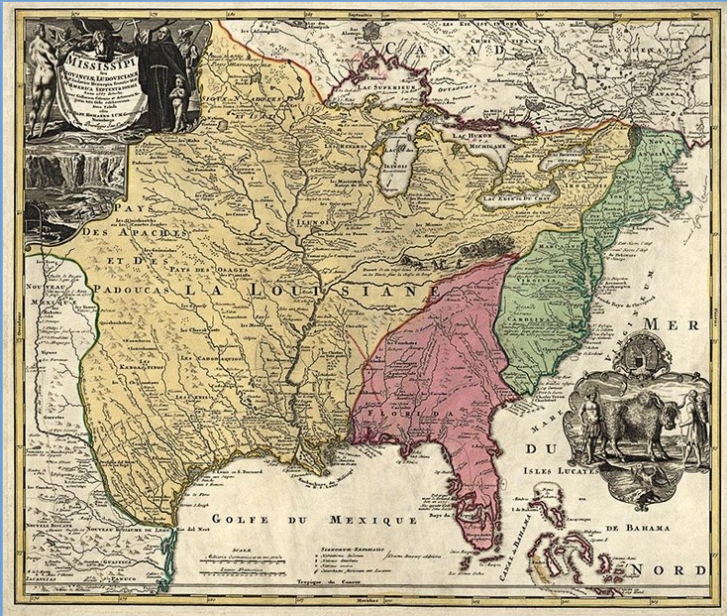
America before it became the US of America.

Yes, fifteen British colonies came into the United States of America. Numbers fourteen and fifteen however, the short term British colonies of East Florida and West Florida, had a vastly different background and came in by a longer, darker path than the first thirteen. Those historic differences, that remain to some degree even today, contributed a great deal of the diversity in our nation's past - and a great deal of the conflict. Their coming into the union also closed the ring around the Indian lands of the southeast and settled their destiny to become part of the United States a few years later.

Three score and ten years before the American Revolution, the span of one lifetime, European presence in the deep south consisted more of influence than of possession (except on maps). A few European settlements perched tenuously on the shores of a vast wilderness over which a terrible darkness had long been settled. But British Charleston and Savannah; Spanish St. Augustine; French Pensacola, Mobile, New Orleans and Natchez up the Mississippi River were not so much an encircling archipelago of European civilization crowding in on the Indian world. Rather, they were more a series of opposing magnetic poles whose political and economic influence radiated out across the intervening wilderness.

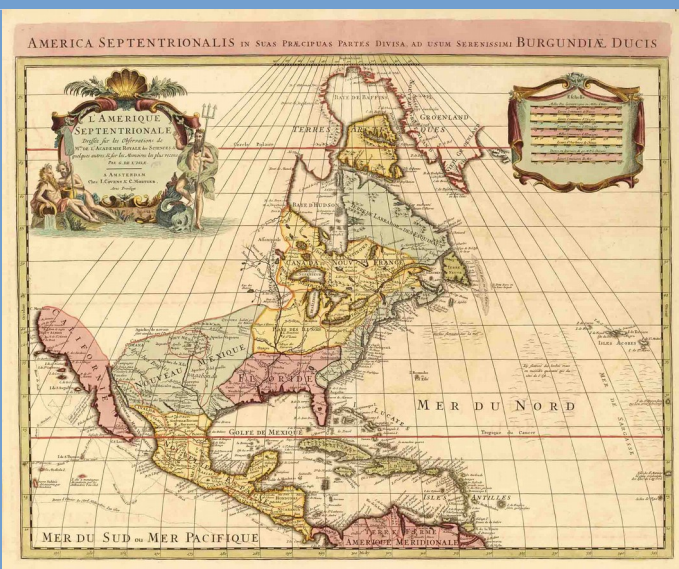
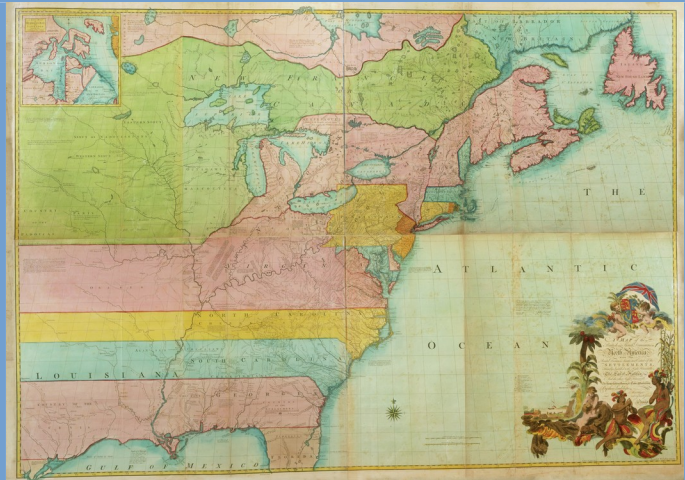
The Indian tribes of the south; the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and the Muscogee, Alabamo, Yamasee and others of the Creek Confederation were caught in those fields of force. The perpetual struggles of the European powers quickly became superimposed upon the Indian tribes' own perpetual struggles with one another.

The following montage of vintage maps, 'dueling maps' we might say, illustrate the confusion and the conflict between the European powers for territory in the New World.



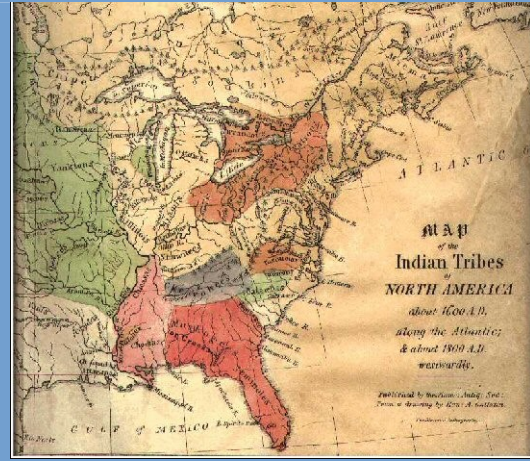
This French map depicts the English colonies cramped in along the east coast, Spanish Florida extending up almost to New England, and French Louisiana occupying most of the mid-continent.

The British map to the right shows the boundaries of the British colonies of Virginia, North and South Carolina and Georgia extending indefinitely to the west, right through French Louisiana, and reducing Spanish Florida to the peninsula.



This Dutch made map shows the Spanish claiming a very generous Florida Colony, overlapping British and French claims – or was it vice-versa.

Such maps as these were created as much as arguing points, and fighting points, as for anything else; but, at least in the cases of the French and British, should not be considered as claims of absolute ownership. Rather they were claims of exclusive rights for trade and development. Land for use was generally acquired by treaty from the Indian tribes.



In the earliest years of their contact with North America, the Europeans largely embraced the darkness they found here. The militant tribalism that glorified war, accompanied by the most merciless and savage cruelty, had become an integral part of the Indians' cultural and spiritual tradition. That provided the Europeans both a means of overcoming hostile tribes (every tribe was anxious to join the well armed Europeans in war on other tribes), and a dependence on the European trade for their defense.

The spiritual darkness covering the land only mirrored the physical darkness. Until the coming of the white man, North American Indians were trapped in the Stone Age. They could not cut trees with stone axes, much less build roads, clear fields of any size and dig themselves out of the wilderness to any great extent. Occasional small natural clearings and burned over areas offered the only respite from their twilight existence under the forest canopy that covered the greater part of the upland southeast.

Savannahs of the coastal plains offered more openness for agriculture and cultural development. Even there though, they had no real metal work, no domesticated animals for food or fibers, no draft animals, no wheels, nothing of even the simplest machine made goods, let alone firearms – but they wanted them! Indians did have something of value however, and trade soon sprang up.

Land was the first and most important object of trade, and ultimately the only thing of value the Indians had to trade. The French and British need for land did not develop rapidly however.

The fur trade and the slave trade were the first real commercial enterprises between the two worlds; and in the southern colonies the slave trade developed first. The Indian tribes had always waged wars among themselves, as men everywhere always have. Now though, war for captives to sell to the tobacco and rice planters of the southern colonies was business, and raged with new vigor among the middle and southern tribes.

The Creeks, the major tribe of the lower southeastern region (really a forced confederation of related tribes dominated by the Muscogee), allied with the British against the French and Spanish in Queen Anne's War, another in a series of European wars that spilled over into North America. In 1702 perhaps the largest and one of the last major Indian slave raids began – a joint invasion of the Gulf coast region by Creeks and British from the Carolinas to destroy the threatening Spanish presence there. Many Spanish settlements were destroyed and St. Augustine was burned, except for the fortress, San Marcos, which held out and managed to maintain Spanish claims on the Floridas.

Most of the chain of Franciscan missions along the coast were wiped out however, and many of peninsular Florida's "Spanish Indians", Catholic converts, were captured as slaves to trade in the Carolinas and Georgia. Many remaining Spanish Indians and white settlers fled the Floridas for safety in other Spanish colonies. There was never any more serious Spanish settlement.

The partial depopulation of Florida and the constant threat of attack led to a general southward movement and consolidation of tribal groups, with a realignment of their territories. The Cherokees drove out the Creeks from what is today north west Georgia and north east Alabama in the mid-Eighteenth Century, but failed to push out the Chickasaw from north west Alabama. The Creek confederation maintained dominance in the lower Appalachians and Gulf coastal plain, while Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes became predominant farther west. The Florida Seminole developed over time from remnants of the original Florida tribes and assorted refugees and renegades from farther north. These tribes are often referred to as the "Five Civilized Tribes".

With the gradual consolidation and strengthening of the tribes, coupled with more equalized armament among them, large scale slaving became impractical for the Indians. By the mid-Eighteenth Century, Africa had become the preferred source for slave labor in the southern colonies. The British Royal Africa Company was, by then, emerging on top in a struggle with the French, Spanish, and Dutch for control of the west coast of Africa where similar tribal warfare was providing a cheaper and more readily available supply of slaves.

The "peculiar institution" of slavery, as well as the slaves themselves, became an integral part of the history of the South, both before and after the founding of the United States. But it is not a focus of this study else it become too lengthy and stray from its intended topic. It will have to suffice, for the most part, to note that wherever there is mention of a wealthy elite, white or "red", there were slaves underpinning it. And wherever there were pioneer settlers going into the wilderness of the southern colonies, later southern states, there were usually at least a few African slaves among them; though the vast majority of early pioneers did not have slaves. For the most part, the wealthy slave owners, always a small minority, came in a second wave of settlement into the better agricultural areas where slaves as percentages of the population were significant and their contributions to development enormous.

Wealthy Indians owned many African slaves, and African slaves accompanied their Indian owners on the Trail of Tears and other Indian removals. Slavery was of such importance in the Indian Territory of the west that most tribes were staunch supporters of the South in the Civil War. But we have not yet arrived in our narrative at the era of widespread white settlement and Indian removal and so we must return to an earlier lifetime.

It was deer hides particularly, along with other furs, that ultimately became the major trading commodities for the southern Indians, far surpassing slavery in value. Before there were plastics, vinyl, rubber, fiberglass, even before leather from the vast cattle industries of North and South America and Australia, before any of that there was buckskin from the wilds of North America.

This new, relatively cheap source of leather for shoes, breeches, coats, gloves, hats, book bindings, trunk covers, carriage tops, and a thousand other uses became almost as important to Europe as the steel knives, hatchets, guns, cloth, livestock, sweets, liquor and reliable food supplies to the Indians. Great fortunes were made in the hide and fur trade, and great political power – on both sides.

Despite vigorous and often violent rivalry between the European trading zones and their Indian surrogates, the English consistently provided the Indians with the best and most reasonably priced trade goods in the southeast. Gradually the focus of the trade shifted over to English Charleston and Savannah where hundreds of thousands of deer hides were shipped out each year at the peak of the trade.

Even so vast a region as the Indians possessed eventually became over-hunted however, and the trade began to decline. The decline of deer increased even more the rivalries between the Europeans for the hides and among the tribes for hunting land. A new value, as well as a new burden, was now placed on hunting land. At the same time, the decline of income from the fur and hide trade stimulated the sale of land from the Indians to the colonial governments, and from the colonial governments to settlers, further increasing the conflicts.

So it went, what our military analysts today might call a period of “low intensity conflict”, generation upon generation complete with heroes, villains, triumphs and tragedies largely forgotten today, but without a clear victor. That status quo was about to be shattered forever though.

In the span of a single lifetime, America would emerge totally triumphant. Not the America of the Indian - yet a native America, for it sprang up here. And an aggressive America that wanted desperately to live and to grow. The term "manifest destiny" would not be coined during a three score and ten year life span of someone born around 1751 along the Gulf Coast. But during that lifetime, someone there would see the French, British, Spanish, and eventually the Indians all lose out.

America's destiny to become a great nation would become manifest – obvious for all the world to see and marvel at. And for past generations of Americans to attribute to Divine Grace; as many of us still do.

The old order of things began to crumble irrevocably with Great Britain's decisive defeat of France and Spain in the Seven Years War. Better known here in America as the 'French and Indian War', the Seven Years War was the first world war in all but name, pitting Great Britain and Prussia, the core of the later German Empire, against France, Spain, Austria, Russia and a host of other European states. Prussia, under its formidable king, Frederick the Great, funded by wealthy England, wore down and bled out the military and economic resources of the continental European powers. That left England, the greatest naval power of the day, relatively free to sweep up vast, poorly defended colonial territories of its now hard-pressed imperialist rivals.

In the 1763 Peace of Paris, ending the Seven Years War, the British added to their empire such crown jewels as French Canada and much of India, along with the two relatively insignificant colonies of East Florida and West Florida.

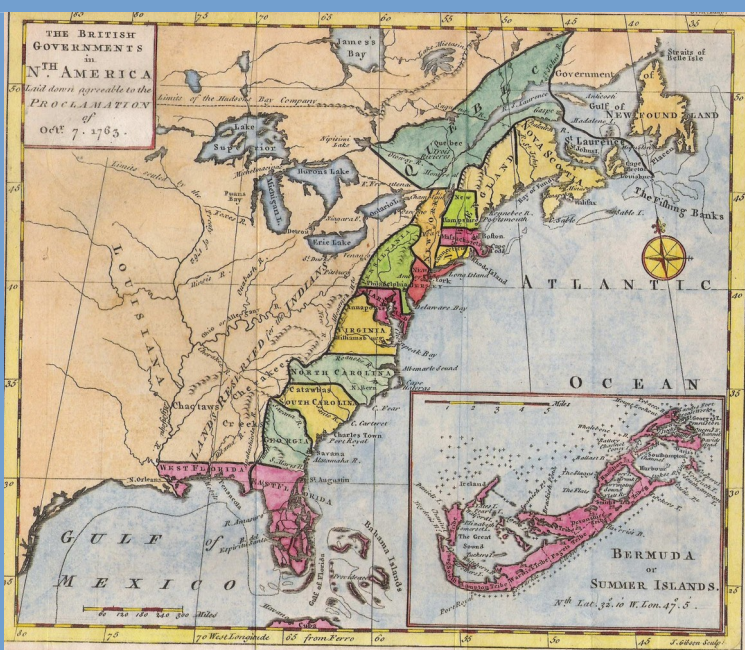
East Florida, seized from Spain, consisted of the Florida peninsula and the patch of Gulf coast south of Georgia over to the Apalachicola River. St. Augustine was the only city of the remotest significance. Formerly French West Florida was a continuation of the coastal strip over to the Mississippi River, with another strip of settlement up the east side of the River. It boasted the renegade and pirate infested backwater towns of Natchez, Baton Rouge, Mobile, and Pensacola.

New Orleans and French Louisiana were ceded to Spain, thus ending the great French empire in North America that had spread down the Mississippi River from the Great Lakes all the way to the Gulf. England considered the Spanish safer than the French to control the main inland waterway of North America. Everyone realized there would be other wars to plan ahead for, there always had been.



The British set the boundaries of the colonies at the Mississippi River, cut down Louisiana to west of the River and added it to Spanish territory. That would come into some dispute a little later with the rise of France under Napoleon. Canada, East Florida, and West Florida are shown on this map as British.

Along with England's other re-orderings of the continent, King George III's Royal Proclamation of 1763 declared a vast area west of the Appalachian Mountains to be reserved for the Indians and off limits for white settlement.



This map shows the Royal Proclamation line of 1763. The four southern colonies theoretically extended to the Mississippi, but settlement was limited to the east side of the Appalachian/Allegheny Mountain chain on all the colonies.

The settlement boundary line was supposedly for the protection of the Indians (and the powerful fur trading interests), but England was already beginning to regard her American colonies with some suspicion. That might have seemed a strange precaution at first glance, but even as early as 1751 the very astute Benjamin Franklin was writing about a new phenomenon observed in the colonies.

The histories of the Floridas and of the entire United States derived in large part from this now little remembered or understood phenomenon – the explosive population growth of Anglo-America that was already spilling over into the Indian Reserve; already creating large numbers of "outlaws and rebels". To add insult to injury, the colonists were taxed to support British troops manning the line and routing out settlers already established beyond it, although the frontier was far too vast even for Great Britain to effectively control.

"*In countries full settled...*", Franklin noted in his treatise, ***Observation Concerning the Increase of Mankind***, "*all lands being occupied and improved to the height; those who cannot get land must labor for others that have it; when laborers are plenty, their wages will be low; by low wages a family is supported with difficulty; this difficulty deters many from marriage, who therefore continue servants and single...*". In those days, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness depended upon the acquisition of a little land. God's first command to man, "*Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it...*" required the acquisition of land. Without it was to labor and die a servant, alone and unremembered. Here in America, land was to be had, and Americans married and had families – large families, as the children survived, despite the hardships, at a much higher rate than in the old world. Americans counted those as blessings of God Almighty.

The term 'land hungry' is used today as a condemnation of our pioneer settlers, but the desire for a little piece of land to water with their sweat and blood was the foundation of the great nation we have enjoyed for so long. To acquire land was to live in the full sense, and was worth any risk and any sacrifice.

But in the way of acquiring land stood Spanish claims, French claims, then mandates of a British empire ruled by an aristocracy that feared the expanding population of rugged, self-confident 'commoners'. The Indians, too, stood in the way of Americans acquiring land.

Franklin continued: "*America is chiefly occupied by Indians, who subsist mostly on hunting. But as the hunter, of all men, requires the greatest quantity of land from whence to draw his subsistence (the husbandman subsisting on much less, the gardener on still less, and the manufacturer requiring least of all), the Europeans found America as fully settled as it could well be by hunters...*".

In this light, it was not the Indians themselves who posed the obstacle, for they were a tiny population in an immense land, but the Indian's inefficient hunter/gatherer economy. If this distinction between Indian and Indian culture was lost on most white settlers, it was not lost on governments, nor was it lost upon the Indians themselves. Underlying and intensifying the struggles over the next few decades between the European powers, the Americans, and the Indians was a literal 'culture war' among the Indians – could they adopt the White Man's ways, settle down to agrarian life and give up their vast hunting preserves to white settlement - or not? These questions, and the questions whites were asking themselves, were soon to be answered in blood.

America began breaking the ties that bound her.

In little over a decade after the Peace of Paris and the Florida cessions, the American Revolution was underway. There were many causes of the Revolution, several of the main ones stipulated in the Declaration of Independence, but they revolve around two general points – King George III was growing ever more despotic in nature and his colonial government was adding greed and corruption to that growing despotism; and the American colonies were simply growing too big, too different from England, and entirely too self sufficient to accept the old ways of governance.

Conditions on the American frontier, especially the southern frontier, in the years leading up to the Revolution are not as well known as the events taking place in New England, but they were just as significant for our nation. On the northwestern frontier, Indians that had been allied with the French continued to make war on English settlers, who found little sympathy or help from the colonial governments. Rising taxes to pay the Seven Years War debt and support the marginal defense of the frontier rankled Americans across the board. Many Americans saw that war as none of their doing and, as noted above, the "defense" as of little benefit and designed as much to hem in the settlers as to protect them.

The situation of the southern frontier was at least complex as in the north, and probably more so, but recounting a few small streams of history will have to suffice to represent far wider developments on the southern frontier. The southern colonies of Virginia, North Carolina, and to lesser extents South Carolina and Georgia, offered more opportunities in those years for what was already becoming the American Dream, albeit on their frontiers. By that time in American development, the lands closest to the coast, called the 'Tidewater' in Virginia, were well settled and dominated by a planter aristocracy.

Those who couldn't make a place for themselves in the more settled lands sought their place in the sun on the frontiers, which kept shifting ever westward in a great tide of native born Americans and new arrivals from England, Scotland, Ireland, and the German states. Ironically, it was the British hiring of conscripted troops from rulers of the smaller German states (Germany did not become a unified nation until the mid-Nineteenth Century) especially Hesse-Cassel, that introduced America to many future German settlers – and future American patriots.

The waves of settlers were soon lapping up against the eastern slopes of the Appalachian Mountains, and even spilling over into the rich, forbidden valleys beyond. Many came as 'squatters' on the vast tracts of wilderness owned by rich Tidewater planters and English aristocrats. They came hoping to hold on long enough to be able to buy the land they were clearing and cultivating.

Let's take a moment to get a sense of their lives.

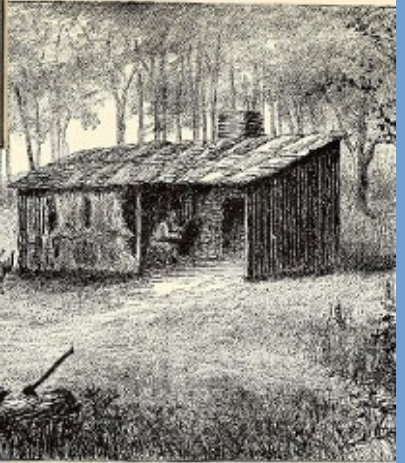


The settlement of the eastern US has long been romanticized, painted in pastels both in the literal and in the figurative sense – as in this portrayal of Daniel Boone leading a group of settlers through the Cumberland Gap by George Caleb Bingham.

This painting of a pioneer's home in the White Mountains portrays the beauty, and the solitude, of frontier life. Such a life had its attractions, chiefly in the opportunity to live freely and make of yourself what you could.



But life on the frontier was also a hard life, full of work, privation, and constant danger. These lithographs from 'old fashioned' history books of the 19th and early 20th Centuries contribute to the picture also.



Perhaps even these are romanticized for we can't truly understand the hardship, fear, and want they knew as everyday life. We do have more than artist's conceptions to rely upon however.

One of the characters any history of the deep south must discover is Sam Dale, once a revered pioneer, Indian fighter, trail scout, patriot. His story is woven throughout the history of this period, and though extraordinary in his personal exploits, his is not an uncommon story in its general nature. There is a famous biography of Dale, purported to be based upon lengthy interviews, and told in the first person, though Dale was long dead when published over a century and a half ago. It too, did not escape a bit of...oh, idealization, hero worship perhaps, and an elevated style typical of the “Romantic Era” that I doubt a humble frontiersman would use. Nevertheless, I believe it can give us a feel for life on the frontier, mixed with the pride most Americans once felt about their frontier heritage.

I will begin where Dale’s story begins, and visit it again as our trail crosses his from time to time farther on along.

I am of Scottish extraction. My father and mother were natives of Pennsylvania, in the vicinity of Carlisle, but soon after their marriage removed to Rockbridge County, Virginia, where I was born. In the latter part of 1775 they moved to the forks of Clinch River, Washington County, and purchased a piece of land, where, uniting with a few neighbors, we built a stockade called Glade Hollow Fort, for protection against the incursions of the Western Indians. Here the women and children remained, each family occupying separate cabins, while the men tilled their corn fields, keeping their guns at hand and scouts constantly on the look-out.

It was a wild precarious life, often interrupted by ambuscade and massacre, but no one of that hardy frontier race was ever known to return to the settlements. On the contrary, they pressed forward from river to river, crossing new ranges of mountains, penetrating new wildernesses, marking their march with blood, encountering privation and danger at every step, but never dreaming of retreat. Even the women and children became inured to peril, and cheerfully moved forward in this daring exodus to the West.

...

Thus passed the days of my youth. Inured to every hardship, living on the coarsest of food, earning our bread with our rifles cocked and primed, often witnessing the ruin of homesteads and the murder of families, my own life constantly in jeopardy, yet ever hopeful, ever relying on Providence, ever conscious of my duty to my fellow men, never counting a personal risk for others as a merit, but only a duty, and, in spite of privation and danger, loving the wilderness to the last.

...it is only in the boundless seas, perhaps, or in the deep solitude of mountain and valley, that the untutored eye can “look through nature up to nature’s God.”

Life and Times Of Gen. Sam Dale, Mississippi Partisan
J. F. Claiborne, NY 1860

The last selection seems to me more of an editorial note than a comment I would expect from Dale, especially the quote from Alexander Pope’s *An Essay on Man*. That does not make it any less true of Dale’s experience however. And to add an editorial note of my own – near the end of his life, his health wracked by old wounds and a lifetime of hardships and exertions past normal human endurance, Dale was awarded an honorary commission as Brigadier General, with half pay, by a grateful state of Alabama for his service to the old Mississippi Territory.

And so, carried by men and women of indomitable spirits, the frontier advanced; but the hard won success of the frontier people brought unwanted attention from the east. As the early westward immigrants cleared the land and built roads and communities, the land owners back east and in England began selling the land, and at inflated prices because of the improvements. Many early settlers were forced to move on, sometimes repeatedly. Some wary, or just worn out squatters settled on the ruggedest, most remote lands knowing they would be of little interest to the wealthy. There their descendants live to this day, among the poorest communities in America.

Such high-handed treatment by absentee landlords did not sit well with the new spirit forming on the frontier – a spirit that recognized a man's worth by his character not by his birth, and recognized property earned by courage, labor and sacrifice, not royal charter. It was especially galling to those driven penniless to our shores in the "Great Clearing" as the Highland Scots' homeland was confiscated by the English aristocracy in retribution for their loyal support of the losing side in the English Civil War. But it did force an expansion of the frontier, often led by families of hardy Scot heritage like the Boones, Crocketts, and Dales.

Even those who were able to buy land on the eastern slopes still suffered from the advance of Colonial authority. Among other inequities, property taxes were as high on frontier subsistence farmers' stony slopes studded with tree stumps as they were on the lush tobacco fields of the Tidewater. It was often impossible for the frontier farmers to both survive, and pay their taxes. Some local officials developed a cruel, but very profitable, practice of evicting small farmers who fell behind in their taxes and reselling their farms to newcomers.

As all political power resided in the east, there was precious little relief to be expected from the colonial governments. All protest was met harshly, especially by North Carolina's notoriously corrupt and dictatorial Governor Tryon, a British army officer who owed his position to the political power of his wife's family. Those evicted had little choice but to become squatters themselves and move on in hope they could survive long enough to get established farther west.

Also to be reckoned with as a major influence on America's future was the growing revolt against the established state churches. Most of the colonies had their particular "established", or official state churches – Congregational (the New England Puritans' church), Presbyterian, and Anglican. Dissent from the established state churches, even violent dissent, was nothing new in America but the First Great Awakening in the decades just prior to the Revolution was giving religious dissent new momentum, especially on the American frontier.

Thomas Jefferson noted that, while the majority of Virginians were dissenters from the Church of England (Anglicans), the economic, political, and civil authority resided with the loyal Anglican Tidewater aristocracy; the same was true of the other southern states as well.

The idea of a spiritual “awakening” developed during and partly because of the Wars of the Reformation in areas that would later become part of the German Empire. Those Christians, principally Lutherans, experiencing spiritual awakening became known as 'Pietists'. Most Pietists remained in their churches, but significant numbers left to found new denominations like the Moravian Brotherhood. Over time, the admirable faith, character and good works of the Pietists caught the attention of Christians in England and an “Awakening” movement began there and spread to America even as the old New England Puritans' religious fire was growing cold.

The “Great Awakening” was a call for personal relationship with God, not just a formal connection to an institutional church. The proponents held that God brought “new light” into the hearts of men who sought Him. The “New Lights” became conscious of standing under the judgment of God and in need of the leadership of the Holy Spirit; and they began to question the leadership of the established churches. The “Old Lights” of the established churches, however, ridiculed the 'awakening' experience and declared that Church membership and sacraments were the only necessary, and indeed, only possible relationship with God.

Such an arm's length relationship with God suited the well fed and protected Tidewater aristocracy, and the Anglican Church gave them just what they wanted in religious cover. They did not appreciate the underclass preaching repentance to them. But those who set out into the wilderness, far from the Church and its ministry, placed themselves directly in God's hands. That faith in the nearness of God made the conquest of the frontier possible; they went hand in hand. And the new faith, really a return to the faith of the early church, flourished on the frontier, but it was continually in conflict with colonial authority wherever they met.

All denominations were affected by the schism and developed “New Light” congregations, but it was the Presbyterian, the newly formed Methodist (originating as a reform movement in the Church of England), and the formerly insignificant Baptist denominations that dove most enthusiastically into the Great Awakening – and suffered the most persecution at the hands of colonial authority. They were forced to pay taxes to support established churches that they did not respect, and even considered their enemy. Their preachers were denied licenses to preach and arrested, whipped and imprisoned for courageously preaching the Awakening Gospel to their people anyway. Baptist parents were arrested, fined, and even whipped and imprisoned for refusing to have their infants 'baptized' by the state church.

The most zealous persecutor of the “New Light” churches was North Carolina's Gov. Tryon, as well as the most openly corrupt and harsh in his administration of British colonial rule. It was in North Carolina that we see most clearly the beginnings of revolution on the southern frontier.

After years of suffering injustices and repression, the men of the North Carolina frontier, especially men of the small churches of the Sandy Creek Baptist Association, began organizing into militias calling themselves “Regulators”. Their initial goal was to forcefully claim their rights as British citizens, not rebellion against the British Crown. Rejection of their demands and attempts to suppress them, however, led to sporadic acts of lawlessness including attacks on local officials, courts, and even Anglican churches.

Most historians mark the end of the Regulator movement as the Battle of Little Alamance Creek in 1771, but that was more a turning point in Americans' search for freedom. After many failed attempts to come to terms with Gov. Tryon, the poorly armed, trained, and led Regulator militia came to the crossing they had never really expected – meeting Gov. Tryon's much smaller but well equipped and trained professional militia in battle. The Regulators were routed, the leaders arrested and executed, and Tryon's militia swept through their home lands burning and pillaging.

Many of the Regulators, their wives and families packed up and joined the stream of unsettled Americans moving “overmountain” into the lands forbidden them by King George. But there they began once again to thrive, and to spread west and south up to the borders of the land we first set out to study – the deep south.

Soon after Alamance Creek, the American Revolution was in full bloom. We will consider only a few scenes of the Revolutionary War, but one has to be a brief footnote to the Battle of Little Alamance Creek. The year 1780 began with the American Revolutionary forces defeated and beleaguered up and down the Atlantic coast, and a powerful army of British loyalists, 'Tories' known as “Ferguson's Rangers”, recruited mostly from New York and New Jersey was spreading destruction down into the southern frontier.

A small Patriot militia force escaped to regroup by crossing the forbidden mountains. Major Ferguson, commander of the Tory militia, sent a warning to the scattered communities across the mountains that if they helped the rebels, he would lead his army into their territory and burn them out.

The upshot of that threat was a historic gathering of “overmountain” militia men, depicted below, and a two week trek back over to the east side of the Appalachians to join up with other frontier patriot militias and destroy Ferguson's Tory Army in the Battle of King's Mountain.



The “overmountain” men couldn't tarry long to bask in their victory however. Leaving their homes and crossing the mountains had been a desperate gamble. Though a hard won peace had been holding between the Cherokee and the white settlers, there was danger afoot all across the frontier. Warning reached them from Nancy Ward that British agents and Tories were arming Cherokee braves and inciting them to attack the frontier settlers with assurances that the men who had crossed the mountains to fight the British would never come back.

Mrs. Ward, her English name, was a half Cherokee and perhaps the most prominent woman in Cherokee society. She had saved a wounded captive, Mrs. Lydia Russell Bean, from burning at the stake and nursed her back to health. Mrs. Bean, a settler on the Watauga River, taught Ward the skills of weaving cloth on a loom and sewing clothing. More importantly, she taught Ward how to raise domesticated livestock and make dairy products. Through Ward, those skills began to revolutionize Cherokee society. Ward became friendly to the Americans and promoted peace as much as possible. She was wise enough to doubt the British assurances that white settlement could be stopped, and knew that a massacre would be avenged.

Immediately upon receiving the warning, an advance company of the hardiest “overmountain” men under John Sevier, and Georgia Riflemen under Col. Elijah Clarke hustled back across the mountains. They quickly fell upon a large war party gathering to massacre the defenseless families of the missing militia men. It didn't take long for the belligerent warriors to realize their dream of wiping out the white settlers was dead; sadly, it was a lesson that cost the tribe dearly.

The “overmountain” men had now won two important victories, though they perhaps couldn't see the first so clearly at the time. Their victory at King's Mountain helped turn around the Americans' fortunes in the war – it took off the field a significant part of the British forces operating in the south, and it seriously dampened the British loyalists' enthusiasm to join the military effort against their fellow countrymen.

The Revolutionary War dragged on a few more years, but our victory was never again so forlorn a hope, and eventually the thirteen British colonies became the first thirteen United States of America. The fourteenth and fifteenth British colonies didn't join in the rebellion, however. John Hancock and Sam Adams were hanged in effigy in St. Augustine and Pensacola.

The Spanish population had largely pulled out of East Florida after the British takeover and it was being filled with recent British immigrants. Then, as war raged in the north, many Tories fled south into Florida and the Gulf coast.

With booming trade to support the British war effort, and English privateers preying on American shipping, it was pretty much peace, sunshine and prosperity in St. Augustine in those days. That was especially true for the firm of Panton and Leslie, founded in St. Augustine by a small group of Tory refugees. It was to grow into a world trading powerhouse in the years after the Revolution.

Panton and his associates had been successful merchants and fur traders in the Carolinas and Georgia until the revolution forced them to flee and forfeit their properties. They, however, retained their contacts among the European manufacturers, and among the Indians, most of whom had supported the British. In short order, the hundreds of thousands of deer hides that had been shipped out of Charlotte, Charleston, and Savanna were being shipped out of St. Augustine, Pensacola and other Gulf ports where the company set up branches.

Along the Georgia border, though, things were pretty rough. A Tory leader, Thomas Brown (formerly associated with Ferguson's Rangers), was run out of Georgia by patriots, after being tarred, feathered, and scalped (scalping of live victims was apparently a common occurrence in those times, as medical treatises had prescribed treatments for it). Whether Brown merited that treatment or not, his survival proved very detrimental to those same Georgia patriots.

Brown retreated across the St. Mary's River into East Florida and, gathering together a company of Tories and Indians, led guerrilla raids back into Georgia. He gained a reputation as particularly bloody even in an area that was soon awash with guerrilla bands operating from both sides of the border - a scourge that continued for decades. Brown hotly denied any actions not in accord with the usual military exigencies of the day, and refused to take responsibility for unauthorized actions of his followers. Whatever the real nature of his activities were, he was held in high esteem by the British in East Florida.

West Florida too, had a very unpleasant time of it during the Revolutionary War. Early on, some British did settle in West Florida, mostly taking over the Indian trade from the French and Spanish. During the Revolution, large numbers of British loyalists moved across the wilderness and Indian territories to the settlements along the Mississippi River, but the French did not desert their homes, and West Florida was not Anglicized like East Florida.



Pensacola was the hub of British activity in West Florida, the hub of the Indian trade, and the hub of the scalp trade – guns and powder for the scalps of American settlers, a scheme the English had developed to discourage American settlement outside

the borders of the thirteen colonies. Thomas Brown was made Britain's agent for the Creek nation, a notable commentary on their expectations of their Indian allies. Americans on the frontier were not forgiving of the scalp trade – to the English or the Indians.

Although far from the thirteen embattled colonies, the Mississippi River came into play in the Revolutionary War, ironically as the savior of the north west frontier – and that emphasized the importance of the River both to the US and the British.

As the east bank of the lower Mississippi was part of West Florida, I'll include a little of that history here.

In the lead up to the official beginning of the Revolutionary War, July 4, 1776, the northwest frontier was ablaze with Indian and British Tory attacks. It has been said that America was built by 'God, guts, and guns', and that is true, especially the former. But while there was plenty of guts on the northwest frontier of the day, there was a desperate shortage of gunpowder.

All the producers were in the east, and it had to packed over the mountains to the scattered settlements of the frontier by horseback on wilderness trails beset by Indian war parties. That made gunpowder scarce and expensive in the first place, and now with the war gutting the fur trade, cash was nearly nonexistent on the frontier. Our pioneer forefathers were not easily defeated however.

Patriots living in New Orleans, then the capitol of Spanish Louisiana, notably the wealthy merchant Oliver Pollock acting as official agent of the US Navy, secretly arranged for the Spanish to supply gun powder to the Americans from New Orleans. Though a journey to New Orleans and back by river was long and arduous, not to mention dangerous, it was the only practical way to supply the frontier, and men were willing to meet the challenge.

Captain George Gibson, and Lt. William Linn and their small company of adventurous frontiersmen, nicknamed "Gibson's Lambs", had already won distinction in their service to the American cause even before the Declaration of Independence. They were bold enough to undertake this mission also. Gibson had been a seaman, merchant, and fur trader; Linn a frontier farmer and Indian scout – but now were solidly in the fight for freedom.

Just a few days after July 4th, 1776, they set out from Ft. Pitt down the Ohio River bound for New Orleans disguised as an ordinary trading venture. Ft. Pitt, now Pittsburgh, was a far outpost on the northwest frontier – a place of comparative safety for settlers in times of danger, the supply and staging area for militia defense of the frontier, and a magnet for attack.

The Ohio River was under close watch by the Shawnees and other hostile tribes, and the lower Mississippi was guarded by the British and Tories. But, miraculously, Gibson's party made it safely to New Orleans. And after much intrigue with Spanish officials and British spies, they slipped out with twelve thousand pounds of Spanish gun powder. About a quarter of that went to Philadelphia by ship, packed in crates with false labels. Capt. Gibson accompanied this shipment, a very dangerous mission if the British blockade had discovered it.

Lt. Linn and the crew headed up river with the rest where they, even more miraculously, arrived safely in American territory after seven grueling months of sailing, rowing, poling, and dragging their little flotilla against the stream of the mighty Mississippi and Ohio Rivers.



This boat, on the Mohawk River, was probably similar to those Lt. Linn's party used on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers to return upriver to their awaiting comrades and families.

It may well be that Gibson and Linn's expedition saved the North west frontier, and certainly made an immense contribution to our country. Neither lived to see America grow and blossom however. Linn was ambushed and killed by Indians only a few years later. Gibson was killed in the once infamous, but now largely unremembered debacle "St. Clair's Defeat", part of the Indian Wars that continued unabated after the peace treaty with Great Britain, as we will see.

With the success of Gibson's venture, the American government took an interest in the Mississippi River. A proposal was raised in the Congress for a full scale invasion of West Florida via the Mississippi to open up easier access to New Orleans.

That idea was shelved because of lack of money and manpower. The Commerce Committee however, secretly authorized a raid down the Mississippi which proved to be a near disaster for the struggling nation.

James Willing, a young man with good family connections but a poor track record of success, was commissioned a Captain in the Continental Navy and assigned the inauspiciously named gun boat, *USS Rattletrap* with its small crew. The *Rattletrap* also made it down the Ohio and into the Mississippi River without incident. He found the Tory towns and riverside plantations totally unprepared for hostilities.

Willing had only recently abandoned a failed business venture in Natchez, and seemed to place much of the blame for his failure on being an outspoken American patriot in heavily Tory country. He intended to make up for that failure now by plundering his way down to New Orleans. On his way down river, he picked up a large crew of what can best be described as ‘freebooters’ to support his activities and he is reported to have stripped the east bank clean. Miraculously though, no one was killed. That seems to be in large part due to his bluff that he was the vanguard of a full scale invasion and resistance to him would be harshly dealt with later.

Willing’s expedition reached New Orleans and sold the loot, including many slaves and a captured British ship, but idled around town eating up the profits until Pollock had Willing relieved of his command. By that time, the outraged Tories and British authorities realized there was no invasion and fairly well blockaded the River to American traffic. Lt. Robert George took the crew back home overland. Willing took passage by ship back to Philadelphia but was caught by the British and held for several years until exchanged for a British officer.

Fortunately for the US, the Mississippi River didn’t stay closed for very long. After determining that the Americans were serious in their rebellion, the French joined in against their old rival the British.

Among other benefits to the Americans of the French alliance, the British Navy was occupied in defending Jamaica and other far flung dominions leaving the Gulf Coast largely unprotected.

When Spain followed France into the new war with England, the Governor of Louisiana, Bernardo Galvez, led a military expedition up the Mississippi River. Coming across as a liberator, he attracted a diverse following of supporters. French settlers flocked to Galvez's banner. Many were Acadians who had been evicted from Nova Scotia and Acadia by the British after the Seven Years War and all resented British rule. German farmers joined in, and there were Anglo-American patriots, many Indians, and runaway slaves hoping for a better deal from the Spanish.

The twenty seven year old Galvez, who seemed to be a throwback to the Conquistadors of old, took Baton Rouge and Natchez, pretty well securing the lower Mississippi from British hands. Then he returned to New Orleans and set sail to capture Mobile. With the looming threat to Pensacola, their chief trading outlet, a force of 1500 Creek warriors went to defend it. But when no attack materialized, they drifted away. Later, marshaling a large land and naval force, Galvez took Pensacola, effectively ending British control of West Florida - at least in the settled areas of the colony.

As the War of the Revolution ground down and American independence became reality, England found West Florida in Spanish hands and East Florida isolated and vulnerable. At the peace treaty table in Paris, over strong American objections, the big powers awarded both Floridas to Spain. Despite their help in cutting down British power, none of the monarchical European powers had any love for the revolutionary new Republic. But none seemed able to stop our growth.

Spain made many demands upon its new possessions, but was not in a position to enforce them. She ordered all British settlers to convert to Catholicism within one year or depart. Some effort was made to enforce that edict in the coastal towns, but in the back country and up the Mississippi River Spain had virtually no presence and made little effort to enforce the edict.

Indeed, the local Spanish authorities welcomed displaced Tory settlers along the Mississippi. Natchez, especially, was a popular destination. Since hundreds of French settlers were massacred or carried off into slavery by Indians in 1729, France had had little to do with the place and it had long since become Anglicized, existing pretty much as an independent and notoriously unruly and violent city-state. That changed little under the Spanish.

Panton and Leslie made the transition easily, and with the compliance of the Spanish Governor, continued to grow and prosper. British government agents and military personnel continued to operate freely among the Indians. They wanted to maintain the Indians as a bulwark against the growth of the U.S. And, at least to hear the Brits tell it, they wanted to be certain the Indians would be able to defend themselves against encroachment of the Americans. Nothing could prevent that however, and fleeing British loyalists were soon followed by American expansionists.

The old enemies. Tories and Patriots, found a common cause in opposition to exorbitant Spanish import and export duties at New Orleans and Mobile (12.5% each way, so a farmer bringing produce down river to sell and bought goods back up river paid 25% tax). Spain was also unable, or unwilling, to enforce order either among the white settlers or the Indians.

Despite English opposition, the floodgates of American expansion had opened wide and wherever American settlers went, the stars and stripes flag was soon to follow.

America Becomes US.

This is an early map of the United States and the surrounding British and Spanish territories. The Peace of Paris only temporarily settled matters between the British, Spanish, French, and Americans; it did nothing to settle matters with the Indians.

The territorial claims of the European powers meant little to “land hungry” settlers; the claims were, after all, little more than spheres of influence for trade with the Indians, not settled land. The claims of the Indians, too, were held in little regard by the average white settler for reasons that ranged from the simple desperate need to survive, to bad blood built up over generations of war, to complex reflections on philosophy and religion.

The more reflective observers, especially among the Virginia and New England elites, pondered theories of ownership. The Enlightenment, chiefly the opening up of the Bible to the common man, had brought about new ways of thinking about ownership of property. It had long been held, even taught by the Church of the Middle Ages, that the title deed to all creation was given individually to Adam and his absolute title passed down to emperors and kings – land was theirs to distribute as they saw fit. That didn't seem to square with the Bible however.

One of the first and clearest expositions of this new theory of ownership, one that offered hope to the common man, was delivered in a sermon to Gov. John Winthrop and his party of Puritans just before they set sail to found the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the year 1630. The preacher was the Rev. John Cotton who, like the others, was a dissenter from the Church of England and would soon be forced to flee for American shores himself. In America, he would found a line of famous preachers, including early America's most influential preacher, his grandson Cotton Mather.

This is a brief excerpt from Rev. Cotton's detailed exegesis of the Biblical view of land ownership (in my own slightly modernized English, and with scripture quotations rendered into the King James Version).

...it is a principle in Nature, that in a vacant soil, he that taketh possession of it and bestoweth culture and husbandry upon it, his Right it is. And the ground of this is from the grand Charter given to Adam and his posterity in Paradise, Gn. 1:28: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it". If therefore any sons of Adam come and find a place empty, he hath liberty to come, and fill, and subdue the earth there. This Charter was renewed to Noah, Gen. 9:1: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth". So that it is free from the common Grant, for any to take possession of vacant countries. Indeed, no nation is to drive out another without special Commission from heaven, such as the Israelites had, unless the Natives do unjustly wrong them, and will not recompense the wrongs in a peaceful way; and then they may right themselves by lawful war, and subdue the country to themselves.

This placing of people in this or that country, is from God's sovereignty over all the earth, and the inhabitants thereof: as in Psalms 24:1: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof".

This was the seed of hope for white settlers and of doom for Indians who, in a land that now easily supports over three hundred million souls, continually tried to drive out the dozens, then hundreds, then thousands of European settlers who came here to be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it.

It is a testimony of the sovereign will of God that the Indians were unable to drive them out, and were in a very few generations vastly outnumbered by the Europeans; and that largely from the astonishingly rapid increase of descendants of the early white settlers rather than a rapid influx from Europe which began later, after America had become a great nation.

John Locke, the English Enlightenment philosopher, formalized the new philosophy of ownership that was most influential with America's Founding Fathers. According to Locke, God had given the creation to man in common, but in a “state of nature” - that is, in a wild and undeveloped state. Men, he asserted, had a God given “natural right” to acquire property existing in a state of nature.

One acquired ownership of property by putting labor into it - 'sweat equity' purchased property from nature's common endowment. That principle became enshrined in American law, most notably in the Homestead Act of 1862, but it existed in men's minds long before it became written law.

President Andrew Jackson very forcefully made that point in his first Address to Congress, what we would call his first State of the Union Address in 1829, in arguing for his Indian Removal Act, signed into law the next year. He called it "*visionary*", or we may say 'a pipe dream', that Indian claims be allowed on tracts of country on which they have “*neither dwelt nor made improvements, merely because they have seen them from the mountain or passed them in the chase.*”

The main tribes of the Southeast – Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, and Chickasaw – claimed tens of millions of acres each, amounting to thousands of acres for every man, woman and child in the tribes.

To the landless, those seemingly limitless tracts where tribal hunters might not even have set foot for years much less worked was as wicked as it was wasteful. Hunting over the land didn't seem to qualify as wresting it from the 'state of nature' – those vast Indian territories, for the most part, remained in the 'state of nature' and were thus fair game for those willing to clear and work it.

There was bitterness among the poorer settlers even over the claims of so much by so few; it seemed to the landless that it was the Indians who were the “land hungry”. It seemed too much like the system in the old world where a few families, the 'nobility', owned most all the land, and the poor, landless people were left to be serfs, or if not needed by the landed gentry, to be turned out to starve, or immigrate. But the would-be settlers were in the New World now, and new ways were developing, perhaps for the first time in human history, from the people.

The “land hungry settlers” and “squatters”, of necessity, went out ahead of safety and comfort, like Israel into the Promised Land. They were the explorers, the first to break trails, the first to clear land, the first to face attack, the first to volunteer for the militias to protect the growing communities, and the first to move on when law and land surveys finally arrived.

It was about this time, early in the life of the United States, that Sam Dale ‘came of age’. In 1792, both his parents died and he was left head of the family. Dale reacted as most of the frontier people to the blows that came their way, or else the frontier would have died.

Never before, certainly never since, though I have breasted many difficulties and endured many sorrows, has the iron ever entered so deeply into my heart. Never have I felt so crushed and overpowered by the feeling of helplessness and isolation. I was under twenty years of age; no foot of earth could be called our own; we were burdened with debt; no kindred blood or opulent friends to offer us sympathy or aid; eight brothers and sisters, all younger than myself, and one an

infant, looking to me for bread and the wilderness around our lonely cabin swarming with enemies.

In this state of mind, on the night after we had laid father by our poor mother's side, when my little brothers and sisters had sobbed themselves to sleep, I went to their graves and prayed.

...I came back tearful and sad, but a hopeful and resolute man. I felt the weight of responsibility upon me, that I must be both father and mother to those orphaned little ones. I had faith in Providence and in myself, and when they awoke I met them with a smile, and with kind words and a cheerful spirit.

We all went resolutely to work according to our strength, and God blessed our labors.

The Dale family worked the land, and made it pay; or as Sam Dale put it “God blessed our labors”. Many, if not most Americans of the frontier lived and labored in the hope, the expectation, that Almighty God would be with them and bless their labors. Here we bump up against the most unifying argument against Indian claims. The Bible was the basis of almost every American's world view. That world view, formed powerfully by the Old Testament, saw America as a new Israel and the promises given to Israel applicable to God's people in that day. From the Pilgrim landing through the Revolution, America's leaders had been covenanting with The Almighty to be a people set apart for Him, to be established in a land reserved for them.

That is, in the northern and middle colonies that were founded by seekers of religious freedom. The southern colonies had been founded for strictly economic purposes. That diversity of purpose was to put near fatal strains on the young America. Still, the general consensus among the common people who went out into the wilderness in those early years was much the same. And despite the unequal piety of the colonies it was beginning to become quite clear that the Almighty was blessing their endeavors, and the Americans reciprocated with thanksgiving and worship, as well as carrying out that first command - “*Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it*”.

Deuteronomy 28 seemed written especially with America in mind – thirteen verses of blessings concluding with:

11. And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee.

12. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasures, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend to many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

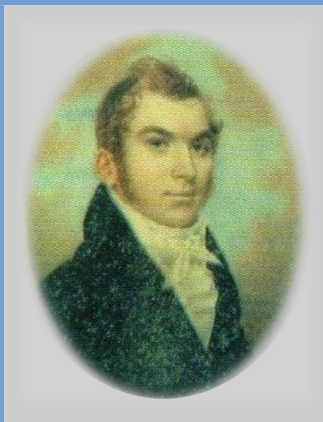
13. And the Lord shall make thee head, and not the tail: and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them.

Thirteen verses of blessings which we claimed for our own – then comes a dire warning and fifty-eight verses of curses for following after other gods, but that is not the subject of this history. John Winthrop set before his little band of Puritan settlers the famous charge “*Consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us; so that if we shall deal falsely with our god in this work we have undertaken and so cause him to withdraw his present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword through the world*” so terrible will be the curse upon us.

All who knew the Old Testament knew it was the lot of the Canaanites to be driven out by Israel, even as the Indians were being driven westward by American expansion. And when we read the sins of the Canaanites – killing of their unwanted children, divination, witchcraft, consulting spirits (Dt. 18:10,11), - we see clear parallels in the Indian culture and religion. The real dangers to the Indians of the practice of consulting with spirits became apparent before the Floridas came finally into America, as we shall see shortly.

America was not without compassion however. Washington, Jefferson, and other founding fathers envisioned their new country as a land of small farmers. They saw a place for the Indians in that land if only they would take to farming. Such an outcome would be both the humane solution and a practical one, opening up vast new areas for settlement – for there was very little land taken for white settlement that was not acquired by treaty, even if settlement began prior to the treaty. Washington and his closest associates developed a “Plan of Civilization” to pursue that outcome – a plan based in large part upon one man. Alexander McGillivray had made a state visit to New York to meet President Washington, and had so impressed the Americans that the practicality of the “Civilization” scheme seemed obvious.

Events of the late 18th century had left a particular group of trans-Appalachian and north Florida resident's, former British loyalists, in a precarious position. Alexander McGillivray epitomized those people. Sometimes compared to the notoriously treacherous French statesman Talleyrand and described as “unsurpassed in intrigue” he held at one time or another (or simultaneously) the rank of British Colonel, American General, Spanish Superintendent General and “Emperor of the Creeks and Seminoles”.



Such contradictions came naturally, if not easily, to McGillivray (left), the son of a Scottish fur trading baron and a half French, Creek Indian princess, Sehoj Marchand.

In many regards he was simply another wealthy Anglo-American planter, but he was also a powerful Creek chieftain (as the Creeks reckoned lineage through the maternal side - and Sehoj was a member of the ruling Wind Clan). The Creeks were a very powerful tribe in those days; too powerful to be ignored by the Europeans, and their lands stood between Georgia and the Mississippi, and between the Tennessee Valley settlements and the Gulf of Mexico.

McGilivray's friendship was eagerly sought, and handsomely paid for by the US Treasury, in part to compensate him for the seizure of his father's estates in Georgia during the Revolutionary War.

Generations of intermarriage with Europeans had created a people dominated by wealthy bi-racial, bi-cultural families with such names as McGilivray, McIntosh, McQueen, Weatherford, Marchand, Durand. But outside the ruling elites, much of the Creek nation clung to the old ways. Add to those cultural stresses the political machinations of England, France, Spain and the Americans and one can understand why McGilivray said in exasperation “*no wonder the Indians are distracted, when they are tampered with on every side.*” McGilivray himself felt he was “*a keeper of Bedlam, and nearly fit for an inhabitant*”. No small portion of the tampering was the Virginia Presidents' well meaning experiment to solve the 'Indian Problem'.

McGilivray had come to New York City, then the US capitol, to protest a treaty between Georgia and some of the Creek chieftains giving over a large portion of their land. His complaint was that the chieftains involved didn't have the authority to speak for the tribe – a common problem in treaties with the Indians, especially the Creeks.

The “Creek Nation” was a confederation of tribes, some very small and insignificant in tribal politics. And it was, in large part, a confederation forced upon the weaker tribes. The powers of the local chiefs in relation to the Tribal Council was always in doubt and in contention. McGilivray succeeded in negotiating a new treaty with the US however, the Treaty of New York, that largely abrogated the treaty with Georgia.

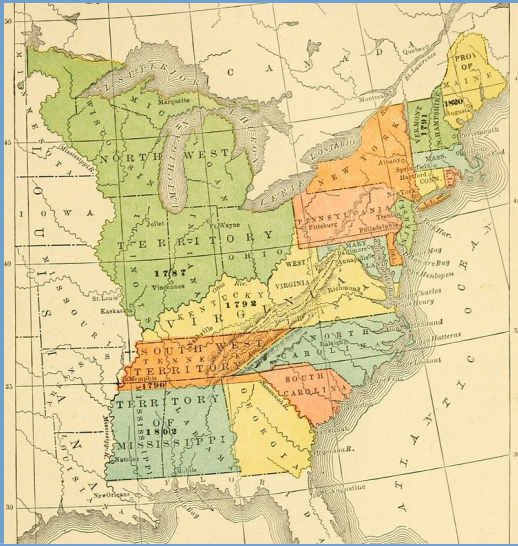
A similar problem had developed on the American side. Under British rule, only the Crown had the right to make treaties with the Indians. States, however, claimed the sovereign right to make treaties with the tribes, and with Indians individually. The federal government (or "general government" as it was then known) disputed that claim, and was seen by many people to be effectively re-instituting George III's edict.

Georgians from governor on down were furious. They had already begun selling off the land and allotting it as payments to war veterans. The main incident became known as the ‘Yazoo Land Fraud’ where corrupt Georgia legislators arranged the sale of huge tracts of land to speculators at nominal prices. The speculators then sold the land to the public at much inflated prices, kicking back some of the profits to the Legislators.

Now, the federal government had blocked both the profitable sale of land, and the settlement of the land by innocent buyers. There was serious talk of armed conflict over the offense, but the State let it pass for the time being. Georgia did not give up its claim on the land, though, which was part of its colonial charter, and upheld by the Treaty of Paris. And Georgians never gave up their willingness to fight for it either.

A few years later, in 1802, swamped by lawsuits over the ‘Land Fraud’, Georgia ceded its territory west of its present boundary to the general government in return for a small cash settlement, the assumption of the lawsuits by the general government, and the promise that the general government would ‘extinguish’ the claims of the Indian tribes within the boundaries of Georgia “*as early as the same can be peaceably obtained on reasonable terms*”. That clause was to continue to be a source of conflict between Georgia and Washington.

Many of those settlers who had bought land in the disputed areas were desperate to homestead it, and some of them lost their lives trying. In perhaps the most radical protest of the Treaty of New York, Revolutionary War hero General Elijah Clarke led a large group of settlers into the disputed territory and declared “The Trans-Oconee Republic”. Although it was an affront to Georgia's claim of sovereignty over the area, as well as a violation of the US treaty, the state was not anxious to take on a revered figure like Gen. Clarke. Within a few months though, Washington (in this case, the original, President George Washington) coerced Georgia into a combined federal and state operation that drove out Clarke's settlers and burned their homes and stockades.



This map shows the USA as it was in 1802. The land ceded from Georgia to the US in 1802 formed the Mississippi Territory, later the states of Alabama and Mississippi. Tennessee was still the South West Territory, and the North West Territory encompassed several future states.

As a practical matter, at this time, most of the Mississippi Territory and a large part of Georgia remained off limits to settlement.

President Washington and the other leaders of the country were anxious for good relations with McGilivray. They saw in him someone who could bring some sense of order to their dealings with the southern Indians. Indeed, McGilivray was already engaged in extending and strengthening his control over the various “towns” of the Creek Confederation. During the Revolutionary War, when he fought for the British against the Americans, McGilivray commanded upwards of five thousand warriors, making him, even after the war, the most powerful figure among the Indians.

One of President Washington's staff during the War, Benjamin Hawkins, accepted the job of Superintendent of Indian Affairs for all Indians south of the Ohio. Hawkins, a delegate to the Continental Congress, and former Senator from North Carolina was a rising star in American politics, but he nevertheless moved to the Creek Nation near McGilivray in present day Georgia, built a model farm and school and devoted the rest of his life to Americanizing the Creeks.

Hawkins' main qualification for the important job was his experience in treaty negotiations. He had been one of the main negotiators, and supporters, of the Treaty of New York. Although re-elected after the Treaty, his support of it and vocal opposition both to Indian cessions and sale of ceded lands in large blocks to speculators, hurt him badly politically.

It would have ruined him in Georgia. But it seemed to be just that independence that recommended him to Washington and the others who recognized the challenge of avoiding war with the Indians, and with Georgia, until the great experiment had a chance to work.

Hawkins traveled around among the Cherokees and Creeks for several years before settling down among the Lower Creeks near to Georgia. The designations “Lower Creek” and “Upper Creek” were, of course, geographical, but geography was to play a crucial role in the increasing cultural division of the Creeks. The Upper Creek lands were mountainous and separated from the 13 American states by Cherokee lands. The Lower Creek lands, on the other hand, butted up against Georgia and Spanish Florida and were much more suitable for large scale agriculture.

Thus the Lower Creeks were far along in adapting to an agrarian life when Hawkins settled there. Several travelers through the region in the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries commented on the similarities in the lives, the outward trappings of life anyway, among the wealthier Indians and the white settlers.



Hawkins largely confined his civilizing activities to the practical economics of agriculture, acting somewhat as a modern farm agent. He corresponded regularly with Thomas Jefferson and they shared interests in the sciences

of agriculture and animal husbandry. He was hospitable to Christian missionaries but did not proselytize the Indians and Christianity made little inroad among the Creeks for a variety of cultural conflicts including polygamy. In fact, Hawkins seemed to adopt the Indian spirituality and culture to some extent. He married the mother of his children according to US law only late in life when he grew concerned about inheritance issues. In a testament to the intermingling of the white man and the red, it is undecided to this day whether his wife was “white” or “Indian”.

Nor did Hawkins attempt to to change the Indians' culture of war and 'Law of Vengeance', or their particularly brutal forms of execution. And on several occasions he demanded the executions of Creeks who had killed American citizens. Those executions led to blood vendettas that played major destructive roles later on.

The only cultural tradition he attempted to change had to do with the perception of farm labor. And in that he suffered from a tremendous handicap, which he perhaps was hardly aware of. In the traditional Indian culture, agriculture was of secondary importance. Tending to small gardens was considered a woman's work. Men confined their activities to hunting, fishing, and war. As agricultural activities expanded beyond the capacity of the women, slaves were required to do the labor. But, while the McGilivrays, Weatherfords, Marchands and the other wealthy ruling families could afford slaves, most of the Indian families could not. Hawkins' 'model farm' efforts were handicapped because black slaves did the farm labor there also.

Creek men who did farm labor were looked down upon as doing womens' work, or slave work; a barrier few braves were willing to overcome. That cultural taboo was ascribed to laziness by white settlers and contributed further to ill feelings over tribal land claims. It was largely in the border areas where there was intermarriage and building of mixed communities that Indian men worked their own land. And that breach with tradition did not sit well with all the Creeks, especially some among the Upper Creeks.

Hawkins was also placed in charge of an attempt to wean the southern Indians away from Panton and Leslie. Congress authorized a few non-profit trading posts. But, as in any government venture into retail business, it wasn't successful. Some goods were available at bargain prices, but stocks were not kept up, and the commodities available for sale had to be approved by Congress and so were never up to date with the seasons or changing consumer demands. Panton and Leslie continued to be the supplier of choice for most of the Creeks and Cherokees, inconvenient as it was. That also was a major road block to the 'Civilization Plan'.

Occasional purchases of Creek lands continued during this post-Revolutionary War period. The proceeds to the Creeks were supposed to be used in developing their lands for agriculture and commerce, but most of the money went to pay debts at P&L. That created an expanding cycle of dependency, encouraged by P&L – selling land to Georgia or the US to pay debts to P&L. The continued selling of land created additional friction (and body count) with those who considered 'tribal lands' to be sacred.

After the death of McGilivray, Hawkins became a major force in Creek politics. But there were dangerous rivals. William Weatherford (aka Red Eagle), nephew of McGilivray, was the logical heir to his uncle's role as leader of the Creek Confederation. By all accounts, Weatherford was a man of extraordinary physical prowess, strength of character, and intellect who won admiration and respect in both the ever encroaching white world, and among the Indians. But he never seemed able to reconcile his two heritages as McGilivray had. He was "Billy" Weatherford, wealthy white planter for a time, then he was Red Eagle, champion of the traditional Creek way of life for a time. Weatherford's indecision proved a fatal chink in the Creek Nation's foundation when war came again.

Weatherford's dilemma seemed common among the Creek leadership and revealed a weakness in their culture. Marriages were made between Indian princesses and European fur traders as business and political arrangements. Because hereditary leadership roles were recognized from the maternal side, the sons of the fur traders became the tribal rulers. But, in the Creek and other Indian cultures, sons had little to do with their fathers; the vital role of instilling values in young men fell to uncles.

Benjamin Hawkins noted that lack of contact with their fathers as a matter of concern in his endeavors, and so it would prove to be. So, though the young men were often raised on plantations little different from those of Americans' and many freely participated in Anglo-American society, in the more important spiritual and cultural aspects of their character, most were alienated from their father's world.

The years after the Revolution had been anything but peaceful on the southern frontier. Only Federal intervention forestalled a full scale war with the Southern Tribes. The US had its hands full with trouble on the north west frontier and another war in the south would have spelled real trouble for the new country. A further word here about St. Clair's Defeat seems in order. Going all the way back to George Washington's day, it has been all too often the case that the United States cuts its military to the bone when a "peace" is declared. That happened after the Treaty of Paris – but proxy war with the British continued on the frontier.



ARTIST'S REPRESENTATION OF WASHINGTON'S PROTECTION.

Here, women of the flaming north west frontier symbolically plead with Pres. Washington for help against the Indians. A small military force sent in answer was destroyed by an Indian coalition armed by the British.

A larger force was then sent against them, headed by the Governor of the North West Territory, Gen. Arthur St. Clair. Due to poor leadership and discipline, and poorly trained and supplied regular army and militia troops of the 'peacetime army', the US suffered its most disastrous defeat ever in casualties as a percentage of the entire United States Army of the day. Estimates of the dead at St. Clair's Defeat range up to 900 out of a force of 1400, with most of the rest wounded.

This time, Pres. Washington relieved St. Clair of his military command, but not the Governorship, and placed Revolutionary War hero General "Mad Anthony" Wayne in charge of the Army. Wayne undertook a thorough rebuilding of the Army before taking to the field against the Indians. It was several years before America's lost ground was reclaimed and the civilians on the frontier were largely on their own in the meantime.

St Clair's Defeat, or the Battle of the Wabash, echoed throughout the frontier for years, encouraging other Indian Confederation schemes that bled over into the southern frontier. It also taught lessons about discipline to later US military commanders, including Andrew Jackson.

With the US in such dire straights militarily, President Washington bitterly complained of the difficulty keeping the lid on those "land hungry" Georgia and Tennessee settlers while the great experiment was given time. And the experiment did work to some degree, local chiefs here and there were won over, some Indian lands were opened for settlement and bloodshed was kept to a minimal, though steady, flow. Scalps continued to trade for ammunition in Pensacola.

Less than a generation after the Peace of Paris, though, events in Europe were once again taking a hand in the Floridas. Inspired by the successful American "experiment", the French overturned their monarchy and established a republic, but along very different lines than the American model. The short period of the revolutionary "First Republic" was characterized by two factors: a bloody chaos and tyranny domestically, and war with Great Britain and its allies who were trying to restore the monarchy. After the French people had enough of the secular, very much anti-Christian revolutionaries, the remarkably successful French military commander, Napoleon Bonaparte, seized control of the country.

Bonaparte was unquestionably a man of genius, not only militarily but as an organizer and administrator as well. He was also a ruthless, cruel ego-maniac, and in the end, a destroyer of himself and his people. Yet Napoleon ruled continental Europe for years. Part of his success was that he was something of a revolutionary too, establishing rule by a new aristocracy based upon personal merit, not birth. That model enabled him to attract to his side many of the most competent and ambitious men in Europe who, like himself, could never have risen above the station in life to which they were born under the "old order".

In 1800, Napoleon forced the Spanish king to cede Louisiana back to France. Whatever Napoleon's plans had been for Louisiana (possibly as a stage for building a new French empire in North America), he shelved them and sold it to the United States in 1803. But the boundaries of the new US territory were unclear. The United States claimed to have bought most of West Florida as well, over to the Perdido River right at Pensacola, part of old French Louisiana. Spanish officials in West Florida, and the British disputed the claim, indeed they never recognized Napoleon's claim to Louisiana at all. Napoleon was coy. Perhaps he relished the conflict he had set in motion, perhaps that was his purpose.

The Louisiana Purchase was of enormous importance to the budding United States. One of the primary effects of the Louisiana Purchase was to offer an alternative to the “Civilization Plan” in dealing with Indian land claims.



This map, from an early 20th Century American history book, gives our view of the Louisiana Purchase, with a strip along the coast over beyond Mobile.

To Americans at the beginning of the 19th Century, the area west of the Mississippi River included in the Purchase was so vast and empty that it seemed to offer unlimited room for both the white man and the red man, and trading land in the rapidly growing east for land in the largely vacant west seemed to many people a perfect solution.

Ironically, the idea had already occurred to some of the Cherokees. At the end of the Revolutionary War, a group of Cherokees petitioned the Spanish Governor at New Orleans to settle on the west side of the Mississippi. By 1794 a steady trickle of Cherokees began settling in present day Missouri. That seemed such a good plan that, after the Purchase, a huge reserve was set aside as “Indian Territory” free from federal and state control.

Ensuing treaties encouraged relocation to the Indian territories, and provided financial inducements; but it was a few years before that alternative became of major importance.

As his power increased, Napoleon deposed the Spanish king and placed his own brother Joseph on the Spanish throne. It seemed to come as a surprise to the egotistical Bonaparte that his usurpation of the Spanish throne was not accepted by most of the Spanish people. A full scale war soon raged between Napoleon's forces, and combined Spanish patriot and English forces. At the same time, with Spain in turmoil, her colonies in Mexico and South America broke out in revolution. That left the Spanish colonial governments in Florida cut off from Spain and very much obligated to the British for protection from France. On the eve of the War of 1812, the English were in de facto control of the southern border of the United States, as well as the northern border.

The European war had another effect upon American and British relations. With the European continent under French control, Great Britain declared an embargo on all trade with the continent. While America tried to remain neutral, commerce with Europe was critical economically, and trade did continue but was subject to harassment and confiscation by the British navy. Even more angering to the American people was the British seizure of American seamen on the high seas and their impressment into the British navy under the pretext that they were deserters. Essentially, any English speaking seaman who could not document American citizenship was subject to impressment.

Meanwhile, Americans began moving into the Gulf Coast areas that were, in our eyes, included in the Louisiana Purchase that Great Britain and Spain were illegally occupying. In 1810, Americans in Baton Rouge revolted, declared a republic and were immediately admitted into the Union. Biloxi did the same. The US Navy sailed into Mobile in 1810 and took over. The few Spanish in Mobile's Ft. Charlotte co-existed with the Americans a couple of years until requested to vacate the premises.

In 1812, a covertly US sponsored "Patriot" force from Georgia invaded East Florida, but the impending war with Great Britain brought their withdrawal. US Navy warships had only been along to observe outlaw activities, and their bombardment of a Spanish position was an unfortunate mistake in choosing a target for gunnery practice, it was held.

While that may not have been the exact truth, it was true that East Florida was a festering thorn in our side. The Revolutionary War Tory and Indian guerrilla activities were still being carried on from East Florida with collusion of the British and Spanish. Then there was the archetypal pirate and smuggler hangout, Amelia Island, a small barrier Island just offshore of the St. Mary's River boundary between Spanish East Florida and Georgia. In those days of weak Spanish control of the Floridas, one privateer after another claimed control and no nation's laws were respected. One French privateer, Michel Aury, even raised the Mexican flag over Amelia Island and used it as a base for attacks on Spanish shipping.

Added to the British, pirate, and Indian threat, there was the curious phenomenon of the two way traffic of slaves through East Florida. The importation of slaves into the US had been banned in 1808. It was a compromise between the northern states and the southern that achieved ratification of the Constitution in 1788 that importation of slaves would be ended in twenty years.

The US Navy blockaded the slave trade at US seaports, but it was a simple matter to deliver slaves to Spanish Florida and cross the St. Mary's River into Georgia unopposed by federal authorities; or, with collusion of Creek chieftains, to come up through Creek lands and deliver the slaves into Georgia and South Carolina from the west. In fact, it was Aury's chief business to capture Spanish slave ships and import the slaves into the US that way.

On the other hand, slaves would escape their plantations in Georgia and flee into East Florida and be welcomed, perhaps even be armed and trained by British agents for defense of the Floridas against the Americans.

It is obvious that the War of 1812 was not a surprise in its coming. The British had been preparing for the second war with the Americans since before the first war by rousing the Indians against them; or rather, supporting the Indians who were rousing war fever against the white man. The Indian wars that ran coincident with the War of 1812 were partly civil wars among the Indians, and very much religious wars.

Also, in a very odd way, they were 'racial' wars. Not in the obvious sense of red man versus white man – red men and white men fought as allies and died as enemies on both sides – but the main protagonists and antagonists were prominent men of mixed heritage.

To use the terms "race" or "blood" in this situation is misleading, for what we usually think of as "racial" discrimination did not seem to apply between the Indians and white settlers on the Southern frontier where there were generations of intermarriage. Perhaps the unwieldy 'intertwined cultural heritage and national identity' would be a more accurate term, but for simplicity's sake I'll use the term 'race'.

It was not only that the mixed race men were preeminent in their tribes that they were leaders in the war but, on one side, it was the fanatical hatred of the white man, his culture and religion that made them leaders in the wars. Speculating on whatever psychological torments drove them would be interesting, but not a proper subject for this history. We do have a good record of many of the major players' activities however.

The mixed race Shawnee chief Tecumseh and his brother, known as "The Prophet" seem a good starting place in discussing these Indian wars – although they didn't arise in isolation from the currents of affairs of those days. They were northern Indians but closely related to the Creek ruling elite. It seems the Indian nobility was as inter-related as the European nobility– and just about as European. In the early 1800's, Tecumseh and The Prophet began making war on all their tribesmen who supported adopting white man's ways and ceding land.

Tecumseh was a skilled orator in the Indian tradition and propounded his vision of a world without the white man with religious fervor. The Prophet was a mystic who claimed to be in contact with mysterious spirits and to possess miraculous powers – to fly, live underwater, to cause the ground to open and swallow white men, and most importantly, to make his disciples invincible in battle. Whether by simple trickery or demonic manifestation, he was apparently able to put on quite a show in support of his brother's vision.

Tecumseh and The Prophet soon took their portentous show on the road, and coupled with the violent dedication of their followers, became a power among the northern tribes. In 1811, on the eve of war, the British sent Tecumseh on a tour of the southern tribes. “The Prophet” didn't come south with his brother, but an entourage of minor prophets and other “Red Sticks” (warriors who carried the red stick war symbol) accompanied him. Benjamin Hawkins was at the Creek council when Tecumseh and company arrived, but Tecumseh kept postponing his performance hoping that Hawkins would grow impatient and leave. Then the floor would be his.

And so it happened, the dismissive and bored Indian Agent Hawkins left and did not hear Tecumseh's momentous oration, but other Americans did. Sam Dale was one of them, and gave a vivid and widely reported account of Tecumseh's performance.

By this time, Dale had turned the farm over to his younger siblings and moved west. He farmed, began trading with the Creeks, and started a haulage business from Georgia across Creek territory on a newly opened “road” to the settlements in the Tombigbee District of the Mississippi Territory. That area, north of Mobile, now in west Alabama and east Mississippi, had been ceded to the British by the Choctaws and came to the US in the treaty of Paris and a separate treaty with Spain settling boundary issues later. Though approved by treaty, the road infuriated many of the Creeks and travel on it was a risk. His taking settlers over the road made Dale a marked man in some Creek circles.

At the time of Tecumseh's visit, Dale was working for Benjamin Hawkins and accompanied him to the council. After Hawkins left, Dale was smuggled back into the council by a part Creek friend. He described Tecumseh's dramatic entrance at the head of his entourage, naked except for breachclouts and painted black all over; his disparaging harangue at the "women" who weren't already at war with the whites; and his powerful call to arms: *"Burn their dwellings! Destroy their stock! Slay their wives and children! The Red Man owns the country, and the Palefaces must never enjoy it! War now! War forever! War upon the living! War upon the dead! Dig their very corpses from the grave. Our country must give no rest to a white man's bones. This is the will of the Great Spirit revealed to my brother, his familiar, the Prophet of the Lakes. He sends me to you."*

For all his years among the Creeks, Hawkins could not foresee the success Tecumseh had; and for a critically long time, he refused to recognize it. Of course, something that no one could have foreseen intervened to aid Tecumseh's cause. He had come south armed by the British with advance knowledge of a bright comet that he was able to work into his act. But there was an even more dramatic event to play into his hand.

At the end of 1811 and into early 1812 a series of earthquakes rocked the central part of the country; and rocked it in more ways than one. Several of those New Madrid earthquakes are the most powerful earthquakes to hit North America in recorded history. According to witnesses, the power of the quakes was awesome, with the earth rolling in waves, opening and closing cracks, toppling trees, and it was reported, even swallowing people, and causing the Mississippi River to run backwards.

The effect of those seismic events upon people living in the shadow of the Stone Age can hardly be imagined by modern man, and it seemed to validate the power of Tecumseh's movement. One account held that Tecumseh threatened an opposing chieftain that he would go home, stomp his foot and destroy the chief's house. Supposedly the earthquakes did damage the chief's house some time after Tecumseh departed for home.

Whether that is true or just legend is impossible to tell from this vantage point. It is true however, that many were convinced of the power of Tecumseh's prophets. Several mixed blood chieftains and thousands of warriors, mostly from the Upper Creeks, fell strongly under the power of this new religious fervor. William Weatherford, Peter McQueen, and Josiah Francis converted to 'prophets' themselves under the tutelage of their visitors. Weatherford and McQueen settled more into roles as war chiefs, but Francis became "The Prophet" of his people.

Even Sam Dale's Creek friend, only one quarter Creek by blood, but raised a Creek, joined the Red Sticks. Dale described him as his "best friend" in relating the sad story of unknowingly killing him in a chance skirmish with a party of Red Sticks along a wilderness trail sometime later.

By the summer of 1812, the war between Great Britain and the United States was officially underway. A civil war among the Creeks was also underway with the Red Stick faction trying to assassinate opposition and destroy European/American influence. It was largely Upper Creek nativists versus Americanized Lower Creeks, but it crossed all tribal and family lines to some extent.

One aspect of the Red Stick campaign was the slaughter of domesticated livestock, a 'white man's invention'. Crops and stored corn of any who defied the Red Sticks were burned. Weatherford and the other Red Stick leaders threatened all towns that did not join them with annihilation. There was little neutral ground for the Creeks, and safety to be had only in numbers, arms and fortifications, leaving fields and livestock abandoned.

At that time, the US was not officially involved in conflict with the Red Stick Creeks. Friendly Lower Creek chieftains, for some time the objects of persecution and assassination attempts, and now outright genocide, appealed to Hawkins for military aid and protection. Hawkins, however, was reluctant to get involved in what he saw as only a minor internal affair. He had very little immediate help available anyway, only a few small military outposts whose purpose was to turn away white settlers.

The war with England was going badly in the north, so little help could be expected from the federal government anyway. The friendly Creeks then turned to an old enemy for help, the state of Georgia. Seeing what was happening very close at hand, white settlers in Georgia were getting very concerned and Georgia newspapers were calling for military action against the Red Sticks. The Governor agreed to send in units of Georgia militia to rout out the Red Sticks. Hawkins distrusted the Georgia militia however and refused them permission to cross the federal treaty line. Hawkins' reputation began to suffer among both sides of the Indian treaty line.

Before the summer of 1812 was over, the situation came to a head. Peter McQueen led a large band of Red Sticks south to Pensacola, still under Spanish (and British) control, for supplies. On the way down through Lower Creek country, his party beat opponents, burned their farms and corn stocks, killed livestock, kidnapped women and spread terror throughout the region. While in Pensacola laying in supplies and plotting with British agents, they openly boasted that they were preparing for war on the white man and his Indian allies.

News of the Red Stick expedition came to the US militia commander in the Tensaw area north of Mobile. He sent out a small militia force augmented by volunteers including a unit headed by Sam Dale, and a party of Lower Creeks. They ambushed the Red Sticks' pack train of guns and ammunition on their return from Pensacola as it threaded its way single file on the wilderness trail near a place called 'Burnt Corn'. The surprised Red Stick warriors fled into the woods. But while the attackers were rounding up the pack animals and trying to get the supplies away, the Red Sticks regrouped and became the attackers, this time surprising and driving away the Americans. Dale attributed the rout to some young, inexperienced militia man panicking and yelling "retreat!".

There weren't a lot of casualties on either side. Dale was wounded though, and had to watch helplessly as one of his friends was killed and scalped only a few yards away. He recovered to be a dangerous foe of the Red Sticks as they learned in the famous "Canoe Fight".

But the Red Sticks counted the 'battle' a victory and proof of their destiny. The most important result of the Battle of Burnt Corn was that it marked Lower Creeks and white settlers of the Tensaw area for revenge; and the result of that act of vengeance was to be far reaching for both whites and Indians.

The Red Stick attacks had caused many of those living in the Lower Creek lands and border lands to seek fortified positions. One such makeshift 'fort' lay just north of Mobile, Fort Mims. Those temporarily harboring at Ft. Mims ran the spectrum of recent white settlers, mixed families long in the area, and Indians supporting and becoming acculturated as Americans. There were also a number of black slaves belonging to all those groups. The refugees were under the protection of the local US and Lower Creek militias. They became the target of the Red Sticks fanatical vendetta.

Due to the incompetence of the US Militia commander, Fort Mims was unprepared for the Red Stick attack. He was killed bravely, but belatedly, attempting to close the main gate. After a brief battle, almost all the whites and sheltering Indians were massacred. A few people escaped in the melee to report horrible atrocities to both the living and dead. Scores, perhaps hundreds of scalps were taken. Most of the slaves were taken off to unknown destinies.

The exact number of casualties is unknown, partly because survivors of the initial attack took refuge in a small blockhouse that was burned down on top of them, and others were taken away for more leisurely ceremonial torture and death. A burial party found around a hundred and fifty mangled bodies and a cellar full of charred bones. The death toll is variously estimated at upwards of 275 men, women, and children; certainly enough to make it the worst Indian massacre of civilians in US history. And that is just how the American public saw it.

Compounding that massacre, Francis led numerous other attacks in the area, resulting in several smaller massacres at plantations and farmsteads. Probably the most infamous was the Kimbell farm massacre. Life in makeshift Fort Sinquefield was miserable and disease was rampant.

The Kimbell and James families decided to risk the Indian menace and return to the nearby Kimbell farm. There the entire party was massacred - or so it appeared to the Red Sticks. But, though clubbed unconscious and scalped, Sarah Merrill revived, searched through the bodies and found that her year old boy had survived being slung against the wall and a scalping attempt. She managed to get the two of them back to the fort.

A burial party slipped out of Ft. Madison, a regular militia fort then under the command of Col. Sam Dale, and brought back twelve bodies to Ft. Sinquefield for burial. As the funeral service outside the Fort was closing, a large party of Red Sticks came whooping and shouting out of the woods. Thanks to some quick thinking and heroic action, all but one woman, who was washing clothes on the river bank, made it back inside to safety; she was killed and scalped.

Though in reality many, if not most, of the victims at Ft. Mims were not US citizens, they were seen in death as fellow Americans. A great cry went out across the south for a reply, and the fate of the Red Sticks, and to a degree the fates of the Creek Nation and the southern Indians in general were sealed. Benjamin Hawkins was shocked into action, dropping his objections to state militias entering the treaty lands, and raising a large force of Lower Creeks to combat the Red Sticks. Those he put under the command of another nephew of McGilivray, Chief William McIntosh (aka "White Warrior") who began to carry the fight to the Red Sticks.

With few regular US forces available, the federal government called up militias in Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia and the Mississippi Territory (in what was to become the states of Alabama and Mississippi) for service in the now "Creek War". Those forces, along with small regular army contingents, were placed under four local commanders who were supposed to rendezvous later on.

Two Generals of the Tennessee Militia, Andrew Jackson and John Cocke, were given separate commands. It took time, though, for the Tennessee militias to organize before they even began their march on the Red Stick strongholds deep in the wilderness.

Jackson, senior in command, though still recovering from gunshot wounds, departed from Tennessee first. But his progress was slow, having to march, cut roads, and build forts along the way to protect their supply line as they went since they were under almost continual attack, especially at river crossings. The roads and forts Jackson's men made would serve settlers for years to come though. In addition to the Red Stick attacks, Jackson had to contend with expiring militia enlistments, failing supply contractors, and a conflicting and uncoordinated command structure.

The first major response to the Ft. Mims atrocity was more local, and more personal. General Ferdinand Claiborne, as the commander of the Mississippi Territorial Militia, had established Ft. Mims and was in overall charge of the region from his base at Fort Stoddert, the main landward fort protecting Mobile. He felt very much responsible for the failure of his militia to protect the fort, although after an inspection of Ft. Mims, he had ordered numerous improvements which the commander of Ft. Mims falsely reported were well in hand.

Claiborne was, in peacetime, a businessman in Natchez, but like most of the other civilian militia officers, he had military experience. He was a veteran of Indian wars in the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes regions under Gen. “Mad Anthony” Wayne in the period after the Revolutionary War. Mortgaging his own estate to finance the expedition, Claiborne set out with his militia in early November toward what was, in a sense, the heart of the Red Sticks – 'Prophet' Josiah Francis' “Holy Ground”.

The Creek Prophet had established a Red Stick town for his tribal followers on the Alabama River. William Weatherford and other Red Stick chieftains established their own tribal 'towns' also during the summer of their triumphs. Consulting with his 'spirits' and casting spells, Francis pronounced a bluff above the river a sacred site, holy ground that no white man could enter.

Claiborne and his militia, along with Lower Creek and Choctaw allies reached this 'holy ground' just before Christmas in 1813.

Perhaps due to the Red Sticks trust in spiritual defenses, Claiborne found the site only lightly fortified. Francis and his followers quickly realized that those defenses were failing and they retreated before the American militia and their Indian allies encircled them. 'Red Eagle' William Weatherford also had a contingent of warriors to defend Holy Ground and they fought tenaciously for awhile, but they too slipped away.

Red Eagle was said to have been the last defender of the 'holy ground'. Finding himself trapped, he dove his horse off the bluff into the Alabama River and swam it to safety in a scene reenacted countless times in western movies of yesteryear. Sam Dale was one of those closing in on Red Eagle who witnessed the famous escape, and perhaps that was particularly disappointing to him. Dale blamed Weatherford for influencing his friend to join the Red Sticks.

With the women and children already sent away and the warriors gone, the Red Stick town was deserted, but with reminders of its founders – the place where captive sacrifices were burned alive, and a ceremonial pole festooned with hundreds of scalps. Claiborne seized the deserted town's remaining food supplies for his own men and allowed the Indian allies to scalp the dead and loot and burn the town. So the Creek Prophet's "Holy Ground" met the same fate as his Shawnee mentor's "Prophet Town" in the north.

In short order, Claiborne arrived at Weatherford's town and did the same, with little resistance. Then, his militia's term of enlistment being up and his men desperately low on rations and unprepared for a winter campaign, many even lacking shoes, Claiborne headed them back to Ft. Stoddert. Dale recounted that they were reduced to living on parched corn and acorns at the last. Once back to Ft. Stoddert, Gen. Claiborne praised his men highly and released them to return home.

They had made a great contribution to the Creek War, but would not be joining up with the other militias for the final assault on the Red Sticks; the men and material needed to go the distance were too great for the small population of the Territory to raise.

Claiborne carried back with him a great deal of interesting correspondence between the Red Stick chiefs and the British and Spanish authorities in Florida. Among the captured documents were letters detailing British naval vessels supplying the Red Sticks. Also, there was a letter from the Spanish Governor of Pensacola congratulating the Red Sticks on their "victory" at Ft. Mims, and requesting that they not burn Mobile, as it was Spanish territory and soon to be returned to the Spanish Crown.

Those victories over the Red Sticks greatly cheered the American side in the war, but apparently did little to dampen the ardor of the Red Sticks. Francis blamed the failure of his magic ring of protection to the site having been defiled by a woman, or some such nonsense. He apparently maintained some authority until he was caught by Andrew Jackson several years later and hanged. But now, the Red Sticks regrouped and prepared to fight on.

Gen. John Floyd of the Georgia militia, a carpenter by trade, had set out with a large force to join up with Jackson but had to detour to counter a Red Stick siege of a major allied Creek town. It was the Lower Creek town of Coweta, home of 'White Warrior' William McIntosh, arch enemy of the Red Sticks that was under threat. Cowetta was also the refuge of escapees from two other Creek towns that were burned by the Red Sticks. Floyd's force had to fight several savage battles, one nearly disastrous, and Floyd was severely wounded. He eventually had to turn back also, never having gotten as far as Coweta. His incursion did draw off the Red Stick siege and save Coweta however, and doubtless also eased the path for Jackson.

Meanwhile, after months of small advances and set backs with the ebb and flow of militias and supplies, Andrew Jackson's small army was slowly cutting roads and fighting its way south along the Coosa River to relieve the Red Stick siege of Ft. Leslie (also called Ft. Lashley) at the little town of Talladega. The "fort" was much like Ft. Mims; a hastily built stockade around a trading post. It held only a handful of whites, but well over a hundred sheltering Creeks who were the real target of the Red Sticks.

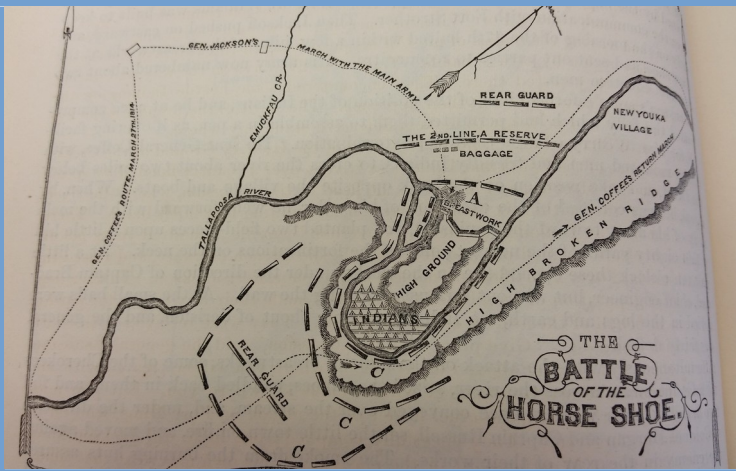
After a pitched battle routed the Red Sticks, Jackson was able to turn east toward the major stronghold of the Red Sticks in a horseshoe bend of the Tallapoosa River in what is today east central Alabama.

By this time Gen. Cocke had advanced into Creek territory and destroyed a Hillabee Creek town not knowing that the Hillabees were negotiating peace with Jackson. That disaster sealed the Hillabees as enemies. Cocke eventually did join up with Jackson but a joint command was now out of the question. Jackson sent Cocke back to raise more militia volunteers, carrying with him a company of militiamen whose terms had expired and were on the verge of mutiny. Jackson had held his command together by sheer determination and courage, even to the point of grabbing a rifle, laying it over his horse's neck (as one arm was still useless from a gun battle in Tennessee) and threatening to shoot the first one who deserted.

Jackson did have one deserter executed. After that he had no more trouble with mutiny and desertion, but not for the reason one might expect. Jackson cared for his men and they knew it. It was not fear of this one man that changed the discontented collection of backwoodsmen into an army that followed him all the way to New Orleans. It was the shock that what they were doing was important enough for Gen. Jackson to execute one of his men.

Gen. Jackson's tenacity in the field impressed the authorities to finally give him the forces and support he needed. But it took sheer determination, and possibly divine intervention, for "Old Hickory" Jackson to finally arrive at the Red Stick fortress at Horseshoe Bend in March of 1814.

Unlike at Holy Ground, the Red Sticks had prepared their defenses well, making their compound in the bend of the river and fortifying the landward approach with a series of British designed revetments. Jackson's forces of militia, regular army, Lower Creek, Choctaw, and Cherokee warriors outnumbered the Red Sticks, but the Battle of Horseshoe Bend was to be hard fought on both sides.



Gen. Jackson led the main force in a frontal attack on the landward defenses, while Col. Coffee led a smaller party to cross the river and attack from the rear.

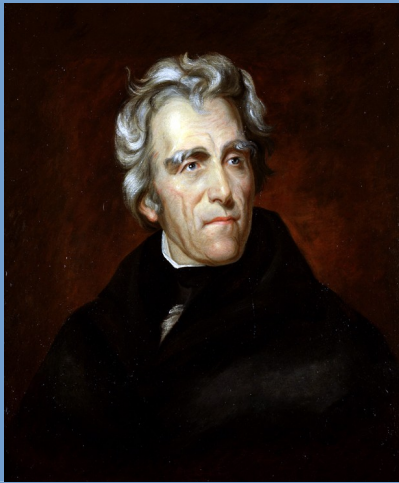
Most of the the Red Stick warriors died in the hand-to-hand fighting at Horseshoe Bend, some 800 or so. A few hundred again slipped away, including most of the leaders. Casualties on the American side numbered just under 200.

The Battle of Horseshoe Bend broke the power of the Red Sticks, but not their will to fight. And it established a new order in the deep south, one of American dominance. It was also a remarkable crossroads of personalities significant to American history.

It saw the elevation of Brigadier Gen. Andrew Jackson of the Tennessee Militia to Major General of the US Army, and propelled his rescue of the Gulf Coast from British control, and his election as President. Jackson, a first generation American of Scots-Irish emigrant parents, was a true man of the American frontier and the first frontiersman to play such a great role in American history.

As a young teenager, Andrew and his brother joined in the Revolution. They were captured and interned in a foul prison ship where both contracted small pox. Andrew survived, his brother did not. Jackson also survived a vicious saber slash across across his face for the impudence of refusing to shine a British officer's boots.

Jackson's mother did not survive the war either. She came down sick and died while nursing other young prisoners. Jackson, whose father had died before he was born, was left an orphan while still in his mid-teens.



By his ability, hard work, and sheer grit, the War of 1812 found Andrew Jackson a prominent attorney, business man, planter, and politician in Tennessee. As one of the new state's founders and leading citizens, he was made a Brigadier General of the State militia, and called up on a mission to reinforce the defense of New Orleans early in the War.

His small army had reached Natchez by flat boat when word came that his orders were canceled and to take his men back home. The cancellation of orders was a political slap, possibly because of his friendship with Aaron Burr. But whatever the cause, it left he and his men in a lurch; flat boats were one way transport only – downstream. Fortunately, Jackson's credit was good and he financed the long trek back to Nashville himself, and had to dun the federal government for repayment. It was on that long road home that Andrew Jackson earned the nickname "Old Hickory", the toughest wood known to frontiersmen.

When the new call to arms after Ft. Mims came, Jackson was in bed with two bullets in his arm from a gun battle on the streets of Nashville. The clash resulted from a chance meeting between Jackson and his right hand man Col. John Coffee, and former friend turned bitter political rival Thomas Hart Benton and his brother Jessie. In the rough and tumble frontier culture of Nashville, gun fights between politicians aroused little interest from authorities, and even less disapprobation from the public.

Jackson was already carrying lead in his chest, too close to his heart to remove in those days. In a scenario that might have served many a western novel or movie script, political enemies intrigued to force a duel between Jackson and a noted duelist named Dickinson. Jackson was also noted as a duelist and dead shot, in fact a duel earned him a place of respect in Nashville's legal establishment, but Dickinson was known to be "faster on the trigger".

Rather than try to beat his opponent to the first shot, Jackson decided to take the bullet, determined to survive long enough to take deadly aim. Which is exactly what he did. Col. Coffee, acting as Jackson's Second, held a pistol on Dickinson to make sure he didn't move from the twelve pace mark as Jackson bit down on the lead slug he carried between his teeth and took aim. Asked how he had managed to stay on his feet, Jackson is reported to have said, "I would have killed him if he had shot me through the head."

Andrew Jackson was a complex man, certainly not a saint, nor a man for all seasons and tastes. An Indian fighter who adopted two orphaned Indian children; who respected Indian warriors and chiefs, even calling some "friend", but still forced them to remove west. A man of volatile temper who was able to forgive and forget, even becoming friends again with the Bentons. A sharp business man and a slave owner, but who was unusually liberal in the treatment of his slaves. To lead a small army of raw militia deep into a wilderness held by fanatical enemies, though, Andrew Jackson was the man. And John Coffee, as usual, was his indispensable right hand.

A young Sam Houston got his baptism of fire at Horseshoe Bend - an arrow in the leg and two bullet holes. He still suffered from the arrow wound as he led his Texican Army to victory over the Mexican Army and became the first President of the Republic of Texas. Davy Crockett came through Horseshoe Bend unscathed as far as we know, to die later at the Alamo in the War for Texas Independence. In the meantime, as a US Representative, he vigorously opposed the Indian removal policies of his old commander Andrew Jackson.

Also promoted, to Brigadier General, after Horseshoe Bend was 'White Warrior' William McIntosh, leader of the Lower Creek forces and protégé of Benjamin Hawkins. That elevation, in addition to recognition of his services, may have been symbolic of American recognition of his ascension to his uncle Alexander McGilivray's position. McIntosh, unlike most other Creek leaders, had close ties to white society and political leaders, being a cousin to two Georgia governors.

He allied himself firmly to the American cause and served under General Jackson's command later in the Seminole War. He also led his Lower Creek militia in other, purely tribal, engagements with Red Sticks.



Some years later, McIntosh's murder, along with other family members and allied chiefs, by a large war party on orders of the Creek National Council (under control of Upper Creek chieftains) might be considered to mark the end of the "Civilization Plan".

McIntosh's (shown left in a portrait by Charles Bird King) crime was that he had signed the Treaty of Indian Springs (Indian Springs being what we would call a hotel and spa resort he was developing), ceding most all Creek lands to Georgia. His motivations for signing the treaty have been subject to endless debate with the most charitable explanation being that he quite honestly believed those of his people who would not accept citizenship into a state and become Americanized as he had, were better off moving west to the Indian Territory. McIntosh was considered an American hero and given a monument by the Daughters of the American Revolution.



Pushmataha, (Left) Chief of the Choctaw Nation, had gained renown in tribal wars over hunting land. He always had friendly relations with the Americans, and had ordered Tecumseh out of his territory. He protected white settlers from Red Sticks after Ft. Mims and led his warriors against the Red Sticks at Holy Ground also.

Years later, he met with President Jackson to protest treaty terms. The meeting turned heated with neither side willing to compromise. Pushmataha contracted 'the croup' (probably diphtheria) and died in Washington.

President Jackson visited his old comrade in arms on his death bed despite their quarrel, and he was buried in the Congressional Cemetery with full military honors.

John Ross, by family and political connections served as an adjutant to Gen. Jackson. Jackson developed an intense dislike for Ross however. Although only one eighth Cherokee and not raised as a Cherokee, he later became Principal Chief of the Cherokees and also went to Washington years later to protest Jackson's Indian Removal policies. He had already won a Supreme Court decision but was told point blank by Jackson that his tribe would have to remove to Indian Territory by the deadline of 1838 as stipulated in the Treaty of New Echota.

Ross ignored Jackson's warning, apparently relying on the fact that Jackson left office well before the deadline. It came as a tragic shock to Ross and his followers when, in 1838, soldiers came to remove them by force on the “Trail of Tears”; but much more about that is upcoming.



In actual field command of the Cherokee force at Horseshoe Bend was Major Ridge, a man whose name was as complex as his life history. As a young brave, “*The man who kills his enemy along the path*” (in colloquial English) gained renown fighting American settlers in Tennessee in the years just after the Revolutionary War.

He was one of the executioners of Cherokee chief Double Head who sold land to the Americans. Later, he made peace with the Americans and became “*The man who walks along the ridge*”, or just “Ridge” to the Americans. He was given the rank of Major after Horseshoe Bend and was thereafter known as Major Ridge. His son, educated in New England and married to a New Englander, was known as John Ridge.

Major Ridge saw the inevitability, perhaps even the advisability, of accepting relocation to Indian Territory, causing a rift in the Cherokee Nation between his followers and those of John Ross.

The Ridges and their “Treaty Party” voluntarily relocated to Oklahoma, where the Ridges became successful in business and ranching. After the trauma of the Trail of Tears, however, they were marked for assassination. Major Ridge, John Ridge, and other members of the family were murdered, causing a long running civil war among the Cherokees in Oklahoma. Ironically, perhaps not surprisingly however, given the importance of their "Law of Vengeance”, among the Ridges' killers was the son of Chief Double Head whom “Man who kills along the path” had killed years earlier for ceding land.

The Ridge faction was blamed for the Trail of Tears for having signed the Treaty of New Echota ceding all Cherokee lands in the east to the US in exchange for lands in the Indian Territory. The charge is frequently made that Andrew Jackson “defied” the Supreme Court decision supporting the Cherokees against forced removal; while that is true in spirit, it is not technically true. The Court had required a treaty ceding the Cherokee land. Ross and the ruling Cherokee Council argued that Major Ridge and his supporting chiefs hadn't the authority to cede the lands. And under the clouded political situation of the Cherokees that was true, but the US Congress accepted the treaty and the removal proceeded several years later. A fuller examination of the circumstances of the treaty is required to place all the associated events in perspective, and that awaits our arrival in due time.

Among the other Cherokees was a man notable in an entirely different way. Also a man of many different names – named 'George Gist' by his father, he had several names from his mother's side, and is best known as Sequoyah, the inventor of the Cherokee alphabet and father of Cherokee literacy. He moved early to Indian Territory in Arkansas and Oklahoma and devoted his life to improving the Cherokee people and trying to resolve their quarrels.

Across the barricades at Horseshoe Bend were several notables also. Usually credited as at least second in command at Horseshoe Bend was the Scots-Irish-Creek Red Stick chief Menawa. Though wounded several times, he would escape the bend, a fortress turned trap, with most of the rest of the Red Stick leaders and play other significant roles later in the history of his people. First, he led the party of over one hundred “Law Menders” who killed, legally executed in their eyes, William McIntosh and other members of his family.

However the US government saw it morally, the killings took place under Creek sovereignty and Menawa safely traveled to Washington D.C., before Jackson's presidency, to protest the treaty McIntosh signed. In another ironic twist of fate, Congress agreed with Menawa and vacated the treaty of Indian Springs, then signed the Treaty of Washington (1826) with a smaller cession of land and higher compensation. It might be an error, however, to call Menawa's actions a victory for the Creek people. Where there had been anger in Georgia at the Treaty of New York, there was now a consuming rage and an American civil war just about to break out decades early. The treaties the last Creek holdouts were forced to sign were harsher than the one McIntosh signed.

'Red Eagle' Weatherford also escaped the Bend alive, but not as the same man. Shortly afterwards, he entered General Jackson's camp to surrender and plead for food for his starving people.

Weatherford's role in the Red Stick reign of terror was always in dispute. His defenders claimed that he had tried to stop the massacre of women and children at Ft. Mims, but being ridiculed as “white” had left before the final assault and atrocities to captives. He had apparently succeeded in saving a large number of hostages at Horseshoe Bend.

For that reason, or out of respect for a valiant enemy, or as a gesture to the Creeks, Jackson rescued him from a lynching and sent him home. He was accepted back into white society and lived the rest of his life as William Weatherford, extremely wealthy American planter with hundreds of slaves; although camps of wandering Creeks could always be found on his plantation.

Peter McQueen and Josiah Francis, usually blamed as the ringleaders of the Ft. Mims massacre, fled to Florida and continued their fight. McQueen is thought by Dale to have died not long after his flight, and Francis was caught and hanged during the First Seminole War a few years later. Not taking part in the battle, but fleeing with his family was ten year old William Powell, a relation of McQueen. He would later be better known as Osceola, scourge of Florida settlers in the Second Seminole War. His stated ambition was to kill all white people in Florida and see their bodies blacken in the sun; a goal he was successful in achieving for a time, but he died in an American prison. All those problems lay in the future, however, and Andrew Jackson and his small force had more pressing problems.

Now that the Red Stick menace to the American frontier was abated, Jackson was anxious to move on to his next challenge. He called for a council with the Creek chiefs. Benjamin Hawkins was official treaty negotiator but he had little or no input as there was no negotiation. General Jackson demanded cession of roughly half the Creek lands, about twenty one million acres. That staggering demand was partly in reparations and partly to secure a wide strip between the Creek population centers and Spanish Florida.

A requirement for reparations and cutting off the arms supply from Florida, without any further details, had been Jackson's instructions from Washington, and he interpreted those liberally. We might take into account all that Jackson and his men had suffered through for months, both to stop the Red Sticks and to save the Lower Creeks, in understanding how he toted up the reparations.

Needless to say, the Lower Creeks were shocked at this and complained that the burden fell heaviest on them, not the Upper Creeks. Realizing the justice in that complaint, some compensation was later paid to the Lower Creeks for improvements lost. At the time however, Jackson was not the man to argue with. And with the Lower Creeks' livestock and food stores destroyed by the Red Sticks, and the Red Sticks' supplies captured or destroyed by the Americans, they had little choice but to agree to the terms of the "Treaty of Fort Jackson" and trust the Americans for supplies.

Certainly help from Panton and Leslie in Pensacola was out of the question for the Lower Creeks. Pensacola was, in fact, next on Gen. Jackson's 'to do' list from Washington. The British had been arming and training Indians and run-away slaves for some time but recent turns of events in Europe had allowed an ambitious new strategy to cripple the United States.

After Napoleon's disastrous retreat from Moscow in December of 1812, in which he lost most of his "Grand Armee", he had been forced to recall his army in Spain to protect France. Joseph Bonaparte's regime collapsed immediately and he fled Spain. Napoleon's fall was not long in coming either. That freed-up British forces to concentrate on the war in America.

In August of 1814, British troops burned Washington DC with little opposition. A humiliating defeat it certainly was, but it had little practical effect. The *coup de gras* for the fledgling republic was to be a three pronged attack to divide and dominate, if not outrightly conquer and occupy. An attack would come across Lake Champlain to split off New England from the mid-Atlantic states, while an invasion by sea would commence from Baltimore to split off the southern states. The third prong was to capture the Gulf Coast and New Orleans, cutting off America from the Gulf and blocking the Mississippi for them.

The first two prongs of the British attack commenced nearly simultaneously, and failed nearly simultaneously with the defeat of the Canadian invasion force at the battle of Plattsburg in New York State, and the failure of the British fleet to capture Ft. McHenry guarding the approach to Baltimore. The attack on Ft. McHenry has, of course, been enshrined in our national anthem "The Star Spangled Banner", which ends with these words:

*O thus be it ever when freemen shall stand
Between their lov'd home and the war's desolation!
Blest with vict'ry and peace may the heav'n rescued land
Praise the power that hath made and preserv'd us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto - "In God is our trust,"*

*And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.*

A heaven rescued land indeed! I would say so, in all three cases. Gen. Jackson was probably unaware of the grand strategy and certainly of its failure. Doubtless the British fleet sailing for New Orleans was also cut off from any recent news of the war. Jackson was aware, however, of the British threat to the Gulf Coast. He knew his old enemies the British were raising an army of Seminoles, Creeks and runaway slaves for war against the Americans. It is worth noting that slavery was legal at this time in both British and Spanish colonies, so their goal in arming the escaped slaves was not altruistic. One Lt. Colonel Nichols, in charge of that operation with a contingent of Royal Marines, had settled in at Pensacola. There was also a powerful squadron of British naval vessels stationed there.

Jackson traveled on down to Mobile, then over to Pensacola, arriving in early November, 1814. He demanded the Spanish evict the British and Indian forces from Pensacola. That of course was impossible for the Spanish to do even if they had wanted to, but observing the superior American forces, Col. Nichols withdrew eastward toward St. Augustine, possibly to draw Jackson after him. The naval squadron sailed away to an unknown destination. The Spanish offered only token resistance and Jackson's forces occupied Pensacola briefly.

The British naval force and Nichols' Marines and Indians had attacked Mobile shortly before, as Jackson's force was marching to Pensacola, but they were driven away by fire from Ft. Boyer, a hastily erected, mostly earth work fort guarding Mobile Bay. The failed attack cost the British one ship lost, another heavily damaged, and Col. Nichols an eye. The plan had been to take Mobile and launch a drive westward to blockade New Orleans from the north while the main invasion force converged upon New Orleans. Now, upon seeing the naval force's departure from Pensacola, Jackson worried that they might be again headed to Mobile, so he turned Pensacola back to the the Spanish and headed that way himself rather than pursue Nichols.

He arrived to find Mobile safe, but learned there about the impending attack on New Orleans. He force marched his men onward and arrived barely in time to prepare a defense for New Orleans.

In what should have been a peaceful Christmas and New Year's holiday season, the Americans thwarted several British sorties on New Orleans. In return, the British invaders had to endure morale breaking nightly raids by practiced Indian fighters seeking the lives, and guns, of unwary Red Coats. It seems a flotilla of enthusiastic volunteers had come down river from Kentucky expecting to be armed by the US military in New Orleans, but New Orleans had been recklessly shorted in both manpower and supplies.

On January 8, 1815, an army of about 8500 seasoned troops disembarked from the British main fleet near New Orleans and began their march, in proper Red Coat fashion, for a make or break effort to capture the city at the mouth of America's greatest river. But for Andrew Jackson, all would have gone according to their plans. As it was, however, they were met with a lethal hail storm from General Jackson's vastly outnumbered makeshift army of backwoods militia, regular army, Indians, pirates, and Creole dandies that sent the elite Red Coats reeling back to their ships in minutes.



In the days of single shot, smooth bore muskets, the success of the British soldier had always depended, ultimately, upon the bayonet; but Gen. Jackson and his backwoods riflemen didn't let them get that close.

The British were not giving up on New Orleans however; the thwarted attackers of New Orleans now turned back to Mobile, this time in far more strength. After five days of heavy bombardment, Ft. Boyer surrendered. As the British invasion force readied to launch its assault on Mobile and, presumably, resume their attack on New Orleans, news arrived that stayed them.

As it happened, the Battle of New Orleans occurred just after the signing of a peace treaty in the neutral Dutch city of Ghent, where peace negotiations had been going nowhere for some time. After the end of the war in Europe, however, the British embargo and impressment of American sailors ceased, and with the failure of the grand strategy to split the US, both sides began to reconsider the need for continuing the war. The Treaty of Ghent essentially was a cease fire and return to the status quo before the war.

Gen. Jackson's victories were not at all pointless though. The northern boundary with Canada was dealt with in detail, the southern boundary was hardly mentioned, because, frankly, Washington was little interested in the southern frontier. England did not recognize the Creek cession at Ft. Jackson, and may not have recognized American claims along the Gulf coast. It is not inconceivable that even America's purchase of the Louisiana Territory could be called into question. Treaties usually carried with them the implicit understanding that areas occupied by the former belligerents would remain in their possession if not otherwise stipulated. It is possible that the American negotiators were unaware of the British plan to occupy the Gulf Coast and New Orleans, and the British may well have signed in the expectation they would have the US hemmed-in from farther expansion south and at their mercy for commerce down the Mississippi.

Gen. Jackson's victory at New Orleans proved that England could not control American destiny. British regular forces evacuated Spanish Florida in 1815, but they left many problems behind them, including a vast store of munitions promised to the Red Sticks.

The Deep South Finally Becomes Wholly US.

General Jackson returned home some months after the Battle of New Orleans but he had little time to enjoy peace. He kept his US military commission and served as military commander of the Gulf Coast Region, participating to some extent in planning and operations there through the very imperfect communication system of the day. By the end of 1817, the President ordered him to return to the southern borderlands and restore order. The escaped Red Sticks had soon asserted dominance over the Florida Seminoles and, as they had farther north, demanded unconditional war against the Americans. British citizens, if not agents of the government, still traded with the Indians and continued to hold out vague hopes of an Indian protectorate in Florida and the contested area ceded in the Treaty of Ft. Jackson.

And there was continual, often bloody, conflict between American squatters and earlier settlers – American, Spanish, Indian – over land and livestock in the vast, unmarked no man's land that lay outside the few surveyed areas. Slave catchers prowled the frontier areas clashing with fugitive bands, and Seminoles who owned slaves or had adopted black slaves into their tribe. Bands of escaped slaves occasionally raided outlying plantations and frontier outposts freeing slaves and providing a powerful allurement for more slaves to escape. However noble we see that drive for freedom today, it was not seen so in the south of that day.

Nichols remained for some time in the area after the Treaty of Ghent, appointing himself champion of the Indian cause and keeping their hopes of reclaiming the lost territory alive. Nichols ginned up a treaty with the Creek and Seminoles for British support and carried several chiefs, including Josiah Francis, to England to lobby for it. The false prophet and butcher of Ft. Mims was treated royally, made a Brigadier General, given a golden tomahawk, and praised for “having fought so gloriously in our cause”. But Nichols' proposed treaty was ignored, and the Indians returned to Florida.

A foremost episode of conflict during that period revolved around a fort built by Col. Nichols on the Apalachicola River, dubbed by the Americans “Negro Fort”. One of the great threats in the Creek War was the promised massive shipment of arms and munitions from the British to the Red Sticks. The shipment arrived in Pensacola after Horseshoe Bend with Americans bearing down on it and no Red Stick army to receive it, so Nichols deposited it in the remote fort, left manned by his Indian and runaway slave militia. After Nichols' departure, the Indians drifted away and the fort, with its thousands of guns and hundreds of barrels of gun powder, fell completely into the hands of what had been a black British colonial militia.

What is then is open to dispute – a band of freedom fighters who raided plantations across the US border, or a band of outlaws as was the opinion of the US and Spanish governments, and increasingly, the opinion of the neighboring Seminoles.

Typically, the Seminoles and runaway slaves had good relations, often with the blacks farming on a share cropper basis. With the ex-slaves in control of "Negro Fort", however, a growing and independent black colony developed surrounding the fort on what the Seminoles considered their land. And the holders of the fort and its arms cache became averse to sharing its supplies with the Indians, who also claimed the arms cache rightfully belonged to them.

A complex series of events on the Florida frontier, that some claim as a direct provocation engineered by Jackson, sent a US Navy boat up the Apalachicola River to take on fresh water. The fort fired on the boat causing several casualties. In retaliation, a small military expedition, including two gunboats, attacked the fort.

An enterprising American officer (but not too farsighted), finding a Seminole war party hostile to the black settlement operating in the area, brought them in on the operation with the promise of allowing them to loot the fort. As was the case with the white settlers, the black settlers fled to the protection of the fort. Cannon fire from the fort drove the attacking Seminoles into the woods.

Their fire did not hit the American gun boats, however, which advanced on the fort and began firing. As fate would have it, on the first salvo, a cannon ball found its way into a stuffed powder magazine and, in an explosion heard all the way to Pensacola, “Negro Fort” and most of its hapless defenders and sheltering families were blown to kingdom come.

When the Americans recovered from the explosion, they found the Seminoles swarming over the smoldering ruin and extracting considerable stores of arms and gun powder. The incursion of Americans into Seminole territory, coupled with fresh stocks of munitions, further inflamed turmoil on the frontier.

So, once again Jackson called up his faithful Tennessee and Georgia militias, and General McIntosh's Creeks; and this time also commanding a substantial regular army force, he set out on the long march southward. Jackson's orders had again been a bit vague, perhaps on purpose. Correctly or not, he comprehended his mission as seizing and occupying the border area of Spanish Florida.

Jackson left Ft. Scott in Georgia and crossed into Florida, first destroying a large Seminole town then continuing on to capture the Spanish Fort San Marcos de Apalachee, now part of Tallahassee, then he swept westward along the border fighting occasional skirmishes and burning Creek and Seminole villages to force them farther south. Travel was difficult and his soldiers were chronically on the verge of starvation when supplies came in. He eventually arrived at Pensacola and again took it with little resistance. That pretty well completed his campaign in Florida, dubbed the First Seminole War.

Jackson captured two British citizens during his campaign and court marshaled and executed them for aiding the Indians in war on his countrymen. Josiah Francis and another Red Stick chief were also captured and executed. The seizure of north Florida and execution of British citizens created an even greater international incident. Of the latter, there was a lot of bluster and promises of investigations, but most Americans accepted that Jackson had good reason for holding them responsible for atrocities on Americans.

Of the former, the US reminded Spain of its treaty obligations to police the border area and issued an ultimatum that Spain either stop the violence along the border or sell the Floridas to the US.

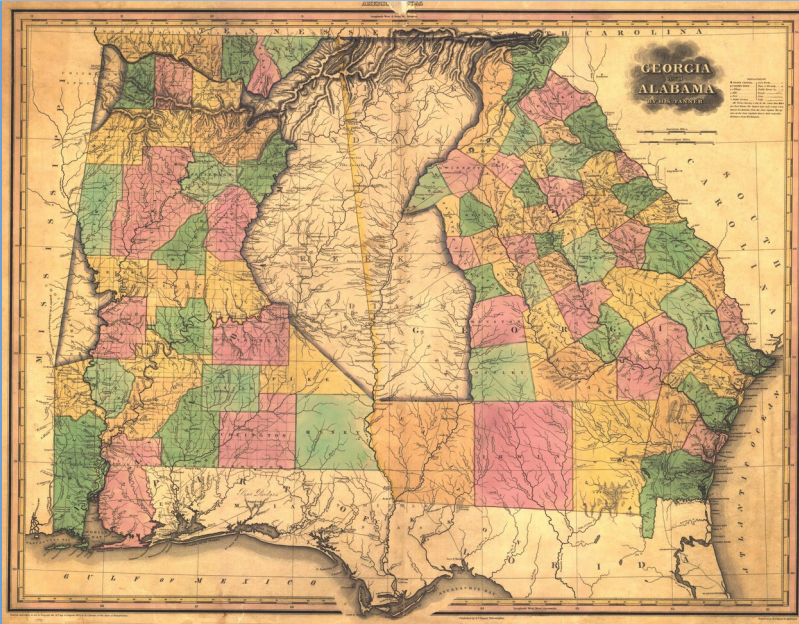
Spain was in no position to police the area as at that time most of Spanish America was imitating the US and revolting against the Spanish Empire, weakened as it was by the Napoleonic Wars. In 1819, Spain agreed to sell the Floridas. Jackson returned to Pensacola in 1821 to receive them into the United States and serve as military governor. He stayed in Florida only a few months to set up a functioning government and then he resigned and returned to Tennessee.

Andrew Jackson had accomplished his immediate goals, but he had not brought peace to the frontier. There were continuing conflicts between white settlers and Indians, increasing conflicts between tribal and state legal systems, and continuing forced removal of settlers from Indian lands by the federal government. There were many other critical issues facing the still fledgling republic also, and Jackson had strong opinions on most of them; America was his country, after all, and the Americans were his people.

Andrew Jackson was elected to the US Senate in 1822, and ran for President two years later. The result of that election was a tie in electoral votes and the election was decided by the House of Representatives in favor of John Quincy Adams. In 1828, though, Jackson was elected President in an historic landslide, demonstrating the rising power of the "west", and of the "common man"; the era of "Jacksonian Democracy" was born.

One of his first priorities as president was the passage of the "Indian Removal Act", signed into law in 1830. The Act actually did little except make a statement that removal of the eastern Indians to the west was now the official policy of the US government. It authorized the President to make treaties swapping Indian lands in the east for lands in the west – something that was being routinely done anyway. Long before Jackson's election as President, many eastern Indians had voluntarily settled in the western "Indian Territories". Others resisted removal however.

This 1823 map of Alabama and Georgia presents the situation; large parts of the states are still off limits to white settlement.



It is wrong to contend, as some do, that Jackson's supposed enmity for the Indians was at the forefront of his thoughts at the beginning of his first term, but issues involving Indian lands forced themselves to the forefront. The killings of William McIntosh and other leaders of the pro-American Creeks in 1825, followed by the flight of hundreds of other Creeks to white settlements for protection was reminiscent of the Red Stick War. They petitioned the federal government and Georgia for help in relocating to the west, and set out in 1827, the year before Jackson was elected President.

The federal government's repudiation of the Treaty of Indian Springs because only McIntosh's small group signed it added fuel to Georgia's long simmering resentment of the central government's stifling of her claim to lands occupied by Cherokee and Creek tribes. McIntosh's son and others of his supporters claimed that a majority of Creek chiefs had supported the Treaty, but the meeting was sabotaged by an anti-Treaty federal agent who warned many of the chiefs to leave before the end of the council. Further, that the same agent had conspired in the killing of his father. An investigation exonerated the agent, but that result was never accepted by the McIntosh family.

That simmering anger against the federal government reached the boiling point with the Cherokee suit before the Supreme Court claiming sovereign nation status. Georgia called up its militia, and military action to support Georgia's claims seemed not far off.

At the same time, recent increases in tariff rates by the US Congress, to support northern manufacturing at the expense of the agricultural south, had brought on the 'nullification crisis'. South Carolina officially stated that it was 'nullifying' that act of Congress. President Jackson publicly stated that he was prepared to enforce the tariffs with the US military if necessary. He is also quoted as suspecting that South Carolina's aim was secession from the Union. Were war to break out between any of the southern states and the federal government, a general secession and wider war was sure to follow. The result of such a war in, say 1831, would have been far less predictable than the Civil War of 1861. The population and power of the north and south were much more equal in those early years of the country. And that would be only one generation out from the Hartford Convention of 1814 in which New England Federalists, feeling neither concern nor need for western and southern frontier states, debated seceding from the Union themselves and making a separate peace with England. Whether they would fight a terrible war to hold the south was highly questionable. What was not questionable to President Jackson was that, if fought, it would be a terrible war. He had no desire to send US armed forces against the very state militias he had trained and led only a few years before.

There was another unquestionable fact also to be considered in case of war – the remaining Indians in Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi would have been in the gravest danger of complete annihilation. Recent memories of war and atrocities by the Indians still burned in peoples' minds in the south. Nor did they need to rely on memories to fear and loathe the Indians; tales of atrocities against settlers in Florida, Texas, and the north western frontiers of the country arrived with each newspaper and letters from relatives. In the hatred, confusion and lawlessness bred by a civil war, the Indians would be far more of a target than ever before.



Depictions of the Seminole wars in the popular press of the time.

President Jackson faced a grave choice immediately upon assuming the office of President of the United States in January of 1829. Should he support the claims of Indian sovereignty, upheld by the US Supreme Court, and invite civil war, genocide of the Indians, and permanent division and crippling of the US. Or should he consummate what had been the growing consensus of American thought on the best way to deal with the Indian problem – relocation to the west.



ATTACK OF THE SEMINOLES ON THE BLOCK HOUSE

It was not an agonizing choice for Jackson; he was an American patriot, and a man of the frontier. The people of the frontier and the greater good of America were his paramount concerns. Despite that natural, and appropriate, bias though, the rational and humane basis of his choice remains solid.

When the rupture between the north and south finally came in 1861, the four years of civil war cost an estimated 620,000 to 850,000 lives, untold suffering, and incalculable costs in material damages as major cities were shelled and starved into surrender, others were burned, and whole industries and the infrastructure of a nation destroyed. There were single battles with more casualties than the entire population of Indians in the southeast in 1830. Whether in a civil war of 1831 or '61, the disappearance of the Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw and Choctaw would hardly have been noticed. Who could blame a president for trying to avert such a tragedy.

When it did come, the Civil War was mostly because of rancor generated in decades of mutual demonization between pro and anti-slavery zealots that was only beginning in 1830. Indian lands and tariffs were hardly an issue at all, Andrew Jackson had removed them from the table with compromise legislation on tariffs and the Indian Removal Act of 1830.

Neither the words of Jackson, nor the fate of the Indians bear up the accusation of any hatred of the Indians. President Jackson's First and Second Messages to Congress are the best revelation of his thinking on the Indian Removal Act and the circumstances at the time. They evince a paternalistic concern for their welfare.

He makes the case, in those speeches, that relocation of the southern tribes to the west would be in everyone's best interest and may afford the southern tribes' only chance of survival and independence. Jackson also laid out the Constitutional basis for rejecting Cherokee sovereignty within the boundaries of a state, the Supreme Court notwithstanding. And he likened what the Southern Indians were asked to do to with what Americans by the hundreds of thousands were doing – leaving the “graves of their fathers”, their homes, and ways of life to move west in search of a better life.

Having the example of modern politicians before us, some may be skeptical of President Jackson's concern for the best interests of the Indians, but I think we can assume that he was telling it straight. That was long before the dawn of today's political correctness.

Furthermore, I can't conceive that a man who had faced hardship and battle as he had, and who had stood at twelve paces and let a well known marksman take aim at his heart and pull the trigger, and who had just won a landslide mandate from the American people, would pander to Indian sympathies he didn't share. Certainly during his lifetime people found that he meant what he said.

As far as Jackson's comments being seen as patronizing by some critics; they simply expose the reality that the continued existence of the American Indians inside the United States' present and future boundaries depended upon the paternalistic good will of the central government.

President Jackson's Messages to Congress are lengthy, thorough and detailed statements on the 'state of the union' far beyond recent efforts. And they are written at a level and in a style that make them difficult for the modern reader, but they are well worth the effort of reading for anyone truly interested in the history of the Indian Removal. The sections dealing with the Indian Removal Act from President Jackson's First and Second Messages to Congress are attached to this history as an Appendix.

Andrew Jackson offered the Indians the two most precious gifts he could offer - to become citizens of the United States; or, if that did not suit them, a new land, and freedom from the United States. When we think of the sacrifices and hazards people every day endure just to slip into this country, we can get an idea of the value of that offer. And when we look at the sacrifices and hazards people endure to escape the fenced-in tyrannies of the world we can also appreciate that offer from the other perspective.

One can, of course, sympathize with Indians who did not wish to give up their old homes and ways of life, and leave 'the graves of their ancestors' even though as Jackson pointed out, it was nothing white people weren't doing. In fact, far from being cruel toward the Indians, Jackson's offer put them on an equal footing with Americans in expectations that they could succeed in a new land – and many were proving that to be true even then. The tragedies that ensued are a testament to the fallen nature of mankind, of all skin colors, not to some thinly veiled enmity on Andrew Jackson's part.

But, unfortunately there were those tragedies still to come in the Indians' saga. Jackson's overly optimistic hopes for a peaceful, orderly, and humane migration to a new homeland west of the Mississippi, buffeted by opposition from the start, evaporated completely in the Second Creek War of 1836-37.

The fact is, neither side fully supported the Indian Removal Act and the treaties that underpinned it. Large numbers of Indians had no intention of moving westward. State governments, land agents, and white settlers resented the provision granting 320 acres to Creek heads of households (640 to chiefs) who wanted to stay and become citizens. In the early 1830's there was a land rush to settle the now supposedly cleared Creek lands, a rush that preceded the federal land surveys and Indian removal. When the surveys began to find conflicts between federally granted Creek claims and prior claims bought from state licensed land agents trouble erupted in which the state and local authorities sided with the white settlers and federal authorities sided with the Indian claimants.

Many Creeks were also defrauded out of their claims, or forced to sell out for little or nothing; that, of course, had been a common experience of white settlers also. Federal Marshals tried to protect Indian interests, but they were too few and far between.

One confrontation got out of hand in Alabama when Federal troops evicted a community of new settlers and burned their buildings. In the aftermath, a white settler was killed by one of the federal troops. The soldier was promptly arrested and indicted for murder leading to yet another threat of federal versus state confrontation. President Jackson sent down his friend and accomplished negotiator, as well as American patriotic icon, Francis Scott Key, to investigate the situation and negotiate a settlement. Key was able to defuse that confrontation, but despite that limited success, conditions in the south were rapidly getting out of control. Jackson was seen as siding with the Indians and lost a lot of popularity in Alabama and the federal government fell into even further disrepute.

In the spring of 1836 several hundred Creek warriors, mostly young, went on the warpath to 'drive out the white man'. Whatever spirit possessed them to attempt something their ancestors couldn't do two centuries earlier did the Creek Nation no favor. They attacked small military outposts, steamboats, farms and plantations killing and scalping, spreading terror – and burning outrage.

Their highwater mark came with the burning of the little town of Roanoke, Georgia in May. Most of the relatively few people in town at the time of the attack managed to escape with the help of the small military detachment guarding it, but over two dozen of the townspeople were found dead or simply went missing. Roanoke had only recently been built, and on the site of William McIntosh's plantation where the Treaty of Indian Springs was signed. The Red Stick revival had its revenge, now it had to pay the penalty.

The American response was predictable. Militias from Alabama and Georgia sprang into action and were soon hunting down and corralling, or killing, whatever Creeks could be found. As usual, the innocent suffered more than the guilty, many of whom simply melted into the Florida Seminoles.

The US Army was put in nominal charge of quelling the uprising for fear of the over zealousness of the local citizen-soldiers; but with the US “standing military” cut to a minimal size and tied up in Florida, it was still the war of the local citizen-soldiers – the ones whose families were at risk, or who had already lost loved ones to Creek warriors, or who stood to gain from their displacement. Within the year, the Creek removal began.

The Cherokee Trail of Tears began two years after the burning of Roanoke. The Cherokees hadn't gone on the warpath against the white man and his culture as had the Creeks. Not only was that seen as futile, but by the 1830's intermarriage and acculturation had blurred the lines between the Cherokees and the Americans. Unlike the Creeks, most Cherokees were by then adapting to the life of small farmers, and many of the Cherokee leaders to lives as wealthy planters and businessmen. What was at stake was sovereignty over the Cherokee Nation's land, and the Cherokees split violently over the issue of removal.

By that time, Georgia was openly denying Cherokee sovereignty and selling off land and harassing the Cherokees to force them out. White settlers were taking up the land, and gold prospectors were streaming into the area by the thousands. In 1829, newspapers were reporting a gold strike on Cherokee claimed land in Georgia.

The Georgia Gold Rush of 1829 was the parent of the California Gold Rush of '49 with many of the same people and lawless frontier character.

With territorial claims of around ten million acres and a population of only about sixteen thousand total remaining in the east, roughly one person per square mile, there was little the Cherokee could do but appeal to the United States government. That only lent more credence to the conclusion that removal was best for both; but not everyone saw it that way.

The Jackson administration supported the Cherokee claims at that time and sent in several hundred troops to evict white squatters and gold miners; in effect making war on its own citizens. The gold miners who were caught were evicted from Cherokee land and their buildings and equipment destroyed. That didn't deter them for long however, and they were soon back in business, along with those who were more wary and managed to elude the soldiers.

Sometimes Cherokees took up working where the white miners had been forced out and that caused more trouble. The aggrieved white settlers and miners protested to Georgia and Georgia protested to Washington. The situation amounted to a no-mans land standoff where no one's law mattered. It would have taken a large federal army to fully control the area and a de facto assumption of both Cherokee and Georgia sovereignty.

The problems and contradictions of the Cherokees' situation began to bear more and more on their minds. One of the Cherokees' main hopes of avoiding removal or submergence into one of the states was to develop a national government, complete with written constitution and democratic institutions. Though limited democracy was new to the Cherokee, they soon explored all the vices and weaknesses of democratic politics.

John Ross, a wealthy merchant and planter working a large number of slaves was elected Principal Chief largely on his boast that he could forestall removal.

Ross had family ties and political capital in Washington and New England, but by then political power had shifted to the frontier. Nevertheless, his confidence was such that he gathered a flock of devoted followers. Rightly or not, Ross was accused of encouraging, or at least closing his eyes to the violence of a secret quasi-religious society dedicated to the suppression of opposition to his anti-removal stand.

Major Ridge, who had led a Cherokee police force in a futile effort to keep white settlers out, became head of the party in favor of removal and counted among his supporters Elias Boudinot (aka Buck Oowatie), Andrew Ross, brother of John Ross, Major Walker (whose name came in much the same way as Ridge's) and his son John Walker, Jr. Though in the minority, they were (or had been) an influential group. Boudinot always decried the election of John Ross as a fraudulent, rigged election.

From then on, Ridge and his supporters were never allowed to present their side in the Cherokee National Council meetings although Ridge and several others of his faction were Council members and even elected officers of the council. Ridge tried to run for Principal Chief in the election of 1832, but the election was canceled.

Boudinot was one of the founders and the first editor of *The Cherokee Phoenix*, the first Indian tribal newspaper in the country. His speaking tour of the US raised most of the money for the paper. Boudinot, a full blooded Cherokee, born Buck Oowaite, adopted the name of a patriot/statesman who was the first President of The American Bible Society and a sponsor of the missionary college young Oowatie attended in New England.

Among other things that lead to his newspaper career, Boudinot helped translate parts of the Bible into the first Cherokee language edition. The Cherokee were the first tribe to develop a written language and very quickly developed a fairly widespread literacy.

Boudinot opposed removal at first, but became convinced of its inevitability and the Cherokees' need to make the best of it. After 1832, his paper argued powerfully for voluntary removal west, where thousands of Cherokees, roughly a third of the tribe had already relocated several years earlier and, after a rocky start, were doing well. Pressure from the Ross faction forced Boudinot to leave the *Phoenix*, however, and a Ross relative and supporter became the new editor. The paper became strongly pro-Ross and anti-Ridge.

Tensions increased to the point that killings of the Ridge, or Treaty Party, faction became commonplace. The most notorious episode was the ambush murder of John Walker, Jr. in Tennessee. Three men of the Ross faction were arrested by local officials and charged with the murder. Although Ross denied any role in the murder, Major Walker made several unsuccessful attempts to kill him. Ross did hire a high powered legal defense and the suspects (who never denied the murder) were released on the basis that the court had no jurisdiction. They were re-arrested on appeal, got out on bail (provided by Ross) and escaped.

President Jackson, a personal friend of Major Walker, warned Ross that he would be held responsible for killings of the “Treaty Party” members.

After that, there were several attempts at reconciliation and efforts for compromise treaties with the federal government but they came to nothing. Pressure for a resolution continued to mount and Ross secretly negotiated for a removal treaty and agreed to let the Senate settle the monetary compensation. Ross backed out when the Senate cut his demand of twenty five million dollars down to five million. That was the last straw for the Jackson administration. The Indian Commissioner was directed to call a Council and get a treaty. The Ross “National Party” faction boycotted the Council but in December of 1835 the Ridge “Treaty Party” signed the Treaty of New Echota agreeing to essentially the same terms that Ross had backed out of.

In general terms, the treaty provided for an equivalent area in Oklahoma and Kansas, free from any state and with only minimal federal oversight, a five million dollar settlement, and a variety of other financial incentives for education, relocation expenses, etc. For those who left voluntarily before the 1838 deadline, the US would provide compensation for homes and other improvements. The original treaty had a provision allowing Cherokees to take state citizenship and receive a land grant, but after the disasters in Alabama and Georgia with the Creek treaty, Jackson unilaterally struck that provision.

When news of the treaty broke there was great consternation and outrage among the Cherokees. The Ross faction accused the Ridge faction of betraying the Cherokee people for personal gain. Major Ridge replied that he expected to gain nothing personally, that he had signed his own death warrant, but that the treaty was best for his people. Boudinot wrote a lengthy response refuting the accusations and attacking the Ross faction for feeding the people false hopes and denying them the real facts of their situation. He also excoriated Ross and the others of the Cherokee ruling elite for dallying on the treaty “...to make a better treaty, that is to get more money, full compensation for your gold mines, your marble quarries, your forests, your water courses”. A sore point to many Cherokees was that the Cherokee elite could take advantage of opportunities on the vast “Tribal Lands” that the poor could not.

Although the Cherokee Council had recently banned the so called “Law of Vengeance”, Boudinot also recognized the treaty as a probable death warrant in stating, “*We can die, but the great Cherokee nation will be saved*”.

In 1836, the Ridges, Oowaites, Boudinots, Andrew Ross and their followers, only around 500, sold out and moved west to start a new life, although for some of them it was to be a short one. Ross continued to counsel his people to ignore the treaty and its looming deadline. But he worked feverishly to build support for overturning the treaty, and based most of his hope on the fact that Andrew Jackson's second term expired and he left office in March of 1837, well before the deadline for Cherokee removal.

As the deadline approached, Ross delivered a petition to Washington containing around sixteen thousand signatures repudiating the treaty. Although it was duly noted that the petition contained vastly more signatures than there were eligible Cherokees, it did inspire sympathy for their cause. In the early spring of 1838, Ross prevailed upon the Secretary of War to ask the states involved for a delay. The governor of Georgia responded that any delay in the removal of the Cherokee people beyond May 26 of 1838 would “certainly” result in the “collision” of federal and state militaries.

President Martin van Buren and the US government declined to enter into a civil war for the sake of a few, as they saw it, ill advised citizens of the Cherokee Nation. Now with the deadline for removal or war growing short, the US military was assigned to hurriedly round up and transport the Cherokee in what is rightly known as the 'Cherokee Trail of Tears'.

There were actually several forced removals at various times and from various points. John Ross managed to get himself placed in charge of the most disastrous of those – the archetypal 'Trail of Tears'. Other removals were managed by professional soldiers with no more loss of life than usual for any pioneer caravan going west in those years. It was a hard trip for anyone, and usually undertaken in the winter to avoid the deadly hordes of mosquitoes in crossing the marshy Mississippi Valley. That was before generations of hardy American pioneers had toiled, and died, in transforming the fever ridden swamps into prime farmland.

With the relocation of the Ross faction to Indian Territory there was an immediate conflict between them and the “Old Settlers” who had removed voluntarily earlier. The Ridge group of settlers had blended into the Old Settlers and accepted their government. The murders of Major Ridge, John Ridge, Boudinot, and many others of the Ridge faction, and the assumption of power by John Ross, caused a civil war among the Cherokees that lasted for generations.

Major Ridge and most of the others were simply ambushed. Boudinot's murder was a little more tragic. He had received some medical training back east and was always willing to help people in distress. One day three strangers came to his house asking help for a sick friend. Boudinot apparently suspected that this was an invitation to his death, but to spare his family he pretended everything was alright, said goodbye to them and went along quietly. He was found with a knife in his back.

Boudinot's children went back to his wife's family in New England. Later the oldest son, Elias. C. Boudinot, an attorney, returned to become heavily involved in Cherokee politics, arguing for assimilation and becoming American citizens, and for division of tribal lands to private ownership.

No known attempt was ever made on the life of Andrew Ross, but few others of the Treaty Party leaders were so fortunate. The US government demanded the arrest of the murderers but Ross refused on the grounds of Cherokee sovereignty. No one was ever charged with any of the murders.

One of the few to escape the death sentence was Boudinot's brother, Stand Oowaite. In separate incidents, both ruled self-defense, he killed two attackers. Still later, as a General in the Confederate Army, he burned northern sympathizer John Ross' "fine home". That is, of course, not the end of the Cherokees' story, but it has already taken us beyond the scope of this work.

By the late 1830's, except for the Seminoles, the Indian removal from the south was complete - as complete as it was going to be. Some of all the southern tribes managed to avoid removal in one way or another. Some simply hid out for a while. Others managed to hold onto their land allotments, and there were numerous special exemptions for particular services rendered to the United States. Unknown numbers were eligible for allotments by military service. In numerous ways they blended into the growing America and today there are millions of Americans, like myself, who count Indians among their ancestors.

In addition, there are more than five million who self-identify in the census as “Native American” (a term I do not normally use because it is ill defined, divisive, and racist in its application).

As for the Seminole – there was a Second Seminole War in the 1830's, a Third Seminole War in the 1850's, and by some tallies, a long running Fourth Seminole War into the early Twentieth Century. It was only after the Third Seminole War that the growing cities of Florida were safe from attack, and sometime after that when outlying settlers and travelers were safe.

The map of the eastern US was complete now, and in that sense the story of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Colonies and the southern Indian lands coming into the USA was complete. But there is an epilogue to the story developed, for the most part, only in recent years.

EPILOGUE

Over the past several generations, a question Andrew Jackson asked in his Second Message to Congress has increasingly come to haunt us:

“What good man would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our extensive Republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms embellished with all the improvements which art can devise or industry execute, occupied by more than 12,000,000 happy people, and filled with all the blessings of liberty, civilization and religion?”

What “good man” indeed – a rhetorical device to imply that no good man, certainly no good American, would prefer the former condition of this continent over the latter. For generations there were few who would have argued that point, but today there seems to be an abundance of such sentiment, albeit among those who seem never to have given the argument any serious thought. There obviously was a challenge to the positive view of America even in the days of Andrew Jackson or he wouldn't have mentioned it, but since the early part of the last century there has been a planned, systematic attack upon America's inner being, our soul, if you will.

The attack originated from foreign shores in foreign and hostile ideals – call them Marxism, Communism, Socialism, Progressivism, or some other Godless 'ism' that America had traditionally opposed, and was therefore hated by; but the nature and history of what we may simply call “the Left” is too far off the topic of this book to pursue any further.

To the subject of this Epilogue however, we can add that those hostile ideals found fertile soil here in America and have taken root in the educational system and popular culture and have long since overgrown the land in a tangle of guilt, shame, and confusion that has become the normal life experience to most of the younger generations – much to their detriment, and to us all who love this country and its people.

The attack on the American soul found that fertile soil here in the decaying fields of America's once great and sustaining Christian faith, for it preys upon spiritual sickness. The spiritual sickness began in the old home place of America's spiritual heritage, New England. As America grew and prospered as few nations ever have, religious persecution, famine, hardship, and Indian attack became evermore distant memories. So did the knowledge of God's great works among them, and finally God Himself became only a legend. As God faded from our thoughts, men became the masters of American history, first as heroes, now as villains.

There was one pale ghost of the past that would not completely fade away however, that was the old Puritan feeling of guilt, a need for absolution, even of a savior. But without The Savior, Jesus Christ, and without a Heavenly Father to be reconciled with, how was one to be absolved from that sense of guilt?

A popular first step, and a very clever ploy of The Enemy, is to assume a guilt burden for someone else's perceived sins while ignoring your own sins. Many Americans, cheerfully encouraged by our enemies – foreign, domestic, and infernal – have chosen the route to redemption of disparaging their own heritage. Their way to fullest absolution for the perceived sin of being a white, Christian American is to be an apostle of those who find only evil and no good in our American heritage; to seek spiritual solace by evangelizing their own unreasoning, self-destructive burden of guilt and shame to others.

You see evidence of that malady in the self-righteous, and blatantly racist denunciations as “greedy white men” the tide of tens of thousands of free men and women, mostly born here, who wanted a little farmstead and a chance at a decent life of hard work, worshiping God as they chose, and building families and communities, and a nation to pass on to future generations. Americans who thought that they had as much of a God given right to a small farm as a few thousand Indians had to millions of acres of forestland.

We see that spiritual sickness in modern history books and popular commentary lauding Tecumseh as a “great chief”, when a more accurate description would be ‘genocidal racist and religious fanatic who brought destruction upon his own people with his demented and probably demon inspired quest to destroy white civilization and drag the Indians back into the stone age under a religion that practiced torture and human sacrifice as worship.’ The same goes for almost all other enemies of the American people – once our enemies, now our heroes.

On the other hand, we currently see Andrew Jackson, once revered as an American hero unparalleled except by George Washington, almost universally condemned as a racist, hater, etc., etc. A more complete and accurate description would include his saving, at great personal sacrifice, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Indian lives from Tecumseh's Red Sticks; staving off a civil war, that would have almost certainly destroyed the remaining Indians in the southeast, by a well meaning, if not entirely successful, effort to peacefully relocate the southern tribes to the west. Then, there was his saving of the Gulf Coast from British control, and playing a major role in the development of the United States into a great nation.

Such has been the fate of most one time American heroes – now to be numbered among the shameful and despised of our history. There is something terribly sad and foreboding about a society that has become so deranged in its thinking.

And so we come back around to spiritual warfare, and to God. If we believe in God, the God revealed in the Bible, then we must believe in His sovereignty, as Rev. Cotton said: *"This placing of people in this or that country, is from God's sovereignty over all the earth, and the inhabitants thereof: as in Psalms 24:1: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof"*.

If God is not sovereign, He is not God. If He is sovereign, then the settling of America was according to his will – not because of the skin color of the settlers, and not entirely because of their faith I think, which was very uneven, but because after thousands of years of failure in this continent, God's first directive was at last being carried out: *"Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it"*.

Certainly an objective consideration of America's unprecedented rise shows the hand of God, as past generations were eager to point out. Without that gift to US, the North American continent would likely be occupied today by a few thousand stone age savages constantly at war among themselves and ruled by evil spirits who refused to peacefully give up their hegemony here.

Hundreds of millions of lives would not have been lived, and the world would not have gained all the good that America has given it. There apparently are many benighted souls who would rejoice at that loss, but not this writer. I have to agree with President Andrew Jackson on that.

Appendix

This first excerpt is from President Jackson's First Annual Message to Congress, delivered December 1 of 1829, and making a case for his proposed "Indian Removal Act":

The condition and ulterior destiny of the Indian tribes within the limits of some of our States have become objects of much interest and importance. It has long been the policy of Government to introduce among them the arts of civilization, in the hope of gradually reclaiming them from a wandering life. This policy has, however, been coupled with another wholly incompatible with its success. Professing a desire to civilize and settle them, we have at the same time lost no opportunity to purchase their lands and thrust them farther into the wilderness. By this means they have not only been kept in a wandering state, but been led to look upon us as unjust and indifferent to their fate. Thus, though lavish in its expenditures upon the subject, Government has constantly defeated its own policy, and the Indians in general, receding farther and farther to the west, have retained their savage habits. A portion, however, of the Southern tribes, having mingled much with the whites and made some progress in the arts of civilized life, have lately attempted to erect an independent government within the limits of Georgia and Alabama. These States, claiming to be the only sovereigns within their territories, extended their laws over the Indians, which induced the latter to call upon the United States for protection.

Under these circumstances the question presented was whether the General Government had a right to sustain those people in their pretensions. The Constitution declares that "no new State shall be formed or erected within the jurisdiction of any other State" without the consent of its legislature. If the General Government is not permitted to tolerate the erection of a confederate State within the territory of one of the members of this Union against her consent, much less could it allow a foreign and independent government to establish itself there.

Georgia became a member of the Confederacy which eventuated in our Federal Union as a sovereign State, always asserting her claim to certain limits, which, having been originally defined in her colonial charter and subsequently recognized in the treaty of peace, she has ever since continued to enjoy, except as they have been circumscribed by her own voluntary transfer of a portion of her territory to the United States in the articles of cession of 1802. Alabama was admitted into the Union on the same footing with the original States, with boundaries which were prescribed by Congress.

There is no constitutional, conventional, or legal provision which allows them less power over the Indians within their borders than is possessed by Maine or New York. Would the people of Maine permit the Penobscot tribe to erect an independent government within their State? And unless they did would it not be the duty of the General Government to support them in resisting such a measure? Would the people of New York permit each remnant of the six Nations within her borders to declare itself an independent people under the protection of the United States? Could the Indians establish a separate republic on each of their reservations in Ohio? And if they were so disposed would it be the duty of this Government to protect them in the attempt? If the principle involved in the obvious answer to these questions be abandoned, it will follow that the objects of this Government are reversed, and that it has become a part of its duty to aid in destroying the States which it was established to protect.

Actuated by this view of the subject, I informed the Indians inhabiting parts of Georgia and Alabama that their attempt to establish an independent government would not be countenanced by the Executive of the United States, and advised them to emigrate beyond the Mississippi or submit to the laws of those States.

Our conduct toward these people is deeply interesting to our national character. Their present condition, contrasted with what they once were, makes a most powerful appeal to our sympathies. Our ancestors found them the uncontrolled possessors of these vast regions. By persuasion and force they have been made to retire from river to river and from mountain to mountain, until some of the tribes have become extinct and others have left but remnants to preserve for a while their once terrible names. Surrounded by the whites with their arts of civilization, which by destroying the resources of the savage doom him to weakness and decay, the fate of the Mohegan, the Narragansett, and the Delaware is fast overtaking the Choctaw, the Cherokee, and the Creek. That this fate surely awaits them if they remain within the limits of the States does not admit of a doubt. Humanity and national honor demand that every effort should be made to avert so great a calamity. It is too late to inquire whether it was just in the United States to include them and their territory within the bounds of new States, whose limits they could control. That step can not be retraced. A State can not be dismembered by Congress or restricted in the exercise of her constitutional power. But the people of those States and of every State, actuated by feelings of justice and a regard for our national honor, submit to you the interesting question whether something can not be done, consistently with the rights of the States, to preserve this much-injured race.

As a means of effecting this end I suggest for your consideration the propriety of setting apart an ample district west of the Mississippi, and without the limits of any State or Territory now formed, to be guaranteed to the Indian tribes as long as they shall occupy it, each tribe having a distinct control over the portion designated for its use.

There they may be secured in the enjoyment of governments of their own choice, subject to no other control from the United States than such as may be necessary to preserve peace on the frontier and between the several tribes. There the benevolent may endeavor to teach them the arts of civilization, and, by promoting union and harmony among them, to raise up an interesting commonwealth, destined to perpetuate the race and to attest the humanity and justice of this Government.

This emigration should be voluntary, for it would be as cruel as unjust to compel the aborigines to abandon the graves of their fathers and seek a home in a distant land. But they should be distinctly informed that if they remain within the limits of the States they must be subject to their laws. In return for their obedience as individuals they will without doubt be protected in the enjoyment of those possessions which they have improved by their industry. But it seems to me visionary to suppose that in this state of things claims can be allowed on tracts of country on which they have neither dwelt nor made improvements, merely because they have seen them from the mountain or passed them in the chase. Submitting to the laws of the States, and receiving, like other citizens, protection in their persons and property, they will ere long become merged in the mass of our population.

I now commend you, fellow citizens, to the guidance of Almighty God, with a full reliance on His merciful providence for the maintenance of our free institutions, and with an earnest supplication that what ever errors it may be my lot to commit in discharging the arduous duties which have devolved on me will find a remedy in the harmony and wisdom of your counsels.

ANDREW JACKSON

This second selection is an excerpt from Jackson's Second Annual Message to Congress of 1830, in which he states his expectations of the now passed "Indian Removal Act":

It gives me pleasure to announce to Congress that the benevolent policy of the Government, steadily pursued for nearly thirty years, in relation to the removal of the Indians beyond the white settlements is approaching to a happy consummation. Two important tribes have accepted the provision made for their removal at the last session of Congress, and it is believed that their example will induce the remaining tribes also to seek the same obvious advantages.

The consequences of a speedy removal will be important to the United States, to individual States, and to the Indians themselves. The pecuniary advantages which it promises to the Government are the least of its recommendations. It puts an end to all possible danger of collision between the authorities of the General and State Governments on account of the Indians. It will place a dense and civilized population in large tracts of country now occupied by a few savage hunters. By opening the whole territory between Tennessee on the north and Louisiana on the south to the settlement of the whites it will incalculably strengthen the southwestern frontier and render the adjacent States strong enough to repel future invasions without remote aid. It will relieve the whole State of Mississippi and the western part of Alabama of Indian occupancy, and enable those States to advance rapidly in population, wealth, and power. It will separate the Indians from immediate contact with settlements of whites; free them from the power of the States; enable them to pursue happiness in their own way and under their own rude institutions; will retard the progress of decay, which is lessening their numbers, and perhaps cause them gradually, under the protection of the Government and through the influence of good counsels, to cast off their savage habits and become an interesting, civilized, and Christian community.

What good man would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our extensive Republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms embellished with all the improvements which art can devise or industry execute,

occupied by more than 12,000,000 happy people, and filled with all the blessings of liberty, civilization and religion?

The present policy of the Government is but a continuation of the same progressive change by a milder process. The tribes which occupied the countries now constituting the Eastern States were annihilated or have melted away to make room for the whites. The waves of population and civilization are rolling to the westward, and we now propose to acquire the countries occupied by the red men of the South and West by a fair exchange, and, at the expense of the United States, to send them to land where their existence may be prolonged and perhaps made perpetual. Doubtless it will be painful to leave the graves of their fathers; but what do they more than our ancestors did or than our children are now doing? To better their condition in an unknown land our forefathers left all that was dear in earthly objects. Our children by thousands yearly leave the land of their birth to seek new homes in distant regions. Does Humanity weep at these painful separations from everything, animate and inanimate, with which the young heart has become entwined? Far from it. It is rather a source of joy that our country affords scope where our young population may range unconstrained in body or in mind, developing the power and facilities of man in their highest perfection. These remove hundreds and almost thousands of miles at their own expense, purchase the lands they occupy, and support themselves at their new homes from the moment of their arrival. Can it be cruel in this Government when, by events which it can not control, the Indian is made discontented in his ancient home to purchase his lands, to give him a new and extensive territory, to pay the expense of his removal, and support him a year in his new abode? How many thousands of our own people would gladly embrace the opportunity of removing to the West on such conditions! If the offers made to the Indians were extended to them, they would be hailed with gratitude and joy.

And is it supposed that the wandering savage has a stronger attachment to his home than the settled, civilized Christian? Is it more afflicting to him to leave the graves of his fathers than it is to our brothers and children?

Rightly considered, the policy of the General Government toward the red man is not only liberal, but generous. He is unwilling to submit to the laws of the States and mingle with their population. To save him from this alternative, or perhaps utter annihilation, the General Government kindly offers him a new home, and proposes to pay the whole expense of his removal and settlement.