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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by John Thaddeus Ellisor entitled "The Second Creek War: The Unexplored Conflict." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in History.

John R. Finger, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

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Associate Vice Chancellor
and Dean of the Graduate School

THE SECOND CREEK WAR: THE UNEXPLORED CONFLICT

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

John Thaddeus Ellisor

December 1996

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my father

Dr. J. Thad Ellisor

who gave me my love of Alabama, its past, and its people--red, white, and black.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my major professor, Dr. John R. Finger, for his direction and assistance over the years. I would also like to thank the other committee members, Dr. Paul Bergeron, Dr. Benita Howell and Dr. Charles Johnson, for their suggestions and constructive criticisms. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my debt of gratitude to my mother, Vassie Ellisor, and my wife, Jennifer Brooks. Without their love and support, I could not have finished this project.

Abstract

According to the standard accounts, the Creek War of 1836 was a short-lived, rather insignificant military conflict, a mere side light to the larger story of Creek removal. Drawing on federal and state records, newspaper accounts, and county histories, this study reveals that the contest was a real war, one which should be called the Second Creek War (the Creek War of 1813-1814 being the first) for a number of important reasons. First, the war was more than a sudden, desperate affair. Lower Creek rebels planned the war and executed a definite strategy for sweeping whites out of New Alabama (the Old Creek Nation). Second, the Creek war was more extensive than we have been led to believe. Creek insurgents fought engagements with whites in Alabama, Georgia and Florida. Third, the contest did not actually end in July of 1836 when federal commanders declared victory. Many Creeks escaped federal and state troops and continued fighting for years. In fact, Creeks took the lead in native resistance efforts during the last stage of the Second Seminole War in Florida. Fourth, some Creeks avoided removal and never left their ancient homeland. For them, the war was a victory. Fifth and finally, the Second Creek War had a significant impact on both red and white southerners for the remainder of the antebellum era.

More importantly, this exploration of the Creek conflict provides a closer look at Indian-white relations at the local level during the removal era of the 1830s--a much neglected topic. Previous studies of the Creek Indians and Creek removal present us with the traditional and rather monolithic view of white versus red, of American oppression and native victimization. However, this exploration of the Creek war reveals more complexity. White settlers in the Creek country competed with and exploited one

another even as they sought to exploit the Creeks and take their lands. Some whites even opposed Creek removal for economic reasons. Simultaneously, the Creeks, riven by ethnic and economic disputes of their own, did not respond to the white challenge in a unified way. Some natives self-destructed, others sought accommodation with whites and exploited their fellow tribespeople, and still more natives took up arms both to liberate themselves from New Alabama's grinding economy and to escape removal to the West.

Thus it seems that the Second Creek War resulted not from the meeting of two united, culturally homogenous and diametrically opposed societies, but from the intermingling of two fractious, incohesive ones. The lack of unity on both sides created volatility and increased social fragmentation which exploded in a war of surprisingly long duration. Indeed, this fact is the great lesson of the conflict, and forms the central thesis around which this exploration of a previously unexplored contest unfolds.

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Introduction

According to the standard accounts, the Creek War of 1836 was a short-lived, rather insignificant military conflict. We get the impression the war was a simple police action. Sometimes we see the term, Creek War of 1836, written in quotation marks to downplay its significance as a real war. Other times historians refer to the conflict as the *so-called* Creek War of 1836. Several historians have devoted a few pages of their books to the war, but they only mention it in passing as they move on to other destinations. Scholars interested in Creek Indian history or Indian-white relations consider the war as a mere side light to the more important story of Creek removal.[1] Military historians, on the other hand, pass over the Creek conflict and set their sights on the two other removal era wars, the Black Hawk conflict in the Old Northwest and the long and costly Seminole War in Florida.[2] Consequently, no scholar has explored the

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[1] The standard view of the Creek conflict comes from Michael Paul Rogin, *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975); Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932); Michael D. Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982); Mary E. Young, *Redskins, Ruffleshirts, and Rednecks: Indian Allotments in Alabama and Mississippi, 1830-1860* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961); Angie Debo, *The Road to Disappearance* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941). J. Leitch Wright, in his book *Creeks and Seminoles; The Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulge People* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), gives a different view of the war. His ethnohistorical account places the conflict in the context of an ongoing civil war between two competing moities in Creek society. Unfortunately, Wright, in writing from a strictly native perspective, makes the same mistake historians writing from a purely white point of view have made: he leaves out half of the story.

[2] Cecil Eby's *"That Disgraceful Affair," The Black Hawk War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973) is a good example of literature on the Black Hawk conflict. John K. Mahon's *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1967) is still the most comprehensive of a number of works on the

Creek War of 1836 in any detail. No one has written a book, thesis, or dissertation about this conflict. In fact, we have only a couple of journal articles devoted to the struggle, and neither of these comprehends the full scope of the war or its real meaning.[3] For 150 years, this war has remained largely ignored and unappreciated.

This dissertation will begin to explore what has been an unexplored conflict. In the process, the work will show that this contest was a real war, one which should be called the Second Creek War (the Creek War of 1813-1814 being the first) for a number of important reasons. First, contrary to popular belief, the war was more than a sudden, desperate affair. It was the culmination of a long contest between Georgians and Creeks for land and resources. Second, the Lower Creek rebels planned the war. They executed a definite strategy for sweeping whites out of New Alabama (the Old Creek Nation), and with a little more luck, they might have drawn other Indian nations into the struggle. Third, the Creek war was more extensive than we have been led to believe. The Creek insurgents fought engagements with whites in Alabama, Georgia and Florida. Fourth, the war was not really short-lived. The federal and state military response to the Creek uprising, while massive, was not as successful as it appeared. The war did not actually end in July of 1836, when federal commanders declared victory. Many Creeks escaped federal and state troops and continued fighting for years. In fact, Creeks took the lead in native resistance efforts during the last stage of the Second Seminole War in Florida. Fifth, some of the Creeks avoided removal and never left their ancient homeland. For them, the war was a victory. Sixth and finally, the Second

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Seminole struggle.

[3] Kenneth L. Valliere, "The Creek War of 1836: A Military History," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 57 (Winter 1979-80): 463-85; Brian R. Rucker, "West Florida's Creek Indian Crisis of 1837," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (July, 1991): 315-34.

Creek War had a significant impact on both red and white southerners for the remainder of the antebellum era.

More importantly, however, an exploration of the war provides a closer look at Indian-white relations at the local level during the removal era of the 1830s. During this decade, native land cessions and a booming cotton market propelled a rush of settlers into the Old Southwest. Many of these settlers moved into country still occupied by the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, and Chickasaw nations and built their cabins and mansions hard by native villages and fields. For a few years prior to the Indian removals, these white immigrants, their black slaves, and the native inhabitants of the land lived as near neighbors. In fact, the decade of the 1830s was unique in the history of southern race relations because at no other time in the antebellum era did so many red, white and black southerners live in such close proximity. And yet, the story of this close contact between the various races remains, like the Creek war, an untold story. We have studies of antebellum white, black and Native American societies.[4] We also have studies of United States Indian policy and the Indian removals.[5] Furthermore, we have studies of the relationship between Native Americans and the blacks who lived among them as slaves or adopted tribal members.[6] However, we seldom see in all these pages a

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[4] Good examples of the abundant literature here are: James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Knopf, 1982); George P. Rawick, *From Sunup to Sundown: The Making of the Black Community* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1972); Wright, *Creeks and Seminoles.*

[5] Good examples here are: Ronald N. Satz, *American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975) and Arthur H. DeRosier, *The Removal of the Choctaw Indians* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1970).

[6] See Daniel F. Littlefield, *Africans and Creeks: From the Colonial Period to the Civil War* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979) and Theda Perdue, *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society 1540-1866* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1979).

satisfactory account of how the different races lived together as members of a larger pluralistic society during that important transitional decade of the 1830s.[7] The Second Creek War grew out of this situation, and an examination of its causes, conduct, and consequences tells us more than we presently know about how natives and non-natives interacted at the grassroots level and how federal removal policies affected both groups.

Previous studies of the Creek Indians and Creek removal, as well as general studies of federal removal policy and American expansionism in the Old Southwest, present us with the traditional and rather monolithic view of white versus red, of American oppression and native victimization. We see white southerners, united in their hatred and mistrust of Indians, and their incessant desire to conquer new land, driving the natives out of their ancient homeland. We see the Indians, completely different creatures, retreating, leaving very little trace of themselves. We do not see red, white, and black people living together as near neighbors with all the complexity and diversity of human motives and emotions that always exist in such situations. We also do not see a complete account of what part this interaction between peoples on the local level played

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[7] John H. Peterson, Jr. warns historians and anthropologists not to view Indians in the Old South as cultural isolates. The same thing is true for whites and blacks. Peterson contends that red, white, and black people influenced one another in various ways in the antebellum South, and he calls for scholars to adopt a "conceptual framework capable of dealing with the totality of human social relations in the Southeast as they changed through time." John H. Peterson, Jr., "The Indians in the Old South," in Charles M. Hudson, ed., *Red, White, and Black: Symposium on Indians in the Old South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1971), p. 129. However, those scholars who have taken Peterson's advice when looking at the Old South usually focus on the period before the 1830s. Consequently, they do not explore the era when the most red, white and black people lived in the closest proximity. Daniel Usner's *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992) is an example of one of these pre-removal era studies.

in the whole removal era story. Certainly there is much truth in the traditional view of the removal era in southern history, but in the end it is too simplistic.[8]

The picture that emerges from this exploration of the war, and the pluralistic society that produced it, is one of more complexity. The study reveals that neither whites nor Indians were united in their goals and purposes. The whites who entered New Alabama in 1832 were divided by class, politics and economic interests. They competed with one another and exploited one another even as they sought to extract land and resources from the Creeks. Furthermore, rather than uniting behind the federal government's native removal plan, New Alabama's whites actually stymied the process. The competitive economy they created, based as it was on the complete dispossession of the Creeks, tended to hold the natives in place, draining them of their resources. This exploitation, in turn, impoverished the Indians, who were already torn by ethnic competition as well as conservative and progressive factionalism. Divided against

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[8] The traditional interpretation of aggressive white southerners pushing Indian removal on oppressed natives probably began with Frederick Jackson Turner's *Rise of the New West, 1819-1829* (1906; reprint ed., New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 65, 67-68. Since that time, many books have utilized and strengthened the theme. Their point of departure has been Andrew Jackson's role in the removal drama. Some historians blame Jackson for not enforcing treaties that protected Indian rights. See Dale Van Every, *Disinherited: The Lost Birthright of the American Indian* (New York: Morrow, 1966). Other historians exonerate the president, claiming that he could not resist the land hunger of southern whites and had no choice but to remove the Indians for the good of the nation and themselves. See Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, 2 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 1: 191-98. A review of the literature on this subject appears in Charles Herbert Schoenleber's "The Rise of the New West: Frontier Political Pressure, State-Federal Conflict, and the Removal of the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Cherokees, 1815-1837," (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1986), pp. 1-8. Schoenleber, himself, falls in the anti-Jackson camp, contending that the president's leadership was crucial to removal. Southerners and their congressmen could not have accomplished it without him. However, Schoenleber shows that southerners were not as united behind removal as many historians have supposed. In the case of the Creeks, all of the works mentioned in note 1 follow and help delineate the traditional theme.

themselves, the Creeks did not respond to the white challenge in the same way. Some natives destroyed themselves, others sought accommodation with whites and exploited their fellow tribespeople, and still more Creeks took up arms to liberate themselves from New Alabama's grinding economy and to escape removal to the West. This armed revolt was the Second Creek War, and it lasted many years, owing both to the determination of the Creek resistance fighters and the divided and competitive nature of white society. The whites, often working at cross purposes, simply could not bring the hostile Indians to bay. Finally, the Creek conflict simply wore itself out.

Thus it seems that the Second Creek War resulted not from the meeting of two united, culturally homogenous and diametrically opposed societies, but from the intermingling of two fractious, incohesive ones. The lack of unity on both sides created volatility and increased social fragmentation which exploded in a war of surprisingly long duration. Indeed, this fact is the great lesson of the conflict, and forms the central thesis around which this exploration of the previously unexplored contest unfolds.

Of course, an exploration of this sort demands care. The principal sources--state and federal records, newspapers, and county histories--often contradict one another. Local newspapers were party organs, and political considerations often colored the reporting of events. Similarly, the individuals who wrote letters to the War Department often had political or financial interests to protect. Early county histories, while providing invaluable details about the war, give us little meaningful analysis, tending to view the sweep of events as evidence of the triumph of Christian civilization over native primitiveness. Consequently, it has taken a great deal of time and tedious work just to establish a correct time line and reasonably accurate narrative of events. However, documents of this sort do have their strengths. The varying points of view do, in their way, give a full picture of events and allow the discerning historian the opportunity to

balance accounts and arrive at a logical middle ground. I have tried to do this throughout the text, and I occasionally discuss the biases of the reporters and actors in this drama. Unfortunately, the documents give us a largely white male perspective. Sources providing a native, female or African American point of view are lacking. Consequently, this study does not pretend to be a complete and totally accurate history. It is an initial exploration. Hopefully, other scholars will follow along the path and provide refining insights into both the Second Creek War and the nature of southern race relations during the removal era in American history.

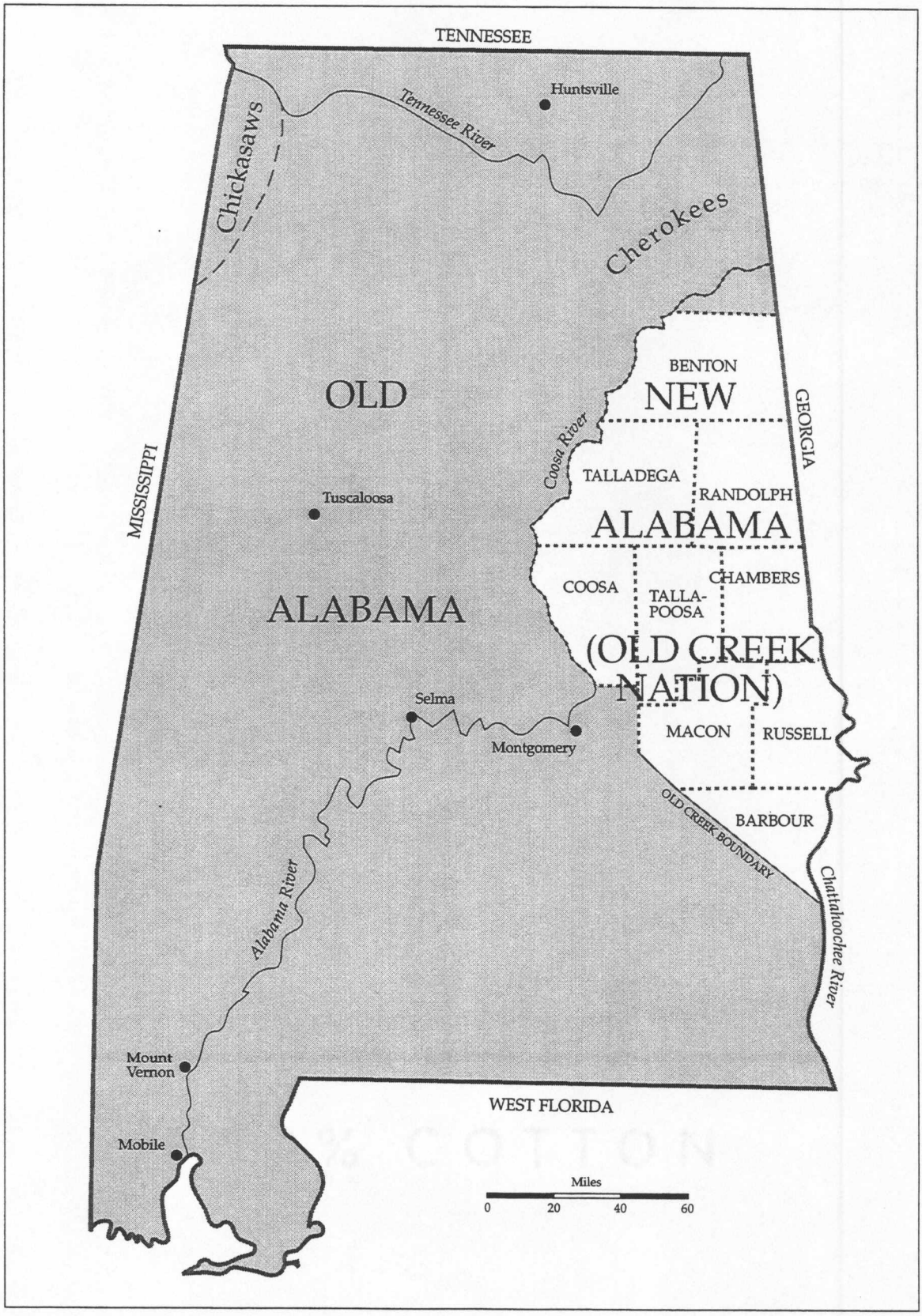
Chapter 1

The Proximate Cause: The Cusseta Treaty of 1832

In March of 1832 a delegation of Upper and Lower Creek headmen, advised by the Creek agent, John Crowell, and an Indian country trader and planter, John Brodnax, met with War Department officials in Washington to negotiate a new treaty with the federal government. The Creeks, over twenty thousand people, had been facing incessant pressure from the Jackson Administration to cede all their land to the United States and to remove beyond the Mississippi River. Having previously given up their extensive holdings in Georgia, the Creek leaders sought a new treaty as a means of both retaining at least a portion of their ancient homeland in Alabama (Map 1) and of avoiding a final removal to West. The Creek delegation also wanted a new pact to protect their nation against the state of Alabama, which had encouraged white encroachment on Creek land by extending state law over the entire Creek country in January of 1832. Among other things, state law emasculated the Creek National Council as a governmental entity by prohibiting Creek leaders from enforcing their own laws against whites or obstructing the federal removal process. Worse, state law did not allow Indians to testify against whites in court. Thus Creeks stood unprotected against the wave of white intruders who came into their territory following the extension of Alabama's authority, and the Creek delegates hoped to trade a portion of their Alabama lands to the federal government in return for a guarantee that President Jackson and the War Department would protect their remaining country from state-sponsored intrusion by whites.[1]

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[1] For a more complete explanation of the reasons behind the signing of the treaty see Michael D. Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), pp. 169-73, and Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), pp. 107-11.



Map 1: Alabama, 1832 - 1836.

On March 24, Creek delegates put their marks and signatures to a document known as the Cusseta Treaty of 1832. Under the terms of the agreement, the Creeks ceded all 5,200,000 acres of their tribal lands in Alabama to the United States. The federal government then promised to survey the cession and allot approximately 2,187,000 acres of it to individual chiefs and heads of Creek households in severalty. The remaining acres of the Creek country would be open to settlement by whites. The treaty also gave the individual Creek landholders an option: they could sell their allotments to whites and move west to land reserved for them in the Western Territory, or they could hold on to their property and remain in Alabama as independent freeholders and state citizens. Once the allotments were made, the Creeks had a five-year period to make their decisions. Finally, the federal government promised to protect the Indians' tribal domain from encroachment by whites from the time of the cession to the end of the decision period.[2]

On the face of it, the Cusseta treaty seemed a clever bargain for the Creek delegates. They meant for their tribespeople to take their individual land allotments in blocks, clustered about their old town sites, and thus maintain some semblance of communal life and tribal integrity despite a much-reduced land base. Furthermore, the federal government would protect the allotments until the individual chiefs and heads of families gained deeds to their holdings. These Creek land owners then could use those deeds to guarantee their property rights under Alabama law and in the Alabama courts.

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[2] Charles J. Kappler, ed. and comp., *Indian Treaties 1778-1883* (1904; reprint ed., New York: Interland Publishing Inc., 1972), pp. 341-43; Elbert Herring to Lewis Cass, Washington, 6 June 1836, in U.S. Congress, *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, Vol. 6 (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1861), p. 575 (hereafter cited as *ASP: MA*, 6); Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 111-12.

In short, it appeared that the Creek delegates could use the Cusseta treaty to manipulate federal power and state law to their own best advantage.[3]

However, the whites had other ideas. During 1832, many citizens of the southern states were hard at work shifting the center of cotton production from the Atlantic coast region into the Old Southwest. These people saw the Cusseta treaty as a great boon, for it would open three million acres of new public land to white settlement and agricultural production. Moreover, the treaty would free the other two million acres of Creek allotment land from the control of a tribal government. That fact would allow aggressive whites to purchase the finest lands in the Old Creek Nation directly from relatively unsophisticated native landholders. In fact, President Jackson counted on this happening. He and his men in the War Department saw the Cusseta accord merely as a market-based removal treaty. They believed that once the government sold all the land surrounding the Creek allotments to settlers, Alabama's aggressive white population would press the natives to sell their landholdings. Then the Creeks would realize they lacked both the means and the desire to compete economically with their white neighbors. Consequently, the Indians would sell their allotments for substantial sums and use the money to finance new starts for themselves in the West. Thus Jackson hoped to bring the forces of the market place to bear on the Creeks and finally compel their removal, something government negotiators had been unable to do for years.[4]

Ultimately, both Jackson and the Creeks would be disappointed with the Cusseta Treaty. Turning the Creeks over to the tender mercies of the market place during the

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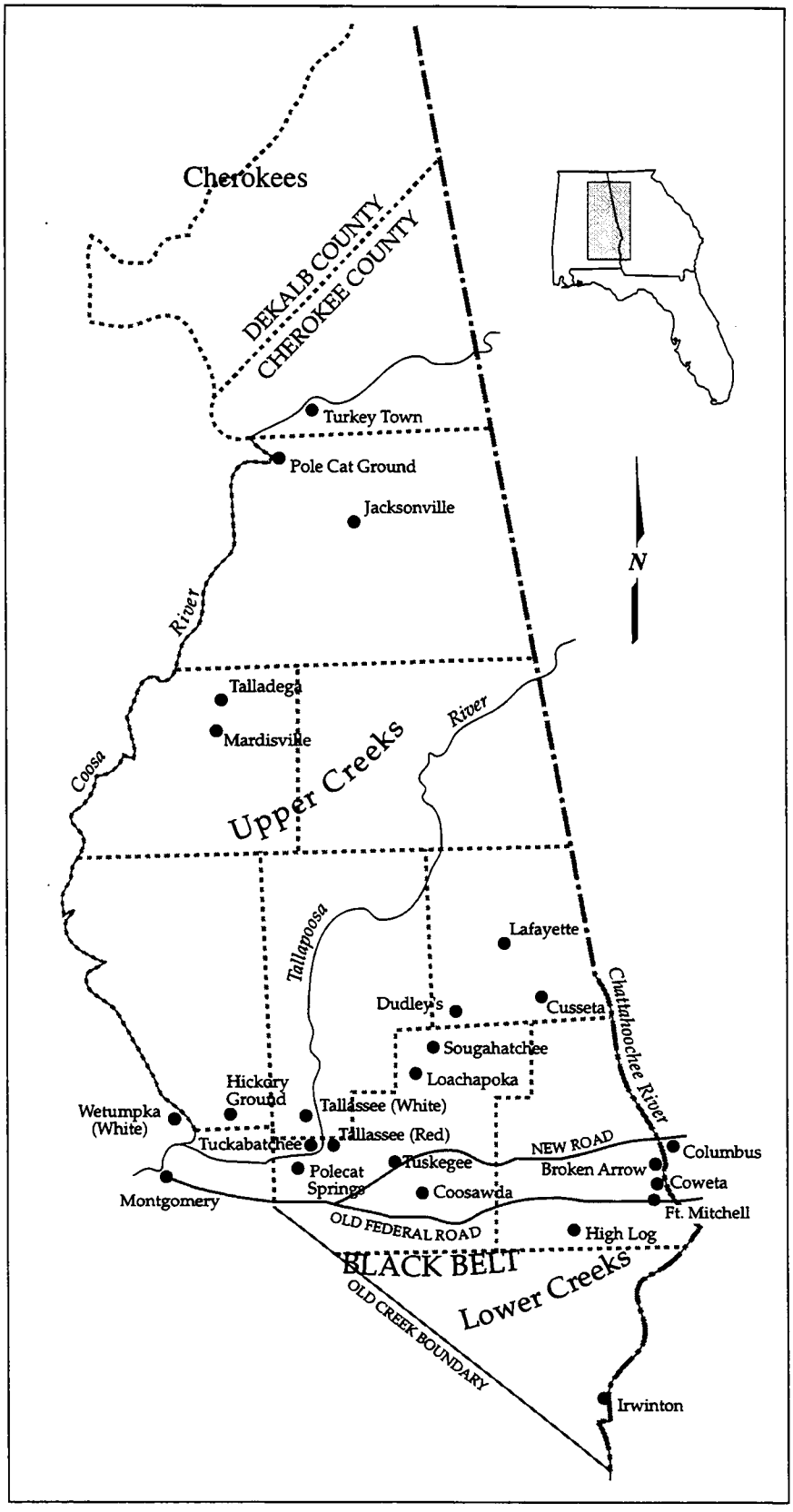
[3] Green, *Politics of Indian Removal*, pp. 171-72.

[4] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 111-12; Michael Paul Rogin, *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf), p. 228.

flush times of the 1830s cotton boom was a mistake. Rather than restricting white intrusion and protecting their land, the Creeks would see the Cusseta treaty become an entering wedge for whites into the last stronghold of the Creek Nation. These whites not only found ways to strip the Creeks of their land allotments but to dispossess them of all their money and disposable property as well. In fact, the new treaty left many natives homeless and starving. This was not what Jackson wanted. While he meant to exert enough economic pressure to compel removal, he never sought to impoverish the Creeks. Furthermore, Creek land and Creek possessions fell into the hands of speculators, not the respectable yeoman farmers and planters Jackson wanted to serve. Even worse, the Cusseta Treaty actually retarded Creek removal rather than stimulating it. Speculators and other whites would not let the Creeks leave Alabama until they extracted the last measure of land and disposable wealth from them. Furthermore, speculators stymied federal removal agents so they could take charge of the removal themselves and profit from government contracts. Thus the treaty failed on all accounts, and by creating a dispossessed Indian population that could neither stay in Alabama nor leave without being further exploited, the Cusseta accord became the immediate cause of the Second Creek War.

* * *

Certainly, it did not take the Creek leaders long to realize the Cusseta Treaty was a mistake. In the wake of the agreement, the Alabama Assembly divided the Creek Nation--now called New Alabama (Map 2)--into nine counties for administrative purposes, and another wave of whites penetrated the Creek country intent on marking off homesteads for themselves in advance of the government's survey and sale of the public lands portion of the Creek cession. Unfortunately, many of these intruders



Map 2: New Alabama.

claimed property already occupied by Creeks, land the natives meant to include in their allotments when the time came. Other intruders marked off land around Creek villages and then restricted the growth of those native settlements, stopping the natives from building new homes and clearing new fields. Furthermore, these intruders used the new county courts, and sheriffs they themselves elected, to further their ends. They filed false debt claims against the Creeks, and because Alabama law did not permit Indians to testify against whites, the courts often decided these claims in favor of the intruders, allowing them to take Creek property and possessions in payment. The sheriffs, on the other hand, often served writs of trespass against Creeks who tried to reoccupy lands taken from them. Still other whites forced the Creeks to accept small rent payments for land so that the squatters would have some legal claim to stay in New Alabama should the federal government try to remove intruders as promised in the Cusseta treaty.[5]

Though whites entered all nine counties of the Creek country, the intrusion was especially aggressive and harsh in the lower counties near the Chattahoochee River, the boundary between Alabama and Georgia. These counties--Chambers, Macon, Russell and Barbour-- contained the best cotton lands in the Creek Nation, and naturally attracted a host of Georgians, who found it an easy matter to cross the river and take up residence on the fertile bottoms of the Chattahoochee and its tributary streams. These Georgians had a long tradition of territorial expansion at the expense of the Creeks, and they tended to view the natives with more hostility than did the Alabamians or other white southerners. Worse, a large portion of the intruders were frontier "roughs" who

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[5] Clanton Ware Williams, *The Early History of Montgomery and Incidentally of the State of Alabama* (University of Alabama: Confederate Publishing Company, 1979), p. 121; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 112-17; Mary E. Young, *Redskins, Ruffleshirts, and Rednecks: Indian Allotments in Alabama and Mississippi, 1830-1860* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), pp. 77-78.

seemed to enjoy mistreating the natives. In fact, Robert L. Crawford, federal marshal for the southern district of Alabama, reported that many of the intruders were "the most lawless and uncouth men I have ever seen; some of them refugees from the state of Georgia, and for whom rewards are offered." These rough Georgians beat the natives, burned their homes and crops, took their land by force, and drove many of them fifteen miles back from the Chattahoochee to the falls and headwaters of its tributary streams. John Crowell, the Creek agent at Fort Mitchell on the Chattahoochee, reported that most of the Indians in his vicinity were living in the woods without the means of subsistence. Deprived of their corn and livestock by ferocious intruders, many Creeks had to live off roots.[6]

Many of the intruders came from, or by way of Columbus, Georgia, a town located just below the falls of the Chattahoochee. Founded in 1827, shortly after the Creeks ceded all of their land in western Georgia to the United States, Columbus was the only commercial emporium in the entire lower Chattahoochee Valley, and its merchants and bankers meant to control and profit from the trade and commerce on all the land drained by the Chattahoochee and its tributaries. This large expanse of land included not only much of western Georgia but much of New Alabama as well. Hence Columbus businessmen did much to encourage the white intrusion into the Creek country.

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[6] Michael D. Green gives a good account of the history of the Georgia-Creek conflict as well as the contest between Georgia and the federal government over the conduct of Creek affairs in "Federal-State Conflict in the Administration of Indian Policy: Georgia, Alabama, and the Creeks, 1824-1834." (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1973). Reports detailing the atrocities of intruders on Creek lands are scattered through the five volumes of United States *Senate Documents*, 23 Cong., 1 Sess., No. 512, "Indian Removal." (Ser.). The majority of these reports originated in the lower counties of New Alabama. Excerpts of Crawford's and Crowell's reports appear in Foreman's *Indian Removal*, pp. 109, 115, 117. See also John B. Hogan to Cass, Fort Mitchell, 14 May 1835, *ASP: MA*, 6: 725-26.

More ominously, they laid plans to acquire for themselves as many of the Creek land allotments as possible. On April 5, 1832, only a few days after the Creek delegation signed the Cusseta Treaty, twenty substantial citizens formed the Columbus Land Company for that purpose. They sent agents into New Alabama to set up stores filled with trade goods and whiskey. They instructed these agents to sell to the Creeks on credit, to lure them into debt to the company, and then to demand as payment bonds for title to the rich lands the individual debtors would claim for their allotments. The members of the company also sent black interpreters called "strikers" into New Alabama to hound and pressure allottees until they agreed to sell their land rights to the company for a fraction of what the property was worth.[7]

Unfortunately, the federal government failed to respond effectively to the intruder problem. The month after the signing of the Cusseta treaty, the Secretary of War, Lewis Cass, ordered Marshal Crawford to remove intruders from the Creek country. However, Cass equivocated, telling Crawford that he should respect the "feelings and situation" of the intruders and resort to force only when absolutely necessary. Moreover, the secretary failed to send troops to assist Crawford. He also dismissed Agent Crowell and closed the Creek Agency at Fort Mitchell as part of the process of transferring the administration of Creek affairs to the Western Territory. Cass seemed to be abandoning the Creeks at the same time he ordered Crawford to protect them.[8]

But worst of all, many intruders resisted the government's efforts to remove them from the Creek Nation. During the summer of 1832 the marshall did evict some

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[7] Young, *Redskins*, pp. 74-76; Robert W. McHenry to Cass, Columbus County, Alabama, 12 March 1834, *ASP: MA*, 6: 639.

[8] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 112-18; Green, *Politics of Indian Removal*, pp. 175-79.

settlers, including those at Irwinton in Barbour County, but the evictees soon returned. Some even married Indian women so they could secure the right to select property as tribal members. Throughout 1832 and into 1833 the intrusion continued, and the Creeks issued complaint after complaint to Washington. In one communique, the Creek leaders stated that "Instead of our situation being relieved as anticipated [by the protection clause of the Cusseta Treaty], we are distressed in ten fold manner." Tiring of the constant complaints, the Secretary of War, in March of 1833, one year after the signing of the treaty, finally instructed the federal marshal "to put an end to this lawless and disgraceful practice of instrusion." But this forceful order came too late. By that time, there were simply too many intruders to remove with the few troops available at Fort Mitchell. Consequently, Deputy Marshal Jeremiah Austill reported that he would remove only those intruders that the Creek chiefs told him to remove. But even this was a difficult task. When Austill announced that he would expel a group of troublesome interlopers from Chambers County, those settlers began raising volunteers to oppose the marshall and his federal troops with force.[9]

Moreover, the issue of intruder removal sparked a loud states' rights controversy with the state of Alabama. In July of 1833, Deputy Marshal Austill attempted to banish one Hardiman Owen from the Creek country. Owen lived near Fort Mitchell in Russell County, Alabama, served as road commissioner for that county, and compiled a long list of crimes against the local Creek Indians, including driving them from their land, killing their hogs and horses, robbing their graves for valuable artifacts to sell in his store, and even breaking the arm of a young Creek girl whose fields he coveted. Adding to his offenses, Owen resisted arrest and tried to murder Austill in the process. As a result, one

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[9] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 112-18; Green, *Politics of Indian Removal*, pp. 175-79.

of Austill's soldiers shot Own dead. The killing, however, filled local squatters with fear and anger, and they appealed to Alabama's governor, John Gayle, for help. Previously a Jackson Democrat, Gayle now turned, along with other important Alabama politicians, against the president on the issue of states' rights. Gayle proclaimed that state, not federal, law should operate in New Alabama, and he demanded that the federal marshals withdraw and leave disputes between settlers and Creeks to their rightful place, the state courts. Gayle also proclaimed that whites now owned most of the Creek country by virtue of contracts they had induced the Indians to sign. Seeing that the governor had taken their part, more intruders formed volunteer companies to resist federal authority, and the officers at Fort Mitchell anticipated "a General rupture between the State and the General Government." Consequently, they sent an order to the federal arsenal at Augusta, Georgia, for more arms and ammunition.[10]

At this point, Jackson must have realized the nature of his political blunder. He had come to the presidency in 1828 intent on pressing the issue of Indian removal. He had urged the states to extend their laws over tribal lands as a means of reducing the power of tribal governments and frightening the Indians into moving west. Furthermore, Jackson had pushed the Indian Removal Bill through Congress in 1830. However, he had also sanctioned the Cusseta treaty, an agreement which allowed Creeks to remain in Alabama and promised federal protection of their property rights for a period of five years. In effect, Jackson worked at cross purposes, advocating the establishment of state law and white settlement in the Creek country, on one hand, but using federal marshals and troops to remove intruders on the other hand. Governor Gayle persuasively impaled

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[10] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 121-23; Green, *Politics of Indian Removal*, pp. 179-80; Thomas Chambers McCorvey, *Alabama Historical Sketches* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1960), pp. 40-46; Williams, *The Early History of Montgomery*, pp. 121-22.

the president on the contradiction, and Jackson, faced with a growing states' rights opposition party in the South during a presidential election year, backed down. Through his personal representative, Francis Scott Key, Jackson promised Gayle that federal authorities would remove no more white settlers from the Creek counties of New Alabama until the Indians took up their individual land allotments as per the Cusseta treaty. Once that was done, the government would remove intruders only from those allotments. Thus Jackson abandoned the Creeks to the intruders and their county courts during a crucial transition period, and the effects would be devastating.[11]

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[11] The Nullification Controversy with South Carolina, the rise of the anti-slavery movement in the North, the ancient conflict between Georgia and the federal government over the conduct of that state's Indian affairs, all contributed to the rise of a southern states' rights party standing in opposition to Jackson's unionism. Now the intruder removal controversy, which promised to burst into a civil war, contributed to the growth of the states's rights movement in Alabama--just in time for the 1836 presidential election. Most states' rights men favored Hugh Lawson White of Tennessee over Jackson's hand-picked candidate, Martin Van Buren of New York. In order to maintain his party's strength, and to stop the growth of a dangerous sectionalism, Jackson had to seek some accommodation with Governor Gayle and his other critics in Alabama on the intruder removal issue.

The president sent Francis Scott Key to Alabama to hammer out a compromise. Key toured the Creek counties of Alabama and confirmed the abuses suffered by the Creeks at the hands of the intruders, although he noted that the settlers near Columbus and Fort Mitchell treated the Indians much worse than other New Alabama settlers. In fact, he noted that the settlers in Talladega County, who had settled among the Upper Creeks, were "well disposed" and treated the Indians "with kindness." Key also noted that land speculating companies in Columbus had already bought up the property rights from three or four thousand Indians for a mere pittance of a down payment. He warned that the companies would rely on the leases to give them possession of the land until such time as they could demand deeds for the property from the government. Furthermore, the speculators would never pay the balance of the amounts for the property; they would merely produce fraudulent accounts for whiskey and other items against the Indians and exchange them for the land. Key readily admitted that the government's inability to show firm resolve against the intruders at the outset had caused much of the problem, leading the intruders to believe that they could get away with almost anything. However, Key finally agreed to a compromise with Governor Gayle that amounted to a federal capitulation. In return for a promise that the state would drop murder charges against Austill and the federal troops in the matter of Owens's death, Key vowed that federal

In the meantime, Secretary of War Cass tried to maneuver around the intruder problem by negotiating yet another treaty with the Creeks. His commissioners, Colonel John J. Abert and General Enoch Parsons, held a council with Creek chiefs on June 19, 1833, and proposed that the natives abandon the idea of individual land allotments, sell all their land to the United States, and immediately emigrate to the West. According to the commissioners, a new treaty based on these terms would have two advantages for the Creeks. First, by selling to the government the tribesmen would get a fair price for their land, something they would not get if they waited to sell to individual white citizens and land speculators. Second, by taking the money and moving west quickly, the natives would free themselves from the fraud and abuse they suffered at the hands of their white neighbors. However, the commissioners probably were not as concerned with the Indians' welfare as they were with the health of the Jackson Administration. First and foremost, this new treaty with the Creeks would relieve the president of the embarrassment caused by his failure to enforce the protection clause of the Cusseta accord.[12]

Unfortunately, this last treaty proposal, like Cass's decision to take an aggressive stand against the intruders, came much too late. By the summer of 1833, the Creeks were no longer free to dispose of their land as they saw fit. Land speculators had wrapped their financial tentacles around a number of the Creek chiefs. In addition,

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authorities would remove no more white settlers from the Creek counties of New Alabama until the Indians had taken up their individual land allotments as per the Cusseta treaty. Once that was done, the government would remove intruders only from those allotments. However, Jackson and his party sustained serious political damage from the this controversy, which helped spark the rise of the Whig Party in Alabama. McCorvey, *Sketches*, pp. 48-49; J. Mills Thornton, *Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisianna State University Press, 1978), pp. 28-31.

[12] Young, *Redskins*, pp. 80-81; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 119-21.

they had already purchased the land rights of many Creek allottees--in many cases for as little as ten dollars in liquor or merchandise. These speculators now ordered the natives to refuse to sell the Creek domain to the government. Intimidated by county courts and laws they did not understand, many Creeks were afraid to defy the holders of their land contracts. Furthermore, many natives opposed the new treaty, because they still did not want to leave their homeland and move west. As a result, the commissioners failed to sign a new agreement with the leaders of the Creek Nation.[13]

Meanwhile, the government carried forward its plans to allot the Creek lands in severalty. Shortly after the signing of the Cusseta treaty, federal commissioners took a census of the Creek Nation to determine how many chiefs and heads of families were entitled to reserves. Benjamin S. Parsons completed the census of the Upper Creek towns on May 1, 1833, listing a total of 14,142 people, including 445 slaves. Nearly two weeks later, Thomas J. Abbot certified a roll for the Lower Creek towns, showing a population of 8,552 people, including 457 slaves. Out of the total Creek population of 22,694 individuals, the commissioners designated 6,557 as heads of familes entitled to allotments. The addition of chiefs and orphans eligible for allotments brought the total number of Creeks to receive either half or full sections to 6,696 individuals. The land these people were to receive would amount to 2,187,200 acres.[14]

With the census completed, the land surveyors went to work dividing off the Old Creek Nation into ranges, townships, sections and half-sections. By the end of 1833 the survey was complete, and a special government commission, employing white men familiar with the Creek country as locating agents, began to help the Creeks select their

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[13] Young, *Redskins*, pp. 80-81; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 119-21.

[14] Ibid., pp. 111-12; J.J. Abert to Cass, Washington, 14 January 1836, *ASP: MA, 6*: 608-10.

allotments. Wherever possible, these allotment selections were supposed to include the land and dwellings the allottees already occupied. However, some of the locating agents conspired with the land speculators and "floated" some Creeks off valuable pieces of property, fixing them on poor land in the pine woods. The speculators then claimed the good properties for themselves because the record books showed that no Indians owned them. The locating agents completed their work, whether honest or dishonest, in January of 1834.[15]

Officials in Washington expected that most of the Creeks would sell their allotments as soon as they received them and move to the Western Territory. Consequently, the Secretary of War appointed four officials to oversee the process, instructing each to witness every transaction and see to it that the natives received a fair prices for their land. Leonard Tarrant and James Bright assumed the task of certifying sales among the Upper Creeks in the northern portion of New Alabama, including the counties of Coosa, Tallapoosa, Talladega, Randolph, and Benton. Robert McHenry became certifying agent for the middle portion of New Alabama--Chambers and Macon counties. Both Upper and Lower Creeks lived in these middle counties, which contained some of the most fertile lands in the state. Some of these tracts bordered on the Federal Road, the main thoroughfare through New Alabama. Finally, John W. A. Sanford, a prominent Georgia politician and militia commander, took charge of the supervision of Creek land sales in Russell and Barbour counties at the lower end of New Alabama. These counties held the majority of the Lower Creek population as well as the worst of the white intruders from Georgia. The Secretary of War allowed each agent to devise his own procedures for assuring fair sales, but he required that each man send his certified contracts along to Washington for review and final approval by the president.

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[15] Young, *Redskins*, pp. 99-100; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 112.

Once the contracts were approved, the government would send deeds to the purchasers.[16]

The certifying agents began their work in January of 1834 and immediately became embroiled in a scene of massive land theft and corruption. The rise of the Columbus Land Company had inspired the birth of other such associations of land speculators, and now all these competing groups came forth with a variety of clever schemes to get the Creek allotments. Company agents turned up at the offices of Sanford and McHenry with native allotment holders. Then they signed land contracts and paid fair prices to the Indians in front of the agents. But once outside the offices, the speculators took the money back in payment for the debts the Creek landholders had run up at the company stores. In other cases, the speculators took the money and paid the Indians in overpriced merchandise or liquor from the stores. Oftentimes, the company agents simply took the money back without any cause whatsoever and dared the Indians to do anything about it. Still more land company agents borrowed the money back from the Creeks, claiming, quite falsely, that they would hold the money until the tribesmen emigrated west, at which time they would give them their money plus interest. However, the most popular method of defrauding the Creeks was a practice called "personation." The speculators simply paid one Indian a small fee to go to the land office and pretend he was another native, the owner of a desirable allotment. The speculator then purchased that allotment from the impostor in the presence of the certifying agent, left the office, took back the money from the impostor, and claimed a valuable property without the real owner knowing anything about the sale.[17]

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[16] Ibid., p. 129; Abert to Cass, Washington, 14 January 1836, Washington, *ASP: MA*, 6: 609; Government Agents, ibid., p. 590; Herring to James Bright, Esq., Office of Indian Affairs, 18 March 1834, ibid., p. 586.

[17] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, 129-32; McHenry to Cass, Columbus County, Alabama,

By March of 1834 Lewis Cass was aware of Creek land frauds, but he failed to take decisive steps to stop them. Return J. Meigs, a government investigator, recommended to the secretary that the government take charge of the Indian lands and auction them off like other public lands, holding the proceeds for the Creek owners. Jackson and Cass rejected this idea, however, for they believed the treaty gave the Creeks the right to sell their lands themselves. They also believed, as did the certifying agents, that a government auction would not entirely protect the ignorant Creeks from designing white men. Thus the War Department allowed the land sales to continue, only advising the agents to take all precautions to guard the Indians against frauds. Once again the federal government failed to protect Creek property rights as guaranteed by the Cusseta treaty.[18]

Encouraged by the government's laissez-faire position, the Columbus speculators expanded their operations. By January of 1835, they had secured as much land as they were going to get from the Lower Creeks living near the Chattahoochee River in Barbour, Russell and Chambers counties. Now they turned their sights on the land of the Upper Creeks living along the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers farther to the west. Here, however, they encountered significant opposition. The Upper Creeks, led by Opothleyahola of Tuckabatchee town, were more cohesive and less demoralized than the Lower Creeks.

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12 March 1834, *ASP: MA*, 6: 639; Creek Chiefs to Secretary of War, Tuckabatchee Town, 16 March 1835, ibid., pp. 645-46; McHenry to Herring, Columbus, Georgia, 15 March 1835, ibid., p. 648; McHenry to Cass, 17 April 1835, ibid., p. 651; Hogan to Gen. George Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 5 July 1835, ibid., p. 430; Herring to Cass, Washington, 6 June 1836, ibid., p. 576.

[18] Meigs to Cass, Athens, Tennessee, 28 April 1834, ibid., p. 640; Cass to Meigs, War Department, 28 June 1834, ibid., pp. 587-88; Cass to Meigs, War Department, 31 October 1834, ibid., p. 590; Cass to Meigs, War Department, 13 November 1834, ibid., p. 591; Herring to McHenry, Office of Indian Affairs, 3 April 1834, ibid., p.586.

They were more determined to hold on to their property. Furthermore, Alabama speculators based in Montgomery had influence with Opothleyahola, and they meant to buy the Upper Creek lands before anyone else. The Georgians did not balk, however. They merely paid dispossessed Lower Creeks to go to the land offices with them to pretend they were Upper Creek property holders. In one instance, the speculators encamped hundreds of impostor Creeks in the woods about McHenry's office in Cusseta town, Chambers County. In fact, the speculators staged festivals of corruption around the land offices, joyously competing with one another to see who could steal the most land. As one speculator remarked, "The harvest is nearly over, and perhaps there will never be another such a one." A shocked Opothleyahola sent the sad news to the War Department. "While we have been at home preparing something for our dependent families to subsist on, other Indians have sold our homes, our all, the only means for our support."[19]

The whole process of allotment and sale of Creek land, as outlined in the Cusseta treaty, had turned into a fiasco. The land companies, using every means at their disposal, monopolized the purchase of Creek allotments, which included most of the best land in New Alabama. In fact, 87 percent of the allotments went to purchasers of two thousand acres or more. This situation hurt Creeks and respectable farmers and planters alike. The natives lost or sold too cheaply the very means of their survival, their corn fields. Honest white settlers, on the other hand, missed the opportunity to buy land directly from the Indians at a reasonable price for all parties. These settlers had to purchase their property from the speculators at inflated prices. Then these whites

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[19] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 131-32; Young, *Redskins*, pp. 85-86; Elizabeth H. Yamaguchi, "Macon County, Alabama: Its land and Its People from Pre-History to 1870" (Master's thesis, Auburn University, 1981), pp. 58-59.

discovered that they had to compete for the land they bought. Entering New Alabama in late 1834 and 1835, they found the original intruders squatting on their land. They pushed these roughs out of the way only to discover that they had purchased questionable titles. In some cases several farmers claimed ownership of the same property because either the speculators or the Indians had sold the land many times over. Worse still, the new settlers encountered abused and angry Indians living all about them. In fact, the honest farmers and planters feared an Indian uprising from the start, and they knew that they, not the speculators, would suffer the consequences of the land frauds. Consequently, groups of settlers, particularly in Russell and Chambers counties where the frauds had been so great, began to petition Washington to investigate and reform the process of Creek land sales, both as a means of pacifying the Creeks and of establishing clear property titles.[20]

Responding to the cries and protests of New Alabama settlers as well as the displaced Creeks, the War Department, one year after it first received word of the problems surrounding the sale of native allotments, finally decided to act forcefully. In April of 1835, Cass directed his agents to withhold certification on land contracts made since February, the month wholesale impersonations began among the Upper Creeks. Cass also ordered the agents to investigate these contracts at the request of aggrieved natives; and should the contracts prove fraudulent, Cass gave his men the power to declare them null and void and return the land to the Creek allottees.[21]

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[20] Young, Redskins, p. 99; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, 132-33, 136. For the actions of respectable planters and farmers see Robert L. Crawford to Cass, Fort Mitchell, 26 January 1834, *ASP: MA*, 6: 635-36; Crawford to Cass, Montgomery, 2 March 1834, ibid., 638; Crawford to Cass, Mobile, 25 March 1834, ibid., 639; Citizens to the President, Chambers County, Alabama, 8 April 1835, ibid., 648-49.

[21] Young, *Redskins*, p. 99; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 133.

Unfortunately, this directive, like the government's order to deal with the intruder problem, came much too late. The land companies had entrenched themselves too deeply in New Alabama ever to let go of all the land they had stolen. Furthermore, Cass should not have entrusted the investigations to the same agents who certified the fraudulent contracts in the first place. Robert McHenry's slipshod bookkeeping, along with his tendency to certify blind contracts, had allowed the speculators to run roughshod over the Indians in his district. J.W.A. Sanford, on the other hand, signaled to the world that he would not conduct any serious inquiry into fraudulent contracts when he announced that he would hold his investigation in Columbus, the home of the land pirates. Receiving this good news, company agents immediately went among the Lower Creeks and kept them away from Sanford's office by telling them that the whole investigation was merely a ploy to lure them into Columbus. There, the agents claimed, the government intended to arrest Indians for old debts, imprison them, and then send them away to the West. Eneah Micco, the aged headman of the Lower Creeks, sent word to Sanford of the problem and asked him to meet the Indians on the Alabama side of the Chattahoochee. Sanford refused and then notified Washington that he had held his investigation but no Indians appeared with evidence of land frauds. Yet Sanford knew these frauds existed; one year before he had reported them to the War Department. By the spring of 1835, however, he had decided to keep quiet. Undoubtedly, he realized that opposing the interests of powerful Columbus businessmen was a risky proposition for a Georgia politician like himself.[22]

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[22] Young, *Redskins*, p. 99; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 133; Herring to McHenry, Office of Indian Affairs, 2 December 1834, *ASP: MA*, 6: 591-92; Cass to John P. King, War Department, 23 April 1835, ibid., p. 594; Cass to Leonard Tarrant, Department of War, 28 April 1835, ibid., pp. 594-95; Cass to Gen. J.W.A. Sanford, War Department, 28 April 1835, ibid., p. 595; Cass to Tarrant, War Department, 28 April 1835, ibid., p. 596; Sanford to Cass, Milledgeville, Georgia, 15 May 1835, ibid., p. 654; Tarrant to Cass, Mardisville, Alabama, 27 May 1835, ibid., pp. 657-58; C.A. Harris to McHenry,

But not all speculators opposed the government investigation. In fact, Cass's order opened up a new vista of opportunity for those businessmen who missed out on the initial Creek land grab. On May 19, 1835, Alabama speculators formed a company for the repurchase of all the contracts that the government's certifying agents would overturn. Robert J. Ware, Thomas M. Cowles, and Clement Billingslea of Montgomery were the leading lights of this company, and they soon brought into their orbit a few independent Georgia speculators as well as some prominent "Indian countrymen"--white men who had lived with the Creeks for a long time and exercised influence over them. The members of Ware, Dougherty, and Company also allied themselves with some of the respectable planters in the lower counties of New Alabama, and worked with these men in protesting the frauds committed by the Columbus speculators. In addition, the Alabama speculators probably encouraged the Creeks to claim fraud even when they sold their lands legitimately. The company's major objective was to convince the president that he should annul all Creek land purchases made after January 10, 1835, so that they might move in and cheat the Indians out of that property themselves. Witnessing this scene, Agent McHenry noted that the contest for the Creek lands had changed dramatically. It was no longer a struggle between red and white, he claimed, but one between white and white, with "the interest of the Indian not much at heart."[23]

War Department, 18 June 1835, ibid., p. 599; Sanford to Cass, Columbus, 22 June 1835, ibid., pp. 660-61; McHenry to Cass, Chambers County, Alabama, 22 July 1835, ibid., p. 662; Sanford to Secretary of War, Columbus, 18 August 1835, ibid.; Creek Chiefs to the President, Creek Nation, 25 August 1835, ibid., pp. 662-63.

[23] Young, *Redskins*, pp. 86-87; Citizens to the President, Macon County, 19 May 1835, *ASP: MA*, 6: 655-56; McHenry to Cass, Chambers County, 23 May 1835, ibid., p. 656; Hogan to Cass, Mobile, 8 March 1836, ibid., p. 751.

But the struggle for the land was only the most obvious part of a much deeper problem. By failing to stop the intrusion into Creek country, or adequately supervising Creek land sales, the federal government had allowed a highly exploitive and competitive economy to take root in New Alabama. Unfortunately, the complete dispossession of the Creek Indians formed the foundation of this economy. The acquisition of Creek lands was the most important aspect of this economy, but the dispossession was much more extensive. Besides their land, the Creeks had annuity funds, money gained from legitimate land sales, livestock, black slaves, and various other valuable possessions the whites could claim. They also had their labor, which was an especially important commodity in opening a new country to commercial agriculture. From the time of the signing of the Cusseta treaty in 1832 to the outbreak of the Creek War in 1836, the new white residents of the old Creek Nation set about the task of converting the Indian lands into a productive part of the American market system, but in the process they sought to milk the Indians of all their wealth. Thus a multifaceted and highly exploitive Indian business became New Alabama's leading economic endeavor, and the impoverished Creeks, besides giving up their land, supplied some of the wealth and labor needed to make the land productive and to build New Alabama's market economy.

New Alabama's county seats and market towns--places like Tuskegee, Tallassee, Talladega, and Irwinton--became centers of the Indian business, along with Columbus, Georgia, just across the Chattahoochee from several Creek towns. In these commercial emporiums the land speculators concocted some of their more nefarious schemes; here the sheriffs took charge of the estates of deceased Indians and sold them to land dealers without ever turning any proceeds over to the Indian heirs; and here attorneys and interpreters found constant employment as the Creeks came to defend themselves in property suits or to stand trial for various offenses against the state laws. Almost without exception the first people tried for murder in the county courts were Creeks accused of

killing other Creeks. Having outlawed the traditional Creek justice system, state authorities obviously felt the need to discipline the Creeks quickly with their own laws so as to preserve order as the country passed from red to white ownership. When Creeks received the death penalty, crowds gathered for the spectacle. The delighted town merchants welcomed them to their stores, selling merchandise to red and white alike.[24]

But the county seats were not the only good places to exploit the Creeks. Trading stores located on the county roads and in the Creek towns did a booming business. Even those Creeks who sold their land fairly and received a decent price soon found that they had to spend their money to survive in New Alabama. Without land they had no place to plant crops, and consequently they bought food from white merchants and farmers. The proprietors of the country stores also encouraged the Creeks to take merchandise on credit so they could present their bills to the government for payment out of the Creeks' annual annuity fund. This fund amounted to $30,000, the largest single cash pool in New Alabama. The indebted natives also had to surrender their land to some of the country merchants. These opportunistic merchants also used their economic position to gain political influence with the Creek chiefs. Members of the Montgomery group of speculators operated stores in Tuckabatchee, the leading Upper Creek town and the home of Opothleyahola. The proprietors of these stores loaned the Creek leader money and no doubt supplied him with merchandise to win his favor and

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[24] For the Creeks and their inheritance problems see Collins to Cass, Tuskegee, 29 January 1836, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, Creek Agency Reserves, (M234, Reel 243), RG 75, National Archives (hereafter cited as Creek Reserves); Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 129; Hogan to Andrew Jackson, Alexandria, D.C., September, 1835, *ASP: MA*, 6: 663-64. For information on the Creeks and the county courts see Elizabeth H. Yamaguchi, "Macon County," p. 66, and Nell Hart Orr, "A History of Lafayette, Alabama, 1833-1933" (Master's thesis, Auburn University, 1950), pp. 11-12.

keep his support in their land war with the Columbus men. Similarly, the Columbus land dealers operated stores in the Lower Creek country, using them as beacheads for their assault on the Creek land base.[25]

Worse still were the grog shops. Hundreds of them lay scattered about the old Creek nation. The Indians loved liquor; and as they become more impoverished, they used strong drink to escape the hunger and hardship of their lives. In fact, the demoralized Creeks turned up at the grog shops to trade everything they had, including their food, for liquor. Selling whiskey to Indians was also important to the economy of Columbus. Each day Creeks trudged across the bridge from New Alabama with bundles of firewood on their backs to sell or trade for alcohol. In fact, the streets of Columbus teemed with parties of drunken Indians, each one watched over and directed by a sober, well-dressed black slave. Each night the Creeks recrossed the bridge to their homes, for while the Columbus merchants welcomed Indian shoppers during the day, a town ordnance prohibited them from staying in town overnight.[26]

The traditional gatherings of the Creeks were also good places to conduct the Indian business. Land dealers and liquor salesmen went to all the major council meetings to sway the decisions of the chiefs. Lawyers and merchants stalked about the grounds, their pockets full of accounts against the Indians. Similarly, the native stick ball matches, which seemed to increase in number and ferocity as the Creeks became more impoverished and demoralized, attracted opportunistic whites. The Creeks both drank

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[25] Hogan to General George Gibson, Ft. Mitchell, May 9 1835, *ASP: MA*, 6: 724; McHenry to Cass, Columbus County, Alabama, 12 March 1834, ibid., p. 639; Yamaguchi, "Macon County," pp. 52, 57.

[26] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 125-26, 142; Harriet Martineau, *Society in America*, 3 vols. (1837; reprint ed., New York: AMS Press, 1966), p. 292; Tyrone Power, *Impressions of America*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1836), pp. 137-38.

and bet heavily on the outcome of these matches, and opportunistic whites found numerous ways to profit from the action surrounding this ancient Native American game. As one observer explained: "A huge crowd of drunkards, thieves, speculators, gamblers, horse racers, bums of every type, and crooks from swamp and glade hung on the flanks" of the assembled Creeks "ready to steal anything from a section of land to a red hot stove. The Indian was a dead game sport, he'd bet everything he had including his wife, pony, dog, and hope of salvation, on the game."[27]

Individual farms and plantations also became points of exploitation. Over the centuries the Creeks cleared extensive fields; the whites used those same fields to produce their first corn and cotton crops. Whites also appropriated the Creeks' expansive apple and peach orchards and used the fruit to make a fiery brandy. Then the settlers ran their huge herds of livestock into the Creek woodlands, which the natives had maintained as deer parks by burning off the undergrowth each year. Now the whites' cattle, horses and hogs ate all the rich mast and tender young shoots the Creeks had produced for their deer. Worse, farmers cut down the forests to grow crops because they knew that the centuries of brush fires had deposited layers of rich potash over the soil. More ominously, the white planters exploited the labor of the Creeks, many of whom, having lost or sold their own lands, desperately needed employment, shelter, and protection from other whites. A traveler in New Alabama in the late months of 1835 would have seen gangs of

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[27] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 138; Johnson Jones Hooper, *Some Adventures of Captain Simon Suggs* (1858; reprint ed., Upper Saddle River, N. J.: Gregg Press, 1970), p. 69; Hogan to Gibson, Ft. Mitchell, June 18, 1835, *ASP: MA, 6:* 729. Wellington Vandiver tells of the stickball games in "Pioneer Talladega, Its Minutes and Memories," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (Spring, 1954): 44; The Creeks also bet their valuable cattle herds on the outcome of a match. See F. L. Cherry, "The History of Opelika and Her Agricultural Tributary Territory, Embracing More Particularly Lee and Russell Counties, from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Date," ibid, vol. 15, nos. 2-4 (1953): 191.

natives, treated almost as slaves, clearing new corn and cotton lands. This traveler also would have seen Creek field hands picking cotton on the extensive plantations that had grown up along the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries.[28]

President Jackson and Secretary of War Cass did not mean for this to happen. They wanted to make life in Alabama uncomfortable for the Creeks, but they did not want to destroy them as a people. Furthermore, these leaders discovered that despite the sorry state of affairs, Alabama's natives were not enrolling for emigration with the government's removal agents. In fact, an unanticipated and decidedly ironic situation had developed out of the Cusseta treaty. Like many other Americans, President Jackson saw the eastern Indians as an obstacle to the nation's economic development and wanted them removed to the West. He had agreed to the Cusseta Treaty as a means of applying economic pressure on the Creeks, anticipating that they would chose to flee this pressure and seek solace on the land set aside for them in the Western Territory. However, by exposing the Creeks to the market place without adequate protections, Jackson actually created the opposite effect. In New Alabama some opportunistic whites discovered that the Creeks were a "natural resource" they could use to facilitate economic development, and consequently they worked against the government's efforts to remove them. As one removal agent explained, "while the government continues to pay the annuities in Alabama, or the Indians have lands to sell, or negro property, these speculators will not let them go." Another agent lamented that there were "a great number of whiskey shops in the nation, the owners of which are universally opposed to

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[28] For the whites' use of Indian land see Cherry, "Opelika," pp. 317, 445, 464; Vandiver, "Pioneer Talladega," p. 16; Yamaguchi, "Macon County," p. 49. For the whites' use of Indian labor see "For The Enquirer," *Columbus Enquirer*, April 22, 1836, p. 3; Hogan to Clay, Irwinton, January 30, 1836, *ASP: MA, 6:* 749; Eugenia Persons Smartt, *History of Eufaula* (Birmingham: Roberts and Son, 1933), p. 21.

the Indians removing until they can get the last cent they have." But that was not the full extent of the problem. Other whites tried to take over the removal process itself as a source of profit. In doing so, they delayed removal. During the delay, the Creeks became even more impoverished and indebted to New Alabama's whites. The debt and poverty, in turn, made the natives even more dependent on their exploiters and they found it increasingly impossible to emigrate. Thus many Creeks were being assimilated into the larger society as a permanent underclass of thieves, beggars and debt-bound peons working the land they lost to the whites. Left to its own devices, the Indian business that the Cusseta Treaty helped create would not have driven the Creeks west. It would have ground them to pulp and possibly enslaved many of the natives right where they were.[29]

The problem of white interference with Creek emigration became abundantly clear in March of 1835, when the president made John B. Hogan the Superintendent of Creek Removal. Between the signing of the Cusseta treaty and Hogan's appointment, only one party of Creeks emigrated to the west. However, both Jackson and Cass believed that the tribespeople would move west en masse in the spring of 1835 following the rush of land sales that winter. They also believed that Hogan, a Mobile resident and staunch Jacksonian, could handle the task of enrolling large parties of Creeks for

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[29] Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 9 May 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 725; Alex. H. Sommerville to Hogan, Dudley's, 25 July 1835, ibid., p. 738. Hogan also reported that when the Creek sub-agent, Leonard Tarrant, announced at the Creeks' summer council meeting in 1835 that the government would make only one more annuity payment to the Indians in Alabama, the news "flew like wildfire among the whites, for nearly every second man on the ground had his pockets filled with accounts against the Indians; and these scamps are the very men that retard the emigration, although they make great professions in favor of their removal." Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 18 June 1835, ibid., pp. 728-29. See also Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 141, for a list of forces working against the Creek removal.

removal and sending them off to the west under the direction of army officers. Hogan, too, was optimistic, but he knew he would have to counteract the influence of all the interested speculators, planters, grog shop owners, jack-leg lawyers, county sheriffs, frontier roughs and others who sought to hold the Creeks in place. On entering New Alabama, the superintendent set up his headquarters at Fort Mitchell and hired four removal assistants to help him tour the Creek towns, enroll the natives for emigration, and ferret out the "evil designs" of his white and red opponents. Hogan concentrated his efforts among the Upper Creeks, who were more numerous than the Lower Creeks and showed more interest in leaving Alabama. He began to court Opothleyahola, the Upper Creeks' most influential leader, believing that he was the key to a rapid emigration. If Opothleyahola could be convinced to go in the spring, Hogan contended, the rest of the Upper Creeks would follow. And once the Upper Creeks were off, the Lower Creeks would certainly find their isolation in a sea of whites intolerable and choose to hurry after the Upper Creeks. Unfortunately, Hogan found that Opothleyahola, and the white men who advised him, had other ideas about how the Creek removal should proceed.[30]

Opothleyahola had always been a staunch opponent of removal, but the fact that so many of his people sold their allotments, and so many more lost their land through fraud, convinced the chief that the Creeks must leave Alabama. However, he did not want to go to the Western Territory. He had received negative reports about the soil and climate there from Samuel Grayson, an earlier Upper Creek emigre who had returned to Alabama to live. Furthermore, Arkansas was the home of Opothleyahola's most despised political enemies, the highly acculturated McIntosh faction of Lower Creeks,

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[30] Ibid., p.134; Hogan to Cass, Mobile, 31 March 1835, *ASP: MA*, 6: 722; Hogan to Gibson, Mobile, 3 April 1835, ibid., pp. 722-23; McHenry to Cass, Chambers County, 17 April 1835, ibid., p. 651; Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 9 May 1835, ibid., pp. 724-25; Hogan to John Gayle, Fort Mitchell, 2 June 1835, ibid., p. 727.

who had packed up their money and slaves and moved west in the late 1820s, shortly after the Creeks ceded the last of their lands in Georgia to the United States. Worse, Opothleyahola believed that white settlers would soon come among the Creeks in Arkansas and they would have to face the same problems they were having in Alabama. Consequently, Opothleyahola wanted to take his followers to the Mexican state the Americans called Texas. Moreover, the Montgomery businessmen and land speculators, Weir, Billingslea and Cowles, were more than happy to assist him in getting there if they could profit in the bargain. They advanced Opothleyahola the $23,000 needed to make a down payment on a tract of land 150 miles square north and west of Nacogdoches. In return, the speculators hoped to claim the unsold full sections of land allotted to Opothleyahola and each of his council chiefs by the Cusseta treaty. On observing these tracts, Superintendent Hogan proclaimed them "the finest body of land I have seen in Alabama."[31]

But this was not the only alternative removal plan Hogan faced. Twelve to fifteen hundred Creeks fled to the northern counties of Alabama to live on Cherokee land. Several hundred more moved to the Chickasaw country in Mississippi. Then Tuskenea, Opothleyahola's chief rival for leadership of the Upper Creeks, and also a major opponent of emigration to Arkansas, announced his plans to move his followers out of their villages to settle on a tract of land on the Black Belt prairie below the Federal Road, the main highway through New Alabama. William Walker, a trader and former army officer related to Tuskenea by marriage, owned this tract and intended to let Tuskenea's people live on it in exchange for their allotment lands. The advantage for Tuskenea was

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[31] Upper Creek Chiefs to Secretary of War, Tallassee Town, 4 September 1836, ibid., pp. 641-42; Tarrant to Cass, Mardisville, 27 March 1835, ibid., p. 781; Hogan to Gibson, Mobile, 8 April 1835, ibid., pp. 723-24; Hogan to Gibson, Mobile, 9 May 1835, ibid., pp. 724-25; Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 18 June 1835, ibid., p. 729.

that the prairie land would remain in Walker's name. Consequently the chief and his followers could stay in Alabama as invited quest, living on land owned by a white state citizen who had the legal right to use his personal property as he saw fit. The advantage for Walker, and the speculators associated with him, was that the Indian allotment lands he would receive were much more valuable than acreage on the prairie.[32]

These alternative removal schemes, and the continued resistance of the Lower Creek chiefs to emigration, doomed Hogan's hopes of sending any Indians west in the spring of 1835. However, with the coming of summer, events seemed to turn in his favor. Opothleyahola's Texas land deal fell through, because the American residents of Texas refused to let the Creeks settle near them. Opothleyahola lost prestige--not to mention his down payment on the Texas tract--and some important chiefs became disillusioned with his leadership and began to support Hogan. Among the Upper Creeks, Governor Bruner and William McGillivray of the Hickory Ground Town proclaimed that they would work with Hogan in getting their people ready to move to Arkansas. Similarly, one of the more hostile opponents of removal, the Old Dog Warrior of Alabama Town, capitulated and informed Hogan that he and the Mad Tiger of Coosada would prepare their people to emigrate. Next Sampson Grayson announced that he would stop talking against removal and prepare to return to the Creek lands in the West. Then Opothleyahola himself seemed to become more amenable to the idea of emigrating to the Western Territory, especially after he saw his son stab another Indian to death in a fight. This killing was but one of many that occurred in the Indian towns as a result of

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[32] For the flight of Creeks to the Cherokee and Chickasaw Nations see Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 114, 126, 142, 188, 190. For the Tuskenea-Walker plan see Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 3 June 1835, *ASP: MA*, 6: 726; Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 8 June 1835, ibid., pp. 726-27; Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 5 July 1835, ibid., p. 430.

the economic pressure exerted by whites and the Creeks' own bitter arguments over removal. His son's crime surely convinced Opothleyahola that a rapid departure from Alabama was necessary to keep his oppressed people from self-destructing.[33]

Even more heartening for Hogan, the leading chiefs of Coweta, Cusseta, Broken Arrow and other important Lower Creek towns admitted that they could no longer live in Alabama. Even Neah Micco, the aged headman of the Lower Creeks, seemed to warm to the idea of removal. In fact, the lower towns chiefs addressed a memorial to the president stating that they were ready to leave Alabama, but they could not go until they received a fair payment for their lands. They needed the money to pay their debts and to help them start anew in the West. The chiefs also complained again about all the land frauds and denounced J.W.A. Sanford for not correcting them.[34]

This letter spurred the War Department into action. President Jackson and Secretary Cass were aware of the unsatisfactory nature of the fraud investigations in both Sanford's and McHenry's districts. Now they knew they must do something to rectify the situation, both to honor their Cusseta treaty pledge and to remove a great obstacle to Creek removal. Consequently, they notified Hogan in early September that

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[33] W. Blue to Hogan, Fort Hull, 4 July 1835, ibid., p. 731; Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 5 July 1835, ibid., pp. 430-31; Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 8 July 1835, ibid., p. 731; Alex. H. Sommerville to Hogan, Tallassee, 10 July 1835, ibid., p. 733; Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 12 July 1835, ibid., pp. 733-34; Wm. Hunter to Hogan, Tallassee, 13 July 1835, ibid., p. 736. Apparently council ground killings were so common that bystanders ceased to be alarmed by them. Hogan reported one incident in which one Creek stabbed another. The "relations of the dead Indian immediately took the murderer, tied him to a tree, and stabbed him to death, and left his body hanging to the tree. There were a great many white persons on the ground, but neither of them, or the chiefs, took any notice of the affair." Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 18 June 1835, ibid., p. 729.

[34] Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 5 July 1835, *ASP: MA*, 6: 430-31; Creek Chiefs to President, Creek Nation, 25 August 1835, ibid., pp. 661-62.

he should take charge of the investigation as part of his duties as removal superintendent. Cass instructed him to visit all the Creek towns and conduct hearings on cases of alleged fraud, making sure to give advance notice to all parties, natives and land buyers, so that they could prepare and present their evidences. However, the secretary did not grant Hogan the power to overturn fraudulent contracts. Those contracts, along with all incriminating evidence, must be sent to the president for a final decision. Only Jackson could void contracts and return land to Creek allottees. Finally, Cass sent word to the certifying agents, Tarrant and McHenry, that they could resume the certification of contracts on all the unsold Creek lands. J.W.A. Sanford had resigned his post as certifying agent to run for a seat in Congress.[35]

With hopes renewed, Hogan informed the War Department that large parties of Creeks would emigrate in the fall of 1835. Unfortunately, he had underestimated the creativity of the local capitalists and the propensity of Jackson and Cass to make unwise decisions. A group of Columbus land speculators now moved to take charge of the removal as a source of profit, to make the Creek removal part of New Alabama's exploitive "Indian business." This group set up J.W. A. Sanford, a respected member of Georgia's pro-Jackson Union political party, as its head and petitioned the War Department for a contract to remove the Creeks. At the same time the company sent secret agents to the Creek towns to delay Hogan's removal until they could get their contract approved. According to the terms of this contract, members of J.W.A. Sandford and Company promised to enroll the Indians for emigration, set up removal camps, and supply wagons, boats, tents, food, guides and all other necessary items for

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[35] Cass to Lower Creek Chiefs, War Department, 9 September 1835, ibid., p. 600; Cass to Hogan, War Department, 9 September 1835, ibid.; Herring to Tarrant, Office of Indian Affairs, 18 September 1835, ibid., p. 602; Hogan to Herring, Fort Mitchell, 15 October 1835, ibid., p. 667.

transporting the Indians to Arkansas at a cost of a mere twenty dollars per Indian, twenty dollars less than the current system run by the government. Jackson and Cass were impressed and decided to give private enterprise removal a chance. They notified Hogan of the change to contract removal and ordered him to dismiss his own agents. They retained Hogan as removal superintendent, however, and ordered him to see to it that Sanford and Company complied with the terms of their contract and treated the Creeks properly.[36]

Hogan and the Creek chiefs were dumbfounded. With the exception of Sanford, the members of Sanford and Company were some of the more notorious speculators in Creek lands. How could the president turn the removal process over to them? The Indians' enthusiasm for a fall removal--the enthusiasm Hogan had worked so hard to cultivate--died away all over the Creek country. Rumors spread among the natives that the contractors meant to collect their money from the government and then take the Creeks only as far west as Mississippi, where they would be enslaved and put to work on cotton plantations. Tuskenea complained loudly that his people would not be led away by speculating contractors "like a parcel of pigs to market." Many other natives "swore that they would never move under those Georgians." Hogan protested the government's decision, claiming that he had been very close to removing thousands of Creeks from Alabama. He also claimed that the contractors were not dealing with the government in good faith. They could not profit from moving Indians at twenty dollars a head, he said. They were only using their contract as a means of tightening their hold on the Creeks so they could extract more native land. Hogan may have been exaggerating, but the

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[36] Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 25 July 1835, ibid., p. 735; Sommerville to Hogan, Dudley's, 25 July 1835, ibid., p. 738; Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 26 July 1835, ibid., p. 736; War Department to Hogan, 21 September 1835, ibid., pp. 777-78; Sanford and Company to Gibson, Columbus, 3 April 1836, ibid., p. 761.

emigration company certainly meant to make a great deal of money somewhere. Why else would J.W.A Sanford resign his newly-won seat in Congress to head the company and engage in the "pin-hook" business of Indian removal?[37]

Unlike Hogan, the new contractors were confident that they could get the Creeks out of the country. They expected to remove five thousand by July of 1836, when their contract expired. Having done that, they expected the government would extend their contract for another year, allowing them to remove the remainder of the tribespeople. In anticipation of a fall removal of a couple of thousand Coweta, Cusseta, and Tuckabatchee Creeks, the contractors made large purchases of beef, corn, wagons and other supplies. They expected a firm commitment to emigration by the Creek chiefs at their fall council meeting at Dudley's store in Chambers County. And indeed, their optimism seemed more than justified by the actions of the council chiefs. These leaders began to clear the way for a move west by arranging for the sale of the twenty-nine sections of land given to the members of the Creek Nation in common by the Cusseta treaty. This sale took place at Tallassee on October 28, and Superintendent Hogan took charge of the money to keep it out of the hands of all the whites who preyed on the natives. The Creek council members also broke Tuskenea as a chief during their meeting at Dudley's, thus reducing his influence against removal among the Upper Creeks and defeating his plan to establish a Creek colony on the Alabama prairie.[38]

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[37] W. Blue to Hogan, Fort Hull, 13 July 1835, ibid., pp. 732-33; Wm. Hunter to Hogan, Keilijah, 12 August 1835, ibid., pp. 739-40; Hogan to Gibson, Washington, 24 August 1835, ibid., p. 738; "Col. William C. Dawson," *Columbus Enquirer*, 27 October 1836, p. 2.

[38] Sanford to Gibson, Columbus, 30 September 1835, ibid., pp. 753-54; Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 12 October 1835, ibid., p. 741; Sanford and Company to Gibson, Columbus, 23 October 1835, ibid., pp. 754-55; Hogan to Herring, Tuskegee, 6 January 1836, ibid., p. 645.

By the end of October, however, the contractors began to see the difficulty of their task. Despite the actions of the chiefs, individual Creeks were reluctant to enroll for removal with men they knew as speculators. Rival speculators, on the other hand, worked to hold the natives in place until Hogan finished his investigation and returned lands to the Creeks for resale. Whiskey shop owners continued to oppose removal no matter who carried it out, and respectable planters and farmers criticized the company, because they believed it could never remove the Creeks successfully. Furthermore, the company members became convinced that Hogan was working against them among the Indians, trying to defeat their contract so he could take back control of the removal process. Through their connections in Washington, the company members gained access to Hogan's correspondence to the War Department. Sanford and his associates knew that the superintendent constantly complained about them.[39]

However, Creek poverty posed the greatest obstacle to removal. The Indians simply did not have enough money to pay their debts and finance the trip west. Superintendent Hogan tried to rectify the problem by beginning his land fraud investigation in the vicinity of Tuckabatchee, where the natives expressed the most interest in emigrating. He quickly overturned many fraudulent land contracts--most because the land buyers failed to appear at the hearings--but he lacked the power to recertify the retrieved lands for sale. Consequently, the would-be Creek emigrants still could not get their money out of the land. Furthermore, the superintendent found that the tribal roll did not contain numbers of household heads. These poor people had never received an allotment to sell and now lacked any means of paying their debts.

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[39] Sanford and Company to Gibson, Columbus, 30 September 1835, ibid., p. 754; Hogan to Gibson, Tallassee, 24 October 1835, ibid., p. 743; Sanford and Company to Gibson, Columbus, 29 October 1835, ibid., p. 755; William Dougherty to Herring, LaGrange, 5 June 1835, ibid., pp. 558-59.

Worse, Creek heirs could not get access to the land left by deceased allottees. The Cusseta treaty made no provision for inheritance, and Alabama law did not permit Indians to inherit property directly. County judges took charge of land owned by deceased Creeks and turned it over to white administrators. These administrators then did as they pleased with the property, including selling it to speculators or cutting all the timber from it. The Creek heirs received little or nothing. And without money, these heirs and other oppressed natives had little choice but to remain in Alabama. But the longer they stayed, the more debt-ridden they became. They lived by borrowing and buying on credit, writing orders on their principal chiefs to be paid out of the annual annuity fund. However, this fact placed the chiefs in an ever-tightening economic bind. Opothleyahola and the other leading chiefs of the Tuckabatchee Creeks informed Hogan that they could not emigrate, because white creditors held them personally responsible for their people's debt. Should they try to leave Alabama, those creditors would step forward to seize all their slaves, horses and other property. The move west would mean their economic ruin.[40]

As a result of all these problems, Sanford and Company removed only a party of about five hundred Creeks in November of 1835. Company members Ingersoll and Marshall escorted this party west along with Lieutenant Deas of the United States Army. Sanford lost heart. Believing that his company could not fulfill its commitment to remove five thousand natives by July 1, 1836, he resigned from the organization. He cited Hogan's investigation and the government's failure to certify Creek land sales as the reason

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[40] Hogan to Secretary of War, Tallassee, 28 October 1835, ibid., p. 670; Sanford and Company to Gibson, Columbus, 29 October 1835, ibid., p. 755; Hogan to Andrew Jackson, Tallassee, 3 November 1835, ibid., p. 671; Hogan to Gibson, Tallassee, 4 November 1835, ibid., p. 743; Collins to Cass, Tuskegee, January 29, 1836, Creek Reserves (M234, reel 243); Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 129; Hogan to Andrew Jackson, Alexandria, D.C., September, 1835, *ASP: MA*, 6: 663-64.

for the failure. Hogan disagreed. He claimed the company failed, because it was unpopular both with the Indians and New Alabama's white "gentry." He also stated that the Indians' inability to resell their lands had not delayed removal. That notion was only an excuse contrived by land speculators to force the government to put Creek property back on the market. Again Hogan asked the War Department to cancel the removal contract, claiming that Sanford had been the only respectable and efficient man in the organization and without him the company would never be able to remove the Creeks satisfactorily. In this regard, Hogan pointed out that the company had taken William Woodward and William Walker, two of the more notorious New Alabama land speculators, into their fold as members. In so doing, the company further alienated the Creeks. However, the superintendent knew it would be difficult for the government to rescind the removal contract with "so many Georgians" seeking to "make their fortunes from it." He was correct. Dr. Ingersoll boasted that he would put two or three members of Congress to work on Secretary Cass to see to it that his company stayed in business. Consequently, the War Department stuck to the contract, leaving both Hogan and the removal company to set the spring of 1836 as the new target date for a mass emigration of Creeks.[41]

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[41] Sanford to the Secretary of War, Columbus, 3 November 1835, ibid., p. 756; Blue to Hogan, Columbus, 5 November 1835, ibid., p. 745; Sanford to Hogan, Columbus, 3 November 1835, ibid., 745-46; Sanford and Company to Hogan, Columbus, 5 November 1836, ibid., p. 746; Hogan to Gibson, Montgomery, 6 November 1835, ibid.; Sanford and Company to Gibson, Columbus, 3 December 1835, ibid., p. 757.

The original members of Sanford and Company were J.W.A. Sanford, S.C. Benton, Luther Blake, John D. Howell, Dr. S.M. Ingersoll and Colonel Alferd Iverson, one of the editors of the *Columbus Sentinel*. S.C. Benton soon resigned and two other men took his place in the company, J. Beattie and Benjamin Marshall, a mixed-blood Creek planter, who, according to Hogan, only joined the company so he could move his family and slaves out of Alabama without being assailed by greedy whites. Finally, Sanford resigned, whereupon William Walker and Thomas S. Woodward joined the company as partners. Hogan to Gibson, Montgomery, 6 November 1835, *ASP: MA*, 6: 746.

Hogan was not being entirely honest when he said that the Creeks' inability to resell their stolen lands did not delay removal. He knew more than anyone else that the natives were caught in an economic trap and needed money to leave Alabama. In fact, he took decisive steps to help the Indians buy their way out of the state and move west in the spring. Whereas before he had informed the Upper Creek chiefs that the government would pay their 1836 annuity in the West, he now promised the leaders that he would have the government make the payment in April in Alabama, provided they agreed to assemble their people in removal camps as soon as they received the money. He intended that the encamped Indians should pay their debts promptly and then depart for Arkansas immediately. Then to assist the Creeks further in establishing financial solvency, Hogan and the Creek sub-agent, Leonard Tarrant, helped the chiefs make arrangements to sell twenty sections of land set aside for Creek orphans by the Cusseta treaty. Hogan believed that the money from these sales, along with their annuity payment, would be enough to get the Creeks on their way. However, he continued to use his land fraud investigation to hasten emigration. He finished his inquiries in McHenry's district, and in the process, overturned 656 contracts involving over a hundred square miles of land. He submitted his report to the War Department along with a recommendation that all the land involved in these contracts be returned to the Indians for resale. As a consequence of all these efforts, prospects looked good for a spring removal. The four leading chiefs of the Tuckabatchee Creeks sold their individual sections of allotment lands for a total of $39,000 and began to prepare their people for the journey west.[42]

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[42] Hogan to Gibson, Unknown Location, 5 December, *ASP: MA*, 6: 747; Herring to Hogan, Office of Indian Affairs, 18 January 1836, ibid., p. 612; "By letter," *Mobile Commercial Register*, 19 January 1836, p. 2; "Twenty Sections of Creek Land, For Sale," *Columbus Enquirer*, 19 February 1836, p. 3; Hogan to Cass, Tuskegee, 18 March 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 617; Creek Chiefs to the President, Creek Reserves (M234, Reel 243).

Then Hogan moved his headquarters to Fort Mitchell to investigate the frauds among the Lower Creeks in Sanford's district. He knew that these poor natives needed financial relief even more than the Upper Creeks. Unfortunately, Hogan arrived at the post in January, 1836, only to find the speculators well prepared to block his investigation in that quarter. He attempted to hold hearings at the fort, but the Columbus land pirates came over the Chattahoochee en masse to disrupt the proceedings. Working through their interpreters, a group of smart and active blacks, the speculators bribed, intimidated, and intoxicated the assembled Indians to get them to deny the existence of any land frauds. Finally, the superintendent admitted that there was simply "too much chicanery to hold hearings at Ft. Mitchell" and moved on to the individual Creek towns to conduct his investigation. However, "gangs of from twenty to forty speculators" followed him from place to place trying to interfere with this work.[43]

Nevertheless, Hogan discovered the true extent of land fraud among the Lower Creeks. The situation was worse than he imagined. The speculators had stolen about three-fourths of the Lower Creek land. The members of the Yuchi town lost virtually all of their property to theft, as did the Creeks of Cusseta town. Hogan also uncovered a number of ingenious schemes the speculators used to get the Indians' land. At Cusseta, Paddy Carr, a mixed-blood planter allied with the speculators, bought all the land and then took the purchase money back with a false promise. He told the tribespeople that

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In fact, McHenry reported that as many as nineteen of twenty contracts in his district were questionable. Not surprisingly, the War Department dismissed him from his position as certifying agent. Herring to McHenry, Office of Indian Affairs, 10 January 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 607; Cass to Hogan, War Department, 15 January 1836, ibid., p. 611.

[43] Hogan to Herring, Tuskegee, 6 January 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 645; Hogan to Herring, Fort Mitchell, 22 January 1836, ibid., pp. 686-87; Hogan to Herring, Fort Mitchell, 14 February 1836, ibid., p. 690.

he would use the funds to send a delegation to Washington to get the president to reverse all the land sales and return all the allotments to the Creek Nation. At Eufaula Town, in Barbour County, Hogan found that two speculators, Alex J. Robinson and General William Wellborn, had purchased 113 half-sections of land for only five or ten dollars per half-section. Robinson and Wellborn made these cheap purchases with the understanding that they would give the Indian allottees more money when the land titles were perfected. Then the men turned around and sold the land to planters and farmers for $3,000 the half-section. The Eufaula Creeks had yet to receive another cent. Worse, some speculators bought Creek land with the understanding that the natives could continue to live on the property as long as they pleased. This specious arrangement made the Indians beholden to their landlords and reluctant to talk to Hogan about the land frauds. It also made the natives less willing to abandon their homes and move west. After examining fourteen towns in the Lower Creek district, a disgusted Hogan concluded that "a greater mass of corruption perhaps has never been congregated in any part of the world than has been engendered by the Creek treaty."[44]

Having failed to stop Hogan's investigation in Sanford's district, the speculators now sought to lessen the impact of his report. They launched a public relations campaign in the newspapers and brought pressure to bear on the War Department. Eli Shorter, one of the founding members of the Columbus Land Company, headed this campaign. He and his associates swamped the War Department with letters, testimonials from New Alabama planters, and forged statements from Indian interpreters and Lower Creek chiefs. All these missives said much the same thing: the land frauds

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[44] Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 5 July 1835, ibid., p. 430; Hogan to Herring, Tuskegee, 11 January 1836, ibid., p. 685; Hogan to Cass, Fort Mitchell, 1 February 1836, ibid., p. 613; Hogan to Herring, Fort Mitchell, 14 February 1836, ibid., p. 690; "For the Enquirer," *Columbus Enquirer*, 22 April 1836, p. 3.

were a myth; allegations of frauds came from jealous speculators who wanted to repurchase Creek contracts; Superintendent Hogan, seeking profit, had allied himself with these speculators; Hogan was trying to overturn good contracts as well as bad ones; and the superintendent's investigation was blocking Creek removal. Then the speculators warned Secretary Cass that if the government returned all the supposedly stolen land to the Creeks thousands of respectable white settlers would be displaced. Consequently, the speculators asked the secretary to stop the investigation and to remove the Creeks from Alabama by force if necessary. Without land, the natives were the real intruders, they reasoned. And finally, the petitioners raised an ominous threat. If allowed to stay in Alabama, the poor Creeks would have to steal from their white neighbors to survive. The whites would resist this theft and an armed conflict would result. The government must act or risk war.[45]

Cass refused to call off the investigation, but the speculator campaign, as well as the complaints of the removal contractors against Hogan, did influence the secretary. First, he warned Hogan to keep his investigation within workable bounds and to tailor it to the larger goal of removal Then he decided to strip Hogan of his removal duties. He

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[45] Shorter to Secretary of War, Columbus, 10 November 1835, *ASP, MA*, 6: 673-75; Land Companies to the President, Columbus, 18 November 1835, ibid., p. 676; Shorter to Secretary of War, Columbus, 9 January 1836, ibid., p. 684; Herring to Shorter, Office of Indian Affairs, 18 January 1836, ibid., p. 612; Herring to Hogan, Office of Indian Affairs, 18 January 1836, ibid.; Hogan to Gibson, Unknown location, 23 January 1836, ibid., p. 748; Shorter to Secretary of War, Columbus, 18 February 1836, ibid., p. 690; Citizens to Cass, Russell County, Alabama, 20 February 1836, ibid., pp. 692-93; Citzens to Secretary of War, Russell County, Alabama, 20 February 1836, ibid., pp. 690-91; Page to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 9 April 1836, ibid., p. 767; Major John Howard to Cass, Milledgeville, Georgia, 9 May 1836, ibid., p. 654. One outraged land buyer expressed another common question in his letter to Washington: "Is it indeed true that the Government is more partial to the Indians than to its own citizens?" E.E. Bissell to Secretary of War, 8 March 1836, Creek Reserves (M234, Reel 243).

assigned those duties to Captain John Page at Fort Mitchell, a man more friendly to the contractors and speculators. Next, bowing to the will of the Georgia delegation in Congress, Cass appointed J. W. Burney and George W. Anderson as commissioners to assist Hogan in his investigation. Cass made these appointments both to speed the investigative process and to assure that Hogan would not be in sole charge of overturning land contracts. Then in March, 1836, the secretary further astonished Hogan by ordering him and his fellow investigators to go back and hold new hearings on all the contracts Hogan and agents McHenry and Tarrant had overturned. Obviously the large number of specious contracts had staggered the secretary and president, and they were reluctant to disappoint so many land buyers and return so much property to the Indians. The secretary was especially concerned that the investigators had overturned so many contracts simply because the land buyers had not turned up at the investigation sites to defend their purchases. Indeed, in their appeals to the War Department, the speculators constantly bemoaned the fact that Hogan conducted *ex parte* investigations, disapproving contracts on the mere word of an Indian. This situation allowed the land buyers to claim that the government favored the interests of the Creeks over its own citizens, and they threatened to bring suits in the Alabama courts to uphold the validity of their land contracts. Given the timing of their protests and Cass's order to start the investigation all over again, it is obvious that the speculators convinced the secretary that he should not declare any land contracts invalid without more solid documentation of fraud. The secretary instructed Hogan and his two associates from Georgia to collect this proof. [46]

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[46] Cass to Hogan, War Department, 16 January 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 611-12; Gibson to Sanford and Company, Office of Commissary General of Subsistence, 30 January 1836, ibid., p. 697; War Department to John W. Burney and George D. Anderson, Washington, 16 February 1836, Creek Reserves (M234, Reel 243); Hogan to Cass, Mobile, 8 March 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 751; Cass to Hogan, Burney and Anderson, War Department, ibid., pp. 614-15; Cass to Sanford and Company, War Department, 12 March 1836, ibid., p. 780; Hogan to Herring, Tuskegee, 30 March 1836, ibid., pp. 618-19; Hogan to Cass,

Cass's decision to do the investigation all over again stopped removal cold. Without the money from the resale of their stolen lands, the Creeks could not free themselves from New Alabama's grinding economy and depart in the spring of 1836. Worse, the administration failed to alter the treaty to allow Indian heirs to claim the lands of their deceased relatives. Those natives who had sold off their possessions in anticipation of leaving began to starve; others began to prepare their fields for another crop, signaling that they would stay in their old homes through the fall, waiting for an end to the land fraud investigation. Seeing this reluctance to emigrate, particularly on the part of the Lower Creeks, Captain Page, the new removal superintendent, resorted to threats. He turned up at the Creeks' spring council meeting at Loachapoka town and informed assembled chiefs that 1836 would be the last year the Creeks could remove at government expense. Thereafter, the white settlers, who now owned the land, would forcibly expel them from Alabama.

Page's declaration was a terrible mistake. He should have saved his threats for the acquisitive and economically competitive whites. The removal contractors were not ready to remove a mass of Creeks in the spring. They were afraid to venture among the angry and aggrieved Lower Creeks, and both Hogan and more objective observers accused them of delaying removal until they could get a contract extension and an increase in their pay. On the other hand, the whiskey dealers and speculators continued to hold the Lower Creeks in place, and refused to turn the natives over to the removal contractors until they could get their hands on the annuity payment that Hogan had requested from the government. In fact, it began to appear that industrious whites would never let the Creeks leave Alabama. Some of them had put the economically dependent

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Tuskegee, 3 April 1836, ibid., p. 620; War Department to F.S. Lyon, Washington, 9 May 1836, ibid., p. 621.

natives to work clearing land for plantations and "performing other labor for white men." In fact, one observer reported that the Lower Creeks were being used as a "substitute for slaves and avarice will make them such."[47]

No other statement better illustrates the tragic result of the Cusseta Treaty. Designed to allow the Creeks to sell their lands individually and to emigrate from Alabama within a few years, the treaty failed on both counts and actually created an economic trap for the natives. By the spring of 1836 it was evident the natives could neither stay in Alabama nor leave without being thoroughly exploited. Exasperated by the situation, John B. Hogan blamed the speculators and removal contractors for the problem. The contractors and speculators blamed Hogan's investigation. Jackson and Cass had no answer to the puzzle but to continue fraud investigations without really wanting to interfere with the business transactions of so many loud and influential white citizens. Given the ineffectiveness of the whites, Opothleyahola took matters into his own hands. As April passed into May, he began to negotiate a deal with a company of land speculators whereby they would buy the rights to all the Upper Creek land under investigation. This sale would finally free the Upper Creeks of their Alabama lands and allow them to buy their way out of the state. The speculators could then settle their accounts with the government and among themselves. Opothleyahola only hoped the government would approve his plan.[48]

Unfortunately, Neah Micco and a number of his Lower Creek sub-chiefs had other plans. They would use violence as a means of extracting themselves from the

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[47] Cass to Mardis," War Department, 26 December 1834, ibid., p. 592; "We are pleased," *Columbus Enquirer*, 18 March 1836, p. 2; Page to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 9 April 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 767; "For the Enquirer," *Columbus Enquirer*, 22 April 1836, p. 3; Hogan to Cass, Tuskegee, 22 April 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 707-8.

[48] John Page to Lewis Cass, Fort Mitchell, 9 May 1836, ibid., pp. 769-70.

dilemma created by the Cusseta Treaty. They would seek armed rebellion as an alternative both to economic oppression in New Alabama and the forced removal Captain Page threatened.

Chapter 2

The Long-Term Causes: Creek Diversity and Georgian Aggression

Though the Cusseta Treaty was the proximate cause of the Second Creek War, that conflict cannot be explored and explained properly without looking at the larger sociological and historical context in which it took place. After all, most all of the other southern natives suffered abuse during the removal era, but only the Lower Creeks and their Seminole cousins in Florida rose up in armed revolt against the whites. Conditions pre-dating the Cusseta accord help explain this fact. The abuses set in motion by the treaty merely fanned an already smoldering flame into war.

There were essentially two pre-existing conditions that inclined the Lower Creeks towards war. First, the Creek Nation was weak. It lacked political, economic or even ethnic cohesion, and the excesses of the Indian business created by the Cusseta Treaty were bound to splinter and decimate the Creeks even more than other native groups and result in some kind of violent upheaval. Second, the Lower Creeks, many of them former residents of the State of Georgia, had a long history of bitter conflict with white Georgians, and when these same Georgians moved into New Alabama determined to claim everything the Creeks had, including their freedom, a terrible conflagration had to occur. Indeed, though the uprising began on Alabama soil, the natives directed it against Georgia. In fact, the Second Creek War was the culmination of a century-long struggle between the Georgians and Lower Creeks for land and resources.

Given these facts, it was not surprising that the war occurred. It is surprising, however, that the whites seemed so powerless to stop it. In 1835 violent confrontations

between whites and Creeks began to escalate as the Indians became more impoverished and demoralized by New Alabama's economic system; then from January 1836 on into the spring, the Lower Creeks, prompted by the outbreak of the Seminole War in Florida as well as fears that whites meant to remove them from Alabama by force, began to demonstrate even more dramatically the classic signs of shock, self-destruction, heightened emotionalism and open hostility to outsiders that often lead to an armed rebellion among colonized and oppressed peoples. And yet the whites, politically and economically divided among themselves, failed to take the steps necessary to prevent the outbreak of war. Instead they bickered with one another over removal and the land fraud investigation and tended to infantilize the Creeks, giving them little credit for independent action, and blaming their misdeeds on the manipulation of other whites. Ironically, the same white competition for control of the Creeks and their economic resources that had retarded removal and helped set up the conditions for a war, also served as a mask under which the Creeks could plot their revolt without interference from the whites. All the while whites competed with one another, and blamed one other for turning the simple-minded Indians hostile, a party of angry Creeks acted in secret to stage their rebellion.

* * *

The press of American expansionism tended to split native tribes and nations into conservative and progressive factions: one faction sought to resist change and cling to traditional Indian culture while the other tried to accommodate itself to the new day by adopting or at least adapting to white ways, including intermarriage with whites. In almost all cases the split between the two groups was bitter and at times violent. Among the Creeks, American expansionism had a particularly divisive and splintering effect because the Creek Nation was not a single tribe but a confederacy of tribes speaking

several different languages. Thus ancient ethnic tensions within the nation both added to and were exacerbated by the normal conservative/progressive split that occurred as the Americans pressed into the Old Southwest during the early part of the nineteenth century. This situation helps explain why the Creeks and Seminoles--a Creek offshoot-- were the only southern Indians that engaged in open warfare against the Americans, and against one another, during that period.[1]

However, ethnic diversity had not always been a source of weakness for the Creeks. In the days before the American Revolution it was a great strength. With the arrival of European colonists on the continent, the Creek Confederacy became a place of refuge for tribal fragments seeking escape from the disease and warfare accompanying European expansionism. The nation's towns multiplied, spreading out across the territory that would become the states of Alabama, Georgia and Florida. The populous Creek Confederacy also grew stronger through its trade with the Europeans. Certainly ethnic animosity and political factionalism existed among the Creeks during the colonial era, but politically astute leaders like Emperor Brims and later the mixed-blood Alexander McGillivray, held the Creeks together. These leaders also maintained their nation's power and land base by playing the French, Spanish, and English rivals off against one another in their struggle for control of the southern country. In fact, the Creek Confederacy emerged from the American Revolution as the strongest Indian nation in all the territory claimed by the young United States. By holding aloof from heavy participation in the war on either side, the Creeks escaped the devastation from American

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[1] Numerous scholars have discussed the conservative/progressive schism in Native American tribes and nations. See P. Richard Metcalf, "Who Should Rule At Home? Native American Politics and Indian-White Relations," *Journal of American History* 61 (December, 1974): 651-65; Robert H. Lowie, "Some Aspects of Political Organization Among the American Aborigines," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 78 (January, 1948): 11-25.

armies that felled the two other principal Indian powers in the land, the Iroquois and Cherokee nations.[2]

Still the American victory doomed the Creeks, signaling the beginning of the end of their political and military power. Along with the rise of the new American nation, the British left the Southeast and the Spanish conceded ownership of the Creek country to the Americans. The Creeks, or Muscogulgees as they called themselves, were left alone to face an American expansionism stimulated by the invention of the cotton gin in 1793. The Americans began to settle Tennessee to the north and the Mississippi Territory to the west. More immediately, the Georgians pressed against the Creek Nation from the east. Without a strong leader to unite them, and saddled with a huge debt accumulated in the dying deerskin trade, the Creeks began a process of selling their Georgia lands to the United States, and moved their towns and villages west in the face of the steady advance of Georgia settlers. This process was never really peaceful, however, as settlers and Creeks often clashed violently along the frontier line. Indeed, Georgians and Creeks had been fighting one another intermittently since Oglethorpe founded the colony of Georgia on Creek soil in 1733, and the bitter conflict between

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[2] Several scholars have discussed the development of the Creek Confederacy. The older interpretation states that the confederacy existed before the coming of the whites. The more recent revisionist interpretation holds that the confederacy arose as a response to turmoil and dislocations unleashed in the native world by the coming of the whites. For the traditional interpretation See David H. Corkran, *The Creek Frontier 1540-1783* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967). For the revisionist view see Vernon James Knight, Jr., "The Formation of the Creeks," in *The Forgotten Centuries*, ed. Charles Hudson and Carmen Chaves Tesser (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1994), pp. 373-92, particularly p. 386. For a discussion of the impact of European trade on the Creek Confederacy see Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins & Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).

these two peoples also helps explain why the Muscogulgees were more militant than the other southern natives during the post-Revolution period.[3]

The ascendancy of the United States, and of the state of Georgia in particular, also caused the Creeks to begin to lose the last vestiges of their cultural independence. The first United States agent to the Creeks, Benjamin Hawkins, believing like other Jeffersonians that the Indians could be civilized and assimilated into American society, made himself the de facto head of Creek government and attempted to replace ancient tribal customs with American ones. Many Creeks began to move out of their towns to establish family farms on the American pattern. On the fringes of the nation, they began to enter the American market economy. Then in 1811 the federal government opened the Federal Road through the heart of the Creek Nation, and this road became a focal point of increased contact between blacks, whites and Creeks. Tribesmen settled out along the road to trade with all the travelers moving through their nation; but along with this interaction, came increasing rates of crime and alcoholism and a further breakdown of traditional ways among the Creeks. Now the ethnic diversity that had once made them strong became a weakness for the Creeks. Political and ethnic factionalism rose to the fore as the various, and sometimes antagonistic, Creek tribes, towns, clans and individuals sought to either accommodate themselves to American power or resist its influence.[4]

The problem reached its climax in 1813 when a conservative party called the Red Sticks sprang up in the Creek Nation. Nativistic Shawnee and Alabama tribesmen made up the central core of this party. Inspired by the fiery, anti-American harangues of the

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[3] For the immediate post-Revolution period in Creek history see Angie Debo, *The Road to Disappearance* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), chap. 2.

[4] Merritt B. Pound recounts this process in *Benjamin Hawkins: Indian Agent* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1951), chaps. 9-14.

northern Shawnee incendiary, Tecumseh, and the ecstatic religious practices of Tecumseh's brother, Tenskwatawa, the Red Sticks seized control of most of the Upper Creek towns. They then laid siege to Tuckabatchee, the foremost Upper Creek town and the home of the nation's headman, the Big Warrior. The Red Sticks believed that the Big Warrior, his council chiefs, and the growing body of well-to-do Creek mixed-bloods had betrayed their Indian heritage by giving up control of the nation to the Americans. The Red Sticks meant to return the Creeks to the old Indian ways and in so doing reintegrate the diverse and splintering Creek Nation. In the process they hoped to unite with Tecumseh's northern Indian confederates and the British in throwing the Americans out of the Indian heartland and wiping out their insidious influences. Some Red Sticks firmly believed that an apocalypse was at hand and the Master of Breath, himself, would help them destroy the Americans and their Indian toadies.

But as with most backward-looking colonial revolts, the Red Stick uprising failed. After massacring the inhabitants of Fort Mims on the Alabama River--many of them mixed-blood planters--the Red Sticks found themselves embroiled in a conflict with the United States called the Creek War of 1813 and 1814. This conflict then merged with the War of 1812 between Britain and the United States, and the results were disastrous for the Creek Nation. The Americans retaliated for Fort Mims by sending three armies into the Creek country, one from Mississippi Territory, one from Georgia, and a third from Tennessee. These armies systematically destroyed almost all the Upper Creek towns; and the Tennesseans under Andrew Jackson finally crushed the Red Stick insurgents at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend on the Tallapoosa River. Those Red Sticks who refused to surrender fled to Spanish Florida to join the Seminoles, themselves a splinter group of the increasingly fragmented Creek nation. Groups of conservative Lower Creeks, who also still despised the Americans, also fled to the Seminole country in the wake of the American invasion. Andrew Jackson then punished all the Creeks,

hostile and friendly, for the Red Stick rebellion by forcing their leaders to sign the Treaty of Fort Jackson. This treaty obligated the Creeks to cede over twenty million acres of land to the United States.[5]

The First Creek War produced other unfortunate results for the Creeks. Following the Fort Jackson cession, white settlers, propelled by a tremendous rise in cotton prices at the close of the War of 1812, took up homesteads on the land taken from the Creeks. This influx of settlers led to the formation of the state of Alabama in 1819. The Creek War, along with the victory over the British at New Orleans, also prompted the rise of Andrew Jackson as a political power in the United States, and caused him and most other southerners to believe more firmly than ever that the Indians were dangerous and could never be civilized and assimilated into American society. Consequently, the ideal of Indian removal became much more popular. The most urgent calls for removal, however, came from the Georgians, who had a long history of conflict with the Creeks and who were not nearly satisfied with the huge Creek land cession at Fort Jackson. The Creeks still occupied some of the finest country in western Georgia, and white Georgians became more determined than ever to expel all the Indians within the borders of their state and to supplant them with white farmers and planters.[6]

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[5] For the complete story of the Red Stick revolt and the First Creek War see H.S. Halbert and T.H. Ball, *The Creek War of 1813 and 1814* (Chicago: Donohue & Henneberry, 1895); Joel W. Martin, *Sacred Revolt: The Muskogees' Struggle for a New World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991); Frank Lawrence Owsley, Jr., *Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands: The Creek War and the Battle of New Orleans 1812-1815* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1981).

[6] Albert James Pickett, *History of Alabama and Incidentally of Georgia and Mississippi from the Earliest Period* (1851; reprint ed., Sheffield, Ala.: Robert C. Randolp, 1903), p. 635; for the rise of Jackson and removal sentiment see Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of Empire, 1767-1821* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), chaps. 13-14; for the sentiments of the Georgians see Charles Herbert Schoenleber, "The Rise of the New West: Frontier Political Pressure, State-Federal

The Georgians were able to exploit the ethnic diversity, political factionalism, and outright greed among the Creeks to accomplish their purpose. They turned to William McIntosh, a wealthy mixed-blood chief of the Lower Creek Coweta town for help. McIntosh was a Creek aristocrat. He belonged to the proud Wind Clan of the Muscogee tribesmen who originally formed the Creek Confederacy. He also claimed kin to some of Georgia's leading white families. He had helped Andrew Jackson defeat the Red Sticks in Alabama and had marched with Old Hickory into Florida in 1818 to help him whip the Seminoles. McIntosh represented the most highly acculturated element of the Creek Nation, and he believed all of his fellow tribesmen must emigrate to the west and eventually civilize themselves according to the American pattern. Like a growing number of white Americans, he placed great emphasis on personal wealth and status, and he regarded conservative Creeks with disdain. He continued to refer to the leaders of the Upper Creeks as Red Sticks, and called the non-Muscogee tribes of Lower Creeks renegade Seminoles and "stinkards"--a term the ancient Muscogees applied to the weaker tribes they conquered and enslaved. Seeing that the voices of conservatism dominated the Creek National Council, McIntosh and the chiefs loyal to him accepted bribes, and promises of federal protection, from the Georgians and signed the Treaty of Indian Springs in February of 1825. This agreement gave practically all of the remaining Creek lands in Georgia and Alabama to the United States. The Senate ratified the treaty the very next month.[7]

Conflict, and the Removal of the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks and Cherokees, 1815-1837" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1986), chaps. 4 and 7.

[7] For the career of William McIntosh see Benjamin W. Griffith, Jr., *McIntosh and Weatherford, Creek Indian Leaders* (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1988); Michael D.Green gives a good account of the Indian Springs Treaty in *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), chap. 4. See also Green's "Federal-State Conflict

The Indian Springs treaty created a serious crisis between the Creeks and the State of Georgia as well as a schism between Georgia and the federal government. On learning of the fraudulent agreement, the Creek National Council, dominated by Opothleyahola and other Upper Creek leaders, moved quickly to preserve their country. They executed William McIntosh and announced to the world that their tribesmen would not withdraw from the land he ceded to the United States. The governor of Georgia, George D. Troup, countered with a threat to send state troops onto the ceded lands to drive the Indians away. War between Georgia and the Creeks seemed imminent. However, President Adams acted to keep the peace. He knew the treaty was a fraud, but he also knew that the Georgians s would never abandon their goal of occupying all the Creek land within their state boundaries. Therefore, Adams sought a compromise. He sent federal troops to keep the peace between Indians and whites, then asked the Creeks to sign legitimate treaties ceding all their lands in Georgia to the United States. Their Alabama lands they could keep. At the same time, Adams attempted to keep the Georgians from surveying and occupying territory still occupied by the Creeks. Unfortunately, Troup refused to compromise. He went ahead with his plans to survey the Creek lands in Georgia, and when Adams threatened to use federal troops to arrest the surveyors, the governor mobilized state troops to protect them. Now it appeared a civil war between Georgia and the federal union might result from the Indian Springs treaty.[8]

At that point Adams backed down. Fearing bloodshed, he declined using his troops against the surveyors and instead applied more pressure on the Creek National

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in the Administration of Indian Policy: Georgia, Alabama, and the Creek, 1824-1834" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1973), chap. 6.

[8] Green, *Politics of Removal*, chap. 5; idem, "Federal-State Conflict," chap. 7.

Council to agree to a final cession of their nation's Georgia territory. In this he succeeded. With the Treaty of Washington in 1826 and the Treaty of Fort Mitchell in 1827, the Creeks gave up their Georgia lands and agreed to concentrate themselves on their territory in Alabama. Thus peace was preserved, but at great cost. The Creeks lost another huge chunk of their ancient homeland and their long-standing hostility toward the Georgians increased. Furthermore, the dispute helped create a strong states' rights political party in Georgia and a continuing mistrust among Georgians for the federal government and its policies. The quest for Creek lands and resources would continue to be a source of conflict among the whites.[9]

The Lower Creeks who moved into Alabama from Georgia following the Fort Mitchell treaty were a piebald lot, already broken in nationality and lacking social organization. Many of these people were the products of years of miscegenation with blacks and whites. They varied widely in color. They also varied in terms of wealth and lifestyles. On the one hand there were the McIntosh Creeks of Coweta and Cusseta towns, highly acculturated and prosperous individuals. They owned plantations, roadhouses, stores and slaves. Then there were a large number of semi-acculturated or hybrid Creeks, people like the Osochis and Chehaws from Flint River. They had given up their towns and ceremonial square grounds to live out on individual farms, and to trade and intermarry with white and black Georgians. Some of these people were small farmers or stock raisers. Many more of them were poor laborers and vagabonds. Some had fallen prey to alcoholism and the other vices of white society, and lacked the system

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[9] Green, *Politics of Removal*, chap. 5; idem, "Federal-State Conflict," chap. 7. The connection between the Creek controversy and the rise of states' rights sentiment in Georgia is a major theme in two important books on antebellum Georgia politics: Murray Paul, *The Whig Party in Georgia*, 1825-1853 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948) and U. B. Phillips, *Georgia and States Rights* (1902; reprint ed., Antioch College: Antioch Press, 1968).

of cohesion and support their traditional, town-oriented, communal lifestyle had offered them. And finally, there were the people the whites called troublemakers. Among this group were "wild" Hitchitis, close kin to the Seminoles, who wandered about Alabama, Georgia and Florida pursuing the chase and occasionally tormenting the whites. And next to the Hitchites were the mysterious Yuchis, who spoke a language entirely different from the other members of the Creek Confederacy, practiced different customs, and had never gotten on particularly well with their Creek neighbors or the whites. At one time, the Yuchis maintained a large orderly town on the Chattahoochee River and distinguished themselves as the most industrious and proud people in the Confederacy. Contact with the whites and their own truculence had brought them low, however, and by the late 1820's both Indians and whites reviled the Yuchis as thieves, rogues and liars. On moving into Alabama, all these diverse Georgia Creeks settled among friends and relatives already living in tribal territories along the west bank of the Chattahoochee just to the south and east of the Upper Creek towns. In descending order these tribal territories were Cusseta, Coweta, Yuchi, Hitchiti, Osochi, Chehaw, Sawokli, Apalachicola and Eufaula.[10]

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[10] Michael D. Green claims that the Lower Creeks were becoming "a distinctive, almost hybrid society . . . genetically and culturally mixed." (*Politics of Removal*, pp. 150-51). Foreman describes Creek captives during the Creek War of 1836 as being "all complexions shading through white, red, and black." Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), p. 151. For further information on the Lower Creeks and their cultural diversity see F.L. Cherry, "The History of Opelika and Her Agricultural Tributary Territory, Embracing More Particularly Lee and Russell Counties, from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Date," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 15, nos. 2, 3, 4 (1953): p. 317; J.B. Clements, *History of Irwin County, Georgia* (Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, 1978), pp. 35-36; J. LeitchWright, *Creeks and Seminoles; The Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulge People* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968), pp. 9-10.

The more united and relatively prosperous Upper Creeks stood in contrast to the people of the lower towns and considered themselves almost a distinct and superior nation. Following the destructive First Creek War, they rebuilt their towns along the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers and their tributary streams, and down along the Federal Road near where that thoroughfare passed out of the Creek country and into the white counties of Alabama. The Upper Creeks also managed to reintegrate their society, which had been violently torn apart by the contest between its progressive and traditional elements. In fact, the Upper Creeks had learned some valuable lessons from the war and the events leading up to it. First of all, they learned that a too hasty adoption of white ways had disintegrating and debilitating effects on Indians. Secondly, they learned that a complete rejection of white culture was impossible, and could also be destructive in a world increasingly controlled by whites. Consequently, the Upper Creeks chose a middle path, clinging to traditional ways while adopting things from the whites that could help them survive and prosper in the face of the white advance. Some time after the war, for example, the Upper Creeks reversed their former trend of moving out of their towns to build individual farms. They tied their fractured society back together by returning to the towns to engage in communal life and cooperative agriculture. However, the townspeople continued to grow corn and cotton to sell to the whites, and individual Creeks continued to run ferries, roadhouses and trading stores. Similarly, the Upper Creeks allowed Baptist missionaries into the nation in the 1820s, hoping those missionaries would teach Creek children valuable white skills like reading, writing, sewing and blacksmithing. However, the town chiefs refused to let the whites preach and proselytize Christianity for that would challenge the traditional religious beliefs and ceremonies that gave Creek life its coherence and strength. This middle path became an integrating principle that appealed to both progressive Creeks and former Red Sticks; and Opothleyahola, the most influential Upper Creek leader, became one of its chief

proponents. Reportedly the wealthiest man in the Creek Nation, Opothleyahola was a shrewd trader who earned the nickname "Old Gouge" from the whites with whom he dealt. Yet this leader took his traditional responsibilities as a chief seriously, upheld ancient Creek customs, and steadfastly refused to wear white clothing.[11]

The accumulation of disparate tribesmen in Alabama only increased the stresses and strains on the Creek Nation, and made it more difficult for the Creek National Council to deal with outside pressures. The emigration of Lower Creeks accelerated the disintegration of Lower Creek towns and this contributed to disorder in the nation. Furthermore, the increased population taxed Alabama's hunting grounds. In the face of these facts some detached and dispirited Lower Creeks, not really feeling at home or particularly safe in Alabama, became susceptible to the white's efforts to remove them to the West--efforts which increased with the election of Andrew Jackson to the presidency in 1828. Thomas L. McKenny, head of the War Department's Indian office, directed the effort to remove the Creeks, while Creek Agent John Crowell and sub-agent William L. Walker carried out McKenney's orders at the local level. During the late 1820s, these men succeeded in removing the McIntosh Creeks and several hundred others from

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[11] Green, *Politics of Indian Removal*, pp. 150-51, 158-59; Christine Schultz White, "Opothleyahola, Factionalism, and Creek Politics" (Ph.D. diss., Texas Christian University, 1986), pp. 95, 139-40, 143-48; John Bartlett Meserve, "Chief Opothleyahola," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 9 (December, 1931): 444, 451-53. The middle path concept is my own interpretation of the actions of the Upper Creeks. This interpretation is based on a careful study of the above sources and several others. Perhaps the best examples of the middle path philosophy came from Opothleyahola in his comments to white travelers and his speeches to his people. Captain Ethan Allen Hitchcock reported that the chief did not like missionaries and believed he was much more likely to get to heaven by worshipping Tuckabatchee's ceremonial brass plates than the white man's Jesus. However, Opothleyahola upheld the white man's education, contending that if young Creeks were "taught in the ways of the white man...our people may stand unmoved in the flood of the white man." White, "Opothleyahola," pp. 143, 145.

Alabama to new homes in the West. They would have been even more successful but for the determined resistance of the conservative Creek Council, which called the clans of the nation together to bind them up against removal. The Creek chiefs also launched a campaign of intimidation, threatening and even beating those Creeks who wanted to remove. Above all else, the Creek Council, dominated by Opothleyaholo and the other chiefs of Tuckabatchee town, wanted to preserve their Alabama homeland, which could not happen unless Creeks presented a united front against the Americans. In this view the Upper Creek leaders they found support among the more conservative Lower Creek council chiefs, including Neah Micco, headman of the lower towns, and Neamathla, the old war horse of the turbulent Hitchitis.[12]

Unfortunately for the Creek Council, the state of Alabama now entered the removal contest. Between 1827 and 1832, legislators, encouraged by President Jackson, extended Alabama law fully over the Creek country. In part the extension was merely an expression of a growing states' right sentiment in Alabama tied to a need to protect the institution of slavery. The states' rights men believed, as a matter of principle, that sovereign states should exercise jurisdiction over all the land in their chartered limits, no matter what class of people occupied the land. The legislators also believed, using very tortured logic, that if the federal government could hold a states' Indians outside state law, then it might at some future date claim the authority to say that blacks would not be slaves. More immediately, however, the legislators wanted to use the threat of state law to convince the Creeks that they should leave Alabama. Among other things, the

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[12] Green, *Politics of Removal*, pp. 148, 150-53; John Page to George Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 15 September 1834, in U.S. Congress, *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, Vol. 6 (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1861), pp. 763-64; Neamathla moved from Florida to the Lower Creek lands in Alabama in 1824 and became one of the most forceful anti-removal chiefs. At one point he even cut off the ears of a man and woman who attempted to emigrate. Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 151, n. 29.

Alabama legislature forbade Creeks from hunting, trapping or fishing within the settled limits of the state, and made it illegal for the Creek National Council to interfere with federal efforts to remove the tribespeople. Many Alabamians believed, as did Jackson, that once the common Indians were freed from the power and coercion of the anti-removal chiefs, they would agree readily to emigrate beyond the Mississippi. However, Alabamians, as a general rule, were not as virulently anti-Indian as the Georgians, nor did they approve Governor Troup's radical tactics in driving the Creeks out of his state. Furthermore, a good number of Alabama assemblymen opposed the extension of state law over the Creek country. Only the representatives of counties bordering the Creek country and the more boisterous states' rights men pushed the extension.[13]

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[13] Green, *Politics of Indian Removal*, pp. 146-47; Schoenleber, "Rise of the New West," chaps. 4 and 7. Schoenleber makes a significant contribution to the literature on removal by showing that southern whites were not a united group of Indian-hating frontiersmen seeking to push the natives off their land. He shows that "not all Mississippians, Alabamians and Georgians acted alike" in regard to Native Americans (p. 11). By examining public opinion and legislative acts at the state level, he finds complexity in the white view of Indians and removal, a complexity that previous historians, writing from a national perspective have overlooked. My own exploration of the interaction of whites and Indians at the grassroots level adds yet another dimension to this view of the complexity of views and motivations among southern whites. Both Green and Schoenleber attempt to explain why Alabamians were less hostile to the Creeks than the Georgians. According to Green, "Alabama's non-Indian inhabitants, whose numbers were many fewer than Georgia's, did not press as vigorously against the tribal boundaries. Alabama's political life did not seem to require the flamboyant expansionism that George M. Troup pursued in Georgia. By the Treaty of Fort Jackson [at the end of the First Creek War], Alabamians had acquired the vast central section of their state from the Creeks. And Alabama was a public land state. Unlike Georgia, which as an old colony had a charter claim to her lands, Alabama was the creation of the federal government, and title to all Indian lands within her boundaries belonged to the United States. Therefore, while interested in Indian removal as an ultimate goal, Alabamians did not initially pursue it with the single-minded lust of the Georgians." Green, *Politics of Indian Removal*, pp. 143-44.

However, the actions of the Alabama Assembly did promote white settlement in the Indian country, settlement that the federal Indian trade and intercourse laws had prohibited. The Creek Council found this aspect of the Alabama acts most onerous. The task of integrating the diverse people of the Creek Nation was difficult enough without the added problem of white intrusion and the corrupting influences of white society. In order to stop this intrusion, to gain a respite from the harmful effects of state law, and to relieve the federal government's intense pressure to remove them from Alabama, the Creek Council signed the Cusseta Treaty of 1832. In a sense this treaty conformed to the middle path design of the Upper Creeks. It was a mix of old and new elements. Ideally the treaty would allow the Creeks to maintain the core of their traditional culture on lands clustered about their ancient town sites. Only now individuals would own these lands, as the whites held their property. Moreover, the treaty guaranteed that the federal government would keep intruders off tribal lands until the Creeks could consolidate their individual holdings and make their individual decisions as to whether they would retain or sell their allotments. Opothleyahola and the Upper Creek chiefs believed their people would maintain their unity and not sell.[14]

In reality the Cusseta treaty was a terrible mistake. Rather than stopping white intrusion, the treaty stimulated a rush of settlers--most of them Georgians--into the Creek country. Furthermore, the treaty threw the Creeks and their resources into the main stream of the American market system without the necessary protections. The Creeks became a colonized people, living as near neighbors with blacks and whites within a larger pluralistic southern society. All this would have harmed any native American nation, but the impact of close contact with outsiders and the insidious "Indian business" on the Creeks was particularly divisive, devastating, and in the end violent, because the

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[14] Ibid., pp. 168-71.

Creek Nation was not a strong, cohesive ethnic entity in the first place. Rather than granting the Creeks a respite, the treaty actually accelerated the forces of disintegration already evident in the nation and precipitated a crisis so great that some Creeks sought relief in a last desperate armed uprising.

One of the most destructive effects of the Cusseta Treaty and the exploitive economy it engendered was to turn Creeks against Creeks in the struggle to survive. The rise of the market economy in New Alabama meant that all the diverse Creek tribesmen, over twenty thousand in number, had individual decisions to make as to how they would deal not only with the white intruders but with each other in a new and highly competitive economic environment. Unfortunately, some natives adapted to the situation by becoming as acquisitive and predatory as their white neighbors. In fact, New Alabama's economic exploitation often cut across racial lines, and this made it all the more destructive to Creek society. Some Creek headmen lived comfortably on the annual annuity fund while their townspeople drifted further into poverty; some educated Creeks, most notably Ben Marshall and Paddy Carr of Coweta town, worked with the land speculators to defraud less sophisticated Indians; some astute Creeks rented their land out to white farmers and lived off the proceeds; a goodly number of Lower Creeks posed as Upper Creeks and sold land that did not belong to them; some Creek girls ventured onto the streets of Columbus to join poor white girls as prostitutes; and not a few older Creek women set up tables along the busy Federal Road, the main thoroughfare through New Alabama, and sold liquor to their demoralized tribespeople. On seeing these native liquor dealers, an English traveler remarked that the Creeks, in imitation of the whites, "were doing their best to prey upon each other." No other statement better

illustrates how fragmented and competitive life in New Alabama had become as a result of the Cusseta treaty. [15]

Unfortunately, many Creeks could not cope with white oppression and economic competition with their own tribespeople. In the wake of growing poverty, alcohol abuse, always a problem for the natives, became all the more destructive to Creek society. Levels of tension and anger rose, and as with most all subjugated peoples, the Creeks entered a period of self-destruction before turning their anger and frustration outward in armed rebellion against the whites. Suicides increased among the Creeks and the natives fought and murdered one another at an alarming rate. An army officer at Fort Mitchell on the Chattahoochee River, writing to Washington in 1836, reported that the adult male population of the Creeks had declined by approximately three thousand individuals in

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[15] Cherry, "Opelika," p. 186; R.L. Crawford to Lewis Cass, 26 January 1834, *ASP: MA*, 6: 635-36; Crawford to Cass, Montgomery, 2 March 1834, ibid., p. 638; Creek Chiefs to the Secretary of War, 16 March 1835, ibid., p. 645; Hogan to Cass, Mobile, 8 March 1836, ibid., p. 751; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 130; George William Featherstonhaugh, *Excursion through the Slave States from Washington on the Potomac to the Frontier of Mexico; With Sketches of Popular Manners and Geological Notices* (1844; reprint ed. Negro Universities Press, 1968), pp. 152-53.

As far as Creek chiefs living off the annuity was concerned, John B. Hogan believed that Neah Micco of the Lower Creeks--the man who would lead the rebellion--was the worst offender. According to Hogan, the Creek sub-agent, Leonard Tarrant, divided annuity payments in two parts, giving one half to Opothleyahola of the Upper Creeks and Neah Micco of the Lower Creeks. Neah Micco then called a meeting to pay claims against the Lower Creeks and to divide the balance of the money out to the various lower towns. However, the old chief only paid some of the claims against his people and did not give any money to the towns. He and the speculators he associated with kept most of the annuity money. Hogan went on to say that Neah Micco opposed emigration because he found no difficulty living in Alabama. He was comfortable, not destitute and starving like many of his people. In fact, Hogan believed that the government could facilitate removal by taking the annuity out of the hands of the chiefs and giving it directly to the common Indians. Without income from the government, the chiefs would not be so anxious to stay in Alabama. Page to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, May 9, 1835, *ASP:MA*, 6: 766; Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 14 May 1835, ibid., pp. 725-26.

only three years. The most noticeable effect of the economic situation, however, was the widespread hunger. Deprived of their lands, unable to hunt effectively in Alabama, and lacking the moral and material supports old clan and town affiliations provided, many Creeks roamed the countryside, living in bark huts, stealing food, begging morsels at the doors of New Alabama's white inhabitants, or even eating the bark and roots from the trees to avoid starvation.[16]

Other Creeks, however, resisted all the exploitation from the start, and engaged in acts of violence that set the stage for a later armed rebellion. Not surprisingly, resistance was strongest among the disheveled Lower Creeks, who had always lived on the eastern border of the Creek Nation and had borne the brunt of conflict with the expansion- minded Georgians. These Lower Creeks left homes and valuable property behind when they moved across the Chattahoochee into Alabama in 1828, and they had not begun to recover from that ordeal when the Cusseta accord brought the Georgians rushing into their midst. Worse, the Georgia speculators lusted after the land along the west bank of the Chattahoochee and its tributary streams, the best cotton land in New Alabama and the very soil on which the Lower Creek villages stood. Consequently, the Lower Creeks were the first members of their nation drawn into the commercial web cast by Columbus, and the first Creeks to face complete dispossession and starvation. Similarly, they were the first to see planters, farmers and slave gangs settling in around

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[16] See James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 140-42. For the Creeks' self-destruction see Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 120; Page to Harris, Ft. Mitchell, 24 December 1836, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, Creek Agency Emigration, (M234, Reel 237), RG 75, National Archives. (Hereafter cited as Creek Emigration). Examples of destitution: Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 108-110, 115; Burney and Anderson to Cass, Mardisville, Alabama, 10 June 1836, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, Creek Agency Reserves, (M234, Reel 243), RG 75, National Archives. (Hereafter cited as Creek Reserves).

them, and the first Creeks to realize that they were losing the last little portion of their ancient homeland. But some of the Lower Creeks resisted the dispossession in Georgia and continued to resist in New Alabama. In fact, the forms of Creek resistance resembled those employed by colonized peoples and oppressed peasants in other countries. Angry Creeks sometimes stole chickens and other possessions from the whites, shot down hogs, dogs and mules for spite, burned barns, poisoned wells, destroyed plows and other agricultural tools, and even killed whites in retaliation for crimes committed against them.[17]

Numbers of Lower Creeks also returned to Georgia to plague their old enemies. In fact, the natives incorporated the resources of the Georgians into their normal hunting and gathering activity. In February of 1834, Georgia's governor, Wilson Lumpkin, reported to the War Department that "a large number of strolling vagabond Indians" had taken up residence in the thinly settled southern part of the state and had done "immense damage" to the local whites by "killing their cattle and hogs, and stealing and consuming their corn, potatoes, &c." Later in the year, the governor informed

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[17] Sociologists and social anthropologists have produced a substantial literature on this sort of resistance as well as on rural rebellions in Europe, Africa and Asia. However, scholars seldom if ever explore Native American uprisings in this context. In fact, the Second Creek War may be the only instance of a rural revolt of oppressed native peasants in the United States. Claude E. Welch, *Anatomy of Rebellion* (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1980) is an interesting example of scholarship in this area. For particular acts of Creek resistance see "From the *Flag of the Union*," reprinted in the *Mobile Commercial Register*, May 16, 1836, p. 2; J.H. Howard to Cass, Milledgeville, May 9, 1836, *ASP:MA*, 6: 578; Major John Howard to D.H. Mitchell," Milledgeville, May 9, 1836, ibid., p. 653; Harold S. Coulter, *A People Courageous: A History of Phenix City, Alabama* (Columbus, Georgia: Howard Printing Company, 1976), p. 3.

Interestingly, Joel W. Martin, author of *Sacred Revolt: The Muskogees' Struggle for a New World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), contends that the First Creek War grew out of the natives' religious response to colonialism. It does not appear that nativistic religion was a factor in the coming of the Second Creek War.

Washington that another group of Creeks had moved into the northern part of the state to live on lands still held by the Cherokees. Lumpkin also accused these tribespeople of "continually robbing and plundering our citizens," and he feared they would turn the Cherokees hostile. He asked that the War Department use its influence with the Creek chiefs or its own troops to return the offending natives to Alabama. If not, he warned that Georgia would have no choice but "exterminating the evil in the only practicable way." But the problem did not end. During the extremely cold winter of 1835--when snow covered Columbus for weeks and ice blocked the Chattahoochee north of the town--a hungry band of Hitchites crossed the river into Georgia to find food and fought a brief battle with the white citizens of Stewart and Sumpter counties. Governor Lumpkin, tired of seeing these and other Indians cross back into Alabama to escape punishment, almost as if they were fleeing from the United States into Mexico, once again petitioned the federal government for assistance. This time the War Department sent two companies of troops down from the Cherokee country to Fort Mitchell to assist state officials in containing the Creeks.[18]

With these and other acts, the Lower Creeks demonstrated that they were not completely powerless in the face of white oppression. In fact, the Creek resistance terrified whites because it exposed certain weaknesses in their own society. It showed them to be a competitive and insecure people, who exploited one another in the course of

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[18] Lumpkin to Cass, Milledgeville, 5 February 1834, ASP: MA, 6: 636-37; Citizens to Lumpkin, Cedar Town, Paulding County, Georgia, 27 May 1834, ibid., p. 641; Lumpkin to Cass, Milledgeville, 7 June 1834, ibid., p. 641; Lumpkin to Cass, Milledgeville, 28 June 1834, ibid., 642; Tarrant to Cass, Mardisville, Alabama, 20 August 1834, ibid., p. 642; "Difficulties of a serious character," *Columbus Enquirer*, 6 February 1835, p.3. For information on the strangely cold winter of 1835, which contributed mightily to the destitution and increased hostility of the Lower Creeks, see *Columbus Enquirer*, 10 January 1835, p. 3; 13 February, p. 3; 6 March, p. 2; 13 March, p. 3.

exploiting the Creeks, and who found it difficult to unite in suppressing the Creek resistance. Ironically, the expansion of the American people and their market economy which so shattered the Creek Nation also fragmented white society, dividing the members of that society socially, politically and economically. As the Second Creek War approached, this fact became more and more evident.[19]

One of the more frightening aspects of the Creek resistance, as far as respectable whites were concerned, was that hostile natives discovered allies among the lower orders of the white community itself. Poor whites and outlaws gravitated toward frontier regions to escape the constraints of so-called civilized society, and in New Alabama they found opportunities for themselves in the Indian business. These frontier roughs--also called "minions of the moon"--were some of the first intruders in the Creek country, and besides driving Creeks off their land, they robbed native graves and stole horses, cattle, and slaves from the natives. They also married Indian women to get their property. But these roughs were opportunists; they also stole livestock and slaves from respectable whites. Furthermore, they often saw respectable farmers and planters, not Indians, as their worst enemies. After all, the respectables drove roughs off the land on which they squatted, then sought to civilize the frontier and stamp out the sinful way of life roughs loved. At times the roughs joined the Creeks in crimes and acts of rebellion against the respectable white community. When, for example, the sheriff of Russell County imprisoned a group of Creeks for killing William Fannin, the younger brother of a despised land speculator, white roughs broke the Indians out of the county's flimsy jail

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[19] Both Michael P. Rogin, *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975) and Charles Grier Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (London: Oxford University Press, 1991) discuss the growth of America's market economy and the fracturing impact that growth had on white society. However, Rogin looks primarily at psychological effects while Sellers deals with the nation's institutions.

and set them free. Roughs also formed notorious subversive communities like Sodom, just across the river from Columbus, where they lived with natives and blacks in a democratic counter-culture. Furthermore, the roughs ran faro banks and grog shops. where they gave the Creeks whiskey in exchange for money and goods stolen from white farmers and travelers. In fact, roughs formed the criminal underworld of New Alabama, bringing disaffected Creeks into their orbit, plotting with them against white authorities and often urging them to resist removal. This alliance of Indians and white roughs must have terrified respectable whites, and perhaps helps explain why Alabama and Mississippi led the nation in vigilante justice during the period 1800 to 1835. Indeed, one plantation mistress in Barbour County, illustrating the deep cultural division between respectables and roughs, lamented that one of the most unfortunate things about having Creek neighbors was that they associated with lower class whites.[20]

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[20] The terms "respectables" and "roughs" come from Bruce Collins, *White Society in the Antebellum South* (London and New York: Longman, 1985), chap. 10. Collins sees the quest for "respectability" on the part of planters, yeoman farmers,and others as being one of the defining themes of southern society in the antebellum era. Constantly opposing roughs and their unacceptable habits was a part of this quest. Similarly, Richard Maxwell Brown contends that the "lower people" and outlaws in America's frontier communities represented a "contraculture" that sought to take over the new communities. The members of the middle and upper levels of society in frontier communities fought to re-establish the same control and value system they had enjoyed in the communities they left behind. Normally, the upper and middle level people organized vigilante groups to suppress the activities of the lower people and outlaws. Consult Richard Maxwell Brown, "The American Vigilante Tradition, " in Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr, eds., *Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives Violence in America* Vol. 1 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), pp. 131-32. For vigilance in Alabama see Orr, Lafayette, 16; Brown, *American Vigilante*, pp. 99-100; James W. Bragg, "Captain Slick, Arbiter of Early Alabama Morals," *Alabama Review* 11 (1958): 125-34. For the association of Creeks and white roughs see Cherry, "Opelika," 208-13; Creek Indian Letters, 1830-1839, Part 4, p. 1236, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia; J.D. Anthony, "Reminiscences of Cherokee County, 1835-1875," in W. Stanley Hoole and Addie S. Hoole, eds., *Early History of Northeast Alabama and Incidentally of Northwest Georgia* (University, Alabama: Confederate Publishing Company, 1979), p. 34; Mattie Thomas Thompson,

But the alliance between Creek resistors and white roughs was not the most fearful aspect of life in New Alabama for respectable whites. Large scale agricultural production depended on slave labor, and whites could not make the lands of the Old Creek Nation productive without placing large numbers of blacks in close proximity to the Indians. However, all these blacks became potential allies of the Creeks and a source of dread to their white masters. The problem was especially great in the lower counties of New Alabama near Columbus. There the Lower Creeks lived near numerous large plantations owned by absentee planters. Many of these men resided in Columbus or on estates on the Georgia side of the Chattahoochee. Large groups of slaves farmed their Alabama holdings and lived much to themselves, observed only by a single white overseer. Naturally enough, some of these slaves gravitated toward local Indian communities where the natives often treated them as equals. A Russell County slave named Henry would explain later that he spent his free time among the Creeks, participated in their ceremonies and games, and even won the heart of a beautiful Creek girl. Henry also reported that one of his good friends, a Creek resistor named Derryhill, actively sought his aid and support against the whites. This association of Creeks and

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History of Barbour County, Alabama (Eufaula: 1939), p. 49. Information on the Fannin murder and the subsequent jail break: J.M. Elliott to John Gayle, Russell County, 9 September 1835, Governor Gayles's Pardons, Paroles and Clemency Files--Russell County, Alabama Department of Archives and History (hereafter cited as ADAH); "Mr. William Fannin," *Columbus Enquirer*, 17 April 1835, p.3. Interestingly, pubs and grog shops are sources of subversive activity for the underclasses of all societies, whether in rural England or the Creek counties of Alabama. Governor Gayle pointed out this problem to Secretary of War Cass in the summer of 1835: "The grog shops, which I understand are the most common establishments throughout the country, should receive your prompt and decided reprehension. They are generally established as I learn, for the accommodation of the Indians, and can any one doubt that to these fountains of crime and immorality are to be ascribed many of the difficulties which our citizens have to encounter." Gayle to Cass, Tuscaloosa, 27 May 1835, Gayles's Executive Letter Book, ADAH; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 138.

blacks so disturbed one of the white inhabitants of Russell County in the summer of 1835 that he swore out a complaint and had the county sheriff arrest Neah Micco, the principal chief of the Lower Creeks, for harboring blacks in his town on Big Euchee Creek. Interestingly, though, other whites came to the old chief's defense, petitioning Governor Gayle to pardon him as he was not personally responsible for the widespread and deplorable tendency of the Creeks to welcome slaves into their settlements.[21]

Whites also had to be suspicious of all the free blacks and slaves who lived permanently in the Indian communities, the so-called Creek Negroes. As a general rule, these people made industrious farmers and lived well. One traveler in the Creek country described the blacks there as alert, sleek and happy as opposed to the dull and morose-looking slaves owned by whites. Moreover, the Creek Negroes were well equipped to deal with the white intrusion. Unlike many Indians, these blacks spoke both English and native tongues, and they understood how both native and white societies worked. Consequently, they were much less likely to be hoodwinked by whites and the Creeks depended upon them to serve as intermediaries and counselors (cultural brokers) in their dealings with whites. One observer reported that on the streets of Columbus he saw numerous parties of drunken Indians, each led by "a negro-man, the slave of some one present, but commonly well dressed in the European manner, having an air of superior intelligence to his masters, and evidently exercising over them the power and influence derived from superior knowledge: the negroes, in fact, appeared the masters, and the red-men the slaves." However, New Alabama's whites could not have been happy about

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[21] William H. Mitchell to John Howard, Columbus, 7 May 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 576, 654; General William Irwin to Clay, 20 May 1836, Governor Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Irwin to Clay, 25 May 1836, ibid; Cherry, "Opelika," pp. 326-28; Petition for Neah Micco, (no date), Governor Gayles' Pardons, Paroles and Clemency Files--Russell County, ADAH.

the influence of blacks over the Creeks. They certainly knew that the Seminole Negroes had inspired much of the Seminoles' resistance to white expansionism in the Florida Territory to the south, and they surely suspected the Creek Negroes as potential troublemakers.[22]

The acts of Creek resistance, as well as the possibility of an alliance between natives, blacks, and white roughs, were especially troublesome to respectable whites because county officials lacked the ability to punish these crimes effectively in some areas. In their desire to exert their state's rights, and to keep the federal government from interfering with the settlement of the Creek country, the Alabama Assembly had extended state law over New Alabama. But in the process, the legislature created a law and order vacuum in the region. By stopping federal marshals and troops from acting independently in regulating the contact between Creeks and whites, and by prohibiting the Creek chiefs from enforcing their own laws over unruly tribespeople, the state of Alabama eliminated important forces for keeping the peace at the same time the Indian business ran rampant creating more and more hostility and disorder. In place of federal and tribal controls, Governor Gayle and the Alabama Assembly put a puny county court system, which lacked the will to prosecute whites for murdering Indians or the manpower to bring Creek criminals to justice in areas where Creeks still outnumbered whites. In Macon County, for example, two thousand Creek warriors lived among only 150 white men capable of bearing arms. In such counties white farmers and planters thought that they lived under Creek rule, and they could not rest easy in their beds at night. At Irwinton, in Barbour County, one plantation mistress complained of

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[22] Thomas Hamilton, *Men and Manners in America*, 2 vols. (1833; reprint ed., New York: Augustus M. Kelly, 1968), 2: 259-60; Harriet Martineau, *Society in America*, 3 vols. (1837; reprint ed., New York: AMS Press, 1966), 1: 292; Tyrone Power, *Impressions of America*, 3 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1836), 2: 137-38.

constantly seeing "savage faces peeping and prying around the premises." On those occasions when county officials did manage to capture, try, convict and hang Creek murderers, they did so at their peril, as witnessed by the actions of the white citizens of Talladega in the months preceding the outbreak of the Second Creek War. Having executed a Creek man on the gallows in the center of town, the townspeople retreated to the courthouse, where they spent the night armed and huddled together in fear of the reaction of the local Indian community. Observing that Creeks murdered white travelers on the Federal Road nearly every month, and continued to trespass on Georgia soil, the *Columbus Enquirer*, a states' rights party organ previously in favor of the extension of state law over Indians, both in Georgia and Alabama, criticized the state of Alabama for the "weak and murderous policy" of claiming an authority it could not exercise.[23]

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[23] Page to C.C. Clay, Ft. Mitchell, *ASP:MA, 6:* 705; Page to C.C. Clay, Ft. Mitchell, April 5, 1836, Governor's Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Hogan to Gayle, Fort Mitchell, 2 June 1835, *ASP: MA*, 6: 728; Thomas S. Woodward to Clement C. Clay, Tuskegee, February 18, 1836, ibid., p. 698; Anne Kendrick Walker, *Backtracking in Barbour County; A Narrative of the Last Alabama Frontier* (Richmond, Virginia: The Dietz Press, 1941), p. 77. The citizens of Jacksonville, Alabama, were afraid of the local Creeks and Cherokees and claimed that out of a population of one thousand people in their town "there are not sixty guns." W.B. Martin to C.C. Clay, Jacksonville, February 12, 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 697. Anne Kendrick Walker, *Backtracking in Barbour County; A Narrative of the Last Alabama Frontier* (Richmond, Virginia: The Dietz Press, 1941), 77. For the hanging incident see Wellington Vandiver, "Pioneer Talladega, Its Minutes and Memories," *The Alabama Historical Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (Spring, 1954): 29-30; For the Georgian view of the Alabama justice system see "Report from *Columbus Enquirer*," reprinted in *Tallahassee Floridian*, 2 May 1835, p.3. The Georgians also had another reason to be angry at the extension of Alabama law over the Creek territory. According to section seventeen of the Indian Trade and Intercourse Act of 1834, the white citizens of any state could receive restitution payments from the federal government if Indians, living in Indian Country, passed into that state and committed depredations on people or property. The restitution money, the act said, would be drawn from the annual annuity of the offending Indian tribe. On this basis, the Georgians appealed to the government for money to pay for property stolen or destroyed by marauding Creeks from Alabama. However, Secretary of War Cass informed the Georgians that the Trade and Intercourse Act no longer applied to the Creeks because the State of Alabama had extended its laws over the

Given this law and order vacuum, and the ever-increasing destitution and starvation of the Creeks, native resistance increased throughout the year 1835. While traveling through Russell County in May, Superintendent Hogan reported that the "Indians have become quite hostile in this part of the nation; they shot a man and woman in Chambers County, and some in this, and people are afraid to ride alone among them." Then, in December of that year, the Second Seminole War erupted in the Florida Territory, sending the white residents of the Chattahoochee Valley into a panic. News came up from the south of widespread Seminole attacks on the white plantations west of St. Augustine and the horrific Dade Massacre. Reports also spread that large numbers of slaves were joining the Seminoles, and the newspapers declared that Cuban fishermen were running guns to the natives from the West Indies. Worse still, army officers in Florida claimed that Creek warriors were reinforcing the Seminoles, marching south "with packs on their backs, like travellers." Already terrified by escalating acts of Creek resistance, whites in Alabama and Georgia began to suspect a Seminole-Creek conspiracy, and feared that they would be the next targets of an Indian uprising. Ominously, some person or persons began to set fire to the buildings in Columbus at night, trying to burn the town to the ground. John B. Hogan, the government's chief advisor in the region, doubted the natives intended to attack the whites in concert with the Seminoles, but he did note that there was little in the Lower Creek country to prevent such an assault. Fort Mitchell, the only military post, was merely an open camp manned by a young lieutenant and only thirty troops. As a partial remedy to the situation, the

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Creek territory. That territory was no longer an Indian Country regulated by the federal government; it was simply a part of Alabama and the Creeks were state citizens. Thus the Alabamans infuriated the Georgians in two ways: first, they failed to keep the Creeks from committing depredations in Georgia; second, they prohibited the Georgians from getting Creek annuity money as compensation for those acts. "Depredations by Creek Indians," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 22 January 1836, p.3.

citizens of Columbus instituted nightly patrols to watch for Indians and asked their governor, William Schley, to call up enough state troops to station five hundred men every thirty miles along Georgia's southwestern frontier. In Russell County, Alabama, just across the river from Columbus, some whites began to form volunteer companies, erected their own fort, and asked the state for arms and ammunition. In addition, they requested that their fellow citizens abstain from selling ardent spirits and gunpowder to the Creeks.[24]

The Georgians' fears, conditioned by generations of conflict with the Creeks and Seminoles, soon led them to excess. In order to keep Creeks from coming into Georgia to hunt and prey on the whites' livestock--as the natives did every winter--the state legislature, on December 24, 1835, passed an act making it illegal for any Creek Indian to enter Georgia unless the Indian came to attend to legal matters accompanied by a respectable white person. The act also prohibited white Georgians from continuing the practice of employing Creeks on their cotton plantations. Furthermore, the act made trading with Indians illegal in Georgia, a proscription obviously aimed at the grog shops lining the eastern bank of the Chattahoochee. Following their incursions into the

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[24] Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 9 May 1835, *ASP: MA*, 6: 725. For the Seminole outbreak see "Letter from a Savannah Volunteer," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 9 January 1836, p. 2; "The contest now promises," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 9 January 1836, p. 3; "Volunteers for Florida," *Mobile Commercial Register*, 13 January 1836, p. 2; "Florida," ibid., 18 January 1836, p. 2; "A correspondent of the Courier," ibid., 28 January 1836, p. 2. Arson in Columbus: "At midnight on Wednesday," *Columbus Enquirer*, 5 February 1836, p. 3; "A plot to burn and plunder Columbus," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 6 February 1836, p. 3. Hogan's doubt: "Hogan to Gibson," Fort Mitchell, 17 January 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 748. The Georgian response to the Seminole War: "From Columbus Paper," *Mobile Commercial Register*, 18 January 1836, p. 2; "Public Meeting," *Columbus Enquirer*, 22 January 1836, p. 3; "Resolution of Russell County Citizens," Uchee Creek, 23 January 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 698; "Meeting for purpose of forming a Night Guard," *Columbus Enquirer*, 29 January 1836, p. 3.

Georgia interior, Creeks stopped at these shops to trade property taken from farmers for liquor. In fact, the roughs who ran these shops encouraged the natives to commit robberies and even warned them of the movements of county sheriffs and their posses. Though the new law would not go into effect until February 1, 1836, a few hotheaded Georgians took it upon themselves to keep the Creeks out of Georgia as soon as the act passed. As part of their effort, they began to shoot Indians on sight, on both banks of the Chattahoochee. Most of their victims, however, were peaceful Creek employees, picking out cotton for white planters. In one instance, eight or nine Georgians marched an old Indian out of a cotton field below Irwinton and brutally executed him.[25]

Lower Creek warriors did not take these attacks lightly, however, especially in light of the Seminole successes in Florida. After a river patrol fired on a small party of Chehaw Creeks sleeping beside a campfire in Georgia, a band of fifty warriors armed themselves and crossed into Georgia to claim the bodies of their slain tribesmen. By the time news of the crossing reached Columbus, frightened whites were saying that a war party of five hundred savages had come over the river to ravage Georgia's farms and plantations. Consequently, twenty-two men led by one John Watson descended the river fifteen miles to Bryant's Ferry to observe the Indian host. They found the Creeks, far fewer than they expected, about to cross back into Alabama. The Indians hoisted a white flag but Watson's men fired. Thereupon the warriors took shelter in a ravine, returned fire, killed two Georgians, and ran the remainder back to Columbus. Though the Georgians did not know it at the time, this tendency to launch a precipitous attack on Creek warriors, followed by an equally precipitous, even cowardly, retreat, would

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[25] "An Act," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 8 January 1836, p. 1; Creek Indian Letters, 1830-1839 (Part 4), p. 1236, GDAH; Hogan to Gibson, Irwinton, 30 January 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 748-49; Hogan to Cass, Fort Mitchell, 1 February 1836, ibid., p. 613.

become a pattern for them. In fact, the battle at Bryant's Ferry, fought on January 26, 1836, was only the first of several such engagements. It was also the opening salvo in a growing conflict that would blossom into the Second Creek War.[26]

The Bryant's Ferry fight also revealed how differently whites at the local level viewed the Creek resistance. More importantly, their reaction to the fight showed how difficult it would be for them to unite in suppressing that resistance. While the Georgians blamed the natives for the outbreak of violence, federal officials on the scene thought the Georgians were even more responsible. Fearing that war would soon engulf the whole Creek Nation, Second Lieutenant John W. McCrabb, the officer in command at Fort Mitchell, wrote to Washington that the "Georgians have thus set fire to the match which the Indians have been some time preparing." John B. Hogan, who had just begun his land fraud investigation among the Lower Creeks when the battle occurred, was even more critical. Locked in his own conflict with land thieves and removal contractors, Hogan believed that the Georgians, led by the Columbus speculators, were deliberately trying to goad the Creeks into war to stop his investigations in the Lower Creek towns. Furthermore, Hogan learned that General McDougald, Columbus's speculating military commander, in concert with General Bailey, commanding the 10th Division of Georgia Militia, intended to make sure the war began by ordering up a thousand militiamen, then marching them into Alabama to attack the Creeks. Hogan promptly notified Alabama's new governor, C.C. Clay, of this outrage and told him that the citizens of Alabama had nothing to fear from the Creeks unless the Georgians invaded. Then, he warned, the Indians would surely go to war.[27]

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[26] "During the excitement," *Columbus Enquirer*, 29 January 1836, p.2.

[27] John W. McCrabb to General R. Jones, Adjutant General, Fort Mitchell, 27 January 1836, ASP: MA, 6: 580; "The Major General," *Columbus Enquirer*, 29 January 1836, p. 2; Hogan to Gibson, Irwinton, 30 January 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 748-49; Hogan to Clay,

Fortunately, the New Alabama settlers living near Fort Mitchell--the very people who would suffer most in an Indian war--managed to stave off such a conflict. A delegation hurried to Columbus, remonstrated against the planned invasion of their neighborhood, and arranged a meeting between generals McDougald and Bailey and the Lower Creek chiefs. This meeting took place at Fort Mitchell on February 1. McDougald and Bailey, as well as Removal Superintendent Hogan, addressed the chiefs and informed them that the president was calling up troops from many states to crush the Seminoles. They went on to warn the chiefs that the same fate would befall the Creeks if they did not stop committing depredations in Georgia. The chiefs assured the whites that they wanted to keep the peace and signed a pledge that in the future they would turn over any tribespeople guilty of crimes in Georgia to the commanding officer at Fort Mitchell. They also promised to retrieve stolen property and take it to the fort. And finally, the chiefs vowed that the Creeks would no longer venture into Georgia in search of horses and other property stolen from them by whites. Instead, they would make complaints of theft to Lieutenant McCrabb, who would forward them to General McDougald and the Georgia authorities for action. These promises soothed the Georgians and prevented them from invading Alabama.[28]

However, the Fort Mitchell conference brought no lasting peace. In fact, the outbreak of the Second Seminole War and the affair at Bryant's Ferry probably made the Second Creek War inevitable. While events would prove that the Seminoles and Creeks never engaged in a widespread conspiracy to attack the whites, and few Creeks

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Irwinton, 30 January 1836, ibid., p. 749.

[28] Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 1 February 1836, ibid., p. 749; Hogan to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 1 February 1836, ibid., p. 750; Sanford and Company to the Commissary General, Columbus, 2 February 1836, ibid., p. 758; "On Monday last," *Columbus Enquirer*, 5 February 1836, p. 3; "Pledge of the Chiefs," ibid.

actually joined the Seminoles in the early months of the war in Florida, many whites believed such a conspiracy existed and they treated the Creeks accordingly. Their actions then pushed the Creeks toward violence. On the other hand, the Seminole victories in Florida did inspire the Lower Creek resistors and undoubtedly led them to believe that they might seek a violent escape from the trap created for them by the Cusseta Treaty of 1832 and the operation of New Alabama's insidious Indian business. Indeed, by the spring of 1836 almost all the Lower Creeks had lost or sold their land. Many were starving. Yet like the Seminoles they did not wish to emigrate west to live in an inhospitable land already occupied and ruled over by the haughty McIntosh Creeks. Furthermore, they were too poor to undertake such a relocation. And finally, they were reluctant to move while the government's investigation held out the promise to them of getting their lands back. And so they stayed in place, starving all the more, divided against themselves, exploited further by the Indian business, and suffering abuse from the Georgians. And yet they knew the government had set the spring of 1836 as the deadline for their removal. Government agents and removal contractors alike were telling them that the five-year grace period provided by the Cusseta treaty was over, that all Creeks without land must leave Alabama soon or face forcible removal by their white neighbors. The newspapers constantly proclaimed that now the Creeks not the whites were the intruders in New Alabama. Little wonder that the Lower Creeks, faced with such a dilemma, and seeing how successfully their Seminole cousins fought the whites, would chose war as a means of resisting removal, reclaiming their country, binding together their torn and impoverished society, and most importantly, feeding themselves.

No one knows exactly when the natives began to plan for war, but the white citizens in the Lower Creek counties of Alabama noticed a significant change in the demeanor of their red neighbors just after the Fort Mitchell conference. Now denied access to their Georgia hunting grounds, as well as the property of Georgia farmers,

hungry Lower Creeks increased their depredations against the whites in New Alabama. At the same time, Superintendent Hogan noted that in his councils with the natives every warrior arrived prepared for battle, armed with "rifle, knife, pouch, horn, &c." Furthermore, the warriors knew all the latest news from Florida because the many literate mixed-blood Creeks kept them informed. An anxious citizens' committee representing Montgomery County, just outside the Creek boundary, notified Governor Clay that the Creeks were purchasing all the guns and ammunition they could get, and they obviously meant to follow the lead of the Seminoles and "push a war against the whites to the last extremity." The committee then went on to ask Clay to send "five hundred stand of muskets and accouterments, three hundred yaugers, and two hundred pistols and sabres," to the city of Montgomery so the citizens could defend themselves. Simultaneously, whites living in the Lower Creek counties began to plead with the governor not to call out any of their men for service in the Seminole War. They contended that Indian warriors far outnumbered white men capable of bearing arms in their counties, and to take any of these men from the state would compromise the ability of communities to defend themselves should the Creeks declare war. In fact, the whites would probably have to flee their homes. One petitioner, the land speculator and avowed states' rights nullifier, Thomas S. Woodward, not only asked Clay not to draft troops from Macon County but even went on to blame Clay, a Democrat, for the circumstances that made keeping the county's fighting men at home necessary. According to Woodward, the governor had exerted such little effort in apprehending Creek murderers that all the Indians had grown "quite impudent and troublesome."[29]

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[29] Citizens to Clay, Montgomery, 4 February 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 698; Hogan to Cass, Fort Mitchell, 5 February 1836, ibid., p. 749; W. Baskin Stogner to Clay, Tuskegee, Macon County, 16 February 1836, ibid., p. 698; Woodward to Clay, Tuskegee, 18 February 1836, ibid., pp. 697-98.

White citizens in the Upper Creek country also noted disturbing changes in the behavior of the natives. One O.K. Truman wrote to Clay that he had heard an old Indian of the noted McGillivray family declare that the Creeks intended to go to war in the spring when "the trees put out their leaves." Determined to test the truth of this statement, Truman took a tour of the Upper Creek country in late February to observe the natives and talk to white settlers. He reported to Clay that he had seen many disturbing signs. First of all, all the Creeks were in "a great commotion among themselves." Their towns in the middle and southern parts of the nation were "determinately sullen, and hostile," and some of the inhabitants of these towns were mixing and mingling with the friendly Creeks to the north on the Coosa River, agitating them. Furthermore, the Creeks were using all their old trails, which "have been entirely disused for many years." In addition, the warriors had bought a great number of rifles at different settlements, particularly Wetumpka, and some of the chiefs had purchased powder by the keg. Curiously, the Indians also bought small brass kettles, pistols, and Mackintosh blankets--a previously unwanted article. Like Hogan, Truman noted that he never passed an unarmed warrior, which was most disturbing because the Upper Creeks living above the Federal Road did not hunt, and seldom carried weapons in the past. In Truman's opinion, the whites should be cautious, and he recommended to Clay that the governor assemble a military force to overawe the chiefs at the Creeks' spring council meeting at Loachapoka town.[30]

Governor Clay also received alarming reports from DeKalb and Cherokee counties in the northeastern corner of the state. These counties, inhabited by white settlers and Cherokee Indians, stood outside the old Creek boundary. However, in December of

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[30] O.K. Truman to Clay, Tuskegee, 5 March 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

1835, Creeks began to move up the Coosa River into these counties. By February, 1836, approximately twenty-five hundred natives had arrived, most of them living in a colony on the east side of the Coosa within six miles of Turkey Town, an old Cherokee settlement appropriated by whites. At the same time, DeKalb and Cherokee counties received a wave of Cherokee settlers, and additional Creek refugees, moving in from northern Georgia, where the ever-aggressive Georgians had taken over their homes. The whites living among all these Indians began to bombard Clay with complaints. They told him that the Creeks were destitute and hostile. The men stayed out of sight all day but came out at night to dance and hold council. Furthermore, they had commenced a system of plunder, breaking into whites' corn houses and smoke houses to steal grain and bacon. They also threatened whites and shot and killed a traveler. Worst of all, the Creeks exerted a bad influence on the local Cherokees and inhibited white settlement in the area. Everyone in the United States knew that federal commissioners and Cherokee leaders were negotiating a removal treaty, with one Cherokee party favoring total removal and another advocating partial removal. This last party, led by John Ross, called for a treaty similar to the Creeks' Cusseta Treaty of 1832, which would allow some tribesmen to stay in their old homeland on individual land allotments. Clay's informants believed that the Creeks had befriended the anti-removal Cherokees, and in the event the final Cherokee treaty mandated a complete relocation to the west, these Creeks would join with their Cherokee friends in resisting removal through force of arms. Should this happen, the informants pointed out, the outnumbered whites in northeastern Alabama would be annihilated. Consequently, they asked Clay to raise a large force of militiamen to remove the Creek intruders among them and send these people on their way west.[31]

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[31] William Garrett, Jr. to Clay, Turkey Town, Cherokee County, 25 January 1836, ibid.; Citizens' Resolution, Cherokee County, Mouth of Chattuga, 6 February 1836, *ASP: MA*,

However, these petitioners also pointed out that the selfishness of other whites lay at the heart of the Indian problem in northeastern Alabama. In fact, speculators had lured many of the Creeks to the Cherokee country. In some cases, these men actually transported the Indians there in wagons. Probably these speculators, including a wealthy Cherokee mixed-blood named James Vann, got the Creeks' land allotments from them by promising them new land in the Cherokee country where they would be safe from removal. Then, after the Creeks arrived in Cherokee and DeKalb counties, these speculators established stores among them and sold them liquor. The Creeks, of course, paid for this liquor with the money the same speculators had given them for their land. With this scheme, then, the speculators managed to secure valuable land for a relative few barrels of cheap whiskey. They left the Indians destitute and angry, with no way to survive but to prey on white farmers. In fact, participants in the Indian business were guilty of this sort of thing throughout the Indian country, and their activities demonstrated again how difficult it would be for a white society, socially and economically divided against itself, to prevent an armed insurrection by a portion of the even more fragmented, and economically exploited, Creek population.[32]

The anguished cries of his fellow citizens aroused Governor Clay, and he attempted to act to head off trouble by sending state troops into the Creek country.

6: 695; R.M. Hook to Clay, DeKalb Court-House, 8 February 1836, ibid., pp. 693-94; W.B. Martin to Clay, Jacksonville, 12 February 1836, ibid., 697; John H. Garrett, Major General 7th Division Alabama Militia, to Clay, Jacksonville, 3 March 1836, ibid., pp. 700-701; Martin to Clay, Jacksonville, 3 March 1836, ibid., p. 700; John H. Garrett, Jr. to Father, Tuscaloosa, 10 March 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Officers to Clay, Autauga County, 15 March 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 697-98; "From the *Flag of the Union*," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 2 April 1836, p. 2.

[32] Garrett to Clay, Turkey Town, 25 January 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Citizens to Clay," Cherokee County, *ASP: MA*, 6: 694-95.

However, Clay found that his own fellow politicians, not the Indians, were the chief obstacles to his plans. The state constitution allowed the governor to call up militia forces only to suppress an actual insurrection or to repel an invasion. Neither of these situations existed in February and March of 1836. Consequently, Clay asked the state legislature to give him the power to raise militia companies to range over the Creek counties and keep the peace. He also asked them to appropriate the money necessary to pay for this military operation. A majority of the legislators refused on both counts, revealing that many of Old Alabama's inhabitants either believed that the settlers in New Alabama, many of them Georgians, were exaggerating the dangers or that they deserved what was happening because they had injured the Creeks and stolen their land. Undoubtedly, some of the legislators who refused Clay's request were the same men who had opposed the extension of Alabama law over the Creek country in the first place.[33]

Clay's only alternative then was to request a federal authorization to call up state troops, in which case the War Department would arm, equip and pay the militiamen he intended to send into the Creek counties. He finally secured this authorization through Major General Winfield Scott, the officer in charge of the Seminole War effort. Scott had assembled a substantial army of federal and state troops to fight the natives in Florida, but he was concerned that the Creeks would turn hostile and join forces with the Seminoles, making his task much more difficult. Therefore, he gave Clay permission to raise a regiment of troops both to prevent a link up of Creek and Seminole warriors and "to restrain the Creeks from hostilities against the white settlers" in New Alabama. The governor then called up this regiment from the state's Seventh Militia Division,

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[33] Clay to William Miller, et al., Tuscaloosa, 19 March 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

comprising several north Alabama counties, and ordered the men to rendezvous at the federal arsenal at Mount Vernon, Alabama, by March 10. Finally, Clay sent word to the arsenal's commanding officer, Captain E. Harding, that he should muster the thousand-man force into the federal service and equip the soldiers before they marched east into New Alabama.[34]

Clay's regiment may have prevented the outbreak of the Second Creek War, but, unfortunately, the troops never reached the Creek country because of political problems with the federal government. When Clay's force arrived at Mount Vernon, Captain Harding was not there to receive them into the service and provide them with arms. Mystified, the troops waited around the arsenal for a few days and then went home. Then, before Clay could organize another regiment, he received word from the Secretary of War that the president was withdrawing Scott's authorization for a militia force, and if Clay already had such a force in the field, he should disband it. In Jackson's view, actual hostilities had not broken out in Alabama, nor did they seem imminent. Therefore, the president claimed he lacked the necessary constitutional grounds for calling up militia troops. In explaining this position to Clay, Secretary Cass stated that he would like to send federal troops to Alabama, which he had authority to do, but no soldiers were available for that purpose. They had all been assigned to Florida, the western frontier, or other important posts. Thus it was that at that crucial point in the late winter and early

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[34] Scott to Brigadier General R. Jones, Adjutant General, Augusta, Georgia, 31 January 1836, *ASP: MA,* 7: 224; Clay to Cass, Tuscaloosa, 25 February 1836, ibid., 6: 695; "From the *Tuscaloosa Intelligencer*," 20 February 1836, reprinted in *Columbus Enquirer*, 11 March 1836, p.2; Clay to Harding, Tuscaloosa, 2 March 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; "From the *Montgomery Advertiser*, " 8 March 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 25 March 1836, p.3.

spring of 1836, the whites failed to take the necessary steps to establish order in New Alabama.[35]

The only other means of preventing war would have been a removal of the Lower Creeks during this period, but even here the whites worked at cross purposes and stymied the process. As early as February, Governor Clay asked the War Department to remove the Creeks from Alabama forcibly in the spring if the natives would not emigrate on their own. But Cass denied the request, stating that the Cusseta Treaty gave the natives the right "to go or stay as they please," and the government could not make them leave Alabama before their land questions were settled. Then, as Colonel Hogan toured the Lower Creek towns conducting his land fraud investigation, he discovered that the removal contractors, and the speculators associated with them, were purposefully interfering with and delaying Creek emigration to thwart his inquiry into their business affairs. In fact, Major General McDougald, Luther Blake, Doctor Mills, Captain William Walker and other land speculators called a secret council with Neah Micco, Efau Emathla, Tuskenea and other anti-removal chiefs at Watulahoka (Neah Micco's town) in early March to make an arrangement that would suit the needs of all parties. Working through their interpreter and *agent provocateur*, Paddy Carr, the speculators warned the chiefs to keep away from Hogan and his investigation. They claimed he was a government removal agent sent to fool the Indians. He was only pretending to take down their complaints about land frauds so he could get their names on an emigration list. That done, he would force them off to the Western Territory. Then the speculators delivered the *coup de grace*. They informed the chiefs that General

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[35] Major General E.D. King to Clay, Vernon, 14 March 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Clay to Officers, Tuscaloosa, 19 March 1836, ibid.; Cass to Clay, War Department, 19 March 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 226-27.

McDougald owned ten sections of land in the Lower Creek country, and if the chiefs promised to keep their people away from Hogan and his investigation, they could stay in Alabama and live on those ten sections as long as they pleased. This deal, sweetened with liberal bribes to the individual chiefs, turned the trick. When Hogan appeared at Watulahoka, the chiefs said that they and their people had sold their land legitimately and had no complaints. Consequently, the speculators were able to prevent Hogan from both retrieving Creek lands and removing the natives to the West.[36]

At the same time, McDougald and his fellow speculators, aided by the various states' rights party presses in Alabama and Georgia, blamed Colonel Hogan and President Jackson for the problem. They claimed that the land fraud investigation held out a false promise to the Indians, leading them to believe that they could get their lands back and live in Alabama as long as they wished. This false promise caused the natives to stay in Alabama and make trouble for all the respectable white settlers around them. The speculators and states' rights editors called on the government to call off its overly long and useless investigation and simply remove the Creek intruders from the land they no longer owned. Of course the government's critics never mentioned the fact that the activities of the speculators made Hogan's investigation necessary in the first place, then delayed it once it was underway. In fact, the standard line of the states' rights press and many Georgians like McDougald was that no frauds had occurred in the Lower Creek country, and that Hogan, as a tool of rival speculators, was simply inducing the Indians to make false claims and stay in Alabama, where they would continue to transgress against their white neighbors.[37]

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[36] Hogan to Cass, Mobile, 8 March 1836, ibid., pp. 751-52; Cass to Clay, War Department, 12 March 1836, ibid., p. 627.

[37] The *Columbus Enquirer* served as the voice of the speculators and published the most criticisms of Hogan. See "Indian Affairs," *Columbus Enquirer*, 11 March 1836, p. 2.

This, of course, was a spurious claim; nevertheless, Hogan was partially to blame for the inability of the whites to prevent the war. There was some truth to the notion that the land fraud investigation held out a false hope to the Creeks. The fraud had gone on too long and was too extensive for the government ever to rectify it. By the spring of 1836, Opothleyahola realized this and began to make other arrangements for paying his peoples' debts and getting them out of Alabama. The Lower Creeks lacked such enlightened leadership; they had decided to take back their land through force. Hogan failed to see this, largely because he allowed his personal conflicts with the speculators and removal contractors to cloud his judgment. He tended to discount the growing hostility of the Creeks, and not only blamed their misdeeds on his own enemies, but contended that all talk of hostility was merely another part of the speculator's plot to stop the land fraud investigation. Thus Hogan, the government's chief advisor in the Creek country, failed to give the Creeks credit for independent thinking and planning. Like the speculators, he infantilized the natives, and blamed other whites for all the problems. Consequently, he did not see that some of the Creeks meant to wage war until it was too late.

Certainly there were plenty of signs that war was imminent. On his tour of the lower towns Hogan saw the natives building new homes. They had no intention of leaving Alabama in the spring, despite the Cusseta treaty deadline. The chief of the Osochis went so far as to purchase a tract of land for his people to settle, and the Eufaulas demanded that the whites citizens of Irwinton give them land to plant. When queried, the natives informed Hogan that they would not go west until their chief, Neah Micco, gave the word. However, other Creeks to whom he spoke had become completely fatalistic and intransigent in the face of all the exploitation they suffered.

Referring to the fact that a phrenologist recently had dug up a number of Creek skulls and carried them away, one old chief--probably Neah Micco's brother and second man, Efau Emathla--told Hogan that he would never leave Alabama. In fact, "He would stay and die here, and then the whites might have his skull for a water cup; they wanted everything, and when he was dead they might have his skull too." Hogan also knew that the agents of the Alabama Emigrating Company, a reorganized version of the J.W.A. Sanford Company, were afraid to venture among the Hitchitis, Chehaws, and especially the Yuchis. But still Hogan thought he could rectify the land frauds peacefully and get the Indians out of Alabama if the speculators would stay out of his way.[38]

Even more ominously, the white residents of the Lower Creek counties began to assail Governor Clay with a new and more urgent round of complaints and appeals for aid. They reported that a profound change had taken place among the Lower Creeks. They were seeing that their red neighbors had moved from a stage of shock, self-destruction, and covert acts of resistance to one of heightened emotionalism and open, aggressive hostility to the whites. This transition, as the New Alabama settlers certainly sensed, invariably signals the immediate outbreak of an armed rebellion by a colonized and oppressed people.[39]

Throughout March and April, the settlers reported that their red neighbors had launched a concerted effort to frighten and intimidate them and to drive them out of the

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[38] Hogan to Cass, Mobile, 8 March 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 752-53.

[39] Franz Fanon sees resistance and self-destruction (autodestruction) among colonized people as part of the same process leading ultimately to armed revolt against the colonizers. The same stage of shock, self-destruction, heightened emotionalism, and outright revolt that Fanon witnessed among the Algerians under French rule were evident among the Lower Creeks during the years 1832 to 1836. Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press), pp. 54-58.

country. Whereas before the Indians had plundered only occasionally, secretly and at night, the settlers now complained that Creeks appeared almost daily in armed parties, operating openly in broad daylight, breaking into houses and corncribs, collecting slaves, and driving off cattle "before the faces of their owners." The Indians also waged a campaign of wanton destruction, obliterating everything they could not carry away. They burned homes, tore down fences, and shot even more cattle, hogs, mules and dogs just for spite. Furthermore, the Indians confronted whites and threatened them with death if they did not leave the country. But worst of all, the natives' behavior was more frenzied and erratic. They engaged in an increasing number of dances and stick ball matches, and affected military displays. They assembled in the swamps in large numbers, painted themselves, fired off their guns to scare the whites, and marched and countermarched over the country as if practicing for war. Seeing all this, some whites did abandon the country and returned to Georgia. Governor Clay responded to this news by again asking Secretary Cass to allow him to send "a body of well armed and equipped mounted men" to range through the Creek and Cherokee country in Alabama.[40]

The whites who remained in the Chattahoochee Valley again pleaded with Governor Clay to send troops. One of these people was Major J. H. Howard of the Georgia militia, who, in early March, brought a troop of 180 men to Bryant's Ferry--the site of the battle in January--and erected a state military post called Fort Twiggs. Governor Schley had charged him with the task of guarding the passes over the

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[40] Clay to Cass, Tuscaloosa, 22 March 1836, ASP: MA, 6: 697; James E. Glenn to Major John H. Howard, Barbour County, 29 March 1836, ibid., p. 705; McCrabb to Jones, Fort Mitchell, 4 April 1836, ibid., p. 579; Page to Clay, Fort Mitchell, 5 April 1836, ibid., p. 705; A. Abercrombie and Edward Carey to Clay, Gerard, Russell County, 9 April 1836, ibid., pp. 702-3; "Committee to Clay," Irwinton, 12 April 1836, ibid., pp. 709-10; "From the Flag of the Union," reprinted in Mobile *Commercial Register*, 16 May 1836, p.2.

Chattahoochee and preventing marauding Creeks from entering Georgia. Howard soon saw, however, that the Creeks had turned their attentions to their white neighbors in Alabama, and he wrote to Governor Clay asking him to station two or three companies of mounted Alabama militiamen in the neighborhood of the Yuchis, Hitchitis and Chehaws in the upper part of Barbour and the lower part of Russell counties. Howard contended that these tribes were the most restless and opposed to emigration, but that his troops working in concert with a force of Alabamians could hold them in check. However, a committee of citizens from Barbour and Russell demanded even more help. These people claimed that three notorious Creek troublemakers recently returned from Florida had caused the problem. These Creeks--Jerry, Jim Henry and Boson--were inciting the other Lower Creeks to emulate the Seminoles in attacking their white neighbors. Consequently, the committee members requested that Clay send at least two thousand troops to overawe the natives and remove them from the state. If only a small number of troops appeared, the citizens contended, the Indians would defeat them easily and then massacre all the white settlers. The petitioners then reminded the governor that this was exactly the mistake the government had made in Florida in December when the Seminoles started to make trouble. They concluded that Clay should see to it that the resulting bloody scenes of the Seminole War did not repeat themselves in Alabama.[41]

Once again Clay asked the War Department for authority to raise troops, claiming that if "actual hostilities" did not exist there was "evidently impending danger of them." He sent his correspondence from Creek country settlers along with his request. Federal army officers in New Alabama also bolstered his plea, forwarding their own descriptions

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41 "Military," *Columbus Enquirer*, 11 March 1836, p. 2; Howard to Clay, Fort Twiggs, 2 April 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Abercrombie and Carey to Clay, Gerard, 9 April 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 702-3.

of Indian depredations to Washington. Captain John Page, Hogan's successor as removal superintendent, claimed that the situation in the Lower Creek country was entirely out of hand. The state of Alabama, he declared, had never subjected the natives to its laws, and, in fact, the whites were afraid to punish the Indians. Furthermore, the Creeks would not emigrate on their own and must be removed by force. Otherwise, the whites would have problems with them for years to come. Lieutenant McCrabb at Fort Mitchell concurred with Page, and added that the Indians were determined to "engage in a desperate struggle to regain their land before they give up everything and move west." McCrabb declared that a military force must march to the scene of depredations to punish Indian leaders and to prevent more mischief by the native resistors.[42]

But once again the Secretary of War denied Clay's request. Astonishingly, he informed Clay that the President saw no "design to disturb the public tranquillity, on the part of the Creeks, as to require the immediate organization of a force to keep them in subjection." However, Cass did send one company of federal troops from the arsenal at Augusta, Georgia, to Fort Mitchell. He also alerted troops stationed at Fort Monroe in Virginia to be ready to move south on short notice should the Creeks rise up in revolt. Finally, the secretary sent a message to Captain Page to circulate among the Lower Creek chiefs. The message warned them of the dire consequences they faced if they chose to resist removal and take up arms against the whites.[43]

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[42] McCrabb to Jones, Fort Mitchell, 4 April 1836, Ibid., p. 579; Page to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 9 April 1836, ibid., pp. 767-68; Clay to Cass, Tuscaloosa, 15 April 1836, ibid., p. 704.

[43] Cass to Clay, War Department, 15 April 1836, ibid., p. 626.

When Page went to deliver Cass's message, he found the chiefs assembled once again at Neah Micco's town. He sought the leaders out individually and gave them the warning in the harshest of terms, even telling them that the whites would exterminate their people if they did not leave Alabama. But the message came much too late. A number of the chiefs were beyond caring what the whites would do. They only knew what they meant to do. As Page would later discover, they had come together at Watulahoka in late April to plan their war. They meant to rise up and drive all the white settlers from their midst as well as launching simultaneous attacks on the town of Tallassee and the hated source of so much of their misery, Columbus. Neah Micco, Efau Emathla and Neamathla were the prime movers in the plot along with the fiery Tuskenea, Opthleyahola's rival and the leading opponent of removal among the Upper Creeks.[44]

Governor Clay knew nothing of the full extent of the rebel plan, but he believed the Creeks intended some sort of armed conflict. He did all he could to prepare for it. Knowing that Major General Gilbert Shearer of Selma, the commander of the Sixth Division of Alabama Militia, had recently raised a battalion of volunteers for the Seminole War, Clay notified the general to hold all other volunteer companies in his division in readiness to march into New Alabama. Should the Creeks start a war, the governor intended for Shearer's volunteers, drawn from counties just to the west of the Creek country, to hurry in and check the hostile advance. Then Clay would raise an overwhelming force of militia and personally lead them to a crushing victory over the hostile natives. The governor also ordered Major General William Irwin of the Fifth Division to raise a battalion of troops to hold in readiness on the southern border of New Alabama. Finally, Clay requisitioned two thousand muskets and accouterments from

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[44] Page to Gibson, Fort Mitchell, 20 May 1836, ibid., pp. 771-72.

the federal arsenal at Mt. Vernon and had them brought up the Alabama River to Montgomery for distribution to his troops.[45]

Unfortunately, the governor encountered more resistance from the citizens of Old Alabama. In fact, even his friends and fellow Democrats doubted the need for troops in New Alabama. General Shearer informed Clay that he stood ready to obey his orders, but he believed that there was really nothing to fear from the Creeks "unless daily intrusion committed on them by whites should drive them to desperation." Similarly, Colonel Hogan, like Clay a strong Jackson man, contended that the large majority of Creeks had "no more disposition for hostilities than there is among the citizens of Washington." Hogan believed that such problems as existed were confined to the vicinity of Fort Mitchell; and even there the whole alarm was just another trick of the speculators, the same men who kicked up the fuss that resulted in the Bryant's Ferry fight in January. Hogan went on to claim that these men were using the "half-breed Jim Henry" to instigate trouble among the Creeks, and, as a result, many New Alabama settlers had gone back to Georgia. However, the settlers actually faced no more danger than before. The Indians were stealing some corn, and killing a beef or two, but they had been doing that for three years. Unfortunately, Hogan concluded, a set of "designing white men" had imposed upon and unduly frightened both the governor and the New Alabama settlers. These villains simply wanted to stop the land fraud investigation and induce the government to sweep the Creeks out of Alabama by force, leaving themselves in charge of the Creek domain.[46]

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[45] Clay to Harding, Tuscaloosa, 17 April 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Clay to Shearer, Tuscaloosa, 18 April 1836, printed in *Mobile Commercial Register*, 13 May 1836, p. 2; Clay to Irwin, Tuscaloosa, 25 April 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

[46] Hogan to Cass, Tuskegee, 24 April 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 709; Shearer to Clay, Selma, 2 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

The most widespread critique of the war scare, however, came from James Belser, another Jackson supporter and editor of the *Montgomery Advertiser*. Belser always showed sympathy for the Creeks, and like Hogan, he tended to see land speculators and Jackson's political opponents, the states' rights nullifiers, as the real problem. In late April he published an editorial, reprinted in many southern newspapers, which declared that "The war with the Creeks is all a humbug. It is a base and diabolical scheme, devised by interested men, to keep an ignorant race of people from maintaining their just rights, and to deprive them of the small remaining pittance placed under their control, through the munificence of the government. We do trust, for the credit of those concerned, that these blood suckers may be ferreted out, and their shameful misrepresentations exposed."[47]

Such statements shocked the New Alabama settlers and made them cry out more loudly for help. In early May, Dr. E. E. Park of Russell County appealed to General Shearer for military assistance, and lamented that most people living in Old Alabama thought ill of New Alabamans and did not want to defend them against the Indians. Park complained of "slanderous publications" in Alabama newspapers, and stated that it was "general opinion in the old part of the State, that the settlers are the individuals who are said to have swindled the Indians out of their lands." However, Park believed the settlers were innocent victims. They had given the speculators extravagant prices for their land and now they were being abused by the Creeks and their fellow Alabama citizens. Furthermore, they would be the ones to die if the Creeks went to war, which they would surely do. Park closed his communiqué to Shearer by telling the general that the friendly Indians had informed the settlers that the hostile party meant to wage a

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[47] Creek Difficulties, Milledgeville *Federal Union*, 5 May 1836, p. 2.

general war in the very near future. Word had gone out from High Log Town, the Hitchiti bastion on Hatchechubbee Creek, that all whites must leave the country in ten days or be shot.[48]

Both Governor Clay and the officers at Fort Mitchell believed what Park said. Major J. S. McIntosh, the fort's new commander, promptly strengthened his post with a sturdy block-house and a strong stockade. Clay, on the other hand, could do nothing. Having applied a third and a fourth time to the War Department for permission to march troops into New Alabama, he received yet another disappointing reply. On May 5, Lewis Cass told Clay he could not mobilize his forces. Then Cass gave his reason: "Recent information from Colonel Hogan leads to the belief that these Indians do not meditate hostilities." Nothing could have been farther from the truth. Only two days after Cass penned these words, the Second Creek War erupted.[49]

Thus it was that the whites, socially, economically and politically divided among themselves, failed to prevent the outbreak of war. Viewing the scene from Fort Twiggs, Major John Howard, the Georgia militia commander, summed up the situation well when he said, "I am persuaded that the various and diversified interests of the white population have produced representations which may induce the department [of War] to underrate the dangers reasonably to be apprehended." Howard might have added that it was those same various and diversified interests of the whites that created the conditions leading to war. In their competitive quest for land, wealth and status, the whites had objectified and depersonalized the Creeks, treating them and their possessions as an

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[48] "The Lower Creeks," ibid., 12 May 1836, p. 3.

[49] Clay to Cass, Tuscaloosa, 18 April 1836, *ASP: MA,* 6: 706-7; Clay to Cass, Tuscaloosa, 25 April 1836, ibid., p. 710; McIntosh to Jones, Fort Mitchell, 2 May 1836, Ibid., p. 579; Cass to Clay, War Department, 5 May 1836, ibid., p. 628.

"natural resource." In the process, the whites unleashed an economic system in New Alabama that quickly reduced the natives to abject poverty. This economic system further splintered and decimated an Indian society already lacking in social, economic or even ethnic cohesion. It was predictable, probably inevitable, that some members of this society would go to war, especially given the example of the Seminoles. And yet the whites were so competitive among themselves, and had so infantilized the Creeks, that they even blamed Indian misbehavior on one another, and could not act in concert when the time came. They could only produce the various "representations" which misled President Jackson and Secretary Cass into underrating the danger of war in New Alabama.[50]

But that war occurred. While the whites argued among themselves, the anti-removal chiefs plotted, playing the whites off against one another until they were ready to act. They made Hogan believe they were peaceful, and might be induced to go west if he rectified the land frauds. But at the same time the chiefs had no confidence in the government or its investigation. They resolved among themselves never to leave Alabama and allowed their starving tribespeople to commit depredations on their white neighbors. The chiefs also accepted bribes and favors from the speculators, and thwarted Hogan's investigation, yet at the same time they planned to kill the speculators and planters and destroy Columbus. Throughout the winter and spring of 1836 they conspired under the noses of the whites, and by the second week of May they were ready to act. They were ready to rise up and throw of the yoke of New Alabama's grinding economic system; they were ready to stop the removal process in its tracks and

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[50] Howard to D.H. Mitchell, Milledgeville, 9 May 1836, ibid., p. 653.

reclaim their lands from the whites. They were ready as well to teach the hated Georgians a lesson or two, and perhaps use the war as a means of bringing unity and order to their fractured and fragmented society. Furthermore, the chiefs may have hoped to inspire a larger and more widespread conflagration, one in which the Lower Creeks would unite with Upper Creeks, Cherokees and Seminoles in holding on to their homelands and stopping the mass of busy whites who were transferring the center of cotton production into the Old Southwest during the decade of the 1830s.

Chapter 3

The Outbreak: War in New Alabama

During the first week of May, 1836, the Second Creek War commenced. Though not as well-organized as its leaders would have liked, the rebel uprising was more than a desperate and impromptu affair. The rebels demonstrated that they had a strategy for taking back their homeland through force of arms. First they moved beyond threats, intimidation, and the occasional murder as means of scaring the whites out of the country. In fact, they launched a widespread terror campaign, attacking farms and plantations and slaughtering whites systematically. Simultaneously, the rebels accumulated stockpiles of stolen arms, ammunition, and food in their strongholds. They also closed the Federal and New roads to prevent communications between the Georgians and Alabamians, and set up a regular network of spies to watch the movements of whites through and around their territory. Then, having established their command of the lower counties of New Alabama, the rebels sought to control the lower Chattahoochee and its crossing points, as well as opening a line of communications to the Seminoles through southwestern Georgia. In the process, they began to cross the river and attack the hated Georgians, thus extending the war to a second state.

These assaults further exposed the weakness of the white society the rebels faced. It was essentially a loosely knit, individualistic agricultural society made up of transients, of people moving from east to west, exploiting the land as they went. Divided among themselves according to economic and political interests, insecure and frightened in a world they thought full of both foreign and domestic enemies, the whites seemed unable to unite and defend themselves when the natives finally rose up in revolt. Having no real attachment to the land or well-developed sense of community, most of New

Alabama's settlers fled in terror, offering not the least bit of resistance to the Indians. The inhabitants of Columbus (home of the land speculators) also found it difficult to cooperate and were afraid to venture beyond the town limits. Furthermore, the whites had no effective military establishment in place. The militia system, relying heavily on civilian soldiers armed and supplied by the federal government, was unwieldy and unable to respond quickly to the native uprising. Consequently, the Creek rebels had their way with the whites on both sides of the Chattahoochee River throughout the month of May and into early June. They burned farms and plantations wherever they chose while the fractious and impotent whites continued to bicker among themselves, even to the point of accusing one another of deliberately provoking the Second Creek War.

Ironically, only the Creeks' own lack of unity and common purpose prevented the rebels from conquering eastern Alabama and a goodly portion of western Georgia. Having been incorporated by the state of Alabama, and firmly entangled in the whites' economic system, the Creeks, too, were a divided and weak people. In the end, not all the Lower Creeks, and but few of the Upper Creeks, joined the rebel party. This fact, more than anything the whites were able to do, limited the success of the Creek rebellion during the first month of the uprising.

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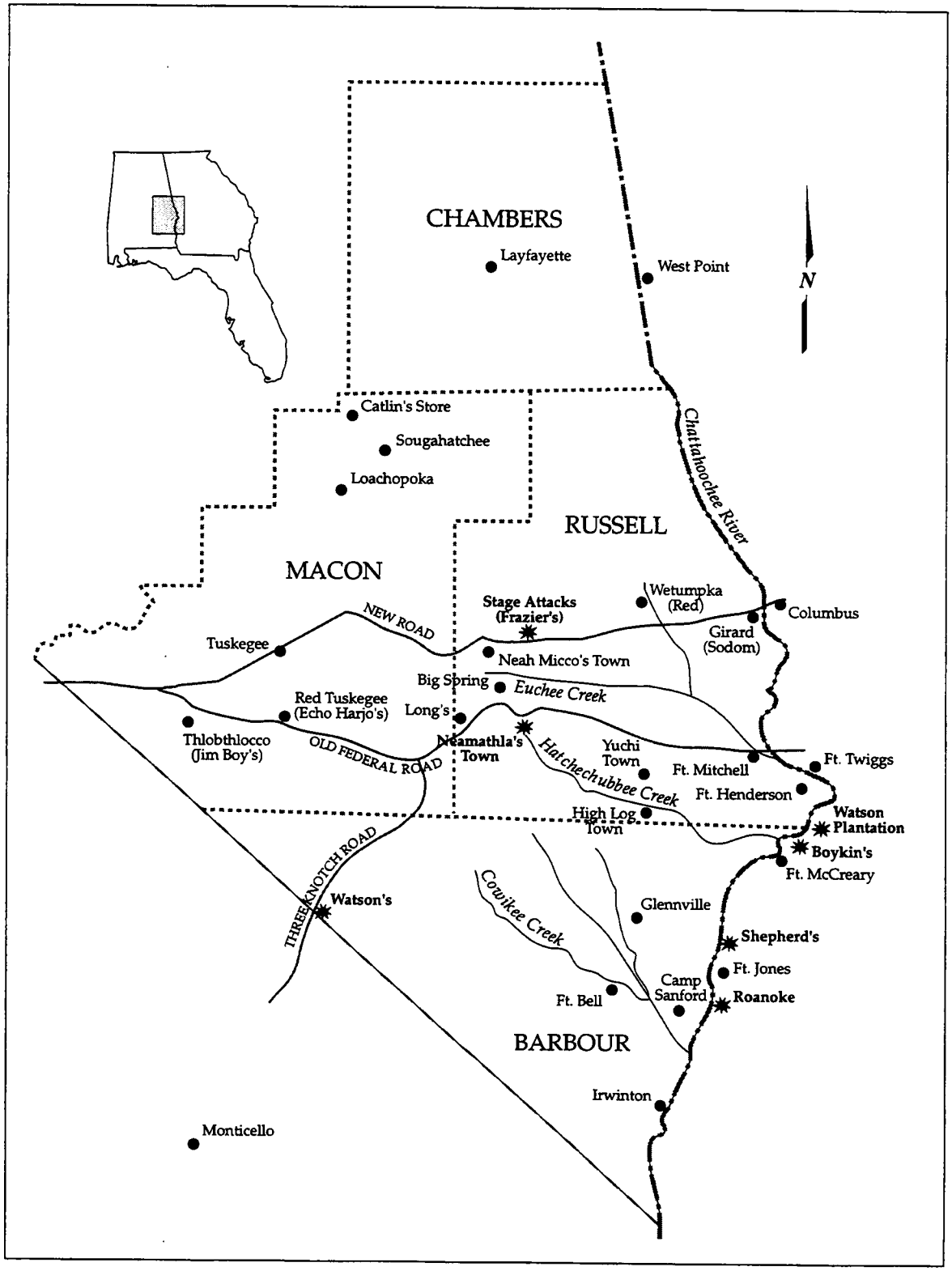
The Creeks' inability to act in concert became apparent from the outset. The rebel party's primary conspirators--Neah Micco, Neah Emathla, Tuskenea and Octruchee Emathla, the Osochi chief--planned to open the war with attacks on Fort Mitchell and Columbus. In anticipation, a large body of warriors congregated near the Russell-Barbour county line, about twenty-five miles southeast of Columbus. However, when Neah Micco sent the "broken sticks" to Tuskenea designating the number of days

before the attack was to begin, the Upper Creek chief drew back. He sent word to Neah Micco that they should hold off "till roasting ear time." This reply may have meant that Tuskenea had lost his stomach for war, or he may have wanted to delay the conflict until New Alabama's fields were full of corn to feed the rebel warriors and their families. Whatever the reason, Tuskenea's hesitation hurt the rebel cause and helped the whites by saving both Columbus and Fort Mitchell from rebel sieges. Without the assistance of Tuskenea and his Upper Creek followers, the rebel Lower Creek chiefs were unwilling to attempt the assault. Worse, Tuskenea and his men never returned openly to the rebel party.[1]

Many Lower Creek Hitchitees, Yuchis, Osochis, and Chehaws were ready to fight, however, and when the attack on the fort and town failed to materialize, they moved out on their own to kill settlers, plunder houses, destroy livestock, collect slaves and burn plantations. The first murders occurred near the Russell-Barbour county line (Map 3). On the morning of Tuesday, May 5, one of the Glenns of the Glennville community fell victim. Subsequently, the rebels fired the whole settlement. Later in the day, Major William "Billy" Flournoy, a former resident of Putnam County, Georgia, saddled his horse and set out for Columbus. He had heard of the Indian plans and meant to spread the alarm. Seven miles north of his plantation, and seven miles below Fort Mitchell, he passed through the Yuchi Town. Long known as the most hostile of the Lower Creeks, the Yuchis knew the purpose of Flournoy's journey and waited in ambush. They shot both Flournoy and his horse dead, scalped him, and stole his gold pocket watch. That same afternoon, Daniel Tarrant, one of Flournoy's neighbors, passed through the town on his way home from Columbus. He simply disappeared. Two

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[1] "Hogan to Editor," *Montgomery Advertiser*, 1 June 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 12 July 1836, p. 2.



Map 3: War in New Alabama.

days later, on the night of May 7, a war party stole up to a log house where a white overseer, one Mr. Watts, and a guest lay sleeping. They stuck their gun barrels into the spaces between the logs and fired. Watts died. His guest, unnoticed by the Indians, pulled up some floor boards and dropped to the ground below. Shivering and shaking, he hid beneath the house as the Creeks broke the door bolt and entered it. They dragged all of Watts's trunks outside, tore them open, and stole the contents. The guest waited until the Indians marched off, then he fled into the woods and remained there the rest of the night. He did not enjoy a peaceful repose, however. He heard gunfire in the direction of the two nearest plantations to Watts's house. On the morning of the 8th, the guest sneaked out of the woods, put Watts's corpse in a wagon, and carried it to Columbus. Flournoy's mangled body had arrived in town the day previous.[2]

These and several other of the initial murders occurred below the Federal Road, but rather quickly small parties of Indians attacked settlers and burned houses all along both branches of that thoroughfare between Columbus and Tuskegee. The activity was particularly heavy around the bridges over the Big and Little Euchee Creeks. In one horrible incident, the rebels waylaid a body of settlers and killed the men among them. They then scalped alive the women and children, placed them in a wagon, and tied fodder to the tails of the mules and the wagon wheels. This done, they set the fodder afire and the mules ran off, throwing the dying women and children out of the wagon as they went. Simultaneously, Upper Creek Tallassee warriors from the villages of Sougahatchee and Loachapoka began to murder people north of the road. They also

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[2] "Creek War and Massacre," *Columbus Enquirer*, 13 May 1836, p.3; McIntosh to Adjutant General, 7 May 1836, *ASP:MA*, 6: 580; Page to Gibson, 8 May 1836, ibid., p. 768; Mitchell to Howard, Columbus, 7 May 1836, ibid., pp. 576, 654; Mattie Thomas Thompson, *History of Barbour County*, Alabama (Eufaula, Alabama: 1939), p. 62; Anne Kendrick Walker, *Russell County in Retrospect: An Epic of the Far Southwest* (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1950), pp. 126-28.

struck farther west in Macon county, as high up as Catlin's store. Two of the attacks were particularly shocking. In one of these incidents, the Tallassees killed a settler named Davis, his wife, and their seven children. Then they cut the heads off the youths and threw one child out into the cabin's dooryard, where "the hogs eat it nearly up." In the other attack, rebel Creeks slaughtered the Jones family and hung their corpses in the trees about their home.[3]

It is difficult to say how many whites died, but it is obvious the massacre could have been much worse. Despite all the warning signs, the Creek uprising caught the settlers off guard. They had prepared no defense plan. They may have fallen for Neah Micco's double game, on the one hand professing friendship for the whites while on the other hand planning for war. More probably, however, the settlers were victims of their own aggressiveness and individualism. Preoccupied with exploiting the lands taken from the Creeks, they failed to cooperate in taking precautionary measures for the common defense. In fact, Governor Clay must have been shocked to discover that the white citizens of Russell County, always the scene of the most intense Indian-white conflict, had never even organized a militia. Without an effective militia or general defense plan, the settlers in the lower counties of New Alabama had little recourse but to flee from the Indian attacks, and only their speed saved many from death.[4]

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[3] "From the Columbus Sentinel," 27 May 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 2 June 1836, p. 3; F.L. Cherry, "The History of Opelika and Her Agricultural Tributary Territory, Embracing More Particularly Lee and Russell Counties, from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Date," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 15, nos. 2, 3 (1953): 518; Page to Gibson, 16 May 1836, *ASP: MA* 6: 771; *Columbus Enquirer Extra*, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 19 May 1836, p. 2; Citzens Committee to Clay, Wetumpka, 13 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Alexander Nunn, *Yesterdays in Loachapoka and Communities Nearby* (Alexander City: Outlook Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 8, 60.

[4] Jonathan Clark to Clay, Montgomery, 4 January 1837, Governor Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

But many more whites escaped slaughter, because the Creeks also lacked a sense of unity and common purpose. Numbers of friendly Indians living among the rebels warned their white neighbors of impending attack, and this gave the settlers time to escape. Tustennuggee Chopco, for example, the chief of Tallassee town, prevented the rebel warriors of his tribe from attacking the white town of Tallassee at the falls of the Tallapoosa. Otherwise, the town would have been taken by surprise and destroyed. In the upper end of Russell county, a Creek woman, Katey Marthley, informed the whites living around Wetumpka town that Tuskoona Fixico, the local rebel leader, meant to kill them. More remarkably, a crippled Indian woman struggled for five miles to tell Major Flournoy's family of his death and to apprise them of their peril. Obviously, not all of New Alabama's red and white residents despised one another.[5]

Nevertheless, the Creek rebels accomplished their main goal. Their campaign of terror shattered what remained of the settlers' sense of peace and security and caused them to vacate Creek lands. Many Macon county residents headed west into Old Alabama, making their way to Montgomery, or crossed the Tallapoosa River to seek refuge in white Wetumpka. The whites living in the upper end of Russell County, and the lower end of Chambers County, rushed east to Georgia to join the settlers from farther south, who left their homes along the Cowikee and Hatchechubbee creeks right after the initial attacks. The bridge at Columbus was packed with people as was Hardaway's ferry station farther to the north. Most of these refugees had come from Georgia originally, and many simply moved into the interior of the state and returned to

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[5] Thomas J. Abbott to Herring, Montgomery, 31 May 1836, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, Creek Agency Reserves, (M234, Reel 243) RG 75, National Archives. Hereafter cited as Creek Reserves. Cherry, "Opelika," pp. 249, 296, 291, 325-26, 531-33; Walker, *Russell County*, p. 128.

their old communities. However, some of the fleeing settlers lost their lives on the road out of the country. In some cases, these peoples' dogs returned to their old hometowns in Georgia by themselves, giving notice to the residents that their friends and relatives in New Alabama had died.[6]

A large number of the refugees only traveled as far as the Georgia border towns to seek shelter. Not surprisingly, Columbus drew most of this crowd, perhaps two thousand refugees. The *Columbus Enquirer* reported on May 9 that "this city presented a scene of confusion and distress, such as we have never witnessed. Our streets were crowded with wagons, carts, horses and footmen, flying for safety from the rifle and tomahawk of the Indians." The *Columbus Sentinel* described the pitiable condition of these people: "Wives separated from their husbands, parents from their children, all dismayed, all terror stricken." Having fled so precipitously, many New Alabama refugees left home with only the clothes on their backs. Now they stared complete economic failure in the face. According to the *Milledgeville Federal Union*, "Poverty, wretchedness and ruin must result to those unfortunate people who, having exhausted their last dollar in laying in their provisions for the year, are driven from their homes, destitute of every earthly comfort."[7]

In fact, it appears that the Indians waited until the settlers stocked their pantries before they began their assaults, and this left the refugees with no choice but to throw themselves on the mercy of the Georgians. This situation worked a great hardship on

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[6] Mitchell to Howard, 7 May 1836, *ASP: MA* 6: 576; Cherry, "Opelika," p. 337; Spencer B. King, Jr., *Georgia Voices: A Documentary History to 1872* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1966), p. 96.

[7] "Creek War and Massacre," *Columbus Enquirer*, 13 May 1836, p.3; "Indian Wars and Murders," *Columbus Sentinel*, 6 May 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 19 May 1836, p. 2; "To the Editor," Ibid.

refugees and border town residents alike. The people of LaGrange found themselves suddenly outnumbered by strangers needing assistance. Columbus residents took as many women and children into their homes as they could, but most of the refugees had to live in tent villages and shanty camps around the outskirts of the town. Food then became a problem. One local woman remembered having to cook for two hundred refugees camped near her home. Furthermore, the state government had no funds for such an emergency. Consequently, G.W.B. Towns, one of Georgia's congressmen, requested that the War Department provide rations to all the New Alabama refugees. Dixon H. Lewis, representing the New Alabama counties in Washington, introduced a resolution in Congress setting aside $20,000 for that purpose.[8]

Worse, the flying refugees spread their panic to Columbus and the other border communities. The Georgians began to fear the Creek uprising was much more extensive than it actually was, and that Columbus was in imminent danger of attack. General Lowe, the local militia commander, set up headquarters in the town and put every eligible male on his muster roll. Then the leading men in Columbus sent out messengers and letters requesting military aid from the federal government as well as from the governors of Alabama and Georgia. Some of these men owned large plantations in New Alabama and faced severe financial losses if the rebellion continued. One planter, Anderson Abercrombie, punctuated his plea to Governor Clay with the words, "For God's sake, send us some help." Eli S. Shorter, the land speculator who now headed Columbus's defense committee, gave further evidence of the extent of the townspeople's

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[8] Ibid.; Cherry, "Opelika," pp. 434, 506; "Major General Bailey to Governor Schley," 13 May 1836, *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 19 May 1836, p.2; "Creek War and Massacre," *Columbus Enquirer*, 13 May 1836, p. 3; *Columbus Enquirer*, 9 June 1836, p. 3; G.W.B. Towns to Cass, Washington City, 24 May 1836, *ASP: MA* 6: 556-57; Cass to Towns, Washington City, 25 May 1836, Ibid., p. 225.

fear in a letter to the Secretary of War. He declared that "four-fifths of the Creek nation are at heart, and in principle, hostile." Further, he proclaimed that a large portion of the Cherokees were hostile, and that both the Cherokees and Creeks had "an intimate understanding and concert of purpose" with the Seminoles. Thus Shorter raised the specter of an extensive Indian conspiracy against southern whites. He claimed that "we must, we are fated to have a severe and sanguinary war with these people," and he asked that a force be sent "fully adequate to the purpose." But Shorter also took the opportunity to advance his own financial interests. He asked the secretary to remove the friendly Creek Indians from the country as soon as possible because even they could not be trusted, and the government should not bear the great cost of feeding them during the coming conflict. What Shorter did not say was that a massive intervention of troops, and a forced removal of Indians, would entirely obliterate the evidence needed for a complete investigation of the Creek land frauds.[9]

Meanwhile, the Creek rebels, emboldened by their early success, extended their depredations and consolidated their hold on the lower counties of New Alabama. The disaffected warriors spread destruction from Irwinton in the south to LaFayette in the north, from the banks of the Chattahoochee in the east to the outskirts of Tuskegee and Tallassee in the west. Those settlers who remained in the country "forted in" at these places and huddled together in fear, expecting attack at any moment. At LaFayette all non-combatants took up residence in the court house while the able bodied men prepared to defend the town from attack. However, not all the men were brave enough for the

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[9] "An Appeal," *Columbus Enquirer*, 13 May 1836, p. 3; Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), p. 145; "Indian Wars and Murders," *Columbus Sentinel*, 6 May 1836, p. 2; James Fretwell, *This So Remote Frontier* (Tuscaloosa: University of Ala. Press, 1980), p. 240; Shorter to Cass, *ASP:MA*, 6: 712.

task. When the town's military commander created a false alarm one night to test the competence of his troops, he found some hiding in the courthouse behind the women. Besides their momentary embarrassment, these poor cowards "were scorned to the end of their lives." At Irwinton, other men had to endure the same stigma. They were so afraid of the Creeks that they ran and hid in barrels when a company of their own militiamen made a noisy approach to town one evening.[10]

Seeing all this, the whites in the Cherokee country of northern Alabama and Georgia also became afraid. Many Creeks, perhaps a few thousand, had moved to Cherokee territory to escape the turmoil in their own land, and the local whites believed that these Creek refugees, along with some disaffected Cherokees, would rise up to join in the rebellion. In Cherokee county, Alabama, a committee of white citizens met with the Creek community at Polecat Ground and learned from the residents that some of the rebels from below had come among them on a recruiting trip. The terrified whites wrote to Governor Clay for the authority to organize a company of men to disarm the local Creeks and to watch over them, seeing to it that no one sold them liquor or more guns. Similarly, the *Milledgeville Federal Union* reported that armed Creeks had moved into the Coosawatte Valley in Murray County, Georgia. According to local reports, these Indians avoided contact with whites and were "suspected of exasperating the Cherokees." From Walker County word came in that the Creek rebels had sent their women and children to that place "to be out of harm's way." The editor of the *Federal Union* recommended that the state take these people hostage. In Carroll and Paulding counties

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[10] Nell Hart Orr, "A History of Lafayette, Alabama, 1833-1933," (Master's thesis, Auburn University, 1950), p. 14; E.H. Richards, "Reminiscences of the Early Days in Chambers County," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (Fall, 1942): 438-39; J.A.B. Beeson, *History of Eufaula, Alabama: The Bluff City of the Chattahoochee* (1875; reprint ed., Spartanburg, S.C.: Reprint Company), pp. 12-13.

rumors began to circulate that the Cherokees were already following the Creek example and rising up, and would devastate the white settlements, if local militiamen were sent south to fight the Creek war. Though most of these reports were exaggerated, and Georgians had little to fear from a Cherokee uprising, the state's presses insisted on threatening the Cherokees with massive retaliation if they pursued a hostile course.[11]

While no armed hostilities occurred in the Cherokee country, the native rebels did increase their numbers in the Lower Creek territory. More Apalachicolas, Sowoklis and Eufaulas joined the Yuchis, Hitchitis, Chehaws, Cussetas, and Tallassees in making war on the whites, increasing the hostile party to about three thousand souls. And with the accession of numbers came more destruction of white property. The rebels began to demolish the plantations in the fertile Chattahoochee River bends near Fort Mitchell and Columbus. At Coweta Bend, they burned out the wealthy Abercrombies and John Crowell, the former Creek agent. They also destroyed the plantation of Paddy Carr, the Creek tribesman who associated almost exclusively with whites and gave such valuable assistance to the land speculators. At night the inhabitants of Columbus could look across the river and see the fires burning. The rebels also took the slaves from the plantations they demolished. Paddy Carr alone lost seventy blacks. Furthermore, the hostile warriors captured a good supply of arms, ammunition, food and other necessities from all the deserted stores and homes they found. They secreted these supplies, along with their women and children, in the swamps along Big Euchee Creek. Then, to guard against any retaliation from the whites, the rebels set up a line of spies from the headwaters of the Big Euchee down to Irwinton, a distance of sixty miles.

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[11] Citizens to Clay, Cherokee County, 30 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; "The Cherokees," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 9 June 1836, p. 3; "Our Indian Neighbors," ibid., 2 June 1836, p. 2; "The Cherokees are up!!!," ibid., 16 June 1836, p. 3.

The rebels also sent their spies over the Chattahoochee to the outskirts of Columbus, and these spies occasionally shot whites who ventured beyond the town's limits.[12]

The rebels also moved to gain complete control of the Federal and New roads so as to prevent communications between the Georgians and Alabamians and to isolate Fort Mitchell. On the evening of May 13, the rebels pursued and overturned a stage coach on the road and killed the passengers. During the next two days, they plundered and burned all the remaining houses and stage stands on the highways between Tuskegee and Columbus. Then, on May 15, rebel warriors directed by Tuskoona Fixico of Wetumpka town set up an ambush near Frazier's stand and Brush Creek, twenty miles west of Columbus. These warriors wrecked and burned two or more stages on the 15th. The next day, using the wreckage as a roadblock, they captured two more stages carrying sixteen passengers. They killed as many of the whites as they could catch, again wrecked the stages, and also claimed a rich reward. In consequence of the Indian difficulties, the managers of the Great Western Stage Line had decided to withdraw the company's stock from Alabama on that fateful weekend. Extra horses, some of the best in the country, trailed each coach, and the Indians captured most of them. In addition, the coaches' heavy mail sacks yielded cash, bank notes, and other securities. The Indians also took a considerable amount of cash and valuable paper from the dead passengers. One of the victims, a Mr. Lackey, had come to Alabama as an agent for a group of orphans. He was returning home to Georgia with $1,500 of their money.[13]

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[12] "From the *Columbus Herald*," 21 May 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 2 June 1836, p. 2; "Postscript," *Columbus Enquirer*, 20 May 1836, p. 3; "Report of Captain William Davis," ibid., 28 May 1836, p. 2.

[13] *Mobile Commercial Register*, 19 May 1836, p. 2; "From the *Macon Messenger*," 6 June 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 16 June 1836, p. 2; E. Shackleford to Clay, 19 May 1836, Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; "From the *Macon Telegraph*," 19 May 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 26 May 1836, p. 2;

The stage attacks alerted the outside world as to the seriousness of the Creek rebellion. In closing down the Federal Road, the rebels stopped the flow of travelers and mail to and from the East. Thomas J. Abbott, one of the government's certifying agents, announced that he could no longer approve Creek land sales because his communications with Washington had been cut off "by the suddenness and unexpected extent" of the Creek uprising. More importantly, the people of Old Alabama and points west now felt inconvenienced, forced to recognize the Indian problem. As late as May 13, many residents of the older part of the state thought that the New Alabama settlers were merely crying wolf one more time. In fact, the postmaster in Montgomery was saying, "The alarm appears to have been unnecessarily great; and we hope that the symptoms of disorder and hostility will be promptly and effectually quelled without further bloodshed, and with such prudence as will not exasperate the Indians who have not been guilty of violence and disorderly conduct." Following the stage attacks, whites outside the old Creek Nation no longer spoke in such moderate tones. Now all Alabamians knew a real war was at hand.[14]

The stage attacks also revealed that in a white society divided by class and economic interests, the so-called respectable white citizens of Alabama and Georgia had more than the rebel Creeks to fear. A party sent to retrieve the mail sacks found that the

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"From the *Columbus Enquirer*," 20 May 1836, ibid.; "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 20 May 1836, ibid.; Cherry, "Opelika," pp. 384, 293-95, 518.

[14] "Statement of Rev. J.E. Dawson," *Columbus Enquirer*, 14 May 1836, p. 2; Abbott to Herring, Montgomery, 31 May 1836, Creek Reserves (M234, Reel 243); *Mobile Commercial Register*, 19 May 1836, p.2; "Letter from N. Blue," Ibid., 16 May 1836, p.2.

One Russell County settler complained of neglect by the people of Old Alabama with the words, "My God! are we, the honest settlers of this new country, to be branded with disturbing the peace of the citizens of Alabama by crying for help, when we are daily witnessing scenes of barbarity at which the basest savage should shudder! "B.H. Baker to Editors," *Columbus Enquirer*, 20 May 1836, p. 3.

letters had been opened so carefully,and with so much discernment, that a white man must have done the work. This observation turned out to be true. One Philander Broad assisted the rebel Creeks in the stage attacks. The residents of Girard, just across the river from Columbus, also jailed another white man for being an accessory to Indian depredations, but he made his escape from confinement, possibly with the aid of the natives. Similarly, the inhabitants of white Wetumpka arrested yet another character thought to be in league with the rebel Creeks. Suspicion fell on many more whites, particularly those who had made their livings selling liquor to the Indians. The *Columbus Sentinel* declaimed against these "unprincipled white men" with the following words: "Having swindled and plundered the Indians in every shape and manner within their power, until nothing more was to be obtained from them, their next step has been to set the Indians to murdering and plundering the white man, and they appropriating the richest spoils to themselves." Or, in other words, some New Alabama whites had turned the war into one more branch of the lucrative and disastrous Indian business.[15]

But greedy white traitors were only part of the problem for respectable whites. The stage attacks also revealed that in a pluralistic society, knowledgeable mixed-bloods could also be a threat. The fact that the rebels had attacked the stages on the exact day the Great Western line put extra coaches and horses on the road led the citizens of Columbus to suspect a conspiracy: someone had informed the Indians of the company's plans. The finger of suspicion fell on Jim Henry, a Chehaw mixed-blood well-known in Columbus. This man worked for a mercantile firm in Columbus, had once been a toady

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[15] "By a letter," *Columbus Enquirer*, 3 June 1836, p. 2; "Extract of a letter," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 23 June 1836, p. 2; "From the *Columbus Enquirer*," reprinted in ibid., 2 June 1836, p. 2; L.M. Stone to Clay, Wetumpka, 20 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Citizens to Clay, Tallapoosa County, 28 May 1836, ibid.; "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 2 June 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 9 June 1836, p. 2.

for the land speculators, and certainly was privy to information about the stages. He would later deny the charge of conspiracy, but he did leave Columbus to join the hostile party; and in the days following the stage attacks, he did attempt to set fire to the river bridge at Columbus. His friend, David Hardridge, along with other educated mixed-bloods, joined Henry in taking up the rebel banner. Their presence among the rebels made the whites even more insecure.[16]

Not surprisingly, fear of Indians increased to near hysteria in Columbus. Lurid accounts in the local newspapers fed the alarm. The *Columbus Republican*, for example, proclaimed that in "the Creek nation, at this moment, the scenes of Florida are being acted over. The wild savage, frenzied by the smell of blood in his nostrils, is prowling the wilderness" Then, in the midst of such reports, friendly Creeks came into town with the news that the rebels had not only allied themselves with the Seminoles in a mutual war of extermination against the whites but that the Florida Indians had recently defeated the army sent against them for the federal government. Worse, the friendly Creeks warned, Osceola himself would soon arrive from Florida to direct the contest in Alabama and Georgia.[17]

It is not surprising that the friendly Lower Creeks would spread such rumors; they were almost as frightened as the whites. The rebel tribesmen sought to impose discipline and order on their own fragmented society by intimidating friendly Indians into joining them in hostilities against the whites. The rebels even vowed to destroy all Indians who

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[16] Cherry, "Opelika," p. 294; "From the *Columbus Enquirer*," 20 May 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 26 May 1836, p.2; Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 145.

[17] *Columbus Enquirer Extra*, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 19 May 1836, p. 2; "Indian Wars and Murders," *Columbus Sentinel*, May 6 1836, ibid.; "Creek War Incidents," *Columbus Republican Herald Extra*, 16 May 1836, ibid.

opposed them, and detained numbers of their friendly tribespeople at Neah Micco's town, twenty-five miles west of Columbus. They also shot those who tried to escape. However, many Lower Creeks did manage to elude the rebels and seek asylum with the whites. The friendly Tallassees moved close to the fort at white Tallassee town, while some Lower Creeks moved into Ben Marshall's camp just across the river from Columbus. Other natives fled from the rebels and took residence with the whites at Tuskegee or moved into the friendly Upper Creek towns in Macon county. Still more Lower Creek refugees went to Fort Mitchell, where Captain Page promised food and protection to all Indians who renounced the rebel cause. On May 12 he wrote: "I see we are surrounded by these people; we have men, women, and children, more than we can get inside the pickets."[18]

That Page should promise the friendly Creeks protection at a post as vulnerable to attack as Fort Mitchell was laughable. The rebels controlled the country all around the fort. They had confined the Georgians to Columbus. They had cut off all communications between Fort Mitchell and the governor of Alabama. Furthermore, less than a hundred troops manned the fort, and there was no well within its gates. Even worse, the rebels knew everything about Fort Mitchell and the activities of its garrison. Some of the Yuchis who had gone there seeking shelter were actually spies. Put out at night as sentries, they went into the surrounding woods to give information to their fellow rebels. The hostile chiefs knew they could take the fort anytime they chose, and they sent word to the natives living there that they would share the same fate as the

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[18] "Postscript," *Columbus Enquirer*, 20 May 1836, p.3; G.W.B. Towns wanted the government to establish as retreat for friendly Indians in Georgia. Otherwise he feared they could not maintain a neutral stance in the conflict and would be compelled by the rebels to fight against the whites. Towns to Cass, Washington City, 24 May 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 656-57.

white soldiers if they did not leave the outpost. Rebel warriors often ventured as near as thirty yards to the stockade to carry off whatever they pleased from the fort's outbuildings. The soldiers did not venture out to stop them, for as the *Columbus Republican Herald* reported, "It was not deemed prudent." Despite his pledge to protect the friendly Indians, and his belief that the rebels could not take Fort Mitchell, Page lamented his inability to take positive action against the hostile party. Dejectedly, he concluded: "Our situation is a very unpleasant one, to have these people challenge and threaten us, and we unable to do anything."[19]

Humiliated by his impotence in the face of the rebel insurgency, Page could only complain to his superiors and assign blame for the disaster in New Alabama. He pointed to something that was both a local and national problem. He believed that the United States army was simply too small to meet the demands of a growing nation. No tribe of Indians feared it, he declared, and gave as evidence his own situation. He had repeatedly asked for more regular troops to overawe the increasingly hostile Creeks, but the War Department could not spare them. With only three hundred men, Page declared, he could have prevented the Second Creek War and saved $3,000,000 in losses and many human lives. Furthermore, he opined that the want of regular troops had caused the failure of the recent Seminole campaign. And then, like so many military men before and after him, Page focused the blame on the politicians in Washington. They were the ones who would rather depend on an antiquated and inefficient militia system than dip into the nation's controversial surplus fund to augment the regular army.[20]

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[19] "Postscript," *Columbus Enquirer*, 20 May 1836, p. 3.

[20] Page to Gibson, 20 May 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 771-72.

But at least Page did not pay with his own life for the politicians' mistakes. In the end the Lower Creek rebels turned away from Fort Mitchell and took up a more important task. They moved to open a line of communications with the Seminoles in Florida and to clear a path through southwestern Georgia to the Seminole country, should they need to retreat there. The first obstacle in their way was the village of Roanoke, Georgia, which stood across the Chattahoochee from the mouth of Cowikee Creek and commanded one of the Indians' favorite river crossing points. The whites from surrounding farms and plantations had gathered in Roanoke for safety, erecting a small fort with blockhouse and pickets. The Creek rebels determined to eliminate this nest of their enemies so they could move freely across the river and through Georgia's sparsely settled lower counties.

On Friday night, May 13, a party of thirty warriors crossed the Chattahoochee to test Roanoke's defenses. They fought a brief skirmish with the whites and withdrew. The apparent victory must have lulled the townspeople into a false sense of security. Many of them went off on a visit to Lumpkin; and when a force of three hundred Creek warriors returned to Roanoke early on the morning of May 15, they caught the village completely off guard. Twenty county militiamen slept by the cotton warehouse, and the remaining forty or fifty people in town slept peacefully in their homes, not in the stockade. The warriors carefully surrounded the village and stationed themselves at the door of every house. Then they began their attack. Nine whites and three blacks died in the initial gun blasts; eight or nine more Georgians suffered wounds. The other townspeople burst out of their houses and made for the woods, Indians shooting at them all the way. Miraculously, most of the surprised villagers survived and made their way to Lumpkin or up the river to Fort Twiggs, still commanded by Major Howard. The Indians looted Roanoke's homes, three stores and warehouse, then they consigned all the buildings to the flames. The rebels also rounded up a considerable number of horses and

slaves and very nearly claimed a steamboat which lay at dock below the village at the time of the first attack. The terrified crew barely managed to pull away into the river in time.[21]

Like the stage attacks, the capture of Roanoke was an important event. It signalled the extension of the Second Creek War into Georgia, and stood as a direct challenge to all the white inhabitants of that state. Furthermore, the destruction of Roanoke served notice that the rebel Creeks meant to establish their control of the Lower Chattahoochee and its crossing points. Significantly, the Indians commenced regular attacks on steamboat traffic the same day they took Roanoke. Twenty warriors, stationed on the Alabama side of the river eight miles below Columbus, fired on the *Hyperion* as it descended the Chattahoochee. The boat's first pilot, a Mr. Brockway, fell dead with a musket ball in his throat. Five others suffered wounds. The steamer then ran aground on the Georgia side of the river and "the passengers fled from her in terror and dismay." The Creeks followed this victory with attacks on other steamers, and the citizens of Columbus soon discovered that they could not carry on their river trade without military protection.[22]

The attack on Roanoke also revealed again how much the Georgians feared the Creeks, and how ill-prepared they were for cooperative effort. Like the New Alabama settlers, many Georgians living near the east bank of the Chattahoochee fled back from

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[21] Scott to Brigadier General Jones, Adjutant General of the Army, Camp Sanford, 26 June 1836, *ASP: MA,* 7: 350; "From the *Columbus Herald,*" 31 May 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 9 June 1836, p. 2; "Corrected Account of Roanoke Attack," *Columbus Enquirer*, 20 May 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 26 May 1836, p. 2; "Massacre at Roanoke," ibid., 2 June 1836, p.2.

[22] "From the *Columbus Enquirer,*" 20 May 1836, in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 26 May 1836, p. 2; "The Creek Indians," ibid., 19 May 1836, p.2.

the river in terror, abandoning even more territory to the rebel Creeks. As these people ran, the rumor spread that the Indians had fortified Roanoke and had beaten off two relief parties of militiamen. Though untrue, this piece of information came as yet another stunning blow to the citizens of Columbus. Fearing that the town would be isolated and cut off from Georgia's interior by marauding Creeks, the editor of the *Columbus Sentinel* urged the farmers below town to stay and fight. He proclaimed that he did not understand how Georgians could run from the Indians that he called "constitutionally cowardly."[23]

The editor also chided his own townspeople for their lack of effort in defending the city. He declared that Columbus would be the military depot for the coming conflict; it could not be allowed to fall into enemy hands. He called on Governor Schley to send troops and canons. He urged his townsmen to organize a better defense for the city, lamenting the fact that the people had become lax since the initial Indian attacks in Alabama. He wanted the men to erect blockhouses for the protection of the women and children He decried the fact that the number of men guarding the town at night had fallen from two hundred to a mere nineteen or twenty. Even more, he criticized the three companies of militia in Columbus for their poor organization and sense of readiness. The men had scattered themselves all over town,and could not be assembled altogether in half a day should the Indians attack. Despite the danger, the inhabitants of Columbus simply could not work together for the common good. [24]

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[23] *Columbus Enquirer*, 28 May 1836, p.2; "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 20 May 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 26 May 1836, pp. 2-3.

[24] *Columbus Enquirer*, 28 May 1836, p.2; "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 20 May 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 26 May 1836, pp. 2-3; "From the *Columbus Enquirer*," 20 May 1836, ibid., p.2; *Columbus Enquirer*, 27 May 1836, p.3.

Worse, it soon became even more evident that all whites were not on the same side in the war. When a company of local militiamen ventured back to Roanoke to spy on the enemy, they discovered that a white man led the small party of rebels who still occupied the destroyed village. Apparently, this party had remained on the scene to guard the loot not yet transported across the river. The angry militiamen managed to shoot the white renegade to death and scatter the Creeks.[25]

Fortunately for the confused and disorganized border settlers, Governor Schley responded to their cries. On May 19, he ordered up twelve volunteer companies and all the drafted men from twenty-eight counties. He directed these troops to rendezvous at three points on the Chattahoochee River: Columbus; Fort Twiggs just south of Columbus; and West Point just north of the town. Schley then made it clear to his militia officers that their purpose was to defend the soil of Georgia from invasion. He prohibited them from taking offensive measures and moving into Alabama until the whole Georgia force was collected, supplied and organized for war. Finally, the governor placed Brigadier General Henry H. Lowe in temporary command of the troops at or below Columbus. A week later he named his permanent commander, the former removal contractor, Major General J.W.A. Sanford.[26]

But Schley was unhappy with the whole situation. Like many of his fellow Georgians, he felt his state had been wronged, but not only by the Indians. He complained of the necessity and the expense of calling up state troops to fight the Creeks, and used the occasion to push again one of Georgia's pet political projects: the

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[25] "Further News from Roanoke," ibid., 20 May 1836, p. 2.

[26] "William Schley to Major General S.A. Bailey," Milledgeville, 19 May 1836, printed in *Columbus Enquirer*, 16 June 1836, p. 3; "General Orders," *Columbus Enquirer*, 29 May 1836, p. 3.

forced removal of the southern Indians by the federal government. In fact, the governor found in the Creek uprising an excuse to criticize those northern congressmen and humanitarians who showed sympathy for the Indians' plight and believed that forced removal violated the natives' treaty rights. Schley believed that Georgia's critics should be more concerned about the murdered New Alabama settlers, and he contended that it was "idle to talk of treaties and national faith with such savages" as the Creeks. Furthermore, Schley now suggested his own solution to the troublesome problem of what to do with the federal government's great surplus fund. It should be used to finance the Indian removal so Georgia and the other southern states would have no more violent outbreaks of disaffected natives. In short, Schley's response to the Creek rebellion showed considerable anger toward the federal government, northerners, and the Indians, perhaps reflecting Georgia's heavy involvement in New Alabama's settlement and economic development, as well as the state's long history of conflict with the Creeks and federal policy towards those natives.[27]

The Georgians' response to Schley's call for troops reflected another aspect of their mentality: anger toward the state of Alabama. In an address to the troops of Morgan and Clark counties, just prior to their march to the Chattahoochee, the speaker of the day told the volunteers that after appealing unsuccessfully to Governor Clay, the people of New Alabama now "turn with outstretched arms and beseeching looks, imploring succor from the brave, patriotic, chivalrous sons of Georgia." The editor of the *Columbus Enquirer* added, "We are proud that we are Georgians--and we sincerely regret that any of those who once were our fellow citizens, and yet share our sympathies

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[27] "General Orders," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 19 May 1836, p. 3; Schley to Cass, Milledgeville, 12 May 1836, *ASP:MA*, 6: 712; "Schley to Cass," 17 May 1836, ibid., p. 46.

and affections, should have been thrown into a state, unwilling to defend their rights--should have placed themselves under the protection of those who laugh at their misfortunes, and abandon them, their lives, their property, their children and wives, a prey to the merciless savage." Needless, to say such sentiments did not endear Georgians to the people of Old Alabama.[28]

But not all Georgians were impressed by all the jingoism. In fact, some state citizens were wholly unenthusiastic about the war. Their dissent most often found voice in the states' pro-Jackson, Union party organs. The *Milledgeville Federal Union*, for example, reported that "Some patriotic and high spirited men feel lukewarm in supporting the Creek War, because they believe that it has been caused by the dishonest speculations of our own citizens." Further, the newspaper noted that this indignation over the "egregious frauds" committed by the "land sharks" was a "just and honorable sentiment." However, the paper warned that the residents of Georgia's interior should not indulge a "sickly sentimentality" for savages whose hands reeked with the blood of men, women and children, and who sought to "lay waste to the fertile and flourishing counties bordering on the Chattahoochee." Instead, Georgia's men should fly to the rescue of the state's border inhabitants.[29]

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[28] "Tribute to the Brave," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 23 June 1836, pp. 2-3; "Troops," *Columbus Enquirer*, 20 May 1836, p.3. Many, if not most, Georgians failed to appreciate Clay's difficulties in getting a militia force into New Alabama in time to prevent the war. The *Enquirer's* editor also criticized the Jackson Administration in its attacks on Clay and the Alabamians generally. Speaking of the New Alabama settlers, the writer said, "They have begged and implored the unworthy officer who presides over their state . . . and he has sent to Washington City, 700 miles, to know of his master whether he ought to protect his bleeding fellow citizens." *Columbus Enquirer*, 20 May 1836, p.3.

[29] "On to the Rescue," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 26 May 1836, p. 3.

For the most part, Georgia's men took this advice. Eager volunteers began to arrive in Columbus even before Schley published his order. Along with them came 360 stands of arms, ammunition, and a canon. These first citizen soldiers came from nearby Upson, Talbot and Harris counties, and they were anxious to get at the Indians. Along with the Columbus militiamen, and companies of New Alabama settlers, they began, almost immediately, to venture across the river to salvage property and prevent the Indians from doing more damage to nearby plantations. They also sought to track down and engage rebel parties; but they had no real success, because the rebel spies kept their fellows well apprised of troop movements in and around Columbus.[30]

It soon became obvious that without sufficient men and arms to penetrate the rebel strongholds the Georgians could not hope to engage any sizable body of Creek warriors. Furthermore, some Columbus citizens feared for the safety of their homes, if the volunteers ventured too far away. The *Columbus Enquirer* voiced the opinion that the refugees from New Alabama should be the ones to take the lead in combating the Indians; the Georgia volunteers should guard the town. A few of the braver New Alabamians agreed. They returned to their property determined to fight for it, and they urged their fellows to do the same. But their pleas often had little effect; many of the refugees turned their backs on the war and returned to their homes in Georgia for good.[31]

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[30] "Troops," *Columbus Enquirer*, 20 May 1836, p. 3; Cherry, "Opelika," p. 400; "Wednesday, May 18," *Columbus Enquirer*, 20 May 1836, p. 2; "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 20 May 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 26 May 1836, p. 2; "From the *Columbus Enquirer*," ibid., 2 June 1836, p. 2; "From the *Macon Telegraph*," 2 June 1836, ibid., p. 2.

[31] "We are literally doing nothing," *Columbus Enquirer*, 28 May 1836, p. 2; "The Excitement," ibid., 13 May 1836, p. 3; "Published by Request," ibid., 3 June 1836, p. 3; "Many families," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 16 June 1836, p. 2.

As more troops and divisional commanders arrived on the scene, the Georgians undertook larger expeditions against the rebels, but still with little success. On May 21, Major General S.A. Bailey of Georgia's 10th Militia Division led a futile effort to drive the Chewackla Swamp for rebels. His force consisted of nearly eight hundred men, half of them friendly Creeks. Two days later, General White organized a similar expedition to the Eight Mile Swamp. His detachment never reached its destination. At the same time, General Jones of Lee County assembled a force of four hundred men to take back Roanoke from the rebels and to cross the river to help General Irwin of the Alabama militia construct a fort near the mouth of Hatchechubbee Creek. The purpose of this fort was to protect public stores and to open a line of communication between Columbus and Irwinton. A company of Columbus residents participated in Jones's expedition, and made a great show of leaving town by horseback and steamboat. At the head of the entourage rode the town's elite gang of planter-speculators, including General Abercrombie, Seaborn Jones, and "Major" Eli S. Shorter. On discovering the Indians had abandoned Roanoke, General Jones's expedition "fell apart" under a spirit of mutiny, and General Irwin, left stranded on the Hatchechubbee near a large body of rebels, had to return to Irwinton without erecting a fort. At that point, Schley's order prohibiting troop movements into Alabama reached Columbus and stopped the formation of any more large expeditions.[32]

From that point on, the Georgia troops stood guard. General Jones convinced some of his soldiers to stay on the Chattahoochee for ten days to watch the river passes

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[32] "From the *Columbus Enquirer*," ibid., p.2; "From the *Columbus Herald*," 22 May 1836, ibid.; "Head Quarters," *Columbus Enquirer*, 3 June 1836, p. 3; "From the *Columbus Herald*," 21 May 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 2 June 1836, p. 2; "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 27 May 1836, ibid., p.3; "From the *Macon Telegraph*," 2 June 1836, ibid., 9 June 1836, p. 2; Irwin to Clay, Irwinton, 25 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

until the governor's main force arrived. These troops took up residence at Fort Jones, just north of Roanoke, Fort McCreary, a few miles north of that, and Fort Twiggs, twenty miles below Columbus. The men at Fort McCreary fought a brief skirmish with rebels who attacked the Brewer and Quarles plantations nearby. At Columbus the civilian soldiers settled into a boring routine uninterrupted by any attempt to fortify the town--much to the chagrin of all the local newspaper editors. However, a few troops did venture over into Alabama to chase the now notorious Jim Henry, who fired the Federal Road bridges over the Euchee creeks, attacked the Victory plantation new Fort Twiggs, and according to most reports, had led the raid on Roanoke. These troops always returned to Columbus disappointed.[33]

Not surprisingly, dissension arose among the troops and local citizens as they waited in Columbus for the rest of Georgia's army to arrive. In general, this dissension revealed the economic competitiveness and class consciousness of white society. The *Columbus Sentinel*, a Jacksonian paper expressing the views of the common man, accused the rich people of the town of not doing their part to defend Columbus. The officers and troops of Harris County, Georgia, whose crops needed cultivation, also began to complain that they had been called in to protect the town so the rich merchants there could return to their stores to make money. Outside the town, the rumor spread that Columbus's wealthy families had completely deserted the place to seek safety and pleasure at watering holes and "other fashionable places" while others fought the war for them. Indeed, in both Alabama and Georgia, many white citizens felt

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[33] "Head Quarters," *Columbus Enquirer*, 30 May 1836, p. 3; "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 27 May 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 2 June 1836, p. 3; "From the *Columbus Herald*, 31 May 1836, ibid., 9 June 1836, p. 2; "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 2 June 1836, ibid.; *Columbus Enquirer*, 27 May 1836, p.3; "From the *Macon Telegraph*," 2 June 1836, reprinted in Milledgeville Federal Union, 9 June 1836, p. 2; "From the *Columbus Enquirer*," 3 June 1836, ibid.

Columbus should not be defended by outsiders at all. As home of the worst land speculators, these people reasoned, Columbus was only getting what she deserved from the Indians. Seeing all this dissent, the states' rights *Columbus Enquirer* defended the town and its wealthy inhabitants, pointing to the fact that Shorter and other prosperous townspeople had gone south to face the Creeks on the river. Then the editor sought conciliation. He acknowledged that Georgians were a "divided people," but he contended that the war could help solve the problem. The common effort against the Creeks would lessen all distinctions and bind Georgians as "brethren."[34]

Events would prove that the editor was mistaken in this belief, however, just as he was mistaken in accusing the Alabamians of inactivity in prosecuting the war. By the time Schley issued his order for a troop call up, Alabama's forces were already advancing toward the scene of hostilities. Expecting some sort of Indian uprising, Governor Clay had been holding a battalion from the 5th Division, Alabama Militia, in readiness since April 25. On May 11, he ordered Major General Irwin, commander of that division, to send the battalion to Irwinton in the southern end of New Alabama. He also called a regiment from the 6th Division into service, and directed its commander, Colonel Edward Shackleford, to proceed with his men to Tuskegee. However, these troops were only the vanguard of the Alabama army. Clay ordered them into the Creek nation to give temporary relief to the settlers and to build forts and supply depots in preparation for the introduction of a larger force.[35]

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[34] "Troops," *Columbus Enquirer*, 20 May 1836, p. 3; ibid., 27 May 1836, pp. 2-3; "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 27 May 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, p. 3; "We sincerely regret," *Columbus Enquirer*, 9 June 1836, pp. 2-3.

[35] Clay to General Anderson Abercrombie, Montgomery, 19 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Orders, A.J. Pickett, Montgomery, undated, ibid. Most of Shackleford's troops came from the Montgomery area, including the Montgomery Cavalry, the Montgomery Guards and the Rifle Rangers. He also led about

Shortly after sending his advance guard on its way, the governor called up the remainder of his army: one battalion from the 1st Division, another battalion from the 2nd, three more companies from the 6th, and a regiment from the 4th. In all, Clay intended to hurl twenty-seven hundred men at the rebel Creeks; and his plan of operations called for the larger part of the Alabama force to move down from Tuskegee to attack the rebel strongholds, while the troops at Irwinton moved up to cut off the natives' retreat to Florida. The governor gave overall command of the Alabama army to Major General John H. Patterson of the First Division. He also made Colonel John B. Hogan his acting adjutant and inspector general, knowing full well that Hogan's opposition to the Creek land frauds had made the colonel numerous determined and violent enemies in and around Tuskegee. Nevertheless, Clay dispatched Hogan to that town and placed some weighty responsibilities on his shoulders. He ordered the colonel to muster Shackleford's regiment into the service, recruit five hundred or more friendly Indians as auxiliary troops and scouts, open a line of communications between Tuskegee, Columbus and Fort Mitchell, organize local militia units, and establish quartermaster, forage master and wagon master departments for the Alabama expeditionary force. In addition, Hogan had to recruit and station a party of videttes to serve as express riders between Tuskegee and Montgomery, where Governor Clay intended to set up his war headquarters as soon as he could leave the state capital in Tuscaloosa.[36]

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a hundred civilian soldiers from Autauga. "Letter from Montgomery," *Mobile Commercial Register*, 18 May 1836, p. 2.

[36] Clay to Abercrombie, Montgomery, 19 May 1836, Administrative Files--Creek Indian War, ADAH; Orders, A.J. Pickett, Montgomery, undated, ibid; Clay to Shackleford, Montgomery, 24 May 1836, ibid; Orders, Clay, Montgomery, 21 May 1836, ibid.; Orders, No. 8, Pickett, Montgomery, 24 May 1836, ibid.; Clay to Cass, Montgomery, 3 June 1836, ibid.

Though Clay acted decisively in getting Alabama troops into the field, the nation's inefficient military system caused delays in getting Alabama's army ready to fight. Though Clay had the power to order up state troops, he had to turn to the federal government to arm, equip, feed and pay those troops. He notified Captain Harding at the federal arsenal at Mount Vernon that he needed subsistence stores for his army, forage for twelve hundred horses, and an additional supply of arms--two thousand muskets, four or five pieces of artillery, and enough pistols, swords, and other accouterments to outfit a battalion of cavalry. But Harding informed the governor that he had no food or forage on hand. Furthermore, he lacked the money to purchase these things, because Congress had not yet made its yearly appropriation for the army. Harding also informed Clay that the Seminole War had depleted his military stores and he could not furnish the governor with all the arms and accouterments he needed right away. However, the captain did send an agent to secure a loan from the state bank in Mobile so he could purchase supplies for the Alabama army. In the interim, he suggested that Clay use private contractors to furnish his troops with rations and forage. The governor wanted to take Harding's advice, but he had no contingency fund to make purchases for the state. Consequently, he had to borrow $20,000 from the state bank to finance his operations until the federal government could reimburse him. However, all the wrangling and negotiations and letting of contracts took time and this prevented the state from getting the necessary equipment and food to her troops so they could get on with the business of subduing the Creeks.[37]

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[37] Clay to Abercrombie, Montgomery, 19 May 1836, ibid.; Clay to Harding, Montgomery, 20 May 1836, ibid.; Clay to Henry S. Martin, Tuscaloosa, 16 May 1836, ibid.; Harding to Clay, Mt. Vernon, 24 May 1836, ibid.; Clay to President and Director of the Branch Bank at Montgomery, Montgomery, 20 May 1836, ibid.; Clay to Brigadier General Moore, Montgomery, 24 May 1836, ibid.; John A. Campbell to Samuel D. Hubbard, Montgomery, 26 May 1836, ibid.; Clay to Harding, Montgomery,

But the aggressively independent civilian soldiers also caused problems and made it difficult for the state to prosecute its war against the Creeks. As a general rule, southern troops enlisted to fight and many would not turn their hands to menial labor in the service of their country. Consequently, Colonel Shackleford had to impress slave gangs to build the fort, prison stockade, and other structures necessary to turn Tuskegee into a military base. Shackleford also had to contend with the mutinous behavior of some of his troops. A portion of his command consisted of drafted militiamen who were hard to control. They questioned the right of the governor to order them into service. Furthermore, many of Shackleford's men had left home in great haste, agreeing to serve for only four weeks until reinforcements arrived in New Alabama. However, when it appeared the main portion of the army would be slow in reaching Tuskegee, some of the men began to fear they would be kept away from their farms and businesses all summer which would ruin them economically. Other soldiers complained that Shackleford should get on with the fighting; otherwise, the reinforcements would get all the credit for whipping the Indians. Amidst all the dissatisfaction and complaining, the McDonald Troop of Montgomery County deserted, and it appeared other militiamen would follow them. On hearing the news, Governor Clay suggested that Shackleford and his officers advertise a reward of ten dollars per head for the apprehension and delivery of defectors to Tuskegee.[38]

The situation was no better at Irwinton, where General William Irwin had taken command even before receiving Clay's order. Irwin just happened to be traveling up the

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4 June 1836, ibid.

[38] "Turnipseed letter," *Mobile Commercial Register*, 19 May 1836, p. 2; Shackleford to Clay, Tuskegee, 22 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Bolling Hall to Clay, Tuskegee, 25 May 1836, ibid.; Clay to Shackleford, Montgomery, 26 May 1836, ibid.; A.J. Pickett to Officers, Montgomery, 27 May 1836, ibid.

Chattahoochee on the day Roanoke fell, and he arrived in Irwinton to find the town residents "in a state of consternation." Irwinton sat on a bluff overlooking the Chattahoochee only eleven miles below Roanoke. Consequently, the wounded refugees from the Georgia village made their way, or were carried, to Irwinton following the Indian attack. The sight of them terrified the inhabitants of the little Alabama community. They realized that their town held a rich supply of arms and provisions, yet lacked effective fighting men or any sort of military organization. Worse, the town residents had never gotten on well with the Indians, and several despised land speculators lived there. No one doubted the Indians would attack Irwinton next, and many women and children had already deserted the town. Those whites who remained "feared slaughter at the hands of the savages."[39]

If anything, General Irwin was even more afraid. He had just returned from Florida the day before and he knew the sorry state of the Seminole war. He believed the Seminoles had taken possession of East Florida and were moving up towards Tallahassee. He also believed the rebel Creeks now intended to move south, devastate all before them, and "force a junction with the victorious Seminoles." He saw their attack on Roanoke in that light, and he believed that only Irwinton stood in the way of this Creek-Seminole union. Beyond that, the general saw another threat. Barbour County held some of the best cotton lands in the state, and a large number of slaves lived both in Irwinton and out on the plantations that had been abandoned by whites. Irwin, perhaps the largest land and slave owner in the state, feared these Barbour County blacks "who have had uninterrupted intercourse with the Indians for a great length of time." He believed that they may have developed a plan of cooperation with the Indians in the taking

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[39] Irwin to Clay, Irwinton, 25 May 1836, ibid.; Irwin to Clay, Ft. Irwin, Irwinton, 20 May 1836, ibid.

of Irwinton. And if Irwinton fell, along with all its provisions and munitions of war, the whole country between New Alabama and Florida would become "one scene of devastation and ruin."[40]

Consequently, Irwin overreacted. He sent out a frantic call for the civilian soldiers in his division to come to Irwinton as fast as possible. By May 20, he had accumulated more troops than the single battalion authorized by Clay. Moreover, these men arrived without provisions for themselves or forage for their horses, and their presence soon taxed Irwinton's resources. The men cleaned out the stores and charged such things as cigars, liquor and fine jellies to the government. Irwin, in turn, commandeered the town's supply of powder, shot and tools; and when citizens seemed reluctant to furnish food for the men and horses, the took that as well. Then the general criticized the citizens for their lack of patriotism. Finally, Irwin applied to the governor for "pecuniary aid" so that he could maintain his troops in Irwinton. This request only irritated Clay, however, and he ordered Irwin to dismiss all the excess troops he had called into service. He also informed the general that a regiment of reinforcements from the 4th Militia Division under Colonel Moore would soon arrive in Irwinton, at which time Moore would take command of the war in that quarter. Much aggrieved, General Irwin promptly dismissed nearly all the troops in Irwinton, leaving that settlement without enough protection. Fortunately, no rebel Creeks appeared.[41]

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[40] Irwin to Clay, Irwinton, 25 May 1836, ibid.; Irwin to Clay, Ft. Irwin, Irwinton, 20 May 1836, ibid.

[41] Irwin to Clay, Irwinton, 25 May 1836, ibid.; Irwin to Clay, Ft. Irwin, Irwinton, 20 May 1836, ibid.; Clay to Irwin, Montgomery, 21 May 1836, ibid.; Clay to General T.B. Scott, Montgomery, 23 May 1836, ibid.; J.P. Booth to Clay, Ft. Irwin, 25 May 1836, ibid.; Charles Lewis to Clay, Clayton, 25 May 1836, ibid.

The Alabamians were also fortunate, given their inability to respond quickly to the rebellion, that the most prominent Upper Creek leaders came out forcefully against the uprising. In Tallapoosa County one Upper Creek chief stationed armed warriors on the trails to prevent the ingress of rebels and to protect the whites. Similarly, Menawa, the former leader of the Red Sticks, met with his white neighbors to proclaim his friendship, offering to give up his people's guns if necessary to allay their fears. Then Tustennuggee Chopco assisted in the incarceration of Tallassee Fixico, alias Oakfuskee Yahola, the leader of the rebel Sougahatchee Tallassees. Most importantly, Opothleyahola took a decisive stand against the war by killing one hostile chief and putting thirteen more rebels in irons. His actions undoubtedly put a check on many Upper Creeks who might have joined the rebel party.[42]

Moreover, some Upper Creek tribespeople followed the lead of their chiefs and assisted the whites in capturing even more rebels. Soon the jail at white Tallassee was full of prisoners, including a woman who, according to the friendly Indians, carried the news of the war to the Upper Creek towns and urged her audiences to take up arms against the whites. More importantly, some of the female relatives of the male prisoners gave the whites valuable information that helped them recover a good deal of stolen money and property. Friendly Upper Creeks also helped the whites capture and incarcerate twenty-one more rebels in the Montgomery jail. Included in this group were five warriors and one white man charged in the stage attacks.[43]

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[42] Shackleford to Clay, Camp Tuskegee, 21 May 1836, ibid.; Citizens to Clay, Tallapoosa County, 24 May 1836, ibid.; Creek Chiefs and Warriors to Clay, Kohomutki Town House, 30 May 1836, ibid.; Page to Gibson, Ft. Mitchell, 29 May 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 953.

[43] Brodnax to Clay, Tallassee, 26 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; "The *Montgomery Journal*," *Columbus Enquirer*, 3 June 1836, p. 2.

Unfortunately, though, the whites seemed to lack even the ability to hold captives successfully. At Tallassee, the citizens complained that they could not guard their town and all the prisoners at the same time. Furthermore, they could not ask the friendly Creeks to assist them in watching the captives, because they did not have enough food for themselves and their Indian allies. And yet, the white residents of Tallassee were unwilling to send the rebel prisoners to Shackleford's compound in Tuskegee, because they hoped to get more information on stolen property from them. But at least they kept possession of their rebels. The prisoners in Montgomery escaped. One night as their guard slept in a state of "brutish intoxication," they picked the locks holding the chains around their bodies, bent the bars on their cell windows with the chains, squeezed through to the prison yard, dug a hole under the fence, and disappeared into the darkness. Neither the other jailer nor the town sentinels knew the difference.[44]

The Upper Creeks also assisted the whites in the only successful military actions they took against the rebels during the month of May. Colonel Charles McLemore of Chambers County led one of these forays. Seeing that his fellow settlers were leaving their homes in droves, ruining all prospect for a successful crop in the fall, the colonel decided to stop the exodus by striking at the rebel Tallassees. These natives had precipitated the white flight from Chambers by murdering numbers of settlers along the county's southern border. McLemore called up two companies of militiamen for the task. Then Brigadier General Elias Beall of Georgia's 10th Militia Division joined in the effort, leading a company of volunteers from Chambers and two more from Troup County, Georgia. Finally, Captain Nimrod Doyle, an old Indian countryman, offered

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[44] Brodnax to Clay, Tallassee, 26 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Goldthwaite to Clay, Montgomery, 4 June 1836, ibid.; Sworn Statement of Daniel Partridge, ibid.

his assistance, riding at the head of nearly a hundred friendly Creek warriors. On May 15, the day the rebels moved to close down traffic on the Federal and New roads, the Chambers County force destroyed Loachapoka in Macon County, the largest of the hostile Tallassee Creek towns. In the process, the colonel's white troops and warriors fought a couple of brief skirmishes, buried dead settlers, collected some beef cattle and other valuable property, and captured several prisoners, including Loachapoka's chief and town prophet. The Creek auxiliaries proved indispensable in this effort. According to General Beall, they "executed every order with promptness and uniformly charged the swamps at every order." Unfortunately for the whites, however, most of the Loachapoka residents had deserted the town before the troops arrived, taking the greater part of their cattle and other possessions down to the Big Swamp, situated in the southern end of Macon county eight miles below Tuskegee. Beall concluded that the Upper Creek rebels were moving south to prepare "for as long and as troublesome warfare as possible."[45]

While McLemore moved on the rebel Tallassees from the east, Captain John H. Brodnax, a resident of white Tallassee, moved on them from the west. He led two companies of white volunteers and two hundred friendly Tallassee and Tuckabatchee Creeks under Opothleyahola himself. On the same day that the Chambers force entered Loachapoka, Brodnax arrived at the Tallassee village of Sougahatchee, which sprawled

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[45] Citizens of Chambers County to Clay, Lafayette, 24 May 1836, ibid.; "Beall's Report," *Columbus Enquirer*, 27 May 1836, p. 3; "S.J. Morris to *Enquirer*," *Columbus Enquirer*, 3 June 1836, p. 3; "From the *Columbus Enquirer*," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 2 June 1836, p. 2; Beall to Clay, Lafayette, 18 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Citizens of Chambers to Clay, Lafayette, 22 May 1836, ibid.; McLemore to Clay, Lafayette, 23 May 1836, ibid. The whites confined the Loachapoka prisoners in the Chambers County Jail. "The War," *Columbus Enquirer*, 21 May 1836, p. 2.

along the banks of Sougahatchee Creek several miles above Loachapoka. And like McLemore's men, Brodnax's troops also found that their enemies had taken flight. However, Opothleyahola and his warriors followed the fleeing Tallassees and took several of their leaders captive.[46]

The operations conducted by McLemore, Brodnax, and their Indian allies essentially cleared the Upper Creek country of rebels, causing them to retreat below the Federal Road to the Lower Creek strongholds. Colonel McLemore then moved to secure the upper counties of New Alabama by constructing two forts. He situated one at the Sougahatchee village site near the border of Macon and Chambers counties; the other he located farther east along the Russell and Chambers county line. Together these posts served as a line of defense separating Lower Creeks from Upper Creeks. They also served as bases for offensive strikes against the rebels to the south. The volunteer troops stationed at the forts began to venture out on search and destroy missions,and within a short time, they burned nearly every Indian dwelling between Lafayette and Tuskegee. Unfortunately, many of these dwellings belonged to friendly Creeks, some of whom had gone to Tuskegee to join Governor Clay's Alabama army.[47]

Partly as a result of McLemore's success, the Alabamians realized that they could not close the war quickly without a good deal of help from the Upper Creeks. Fortunately, they knew the best way to achieve this support. Owing to the operation of

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[46] Brodnax and Committee to Clay, Tallassee, 22 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Shackleford to Clay, Camp Tuskegee, 21 May 1836, ibid.

[47] McLemore to Clay, Lafayette, 23 May 1836, ibid.; "From the *Columbus Enquirer*," 3 June 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 9 June 1836, p. 2; An angry Captain Brodnax reported to the governor that whites had burned the Creek town of Notasulga knowing that it was not a rebel settlement. Brodnax to Clay, Tallassee, 26 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

the Indian business, the Creeks were poor and hungry; the whites merely offered them material rewards for their assistance. Both Beall and Brodnax allowed their native allies to keep everything they took from Loachapoka and Sougahatchee. General Beall noted that this method of paying the friendly Indians also had the effect of further dividing them from the rebels who would surely be displeased by the theft. Some white citizens of the Upper Creek country also fed the Indians to win their loyalty; and when their resources ran low, Governor Clay stepped in with an offer to feed the friendly Creeks at government expense until the end of the war.[48]

But still Clay feared that Upper Creeks would chose the rebel side, and like all Alabamians, he knew how devastating that would be. Consequently, he took a bold step. On arriving in Montgomery to take charge of the war, Clay met with Opothleyahola and a delegation of ranking chiefs to deliver a proclamation designed to impress on them the gravity of the situation. The governor wanted to make it clear that the Second Creek War was unique in the history of Indian-white conflict, and the chiefs should make sure they chose the right side. The hostile Creeks, he said, were not engaged in an old-fashion war with the whites, because they were no longer an independent people. They had been incorporated into the state of Alabama four years previous. Their councils, conventions and assemblies had been abolished. Their usages and customs contrary to those of white citizens were declared null and void. Now the Creeks were subject to state, not tribal law, and that law did not allow them to wage war on other state citizens. Consequently, the whites would not treat the hostile Creeks as "fair and open enemies" as they had in past times; now they would deal with them as mere

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[48] Clay to Eli Shortridge, et al., Montgomery, 1 June 1836, ibid.; Clay to Hon. B.T. Butler, Secretary of War, Huntsville, 14 January 1837, ibid.

traitors. If caught and convicted, they would be hanged. In other words, the Second Creek War was a civil rebellion, and the rebels would suffer accordingly.[49]

But that threat was not enough, Clay's proclamation went further. It obligated the friendly Indians to assist the whites in enforcing state law and putting down the rebellion. In particular, it imposed on town chiefs the duty of handing over their hostile tribesmen to the state along with all property stolen from the whites. In addition, these chiefs had to apprise state officers of the movements of hostile parties. And finally, the proclamation stated that all friendly warriors, in order to allay the fears of their white neighbors and keep themselves from harm, should not venture forth from their towns with guns in their hands except to join the whites in battle against the hostiles.[50]

Unfortunately, Clay's rather high-handed proclamation was unnecessary. Even worse, it threatened to undo all the good work local whites had done to secure the help of friendly Creeks. Clay's words insulted these people and cooled their relations with the state. Furthermore, some whites began to tell the friendly Creeks that Clay's statement meant that they were required to take up arms against the rebels or be declared hostile themselves. The Indians found this piece of news particularly galling. Many of them did not wish to fight their rebel tribesmen, because they knew the hatred and bitterness of the conflict would linger on after all the Creeks left Alabama and would blossom into renewed inter-tribal violence in the West. Furthermore, the proclamation offended those warriors who had already gone to Tuskegee to join the Alabama army. Viewing the rather lethargic pace of the state's military movements, these warriors now became convinced that the whites meant to put them forward to do the real fighting of the war,

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[49] "Governor's Proclamation," Montgomery, 20 May 1836, printed in *Columbus Enquirer*, 27 May 1836, p. 3.

[50] Ibid.

and Clay's proclamation was basically a statement to that affect. Consequently, the friendly chiefs held a council twelve miles from Tuskegee and determined that they would not fight the hostiles. Their warriors began to pick up their belongings to go home.[51]

Observers at Tuskegee were aghast, and pummeled Clay with protests. Colonel Shackleford believed that more Creek warriors would take up the rebel cause in the wake of Clay's proclamation, and he urged the governor to send even more troops to Tuskegee as quickly as possible. One George Goldtwaite, equally distressed, proposed a typically New Alabama solution to the problem. He believed Clay should appeal to the economic self-interest of Opothleyahola and the other Indian leaders, paying each of them "three or four thousand dollars contingent on them bringing in the hostile leaders for justice." The governor did not take this advice, but he did work through Colonel Hogan to patch up difficulties with Opothleyahola and the other chiefs. He also sought to have the state pay compensation to all the friendly Creeks who lost homes and property to marauding troops. However, as the month of May drew to a close, the whites, showing once again their tendency to work at cross purposes, failed to secure a firm commitment of military assistance from the Upper Creeks. And yet they knew such assistance would be invaluable in the upcoming invasion of the Lower Creek country. In fact, N. T. Collins, a prominent New Alabama settler, proclaimed that with the help of friendly Indians the war could be closed in a few days, without them the whites would have to endure months of hard fighting.[52]

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[51] Collins to Walker and Woodward, Echo Harjo's Camp, 20 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Goldthwaite to John A. Campbell, Camp near Tuskegee, 23 May 1836, ibid; Shackleford to Clay, ibid.; "From the *Columbus Herald*," 23 May 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 2 June 1836, p. 2.

[52] Ibid.; Collins to Walker and Woodward, Echo Harjo's Camp, 20 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Campbell to Brodnax, Montgomery, 27 May 1836, ibid.

But even as the majority of Creek warriors held aloof from the whites, they also continued to shun the rebel party. In the end this neutral stance benefited the whites. Had the rebels been able to draw a sizable number of Upper Creeks into their fold, they surely could have cleared New Alabama and a good portion of western Georgia of the fearful and disorganized whites. But the early defection of Tuskenea and the forthright anti-rebel stance of Opothleyahola and numerous other Upper Creek chiefs undoubtedly kept numbers of Upper Creeks from taking the side of the Lower Creek hostiles. Therefore, the rebels found themselves contained in the lower counties of New Alabama and threatened by a growing army of whites on both sides of the Chattahoochee. The incohesive nature of Creek society had done what the whites could not do. It had blunted the impact of the Creek uprising and damaged the rebellion beyond repair.

But for the time being, the rebels ruled the day. They had driven the settlers off their lands. They were fat and well fed for the first time in years. They had accumulated a good supply of arms and ammunition. They had cowed the hated land speculators and penned many of them up in Columbus. They had disrupted traffic on the Chattahoochee and cut off communications between Columbus and Montgomery, making it difficult for Georgians and Alabamians to coordinate their war efforts. Furthermore, the rebels saw no white force in the field ready to offer them serious opposition. Neah Micco proclaimed that the whites would not fight, and that he would take back all the old Creek land in Georgia, all the way east to the Ocmulgee River. Neahmathla, on the other hand, knew his warriors must face an avenging army in time, but he had to wonder, given the experience of his Seminole cousins in Florida, how powerful and competent that army would be. He fortified his camp on Hatchechubbee Creek and sent a message to

Captain Page announcing that his people were ready to meet the white troops in back of Cook's stand on the Federal Road.[53]

But more importantly, the rebels had to take satisfaction in the fact that they had struck fear into the hearts of their enemies, and exposed an inherent weakness in the white society that oppressed them. For from being the united, confident monolith marching ever westward to fulfill the nation's manifest destiny, the society the rebel Creeks faced was aggressive but individualistic and competitive, divided politically and economically, and above all, insecure. In the months leading up to the Creek rebellion, the people of Alabama and Georgia worried about the war in Texas, where American settlers, many of them slaveholders from the South, fought to free themselves from Mexican rule. The possibility of Mexicans and western Indians uniting to harass the borders of Arkansas and Louisiana struck fear into southern hearts. More immediately, southerners feared the northern abolitionists who had began to send their literature south, thereby threatening to stir up slave revolts. Also, southerners had dreaded the possiblity of going to war with France because of that nation's failure to make indemnity payments to the United States for past conflicts between the two. Newspapers had warned of French ships appearing off the southern coasts. Then, in the face of all this, the Creeks and Seminoles attacked and humiliated both Georgians and Alabamians, and it seemed likely that the Ross faction of anti-removal Cherokees, rising up to defy the New Echota Treaty, would ravage white settlements in northern Georgia and Alabama as well as Tennessee. In the face of all this, many whites in these states actually feared for the future of their civilization. The editor of the *Milledgeville Federal Union* declared that

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[53] "The War," *Columbus Enquirer*, 21 May 1836, p. 2; "From the *Georgia Telegraph*," 2 June 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 9 June 1836, p.2; Page to Major General Winfield Scott, Columbus, 31 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

the Creeks meant to return Georgia to a state of nature. Thus the whites saw themselves as victims of powerful enemies, both foreign and domestic. They were not confident expansionists.[54]

Confronted by their own weakness, and shown the tragic results of their greed, all the whites could do was argue about who was to blame for the Second Creek War. Interestingly, they did not blame the Indians as much as they blamed one another. They also sought retribution. In late May, seven hundred white citizens living in New Alabama and Georgia counties nearby signed and forwarded to the United States Congress a memorial calling for an investigation into the causes of the conflict. The memorialists claimed that they were surrounded by "the devastating horror of an Indian war brought into existence by an abandoned and heartless association of white men," who had not only enriched themselves by cheating the Creeks out of their lands, but had influenced "some of the public presses of the country by their ill-gotten wealth, making them servile organs of misstatement and falsehood." Furthermore, the outraged petitioners accused the various "Land Companies" of deliberately planning the Creek War to block a federal investigation into their extensive business in fraudulent land contracts. According to the memorialists, enough evidence existed to warrant the immediate arrest of several individuals living near the disaffected Indian districts and the government should do so. In so many words, the memorialists were saying that the Second Creek War was unique. It was not so much a traditional race war between Native Americans and whites as it was a civil war between dishonest land speculators on one side and the

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[54] "To the People of Georgia," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 2 June 1836, p. 2; "Major General Alexander Macomb to Cass," New Orleans, 25 April 1836, reprinted in ibid., p. 1; "Cass to C. C. Camereleno," War Department, 4 May 1836, reprinted in *Columbus Enquirer*, 20 May 1836, p.3; "Florida," ibid.; "How is this?" *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 9 June 1836, p. 2; "On to the Rescue," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 26 May 1836, p. 3.

government and respectable white citizens on the other, with the speculators fomenting and using Indian hostilities as a cover for their nefarious practices.[55]

Governor Clay, Colonel Hogan, James Belser and other prominent members of Alabama's pro-Jackson Union party shared this view of the war. In fact, Clay had come away from his conference with Opothleyahola agreeing with the Upper Creek leader that the war had been produced by white men, the retailers of spirituous liquors and the land speculators--men Opothleyahola called "sandshakers." Therefore, on May 24, when Clay asked the commanding officer at Fort Mitchell to supply him with the names of all hostile Creek chiefs, he also requested that the officer capture and hold all white persons suspected of instigating the hostility until the state could review the evidence against them. Clay especially wanted evidence against the land speculators, Judge Shorter in particular. He had heard that one of Shorter's associates, a Dr. Scott, was reporting that in the days preceding the outbreak of the war the Judge had told some men in his Columbus office that "dust would be kicked up in the nation." to conceal the activities of the speculators and cause President Jackson to come in and drive out the Indians. Furthermore, Shorter turned aside Scott's comment that the government would not let the Indians be defrauded with a certain smug satisfaction. According to Scott, Shorter seemed to know that the government "would let things pass and use the war to excuse everything." An angry Clay ordered Colonel Hogan to interview Scott and the other members of Shorter's audience, and to collect their sworn statements as evidence against the Columbus speculator.[56]

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[55] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 149.

[56] Clay to Cass, Montgomery, 3 June 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Clay to Commanding Officer, Montgomery, 24 May 1836, ibid.; Pickett to Hogan, Wetumpka, 12 June 1836, ibid.

Of course the states' rights men in Alabama and Georgia did not agree with Clay, and seized upon the Creek conflict "as a weapon of party warfare." The editor of the *Columbus Enquirer* contended that the idea that the war was a trick of the speculators was ridiculous, and "no one with a thimble full of brains would believe such a thing." Furthermore, the paper's editor, as an obvious friend to the Shorter crowd, sought to place all blame for the Creek War on President Jackson's partisans. Once again, he excoriated Hogan for manufacturing the whole Creek land fraud myth to serve his own financial interests. He also accused Hogan of inciting the Indians to violence against the whites by advising one warrior to cut the throat of a judicial officer who had seized his property. Then the editor moved on to Secretary of War Cass, condemning him for not sending federal troops to prevent the Indian uprising. He contrasted this failure with Cass's willingness to use troops to remove white settlers from the Creek country a few years earlier. In those days, said the editor, "The hills about Fort Mitchell were covered with soldiers and tents, as though war was about to be waged with some great nation." Therefore, the editor concluded that Cass actually favored the Creeks, who had "been treated with all the tenderness, respect and forbearance due to our people, and our people have been treated like outlaws and savages." The editor did not profess to know why Cass should act as he did, but he did note that the Secretary of War had grown quite wealthy while in office. The implication here was that even Lewis Cass was somehow involved in New Alabama's infamous Indian business.[57]

Finally, the *Enquirer* fired a broadside at Jackson himself, thus relieving the citizens of Columbus of blame for the war while at the same time advancing the interests of the States' Rights Party in the upcoming state and presidential elections. First the

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[57] *Mobile Commercial Register,* 14 May 1836, p. 2; *Columbus Enquirer*, 27 May 1836, pp. 2-3.

paper pointed to the administration's failure in Florida, where Jackson had sent three major generals and an army of five thousand men against twelve hundred Seminoles. The result: "The Indians triumphant and the whole of Florida at their mercy." Then the paper described the fruits of the Creek War: "peaceable citizens murdered, commerce on the Chattahoochee interrupted, and the flourishing City of Columbus threatened with pillage." At last the editor concluded: "Oh! the Glory of the Administration."[58]

That President Jackson and his party stood to lose popularity in the South over the issue of Indian affairs was ironic. Old Hickory owed his initial rise to political power to his victories over the Creeks and Seminoles in 1814 and 1818. But since that time the nation and the South had changed. Whites no longer lived apart from Indians, separated by a wide frontier of wilderness. By 1836 much of the natives' land domain had been incorporated into the American economic system. Natives and whites lived as near neighbors, their economic affairs entangled. The Second Creek War grew out of this situation and consequently it was not simply a red versus white conflict. Whites saw the war differently according to the own political and economic interests. There was not so much uniformity of purpose as there was when Jackson led troops against the Red Sticks. Now, in a more highly politicized and economically competitive environment, the president's states' rights opponents, the hated nullifiers, were able to picture the Old Hero, the great Indian fighter, the father of the Indian Removal Bill, as a liberal in Indian affairs--a man whose leniency towards the Creeks, and unwillingness to dispatch troops to the Creek country, had led to the deaths of American citizens. With a presidential election in the offing, and a controversial Martin Van Buren the Democratic candidate, Jackson, as well as his followers in Alabama and Georgia, must have found the Indian

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58 "The Great Glory of this Administration," ibid., 3 June 1836, p.3.

outbreak very embarrassing. Perhaps this explains why the War Department's response to the Creek rebellion, when it finally came, was so overdone.

Chapter 4

The Federal Response

According to one recent writer, the Second Creek War "did not take very long." Another historian has claimed that the Creek conflict was "minor" when compared to the protracted removal wars: the Seminole and Black Hawk's. Indeed, the general consensus among scholars has been that the federal operation against the Creeks, lasting only a few weeks, was largely successful, bringing the war to a close and allowing the government to get on with the more important business of removing the Creeks from Alabama. In part, this view of a rapid and successful conclusion of the conflict comes from the two army commanders who conducted the march against the Creek rebels in June of 1836: Thomas S. Jesup and Winfield Scott. Once they concluded their "sweep" of the Lower Creek country, these men simply announced the end of the war. Since that time, historians have taken them at their word; they have not explored the story lying beneath the generals' pronouncements.[1]

In fact, the federal operation was not as successful as it appeared, because the whites never executed a coordinated plan to end the war. The Jackson Administration was largely responsible for this failure. Seeing an opportunity to sweep away past mistakes by quickly crushing the Creek rebellion and forcing all the Creeks, hostile and friendly, to leave New Alabama, the secretary of war dispatched a thousand federal troops and two major generals to the scene of the conflict, as well as sanctioning the call up of many more thousands of civilian soldiers and Upper Creek warriors. But this

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[1]Michael Paul Rogin, *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf), p. 235; Anthony F.C. Wallace, *The Long, Bitter Trail: Andrew Jackson and the Indians* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), p. 87.

force was simply too large for the task at hand, and General Winfield Scott's grand scheme for surrounding and defeating the rebels fell prey to some of the same local conditions that produced the war in the first place--particularly the individualistic, insecure and competitive nature of local white society. The army divided into Alabama and Georgia contingents, with the two sides showing little desire or ability to coordinate their efforts. Furthermore, the Georgia and Alabama troops were largely untrained, undisciplined, and ineffective. Worse, the undeveloped nature of the country, coupled with war profiteering, made communications and supply difficult for such a host of troops and caused interminable delays. Meanwhile, a few new rebel attacks created an unnecessary panic in New Alabama and impelled General Jesup, commanding the Alabama force, to disobey Scott's orders and to move on the Creeks without Scott and the Georgia army. Jesup's army quickly captured many of the rebels, and the general just as quickly declared victory in the Creek war. An angry Scott then conducted his own separate march against the rebels before being forced to agree that Jesup had defeated the enemy. But the government's uncoordinated, piecemeal efforts resulted in no great battle and no decisive defeat for the rebels. And while Jesup did corral over two thousand rebels for removal, local observers believed many more members of the hostile party remained hidden and unsubdued.

Furthermore, General Jesup was not really responsible for the gains his military operation achieved. He captured so many of the rebels only because New Alabama's native society was so fractured and weak. Faced with a white invasion, the rebel party splintered. Rather than drawing together with their comrades to defend their country, some rebels began to flee to Florida before the white army descended on them. This division weakened the rebel resistance. Then old Neah Micco, accustomed to playing both ends against the middle in New Alabama's free-for-all economy, deserted to the whites at the last moment, leaving his rebel followers to face the advancing federal army

without their leader. Finally, amidst the confusion and disarray, Opothleyahola and eighteen hundred Upper Creek warriors joined the whites. Lured by the promise of food, money and spoils, they led the federal advance against the Lower Creek rebels, captured Neamathla, and forced most of the other rebels to surrender. These events, growing out of a crippled Creek society, where individuals and groups looked first to their own economic survival, created the "victory" that the competitive and disunited whites failed to gain on their own--the victory that Jesup, Scott and so many historians have proclaimed.

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Secretary of War Cass set the federal operation in motion by marshaling a supply of money and troops. On hearing of the Creek rebellion, he sent a requisition to Congress calling for an appropriation of $500,000 to finance the Seminole War and to suppress the Creek uprising. Congress approved the appropriation almost immediately. Cass also urged the congressmen to pass a bill, pending before them, that would authorize the president to raise ten thousand volunteer troops for twelve months to serve against the Creeks and Seminoles, and possibly against the Mexicans and Indians on the western frontier. Again, Congress granted the secretary's request. But Cass was not content to fight the Creek war with volunteers alone. He sent fourteen companies of regular troops, including four hundred marines, to Fort Mitchell from their stations in the North. Then the secretary brought the navy into play. He ordered five armed steamboats to the Chattahoochee to transport military supplies, protect commercial traffic, and intercept hostile bands attempting to cross the river.[2]

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[2] "Dixon H. Lewis to the Editor," *Columbus Enquirer*, 3 June 1836, p. 3; ibid., 9 June 1836, p. 3; Cass to Schley, War Department, 13 May 1836, U.S. Congress, *American*

Next, Cass sought out someone to direct the federal operation. Before the worst of the Creek depredations, he had instructed Major General Winfield Scott, commander of United States troops in Florida, to move north and direct the campaign against the Creeks should they commence open hostilities. Now, however, Cass thought the Creek conflict merited its own commanding general. Consequently, he assigned the task to Thomas S. Jesup, the army's quartermaster general. Cass breveted Jesup a major general and directed him "to take command of the troops of the United States and of the militia who may be called into service from Georgia and Alabama for suppression of hostilities in the Creek country." However, the secretary reminded Jesup that General Scott was his senior; and if Scott moved to take direct charge of the Creek War, Jesup would be his second-in-command. Though this part of Cass's instructions would prove a great mistake, Jesup accepted the secretary's decision without complaint and left Washington for the Creek country on May 20. Cass then wrote to governors Clay and Schley to inform them of Jesup's arrival and to ask that they cooperate with Jesup and furnish him with everything he needed to wage the war.[3]

But Cass gave Jesup a larger responsibility than simply winning the war. In fact, the secretary saw the war as an opportunity to end the whole Creek problem, a problem the Jackson Administration had helped to create by failing to enforce the terms of the

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State Papers, Military Affairs, Vol. 6 (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1861), p. 629; Cass to Schley, 25 May 1836, ibid., pp. 625-26; "Cass to Lewis," War Department, 17 May 1836, reprinted in *Columbus Enquirer*, 27 May 1836, p. 3; Cass to the President, undated, *ASP: MA*, 6: 434-35; Cass to Shorter, 21 May 1836, ibid., p. 631; Statement of the Number, Washington, June 1836, U. S. Congress, *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, Vol. 7 (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1861), p. 115; Recapitulation, Adjutant General's Office, 18 July 1836, ibid., p. 354.

[3] Cass to Jesup, 19 May 1836, *ASP: MA*, 6: 622-23; Cass to Jesup, War Department, 25 May 1836, ibid., p. 631; Cass to Schley, War Department, 20 May 1836, ibid., p. 629.

Cusseta Treaty of 1832. Cass's solution was the complete removal of all Creeks, both hostile and friendly, from New Alabama. Claiming that all Indians were unstable and violent, and that it would be impossible to keep a majority of the Creeks at peace if any portion of them made war, Cass ordered Jesup to ignore previous treaty promises and to send all the Creeks west as a national security measure. He also instructed the general to remove the Lower Creeks first, taking care to place a significant part of his military force on the southern border of the Creek country to prevent any of the Lower Creeks from fleeing to the Seminole country once the removal began. Finally, Cass directed Jesup to feed the Indians and to treat them kindly as he ushered them into the removal camps. However, the secretary stated firmly that the Creeks "must be removed by a military force if necessary." Cass then ordered Captain Page to collect the Indians' firearms and to send them ahead of the emigrants to Fort Gibson in the Western Territory.[4]

Cass also urged haste on Jesup. He wanted to end the Creek rebellion and clear New Alabama of Indians as quickly as possible so he could devote full attention to the Seminole conflict, which now threatened to be a costly, time-consuming, and humiliating affair. With this object in mind, he told Jesup that removal was to be his top priority and "other considerations must yield." Chief among these other considerations was the land fraud investigation. Believing that the commissioners could not conduct their business while the war raged, and now accepting the speculators' view that the investigation had only delayed removal and thereby encouraged rebellion, Cass informed Jesup that he was stopping the process. He also dismissed Hogan and the other investigators.[5]

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[4] Cass to Jesup, War Department, 19 May, ibid., p. 623; Cass to Jesup, War Department, 25 May 1836, ibid., pp. 631-32; Cass to R.K. Call, War Department, 23 May 1836, ibid., p. 441; Cass to Armstrong, War Department, 20 May 1836, ibid., p. 630.

[5] Cass to Jesup, War Department, 19 May 1836, ibid., p. 623; Cass to Hogan, Anderson, and Burney, War Department, 19 May 1836, ibid., pp. 623-24; Herring to

Of course, Cass wanted to continue all practices that facilitated removal, including the sale of Creek lands. He dismissed all four of the government's certifying agents, Hogan included, but he continued to allow the friendly Indians to make contracts under General Jesup's supervision. Still, Cass said that removal must take precedence. He declared that when Jesup was ready to remove the Indians, they must go, whether they had sold all their lands or not. The government would then sell the remaining land for the natives at a fair price and send the money to them. Cass also said that he would look into the matter of fraudulent contracts once the war ended; and if any lands had been stolen from the Indians, the government would claim them and resell them for the original allottees. He would send that money west as well. None of these considerations applied to the hostile Creeks, however. Because of their rebellion, they had forfeited their claims to the land.[6]

Cass therefore outlined an ambitious plan of action for General Jesup, but the task became even more difficult and complex when Jesup arrived in Augusta, Georgia, on May 27 to find General Winfield Scott already there. His Seminole campaign having failed miserably, Scott had decided to leave Florida to take charge of the Creek War as a means of redeeming his soiled military reputation. As a general of the old school, trained in the War of 1812, Scott believed that military success lay in strict organization. In his fight with the Seminoles he had attempted to marshal a superior force of well-equipped troops with which to surround and crush the enemy. However, he believed this plan had failed because of factors outside his control--supply problems, disease, inefficient volunteer troops, the guerrilla tactics of the Seminoles, and the insubordination of a

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Cass, War Department, 20 May 1836, ibid., p. 630; Gibson to Hogan, Office of Commissary General, 20 May 1836, ibid., p. 776.

[6] Extract from instructions, War Department, 19 May 1836, ibid., p. 446.

competing general, Edmund P. Gaines. Consequently, Scott had not lost faith in his system. He felt sure he would have better success with the Creeks because he believed they were "accessible." Unlike the Seminoles, they lived in large towns that could be easily located and destroyed. Furthermore, while Florida remained difficult and unknown terrain for most whites, New Alabama was familiar territory to numerous settlers and military men; and while it held its fair share of swamps, the Creek country was much easier to traverse than Seminole Florida. Given these facts, Scott took command of the Creek War determined to prove that a well-organized, well-supplied army, with all its parts working together, could encircle and destroy a native enemy relatively quickly and with minimal losses to the United States.[7]

Scott also hoped to do a better job of public relations in Georgia than he had done in Florida, for he had learned a good deal about the insecure and prickly nature of southern frontier society. Witnessing the wholesale flight of white settlers from the Seminoles in northeast Florida, Scott had made the mistake of publicly accusing the refugees of cowardice. Furthermore, he pointed out to them that the Indians might not be their worst enemies. The general believed that white cattle thieves had caused much of the panic, spreading rumors of Indian advances so respectable settlers would desert their plantations and leave their livestock unattended. The Floridians responded to these accusations by burning the general in effigy on the streets of Tallahassee, as well as accusing him of calling off the Seminole campaign too early and disbanding his army. They complained that he had left them to the mercy of the victorious savages. But this was not the general's biggest mistake. In one of his official letters, widely published, he

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[7] Scott's Address, 19 January 1837, *ASP: MA*, 7: 202; Scott to Brig. General Clinch, Picolata, 26 February 1836, ibid., p. 244; Scott to Jones, Savannah, 22 May 1836, ibid., p. 313; Document 263, ibid., p. 358; James Gadsden's Statement, ibid., p. 135.

expressed a preference for "good troops" over volunteers, a sentiment which gained him the ire of many citizen soldiers already dissatisfied with their service in Florida. Consequently, on arriving in Georgia, the general sought to explain away his comments in the state's newspapers so as to set aside any prejudice the Georgia troops might have about serving under him in the Creek conflict. And even though many Georgians and Alabamians had fled from the Creeks, Scott did not criticize them for it.[8]

His public relations work done, the general now began to organize his new military campaign as if he expected to fight the British all over again. He intended to set up headquarters at Columbus; and as he expected several thousand regular troops, volunteers, and drafts to assemble at or near that town, he first took up the important task of arming and feeding such a host. Even before leaving Florida he appropriated rifles, tents, ammunition, accouterments, and the like left over from the Seminole debacle, then sent these articles by steamboat up the Altamaha and Ocmulgee rivers to Hawkinsville, Georgia--only seventy-five miles overland from Columbus. On arriving at Augusta, the general cleaned out the federal arsenal there as well as ordering some 150,000 rations from Savannah and Charleston. In addition, General Scott sent a requisition to the army's quartermaster and commissary departments in New Orleans for 250,000 more rations, 40 or 50 sacks of salt, and 400 felling axes. He also ordered arms, ammunition and even cannons from the federal arsenal at Mount Vernon, Alabama. Then Scott contracted with local businessmen to supply his army. He purchased ten wagon loads of subsistence in Augusta and made arrangements with parties in west Georgia for the daily delivery of

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[8] "General Order No. 48," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 2 June 1836, pp. 2-3; Jos. M. White to Jackson, Washington, 28 May 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 296-97; Scott to Schley, Augusta, Georgia, 26 May 1836, ibid., pp. 314-15; "Scott to F.M. Robertson," Augusta, 26 May 1836, *Columbus Enquirer*, 3 June 1836, p.2; "Scott to Jones, Adjutant General," printed in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 9 June 1836, p. 2.

two hundred bushels of corn to his Chattahoochee posts. Finally, the general stationed a quartermaster and commissary agent at Hawkinsville and instructed him to purchase 60,000 pounds of bacon, 350 head of cattle, and up to 1,500 bushels of corn meal for all the soldiers.[9]

Strategy was the next important issue. Scott wanted to outline a plan of military operations that everyone would understand and follow. This had not been done in the Florida campaign, and Scott was determined that that mistake not be repeated. He and General Jesup left Augusta together, traveled down the Federal Road to Milledgeville, Georgia's capital, and on the evening of May 28 met with Governor Schley to decide on a course of action. Scott was surprised, and pleased, that independent of each other the three men had already developed the same strategy for fighting the war. Very quickly, then, they agreed to a war plan designed to bring about the rapid destruction of the Creek rebels while at the same time preventing any retreating hostiles from reaching, and combining with, the Seminoles in Florida.

The grand plan called for a division of the United States Army of the South into two parts. General Scott, as commander of the first corps would take charge of all the Georgia troops assembling about Columbus as well as half the regulars marching in from points north. Then, assisted by Governor Schley, Scott would station a portion of the Georgia force at all the important river crossings between Columbus and Roanoke, forty miles to the south. These troops would keep the river open for navigation, and protect the Georgia settlements from incursions by the rebel Creeks, until Scott was ready to lead the main body of Georgia troops and regulars down the river to Irwinton, Alabama, or

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[9] Scott to Schley, Augusta, 26 May 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 314-15; Scott to Major J. Clark and Lieutenant Grayson, 28 May 1836, ibid., p. 316; Scott to Clark and Grayson, ibid., p. 315; Scott to Beard, Augusta, 27 May 1836, ibid.

some other point below the rebel Creek towns. In the meantime, General Jesup would take charge of the army's second corps, made up of all the Alabama troops and the other half of the regular force. After setting up his headquarters at Tuskegee, and mustering all the Alabamians into the federal service, Jesup would take the majority of his troops down to Irwinton to join Scott, and together the men would march north against the rebels. If the natives decided to fight in a body, the army would destroy them. If the rebels decided to break and flee, they would have to run north into the heart of the old Creek Nation, not south to Florida. However, should any of the hostiles attempt to escape across the Chattahoochee on the right flank of the advancing army, so as to reach Florida through southwestern Georgia, they would run head-on into all the troops previously stationed at the various river posts on the Georgia side. Thus contained, the rebels would have no choice but to die or give up their resistance.[10]

Scott, Jesup and Schley set out for Columbus together the day after their discussion and arrived at their destination on the evening of May 30, much to the relief of the town's residents, whose anger and pessimism now turned to joy and a general sense of brotherly love. The governor and the federal officers took up adjoining rooms in the upper floor of the McIntosh Hotel, and the town's newspapers began to sing their praises. The editor of the *Columbus Herald* proclaimed that seeing Scott and Jesup together awakened feelings of the "more chivalrous days" when the two men served together in the War of 1812. The states' rights *Enquirer*, on the other hand, went out of its way to compliment Schley, a Union man, saying that "what may have been our former prejudices against him, these are now forgiven. We see him as the governor of our

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[10] Schley's Deposition, ibid., p.174; Kenan's Deposition, 27 November 1836, ibid., p. 170; Kirby's Testimony, 19 December 1836, ibid., p. 168; Orders No. 1, Thomas S. Jesup, Tuskegee, 9 June 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Jesup to Clay, Columbus, 31 May 1836, ibid.

State, prompt and decisive on an important occasion, and think him entitled to the thanks of the State." For his part, Schley appointed a number of states' rights men to his staff, and while his ranking officer, General Sanford, was a Union man, he was not unpopular with Columbus's ruling elite. Indeed, Sanford had probably endeared himself to Judge Shorter and the other speculating nullifiers in Columbus by his lax, if not criminal, performance as a government certifying agent and Indian land fraud investigator. In fact, the states' righters seemed to have sworn off state party politics for the duration of the Indian rebellion so they could come together with their fellow Georgians to wage a "War of no ordinary character." Instead, the editor of the *Enquirer* now turned his venom on northerners, particularly those northern editors who insinuated that the Creek War had been contrived "to squander a portion of the public money among the southern people." The Georgians, now briefly united in a common cause, did not want to hear such criticism from people who supported the hated tariff, a "specious system of legalized robbery" that absorbed the "South's treasure."[11]

Despite the warm reception by the townspeople, Scott, Schley and Jesup immediately received word of the first of what would become a series of setbacks for their plan of operations. They discovered that Governor Clay, now ensconced in his headquarters at Montgomery, had drawn up war plans of his own and intended to attack the rebel Creeks on June 5, less than a week away. Scott believed he had to get control of Clay or see his own plan, and the war, spoiled. He did not want the Alabamians moving down on the hostiles from above, scattering them to the winds. Yet the general knew he could not have all the Georgia troops and United States regulars mustered,

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[11] "From the *Columbus Herald*," 31 May 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 9 June 1836, p. 2; Schley's Deposition, *ASP: MA*, 7: 175; "The War," *Columbus Enquirer*, 3 June 1836, p.3; "Since our last," ibid., 9 June 1836, p.2.

equipped, and ready to march with the Alabamians by June 5. Therefore, he sent a letter to Clay informing the governor that he was "opposed to any premature operations against the enemy," and asked Clay to delay the advance of his troops until June 15. Scott also received Schley's help in this regard. The Georgia governor wrote to Clay, telling him that the war would be over in a few weeks if he would only wait for Scott's plan to unfold. On the other hand, he cautioned Clay that an early move on his part might cost lives and do little good.[12]

Scott then sent Jesup to take command of the Alabama army. Travelling with an escort of 120 Georgia cavalrymen and regular officers, the general galloped west along the dangerous New Road, passing within three miles of Neah Micco's town, to arrive at Tuskegee on the evening of June 5. Fortunately, he found the Alabama troops still sitting in place. On the morning of the 7th the general set out again, bound for Clay's headquarters in Montgomery. He did not have to travel that far. On reaching Line Creek, the border between Old and New Alabama, the general came face to face with Clay, who was making his way to Tuskegee to take command of his army and lead it against the Creek rebels. The two men dismounted and held a discussion on the spot, then rode to Tuskegee together the next day.[13]

Clay and Jesup established a rapport and seemed to agree on all important points. Both men supported the Jackson administration, and Clay was delighted to hear that Jesup would remove all the Creeks from Alabama. He was also glad to hear that the general would take over the feeding of the friendly Indians from the state. Both men thought the

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[12] Ibid; Scott to Clay, Columbus, 31 May 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 318-19; Scot to Jesup, Columbus, 1 June 1836, ibid.; Schley to Clay, Columbus, 31 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

[13] Jesup to Cass, Fort Mitchell, 25 June 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 347. Clay to Hopothle Yoholo, Tuskegee, 7 June 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

distribution of rations was necessary to procure a Creek auxiliary force and to keep the rebellion from spreading to the hungry Upper Creek towns. Jesup and Clay also agreed on the causes of the war, blaming the speculators more than the Indians and declaring that the guilty parties should be brought to justice. Further, the two men agreed on the competence of the unfortunate Colonel Hogan, whom Jesup authorized, along with Hogan's speculating enemies William Walker and Thomas Woodward, to recruit a force of friendly Creek warriors to participate in the drive against the rebels. More importantly, however, Jesup learned that the governor, who had already delayed the Alabama advance because of supply problems and the inability of General Moore to get to Irwinton on time, was now willing to turn the state's troops over to Jesup to command as he saw fit. Consequently, the two men came away from their meeting with a feeling of mutual respect and the ability to work well with one another.[14]

Unfortunately, on his return to Tuskegee, Jesup began to discover that local conditions, particularly the nature of southern civilian soldiers, would cause him more problems. First, he found that Alabama's troops were proud, independent, and very particularistic. They mistrusted the "General Government" and refused muster into the

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[14] Clay to Moore, Montgomery, 6 June 1836, ibid.; Clay to Hopothle Yoholo, Tuskegee, 7 June 1836, ibid. Jesup charged Hogan with the task of feeding the families of the friendly warriors who agreed to serve as auxiliaries. Hogan apparently continued the system begun by Clay of allowing private individuals to feed the Indians, subsequently submitting their bills to the government for payment. F.G. McConnell fed the natives camped about Talladega during the war. Harrison Young fed the Kowaligi Creeks, procuring bacon from the merchants at Wetumpka. A Mr. Russell supplied the Indians at Tallassee. These and other individuals submitted their claims to Captain Page once the war ended and they handed over their native charges to the removal contractors. Jesup to Clay, Big Spring, 16 June 1836, ibid.; Page to Gibson, Ft. Mitchell, 3 November 1836, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, Creek Agency Emigration, (M234, Reel 237) RG 75, National Archives; Page to Harris, Ft. Mitchell, 15 November 1836, ibid., 615; Page to Harris, Ft. Mitchell, 23 November 1836, ibid., 617; J. A. Chambers to Page, Tampa Bay, 1 November 1836, ibid., 618.

federal service. The Alabamians wanted to fight "on their own hook" under their own officers. Beyond that, they believed that if they mustered into the United States service, Jesup would extend their three-month enlistments and march them off to fight the Seminoles, once they were done with the rebel Creeks. Fortunately, impassioned pleas by Governor Clay and General Patterson, commander of Alabama forces, overcame the men's intransigence and they finally agreed to muster into the federal service and accept Jesup as their leader. But then Jesup learned that he had to be careful what he ordered the Alabamians to do, for, as he complained to Cass, "Southern militia and volunteers cannot be induced to labor." To remedy this difficulty, the general recommended to the secretary that the army's quartermaster's department form "a corps of artificers and laborers" for use in the southern states. But this was not Jesup's most vexing personnel problem. The independent Alabamians had little desire to cooperate with the Georgians in warring on the Creeks. Some even resented the Georgians for coming onto Alabama soil to attack the Indians. The Alabamians were impatient and wanted to get on with the fight according to Clay's original schedule. They pressed a sense of urgency upon their new commander, and made it difficult for him to wait for Scott and the Georgians to ready themselves for the great campaign.[15]

Unfortunately, Jesup also had to contend with the insecurity of local white society, particularly the exaggerated fear of Indians. In fact, the general entered New Alabama just as another wave of panic washed over the whites. New reports of rebels entering the Creek camps in the Cherokee counties of northern Alabama came in to

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[15] Jesup to Cass, Tuskegee, 11 June 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 325; Clay to Patterson, Montgomery, 6 June 1836, Administration Files--Creek War, ADAH; Kenneth L. Valliere, "The Creek War of 1836: A Military History," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 57 (Winter 1979-80): 477. "To the Public," Columbus, 25 June 1836, printed in *Columbus Enquirer*, 30 June 1836, p. 3.

Tuskegee and Montgomery. The white citizens of Benton, DeKalb and Cherokee counties feared attack and wanted to raise troops to patrol the Indian settlements and to prevent the sale of alcohol to the natives. Similarly, the white citizens of Talladega and Tallassee came to believe that the rebels meant to assail them, and Clay was forced to divert troops from Tuskegee to protect those towns.[16] At the same time, Colonel McLemore reported that the situation had deteriorated in Chambers county. The rations the whites had been giving the friendly Indians were growing scarce, numbers of local Creeks were turning hostile, and McLemore feared that if he marched the county's troops to join Jesup's army, these Indians would rise up and massacre white families. Consequently, McLemore said he would not obey the governor's order to come to Tuskegee.[17] Furthermore, the colonel objected to Jesup's plan to remove all the Creeks from Alabama, showing once again that New Alabama's whites were not united in their approach to Indian policy. McLemore, representing the respectable citizens of Chambers County, pointed out that many of his county's Indians had lost their lands to theft, and if the removal agents tried to make them go west before they recovered those lands or received a fair price for them, the injustice would cause even more natives to turn hostile and the white people of Chambers would suffer. Moreover, McLemore claimed that a

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[16] Thomas C. Hindmon to Clay, Jacksonville, 7 June I836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Clay to General John H. Garrett, 7th Division, Tuscaloosa, 19 June 1836, ibid.; Garrett to Clay, Cherokee County, 21 June 1836, ibid.; Brodnax to Clay, Tallassee, 26 May 1836, ibid.; Clay to Nicks, Montgomery, 1 June 1836, ibid.; Clay to Patterson, Montgomery, 3 June 1836, ibid.; Clay to Patterson, 6 June 1836, ibid.

[17] Scott to Jones, Columbus, 2 June 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 317; McLemore to Clay, Tallassee, 5 June 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; "S.J. Morris to Editors," Chambers County, 12 June 1836, printed in *Columbus Enquirer*, 16 June 1836, p. 2.

quick military removal would protect the interests of the land thieves, who had always advocated such a removal "to secure their stolen lands against reversal."[18]

However, the most disturbing news came from the south, where a group of Eufaula Creeks, also formerly friendly, attacked a few settlers in the eastern end of Pike County in Old Alabama. On June 3 these Indians fired on an old farmer named Pugh and his two sons as they worked in a field. Pugh and one son fell critically wounded; the other son escaped. Later the same day the Eufaulas ambushed members of the Watson family as they herded their cattle away from the Indian border along the Three Knotch Road, which connected Columbus with Pensacola, Florida Territory. Thomas and Peter Watson were killed along with Peter Watson's son-in-law. Another man, shot through the mouth, escaped with those unwounded. Pike County's citizens responded to these attacks by taking flight, much to the chagrin of General John W. Moore, who happened to be marching through Pike County on his way to Irwinton when the murders took place.[19] Moore arrived at Monticello, the county seat, on June 7 and was astonished to find that even though the village was located a good twenty-five miles from the old Creek Nation boundary, all of its inhabitants had fled. Hearing that the Eufaulas were collecting in a large body somewhere near the Watson place and the headwaters of Pea River, and intended to ravage Pike county, Moore notified Clay that he should send arms and ammunition to Monticello so the terrified whites could return and defend themselves.

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[18] Scott to Jones, Columbus, 2 June 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 317; McLemore to Clay, Tallassee, 5 June 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; "S.J. Morris to Editors," Chambers County, 12 June 1836, printed in *Columbus Enquirer*, 16 June 1836, p. 2.

[19] Citizens to Clay, Berry's Store, Pike County, 4 June 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

Then the general resumed his march to Irwinton, leaving two companies of troops behind at the Watson home to guard the border between Old and New Alabama.[20]

And the bad news continued. Moore received a report that the rebel Creeks were amassing before Irwinton, preparing to wipe the place away finally. He responded to this news by making a forced march to village, only to discover the report was false--another product of fear. Even worse, Moore found no provisions for his six hundred tired troops or forage for his horses. Expecting hot food, comfortable tents, and other conveniences at the end of their long journey, the general's men grew surly. Then when they learned that they must swear into the federal service and take orders from General Scott, they became mutinous. Moore managed to calm them down; but he wrote to Clay that unless he received food and forage, he could not hold the line at Irwinton. Clay was mystified. In anticipation of Moore's arrival, and the commencement of the Alabama campaign against the Creek rebels, he had sent ten or twelve wagon loads of flour and bacon to Irwinton along with $1,500 for the purchase of corn for the horses. It was all missing, gone the way of the Creek lands.[21]

Hearing all this, and running low on food and forage himself, General Jesup decided he must leave Tuskegee and take some action against the rebels. As he would later explain, "a general panic pervaded the whole country; the Indians were plundering, murdering, and burning in all directions, and there seemed to me to be a great danger of several of the frontier counties breaking up entirely unless some decisive movements were

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[20] Clay to Commanding Officer, Montgomery, 5 June 1836, ibid.; Clay to John W. Stanley et al., Montgomery, 5 June 1836, ibid.; Moore to Clay, Monticello, 7 June 1836, ibid.; Jesup to Scott, Tuskegee, *ASP: MA*, 7: 338.

[21] Moore to Clay, Irwinton, 11 June 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Huger to Clay, Irwinton, 12 June 1836, ibid.; Clay to Jesup, Montgomery, 13 June 1836, ibid.

made." Consequently, Jesup decided to march his men thirty miles up the Federal Road to set up camp at Long's station, where he believed he would find corn and a small stockade. And because the Long place was only a few miles from Neah Micco's town, the general claimed that his camp there would intimidate the chief and his rebel warriors and help end the recent rash of depredations on white settlers and their property. However, Jesup meant to do more. On June 11 he wrote to the Secretary of War that the communication with Columbus was in the hands of the enemy, and that circumstance, along with the recent hostilities, inclined him to "strike a blow at once." The general never named the target of this blow, but it must have been Neamathla's war camp, which sat on the upper reaches of Hatchechubbee Creek between Tuskegee and Irwinton. Before advancing, however, Jesup sent out an Indian runner to Neah Micco's town to give the old chief one last chance to give up the rebel cause and declare himself friendly to the whites. Jesup also issued an order that all friendly Indians must move north of the Federal Road; any natives found south of the thoroughfare would be treated as hostiles by his advancing army.[22]

Of course, any attack on the Indians at this point would be a violation of Scott's orders, but General Jesup believed he had the right to change the commanding general's plan, given the dire circumstances he found in Alabama. He also may have been moved to haste by Cass's instructions that he defeat the Creeks as soon as possible so the government could concentrate its efforts on the even more troublesome Seminoles. Unfortunately, Jesup failed to reveal all his motivations and plans to General Scott. Later

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[22] Jesup to Cass, Tuskegee, 11 June 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 325; Jesup to Cass, Fort Mitchell, 25 June 1836, ibid., p. 347; "To the Public," Columbus, 25 June 1836, printed in *Columbus Enquirer*, 30 June 1836, p.3; Elizabeth H. Yamaguchi, "Macon County, Alabama: Its Land and Its People from Pre-History to 1870," (Master's thesis, Auburn University, 1981), p. 223.

Jesup would say that he wrote two letters to Scott explaining his decision and subsequent movements; but one letter was never mailed and the other, entrusted to an Indian runner, never reached Scott. In fact, the only report Scott received from his second-in-command during the first two weeks in June was one dated June 8. In this short, cryptic, unsatisfactory report, Jesup did say that the hostiles were committing outrages below Tuskegee; and he would need to make some sort of troop movement in that direction, but he never mentioned striking a blow.[23]

General Scott was not a little distressed. Since arriving in Columbus, he had experienced his own set of problems. He found nothing organized and no magazines or stores in place in the town; he fell ill, confined to bed; and worst of all, he lost contact with Jesup and his second corps. Furthermore, some of the Creek rebels, including the members of Jim Henry's band, were attempting to escape across the Chattahoochee. These natives had decided not to face the imminent white invasion and had assembled near the mouth of Hatchechubbee Creek to build rafts and canoes for transporting their families, captured slaves, and assorted plunder over to the Georgia shore. Simultaneously, they sent war parties against the Georgia outposts and plantations to clear a path for themselves and to steal horses for the overland trip to the Seminole country. Even before Jesup arrived in Tuskegee, rebel warriors crossed the river within one mile of Fort McCreary to loot and burn the Quarles and Brewster plantations before moving on to Florida. On June 3, Georgia troops, under captains Carr, McCreary and Brown, fired on a large party of Creeks coming over the river at Boykin's Ferry, twenty-five miles south of Columbus. Shortly thereafter, fifty rebels attacked the Watson plantation farther upstream and carried away three slaves. Then, on June 9,

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[23] Jesup to Scott, Camp Hatchychubby, 20 June 1836, ASP: MA, 7: 337-38; Jesup to Scott, Tuskegee, 8 June 1836, ibid., p. 325.

Captain Hamilton Garmany's Gwinnett County troops fought a desperate battle with a reported 250 Indians at Shepherd's plantation, four miles above Roanoke. These troops sustained serious losses, and only the timely arrival of reinforcements from forts McCreary and Jones, saved them from annihilation.[24]

Unfortunately, Scott lacked efficient troops to counter the rebel move. By June 9 only one company of regular soldiers had arrived at Columbus; and while the Georgia militiamen and volunteers had poured in in numbers, they were not yet prepared to fight the enemy. In fact, Governor Schley had called up too many men. Approximately four thousand men descended on Columbus and West Point, many more than Scott could effectively supply. And even though the *Columbus Herald* praised the "chivalry and prowess" of these civilian soldiers, most of the men turned up without muskets or rifles. Nor were many of them particularly good soldier material if one Jacob Rhett Motte, a regular army surgeon, is to be believed. To Motte, the Georgia civilian soldiers "presented a glorious array of dirks, pistols, and bowie-knives, with no scarcity of dirt." Further, it seemed to the surgeon that "every ragamuffin of Georgia, deeming himself an invincible warrior, had enlisted under the standard of Mars, which many from their conduct must have mistaken for the standard of Bacchus, as they observed the articles of the latter god with much greater reverence." Apparently, General Sanford agreed. Initially, he set up his headquarters at Fort Ingersoll, just across the river from Columbus; but later he marched his host of Georgia troops three miles farther into Alabama,

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[24] Scott's Statement, 19 January 1837, ibid., pp. 204-205; Scott to Jones, Ft. Mitchell, 2 July 1836, ibid., p. 350; *Columbus Enquirer*, 3 June 1836, p. 2; "Creek War," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 23 June 1836, p.2; "Several skirmishes," *Columbus Enquirer*, 9 June 1836, p. 2; "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 9 June 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 16 June 1836, pp. 2-3; "One of the most serious," *Columbus Enquirer*, 16 June 1836, p. 2; "Maj. Howard's Report to Gen'l Sanford," Steam Boat Metamora, 13 June 1836, printed in ibid., 23 June 1836, p.2.

because a "town life did not well suit soldiers." Worse, the Georgians, like the Alabamians, objected to federal service and agreed to it only if they could enlist for three months. Furthermore, General Scott had to promise not to march them away to fight the Seminoles in Florida, especially not in the heat of summer.[25]

Nevertheless, Scott did the best he could under the circumstances. He armed the first six to eight hundred men to appear in Columbus, purchased ammunition from town merchants, and sent these troops downriver to forts Twiggs, McCreary, and Jones as well as all the other smaller guard posts between Columbus and Roanoke. Then, when Captain William C. Dawson arrived in town with a volunteer company carrying their own arms, Scott ordered these men and a part of the Columbus artillery company to board a local steamboat, the Metamora, for duty. Scott instructed Dawson and his troops to cruise up and down the Chattahoochee, prevent any rebels from crossing the stream, and destroy all Indian "canoes, bateaux, flats, rafts, etc." He also told Dawson to call at all the stations on the river, render assistance to the posts as needed, and spread the word of any enemy movements to all troops along the Chattahoochee.[26]

Unfortunately for Scott, most of the untrained and undisciplined Georgia troops did not distinguish themselves against the rebel Creeks. On seeing Indians they tended to

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[25] Scott's Statement, 19 January 1837, *ASP: MA*, 7: 204-205; Testimony of Maj. Edmund Kirby, 19 December 1836, ibid., p. 169; Sanford's Deposition, 17 December 1836, ibid., p. 172; Schley's Deposition, ibid., p. 176; "Creek War Incidents," 7 June 1836, *Columbus Herald*, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 16 June 1836, p.2; Jacob Rhett Motte, *Journey into the Wilderness: An Army Surgeon's Account of Life in Camp and Field during the Creek and Seminole War 1836-1838*, ed. James F. Sunderman (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1953), p. 3; "Creek War," 16 June 1836, *Milledgeville Federal Union*, p.2; Scott to Call, Ft. Mitchell, 1 July 1836, *ASP, MA*, 7: 351; Scott to Jones, Columbus, 12 June 1836, ibid., p. 327.

[26] Scott's Statement, 19 January 1837, ibid., pp. 202-205; Deposition of William C. Dawson, 16 January 1836, ibid., p. 173.

shoot first and then retreat precipitously, later magnifying rebel numbers to justify their flight. Governor Schley was so used to this happening that when messengers reported that there were over two hundred Indians at the Battle of Shepherd's plantation, the governor noted sarcastically that "that would do very well for 30 or 40." Similarly, a company of Monroe County troops, after fleeing from the Creeks at Turner's Field on June 16, claimed to have faced from two to three hundred warriors. However, one Thomas J. Stell reported that he saw only twenty-five or thirty Indians and the Monroe troops refused orders to stand and fight, preferring to run for the safety of Fort Jones. When Stell sent word of the so-called battle to Columbus, he summed up his view of the war on the Chattahoochee with the words, "Worse and worse--just had a fight with the Indians--got whipped."[27]

But in all fairness, the civilian soldiers did have their successes. Dawson's steamboat patrols located and destroyed enough native water crafts to keep many of the would-be rebel escapees confined to New Alabama. Furthermore, the use of steamboats allowed the whites to win at least one significant battle over the Creeks. This fight occurred on June 4, when 125 Georgia and Alabama troops concealed themselves on board the Metamora at Irwinton and set off upriver to lure the Creeks into a confrontation. The ploy worked. Two or three miles above Roanoke, 150 Indians fired on the apparently unprotected steamer. The troops then raised up and returned fire, dropping rebel Creeks and a few of their black allies off the river bluff.[28]

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[27] "Schley to Maj. H.W. Jernigan," Columbus, 15 June 1836, printed in *Columbus Enquirer*, 23 June 1836, p. 3; "A.B. Pope to Mr. Miller," Lumpkin, Georgia, 16 June 1836, ibid.; "From the *Republican Herald*," 2 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 9 August 1836, p. 3; "Thomas J. Stell to Editors," Lumpkin, 6 August 1836, *Columbus Enquirer*, 18 August 1836, p. 3; "Ezekiel Ward to Editors," Columbus, ibid., 14 July 1836, p. 3.

[28] Scott to Jones, Ft. Mitchell, 2 July 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 350; J. P. Booth to Clay,

General Scott took little pleasure in such successes. He wanted to put his grand plan in motion; but his army could not be armed and supplied quickly given its large size, the relatively primitive state of the local terrain, and the insecurity and acquisitiveness of the local population. Heavy rains virtually closed the road from Augusta and Milledgeville, two steamboats bringing supplies up the Ocmulgee River to Hawkinsville exploded, and the various federal arsenals and supply depots in the South found it difficult to meet the demand for arms and rations created by troop build-ups on the Texas frontier, Alabama, Georgia and Florida. Captain Harding , for example, informed Scott he could not fill the general's order for ordnance from the Mount Vernon arsenal, because Governor Clay and his Alabama troops had already taken all his stores, including 6,800 muskets. Furthermore, Georgia businessmen showed that they were just as willing to cheat the federal government as the Indians. Wagoneers charged the army exorbitant rates for hauling provisions and speculators moved into Columbus even before the army to buy up corn and bacon for resale to Scott and his supply officers at an excessive profit. Worse, the unreasonable fears of the frontier populace interfered with Scott's ability to feed and equip his troops. Inexplicably, General Irwin of the Alabama militia, already unduly afraid of a slave revolt in Irwinton, created yet another panic when he sent a letter to Brigadier General Wilcox of the Georgia militia informing him that two thousand hostile Creeks had crossed the Chattahoochee and were laying waste to the lower counties of Georgia, murdering men, women and children indiscriminately. This wild tale caused more of the inhabitants of southwest Georgia to flee their farms and villages, and the conductor of the wagon train carrying arms from Hawkinsville to Columbus, in an effort to avoid the imaginary Indians, took a circuitous route that delayed his arrival at Scott's

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Irwinton, 18 June 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

headquarters for three or four days. Given all these difficulties, Scott would not have his first corps armed and ready to march downriver to Irwinton until June 21.[29]

Neither Jesup nor General Moore believed they could wait for Scott. In fact, Jesup was "anxious to secure the country and General Scott himself from the evil consequences of a plan there were neither means nor time to execute." Rather than trust the Georgia sentinels on the Chattahoochee to keep the rebels from flying to Florida, Jesup and Moore determined to seek the Indians in their camps and capture them before they had time to flee. Jesup led his troops out of Tuskegee on June 12 with the intention of setting up camp at Long's Station and sending word to Moore to bring his men up from Irwinton. Then Jesup meant to move south from Long's, link forces with Moore, march against the Creek strongholds, and defeat the enemy in ten to fifteen days. However, if the rebel force proved larger and stronger than supposed, then Jesup would combine his army with Scott's and bring the Indians into submission in a month. But unknown to Jesup, General Moore was already taking his own independent action against the Creeks. Responding to yet another rumor that a rebel force of two thousand warriors was assembling to attack Irwinton, Moore left the village on June 13 to attack High Log, the main Hitchiti settlement on Hatchechubbee Creek. He marched at the head of his mounted regiment of 4th Division troops and four companies of infantry previously stationed at Fort Bell, a tiny guard post on the south fork of Cowikee Creek. General Scott knew nothing of this operation or of Jesup's new scheme for winning the Creek war. Before leaving Tuskegee Jesup sent a letter purporting to explain his actions, but this missive never reached Scott at Columbus.[30]

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[29] Scott's Statement, 19 January 1837, ASP: MA, 7: 204; Betts's Deposition, ibid., p. 177; Harding to Scott, Mount Vernon Arsenal, 14 June 1836, ibid., p. 321; Huson Deposition, 17 December 1836, ibid., p. 173.

[30] No. 263, ibid., p. 359; Moore to Clay, Camp Slaughter, 11 July 1836, Clay's

General Jesup had good reason to expect a victory, because the rebel party, reflecting the general disintegration of Creek society, had started to come apart. First, a good portion of the rebels broke off to attempt escape over the Chattahoochee. Then, on June 10, Neah Micco, headman of the Lower Creeks, fled from his own town, declared himself at peace, and sought the protection of a friendly chief, Echo Harjo, at the Indian town of Tuskegee, a few miles southeast of white Tuskegee. In fact, Neah Micco, like many other New Alabamians, both red and white, had always looked out for himself first and foremost. He had been a friend to the whites before the war, even a tool of the land speculators. He also lived well off the Creek annuity, while many of his people starved. At the same time he plotted rebellion, probably at the urging of Neamathla and the nation's fiery young warriors. But once the war began, Neah Micco protected himself by sending out peace feelers to Columbus and Tuskegee. Then, when he learned from Jesup that a white invasion was imminent, and that he could surrender without punishment, the old chief deserted the rebel camp and left his followers to face the whites in confusion and disarray.[31]

The loss of Neah Micco was followed by an even more stunning blow to the rebel cause: the decision of Upper Creeks to join Jesup's army. As Jesup and General Patterson neared Long's Station with their eight hundred troops, 450 of the best warriors in the Creek Nation rode up to join them. This body included Autosses,

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Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Jesup to Scott, Tuskegee, 12 June 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 338.

[31] "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 3 June 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 9 June 1836, p. 2; "From the *Columbus Herald*," 8 June 1836, reprinted in ibid., 23 June 1836, p. 2; "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 17 June 1836, ibid.; Petition for Neah Micco, Document No. 3, Governor Gayle's Pardons, Paroles and Clemency Files--Russell County, ADAH; Collins to Capt. W. Walker," Echo Harjo's Camp, 20 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

Cussetas, Upper Creek Eufalas, and Tuskegees, all recruited by the land speculators and Indian countrymen Thomas Woodward, William Walker, and L. B. Strange. Echo Harjo and the Cusseta chief, Tuckabatchee Harjo, led these warriors along with "the celebrated Jim Boy," an Autosse chief who had once been a Red Stick prophet, and had participated in the attack on Fort Mims during the First Creek War. But these 450 men were only the vanguard of the Upper Creek contingent. Twelve hundred more warriors were supposed to meet Jesup at Long's on June 16. Colonel Hogan had recruited this larger body of Upper Creeks, and their leaders included Opothleyahola and Menawa, the old Oakfuskee chief who commanded the Red Sticks at their last stand at Horseshoe Bend in 1814. General Jackson's troops, and their Lower Creek allies, had shot Menawa virtually to pieces during that battle, but now, twenty-two years later, this Creek leader, horribly disfigured, came to join President Jackson's army to fight against the Lower Creek rebels. His transformation from enemy to ally, along with that of all the other former Red Sticks in the Alabama force, is not difficult to explain. As with most everything else in New Alabama, it was a matter of economic survival. Many of the Upper Creeks were starving and in debt. They needed money to pay off their obligations, to buy food and clothes for their families, and to prepare themselves for their long and arduous journey west. Jesup promised to pay the warriors for their service in the army and to deliver to them their annual annuity payment--including the share that would have gone to the rebel Lower Creeks--before they left Alabama. These were all strong inducements, and the Upper Creek warriors would prove themselves well worth the investment.[32]

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[32] Jesup to Cass, Tuskegee, 11 June 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 325; Jesup to Cass, Fort Mitchell, 25 June 1836, ibid., p. 347; "To the Public," Columbus, 25 June 1836, printed in *Columbus Enquirer*, 30 June 1836, p.3; Clay to Hopothle Yahola et al., Tuskegee, 10 June 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Clay to Jesup, Tallassee, 12 June 1836, ibid; "From An Act Making Further Appropriations," printed in

The Upper Creeks demonstrated their value as allies almost immediately. When Jesup's column arrived at Long's on June 14, the general discovered what he should have known all along: the rebels had stolen or destroyed all forage and provisions for miles around the station. Furthermore, the general found no stockade there. He had intended to leave all his cumbersome baggage wagons under guard in this stockade before setting out to chase the enemy unencumbered. Now he had to change his plans. He decided to move directly on to Irwinton for food and supplies. However, since Neamathla's camp on the upper reaches of the Hatchechubbee lay near the road to Irwinton, the general meant to attack it along his way south. Marching ahead of the main body of troops, Jim Boy's warriors, early in the afternoon, arrived at the wide, well-worn trail that connected Neah Micco's town on Big Euchee Creek with Neamathla's camp fifteen miles to the south. These men turned onto this trail and followed it to the Big Spring, a popular Indian camp ground located mid-way between the two Indian towns. They had just dismounted to rest and eat when much to their surprise they saw old Neamathla himself, accompanied by his son and daughter, coming down the trail. Pretending to be friends, the Upper Creek warriors decoyed the chief into their midst and captured him. Now surrounded by his adversaries, many of whom cried out for his blood, the old veteran showed no sign of shock or despair, nor did he attempt to escape his captors. However, two of his rebel warriors, coming along behind the chief, witnessed his capture and rushed around the spring and on to the Hatchechubbee to warn of the enemy's approach.

Tallahassee Floridian, 30 July 1836, p. 2; The larger group of Upper Creek warriors came from Tuckabatchee, Tallassee, Chot-lock-sof-ka, Upper Creek Eufaula, Nuyaka (New York), Fish Pond, Hatchet Creek, Kowaligi, Hillabee and Oakfuskee. Clay to Jesup, Montgomery, 14 June 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), p. 148.

Nevertheless, Jesup now had the second of the rebels' two principal chiefs in custody--thanks to his Indian allies.[33]

General Jesup brought the main body of troops up to the Big Spring a short time after Neamathla's capture. Knowing that the rebels at Neamathla's town were warned and ready for his attack , he decided to make camp at the spring until his reinforcements arrived. He knew Opothleyahola's warriors were drawing near, as well as a fresh battalion of militiamen from northern Alabama. Jesup also wanted to open a line of communications with Scott. He wrote a letter to the general informing him of the Alabama army's position, and finally told his superior officer of his intention to attack Neamathla's town. He also told Scott that he would not be pushing on to Irwinton after all. Since he had only two days' provisions for his army, he would fall back on Fort Mitchell for supplies after attacking the Hitchiti camp. He asked General Scott to have corn and rations ready for him when he arrived.[34]

The white troops may have been glad for the day of rest at Big Spring, but the friendly Creeks were not. Without telling Jesup about his plans, Jim Boy led a hundred of his warriors and three or four of their white friends away from camp. This party then traveled up the Indian trail to Neah Micco's town and entered it. Owing to Neah Micco's defection, most of his rebel followers had moved down to join Neamathla's people; only a few remained in their home village along with those of their tribesmen who had never taken up the rebel cause. Jim Boy's men encountered no opposition as they rode into a

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[33] Jesup to Cass, Fort Mitchell, 25 June 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 347; "To the Public," Columbus, 25 June 1836, printed in *Columbus Enquirer*, 30 June 1836, p. 3.

[34] Jesup to Cass, Fort Mitchell, 25 June 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 347; "To the Public," Columbus, 25 June 1836, printed in *Columbus Enquirer*, 20 June 1836, p. 3.; Clay to Garth, Montgomery, 29 May 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Jesup to Scott, Long's, 15 June 1836, ASP: MA, 7: 332.

town loaded with plunder. The sight of it astonished one of the white men, William Baskin Stogner. Besides black slaves and fine furniture, he saw such "niceties" as writing paper, china, and cut glass in abundance. The nature of this stolen property spoke volumes about the competitive and predatory nature of New Alabama society. First, it showed the wealth and refinement of some of the Indians' white neighbors; second, it showed that the Indians believed they could sell such items to a different class of whites. Why else would the rebel Creeks, in a state of war, bother to carry off and store such items? Of more immediate importance, however, Jim Boy's warriors and their white friends found food-- purloined beef, bacon and pork in large quantities, both cooked and uncooked. They sat down for a much needed feast, and afterwards Jim Boy took a few of his men across Euchee Creek into another part of the sprawling town. There the men killed a Yuchi warrior and took twelve prisoners before returning to the Big Spring.[35]

By the morning of June 17 the reinforcements had not arrived, so Jesup moved ahead without them. However, the difficulty of driving all the wagons over the rough road slowed the army's movement to a crawl. The men traveled only a few miles the whole day and had to make camp at the spot where the road crossed Hatchechubbee Creek, still nine miles from Neamathla's stronghold. But as they settled in for the night, Opothleyahola and his warriors, along with a number of white gentlemen from Tallassee and other parts of Tallapoosa county, finally arrived. Now Jesup had a force of over two thousand men, well armed and eager for battle. Unfortunately, a message also arrived in camp, bringing opposition from an unexpected quarter. The message came from General Scott, who had not received Jesup's message of the previous day, but had heard about Jesup's expedition from a civilian traveler recently arrived in Columbus from

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[35] "To the Public," Columbus, 25 June 1836, printed in *Columbus Enquirer*, 30 June 1836, p.3.

Tuskegee. Simultaneously, the general received word that General Moore was marching up the country from Irwinton. Obviously, all this news shocked Scott. In fact, he could scarcely believe it, for he had expressly forbidden any offensive measures until the entire force of Alabamians, Georgians and regulars could move in unison. As yet Scott did not know how far Jesup had gotten with his expedition, or even if such an expedition really existed; but along with his expressions of dismay at the possibility, he sent his second corps commander a direct order: "I desire you instantly to stop all offensive movements (if you are in command) on the part of the Alabamians until the Georgians are ready to act, say on the 21st instant, when the greater number of them will be armed and ready for the field."[36]

Jesup thought he had come too far to turn back. He feared the consequences if he tried to restrain his headstrong Alabama troops. Even more, Jesup believed his native warriors would lose all confidence in him and leave his army if he stopped his advance against the enemy. Consequently, the general made a momentous decision. He would later write the secretary of war that, because General Scott was "unacquainted with the circumstances under which I was placed, I felt it my duty to disregard the order." Therefore, early the next morning, Jesup closed on Neamathla's stronghold, which "was strongly fortified by nature, and one of the best selected spots for an Indian battle, in the whole Creek Nation." In fact, the village sat on a peninsula of land surrounded on three sides by creeks and swamps. The only open approach to the town was from the north through a sparse pine forest. Consequently, Jesup sent his Indian auxiliaries across the creeks to the back of the camp, while he brought his troops and artillery down through the forest. He intended for the two divisions of his army to close on the town at once, catch

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[36] Jesup to Cass, Fort Mitchell, 25 June 1836, ASP: MA, 7: 347; Scott to Jesup, Columbus, 16 June 1836, ibid., pp. 330-31.

the rebels in a vice, and defeat them while at the same time denying them any avenue of escape.[37]

The plan did not work. Having lost their leader, the rebels decided not to make a stand in the village. They moved out to a nearby swamp and waited, then took advantage of a flaw in Jesup's plan. Owing to the slow movement of the army's wagons and field pieces, the friendly Indians entered Neamathla's village from the south before the white troops arrived. This left an avenue of escape for the rebels and they moved away from the troops unopposed. The women and children set out for the impenetrable swamps and canebrakes of the Cowikee creeks in Barbour county. The rebel warriors lingered to the rear to protect against pursuit and to look for a chance to strike a blow against the whites, should they camp too near the town's swamps. They never got the opportunity. Jesup drew his men back from the swamps to camp on high ground, while the friendly Creeks spent the night safely ensconced in the village. A few angry rebels prowled the outskirts of the place all night, and early the next morning they fired a few ineffective rounds at Jesup's allies before moving south to join their families.[38]

Jesup was disappointed by his failure to trap the rebels in Neamathla's village, but at the same time he must have considered himself fortunate. On inspecting the place, he gained a great deal of respect for Neamathla's military prowess. The old chief put the town in a spot where it would be easy to defend against superior numbers. In addition, he had constructed it as a fort, with stout houses arranged in a way that would give the

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[37] Jesup to Cass, Fort Mitchell, 25 June 1836, ibid., p. 347; *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 23 June 1836, p. 3; "To the Public," Columbus, 25 June 1836, printed in *Columbus Enquirer*, 30 June 1836, p. 3.

[38] Jesup to Cass, Fort Mitchell, 25 June 1836, ibid., p. 347; *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 23 June 1836, p. 3; "To the Public," Columbus, 25 June 1836, printed in *Columbus Enquirer*, 30 June 1836, p. 3.

inhabitants the best firing angels all around. In fact, Jesup stated that the Hitchiti camp was one of the strongest military posts he had ever seen. Neamathla obviously meant to defend his ground if pressed; and had his followers remained in the town, they could have inflicted serious casualties on Jesup's army. Obviously the sudden loss of their chief broke their resolve, but Jesup and General Patterson also believed the rebels chose to flee because they did not want to fight other Creeks. In fact, the general gave chief credit to his native allies for the success of his military operation and admitted that the whites would have encountered hard fighting and a much longer campaign without them. Furthermore, the rebel retreat in the face of Opothleyahola and his sixteen hundred warriors tends to support the belief that a major part of the rebel plan for taking back and holding their country was to enlist the Upper Creeks in their cause. Failing to do this, they knew they could not hold their territory for long and a stout defense of their war camp was unnecessary. Indeed, the realization that the Upper Creeks would not take part in the rebellion may have led to the sudden capitulation of Neah Micco as well, even before Jesup's expedition began.[39]

Certainly the general believed that the rebels were ready to quit. Shortly after he took Neamathla's town on June 18, the reinforcements from north Alabama arrived, bringing his total force to over three thousand men. With an army of this size, Jesup

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[39] "Creek War Incidents from the *Columbus Herald*," 28 June 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 7 July 1836, p. 2; "Patterson to Clay," Wetumpka, 25 July 1836, printed in ibid., 16 August 1836, p. 2;. Thomas J. Abbott, Hogan's assistant, agreed with Jesup as to the value of the Upper Creeks as allies. He wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that "their formidable presence and conduct is in no small degree to be attributed the speedy and happy termination of these difficulties." Abbott to Herring, Tuskegee, 9 July 1836, Creek Reserves (M234, Reel 243). General Patterson believed Jim Boy and Opothleyahola deserved a "public testimonial of appreciation." Patterson to Clay, In Camp, 22 June 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

believed he could force the hostiles into a major battle within twenty-four hours and end the war entirely in a mere five days. All he had to do was continue his march down towards Irwinton, which would carry him right to the Cowikee creeks where the disillusioned rebels had fled. Furthermore, Jesup's troops found a hundred head of cattle and a considerable quantity of corn at Neamathla's town, freeing them to resume their march south without having to go back upcountry to Fort Mitchell for provisions.[40]

But then General Scott did what the rebel Creeks could not. At this crucial point in the war he stopped Jesup's advance, giving the rebels a much needed respite. While on a visit to Fort Mitchell, Scott received Jesup's letter from the Big Spring informing him of the general's intention to come to that post for provisions. Shocked for a second time, Scott dashed off a note to his wayward second corps commander. It said that Scott was astonished to learn that instead of proceeding straight to Irwinton as ordered, his trusted friend had marched down through the heart of the Indian country "seeking private adventures." Scott then accused Jesup of deliberately inverting his plan of operations by conducting a sweep down through the hostile territory rather than upwards from Irwinton. Furthermore, Scott informed Jesup that he should not have assumed he could get supplies at Fort Mitchell. In fact, Scott likened Jesup's unauthorized advance into the Indian country and desperate appeal for provisions to General Gaines's' foolhardy march on Fort King in Florida during the recent Seminole campaign, a march which Scott obviously believed had doomed his army's efforts to bring a quick end to that Indian uprising. Scott then told Jesup he could only give him provisions at Fort Mitchell by taking them from the Georgia soldiers who were already living hand to mouth. These supplies would then have to be replenished before the Georgians could move downriver, and that further delay

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[40] Jesup to Blair, Fort Mitchell, 20 June 1836, ASP: MA, 7: 336; Jesup to Scott, Fort Mitchell, 19 June 1836, ibid., p. 334.

would cause untold trouble as the Georgians were already near mutiny for being held in check. Worse still, Scott feared what his unruly troops would do when they discovered that the Alabamians were already operating and would soon appear at Fort Mitchell, forty-five miles out of position according to the general plan of attack. Therefore, to prevent such trouble, as well as stop any further "erratic movements" before his master plan could take effect, Scott ordered Jesup to not only delay his march but encamp his force somewhere in the neighborhood of Fort Mitchell until further orders. As Jesup would later explain, he did not feel himself at liberty to disobey this second order from Scott. Consequently, he turned command of his troops over to General Patterson, and rushed off to Fort Mitchell to reason with Scott and obtain his permission to continue his movement against the enemy[41]

Jesup arrived at Fort Mitchell only to find that Scott had returned to Columbus. However, he did discover a steamboat loaded with eighty thousand rations tied up at the fort's landing on the Chattahoochee. Now Jesup, already angry, began to lose control of himself. He fired off a letter to Scott justifying his march on the grounds of necessity, to save the lives of Alabama citizens. He also accused Scott, his old comrade at arms, of treating him "with a degree of harshness which is cruel in the extreme." Then Jesup began to play politics. He wrote a letter to Francis P. Blair, editor of the *Washington Globe*, a Democratic party organ. He complained that Scott had abused him and mishandled the Creek war, stating that the "scenes of Florida were enacted all over again." He blamed the Seminole failure on needless delay, and said the same thing threatened to ruin the Creek campaign. He contended that Scott could have put an end to the war only one week after his arrival had he used all the men available to him

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[41] Scott to Jesup, Columbus, 17 June 1836, ibid., pp. 332-33; Scott to Jesup, Columbus, 19 June 1836, ibid., p. 335; Jesup to Cass, 25 June 1836, ibid., p. 347.

properly. Instead, Scott "thought it necessary to adopt a splendid plan of campaign upon paper, and make everything bend to it." Jesup then went on to say that he would ask to be relieved of command, and would request an investigation of the war effort. Finally, he told Blair to "let the President see this letter; he, I am sure will approve the promptness with which I have acted, when he shall be sensible that I have, by the movement I have made, tranquilized the whole Alabama frontier."[42]

No one sentence could have caused more trouble in that day and time. President Jackson was already incensed over the conduct of the Florida war. In fact, he had accused the Florida settlers of being "Cowards And Breeders Of Cowards" for running from the Seminoles. Then he had seen the citizens of Georgia and New Alabama fly from the rebel Creeks; and General Scott, whom Jackson had once challenged to a duel, seemed unable to defeat the Indians. This was especially difficult for the president to understand as he had made short work of both the Creeks and Seminoles in 1814 and 1818, when both groups were more powerful. Jesup's letter gave Jackson proof that something had been mismanaged and convinced him to order a War Department investigation of both the Seminole and Creek efforts. Moreover, Blair decided to publish Jesup's letter for the nation to see. In so doing, he turned a strategy conflict between two generals into a national political issue, with Jackson's Democrats supporting Jesup and his Whig opponents backing Scott.[43]

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[42] Jesup to Scott, Fort Mitchell, 19 June 1836, ibid., p. 334; Scott to Jesup, Columbus, 19 June 1836, ibid., p. 335; Jesup to Blair, Fort Mitchell, 20 June 1836, ibid., p. 336.

[43] "Florida To Become A State," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 13 May 1837, p. 3; Chester L Kieffer, *Maligned General: The Biography of Thomas Sidney Jesup* (San Rafael, California and London: Presidio Press, 1979), pp. 141-42; John Spencer Bassett, ed., *The Correspondence of Andrew Jackson* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1931), 5: 419.

However, that controversy lay a couple of months in the future. For the moment, Jesup and Scott reached an accommodation. They finally met on June 21, and Jesup presented a full report of his operations. Scott, not knowing of Jesup's letter to Blair, decided to accept Jesup's explanation of extenuating circumstances. Though Scott did not completely agree that the danger to Alabama citizens was as grave as Jesup said, he did conclude that the general acted as he thought he must, and had not purposefully set out to disobey orders for his own aggrandizement. (Later, Scott would change his mind again and decide that this was exactly what Jesup did.) The two men parted on good terms with Jesup agreeing to submit himself to Scott's command in all future endeavors.[44]

Jesup thought the war was at an end. Following the capture of Neamathla's town, his Creek allies scoured the country below Hatchechubbee Creek and brought in numbers of blacks along with fifty or sixty Indian captives, including another rebel chief, Kia Motla. Jesup sent some of these captives back to the swamps to tell their families and friends that if they surrendered they would be treated fairly. As a result, on June 22, approximately three hundred warriors and over five hundred women and children surrendered to General Patterson at his camp above the creek. These Indians also brought in a large number of horses and mules and more slaves. The friendly Indians then went to their camp and appropriated their other property and plunder. Two days later, Jesup led six companies of mounted troops and sixty Indians under Jim Boy on a reconnaissance of the country between Fort Mitchell and the Hatchechubbee. During this time, he managed to capture 113 more rebels led by the Chehaw chief, Yohola Harjo. General

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[44] Jesup to Scott, Camp Hatchychubby, 20 June 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 337-38; Jesup to Cass, Fort Mitchell, 25 June 1836,ilbid., p. 347; Scott to Jesup, Columbus, 21 June 1836, ibid., p. 339; Scott to Jesup, Columbus, 23 June 1836, ibid.; Scott to Jones, Fort Mitchell, 23 June 1836, ibid., p. 340.

Moore's troops were also busy. After burning sixty or seventy homes at the abandoned High Log town on June 16, they went to work searching the branches of Cowikee Creek for rebels. Another detachment of Moore's men stationed at Watson's farm captured three hundred of the Eufaulas that had threatened Pike County. These prisoners included two hundred warriors, five chiefs, and two of the men who killed the Watsons. The Alabama troops took most of these captives to Fort Mitchell for incarceration, and even more rebels surrendered themselves at Echo Harjo's town in Macon County. By June 25, Jesup believed that nearly all the hostiles had surrendered or been captured, with the exception of Jim Henry's small band and a few others who were "wandering without concert or object" waiting for "a favorable opportunity to come in." General Patterson also believed the war was finished and gave chief credit to his Indian allies for the "bloodless" victory.[45]

General Scott was not so optimistic. He believed the rebels might be more numerous, and still troublesome. While Jesup thought he had defeated the Indians, Scott saw that no real battle had occurred. He believed that many of the rebels had scattered and gone into hiding. Further, Scott received word from an "intelligent negro" recently escaped from the hostile camps that four or five hundred Indians were congregating on the lower reaches of the Hatchechubbee and Cowikee creeks to prepare for an escape across the Chattahoochee. More importantly, perhaps, the general commanded over

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[45] Jesup to Cass, Fort Mitchell, 25 June 1836, ibid., pp. 347-48; "To the Public," Columbus, 25 June 1836, printed in *Columbus Enquirer*, 30 June 1836, p.3; "Movements of General Jesup," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 7 July 1836, p. 2; "The War," ibid., 30 June 1836, p.2; Patterson to Clay, Patterson's Camp, 22 June 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Moore to Clay, Camp Slaughter, 11 July 1836, ibid.; Moore to Scott, Headquarters, 25 June 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 343; Jesup to Scott, Fort Mitchell, 23 June 1836, ibid., p. *346;* "Patterson to Clay," Wetumpka, 25 July 1836, printed in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 16 August 1836, p. 2.

four thousand Georgia troops and a thousand regulars who had seen little or no action in the war. He must have known he could not simply send them home. Consequently, the general decided to follow through with his original plan.[46] He intended to move down the Chattahoochee from Columbus, cross the river below the Cowikee and then lead his Georgians, regular troops, and Moore's Alabamians in a sweep up the country. He apprised generals Jesup and Patterson of this fact and ordered them to move their troops down from the Hatchechubbee at the same time. With this maneuver, Scott hoped to catch the remaining rebels in a trap.[47]

Scott would have liked to have employed Opothleyahola's friendly warriors in the operation but unfortunately he could not. Once again, other whites foiled his design. Just before marching down the Chattahoochee, he received word that Opothleyahola's men had gone home, because Jesup had not met his commitment to feed their families, and a few of the ragtag Alabama troops, in lieu of finding any hostiles to kill, had murdered some of the friendly Creeks. General Patterson and many other Alabamians deeply regretted these killings, for, as one correspondent stated, all the good that had been done in the war to that point had been through the "instrumentality" of the friendly warriors. But the damage was done. Scott would not have enough Creek scouts to find the rebels he sought. Once again, the respectable whites discovered that in their conflict with the natives, the rougher elements of their own divided society were their worst enemies.[48]

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[46] Scott to Jesup, Columbus, 19 June 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 335; Scott, Orders No. 15, Columbus, 21 June 1836, ibid., p. 344.

[47] Scott to Jones, Columbus, 21 June 1836, ibid., p. 333; Scott to Jones, Columbus, 23 June 1836, ibid., p. 337; Scott to Jones, Ft. Mitchell, 24 June 1836, ibid., pp. 345-46.

[48] "Letter from Fort Mitchell," 29 June 1836, printed in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 7 July 1836, p. 3; Clay to Jesup, Montgomery, 14 June 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--

However, Scott did succeed in recruiting some Indian allies. Not surprisingly, "Major" Paddy Carr volunteered the services of himself and a hundred followers to General Scott. Joining the whites for the march down the Chattahoochee, Carr presented the perfect picture of a traditional full-blooded Indian. He was handsome, dark-skinned, with a face tattooed in ancient Creek fashion. He and his men wore buckskin leggings, calico hunting shirts, and scarlet turbans with a strips of white cloth tied around the center to mark them as Scott's allies. And yet, Paddy Carr was not traditional Creek. He was a mixed-blood, reared and educated by John Crowell, a white man. Furthermore, Carr sought the wealth and accolades of white society and helped cheat the Lower Creeks out of their land. Now he marched with Scott to quell the rebellion that had sprung from his own peculation and caused the destruction of his fine plantation. Perhaps more than any other single individual, Paddy Carr showed the destructive diversity and social fragmentation of New Alabama's native society.[49]

Scott sent his native allies and regular troops down the river on June 20. Paddy Carr's warriors and Major Pierce's small battalion of United States artillery led the procession. Major Lomax followed closely behind with another battalion of federal troops. Three days later a detachment of 450 marines arrived in Columbus, and Scott promptly dispatched them down to Bryant's Landing to construct a new picket post and

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Creek War, ADAH.

[49] Scott to Jesup, 21 June 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 336; Jacob Rhett Motte, *Journey into the Wilderness: An Army Surgeon's Account of Life in Camp and Field during the Creek and Seminole Wars 1836-1838*, ed. James F. Sunderman (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1953), p. 8; Peter A. Brannon, "Alabama Indian Chiefs," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 13 (1951): 67.

supply depot on the Alabama side of the river. The marines named their post Fort Henderson.[50]

The troop movement was an impressive sight. Poised on a hilltop to the rear of the first column, Jacob Rhett Motte, the army surgeon, described the marching soldiers and Indian warriors as a huge snake winding its way along through the open pine woods near the river. The troops, marching double file and wearing sky blue fatigue uniforms, black leather caps, and white cross-belts, made up the glittering body of the serpent while the mounted Indians in picturesque attire resembled the head. Far ahead of the snake rode "Major Paddy" on a cream colored horse covered with a scarlet blanket. A colorful beaded bullet pouch hung at his side; he swept the summer insects away from his face with a beautiful eagle feather fan; and his turban was "distinguished from the rest by the graceful floating of an eagle's feather."[51]

On June 22 the column reached Fort McCreary. Passing beyond, the troops immediately entered "the scene of Indian devastation," the place where the advance of Georgia's cotton culture collided with New Alabama's native resistance movement. For eight miles before they reached Roanoke, the river road they traveled "presented nothing but a continued series of black heaps of ashes, all that remained to mark the once happy homes of many now homeless families." They arrived at the once beautiful village of Roanoke at sunset to find the most dramatic evidence of the Creek rebellion. According to Motte, "Nothing marked the place where once it [Roanoke] stood but heaps of ashes and a few charred logs. Of many proud mansions which lately reared their fronts to the

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[50] Scott to Jones," Columbus, 21 June 1836, ASP: MA, 7: 333; "United States' Marines," *Columbus Sentinel*, 1 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 7 July 1836, p.2; Scott to Jesup, Columbus, 21 June 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 336; ibid., p. 339.

[51] Motte, *Journey*, p. 11.

admiration of the beholder, not one was left." The site did not remain desolate, however. The five hundred federal troops set up Camp Gibson on the spot [52]

Then came the Georgia civilian soldiers. After finally receiving a shipment of a thousand rifles from Hawkinsville, General Sanford and two thousand of his militiamen and volunteers, 160 of them still unarmed, left Columbus on the same day the advance column reached Fort McCreary. Then General Scott departed, leaving behind six hundred men to guard the river passes above Columbus and four hundred more troops to protect the town itself. Another mounted battalion of Georgia troops remained in town to receive and transport additional supplies down the river. They soon sent along more arms, accouterments, and two huge flats for Scott's men to use in crossing the Chattahoochee.[53] On the evening of June 24, General Sanford's troops arrived at Roanoke, marching up to Camp Gibson with their drums and fifes playing martial music " and their "banners of gaudy hues waving before their eyes." Surgeon Motte was astonished. The large bustling camp of soldiers stood in striking contrast "to the dark and smoldering ruins around" and Doctor Motte, a southern aristocrat recently arrived from his comfortable home in Charleston, had trouble "identifying himself" with this frontier spectacle.[54]

Scott arrived at Camp Gibson the next day and prepared to cross the river. Unfortunately, he had to delay the move because of another wandering subordinate. General Moore had taken off on his own to attack the rebels congregating between the

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[52] Ibid., pp. 11-12.

[53] Scott to Jones, Columbus, 21 June 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 333; ibid., 23 June 1836, p. 337; Orders No. 17, Thomas J. Lee, Columbus, 22 June 1836, ibid., p. 344.

[54] "Camp Gibson, near Roanoke," *Columbus Republican Herald*, 5 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 12 July 1836, p.2; Motte, *Journey*, pp. 12-13.

Hatchechubbee and Cowikee creeks. This move, like Jesup's before it, threatened to completely disrupt Scott's plans by giving the rebels an opportunity to escape downriver and make a crossing below Scott's army. Consequently, Scott sent a messenger to find Moore and to tell him to move his force back below the south fork of the Cowikee to cover Scott's western flank as he made his push northward.[55]

On June 26, Scott led the federal troops and half of the Georgians across the river. The other Georgians remained behind to reinforce the various river posts. Once in Alabama, Scott established Camp Sanford as a base of operations, and promptly set off up the country to scour the Cowikee swamps--a "terra incognito" to all but Carr's friendly Creeks. The Georgians marched in two columns, one led by Scott and the other by Sanford. General Fenwick led the brigade of federal troops, which consisted of three small battalions of artillery under majors Pierce, Lomax and Erwing. Owing to heavy rains, Scott could not take his wagons along on the trip. He left them at Camp Sanford , along with his sick, under the protection of a lone militia company and a six-pound cannon. He then transported his army's supplies, including four-days rations, on pack horses.[56]

Doctor Motte also remained in camp, taking care of between sixty and seventy men, most of whom "suffered cases of dysentery and diarrhea from drinking the rotten lime-stone water of the country and the hardships of camp life." In addition, Motte found plenty of opportunities to observe the laziness and lack of discipline that made it so difficult for state militiamen to defeat the Creeks. In fact, Motte and the few other regulars in camp were so unwilling to trust their safety to militia sentinels that they stayed

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[55] Scott to Jesup, Camp Sanford, opposite to Roanoke, 26 July 1836, ASP: MA 7: 348-49.

[56] Scott to Jones, Ft. Mitchell, 2 July 1836, ibid., pp. 349-50; Motte, *Journey*, p. 15.

awake to do their own sentry duty, making "the grand rounds several times a night." Unfortunately, in doing this they ran a greater risk of being shot by the militiamen than the hostile Indians. Furthermore, on observing some of the night guards, Motte discovered that despite all the danger about "the eyelids of these votaries of Morpheus had so great a desire of associating together, as to exclude all remembrance of their being on post."[57]

As it turned out, Scott's grand march was short and ineffective. General Moore never got to his correct position; General Jesup, having turned over command of the Alabama troops to General Patterson, remained at Fort Mitchell preparing hostile captives for removal; and General Patterson carried on business as usual from his camp above the Hatchechubbee. If there were any rebel Creeks about, they defied Scott's plan by refusing to confront him, by not allowing themselves to be "accessible." For his part, the general had no desire to pursue the rebels into their hidden recesses. Consequently, he declared that no substantial body of hostiles remained in the wild in the Lower Creek country. He spent only two or three days in the swamps and arrived back at Fort Mitchell on July 2 with only one Indian and one black captured. The only real achievement that might be attributed to the march was the capture of Jim Henry by Jim Boy on or around July 1; but again, friendly Creeks not white soldiers performed this feat. For the most part, Jesup's earlier bold maneuver had turned Scott's march into a mere formality, an anticlimax. But it did serve some purpose. It allowed the general to contend that he completed the plan of operations he drew up at Milledgeville. Now he was ready to declare what he could not let Jesup declare ten days before: "the war was virtually over." The federal operation against the rebel Creek Indians was a success.[58]

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[57] Ibid., pp. 15-16.

[58] Scott to Jones, Ft. Mitchell, 2 July 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 349-50; Scott to Call, Ft. Mitchell, 1 July 1836, ibid., pp. 350-51; "The notable Jim Henry," *Columbus Republican Herald*, 5 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 12 July 1836, p. 2;

But was it a success? Many New Alabama settlers and Indian countrymen knew that only about five hundred warriors had been captured, leaving a significant number of rebel fighters, perhaps twelve hundred, unconquered. In fact, one observer wrote from Fort Mitchell that the general impression that the war was nearly finished arose solely from the fact that "the hostiles have *now* no leader of a fierce, bold, and military genius, to plan, to execute, and to control them." Thus the rebels could not concentrate for a fight, but small, scattered parties could still do damage to the whites. Given this evidence, one has to ask why Scott was so quick to declare victory? Why did he change his earlier assessment that the uncoordinated, piecemeal movement of fairly ineffective white troops had only scattered the Creek rebels? Why did he fail to acknowledge that Jesup's "victory" resulted more from the fractured nature of Creek society than from the military prowess of his army? And why did he alter his belief that the war would not end until the rebels suffered a decisive defeat in battle? Perhaps the general pronounced his campaign a success in order to keep peace with Jesup, his old comrade? Perhaps his brief march through rebel territory actually convinced him that few hostile warriors remained on the loose? Or possibly General Scott simply needed a quick victory to salvage the prestige he had lost in Florida? As to his motives, we can only speculate. However, events both during and after the federal operation of June and early July of 1836 would prove that that operation was not the decisive victory many have believed.[59]

"Patterson to Clay," Wetumpka, 25 July 1836, printed in ibid., 16 August 1836, p. 2.

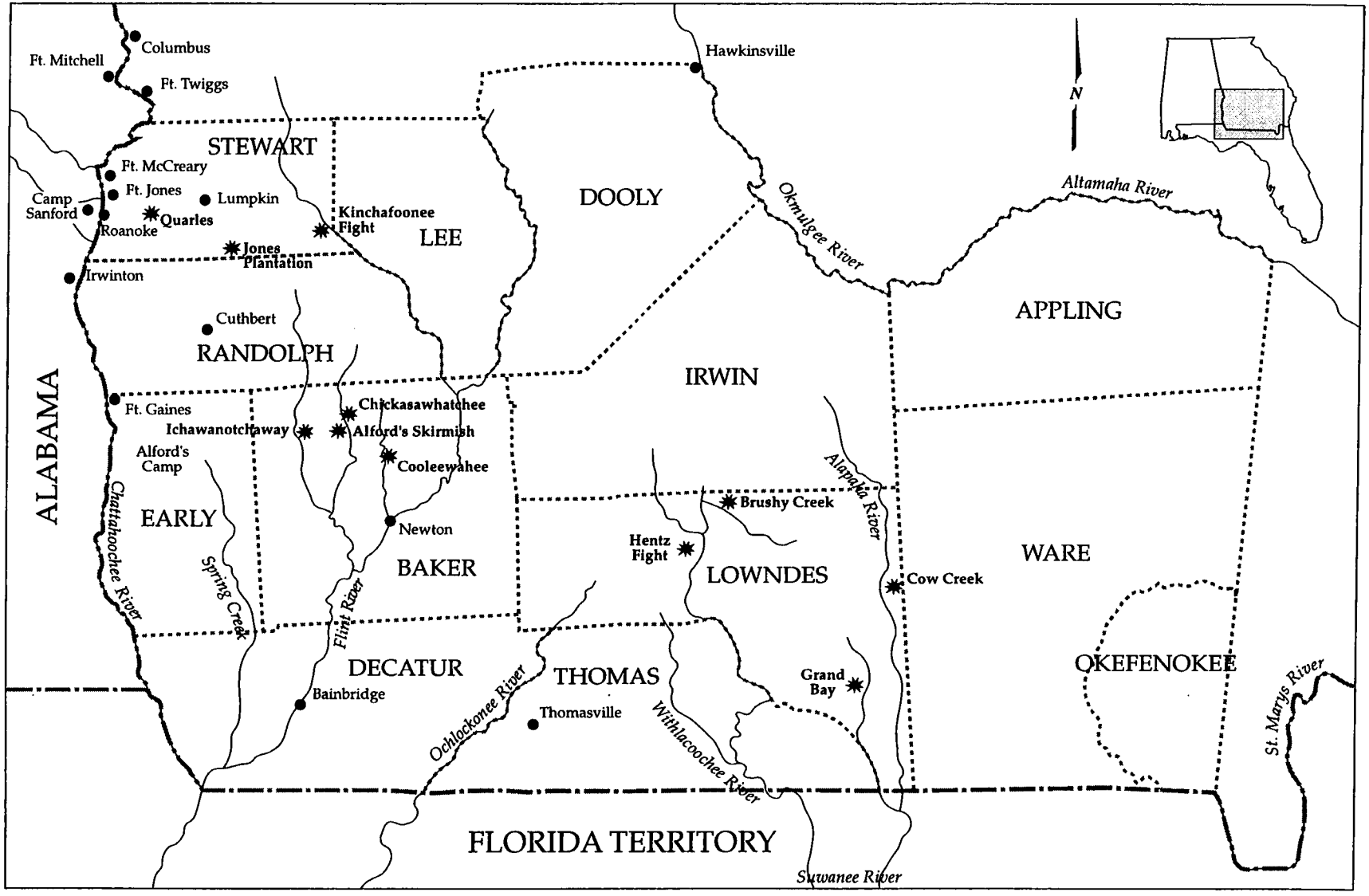
[59] "Letter From Ft. Mitchell," 29 June 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 7 July 1836, p.3; Scott to Jones, Ft. Mitchell, 24 June 1836, *ASP:MA*, 7: 345-46; "The War," *Columbus Enquirer*, 30 June 1836, p. 2.

Chapter 5

The Flight: War in Southern Georgia

In fact, local observers were correct: the Creek War was not finished. Because the Alabama and Georgia troops did not execute Scott's strategy, a significant number of rebels did remain in the wild. Many of these people now set out for Florida, winding their way through the south Georgia swamps to the Seminoles. But the federal commanders continued to believe the war was done. General Scott allowed most of the Georgia troops to leave the service shortly after their march through New Alabama. General Jesup, on the other hand, pushed both the rapid removal of his hostile captives and the repopulation of New Alabama by whites as the means of finishing off the war. However, the forced removal, and the dismissal of so many state troops, only served to continue the conflict. In the absence of patrolling troops, even more rebels emerged from hiding and fled to Florida. Furthermore, numbers of Jesup's rebel captives, on learning the general meant to remove them from Alabama, fled from custody and joined the exodus to the Seminole country as an alternative to emigration to the dreaded West. Local militiamen tried to stop the flight, and while they had some success, they also continued to prove themselves ineffective, acquisitive and occasionally cowardly. The rebels, on the other hand, were more determined than ever, for now they fought against forced removal as well as incorporation into the whites' destructive economic system. Consequently, an untold number of rebels made good their escape from New Alabama and fought their way across southern Georgia to the Florida Territory (Map 4). In fact, the real fighting of the Second Creek War began only after the supposedly decisive federal operation in June.

Yet this part of the story remains largely untold. The engagements of July and August, 1836, occurred in isolated swamps, hammocks, and fields scattered throughout



Map 4: War in Southern Georgia.

the sparsely settled southern counties of Georgia. But no federal troops participated in these contests, hence few "official reports" reached Washington or the national periodicals. The war continued largely out of sight of most of the nation's citizens. In fact, it took place in the unobserved interspace between Jesup's removal efforts in Alabama and the dramatic Seminole War in Florida. For this reason, historians, writing from federal records, have focused on those two events, ignoring the full extent or significance of the second stage of the "minor" Creek conflict.

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One of the reasons that General Scott failed to capture the body of four or five hundred rebels he sought in New Alabama was that those Creeks had already broken out of his trap and escaped across the Chattahoochee into Georgia. Furthermore, they did so under Scott's very nose. However, this realization was slow to dawn on the general. Stopping off at Fort Mitchell to confer with Jesup on his march down the river to Roanoke, Scott learned that no less than eighty of the warriors who surrendered to Patterson and Jesup had fled from custody while the Alabama troops escorted them to Fort Mitchell. In fact, they had given themselves up without their weapons simply to get information about their enemies, and once achieving that object, they returned to the woods, retrieved their arms, and set out for Florida. Even worse as far as the whites were concerned, the rebels still in custody admitted that before surrendering they sold or gave their guns and ammunition to all those tribespeople who wanted to stay out and continue the resistance. This news concerned Scott, but he was not overly alarmed.

Owing to all the outposts and armed Georgians on the river, he believed few if any rebel Creeks had, or would, escape across the Chattahoochee.[1]

On arriving at Roanoke, Scott began to discover his mistake. He received reports that two Indian trails had been discovered below Roanoke, one three and a half miles away and the other only one and a half miles away. The first trail was only a day old and the second two days old. Both trails led up from the river in a southeasterly direction toward Florida. Scott was appalled. He attributed the escape of these Indians into the interior of Georgia to "some extraordinary neglect" on the part of the river guards. Yet the general retained his optimism. He believed only about sixty Indians had made the crossing, mostly the more inveterate of Neamathla's Hitchiti warriors. His sources informed him that these men had abandoned their families to attempt a desperate flight to the Okefenokee Swamp in southeastern Georgia before moving on to Florida. Scott sent two detachments of Georgians and a few friendly Indians under Tom Carr, Paddy's brother, in pursuit of the rebels. Colonel Thomas Beall commanded one of the detachments, and Captain Jernigan, the noted local partisan, commanded the other. Scott was confident these men would catch the Indians quickly, and he continued on into New Alabama unperturbed.[2]

But the bad news continued. On arriving back at Fort Mitchell after the completion of his march, Scott learned that another small party of warriors had just that day deserted their families and escaped across the river just a few miles below the

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[1] "Letter From Ft. Mitchell," 29 June 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 7 July 1836, p.3; Scott to Jones, Ft. Mitchell, 24 June 1836, U.S. Congress, *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, Vol. 7 (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1861), pp. 345-46; "The War," *Columbus Enquirer*, 30 June 1836, p. 2; Scott to Jones, Ft. Mitchell, 2 July 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 349-50.

[2] Ibid.; Scott to Call, Ft. Mitchell, 1 July 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 350-51.

fort. The very next day militiamen in Stewart County, Georgia, discovered still another group of Indians, twenty-five to thirty, traveling in a southeasterly direction toward Florida. They engaged these Creeks in a three-day running battle through the Kinchafoonee Swamp before calling off the chase. Even worse, the men Scott sent to pursue the fleeing hostiles below Roanoke discovered that those Indians numbered not sixty individuals but as many as three hundred. Furthermore, they were mounted, well-armed and supplied; and word traveled upriver to General Scott that many Creek Negroes, as well as slaves taken from New Alabama plantations, traveled with the native rebels. The whole crowd was moving along the old Indian trail that led across the southwest corner of Georgia into Florida, passing through sparsely settled Baker and Thomas counties along the way.[3]

Most distressing of all, this last body of rebels did not try to pass by unnoticed to the Seminole country. They meant to exact vengeance on the Georgians as they went. They began by shooting a man named Parkman near Cuthbert. Then, as they passed down the west bank of Chickasawhatchee Creek on Sunday morning, June 25, they began to slay Georgians in earnest. They killed a Mr. William Jones, his wife, and several children. They also murdered Joseph Hollowell and his children along with Mr. Nix and his family. Then they destroyed John Padgett, his child, and a widow lady named Hayes. By Sunday evening thirteen to fifteen whites lay dead; others nursed serious wounds. The Creeks scalped none of the victims, but the mangled appearance of the white children gave evidence that the rebels had beaten them to death "with sticks and lightwood knots." As

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[3] Scott and Kenan to Jones, Ft. Mitchell, 4 July 1836, Ibid., p. 352; "D. Stapleton to Editors," *Columbus Enquirer*, 14 July 1836, p. 3; "Michael Hentz to Governor," Extract, no date, printed in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 7 July 1836, p.2; "The Creeks Crossing the Chattahoochee, *Georgia Telegraph*," 30 June 1836, reprinted ibid.; Scott to Jones, 6 July 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 353.

word of the assaults spread, other families living in Baker county either fled to the center of Georgia or congregated in local forts.[4]

The fury of the rebel assault on the Chickasawhatchee community suggests that the Lower Creeks bore the whites of that locale some special animus. The Chehaws, Osochis, Hitchitees and Yuchis lived in the area prior to the Indian Springs Treaty of 1827, and they had returned to the area often since their removal to New Alabama. Possibly, these natives experienced poor relations with the white settlers on the Chickasawhatchee and decided to seek retribution as they fled to Florida. Certainly one white family died for this reason. When the Creeks attacked the Jones clan as they sat at their breakfast table on that Sunday morning, they did so because the family lived in a house formerly occupied by a man known to abuse Indians.[5]

Following the killings, the Creeks entered the Chickasawhatchee Swamp, forty miles east of the Chattahoochee and approximately one hundred miles south of Columbus. Said to be from fifteen to twenty-five miles long, and in places anywhere from one to eight miles wide, the Chickasawhatchee was a forbidding place. Colonel Beall and Captain Jernigan arrived in the vicinity of the swamp on June 28, riding at the head of mounted volunteers from Bibb, Monroe, Talbot and Upson counties. This group was augmented along the trail by local militiamen from Baker County as well as others from Early, Stewart, Thomas and Pulaski counties, making a total force of about five hundred men. They began to search and probe the swamp for signs of the enemy.[6]

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[4] "Michael Hentz to Governor," extract, no date, *Milledgeville Federal Union,* 7 July 1836, p.2; "Indian Depredations and Murders," *Macon Messenger*, 30 June 1836, reprinted in ibid.

[5] Thronateeska Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, *Reminiscences of Dougherty County, Georgia* (Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Company, 1978), pp. 3-4.

[6] "From the *Columbus Herald*," 12 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*,

At first the scouting parties of local whites and friendly Indians found little, but on July 1, they spotted a line of rebel pickets and realized the fugitives' camp lay nearby. Beall stationed half of his men around the swamp and led the other half toward the Indian position. On the morning of July 2 these troops pulled off their coats, tied up their heads with handkerchiefs, and went into the morass with a rush. They trudged three or four miles "through briers, mud and water, sometimes up to the neck" before coming in view of the rebel stronghold. It sat on a hammock hard by the Chickasawhatchee creek. The men charged, and after twenty minutes of hard fighting, succeeded in driving off the Indians and taking the island. In the process they killed twelve Creeks and wounded perhaps twenty or thirty more, some of whom probably died in the Chickasawhatchee and were never found. The Indians broke up into small groups and fled in every direction into parts of the swamp so thick that the whites could not follow. Colonel Beall's men suffered seven casualties, two of them fatal.[7]

Along with the island, Beall's men captured a large store of booty, much of it taken from Roanoke. According to one observer, "the Indians had 35 tents, and an incredible quantity of beef, bacon, horses, saddles, bridles, homespun, cooking utensils, etc." The soldiers also gathered up guns and a substantial supply of ammunition. Not having the means to transport most of this plunder out of the swamp, Colonel Beall ordered it burned. The horses were another matter. The Indians entered the swamp

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19 July 1836, p.2; "Thomas N. Beall to Scott," ibid., 12 July 1836, p. 2; "Colonel Beall's Report," *Columbus Enquirer*, 28 July 1836, pp. 2-3; George White, *Historical Collections of Georgia* (1855; reprint ed., Geneological Publishing Company, 1969), p. 262.

[7] "Colonel Beall's Report," *Columbus Enquirer*, 28 July 1836, pp. 2-3; J.H. Martin, comp., *Columbus, Georgia; From Its Selection as a Trading Town in 1827 to Its Partial Destruction by Wilson's Raid in 1865* (Columbus: Thomas Gilbert, 1874), p. 74.

with fifty to seventy of them, and after the battle, a number of white citizens appeared before Beall to make legitimate claims on animals stolen from them. But the horses disappeared before their rightful owners could identify them. According to Beall, the beasts "were carried off without [my] knowledge, by individuals who were not in the battle, nor under my command." This situation showed, once again, that the rebel Creeks were not the only people living by predation.[8]

Despite the colonel's frustration with some of his fellow citizens, Chickasawhatchee was a significant victory for the Georgians. In fact, the Chickasawhatchee was the place where these men "met, fought and for the first time, whipped the Indians." But Beall wanted to finish the job he started. He believed the Creek survivors of his attack were still hiding in the swamp and intended to remain there for some time. He wanted to hunt them out, but he knew he could not find them without the assistance of more friendly Creeks. On July 3, he asked General Scott to send Paddy Carr and a hundred of his warriors to the Chickasawhatchie. He also asked for three thousand cartridges because the incessant rains, coupled with all the wading in the swamp, had ruined his supply of ammunition.[9]

Scott responded on July 6. He sent off two steamboats, the Metamora and Reindeer, from Columbus loaded with 40 friendly Indians and 160 foot soldiers. The soldiers were all Columbus men, members of the town's various volunteer companies: Captain Urguhart's Columbus Guards, Captain Evans's' Cadet Riflemen, Captain Lawhon's artillery company, and Major Hoxie's Muscogee Blues. These men stayed at home to

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[8] "In our last," *Columbus Enquirer*, 14 July 1836, p.2; "Colonel Beall's Report," ibid., 28 July 1836, pp. 2-3.

[9] D.A.R., *Dougherty County*, p. 3; "By Col. Henry Mumford," *Columbus Enquirer*, 21 July 1836, p. 3; "Beall to Scott," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 12 July 1836, p. 3.

guard Columbus during the Alabama campaign, but they had chafed at the inactivity, as well as the constant criticism that Columbus men were more interested in making money than fighting. Consequently, when word of the Chickasawhatchee fight and Beall's request for more men reached Scott, Major Hoxie pleaded with the general to let the Columbus men go south to prove their mettle. The general consented and placed Hoxie in command of the relief force. The troops then boarded the steamboats with the friendly Indians and traveled down the Chattahoochee to the mouth of the Flint River, then up the Flint to the vicinity of the Chickasawhatchee. There they made contact with Colonel Beall.[10]

Unfortunately for Scott, his order to Major Hoxie was his last significant act as commander of the Army of the South and chief prosecutor of the Second Creek War. In a sense, he became another casualty of the conflict. Dissatisfied with the conduct of both the Seminole and Creek campaigns, President Jackson ordered Scott's recall to Washington and gave General Jesup "command of the troops serving against the hostile Creeks." Scott left Columbus on July 8, but he did not feel defeated. Indeed, he still believed he had brought the Creek conflict to a close. In his parting report, he expressed confidence that the civilian troops would soon surround the fugitive Creeks in Georgia and force them to surrender. He also stated that the number of rebels still on the loose in New Alabama was "quite inconsiderable." Once again, and for the last time, General Scott underestimated his opponents.[11]

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[10] Scott to Hoxie, Ft. Mitchell, 6 July 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 355; "We have at length," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 12 July 1836, p. 3.

[11] Macomb to Scott, Washington, 28 June 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 355; Macomb to Jesup, ibid., p. 356; Scott to Macomb, Columbus, 8 July 1836, ibid.; Order No. 29, Columbus, 7 July 1836, ibid; "Order No. 30," Tuskegee, 9 July 1836, printed in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 19 July 1836, p.3; Jesup to Blair, Ft. Mitchell, 20 June 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7, 336-37; "Gen. Scott's Recall," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 9 August

The battalion of Columbus troops, and the companies of local troops who joined them at the Chickasawhatchee Swamp, accomplished very little. After searching the morass for a week, they decided that no substantial body of Indians remained there. Then, when fresh signs were reported in the Cooleewahee Swamp some fifteen miles away, the battalion and a party of friendly Indians "marched to the place, entered that swamp of swamps, and searched it most elegantly." However, they succeeded in "only jumping up a few bears, rattlesnakes, and several alligators, who, no doubt, were not a little astonished at the visit paid them." Consequently, General White, who now commanded the Columbus battalion, decided that the Indians had left that part of the country, and to continue to search for them in the swamps would only destroy the health of his "up-country troops." Consequently, the general ordered his men back to Columbus, where they made a spectacular entrance--"half military and half farsical"-- on July 18 and 19. The white troops led the way down Broad Street so sunburned, dirty, and thoroughly smoked, their neighbors hardly recognized them. Behind them rode the friendly Indians in their "fantastic native costumes." The last man of the Indians carried the only real trophy of the expedition, "a little bob-tailed piney woods shoat . . . which squealed manfully at every step the Indian brought."[12]

Though the Columbus troops found no Creeks to fight, the town's newspapers trumpeted the positive benefits of their expedition. According to the *Sentinel*, "The unexplored swamps of Baker county have at least one advantage--they furnish a desirable chance to change the quiet, easy living, and peaceful citizen of our cities into the hardy, laboring, and fear-naught soldier." The *Enquirer*, on the other hand, believed the

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1836, p. 3.

[12] "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 22 July 1836," reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 26 July 1836, p.2.

expedition had saved the reputations of the Columbus men, who, at the outset of the war had been "promiscuously charged with cowardice." The expedition also improved the standing of the friendly Creeks in the eyes of the *Enquirer*, and the editor encouraged the town residents to treat them favorably and encourage them, "for without them, but little can be done against a foe that slips from his hiding place, does mischief and slips back again, so secret as to be almost unperceived."[13]

Whatever may have been the personal benefits of their field trip, General White and the Columbus troops and friendly Indians left lower Georgia too soon. Had they stayed a day or two longer, they could have joined in a good fight with the same rebels Beall engaged in the Chickasawhatchee. The day after that battle, while Beall was writing to Scott for reinforcements to search the swamp, sixty of the surviving rebel warriors and their families came out of the morass and headed east. They crossed the Flint River, reposed for a week in another swamp, and then set off once more toward the expansive and mysterious Okefenokee. But now they moved more cautiously, committing no murders, and trying to stay out of sight of the whites. Nevertheless, some Georgians spotted them forty miles north of Thomasville and sent out the alarm. Having just set out for Columbus, White's men missed the opportunity to respond.[14]

Instead, one hundred and thirty-six militiamen from Thomas and Lowndes counties rushed to the scene. They caught up to the Indians just east of Little River, and on July 15, fought a two-hour engagement called the Battle of Brushy Creek. The rebels initially repulsed the whites, then broke before a vigorous charge. At that point the fight became a running struggle through cypress swamps, bay ponds, and hurricane falls.

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[13] Ibid.; "The Army," *Columbus Enquirer*, 21 July 1836, p.2.

[14] "Gallant Affair," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 16 August 1836, p.2.

Throughout the contest the Indians "distinguished themselves by a boldness savages rarely exhibit," but in the end the whites claimed another victory. They lost three men killed and eight wounded; they killed twenty-two Creek warriors and two blacks. The civilian soldiers also captured nine women and nine children and placed these captives in the county jail in Thomasville. Those rebels not killed or wounded beyond recovery escaped into the Alapaha River swamp and probably reached a safe haven in the Okefenokee.[15]

But then more Indians appeared in Baker County. Settlers sighted thirty mounted warriors ten miles above the Chickasawhatchee battle ground. Now the local whites realized the full extent of the problem. Fearing more attacks from Creeks passing through the county, they cried out for help. Taking up their cause, the *Columbus Sentinel* called for General Sanford, who had taken command of the Georgia corps of the Army of the South on Scott's departure, to recall troops into the service and station a body of them both in Baker County and at Fort Gaines on the Chattahoochee to protect the exposed citizens in the southern end of the state.[16]

Meanwhile, back in New Alabama, the Creek rebellion also showed signs of renewed life. On July 7, shortly after Scott swept through Barbour and Russell counties, a detachment of General Moore's men discovered a party of Indians at Cowikee Swamp--a known staging area for rebels seeking to cross the Chattahoochee. Since their arrival at Irwinton in early June, General Moore's regiment had conducted numerous searches of the three branches of Cowikee Creek without finding any Indians to fight. Now their sudden discovery of enemy warriors made them too anxious for the

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[15] Ibid.; "Indians in Thomas County," *Columbus Enquirer*, 24 July 1836, p. 3.

[16] "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 22 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 26 July 1836, p. 2.

fray. Consequently, they initiated the sort of engagement that had become all too common in the Second Creek War. They fired on the rebels too quickly, and when the natives ran to the swamp, the excited white men foolishly chased after them. Almost too late they discovered the trap. Many more rebels lay in wait in the swamp, intent on ambushing the unwary civilian soldiers. Finally realizing the danger, the whites drew back, but they did not retreat in an orderly military fashion. Instead, they did as so many of the Georgia troops had done when confronted with a superior Indian force. They fled in panic to spread the alarm and to call for reinforcements. But when those reinforcements arrived, led by General Moore himself, they found, as always, that the rebel band had broken up into small parties and scattered into the thickest parts of the swamps--places where the whites could not follow.[17]

This missed opportunity, coming after so many fruitless searches, unnerved General Moore. He wrote to Governor Clay to complain about General Jesup's conduct of the war. Obviously, Moore believed, like Scott, that Jesup had attempted to win the war on his own without ever trying to coordinate his efforts with those of the Alabama troops at Irwinton. Further, Moore claimed that Jesup had never acknowledged all the hard work Moore's troops had done. Moore also noted that the press had never publicized his men's efforts. But the general's chief complaint was that no one had furnished his regiment with friendly Indian trackers and scouts. Writing of his recent battle, Moore stated that, "On this occasion, as on many others, had but a few friendly Indians been with this division of Troops, these Indians [rebels] might have been successfully pursued--their cunning in disguising their trails is so great, as to render it

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17 "From the *Columbus Herald*," 12 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 19 July 1836, p.2; "From the *Columbus Herald*," 16 July 1836, ibid., p. 3; Moore to Clay, Camp Slaughter, 11 July 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

impossible for any white man who is not perfectly conversant with their habits, to discover the course they may have taken in the retreat." In so many words, Moore was admitting to what others had already discovered: despite all the claims of victory, the whites could never capture all the Creek rebels, and end the Creek War, by themselves.[18]

Jesup seemed to pay little attention to the renewed fighting. Having already declared the war "virtually over," he moved to consolidate his victory by reopening the lower counties of New Alabama to white settlers. He built two new posts on the Federal Road for his regular troops, then put them to work repairing bridges and making the highway secure for the mails and renewed travel. Reestablishing the white presence in the Lower Creek country was not an easy task, however, because of the extent of the destruction. As the federal troops moved east from Fort Mitchell to take up their new posts, they encountered nothing but burned homes, ruined stages and wagons, rows of new-made graves, and at one point, a number of empty coffins, "scattered in all directions by the Indians." One company of soldiers stopped at a deserted farmhouse to drink from a well standing out front. After they had taken their fill, the men received the "pleasing news" from a bystander that the Creeks had only recently murdered the owner of the property and had thrown his corpse down the well. Such incidents did little to improve the morale of the regulars, many of whom came from the northern states and lacked enthusiasm for the Second Creek War. As one officer explained, "The army has been sent here to protect the rights of the citizens, which rights have been established wrongs."[19]

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[18] "From the *Columbus Herald*," 12 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 19 July 1836, p.2; "From the *Columbus Herald*," 16 July 1836, ibid., p. 3; Moore to Clay, Camp Slaughter, 11 July 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

[19] "Thomas J. Lee to Post Master," Ft. Mitchell, 2 July 1836, *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 12 July 1836, p. 2; Jesup to Clay, Camp Near Big Warrior's Stand, 5 July 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Scott to Jesup, Camp Sanford, 26 June

Having sent his regulars on their way, Jesup went to work on his most important task: Creek removal. In fact, the general believed that removal was "but the sequel" to the war and the only real way to bring "permanent peace and tranquillity" to the country. Consequently, he disdained the futile task of chasing fugitive Creeks and concentrated his efforts on getting his rebel captives out of Alabama as quickly as possible. He began with the sixteen hundred war prisoners at Fort Mitchell. Since June 23, the day General Patterson and his Indian allies brought in most of these captives from the Hatchechubbee, Captain Page had been busy enrolling and preparing them for emigration. Similarly, the fort's blacksmiths had been hard at work making handcuffs and chains for the warriors; and county sheriffs had searched through the prisoners to find and arrest those rebels known to have committed crimes. At the same time, crowds of whites flocked to the fort to reclaim stolen horses and slaves brought in with the rebels, or simply to gawk at the vanquished foe. These interested spectators, especially the newspaper correspondents, found old chief Neamathla particularly fascinating. He had opposed the whites for a long time and possessed a high military reputation. He was eighty-six years old and "something peculiarly striking in his countenance" impressed everyone who saw him. One reporter claimed that he was the only Indian he ever saw that could "look a white man full in the eye" when addressed. In fact, Neamathla showed remarkable courage in the face of defeat--which he blamed on Neah Micco--and even requested that the whites shoot him rather than imprison him in chains. He did, however, ask that they spare his son, a youth of seventeen or eighteen years. But General Jesup had no interest in executing any of the rebels; he only wanted them out of the country.

1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 348-49; Jacob Rhett Motte, *Journey into the Wilderness: An Army Surgeon's Account of Life in Camp and Field during the Creek and Seminole Wars 1836-1838*, ed. James F. Sunderman (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1953), p. 21; *Army and Navy Chronicle* 4, no. 4 (28 July 1836): 124, 127.

Consequently, he sent them from Fort Mitchell on July 2 with an escort of three companies of troops to begin their long journey to the West.[20]

The marching rebels presented a poignant spectacle. The men led the procession, walking in double file, handcuffed two together with a long chain passing down the center of the files, connecting all the pairs. Old Neamathla marched with the rest, and like the other warriors, showed no sign of the physical and mental anguish he must have been suffering. In fact, the only sound which came from the ranks of these men was "an emphatic 'ta' whenever two of them pulling in opposite directions would jerk one another by the wrists." The women, however, were not so stoic. They followed their men "drowned in tears, and giving utterance to most distressing cries." Many youngsters walked with the women and cried in sympathy for their mothers. The smallest children and the oldest, most feeble rebels brought up the rear, riding in wagons.[21]

The moving line of rebels also gave evidence of the high degree of race mixing among the Lower Creeks, and the complexity of human relationships and emotions among all of New Alabama's citizens. According to a correspondent for the *Army and Navy Chronicle*, the rebel Creeks were "all complexions shading through white, red, and black." Furthermore, some of the spectators who watched the rebels depart felt pity for them. Far from hating the Creeks, they understood their plight and the reasons for

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[20] Jesup to Clay, Camp Near Big Warrior's Stand, 5 July 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 24 June 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 30 June 1836, p. 2; "Letter from Columbus," 25 June 1836, ibid., p. 3; "Creek War," *Columbus Herald*, 28 June 1836, ibid., 7 July 1836, p. 2; "Letter from Camp Gibson," *Columbus Republican Herald*, ibid., 12 July 1836, p. 2; Motte, *Journey*, pp. 20-21.

[21] Page to Commissary General, 2 July 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 753; Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), pp. 152-53; Motte, *Journey*, p. 20.

their rebellion. A reporter for the *Milledgeville Federal Union* expressed a common sentiment. "Surrounded by a white population, broken up in their nationality--wretched, and every way undone, this miserable remnant of a once powerful people, have at last yielded to the force of circumstances, and with a bitter curse upon the heads of their enemy, they have left us, for what we hope, a better country, and a happier condition." The mixed appearance of the rebels, and the sympathetic reaction to their passing by numerous whites, revealed that the Second Creek War was not a simple matter of traditional Indians facing aggressive, uncaring whites across a hard and fast racial and cultural boundary.[22]

The whites who witnessed the passing of the Creek rebels pictured them as defeated and subdued, their acts of resistance completely at an end. This was not exactly the case. Some of the more traditional-minded prisoners would stage one final demonstration of their opposition to white oppression. These people did not believe it possible to find a better country or happier condition in the West. Unlike the mobile whites, who saw land as a marketable commodity, many Creeks felt an organic attachment to their homeland and some could not bear to leave it. Furthermore, many of the old people, and those of all ages who still clung to the old Creek view of the cosmos, believed that the West was a woeful place where no one could be happy. The spirits of the dead dwelled in the West, and only sorrow, sickness and death awaited those who ventured there. Now faced with forced exile to the infernal region, some of the rebels took their resistance to white domination to its ultimate extreme. They chose the most dramatic form of escape and protest. They committed suicide. One old man hanged himself the night before the departure from Fort Mitchell, and others soon followed his

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[22] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 151; *Army and Navy Chronicle*, vol 4, no. 4 (28 July 1836): 126; "Westward Ho!," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 12 July 1836, p. 2.

example. These incidents of self destruction among the rebels "served forcibly to exhibit how strong the 'amor patriae' burned in their breasts."[23]

Other members of the rebel party killed themselves to avoid imprisonment or execution by the whites. When the procession reached Montgomery, where the rebels were scheduled to board steamboats for passage down the Alabama River to Mobile, a detachment of Governor Schley's troops arrived to arrest some of the warriors suspected of committing depredations in Georgia. At that point one rebel warrior drew a concealed knife and cut his own throat; another, using a duller knife, succeeded, after several attempts, in plunging it into his chest; and a third man killed one of his guards with a hammer, knowing full well he would be shot to death on the spot.[24]

But death was not the only way for rebel captives to resist forced removal or imprisonment. Escape was another alternative, as Jesup discovered when he attempted to remove Neah Micco's band of approximately six hundred souls from New Alabama. General Patterson took a battalion of his Alabama volunteers to Echo Harjo's camp on July 5 to disarm Neah Micco's people in preparation for their departure from the state. These rebels gave up only a portion, concealed the remainder, and agreed to report to General Jesup at Tuskegee on July 7, at which time the general intended to send them off to Montgomery. Yet when the general arrived at Tuskegee, he found only old Neah Micco and a few of his followers. The rest, including the notorious Jim Henry, had fled to Tuckabatchee Harjo's town in Chambers county. A furious Jesup immediately ordered General Patterson to bring the fugitives back, declaring that "The negotiation with Neo Micco has proved that the best argument with Indians is formed not of words, but of

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[23] Motte, *Journey*, pp. 19-20; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 153-54.

[24] Motte, *Journey*, pp. 19-20; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 153-54.

powder and lead." A few days later, Patterson returned with most of the fugitives and Jesup hurried them on to Montgomery. There, on July 14, they, along with Neamathla's band, and a few additional parties of rebels, boarded two small steamboats, and two barges pulled by the boats, and started off down the river to Mobile to await ships to take them along the Gulf Coast and up the Mississippi River to Arkansas With the departure of these 2,498 rebel Creeks, General Jesup declared the war "entirely at an end" and began preparations to remove the friendly natives. Jesup was wrong again. At least two hundred members of Neah Micco's band remained in New Alabama. Furthermore, several bands of unsubdued rebels lay in hiding in the stretch of country between Osochi Bend and the mouth of the Cowikee. Jesup had never discovered these people because Patterson's mounted troops could not penetrate their swamps and hammocks and the general's friendly Creeks had refused to look. Upset by Jesup's inability to feed their families properly, and the fact that some of the Alabama troops had murdered a few friendly Indians, they left the general's service without completing the necessary searches. Consequently, when Jesup dismissed the Alabama troops in late July, and they left their post at Long's on the Federal Road, the undetected rebel parties came out of hiding, congregated in larger groups, set up well-stocked tents in the open pinewoods, and prepared to join the exodus to the Florida Territory. Moreover, some formerly friendly Creeks, who also wanted to avoid Jesup's forced removal, moved into the rebel camps. Once again, the Georgia volunteers who occupied the river posts across from the mouths of the Hatchechubbee and Cowikee creeks began to hear the ring of axes and hammers as the natives built new canoes and rafts for crossing the Chattahoochee.[25]

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[25] "Patterson to Clay," Wetumpka, 25 July 1836, printed in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, p. 2; Jesup to Scott, Tuskegee, 7 July 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 357; Jesup to Clay, Camp near Big Warrior's Stand, 5 July 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Jesup to Secretary of War, Tuskegee, 17 July 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 951; "Patterson to Clay," Wetumpka, 25 July 1836, printed in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 16 August 1836,

Now Jesup recognized the danger. He informed Governor Clay that New Alabama still contained a large number of refractory Creeks and he would need an imposing force to keep them quiet. Fortunately, this force soon arrived in the form of fifteen hundred Tennessee volunteers mustered for the Creek and Seminole service. Jesup sent these men out to patrol the countryside and to keep the peace in New Alabama. However, these troops found few Indians and did not prevent more rebels from flying to Florida.[26]

In the wake of that flight, the war resumed in earnest in Georgia. On the night of July 22, a party of 250 rebels, consisting of refugees from Neah Micco's band, some Eufaula Creeks, and a few blacks, slipped across the river a few miles below Fort McCreary. Old Nulth-cap-Tustennuggee led the group as they entered the Georgia woods and headed for Florida by a rather devious route, marching north and west at first before turning south. But the Georgians soon discovered their course. A slave boy happened upon their trail and reported the find to Captain Calhoun, who commanded the garrison of mounted troops stationed at Fort McCreary. The Captain assembled ninety-eight men and set off in pursuit, trailed the rebels for fifteen miles, and caught up to them at Quarles plantation, eleven miles west of Lumpkin. On July 24, Calhoun's advance

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p.2; Jesup to Schley, Tuskegee, 28 August 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 365; Jesup to Scott, Tuskegee, 7 July 1836, ibid., p. 357; "Remarks on *Richmond Courier* and *Enquirer* by J.F. Lane," Creek Country, 8 August 1836, ibid., pp. 358-60; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 154; Charles Lewis to Clay, Clayton, 29 July 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Lewis to Clay, Clayton, 4 August 1836, ibid.; "Letter to the Editor," Ft. Mitchell, 29 June 1836, printed in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 7 July 1836, p.3; "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 29 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 2 August 1836, p. 2.

[26] "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 29 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 2 July 1836, p. 2; Clay to Jesup, Huntsville, 16 August 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

guard attacked the Indians' rear guard and forced them to retreat. The Georgians rushed in pursuit only to find that the rebel rear guard, once again, had decoyed them into the main rebel force. The two sides locked in a hard struggle, with the Creeks attempting to outflank the Georgians, first on one side and then the other. The Georgians fought off the flanking movements for an hour until some person in the rear called out the order "to your horses." At that point the Georgia line broke and ran despite Calhoun's best efforts to rally them. They left five dead troops behind. Calhoun would later report that although the Indians outnumbered his men two to one, the Georgians had killed twenty-two rebels. However, the Georgians were outnumbered only if one counts the Creek women and children as combatants. In reality, the Georgians probably met a force of warriors inferior to themselves and still managed to lose the Battle of Quarles Plantation.[27]

When word of this engagement reached Columbus and Milledgeville, both Governor Schley and General Sanford knew they had a serious problem. Because of the declarations of victory by Jesup and Scott, they had dismissed most of Georgia's army after the march through New Alabama, holding in service only one battalion of mounted men under Major Julius C. Alford. These troops operated out of Fort McCreary and patrolled the river front of Stewart County--the site of most Indian crossing attempts. But all along Schley feared that the Creek rebels would reassemble in force once they saw the great majority of Georgia and Alabama troops go home. Consequently, he had taken the precaution of ordering General Wilcox of Telfair County to assemble and station enough men in Baker County to intercept those Creeks

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[27] Page to Commissary General, Ft. Mitchell, 26 July 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 954; Jesup to Clay, Tuskegee, 1 August 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; "Camp At McClendon's," *Columbus Enquirer*, 28 August 1836, p.3; "The War Not Yet Ended," *Columbus Sentinel*, 29 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 2 August 1836, p. 3.

who might pass by Alford's men on their way to Florida. But once again the independence of Georgia's civilian soldiers interfered with Schley's ability to corral the fugitive Creeks. Wilcox's men refused to go to Baker County. Consequently, there was no back up force in place when the rebels began their flight to Florida. A disappointed Schley wrote to Jesup and admonished him: "I think, therefore, you have mistaken the true state of the war, when you consider it at an end."[28]

Worse, the newspapers questioned the competency of Sanford's river guards. Besides the news of the large rebel party that engaged the whites at Quarles's' plantation, the *Columbus Sentinel* began to receive almost daily reports of smaller parties of Indians crossing the Chattahoochee and "strolling off to the eastward!" Therefore, the paper's editor demanded to know: "Where are our horsemen?" Are they at their posts? If so, why not stop this *Indian emigration*, which is taking altogether a wrong course?" This alone was a telling criticism, but the editor coupled it with and even darker specter. If the rebel Creeks reached Florida, he said, they would stay there only until the United States launched its upcoming campaign against the Seminoles. Then they would return to south Georgia and New Alabama to continue their harassing warfare for "God only knows how long!" Thus something must be done to stop the rebel flight and finally end the Creek war, the editor proclaimed. "Let those in command see to this matter."[29]

Now Sanford knew he had to take decisive action. He could not let any more Creeks escape. Consequently, he took to the field himself, leading four mounted companies and Major Hoxie's battalion of Columbus infantrymen south to Fort

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[28] "Alford to Sanford," 23 July 1836, printed in *Columbus Enquirer*, 28 July 1836, p. 3; "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 1 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 7 July 1836, p.2; "Schley to Jesup," *Columbus Enquirer*, 7 July 1836, p.3.

[29] "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 22 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 26 July 1836, p.2; "Creek War not Over," *Columbus Enquirer*, 28 July 1836, p.2.

McCreary. As he left town he announced that he would not return empty handed. He was determined "to pursue the enemy to the *South keys* of Florida" if necessary.[30]

But Sanford's task would not be easy because of the indifferent quality of Georgia's troops. Even as Sanford marched, Major Jernigan, commander of the Stewart County militia, was having problems in this regard. The morning after the clash at Quarles's Plantation, Jernigan received word that the Creeks had turned to the southeast, and had crossed the Cuthbert Road just seven miles south of his company headquarters at Lumpkin. This meant that once again the rebels were headed for the Chickasawhatchee Swamp, and Jernigan knew he had to cut them off before they reached that dismal expanse of territory. He started after the rebels immediately and put out a call for his Stewart County Rangers to gather themselves together and join him along the way. He also sent word to the officers at Fort McCreary asking that they fly to his aid with their garrison. They did not come. But Jernigan kept to the trail and soon overtook the Creeks at Jones plantation. By that time some of his rangers had joined him along with a number of civilians from Stewart and Randolph counties. Still undetected by the Indians, Jernigan ordered his men to dismount and steal through a cornfield to the rebel camp. However, his advance guard engaged the enemy too early and spoiled the surprise. A tough battle ensued, and Jernigan might have gained the day but for the inconsistency of his men. At a crucial moment in the contest, they refused his order to charge the Indians. This gave the rebels time to seek superior cover and Jernigan had to order his exposed troops to retreat, leaving three dead on the field. Fortunately for the

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[30] "Order No. 130," Columbus, 25 July 1836, printed in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 2 August 1836, p. 3; "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 22 July 1836, ibid., 26 July 1836, p.2; "Creek War not Over," *Columbus Enquirer*, 28 July 1836, p.2.

whites, the natives did not pursue them. They continued on their way to Florida, claiming the Battle of Jones Plantation as another victory for their rebellion. [31]

The Georgia troops were not the only problem, however. Owing to the government's forced removal policy, the rebels had become more determined than ever to resist capture by the whites. Now, like some of their fellows in Alabama, they would seek death rather than submission to the Georgians. This determination would make it even more difficult for the Georgians to stop their flight.

Major Jernigan was the first to note this fact. On the morning of July 26, he rallied his men and started after the Indians again, chasing them to the outskirts of the Ichawaynotchaway Swamp, which sat at the southwest end of the Chickasawhatchee Swamp. More and more of his rangers joined him as he rode, and by the time he made camp that evening, his force numbered three hundred men. He roused his troops before sunrise on the 27th and put them on the march without breakfast for two reasons: "First, no time to cook; and second, nothing to cook." A mere three-mile march brought him near the enemy as they crossed Turkey Creek at its main confluence with Ichawaynotchaway Creek. Seeing the whites, the rebels turned about and made a stand on a hammock within the swamp. The Georgians eventually overran the Creek position, killing eighteen rebels and capturing a large store of goods, but the battle was long and hard. In fact, the whites came away from the contest awestruck. Before the battle, the fatalistic Primitive Baptist troops in Jernigan's command announced that they would not hide behind trees when facing the Creeks, for if they were meant to die "they would be killed anyhow, tree or no tree." On seeing the fierceness of the Indians, however, the Primitives "ran for the biggest trees on the battle field." and there they stayed for the

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[31] "Major Jernigan's Official Report," printed in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 30 August 1836, p. 3.

remainder of the fight. For his part, Jernigan claimed that the Creeks at Ichawaynotchaway " fought with more desperation and gave up the ground with more reluctance than any battle I have had with them."[32]

However, the fugitive Creeks did not want to demonstrate their bravery and courage. They knew that their greatest strength lay in their ability to conceal themselves in the Georgia swamps, as General Sanford would soon discover. He arrived at the Ichawaynotchaway on the evening of the battle, and the next day he put his mounted troops to work searching the Chickasawhatchee for the remaining members of Nulth-cap-Tustennuggee's party or any other natives who might be passing through the swamp on their way to Florida. Five more companies of mounted men soon joined his command, and the general directed these troops to scour the Ichawaynotchaway and Kinchafoonee swamps as well as the Chickasawhatchee. At the same time, Sanford ordered Major Hoxie, who had brought his battalion of Columbus foot soldiers up Flint River by steamboat, to station his command between Chickasawhatchee and the Flint to cut off any rebels Meanwhile, Florida volunteers stationed themselves on the Suwanee River to meet any fugitives who might escape Hoxie. The search lasted two weeks, and though the Sanford's men found many fresh tracks, the Creeks, for the most part, eluded them. In fact, all the activity resulted in only one skirmish. On August 5, Colonel Julius C. Alford's battalion of river guards fought a brief battle with a party of more than a hundred Indians east of the Chickasawhatchee. After the battle, Alford's men found bloody litters beside the trail of the escaping rebels, but they could not locate any corpses. In fact,

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[32] Ibid.; "Creek War Incidents," *Columbus Republican Herald,* 2 August 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union,* 9 August 1836, p. 3; F. L. Cherry, "The History of Opelika and her Agricultural Tributary Territory, Embracing More Particularly Lee and Russell Counties, from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Date," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 15, nos. 2, 3 (1953): 401.

there was only one confirmed kill during the whole of Sanford's campaign. An old Creek man, making his way out of the Chickasawhatchee, passed too near a white cabin and some young boys shot him dead. Alford, for want of anything else to praise, described this act as being "very much to the honor of these little warriors."[33]

Unable to find any Creeks or significant trails to follow, Sanford returned to Columbus on August 11 along with Major Hoxie and the town's troops. However, the general did leave men at strategic points in southwestern Georgia to stop the Indian flight and to protect the white citizenry. He instructed Major Alford and his battalion to remain at Fort McCreary and to form various flying camps to chase down and exterminate any rebels sighted between the Chattahoochee and the Chickasawhatchee. The general also ordered Captains Kendrick and Calhoun to station their companies near Lawhon's in Lee County and to keep alert for any signs of the Indians. Then the general sent more men to Major Jernigan's headquarters at Lumpkin. And finally, Sanford charged Captain Hentz with the task of tracking down the rebel party Alford had engaged in the Chickasawhatchee.[34]

But the civilian soldiers still could not stop the rebels. Captain Hentz soon discovered the trail of a large Indian party coming out of the Chickasawhatchee and followed it east across the Flint near Newton, Georgia. Realizing that the natives

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[33] "Major Jernigan's Official Report," printed in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 30 August 1836, p. 3; "Creek War Incidents," *Columbus Republican Herald*, 2 August 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 9 August 1836, p. 3; "From the *Columbus Herald*," 16 August 1836, ibid., 23 August 1836, p. 3; "Tho's Hoxey to Editors," Fort Gaines, 27 July 1836, printed in *Columbus Enquirer*, 11 August 1836, p.2; "Julius C. Alford to Gentlemen," Camp Hoxey, 6 August 1836, ibid.; "Alford to Sanford," Lumpkin, 25 August 1836, printed in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 13 September 1836, p.2.

[34] *"From the Columbus Herald,"* 16 August 1836, ibid., 23 August 1836, p. 3; "The Troops," *Columbus Enquirer*, 18 August 1836, p. 3.

outnumbered his company of troops, he sent word to Alford's camp near the head of Spring Creek that he would need reinforcements. Hentz then trailed the rebel party another thirty miles to the vicinity of Little River, where, on August 13, he found that the Creeks had stopped, turned about, and now stood ready to fight their pursuers. Furthermore, they occupied an advantageous position. The eighty warriors of the party had formed an extended line of defense across the mouth of a bushy swamp which sat securely in the fork of a creek. The only approach to the swamp lay across an open pine flat. Nevertheless, Hentz ordered an attack on the Indians' position. Unfortunately, after the first fire many of the captain's men broke and ran. In fact, they not only left the battlefield, they kept riding until they reached their distant homes. Hentz and a few others made camp; and as they waited for Major Alford's reinforcements, they dressed their wounds and lamented this latest example of Georgia cowardice and Indian determination.[35]

Now Alford tried his hand. He arrived at Hentz's camp that evening, and led another advance on the Indians. True to form, however, the rebels broke up into smaller parties and fled across Little River toward Grand Bay on the eastern branch of the Withlacoochee. Lacking the ability to track small, crafty parties of fugitives, Alford did just as he had done at the Chickasawhatchee: he simply gave up the chase and headed back to his base camp. Along the way, he stopped by the county jail at Thomasville to pick up thirty-one Indian prisoners for transport back to Fort Mitchell. The Georgians had captured eighteen of these people at the Brushy Creek fight and three on the Alapaha River. The remaining ten, however, were new captives, part of yet another large party of rebels making their way to the Okefenokee on a parallel course with those

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35 "Alford to Sanford," Lumpkin, 25 August 1836, printed in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 13 September 1836, pp. 1-2.

Hentz fought at Little River. Alford chose to ignore this band of Creeks and marched for Fort Mitchell as if his job was done.[36]

Then, as Jesup and Scott had done before him, Alford declared victory, at least as far as his own post was concerned. On August 25, he wrote to Sanford and pompously proclaimed that his battalion of troops had "effected at the point of the bayonet, what heretofore no array of force, or parade of men could otherwise accomplish: the *total* expulsion of the Indians from Chickasawhatchee swamp." Further, Alford claimed that all the swamps of Baker county "are now more clear of Indians, than they have been for five years." The major also contended that all those Indians who had escaped through south Georgia had taken refuge in the Okefenokee, and, according to the captive "squaws" taken from Thomasville, they would remain there two months before descending into Florida. Therefore, Alford informed his superior, "not one Indian has gone to Florida." Then, with his battalion's term of enlistment was about to expire, Alford marched his troops to Lumpkin to await their discharges from the service.[37]

Like all the other the victory proclamations, Alford's statement was premature. He no sooner issued it than some fisherman happened upon a camp of Creeks on Flint River in the northwest corner of supposedly Indian-free Baker County. The fishermen called for assistance and a troop of thirty or forty civilian soldiers subsequently chased down these fugitives and supposedly killed twenty-three of them without a single white man sustaining a wound. This report seems all the more incredible considering the soldiers' statement that the Creeks "fought desperately, clubbing their rifles, and fighting man to man." Nevertheless, some sort of skirmish occurred, and the whites did take a

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

few female prisoners. One of these captives spoke English, was well known in the local white settlement, and gave the lie to some of Alford's claims. This Creek woman told her captors that many small parties of Indians remained unsubdued, that they were still stealing their way through the swamps to Florida, and a number had already arrived there.[38]

The truth of her statement soon became obvious. For the remainder of the month of August and into September, whites in Lowndes and Ware counties in Georgia saw small groups of Indians travelling toward Florida. Similarly, the settlers in Middle Florida were "kept in a state of great alarm by the continual passing of parties of Creek Indians on their way to the country occupied by the Seminoles." According to the *Tallahassee Floridian*, hundreds of Creeks had penetrated Florida despite the effort of the territorial militia to stop them. However, these parties tried to be as secretive as possible. They avoided confrontations with the whites, and in most cases, did not seek to murder them. They did loot plantations in order to survive, carrying off "cattle, horses, clothing, and provisions." Nevertheless, the whites feared for their lives and stayed constantly on guard. According to local tradition, some of the settlers slept in their cow pens to avoid being surprised by parties of Indians in the night. The cattle could detect the coming of the Indians well in advance, and once let out of their pens, they would always retreat in the opposite direction, leading their owners through the darkness and out of harm's way.[39]

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[38] "Another Skirmish," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 30 August 1836, p. 3.

[39] Motte, *Journey*, p. 69; "The Creeks," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 27 August 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 6 September 1836, p. 3; "Florida," ibid., 13 September 1836, p.3; *Tallahassee Floridian*, 6 August 1836, p. 2; John Ben Pate, *History of Turner County, Georgia* (1933; reprint ed., Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Company, 1979), p. 37.

Unfortunately, the white troops were not content to let the Indians pass by unmolested. The mounted volunteers kept up their searches and numerous skirmishes occurred. The largest fight took place on August 27, when a company of sixty-five Georgians fought thirty-three rebel warriors and their families at Cow Creek near the line between Ware and Lowndes counties. The whites dispersed the Indians, killed a few, and captured four, but, as always, most of the fugitives escaped and continued on to the Okefenokee or directly to the Florida Territory.[40]

In fact, the whites' close pursuit only made the Creeks more determined to escape, even to the point of killing their offspring. The desperate fugitives sometimes suffocated hungry, crying infants to prevent soldiers from hearing them. The troops found these babies with their mouths and noses packed full of moss and dry grass. The Creeks also killed larger children to avoid encumbrance. One group of captive women, en route to Fort Mitchell for removal, poisoned all their children in the night so they could make good their escape. However, this was not selfish behavior. The rebel Creeks obviously believed death was a better fate for their young than falling into the hands of the whites, whose acquisitive instincts applied to Indian youngsters as well as all other native resources. After the Ichawaynotchaway battle, for example, the civilian soldiers not only divided up ten or twelve packhorse loads of captured goods among themselves, they also divided up the Indian infants they found abandoned in the woods. According to Major Jernigan's final report, the gentlemen who took these babies "seemed pleased to have them."[41]

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[40] "Levi J. Knight to Schley," Lowndes County, 30 August 1836, printed in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 20 September 1836, p. 3.

[41] "Jernigan's Report," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 30 August 1836, p. 3; Motte, *Journey*, p. 69-70; "From the *Columbus Herald*," 16 August 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 23 August 1836, p. 3.

The determination of the rebels and their success in escaping capture increased the level of fear among the whites, but this fear turned to panic when they realized that the rebel flight was only a part of a larger war strategy. Captured Indian women informed the whites that their retreat to Florida, and the fact that they had forsworn attacking white settlers along the way, did not mean that the Creek war was over for the Georgians. In fact, the rebel warriors intended only to deposit their women and children in the Seminole country before returning to Georgia with some of the Seminole warriors to renew the conflict. Furthermore, the Georgians believed that the Creeks had no intention of simply using the Okefenokee Swamp as a temporary camping ground before moving into Florida. It now appeared the Creeks meant to establish a permanent base camp there. Furthermore, the natives intended to use the Okefenokee as a staging area for their upcoming raids in the south Georgia counties. The whites believed these raids would begin in the fall when the Creeks and Seminoles moved north from Florida to escape the next campaign of United States troops.[42]

The white residents of south Georgia cried out to Governor Schley for help in averting the fall disaster. A committee of respectable citizens in Decatur County expressed a common sentiment: "We the undersigned citizens of Decatur County considering ourselves, families, and property in a state of immediate danger from the inroads of the Indians, and knowing that in our present state of defense nothing but an over-ruling Providence prevents the savage from murdering our wives and children, burning our houses and laying waste our farms; do feel it our duty to address your Excellency on the subject of an immediate and so far as consistent and adequate defense."

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[42] "Indians In Lowndes," ibid., 30 August 1836, p.3; "Alford to Sanford," Lumpkin, 25 August 1836, ibid., 13 September 1836, p. 2. "Jernigan's Official Report," Lumpkin, 5 August 1836, ibid., 30 August 1836, p. 3.

Schley wanted to comply but he found himself in a difficult position. He had already raised large contingents of volunteers to serve in Florida, and the enlistments of most of the Georgia volunteers serving against the Creeks would expire in September. Raising a sufficient force to protect south Georgia from the Creeks would require drafting militiamen, which Schley had already discovered was a very unpopular, costly, and ineffective way to fight Indians. Consequently, the governor called on the federal government for assistance. He asked General Jesup to station federal troops in Ware and Lowndes counties as they were "the least populous and most defenseless portion of the country through which the Indians were passing." Fortunately, Jesup agreed. He sent two hundred regular troops to the Georgia-Florida border. These men, led by Major Dearborn, marched out of Irwinton on September 29, followed the general route of the flying Creeks through southwestern Georgia, and set up camp in Lowndes county near the western fringe of the Okefenokee Swamp.[43]

By that time the fighting in southern Georgia had ceased, but Jesup's response to Schley's request was a tacit admission that neither his march against the rebel strongholds or his forced removal effort had ended the Second Creek War. In fact, his efforts only made the rebels more desperate and determined to resist two unacceptable alternatives: incorporation into the white socioeconomic system or removal to the West. The flight to Florida and the continuation of the war in southern Georgia was an expression of this rebel tenacity. Now, as the fall approached, it appeared that the Creek resistance movement, united with that of the Seminoles, would become larger and more destructive

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[43] "From the *Columbus Herald*," 16 August 1836, ibid., 23 August 1836, p. 3; "Citizens to Schley," Decatur County, 30 August 1836, printed in Frank S. Jones, *History of Decatur County, Georgia* (1971; reprint ed., Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Company, 1980), pp. 126-27; "United States' Troops in Lowndes," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 27 September 1836, p. 3; Motte, *Journey*, pp. 31, 34, 38-39, 42-43.

than ever before. The editor of the *Columbus Enquirer* lamented this fact and summed up the events of July and August in words that were more perceptive than he realized. "It is a remarkable fact, in the history of the recent difficulties with the savages, that the whites generally believe the war at an end, about the time it fairly commences. Whether this arises from a want of knowledge, among the commanding officers, *of the real character of the Indians*, we do not pretend to say." Certainly this statement fairly encapsulates the true meaning of the second stage of the Second Creek War.[44]

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[44] "The Creek War," *Columbus Enquirer*, 4 August 1836, p. 2.

Chapter 6

The Lull in the Eye of the Storm: The Whites Turn on Themselves

Despite the fears of renewed conflict with the Creeks in southern Georgia and Alabama, the late summer and fall of 1836 brought a temporary cessation of armed hostilities--a lull in the eye of the storm. However, conflict did not end. In the aftermath of fighting between Indians and whites, the whites continued to argue among themselves. Revealing once again the economic and political competitiveness which had helped bring on the Indian war, the whites now clashed with each other on issues rising out of the conflict. The conduct of the Creek removal, the punishment of rebel leaders and warriors, the disposition of the remaining Creek lands, and the assignment of blame for a war all thought disgraceful, continued to be topics of hot dispute even after the shooting died down.

The debate showed that many Georgians and Alabamians viewed the Creek war and removal as negative experiences, not as triumphs. They knew that something had gone awry. Some felt guilty for the injustices done to the natives. Many even pitied the Creeks as they marched from their ancient homeland. Most were ashamed of the conduct of the war, knowing they had not performed well. Yet few whites assumed personal responsibility for the situation. They blamed one another for the debacle, or they passed the whole sorry state of affairs off as one of the mysteries of history. They saw the sad dispossession and removal of the Creeks as an unfortunate yet somehow unavoidable episode in the ongoing struggle between savagery and civilization.

The fact that so many whites on the local level lamented the course of events and did not seek to glorify the war and removal is surprising. While many historians have detailed the negative impact of the removal era on Native Americans, few if any have studied the impact on whites at the grassroots level where the removals took place. The

view implicit in all these accounts is that a united body of aggressive, remorseless white southerners pushed for removal, were relieved and happy when it happened, and benefited economically as a result. After all, the Indian removals facilitated the expansion of cotton cultivation into the Deep South, and as a consequence, cotton production became not only the South's leading industry but the cornerstone of the nation's "market revolution." Given this situation, one would expect that southerners would have extolled the removals after the fact and even mythologized events like the Second Creek War. But this did not happen. The Creek case reveals that whites were not so united in purpose, not so remorseless, and definitely not all happy to see the natives go they way they did. And far from dressing up the Creek war, most whites saw it for what it was: a failure. They did not, however, take the next logical stop and admit that this failure was an indictment of the acquisitive and competitive nature of their entire society.

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In the aftermath of the Creek rebellion, stunned whites naturally sought to punish those responsible for the costly and humiliating affair. Yet they could not agree who the responsible parties actually were. Governor Schley and many Georgians wanted to chastise the rebel warriors and chiefs. Governor Clay and the Alabamians, on the other hand, seemed more interested in bringing the land speculators and liquor dealers before the bar of justice. When the fighting ended and the Creek removal began, these two groups clashed, and President Jackson sent a special commission to Alabama to settle the issue of war causation and culpability. But in the end, neither side would be satisfied that the guilty parties had paid the price for initiating the Second Creek War.

General Jesup's removal policy brought the controversy to a head. Because the Secretary of War had charged him with the larger tasks of winning the Creek War, removing the Creeks from Alabama, and supporting the fight against the Seminoles, Jesup had little interest in punishing rebel captives. Furthermore, he believed that the peace and security of the country demanded that the speedy removal of the Creeks must take priority over all other considerations. Consequently, the general rushed his rebel prisoners out of the country before county officers in Georgia and Alabama could arrest all the Indians they suspected of crimes. These officers managed to claim and incarcerate some of the suspected rebels, but prosecuting them proved difficult, because Jesup's hasty removal of other rebels interfered with the collection of incriminating evidence. In fact, Jesup allowed both Neah Micco and Neamathla, the men who led the Creek rebellion, to leave Alabama without being arrested or seriously questioned by local sheriffs and prosecutors. In excusing this action, the general claimed that no real evidence existed against most of the hostile leaders, so he saw no reason to keep them in Alabama. Thus he detained only Jim Henry, the man both Alabamians and Georgians blamed for the more outrageous crimes committed during the rebellion.[1]

Ironically, just as the outbreak of the war had covered over the misdeeds of the land speculators, now Jesup's removal policy tended to cover over the misdeeds of the Indians. This incensed the Georgians, who had a long history of conflict with both the Creeks and the federal government, and who believed that they had borne the brunt of rebel hostilities without any chance of seeking proper retribution. Furthermore, the Georgians had feared all along that once pressed by white armies the rebel leaders and

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[1] Clay to Leonard Abercrombie, Tuscaloosa, 9 July 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Pickett to Clay, Mt. Vernon, 15 July 1836, ibid.; Pickett to Clay, Mt. Vernon, 19 July 1836, ibid.

warriors would simply declare their innocence and the federal government, as it had often done in the past, would be lenient and let the "savages" escape just punishment. Jesup's speedy removal policy realized their fears. The Georgia newspapers, particularly the states' rights party organs, roundly criticized the federal government's negligence. The *Columbus Enquirer* even blamed the renewal of the war in southern Georgia in July on the fact that Jesup had failed to cower the common Indians by inflicting immediate and severe punishment on their captured leaders. In fact, the paper accused the government of "coaxing, begging, and persuading Indians to keep the peace," and warned that if the rebel chiefs were allowed to go freely to the West, they would simply continue their war against the whites on that frontier.[2]

Governor Schley was especially angry with Jesup. On June 28, shortly after General Patterson marched Neamathla's band into Fort Mitchell, Schley called for all offended parties to step forward with evidence against the captives. He then asked General Jesup to delay the removal of the rebel warriors to the West until such time as he could accumulate all the evidence he needed to convict the ringleaders. But Jesup did not want to wait. He sent Neamathla's people off to Tuskegee on July 2, and made a political enemy of Schley in the process. The angry governor was able to claim only nine members of Neamathla's group, although one of these men was the notorious Dave Hardridge, the mixed-blood son-in-law of Neamathla and the man the Georgians blamed for planning the attack on Roanoke. With Hardridge and the others secure in the Columbus jail, Governor Schley tried, on July 8, to get nineteen more rebels out of the Russell County, Alabama, jail so he could try and punish them in Georgia. Apparently,

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[2] "From the *Columbus Sentinel*, 8 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 12 July 1836, p. 2; "Creek War," *Columbus Herald*, 19 July 1836, reprinted in ibid., 26 July 1836, p. 2; *Columbus Enquirer*, 28 July 1836, p.2.

he was unsuccessful in this effort, but he did not stop trying to secure rebel prisoners. With a little more evidence in hand, he dispatched sixty mounted men to Tuskegee on July 9 to claim more of Neahmathla's warriors for trial. On arriving in Tuskegee, however, these men found that the rebel removal party had already set out again on the road west. Undeterred, these diligent troops rode on to Montgomery. There they caught up to the Indians, corralled twelve suspects, and carried them back to Columbus. Several more of the suspects committed suicide rather than return to Georgia.[3]

Still, Schley and his Georgians were not satisfied. They wanted the only major rebel leader remaining in the country, the Chehaw half-blood, Jim Henry. The *Columbus Enquirer* characterized Henry as "a villain, more conspicuous than any other in the nation throughout the war." Schley held the same view and demanded that General Jesup turn Henry over to him, claiming that he led the rebel party that burned Roanoke, and had "committed many murders, robberies and arsons in Georgia." According to Schley, Henry was "amenable to the laws of Georgia, against which he has notoriously offended." However, Governor Clay had made a previous request for the rebel leader, and as Henry was a resident of Alabama, Jesup handed him over to the sheriff of Russell County on the charge of stage robbery and murder. The sheriff placed Henry with the county's other rebel prisoners in the county jail at Girard--just across the Chattahoochee from Columbus--amidst a great outcry from the Georgians, who now believed that Jesup, by denying

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[3] Jesup to Schley, Tuskegee, 2 August 1836, U. S. Congress, *American State Papers, Military Affairs,* Vol. 7 (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1861), pp. 364-65; Jesup to Schley, Tuskegee, 28 August 1836, ibid., p. 365; "From the *Columbus Sentinel,*" 1 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union,* 7 July 1836, p. 2; "From the *Columbus Enquirer,*" 7 July 1836, reprinted in ibid., 12 July 1836, p. 2; "From the *Columbus Sentinel,*" 8 July 1836, reprinted in ibid., pp. 2-3; "From the *Columbus Herald,*" 19 July 1836, reprinted in ibid., 26 July 1836, p. 2; "*From the Columbus Herald,*" 16 July 1836, ibid.

Schley's order, was trying to screen Henry from punishment. Indeed, so great was the feeling of indignation that the Georgians were willing, should Schley give the word, to cross the river and seize Henry by force. To prevent this, General Sanford, the first corps commander, placed a strong military guard around the Russell County jail. For his part, Governor Schley made the request of Governor Clay that should Henry be acquitted by the Alabama court, Clay would re-arrest him and deliver him to Schley's agents to stand trial again in Georgia. Clay agreed, but the Alabamians moved Henry to a more secure jail in Chambers County.[4]

That Jim Henry should become such a center of attention showed not only how tangled the local communities of Indians and whites had become, but also how much the Georgians mistrusted the commercial motivations of their own society. Unlike the old rebels Neah Micco and Neamathla, Henry grew up around white and red people. In fact, he looked "more like a courtier than a warrior," dressing "fashionably" in "broadcloth and cashmere." Like Dave Hardridge, he received an education at the Methodist mission school near Fort Mitchell, an institution generally opposed by old-line Creek conservatives. In later life he would become a Methodist preacher and a Mason. But more importantly, Henry entered into the business life of Columbus, first as a clerk and interpreter for Indian customers in Stewart and Fountain's store, then as a small store owner himself. He also worked with the land speculators for a time before deciding to

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[4] *Columbus Enquirer*, 7 July 1836, p. 2; Schley to Jesup, Columbus, 3 July 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; "Jesup to Schley," Headquarters, Second Army Corps, 4 July 1836, printed in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 12 July 1836, p. 2; "From the *Columbus Herald*," 12 July 1836, reprinted in ibid., 19 July 1836, p. 2; "Letter from Columbus," 7 July 1836, printed in ibid., 12 July 1836, p.3; "From the *Columbus Herald*," 16 July 1836, reprinted in ibid., 19 July 1836, p. 2; Schley to Clay, Milledgeville, 13 September 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Clay to Schley, Tuscaloosa, 26 September 1836, ibid; "The Indians confined," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 16 August 1836, p. 2.

take a rebel stand. Ironically, it was probably Henry's close contact with the whites that led them to see him as a major Indian leader. With their own competitive and acquisitive instincts in mind, they saw Henry as the master mind of the initial rebel successes, and they believed his desire to increase his personal fortune motivated his rebellion. Years after the war, the story persisted that he had staged the revolt as a means of cornering the valuable Indian trade. But in accusing Jim Henry, the whites were actually indicting the economic practices of many of their own people. They projected their own motives onto the young Chehaw, then sought to punish him for their own sins.[5]

But Henry was not an important Creek leader, and, in fact, the rebel chiefs may have used him as a foil, as the Alabamians soon discovered. General Patterson said after meeting Henry that "public report has greatly exaggerated the consequences and capability of Jim Henry: the position he seems to have occupied among the Indians, by no means warrants the anxiety with which the pursuit after him has been viewed. He is young [twenty years], and possesses none of those qualities calculated to give him sway over the tribe." Thomas Woodward, who knew the Creeks as well as any white man, added: "The Indians soon learn whom the whites look upon as being their leaders, and not being as ambitious of distinction as the whites generally are, when any talking or compromising is to be done, those persons are *put* forward. Such was the case with Jim Henry and others, in 1836." Thus it was that poor Henry and Dave Hardridge, men who had always

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[5] Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), pp. 152-53; Anson West, *A History of Methodism in Alabama* (Nashville: Methodist Episcopal Publishing House, 1893), pp. 376-78; W. O. Tuggle, *Shem, Ham, and Japheth: The Papers of W.O. Tuggle*, eds. Eugene Current-Garcia with Dorothy B. Hatfield (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1973), pp. 42, 44, 46, 130; F. L. Cherry, "The History of Opelika and her Agricultural Tributary Territory, Embracing More Particularly Lee and Russell Counties, from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Date," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 15, nos. 2,3 (1953): 294.

had close contact with the whites, stayed behind in Alabama and Georgia to stand trial while Neah Micco, Neamathla, and other rebel leaders--men who had always held aloof and played a double game with the whites--escaped punishment by travelling west to Arkansas or south to Florida.[6]

But in the end, the Georgians failed to convict even Jim Henry. Placed before an examining justice on July 12, Henry denied most of the crimes attributed to him. He admitted robbing some homes and carrying off Sheriff Elliott's slaves, but he denied robbing the stages or committing any murders. Furthermore, he said he had not participated in the sacking and burning of Roanoke, although he had led the rebel warriors in battle against the Georgians at Shepherd's Plantation, Turner's Field, and the attack on Fort Jones. Henry also pleaded extentuating circumstances, claiming that destitution and starvation caused him and his fellow rebels to commence hostilities. The justice bound him over for trial on the charge of "negro stealing" (a capital offense) at the next meeting of the circuit court in Russell County. However, in the interim young Henry apparently decided to stop incriminating himself and gained the able services of two attorneys at law, Messrs. Underwood and Harris. These lawyers succeeded in changing the venue of his trial from the scene of the hostilities in Russell County to Montgomery in Old Alabama. What happened next is not entirely clear, but it appears the Montgomery court acquitted Henry in the late fall of 1836, then sent him to Columbus to face the charges of the Georgians. He remained in jail in Columbus for one year, and in January of 1838, he stood trial again, along with Dave Hardridge. Surprisingly, the Georgians also acquitted both men, undoubtedly for lack of evidence.

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[6] "Patterson to Clay," Wetumpka, 24 July 1836, printed in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 16 August 1836, p. 2; Thomas S. Woodward, *Woodward's Reminiscences of the Creek, or Muscogee Indians* (Montgomery: Barrett and Wimbish, 1859), p. 45.

Captain Page, the removal superintendent was present for the trial, and afterwards he kept the two men in his room until he could turn them over to Benjamin Marshall, the United States Interpreter, for removal to the West. Page afforded Henry and Hardridge shelter because there was "so much excitement about their being acquitted that if they had been turned loose in the country they would have been murdered."[7]

In fact, the whole process of arrest, trial, and punishment of rebel captives proved disappointing to the vengeful Georgians. Almost all of the rebel prisoners in Georgia and Alabama--some fifty-seven in number--eventually went free for want of evidence, and apparently only six received the death penalty for their part in the uprising. The whites hanged these men at Girard, Alabama, on November 25, 1836; but even their deaths failed to satisfy a crowd of hundreds who had "left their homes, eager to witness the breaking of an Indian's neck." In fact, the condemned rebels turned their executions into a last act of passive resistance, which, according to the *Columbus Enquirer*, was "well calculated to draw forth the sympathies of the white man in behalf of these deluded and unhappy people." One of the Indians was a chief--probably Tuscoona, the man who led the stage attacks--and he fully declared his guilt before the assemblage. However, he declared that the other Indians were innocent. Further, Tuscoona stated that he only committed his crimes in accordance with instructions given him by Neamathla and Neah Micco, men whom the *Enquirer* described as now "quietly reposing in the forests of Arkansas." Finally, the chief and his five compatriots faced their deaths stoically and heroically, singing several songs and giving a final "whoop" before taking the fatal leap. This scene had a sobering effect on the white observers, and left a reporter for the

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[7] "From the *Columbus Herald*," 16 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 19 July 1836, p. 2; "The Indian Prisoners," ibid., 22 November 1836, p. 1; Tuggle, *Papers*, p. 130; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp, 55, 190.

Columbus Herald to lament that while "the most prominent actors in the bloody drama" had escaped, "doubtless some unlucky son of the forest suffered in the very midst of his innocence." And yet the reporter concluded, "it cannot be helped--blood for blood, life for life, is the golden maxim; the wail of widow, and the cry of the orphan, sued for revenge in tones of thunder."[8]

The fact that the whites convicted so few rebels proves that they did not hate the Creeks to the point of letting their desire for revenge overcome the rule of law. Further, the lack of legal convictions, as well as the absence of vigilante justice, indicates that many whites, even in Georgia, understood the real reason for the native rebellion. Certainly this was the case in Alabama, as evidenced by General Patterson. Shortly after taking Neah Micco, Neamathla, and Jim Henry into custody, he informed Governor Clay that "It is becoming the general impression that the hostile Creeks have been driven to the perpetration of these outrages by a mass of wrong & injury suffered by them from a portion of our citizens disgraceful to the age in which we live & a lasting stigma upon our country." Then he added, "I do not ask that the arms of the law should be weakened but I speak, I am sure the sentiment of my command when I suggest that these considerations ought not to be disregarded in the question of their punishment." Clay obviously agreed. Despite having declared the Indian uprising an act of treacherous rebellion against the state of Alabama, the governor did not seek sweeping retribution on the captive warriors and chiefs. He only asked General Jesup to surrender "hostile criminals" to the county

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[8] The superior court at Columbus acquitted fifteen Indians at one time in November of 1836. These Indians had been charged with attacking the plantation of General J. S. Watson and shooting some of his slaves. "From the *Columbus Herald*," 15 November 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 22 November 1836, p. 2; "Execution of Indians," *Columbus Herald*, 29 November 1836, reprinted in ibid., 6 December 1836, p. 2; "Six Creek Indians," *Columbus Enquirer*, 1 December 1836, p. 2; Cherry, "Opelika," p. 202.

authorities, not all rebel leaders and fighting men. And while Clay was willing to let the courts try these Indian criminals for various offenses, he ordered the judge and solicitor of the circuit court embracing the New Alabama counties where the uprising took place to pursue rigorously only the prosecution of known murderers. The governor seemed willing to let other offenses pass by unnoticed.[9]

But some Alabamians did not think leniency towards the Creeks was enough; they wanted to punish the whites who caused the war. James E. Belser of the Montgomery Advertiser led the attack. He wrote to President Jackson to give him "especial notice" of the "system of villainy" the speculators had practiced on the Indians, accusing "Shorter and Tarver," both residents of Columbus, of heading the combination of "land pirates" who drove the Creeks to war. Then Belser set his sights on the Columbus press, claiming that the town's newspapers were "principally in the hands of speculators" who covered "their own vile deeds" by attacking Alabama's chief executive. Finally, Belser attacked the town of Columbus itself, with which Montgomery competed for control of the produce of New Alabama. Revealing some of the tension aroused by this economic rivalry, Belser contended that there was "not within our knowledge such a brothel of corruption as is contained within the limits of our celebrated sister-town. If the righteous could be extracted from it, there is good reason why it should be blotted out from the book of remembrance."[10]

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[9] Patterson to Clay, Camp?, 22 June 1836, Clay's Administrative Files, Creek War, ADAH; Clay to Moore, Tuscaloosa, 28 June 1836, ibid.; Clay to Judge Pickett and Solicitor Shortridge, Tuscaloosa, 9 July 1836, ibid.

[10] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 149, 183-84; Belser to Jackson, Montgomery, 12 June 1836, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, Creek Agency Reserves, (M234, Reel 243), RG 75, National Archives; "The Montgomery Advertiser," *Columbus Enquirer*, 30 June 1836, p. 2. Unfortunately for Belser, the loyal Jackson man, the commercial emporium of Montgomery, like Columbus, held a preponderance of states' rights men and nascent Whigs. Therefore, when the editor ran for the state legislature on August 1, he

John B. Hogan also stepped forward to call for retribution against the speculators by publishing correspondence he had received from one John S. Scott, a defector from the speculators' camp. One of these letters, written by Shorter during the height of the speculations, proclaimed that "stealing was the order of the day," and outlined the methods Shorter and his partners used to swindle the Indians out of their lands in Chambers County. Another letter, written by Benjamin B. Tarver, gave even more dramatic proof of fraud by impersonation and pretended payment. "There is nothing going on at this time, but stealing of land with about fifty Indians. Pay them ten dollars or five when certified, and get all the balance back, and get four hundred or five hundred contracts certified with fifty Indians, is all the game." Then Tarver concluded, "Hurrah boys--here goes it--less steal all we can. I shall go for it, or get no lands--now or never."[11]

Hogan also attempted to produce evidence that speculators had planned the war to stop the government's investigation of their schemes and to provoke a forced removal of the Creeks. After holding talks with Opothleyahola and the rebel chief, Hotulgar Harjo, Hogan published the outlines of the plot he discovered. He proclaimed that two of the leading rebels, Neah Micco and Tuskenea, had never operated as free agents in directing Creek affairs. The company of land speculators headed by Thomas Woodward and William Walker had always controlled Tuskenea while Luther Blake and

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was badly beaten. The *Columbus Enquirer* crowed over the fall of the "censor general of the west," but proclaimed that Belser was now "on the high road to promotion; it having become the settled policy of the government to cherish and feed every worthless wretch that the people condemn and reject." The *Enquirer* went on to predict that Vice-President Van Buren would give Belser an office before six months expired. "A great man has fallen," *Columbus Enquirer*, 11 August 1836, p. 2.

[11] "Hogan to Editor of Montgomery Advertiser," Montgomery, 1 June 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 12 July 1836, p. 2.

Paddy Carr and their group dictated policy to old Neah Micco. These speculators had used these chiefs to secure control of Creek land, and after concocting the Creek war "in high council" in Columbus, they instructed their puppet chiefs as to how the uprising should proceed. Then Woodward, who attended the council under the pretext of going to the Columbus horse races, returned home to Tuskegee to spread the word among friends and neighbors that a war was about to occur and they should protect themselves. And once the war broke, according to Hogan, Woodward and Walker continued to hold secret councils with Tuskenea, even as they marched out with Jesup's expeditionary force to put down the rebellion they created.[12]

In hindsight, Hogan's explanation of events hardly seems credible. Perhaps seeking to cover his own failure to see the war coming, he gave the Creek rebels no credit for independent thinking, preferring to blame the whole conflict on a conspiracy of white men. But more to the point, Hogan ignored the fact that Columbus was a prime target of the rebellion. The speculators, as dastardly as they may have been, surely would not turn Indians loose on the town and its surrounding plantations where they and their friends lived. It seems much more likely that the Creek rebels targeted Columbus and its environs for attack because they considered the speculators their enemies, not their friends and co-conspirators.

Nevertheless, Hogan's conspiracy theory flourished in Alabama and even in the war-ravished section of Georgia. Both Governor Clay and General Jesup suspected Judge Shorter and Paddy Carr of instigating the war, and even those citizens who doubted Hogan's full account still blamed the speculators for causing the Creek war and sought to censure them. At public dinners held to honor war veterans, men raised their

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[12] Ibid.; Clay to Jesup, Tuscaloosa, 13 July 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Jesup to Clay, Tuskegee, 18 July 1836, ibid.

glasses and expressed such sentiments. In Stewart County, Georgia--the site of extensive Creek depredations--one Thomas Stuckey proposed the toast: "Maj. Eli S. Shorter, together with all those who have been participants in the late Indian frauds, be forever damned in the estimation of every honest and intelligent citizen." In Pike County a celebrant added, "May the time soon roll round when the hostile Indians that have killed the innocent be brought to justice, and those that have stolen their lands be hung by the neck until they are dead, and then be buried together as murderers and dishonest men." Then in Fayette County, one Larkin Burnitt issued an even more creative salute to the "land stealers of the Creek nation."

> May angry corns beset their toes,
> 'Till blood at every step may flow,
> And narrow shoes their feet to wear,
> Till savage yells are heard no more.[13]

All the complaints and memorials calling for an investigation of the activities of the land speculators found attentive ears in the House of Representatives, especially among President Jackson's opponents from the North and South. John Quincy Adams and other northern abolitionists believed that southern slaveholders had precipitated the conflict so the federal government would drive the Creeks out of a rich cotton country. They also believed that Jackson's forced removal policy violated the treaty rights of the friendly Creeks. Consequently, Adams attempted to block an appropriation of funds for the Creek removal, until Congress conducted a full investigation of the war and its causes. On the other hand, Jackson's southern states' rights opponents favored an

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[13] Mary E. Young, *Redskins, Ruffleshirts, and Rednecks: Indian Allotments in Alabama and Mississippi, 1830-1860* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), p. 113; "Stewart County Celebration," *Columbus Enquirer*, 8 September 1836, p. 3; "Public Dinner, Zebulon, Pike County," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 6 September 1836, p. 3; "Fayette County Festival," ibid., 27 September 1836, p.3.

investigation of the war, because they believed the president's policies were to blame. Dixon Lewis of Alabama even accused Jackson of being too favorable to the Indians, of placing their rights ahead of New Alabama's white settlers. Lewis believed this leniency and permissiveness towards the natives had emboldened them and encouraged them to take up the tomahawk against their white neighbors. Ironically then, both the abolitionist Adams and the pro-slavery Lewis joined forces to push for a congressional investigation of the Creek conflict. Further, they proposed that either the Committee on Indian Affairs or a special committee selected by the House should conduct the inquiry. However, the majority of representatives, including Jackson's partisans, voted against this proposal and decided to let the president handle the matter. On July 1, the House forwarded a resolution to Jackson calling on him to look into the causes of the Creek War-- specifically the alleged misdeeds of the land companies--and to pursue the prosecution of those who may have broken the law.[14]

On July 7, the War Department, pursuant to the resolution, commissioned two Georgians, T. Hartley Crawford and Alfred Balch, as government investigators. The president instructed them to inquire into the Creek land frauds and to recommend for approval or disapproval the land contracts made in McHenry's and Sanford's districts of the old Creek Nation. The native rebellion had cut short Hogan's investigation into Sanford's contracts, and while he had submitted his final report on the McHenry contracts--most of which were fraudulent--Jackson thought the document too sketchy and generally unsatisfactory. The president did not wish to overturn land contracts on what he thought was flimsy evidence of wrongdoing. Consequently, Crawford and Balch had to do the work in McHenry's district all over again. The commissioners

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[14] "Remarks of Dixon Lewis on the Indian Appropriation Bill," *Columbus Enquirer*, 30 June 1836, p. 2; "Resolved," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 2 August 1836, p. 1.

arrived in New Alabama in September, set up shop near Tuskegee, and began their investigations by placing notices in the regional newspapers informing all parties holding unconfirmed, disputed, or reversed contracts on Creek land to provide evidence within forty days of the validity of their claims. They also wrote to governors Schley and Clay, and all other informed parties, asking for evidence of land frauds and information that might enlighten the commissioners on the causes of the Creek War.[15]

Unfortunately, Crawford and Balch, like Hogan before them, encountered numerous obstacles in their path. Again, the speculators launched a letter-writing and newspaper campaign against the government investigation. An angry Balch complained of the "high toned nature of Shorter's correspondence," and lamented that certain wealthy parties had the power to influence, obfuscate, and cajole public officials and opinion. Worse, the commissioners lacked the power to coerce. They could not compel anyone to give testimony or tell the truth. They also encountered a general lack of enthusiasm for the investigation on the part of important Georgians. While Governor Clay showed a willingness to help the commissioners, providing what evidence he could, and blaming the war on the land frauds and the intemperance introduced to the Indians by a "class of white men," Governor Schley refused to provide any useful information. In his brief reply to the commissioners' inquiries he simply passed over the wrongdoing of the land pirates and liquor dealers--many of them Georgians--and blamed the Indians for the war, calling the natives "idle, dissolute vagrants, many of whom had for a long time, been subsisting on provisions stolen from the people of Georgia living on and near the Chattahoochie." But perhaps the greatest problem the commissioners faced was the

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[15] War Department to G.P. Brown, Washington, 15 July 1836, Creek Reserves (M234, Reel 243); "Letter from *Columbus Sentinel*," Washington City, 8 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 9 July 1836, p. 3; Young, *Redskins*, pp. 90-91; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 149-50.

Creek removal. With the Indians departing and the white settlers coming in, New Alabama was like a "moving camp," and evidence against the speculators was difficult to obtain. Thus the removal tended to shield both Indians and whites from punishment for their parts in the Creek war.[16]

Faced with all these problems, the commissioners could not do a satisfactory job. After spending the fall in Alabama, they published a report assigning general blame for the war on the speculators and absolving the federal government. They also recommended that the president reject a large number of questionable land contracts. However, the commissioners could prove no conspiracy on the part of the speculators to start the war, nor were they able to compile enough proof to bring any one individual or group of individuals before the bar of justice for any particular crime. Even so, President Van Buren, Jackson's successor, did not follow their recommendations. In the end he approved most of the fraudulent land contracts. The commissioners had to content themselves with the somewhat absurd observation that as of October, 1836, the government policy of allotting the Creek domain in severalty and allowing individual holders to sell their land had resulted in a fair number of legitimate contracts, giving the Indians $890,400 free and clear to begin their new lives in the West. However, they failed to note that land included in these legitimate sales amounted to only 774, 400 acres; the federal government had allotted the Creeks an estimated 2,187, 200 acres. Had the Creeks been able to sell all this land for a fair price, they would have been far better off. Furthermore, much of the money the natives received from the fair contracts went almost directly into the hands of white lawyers, merchants, liquor dealers, and all the

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[16] Alfred Balch to Cass, Nashville, 1 August 1836, Creek Reserves (M234, Reel 243); Crawford and Balch to B.F. Butler, Secretary of War, Green's near Tuskegee, ibid., frames 190-91; Schley to Balch and Crawford," Tuscaloosa, 26 September 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 149-50.

others operating the notorious Indian business. Again, Balch and Crawford failed to make this clear. Their report did, however, tend to clear the government of any wrongdoing, which may have been the sole purpose of the investigation all along.[17]

And so the speculators prevailed, taking off the lion's share of Creek property. Those citizens who wished to see them punished for the Creek war had to sit by and stew in their disappointment along with those who had cried out for the blood of all the rebel leaders. In the end there would be no satisfactory punishment for the men most responsible for all the death and destruction on both sides of the Chattahoochee River.

However, white respectables did gain a measure of revenge. They punished some of the roughs who assisted the Creek rebels and ostracized the land speculators. Shortly after the six Creeks met their deaths at Girard, the United States District Court in Mobile convicted Philander Broad for his part in the stage attacks and sentenced him to death by hanging. In Cherokee County, Alabama, the local citizens interrogated one Thomas Chambers; and after he confessed to helping the local Creeks plan an attack on whites, they "turned him loose in the woods"--a euphemism meaning killed but denied a burial. The aggrieved settlers also developed a popular myth as compensation for their inability to bring the speculators before courts of law. They simply proclaimed that God would not allow the land pirates to reap the rewards of their crimes. J. J. Hooper, Chambers County resident and local colorist, gave voice to this myth in his book *Some Adventures of Captain Simon Suggs.* Hooper declared that in the ten years following the Creek removal most all of the speculators "lost money, lands, character, every thing!"

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[17] Young, *Redskins*, pp. 74, 91-96; Balch and Crawford to C. H. Harris, Near Tuskegee, 14 October 1836, Creek Reserves (M234, Reel 243); Harris to Crawford and Balch, War Department, 28 October 1836, ibid.; U.S. House Report 154, 24th Cong., 2nd Sess., "Report of Commissioners, investigating causes of hostilities of Creek Indians," pp. 14, 51 (Ser. 304).

while those who yet retained some of their "lordly possessions" strove in vain "to avert their irresistible fate--an old age of shame and beggary." Finally, Hooper concluded: "They are cursed, all of them--blighted, root and trunk and limb! The Creek is avenged!" The facts did not justify such a sweeping judgment, but it certainly was true that some of the more infamous speculators did not enjoy their spoils for long. Both Judge Shorter and William Walker died before the end of 1836, and Thomas S. Woodward, after being sold out twice by the county sheriff, left Alabama in 1841 to pursue a less than happy life in Louisiana and Arkansas. General Daniel McDougald and other speculators lost money when the Columbus banks they controlled failed during the economic depression that began to spread over the nation in 1837.[18]

However, the punishment of those responsible for causing the war was only one of the issues that sparked controversy among Georgians and Alabamians in the late summer and fall of 1836. These citizens were ashamed as well of the conduct of the Creek war, and they wanted to assign blame to everyone but themselves. Not surprisingly, General Winfield Scott became a prime target. When he left Columbus in July, the general thought he had concluded the war successfully, but on arriving in Washington, he discovered the real reason Jackson relieved him of command: Jesup's critical letter to Blair. Scott called the letter a "treacherous instrument which . . . stabbed me in the dark" and launched a campaign to clear his name. He wrathfully

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[18] "Broad Convicted," *Columbus Enquirer*, 29 December 1836, p. 2; J.D. Anthony, "Reminiscences of Cherokee County, 1835-1875," in *Early History of Northeast Alabama and Incidentally of Northwest Georgia*, ed. W. Stanley Hoole and Addie S. Hoole. (University, Alabama: Confederate Publishing Company, 1979), pp. 38-39; Johnson Jones Hooper, *Some Adventures of Captain Simon Suggs* (1848; reprint ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Literature House/Gregg Press, 1970), pp. 69-70; "Tribute of Respect," *Columbus Enquirer*, 13 December 1836, p. 2; Young, *Redskins*, pp. 108-109.

demanded a court of inquiry into his conduct in both the Creek and Seminole conflicts, and the nation's Whig newspapers, looking for anything they could use against the administration during a presidential election year, took his side in the controversy. When the court convened in Frederick, Maryland, in November, Scott accused Jesup of trying to build his military reputation by deliberately defying the orders of his superior officer. Furthermore, Scott contended that there had been no real danger to the frontier justifying Jesup's premature advance, and that that unwise maneuver had caused the rebel Creeks to flee across Georgia carrying more death and destruction with them. Then Scott catalogued in great detail all the supply problems which delayed his offensive against the rebels. He also called on Governor Schley, General Sanford, and other noted Georgians, to support his testimony. Finally, the court cleared the general of any wrongdoing or incompetence in handling the Creek and Seminole conflicts, but many people in Georgia, Alabama, and the Florida Territory continued to blame him for all the failures. On the whole, they seemed to prefer Jesup's aggressiveness to Scott's deliberate attention to detail. Said one observer, "General Scott is too slow and systematic for Indian warfare, and is abused from Columbus to Mobile--not without cause." Despite the verdict of the court of inquiry, the popular sentiment prevailed that Scott's "Northern laurels" won against the British in the War of 1812 had now turned to "Southern willows" against the Creeks and Seminoles. However, General Jesup was not without his severe critics as well, especially in Georgia. These people, including Governor Schley, blamed Jesup for not allowing the Georgians full participation in the war, being lenient on rebel captives, and, of course, causing the war in southwest Georgia by allowing so many Creek rebels to escape to Florida.[19]

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[19] Scott's Statement, January 19, 1837, *ASP: MA*, 7: 204, 207, 211; Charles W. Elliott, *Winfield Scott: The Soldier and the Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), pp. 323-25; "Sanford's Deposition," 17 December 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 171-72; "Dawson's

But the local citizens saved most of their criticisms for one another. They knew they had not fought the war well, and they found all the displays of cowardice and timidity particularly distressing. In Alabama, Governor Clay's political opponents used his supposed ineffectiveness as a protector of the state's people against him in the fall elections. Meanwhile, General Moore continued to claim that his regiment had performed better than any other troops but without reward or recognition from the state or federal government. In Georgia, some critics castigated the New Alabama settlers for their incontinent flight in the face of the rebel uprising, saying they should have stayed at home to defend themselves rather than relying on others to do it for them. These Georgians, represented by O.P. Cheatham of Stewart County, wanted the rich soil of New Alabama "settled by a braver and more honorable set of men" now that the war was done. Other Georgians complained that they had come to the defense of the Creek Nation settlers, and had done most of the fighting against the rebels, without proper appreciation or cooperation from the Alabamians or the federal government. But the Georgians also pointed fingers at one another in the aftermath of so many humiliating engagements with the Creeks. Officers who had participated in those battles where the Creeks ran the whites from the field argued with one another as to who was a coward and who was not. The competition and level of vituperation grew to the point that the *Columbus Enquirer* was forced to call a halt, saying of the recriminations, "We shall therefore feel bound hereafter to publish nothing of the kind evidently personal, leaving

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Deposition," 16 January 1837, ibid., p. 174; "Schley's Deposition," ibid., p. 176; Pronouncement of Alex. Macomb, Major General, President of the Court, and S. Cooper, Judge Advocate, Recorder of the Court, ibid., pp. 178-80. For opinion on Scott see "General Scott," *Columbus Enquirer*, 14 July 1836, p. 2; *Tallahassee Floridian*, 16 July 1836, p. 3; "G.W. Gayle to Clay," Cahawba, 18 July 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; "Letter from Columbus," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 12 July 1836, p. 3.

the contending parties to convey their abuse, threats, challenges, &c., through some other channel." Meanwhile, M. T. Chapin, a yankee lawyer living in Irwinton, drew no distinctions between individuals, attributing the disappointments of the war to the inferior quality of southern society. Writing home to Rhode Island, he proclaimed:

> The War has been most miserably managed. The secret is the men are cowards. They don't consider how serious a matter is till they get into the woods and hear the yell of the savage . . . so away they run and fill the country with reports as wild and false as their conduct is base and cowardly.

Seeing all this, Mansfield Torrance, who had served with Jesup's Indian brigade, summed up the popular disgust with the conduct of the conflict. "The Creek War, may its history never be written but if written may it be *ex-punged*." [20]

But the conduct of the Creek War was not the greatest source of embarrassment to whites during the late months of 1836. Surprisingly, the Creek removal, which the war inspired and facilitated, became an even more controversial issue. After all the death and destruction of the summer, one would expect that the whites would have been overjoyed to see the natives finally leave Alabama and would have cooperated freely with federal officials in sending them on their way. This was not always the case. Too many whites were loathe to give up the Indian business, the pillar of New Alabama's economy.

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[20] "From the *Tuscaloosa Flag of the Union*," reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 16 August 1836, p. 2; Moore to Clay, Camp Slaughter, 10 July 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; "To the Settlers in the Creek Nation from Wm. Baskin Stogner," Columbus, 13 July 1836, printed in ibid., 14 July 1836, p. 2; "Toasts," *Columbus Enquirer*, 15 September 1836, p. 3; "Dinner for Baldwin Hussars, Corporal William House," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 23 August 1836, p. 3; "Stewart County Celebration, O. P. Cheatham," *Columbus Enquirer*, 8 September 1836, p. 3; "To the Public," *Columbus Enquirer*, 25 August 1836, p. 3; "Flewellen's Reply," ibid., 8 August 1836, p. 3; "For some weeks past," ibid., 8 September 1836, p.2; M.T. Chapin to Joshua Bicknell, Irwinton, 30 July 1836, Chapin Collection, ADAH; "4th of July Toasts, Mansfield Torrance," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 7 July 1836, p. 2.

Despite the war, they continued to hold the natives in place, milking them of their resources. Respectable whites deplored this fact, and General Jesup had difficulty disentangling the Creeks from their acquisitive white neighbors and sending them west. Even then, respectable whites were not pleased with the forced removal. They regretted the hardships imposed on the natives and criticized the abuses. While they were relieved to see the Creeks go, they saw the removal more as a necessary evil than a positive good.

Having shipped his rebel captives from Alabama by mid-July, Jesup turned his attention to the systematic removal of the mass of friendly Creeks. He moved his headquarters from Tuskegee to Tallassee and stationed his force of regular troops along with Alabama and Tennessee volunteers at various posts throughout New Alabama. He intended that these troops maintain law and order between the whites and Indians until the natives were ready to leave the state; at that time the troops would escort them on the first leg of their journey west. Then Jesup ordered all the Creeks into removal camps north of the Federal Road, and warned them that if they ventured south of the highway into what had been rebel territory they would be considered hostile by the troops and treated accordingly. Finally, Jesup ordered Opothleyohola to assemble the people of Tuckabatchee and all its affiliated towns at Tallassee and have them ready to march west by August 10. Obviously, the general believed that if he could get the Speaker of the Upper Creeks out of the country, the other leaders and towns would follow in short order. In fact, Jesup hoped to have all the remainder of the Creeks, eighteen to twenty thousand people, removed from Alabama by the end of the summer, including the fifteen hundred to two thousand Indians who had taken up residence near the Cherokees in Benton and Cherokee counties. He warned this group of refugee Indians, who now

seemed the most troublesome and ill-tempered of the Upper Creeks, that they, too, would be treated as rebels if they did not move west when he gave the order.[21]

But Jesup soon discovered that the Indians were not the major obstacles to his plans. Opothleyohola and his Tuckabatchees, numbering about 2,700 souls, tried to leave Alabama as early as August 1. Another group of 1,170 Creeks, including four hundred captured among the Cherokees in Tennessee, attempted to leave the vicinity of Talladega on August 6. On that same day a third detachment of 3,022 Creeks headed by the chief William McGillivrey marched out of Wetumpka. However, these Indians found the path west blocked by sheriffs, lawyers, creditors and an assortment of greedy whites. According to Jesup, "Suits were multiplied against the Indians--their negroes, horses, and other property taken--themselves driven almost to desperation by the difficulties which surrounded them." Even more bad news came in from Cherokee County, where one Jesse Duren stood in the way of removal. The county's respectable whites complained to Jesup that Duran had induced the Creeks to come into the Cherokee country in the first place, so that he might profit "by bringing them to want and starvation." He sold goods and liquor to the Indians and now proclaimed that he would not allow them to enroll for the removal unless he got the appointment as enrolling agent. Exasperated by the actions of Duran and others like him, Jesup concluded, "I find more difficulty than I

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[21] "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 29 July 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 2 August 1836, p. 2; Jesup to Scott, Tuskegee, 7 July 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 357; "Jesup to Secretary of War," Ft. Mitchell, 24 July 1836, ibid., p. 951; William Garrett to Clay, Ashville, 1 July 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Jesup to Clay, Tuskegee, 18 July 1836, ibid; Jesup to Clay, Tallassee, 23 August 1836, ibid. The whites in the northern counties of Alabama had always been afraid of the Creek refugees there, and some believed that the hostile escapees from the Lower Creek country had fled to the mountains around the Creek camp on Town Creek. In August many white settlers were about to flee their homes in that vicinity until more Alabama troops arrived to protect them "Andrew Moore to Clay," Claysville, 20 August 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH.

apprehended in removing the Indians, & all the difficulties, or nearly all, arise from the interference of white men." Worse, the general believed that because of that opposition, the long suffering Upper Creeks, heretofore friendly, "may yet be persuaded to hostilities."[22]

Governor Clay was deeply incensed. Like other Alabama politicians, he had been urging the federal government to remove the Creeks for many years. Yet he had seen his own citizens delay the process. First they had prevented Colonel Hogan from taking the Creeks away. Then they fomented a costly war. Now they resisted Jesup's efforts to clear Alabama's soil of its troublesome native inhabitants. Worse, the governor knew he could do nothing about the problem. Alabama law did not give him the power to punish whites who interfered with the federal removal project. Therefore Clay took a radical step. He urged Jesup to use his war powers to arrest and discipline those who stopped the Indians from emigrating. That a southern governor, during a time of growing sectionalism and states' rights sentiment, would advocate the use of federal power against his own citizens, shows just how frustrating the Creek situation had become for Alabama's respectable citizens.[23]

Jesup did not take Clay's advice. Perhaps he feared that using his troops against the white citizens of Alabama would set off a federal-state conflict even greater than the one in 1833, when President Jackson tried to remove all the unauthorized settlers from the Creek Nation. Instead, Jesup chose to facilitate Creek removal by a method more appropriate to local economic conditions. Like Hogan before him, he decided to get

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[22] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 160-63; John H. Garrett to Clay, Childersville, 27 June 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Jesup to Clay, Tuskegee, 18 July 1836, ibid.

[23] Clay to Jesup, Huntsville, 31 August 1836, ibid; Clay to Jesup, Tuscaloosa, 25 July 1836, ibid.

the Indians out of Alabama by "enabling them to pay the just demands against them and defending them against those which were doubtful or unjust." In other words, Jesup wanted to get more money into the hands of the Tuckabatchee chiefs and the other leading men of the Upper Creeks so they could buy their way out of the country they once owned.[24]

First, Jesup authorized a land sale previously negotiated between Opothleyahola and a group of land speculators headed by J. C. Watson. On August 28, Watson and his partners paid the Creek chiefs of Tuckabatchee and surrounding towns $75,000 for over 200,000 acres of land which had been taken from the Indians by fraud but returned to them as a result of Hogan's investigation. Not surprisingly, some of the members of the Watson Company were the same men who stole the land in the first place, and the new land contract not only allowed them to get back what Hogan had taken from them, it allowed them to get it back at a mere 37.5 cents per acre. Furthermore, the contract gave Watson and his associates an option to purchase all the rest of the Indians' unsold lands at appraised prices. General Jesup actually entertained strong doubts that the chiefs had the right to make such an agreement--selling land that belonged to their townspeople. However, the deal gave the chiefs a substantial sum of money to pay their tribal debts, so Jesup kept his reservations to himself. Similarly, the *Montgomery Advertiser*, a paper sympathetic to the Creeks, approved the Watson sale despite its shortcomings for the natives because "when we see how carelessly the country views the atrocious crimes that have been practiced upon the Indians, we are not astonished at the conclusion they have adopted [to take any money they could and get out of Alabama]."[25]

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[24] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 160-61.

[25] "Creek Lands," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 23 August 1836, p. 3; Young, *Redskins*, pp. 90-91; Jesup to Harris, Ft. Mitchell, 28 September 1836, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, Creek Agency Emigration, (M234, Reel 237) RG 75, National

Next, Jesup proposed a financial deal of his own to the Creeks. Having received orders to take charge of the Seminole War once he finished the Creek removal, Jesup decided to recruit a force of Creek warriors to take with him to Florida. He knew he owed his success against the Creek rebels to his friendly natives, and he wanted to duplicate this success against the Seminoles. Jesup also knew that using Creek warriors against the Seminoles would be much less expensive than a like number of white troops. Furthermore, the general thought the Creeks more expendable. The heat and disease of Florida took a terrible toll on white troops, and the general knew the use of native warriors would save many white lives. Consequently, he asked the Creek chiefs to raise a regiment of six hundred to a thousand mounted warriors for twelve months service in Florida. In return, Jesup promised to advance them their annual annuity payment of $31,900, plus a $10,000 bonus for good and faithful performance in the Seminole country. Jesup also promised that the warriors would receive the pay, emoluments and equipment of United States soldiers as well as any "plunder" they might take from the Seminoles. Jesup included Seminole slaves as part of this plunder, and the Creek chiefs, mostly men of economic means, readily agreed to Jesup's deal, provided the families of the warriors and chiefs who served in Florida would not be removed from Alabama until the men returned to assist and lead them. Though this condition meant that approximately three thousand natives would remain in the state for another year, Jesup had to concede the point. Thus the Creeks signed their contract with the government on the same day they made the land deal with J.C. Watson. Now they had enough money to buy the majority of their people out of the grasp of the whites.[26]

Archives; "Stolen Lands," *Montgomery Advertiser*, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 13 September 1836, p. 3.

[26] Orders, Tallassee, 28 August 1836, Creek Emigration (M234, Reel 237); Jesup to Harris, Ft. Mitchell, 28 September 1836, ibid.; Macomb to J. R. Poinsett, Washington,

However, as with everything involving the Creeks and their lands, Jesup's schemes did not go uncontested. Competing companies of speculators wanted the Upper Creek lands, and they began to complain loudly about the Watson contract. Irvin Lawson, James S. Calhoun, and the other members of a Columbus-based company would allege that the deal had been struck "in a private room, and after the hour of midnight," without any notice to competing interests. Yet another group of speculators, Ware, Dougherty and Company, asserted the principle that Jesup had kept to himself, that the Creek chiefs had no right to sell land for their people and therefore the Watson contract could not be valid. Even the federal commissioners, Balch and Crawford, recommended that the president disapprove the Watson deal. However, Watson eventually reached a compromise with his chief opponents by admitting them to membership in his land company, and the government ratified the Creek land purchase despite all objections.[27]

Then Jesup's plan for enlisting Creek allies against the Seminoles came up for debate. Generally speaking, the supporters of Jackson's Administration favored it and the opponents did not. The Jacksonian *Columbus Sentinel* said: "This scheme seems to be a measure of sound policy, particularly when we reflect how serviceable the celebrated chief Jim Boy and his command were to General Jesup in fighting the Lower Creeks." The *Columbus Herald* was even more optimistic. "When the eagle eyes of Osceola, Carr and Jim Boy shall flash on each other, there will be a war-whoop that will stir with new

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September 19, 1837, *ASP: MA*, 7: 518-19; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 161-62; Michael Paul Rogin, *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf), p. 241. Lewis Cass also wanted Jesup to raise Creek warriors for the Florida service and proposed this to the general as early as July 11. Cass to Jesup, Washington, 11 July 1836, *ASP: MA*, 7: 519.

[27] Young, *Redskins*, pp. 90-91; Shorter to Col. J.J. Abert, Columbus, 17 November 1836, Creek Reserves (M234, Reel 243).

life the blood of the red man, and produce a fight which we believe will put a final stop to all Indian disturbances on this side of the Mississippi." However, the states' rights *Columbus Enquirer* was not so sanguine, taking, as always, a more anti-Jackson, anti-Indian, and strongly pro-Georgian point of view. According to the *Enquirer's* editor, Jesup's policy of using Creeks against Seminoles "looks a little like stooping to conquer." Then he asked, "Shall it be said that the United States with a population of Sixteen Millions of people are unable to conquer and put down a handful of Seminoles without a band of Creeks?" Yet this was only part of the problem. What bothered the states' rights Georgians most was that Jesup's plan delayed the complete removal of the Creeks. The *Enquirer's* editor feared that leaving the few thousand relatives of the Creek regiment in New Alabama might be "the occasion of future disturbances." And if so, "we wonder if Gen. Jesup and Col. Hogan will be able to shuffle the blame again on the people of Georgia? They are apt to try."[28]

Events would prove that Jesup's opponents had a good point: marching the Creeks against the Seminoles was a mistake. The general was determined, however, and proceeded with his plan to win the Florida war. The Creek regiment, 750 warriors strong, left Fort Mitchell by steamboat in early September. They traveled down the Chattahoochee, out into the Gulf of Mexico, and on to federal army headquarters at Tampa Bay. Paddy Carr, Jim Boy and Echo Harjo served as officers, and Colonel J. F. Lane of the regular army commanded the force as a whole. The warriors' families remained behind in three camps: one in Russell County near Fort Mitchell, another at

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[28] "From the *Columbus Sentinel*," 5 August 1836, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 16 August 1836, p.2; "The Creeks against the Seminoles," *Columbus Herald*, reprinted in ibid., 13 September 1836, p. 3; "Rather Slim," *Columbus Enquirer*, 1 September 1836, p. 2; *Columbus Enquirer*, 15 September 1836, p. 3.

Echo Harjo's town on the New Road in Macon County, and the other at Polecat Springs on the Federal Road near the Old Alabama boundary.[29]

While Lane's regiment moved south, most of the remainder of the Creeks began the march to their new homes beyond the Mississippi. Opothleyahola and the Tuckabatchees started on September 2, with the town priests marching a mile ahead of the main body, carrying the sacred medals which had been buried beneath the Tuckabatchee square grounds. The next day William McGillivrey's detachment crossed the Coosa River into Old Alabama and headed west while nearly two thousand Lower Creek Coweta and Cusseta tribespeople left Cusseta town in Chambers County. Over a hundred truculent rebel Creeks emerged from hiding and joined this last party after it got underway. Simultaneously, the large contingent of Indians from Talladega headed north to Gunter's Landing on the Tennessee, where the two thousand Creeks who had been living near the Cherokees in DeKalb, Benton and Cherokee counties joined with them in crossing the river and marching on to Memphis. Presumably, this host of Creek refugees from the Cherokee country also included some Creeks recently removed from among the Cherokees in north Georgia. A month after this grand procession of Creeks crossed the Tennessee, another removal party from Talladega, consisting of 2,330 individuals, followed along the same path to Gunter's Landing and on to the Mississippi. This was the last group of the 14,609 Creeks who left Alabama before the end of 1836. An army officer conducted each of the removal parties west and the Alabama Emigrating Company supplied food, wagons, and when necessary, steamboat transportation for the Indian travelers. This company, which included Thomas Woodward, William Walker and some of the more infamous land speculators and members of the J. C. Watson land

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[29] "The Creeks against the Seminoles," *Columbus Herald*, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 13 September 1836, p.3.

company, charged the government $28.50 for each Creek emigrant. Even after the natives left Alabama, these men continued to profit at their expense.[30]

The exodus from the lands of the old Creek Nation was a terrible experience for the Indians. The "squalid, forlorn and miserable" Tuckabatchees left their homes reluctantly "under the influence of deep melancholy and deep dejection." Another party of Indians so loved their country that on moving they "carried with them every article they could lay their hands on that they ever owned, whether of any value or not, as keepsakes, such as old irons, broken jugs, jars &c." Other Creeks tore down their cabins so the whites could not use them and cut down the fruit trees growing over the graves of their children so the whites could not enjoy the produce of their labors and their sorrows. A few Indians lingered behind the moving parties to meditate alone among the deserted towns, to touch the rocks and trees one last time, and to bid a final farewell to the fields and streams of Alabama. Some old people determined not to leave at all. They took up posts on the high hills where they sat gazing out on their ancient homeland until they starved to death.[31]

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[30] Angie Debo, *The Road to Disappearance* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), p. 106; Harris to Poinsett, Secretary of War, War Department, 5 February 1838, *ASP: MA*, 7: 952; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 161-163, 167; "Creeks in Cherokee," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 9 August 1836, pp. 2-3; "On Sunday last," ibid., 23 August 1836, p. 3; Jesup to Harris, Tallassee, 21 August 1836, Creek Emigration (M234, Reel 237); "Removal of the Creeks," *Columbus Sentinel*, 16 August 1836, *reprinted in Milledgeville Federal Union*, 23 August 1836, p. 3; Young, *Redskins*, p. 90. The Creek removal camp in the Cherokee section of Alabama was situated on Town Creek in the vicinity of Gunter's Landing on the Tennessee River. General Andrew Moore to Clay, Claysville, 15 August 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Moore to Clay, Camp Springs, 22 August 1836, ibid.

[31] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 162; Cherry, "Opelika," p. 406; Motte, *Journey*, p. 254, no. 3.

Unfortunately, some whites, usually the rougher element of society, made the ordeal much worse for the Creeks; they saw the removal as a joyous spectacle and one last grand opportunity to torment and exploit the natives. Lieutenant J. T. Sprague of the United States Marines, the man Jesup charged with the task of removing the Coweta and Cusseta Creeks, reported that "a large number of whitemen were prowling about" his emigrating party, robbing the natives of "their horses and cattle and carrying among them liquors which kept up an alarming rate of intoxication." Another observer watched a party of Creeks making their way over the Coosa River, and recounted that "some low-down white men stood on the bank and shot the dogs of the Indians as they were swimming across." This observer also "saw many an Indian shed tears as his dog was killed."[32]

However, other whites deplored the mistreatment of the Indians and showed pity and compassion for their red neighbors. Whitney Anthony, a local historian, never forgave General Nelson, the officer who marched the Creeks out of Cherokee County, for executing an Indian who disobeyed one of his orders. In Macon County, some whites held a dance for their red neighbors the day before they were to depart for the West. In Talladega County, Melton Lewis, a prominent white citizen, married an Indian woman, packed up his possessions, and left Alabama with her people. Other white men with Creek wives followed his lead. On the other hand, some whites, like Wiley Williams of Marion County, Georgia, attempted to shelter those Indians who wished to sever their tribal ties, remain in the country of their birth, live with whites, and work for wages. Williams employed a number of Yuchis on his plantation and resisted attempts by some of his white neighbors to send them away. Finally, Governor Schley ordered Williams to deliver his Indians to Fort Mitchell for removal, and the county authorities

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[32] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 167; Anthony, "Cherokee County," p. 42.

placed the planter on trial for violating the state law prohibiting Creek Indians from living in Georgia. Meanwhile, all over the old Creek country respectable whites watched sadly as the natives passed, and like the citizens of Tuscaloosa, "expressed many a heartfelt regret . . . at the necessity which compelled us to remove them to the far West." Undoubtedly, some of this sympathy for the Creeks stemmed from the fact that they had contact with whites for a long period of time and consequently resembled the whites in many respects. Besides the obvious light skin color of many emigrating Creeks, a correspondent for the *New York Observer* reported that the travelers consisted of "all ages, sexes, and sizes, and of all the varieties of human intellect and condition, from the civilized and tenderly nourished matron and misses, to the wild savage, and the poorest of the poor." Certainly northerners would have applied this description equally well to all the Alabamians the Creeks left behind.[33]

Unfortunately, most sympathetic whites refused to take personal responsibility for what had happened. They knew the removal was a tragedy but they believed it was necessary to preserve the "doomed Red man," who tended to adopt the vices of white civilization but not its virtues. The respectables could not admit that removal was simply a product of their own expansionistic and acquisitive culture, particularly their desire to achieve wealth through the increased production of cotton. In fact, they seemed strangely detached from the whole process, as evidenced by one writer in the

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[33] Alexander Nunn, *Yesterdays in Loachapoka and Communities Nearby* (Alexander City, Alabama: Outlook Homecoming Association), p. 96; Anthony, "Cherokee County," p. 42; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 162; Nell Hart Orr, "A History of Lafayette, Alabama 1833-1933," (Master's thesis, Auburn University, 1950), p. 16; "Wiley Williams to Editors," *Columbus Enquirer*, 4 August 1836, p. 2; "Letter to the Editors," Hamburgh, 8 August 1836, ibid., 11 August 1836, p. 2; "The Citizens of Marion County vs. Williams and his Uchee Indians," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 7 July 1836, p. 3; "Letter from Little Rock," 25 December 1836, printed in *New York Observer*, 11 February 1837, p. 4.

Mobile Commercial Register. His description of the Creek removal was echoed by many presses across the South.

> This spectacle of a moving people, could not be more affecting. . . . We gaze as upon a great drama, in which we are less actors than spectators, wherein the fortunes of millions have been guided, upon principles not yet developed to our understanding,--full of obscure judgments, and incomprehensible dispensations of Providence, moving kingdoms and states as by the power of an unseen but irresistible and acknowledged Destiny.

Insofar as respectable whites did feel guilty about what had happened, they were able to project this guilt onto the speculators and roughs who were more directly involved in exploiting the Creeks and taking their land. Perhaps this fact explains the high level of vituperation against the speculators and liquor dealers in the months following the Creek uprising. In fact, this same writer in the *Commercial Register* called for punishment of the speculators, and a reversal of their schemes, to "redeem the character of our people" and "carry some comfort to the Creek in the farthest wilds of Arkansas." Respectable whites also called for financial compensation for the Creeks, believing like any commercial people, that they could reduce native lives and suffering to a dollar amount and then make satisfactory restitution without ever realizing the real root of the problem.[34]

But to their credit, most whites never glorified or mythologized the Creek war and removal as victors often do in such circumstances. The early county historians, men like Whitney Anthony and F. L. Cherry, told the story as it actually happened; and while they did see a certain inevitability in the triumph of their own Christian civilization, they tended to regard sinful whites, not the Indians, as the greatest opponents of that

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[34] "From the Commercial Register," reprinted in *Tallahassee Floridian*, 30 July 1836, p. 3; Rogin, *Fathers and Children*, p. 243.

civilization. In the process of describing the growth of their respective communities, they pictured white speculators, faro dealers, horse thieves, and drunks as the real enemies, not the native Creeks. Furthermore, such Indian corruption as they observed, they blamed on members of their own race. As one aristocratic young writer in Irwinton observed: "The problem with the Indians was that they tended to associate with lower class whites." Obviously, then, the continuing conflicts among the whites themselves in the aftermath of the Creek rebellion and removal reveals that these events are not explainable in the simple, traditional context of white versus red.[35]

But no matter what the contentious whites in Alabama and Georgia thought of one another, they were all relieved to be free of Indian warfare. General Jesup was also relieved. Having set the mass exodus of Creeks in motion, he once again declared the Creek war officially ended and turned to the task of defeating the Seminoles. In early October, he marched his regular troops out of the Alabama interior and encamped them around Fort Mitchell. Then, when the steamboats that had taken the Creek regiment to Tampa Bay returned, these men sailed off to Florida as well. General Jesup traveled not far behind and assumed command of the Seminole War from John Call, the governor of the Florida Territory. Now it appeared peace had come to New Alabama at last. There were no more war whoops or gunshots, and by December much of the argument between the white citizens had died away. Finally, the whites looked forward to developing the rich country they had acquired from the Creeks.[36]

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[35] Anthony, "Cherokee County," p. 42; Mattie Thomas Thompson, *History of Barbour County*, Alabama (Eufaula: 1939), p. 49; Typical of all the early Alabama historians, Wellington Vandiver called Indian removal "one of the darkest tragedies that ever stained the pages of the history of the United States government, or sullied the reputation of the American people" (Wellington Vandiver, "Pioneer Talladega, Its Minutes and Memories," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 16, no. 1(Spring, 1954): 63.

[36] Orr, "Lafayette," p. 15.

Unfortunately, the late summer and fall of 1836 was but the lull in the eye of the storm as far as the Second Creek War was concerned. The whites would soon discover that that conflict was not finished. In fact, the "spectators" of the "great drama" of the Creek war and removal would see several more acts before the final curtain fell.

Chapter 7

The War Revives: New Alabama, 1837

The months of peace following the federal operation against the Lower Creeks, coupled with the removal of so many Indians during the fall of 1836, stimulated a new rush of whites into New Alabama. Many of these people were returning settlers, those who could afford to rebuild destroyed homes, replace stolen property, and start afresh. However, many more of these settlers were new arrivals, who purchased property from the land companies or from earlier residents. In some cases the original settlers sold because they could not afford to return to Alabama; others, however, sold because the new immigration drove up land prices. These individuals made a profit by selling their farms and plantations and then moved farther west to start again.[1]

Newspapers promoted the new immigration by praising the potential productivity of the country and advertising the towns of Montgomery, Wetumpka, Columbus, and Irwinton as ideal places for the marketing and shipment of cotton and other agricultural products. In turn, these towns began to grow as never before owing to a new influx of merchants and others coming to profit in a developing country. The growth of Irwinton was the most dramatic. During the late months of 1836 and early 1837, a number of wealthy cotton planters from Virginia, the Carolinas, and Old Alabama moved in to set up operations on the fertile lands bordering the Hatchechubbee, Cowikee, and Barbour Creeks. Some of these planters also built permanent residences in Irwinton. At the same time, brick stores began to appear along

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[1] F.L. Cherry, "The History of Opelika and Her Agricultural Tributary Territory, Embracing More Particularly Lee and Russell Counties, from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Date," *The Alabama Historical Quarterly* 15, nos. 2-4 (1953): 412, 526-27.

the town's streets. In addition, the Alabama Assembly granted charters for the establishment of male and female academies in the town, and the State of Georgia granted a charter to the Irwinton Bridge Company to build a structure across the Chattahoochee. Another company constructed an expensive race track for the town, and Mr. W.G.M. Davis started the community's first newspaper, a weekly, *The Irwinton Herald.* Thus what had been a little frontier outpost on the Chattahoochee began to take on the trappings of an aristocratic cotton port, a place that would produce in time more than its share of Alabama governors and other wealthy and influential people.[2]

Certainly, the white citizens of New Alabama were optimistic about their future, but they still feared Indians and believed that the federal operation of the summer had left much business unfinished. Perhaps four thousand Creeks remained in Alabama, most of them living in two removal camps in Macon County--one on the county's western border at Polecat Springs and the other twenty miles east at Echo Harjo's town bordering the Big Swamp. These camps contained the families and townspeople of the 776 Creek warriors serving against the Seminoles under the direction of Jim Boy, Paddy Carr, and Echo Harjo. According to their original agreement with General Jesup, these warriors were to stay in Florida only until February 1, 1837. Then they would return to Alabama, settle their business affairs, and immediately emigrate west with their families and friends. Unfortunately, Jesup's war against the Seminoles did not go as well as he planned, and he decided to extend the enlistments of his Creek allies for several months rather than undertaking the expense of raising a sufficient number of white troops to

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[2] Harry Philpot Owens, "A History of Eufaula, Alabama 1832-1882" (Master's thesis, Auburn University, 1963), pp. 11,19, 27, 34; J.A.B. Beeson, *History of Eufaula, Alabama, The Bluff City of the Chattahoochee* (1875; reprint ed. Spartanburg, S.C: The Reprint Company, 1976), pp. 13-14; "Irwinton, Barbour County, Alabama," *Columbus Enquirer*, 9 February 1836, p. 2.

replace them. At the same time, Jesup promised his warriors that their families would not be sent west without them. They would remain in Alabama, waiting. Many of New Alabama's whites never supported this plan. They believed that New Alabama would never know peace and develop its full economic potential until all the Creeks were removed, and they could not understand why Jesup had not completed the task in the late summer and fall when he sent the great majority of natives on their way to the Western Territory.[3]

Worse, Jesup had declared victory in the Second Creek War too soon. He had failed to subdue and remove all of New Alabama's rebel Creeks, and this failure would have tragic consequences. White settlers noticed that the federal removal camps grew in size in the late months of 1836, and they believed that as many as four hundred hostile Creek warriors had come out of the swamps with the departure of the troops and moved into the camps to feed at government expense. Even more alarming, Indians continued to slaughter the whites' cattle. The frightened settlers became convinced that the removal camps must be closed and the last of the Creeks removed from the state. Otherwise, the natives might launch another attack on New Alabama's farmers and planters and cause them to lose yet another year's crop. But again, there was no general consensus of opinion among the whites in Alabama. Some Old Alabamians, as well as the federal officers who directed the removal camps, believed that the settlers were persecuting the friendly Indians who lived in these camps. They saw New Alabama's militiamen as the real aggressors and troublemakers, men who were merely looking for any excuse to strip the friendly Creeks of their last possessions before driving them from

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[3] Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), pp. 179-80. Four hundred more friendly Creeks lived around Fort Mitchell. "Creek Indians," *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 17 January 1837, p. 3.

the state. In the end, however, the settlers prevailed. After the events of the previous summer, neither Governor Clay nor President Van Buren could afford to tell the settlers they were overreacting. These leaders acquiesced and let the militiamen move the camps out of New Alabama before Jesup's warriors returned from Florida. In doing so, they broke Jesup's pledge to his warriors and their families.[4]

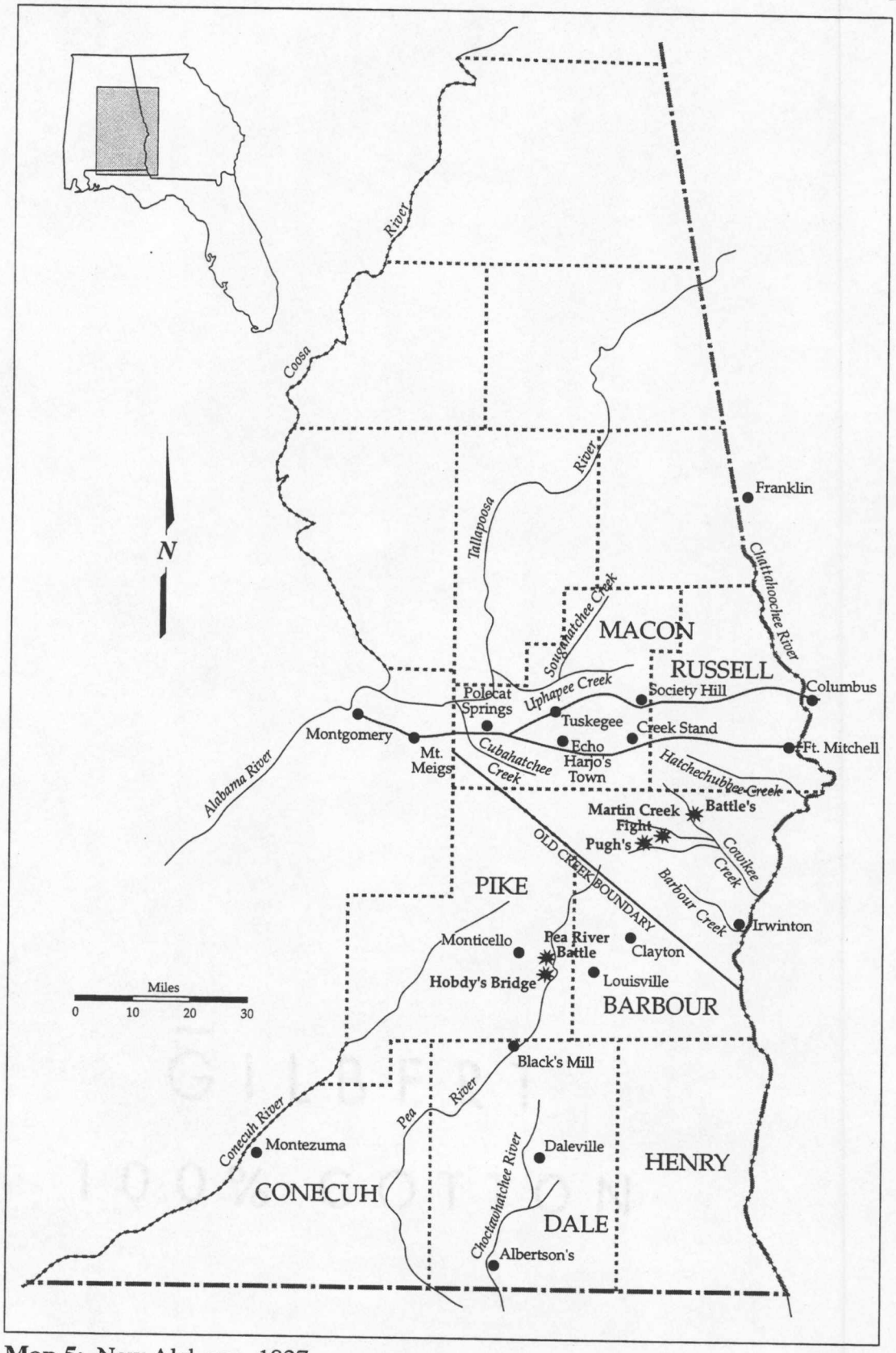
Even worse, the assault on the camps was counterproductive. In fact, it reignited the Second Creek War in New Alabama. The militiamen committed atrocities which drove even friendly Creeks out of the camps and back into the swamps. There they joined groups of rebel Creeks who had been hiding out since Jesup's army marched through the country. Together these people set out for West Florida, determined to resist removal at all costs. But Alabama's troops would not let them go in peace. They tracked down and attacked the Indians, and the natives murdered whites in return. Whereas before the natives had taken the aggressive role, and the Georgians had done most of the fighting against them; now, in the third phase of the conflict, Alabama militiamen and volunteers took the whip hand in driving the war and engaged the Creeks in numerous engagements and a couple of bloody battles. In the process, many combatants died. Furthermore, women and children on both sides fell in the fight that raged through the southern counties of Alabama during the winter and spring of 1837 (Map 5).

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The trouble began in early December of 1836 when Marine Lieutenant John G. Reynolds, director of the Creek camp at Polecat Springs, issued a pass to one of his

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[4] Ibid.



Map 5: New Alabama, 1837.

charges. This pass allowed the man to return to land he once owned on Sougahatchee Creek to collect his cattle and move them closer to the removal camp. He was engaged in this task when a gang of whites murdered him. Certainly there was no justification for this crime, but it might be explained by the fact that the Sougahatchee had been the home of the rebel party among the Tallassee Creeks. Furthermore, that section of Macon County between the Sougahatchee and Ephapee creeks contained few settlers, and the whites believed that some of the Tallassee rebels still haunted this wilderness area. The murderers may have thought the man from Reynolds's camp was one of these hostile Creeks. On hearing of the crime, Reynolds's commanding officer at Fort Mitchell directed the Lieutenant to secure testimony and have the perpetrators apprehended by the civil authorities. The officer even vowed to send federal troops to help Alabama officials capture the murderers if necessary. However, it does not appear the killers ever came before the bar of justice.[5]

The Creeks in Reynolds' camp did not retaliate for the murder, but the whites soon suffered for the killing in another quarter of New Alabama. On the afternoon of December 29, a half-dozen warriors used a horse lot fence to shield their advance on the home of Dr. Cullen Battle, a Barbour County planter who lived on the north fork of Cowikee Creek between Fort Mitchell and Irwinton. The Creeks approached to within twenty-five yards of the dwelling when a servant girl saw them and gave the alarm.

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[5] J.M. Washington to Reynolds, Ft. Mitchell, 18 December 1836, Governor Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Reynolds to Clay, 3 January 1837, ibid. The Tallassee offshoot villages of Sougahatchee and Loachapoka sat along the banks of Sougahatchee Creek. Volunteer troops from Chambers County and a mixed force of whites and friendly Creeks under Opothleyahola attacked the inhabitants of these villages shortly after the outbreak of war in May of 1836. One fearful settler reported to Clay that "those Indians who have been raised on Lockupokee creek [Sougahatchee Creek] are the most hostile of any in the nation." John J. Harper to Clay, Macon County, 28 January 1836, ibid.

Battle fled from the house with the Indians firing their guns at him as he ran. He left the warriors in possession of his home and smokehouse, which contained the meat of fifty-one hogs recently slaughtered. They looted the plantation, shot one of Battle's field hands to death, and then burned all the buildings save the slave cabins to the ground. Battle reported the news to his neighbors; and they fled south toward Irwinton in a panic, convinced that the rebel Creeks were about to launch a new series of raids. The panic soon spread throughout Russell and Barbour counties.[6]

Two days after the attack a company of men from Battle's neighborhood, along with another company from Irwinton, set out from the plantation in pursuit of the Indians. The men found that herds of mules, cattle and hogs had obliterated the warriors' trail but they "believed" that their quarry had proceeded toward the friendly Creek camps in Macon County. Consequently, they struck out in that direction, and after a ride of approximately twenty-five miles, arrived at the camp at Echo Harjo's town. This town, commanded by Lieutenant T. P. Sloan, sat along the north side of the Federal Road and contained houses "as good as any Indian ever builds." Its residents numbered eleven or twelve hundred souls, over two hundred of them warriors. The settlers called on Lieutenant Sloan to inquire into his management of the place and were shocked to find that he exercised hardly any control over his charges. He issued some food to the families every four days, but for the most part, the Indians came and went as they pleased with no troops to restrain them. Furthermore, they had guns, ammunition, and plenty of money, and often strayed to grog shops where they "drank as much as they pleased."

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[6] Page to Harris, Fort Mitchell, 30 December 1837, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, Creek Agency Emigration (M234, Reel 237), RG 75, National Archives; Colonel John Currie, 42nd Regiment Alabama Militia, to Clay, Irwinton, 31 December 1836, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Page to Clay, Fort Mitchell, 3 January 1837, ibid.; "Indian Difficulties," *Columbus Enquirer*, 19 January 1837, p. 2.

The settlers informed Sloan of their intention to search his camp for hostile Indians, but when the lieutenant warned them that they might scare the Creeks away from the town and scatter them in the woods, the white men desisted and returned to their homes in an angry mood.[7]

The leader of the expedition, Dr. Levi T. Wellborn--relative of the land buyer, William Wellborn--wrote an account of his adventure for the *Columbus Enquirer* and complained again about the treatment of the New Alabama settlers at the hands of the state and federal governments. He contended that the authorities had ignored the settlers' pleas for help in the days preceding the war, and, as a result, the Indians had plundered them to the point of poverty. And now, while farmers and planters worked to rebuild their homes and struggled to survive, the Indians, well-fed and unregulated by the government, were again plotting their ruin. Wellborn concluded that only the complete removal of the Creeks would restore peace to New Alabama, and he threatened that if the government did not act, the settlers would take matters into their own hands and give the Indians "a quietas." The editor of the *Enquirer*, ever ready to support the interests of settlers and land buyers, as well as condemn the policies of Union Party men, weighed in on Wellborn's side. Once again attacking Alabama's governor, he asked: "What is that poor lump of *Clay* about, that he does not order out the militia of the State and arrest or prevent the flow of blood?" Then he went after the new administration in Washington with the comment that "The election of Van Buren is now over, and it is sincerely hoped that the powers that be will turn their attention, at least for a time, from the villainous scenes of an electioneering campaign, to the protection of our

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[7] Ibid.

suffering countrymen. *Remove* these Indians forthwith, is and ought to be the watchword."[8]

Throughout the month of January, individual settlers and citizens' committees assailed Governor Clay with much the same message. They claimed that numerous rebel warriors had emerged from hiding and gone into the removal camps since Jesup and his troops departed for Florida. The settlers also stated that they had continued to lose livestock to the Indians, and they feared the residents of the camps would now begin to murder them and destroy their property all over again. They claimed they could not afford to lose another season's crop, yet they could not protect their frightened women and children and farm at the same time. Consequently, the petitioners declared that Clay must take action to save them. They wanted the governor to consolidate immediately all the Creeks in a single camp beyond the borders of New Alabama, raise troops to guard the Indians, disarm all the warriors, and then remove the natives from the state as soon as possible. Furthermore, the settlers believed they had the right to demand action, because Clay had been tardy in assisting them before and Jesup had promised them that his operations of the summer had ended the Creek rebellion. Then, just as Wellborn had done, the settlers and citizens' committees closed their letters with the threat that if Clay did not act, they would take matters into their own hands. In a resolution sent to both the Secretary of War and the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, some residents of Russell County claimed the right to put to death "every male Indian" caught outside the bounds of the removal camps.[9]

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Citizens to Clay, Creek Nation, 2 January 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Committee to Clay, 4 January 1837, Irwinton, ibid.; Jno. Clark to Clay, Montgomery, 4 January 1837, ibid.; Feagin to Clay, Unknown Location, 10 January 1837, ibid; Lawson J. Keener to Clay, Creek Nation, 11 January 1837, ibid; Jno. Clark to Clay, Tuscaloosa, 12 January 1837, ibid; "Indian Disturbances," *Columbus Enquirer*,

However, not everyone in New Alabama was so quick to point the finger of blame at the camps. The removal superintendent, Captain Page, conducted his own investigation of the Battle affair and discovered the identities of two of the warriors involved. These men had entered one of the slave cabins to get fire to burn down the plantation house. A sick black woman lay on a bed in the room. For a moment, the warriors looked her right in the face and laughed. She identified them to Page as Yuchi Charley and Lame John, men she had seen almost every day for two years prior to the war. Page knew these men as well; and after consultation with his Creek informants, he concluded that they had never been in any of the removal camps. He believed that they had returned only recently from the hard fighting and starving times in Florida. Page relayed his findings to C. A. Harris, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, so as "to do away the suspicion that rests upon the friendly Indians, and that the *guilty* may be punished." Nevertheless, Page took steps to protect the settlers from future depredations. He mustered two companies of volunteer troops into the federal service, stationing one at Echo Harjo's town and the other at the Hatchechubbee Swamp below Fort Mitchell.[10]

Governor Clay could not act as swiftly. The state legislature had adjourned for the winter without making an appropriation of funds the governor could use to raise and pay troops. However, Clay was not entirely convinced a call up of state troops was necessary. Given the limited extent of current Indian depredations, he believed the citizens of the affected counties had the power to defend themselves. In response to a petition from the citizens of Irwinton, he suggested that in the event of further outrages

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19 January 1837, p. 2.

[10] Page to Harris, 15 January 1837, U.S. Congress, *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, Vol. 7 (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1861), pp. 954-55.

the citizens should promptly assemble, pursue, and punish the Indians. That, according to the governor, would "condure more to their safety than the troops which have been ordered into service." Clay then informed Russell County residents that their county sheriff and his deputies had the necessary power to deal with Indians. He also expressed surprise and dismay at the fact that Russell County, the scene of most of the Indian disturbances in New Alabama, still had no organized militia. Nevertheless, Clay did believe, like his petitioners, that all the remaining Creeks should leave Alabama for the good of the state and themselves. He asked George Whitman and the other members of the emigration company to remove the Creeks as soon as possible. He also directed Whitman, commander of a volunteer company called the Montgomery Guards, to offer the services of his troops to Captain Page at Fort Mitchell.[11]

Van Buren did even more. Obviously not wishing to repeat Jackson's mistake of failing to send troops into New Alabama in time to prevent a war with the Creeks, the new president ordered Clay to call up a whole battalion of volunteers for service in the old Creek Nation. Clay issued the call on January 20, and by the second week of February, Captain Page had fulfilled the quota, mustering into service four companies of mounted volunteers and one company of infantry. These volunteers then elected Colonel William Wellborn of Irwinton as their commanding officer and Major Benjamin Young as the second-in-command. Page also accepted two companies of Georgians into the service, and these companies stationed themselves on the east bank of the

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[11] Clay to Commanding Officer, Fort Mitchell, Huntsville, 14 January 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Clay to Jno. Clark, Huntsville, 14 January 1837, ibid.; Clay to Captain George Whitman, Huntsville, 14 January 1837, ibid.; Clay to Irwinton Committee, Tuscaloosa, 31 January 1837, ibid.; Clay to Butler, Tuscaloosa, 2 February 1837, ibid.

Chattahoochee to protect the settlers on the Georgia frontier should any of the Creeks attempt once again to cross the river and march toward the Seminole country.[12]

At this point it appeared that the authorities might be overreacting to the Battle incident. In fact, George Whitman, the removal contractor and member of Wellborn's battalion, was quite skeptical of the furor surrounding the Battle attack and other alleged depredations by the Creeks. Reflecting the animosity some Old Alabama residents felt for all the Georgians colonizing New Alabama, Whitman informed Governor Clay that he had heard from a recent traveler through the Creek country that all the excitement was "a humbug--and another Georgia Trick." He went on to say that the Georgians "could not live without a disturbance with the Indians and when they have [to] I do not know what they will do for a substitute." However, the rebel Creeks soon justified all the precautions the authorities had taken.[13]

On January 26 a party of perhaps sixty warriors invaded the plantation of one Lewis Pugh on the western end of Barbour County. They shot the overseer, Jacob Herron, from the top of a house, then killed Pugh and four or five of his slaves. The next day twenty white men went to the scene to survey the damage. They saw a few Indians milling about the plantation house and immediately opened fire on them. At that point the larger body of Creeks emerged and drove the whites off, killing two of them in the process. The Indians then left Pugh's place and moved toward the headwaters of the middle prong of Cowikee Creek. In the process they burned the

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[12] Clay to Brigadier General Thomas B. Scott, Commanding the 5th Division, Alabama Militia, Lowndes County, Tuscaloosa, 20 January 1837, ibid.; Clay to Page, Huntsville, 20 January 1837, ibid.; Spencer George to Clay, Fort Mitchell., 27 January 1837, ibid.; Clay to Irwinton Committee, 31 January 1837, ibid.; Page to Clay, Fort Mitchell, 11 February 1837, ibid.; Page to Clay, Fort Mitchell, 12 February 1837, ibid.

[13] Whitman to Clay, Montgomery, 22 January 1837, ibid.

homes of two settlers named Martin and Murphy and also destroyed a store. By that time, Colonel Wellborn and twenty-one of his Barbour Rangers had taken up the chase. On January 28, they overtook the warriors in a swamp at the intersection of Martin's Creek and the Cowikee. The ensuing fight raged for thirty minutes before Wellborn ordered a retreat, giving way to the Creeks' superior numbers. In fact, one soldier declared that he was "run to the eye-brows" to get away from the pursuing Indians. The Rangers lost one man killed, First Lieutenant Patterson of Irwinton. Four or five others suffered wounds, including Colonel Wellborn, who lost the tip of his forefinger to a musket ball. Second Lieutenant Cowan, also of Irwinton, lost an arm in the affray.[14]

News of the Pugh attack and the Battle of Martin's Creek caused many settlers in the southern counties of New Alabama to flee their homes and take up residence in forts scattered about the countryside. It also raised a new round of protests from the states' rights camp. The *Columbus Enquirer* proclaimed that the New Alabama settlers could no longer look to "Granny Clay" and the "General Government" for support, and predicted that the Georgians would have to fly to the rescue and salvage the situation as they had done the previous summer. One of Barbour County's Union Democrats, Charles Lewis, wrote Clay that his opponents in the area were actually withholding information from the governor so they could continue to curse him for his inactivity. Lewis begged Clay to travel to the community of Clayton, Barbour's county seat, to take charge of the situation, saying that "you can do more at this moment to serve the Sate and your self by

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[14] John L. Hunter to Clay, Irwinton, 28 January 1837, ibid.; Lawson J. Keener to Clay, Clayton, 28 January 1837, ibid.; Goldthwaite to Clay, 31 January 1837, ibid.; Page to Clay, Fort Mitchell, 3 February 1837, ibid; "Indian Affairs," *Columbus Enquirer*, 9 February 1837, p. 2.

coming to this place than at any other time." The governor, however, chose to stay in Tuscaloosa.[15]

News of the latest disturbance also led the settlers to believe that they must force a tighter discipline on the Creek removal camps, whether or not Clay or the federal government approved. Captain Page contended that the warriors Wellborn fought were more hostiles recently returned from Florida, along with a few others from Echo Harjo's camp "that have been loitering in the edge of the swamps and would never come forward to be enrolled" for removal. Nevertheless, the settlers mistrusted all the Creeks in the camps; at the very least, they did not know which ones were friendly and which ones were not. Certainly they remembered that earlier in the year Neah Micco and other rebel Creeks had professed friendship for the whites at the same time they attacked them. Furthermore, Colonel Wellborn and others mistrusted the federal officers in charge of the camps. They believed that these men, either knowingly or unknowingly, were feeding large numbers of rebel Creeks living near the camps. Consequently, the settlers decided to tolerate the situation no longer. They would place all the Creeks in camp under guard until the government removed them from Alabama.[16]

Interestingly, the Georgians made the first move on the camps. On receiving word of the Battle of Martin's Creek, Major Henry W. Jernigan, hero of the Chickasawhatchee fight, quickly assembled a company of men and crossed the Chattahoochee below Irwinton to assist Wellborn in tracking down the Indians. He joined the colonel and another company of Georgians from the town of Franklin at Martin's plantation, and together the three companies began to search for the trail of the

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[15] Lewis to Clay, Clayton, 3 February 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; "Indian Affairs," *Columbus Enquirer*, 9 February 1837, p. 2.

[16] Ibid.

enemy. Captain Page would later report that the tracks of the warriors who left Martin's Creek led northeast toward Fort Mitchell, but Wellborn and Jernigan chose to follow yet another trail. They discovered fresher tracks, assumed they were made by hostile Creeks, and followed them to the northwest, in the direction of the removal camp at Echo Harjo's town. They did not follow the trail directly to the camp, however, but "decided" that the Indians had either gone into the camp or were using the camp to "screen themselves from punishment" They stopped their pursuit at Creek Stand on the Federal Road, seven miles east of the camp, and sent a message to Lieutenant T.P. Stone, the federal officer in charge of the camp, asking that he come out to meet them. When Sloan arrived, Wellborn informed him that the troops wanted to move his camp "away from the dense swamps that surrounded it to a more elevated location where all communication with hostile and supposed friendly Indians could be cut off." Sloan, however, objected strenuously, saying that he knew the Creeks in his camp were friendly and harmless. Furthermore, he had already disarmed the sixty warriors presently in residence; forty-two others, who did not wish to give up their guns, had quit the camp and had not returned. Faced with this protest from a regular army officer, Wellborn dropped the idea of moving the camp and returned with his company to Barbour County. The Georgians, however, refused to let the matter rest. They elected Jernigan as their new commander and determined to carry out the original plan with the assistance of a rough and irregular company of men recently arrived from Russell County. Dr. E.E. Parks led this last company.[17]

According to Jernigan's account of the operation, his men surrounded the camp on February 5, and despite Sloan's outcries, herded the Indians toward the lieutenant's headquarters in the center of the camp. The troops caught ninety-two effective warriors

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[17] Ibid.

in their web, not the sixty Sloan had claimed. They also discovered forty guns and a good supply of ammunition, though Sloan had said his charges were unarmed. The troops held the Creeks at the headquarters overnight; the next day they marched the warriors north to Tuskegee, placing them in a strong stockade at Major Benjamin Young's cantonment on the New Road. They left the women, children, and old men with Sloan. That finished the task. Jernigan left Tuskegee and returned with his company to Georgia, stopping by Fort Mitchell long enough to explain to Captain Page what he had done. The removal supervisor, always a friend to the Georgians, approved the act, as did the *Columbus Enquirer*, which accused the regular army officers stationed at the camps of "indirectly conniving at the atrocities of the savages."[18]

Lieutenant Sloan told a different story in his report to General Jesup. He claimed that the troops pillaged the homes of the Indians and carried away property and money. They also held the Indians overnight with no provisions and few blankets to shield them from the inclement weather. Then, by placing so many of the Creek men in prison in Tuskegee, which they had no right to do, Jernigan's men left the removal camp largely unprotected from mobs of whites who began to take away the Indians' livestock--herds of horses, mules and ponies. Worse, some of the Georgia and Russell County volunteers who raided Reynolds's camp continued to move through the country committing depredations. After Jernigan dismissed them they moved down the Federal Road to Polecat Springs to intimidate the residents there. Along the way, they attacked the plantation of Anne Cornell, a well-known Creek woman. They took two free blacks and an Indian boy from her, presumably to enslave them, and then burned her buildings and fodder stacks. Indeed, Sloan's account of all this seems to reveal another reason, besides the security of the country, for the whites' move against the removal camps.

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[18] Ibid.

Some settlers obviously wanted the camps broken up and the Indians pushed out of Macon County so they could claim Indian property, perhaps even the land that some of the friendly Creeks still owned. In other words, the desire to exploit the Indians as a natural resource, the continued operation of the old Indian business, certainly explains some of the aggression toward the predominately friendly Indians of Macon County.[19]

Unfortunately, the drive against the camps, coupled with the economic exploitation that accompanied it, was counterproductive; rather than pacifying the Creeks, white aggression increased Creek hostility and ignited the second phase of the Second Creek War. Following Jernigan's operation, fights between small groups of whites and Creeks broke out in Macon County. Colonel Wellborn blamed this fighting on what he called Jernigan's premature move on Sloan's camp. According to Wellborn, the Georgian did not have enough men to surround Echo Harjo's town and capture all its inhabitants. Wellborn believed that Jernigan had flushed a considerable number of hostile warriors from the camp, and now those warriors were attacking local whites. On one point Wellborn was correct: Jernigan did not have enough men to for the job. Echo Harjo's town actually straggled along the outskirts of the Big Swamp for a distance of nine miles. It would have taken two or three regiments to corral the Indians scattered through that space. However, the colonel was wrong in thinking that many rebel

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[19] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 180-82. Some white residents of New Alabama may have wanted to drive the Creeks from the removal camps because they feared that these native would remain in the state for good if left to their own devices. The five-year trust period of the Cusseta Treaty was about to expire, and those Creeks who still held their land allotments could register their deeds in the county courts and become freeholders and citizens of the state of Alabama. As such, they could claim the right to vote and important legal protections from the state. Some whites certainly found this scenario unacceptable and moved to push the camp residents away. Elizabeth H. Yamaguchi, "Macon County, Alabama: Its Land and Its People from Pre-History to 1870" (Master's thesis, Auburn University, 1981), p. 224.

warriors escaped Jernigan's grasp. Most of the warriors Jernigan left behind were friendly; if they fought the whites, which some undoubtedly did, they probably did so to protect the property of their townspeople, or to keep the whites from capturing them and taking them to the Tuskegee stockade. Thus the move on Sloan's camp probably turned some friendly Creek warriors hostile, and rather than crippling the rebel party, Jernigan's action actually increased the numbers and strength of that group.[20]

Yet the whites would repeat the mistake. On February 4, the day before Jernigan entered Sloan's camp, Governor Clay, not knowing anything of the operation, took steps to "restore peace and safety" in New Alabama. He gave his adjutant and inspector general, John A. Campbell, a set of orders to transmit to the company commanders of the volunteer battalion recently called into the Creek service. Clay directed that the troops disarm all the Indians awaiting removal and place them in one camp under guard. The governor also instructed the troops not to permit the Creeks to roam from the camp they created, and any natives found outside the camp should be treated as hostiles. Shortly after the issuance of Clay's order, Captain Page disarmed the friendly Indians living around Fort Mitchell--Paddy Carr's followers--and enclosed them in pickets. He then directed Lieutenant Reynolds at the Polecat Springs camp to disarm all of his Indians, box their guns, and send them to Montgomery for shipment to the West. That done, Page ordered Major Young, stationed at Tuskegee, to take troops to Reynolds' camp and to erect a stockade to hold the camp's warriors until they could be removed

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[20] N.E. Brunson to Clay, Montgomery, 4 February 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Whitman to Clay, Montgomery, 7 February 1837, ibid.; Wellborn to Clay, Irwinton, 2 March 1837, ibid.; Alexander Nunn, ed., *Lee County and Her Forebearers* (Montgomery: Herf Jones, 1983), p. 298. The *Columbus Herald* reported that as many as two hundred warriors broke free from Sloan's camp when the whites approached. "From the *Columbus Herald*," 20 January 1837, reprinted in *Milledgeville Federal Union*, 24 January 1837, p. 3.

from the state. Despite Clay's order, Page determined that it would not be practical to concentrate all the Indians at Tuskegee.[21]

On February 19, Young and his troops arrived at Polecat Springs along with three other companies commanded by Colonel Wellborn, Captain Harrells and Dr. Parks. Parks's men were probably the ones who committed the thefts at Sloan's camp, and unlike the other troops, they had declined being mustered in to the federal service. They obviously resented federal authority and wanted to operate against the Indians unencumbered by any legal or moral restraints. They also had something to prove. The men of Russell County, always among the worst abusers of the Creeks, had been accused of cowardice during the summer war, of fleeing the country and allowing others to do their fighting for them. Now Parks and company wanted to salvage their tarnished reputations at the expense of the camp Indians. Captain Page realized this fact and tried to dissuade Parks from going to Polecat Springs. He also cautioned the Russell County men to watch their behavior if they did go. Unfortunately for the friendly Creeks at Polecat Springs, as well as the respectable white settlers of New Alabama, Parks' irregular company paid no attention to the captain.[22]

When the Alabama troops arrived at Reynolds's camp, the lieutenant already had the resident warriors assembled about his headquarters. Knowing they had done nothing wrong, the warriors, unafraid, "jumped upon logs and appeared quite amused, at the

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[21] Clay to Campbell, Tuscaloosa, 4 February 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Clay to Page, Tuscaloosa, 4 February 1837, ibid.; Clay to Colonel John Currie, Tuscaloosa, 21 February 1837, ibid.; Page to Clay, Fort Mitchell, 27 February 1837, ibid.

[22] Benjamin Young to Clay, Camp near Polecat Springs, 19 February 1837, ibid; Page to Clay, Fort Mitchell, 27 February 1837, ibid.; E.E. Park to A.P. Bagby, Ashton, Russell County, 18 April 1838, Governor Bagby's Militia Files, ADAH.

unnecessary measures adopted to make prisoners of them." Reynolds then called his roll, showing that all his male residents, save a few old men, were in attendance. Colonel Wellborn then took charge of the inmates and secured them under guard for the evening. At that point, Parks's men went to work. During the night they attacked the defenseless Indian homes. They stripped them of provisions, defiled the women, shot and wounded a young girl who resisted their advances, and murdered an inoffensive old man by shooting him and mashing his head to a paste with musket butts. This old man and many of the other molested Creeks belonged to Jim Boy's town. Unfortunately, Jim Boy's people suffered while he fought for the United States against the Seminoles in the wilds of Florida, something the Russell County roughs would not dare do.[23]

Deeply incensed at the atrocities perpetrated on Indian allies, and troubled by the fact that despite Page's order, many of the Alabama troops wanted to move his warriors to Tuskegee, Reynolds demanded that Wellborn protect them. As Reynolds stated, "he had taken me and the Warriors prisoners." The colonel agreed to listen to reason, and sat down with Reynolds to decide on a plan that would assure the safety of both Creeks and white settlers. Finally, they struck a deal. First, Wellborn agreed to disarm Parks's company both to pacify the Creeks and to restore their confidence in Reynolds. The Russell County men, however, soon left for home. Next, the colonel promised not to remove the Creek warriors from their families. However, Reynolds had to let the Alabama troops move all of his charges down the Federal Road to a new camp in the vicinity of Mount Meigs. This camp would be west of Line Creek, the border between Old and New Alabama, and away from the scene of recent clashes between

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[23] Young to Clay, Camp near Polecat Springs, 19 February 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; John Reynolds to Page, Near Polecat Springs, 19 February 1837, ibid.

whites and Indians. Reynolds informed the Indians that the move would take place in only two days. Consequently, the Creeks quickly began selling off their possessions to be ready.[24]

But again, the relocation of Lieutenant Reynolds's camp, the largest in Russell County, did little to bring peace to New Alabama. Settlers on the Black Belt prairie in the vicinity of the camp site continued to complain of rebel Creeks in the area and continued to clash with them along Cubahatchee Creek. However, some of the so-called hostile Creeks were friendly Creeks who had fled from Polecat Springs in the wake of the abuse they received from the whites. Beyond that, Governor Clay feared the reaction of Jesup's warriors in Florida, arguably the best fighting men in the Creek Nation. He asked Captain Page to send word to these men that the state of Alabama disapproved the outrages committed on their friends and relatives at the removal camps. He also ordered the state solicitor, G. D. Shortridge, to collect evidence for the prosecution of all those members of the Parks company who committed outrages on the Creeks. Shortridge, however, cautioned against such a move given "the established and bitter prejudices of the people of the new counties" against the "unfortunate" Creeks. The solicitor also stated that anyone attempting to prosecute the offenders "would be put down by the weight of public odium." Consequently, Clay backed down, concluding that under the circumstances a prosecution might not serve "the cause of public justice."[25]

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[24] Ibid.; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 180-82.

[25] Settlers to Clay, Prairies, Macon County, 6 March 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Clay to Page, Tuscaloosa, 7 March 1837, ibid.; G.D. Shortridge to Clay, Montgomery, 20 March 1837, ibid.; Clay to Shortridge, Tuscaloosa, 23 March 1837; Clay to Schley, Tuscaloosa, 23 March 1837, ibid.

But apparently Clay did believe that clearing the Creek camps would serve the cause of public justice, for he contended that breaking up the so-called friendly camps would deny the rebel Creeks "a source of subsistence, and of refuge, and hasten a termination of hostilities." As early as February 1, he wrote the War Department requesting the authority to remove the encamped Indians from Alabama, despite Jesup's promise that they could stay where they were until their warriors returned from Florida. In three weeks Clay had his reply. Joel Poinsett, the new secretary of war, ordered him to move all the Indians down the Alabama River to Mobile Point on the Gulf Coast. There they would await the return of their warriors from Florida before taking passage on steamboats to the mouth of the Mississippi and up that river to Arkansas. On receiving this good news, the governor ordered his volunteers to move the Creeks from Mount Meigs, Tuskegee, and Echo Harjo's town into another removal camp a mile east of Montgomery. By March 8 all the Creek emigrants had been transferred, and nine days later, 650 of them embarked for Mobile Point on the steamboat John Nelson. The next day 800 more Creeks left Montgomery on the Chippeway, and another 480 departed on the Bonnets O' Blue. A thousand more natives set off on March 20, and during the next week, all the remaining Indians headed down the Alabama River.[26]

This hasty removal afforded greedy whites their last opportunity to exploit the Creeks, one final chance to pursue the Indian business that had done so much to cause

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[26] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 184; Clay to Shortridge and Booth, Tuscaloosa, 24 February 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Clay to Page, Tuscaloosa, 7 March 1837, ibid.; Clay to Macon Citizens, Tuscaloosa, 13 March 1837, ibid; Major H. J. Wilson to Lieutenant John G. Wilson, Mobile Point, 13 March 1837, ibid.; Whitman to Clay, Montgomery, 18 March 1837, ibid; Clay to Jesup, Tuscaloosa, 30 March 1837, ibid. The War Department ordered Captain Page to accompany the Indians to Arkansas. In his absence, Colonel Wellborn assumed command of all troops in the field in the Old Creek Nation. Lieutenant Luther took command at Fort Mitchell. Page to Clay, Fort Mitchell, 4 March 1837, Ibid.

the war. The volunteer troops gave the Creeks little notice before marching them out of the camps, and during the move, thieves moved in to strip them of their possessions. At Echo Harjo's town, for example, the women, children and old ones had only thirty minutes to vacate the premises. Having no wagons to transport their property, they left it locked in Lieutenant Sloan's headquarters until the officer could send it along to them. Unfortunately, whites broke into the buildings and took almost everything of value. These thieves also stole the Indians' remaining livestock. In fact, the removal cost Sloan's charges "145 ponies, 60 head of cattle, 200 hogs, 100 bushels of corn, 100 beehives, cooking and farming utensils and crockery ware, 63 guns" and a goodly sum of money. Governor Clay may not have seen that he was not serving "public justice" by breaking up the removal camps, but James Belser of the *Montgomery Advertiser*, representing the more thoughtful residents of Old Alabama, did see the final result of the Indian business clearly. On observing the Creeks just prior to their departure from his town, he stated that "The spectacle exhibited by them is truly heart rending . . . while our citizens are rolling in ease and luxury, those who are natives of the country are in the most abject poverty, dependent for subsistence on the charity of the government."[27]

Furthermore, the clearing of the camps did not hasten the termination of hostilities as Clay had hoped. In fact, the opposite occurred. Macon County residents continued to complain of Indians in the swamps bordering the Black Belt prairie. Furthermore, they knew the full economic potential of this rich prairie could not be realized if Indians retarded white settlement. They called on Clay to raise even more troops to ferret out the intractable Creeks. But that was not the worst of the situation. The troop movements and removal of the camps stimulated another flight of several hundred, perhaps as many as a thousand, rebel Creeks and formerly friendly camp

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[27] Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 182-84.

escapees. However, these refugees did not run to the Chattahoochee and across southwest Georgia to the Seminole country in East Florida. Unlike the rebel migrants of the previous year, these Creeks knew no shelter could be found among the besieged Seminoles. Instead, they traveled due south towards West Florida, a region still largely uninhabited by whites where no war raged. There they hoped to find peace and security and to avoid removal to the West. The whites, however, were not content to let the Indians pass through southern Alabama unmolested. They now saw all refugee Creeks as a threat to their existence and determined to kill or capture for removal every native they could find. Thus the southern migration of refugee Creeks in the winter and spring of 1837 resulted in some of the bloodiest fighting of the Second Creek War.[28]

The migration actually began in January, if not before, with small parties of Creeks moving south by three distinct routes: one trail led from Macon County down the Conecuh River through Pike and Covington counties to the Florida line; a second trail, farther to the east, led from the headwaters of the Cowikee creeks in Russell and Barbour counties down the Pea River through Pike and Dale counties; and a third trail followed the high ground between the other two routes. The counties through which these trails passed were a part of Old Alabama, but they contained relatively few white inhabitants. In fact, Indians travelling these routes would pass near only three significant white settlements: Monticello in Pike County, Montezuma in Covington, and Daleville in Dale. The Creeks moved quietly along the outskirts of these settlements, trying to pass out of Alabama undetected. They did not molest white farmers or their property,

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[28] Citizens to Clay, Monticello, 24 February 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Brodnax to Clay, Camp McClendon, 2 March 1837, ibid.

though they did try to preserve the secrecy of their movements by killing the occasional unlucky white hunter who happened upon them in the woods.[29]

In February the situation changed. The Indian traffic through the southern border counties increased owing to the activity of white troops farther north. Now settlers in Dale, Covington, and Pike counties discovered an alarming number of tracks, and they determined to stop the Creeks from moving through their section of the state. Captain Jack Cooper of Louisville in Barbour County took the first step. On receiving word of a large party of Creeks coming down the Pea River trail, he gathered a company of one hundred men and on February 10 attacked the Indians at Hobdy's Bridge, eight miles east of Monticello. In the fight that followed the Creeks fired nails from their muskets, filling the swamp with screeching and howling noises which disconcerted the whites for a time. But in the end Cooper's men drove the Indians from their position, killing four or five. The remainder of the Creeks scattered and ran, leaving a considerable amount of plunder behind in their camp, including bolts of calico taken from the store near Martin's Creek. This cloth identified the Creeks Cooper fought as the same ones engaged by Wellborn two weeks before. The whites continued their pursuit of the Indians for two days and skirmished with them again at Black's Mill farther down the Pea. This time one of the whites died. The Indians then left the river and its swamps, ascended to higher ground, and escaped.[30]

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[29] Citizens to Clay, Monticello, 24 February 1837, ibid.

[30] Ibid.; Anne Kendrick Walker, *Backtracking in Barbour County; A Narrative of the Last Alabama Frontier* (Richmond, Virginia: The Dietz Press, 1941), pp. 48-50; Green Beauchamp, "Early Chronicles of Barbour County," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (Spring, 1971): 52-54; Margaret Pace Farmer, *History of Pike County, Alabama* (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, 1953), p. 11; Marian Bailey Brunson, *Pea River Reflections: Intimate Glimpses of Area Life During Two Centuries* (Tuscaloosa: Portals Press, 1975), p. 5.

On February 28, the flying Creeks retaliated for Cooper's attacks. They killed a Mrs. Albertson and her sister at the Albertson home on the east bank of the Choctawhatchee River, approximately fifty miles below Hobdy's Bridge. Subsequently, local settlers chased the Creeks into Florida and captured a woman and two boys. They placed their captives in the Daleville jail, a rustic round log structure, to await removal from the state. However, one moonlit night, a man, presumably Mr. Eli Albertson, husband of the deceased, sneaked up to the jail, stuck his gun barrel through one of the open spaces between the logs, and killed the woman. Now it was apparent that the migration of fugitive Creeks to West Florida would be a quiet affair no longer; the Second Creek War had begun in Alabama's southernmost counties.[31]

Following the Albertson killing, the residents of Dale County fought another skirmish with a party of two or three hundred passing Creeks, and found even more Indian sign on the trails. Greatly alarmed, community leaders decided it was time to notify Governor Clay and ask for his help. They wanted permission to form volunteer companies paid for by the state, and to station these troops at key points to intercept parties of Creek travelers. They explained that these troops were necessary because trying to assemble men and track down the Indians after some sighting or depredation occurred did not work. The Creeks always managed to elude pursuit no matter how large the white force. Anticipation and ambush were necessary to defeat the foe.

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[31] A. Warren to Clay, Greenville, 8 March 1837, Clay's Administrative Files-Creek War, ADAH; William Foster, Colonel Commanding 46th Regiment, to Clay, Daleville, 12 March 1837, ibid.; Clay to Wellborn, Tuscaloosa, 13 March 1837, ibid.; Brunson, *Pea River*, p. 5.; Val McGhee, *Claybank Memories: A History of Dale County, Alabama* (Ozark: Dale County Historical Society, 1989), pp. 18-19. Eli Albertson lived on the upper edge of the Broxton settlement east of the Choctawhatchee and between the present-day towns of Geneva and Daleville. Fred S. Watson, *Piney Woods Echoes: A History of Dale and Coffee Counties, Alabama* (Elba: Elba Clipper, 1949), pp.13-14.

Furthermore, the men justified their request on the grounds that now the frightened residents of their county were fleeing their farms, and if they did not plant in the spring, severe want would ensue. Also, Clay's petitioners believed that if the Creeks reached Florida they would only stay there until the Alabamians relaxed their guard. Then, as Indians always did, they would return to their "old haunts" in New Alabama and once again do harm to the whites. Finally, the citizens warned that the Seminole war was winding down, that Jesup would soon press the Florida Indians into submission, and when that happened, some Seminoles would escape to West Florida, unite with the refugee Creeks there, and together they would harass Alabama's border counties. Dale's citizens charged Clay with the responsibility of preventing this potential disaster by stopping the Creek flight.[32]

Clay was surprised. Obviously, he had underestimated the number of Indians still at large. Rather quickly after hearing of their movements, he devised a plan to bring them to bay. He charged Colonel Wellborn with the overall defense of the state's southern counties, and asked the colonel to supply him with a full report of the numbers and movements of both Alabama troops and fugitive Creeks. In addition, he ordered Wellborn to intercept southbound Creeks by stationing members of his battalion at appropriate points along the paths to West Florida. Then Clay ordered Captains Whitman and Young to scour the swamps bordering Macon County and drive any remaining Indian residents of those swamps down toward Wellborn's troops. The governor also authorized Colonel Foster to raise a new company to operate in Dale County and told Captain Whitman to repair to that county following his searches in

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[32] Citizens to Clay, Monticello, 24 February 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Warren to Clay, Greenville, 8 March 1837, ibid.; Foster to Clay, Daleville, 12 March 1837, ibid.

Macon. Whitman would then take charge of the defense of Dale and construct a fort there for storing arms and provisions. Finally, Clay insisted that his men push ahead with their assignments and kill or capture all the "straggling Creeks." He believed it was necessary to deal with the Indians before the leaves filled out in the spring. Otherwise, it would be impossible to find them in the dense swamp cover, and the Creek war would drag on for several more months.[33]

Clay also begged assistance from General Jesup, who had been conducting an aggressive campaign against the Seminoles. Throughout the winter of 1837, the general kept detachments of troops constantly in motion destroying native villages, cattle herds, and large stores of coontie--the root from which the Seminoles made their flour. Jesup's men also captured pony herds, killed Indians when they could, and took many more prisoners. In fact, the troops exerted so much pressure on the natives that Micanopy, the principal chief of the Seminoles, sued for peace. He gave himself up to Jesup along with other important chiefs, including Jumper, Alligator, Davey, and Negro Abraham. These leaders met with Jesup at Camp Dade on March 6, 1837, and signed a treaty whereby they agreed to cease hostilities and bring their followers to Tampa Bay by April 10 to board transports for the West. As part of this treaty, Jesup promised that the natives would not have to surrender the Seminole Negroes to the whites, and this provision, while unpopular with the Floridians, convinced many more Indians and blacks to move into the general's removal camps. Seeing this success, Governor Clay, and most other observers, thought that the Seminole War was finished. Consequently, Clay informed Jesup that the Second Creek War had recommended, that

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[33] Clay to Page, Tuscaloosa, 3 March 1837, ibid.; Clay to Wellborn, Tuscaloosa, 13 March 1837, ibid.; Clay to Warren, Tuscaloosa, 13 March 1837, ibid.; Clay to Young, Tuscaloosa, 13 March 1837, ibid.; Clay to Henry P. Holcomb, Tuscaloosa, 15 March 1837, ibid.; Clay to Foster, Tuscaloosa, 20 March 1837, ibid.

he was not pleased with the performance of the Alabama militiamen, and he wanted Jesup to release the battalion of Alabama volunteers serving in Florida so they could help subdue the fugitive Creeks in southern Alabama. The governor asked Jesup to ship the troops home by way of the Choctawhatchee River, which led from Choctawhatchee Bay on the Gulf Coast up into Alabama. Clay intended to order these seasoned soldiers to disembark from steamboats near the Alabama line, then march up the country toward Montgomery scouring the swamps for hidden Creeks as they went. However, the governor did not want the friendly Creek warriors to return to the state. He believed their presence would upset the citizens of the lower counties and lead to more violence. Despite Jesup's promise that the warriors could return to Alabama to settle their business affairs, Clay asked the general to send them directly to Mobile Point to join their families.[34]

Yet not everyone in the state agreed that military action was the way to rid the state of its aboriginal inhabitants. Captain Whitman conveniently used his duties an emigration agent to avoid further military service in southern Alabama, for he did not believe such service was necessary. In fact, he thought that the continued pursuit of the Creeks was only prolonging the removal process and continuing the war. Whitman and the other members of his Montgomery Guards contended that many of the fugitive Creeks in Macon County and elsewhere wanted to come into the removal camps, but the marches and countermarches of the Alabama troops were scaring them away. Whitman also implied that the Indians were now fighting for their own survival when placed under

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[34] John K. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1967), pp. 199-200; John T. Sprague, *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War* (1848; reprint ed., Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), pp. 166-67, 177-78; Clay to Jesup, Tuscaloosa, 30 March 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Clay to Warren, Tuscaloosa, 31 March 1837, ibid.

attack; no longer were they actively pursuing a war with the whites citizens of Alabama. Furthermore, Whitman's own experiences had taught him that searching for Indians in the swamps was useless. He likened the task to "chasing phantoms:" The whites almost never found the Indians, and when they did, the natives most often repelled their attacks. Whitman obviously believed it was in the state's best interests to leave the remaining Creeks alone. Furthermore, his Montgomery Guards were mostly businessmen, and given the poor economic conditions the nation was beginning to experience in 1837, these men wanted to get back to their banks and stores. Whitman's first lieutenant even announced that he would not return to the Creek service if ordered. Fortunately for him and the rest of the Montgomery Guards, Whitman's removal duties kept him occupied until their enlistments expired. They did not have to chase phantoms any longer.[35]

The argument over the best method to corral the Creek fugitives and remove them from the country would continue for the duration of the Second Creek War. Federal army officers and Indian agents would contend that peaceful coercion was the best policy. They wanted to send friendly Indians out to find the frightened fugitives and to persuade them to surrender themselves for removal with promises of food, clothing, and federal protection. White settlers, on the other hand, would continue to urge constant pursuit by armed troops as the only solution to the Indian problem. They wanted to either kill all the Creek fugitives or force them to give themselves up for removal. During the last years of the war, whites used both methods. However, in Alabama, in the early months of 1837, the more militant course prevailed, and resulted in one of the most bloody and decisive fights of the war.

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[35] Whitman to Wellborn, Montgomery, 15 March 1837, ibid.; Whitman to Clay, Montgomery, 18 March 1837, ibid.; Clay to Whitman, Tuscaloosa, 30 March 1837, ibid.; J.H. Means to Clay, Montgomery, 2 April 1837, ibid; Whitman to Clay, Montgomery, 17 April 1837, ibid.

The series of events leading to the Battle of Pea River began in mid-March when Colonel Wellborn learned that a number of Creeks had deserted the Indian camp at Montgomery just before the removal of the camp to Mobile Point. He believed that these Indians had joined the others in the Cubahatchee and Big swamps of Macon County. Consequently, he sent out a call for all off the companies of his battalion to join him at Stone's plantation near Creek Stand for a search and destroy mission. He examined the Cubahatchee first but found no Creeks. On March 20, he set out to attack a reported Indian camp in Big Swamp, though only seventy-two members of his battalion had joined him. En route, he happened upon the Indians attacking the plantation of one Mr. Ellison, and discovered that they had already burned the buildings as well as killing the overseer and one slave. Wellborn charged the Indians and ran them away. He then followed their "bloody trail" but failed to overtake them. In two days he gave up the search and returned to Stone's to await the arrival of the remainder of his troops.[36]

At that point, Wellborn received an express telling him that Captain Jones of the Barbour Rangers and Captain Morris of the Georgia volunteers had flushed a party of approximately three hundred Indians from their hiding place on the middle fork of Cowikee Creek. Now these officers and their companies were pursuing those Creeks to the west toward Pea River. Wellborn decided to join the chase. He left two companies under captains Brodnax and Boyd to protect the settlers of Macon County, then headed south to Pea River with a company of men under Captain Harrells. On reaching the headwaters of the river, Wellborn was able to track the Indians by the houses they left burning in their wake. On March 23, he arrived at the fork of Pea River and Pea Creek,

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[36] Warren to Clay, Macon County, 24 March 1837, ibid.; Wellborn to Clay, Irwinton, 6 April 1837, ibid.

where the Indians had set up camp in a swamp four miles above Hobdy's Bridge--the site of Captain Cooper's earlier battle with the Creeks. Captain Jones' company and the Georgia volunteers were already on the scene along with a company from Pike County under Captain White. In addition, two irregular companies of citizens "turned out on the occasion." Many of these citizens had come over to the river from Irwinton. Wellborn now commanded a little over two hundred men, and he determined to attack the Creek fugitives.[37]

On the morning of March 24, Wellborn divided his command in two parts for the assault. From a point below the Indian camp, the colonel sent approximately half of his men across the Pea with orders to march upriver to a point opposite the Indian position. There they were supposed to move into the swamp on the river's edge and open fire on the Creeks. By this means Wellborn hoped to draw the fugitive warriors out of their camp and toward the river, while he and the rest of his command crossed Pea Creek and marched up to invest the camp from the south. Apparently Wellborn hoped that once the warriors saw that he had captured their women, children, old people and supplies, they would lay down their arms and surrender.[38]

The plan did not work as expected. The warriors saw the white troops coming up the west bank of the river and crossed the stream to drive them away. The troops stood their ground for awhile, then broke and ran. Some of the whites scurried into the thickets to hide, others mounted their horses and fled all the way to Monticello, eight miles away. Even there they did not feel safe. Having chased the whites some two

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[37] Ibid.; Skinner and Booth to Clay, Irwinton, 25 March 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Thompson, *Barbour County*, pp. 63-65.

[38] Wellborn to Clay, Irwinton, 6 April 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Thompson, *Barbour County*, pp. 63-65; Walker, *Backtracking*, pp. 49-55; Beauchamp, "Chronicles," pp. 55-58.

miles, the Creek warriors started back for their camp in what must have been a joyous mood. Meanwhile, Wellborn was slow to reach the enemy camp, his men having to swim Pea Creek as well as wading through waist high swamp water and mud to reach the high ground on which the camp reposed. Then, when they finally came in sight of the camp, the Creek women put up "a most deafening shout" and alerted their men, who were able to rush back to the camp before Wellborn arrived. The two sides then commenced firing on one another across a lagoon that protected the camp to the east and south.[39]

The fight lasted nearly four hours, and Wellborn believed "but few battles in modern times have been more severe." The warriors fought fiercely, charging several times in an attempt to drive the whites back from the banks of the lagoon. Some fired bullets made from pewter plates melted down by their women. One of their rounds struck James H. Wellborn, the colonel's son, in the head, and he fell beside a small poplar tree. He writhed and moaned in agony for some time before he expired, and a fellow soldier crouching next to him said the sight made him feel that he "would just about as soon be at home." Undeterred by young James' death, and seeing that his troops were running out of ammunition, Colonel Wellborn ordered his own charge on the enemy's western flank near the river. This charge succeeded and the whites entered the Creek camp, where the fighting became hand to hand, with some of the Indian women joining the fray. Several of them surrounded one of the whites and he had to extricate himself from the trap with a Bowie knife. Finally the Indians broke and fled, at which point "the slaughter became unparalleled." The troops cut down men, women,

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[39] Wellborn to Clay, Irwinton, 6 April 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Thompson, *Barbour County*, pp. 63-65; Walker, *Backtracking*, pp. 49-55; Beauchamp, "Chronicles," pp. 55-58.

and children alike and chased the Indians over to the west side of the river. The foot-log the Creeks used to cross the Pea was covered in blood. In the end, the whites killed forty-two Indians and one black in and around the camp site. Others fell into the river and died. Wellborn was unable to report exactly how many fugitives died on the west side of the river, but he did state that his troops did their duty there and "I trust did execution." Certainly more than fifty Indians perished in the attack, and many more may have died later. In the aftermath of the clash, one trooper explained that his shoulder was so sore from the repeated kicking of his flint lock musket that he could scarcely use his arm. Furthermore, he lost all his eye brows and lashes from the powder flashing in the gun's pan. Even more telling, his pants were as bloody as if he had been killing hogs. Another trooper claimed that the most strenuous fighting he did in the battle was with another soldier, whom he tried to stop from killing an Indian woman. The frustrated executioner struck him in the head with a gun butt.[40]

The Battle of Pea River was a decisive and profitable victory for the whites. In addition to killing so many Indians, the troops also claimed all of their packs and provisions as well as twenty horses. In addition, the troops took at least six captives, mostly children. Individual soldiers carried these captives to their homes, and, according to an eye witness, enslaved them. Two of these youngsters were the children of Ches-ke-Micco, the Indians' leader. This man, called "bold and fearless" by Wellborn, was a chief of Loachapoka town, one of the original hostile Tallassee settlements in the Creek rebellion of 1836. Both he and his wife died in the battle. The whites lost five killed and nine wounded. William Wellborn, though losing his son, gained the respect of the

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[40] Wellborn to Clay, Irwinton, 6 April 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Thompson, *Barbour County*, pp. 63-65; Walker, *Backtracking*, pp. 49-55; Beauchamp, "Chronicles," pp. 55-58.

entire state on top of the wealth he had amassed selling the land in and around the town of Irwinton--land he acquired from the Eufaula Creeks at a mere five or ten dollars per half section. Toward the end of 1837, he added to his prizes a seat in the state senate. Once again, the Creeks had proved to be a valuable natural resource for aggressive and ambitious whites.[41]

More importantly, the Pea River fight ended the Second Creek War in New Alabama. Scattered groups of Creeks remained in the swamps of Macon, Russell, Pike, and Barbour counties, but stayed firmly hidden. Those who moved down into West Florida did so very quietly and carefully. New Alabama's whites lived in fear for some time after the battle, but gradually they realized the fugitive Creeks were no longer a threat to them. Similarly, the settlers on the Old Alabama side of Pea River, having fled from the southward moving Creeks, now returned to their farms in time to save the year's crop. Governor Clay maintained troops at Society Hill on the New Road and on the middle prong of Cowikee Creek to give confidence to the settlers, and to encourage the continued migration of people into Alabama. Clay also gave Colonel Wellborn discretionary authority in dealing with the fugitive natives, and urged him to stay in the field "till every Creek Indian is killed, or captured and removed." However, the troops in New Alabama had little to do but chase the occasional party of six or seven frightened Indians seen running across the roads.[42]

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[41] Wellborn to Clay, Irwinton, 6 April 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Thompson, *Barbour County*, pp. 63-65; Walker, *Backtracking*, pp. 49-55; Beauchamp, "Chronicles," pp. 55-58.

[42] John L. Hunter to Clay, Tuskegee, 30 March 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Clay to Skinner and Booth, Tuscaloosa, 3 April 1837, ibid.; Clay to Brodnax, Tuscaloosa, 6 April 1837, ibid; John Currie, Colonel 42nd Regiment Alabama Militia, to Clay, Irwinton, 8 April 1837, ibid.; Clay to Major General John P. Booth, Tuscaloosa, 14 April 1837, ibid.; Clay to Booth, Tuscaloosa, 14 April 1837, ibid.; Clay to Poinsett, Tuscaloosa, 17 April 1837, ibid.; Warren to Clay, Montgomery, 20 April

Unfortunately, the Pea River fight did not end the Second Creek War altogether. Jesup's failure to quell rebel resistance and remove all the Creeks from Alabama in the summer and fall of 1836 would continue to have adverse effects. In fact, the Pea River affair only shifted the locus of the conflict down to West Florida and the Alabama border counties of Covington and Dale. There violence would continue between whites and parties of Creek refugees, and many white families would abandon the country just as the New Alabama settlers had done the summer previous. Some of these Creek fugitives were members of the original rebel party, others were formerly friendly Creeks driven from the removal camps by the abuses of the insecure and greedy whites. Now united, these two groups of Indians determined to resist removal and fight for their lives. In the process, they would continue to commit depredations on the white citizens, and Colonel Wellborn, despite his victory on Pea River, would continue to keep six companies of troops in the field to guard the Alabama-Florida border.[43]

1837, ibid.

[43] Clay to Wellborn, Tuscaloosa, 15 April 1837, ibid.

Chapter 8

Florida Territory: The Final Theater

For over a hundred years prior to 1837, groups of Creek Indians migrated into Florida. In part, this migration was an aspect of a natural Creek expansionism: the disease and colonial warfare brought by the whites had extinguished Florida's original Indian population and the Creeks simply moved into the void to take up abandoned agricultural fields and hunting grounds. However, the Creeks also migrated to Florida to find a haven from Anglo-American expansionism as well as the old political, economic, and ethnic tensions within the Creek Confederacy which white expansionism exacerbated. By the year 1810, the Creek residents of Florida had broken away from the Creek Confederacy, and whites looked upon them as a separate tribe or nation called the Seminoles--a white version of a Muscogee term meaning wild men or runaways. However, the Florida natives did not see themselves as one people. Besides the Seminoles proper living on the Alachua prairie in East Florida, several other tribes and tribal remnants inhabited the various parts of Florida. Yuchis built villages near the Atlantic coast. Tallahassees and Miccosukees lived in large settlements in the middle section of the region. Many of the Upper Creek Red Sticks who fled Alabama at the close of the First Creek War lived in these towns. Farther west the Apalachicolas planted their corn crops along the river of their name, the old boundary line between the Spanish colonies of East and West Florida. To the south, along the shores of Tampa Bay, the Eufaulas and other Upper Creek migrants survived and prospered. Far to the south, near the Everglades, the so-called Spanish Indians maintained their fishing settlements. Other Creeks lived in dispersed hunting camps throughout East and West Florida, and descendants of the region's original Indian inhabitants--Yamasees and Apalachees in particular--could still be found in the old Spanish towns of Pensacola and

St. Augustine. Not only did these native groups not believe they were a single nation, some, in ancient Creek fashion, actually hated one another. However, they did find common cause in the fact that they were not white Americans and they did not want to live close to any.[1]

In fact, one of the things that made Florida attractive to Creek migrants was the scarcity of white inhabitants of any kind. Spain's rulers had established Florida as an outpost of its far-flung empire and they made little effort to populate the region with colonists. The Spanish, and later British, inhabitants of Florida confined themselves, for the most part, to Pensacola and St. Augustine and the few forts and trading stations in between. For much of the colonial era, Florida's wild heartland remained almost free of Europeans and their descendants. However, that situation began to change rapidly in 1818 when General Andrew Jackson invaded Spanish Florida to break up the settlements of his old Red Stick enemies and to punish the Florida Indians for their attacks on United States citizens, as well as their continuing association with British traders, spies, and incendiaries. Three years after this First Seminole War, Florida became a United States territory, and two years after that, government officials compelled the natives to sign the Treaty of Moultrie Creek, which obligated the Seminoles, Tallahassees, Miccosukees and others to move to a large reservation south of the Suwannee. In addition, the treaty set aside some reservation lands for the friendly Apalachicola Creeks on their beloved river. Following close on the heels of this treaty, a stream of American settlers poured onto the rich Florida lands bordering Georgia and Alabama. With the coming of

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[1] John K. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1967), pp. 2-8; J. Leitch Wright, *Creeks and Seminoles; The Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulge People* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), pp. 5-6.

these white pioneers, the Florida Creeks, now called "Seminoles," saw their safe haven beginning to collapse.[2]

Unfortunately, the establishment of a Seminole reservation did little to impede the process. White settlers felt threatened by the Florida natives. They knew the Seminoles had been enemies of the United States for a long time. Worse, these natives had always welcomed runaway slaves into their midst, and Florida planters depended on slave labor. Furthermore, the Indians refused to stay on their poor reserve lands and continued to plant and hunt in areas where whites built their farms and plantations. On the other hand, white horse thieves and whiskey dealers invaded the Indian country along with slave catchers, who not only took back American slaves but captured Indian slaves and free Seminole Negroes as well. In the face of all this, Indian-white conflict intensified, murders occurred on both sides, and the territorial newspapers began to call for the complete removal of Indians from Florida, both as a means of encouraging Florida's economic development and for the good of the natives themselves. One territorial governor, William P. DuVal, contended that moving the Florida natives west would save the "drunken, lazy and worthless" red men from the "certain fate of total extinction." Such statements found attentive ears in Washington, where Andrew Jackson, already prejudiced against the Seminoles, took office as president in 1829 determined to relocate all the southern natives beyond the Mississippi River. In 1830 he pushed the Indian Removal Bill through Congress, and in 1832, he sent Colonel James Gadsden to negotiate an emigration agreement with the Florida Indians.[3]

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[2] Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, chaps. 2-4; Virginia Bergman Peters, *The Florida Wars* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1979), chaps. 3-5.

[3] Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, chaps. 4-5; Peters, *Florida Wars*, chaps. 5-6; Brian R. Rucker, "West Florida's Creek Indian Crisis of 1837," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (July, 1991): 317. Rucker is a key source of information for this chapter though his focus differs from my own. He presents the events of 1837 as part of a long-

Unfortunately, the government's effort to remove the Seminoles prompted a native uprising. Gadsden found the Seminoles in a starving and destitute condition owing to a serious drought and used this fact to get the Indians to sign the Treaty of Payne's Landing. According to the terms of this pact, the Seminole chiefs agreed to move west to lands set aside for them provided they had the opportunity to examine and approve these lands first. These chiefs then sent a delegation to see the western country and to report back their findings so the tribespeople could make their decisions. However, the American commissioners who accompanied the delegation subverted the approval process. They had the Seminole delegates sign a statement that they personally approved the western lands, then they used this statement to say that all the Seminoles had approved the removal treaty. However, a number of Florida's Indian bands were unwilling to emigrate. They knew they had been tricked; they did not want to live in a colder climate; and they did not want to reintegrate themselves into the Creek Confederacy and live under the Creek National Council in the West, which the Payne's Landing pact obligated them to do. Furthermore, they feared that during the course of emigration the Creeks and whites would strip them of their slaves and enslave their friends and allies, the Seminole Negroes. In fact, the blacks living among the Seminoles became a driving force behind the natives' resistance to removal. The government meant to enforce the treaty, however, and General Duncan L. Clinch ordered the Seminoles to assemble themselves at Tampa Bay by January 8, 1836, preparatory to boarding ships for the long journey west. The general also proclaimed that if the natives did not come in voluntarily he would seize them by force. The Seminoles, Miccosukees, Tallahassees,

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standing conflict between West Florida's whites and Creeks. I see West Florida more as a theater of a war begun in Alabama. I also follow that war into Middle Florida whereas Rucker does not.

and other dissenting groups responded to this threat with an armed revolt to save their Florida haven. They attacked natives who favored removal and murdered their agent, General Wiley Thompson, on December 28, 1835. On the same day, they ambushed and wiped out a contingent of a hundred federal troops under Major Francis L. Dade. The Second Seminole War had begun.[4]

The Seminole uprising helped spark the Second Creek War in Alabama, and this conflict, in turn, prompted the last of a long series of Creek migrations to Florida. Following General Jesup's invasion of the Lower Creek country, groups of native insurgents fought their way through southern Georgia to the dense swamps and hammocks of the middle and eastern sections of Florida Territory. Then, in 1837, following the break-up of New Alabama's removal camps, more Creeks fled due south into western Florida. This last group of natives, like many tribespeople before them, sought a peaceful haven. They wanted to resist removal, but they did not want more conflict with the whites. However, West Florida's white settlers had other ideas. They determined to capture the Creek fugitives and send them away to the West. In the process, they provoked the anger of the fugitives and caused them to retaliate. Their retaliation led to the introduction of the Second Creek War into West Florida, which then bled into and merged with the Seminole conflict farther east.

The Second Seminole-Creek War, the final theater in the natives' fight to preserve a portion of their Florida haven, wore on until 1843, with the latest Creek migrants taking the lead. In fact, the confluence of the Creek and Seminole conflicts, along with the significant role played by Creeks in the Florida war, is yet another unexplored aspect of the native resistance movement. Lieutenant John T. Sprague, one of the war's

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[4] Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), pp. 320-28; Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, chap. 6.

participants, pointed to the Creeks as being a driving force in the fight, but since that time historians have focused more on the activities of Seminoles and blacks, all but ignoring the Creek fugitives from Alabama as significant combatants in the Florida war. Furthermore, Creek fugitives were the last natives to give up the fight. With their surrender, the Creek-Seminole conflict officially ended. However, some Creeks and Seminoles never gave themselves up for removal. A few Seminole bands won the right to stay in south Florida on a reduced reservation, while groups of Creek fugitives continued to roam the coast of western Florida. In fact, some of these fugitives never left their Florida haven for the West and continued to clash with whites right into the decade of the 1850s. Only then did the Second Creek War finally fade away--a full twenty years after it began.[5]

But one should not think that the natives' war for Florida was a simple matter of red versus white, or that native determination alone contributed to the longevity of the conflict. In fact, Florida's non-native population, both wittingly and unwittingly, conspired to keep the war alive. In fact, the situation was even worse than in Alabama because Florida's non-native population was more diverse, consisting of more disaffected blacks, Spaniards, and white roughs. Some of these people made a living supplying the natives with arms, ammunition, and provisions. Furthermore, Florida was an

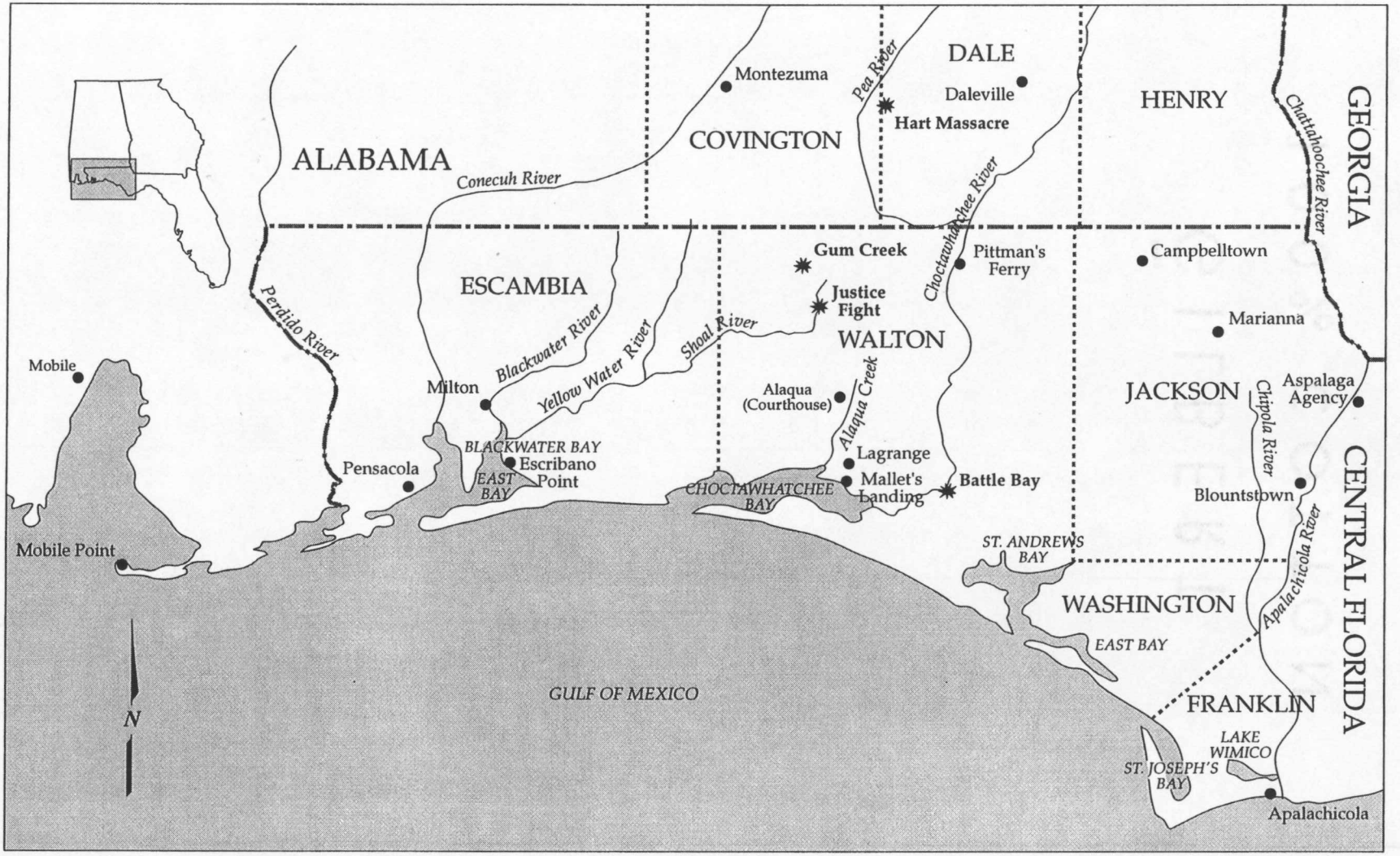
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[5] Sprague's observations on the Creeks and their role in the Florida war will be given in detail in the following pages. Edwin C. McReynolds, *The Seminoles* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957) is one of many works that pass over the connection between the Creek and Seminole wars and the role of Creek leadership in Florida. James Leitch Wright, on the other hand, goes too far in the other direction. He contends that the Creek and Seminole wars were one and the same conflict from the very beginning, with the Alabama Creek rebels and the Florida Seminoles being one people, members of a non-Muscogee moiety within the Creek Confederacy. This sweeping interpretation ignores significant differences between the Seminoles and Creek fugitives. Beyond that, Wright does not explore the war in any detail. Wright, *Creeks and Seminoles*, chap. 6.

undeveloped territory and war with the natives was its biggest industry. Consequently, some whites of all classes did not really want to see it end too soon. Moreover, even those whites who sought a quick end to hostilities and a rapid removal of Florida's natives disagreed on tactics. Some realized that the natives did not really want war and sought to negotiate an end to the difficulties. Other whites, however, wanted to hunt the natives down and force them into submission. Thus the whites worked at cross purposes and the war continued, aided and abetted by the divisions and disagreements within Florida's competitive non-Indian society.

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The series of events leading to the extension of the Creek war into West Florida began in late February of 1837 when Archibald Smith, the United States agent to the Apalachicola Indians, learned that two parties of fugitive Creeks had crossed the Alabama border (Map 6). One party had come down the Choctawhatchee River, stealing canoes and attacking white settlers as they went. According to Smith's informants, the Indian women in this party had killed their small children to ease their flight and were fighting as fiercely as their men. Obviously, these exaggerated reports referred to the same group of fugitives that fought Captain Cooper's Alabama volunteers at Hobdy's Bridge on the Pea River on February 10, and subsequently murdered Mrs. Albertson and her sister on the Choctawhatchee. The second party of fugitives, perhaps as many as four hundred in number, had entered Florida farther to the west, supposedly making their way toward a settlement of friendly natives at Escribano Point on Blackwater Bay. The so-called Escribano Indians were descendants of Creeks from Tuckabatchee town who moved to Florida during the American Revolution. Some of them had intermarried with Spaniards; they spoke English fairly well; and they supported themselves by



Map 6: War in West Florida.

catching fish and oysters for the Pensacola market. They traveled to Pensacola, twenty miles across the bay, in small sail boats. These Escribano Creeks had never given offense to the local white settlers, but many whites, particularly those in Alabama, believed that they had provided the rebel Creeks farther north with supplies and munitions and would do so again. Smith set out from his post on the Apalachicola determined to stop this from happening. The agent also sent a letter to Pensacola asking that the authorities suspend the sale of powder and lead to natives or to white men who might sell or trade it to Indians.[6]

Smith hurried across West Florida to the Escribano Creek village, warning settlers as he went. He called the natives together and told them not to associate with the fugitives from Alabama. In fact, he cautioned them that "their future happiness now depended on their own Conduct." The Indians, in turn, assured Smith that they would stay on watch for the fugitives, and if any tried to approach, they would move to Pensacola to get away from them. Not only that, they would help the whites subdue the interlopers. These statements pleased Smith and he took his leave of the Escribano settlement.[7]

However, the friendly Creeks also gave the agent some bad news. They informed him that one of their women had encountered two Indian boys in the woods a few miles away. These boys said that they belonged to four camps of Creeks from Coweta town in Alabama, and that their people "were resolved to die rather than emigrate to Arkansas." The boys also claimed that many more Creeks would come down shortly, and that they would all attempt to live along the fifty miles of Gulf Coast from Blackwater

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[6] Rucker, "Creek Indian Crisis," pp. 321-22.

[7] Ibid., pp. 322-23.

Bay to the mouth of the Choctawhatchee River. That Coweta Creeks were part of the fugitive population must have startled Smith, for the Cowetas were Paddy Carr's people and had never been a part of the rebel party of 1836. Furthermore, most of the Cowetas had emigrated in the fall of that year. That some Cowetas now appeared in Florida determined to die before going west should have indicated to Smith that the number of Creeks who had escaped removal in Alabama was larger than previously supposed. He gave evidence of such a belief in a statement to C.A. Harris, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington: "From what I have seen I am fearful that distress will pervade the most part of West Florida for some time."[8]

The white settlers of northwestern Florida were also frightened by the Creek migration and took immediate steps to defend themselves from harm. The entire militia force of Walton and Washington counties assembled and prepared for action. The citizens of Pensacola also raised a volunteer company which proceeded to the Blackwater River to defend the settlers in that vicinity. Joseph Bonifay, a prominent and knowledgeable inhabitant of the area, rode east from the Black Water settlement on a reconnaissance mission, gathering all the information he could on recent Indian movements and activities.[9]

Simultaneously, the United States military sought to locate fugitive Creeks for removal. Federal troops and navy personnel from Pensacola established a supply depot named Camp Dallas at the head of East Bay, and a thirty-six man mounted company used the camp as a base of operations. This company searched the country between the Yellow and Shoal rivers for Indians, but found only one abandoned camp. Another

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., p. 323; "The Creeks," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 18 March 1837, p. 2.

force disembarked from the United States steamboat Constellation and set out in search of Creeks, but, again, with little to show for their efforts. The government's spies and agents were more successful, however. They found a band of thirty-five fugitive Creeks and convinced them to come in peacefully. Army Major Henry Wilson, the officer in charge of the Creek emigration camp at Mobile Point, came over to Pensacola to meet this group of Indians and to escort them back to his post. Later Major Wilson and Lieutenant John G. Reynolds, the Marine officer who had been in charge of the Creek removal camp at Polecat Springs, Alabama, would return to Escribano Point to oversee the government's efforts to establish contact with all the fugitive bands through friendly Indian emissaries. Wilson and Reynolds would promise the Creeks protection, food, and clothing if they would give themselves up and go to Mobile Point. These officers believed that peaceful coercion was the best method of bringing in the runaway Creeks.[10]

But then the white fear of an invasion of hostile Indians dissipated. As the month of March progressed no large bodies of Indians showed themselves in northwestern Florida. Neither did the refugees commit any depredations of note. Farther north, the migrating parties referred to by the two Coweta boys were finding it difficult to escape from Alabama under the vigilant watch of Wellborn and the companies of Dale County men that roamed the Florida border. News of the activity of Wellborn's troops, and his decisive defeat of the fugitives at the Battle of Pea River on March 25, must have encouraged white Floridians to believe that they might escape harm.

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[10] Rucker, "Creek Indian Crisis," pp. 323, 326; "The military," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 25 March 1837, p. 2.

Certainly the *Pensacola Gazette* took such a view, and attempted to ease the fears of its readers by downplaying the danger of Indian attacks.[11]

Unfortunately, some settlers and frontier roughs would not leave the Creeks alone. They began to push the Creeks to defend themselves. When several bands of Indians did turn up at Mallet's Landing on LaFayette Bayou, an offshoot of Choctawhatchee Bay, one settler tried to hire them as farm laborers so he could capture them for removal. Another settler succeeded in taking four Indians as prisoners. Surprisingly, the Mallet's Landing settlers expressed no fear of being killed by the Creeks. They knew that the natives only wanted to hide out from the authorities. Yet the whites were concerned that hungry Indians would kill their cattle, and they wanted troops to come in and relieve them of their unwanted red neighbors.[12]

Similar situations occurred throughout West Florida; Indian-white relations deteriorated rapidly; and on April 15 a climactic event took place. A group of eight to ten Creek fugitives went into the Lumberton village near the mouth of the Blackwater River to buy supplies. When they finished their business some whites tried to detain them. The Indians ran and the whites shot one in the leg. Rather than submit to imprisonment, the wounded Creek cut his own throat with a knife, threw the knife to his young son, and told the boy to kill himself in the same manner. The boy, approximately ten years old, tried to obey, but the whites took the knife from him. Some of the men then grabbed the wounded father, secured a rope around his neck, threw him in the river, and dragged him under a raft of floating logs until he expired. The whites also managed to seize an Indian woman and another boy during the melee.[13]

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[11] Rucker, "Creek Indian Crisis," pp. 323-24.

[12] Ibid., p. 324.

[13] Ibid.

Some respectable whites deplored this incident and feared that the fugitive Creeks would retaliate. Commodore Alexander J. Dallas, commander of the Pensacola Navy Yard, dispatched troops to protect the Blackwater settlers. Lieutenant Neil M. Howison, leader of the troops, then sent one of the captive Creeks, a woman, and two friendly natives to open a dialogue with the fugitives camped in the Blackwater neighborhood. The two friendly Indians soon returned to Howison with the disappointing news that the fugitives were "very much exasperated" by the Lumberton incident. So much so that they had threatened to shoot the friendly Creeks and had kept the Indian woman, not allowing her to return to the whites. The fugitives' feelings were not improved when a company of Walton County settlers under Colonel McKinnon captured a party of Indians on Black Creek, sixteen miles from LaGrange.[14]

Then Commodore Dallas's fears became reality. On April 23, the natives began to strike back, opening the Second Creek War in West Florida and also renewing that conflict in southern Alabama. Just before dawn, Creek warriors attacked the camp of seven white cow hunters on Gum Creek, a tributary of Shoal River, near the Alabama line in Walton County. They killed five of the cowmen, but the other two escaped to tell the tale. One week later, warriors on horseback returned to Dale County, Alabama, established a camp on Pea River, and assailed the homes of settlers on the main road from Daleville to Montezuma, forty miles north of the Gum Creek incident. In one particularly ghastly attack, the Creeks massacred seven members of the Josiah Hart family and left their mangled bodies in a heap in the cow pen. Their neighbors dug a

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[14] Ibid., pp. 324-25; From the *Tallahassee Floridian*, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, 21 May 1837, ADAH.

common grave for the family, lined it with cow skins, deposited the corpses, covered the Harts with more cow skins, and filled in the dirt.[15]

A company of Dale County troops led by Captain Arch Justice quickly took up the Indian trail and followed it back into Florida and down to Shoal River. Justice had distinguished himself at the Battle of Pea River, and following that fight, he traveled down the Pea in a canoe at night looking for Indian campsites in the swamps. These heroic acts, plus his ability to track down straggling parties of natives, endeared him to the citizens of Dale County. In Florida, he enhanced his reputation even more. He and his men succeeded in running down the flying Creeks, besieged their camp, and killed fourteen of the fugitives. Justice intended to move farther down the river to attack another Indian camp, but he never got the opportunity. Colonel Wellborn arrived on the scene two hours after the battle with reinforcements from his battalion. He sent Justice and his exhausted company back to their post in Alabama-- the newly built Fort Dale-- and continued the pursuit of the fugitive Creeks himself. The Indians, however, managed to escape Wellborn.[16]

The outbreak of war in West Florida revealed the deep cultural division between Indians and whites in the region, but it also highlighted social and cultural differences in white society. While the isolated settlers of Walton County saw themselves as the

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[15] Rucker, "Creek Indian Crisis," p. 325; John L. McKinnon, *History of Walton County* (Gainesville: Palmetto Books, 1968), pp. 110-15; for the Hart Massacre and resumption of war in southern Alabama see Citizens to Clay, Montezuma, 5 May 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Wellborn to Clay, Camp Holloway, 12 May 1837, ibid.; Lewis to Clay, Montgomery, 18 May 1837, ibid.; Marion Bailey Brunson, *Pea River Reflections: Intimate Glimpses of Area Life During Two Centuries* (Tuscaloosa: Portals Press, 1975), pp. 23-27.

[16] Wellborn to Clay, Camp Holloway, 12 May 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Brunson, *Pea River*, 26-27.

victims of Creek aggression, Benjamin Drake Wright, the editor of the *Pensacola Gazette*, took another view. In doing so, he represented the views of a respectable class of whites removed from the Indian frontier. He tended to blame the coming of the war on other whites, saying "These misguided savages were seeking concealment. They were not disposed to shed blood of a white man, but the outrage committed at Black Water, has exasperated them to the last degree, and we may now look for a savage war with all its attendant horrors." Wright went on to say, quite prophetically, that many valuable lives would be lost before the whites drove the natives from their hiding places, and he concluded with the question: "On whose head rests the blood of these victims?"[17]

Soon Wright had the opportunity to chastise his fellow Floridians again, this time illustrating more vividly the contempt that many respectable whites held for frontier roughs. In early May a gaggle of white men murdered an Indian at Mallet's Landing in Walton County. But this Indian, named Jim, was a friendly Creek. Moreover, he had served the whites as a guide and interpreter. Wright responded to the murder with a rather shocking denunciation:

> These heroes are supposed to have been drunk when they perpetrated this outrage--they are the very last persons to go out with their neighbors against the hostile Indians, and expend their heroism upon those who are inoffensive and friendly! It is high time that these unprincipled wretches should be made to pay with their lives, the penalty of thus violating the laws of the land, and shedding human blood. The Indian, when friendly and peaceable, is as much entitled to the protection of our laws, as the best man in the community.[18]

With editorials of this sort, Wright established himself as a liberal voice in West Florida, as an upholder of Indian rights in the heat of a war. In this respect, he

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[17] Rucker, "Creek Indian Crisis," pp. 325-26.

[18] Ibid., pp. 327-28.

resembled James Belser of the *Montgomery Advertiser*, and, of course, John B. Hogan, the former removal agent and land fraud investigator. These men were able to see that the acquisition of the Indian land domain, and the removal process, had a degenerative effect on whites as well as natives. And while they continued to support Indian removal, these men, and other respectable whites, wanted a peaceful, honorable removal for the good of both Indians and whites. They most certainly did not believe that removal was a cure-all for the ills of the country. They certainly knew that other whites, not Indians, were the greatest obstacle to bringing civilization and orderly economic development to the South.

Unfortunately, men like Wright had little impact on the situation. The bloody struggle had begun in the wilds of West Florida, and the combatants waged war according to their own rules. The main body of Creek refugees took up residence on the Choctawhatchee River and the bayous of Choctawhatchee Bay in Walton County. According to the white inhabitants of the county, the natives had a definite military strategy in mind. By controlling Choctawhatchee Bay, the Indians were able to cut off the local whites' main line of communication and supply from Pensacola. On the other hand, the Creeks were able to establish their own supply line to the town through friendly Indians and Spanish traders. Thus firmly ensconced in Walton County, the Creeks could raid the isolated whites at will. During the month of May they committed numerous depredations in Walton County and killed twelve whites. The settlers lived in a state of panic, and aged county residents would later report that the period of Indian warfare in Walton was more terrible than the years of the Civil War, when the Choctawhatchee became a base of operations for white outlaws and Union guerrillas.[19]

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[19] McKinnon, *Walton County*, pp. 118-24; "News From the Army," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 20 May 1837, p. 3.

But the Creeks soon had to contend with the West Florida militia and volunteers. Despite the Camp Dade treaty, the Seminoles were not leaving the territory and the Seminole War had not ended as hoped. Therefore, General Jesup could not spare any sizable number of federal troops to fight the Creeks in West Florida. Consequently, the territorial governor, Robert Keith Call, ordered Colonel Leavin Brown of Jackson County to raise a body of troops and to take charge of the war effort on the Choctawhatchee. Call also authorized Colonel Morton of Escambia County to form a company of men to patrol the countryside to the west, between the Choctawhatchee and Yellow rivers. Finally, the governor accepted into service two companies of citizens soldiers from Walton County. Many of these Walton men, commanded by Colonel John L. McKinnon, were Scotch pioneers. They constructed a fort in the central part of their county and began to scour the lower Choctawhatchee and the bayous of the bay in an attempt to dislodge the Creek fugitives.[20]

At the same time, Colonel Wellborn of Alabama sought to enter the fray in West Florida, and to take the removal process out of the hands of the federal government--just as he had done in Alabama. Agitated by the recent murders in Dale County, as well as some in Covington, the colonel wrote to Governor Clay on May 12 asking for permission to raise two hundred additional troops for a march into Florida to end the Indian hostilities. Wellborn claimed that he could not use the troops presently under his command for such an invasion because Indians still remained in the Alabama swamps and white settlers needed protection from them. The colonel also assured the governor that he could end the hostilities in Florida fairly quickly if allowed to hunt down the fugitives. Furthermore, Wellborn implied that haste was necessary because the federal officers in Florida were trying to achieve peace by "begging" the hostile warriors to come

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[20] Rucker, "Creek Indian Crisis," p. 327.

in and surrender. If this policy persisted, according to the colonel, the warriors would sue for peace, gain a respite for themselves, hide their women and children more deeply in the swamps, and then return to Alabama to desolate Dale County. Or, as one of Wellborn's supporters claimed, the warriors would move their families into government removal camps for a time to feed and arm themselves at federal expense before taking off on the war path again. The only real way to achieve peace, said Wellborn, was to chase and hound the fugitives constantly until they gave up their resistance unconditionally. But what the colonel did not say to the governor was that the key to his invasion plan was to break up the Indian village at Escribano Point on Blackwater Bay. Wellborn and his supporters in Alabama believed the Escribano Indians were supplying the Creek fugitives, and if the troops cut off that source of supply, the fugitives could not hold out for long against their persistent pursuers. Once again, Wellborn sought to blame a camp of friendly Creeks for the success of the hostiles.[21]

Fortunately, Clay denied Wellborn's request. Otherwise, the colonel would have repeated the mistake he made at Polecat Springs. He would have had another confrontation with Lieutenant Reynolds, the federal removal agent, and undoubtedly would have frightened a number of friendly Indians into joining the fugitive party. Furthermore, the fugitives would have kept on hiding and fighting with or without arms and food from the Escribano Creeks. Certainly Wellborn had not ended the Indian conflict by breaking up the removal camps in Alabama, so he should not have thought he would be successful with the same strategy in West Florida, a place that contained more hiding places and fewer whites than most of Alabama. Governor Clay's realization of this fact may have prompted his denial of the colonel's request.

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[21] Wellborn to Clay, Camp Holloway, 12 May 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Lewis to Clay, Montgomery, 18 May 1837, ibid.

Meanwhile, Colonel Leavin Brown opened his campaign on the Choctawhatchee. On May 6, he mustered seventy-three drafted militiamen into service at Marianna in Jackson County. He then marched north to Campellton near the Alabama line to obtain supplies, moved over to Pittman's Ferry on the river, and began his explorations of the stream and its hiding places. Finding no Indians, the colonel moved south again to the Walton County courthouse, arriving on May 19. On that very day Colonel McKinnon and the Walton troops, operating on the lower Choctawhatchee, fought a serious engagement with the Creeks at "Battle Bay" near the Cow Ford on the river. These troops also captured sixteen of the fugitives and sent them on to Pensacola for shipment to Mobile Point. Brown heard of McKinnon's fight only a short time before he received an express from one J. J. Harrison telling him that a group of Creeks had taken up residence around his home on Alaqua Creek, another tributary of Choctawhatchee Bay. On May 22, Brown's troops took to their horses and rode the fifteen miles to Harrison place in great haste.[22]

At that point, one more controversial episode in the Second Creek War in West Florida began to unfold. The men approached the Harrison home at night to avoid detection by the Indians. They found Harrison in the house along with seventeen fugitive Creeks who had decided to spend the night with him. Brown made these people prisoners, left them at the house under guard, and set out after the other fugitives in the neighborhood. He learned from Billy, a friendly Indian, that the Alabama Creeks occupied two camps on the Alaqua, one a half-mile from Harrison's home and the other some two miles up the stream. Brown found the first camp easily and captured its occupants, one warrior and nine women and children. With this group of prisoners in

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[22] Rucker, "Creek Indian Crisis," p. 327; "Report of Colonel Brown," LaGrange, 24 May 1837, printed in *Tallahassee Floridian*, 1 July 1837, p. 2.

tow, Brown headed for the second camp, but found an impenetrable swamp standing in the way. The captive warrior informed the whites that he could show them another way to the camp and they let him take the lead. Brown's men followed the Indian all night with no sign of the camp. In the morning they realized the warrior had duped them; and because they could not find the remaining Alaqua fugitives on their own, Brown ordered them to return to Harrison's house. Then tragedy struck. Tired, angry, and disappointed, one of Brown's companies turned their guns on the captive warrior and executed him. Then, according to the colonel's report to Governor Call, the Creek women and children took fright and fled. To prevent this escape, the troops shot them all down. Moving on, the men collected their prisoners from Harrison's place, with the exception of one warrior who had poisoned himself, and marched to the village of LaGrange for supplies. That night, while their fatigued guards slept, the only three warriors in the party of sixteen Creek captives managed to escape.[23]

Some whites found the news that militiamen had killed Indian woman and children disturbing. Wright and other newspaper editors reported that Brown's men slew twelve Indians, not the ten the colonel reported. Furthermore, these editors questioned the necessity of such an act. However, Lieutenant Reynolds soon turned their questions into outright condemnations when he reported his investigation of the incident. Reynolds happened to be travelling along the north shore of Choctawhatchee Bay shortly after the killings occurred, and he turned from his path to inspect the death site. He was shocked by what he discovered. The troops had killed the Indians in a spot "not more than fifteen feet in diameter." Moreover, they had scalped several of the dead as well as slitting the ears of some to get at their silver earrings. Reynolds and the friendly Indians who accompanied him believed that Brown's men penned the captives up and slaughtered

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[23] Ibid.

them like cattle. The inhabitants of a cabin not far away heard the shrieks of the children when the massacre occurred. Contrary to Brown's report, Reynolds concluded that the militiamen had committed "one of the most outrageous acts civilized men could be guilty of."[24]

The Alaqua Creek massacre and Reynolds's expose of it further revealed the different ways federal officers and state troops approached the Creek problem. Even worse, the whole affair contributed to the general feeling of animosity between the two groups, delayed the removal process, and lengthened the war. Lieutenant Reynolds claimed that the fugitive Creeks were so frightened by "the worse than savage cruelty and treachery" of the settlers that they would either "fight or fly" whenever numbers of whites came near them. Frontier whites, however, tended to blame the federal government's penury and weakness for all the difficulties, claiming that the authorities in Washington should have sent large numbers of federal troops to the Southeast before beginning the removal process. That would have kept the Creek and Seminole wars from starting up in the first place. Some West Floridians focused their anger on Lieutenant Reynolds, and the rumor spread that the officer would be murdered for exposing the Alaqua massacre. Furthermore, many settlers came out in support of Colonel Brown's actions in the affair. At a Fourth of July celebration in Marianna, the orator of the day claimed that the shooting of the Indians was necessary, and that the normal rules of war did not apply to savages who surrounded cabins and butchered everyone inside.[25]

Undeterred by the controversy, Colonel Brown planned an even larger military operation for the summer of 1837. He asked Governor Call to transfer Colonel Morton's

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[24] Rucker, "Creek Indian Crisis," pp. 328-29.

[25] Ibid.; "Oration," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 29 July 1837, p. 2; "The citizens of Florida," ibid., p. 3.

Escambia County volunteers to Walton for use against the Choctawhatchee Creeks, but the executive had to deny the request. Whites continued to see small parties of fugitive Creeks in the far western end of the territory between the Yellow and Blackwater rivers, and Call wanted to keep troops in the vicinity of Pensacola as a defense against attacks. Not only that, the Creeks at Mobile Point had become a problem. Warriors from the removal camp were ranging east to the Florida line in search of game, and local fishermen kept them supplied with liquor. Furthermore, these warriors had stolen property from whites and killed some cattle. Floridians living near the border feared these Creeks might join the fugitives in their hostilities. The citizens of lower Alabama also mistrusted these natives and asked Governor Clay for assistance in keeping them contained to their camp. Clay responded by ordering General Bates of Alabama's Fourth Militia Division to recruit a company of volunteers for service at Mobile Point. Colonel Brown, however, found help from another quarter. Governor Call dispatched volunteers from the coastal towns of St. Joseph and Apalachicola to Pensacola. According to Brown's plan, these troops would sweep east into Walton County from the Blackwater River while his own men marched west from the Choctawhatchee. He hoped to catch the runaway Creeks in a vice.[26]

Brown's strategy never worked as well as he hoped, but his relentless pursuit of the Indians led to the discovery of one of the original rebel bands of 1836. On July 4, the same day the citizens of Marianna were showing him their support, Brown detected fresh tracks on Shoal River and soon came up with a party of 125 fugitives on the edge of a hammock. The colonel ordered a charge and killed ten Creeks before they escaped

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[26] Rucker, "Creek Indian Crisis," pp. 329-30; T.L. Toulmin to Clay, Mobile, 11 June 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Clay to Bates, Tuscaloosa, 29 June 1837, ibid.

into a nearby swamp. The Indians left all their packs behind, and in one of them Brown found "an elegant gold watch and safety chain." This watch bore an inscription: "William Flournoy, August 22, 1834." Brown's men knew that Flournoy's murder in early May of 1836 had opened the Creek War. They also knew that the Yuchis who killed Flournoy had done much of the mischief during the rebellion, including the destruction of Roanoke, Georgia. The watch and other evidences told Brown that not all of the troublesome Yuchis had gone west in chains or joined the Seminoles in East Florida. Some had taken up residence in Walton County.[27]

Brown continued the chase. He tracked the Yuchis from the Shoal River battlefield north to the Alabama line where the Indians scattered. They also fired the woods for several miles near the border to shield their retreat. Brown broke off the pursuit and turned south again to the Shoal. There he located the tracks of another large Indian party going south. He followed these natives from camp to camp down towards Choctawhatchee Bay and even discovered a village site where some fugitives had lived undetected for several months. Here the Creeks had cleared a large field to use as a stickball ground. Brown did not tarry, however, but kept after the fugitives until they came to rest in the Alaqua Swamp. After spotting the smoke from their fires on the morning of July 19, the colonel divided his command and attacked the Creeks from two directions, killing three and wounding many more. The whites lost one man killed and a few wounded. Brown claimed to have engaged at least seventy warriors in the Alaqua Swamp fight, but again, most of the Indians escaped death or capture.[28]

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[27] Rucker, "Creek Indian Crisis," pp. 330-31; "Leven Brown's Report," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 15 July 1837, p. 2; "The Creeks," ibid., 16 September 1837, p. 3.

[28] Rucker, "Creek Indian Crisis," p. 331; "Report of Colonel Brown," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 5 August 1837, p.2.

Nevertheless, by summer's end, Brown's military operations coupled with Major Wilson's peaceful overtures to the fugitives through friendly Creek emissaries seemed to be having a positive effect. Small parties of Indians, tired of all the running and hiding and fighting, began to surrender to the whites. Then, in late August, a significant event occurred. The principal chief of the West Florida fugitives, a man variously called Cosapinia and Coosa Fixico, walked into LaGrange with his wife and several other Creeks and capitulated. He told the whites that he would tell all his people to give up, but because they were scattered far and wide in small parties, it would take some time for his runners to reach them. The whites were impressed. One observer called the chief a "fine, noble-looking man." His wife, too, became a center of attention in LaGrange. The same observer said that she had "a distinquished air" and noted that she was the daughter of Peter McQueen, one of the famed Red Stick leaders in the First Creek War. Colonel Brown conversed with these dignified prisoners and gave the chief ten days to assemble his people at the federal removal camp at Escribano Point.[29]

Now whites began to rest easier in their beds at night. There had been no Indian trouble in New Alabama in several months. Peace settled on the Alabama-Florida border as well. Furthermore, General Jesup released most of his Creek warriors from the Seminole service and they returned to their families at Mobile Point. Subsequently, the federal officers in charge moved the station and its thousands of occupants west to Pass Christian, Mississippi, well away from the fearful whites living along the Alabama and Florida coasts. The War Department also ordered Governor Clay to dismiss his state troops from service, and Colonel Wellborn returned to Irwinton to concentrate on politics. Many of Colonel Brown's exhausted West Florida troops trudged back to

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[29] Rucker, "Creek Indian Crisis," p. 331; "From the *Pensacola Gazette*," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 9 September 1837, p.2.

their homes as well, their summer enlistments having expired. It appeared the war might be over at last.[30]

But not many fugitive Creeks obeyed Coosa Fixico's order to come in and surrender themselves for removal to the West. Instead, some of the fugitives began to move east out of Walton County towards the Apalachicola River and the Seminole country beyond. The whites would spend the fall trying to corral these migrants. On September 10, word came in from St. Andrews Bay that 125 members of the Yuchi band were making their way down the coast. Apparently five members of that tribe living among the Seminoles had come west to find their kinsmen, and had convinced them to follow them back to the wilds of the peninsula where they would be free of the press of white settlers. On September 16, a company of fifty volunteer soldiers left Marianna to cut the Yuchi fugitives off at the Apalachicola. Two weeks later, friendly Creeks captured seventeen members of another flying party of fugitives on the Apalachicola twenty-five miles below the Alabama line. Captain Dupont of Quincey raised 160 men to pursue the remainder of this party. Meanwhile, Governor Call sent one of the Apalachicola Creek chiefs, John Walker, to scout the country west of the Apalachicola to the Ochlockonee River and south to the sea shore. Call had received information from some of the Indian captives that this area of the territory, "unfrequented and entirely unknown to whites," was a refuge for a number of Creek warriors and their families. Walker found no fugitives, but in October, scouts sighted a camp of runaway Creeks in the Chipola Swamp, just west of the Apalachicola, and the governor sent another body of troops to capture them. A month later, the troops succeeded in placing ninety of

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[30] Rucker, "Creek Indian Crisis," pp. 331-32; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, pp. 184-85; Poinsett to Clay, War Department, 13 June 1837, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Booth to Bagby, Irwinton, 1 November 1837, Bagby's Militia Files, 1837-1841, ADAH; Lewis Smith to Bagby, Irwinton, 4 November 1837, ibid.

these fugitives in custody. About the same time, other troops surprised and seized yet another party of thirty natives, nearly all warriors, far to the south on the head of Lake Wimico, near the mouth of the Apalachicola. While fleeing an earlier pursuit by white troops, members of this last band of Creeks had "evinced their indomitable spirit by destroying their infants in order to effect their escape."[31]

But not all the fugitives in West Florida felt the need to flee. Some Creeks remained on the Choctawhatchee River, and Governor Call attempted to gain the surrender of these Indians through diplomacy. He ordered Colonel Brown to suspend his military operations in the area and sent his personal representative, Stephen Richards, and one of the fugitive chiefs captured on the Apalachicola, a man named Coa Harjo, to treat with the natives. By promising protection, these men induced seventy of the Choctawhatchee Creeks to submit and report themselves to the Aspalaga Indian Agency on the Apalachicola River. Still, Governor Call notified Secretary of War Poinsett that numerous West Florida Creeks remained unsubdued, and in December the *Tallahassee Floridian* announced that an entirely new group of Indians had been discovered along the coast. This band, made up of people from nearly every tribe in the Creek Nation, had come down from Alabama in the summer of 1836 to settle on the narrow peninsula of land between Choctawhatchee Bay and the gulf. They had lived there unmolested ever since, only making their presence known in late November 1837 when three of them rowed their canoe out in the bay to board a keelboat and purchase corn and other supplies. They paid cash for what they bought and asked the boat's

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[31] Rucker, "Creek Indian Crisis," p. 332; "By a letter," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 9 September 1837, p. 3; "Fugitive Creeks," ibid., 16 September 1837, p. 3; "On Wednesday last," Ibid., 7 October 1837, p. 2; "A party of friendly Indians," ibid., 14 October 1837, p. 3; "The party of friendly Indians," ibid., 28 October 1837, p. 2; "From the West," ibid., 18 November 1837, p. 3.

captain to bring them gunpowder, saying that they would pay one dollar per pound for it in hard money. They also informed the captain that they intended to remain peaceful, but they would resist to the last if the whites fired on them.[32]

This desire to remain quiet and in peace reflected the views of most of West Florida's fugitive population, but not all. In September, about the time Wellborn dismissed his troops from service, Creeks returned to Dale County, Alabama, to commit depredations. They began by killing a man named Wilkinson near Pierman's Ferry on Pea River. During the next few months, they murdered several families in the county. The other white residents fled into forts, abandoning their crops just at harvest time. According to Major General J. P. Booth, the commanding officer of Alabama's 5th Militia Division, the whole county was devastated. Furthermore, Dale's whites felt abandoned. Wellborn had taken his seat in the state senate; Governor Clay and gone to Washington to serve in the United States Congress; the federal government seemed concerned only with the Seminole problem; and when General Booth raised a company to protect Dale's citizens, he found the state assembly reluctant to pay the bill. In November, A. Warren, the county's representative in the state legislature, appealed to Governor Arthur P. Bagby, Clay's successor, for help. Bagby authorized William Pouncey, a veteran Indian fighter, to recruit a company of mounted rangers to patrol the county and to provide the security necessary for the citizens to return to their farms. Later, Jeremiah Pate commanded this ranger company which was active well into the year 1838. By that time the Indians in Dale had become secretive and furtive again, and the

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32 "The Fugitive Creeks," ibid., 2 December 1837, p. 2; "We understand," ibid., 6 January 1838, p. 2.

county experienced no more armed conflict. Nearly two years after it began, the Second Creek War closed in the state of Alabama.[33]

The hostilities also died away in West Florida during this period, primarily because the whites decided to leave the more than two hundred remaining fugitives alone. However, Governor Call was concerned about the amount of damage the war had done in West Florida and the lack of federal concern for the problem. Writing to Washington, Call informed the president and the secretary of war that many of the region's farmers were destitute. The sparse white population of Walton and Washington counties had been unable to tend their farms for several months because of the Indian danger. In addition, the natives had destroyed many of their cattle. Furthermore, most of the men had been called into the military service at one time or the other, but the federal government had been slow in paying them. Numbers of men had to sell their pay claims to speculators at a discount. In some cases, the governor himself had had to assume financial responsibility for calling up troops. Otherwise, the men would not serve and contractors would not supply forage and provisions, which were scare and expensive throughout Florida. In fact, said Call, many of West Florida's people now depended on a federal rations program first initiated when the Seminoles drove so many of the East Florida settlers from their homesteads. Yet, as Call pointed out, the War Department had issued orders to its officers to end the subsistence program on February 15, 1838. Call demanded that Poinsett extend this deadline, allowing the eligible citizens of the west, east and middle districts of Florida to draw government subsistence until they could

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[33] Citizen's Petition, Dale County, Date Unknown, Clay's Administrative Files--Creek War, ADAH; Booth to Bagby, Irwinton, 1 November 1837, Bagby's Militia Files, 1837-1841, ADAH; Lewis to Bagby, 4 November 1837, ibid.; Warren to Bagby, Tuscaloosa, 23 November 1837, ibid.; Colonel William Pouncey to Bagby, Daleville, 12 December 1837, ibid.; Captain Jeremiah Pate to Bagby, Dale County, 12 February 1838, ibid.

plant and harvest a crop. Indeed, the governor stated that the government actually owed the Floridians such help, because the United States army had driven the Creeks out of Alabama and down into Florida, then did little to get them out, leaving that task to state troops. Call concluded his argument with the claim that, if the government did not aid Florida's farmers, they would have no choice but to abandon the whole territory to the Indians.[34]

Poinsett granted Call's request, but the governor would discover that some of his own citizens were the biggest problem in bringing the fugitive Creeks to heel and completely ending the hardships of the war for natives and whites. Throughout the early months of 1838, whites harassed both the friendly Apalachicola Creeks and the former Creek fugitives camped near the Aspalaga agency. Some whites threatened to drive them away from the valuable reservation lands on the Apalachicola. Governor Call advised the friendly Indians to solve their problems with local whites by selling their land reserves back to the government and emigrating to the West. However, he wanted to get the Alabama Creeks living with the Apalachicolas out of the country first. As a condition of their surrender, many of these people retained their firearms and other weapons, and Call feared that they would react to all the pressure they felt by renewing their attacks on whites. He also feared they would draw the friendly Creeks into the conflict on their side. But by the spring of 1838, Call believed he had solved the problem. The former fugitives living at Chief Walker's town on the Apalachicola agreed to board the government's steamboats and leave for New Orleans in early May.[35]

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[34] "Legislative Council," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 30 January 1838, p. 1; "Call to Poinsett," Tallahassee, 14 October 1837, ibid; "Call to Poinsett," Tallahassee, 17 January 1838, ibid.; "Call to Van Buren," Tallahassee, 18 January 1838, ibid.

[35] George Walker to Carey A. Harris, Marianna, 25 January 1838, printed in Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, Vol. 25, *The Territory of Florida, 1834-1839* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960), pp. 458-59; "The

But again, Call had to contend with his own citizens, some of whom did not want the fugitives to leave the territory. One of these men was Arch Smith, the previously mentioned Indian agent. He established a "tipling shop" near the Apalachicola villages, and the Indians who frequented this shop often became "so intoxicated and riotous" that they alarmed the whole neighborhood of Creeks and whites. Furthermore, Smith sold gun flints and possibly ammunition to the former fugitives in the vicinity. Worse, the Apalachicolas complained that Smith paid them their last government annuity in depreciated bank notes, not specie. George Walker, Call's representative to the Apalachicolas, informed the governor that Smith opposed Indian emigration and was using his influence to prevent it so he could continue to make a good living off of his charges.[36]

But that was not the extent of the bad news from the Apalachicola. On the night of April 30, just a few days before they were supposed to depart for the West, a hundred of the former fugitives at Walker's Town became fugitives once again. They quickly deserted their camp, leaving many of their possessions, boarded a raft, floated down the Apalachicola a few miles, and landed on the eastern bank. From there they fled into the woods of Middle Florida toward the Ochlockonee River country. Governor Call soon learned from the Indians who remained behind that whites were responsible for the flight of their tribespeople. These whites told the fugitives that instead of sending them west as promised, the government intended to kill all the warriors and confine the women in chains. Flight, according to these white provocateurs, was the only alternative to this sad fate. Call sent troops after the

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Creeks," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 21 July 1838, p. 2.

[36] Walker to Harris, Marianna, 25 January 1838, *Territorial Papers* 25: 458-59.

runaways but feared they would elude the pursuit through information "derived from abandoned white men, whose interests are opposed to removal."[37]

The governor did not say exactly what the interests of these abandoned men were, but their motives are not difficult to determine. By 1838 many Floridians were profiting from the Indian war and they did not want it to end too soon and the natives removed. After all, Florida was a territory with no cities, a relatively small population, little or no manufacturing, and as yet no large scale agricultural production. War was Florida's biggest industry, its very own version of New Alabama's Indian business. The federal government had established military posts and supply depots throughout the territory as well as roads, bridges, and causeways. The government employed many civilians as clerks, mechanics, carpenters, blacksmiths, guides, interpreters and the like. Furthermore, the government brought thousands of soldiers to Florida, both regular troops and state militiamen and volunteers. These men had to be paid and they spent money with Florida merchants. In addition, the government sheltered white refugees at its military posts and fed many civilians through its rations program. The government also purchased large amounts of food and supplies from Florida contractors and farmers. Millions of federal dollars poured into the territory in one form or the other, and many Floridians, especially politicians, depended on this financial boon, especially in the late 1830s and early 1840s when the entire nation suffered from an economic depression. On the other hand, Florida's natives needed arms and provisions to continue their resistance, and some disgruntled Spaniards, Cuban fishermen, blacks, and white roughs profited by trading with them. Probably the people who frightened the fugitive Creeks

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[37] "We learn," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 5 May 1838, p. 2; "The Creeks," ibid., 21 July 1838, p. 2.

away from the Apalachicola agency and kept them apprised of troop movements belonged to this last class of acquisitive Floridians.[38]

The escape of these and other Creek fugitives from West Florida to Middle Florida came at a key turning point in the Second Seminole War. Though the Seminoles had declined to fulfill their Camp Dade Treaty pledge to leave Florida, General Jesup had been successful in breaking up a concerted, organized Seminole resistance. Following the failure of the treaty, he used truce flags to capture Osceola and other important Indian leaders. He also neutralized the Seminole Negroes as a force in the war by promising them their freedom and monetary rewards if they would desert the natives and serve as interpreters and scouts for his army. Then, in the fall of 1837, Jesup turned loose a horde of nearly nine thousand regular troops, civilian soldiers and sailors on the Seminoles strongholds east and south of the Suwannee River. These men killed scores of natives, captured almost three thousand for removal, and destroyed many of their villages, fields and cattle herds. More importantly, Jesup's men dispersed the Indians in small groups and took from them the ability to congregate in large numbers to fight pitched battles or conduct devastating raids on white settlements. Those natives who continued to fight resorted to guerrilla warfare, striking in small parties along the white frontier over a wide area. Furthermore, these warriors, infuriated by Jesup's tactics, fought more fanatically than before.[39]

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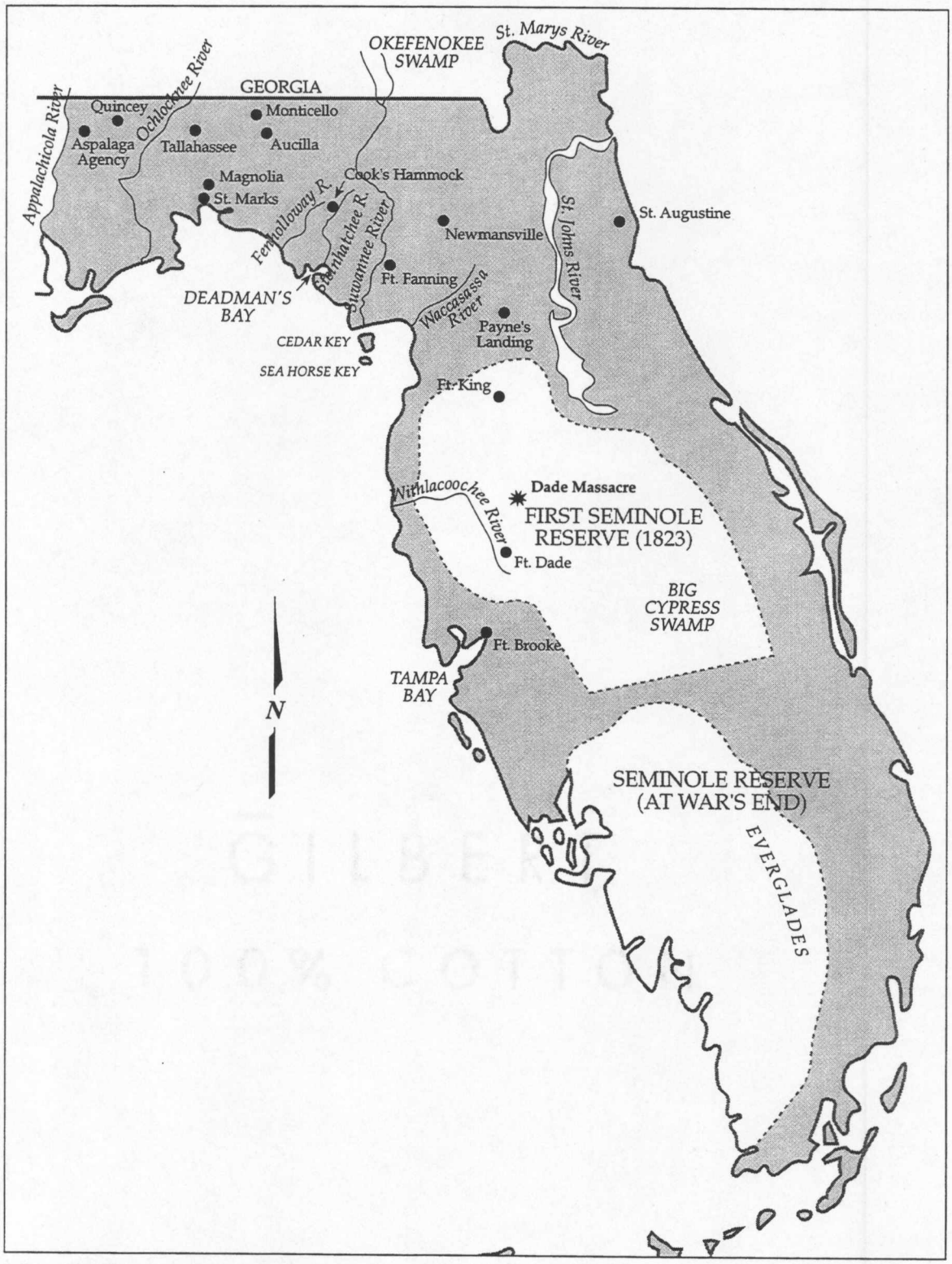
[38] John T. Sprague, *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War* (1848; reprint ed. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), pp. 268-70. At the time of General Jesup's departure from Florida in 1838, the federal government was spending $458,000 per month on the war. Since the beginning of the conflict in late 1835, the government had spent a total sum of approximately $9,400,000. And the war would not end until 1843. Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, p. 244.

[39] Sprague, *Florida War*, pp. 196-97; Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, pp. 214-19, 225, 240-41.

Unfortunately for white Floridians, some of these guerrilla bands moved north from the Seminole reserve and began to commit depredations in Middle Florida, which had not experienced hostilities to any great extent prior to the winter of 1838. Tallahassees and Miccosukees, former residents of the middle district, returned to their old haunts and led the attacks on farmers and planters. However, now a new group of combatants appeared. Bands of fugitive Creeks escaped from Alabama and Georgia had been hiding in the vicinity of the Suwannee River, and under pressure from Jesup's troops, they emerged like cornered animals to join the fray. At the same time, the Creek escapees from West Florida sought a final refuge on the Ochlockonee River, established contact with the Miccosukees, Tallahassees, and other bands of Alabama Creeks, and also began to raid in Middle Florida. At that point, the Creek struggle merged fully with the Seminole one, and the Second Creek War and Second Seminole War became the same contest (Map 7). Even more significantly, the Creek fugitives living in the middle district of the territory between the Apalachicola and Suwannee rivers became some of the most active raiders in all of Florida, and actually took over the leading role in the Seminole-Creek resistance effort. Furthermore, these battle-hardened Creeks, who had begun their rebellion in Alabama in 1836, would be the last natives in Florida to lay down their arms against the whites.[40]

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[40] "Call to Van Buren," 18 January 1838, *Tallahassee Floridian*, 30 January 1838, p. 1; Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, p. 237; Sprague, *Florida War*, p. 100. John T. Sprague, a participant in the Florida war, summed up the role of the Creeks in the last stages of the conflict: "The Indians west of the Suwannee were those disaffected and malignant spirits who fled from the state of Georgia at the commencement of hostilities there, in May, 1836. They sought refuge in Florida, where, by exciting and participating with those in open warfare, they would receive a cordial welcome. Young, intelligent, and brave, unburdened by women and children, full of vindictiveness and revenge for wrongs heaped upon them in their own land, they gave hearty support to the Seminoles, ultimately taking the prosecution of the war into their own hands." Ibid., p. 272.



Map 7: War in Middle Florida.
Source: Adapted from Burges & Honour Map, printed in M.M. Cohen, *Notices of Florida and the Campaigns* (1836; Reprint ed., Gainesville: Univ. of Florida Press, 1964).

The war began in Middle Florida on the night of January 16, 1838. Native war parties attacked three white families within twenty miles of Tallahassee, the territorial capitol. In February they struck in the neighborhood of Colonel Gamble's plantation about thirty miles southwest of Tallahassee. In March they harassed the settlers near Aucilla, thirty miles to the east. In April, they killed a white family and five slaves just south of the Georgia border near the Okefenokee Swamp as well as murdering travelers on the road between Magnolia and Monticello. In May the Creek fugitives from the Apalachicola escaped to the Ochlockonee and soon began committing depredations for miles around. By the summer of 1838, Middle Florida had become fully involved in what was now the Creek-Seminole War, which, according to one observer," assumed so erratic and guerrilla a character, as to require the vigilance of every individual to bring it to a close." In fact, no white could anticipate "whose house or whose family" would be "the next victims."[41]

An agitated Governor Call pointed out the problem to the War Department and to the military commanders in Florida in no uncertain terms. While the majority of the army searched for Indians to the east and south, he said, Middle Florida lay exposed. Furthermore, the strip of land along Middle Florida's coast was almost a complete wilderness varying in width from 20 to 130 miles. Indians lived in that wilderness undisturbed, could pass freely back and forth to the peninsula, and could attack at will the farms and plantations just to the north of their sanctuary. This wilderness zone also

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41 "Call to Poinsett," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 30 January 1838, p.1; "More Indian Depredations," ibid., 17 February 1838, p. 3; "Gallant Defense," ibid., 3 March 1838, p. 3; "Sad intelligence from the interior," ibid., 7 April 1838, p. 2; "More Murders," ibid., p.3; "More Indians," ibid., 14 April 1838, p. 3; "Mr. Dyer's house," ibid., 21 April 1838, p. 2; "13 Indian murders in 20 days," ibid., 28 April 1838, p. 3; "The news from the Indian nation," ibid., 2 June 1838, p. 2; "To the Editor of the Floridian," ibid., 4 August 1838, p. 2.

served as a commissary for the hostile natives, for it contained cattle which they occasionally drove across the Suwannee into East Florida. The editor of the *Tallahassee Floridian* went on to complain that under present conditions fifty Indians could attack Tallahassee and disperse the territory's legislative council. Then as he would do continually for the next few years, Call asked the government to either supply a larger force of regular troops to man posts in Middle Florida or allow him to call several hundred Florida civilian soldiers into service to fight in this new arena of the conflict.[42]

Call had good reason to fear the Indians in Middle Florida. They would prove to be the most intransigent natives in the whole territory. A Creek fugitive named Octiarche led one of these bands. He lived originally in a village in Chambers County, Alabama--thirty miles above Columbus. Sometime after the outbreak of the Creek war, he led a group of sixty men, thirty women and twenty children across the Chattahoochee near Fort Mitchell and proceeded across Georgia. Along the way, Octiarche and his followers repelled an attack from a Georgia militia company and finally reached the Okefenokee Swamp. From there they moved down into Middle Florida and settled in Cook's Hammock near the Steinhatchee River, approximately twenty-five miles from the coast and eighty miles from Tallahassee. Having left their own country, Octiarche's people felt the need to defend their home in Florida to the last. Yet they could not continue to resist the whites by themselves. They must unite in common cause with the Seminoles. Consequently, Octiarche sent messengers to the Seminole bands offering cooperation-operation and supplies of gunpowder. The messengers also took peace pipes in hopes of extinguishing the old feelings of discord and revenge that existed between Creeks and Seminoles. Thereafter, Octiarche became a leading figure in the war

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[42] "The present situation of our frontier," ibid., 27 January 1838, p. 3; "Call to Poinsett," ibid., 30 January 1838, p. 1.

effort, participating in skirmishes and depredations throughout the territory. The whites knew him by his loud voice, often heard resonating through the swamps and hammocks during a battle, giving heart to his warriors. His enemies also recognized him by his commanding physique and grotesque decorations. He often appeared in a fight with one side of his face painted black and the other scarlet, while his chest and stomach bore variegated colors. Yet Octiarche was no vicious savage. His sobriety, integrity, and sound judgment in council earned the respect of Indians and whites alike, and made Octiarche an even more dangerous opponent to men like Call and Jesup.[43]

Cook's Hammock and the swamps bordering the Steinhatchee River also housed a second, even more intractable group of Indians. This mixed band consisted of both fugitive Creeks and Miccosukee Seminoles under the direction of Halpatter Tustennuggee (Alligator Warrior), a Creek, and Cotzar Fixico Chopco (Mad Tiger), a Miccosukee. Like Octiarche's band, these natives planted their crops in the hammock and ventured down to the mouth of the Steinhatchee on Deadman's Bay to fish and gather oysters. This band was noteworthy because it contained forty-two young warriors--most grown to manhood during the Creek and Seminole wars--and only seventeen women and six children. Therefore the band was active, fast-moving, and bold. The warriors raided whites for plunder throughout Middle Florida, into East Florida, and as far north as the Okefenokee in Georgia. They frequently attacked houses in broad daylight, and like Octiarche's men, often used arrows instead of bullets to kill the whites within.[44]

The West Florida escapees comprised the third important Indian band in Middle Florida. Their location on the Ochlockonee, between the Apalachicola and Tallahassee,

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[43] Sprague, *Florida War*, pp. 272, 505-506.

[44] Ibid., p. 272.

meant that the inhabitants of that town and its plantation district faced hostile natives to the east and west. Apparently, a man named Chocotee Emathla led the Ochlockonee Creeks through the summer of 1838, but ever after a chief named Pascofar headed the band and made himself notorious among Florida's white population. According to one army observer, Pascofar's band also included a few members of Jesup's Creek battalion, warriors who deserted the United States service and went over to the enemy on hearing of the poor treatment of their friends and relatives in the Alabama removal camps.[45]

These Indian bands posed serious problems for the white inhabitants of Middle Florida, but they became all the more dreadful because they had white accomplices in the section. In fact, a renegade gang of white roughs robbed and killed settlers and travelers in the region under the guise of Indians. Sometimes they participated with the natives in acts of robbery and murder and took shares of the plunder. On at least one occasion a settler whose cabin was besieged by Indians heard a white man yelling instructions to them in English. On another occasion, Secretary of War Poinsett expressed his hope that the territorial governor would "use all legal and proper means to prevent the treasonable intercourse which is supposed to exist between the whites and Indians, and to detect their shameful conduct." The authorities never prevented the treasonable intercourse, however, and that made the task of subduing the native guerrilla bands all the more difficult.[46]

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[45] Ibid.; "Hutter to Call," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 4 August 1838, p. 2.

[46] Sprague, *Florida War*, p. 273; Jacob Rhett Motte, *Journey into the Wilderness: An Army Surgeon's Account of Life in Camp and Field during the Creek and Seminole Wars 1836-1838*, ed. James F. Sunderman (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1953), p. 81; Secretary of War to Secretary McCants, War Department, 19 October 1940, Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers of the United States*, Vol. 26, *The Territory of Florida, 1839-1845* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960), pp. 220-22.

The inability of the governor and military commanders to agree on how to conduct the war also delayed the process of defeating the Middle Florida Creeks. Before he left the territory to resume his duties as quartermaster general in Washington in May of 1838, General Jesup assigned General Walker K. Armistead to take direction of the war effort in Middle Florida. He also dispatched three companies of regulars (250 men) under Captain G. C. Hutter to the port of St. Marks to defend Middle Florida during the summer, as well as to search the Ochlockonee River area for the Creek fugitives newly arrived from West Florida. However, General Zachary Taylor, Jesup's successor, did not wish to conduct any operations against the Florida Indians in the summer, the so-called "sickly season," and so he did not assign any additional troops to Middle Florida. He did, however, plan a fall campaign for the region designed to drive hostile warriors away from the white settlements there and down into the peninsula with all the other natives. There Taylor hoped to encircle the Indians, cut off all interchange between them and whites, and compel them to give up and leave the territory. But the Floridians demanded immediate action. Governor Call wanted to put several hundred more state troops into the federal service for the defense of Middle Florida. However, Call wanted these soldiers to act as a home guard, paid and fed by the federal government. Essentially, the governor wanted to give settlers an incentive to return to their abandoned homesteads. He wanted the government to pay them to defend their own property and communities. The War Department could not agree. The Secretary of War had become embarrassed by the cost of the war and wanted to reduce subsidies and the employment of civilian soldiers, which were much more expensive to use than regulars. Moreover, federal officials thought Call and his fellow citizens had their own economic interests too much in mind. They believed that the Floridians wanted to get as many of their men and horses on the government payroll as possible, and, failing that, they wanted to have as many regular troops as possible placed in defensive positions to

guard them while they pursued their farming tasks and other economic enterprises. In the federal view, the Floridians really wanted to restrict the government's offensive operations against the Indians, because they did not want the war ended too quickly. A protracted conflict was better for Floridians economically, provided they had a "sedentary force" to protect their communities from destruction. The wrangling between the various parties involved--Call, Taylor, and Poinsett--complicated the whole process of subduing and removing Indians from Florida.[47]

However, the actions of the natives in Middle Florida seemed to bolster Call's side of the argument. The searches conducted by Captain Hutter's regulars and a relative few Florida militiamen proved fruitless, and the Indian raids continued into the summer of 1838 and even intensified. Most disturbingly for the whites, some of the fugitive Creeks from East Florida, along with Cooacoochee's band of Seminoles, moved north into the Okefenokee Swamp, killing and driving off settlers as they went. Once there they also attacked whites in Ware County, Georgia, reintroducing the war to that state. Simultaneously, the Creeks on Ochlockonee River became much more aggressive towards their enemies. On July 26, they rowed up to the home of a Mr. Laschley in four large canoes, killed the old gentleman and his daughter, slaughtered seven of his beeves, gathered thirty of forty bushels of corn from the field and took another twenty

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47 "Three companies," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 28 April 1838, p. 2; "General Orders No. 7," ibid.; Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, pp. 247-49; Delegate Levy to the Secretary of War, Washington, 5 January 1841, *Territorial Papers* 26: 416. President Jackson also did not believe the Floridians really wanted to fight the Seminoles aggressively. He told Joseph M. White, the territorial delegate to Congress, that fifty women could defeat all the Indians who had been harassing that part of Florida west of the Suwannee River. He also informed White that Florida's men "had better run off or let the Indians shoot them, that the women might get husbands of courage, and breed up men who would defend the country." Delegate White to J. Knowles, Washington, 15 February 1837, ibid., pp. 378-79.

bushels from the corn crib. They then shelled all the corn, loaded the plunder in the canoes, and slipped silently away down the river. When militiamen arrived from Quincey, they found "the whole premises had been reduced to ashes--the domestic animals, such as horses, dogs, &c. which had all been killed, were lying around the smoking ruins, and everything gave evidence of the most wanton cruelty and mischief." Worse, the Ochlockonee Creeks soon extended their forays back to the plantations on the Apalachicola.[48]

Under heavy pressure from the Floridians, Secretary Poinsett relented. On August 20, he directed Taylor to call up five hundred mounted territorial militiamen and to implement Call's plan for the defense of Middle Florida. Taylor still lacked confidence in the Floridians, however, and proposed an alternative scheme: he wanted to lay off all of northern Florida south to the Withlacoochee River in twenty mile squares with a fort and garrison of twenty soldiers in the center of each. The army would cut roads around each of the squares, establish lines of communication between the forts, and the troops would patrol their areas regularly. Taylor assured the War Department that this occupation plan would finally choke off all Indian depredations. The administration liked the proposal and gave Taylor permission to put it in place.[49]

While he waited for approval of his plan, the general marched his army into the field in the fall of 1838 and attempted to drive as many Indians as possible from the area

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[48] "A portion of the Indians," *Tallahassee Floridian*, 9 June 1838, p. 2; "From St. Augustine," ibid., 23 June 1938, p. 2; "From the frontiers," ibid., 21 July 1838, p. 2; "More Indian Murders," ibid., 28 July 1838, p. 2; "The War nearly ended," ibid.; "More victims to savage barbarity," ibid., 28 July 1838, p. 3; "Indians in the Okefenokee," ibid.; "The Creeks," ibid., 4 August 1838, p. 2. For the Lashley attack see "C.H. Dupont, Colonel Commanding 5th Regiment Florida Militia, to Call," ibid.

[49] Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, pp. 248-49.

of white settlement in northern Florida. As part of this plan, Taylor dispatched troops under Major Gustavus Loomis to cooperate with General Floyd of the Georgia militia in erecting posts around the Okefenokee and forcing the Indians from that morass. In addition, Taylor sent Lieutenant Colonel Green to sweep the natives from the area between St. Marks and the Suwannee River. He instructed Green to locate two companies of men in the vicinity of the Apalachicola River and then to build a post on the Steinhatchee near Deadman's Bay for four more companies. Taylor ordered these companies to cut a road up from the coast to the major east-west thoroughfare connecting Tallahassee with St. Augustine. That much done, the general proceeded to the Apalachicola to oversee personally the removal of the friendly Creeks there. Afterwards he journeyed to the new fort on the Steinhatchee and sent the troops stationed there off to examine all the local swamps and hammocks. Finally, he moved south to Tampa Bay to direct operations against the natives in southern Florida. However, he soon discovered that Middle Florida needed more help. Early in 1839 Indians murdered several families near Tallahassee, close by the railroad line between that town and the port of St. Marks. The white inhabitants of that section went into an uproar. Taylor immediately sent an additional force of two hundred infantrymen and a company of dragoons to reinforce Colonel Green's men. Governor Call and his legislative assembly moved to raise twelve more companies of militia, and Taylor felt compelled to accept them into the federal service with the proviso that only half of them would be mounted. Mounted troops were more expensive to maintain than foot soldiers, and Taylor had discovered that horsemen were not as effective as infantry. The Creeks and Seminoles secreted themselves in places horses could not go, rarely camping in open pine woods or travelling on the roads.[50]

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[50] Ibid., pp. 253-54, 259; Sprague, *Florida War*, pp. 222, 226, 232-33, 237.

As soon as he received approval from Washington, Taylor began to put his occupation scheme in place. His troops and civilian workers made prodigious efforts. On July 20, 1839, after only eight months of work, the general reported that he had constructed 53 new posts, 848 miles of wagon road, and 3,643 feet of causeways and bridges. Taylor also mounted another campaign to clear Middle Florida of Creeks using elements of the Second, Fifth and Sixth Infantry Regiments and the Third Artillery. In the end, however, Taylor did little to bring an end to the armed resistance of the fugitives from Alabama. Neither the establishment of forts nor the sweeping operations of troops quelled the Creeks or stopped their depredations. The Ochlockonee band proved particularly troublesome, killing numbers of whites on the Apalachicola in late 1839 and early 1840. Taylor responded by building yet another army post near Blountstown in West Florida, but white families continued to perish. Taylor did, however, gain a victory over his nemesis, Governor Call. In November of 1839 the president dismissed Call, believing that he was interfering with the federal officers and trying to control the whole management of the war himself. Judge Robert Raymond Reid became the new governor of the Florida Territory.[51]

After two years service, General Taylor left the Florida command in the hands of Brevet Brigadier General Walker Keith Armistead. As with all his predecessors, Armistead had his own strategy for ending the war. Essentially, he divided Florida into two parts, leaving civilian soldiers to protect the northern settlements while he put his regulars to work in the south searching for Seminole bands. To facilitate this plan, Secretary Poinsett accepted even more Florida militiamen into the service and even agreed

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[51] Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, pp. 261, 264-65; Sprague, *Florida War*, pp. 237, 243, 252, 261; Jerrel H. Shofner, *Jackson County, Florida--A History* (Marianna: Jackson County Heritage Association, 1985), p. 93.

that five hundred of them could remain on their farms as a home guard. On the whole the scheme worked fairly well. Creek raids in Middle Florida decreased in 1840. Meanwhile, Armistead's regular officers showed themselves to be competent guerrilla fighters against the Seminoles to the south. Adapting their clothes, armaments, and tactics to the peculiar, almost tropical, environment of southern Florida, they were able to penetrate strongholds that had been secure places of retreat for the Seminoles. They even explored the Everglades for the first time and routed the Indians bands within that vast swamp. Though he only commanded for one year, Armistead tightened a ring around the Seminoles in the peninsula, and captured or compelled the surrender of nearly seven hundred Indians and blacks. According to the general, only about three hundred native fighting men remained in Florida when he turned the command over to Colonel William Jenkins Worth in the summer of 1841.[52]

The war changed sharply under Worth's direction. He moved to streamline his force and cut costs, dismissing numerous civilian employees. Even before he took command, the War Department issued orders to discharge all civilian soldiers in Florida, and Worth also sent home the Georgia troops stationed around the Okefenokee Swamp. These measures provoked the ire of many Georgians and Floridians dependent on government expenditures. Nevertheless, Worth persevered, determined to use his lean army to keep constant pressure on the Indians even in summer, formerly a time of rest and repose for white troops and native warriors alike. At the same time, the colonel believed the war could not be won unless white settlers occupied the land and stood firm in their own defense. He was appalled that a few Indians in any given area of Florida could scare so many whites off the land. Consequently, Worth began to use his troops to help whites return to their farms or to locate new ones, providing transportation, rations,

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[52] Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, pp. 274-78, 280, 287.

and assistance in building blockhouses and other defensive structures. In true republican fashion, the colonel saw cabins, fields, community redoubts, and a virtuous Anglo-Saxon population as the only true bulwarks against savagery.[53]

Worth was especially active against the Creeks in Middle Florida. He stationed seven companies of dragoons and four companies of infantry in a line of posts from Trader's Hill on the St. Marys River to Tallahassee. These troops patrolled the country around the white settlements and the Okefenokee Swamp. Worth used two of these posts as centers for concerted drives against the Creeks in the summer of 1841. From Fort Fanning near the Suwannee, Captain Bonneville ventured out with the 7th Infantry to destroy Indian fields along that river and in the Wacassas hammock. Meanwhile, Major Wilson, commanding the 3rd Infantry, left Fort Stansbury near Tallahassee and used boats to hunt Creek fugitives along the shores of Deadman's Bay and to ascend to the farthest reaches of the Steinhatchee, Fenholloway, and other rivers known to harbor Indians. However, the natives generally eluded their pursuers, traveling at night and carefully covering their trails. One soldier described their methods: "Entering or emerging from a swamp or hammock, they jumped from log to log for miles, walked backwards, crawled upon their hands and knees, crossed and recrossed their tracks, if necessary . . . then scattered in parties of four or five, with the understanding to meet at some well known camping ground."[54]

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[53] Ibid., pp. 292-93, 295, 297, 298, 300-301; Sprague, *Florida War*, pp. 265, 284. In August of 1842, Congress enacted an Armed Occupation Bill for Florida. This act allowed heads of families to receive 160 acres of land in south-central Florida provided they settle that land and meet certain other stipulations. This act was the ancestor of the famed Homestead Act of the 1860s and added 6,500 settlers to Florida's population. Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, p. 313.

[54] Ibid., p. 306; Sprague, *Florida War*, pp. 279-80, 406-407.

Worth kept similar pressure on the Seminoles farther east and south, but his greatest achievement was in using former Indian war leaders as emissaries for peace and removal. The colonel made particularly good use of Cooacoochee, who, following his surrender had been sent off to Arkansas and then brought back to convince his recalcitrant Seminole tribesmen that the West was not such a bad place after all. More importantly, Cooacoochee carried the message to the war-weary Seminoles that they could live in peace in the West, and reunite families that had been separated and scattered by the fighting in Florida. Cooacoochee appeals to his war weary tribespeople, along with those of Alligator and other respected converts to the cause of peace and removal, had the desired effect. Once again, numbers of Indians came in to give themselves up, most notably the Tallahassee Seminoles under Tiger Tail and Nethlockemathla.[55]

But Worth's success met with a strong reaction from a hard core of natives determined to remain in Florida. The fugitive Creeks stood at the forefront of this group. In April of 1841, the Tallahassess, Halleck Tustennuggee's band of Miccosukee Seminoles, and Octiarche's Creeks met in Long Swamp near Fort King to stop the surrender and removal process. They passed a law mandating the death penalty for any Indian, male or female, found communicating with a white man for purposes of removal. Furthermore, they promised to put to death any Indian messenger sent by the army. The Creeks became the principal enforcers of these decrees, and they even entered removal camps under the cover of darkness to intimidate the inmates and force them back out into the Florida wilderness. When Worth finally achieved the surrender of Nethlockemathla's band of Tallahassees in late 1841, the Creeks plotted to assassinate that chief and make his people return to the war path. Though unsuccessful in that

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[55] Ibid., pp. 329, 331, 332, 247, 252-53, 376; Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, pp. 300, 302, 304.

endeavor, the Creeks did much to lessen the effectiveness of Worth's policy of sending friendly Indian emissaries to the hostile camps.[56]

The Creek influence against removal even extended farther south in the peninsula to the Big Cypress Swamp and the Everglades, where a few Seminole bands and a scattering of Creek rebels sought refuge from the war. There, Otulke Micco, also known as the Creek Prophet, ruled with an iron hand. This chief participated in the outbreak of the war in Alabama, and may have been one of the group of warriors who broke out of the Montgomery jail in the summer of 1836. Sometime thereafter he fled to Florida and allied himself with the Seminoles under Billy Bowlegs and Sam Jones (Arpeika). He claimed magical powers and regaled the Florida natives with tales of his exploits in Alabama and his miraculous escape from prison. He said that the Great Spirit had sent him to Florida, and had directed him to seek revenge for the wrongs his people suffered in their own land. The Seminoles with whom he associated became convinced that Otulke Micco could control the seasons, find game, sense the approach of troops, heal the sick, and kill people with incantations. And like the Red Stick prophets of the First Creek War, Otulke Micco used fear as a means of controlling his followers. He would not let the Seminoles within his sphere of influence surrender for removal. If he suspected that a family planned to defect, he appeared at their chickee with all his paraphernalia--roots, snake skins, blowpipes, etc.--and after much dancing and praying and gesturing and singing, he determined their guilt or innocence. If guilty of the crime of desiring to emigrate, they suffered death.[57]

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[56] Ibid., p. 300; Sprague, *Florida War*, pp. 317, 430, 451, 453.

[57] Ibid., pp. 271, 295-96, 318.

Yet some members of the southern bands shook free of the Prophet and gave themselves up to the soldiers. However, they did so under great psychological distress. Having arrived at Fort Brooke, chief Hospertarke (Old Shivers and Shakes) and his followers held dances and ceremonies night after night to stave off the curses of the Creek necromancer two hundred miles away. Ominously, Hospetarke's health began to decline at the Fort Brooke removal camp. Certain that Otulke Micco was killing him with his magic, Hospetarke was anxious that the government send him to Arkansas so he could escape, once and for all, the Prophet's pernicious influence.[58]

The Creeks also kept up their attacks on the whites, though now they carried the war almost by themselves. In fact, Worth wrote to the adjutant general in December of 1841 that the Creeks alone remained "as objects of apprehension or harm to the settlements." The colonel then did his best to eliminate them as combatants. He sent Lieutenant Colonel Garland with elements of the 3rd, 4th, and 7th Infantry regiments to scour Middle Florida yet another time, searching every part of the Suwannee, Apalachicola, Ochlockonee and Steinhatchee river basins as well as Cook's and Pumpkin hammocks. Creek warriors under Octiarche and Halpatter Tustennuggee responded by moving east away from the troops and striking at settlers in the populous area around Newnansville. Halpatter Tustennuggee also murdered two Indian peace messengers from Arkansas and left their bodies for the troops to find. Finally recognizing that persistent pursuit only made the Creeks more resistant and vengeful, Garland slowed down the chase and made peaceful overtures to the natives. Despite the inveterate hostility of Halpatter Tustennuggee and a number of the younger warriors, Garland obviously believed that most of the Creeks were tired of their fugitive existence. In time his insight and patience was rewarded. The Creeks operating near Tallahassee agreed to surrender,

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[58] Ibid., pp. 315, 321.

and in the spring of 1842, Octiarche consented to a truce and a meeting with Colonel Worth at his headquarters on Cedar Key.[59]

With the capture of Halleck Tustennuggee, the most dangerous Seminole war chief north of the Everglades, Worth thought his job was done. By his own reckoning, he had sent 662 Indians and blacks west and only about 300 native men, women and children remained in Florida. The colonel did not believe the effort to capture and remove these few people was worth the additional time and expense. Like Jesup before him, Worth asked the War Department to grant these Indians a new and reduced reservation in southern Florida on the condition that they stay within its confines and remain at peace with white Floridians. President Tyler, seeing how long and costly the Indian war had been, agreed to Worth's proposal and sent word to the colonel on May 10, 1842, that he should end hostilities as soon as possible. Worth then called the chiefs to council and perfected the agreement. On August 14, he declared the Second Seminole War at an end and took an extended leave from Florida.[60]

But the Second Creek War was not finished. Pascofar and Halpatter Tustennuggee never agreed to the settlement. Raids continued in Middle Florida and the Ochlockonee Creeks recrossed the Apalachicola and attacked settlers in Washington County of West Florida. Governor Call, who had returned to office by virtue of the Whig victory in the presidential election of 1840, sounded the familiar call for more troops. The War Department responded by ordering Colonel Josiah H. Vose, Worth's replacement, into the field. But Vose procrastinated. He believed the Creeks had not

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[59] Ibid., pp. 347, 352-53, 394-95, 440, 470-71; Worth to Adjutant General, Tampa, 15 December, 1841, *Territorial Papers* 26: 410-411.

[60] Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, pp. 307, 309-10, 315-16; Sprague, *Florida War*, pp. 475-77, 482-83, 485-86, 488.

been informed of the peace accord and he wanted to apprise them of the facts before ordering out yet another search and destroy mission. Furthermore, he believed that a pursuit of the Creeks at that point might upset the newly established peace with the remainder of Florida's natives.[61]

But Vose had another reason for delaying operations. He did not blame the Indians alone for the problem. He blamed Florida's poor whites, the people known as "vagabonds" and "crackers." They hated the Indians and the Indians hated them. Vose and other army officers saw that this implacable animosity was both a cause and a major reason for the continuation of the war. Interestingly, these respectable officers, revealing the deep cultural and class divisions that existed in white society, seemed to favor the Indians over the crackers. One of Worth's lieutenants described these poor whites as always "dirty, ragged and dusty, seated upon long-tailed and short-eared horses, with the deadly rifle resting in front and a short jacket, long beard and hair, and a broad-brim white hat." Captain Motte, a veteran of both the Creek and Seminole wars, believed that the Florida and Georgia crackers were the dumbest people in the world and excelled in no "duties except those involved in begetting "ugly little white-haired responsibilities." The white vagabonds proved particularly upsetting to Colonel Vose because they plundered Indian camps and fields, including those of Octiarche's band of Creeks. Also, the crackers threatened to accumulate in large gangs to attack the now friendly Seminoles as they moved south to their new reservation. Vose believed poor whites were responsible for much of the Indians' hostility, and might overturn the peace process. He wrote to Washington complaining that the vagabonds had not dared defend themselves during the war, but now that most of the natives were peaceful and retiring "a most unaccountable desire for the toils and glory of the field" had appeared

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[61] Ibid., pp. 495-96; Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, p. 316.

among the poor white class. Surprisingly, the adjutant general noted on Vose's letter that the colonel should repel any attack on the peaceful Indians by force. The natives, and the peace process, must be protected. This reply showed again how difficult it was for a divided white population to end an Indian war.[62]

But the natives were divided as well, and this posed another obstacle to peace. No longer united in a war with the whites, the old animosity between Creeks and Seminoles came to the fore. United in removal camps, the Florida warriors turned on one another and renewed old feuds, and only the vigilance of the army officers prevented "the most revolting crimes." Furthermore, Billy Bowlegs, leader of the Seminoles within the reservation, thought the Creeks were intruders in Florida and he threatened to kill Octiarche if he moved south. This news troubled Worth, now returned from leave as a brevet brigadier general. He feared violence would break out between Creeks and Seminoles as well as between Creeks and whites. However, he solved the problem simply. When Octiarche and his people showed up for peace talks, he simply took them captives and shipped them off to the West.[63]

Now Worth's attention turned to Pascofar and the Ochlockonee Creeks, the only hostile Indians left in Middle Florida. The general ordered Colonel Ethan Allan Hitchcock, commanding the 3rd Infantry at Fort Stansbury, to "pursue, capture and destroy" these fugitives. He also authorized Hitchcock to pay five hundred to a thousand dollars to two white men, who had been in communication with Pascofar for years, for their help in gaining the chief's surrender. That these men had been in contact

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[62] Ibid., pp. 256, 317; Sprague, *Florida War*, pp. 494, 496; Motte, *Journey*, pp. vii, xiv; Vose to Adjutant General, Cedar Keys, 26 September 1842, *Territorial Papers* 26: 548-49; Vose to Adjutant General, Cedar Keys, 29 September 1842, ibid., p. 551.

[63] Sprague, *Florida War*, pp. 498-99, 501-502; Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, p. 317.

with the Ochlockonee Creeks when the army had been unable to locate them, showed once again the complexity of social and economic relationships on the Florida frontier. It also revealed that the war was not a simple matter of red versus white. Hitchcock, however, ignored Worth's instructions. He was determined to establish relations with Pascofar in his own way, and to remove the Ochlockonee Creeks "without the shedding of blood."[64]

Hitchcock left his post with two companies of soldiers on December 9, 1842, marched to the west, and placed his men on a steamboat headed down the Apalachicola River. For some months past the Indians had been pillaging along the stream and Hitchcock thought it would be the best place to find them. Using two friendly Indians as scouts and emissaries, Hitchcock made contact with one of Pascofar's young warriors. Through that young man, the officer gained an audience with the chief. Then, with kind words and gifts of food, liquor and blankets, Hitchcock won Pascofar's confidence. The chief admitted that his people were poor and could not continue to live in isolation. Furthermore, they were in constant danger from the whites. Finally, Pascofar agreed to surrender his people for removal. However, he said that the members of his band were afraid to come out of hiding and show themselves on the Apalachicola because of all the depredations they had committed there. He promised Hitchcock that they would give themselves up on Ochlockonee Bay. Consequently, the officer met them there and took the fifty-one members of the band on board his boat for transport to the Horse Key removal camp. On January 26, 1843, Worth shipped the Ochlockonee Creeks to New Orleans.[65]

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[64] Sprague, *Florida War*, p. 500; Peters, *The Florida Wars*, pp. 257, 259.

[65] Ibid., pp. 259-61.

Hitchcock was well pleased. He wrote in his diary: "But now the Indian War is finished--ended--closed for the last time. The Indians have been talked out of Florida." Governor Call was even more elated. He appeared before the territorial legislature to proclaim that "All apprehension of danger is now removed--not an Indian remains. The last war whoop has been heard on our southwestern border and peace and security are permanently restored in that quarter."[66]

Hitchcock and Call were wrong. The Second Creek War was not finished. Fugitive Creeks remained along the coast of West Florida, and not all of them were content to live in peace. For much of the remainder of the antebellum era, these natives occasionally robbed homes, killed livestock, looted postal stations, and murdered whites in Washington County and along the shores of St. Andrews, Choctawhatchee and East bays. A group of Indians known as "Old Joe's Band" was particularly troublesome. They roamed between St. Joseph's and East Pass, and their attacks on whites did not end until 1848, when Old Joe tried to murder a lone white traveler named Kage King for the bolt of calico the man carried. After a grueling chase and fight, King managed to kill Joe with a knife and went home to tell the news. Joe's death quieted his band and brought peace to the coast, but farther north the whites in Jackson county continued to suffer from periodic attacks. In fact, marauding Creeks stole so much corn there in 1854 that the state legislature made a special appropriation to compensate the local farmers.[67]

After that episode the Second Creek War finally died away, nearly twenty years after it began, and only a few years before the beginning of the larger conflagration known as the Civil War. That the Creek conflict lasted so long gives testimony to the determination of the fugitives to resist removal and to punish whites for all the injustices

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[66] Ibid., p. 262.

[67] Rucker, "Creek Indian Crisis," p. 333; McKinnon, *Walton County*, pp. 124-28.

they suffered in Alabama. The war also owed its longevity to the diverse interests of the white population. Divided by class, economic ambitions, and politics, the whites worked at cross purposes. Federal officers in West Florida sought peace through negotiation with the Creeks while local militiamen sought only a military solution to the Indian problem. In Middle Florida settlers wanted the government to defend them from the natives, but they also thrived off of federal expenditures and wanted the war continued. Some whites fought for their homes, others fled wildly to federal forts at the sight of a few Indians, and lingered about to live off government handouts. Some of Florida's crackers hated the natives and provoked them to hostility, but a number of white roughs looted and pillaged right alongside the Indians. Spaniards and blacks also traded with the Creeks and Seminoles, furnishing them with the material of war. All this lack of unity of purpose among Florida's non-native population made it difficult for them to defeat the Indians, especially the embittered and determined Creeks. In fact, the whites never won the Second Creek War completely in so far as removal was a goal of the conflict. When all the noise and smoke cleared away, some Creeks remained in the wilds of Florida--the old haven of Creek migrants.

Conclusion

The Significance of the Second Creek War

The Second Creek War was unique in the history of native-white warfare in the United States. It grew out of the close contact between native and white societies during the transitional decade of the 1830s, the time when the last of the good Native American lands passed into white hands and the majority of tribespeople left their old homes in the South for new ones in the West. During that decade, white farmers and planters transferred the center of cotton production from the Atlantic states into the Old Southwest. In the process, they moved into country still occupied by the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, and Chickasaw nations and built their cabins and mansions hard by native villages and fields. For a few years prior to the Indian removals, these white immigrants, their black slaves, and the native inhabitants of the land lived as near neighbors in a pluralistic society. In fact, at no other time in the antebellum era did so many black, white and red southerners live in such close proximity. In the case of the Creek Nation, this situation resulted in war. This fact alone makes the conflict significant, for an exploration of the war's causes, conduct and consequences provides a window of opportunity for examining native-white relations on the grassroots level during the dramatic removal era.

First and foremost, an exploration of the Second Creek War reveals that it sprang out of the meeting and intermingling of fractious, incohesive societies. the Creeks were torn by ethnic competition as well and conservative and progressive factionalism; the whites were divided by political, economic, and class interests; and both peoples were fragmented by the forces of individualism and competition unleashed by America's "market revolution." The lack of unity among natives and whites created volatility and increased social fragmentation which exploded in a war.

In this respect, the Creek conflict was not a traditional Indian-white war. In all other conflicts, including the Second Seminole War, Indians and whites faced one another across a definable frontier when the fighting began. In most cases, the natives took up arms to resist white encroachment on tribal territories or to combat white efforts to remove them to distant locales. The Second Creek War was somewhat different. The Cusseta Treaty of 1832 was not ostensibly a removal treaty. It simply broke down the frontier line separating Creeks from whites and created a pluralistic society in New Alabama. Unfortunately, the treaty also exposed Creek land, resources, and even the natives themselves, to economic exploitation by their white neighbors. However, whites also exploited other whites in the course of despoiling the Creeks, and the natives turned on one another in the lawless, competitive economic environment the treaty created. As a consequence, Creek society fell almost completely apart as the natives became increasingly impoverished, debt-ridden, and despondent. In fact, the Creeks were trapped. They lacked the economic resources necessary to pay their debts and leave Alabama, but the longer they stayed in their homeland the more indebted and dependent they became. Against this backdrop, the Second Creek War occurred. Lower Creek warriors rose up to fight the threat of forced removal but also to free themselves and their families from incorporation into the white socioeconomic system as second-class citizens and even slaves. More than any other Indian uprising in American history, the Second Creek War resembles a rural revolt of oppressed native peasants. Governor Clay of Alabama recognized this fact in his war proclamation, declaring that the Creek conflict was not a traditional Indian war but an act of civil rebellion of one class of state citizens against another.

Furthermore, the Second Creek War was not a minor conflict. Rising up in May of 1836, the Creek rebels executed a definite strategy for taking back their country and their lives from the whites. They drove whites from their farms and plantations in the

lower counties of New Alabama. They closed the Federal and New roads to cut off communications between Georgia and Old Alabama and moved to isolate Columbus by shutting down steamboat traffic on the Chattahoochee. Then they crossed the river into Georgia to open a line of communications to the warring Seminoles in Florida and to clear a path of escape for themselves should they need it. In the process of all this, the Creek rebels killed over a hundred whites and inflicted an estimated $3,000,000 worth of damage on white property. However, the loss of life and extent of destruction would have been greater but for the rapid flight of so many whites. In fact, the disunited whites, dependent on a tired militia system, proved unable to defend themselves against the Creek onslaught. Already fearing the appearance of French ships off the Gulf Coast, the Mexican/Indian threat in the West, the furious Seminoles to the south, and abolitionist attacks from the north, the white settlers in and around the Old Creek Nation were not confident expansionists and they surely did not consider the Creek rebellion a minor event. In fact, only the divided nature of Creek society--most importantly the unwillingness of the Upper Creeks to join the rebellion--kept the rebels from pushing the whites out of New Alabama and the western counties of Georgia.[1]

Certainly, Secretary of War Cass did not think the uprising was insignificant. He recognized the danger inherent in a combination of hostile Creeks and Seminoles and sent two major generals and an army of well over ten thousand men to put down the Creek revolt before that alliance took place. Furthermore, he ordered General Jesup to remove all the Creeks, both hostile and friendly, from Alabama. Cass honestly believed that the Lower Creek revolt would spread like an infection to the Upper Creeks if these friendly natives stayed in the state. He was serious when he called for the removal off all

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[1] Page to Gibson, 20 May 1836, U.S. Congress, *American State Papers, Military Affairs,* Vol. 6 (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1961), pp. 771-72.

Creeks as a national security measure. He was not using the war simply as an excuse to do what government commissioners and negotiators had been unable to do for years.

However, the federal response to the Creek rebellion was not as effective as we have been led to believe. In fact, the Second Creek War is significant for its longevity, not its brevity. Despite their declarations of success, generals Jesup and Scott did not defeat all the Creek rebels and end the war in the summer of 1836. Such success as they enjoyed came, again, because of Creek factionalism. Upper Creeks, not federal or state troops, captured most of the rebel party. However, some rebels simply went into hiding in the summer of 1836. Others fled across southern Georgia to the Seminole country, opening a new, and previously overlooked, stage of the war. Then, in 1837, the conflict erupted again in New Alabama as rebels emerged from hiding and whites tried to break up the state's remaining removal camps. Now, members of the original rebel party united with formerly friendly Creeks driven from the camps and fled to West Florida, carrying the war with them into yet another area. The war raged in West Florida well into 1838, when some of the surviving Creeks fled into Middle Florida, established contact with Seminole bands and other Creek fugitives, and merged the Creek and Seminole wars into one. Then Creeks actually took over direction of the Florida conflict until its official end in 1843. But even then some Creeks continued to roam the coast and woodlands of West Florida, occasionally attacking whites. Surprisingly, their depredations lasted right into the decade of the 1850s. Only then did the Second Creek War die away.

However, one should not suppose that native determination alone accounts for this long war. The whites' lust for Creek land and property helped bring on the conflict, and after the war erupted, this greed helped continue the conflict. Elements of non-native society, seeing Indian warfare as an economic boon, actually aided and abetted the Indian resistance. Furthermore, even those whites who wanted to end the war could not

agree on tactics. Some whites saw the natives as vermin and sought to kill or remove them with force. Other whites pitied the Creeks, blamed members of their own society for the war, and sought a peaceful and honorable removal through negotiation. Indeed, some respectable whites removed from the scene of fighting saw the lower orders of their own society as more dangerous than the Indians. Thus the whites often worked at cross purposes, thus extending the war. At the same time, contending political parties blamed one another for the conflict, which most southerners saw as a failure. In fact, even Andrew Jackson, the great Indian fighter, lost popularity as a result of the conflict. Interestingly, the Second Creek War revealed a non-Indian society often at war with itself, and this fact makes the conflict quite significant as a source of study.

Although it is difficult to determine the exact cost of this long war, both in terms of money and lives, it had to be substantial. Between the years 1835 and 1843, Congress appropriated between thirty and forty million dollars for the suppression of Indian hostilities in Alabama, Georgia and Florida. It is hard to draw the line between Creek and Seminole war expenditures because the appropriation bills made no designations, but chasing and fighting Creeks in three different states must have demanded a healthy portion of the total sum. Furthermore, both the federal government and the state of Florida continued to expend funds in tracking down Creeks well after 1843. Worse, the Creek and Seminole wars consumed human beings. Hundreds of whites and Indians died in the war, most from hardship and disease rather than direct combat. Most unfortunately, the Creek fugitives may have lost all of their children during the years of their flight from Alabama to Middle Florida. When, for example, Colonel Ethan Allen Hitchcock finally rounded up Pascofar's band at Ochlockonee Bay, he noted that the group included no children between the ages of four and fifteen years of age.[2]

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[2] John K. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1967), p. 326; Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal* (Norman:

Despite the cost, or perhaps because of it, the war benefited whites. First of all, the war resulted in the forced removal of the large majority of Creeks. This removal, in turn, contributed to the whites' sense of security and bolstered economic development in Georgia, Florida, and Alabama. As whites settled on more of the land vacated by the Creeks, Alabama's agricultural production increased, the center of population shifted to the southern portion of the state, and Montgomery became the state's capital and most influential city in the decade of the 1840s. Similarly, the Creek removal facilitated the economic growth of the Chattahoochee-Apalachicola river system. This system, which includes the Flint and Chipola rivers and numerous other tributary streams, traverses thousands of acres of good farm land. With the end of the Creek war, plantations and new towns sprang up all along the system, particularly in southwestern Georgia where roaming Creeks and Seminoles had caused white settlers problems for decades. The city of Columbus, located at the fall line of this river system, became an even more important commercial center, just as its residents had hoped when they set out to grab the Creek lands in New Alabama. Columbus merchants prospered from the buying and selling of cotton from all the new fields in Georgia and Alabama, and they used the money to make Columbus a manufacturing hub that sported cotton gin factories and cotton mills. These merchants, along with those of Eufaula, Albany, Bainbridge, Marianna and other inland ports on the Chattahoochee-Apalachicola system, shipped all the cotton they collected downriver to the town of Apalachicola, located at the mouth of the waterway on the Gulf of Mexico. There other businessmen sent all the cotton produced on lands once claimed by the Creeks to the North and to Europe. During the 1840s, Apalachicola boomed and bustled with activity and became the third largest

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University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), p. 383.

cotton port and international trading center on the Gulf Coast behind New Orleans and Mobile.[3]

But the Indian removal was not the only beneficial economic result of the Creek war. During the years 1835 to 1843, the federal expenditures helped local economies. Besides construction of new roads and other internal improvement projects in Florida, the war provided valuable publicity for the territory, and many settlers purchased land there once the conflict ended. Some of these settlers were war veterans who returned with their families to a country they found salubrious and delightful. Similarly, the presence of so many soldiers, and the availability of government contracts, benefited the town of Columbus and its environs in 1836. Money gained from these sources, along with all the business brought to Columbus by a rush of new settlers on the Creek lands, helped see the town through the Panic of 1837. Not as many businesses "went by the board" in Columbus as in other cities and towns.[4]

Of course, the war's outcome was not so favorable for the Creek rebels and fugitives. The Lower Creeks who went west in chains did not fare well in their new homes. Ethan Allen Hitchcock, the army officer who gained the surrender of Pascofar,

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[3] The dispossession of the Creeks opened approximately one-third of the state of Alabama to white settlement. As a result, the state's non-native population doubled in the decade of the 1830s. Cotton production more than tripled, largely because of the opening of the famed Black Belt to cotton planting. Mobile also grew in importance as an international cotton port during this period. Weymouth T. Jordan, *Ante-Bellum Alabama: Town and Country* (Tallahassee: Florida State University, 1957), 9-11. Lynn Willoughby chronicles the economic development of the country between Columbus and the Gulf of Mexico in *Fair to Middlin': The Antebellum Cotton Trade of the Apalachicola/Chattahoochee Valley* (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1993).

[4] Mahon, *Second Seminole War*, p. 326; J.H.Martin, comp., *Columbus, Georgia; From Its Selection as a Trading Town in 1827 to Its Partial Destruction by Wilson's Raid in 1865* (Columbus: Thomas Gilbert, 1874), pp. 80-81.

visited the Creek Nation in the West in 1841 and found that the Upper Creeks, who had emigrated peacefully in 1836, were clinging to their old customs, including communal farming and cooperative construction projects about their towns. Working together in traditional fashion, while at the same time allowing individual economic enterprises, these Upper Creeks had begun to prosper in their new country. Not too many years after their relocation, they were growing large quantities of cotton and corn and tending herds of horses, cattle and hogs. The Upper Creeks escaped their old homeland to preserve their culture and social order, and, in turn, the strength of these things allowed them to reestablish themselves successfully in the West, despite the loss of property and life they suffered in New Alabama and on the trip to their new homeland. On the other hand, the Lower Creek population, which contained the rebels of 1836 and most of the late arrivals to the western country, was less united, thrifty and prosperous. Town government was weak, and while the early emigrants--the McIntosh Creeks--thrived on plantations and ranches, many Lower Creeks were poor and remained susceptible to alcoholism and all the evils of social disintegration that had plagued them in Alabama and had helped bring on the war. For these people, the fight to resist removal simply worsened their lot in life for some years to come.[5]

Similarly, the Creeks who remained in the Southeast at war's end did not fare well. Green Beauchamp, a pioneer citizen of Barbour County, stated that after Wellborn's Pea River Battle in March of 1837 the troops enslaved all the Creek women and children they captured. The same thing occasionally happened during the course of fighting throughout southern Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. Ward Coachman, who would

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[5] Grant Foreman, ed., *A Traveler in Indian Territory: The Journal of Ethan Allen Hitchcock, Late Major-General in the United States Army* (Cedar Rapids: Torch Press, 1930), pp. 111-23.

become principal chief of the Creek Nation in the Indian Territory, returned to Alabama in the 1840s to rescue sixty-five of these unfortunate captives. However, he knew of about one hundred more who remained in slavery. There may have been even more Creek slaves scattered throughout the Southeast that Coachman could not locate. In Alabama, both the War Department and Governor Arthur Bagby urged the white citizens to give up their captives for removal, but their efforts were not entirely successful. In reply to one of Bagby's inquiries, Jonathan P. Booth, the one time commanding general of the 5th Division of Alabama Militia, informed the governor that he and several other leading citizens of Barbour and Dale counties held Indian captives. Booth claimed that he and William Wellborn would give their Indians up, but he believed that the release of the other captives was "very questionable." He was correct. The economic system of the Old South required lots of laborers, and some whites would never surrender the natives they had taken such pains to capture. Beauchamp stated that as late as the 1870s Creek captives were living among the whites and blacks of Barbour County.[6]

It does not appear that all the captives were slaves, however. Some occupied a shady, second-class position between free whites and black slaves. The life of an Indian woman named Ailsey--one of General Booth's captives--gives testimony to this fact. Despite his promise to Governor Bagby, Booth never surrendered Ailsey to the authorities. Instead, he reared her with his own children, educated her after a fashion, never enslaved her, and did not let her keep company with slaves. However, neither the Booths nor the other white residents of Eufaula (formerly Irwinton) allowed Ailsey to associate with them on terms of equality. Consequently, Ailsey became a servant for

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[6] Green Beauchamp, "Early Chronicles of Barbour County," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (Spring, 1971): 58; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, p. 190, n. 35; Booth to Bagby, Irwinton, 26 May 1841, Bagby's Militia Files, 1837-1841, ADAH.

the whites and "a noted laundress of fine linens and laces." She lived in her own log house and married a black man. Meanwhile, farther to the south and west near Pea River, a family named Clark reared a dark-skinned Creek infant they found abandoned in their cotton field by her fugitive tribespeople. The Clarks named the girl "Indian Peggy" and brought her up as one of their own. However, she never left their home to make her own way in the world. She served the Clarks as a cook and housekeeper, associated little with other whites or blacks, and never married. She died at age 37. Perhaps the best explanation of the status of Ailsey and Peggy and other unenslaved Creeks comes from John L. McKinnon, author of the *History of Walton County, Florida*. In describing two captive boys who tended cows on the McKinnon's West Florida homestead, the writer called them "interesting pets."[7]

Even those scattered groups of Creeks who managed to evade removal and captivity and stayed on in the Southeast as free people still suffered some unfortunate consequences. They were forced to give up much of their culture and their Indian

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[7] Eugenia Persons Smartt, *History of Eufaula, Alabama* (Birmingham: Roberts and Son, 1933), p. 19; Mattie Thomas Thompson, *History of Barbour County*, Alabama (Eufaula: 1939), pp. 54-55; Booth to Bagby, Irwinton, 26 May 1841, Bagby's Militia Files, 1837-1841, ADAH; Marion Bailey Brunson, *Pea River Reflections: Intimate Glimpses of Area Life During Two Centuries* (Tuscaloosa: Portals Press, 1975), p. 27-29; John L. McKinnon, *History of Walton County* (Gainesville: Palmetto Books, 1968), p. 120. The actions of Arch Justice-- famed Dale County, Alabama, Indian fighter-- demonstrates further that some southern whites objected to the enslavement of Creek captives. Justice captured a native boy and girl in the course of his border forays and reared them. However, the county sheriff, one Levi Skipper, took the male youngster away from Justice on an writ of detinue and placed the lad on the local slave block for sale to the highest bidder. This upset Justice. "Drawing his gun he walked up to the block and said to the Indian, 'Come down off that block, you are a free man!' Then Justice said some more things that he did not learn in Sunday School. No one, not even the sheriff, offered any resistance and the Indian went about his business a free man." Fred S. Watson, *Piney Woods Echoes: A History of Dale and Coffee Counties, Alabama* (Elba, Alabama: Elba Clipper), pp. 14-15.

identities to remain in a place where Native Americans had become illegal aliens. A closer look at the eastern end of old Macon County, Alabama, (an area presently included in Lee County) provides an example of this process. Reverend F. L. Cherry, a nineteenth-century county historian, stated that two years after the Creek removal there were still as many Indians as whites living in this area. They had avoided removal by being "very quiet." Writing about the same location in the twentieth century, Alexander Nunn, another county historian, said: "When I was a boy . . . many families of Indian ancestry could still be found amongst us; some were of mixed white and Indian blood, some of Indian and Negro ancestry. Probably there are even more with Indian blood in their veins today but the proportion of Indian blood has been so much diluted that distinctly Indian features have almost disappeared." This evidence suggests that amidst the turmoil and violence of New Alabama's economic life, some Creeks may have sought out blacks and whites as allies and mates in the contest to survive and prosper--a contest that cut across racial lines. This evidence also may indicate that these Creeks used their affiliations with black and white families as a successful strategy for evading removal. However, the cost over time was the complete loss of their native culture and ethnic identity. They resisted removal only to be assimilated into the black and white communities. The same thing happened in West Florida, the last stronghold of the remaining Creek resistance fighters. In time even these people had to emerge from their bayous and swamps, give up their lives of predation along with much of their culture, and gradually blend in with blacks or whites. By 1900 most of Florida's Creeks had forgotten, or sought to cover up, their Indian ancestry.[8]

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[8] F.L. Cherry, "History of Opelika and Her Agricultural Tributary Territory, Embracing More Particularly Lee and Russell Counties, from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Date," *The Alabama Historical Quarterly* 15, nos. 2-4 (1953): 224; Alexander Nunn, *Yesterdays in Loachapoka and Communities Nearby* (Alexander City, Alabama: Outlook Publishing Company), *p.* 8; Lucius F. Ellsworth and Jane E. Dysart, "West Florida's

And yet, in the light of more recent events, the fact that some Creeks staged a successful fight to stay in the Southeast can be seen as a triumph. The Civil Rights Movement and the opportunity to receive reimbursement for lost tribal land through the federal government's Indian Claims Commission (established in 1946) prompted many Creek descendants in the southern states to come forward and to reassert themselves as Native Americans. Some have also tried to reclaim various aspects of their lost culture. The Poarch Band of Creeks centered in southern Alabama and the Florida Tribe of Eastern Creek Indians are the two most noticeable of these people, but other groups are seeking recognition. Their efforts show that the children of the Creek resistance fighters, as well as those of more peaceful native resistors, have come out of hiding at last. That they are able to do so means that the rebels of 1836, and their offspring, can claim at least a partial victory in the Second Creek War. Surely this fact, along with all the others previously mentioned, makes the conflict significant in the history of race relations in the United States.[9]

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[9] Ibid., pp. 436-39; J. Leitch Wright, *Creeks and Seminoles; The Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulge People* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p. 318.

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Vita

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