

THE REMOVAL OF THE CREEK INDIANS FROM THE SOUTHEAST, 1825-1838

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THE REMOVAL OF THE CREEK INDIANS FROM THE SOUTHEAST, 1825-1838

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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This dissertation examines the removal of approximately twenty-three thousand Creek Indians from Alabama and Georgia to present-day Oklahoma between 1825 and 1838. At its height, the Creek Nation encompassed most of the present-day states of Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. It was a vibrant, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society. But, the Creek Nation increasingly found itself under siege by white settlers and state and federal politicians who wanted to open up the Creeks' land for white settlement. Whites were able to acquire Creek land piecemeal in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries through treaty negotiations. In 1825, the Coweta headman William McIntosh signed the Treaty of Indian Springs which ceded all remaining Creek land in Georgia and

a large portion of Creek land in Alabama to the federal government in exchange for a large sum of money and territory in present-day Oklahoma.

A vast majority of the Creeks opposed the Treaty of Indian Springs and although they were able to nullify the document with a revised version in 1826, the Creeks did not recoup their Georgia land. Consequently, many Lower Creeks began a decade long period of hunger and starvation. In fact, this period marked the beginning of the end of the Creek Nation in the east. The treaties were also removal documents that gave Creeks the option of leaving the southeast in order to ameliorate their suffering. Creek headmen did all they could to keep the Creek Nation together, even signing a new treaty in 1832 that gave each Creek family legal title to a tract of land, but they ultimately had little success. Whites streamed into the Creek territory, many of whom cheated the Creeks out of their land. In 1836, a small band of Lower Creeks revolted against white encroachment and started a war that gave Andrew Jackson an excuse to remove all the Creeks west of the Mississippi River. In the span of little more than a decade this once vibrant society was gone from the Southeast.

This dissertation examines the events in the Creek Nation immediately after the signing of the Treaty of Indian Springs in 1825. It is a social history that focuses on three primary areas: the Creek homefront in Alabama during the removal epoch, the experiences of the Creek Indians as they traveled west, and the ways in which the Creeks reestablished their lives in present-day Oklahoma.

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Introduction

To 1825

“What land we have left we cannot spare, and you will find we are distressed.”
—Tame King, Speaker of the Upper Towns, 1809

In 1855 Arwike, a thirty-eight-year-old Creek man from the town of Hitchiti, emigrated from Alabama to the Indian territory. He traveled alone, paying for his transportation and a year’s worth of provisions out of his own pocket.¹ Arwike was a member of the Creek Nation, a large multi-ethnic, multi-lingual society that, at its height, encompassed most of the present-day states of Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. By the time Arwike set out for his new home in the west, however, the Creek Nation no longer existed in the east; its people and government had been relocated west of the Mississippi River and the land turned over to the federal government and divided into parcels for white settlement. Arwike’s story is unusual in that his journey west commenced almost two decades after the federal government forced the Creeks to the Indian territory. In fact, many of his Hitchiti townspeople left Alabama in shackles and under armed guard. Arwike was one of the last Creeks to emigrate from Alabama. In forcing the Creeks west, the federal government, along with the state governments of Georgia and Alabama,

¹ Arwike appears to have died before he could collect reimbursement money from the federal government for his emigration, however in 1885, one of Arwike’s heirs, a Creek Indian named Parscofar, petitioned the United States for the cost of his ancestor’s transportation and provisions, see Creek Self-Emigration Claims, Record Group-75, Special Files of the Office of Indian Affairs, 1807-1904, Special File-285, Microcopy-574, reel-77, 32, National Archives.

realized their dream of opening up vast tracts of land for white settlement. And by the time Arwike left Alabama in 1855, it was remarkably different than the land his Hitchiti brethren passed over in 1836. In roughly twenty-years, large-scale cotton agriculture had replaced the small plots of corn and other crops the Creeks grew near their homes, railroads dissected old Creek hunting grounds, and cities emerged where Creek villages once stood.

Arwike's personal story is only an epilogue to the removal of nearly twenty-three thousand Creek Indians who emigrated across the Mississippi River between 1827 and 1837. A majority of the emigrants were forced from their homes and marched west under the supervision of the United States military in 1836 and 1838. The hardships faced on the “Creek Trail of Tears” were legendary. But, not all the Creeks were forced west by the United States government. A small percentage of Creeks *voluntarily* emigrated west between 1827 and 1836. The voluntary emigrations began when Coweta chief William McIntosh illegally ceded large portions of Creek territory to the federal government in exchange for money and land in the west. Many of the thirty-five hundred Creeks who voluntarily emigrated were supporters of McIntosh. Sensing that they might be able to peaceably coerce the entire Creek Nation west, the federal government began a concerted effort after 1826 to compel and cajole the Creeks into voluntarily emigrating. Because many of the Lower Creeks forced from Georgia were unable to reestablish their lives on available land in Alabama, they faced a future of hunger and even starvation. Voluntary emigration, however, gave these Lower Creeks, and all Creeks for that matter, the option of seeking a new life in the west. Consequently, many of the poorer Lower Creeks had to

choose between remaining in the east or emigrating west. This was not a decision the Creeks took lightly and the Creek Nation grew increasingly factionalized over the emigration question. In fact, the problems the Creeks faced created such a quagmire of despair and desperation that more and more Creeks found voluntary removal an attractive alternative between the years 1827 to 1836. Still, a vast majority of Creeks were resolutely determined to remain and die on the land of their ancestors regardless of their suffering. In fact, it was not until a small band of Lower Creeks started a war against white settlers in east Alabama in 1836 that the federal government decided to forcibly remove the entire Creek Nation. And yet, there were those such as Arwike who remained behind in Alabama into the 1840s and 1850s. He was not alone. In fact, one seventy-one year old woman emigrated from Alabama to the Indian territory in the mid-1870s.² Moreover, some Creeks, like the ancestors of the Poarch Creeks near present-day Atmore, Alabama, never emigrated west.

Despite its importance to American history, there has never been a comprehensive investigation into the removal of the Creek Indians. In the 1930s, Grant Foreman wrote extensively on the removal of the Southeastern Indians but never included more than a chapter or two on the Creeks' experiences as they traveled west. Michael D. Green's seminal work, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, published in 1982, details the Creeks' struggle, and ultimate failure, to maintain their political autonomy in the east in the face of American expansion. Yet, as his title implies, Green examined the political and diplomatic maneuverings of Creek headmen and American officials while largely

² Creek Self-Emigration Claims, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-285, M-574, reel-77, 87, NA.

ignoring the social aspects of removal. Indeed, while myriad book chapters, journal articles, doctoral dissertations, and even master's theses have also focused on different aspects of the Creek removal narrative, to date there has never been a definitive ethnohistorical account of the Creeks' experiences as the emigrated west or their life on the Creek homefront during the voluntary removal period.³

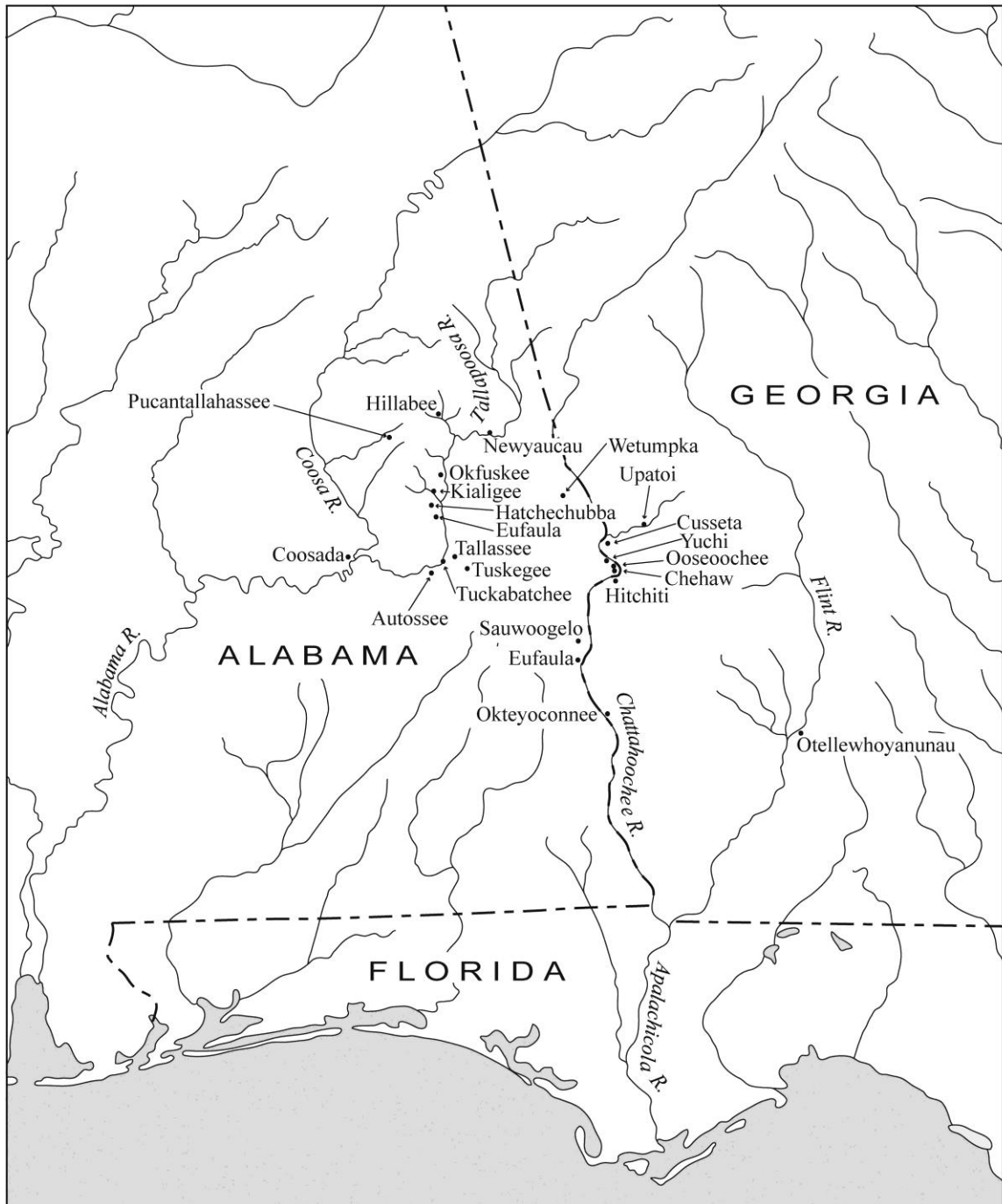
This dissertation attempts to fill in the enormous gap in Creek Indian historiography. Building upon the solid foundation set by Green, this work examines the social history of Creek removal. Of primary concern are the experiences of the Creeks as they traveled west, life on the Creek homefront during the decade-long removal period, and how the Creeks adapted to life in the west. Beginning with the Treaty of Indian Springs, which commenced voluntary removal in 1825, and moving chronologically, this work documents the increasingly dire situation the Creeks found themselves in as white squatters squeezed the Creek Nation to its breaking point. The first chapter examines the

³ Grant T. Foreman, *Indians and Pioneers: The Story of the American Southeast before 1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930); *Ibid.*, *Advancing the Frontier 1830-1860* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1933); *Ibid.*, *The Five Civilized Tribes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934); *Ibid.*, *Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians* (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); Christopher D. Haveman, "With Great Difficulty and Labour: The Emigration of the McIntosh Party of Creek Indians, 1827-1828," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 85:4 (Winter 2007-2008), 468-490; *Ibid.*, "Final Resistance: Creek Removal from the Alabama Homeland," *Alabama Heritage* 89 (Summer 2008), 9-19; Anthony F.C. Wallace, *The Long, Bitter Trail: Andrew Jackson and the Indians* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993); William Roan Tipton, "The Removal of the Creek Indians from Alabama to the Indian Territory in 1836," (M.A. thesis, University of Alabama, 1921); Charles Manley Humphrey, "Removal of the Creek Indians to Oklahoma," (M.A. thesis, Oklahoma Agriculture and Mechanical College, 1933); Marvin L. Ellis, "The Indian Fires Go Out: Removing the Creeks from Georgia and Alabama, 1825-1837," (M.A. thesis, Auburn University, 1982); John Thaddeus Ellisor, "The Second Creek War: The Unexplored Conflict," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, 1996); Gloria Jahoda, *The Trail of Tears* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975); Kåre Kvaløy, "The Creek Indians and the BIA: From Removal to Oklahoma Statehood, 1830-1907," (M.A. thesis, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 1997); Janis Elaine Campbell, "The Social and Demographic Effects of Removal," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1997); Douglas A. Hurt, "The Shaping of a Creek (Muscogee) Homeland in Indian Territory, 1828-1907," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 2000); Karl Davis, "Much of the Indian Appears: Adaptation and Persistence in a Creek Community, 1783-1854," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, 2003).

signing of the Treaty of Indian Springs by William McIntosh which ceded all Creek land in Georgia and a large portion of land in Alabama. A party of Creek warriors, under the authorization of the Creek National Council, executed McIntosh for his role in the signing. The National Council also worked to convince the federal government to overturn the treaty. In 1826, the Creeks were successful in convincing the federal government to nullify the Treaty of Indian Springs and a revised version, called the Treaty of Washington, was signed. However the Treaty of Washington did not recoup the Creeks' Georgia land and over seven thousand Lower Creeks were forced from Georgia into Alabama in 1827. The chapter also documents the difficulty the Lower Creeks from Georgia had in reestablishing their towns and lifeways within the borders of Alabama. Chapter Two gives a detailed account of the journey of the McIntosh party, the first government-sponsored Creek voluntary emigration, which left the east in 1827 for present-day Oklahoma. Chapter Three documents the journey of two more parties that emigrated in 1828 and 1829, while also describing Creek headmen's attempts to hold the Creek Nation together by trying to prevent would-be emigrants from leaving. Chapter Four examines the Treaty of Washington of 1832, which was a last, desperate attempt by Creek headmen to maintain control over their land and lifeways in the face of white encroachment. The fourth chapter also examines the land frauds perpetrated on the Creeks by white land speculators. Chapter Five is a detailed narrative of two more voluntary emigrating parties that left Alabama in 1834 and 1835. Chapter Six examines the lives of the Creek emigrants in the west. Many of these emigrants had difficulty adjusting to their new surroundings and faced hardships such as disease, extreme

weather, and raids from other Indian groups. Chapter Seven details the outbreak of the Second Creek War in 1836. The war officially ended voluntary removal and gave the federal government an excuse to order all Creeks out of Alabama. Government soldiers shackled the Lower Creeks who participated in the war and marched them to Montgomery, Alabama before placing them on steamboats for the west. Chapter Eight describes the experiences of approximately 13,000 Creeks as they marched west under the direction of United States military officers and private contractors in 1836. Chapter Nine examines the removal of the Creeks who remained behind in Alabama into 1837 while their relatives were mustered into military service to fight the Seminoles in Florida. This chapter also documents the government's attempts in 1837 to round up "refugee" Creeks who escaped to live among the Cherokee and Chickasaw people.

The decade-long period of Creek removal exposed long-simmering fissures in the Creek Nation and created brand new ones. It did much to change the nature of Creek society. The divisions between the Upper and Lower towns, evident since the eighteenth-century, continued during the removal period. The Lower towns, closer to white encroachment and most affected by the Treaty of Indian Springs and Washington, rapidly declined after 1827. Some disappeared altogether. Due to the unique pressures they faced, voluntary removal was primarily a Lower Creek phenomenon. Although a number of Upper Creeks voluntarily emigrated, it was the Lower Creeks, due to their increasingly dire situation, who appeared more often on voluntary emigration muster rolls.



Selected Towns of the Creek Nation, ca. 1800.

Adapted from Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and Their World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 29.

Conversely, the Upper towns were better able to maintain their lifeways during this period. But, there is little evidence that the Upper Creeks did much to help the Lower Creeks in their time of need. Traditionally, the Creeks helped out each other in the lean times when food was scarce. But, through the late eighteenth-century, wealthier Creeks with property began to turn their backs on those who were in need. This pattern continued throughout the removal period.

Voluntary removal also physically split the Creek Nation. While the Creek headmen in the east hardly recognized the legitimacy of the Western Creek Nation, the federal government did. The McIntosh party established the first Creek government in the west after they arrived near the Arkansas Territory border in 1828. Roly McIntosh, William McIntosh's brother, became the Western Creek Nation's first principal chief. As a result, all Creek headmen who were forced west after 1836, had to reconcile with him. On a more personal level, voluntary emigration divided towns as Creek emigrants defied the other members of their *talwa* and emigrated west. Families and clans broke up as husbands, wives, and even children made the decision to emigrate or remain behind in the east. Voluntary removal also gave Creeks the option of circumventing the rules and laws of the Creek Nation in the east. For instance, in a few cases Creeks emigrated west in order to avoid punishment for lawbreaking. Creek headmen also became mini-dictators by defying traditional Creek protocol and exerting their influence over the decisions of Creeks from other towns. Perhaps even more significantly, as the situation in the Creek homefront grew increasingly precarious, the result of starvation, disease, and white

encroachment, the Creek Nation remained almost continually factionalized over how to maintain their lifeways in the east.

These factions prevented the Creeks from presenting a united front against emigration. In 1836, a small band of Lower Creeks instigated a war against white settlers who had illegally squatted on their land. The Second Creek War, as it came to be called, turned voluntary removal into a military operation. A vast majority of the Creeks were subsequently forced to present-day Oklahoma. Approximately eighteen thousand Creeks were marched west either in the “Creek Trail of Tears,” the refugee removals after 1836, or the small, family detachments like Arwike’s.

* * *

At the time of removal, the Creek people were part of a distinctive, vibrant society who lived primarily along the rivers and creeks within the borders of the states of Alabama and Georgia. Along these rivers and their tributaries, the Creeks built towns. Towns were known *talwas* by the Creeks while villages (or daughter towns), which generally shared a common town fire, were known as *talofas*. Michael D. Green has observed that the *talofa* was to its *talwa* as a bedroom community is to a modern city.⁴ *Talofas* generally did not have a square ground and were dependent upon its affiliated

⁴ Green notes that *talwas* should more accurately be considered a “tribe,” see Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 4.

talwa to meet certain ceremonial and religious needs.⁵ The Upper Towns were located generally along the Coosa, Tallapoosa, and Alabama river systems, while the Lower Towns were concentrated primarily on the Chattahoochee and Flint river systems. *Talwas* were generally autonomous, with each presided over by a number of chiefs and headmen who sat on town councils and made decisions reached through consensus of the leadership. Each town had a head chief, or Micco, and a number of lesser headmen, speakers, interpreters, and assistants. At various times, the Miccos and other chiefs and headmen represented their particular town in the Creek National Council. There, decisions that affected the larger Creek society were made. There were also two principal headmen who represented the views of the Upper and Lower Creeks. Big Warrior of Tuckabatchee and Little Prince of Cusseta were the principal chiefs of the Upper and Lower towns during the commencement of the removal epoch.

Creek households were arranged around the *talwa*'s central public square ground, complete with buildings used for public meetings and ceremonies. In the center of the *talwa*'s square was the town's fire, both a physical and symbolic representation of the life of that town. Surrounding the square ground were the houses of Creek families. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries many Creeks lived in frontier-style cabins. Originally, a Creek household consisted of a number of buildings (typically one to four) depending upon the size of the family. A Creek compound usually consisted of a lodging

⁵ Some *talofas* had a square ground. Intuchulgau and Tuttallossee, *talofas* of Yuchi and Hitchiti, respectively, had constructed their own square grounds, see Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and Their World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 96.

house, storehouse, a pavilion or meetinghouse, and cookhouse.⁶ Beyond the Creek houses were their hunting grounds and agricultural fields. While these towns and *talofas* were once relatively compact, increasingly in the late eighteenth-century they became much more spread out, as the raising of domesticated livestock became more prevalent amongst the Creeks.⁷

The primary event that united the Creeks of a particular town was the annual *busk* or Green Corn Ceremony, usually held in July or August. The ceremony lasted for approximately a week. The *busk* celebrated the upcoming harvest, reaffirmed mutual connections to their town and the Nation, and celebrated the new year. It was the most important ceremony and attendance was mandatory. The *busk* was about purity and renewal, the necessary ingredients in preserving the balance the Creeks were careful not to disrupt. During this ceremony, the Creeks thoroughly cleaned their homes, collected and burned old provisions in the town fire, and forgave old grudges. Some Creeks purified themselves through fasting, however, all Creeks were forbidden from consuming the fruits of the new harvest until allowed to do so. Creek men would also purify themselves by drinking the black drink, made from the yaupon holly plant.⁸ It was a time of singing, dancing, and socializing. The *busk* reaffirmed the town's commitment to each other and, as Josh Piker has written, the busk was "a town-centered ceremony which

⁶ William Bartram, *Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida* (New York: Library of America, 1996), 564-565.

⁷ Gregory A. Waselkov, "Changing Strategies of Indian Field Location in the Early Historic Southeast," in ed. Kristen J. Gremillion, *People, Plants, and Landscapes: (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press,), 185-193; John Worth, "The Lower Creeks: Origins and Early History," in *Indians of the Greater Southeast: Historical Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, ed., Bonnie G. McEwan (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 265-298; Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 168-174.*

⁸ For more on black drink see Charles M. Hudson, ed., *Black Drink: A Native American Tea* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979).

called on the townspeople to acknowledge their dependence on the towns' spiritual and material resources.”⁹ But, the Creeks were also aware of their dependence upon the land that their town was situated upon.¹⁰ The *busk* celebrated the upcoming harvest, used locally-cut wood to construct a new town fire, and relied upon local roots and plants, including yaupon, to consecrate the new year. In short, as Michael Green noted, the *busk* focused “on the produce of the land, [and the Creeks] celebrated their past and their future life in the place where they were. They could never forget that they were uniquely the people of that place.”¹¹

⁹ Joshua A. Piker, *Okfuskee: A Creek Indian Town in Colonial America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 115-118.

¹⁰ For more on the Creeks' spiritual connection to their land there are a number of recorded origin and migration stories, see John R. Swanton, “Religious Beliefs and Medicinal Practices of the Creek Indians,” Bureau of American Ethnography *42nd Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnography* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1928), 490-491; John R. Swanton, *Myths and Tales of the Southeastern Indians*, Bureau of American Ethnography *Bulletin* 88 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1929), 2; George E. Lankford, *Native American Legends, Southeastern Legends: Tales from the Natchez, Caddo, Biloxi, Chickasaw, and Other Nations* (Little Rock: August House, 1987), 83-105; For Creek legends taken from Creeks who emigrated to present-day Oklahoma see Ernest Gouge, *Totkv Mocvse: Creek Folktales by Earnest Gouge*, eds., Jack B. Martin, Margaret McKane Mauldin, and Juanita McGirt (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 45, 73-76, 125; For more on the importance of place names for Southeastern Indians see Patricia Galloway, “A Storied Land: Choctaw Place-Names and the Emplotment of Land Use,” in *Practicing Ethnohistory: Mining Archives, Hearing Testimony, Constructing Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 175-201; Many contemporary Indian writers have effectively articulated Indians' connection to their land, specifically see, N. Scott Momaday, “Native American Attitudes to the Environment” in *Seeing with a Native Eye: Essays on Native American Religion*, eds., Ake Hultkrantz and Walter H. Capps (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 79-85; Vine Deloria, Jr., *Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 55-59; Vine Deloria, Jr., *God is Red* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1973), 75, 161-163, 175-176; Vine Deloria, Jr., *For This Land: Writings on Religion in America* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 208, 250-251, 252-258; also see Joseph Epes Brown, *Teaching Spirits: Understanding Native American Religious Traditions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 23-26.

¹¹ Quote from Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 16. For more on the busk see Louis Le Clerc Milfort, *Memoirs or A Quick Glance at My Various Travels and My Sojourn in the Creek Nation* (Paris: Giguet and Michaud, 1802; reprint, Kennesaw: Continental Book Company, 1959), 135; William Bartram, *Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida* (New York: Library of America, 1996); Benjamin Hawkins, “A Sketch of the Creek Country, in the Years 1798 and 1799” in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins, 1796-1810*, H. Thomas Foster, III, ed. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003); James Adair, *The History of the American Indians*, ed., Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005).

The Creek people were not racially or culturally homogenous, but instead were part of a vibrant multi-lingual, multi-racial, and multi-cultural society. The Creeks had increased in size substantially throughout the eighteenth-century as a result of their policy of incorporating outsiders into their society. This was beneficial for the incorporated party and many immigrant Indian bands fled to the protection of the Creeks after military defeat. For his part, Arwike was well aware of the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual complexion of Creek society. As a Hitchiti, Arwike's people were once outsiders who benefited from the Creeks' liberal policy of incorporating other Indian groups into their society. The Hitchiti did not speak Muscogee, the predominant Creek language, and unless he learned the dialect, Arwike would have had difficulty communicating with the majority of the other Creeks. Still, Arwike's clan connections made him both Hitchiti and Creek. He was little different than a Tuckabatchee, Coweta, or Cusseta, or other incorporated tribes, such as the Yuchi or Natchez. Each town ran their own internal affairs, but relations with outsiders were left to the majority ruling council, which by the nineteenth century had been formalized into a National Council.

Arwike and his town of Hitchiti were not the only outsiders who became incorporated into Creek society. Untold numbers of French, British, and later American men also became residents of the Creek Nation by marrying into Creek families. Called "Indian countrymen," these whites received benefits within the Creek Nation that outsiders without clan connections, did not. Love and companionship were, no doubt, a primary reason for these unions, but for some white men, there were other motivations. Financial opportunities were common reasons for marrying native women. Many white

traders established year-round trading businesses within Creek towns, but with no access to the Nation's agricultural land and bounty, many traders found it inexpedient to purchase food at high prices. Consequently, many white traders took Creek wives in order to gain access the Nation's food supply.¹² In other cases, protection was a driving factor. Many British loyalists found refuge among the Creeks after the American Revolution. Fugitives who had escaped justice in white society sometimes married into Creek families and were subsequently beyond the reach of the civil authorities. Kendall Lewis, for example, one of Big Warrior's most trusted advisors and interpreters, fled to the Creek Nation in 1808 to escape a murder charge in Hancock, Georgia.¹³ These unions produced scores of children who were considered by the Creeks to be fully Indian as a result of their clan connection through their mother's familial line.¹⁴ Clan and kinship connections, not skin color or dialect, assured their place in Creek society. Nonetheless, Creek children of European fathers oftentimes served as cultural intermediaries between the Creek and white worlds by acting as interpreters, go-betweens, or soothing misunderstandings between the cultures.¹⁵

¹² Theda Perdue, *"Mixed Blood" Indians: Racial Construction in the Early South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003), 13-18.

¹³ Andrew K. Frank, *Creeks and Southerners: Biculturalism on the Early American Frontier* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 43-44.

¹⁴ Perdue, *"Mixed Blood" Indians*, 34-36, 40.

¹⁵ Frank, *Creeks and Southerners*, 77-95; Scholars debate the impact of these children of Creek mothers and European fathers on Creek society. Recently, Claudio Saunt has pointed to a connection between the maturation of these Creeks of mixed-parentage into adulthood and the emergence of a wealthy, elite class within the Creek Nation, see Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); These Creek elites grew rich on the deerskin trade with the British in the eighteenth-century, and once the trade declined, many turned to running taverns, inns, and ferries. Most Creeks became voracious consumers of European manufactured goods, and they almost extinguished the deer population in the southeast trying to acquire more, Also see Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: Creek Indian Trade with Anglo America, 1685-1815* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993); But, Saunt argues that Creeks of mixed-parentage—in many cases, already born into wealth—were also more “familiar and comfortable

These cultural intermediaries could not, however, stop the continual encroachment of whites onto Creek land. In fact, losing land, either through white encroachment or through land cession treaties, became a too common occurrence for the Creeks from the late eighteenth-century through the removal period.¹⁶ The Creeks initially responded to this threat by playing the French, Spanish, and British off against each other. This prevented one European power from growing too influential in the region, and helped to buffer their encroachment. Although the Creeks were never completely unified, they came together when threats to their land and way of life emerged. As a result, the Creeks increasingly gave more power to their chiefs and headmen to make diplomatic decisions on behalf of the Creek people. It was during this period, beginning in the first half of the eighteenth-century, that Steven Hahn argues the disparate coalition of Creek towns began functioning more like a “nation” in the political sense.¹⁷

with the market economy, coercive power, and race slavery of colonial [white] settlements” than Creeks without European parentage. Saunt argues that as their wealth increased, traditional practices that had guided the Creeks for generations—communal land ownership and eschewing the accumulation of wealth and property, to name just a few—were replaced by private ownership of land, laws to protect private property, and the desire to acquire more and more wealth. Theda Perdue, however, sees little connection between ancestry and class within the Creek Nation, arguing that wealth and poverty within the Creek Nation cut across racial lines, Perdue, *“Mixed Blood” Indians*, 101; Andrew K. Frank, however, has argued that race, class, and identity was not an “either-or situation,” but that many Creeks of mixed-parentage were able to seamlessly move between the two worlds and thus they bridged the gap between white and Indian cultures.

¹⁶ An eighteenth-century British cartographer labeled modern-day Alabama and Georgia as “Good Land” on one of his maps, see Verner W. Crane, *The Southern Frontier 1670-1732* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1928), 133.

¹⁷ Steven C. Hahn, *The Invention of the Creek Nation, 1670-1763* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004) notes that the policy of neutrality, formulated in the “Coweta Resolution” which played the European powers off each other, as the foundation for nationhood; Also see Joseph M. Hall, Jr., “Making an Indian People: Creek Formation in the Colonial Southeast, 1590-1735” (Ph.D. diss. University of Wisconsin—Madison, 2001), who also traces the origins of Creek national identity and shows how the complex relationship between the Creeks and the British, French, and Spanish contributed to forging Creek unity. Hall places emphasis on the Yamassee War for strengthening this fragile unity into a stronger bond.

There were renewed demands for Creek land by British colonists after the British victory in the French and Indian War. British colonists, who were considered to be the most land-hungry of all the whites, encircled the Creek Nation after 1763. London hoped to ameliorate Creek complaints of white settlers, their slaves, and cattle roaming onto Creek land by constructing a boundary line that was to divide British possessions with those of the Indians.¹⁸ This line, which the Creeks saw in literal terms as a “brick wall” and a “Stone Wall” which was “not to be passed” and “never to be Broke” was seen by the colonists as nothing more than a mark on a tree, a fifty-foot clearing, or a stream that could easily be crossed. In some places, there was no boundary marked at all.¹⁹ In fact, in the process of hammering out a boundary line in the south, the Creeks were forced to cede portions of their land four times, including a large tract of over two million acres to Georgia in 1773.²⁰ In the ten years after 1763, with the British colonists’ power on the continent virtually unchecked, the Creeks found themselves invaded on two fronts; one was the “legal” land cessions the Creeks were coerced into signing with the Georgians as they formulated the boundary line, the second was the illegal, unregulated influx of white settlers and their livestock crossing over to live on Creek land.²¹

Ironically, the massive influx of rag-tag, land-hungry whites from Virginia and the Carolinas into the Georgia frontier after the Creek land cessions between 1763 and

¹⁸ Louis De Vorsey, Jr., *The Indian Boundary in the Southern Colonies, 1763-1775* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961).

¹⁹ The Creeks were not passive participants during these land cessions. In each case they ceded land after negotiation and in return for certain promises and goods. See Kathryn E. Holland Braund, “Like a Stone Wall Never to Be Broke,” in Joseph P. Ward, ed., *Britain and the American South: From Colonialism to Rock and Roll* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003), 65-71, 73-79.

²⁰ Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 28-30.

²¹ David H. Corkran, *The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 229, 233-234, 239, 243-245, 251-252, 263.

1773 played a major role in defining Georgia's independence movement as well as shaping post-revolutionary Georgia politics. These backcountrymen, called "Crackers" by Georgia's better sort, fought against the British primarily to gain access to more Creek lands. Once the war was over, Georgia politics became dominated by men who made no secret of their desire to stretch the new state's boundary to the Mississippi River.²² Creek politics and diplomacy during this time was dominated by the Koasati headman Alexander McGillivray, himself a cultural intermediary. McGillivray supported the British during the Revolutionary War and understood better than most the Georgian's insatiable desire for Creek land. This was confirmed in 1783, 1785, and 1786 when two Creek chiefs ceded large tracts of Lower Creek hunting ground to the Georgians. In response, McGillivray and the Creeks felt compelled to normalize relations with the United States by treaty in order to restrain the Georgians. They considered the Treaty of New York, signed in August of 1790, to be favorable to the Creeks because the federal government guaranteed their claim to their land and promised protection against Georgian encroachment. Still, the treaty was controversial. The cessions of 1783, 1785, and 1786 were formally approved in the New York treaty, creating resentment among many Lower Creeks who opposed the cession of their land. McGillivray, an Upper Creek, became unpopular among many Creek factions within the Nation.²³

²² Edward J. Cashin, "But Brothers, It is Our Land," *An Uncivil War: The Southern Backcountry during the American Revolution*, eds., Ronald Hoffman, Thad W. Tate, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985), 240-275; Also see Edward J. Cashin, "From Creeks to Crackers," in *The Southern Colonial Backcountry: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Frontier Communities*, Eds., David Colin Crass, Steven D. Smith, Martha A. Zierden, and Richard D. Brooks (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998), 69-75; Harvey H. Jackson, "The Rise of the Western Members: Revolutionary Politics and the Georgia Backcountry," in *An Uncivil War*, 276-320.

²³ The two chiefs who illegally ceded land to the Georgians in 1783, 1785, and 1786 were Tallassee King and Fat King, see Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 35; Michael D. Green, "Alexander

One of the more significant stipulations in the Treaty of New York was Article Twelve which detailed the new American policy of “civilization.” This stipulation was designed to show the Creeks that their lifestyle was incompatible with a “civilized” society. The intent was to destroy Creek traditions, ceremonies, and lifestyle and teach Indians to live as a part of white society.²⁴ The primary goal was to free up vast tracts of Creek hunting ground for American agriculture.²⁵ Creek agent Benjamin Hawkins helped formulate and implement the government’s civilization plan. Appointed by George Washington after stints in the Continental Congress and as a senator, Hawkins was also a friend of Thomas Jefferson. Aside from providing contemporary agricultural implements, spinning looms, and crops such as cotton to the Creeks, Hawkins also attempted to mold Creek government and laws into one resembling the European-American model.²⁶ Many wealthy Lower Creeks embraced Hawkins’ plan, while those

McGillivray,” in *American Indian Leaders: Studies in Diversity*, ed., R. David Edmunds (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 41-63; One of these Creek factions opposed to McGillivray was the adventurer William Augustus Bowles, see J. Leitch Wright, *William Augustus Bowles: Director General of the Creek Nation* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1967) ; J. Leitch Wright, Jr., “Creek-American Treaty of 1790: Alexander McGillivray and the Diplomacy of the Old Southwest,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 51 (December 1967), 379-400, notes that six factions were present at the treaty signing including those opposed to McGillivray. Wright argues that among other things, McGillivray’s desire to maintain a stream of goods into the Creek Nation in order to preserve his power in the face of the emerging Bowles’ faction, and personal enrichment were the reasons McGillivray chose to sign the Treaty of 1790; Also see, Randolph C. Downes, “Creek-American Relations, 1782-1790.” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 21 (June 1937), 142-184; John Walton Caughey, *McGillivray of the Creeks* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1938).

²⁴ For more on Jeffersonian thinking as it related to the Indians see Bernard W. Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973); Anthony F.C. Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire Building* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 78-116; Roy Harvey Pearce, *The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1953).

²⁵ Merritt B. Pound, *Benjamin Hawkins—Indian Agent* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1951), 143-148; Florette Henri, *The Southern Indians and Benjamin Hawkins 1796-1816* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 83-111.

²⁶ Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 37-38.

trying to maintain their traditional lifeways, many of whom were Upper Creeks, denounced it.

Hawkins' civilization plan came during a period of increased pressure within the Creek Nation. Georgia frontiersmen continued to encroach illegally on Lower Creek land, and the "hungry years" after 1804 saw many poorer Creeks suffering for want of food. Moreover, new land cessions in 1802 and 1805 surrendered millions of acres of their former hunting grounds to the United States.²⁷ And, the Factory System was established to cut off foreign trade with the Creeks and redirect it toward American traders. The intent was to force the Creeks into debt, which the government wanted repaid through more land cessions.²⁸

The Lower Creeks, due to their proximity to whites in Georgia and the Carolinas, became the ones most acculturated by the presence of the British, and later, the Americans. By the turn of the nineteenth-century, however, whites had increasingly begun to encroach further west and settle on Upper Creek land. In fact, Tame King, a Tallassee and Speaker of the Upper Towns, complained to President Jefferson that "what land we have left we cannot spare" and as a result of the encroachments the Creeks had become quite "distressed."²⁹ For the Upper Creeks, the 1805 treaty was particularly unwelcome because the federal government inserted a stipulation that authorized a federal road to be constructed through the Creek Nation to connect Georgia with Mobile and New Orleans. Vast stretches of the road cut through Upper Creek territory. The

²⁷ For more on the "hungry years" see Saunt, *A New Order of Things*, ch. 9.

²⁸ R.S. Cotterill, *The Southern Indians: The Story of the Civilized Tribes Before Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), 139-144.

²⁹ James F. Doster, *Creek Indians: The Creek Indians and their Florida Lands, 1740-1823*, vol. 2 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1974), 26.

Federal Road exacerbated the divisions between the Upper and Lower Creek towns because it was signed by a number of Lower Creek headmen and did not have the approval of the National Council. The Upper Creeks had witnessed firsthand how whites had devastated the Lower Creek hunting grounds since the end of the American Revolution and were determined not to make the same mistake. Moreover, the treaty allowed for a number of Creek headmen to monopolize the operation of inns, taverns, and ferries along the road.³⁰ The Upper Creeks fought this land cession for a number of years but the Federal Road eventually opened in 1811. The road created a literal pathway into the Upper Creek towns and whites began to settle in the region.³¹ In the face of these mounting pressures, many Creeks simply packed up their possessions and voluntarily emigrated to the Spanish territory of Texas. In fact, in 1811, 428 Alabama and Coushatta Creeks, representing almost sixty different families emigrated to Texas from present-day Alabama. That same year another group of thirty-three Creeks from Kialigee town emigrated from Alabama to Texas, and later sought compensation from the federal government for their move.³² Those Creeks joined the Alabama and Coushatta Creeks

³⁰ Saunt, *A New Order of Things*, 216-217; Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 38-39.

³¹ Henry DeLeon Southerland, Jr. and Jerry Elijah Brown, *The Federal Road through Georgia, the Creek Nation, and Alabama, 1806-1836* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989); Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 38-42. Green also points out that there were disagreements between the Upper and Lower towns over the distribution of annuities; a power-struggle within the National Council; that the Upper Creeks received annuities for ceded Lower Creek land; and the quest for power by the Tuckabatchee chief Big Warrior

³² Self-emigration claims, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-285, M-574, reel-77, 33, 52-71, 81, NA.

who had emigrated to Louisiana and then east Texas in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.³³

The vast majority of Upper Creeks, who did not follow the Alabamas, Coushattas, and Kialigees to Texas, faced increased pressures within the Creek Nation. Many Creeks resented the land cessions and the Federal Road, but it was particularly galling that many Creek headmen profited at the expense of the Creek Nation. And, while Creek traditionalists resented the imposition of Hawkins' "civilization" plan upon them, they were especially hostile toward Creek leaders who grew wealthy as a result of the plan's adoption. The Creek Nation was corrupted, traditionalists believed, by a white culture that manifested itself in the form of land cessions, the Federal Road, white encroachment, herds of cattle that required large tracts of pasture land, alcoholism, indebtedness to white traders, and stark divisions in material wealth between Creek leaders and the rest of the Nation. In the spring of 1813, Creek traditionalists finally lashed out at the National Council, white culture, and the material possessions of the Creeks who supported it.³⁴

³³ See Sheri Marie Shuck-Hall, *Journey to the West: The Alabama and Coushatta Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008); Sheri Marie Shuck, "Voices From the Southern Borderlands: The Alabamas and Coushattas, 1500-1859," (Ph.D. diss., Auburn University, 2000).

³⁴ Many scholars also acknowledge the presence of the Indian-prophet Tecumseh and his brother Tenskwatawa for contributing the outbreak of war, as well as the execution of the Creeks who murdered a number of white settlers on the Duck River in Tennessee in the spring of 1812. For more on the Creek War see Gregory A. Waselkov, *A Conquering Spirit: Fort Mims and the Redstick War of 1813-1814* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006); Saunt, *A New Order of Things*, 249-272; Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 42-43; Frank L. Owsley, Jr., *Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands: The Creek War and the Battle of New Orleans 1812-1815* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1981), 11-15, 33; Also see H.S. Halbert and T.H. Ball, *The Creek War of 1813 and 1814* (Chicago: 1895; reprint, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1969); Ross Hassig, "Internal Conflict in the Creek War of 1813-1814." *Ethnohistory* 21:3 (Summer, 1974), 256-258; Theron A. Nunez, Jr., "Creek Nativism and the Creek War of 1813-1814." *Ethnohistory* 1:5 (Winter 1958); R. David Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983); John K. Mahon, *The War of 1812* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1972), 231-244. For a description of the Creeks' worldview as it relates to the Creek War see Joel W. Martin, *Sacred Revolt: The Muskogee's Struggle for a New World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991). Also see Wright, *Creeks and Seminoles*, 155-184; John W. Cottier and Gregory A. Waselkov, "The First Creek War: Twilight of Annihilation," in *Clearings in the Thicket: An Alabama Humanities Reader: Essays and*

Called Red Sticks for the red war clubs they carried, the traditionalists soon expanded the scope of their war to include driving whites from the borders of their land. The Red Sticks were successful in a number of battles but lost decidedly at Horseshoe Bend in March 1814 by Andrew Jackson and the militias of Georgia and the Mississippi Territory. Jackson was aided by bands of Creek, Cherokee, and Choctaw warriors. The Creek Nation lost over twenty million acres of their land to the United States as a result of the Creek War. Jackson dictated the terms of peace for the United States and he made little secret of his desire to break up the power of the Creek Nation and open up vast tracts of land to white settlement.³⁵ In fact, Jackson argued approximately a decade later that the federal government needed to reject the sovereignty of the Indians and exert eminent domain over their lands.³⁶

President James Monroe, however, believed forced removal to be unjust, and the government continued to try and acquire land through treaty-making and land purchases.³⁷ The Creeks, however, became more resolute in their determination to oppose any more land cessions. In response, the federal government circumvented this opposition by targeting a few Creek headmen who were considered “friends” of the

Stories from the 1983 Alabama History and Heritage Festival, ed., Jerry Elijah Brown (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1983), 21-38. Cottier and Waselkov argue that another source of contention between the Upper Creeks and whites leading up to the Creek War was over the Tennesseans attempting to open the Coosa River to navigation so they could trade with Mobile. The Upper Creeks feared that this would bring whiskey through their country. For a first-hand account see James P. Pate, ed., *The Reminiscences of George Strother Gaines: Pioneer and Statesman of Early Alabama and Mississippi, 1805-1843* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998), 50-67, 131-134.

³⁵ Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 42-43; Owsley, *Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands*, 51-86.

³⁶ Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 48-49; The federal government proceeded slowly with attempting to acquire the rest of the Creeks' land which angered Georgia's states'-rights governor George Troup, see Michael D. Green, "Federal-State Conflict in the Administration of Indian Policy: Georgia, Alabama, and the Creeks, 1824-1834," (Ph.D. diss, University of Iowa, 1973), 11-15.

³⁷ Green, *Federal-State Conflict*, 29; Also see Brian Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and United States Indian Policy* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), 3-11.

United States, and men who would sign a land treaty in exchange for money.

Increasingly during the second decade of the nineteenth-century, the government turned to the Creek headman William McIntosh. He was from Coweta and had been a part-time speaker for the Lower Creek towns. He sat on the National Council as the fifth highest ranking chief, was cousin to Georgia governor George M. Troup, and had fought on the side of the United States against the Red Sticks and Seminoles.³⁸ McIntosh was exceedingly wealthy and the land cessions he had made to the government had only added to his personal wealth. He owned a house on the Chattahoochee River worth fifteen hundred dollars, held 150 acres of land, one hundred slaves, and two ferries that brought in revenue of almost two thousand dollars a year. He also had eight hundred head of cattle, six horses, blacksmith tools, and a thirty-room inn that he ran with a relative.³⁹ McIntosh was literate, which the Cusseta headman Little Prince, his ally during the Red Stick War and the principal chief of the Lower Towns, believed he used to his benefit and against those of his own people.⁴⁰ McIntosh also skimmed a percentage of the Creek annuity for his own personal gain.

But, McIntosh knew that there was more money and influence to be gained by selling Creek land to the federal government. In 1818, the Creeks' ceded two small parcels of land in present-day north-central Georgia to the federal government. Although no record of McIntosh's role in the treaty exists circumstantial evidence suggests that the Coweta headman used his influence to get the treaty signed in exchange for the

³⁸ Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 54; Saunt, *A New Order of Things*, 216-217.

³⁹ Benjamin W. Griffith, Jr., *McIntosh and Weatherford, Creek Indian Leaders* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1988), 230.

⁴⁰ James C. Bonner, "Tustenugee Hutkee and the Creek Factionalism on the Georgia-Alabama Frontier." *Alabama Review* (April 1957), 112, 115.

government removing all white traders from the Creek Nation. As a trader himself, McIntosh wanted to monopolize trade in the Creek Nation. But the Creeks moved to halt anymore land cessions and sometime around the 1818 treaty the National Council passed a law that forbade the ceding of any more of their land without explicit approval of the National Council. Anyone found guilty of breaking this law faced execution. The law was briefly suspended in 1821 when William McIntosh signed a land cession treaty that ceded old Creek hunting grounds considered somewhat disposable and devalued as the result of white invasion into the area. Moreover, the money received for the tract was used to pay off Creek debts.⁴¹

The 1821 cession moved the border between the Creek Nation and Georgia to the Flint River. This, however, did not satisfy Georgia politicians, who wanted the Creeks removed entirely from the states' borders. Again, the federal government and Georgia turned to William McIntosh. In a series of late night sessions, some concluded secretly in the woods between the town of Coweta and its *talofa* of Thlakatchka (Broken Arrow), McIntosh and two United States commissioners hammered out a treaty to cede another large tract of Creek land to the United States. The negotiations began in December 1824 and concluded with the February 12, 1825 signing of the Treaty of Indian Springs.⁴² It ceded all Creek land in Georgia and a large portion of Creek land within the borders of

⁴¹ Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 56-57, 73-74. Soon after the 1818 cession was made advertisements for the sale of individual plots carved from this land went out to prospective white buyers in newspapers as far away as Tennessee, see the *Nashville Clarion and Tennessee Gazette*, 27 Oct 1818.

⁴² McIntosh understood the consequences of signing the treaty. Ceding Creek land without National Council approval was illegal and punishable by death. Thus, believing he would be killed on the spot if he signed the treaty at the council ground at Broken Arrow, McIntosh and the commissioners chose to conduct the signing in McIntosh's home at Indian Springs, Georgia, sixty miles away. Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 81, 82, 86, argues that these meetings were not very secret and many Creeks knew McIntosh was negotiating a cession.

Alabama to the federal government. In addition, the treaty set aside a large tract of land near the Arkansas Territory border for McIntosh and his supporters to settle on. The treaty was so devastating that it changed the Creek Nation forever. Although the Creeks were successful in overturning the Treaty of Indian Springs, signing a revised version called the Treaty of Washington almost a year later, the Creeks ultimately never regained their Georgia lands.⁴³

The treaties of Indian Springs and Washington set in motion events that culminated in the forced removal of the Creek Nation to present-day Oklahoma. Thirteen years after the Treaty of Indian Springs signing, almost all of the Creeks had been forcibly removed from the Southeast. Forced removal was emotionally wrenching and many committed suicide rather than be forced off their land. Even today, the Creeks' Alabama and Georgia lands are still revered. As a child Alfred Berryhill, Second Chief of the Muscogee Nation in Oklahoma, remembers driving with his father Togo Micco Berryhill. Crossing a bridge, Togo Micco Berryhill would look down at the ravines and say "rivers of sand." It was not until Alfred Berryhill visited Alabama and Georgia that he understood what his father meant: in the east, the Creeks once enjoyed rivers of water.⁴⁴

⁴³ Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 76-125.

⁴⁴ Interview with Second Chief Alfred Berryhill, Okmulgee, Oklahoma, 23 September 2008.

One

The Treaty of Indian Springs and Removal from Georgia

1825-1827

“Wandering about like bees whose hive has been destroyed.”

—Basil Hall, British traveler, 1828

On February 12, 1825 William McIntosh and approximately fifty of his supporters signed the Treaty of Indian Springs, turning over all Creek land in Georgia and a large portion of Creek land within Alabama to the federal government.¹ In addition to ceding Creek land, the treaty was a removal document on two important levels. Not only did it set aside land near the Arkansas Territory (now present-day Oklahoma) for the McIntosh party, but the Treaty of Indian Springs expelled all the Lower Creeks living within the borders of the ceded land.² McIntosh's supporters were an overwhelming

¹ William McIntosh's motivations for signing the treaty are unclear. Money was a primary factor: he expected to receive twenty-five thousand dollars for his two reserves of land along with a bribe of fifteen thousand dollars for organizing the treaty party, see Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 82; Another plausible motivation was the rivalry between McIntosh, who had long controlled the flow of goods into the Creek Nation, and Creek agent John Crowell, who resented McIntosh's power and ability to control the flow of goods. Crowell sought to redirect Creek trade through his brother Thomas who kept a store near Fort Mitchell and by 1825, McIntosh's patronage machine had sharply declined, see Andrew K. Frank, "The Rise and Fall of William McIntosh: Authority and Identity on the Early American Frontier," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 86:1 (Spring 2002), 18-48.

² Highlights of the Treaty of Indian Springs include, Article 1 which ceded all land lying within the state of Georgia and the upper section of Creek land within the borders of Alabama to the federal government. Article 2 traded their Georgia and Alabama lands "acre for acre" for land "on the Arkansas river, commencing at the mouth of the Canadian Fork thereof, and running westward between said rivers Arkansas and Canadian Fork" in the West. Article 4 allowed for an exploratory deputation to visit the Arkansas Territory region in order to survey its quality and to choose a suitable piece of land on which to settle. Article 8 assigned September 1, 1826 as the deadline for the Lower Creeks to leave the ceded land, see Treaty of 12 February 1825, in Charles J. Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, Vol. II, Treaties (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), 214-217; Even as the treaty was being

minority in the Creek Nation, estimated at only about four hundred in a Nation of over twenty thousand, and were primarily the Coweta headman's friends, relatives, or business partners.³ Many members of the "McIntosh party" were wealthy and their motivation appeared to be money: collectively they stood to receive \$200,000 from the federal government.⁴ The vast majority of the Creek Nation, however, denounced the treaty and

hammered out, the federal government was in the process of setting aside a large tract of land for the McIntosh party in the west, see John C. Calhoun to Duncan G. Campbell and James Meriwether, 21 January 1825, United States Congress, House Report 98, *Georgia Controversy*, 5 March 1827, 19th Congress, 2nd Session, Serial Set 161, 129; Although the western border of the Arkansas Territory had changed on a number of occasions in the 1820s, this land was still commonly referred to by many as "Arkansas" or the "Arkansas Territory."

³ The number of McIntosh supporters (and members of the Nation) comes from John Crowell's Defense, n.d., Record Group-75, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Creek Agency 1824-1876, Microcopy-234, reel-219, 1107-1121, National Archives. McIntosh also knew that he had little support amongst the Creeks for such a cession and so he handpicked Creek business partners, friends, and underlings beholden to him to make up the signing party. Twenty-six of the fifty-two signers were Creek "law menders," a group of Creek law enforcement agents who had worked closely with McIntosh in the past. The law menders were created by the former Creek agent Benjamin Hawkins in an attempt to model the Creek Nation and its laws more closely with that of the United States. McIntosh had used his law menders to execute the Creeks who had murdered whites on the Federal Road and in Tennessee in 1813—an act that contributed to the nativist Red Stick movement. Thirty of the fifty-two signers were from McIntosh's town of Coweta or its *talofa* Thlakatchka. The government estimated that there were over fifty towns in the Creek Nation in 1825 and the signers represented only eight of them, see T.P. Andrews to James Barbour, 1 August 1825, HR 98, 19/2 (161), 315; The list of signers of the Treaty of Indian Springs is found in House Report 98, 19/2 (161), 254-255; For more on the law-menders see Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 55; Timothy P. Andrews to James Barbour, 1 August 1825, RG-75, M-234, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, reel-219, 477-565, NA; Furthermore, many if not most of McIntosh's closest supporters lived near him, a claim made by the speaker of the Upper Creeks, Opothle Yoholo, see HR 98, 19/2 (161), 715.

⁴ For an example of their wealth see, Oethlemata Tustunnuggee, a Coweta and signer of the Treaty of Indian Springs, who "appeared to live very well and had considerable property about him," see Deposition of Alexander Ware, 1 September 1826, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-136, M-574, reel-27, 892-893, NA; Article 2 of the treaty authorized \$400,000 to be allotted to Creeks for emigration. This included transportation costs and compensation for abandoned improvements. Of this sum, \$200,000 was to go directly to the small McIntosh party, see Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, 214-217; Also see Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 91; McIntosh's supporters understood that in addition to moving to "a beautiful country West of the Mississippi," they would receive "sufficient compensation for [their] improvements." There also appears to have been a cult-of-personality surrounding McIntosh. For instance, McIntosh's followers claimed that he was their "head" and that they were "only the hands and feet" see Joseph Marshall and Creek Indians to Edmund P. Gaines, 18 June 1825, HR 98, 19/2 (161), 596-598; Indeed, McIntosh's followers had elected him as their "principal protector and chief" and authorized him to negotiate with the federal government at Indian Springs. These supporters claimed that their motivation for following McIntosh was their belief that he knew what was best for the Creek people, see *Georgia Journal*, 14 June 1825; Many supporters defended McIntosh and the treaty signing. Some members of the McIntosh party publicly maintained that their reason for emigrating was to escape the

rejected emigrating from the land of their ancestors. Declaring the Treaty of Indian Springs a “national calamity,” the Creek National Council moved to overturn the treaty and punish the offenders.⁵ And, while the Treaty of Indian Springs was ultimately overturned, the Creeks did not receive all their land back. In 1826, the Creeks were forced to remove from Georgia to within the limits of Alabama.

* * *

On the last day of April 1825, between one hundred-twenty and one hundred-fifty Creek warriors, led by the Okfuskee chief Menawa, surrounded the home of Coweta headman William McIntosh and set it on fire. When McIntosh tried to flee he was gunned down. McIntosh’s corpse was dragged from the house by the heels to the edge of his yard. There the Creeks “shattered [McIntosh’s head] to pieces” “by shooting a number of balls through his head and body” and mocked the dead chief by saying, “this is

Georgians’ encroachment on Creek land. Chilly McIntosh told Auguste Levasseur, who accompanied the Marquis de Lafayette on his travels to Alabama in 1825 that the Creek Nation had become weak as a result of its proximity to the vices found in white society. Levasseur got the impression that Chilly McIntosh “appeared to hope that the treaty which removed them to another and a desert country, would re-establish the ancient organization of the tribes, or at least preserve them in the state in which they now were,” see Auguste Levasseur, *Lafayette in America in 1824 and 1825; or, Journal of a Voyage to the United States*, Vol. II (Philadelphia: Carey and Lea, 1829; reprint: New York: Research Reprints, 1970), 76; Thomas McKenney, head of the Indian Office, wrote that McIntosh had “wavered” on signing the treaty on at least one occasion but was repeatedly “flattered and caressed” by the commissioners who led McIntosh to believe “that he was consulting the ultimate advantage of the nation,” see Thomas McKenney and James Hall, *The Indian Tribes of North America with Biological Sketches and Anecdotes of the Principal Chiefs*, Vol. I (Philadelphia, 1836, [reprint] Edinburgh: John Grant, 1933), 264, 267-268.

⁵ Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 95.

the great General—the white man’s friend.”⁶ McIntosh’s execution came after two and a half months of careful deliberation by the Creek National Council. During that time, the United States Senate ratified the Treaty of Indian Springs and President John Quincy Adams signed it, despite a personal plea from Big Warrior, the principal chief of the Creeks, who traveled to Washington to protest the treaty.⁷ The law menders then turned their attention to others complicit in the treaty signing, including two of William McIntosh’s sons-in-law, Samuel Hawkins and his brother Benjamin. The Creeks dragged Samuel from his home and gave him “a long talk” before he was hanged.⁸ Benjamin Hawkins escaped with only a gunshot wound.⁹ Etomme (Thomas) Tustunnuggee, whose name appeared immediately under McIntosh’s on the Treaty of Indian Springs, also was executed. McIntosh’s son, Chilly, who was in McIntosh’s house during the attack, managed to escape through a back window and fled to Georgia’s capital, Milledgeville.¹⁰

⁶ Joseph Marshall and Creek Indians to Edmund P. Gaines, 18 June 1825, HR 98, 19/2 (161), 596-598; *Cherokee Phoenix*, 28 February 1828; also see Albert J. Pickett, “The Death of McIntosh, 1825,” *Arrow Points* 10 (February 1925), 31-32; McIntosh and Etomme Tustunnuggee had “nearly one hundred balls” shot into them, see Peggy and Susannah McIntosh to Duncan Campbell and James Meriwether, 3 May 1825, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-219, 636-638, NA.

⁷ Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 90-95.

⁸ This account was retold by Cotsaho Martla who participated in the execution. See Deposition of Cotsaho Martla, n.d., RG 75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-136, M-574, reel 27, 969-973, NA.

⁹ Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 96.

¹⁰ Upon hearing of William McIntosh’s execution, John Quincy Adams noted that “I told Chilly that I was deeply distressed at these melancholy tidings, and would do all that would be in my power for him; advising him to call upon the Secretary of War tomorrow,” see Allan Nevins, ed., *The Diary of John Quincy Adams 1794-1845* (New York: Longmans, 1928), 346.

Others sentenced to die managed to escape.¹¹ Most of the members of the McIntosh party fled into Georgia and sought the protection of white allies.¹²

Exile proved to be an uncertain and stressful period for the McIntosh party.¹³ They spent the spring and summer of 1825 separated into four groups in different locations in Georgia. Pike County, Georgia became the temporary home of Roly McIntosh and over two hundred other Creeks, while Chilly McIntosh and approximately forty Creeks hid out at Indian Springs. McIntosh supporters from Sand Town were divided into two camps with fifty-seven members in Fayette County, Georgia and 111 in DeKalb County, Georgia.¹⁴ While in exile Roly McIntosh succeeded his brother as chief, and he married his brother's widow Susannah.¹⁵

The law menders continued to mete out punishment by targeting the McIntosh exiles' unprotected homes. In June 1825, four months after the treaty signing, Roly McIntosh and the Marshall brothers—Benjamin and Joseph—wrote to Chilly McIntosh

¹¹ Among those were the Derasaw brothers, Hagy McIntosh, and William Miller, see Peggy and Susannah McIntosh to Duncan Campbell and James Meriwether, 3 May 1825, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-219, 636-638, NA.

¹² James Barbour to John W. Taylor, 2 February 1825, Benjamin Franklin Cooling, ed., *The New American State Papers, Military Affairs vol. 17: National Development and the Military* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1979), 119-120.

¹³ The feelings of those closest to William McIntosh was a mixture of rage and fear. Susannah and Peggy McIntosh angrily wrote Campbell and Meriwether noting that, "when you see this letter stained with the blood of [William McIntosh] the last drop of which is now spilt for the friendship he has shown for your People . . . if you and your people do not assist us, God help us, we must die either by the sword or the famine," see Peggy and Susannah McIntosh to Duncan Campbell and James Meriwether, 3 May 1825, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-219, 636-638, NA; Jane Hawkins, daughter of William McIntosh and widow of Samuel Hawkins also wrote Campbell and Meriwether, see Jane Hawkins to Duncan Campbell and James Meriwether, 3 May 1825, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-219, 639-641, NA; also see Edmund Gaines to George Troup, 10 July 1825; House Report 98, 19/2 (161), 628-630.

¹⁴ House Report 98, 19/2 (161), 565-567.

¹⁵ *Georgia Patriot*, 24 May 1825 reports on Roly's election as principal chief of the McIntosh faction; also see James C. Bonner, "Tustunugee Hutkee and Creek Factionalism on the Georgia-Alabama Frontier," *Alabama Review* 10 (April 1957), 118; A. Ware to George M. Troup, 5 August 1826, *Creek Indian Letters, Talks, and Treaties*, 1705-1839, Part 3, 1097, Georgia Archives.

from Pike County complaining that the Creeks were “still doing all the harm to us they can.” The law menders had confiscated a “considerable” number of cattle and hogs, either driving them off into the frontier or killing them and the exiles noted that “it appears that they are disposed to destroy everything.”¹⁶ In fact, a number of the McIntosh exiles returned to their homes at least once, at great risk to their lives, to gather any possessions they owned that had not been taken or destroyed. Large herds of cattle owned by the McIntosh party were driven by their owners eastward and quickly sold in Pike County, Georgia to prevent the Creeks from destroying them.¹⁷ There was also fear among the exiles that the law menders “would come in and have the offending chiefs tied by their white friends, taken back [to the Creek Nation and] killed.”¹⁸

Much of the McIntosh party’s property, however, was confiscated or destroyed before they could retrieve it. Both monetarily and with regard to the sheer volume of goods, the McIntosh and Hawkins families suffered the greatest losses. Among the \$25,000 worth of possessions stolen or destroyed from William McIntosh’s estate in 1825 was over seven hundred head of cattle; over \$13,000 in cash; two houses; four hundred tin cups; agricultural implements such as hoes, ploughs, and axes; and clothing such as a uniform coat, pantaloons, vest coats, shirts, and silk handkerchiefs. The Creeks also confiscated seventy-four of William McIntosh’s slaves. Similarly, the law menders confiscated or destroyed over \$22,000 worth of property from the estate of the late

¹⁶ Joseph Marshall, Benjamin Marshall, and Roly McIntosh to Chilly McIntosh, 5 June 1825, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-219, 276-277, NA.

¹⁷ Deposition of William Wagon, 23 September 1825, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-136, M-574, reel-27, 857-858, NA; Deposition of Benjamin Marshall, 23 September 1826, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-136, M-574, reel-27, 1106-1107, NA.

¹⁸ Robert Freeman and W.B. Ector, 9 June 1825, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, M-234, reel-219, Creek Agency 1824-1876, 287-288, NA.

Samuel Hawkins. This included a two-story house and fourteen log cabins burned by the Creeks. Everyday items such as children's clothes, gowns, shawls, and frocks; two large dutch ovens; sixty-four pounds of soap; twenty earrings, forty silver broaches, and six bunches of cut glass beads; as well as livestock including over five hundred head of cattle, two hundred hogs, one hundred chickens; and an extensive set of agricultural tools, were also taken or destroyed. The law menders confiscated fifteen of Hawkins' slaves worth almost \$7,000.¹⁹

Despite the fact that many Indian countrymen were supporters of McIntosh, it is wrong to believe that they all trusted each other. In fact, disputes over the claims for losses by the McIntosh and Hawkins family shows the level of distrust. For instance, fifty-five year old William Lott, who was born and raised in the Creek Nation and voluntarily emigrated with McIntosh supporters in 1828, accused the Hawkins family of embellishing Samuel Hawkins' estate in order to receive more compensation from the federal government. In a deposition, Lott, who knew the Hawkins for over twenty years, accused Stephen Hawkins of having bad "character," and that Lott "would not believe him upon oath or in any other way."²⁰ Former Creek agent David Mitchell, a McIntosh ally, leveled the same charge against Lott.²¹ Similarly, James Moore, who eventually

¹⁹ McIntosh party claims of lost property, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-220, 765-766, NA; For lists of claims of the Samuel Hawkins property lost see Deposition of Benjamin Hawkins, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-136, M-574, reel-27, 944-946, NA; Also see RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-136, M-574, reel-27, 986-988, NA; For number of slaves confiscated from the estates of McIntosh and Hawkins see Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., *Africans and Creeks: From the Colonial Period to the Civil War* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979), 100-102.

²⁰ Deposition of William Lott, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-136, M-574, reel-27, 997, NA.

²¹ David Mitchell to G.P. Tutt, n.d., RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-136, M-574, reel-27, 796, NA.

voluntarily emigrated west, backed up Lott's claim about Hawkins, but also charged James Reed, another wealthy Indian countryman, of being untrustworthy.²²

Fearing the same fate as McIntosh, many of the signers of the Treaty of Indian Springs threw themselves at the mercy of the National Council and were formally pardoned on June 29, 1825.²³ The Creek National Council justified the pardons by stating that they had already successfully "topped the tree which they had intended topping." To forestall retribution by McIntosh's kinsmen, the council issued a caveat, stating that "if the Cowetaus attempted to get revenge [for McIntosh's death] they would cut off the branches at their leisure."²⁴ The statement was at once a warning and an invitation for the remaining McIntosh exiles to return to their homes with the promise of safe passage. The National Council expected the McIntosh party to emigrate to the Arkansas Territory. The Creeks did not want them in the Nation any longer. However, the National Council tried to prevent a large number of Creeks from joining the McIntoshes by passing a law in 1826 that made emigration or aiding in emigration punishable by death.²⁵ These headmen also began to aggressively prevent any Creek Indian without an immediate connection to William McIntosh from enrolling for emigration.²⁶

²² Deposition of James Moore, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-136, M-574, reel-27, 1033, NA.

²³ Resolution of the Creek Indians, 29 June 1825, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-220, 691-693, NA; T.P. Andrews to James Barbour, 1 August 1825, HR 98, 19/2 (161), 315; For list of signers and those that repented see HR 98, 19/2 (161), 255-256.

²⁴ *Southern Recorder*, 31 May 1825.

²⁵ *Alabama Journal*, 17 November 1826.

²⁶ James Barbour to John Crowell, 4 October 1826, *Creek Indian Letters, Talks, and Treaties*, Part 3, 1101, Georgia Archives.

The pardoning of the McIntosh offenders did not end the Creeks' determination to overturn the Treaty of Indian Springs, nor did it end the McIntosh survivors' determination to seek revenge for William McIntosh's execution. Among the most vocal in their outrage was McIntosh's cousin, Georgia governor George M. Troup. In fact, it was the threat of an impending war amongst the Creeks and the threats of violence from Georgia that forced the federal government to intervene. President John Quincy Adams appointed two special agents to travel to the Creek Nation to reconcile the two Creek factions, protect white Georgians from potential Creek violence, and convince the Creeks to accept the Treaty of Indian Springs. General Edmund P. Gaines, who had served on the Southeastern frontier after the first Creek War, was once again ordered to keep the peace in the Creek Nation during this tumultuous period. Joining Gaines was Major Timothy P. Andrews from the Paymaster-General's office in Washington, who was ordered to investigate Creek Agent John Crowell. The agents quickly began to sift through the finger pointing and misinformation. Gaines distrusted Troup and his eagerness to force the Creeks from Georgia. In fact, Troup's dispatch of surveyors to the contested cession ahead of the September 1 deadline angered the agent. Moreover, in a meeting with almost seven hundred of the leading Creek headmen and warriors at Broken Arrow, the agents could not ignore the overwhelming opposition to the treaty. In fact, Gaines discovered that "*forty-nine-fiftieths*" of the Creeks were hostile to McIntosh and against removing west of the Mississippi River.²⁷ Andrews, during his own investigation, also came to believe that nine-tenths of the entire Creek nation opposed

²⁷ Gaines was the commanding officer of the Eastern Department of the army. Edmund P. Gaines to George Troup, 10 July 1825, HR 98, 19/2 (161), 628-630; For more on Gaines see James W. Silver, *Edmund Pendleton Gaines: Frontier General* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949).

McIntosh.²⁸ Gaines estimated that in 1825, the “McIntosh faction” of Creeks numbered only about four hundred individuals in a nation of 20,690 Creeks.²⁹ Andrews reported to the Secretary of War James Barbour that the Lower Creeks refused any money to be paid them under the treaty and instead wished to “go out of their houses [in the ceded territory] and lay down [and] die near them.”³⁰ And, “having sold no land to the government they would receive no money—that they would not use force against [the United States], but that they would die upon their beloved land [and] let their bodies enrich the soil by their decay, that the world might see that the Muscogee nation died for the love of their native land [and] would not desert the graves of their Fathers.”³¹ The agents and the federal government became convinced that the document was fraudulent.

Negotiations for a new treaty began in November 1825 when a delegation dispatched by the Creek National Council arrived in Washington. The state of Georgia and its residents were unwilling to give up what land they had received in the Treaty of Indian Springs and demanded all Creeks removed from their borders.³² With the Creeks backed into a corner and Georgia’s western border still largely unsurveyed, it took months of contentious debate to decide exactly how much land the Creeks would reclaim

²⁸ T.P. Andrews to James Barbour, 12 June 1825, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-219, 268-274, NA.

²⁹ The number of Creeks in the Nation was based on an 1823 census. The number of McIntosh supporters (and members of the Nation) comes from John Crowell’s Defense, n.d., RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-219, 1107-1121, NA.

³⁰ Andrews is referencing John Crowell who was quoting the Creeks, see T.P. Andrews to James Barbour, 2 June 1825, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-219, 241-250, NA.

³¹ Testimony of William Hambly, 4 July 1825, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-219, 901-914, NA.

³² Jeremiah Evarts, who traveled through Georgia in 1826 noted that “there is scarcely a native Georgian in the state, who will not get into a passion, the moment the perfect right of the state to the Creek lands is called into question, see J. Orin Oliphant, ed., *Through the South and the West With Jeremiah Evarts in 1826* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1956), 100.

or lose forever. Arguing on behalf of the Creeks was Opothle Yoholo, who had emerged as one of the most powerful Creeks in the Nation due to his rank as speaker of the Upper Towns and his eloquence in defending Creek policy. He filled the void left by the principal chief of the Creek Nation, Big Warrior, who died in March 1825 in Washington while trying to overturn the Treaty of Indian Springs.³³

After arriving in Washington, the delegation and the federal government dickered for three months over land boundaries. The debate, at times, grew so contentious, and an agreeable resolution appeared so unlikely, that at one point Opothle Yoholo attempted suicide. But, in late January 1826, the Creek delegation agreed to terms. The Treaty of Washington, signed on January 24, 1826, nullified the Treaty of Indian Springs—the only Indian treaty ratified by the United States Senate to be overturned. While described as a victory for the Creeks, it was far from perfect. Although they regained their land within the borders of Alabama, the Creeks could ultimately not recoup their land in Georgia.³⁴ Moreover, a stipulation, designed to foster emigration, was inserted into the treaty by the government that paid \$100,000 to the McIntosh party if 3,000 emigrants would leave with them. Federal agents believed that if several thousand Creeks removed it would

³³ Opothle Yoholo's youth and level-headedness was also in stark contrast to the age of the principal chief of the Lower Creeks, Little Prince and the mental instability of Big Warrior's son Tuskeneah, see Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 98-125; For more on Opothle Yoholo see John Bartlett Meserve, "Chief Opothleyahola," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 9:4 (December 1931) 439-453.

³⁴ Richard J. Hryniewicki, "The Creek Treaty of Washington, 1826," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 48 (December 1964), 425-441; The *Georgia Messenger* 15 February 1826 reported that a witness to one of the many negotiations that took place during the three month deliberations observed that the Creeks opposed to the Treaty of Indian Springs were in the president's mansion and presented themselves dressed in army officer uniforms embroidered in gold with gold epaulettes. The McIntosh representatives were dressed in simple blue frocks. Although the opposition party was presented with United States military uniforms as a token of friendship, a witness to the negotiations believed that the McIntosh delegation was received by administration officials more favorably.

“have the effect to break up the [Creek] Nation.”³⁵ But, most Creeks did not want to emigrate. A month-and-a-half before the Treaty of Washington was signed, Opothle Yoholo and other Creek headmen, summed up the feeling of a vast majority of Creeks when he wrote Secretary of War James Barbour noting that “as for an emigration to the West, our eyes are overwhelmed at the thought.”³⁶

Adding insult to injury, Georgia continued to dicker over parcels of land, which they ultimately won, and this prevented the Senate from ratifying the new treaty until April. The Creeks had to repay the McIntosh party for their losses and the nation lost property on both banks of the Chattahoochee which cut into their lucrative ferry businesses. They were also forced to give up two-square miles of land near Fort Mitchell in Alabama where the new Creek Agency was relocated.³⁷ Little Prince, the highest ranking chief in the Creek Nation, who had seen the Lower Creeks lose twenty million acres over the previous two decades, along with a number of other headmen, angrily protested that the government had no right to take the Creek land on the west side of the Chattahoochee River.³⁸

The Treaty of Washington pushed back the date the Creeks had to leave Georgia from September 1, 1826 to January 1, 1827. The Lower Creeks whose land was now in Georgia, were harassed by impatient white settlers who ignored the deadline for the

³⁵ David Brearley to James Barbour, 8 November 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 67-68, NA.

³⁶ Opothle Yoholo and Creek Indians to James Barbour, 10 December 1825, HR 98, 19/2 (161), 728-729.

³⁷ Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 119-125.

³⁸ Twenty-million acres estimate is from HR 98, 19/2 (161), 2; Complaints about taking Creek land to construct the new Creek Agency comes from Little Prince and Creek Indians to John Ridge, 16 December 1826, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-220, 480-482, NA.

Creeks to leave and began trespassing almost immediately on the ceded land. Worse, many settlers stole Creek livestock, ran the Creeks out of their homes, and took possession of their fields ““before they can save their crops.””³⁹

The federal government and state governments of Alabama and Georgia also made preparations in expectation of the January 1 deadline. In January 1827, the Alabama legislature passed two pieces of legislation. The first law extended legal jurisdiction over the three million acres of land given to Alabama in the Treaty of Indian Springs but retained by the Creeks in the Treaty of Washington. Autauga County, Alabama, was thus expanded to include the cession. More extension laws followed in 1828 and 1829. The second law, also passed in 1827, prohibited the Creeks from hunting, trapping, or fishing where the state extended its jurisdiction.⁴⁰ For their part, the Georgia government began the process of organizing counties, sheriffs, clerks, courts and other manifestations of white culture on the Creeks’ former land. Advertisements for the sale of individual plots of the Indian Springs cession soon appeared in newspapers throughout the region. In 1827, the town of Columbus was platted near the falls of the Chattahoochee just to the north of the newly abandoned town of Cusseta.⁴¹ The federal

³⁹ Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 128.

⁴⁰ “Act to Extend Jurisdiction” and “Act to Prevent Creeks from Hunting and Trapping,” 11 January 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-2876, reel-221, 191-193, NA; The extension of Alabama jurisdiction over the Creeks occurred piecemeal in 1827, 1828, and 1829. The 1828 extension law extended criminal and civil jurisdiction of Shelby and St. Clair counties. The 1829 extension law extended criminal and civil jurisdiction of Pike and Montgomery counties, see Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 145-146; also see Tim Alan Garrison, *The Legal Ideology of Removal: The Southern Judiciary and the Sovereignty of Native American Nations* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002), 155-167.

⁴¹ For Columbus land sales see *Macon Telegraph*, 28 April 1828.

government moved forward with the planned relocation of the Creek Agency on the Flint River in Georgia to the tract of land near Fort Mitchell (see figure 1).⁴²

Evidence suggests that most of the seven thousand Lower Creeks in Georgia made the forced removal to their lands within the borders of Alabama within the calendar year 1826.⁴³ Little Prince stated as much when he declared on December 16, 1826, two weeks before the deadline to vacate Georgia, that “we had to give up a large tract of country which [compelled] our people to cross the Chatahoochy River they did so and settled on the west side among our other people.”⁴⁴ The Lower Creeks were to receive compensation for their lost land. In order to register for the money, they had to meet with agents who recorded the value of their land and possessions. Entire towns, led by their chiefs, registered their improvements with agents for compensation.⁴⁵ Claims for compensation for improvements from a number of McIntosh supporters from Sand Town, which was located within the borders of Alabama, give some insight into the property of the Lower Creeks. For instance, Talmas Harjo claimed a fourteen-square-foot cabin “in

⁴² Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 204n; Fort Mitchell was located on a “prominent sandy knoll approximately ¾ of a mile due west of the Chattahoochee River” and few miles south of present-day Columbus, Georgia, see David W. Chase, “Fort Mitchell: An Archaeological Exploration in Russell County, Alabama.” *Alabama Archaeological Society*, No. 1, February 1974, 1; Jacob Rhett Motte, *Journey into Wilderness: An Army Surgeon’s Account of Life in Camp and Field during the Creek and Seminole Wars, 1836-1838*, James F. Sunderman, ed. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1963), 6; For more on the Old Creek Agency see Charles C. Jones, Jr., *The Dead Towns of Georgia*, Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, Vol. IV (Savannah: Morning News Steam Printing House, 1878), 241-244.

⁴³ The Lower Towns in Georgia around 1800 were: Hatche Uxau, Upatoi, Cusseta, Hitchiti, Oconee, Sauwoogelooche, Okteyoconnee, Pajeeligau, Intuchulgau, Aumucullee, Toccogulegau, Tuttallosee, Otellewhoyanunau, Timothy Bernarnd’s town, and Hitchetoochee, from Robbie Ethridge, *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and their World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 29.

⁴⁴ Little Prince and Creek Indians to John Ridge, 16 December 1826, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-220, 480-482, NA; The number seven thousand found in Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 142; also see “Treaty of 24 January 1826,” in Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, Vol. II, Treaties (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), 264-268.

⁴⁵ Solomon Betton to James Barbour, 4 December 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 148-151, NA.

good order,” and a five-acre field “under good fence.” Nocos Harjo claimed a cabin, two acres of fenced land, and six peach trees. Toatker Horsey claimed a fourteen-by-fifteen foot cabin, a ten-foot-square corn house, and five acres of fenced land.⁴⁶ Wealthier Lower Creeks generally would have owned a one, or sometimes a two, story house or cabin, complete with a plank floor and perhaps a piazza. A homestead might also have had a separate kitchen and a corn and/or meat house with perhaps a dozen or so peach trees surrounding the abode. Generally, the wealthier Creeks would have had more acreage, more fruit trees, and larger homes or cabins than average Creeks. For example, Fixico of Upatoi was compensated eighty-eight dollars for his improvements in Georgia while Icoica was paid only sixteen dollars.⁴⁷ Despite the monetary compensation, the Lower Creeks had spent thousands of man-hours constructing improvements and altering the land to suit their needs. These improvements were lost, with only monetary compensation, which never equaled the intrinsic value of their land, to show for it.

Many Lower Creeks had difficulty receiving their money. In a number of instances, white traders cheated the Lower Creeks out of the compensation they should have received for their Georgia lands and abandoned improvements. Government agents did not oversee many of the actual transactions and a number of white traders were able to acquire Creek land for low prices by assessing the value of the improvement by twenty-five or thirty percent below its value. Moreover, white traders also acquired Creek land by issuing unauthorized vouchers or “due bills” for their improvements.

⁴⁶ Possessions come from itemized receipts for Lower Creek improvements in Alabama in 1829. For examples of Creek possessions see, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 123, 132, 144, NA.

⁴⁷ Receipts for sale Improvements, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 627-628, NA.



(Figure 1) U.S. Land Office, Tallapoosa Land District, Plat Book, Reel-30, 160, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

Many Creeks destroyed the due bills once they discovered that the government was to compensate them in cash and, in some cases, the traders refused to even honor the voucher.⁴⁸ Solomon Betton, one of the agents in charge of valuing the land improvements of the Creeks, claimed that people—he failed to identify them—attempted to physically impede his journey and thwart the land valuations by obstructing the roads into the Creek towns.⁴⁹ For his part, Betton was accused by Creek agent John Crowell of giving his son a copy of the book containing the location of Creek land improvements in Georgia. Betton’s son then purchased large tracts of Creek land.⁵⁰

It appears that many Lower Creeks from Georgia had difficulty finding good land within the borders of Alabama. Indeed, there is ample evidence to show that many Lower Creeks began an extended period of transience as a result of having lost their land in Georgia. The best descriptions come from Basil Hall, a British traveler who visited Alabama in April 1828, nearly a year-and-a-half after the January 1 deadline. When Hall, his wife, daughter, and family nurse crossed the Chattahoochee and stopped by the Creek Agency, the family observed “crowds of those miserable wretches who had been dislodged from their ancient territory to the eastward of the river, but had not yet taken root in the new lands allotted to them.” Hall and his wife observed these dispossessed Lower Creeks receiving emergency food rations. Having spent what little money they had, Hall reported that many were “bordering on starvation” and “great numbers of them

⁴⁸ Letter of John Crowell, 17 August 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 243-246, NA; John Crowell to James Barbour, 18 October 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 254-257, NA.

⁴⁹ Solomon Betton to Thomas McKenney, 4 November 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 100, NA.

⁵⁰ Letter of John Crowell, 17 August 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 243-246, NA.

[had] actually perished from want.”⁵¹ Hall’s wife observed that the Creeks were “in a state of starvation” and “numbers of them were flocking about [at the agent’s] house in eager expectation of supplies of food.”⁵² In fact, Hall noted that the refugee Lower Creeks appeared to be “wandering about like bees whose hive has been destroyed.”⁵³ In another instance, a company of soldiers came upon eighty-two indigent Creeks, including women and children, who had fled to Florida. Surviving by stealing from the residents of Hog Town, the party was described as being “in the most miserable and wretched condition it is possible to conceive. Many of them skeletons and their bones almost worn through the skin.”⁵⁴

It is unclear why many of the Lower Creeks were unable to reestablish their homes and farms within Alabama, but it was likely multi-causal. The scarcity of quality land and a large Creek population was a primary culprit. Even before the Creeks were forced from Georgia, a traveler to the region observed that Alabama was already “comparatively populously inhabited by Indians.”⁵⁵ Moreover, agents in the Creek Nation estimated that of the 4.8 million acres of land that comprised the Creek Nation after January 1, 1827, only “one fifth” was considered “good land.”⁵⁶ Exacerbating the problem was that the Creek economy increasingly relied upon the raising of domesticated

⁵¹ Basil Hall, *Travels in North America, In the Years 1827 and 1828*, Vol. III (Edinburgh: Cadell and Company, 1829), 288-289.

⁵² Margaret Hunter Hall, *The Aristocratic Journey: Being the Outspoken Letters of Mrs. Basil Hall written during Fourteen Months Sojourn in America 1827-1828* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1931), 237-244.

⁵³ Hall, *Travels in North America*, 288-289.

⁵⁴ Letter of J.S. McIntosh, 18 January 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 380-382, NA.

⁵⁵ Karl Bernhard, Duke of Saxe-Weimar Eisenach, *Travels Through North America, During the Years 1825 and 1826*, Vol. II (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Carey, 1828), 29.

⁵⁶ John J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 11 November 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 144-148, NA.

livestock. Prized land had become increasingly scarce as Creek ranching filled the vacuum left by the decline in the deerskin trade as a source of income and subsistence for the Creeks after the 1790s. Creek livestock—horses, cattle, and hogs—needed ample land for grazing and quickly exhausted the soil. In response, by the early nineteenth century many Creek families began moving away from their town centers in search of valuable pasture lands. This phenomenon affected both the Upper and Lower Creeks. Many Upper Creek towns separated and began moving out along the branches of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers, while many Lower Creek towns spread out down the Chattahoochee or moved east to the Flint River.⁵⁷ Along these rivers and their branches, the Creeks established individual or multiple family-based farmsteads. Former Creek agent Benjamin Hawkins observed in the early nineteenth-century that Hillabee town had diffused into individual farmsteads which left only one family in town. Decades later, Creek agents in the 1830s observed that the Hillabees were still “extremely diffused” into what became the Tallapoosa County, Alabama countryside. Similarly, the Yuchi were also considered to be “extremely diffused” over what became Russell County, Alabama.⁵⁸ In the search for fresher, unexhausted pasture more and more Creek land was tied up for grazing. The land left behind near former town centers was often exhausted

⁵⁷ Gregory A. Waselkov, “Changing Strategies of Indian Field Location in the Early Historic Southeast,” in ed. Kristen J. Gremillion, *People, Plants, and Landscapes: Studies in Paleoethnobotany* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997), 185-193; Also see John Worth, “The Lower Creeks: Origins and Early History,” in *Indians of the Greater Southeast: Historical Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, ed., Bonnie G. McEwan (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 265-298; Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 168-174.

⁵⁸ John J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 14 November 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 154-158, NA; David W. Chase “An Historic Indian Town Site in Russell County, Alabama,” *Coweta Memorial Association Papers*, No. 2, January 1960, 2, argued that the original town site of the Yuchi was “a full mile” below the mouth of Uchee Creek.

from grazing or over-farming.⁵⁹ There is also the possibility that even land that was not being used may have still been claimed by another Lower Creek rancher who already resided in Alabama. Poorer Lower Creeks without significant numbers of livestock were no doubt edged out in the race to claim the best land.

In fact, there is evidence that many Lower Creeks from Georgia continued the pattern of residing on diffused, individual farmsteads on the west side of the Chattahoochee. One agent who traveled through the Creek countryside in 1833 to survey and locate Creek settlements noted that,

the Creeks [although] always spoken of as composed of separate towns, are generally scattered up [and] down the water courses and not in compact settlements. One of these towns lies in a length of forty miles in the [valley] of a creek, and those in the upper parts, where it is mountainous, entirely occupy the [valleys]. . . [The Creeks] are generally scattered about in families in every direction, and the distinction of towns in whatever it may have at first originated, is now and has been for some time, as far as settlements are concerned, more nominal than real.⁶⁰

Another agent noted that most of the Creek refugees were located “below the falls [of the Chattahoochee River] . . . spread on the river banks and in the interiors of the nation.”⁶¹

This phenomenon was not unique to the Creeks. The Chickasaw and Cherokee both experienced town diffusion as people moved out for grazing and private farming land. One Cherokee town during this period had twenty-six families in individual farmsteads that stretched for twenty-six miles. Thus, many southeastern Indians increasingly spread out as livestock became a more important form of commerce. For the Creeks this

⁵⁹ Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 170.

⁶⁰ John J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 11 November 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 144-148, NA.

⁶¹ Solomon Betton to James Barbour, 27 June 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 60-65, NA.

diffusion meant both finding the rich cane breaks or old fields conducive to feeding livestock and acquiring enough land to graze their herds.⁶² Yet, the available grazing land within the eastern borders of Alabama quickly filled with Lower Creek refugees. In fact, after January 1, 1827, approximately seven thousand Lower Creek refugees were in search of plots within the approximately 960,000 acres of “good land” in the Creek Nation.⁶³ Much of this quality land, however, was already inhabited by Upper and Lower Creeks residing within the borders of Alabama. To overcome the problem of land scarcity, some Lower Creek refugees simply bypassed the land in the eastern Creek Nation along the Chattahoochee River and chose instead to settle among the Upper Creeks. Gustavus Scott, an agent assigned to value the Creek land improvements in Georgia, observed in May 1827 that not only were the Lower Creeks settled primarily on “the more fertile banks” of the Line Creek, Uchee, and Chattahoochee Rivers, but along the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers to the west as well.⁶⁴

But finding adequate land was only one of many hurdles Lower Creek refugees had to overcome. Clearing and planting new fields within the borders of Alabama required time. If this land could not be found and settled quickly, planting for the 1827 season might be lost. Compounding this problem was that many Lower Creeks arrived in Alabama already undernourished and hungry. It is unclear if planting had been disrupted

⁶² The Cherokee town spread for twenty-six miles was Sixes Old Town which had twenty-six families, see Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 49, 303n.

⁶³ Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 141.

⁶⁴ This became particularly apparent when agents tried to distribute recompense for the Lower Creeks improvements. Many Lower Creeks were so spread out that agents set up a location at Miller’s Bend for the Creeks to receive their compensation, see Gustavus H. Scott to James Barbour, 15 May 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 502-504, NA; Miller’s Bend was “two or three miles” on the west side of the Chattahoochee River, see Gustavus H. Scott to John Crowell, 17 May 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 518-519, NA.

as a result of the uncertainty surrounding the Treaty of Indian Springs, but a number of Creeks who were able to plant prior to emigrating from Georgia were physically forced off their property by white settlers before they could gather the year's harvest.⁶⁵ Cost was still another problem. A number of refugees who were trying to get their fields up and running fell into debt trying to acquire supplies and provisions to last them until they could get their first harvest. Most of these debts were secured by their headmen and paid out of their annuity. The Cusseta chief Tuckabatchee Harjo noted that about half the Nation was being supported on the Creek annuity.⁶⁶

There is little evidence to suggest that those towns that had not been affected by the treaties stepped in to help those in need. For generations, it had been traditional Creek practice to maintain stores of emergency food supplies in times of disaster or famine. At the very least, Creeks were obligated to help their neighbor during the lean years.⁶⁷ Starvation occurred in rare cases, but when famine struck the Creek Nation, the entire Lower or Upper Creek populace suffered together. By the turn of the nineteenth-century, however, food shortages illustrated a growing inequality in the Creek Nation. Claudio Saunt argues that during the early nineteenth-century the Creeks "no longer worked together in times of adversity." During the "hungry years" after 1803-04, wealthier Creeks did little to aid their starving brethren.⁶⁸ This appears to be no different

⁶⁵ Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 128.

⁶⁶ Tuckabatchee Harjo and Creeks to John H. Eaton, 1 February 1831, United States Congress, Senate Document 512, *Correspondence on the Subject of the Emigrating Indians*, 23rd Congress, 2nd Session, Serial Set 245, Vol. 2, 405-407.

⁶⁷ William Bartram, "Observations on the Creek and Cherokee Indians," in *William Bartram on the Southeastern Indians*, ed., Gregory A. Waselkov and Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 160-161.

⁶⁸ Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 213-215.

after the Lower Creeks left Georgia in 1826. This, in part, may be explained by the disruption the raising of livestock had in traditional Creek agricultural practices. The move toward raising livestock created labor shortages as matrilineages lost their control over agricultural production. Often there were not enough people to work the communal fields because families had dispersed into the countryside to raise livestock. The result of this is that the “nuclear family assumed the role of principal economic unit” over that of the town or clan.⁶⁹ Subsequently, many Lower Creeks had to collect government rations at the Creek Agency, as the Halls observed, rather than at other Lower or Upper Creek towns, because other Creeks appear not to have provided aid. In fact, after Basil Hall and his wife witnessed the starvation of the Lower Creeks in 1828 they traveled to the Upper towns where they observed a number of Upper Creeks in a pre-ballgame ceremony smoking the pipe while “laughing and shouting with great animation”—a striking dichotomy to the desperation found in some of the Lower towns.⁷⁰ Moreover, in 1828, Creek warriors attacked and beat a group of starving Creeks who had stolen food. Among them was an elderly Creek woman who was “reduced to a perfect skeleton,” beaten “till her bowels might be seen,” and “whipped to the hollow” for taking some corn.⁷¹

A few Creek towns, nonetheless, showed incredible resiliency, and a number were rebuilt within Alabama. Most significant was that of Cusseta, one of the largest, and

⁶⁹ Waselkov, “Changing Strategies of Indian Field Location in the Early Historic Southeast,” in ed. Kristen J. Gremillion, *People, Plants, and Landscapes*, 190-191.

⁷⁰ Basil Hall, *Travels in North America*, 291; The ball game occurred near Thomas Triplett’s house, twenty-seven miles east of Montgomery, Alabama, see Margaret Hall, *The Aristocratic Journey*, 241-244.

⁷¹ Claudio Saunt, *Black, White, and Indian: Race and the Unmaking of an American Family* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 30.

historically most important Lower Creek towns. A few years prior to their removal from Georgia, Cusseta proper consisted of about one or two hundred houses arranged around their square ground on land that was considered poor and exhausted. Other Cussetians probably lived on individual farmsteads away from the town center. The Cussetas also had *talofas* that were up to twenty miles from the town's square ground.⁷² Sometime prior to the January 1, 1827 deadline, the people of Cusseta moved across the Chattahoochee River and resettled on their new land.⁷³ Instead of creating one large town, however, a number of different Cusseta settlements emerged spread over a large area. One village, called Charlisee, was established on Osenubbahatchee (Osanippa) Creek sometime after moving from Georgia. The Cussetians placed another large village on the west side of the Chattahoochee River opposite West Point, Georgia. Both of these settlements were some forty miles north of their historic location in Georgia. The Cussetas reestablished five other villages located on Little Uchee Creek, Tolarnulkarhatchee Creek, Opellikeehatchee Creek, Chowokolohatchee Creek, and Secharlitcha Creek.⁷⁴ The Cussetas, bowed but not broken from the loss of their Georgia

⁷² Adam Hodgson, *Letters from North America Written During a Tour in the United States and Canada*, Vol. I (London: Hurst, Robinson and Company, 1824), 121-122, reported that the houses were "elevated on poles from two to six feet high, and built of unhewn logs, with roofs of bark"; Lukas Vischer, a Swiss traveler to Alabama in 1824 observed that the Cusseta had two hundred houses, see Robert P. Collins, "A Swiss Traveler in the Creek Nation: The Diary of Lukas Vischer, March 1824," *Alabama Review* 59:4 (October 2006), 257-258; Also see Hawkins, *A Sketch of the Creek Country*, 57-61.

⁷³ Foster, *Archaeology of the Lower Muskogee Creek Indians*, 55, 56-59, argues that there were Cusseta settlements on the west side of the Chattahoochee.

⁷⁴ The locations of the Cusseta villages are based on Thomas Abbott's 1832 census of Creek towns. It is unclear if these villages were established immediately after their emigration to Alabama after 1827 or if they moved at a later date. Charlisee was also called "Cusseta on the Osenubba Hatchee," see "Names of the Creek Chiefs of the Creek Nation and also the Township and Range in Which Each Town is Located," 1832, RG-75, Letters Received by OIA, Creek Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 45-59, NA; See, "Rolls of the Creek Locations of the Creek Lands Made Under the Treaty of March 24, 1832," RG-75, Entry-287, Volume 3, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Tolarnulkarhatchee was probably

land, took pains to reestablish their town's square ground and ceremonial fire, although its location is unclear. They were also able to plant and harvest crops and in 1831 they held a *busk* in their new square ground.⁷⁵ It probably was not the first Green Corn Ceremony the Cussetas held on their Alabama lands, but it was the first that appears in the written record. No descriptions of the *busk* exist, but there is little doubt that the ceremony's spiritual component and emphasis on renewal took on added significance considering that they had consecrated new land. Besides Cusseta, only two other towns reorganized in name after emigrating from Georgia, Hitchiti and Otellewhoyanunau, a *talofa* of Chiaha meaning "Hurricane Town."⁷⁶ It appears that the Hitchiti crossed the Chattahoochee River and reestablished settlements on the western bank in present-day Russell County.⁷⁷ Otellewhoyanunau moved from the eastern bank of the Flint River into the borders of Alabama.

A number of Lower towns from Georgia were not able to resettle within the borders of Alabama, however, and they chose to voluntarily emigrate to the west.

Okteyoconnee, a town of 272 Creeks, located some forty miles south of Fort Mitchell on

Tonanulgar—a town with a square ground located on Uchee Creek, see Amos J. Wright, Jr., *Historic Indian Towns in Alabama, 1540-1838* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 160.

⁷⁵ Testimony of Edward D. Croft, 24 August 1832, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-223, 373, NA; Evidence of Cusseta busk comes from an 1831 list of Creeks vaccinated for smallpox. Among the entries are Creeks "Returning from Cusseta Busk," see United States to Dr. Wharton, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 537-538, NA.

⁷⁶ Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 66-67, 267n (43).

⁷⁷ Location in 1827 is based upon land reserves assigned after 1832, see Names of the Creek Chiefs of the Creek Nation and also the Township and Range in Which Each Town is Located, 1832, RG-75, Letters Received by OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 45-59, NA; See John H. Howard to Lewis Cass, 9 May 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1861), 652-654, which states Hitchiti was located 30 miles below Columbus in Russell County, Alabama after the 1832 Treaty of Washington.

the east side of the Chattahoochee, did not reorganize after 1827.⁷⁸ A number of Okteyoconnee Creeks voluntarily emigrated west in 1829.⁷⁹ But, Creek towns already in Alabama were also dissolved as a result of voluntary emigration. For instance, Sand Town, a number of members from which signed the Treaty of Indians Springs, was probably located in either Russell or Tallapoosa County, Alabama. After the treaty signing and McIntosh's execution, approximately 160 Sand Town Creeks fled to Georgia and remained in exile in DeKalb County, Georgia. Of that number, between seventy and eighty voluntarily emigrated west in 1827.⁸⁰ The town did not reorganize in Alabama after 1827. Similarly, a number of Creeks from Big Spring, located fourteen miles from Fort Mitchell, emigrated west between 1827 and 1829. Big Spring town appears to have dissolved in the east, however, and was not listed on a census taken of the Creek Nation in 1832.⁸¹

Some Creeks congregated into settlements, at least initially, on the west side of the Chattahoochee River by 1827. Whether they were single towns or a congregation of Creeks from multiple towns is unclear because the agents to the area gave little details about the towns' composition. For instance, a merchant in the Indian trade discovered a

⁷⁸ Population of Okteyoconnee from HR 98, 19/2 (161), 258.

⁷⁹ Evidence of emigration from receipts of Okteyoconnee Creeks, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 831-849, NA.

⁸⁰ McIntosh Emigration Roll, Record Group-217, GAO, Treasury Department Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-91, Folder-2006, Year-1830, Agent-Breareley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; For location see Amos J. Wright, Jr., *Historic Indian Towns in Alabama*, 135; John R. Swanton, *Early History of the Creek Indians and Their Neighbors* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922), 260.

⁸¹ Evidence of emigration from McIntosh Emigration Roll, Record Group-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-91, Folder-2006, Year-1830, Agent-Breareley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Receipts of Big Spring Creeks, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 785, NA; for location of Big Spring see Thomas S. Jesup to Winfield Scott, 15 June 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General's Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-25, Folder-Orders and Letters Sent by General Jesup & Staff, June 1836, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Compiled list of Known Lower Creek Towns and Villages⁸²

1825-1826	1832
Coweta	Coweta (in five settlements)
Cusseta	Cusseta (in seven settlements)
Ooseochee	Tolowarthlocco (<i>talofa</i> of Pahlochokolo)
Okteyoconnee	Eufaula (in two settlements)
Eufaula	Hatchechubba
Hatchechubba	Cowikee (<i>talofa</i> of Sawokli)
Big Spring	Sawokli
Hitchiti	Hitchiti
Thlakatchka	Yuchi
Big Shoal (<i>talofa</i> of Choccolocco)	Ooseochee (in two settlements)
Sawokli	High Log (<i>talofa</i> of Yuchi)
Sand Town	Otelleswhoyanunau (<i>talofa</i> of Chiaha)
Cherokee Town	Thlakatchka (<i>talofa</i> of Coweta, in five settlements)
Little River	Hiahagi (<i>talofa</i> of Hitchiti)
Chehahaw	Pahlochokolo
Cheahharhaw	Chiaha
Chiaha	
Yuchi	
Pahlochokolo	
Otelleswhoyanunau (<i>talofa</i> of Chiaha)	
Cowocolo Tallahassee	
Hodaldoyanna	

⁸² List for 1825 consists of towns within the borders of Alabama and Georgia. The 1825 list is from Report of T.P. Andrews to James Barbour, 4 July 1825, HR 98, 19/2 (161), 258; 1832 list is from the 1832 census of Lower Creek towns conducted by Thomas Abbott, see 1832 Census of Creek Indians Taken by Parsons and Abbott, RG-75, M-275, reel-1, 113-196, NA; Also see Wright, *Historic Indian Towns in Alabama*; William A. Read, *Indian Place Names in Alabama* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1984); H. Thomas Foster II, *The Archaeology of the Lower Muskogee Creek Indians, 1715-1836* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007); Upatoi was added to the 1825-1826 list and was based on Receipts for sale Improvements, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 627-628, NA; Sand Town, Cheahharhaw, Chiaha, and Chehahaw, were added to the 1825-1826 list. On the first McIntosh emigration roll both “Chehahaw” and “Cheahhar” are listed. No doubt, one of these is Chiaha. See, McIntosh Emigration Roll, Record Group-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-91, Folder-2006, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Otelleswhoyanunau was added and can be found in Ethridge, *Creek Country*, 29.

new settlement of refugee Creeks south of Fort Mitchell when he traveled to a “location seven miles below the Creek Agency, opposite [and] near several large towns composed mainly of the Indians who had lately removed from the lands of Georgia.”⁸³ The merchant did not provide the names of the towns he visited, however, he was possibly referring to refugees from the towns and villages of Okteyoconnee, Otellewhoyanunau, or Hitchiti which were located in the southern portion of the Creek Nation in Georgia.⁸⁴ Another settlement of refugee Creeks was located at Miller’s Bend, about sixty miles north of the Creek Agency and near the Cusseta settlement opposite West Point.⁸⁵ Due to their proximity to each other, it is unclear whether the Creeks at Miller’s Bend and those opposite West Point were part of the same settlement.

Other Lower Creeks simply fled the Creek Nation altogether. A number of Creeks, some of whom were the Upper Creek residents of Rabbit Town, headed north to live among the Cherokees. They probably settled as far away as fifty miles from the Creek Nation boundary line. Over the next several years, hundreds of Creeks also fled

⁸³ Unsigned, undated letter to James M. Berrien, et al. RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 632-638, NA.

⁸⁴ For information on the Lower town’s relocation after land reserves are assigned in 1832, see *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 12, Nos. 1-4, p. 205; Location of Creek Lands, RG-75, Entry-287, Volume-3, Miscellaneous Creek Removal Records, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; RG-75, Entry-300, Boxes 1-17, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁸⁵ Reportedly the Miller’s Bend settlement was “two or three miles” on the west side of the Chattahoochee River, see Gustavus H. Scott to John Crowell, 17 May 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 518-519, NA; There was some debate over the size of the Miller’s Bend settlement. Gustavus H. Scott, an agent charged with compensating Creek claimants for their lost Georgia lands was told by “reliable” informants that the Creeks had “their largest settlement at Miller’s Bend on the [Chattahoochee] River,” see Gustavus H. Scott to James Barbour, 15 May 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 502-504, NA; Solomon Betton, also an agent charged with compensating Creeks for their ceded land argued that Miller’s Bend was only “a small village” that contained 146 Creeks. Betton believed that most of the Creek refugees were “below the falls [of the Chattahoochee River] . . . spread on the river banks and in the interiors of the nation,” see Solomon Betton to James Barbour, 27 June 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 60-65, NA; for the four hundred Creeks “opposite West Point” see United States to Dr. Wharton, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 537-538, NA.

north to the Cherokee Nation. Agents reported seeing at least one “small village of full Blooded Creek Indians” that was constructed within the Cherokee limits consisting of several “small cabins.”⁸⁶ Others headed south to Florida to live among the Seminoles.⁸⁷

There were also small bands of Lower Creeks who resisted government interference in their lives. They refused to acknowledge either treaty, and made no effort to comply with the treaty stipulations. As the January 1, 1827 deadline came and passed, bands of Creeks chose to remain in Georgia.⁸⁸ Others may have moved into the borders of Alabama but repeatedly returned to Georgia for extended periods of time. These Lower Creeks continued to hunt on their traditional grounds but found that maintaining their lifestyle in Georgia was nearly impossible. They could no longer plant crops or stay in one place for too long without being detected by white settlers or Georgia surveyors. Subsequently, these Creeks were forced into temporary camps where they spent years moving around western and central Georgia in order to remain undetected. In 1828, reports from residents of Lee County, Georgia, observed that there were several temporary Creek settlements within the region. When discovered by the whites, the

⁸⁶ The witness mentions seeing fifteen heads of Creek families within this village, see William H. Moore to Lewis Cass, 29 March 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 291-293, NA; *Georgia Journal*, 14 June 1825; For Rabbit Town among the Cherokee see “Names of the Creek Chiefs of the Creek Nation and also the Township and Range in Which Each Town is Located,” 1832, RG-75, Letters Received by OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 45-59, NA; Unsigned letter, 7 March 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 384, NA.

⁸⁷ The government anticipated that it was “probable” that some Creeks would seek refuge in Florida and among the Seminoles to escape emigration, see James Gadsden to Andrew Jackson, 14 November 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Seminole Agency Emigration, M-234, reel-806, NA; Also see Mary W.M. Hargreaves, *The Presidency of John Quincy Adams* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1985), 201.

⁸⁸ *Niles' Weekly Register*, 2 October 1830.

Creeks simply abandoned these encampments within a day or two and moved on.⁸⁹

Other Creeks, however, were less concerned about being detected and one Georgian reported that the Creeks told him that “they will not give up this country.”⁹⁰ Government officials met with the leading Creek headmen of the Lower towns and ordered them to go to Georgia and compel their people to return to the west side of the river. Many Creeks were forced back to Alabama, but the Georgians reported that the Creeks just as easily re-crossed the river.⁹¹

When the Creeks in Georgia failed to find enough game, as was typically the case by the 1820s as the deer herds were nearly depleted, they sustained themselves by killing the livestock of the Georgia settlers. The Georgians saw that as theft, but the Creeks felt little compunction about taking from settlers who they regarded as illegally living on their land. This was nothing new. The Creeks had hunted encroaching settlers’ livestock since the mid-eighteenth century.⁹² But, by 1827 and 1828 many Creeks were taking Georgians’ livestock out of necessity. A number of whites, in fact, encountered Creeks who “were literally starving.” Numbers of Creeks, particularly those from the Yuchi, Hitchiti, Cusseta, Ooseochee, and Chehaw towns crossed the Chattahoochee specifically to feed off the crops and livestock of white settlers. Others continued to raise their

⁸⁹ Sowell Woolfolk to John Forsyth, 8 February 1828, *Creek Indian Letters, Talks, and Treaties*, 1705-1839, Part-3, 1139, Georgia Archives.

⁹⁰ Citizens to John Forsyth, 22 April 1828, United States Congress, House Document 25, *Indian Depredations in Georgia*, 11 January 1830, 21st Congress, 1st Session, Serial Set 196, 6.

⁹¹ Citizens of Lee County to John Forsyth, 18 December 1827, *Creek Indian Letters, Talks, and Treaties*, 1705-1839, Part-3, 1129, Georgia Archives; Col. M. Watson to John Forsyth, 27 November 1827, *Creek Indian Letters, Talks, and Treaties*, 1705-1839, Part-3, 1127; Also see *Tuscumbia Telegraph*, 2 January 1828, The Georgia Archives.

⁹² Saunt, *A New Order of Things*, 177 says that this was common practice as early as the 1760s. Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: Creek Indian Trade with Anglo America, 1685-1815* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 149, notes that it was common practice for Creeks to shoot cattle who strayed across the border—since cattle on their land literally became fair game.

livestock in Georgia. Many Georgians encountered Creek camps complete with shelters or lean-tos.⁹³ When caught on the east side of the river, these Lower Creeks maintained that they were only retrieving their own livestock that they had left in Georgia.⁹⁴ In rare cases this could lead to deadly confrontations. In Muscogee County, Georgia, a settler caught a Creek Indian taking corn from his corn house. The resident reported that he shot and killed the suspected thief as he reached for his gun.⁹⁵

Not all Lower Creeks were so negatively affected by the Treaty of Indian Springs and Treaty of Washington. For instance, Eufaula, which had two Lower Creek settlements after 1827, one located on the western bank of the Chattahoochee River and the other on the Chowokolohatchee Creek appears to have avoided, at least initially, being squeezed by the newly arriving Creek refugees.⁹⁶ Witnesses observed that one of the Eufaula settlements had planted crops in a what the Indians called a “town fence” where they would “plant a few acres of corn, and a small distance off, will plant a small patch of potatoes, and in another place, he will have his pease [sic], or beans, leaving between each patch, a peice [sic] of wood land.”⁹⁷ Other Lower Creeks continued to grow food for their families and, at times, even produced enough surplus produce to sell to travelers. Anne Royall, who traveled through Alabama in 1830, reported that on the

⁹³ House Document 25, 21/1 (196), 9.

⁹⁴ John S. Porter to John Forsyth, 19 June 1828, *Creek Indian Letters, Talks, and Treaties*, 1705-1839, Part-3, 1141-1142, Georgia Archives.

⁹⁵ John Forsyth to James Barbour, 29 November 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, M-234, reel-221, 323, NA; John Crowell to John Forsyth, 27 November 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 328, NA.

⁹⁶ The two Eufaula settlements are from the 1832 Census of Creek Indians Taken by Parsons and Abbott. The Upper Creek Eufaula are represented on the census as “Ufawla Town” and is listed separately among the Upper towns, see, RG-75, M-275, reel-1, 4-9, 40-43, 56-57, NA.

⁹⁷ Robert Crawford to John Robb, 15 September 1832, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-223, 54-58, NA.

road between Fort Mitchell and Montgomery, “the whole way was strewn with Indian camps, but we saw few Indians. They live on the rivers in the summer and attend to their farms, and in fall and winter live in camps on the road side, to sell their productions to travellers, such as corn and fodder for feeding horses.”⁹⁸

Even McIntosh party elites who were forced from Georgia were negatively affected by the treaties of Indian Springs and Washington. Joseph Marshall, for instance, was the thirty-year-old son of an Englishman and a Coweta woman. Their family was wealthy. Prior to 1827, Marshall’s father owned a large piece of property at the falls of the Chattahoochee, near where Columbus, Georgia was platted. Marshall, who owned a ferry on the Flint River in Georgia, was also one of the signers of the Treaty of Indian Springs. But, despite the fact that he aided Georgia in acquiring vast amounts of Creek land, Marshall was denied a request to construct a canal from which to draw water from the Chattahoochee River to power a mill he was constructing within the borders of Alabama. Joseph Marshall’s brother Benjamin, however, appears to have suffered little from the treaties of Indian Springs or Washington. Benjamin Marshall, who also signed the Treaty of Indian Springs, and along with Joseph, was considered to be “a true friend to the whites,” owned an impressive plantation on the west bank of the river directly across from his father’s old plantation. Benjamin Marshall constructed a mill adjacent to one of his fields on Mill Creek, had numerous dwellings, and no doubt engaged in

⁹⁸ Jeffrey C. Benton, ed., *The Very Worst Road: Travelers’ Accounts of Crossing Alabama’s Old Creek Indian Territory, 1820-1847* (Eufaula: Historic Chattahoochee Commission, 1998), 64.

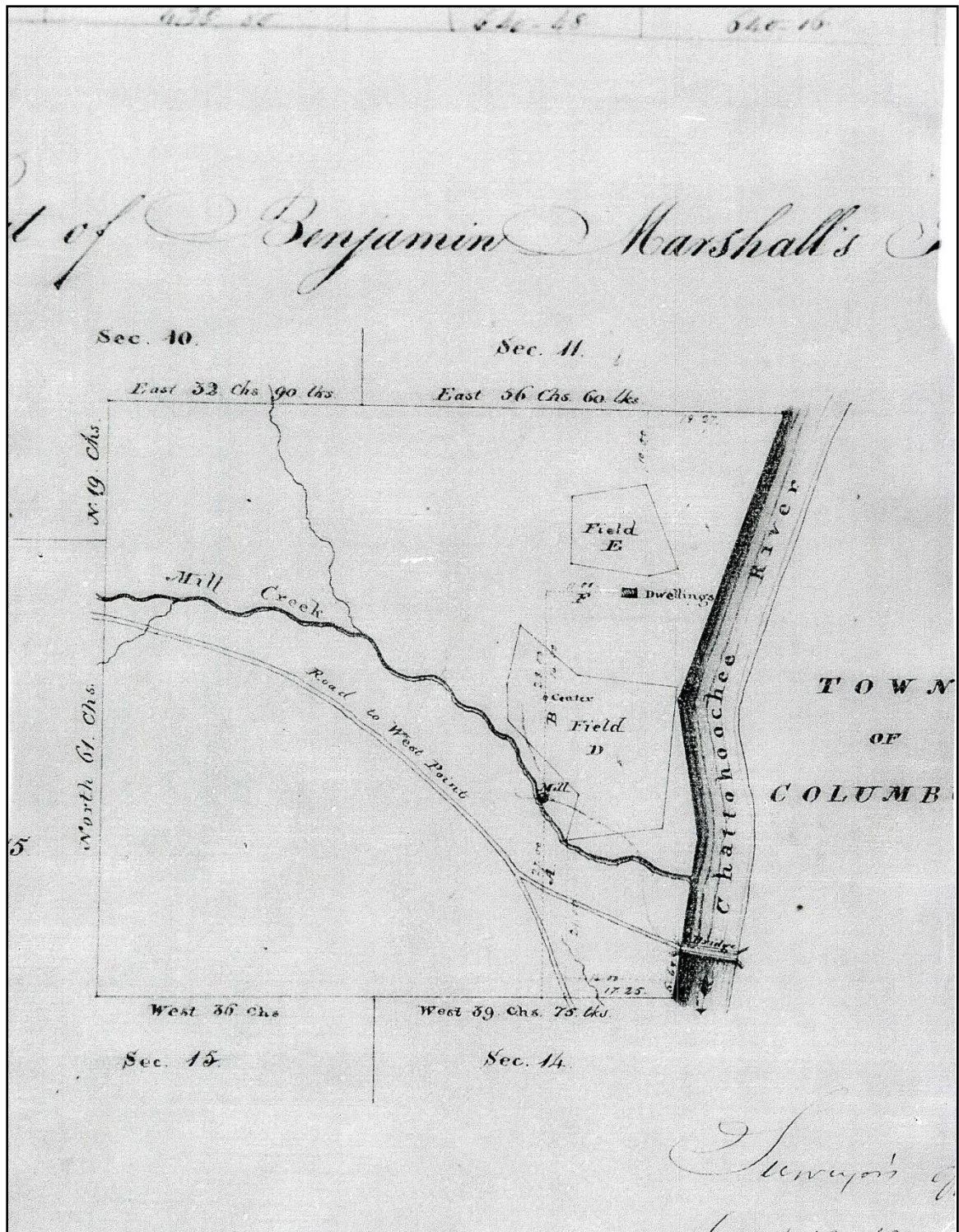
business with travelers using one of two roads that passed through his property (see figures 2 and 3).⁹⁹

Many Creeks also survived but were forced to adapt to non-traditional means of support. George Featherstonhaugh, a traveler to the Creek Nation in 1835, observed that there were a number of Creeks working as deckhands on board the steamboat *Chippewa* traveling between Mobile and Montgomery.¹⁰⁰ Over the next several years, the town of Columbus, Georgia and its environs became a magnet for Lower Creeks looking for work, to trade, or seek handouts from the local populace. There were “generally hundreds” of Creeks in Columbus by day but all Creeks were required to return to their homes on the west side of the Chattahoochee River at night. Local residents noted that the Creeks “were generally friendly and harmless while on this side of the river, but sometimes annoying, as they would go to private houses to the alarm of some of the ladies, but their object was to get something to eat or steal.”¹⁰¹ Lower Creeks congregated outside the doors and windows of local Columbus merchants, while the

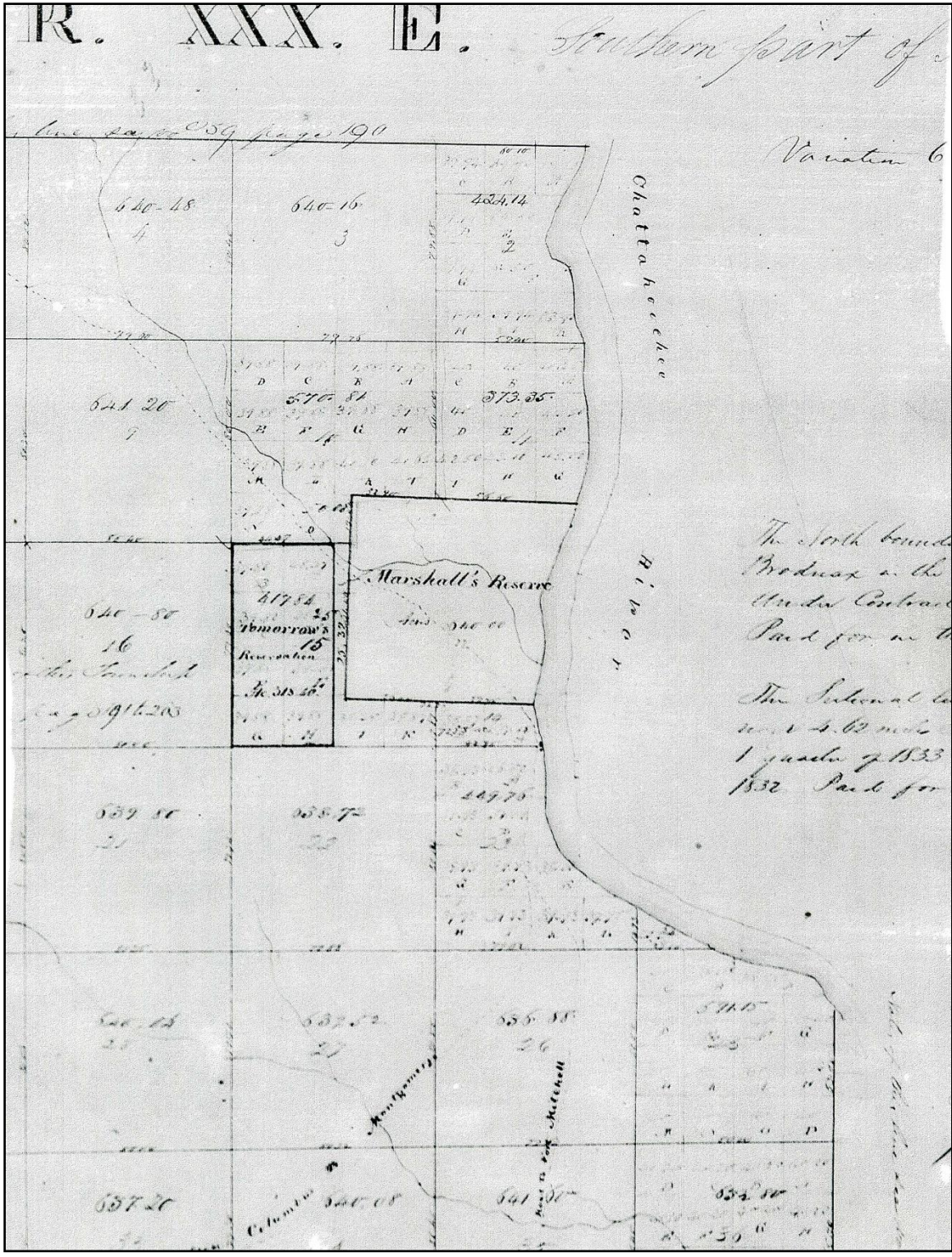
⁹⁹ Marshall’s genealogy and location of their settlement at the falls is found in Thomas S. Woodward, *Woodward’s Reminiscences of the Creek or Muscogee Indians: Contained in letters to Friends in Georgia and Alabama*, (Mobile: Southern University Press, 1965), 99; Plat of Benjamin Marshall’s Reservation, T17, R 30 E, Alabama Department of Archives and History; Marshall’s location at the falls of the Chattahoochee is also found in U.S. Bureau of American Ethnography, *Towns of the Creek Confederacy as Shown in the Early Maps of Georgia, 1818* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922); For location of Marshall’s ferry see Edmund P. Gaines to Creek Chiefs and Warriors, 5 July 1825, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-136, M-574, reel-27, 759-760, NA; For Marshall’s age see Deposition of Joseph Marshall, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-136 M-574, reel-27, 786, NA; John Forsyth to John Crowell, 21 July 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 767-768, NA; John Forsyth to Peter B. Porter, 30 July 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 801-802, NA.

¹⁰⁰ 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* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1844), 143-144, 152-154.

¹⁰¹ John H. Martin, ed., *Columbus Geo From Its Selection as a “Trading Town” in 1827 to Its Partial Destruction by Wilson’s Raid in 1865, History—Incident—Personality* (Columbus: Thos. Gilbert, 1874), 10.



(Figure 2) U.S. Land Office, Tallapoosa Land District, Plat Book, Reel-30, 161, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.



(Figure 3) U.S. Land Office, Tallapoosa Land District, Plat Book, Reel-30, 161, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

streets were filled with Creek women carrying baskets on their backs.¹⁰²

Featherstonhaugh also observed Creek women at a crude table selling shots of whiskey for money or bartering “for anything to [get] in return, if it were only the skin of an animal.” Some Creeks were hired to pick cotton for white farmers. Other Creeks were reduced to begging door to door for food or money while the most desperate Creek women turned to prostitution.¹⁰³

Despite the hardships, for most Creeks life went on and their social and ceremonial life continued. In 1831, a British visitor on his way to Charleston from New Orleans passed through the Creek Nation and observed the Yuchi and another unnamed Lower Creek town participating in a ball game near Fort Mitchell. Noting that the ball players’ “skin was besmeared with oil, and painted fantastically with different colours. Some wore tails, others necklaces made of the teeth of animals,” the traveler witnessed the Yuchi lose to their opponents. Afterwards, the Creeks celebrated as “the victors danced about in all the madness of inordinate elation, and the evening terminated in a profuse jollification.”¹⁰⁴

But, even as the Creek people sought to adjust to their new lives on a reduced domain, the Creek National Council faced continued demands from Georgia for more land. Soon after the ratification of the Treaty of Washington, Georgia discovered that a

¹⁰² Harriet Martineau, *Society in America*, Vol. I (New York: Saunders and Otley, 1837), 212-217; also see Sol Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South for Thirty Years* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1868), 77-78.

¹⁰³ Featherstonhaugh, *Excursion Through the Slave States*, 152-154; For picking cotton see John B. Hogan to C.C. Clay, 30 January 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, (Washington, D.C.: Gales & Seaton, 1861), 749.

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Hamilton, *Men and Manners in America* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Blanchard, 1833), 342.

narrow strip of land along the Alabama border was not included in the cession and the state began pressing the Creeks into new negotiations. Indignant at Georgia's demands, Little Prince, the speaker for the Council, refused to consider ceding the additional land and replied to the request by observing that "we have no land to spare" and that the Creeks were "very thickly settled."¹⁰⁵ Creek attitudes did not stop Georgia's surveyors, already busy exploring their new cession from the Treaty of Washington, from crossing the Creek boundary to survey this strip of land in early 1827. Angered by the trespass, a number of Lower Creeks confronted one of the surveyors, confiscated his compass, and "threatened [him] very severe" if they ever found him on the west side of the line again. Still smarting from the Treaty of Indian Springs and Treaty of Washington and adamant in their refusal to cede more land, the Creeks went so far as to place towns along the boundary line to prevent the land in question from being surveyed. A surveyor observed "three settlements of Indians in [his] district that have in them about ten men and in two miles on the Alabama side there is a large town that I am told have from forty to fifty warriors in it which is to be placed on the new treaty line as spies, and prevent the land from being surveyed."¹⁰⁶

The Creeks' united front against ceding more territory did not last, however and through shrewd negotiations the United States was able to buy the last of the Creeks' Georgia land. Ironically, it was Little Prince, initially one of the most outspoken in his objection to ceding the strip, who became the major catalyst in pushing the new treaty

¹⁰⁵ Little Prince to John Crowell, 3 June 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 221-222, NA.

¹⁰⁶ James A. Rogers to George M. Troup, 23 January 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 531-532, NA.

through. Prominent Creeks such as Opothle Yoholo, who was advised by Cherokee leaders John Ridge and David Vann, continued to oppose the cession. Little Prince's actions are puzzling. Michael D. Green has suggested a number of possible explanations for Little Prince's reversal, including paranoia over Opothle Yoholo's increasing influence within the Nation, the fear that Ridge and Vann were increasing Cherokee influence over Creek affairs, and the senility or irrationality of the aging headman. Little Prince avoided McIntosh's fate for ceding more land against the wishes of the National Council by using his influence and by presenting gifts and money to enough chiefs to circumnavigate Opothle Yoholo's opposition and make the treaty legitimate.¹⁰⁷ The Treaty of Fort Mitchell, signed in November 1827, ended the Lower Creeks' long and acrimonious relationship with the Georgia government. Within two years a visitor traveling through the area marveled that "From the Flint Creek to Chattahoochee [there were] cotton land speculators thicker than locusts in Egypt."¹⁰⁸

* * *

Despite the abrogation of the Treaty of Indian Springs, its successor, the Treaty of Washington, had a devastating impact on the Creek Nation. The loss of Creek land in Georgia forced approximately seven thousand Lower Creeks to join the other sixteen

¹⁰⁷ Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 138-139; For more on the 1827 Treaty of Fort Mitchell see Richard J. Hryniewicki, "The Creek Treaty of November 15, 1827," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 50:1 (March 1968).

¹⁰⁸ *Southern Advocate*, 8 June 1827.

thousand Creeks on about five million acres of land within Alabama. The treaties forced the Lower Creeks into a precarious situation. Many did not resettle successfully on new land and this had the result of forcing a number of Lower Creeks into a state of material want that lasted well into the 1830s. Moreover, the treaties disrupted town life for a majority of the Lower Creeks. While some towns such as Cusseta, Hitchiti, and Otellewhoyanunau resettled in some capacity, many Lower towns disappeared entirely. Evidence suggests that many Lower Creeks chose, or were forced to resettle onto individual farmsteads, and some as far west as the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers. Adding insult to injury was the fact that the treaties were essentially removal documents. Hoping to entice other Creeks to follow the McIntosh party, government officials began canvassing the Creek Nation hoping to compel or cajole Creeks into enrolling for emigration. Their goal for the first party was three thousand individuals. In response to this threat, Creek headmen formulated laws and policies designed to dissuade other Creeks from following in their wake. Within this atmosphere, nearly seven hundred Creeks of the McIntosh party and their slaves made preparations to emigrate west.

Two

The First McIntosh Emigration

1827-1828

*“We were troubled with constables every five miles, with false papers
and we did not enjoy any peace until we came down the mountain.”*

—Chilly McIntosh, William McIntosh’s son, 1827

Although the Treaty of Washington was a victory of sorts for the Creek Nation, its lasting legacy was that it commenced government-sponsored emigration to the west. While most of the Lower Creeks were rebuilding their lives after the loss of their Georgia lands, members of the McIntosh party were surveying land near the Arkansas Territory border and preparing for their emigration by packing their possessions into large wagons. When they left the Creek Nation for the west in November 1827, only about seven hundred Creeks and their slaves chose to emigrate. Many of those emigrants were friends, followers, or business partners of the late William McIntosh. Their departure from the Creek Nation was highly controversial, and the Creeks considered the McIntosh party to be traitors. But any sense of relief the McIntosh party must have felt as they left the Nation was short-lived as their actual journey west proved to be dangerous and tedious. Their destination was a location approximately eight miles west of Cantonment Gibson near the Arkansas Territory border. Cantonment Gibson was a garrison built a few years earlier to protect white settlers from emigrating Indians. When the McIntosh

party finally arrived at their new lands in present-day Oklahoma between January and March 1828, they became the founders of the Western Creek Nation.

* * *

The McIntosh Creeks spent the years 1825, 1826, and much of 1827 “laboring under great fear” of more retaliatory punishment from the Creek Nation.¹ They also spent those two-and-a-half years without a steady supply of food and, in many cases, without adequate clothing and other provisions. Raids upon the homes and property of the McIntosh party immediately after the Treaty of Indian Springs left many of the poorest of the McIntosh party with little to live on. Exile prevented the McIntosh party from planting crops during the spring of 1825 or tending to any of their remaining livestock. Subsequently, they relied on government aid. Between May and November 1825, four to six hundred members of the McIntosh party, “most of them indifferently clothed [and] some with scarcely any clothing,” returned to Indian Springs and pleaded for provisions to replace their lost or destroyed goods. Subsequently, agents “accordingly furnished them with such articles as were generally absolutely required [and] with some beyond what they were accustomed to.” Included were basic material items such as shoes, socks, homespun, calico, blankets, soap, toothbrushes, and fishing line and hooks, along with luxury items such as saddles, beaver hats, pantaloons, vests, silk ribbon, seer-

¹ David Brearley to James Barbour, 15 November 1826, Record Group-75, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Creek Agency Emigration, 1826-1849, Microcopy-234, reel-237, 4-6, National Archives.

sucker fabric, frock coats, shawls, hosiery, tortoise combs, and ostrich feathers. A small amount of food, such as eggs, lard, butter, potatoes, and onions, were also issued. In all, the federal government distributed approximately \$4,600 worth of luxury items to the party, \$1,340.62 of which went directly to Chilly McIntosh and his family. Many of the Creeks who received provisions also took orders from other members of the McIntosh party. For instance, Chilly McIntosh received “orders for cloak for Indians” and “sundry orders by Indians.” And Joseph Marshall, a signer of the Treaty of Indian Springs, received a “verbal order for 52 Indians \$5.00 each in Homespun and Blankets” for a total of \$260.² The McIntosh Creeks also provided aid to their own members. For instance, Benjamin Hawkins, a Hillabee and the brother of the executed Samuel Hawkins, received compensation from the federal government “in support of the hungry and naked followers of the late Genl. McIntosh in 1825.”³

At some point the government stopped issuing provisions and the McIntosh Creeks had to fend for themselves.⁴ By March 1826, just over a year after the signing of the Treaty of Indian Springs, there were still approximately one hundred McIntosh Creeks in exile at Buzzard’s Roost reportedly suffering from a lack of food and material items.⁵ In November 1826, agents estimated that there were still perhaps as many as 180

² It is unclear if these provisions were given to the McIntosh party or drawn out of their annuity or money paid to them for emigrating, see Provision list of Joel Baley to the Friends and Followers of the late Genl. William McIntosh, 21 February 1826, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-220, 697-708, NA.

³ Receipt for Benjamin Hawkins, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Agent-Benjamin Hawkins, Year-1829, Account number-13,229, Box-77, Folder-1702, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁴ David Brearley to James Barbour, 15 November 1826, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, RG-75, M-234, reel-237, 4-6, NA.

⁵ J. M. C. Montgomery to George M. Troup, 4 March 1826, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-220, 562-564, NA.

members still in need of aid.⁶ In May 1827, observers reported that many Creeks of the McIntosh party were “starving” and had to subsist almost entirely on the China briar root, a traditional food but one with little nutritional value.⁷

The scarcity of provisions was not the only concern among the McIntosh faction. The anger and rage exhibited toward the McIntosh party by the principal headmen of the Creek Nation remained strong and showed evidence of getting stronger into 1826. As a result, the McIntosh party spent these years living in fear of more retaliation. This was confirmed by David Brearley, a colonel in the United States Army, New Jersey native, and former agent to the Cherokees in the Arkansas Territory. He was assigned to conduct the McIntosh party west.⁸ In November 1826, Brearley met with the party at one of McIntosh’s former homes and discovered that “the alarming and cruel disposition” expressed toward the McIntosh party by the Creeks “has been manifested in a greater degree during my absence, than had before come to my knowledge.”⁹ Moreover, Creek headmen were threatening anyone who joined the McIntosh party for their emigration west. Indeed, even being seen talking with emigrating agents was grounds for punishment and Brearley observed that “men, women and children fled from their houses

⁶ David Brearley to James Barbour, 15 November 1826, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 4-6, NA.

⁷ Thomas M. Randolph to James Barbour, 15 May 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 444-448, NA; The China briar and its usages is found in Benjamin Hawkins, *A Combination of A Sketch of The Creek Country, in the Years 1798 and 1799 and Letters of Benjamin Hawkins* (Georgia Historical Society, 1848, reprint, Spartanburg: The Reprint Company, 1982), 21.

⁸ Grant Foreman, *Indians and Pioneers: The Story of the American Southwest before 1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 292.

⁹ David Brearley to James Barbour, 15 November 1826, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 4-6, NA.

at my approach.”¹⁰ The threats suggest that the chiefs believed there was a demand for removal, likely from the Creeks of the Lower towns who were forced from Georgia.

After William McIntosh’s execution, it was left to McIntosh’s son Chilly to prepare the emigrating party for their removal to the west. The first order of business was to choose a piece of land near the Arkansas Territory border. Article Six of the Treaty of Washington authorized a delegation of up to five Creeks to travel to the west and choose their land reserve. Benjamin Hawkins of Hillabee town along with Asseemee of Hitchiti, Lemuel B. Nichols, Arbeka Tustunnuggee, and Daniel Kennard of Thlakatchka, represented the Creek delegation.¹¹ It is unclear why they were chosen, but most had close ties to William McIntosh and the McIntosh family. Hawkins was related to McIntosh through marriage and Arbeka Tustunnuggee signed the Treaty of Indian Springs. The Kennard family also had close ties to the McIntosh family.¹² Lemuel B. Nichols, however, had only resided in the Creek Nation for five-and-a-half years.¹³

On March 15, 1827 the deputation, along with Brearley, stepped aboard the steamboat *Fort Adams* at Montgomery for their trip west. Each member of the deputation received a blanket and rifle. The party traveled down the Alabama River to Mobile, where they boarded the steamboat *Columbia* for their journey to New Orleans. There they boarded the *Catawba* to ascend the Mississippi and Arkansas Rivers. Disembarking at Dardanelle west of Little Rock, the party went by land for the final

¹⁰ David Brearley to James Barbour, 4 October 1826, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency West, M-234, reel-236, 5, NA; for more on the threats see, James Barbour to John Crowell, 6 October 1826, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, M-21, reel-3, 179, NA.

¹¹ Receipt of David Brearley, 19 April 1827, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Box-90, Folder-1995, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487-G, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

¹² United States Congress, House Report 98, *Georgia Controversy*, 5 March 1827, 19th Congress, 2nd Session, Serial Set-161, 578.

¹³ Affidavit of Lemuel B. Nichols, House Report 98, 19/2 (161), 426.

eighty or ninety miles to Cantonment Gibson. Along the way, the exploratory deputation met with the Western Cherokee Indians.¹⁴

Once the party arrived at Cantonment Gibson they procured additional horses, an interpreter, and guides. On May 11 the party left the garrison on horseback to explore the region. The itinerary included exploration of approximately one hundred miles along the north side of the Arkansas River. But, heavy rains forced the party to change plans and cross the Arkansas River after four days and traveling only about sixty miles. The exploratory deputation traveled southwest and crossed several minor branches before reaching the grayish and muddy waters of the Canadian River on May 23.¹⁵ The party then headed in an “East and North East” direction reaching the mouth of the Grand River and arriving back at Cantonment Gibson on May 27. What the Creeks found was generally what the white travelers and the troops at Cantonment Gibson had already concluded. North of the Arkansas River rich bottomlands and rich prairie lands extended for almost eighty miles long and about three or five miles in width. Beyond the southern banks of the Arkansas River, however, Brearley noted that the prairies were “barren” and

¹⁴ *Alabama Journal*, 23 March 1827; David Brearley to James Barbour, 20 July 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 33-35, NA; Receipt of David Brearley, 19 April 1827, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Agent-Brearley, Year-1830, Account number-14,487-G, Box-90, folder-1995, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Abstract of Disbursements to David Brearley Abstract of Disbursements of David Brearley, RG 217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Agent-David Brearley, Year-1830, Account number-14,487, Box-90, Folder-1990, National Archives II, College Park, MD; The *Fort Adams* was a 137 ton side-wheel steamboat built in 1825. The *Catawba* was a 112 ton side-wheeler built in 1827. Both are listed in Bert Neville, *Directory of River Packets in the Mobile-Alabama-Warrior-Tombigbee-Trades 1818-1932* (Selma: Selma Printing Service, 1967), 15, 18; The *Fort Adams* is also listed in Harry P. Owens, *Steamboats and the Cotton Economy: River trade in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1990), 4, 25; Also see, Christopher D. Haveman, “With Great Difficulty and Labour: The Emigration of the McIntosh Party of Creek Indians, 1827-1828,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 85:4 (Winter 2007-2008), 468-490.

¹⁵ For descriptions of the land see House Report 87, *Remove Indians Westward*, 18 February 1829, 20th Congress, 2nd Session, Serial Set 190, 42; The sixty miles they traveled along the Arkansas River was reported by John W. Baylor to John Campbell, 29 October 1831, United States Congress, Senate Document 512, *Correspondence on the Subject of the Emigrating Indians*, 23rd Congress, 2nd Session, Serial Set 245, 633.

“steril.”¹⁶ After spending several days exploring their new territory, the McIntosh deputation chose a piece of land about eight miles west of Cantonment Gibson and four miles from the territorial line.¹⁷ Wisely, they picked a plot on the rich north side of the Arkansas River, located at a point that offered them the protection of Cantonment Gibson, while allowing the government the greatest amount of ease in distributing their provisions during the first year of their resettlement.¹⁸

After receiving “pledges of friendship” from the Osage Indians, the exploratory party left Cantonment Gibson. The deputation reached Dardanelle on June 5 before boarding an open boat and traveling down the Arkansas River to the White River. The party arrived at the White River on June 18. There, the party boarded the steamboat *Courtland* which took them up the Mississippi River to Cairo, Illinois. Near Cairo, the deputation caught the Ohio River and then the Tennessee River where the party eventually arrived at Waterloo, Alabama. From Waterloo, the party traveled the rest of the way back by land and reached the Creek Nation by mid-July.¹⁹

When the deputation returned from their explorations into the Arkansas Territory, two Creek councils were called. A National Council was held at Wetumpka for the purpose of hearing the deputation speak on the condition of the Arkansas Territory and

¹⁶ David Brearley to James Barbour, 20 July 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 33-35, NA.

¹⁷ The distance of the site from Cantonment Gibson is found in David Brearley to James Barbour, 20 July 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 33-35, NA.

¹⁸ Brearley actually selected the site between the Arkansas and Verdigris Rivers because of its proximity to Cantonment Gibson, see Roly McIntosh and Creek Indians to Andrew Jackson, 25 October 1831, Senate Document 512, 23/1 (245), 633-635; David Brearley to James Barbour, 20 July 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 33-35, NA.

¹⁹ David Brearley to James Barbour, 20 July 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 33-35, NA; The *Courtland* was a 214 ton, side-wheel steamboat based out of New Orleans and is listed in Bert Neville, *Directory of Tennessee River Steamboats (1821-1928)* (Selma: Coffee Printing Company, 1963), 16.

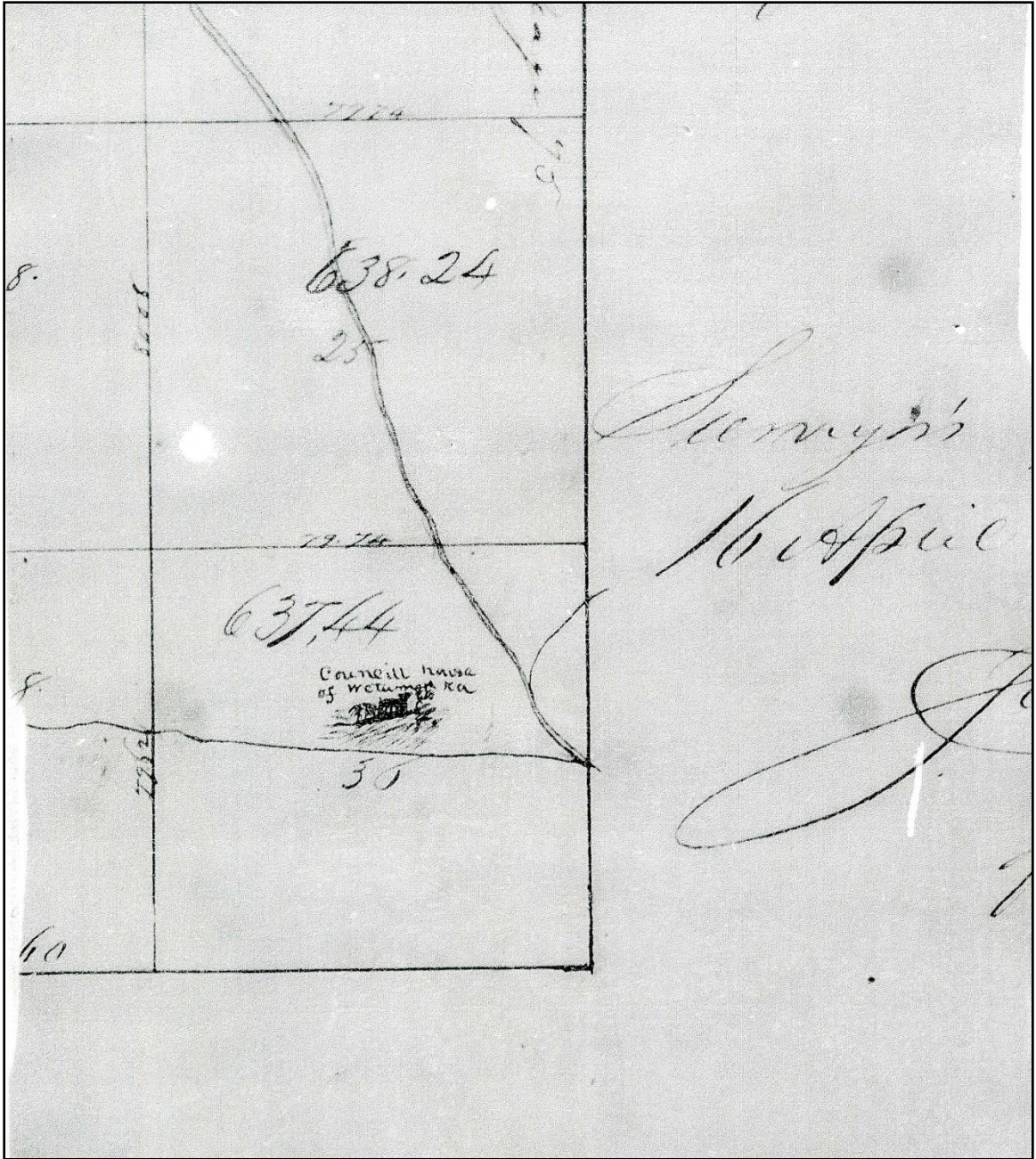
on how they were received by the Cherokee and the Osage Indians who lived there (figure 4).²⁰ Among the speakers was Arbeka Tustunnuggee, the leader of the exploratory deputation, who gave a highly favorable report of their new land. He stated that with regard to the condition of the land, water, and game, the Arkansas Territory had many advantages over their land in Alabama and Georgia.²¹ The descriptions of the quality of the Creeks' western lands were, no doubt, embellished in an attempt to recruit more Creeks to emigrate. In fact, it appears that prominent McIntosh Creeks were not convinced the Arkansas Territory was the best region in which to settle. For instance, on the eve of the signing of the Treaty of Indian Springs in February 1825, Roly McIntosh was asked by a government agent about his desire to emigrate west. Roly McIntosh told the agent that he "was not so disposed [to leave], that he had visited [the Arkansas Territory and] had hunted there three seasons, that the muskitoes were very bad [and] the country was sickly, the Indians very hostile, that he had very narrowly escaped from them with [his] life two or three times that he had been sick himself and come near dying." Roly made it clear that he wanted to live at the foot of the Rocky Mountains.²²

Also speaking at the National Council was Little Prince of Cusseta and Mad Tiger, foes of William McIntosh and emigration. They implored any member of the McIntosh party who did not want to emigrate but were fearful of admitting it to speak so

²⁰ The federal government also increasingly began meeting with the Creeks at Wetumpka due to its proximity to Fort Mitchell, see Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 177; Also see, Little Prince and Creek Indians to James Barbour, 5 June 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 165-170, NA.

²¹ *Macon Telegraph*, 14 August 1827.

²² Testimony of Laird W. Harris, 12 June 1825, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-219, 944-945, NA.



(Figure 4) U.S. Land Office, Tallapoosa Land District, Plat Books, Reel-30, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

they could stay behind in Alabama and receive protection. The gravity of the situation at the National Council at Wetumpka did not escape anybody who attended and newspapers described the Council's attendance as "uncommonly numerous." It was fitting that among the final speakers at the National Council was none other than Chilly McIntosh who gave "a very eloquent speech." After he was done talking, he "shook hands with the head men of the Nation," then traveled with his group to the falls of the Chattahoochee River to hold their own council. At the second council, held on August 4, McIntosh and his group made the necessary arraignments for removal, received the official report of the exploratory deputation, and accepted the emblems of friendship sent by the Cherokee and Osage Indians residing in the west.²³

The formal commencement of voluntary removal began with the establishment of enrollment camps in Alabama. A number of emigration camps were placed at various points around the Creek Nation. Any Creek Indian inclined to emigrate was required to move into the camp nearest to where they lived and pack their belongings into large wagons. While awaiting transportation, they would subsist on government-provided food rations of corn, corn meal, salt and beef. The government established a number of camps throughout the Creek Nation, each containing between one hundred and 250 Creek emigrants.²⁴ As a leading proponent of removal, Chilly McIntosh also took an active role

²³ *Arkansas Gazette*, 25 September 1827.

²⁴ It is unclear where these camps were located. A site near Fort Gaines appears to be one, see Expenses of John W. Grace, 8 November 1827, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor; Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487-D, Year-1830, Box-90, Folder-1992, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Thomas Anthony, no. 74 on Brearley's disbursement list was reimbursed for conducting 104 Creeks from Kiamulga to Harpersville. Thomas S. Woodward also noted that the "half breed son" of James Seagrove, "was killed by the Indians many years ago for killing another Indian at Kiemulga, when the first McIntosh party were emigrating to Arkansas territory," see Thomas S. Woodward, *Woodward's Reminiscences of the Creek, or Muscogee Indians, Contained in Letters to Friends in Georgia and Alabama* (Montgomery, 1859; reprint, Mobile: Southern University Press, 1965), 90; Chilly McIntosh

in helping with the emigration. McIntosh set up an enrollment camp at his own house on the Chattahoochee River. There he supplied provisions to an undisclosed number of Creeks who planned to emigrate west. McIntosh also rented an ox-cart as well as a five-horse and a four-horse team to pull the two large road wagons to hold their possessions. Other Creeks also contributed food and fodder for the emigration and each was entitled to compensation from the federal government. Chilly McIntosh, for instance, threatened to sell his wagons if not paid the going rate for a wagon hire, which was three dollars a day.²⁵

September 15 was initially the appointed time for each camp to consolidate at the rendezvous at Harpersville, Alabama, a site chosen by Brearley because it was far removed from the hostility found in the Creek Nation.²⁶ There were delays, however, and by the time Chilly McIntosh's enrollment camp arrived in Harpersville, the emigration was behind schedule.²⁷ Once consolidated at the rendezvous, agents met with each Creek adult male. The Creeks gave their name, their town of origin, as well as the number of women, children, or slaves accompanying the family to the agents. This

stopped at Kiamulga on his way to Harpersville where he merged with the party encamped there, see H. Stambaugh to Lewis Cass, 28 February 1834, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 662-665, NA; Abstract of Disbursements of David Brearley, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1990, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Line Creek, Ten Islands, and Coosada may have been other locations.

²⁵ The United States by Col. D. Brearley, Agent for the Emigrating Creek Indians to Chilly McIntosh, RG-75, Entry-300, Box-5, Receipt-23, National Archives, Washington, D.C; H. Stambaugh to Lewis Cass, 28 February 1834, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 662-665, NA.

²⁶ Harpersville was almost two hundred miles from the Creek Agency, see David Brearley to William Stuart, 8 April 1836, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-270, Year-1839, Agent-Triplett, Account number-2743-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD; David Brearley to James Barbour, 5 September 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 58-59, NA.

²⁷ Testimony of David Brearley, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 660, NA.

information was recorded onto muster rolls. After giving their information, each Creek male received a blanket, rifle, and knife.²⁸ When the agents had finished the muster roll on November 8, they found that they had 707 emigrants, which included the Creeks' eighty-six slaves. A family of four was subsequently redacted which brought the total down to 703.²⁹ The number was well short of the government's goal of three thousand.³⁰ There were approximately 190 men, 175 women, and 250 children. William McIntosh's town of Coweta was the most represented, with about 170 emigrants.³¹ Only eight of the signers of the Treaty of Indian Springs enrolled to remove with this emigrating party.

Many of these first emigrants were close McIntosh family associates and relatives. The McIntosh and Hawkins families were linked by marriage. Eliza, the

²⁸ McIntosh Emigration Roll, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-91, Folder-2006, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-129, Folder-2804, Year-1833, Agent-Page, Account number-17,581, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

²⁹ Brearley made a number of emigration rolls and each had a different total. Creek Agent John Crowell reported to Washington that there were 707 emigrants "including white + black," see John Crowell to James Barbour, 6 December 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 289-291, NA; For the 703 emigrants see Thomas McKenney to James Barbour, 17 January 1828, House Document 74, *Creeks Removed West of the Mississippi*, 20th Congress, 1st session, serial 171, 3-4; One muster roll shows 703 emigrants with the redaction of the family of John Wynn. Wynn and family emigrated with the second emigrating party, see McIntosh Emigration Roll, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-91, Folder-2006, Year-1830, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; For Wynn and the second emigration see Second McIntosh Party Emigration Roll, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-91, Folder-2006, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

³⁰ Article IX of the Treaty of Washington authorized an enticement of \$100,000 to be distributed to the McIntosh party if 3000 enrolled for removal. As a result of the low number of enrollees, the 3000 emigrant goal was eliminated as stipulated in the 3rd section of the Act of 20th May 1826. The \$100,000 enticement was also voided and thirty dollars was allocated for each Creek emigrant regardless of their ties to McIntosh. This enticement was only for Creeks emigrating within two years, and did not apply to most of the emigrants who removed in 1829 or thereafter, see Elbert Herring to Lewis Cass, 16 June 1834, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-13, 45-47, NA.

³¹ Treaty of Indian Springs, 12 February 1825, in *Indian Affairs*, 214; McIntosh Emigration Roll, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-91, Folder-2006, Year-1830, Account number- 14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Those Creeks who signed the Treaty of Indian Springs and emigrated with the McIntosh party were Roly McIntosh, Chilly McIntosh, Arbeka Tustunnuggee, William Miller, Samuel Miller, Charles Miller, Alexander Lashly, and Tallasee Hajo (John Carr); The rest of the towns listed in the muster rolls include Newyaucau, Charkeethlocco, Cheahharhaw, Chehahaw, Cheahhar, Big Spring, Sand Town, Thlakatchka, Hitchiti, Ochakola, Wekywathlocco, Yuchi, Cusseta, Wacoochee, Talladega, Coosada, Tuckabatchee, Hillabee, and Kiamulga.

daughter of Stephen Hawkins and brother to Benjamin Hawkins, was married to William McIntosh. Both Stephen and Benjamin Hawkins appear on the emigration roll. Chilly McIntosh (son of William McIntosh) and Hoge McIntosh (half-brother to William) appear on the emigration roll.³²

Other Creek emigrants, such as Daniel Perryman were close McIntosh associates. In fact, agents considered offering Perryman a thousand dollars to help get the Treaty of Indian Springs signed. It was implied that Perryman would have accepted if offered.³³ William Miller, who accompanied twenty-two other members of his family west, was also a close associate of William McIntosh. Miller served with McIntosh during the Seminole War and signed the Treaty of Indian Springs along with Samuel Miller and Charles Miller. In fact, Chilly McIntosh referred to William Miller and Arbeka Tustunnuggee, who also signed the Treaty of Indian Springs, as “friends.”³⁴ For his part, Arbeka Tustunnuggee, in addition to being a “friend” of Chilly McIntosh and accompanying the exploratory deputation, appears to have also been related to Lewis McIntosh and his mother.³⁵ Three members of the Derasaw (also spelled Derrisaw and Derasau) family appear on the roll. They were probably descendants of the Creek interpreter James Durouzeaux who married a Creek woman in the late eighteenth-century.³⁶ The Derasaws were targeted for execution for their support of the Treaty of

³² House Report 98 20/2 (161), 573; For more on the Hawkins family see House Report 98, 19/2, (161), 705-706; Also see, John Bartlett Meserve, “The MacIntoshes.” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 10:3 (September 1932), 310-325; Woodward, *Reminiscences*, 99.

³³ For report on the bribe see Affidavit of William Hambly, House Report 98, 19/2 (161), 394; Also see John Bartlett Meserve, “The Perrymans.” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 15:2 (June 1937), 166-184.

³⁴ House Report 98, 19/2 (161), 327.

³⁵ A List of Vouchers,” RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1997, Year-1830, Account number-14,487-I, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

³⁶ For more on James Durouzeaux see Andrew K. Frank, *Creeks and Southerners: Biculturalism on the Early American Frontier* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 35.

Indian Springs and but managed to escape.³⁷ Among the other Creek emigrants was Lemuel B. Nichols, who had only resided within the Creek Nation for five-and-a-half years and was only “tolerably well acquainted with the character and customs of the Creek nation,” but was well connected enough to join the exploratory deputation to the Arkansas Territory and emigrate with the McIntosh party.³⁸ Andrew Lovett of Coweta, also appears on the role. He was related to George Lovett who served as a Creek interpreter, was present at the signing of the Treaty of Fort Jackson in 1814, and the land cession treaties of 1818 and 1821, and served alongside William McIntosh during the first Seminole War.³⁹ Thomas S. Woodward, a veteran of the Creek and Seminole Wars who lived much of his life in Alabama and kept a record of his correspondence with friends about early nineteenth-century Creek history, listed the names of the most prominent families in the Creek Nation. Among those listed that appear on the McIntosh emigration roll are Hawkins, McIntosh, Marshall, Derasaw, Birford, and Brinton families.⁴⁰

There were also wide disparities of wealth. The McIntosh family was exceedingly wealthy, and many other members of the McIntosh party owned substantial property. Others were more modest property owners and some were clearly

³⁷ Peggy and Susannah McIntosh to Duncan Campbell and James Meriwether, 3 May 1825, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-219, 636-638, NA.

³⁸ Lemuel B. Nichols’ history in the Creek Nation is found in the Affidavit of Lemuel B. Nichols, House Report 98, 19/2 (161), 426.

³⁹ Andrew Lovett’s name appears on a list along with George Lovett and James Lovett consisting of “Creeks friendly to the United States during the Creek War,” see, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, reel-221, 231, NA; For George Lovett’s presence at the signing of the treaties of 1814, 1818, and 1821 see Kappler, vol. II, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), 107-110, 155-156, 195-197; George Lovett’s service with William McIntosh in Florida is found in Benjamin W. Griffith, Jr., *McIntosh and Weatherford, Creek Indian Leaders* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1988), 83, 177, 187, 191.

⁴⁰ Woodward, *Woodward’s Reminiscences*, 99.

impoverished. For instance, Andrew Lovett owned an eighteen square-foot cabin, a sixteen square-foot cabin, and two twelve square-foot cabins. In addition, he owned two fourteen square-foot corn houses, eleven acres of fenced land, and six peach trees.⁴¹ Richard Robinson, of Big Spring, owned one house, kitchen, cabin, meat house, corn house, twelve acres of fenced land, and twelve peach trees.⁴² Fuctee Lustee, also of Big Spring, owned one sixteen square-foot cabin, a fifteen square-foot double cabin, eight acres of fenced land, and five peach trees.⁴³ Others led more modest lives. Nocos Ecar and Misshooea of Newyaucau only claimed three and four acre fields, respectively.⁴⁴ It also appears that there were also many Creeks who were in a state of material want and enrolled for emigration to avoid starving. One observer wrote that the neediest members of the McIntosh party “would not only enter their names now [for removal] but would actually follow [Brearley] like hungry dogs to be fed, anywhere he might lead.”⁴⁵

Loyalty may also have been a factor in choosing to leave the Creek Nation. Many Creeks also belonged to McIntosh’s town of Coweta or its *talofa* Thlakatchka and saw McIntosh as their chief and protector. Still many did not want to emigrate and families were broken apart as a result. Among those who refused to emigrate with the McIntosh party was a teenage girl, named Mary Ann Battis who was enrolled at the Asbury mission school. Battis’ relatives tried to force her to emigrate with them to the Arkansas

⁴¹ Receipt of Andrew Lovett, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 306, NA.

⁴² Receipt of Richard Robinson, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 230, NA.

⁴³ Receipt of Fuctee Lustee, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 223, NA.

⁴⁴ Receipts of Nocos Ekar and Misshooea, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 512, 516, NA.

⁴⁵ T.M. Randolph to James Barbour, 15 May 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 444-448, NA.

Territory. She refused, stayed behind, and later married a Cherokee, moved to the Cherokee Nation, and started a family.⁴⁶

Whatever their reasons for removing, the actual journey to the west was difficult, especially in the dead of winter. In fact, the emigration began with an inauspicious start. While the Creeks waited for the agents to finish the muster roll, some residents of Harpersville tried to cheat the Creeks of the McIntosh party out of their money and property. An indignant Chilly McIntosh wrote a letter to the newspaper of the *Tuscumbia Patriot* and complained of receiving “no hospitality from the citizens of [Harpersville]” and of having been “harassed with attachments upon our property, and thrown into confusion with false accounts.”⁴⁷ The muster roll was completed on November 8, 1827 and the party began moving north in the darkness on November 9 or 10.⁴⁸ As the Creeks traveled out of Harpersville, however, local law enforcement continued to follow the party. Chilly McIntosh’s account of traveling out of Harpersville was reported in the *Patriot*. He observed,

Hoping to march our people along peaceably, we were troubled with constables every five miles, with false papers and we did not enjoy any peace until we came down the mountain; then we marched along with peace and harmony—passed through many villages, and arrived at Tuscumbia, where we encamped for a few days, intending to take boats down the

⁴⁶ Jane Hill to Thomas McKenney, 29 May 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 821-825, NA; For her marriage to a Cherokee see Robert Rogers to Lewis Cass, 20 November 1833, RG-75, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 327-328, NA.

⁴⁷ *Niles Weekly Register*, 29 December 1827.

⁴⁸ Brearley was making preparations for the second emigrating party even as he was at Harpersville. In a November 8 letter to his sub-agent William Walker, Brearley told Walker to establish a rendezvous for the second emigrating party at a site closer to the Tennessee River so they could use boats to get to Tuscumbia. However, the treatment they received from the citizens of Harpersville no doubt also weighed on Brearley’s mind. See, David Brearley to William Walker, 8 November 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 71, NA.

waters of the Tennessee, and so on to Mighty river.⁴⁹

The McIntosh faction began their emigration in earnest as they left Harpersville and it quickly became clear how massive an operation it was. To aid in transporting the large numbers of people, the group at times broke into smaller detachments, each with a leader who was hired to oversee their emigrants. Sometimes a Creek Indian led these smaller detachments. For instance, Oakchonawa Yoholo received compensation for transporting twenty-one Creeks to Memphis.⁵⁰ The agents also came to rely upon hundreds of individuals to aid in the emigration, most of whom were locals who rented out wagons, ferried the Creeks over rivers, loaded and unloaded keelboats, and provided provisions of beef, corn, corn meal and fodder along the route. Brearley rejected the idea of contracting ahead of time for provisions due to increased cost, and instead chose to stop along the route and purchase directly from local farmers or merchants.⁵¹ In cases where additional wagons were hired to haul Creek baggage or carry Creeks too old to walk long distances, the wagon owner was compensated by the government for renting the wagon for the leg of the journey, as well as paid for the return trip home. The Creek emigrants themselves also provided provisions for the party as they commenced their journey.

Poor weather and sickness plagued the Creeks as they traveled to Tuscumbia. Arriving there on November 25, 1827, the agents purchased medicine for the growing

⁴⁹ Quoted in *Niles' Weekly Register*, 29 December 1827.

⁵⁰ Other examples of the party breaking into smaller detachments was Owen Todd who was compensated for ferrying "his party" of Creeks over the St. Francis River; David Connor was also compensated for "removing a party" to Tuscumbia. See Abstract of Disbursements of David Brearley, RG 217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1990, Agent-Brearley, Year-1830, Account number- 14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁵¹ Thomas McKenney to William B. Lewis, 6 March 1830, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-6, 313, NA.

number of sick Creeks. Tuscumbia was also home to a number of alcohol traders and Brearley assigned an agent to suppress the sale of alcohol to the Creeks while in town. Interestingly, the agents themselves appear to have brought alcohol into camp at various points throughout the emigration.⁵² Brearley recorded a purchase of twenty gallons of brandy as the party traveled through Blount County, Alabama and four gallons of whiskey after leaving Tuscumbia in his disbursement roll. In fact, even before reaching Harpersville, the agent in charge of the Creeks at one enrollment camp compensated a number of Creeks three gallons of whiskey for helping to overturn a wagon that fell into a river.⁵³

The Tuscumbians proved to be gracious hosts to the Creek emigrants. Chilly McIntosh observed that the party had “received all kind of hospitality and good treatment. The citizens of Tuscumbia have treated us like brothers, and our old helpless women were furnished by the good women of the town with clothing.”⁵⁴ Brearley penned a letter to the local newspaper thanking the Tuscumbians and noting that “from the inclemency of the weather during the time they were compelled to remain, many of them, particularly the aged and infants, presented extreme objects for charity, whose

⁵² Abstract of Disbursements of David Brearley, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1993, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; For arrival on November 25 see David Brearley to James Barbour, 1 December 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 73, NA.

⁵³ Abstract of Disbursements of David Brearley, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1993, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Memorial of Expenditures for which no Receipts were taken after leaving Tuscumbia, Alabama, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1994, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Receipt of John W. Grace, 8 November 1827, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1992, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁵⁴ Quoted in *Niles' Weekly Register*, 29 December 1827.

wretched condition was vastly ameliorated by the liberal donations [of the local women].”⁵⁵

Although it appears that Brearley had decided that all the Creeks would walk to the Arkansas Territory if able, the conditions at Tuscumbia changed his mind.⁵⁶ The road from there to Memphis in 1827 was unfit for extended use even in dry weather but the heavy rains made the road even more treacherous.⁵⁷ On November 28, Brearley broke the party into two. The Creeks who owned horses, along with those accompanying the baggage wagons, about three hundred total, continued by land to Memphis under the charge of subagent Thomas Anthony.⁵⁸ The land party also contained an unspecified number of women and children. Among the land party were a number of Creek runners. Newspapers reported that Brearley sent Creek runners ahead to organize a grand council with the principal headmen of the Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations. The purpose of the conference, in the words of one newspaper, was to “renew their ancient friendship, and smoke the *calumet* of peace, until the smoke, to quote the language of one of their chiefs here, shall rise higher than the clouds.”⁵⁹ Receipts show that the land party crossed the Hatchie and Wolf rivers on December 5 and 7, respectively.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Quoted in *Arkansas Gazette*, 15 January 1828.

⁵⁶ David Brearley to James Barbour, 3 August 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 50-51, NA.

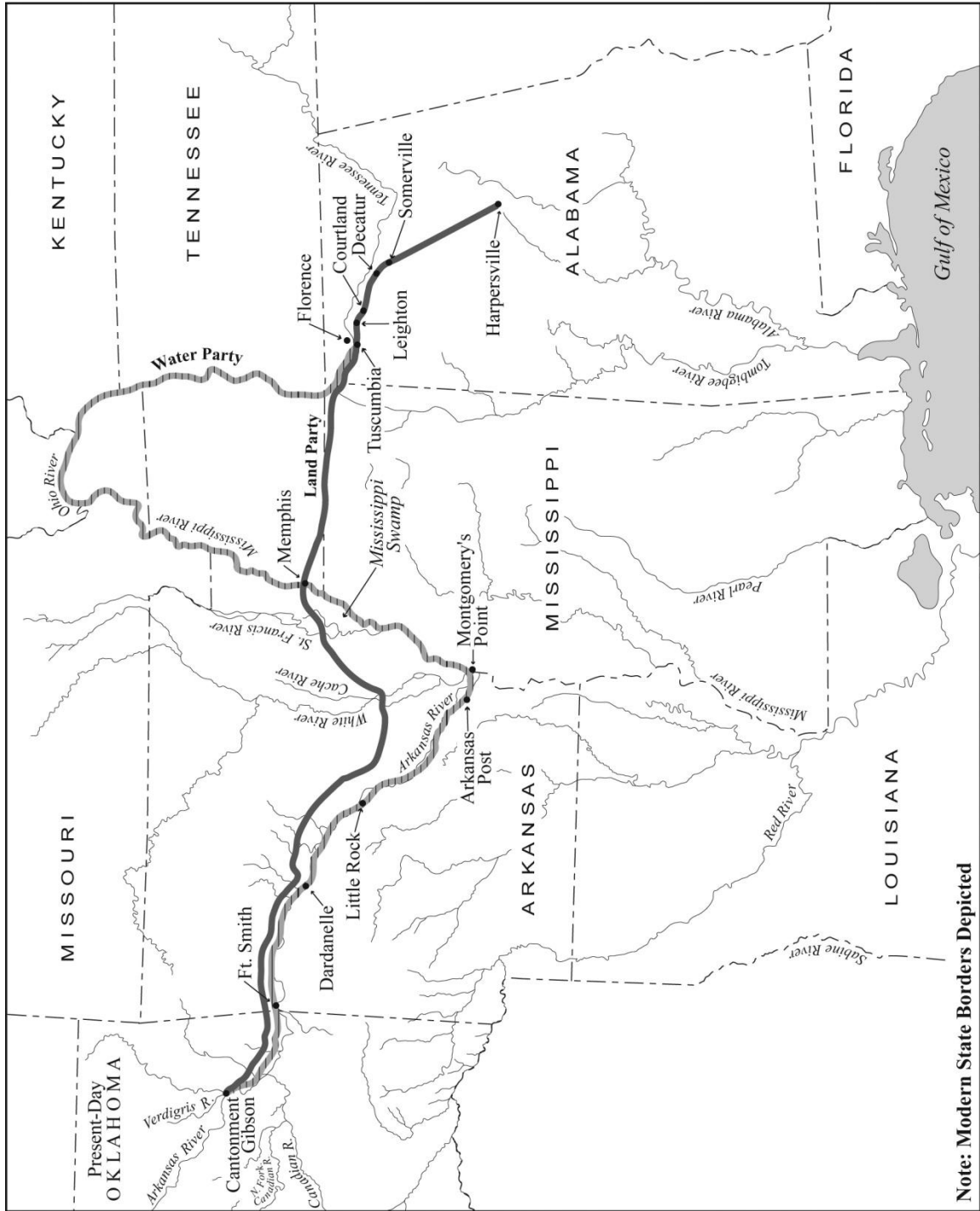
⁵⁷ For the state of the road from Tuscumbia to Memphis see United States Congress, House Report 256, *Road—Memphis to Tuscumbia*, 20th Congress, 1st Session, Serial Set 179.

⁵⁸ David Brearley to James Barbour, 1 December 1827, RG-75, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, Reel 237, 73, NA; The subagents were likely Thomas Anthony, see Receipts of Thomas Anthony, 11 December 1827, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry 525, Box 90, Folder-1993, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487-E, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁵⁹ *Arkansas Gazette*, 15 January 1828.

⁶⁰ Receipts of William Simpson and Oliver Livingston, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1993, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

First McIntosh Party, November 1827 - February/March 1828



The remainder of the party, still in Tuscumbia, traveled by water. On November 30, Brearley paid three hundred dollars for a keelboat that included a cooking space for the Creek women and cooking utensils with which to prepare meals. The next day he procured another keelboat near Florence, Alabama.⁶¹ The water party, under the direction of David Brearley, left Tuscumbia in keelboats on December 2 and traveled down the Tennessee River, through the states of Tennessee and Kentucky. At the confluence of the rivers, the boats left the Tennessee River and entered the Ohio River and then the Mississippi River near Cairo, Illinois. The water party then descended the Mississippi to Memphis where they rendezvoused with the land party.⁶²

Evidence suggests that the land party arrived in Memphis first, sometime around December 11. The water party probably arrived on Sunday, December 16. Once arriving in Memphis, the party established “Camp McIntosh” on the west side of the Mississippi

⁶¹ One keelboat was purchased in South Florence, Alabama, see Abstract of Disbursements of David Brearley, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1992-1993, Agent-Brearley, Year-1830, Account-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; The keelboats purchased were long, slender crafts that pinched to a point at both ends resembling a giant canoe. The typical keelboat was anywhere between forty and eighty feet long with a seven to ten foot beam and could handle about thirty tons. It was a type of boat that was popular on western rivers because it had a shallow keel that only drew about two or three feet of water even when fully loaded. The center of the boat could remain open like a large canoe, but it is likely that the cooking space the Creeks had on board at least one of their boats contained a blockhouse that created a large, flat surface space. Underneath this blockhouse was a small shelter with up to six feet of clearance. The Creeks could huddle in the shelter to escape the driving rains. The keelboat was engineless and was generally moved by the current. In some cases the boats moved by ten or twelve rowers near the front but keelboats were typically “poled”—where about seven or eight men stood on the deck and kept the craft in the center of the river’s current with the use of long poles. If the river was too deep, the crew would disembark the vessel and tediously “cordel” the keelboat by pulling it with ropes along the river bank. See Leland D. Baldwin, *The Keelboat Age on Western Waters* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1941), 44-45; Receipts show that a number of Creeks from Thlakatchka town who enrolled to emigrate with the second McIntosh party in late 1828 were compensated for working on flat boats in the fall of 1827. It is unclear whether these were the same boats the first McIntosh party used, see RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 608-651, NA.

⁶² *Arkansas Gazette*, 15 January 1828; For their December 2 departure see David Brearley to James Barbour, 1 December 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 73, NA.

River, in Crittenden County, Arkansas Territory.⁶³ Agents continued to procure provisions locally, and disbursement receipts show that the provisions bought and distributed to the Creeks included corn, beef, salt, “Indian meal,” pork, flour, and vinegar along with bacon, butter, cabbages, turnips, and onions. Other expenditures included renting a number of wagons and hiring teamsters, buying chains and rope, candles, fodder, and hay for the horses, and paying for room and board for Brearley and his agents.⁶⁴

Due to the impracticality of traveling along dangerously muddy and wet roads, the women, children, and elderly, numbering approximately 255, again boarded keelboats and began descending the Mississippi River on December 25. The water party, under the charge of Charles Brearley, continued down the Mississippi to the mouth of the White River before using the cutoff to reach the Arkansas River. They encamped at least one night at Arkansas Post before arriving at Little Rock. For the women and children, travel by water, even in wet conditions, was relatively easy and uneventful, although the two keelboats were briefly detained at some point so that the party could bury a Creek Indian who died along the route.⁶⁵

The land party, which included women and children, left Memphis by land on the same day under the command of David Brearley. For the land party, the trip from Memphis to the White River proved to be difficult and exhausting, and they experienced

⁶³ Receipts of David Brearley, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1830, Box-90, Folder-1994, Agent-Brearley, Account-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁶⁴ Abstract of Disbursements of David Brearley, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1992-1993, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account Number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁶⁵ David Brearley to Montgomery & Miller, 17 March 1828, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, RG-217, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1994, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; *Arkansas Gazette*, 15 January 1828.

problems at almost every turn. With the rain continuing to fall, the rivers became dangerously swollen, and the roads were virtually impassable as a result of the mud. The land party struggled for upwards of two months to go the rest of the way to Cantonment Gibson.⁶⁶ The *Arkansas Gazette* described the journey during this stretch as primarily “‘swimming and wading’ (for it could hardly be called travelling)” and Brearley wrote to his superiors in Washington that travel from Memphis was very “tedious and distressing to the Indians.”⁶⁷ The difficult travel on the muddy roads strained the land party. Crossing the St. Francis proved to be particularly tedious for the Creeks and many of them were forced to leave property behind. In fact, Chilly McIntosh had to leave behind his two large road wagons that he brought from his plantation.⁶⁸

The journey from the St. Francis River to the White River took five days. The land party arrived there on January 6, 1828.⁶⁹ The Creeks found the eastern banks of the White River overflowed with rainfall and it took almost two weeks before they could make a safe crossing. Provisions had become scarce for the party and with few settlers from which to purchase food, a number of Creek men swam across the White River to hunt on the less-flooded western banks. In a matter of days, it was reported Creek hunters killed almost sixty deer. With two hundred horses and twenty baggage wagons,

⁶⁶ David Brearley to James Barbour, 26 January 1828, GAO, Treasury Department, 2nd Auditor, Record Group-217, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1989, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; *Arkansas Gazette*, 8 January 1828; For more on flatboats see Baldwin, *The Keelboat Age on Western Waters*, 47-49.

⁶⁷ *Arkansas Gazette*, 30 January 1828; David Brearley to James Barbour, 26 January 1828, NA, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Record Group-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1989, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁶⁸ The United States Indian Department to Chilly McIntosh, RG-75, Entry-300, Box-5, Claimant Number-22, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Chilly would subsequently seek compensation from the federal government for \$285.00 for the loss of his property.

⁶⁹ David Brearley to James Barbour, 26 January 1828, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1989, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

the party was forced to descend further south traveling through thick cane brakes and cypress swamps seven miles below the mouth of the Cache River in order to find a safe place to cross the White River. The crossing of the White River was ultimately done “with great difficulty and labour.”⁷⁰ Once on the western bank, the party continued toward the head of the prairie with the intention of setting out on the Cadron Road.⁷¹ Their route had the party by-passing Little Rock thirty miles to the north.

While the land party slowly made their way toward Fort Smith, the water party stopped at Little Rock due to the high waters of the Arkansas River. Brearley left the land party on January 24 and traveled south to meet the keelboats. At Little Rock, the agent procured the services of the steamboat *Facility*, a brand new, side-wheeler which he hired to tow the keelboats up the Arkansas River to the mouth of the Verdigris.⁷² The Creeks later accused Brearley of stopping the boats at Fort Smith where “a great portion of [the Creeks’] property was left and destroyed—Col. Brearley said he had got the people at their place of residence and they might get their property as they could.”⁷³ Beyond Fort Smith, the water party stopped briefly at Auguste Chouteau’s trading house near the falls of the Verdigris River on January 30. Nearly 250 Osage Indians greeted the water party as they arrived.⁷⁴ In 1825, the Osage ceded portions of their land to the

⁷⁰ For reports of deer hunt see *Arkansas Gazette*, 30 January 1828; Abstract of Disbursements of David Brearley, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1993, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁷¹ *Arkansas Gazette*, 30 January 1828.

⁷² Abstract of Disbursements of David Brearley, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1830, Box-90, Folder-1994, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; For information on the *Facility* see Carl A. Brasseaux and Keith P. Fontenot, *Steamboats on Louisiana’s Bayous: A History and Directory* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 185.

⁷³ Western Creeks to Andrew Jackson, 7 March 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency West, M-234, reel-236, 72-74, NA.

⁷⁴ *Arkansas Gazette*, 13 February 1828.

federal government in order to make land available for the Creeks.⁷⁵ The Osage “were somewhat sour” over the loss of their land and the prospect of more Indians settling near them. The government orchestrated the meeting in order to introduce the Creeks to the Osage, form bonds of friendship, and to warn the Osage against committing depredations against their new neighbors. General Mathew Arbuckle, who was in charge of Cantonment Gibson, was able to compel both nations into forming a council to discuss peace terms. Brearley even delayed plans to reconnoiter with the land party of emigrants, who were still trekking west between Fort Smith and north of Little Rock, in order to attend the council. At a meeting the following night, Claremore, an Osage headman, pledged to Brearley that his band of Indians would coexist peacefully with their new Creek neighbors. Claremore even offered two of his daughters to the Western Creek Nation and his “favorite” son to reside with Brearley. For their part, Brearley reported that the Osage were interested in inviting some Creeks familiar with farming to reside amongst them.⁷⁶

Peace with the Creeks was important for the Osage. They were in the midst of an on-going war with the Pawnee and Comanche Indians, while bands of emigrant Cherokees, Delawares, Kickapoos, and Shawnees, among others, had threatened the Osage at various times since at least 1823.⁷⁷ The Osage may have seen the Creeks as a needed ally to counter these western Indian groups. In fact, after the council between the

⁷⁵ Grant Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier 1830-1860* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1933), 118; Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, Vol. II, 217-221; Also see Agnew, *Fort Gibson: Terminal on the Trail of Tears* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 55-57; Willard H. Rollings, *The Osage: An Ethnohistorical Study of Hegemony on the Prairie-Plains* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 254-267.

⁷⁶ David Brearley to James Barbour, 16 February 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 105-107, NA; *Arkansas Gazette*, 13 February 1828.

⁷⁷ Brad Agnew, *Fort Gibson*, 63-64.

Creeks and Osage, the *Arkansas Gazette* wrote that the friendship between the Creeks and Osage “will tend greatly towards the security of both nations, in the wars which will unquestionably be waged against them by the Pawnees, Comanches, and other Indians, with whom the Osages have been at variance for many years.” The very day the Creeks and Osage were holding their council, an Osage war party returned with eight Pawnee prisoners. The party was sent out in retaliation for a Pawnee attack on the Osage the previous night in which twenty-five Osage were killed.⁷⁸

After the meeting, the water party continued on to Cantonment Gibson, where they became the first party of Creek Indians to arrive at their new homes near the Arkansas Territory border. Brearley then boarded the *Facility* and traveled back toward Fort Smith and then Dardanelle to collect the land party, which were still walking toward Cantonment Gibson. The land between Little Rock and Fort Smith was littered with small streams which, during this time of year, overflowed as a result of the wet seasonal weather. Within a few dozen miles after setting out from their encampment twenty or thirty miles north of Little Rock, the land party crossed several creeks, bayous, and adjacent cypress swamps. These treacherously overflowing rivers and streams separated the Creeks and the land party began to stretch into a long train.

There is no record of the route the land party took once Brearley left them in charge of his subagent. There were two primary roads across the territory of Arkansas. During the wet season, it was easier to cross the Arkansas River at Dardanelle then cross the river again at Fort Smith. During the dry season, travel along the north bank of the

⁷⁸ *Arkansas Gazette*, 13 February 1828; For more on Pawnee-Osage relations see George E. Hyde, *The Pawnee Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951), 179, 182-183.

Arkansas River was more common.⁷⁹ Although receipts show that at least some Creeks crossed the Arkansas River, exactly how many is unclear.⁸⁰ These Creeks may have crossed the river in order to board the *Facility* for the final leg of their journey. But, because the party was so spread out along the road, it is likely that many Creeks did not cross the Arkansas River and instead continued by land along the north side. This notwithstanding, many Creeks had not even made it to Dardanelle before Brearley arrived to collect them. Upon arriving to collect the party, Brearley was surprised to learn that the land party was “scattered along the road” between Dardanelle and Fort Smith, a distance of over eighty miles.⁸¹ The balance of the land party did not arrive at Cantonment Gibson until late February or early March 1828.

The Creeks arrived at their new homes noticeably exhausted. Even before collecting all of the stragglers east of Fort Smith, Brearley noted in a letter to Secretary of War James Barbour that due to the poor weather and the wet roads that the land party appeared “so completely” worn down and urged the federal government patience in landing them at their destination.⁸² By the spring there were still McIntosh emigrants coming in to Cantonment Gibson. These late arrivals were stragglers who had fallen sick along the route and were forced to remain while the rest of the party continued west. In fact, while near the Western Cherokee settlements, a number of Talladega Creeks fell ill and had to remain behind. In March 1828, a detachment of Talladegas returned eastward

⁷⁹ John Van Horne to George Gibson, 2 April 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 772-774, NA.

⁸⁰ Abstract of Disbursements of D. Brearley, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1998, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁸¹ *Arkansas Gazette*, 3 January 1826; 13 February 1828.

⁸² David Brearley to James Barbour, 16 February 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 105-107, NA.

along the route to recover their brethren. They probably arrived in the west sometime in the middle of April 1828.⁸³ Also among the emigrants who arrived in the west later than expected were 134 emigrants who, while passing through the western Cherokee settlements, had been detained because of illness. The party was described as being “in great distress . . . destitute of provisions, or comforts of any Kind, a considerable number of them sick and altogether without the means of proceeding to their destination.”⁸⁴

Over the next few years more of William McIntosh's relatives trickled into the Western Creek Nation. They provided transportation and provisions for themselves rather than accompany the actual emigrating party in 1827-1828. This small number received no immediate monetary and logistical aid from the government although they were later compensated for their travels by the federal government. Roly McIntosh, for instance, did not accompany Chilly McIntosh and the main party, but chose instead to emigrate himself and twenty-seven members his family along with thirty-six horses west.⁸⁵ Susannah McIntosh, Peggy McIntosh, John McIntosh, and Jane Hawkins who was Chilly McIntosh’s sister, were also compensated for emigrating themselves and their families.⁸⁶ Susannah McIntosh paid for the emigration of thirty-six of her family

⁸³ Abstract of Disbursements of David Brearley, NA, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1990, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁸⁴ It is unclear whether the Talladega Creeks were a part of the 134, see John Rogers to Secretary of War, 27 February 1829, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1831, Agent-John Rogers, Account number-14,999, Box-95, Folder-2107, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁸⁵ Roly McIntosh was not compensated by the government until 1829, see Receipt of Thomas Anthony, 23 February 1829, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1989, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁸⁶ Peggy McIntosh paid for the emigration of thirty-five members of her family. John McIntosh transported himself and seven slaves. Both receipts can be found in RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1998, Agent-Brearley, Year-1830, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

members while Jane Hawkins paid for the emigration of forty-nine.⁸⁷ Benjamin Hawkins, who enrolled and emigrated with the McIntosh party, along with three other Creeks, returned with Brearley on the steamboat *Florida* to the Creek Nation to collect ten members of his family and ten of his slaves. Hawkins and his family arrived back at Cantonment Gibson sometime in late August or early September 1828.⁸⁸

* * *

The arrival of the approximately seven hundred McIntosh Creeks and their slaves at Cantonment Gibson had broad implications for those Creeks who remained in the Creek Nation in the east. As members of the first government-sponsored Creek emigration, the McIntosh party essentially helped pave the way for more Creeks to emigrate west. Many of the Creeks who followed the first voluntary emigrating party were friends, followers, or business partners of the late William McIntosh. But, there

⁸⁷ Claim of Susannah McIntosh and Jane Hawkins, 12 September 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 651, NA; Each were entitled to compensation of fifteen dollars per person, see John Crowell to Elbert Herring, 13 November 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-223, 664-665, NA; Some of the family members of Susannah McIntosh and Jane Hawkins arrived in 1831, see Muster Roll of Creeks, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 418, NA.

⁸⁸ Benjamin Hawkins' return from the West is reported in the *Cherokee Phoenix*, 14 May 1828; Hawkins' self-emigration is reported in the *Arkansas Gazette*, 20 August 1828, which stated that Hawkins carried with him "between 30 and 40 negro slaves;" Hawkins, however, only sought compensation for transporting ten slaves to the Arkansas Territory. Hawkins was compensated by the government \$7.00 per family member, \$3.00 for each slave. Hawkins sought reimbursement for \$126.70, see Receipt of Benjamin Hawkins, 24 January 1829, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1998, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; The discrepancy in the number of slaves might have been because Hawkins was asked, and agreed to transport the slaves of one of William McIntosh's widows to the Arkansas Territory, see Benjamin Hawkins to David Brearley, 1 June 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 162-163, NA.

were also many Creeks with no connection to the former Coweta headman who contemplated moving west. The deteriorating conditions in the Creek Nation in Alabama, including shortages of food brought on by the loss of their Georgia lands, had convinced numbers of Creeks that emigration was their only hope for survival. In response, Creek headmen began a concerted effort to prevent the mass voluntary removal of the Creeks, including issuing death threats and driving Creeks from enrollment camps. Despite these threats, two more voluntary emigrations left the east in 1828 and 1829. Because the McIntosh party had already established the first Creek government in the west, these emigrants were under the jurisdiction of the laws of the Western Creek Nation. In fact, Roly McIntosh, whom Opothle Yoholo described in a government report, as being “an underling chief [of] inferior degree,” became the principal chief of the Western Creeks. And all Creeks who emigrated thereafter were forced to reconcile with him.

Three

The Second and Third Voluntary Emigrating Parties

1828-1833

“There have been seventeen Red people kill’d by the whites and nothing thought of more than if they had been so many wild hogs.”

—Cusseta chief Tuskeneah, 1829

Although over seven hundred Creeks and their slaves voluntarily emigrated from the Creek Nation in November 1827, this number did not represent all the Creeks who decided to move west. Many McIntosh supporters did not leave the Creek Nation with Chilly McIntosh but chose to wait for the second voluntary emigration almost a year later. The extra time allowed these Creeks to get their affairs in order before their journey west. Moreover, there were a number of Creeks who were not supporters of McIntosh, but who also contemplated emigrating. They were primarily Creeks most affected by the treaties of Indian Springs and Washington, or those who believed that the mass, forced removal of the Creeks to be inevitable and wanted to choose the best land before the entire Nation was forced west. Consequently, another exploratory deputation consisting of three Creeks accompanied twelve Chickasaws, six Choctaws, and three Potawatomies to survey the western lands in June 1828.¹ The government also planned

¹ Thomas McKenney to William Clark, 10 June 1828, Record Group-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, Microcopy-21, reel-5, 6-8, National Archives; Thomas McKenney to Luther Blake, 12 June 1828, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-5, 15, NA; The three members of the exploratory deputation were Coe Marthla, Tuskeneha, and Choeste, see Grant

and executed two more voluntary emigrations in 1828 and 1829. But these voluntary emigrations were just as controversial as the emigration of the McIntosh party, and the chiefs and headmen continued to issue threats and physically impede Creeks from leaving the Nation.

* * *

The Treaty of Indian Springs and the voluntary emigration of the McIntosh party created a deep sense of anger and betrayal within the Creek Nation. Even the Creeks' success in negotiating the Treaty of Washington and the government's failure to convince large numbers to emigrate with the McIntosh party did little to abate their frustrations. In the months after the McIntosh party departed for the west, a number of Creek headmen threatened and attacked those whom they believed were corrupting the Creek Nation. In a few cases, these attacks were reminiscent of earlier actions by Creek traditionalists who sought to purge the Creek Nation of the influence of white culture, although they were not as coordinated or as widespread as the violence in 1813-1814. But, like the violence of the Creek War, the actions of Creek leaders was a response to the stresses and

Foreman, *Indians & Pioneers: The Story of the American Southwest before 1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 268-269; Harper Lovett was the deputation's interpreter but died while exploring the western lands, see, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-71, Folder-1564, Year-1829, Agent-Isaac McCoy, Account number-12,624-F, National Archives II, College Park, MD; RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-91, Folder-2081, Year-1831, Agent-Harper Lovett, Account number-14,916, National Archives II, College Park, MD. For more on the deputation see *Arkansas Gazette*, 11 November 1828 and 18 November 1828; Also see Edward R. Roustio, ed., *Early Indian Missions: As Reflected in the Unpublished Manuscripts of Isaac McCoy* (Springfield: Particular Baptist Press, 2000), 48; The Creeks in the exploratory deputation were given orders to travel light and bring only the clothes on their backs and upon reaching Fort Gibson each was presented with a hunting shirt and leggings, see Luther Blake to William B. Lewis, 21 January 1832, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-114, Folder-2536, Year-1833, Agent-Crowell, Account number-16,806-A, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

pressures the Creeks faced at the time. In 1828, this included the loss of their Georgia land, hunger, and the voluntary emigration of the McIntosh party. In a number of cases Creeks who were seen as embracing white culture were at risk. But, the headmen directed most of their threats toward the Creeks who planned to voluntarily emigrate west.

In May 1828, between twenty-five and thirty Tuckabatchee warriors, apparently under orders from Opothle Yoholo and Tuskeneah's brother Yhargee, broke into the home of missionary Lee Compere and seized a number of blacks who were worshipping in attendance. Leading the captives to the yard one-by-one, each was tied to a post and beaten "unmercifully." Among the victims was a twelve-year-old girl who was forced to watch before she was also beaten and molested.² The headmen reportedly "'were the most obstinate opposers'" of Compere and believed that if blacks were allowed to practice Christianity, other Creeks might do the same, and "'then the Kings of the Towns would lose their authority.'"³ Three months after the Compere attack, three Creek women who were living with white men were kidnapped, stripped naked, bound, hoisted off the ground by a tree limb, and whipped until their breasts were "'cut to pieces.'"⁴ These attacks had all the markings of a renewed desperation in the Creek Nation. Within

² Lee Compere to Thomas McKenney, 20 May 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 704-707, NA.

³ William G. McLoughlin, "Red, White, and Black in the Antebellum South," *Baptist History and Heritage*, 7: 2 (April 1972), 69-75; Big Warrior had publicly protested the preaching of the Christian gospel within the Creek Nation as recently as 1822, see House Report 98, 19/2 (161), 24-84; Also see Walter Brownlow Posey, *Frontier Mission: A History of Religion West of the Southern Appalachians to 1861* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), 171-174.

⁴ *Alabama Journal*, 23 May 1828; Lee Compere to Thomas McKenney, 20 May 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 704-707, NA; Thomas McKenney to John Crowell, 30 August 1828, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-5, 109-110, NA; Claudio Saunt, *Black, White, and Indian: Race and the Unmaking of an American Family* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 30.

the context of the Treaty of Indian Springs and the emigration of the McIntosh party, Creek headmen were looking for an outlet for their frustrations. Indeed, the Creeks who participated in the Compere attack noted that their actions ““originated in phrensy, bordering on despair.””⁵ Christianity had long been opposed by the Creeks because of its negative effect on Creek traditions. Most Creeks rejected the efforts of Methodist, Baptist, and Moravian missionaries, and Christian Creeks were rare. But in many cases, the Creeks’ slaves were receptive to Christianity and many did convert.⁶ For his part, Compere had only two or three Creeks who were members of his congregation, and there is little doubt that these headmen overstated the influence of Compere. Chiefly authority within the Creek Nation was never threatened by the presence of the Baptist preacher, nor the miniscule number of Creek Christians. But within the Creeks’ increasingly fatalistic view of their future, another attempt to wipe out white culture in the Creek Nation made perfect sense. A warrior who participated in the attack explained that whites ““came into their country [and] said they were their friends, that the Government called them their children, and yet they had been promised many things which had not been done for them, and therefore the Indians did not believe that whites people were any of them their friends, that it was not worth their while to think about worshipping God for . . . they would be destroyed anyhow.””⁷

Most of the threats and attacks, however, were directed at Creeks who supported voluntary emigration. All Creeks were considered targets if they planned to move west.

⁵ McLoughlin, “Red, White, and Black,” 69-75.

⁶ See, Gary Zellar, *African Creeks: Estelvyte and the Creek Nation* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 19.

⁷ McLoughlin, “Red, White, and Black,” 69-75.

This was a policy born out of necessity. Voluntary emigration threatened to dissolve the Creek Nation at a time when the Creeks needed a united front against white encroachment and governmental interference in Creek affairs. The prevalence of material want, including hunger and even starvation in the Creek Nation, made voluntary emigration an attractive alternative for a number of Lower Creeks. Moreover, Creek leaders had to confront an effective government propaganda campaign that stressed any successes the McIntosh party appeared to have in the west, while pointing to the Creeks' increasingly dire situation in the east. Creek headmen chose to counter the government's argument with physical threats against Creek emigrants. Each side mapped out their strategy and both sides understood the stakes involved: the mass voluntary removal of the Creek people would essentially break the strength of the Nation and open up Creek land for white settlement.

Among the more prominent targets were Indian countrymen who publicly advocated emigration. When David Brearley was hired to conduct the McIntosh party west in 1826, he contemplated using Indian countrymen to increase the number of voluntary emigrants. The agent believed that the Indian countrymen's influence, wealth, and marriage connections, could neutralize the headmen's opposition to emigration and convince large numbers of Creeks to move west. Brearley also noted that almost all of the Indian countrymen were agreeable to the arrangement as long as they received "an additional sum for their services in effecting emigration."⁸ Although it is unclear the extent to which Brearley used this tactic, there is some evidence that it was employed.

⁸ David Brearley to James Barbour, 2 December 1826, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 12-14, NA.

For example, James Moore, of Big Spring town, was a neighbor of William McIntosh but did not emigrate with the McIntosh party in 1827.⁹ Moore was fifty-seven years old and had resided in the Creek Nation for about thirty years. He was also wealthy by the standards of most Creeks.¹⁰ Before Moore emigrated west in 1828, however, Opothle Yoholo threatened to confiscate his property, exile him from of the Creek Nation, and prevent his Creek family from following him if he did not desist from emigrating to the west. Moore's desire to emigrate was probably reason enough for the threat, however, "his endeavors to induce others to emigrate" made Moore an even more important target.¹¹

But, it was not just Indian countrymen who were targeted by the Creek headmen. In fact, "denunciations of death" were issued by some of the headmen against anyone who encouraged emigration.¹² In fact, just like James Moore, the Creeks threatened John Davis, a Creek Indian educated at the Withington Missionary School, "with death if he did not desist from his endeavors to induce other Indians to emigrate." Creek headmen

⁹ Receipt of James Moore, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1998, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; James Moore's name appears on the second emigration roll even though he self-emigrated, see Second Party Emigration Roll, RG-217, Entry-525, Box-91, Folder-2006, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; James Moore as neighbor to William McIntosh is reported in Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 211, n63.

¹⁰ For Moore's age see Deposition of James Moore, 24 August 1826, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-136, M-574, reel-27, 802, NA; Deposition of James Moore, 22 August 1826, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-136, M-574, reel-27, 804, NA, stated that Moore was fifty-six.

¹¹ Testimony of William Hudson, 8 March 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 877-880, NA.

¹² *Macon Telegraph*, 16 June 1828.

also “prohibited negroes and Indians from acting as interpreter to those persons employed in endeavoring to produce an emigration.”¹³

The Creek headmen also tried to stop voluntary emigration by targeting the emigrants themselves. Their strategy included violence but also propaganda designed to counter the government’s emigration campaign. Creek headmen saw first-hand the effectiveness of the government’s promotion of voluntary emigration when Brearley returned to the Creek Nation after conducting the first McIntosh party west. In order to convince a large number of Creeks to emigrate, the agent made it a point to emphasize the quality of the lands and the successes the McIntosh party was having in the west. As a result, “numbers [of Creeks] flocked to an appointed rendezvous, and enrolled their names as emigrants, in a book prepared for the purpose.”¹⁴ Creek headmen countered this by visiting an enrollment camp at Fort Bainbridge (twenty miles southwest of Fort Mitchell) where emigrating Creeks had gathered and used “every argument in their power to get them to return and not to go.” This included giving their own, negative descriptions of the western land and scaring the emigrants by telling them “that the [first party] has not got to the country they started for.”¹⁵

The most effective tool at the disposal of the headmen was threats of violence, however. Immediately after large numbers of Creeks began enrolling for emigration, the

¹³ Testimony of William Hudson, 8 March 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 877-880, NA.

¹⁴ *Macon Telegraph*, 16 June 1828; While at Harpersville in 1827, Brearley directed William Walker to establish a new rendezvous site in the upper portions of the Creek Nation near the Tennessee River for the second emigrating party, see David Brearley to William Walker, 8 November 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 71, NA; There were also enrollment camps at Fort Bainbridge and Line Creek.

¹⁵ Emigrating Creeks to David Brearley, 3 June 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 154-156, NA.

chiefs organized a secret council. Fearing for their lives, many of the Creeks who intended to emigrate refused to enroll and approximately one hundred deserted Fort Strother after the council. Creek warriors also drove off fifty Yuchis who waited in camp.¹⁶ Perhaps as many as two hundred Creeks fled Fort Strother which left only “a few mulattoes” remaining at the rendezvous.¹⁷ When Brearley went to Fort Strother to see how the enrollment was coming along, he found only a few Creeks at the site and many of those that remained were “wavering.”¹⁸ In another instance, some Creek warriors came into a camp that contained a number of emigrants and stole their horses. When the horses were found and recovered, they were stolen again. In one night alone, the emigrating Creeks claimed that seventeen of their horses had been stolen as punishment for enrolling for emigration.¹⁹

In addition to harassment from other Creeks, white traders cheated the emigrants out of their money and property. In October 1828, while a number of Creeks waited at Fort Strother for the emigration to begin, local white traders abused and cheated the enrollees out of their money. Believing that they had been poorly treated by the traders, the Creeks vowed to kill the next white man that came by. Indeed, the next trader who arrived was driven into the Coosa River and killed with his companions.²⁰

While many of the Creeks at these enrollment camps were members of the McIntosh party, there were also many who had no connection to William McIntosh. In

¹⁶ *Macon Telegraph* 16 June 1828; The new law against emigrating or aiding in emigration was reported in the *Alabama Journal*, 17 November 1826.

¹⁷ *Cherokee Phoenix*, 8 October 1828.

¹⁸ *Tuscumbia Telegraph*, 28 November 1827; *Arkansas Gazette*, 18 November 1828;

¹⁹ Emigrating Creeks to Thomas McKenney, 18 July 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 158-159, NA.

²⁰ *Selma Courier*, 2 October 1828.

fact, many were probably Creeks from Georgia or those who resided along the Chattahoochee and were the most affected by the Treaties of Indian Springs and Washington. The fifty Yuchis driven from their camp were a case in point. Starvation or material want might have played a significant factor in their choosing to leave the Creek Nation. The enrollees' condition only became more precarious once they were driven from the enrollment camps. These Creeks received food rations while enrolled, but once forced to leave the camps by the headmen, they had to fend for themselves. Many, no doubt, did not plant crops that year because they anticipated that they would be issued provisions by the government. In fact, it is possible that the Creeks Basil Hall observed receiving rations at Fort Mitchell in April 1828 might not have been Lower Creeks who were unable to find land within Alabama, but instead were Creeks who had been driven from their enrollment camps. Aside from the increasingly dire situation found in the Creek Nation, many Creeks with no connection to McIntosh likely enrolled because they believed forced removal to be inevitable and thus came to the conclusion that it was better to emigrate sooner rather than later. In fact, Lee Compere believed that many Creeks were "beginning to take up the question in this light—'if we are to go [west] we had better go soon.'"²¹

Members of the McIntosh party were also targeted. John Berryhill of Thlakatchka town enrolled for emigration and waited at a camp at Line Creek when the late Big Warrior's son Tuskeneah arrived. Using "insulting language" against the Creeks

²¹ Lee Compere to Thomas McKenney, 10 December 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 78-82, NA.

there, he told the emigrants that “for a trifle he would cut their throats” for emigrating.²² On another occasion, Tuskeneah, who along with the former Red Stick prophet Jim Boy, drew a sword and threatened to kill John Reed of Thlewallee and William J. Wills of Thlakatchka while at Reed’s mother’s house near Line Creek.²³ Tuskeneah pointed a cocked rifle at a Creek Indian named Alexander Moniac and threatened to shoot him if he did not desist from emigrating. Moniac had already been issued his “publick rifle” for enrolling but did not emigrate with the second party and Walker observed that the two men were thereafter “seen together perfectly friendly.”²⁴ Tuskeneah also tried to prevent a party of Creeks who had enrolled for removal from occupying a house belonging to a member of the McIntosh party who had vacated it upon leaving the Creek Nation in the fall of 1827.²⁵

Tuskeneah’s attack came over a year after he was broken as principal chief of the Upper Creeks. The National Council appointed Tuskeneah as principal chief, a role his father held upon his death in 1825. But soon thereafter, the National Council determined that Tuskeneah was “incompetent to sustain the responsible duties of his office” and he was subsequently dismissed as the Upper Creek headman. Although he never assumed the title of principal chief, Opothle Yoholo became the “prime minister or Chief Councillor of the Nation,” and he effectively filled the vacuum left by Tuskeneah. In fact, Opothle Yoholo was largely considered one of the most powerful Creeks even while

²² Testimony of John Berryhill, 18 May 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 752, NA.

²³ Testimony of John Reed, 18 May 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 750, NA.

²⁴ William Walker to Thomas McKenney, 18 June 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 892-894, NA.

²⁵ Thomas McKenney to John Crowell, 5 January 1828, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-4, 233, NA.

Tuskeneah was principal chief.²⁶ With a diminished national leadership role in 1828, however, Tuskeneah may have been acting more as a rogue agent rather than operating with the approval of the National Council.

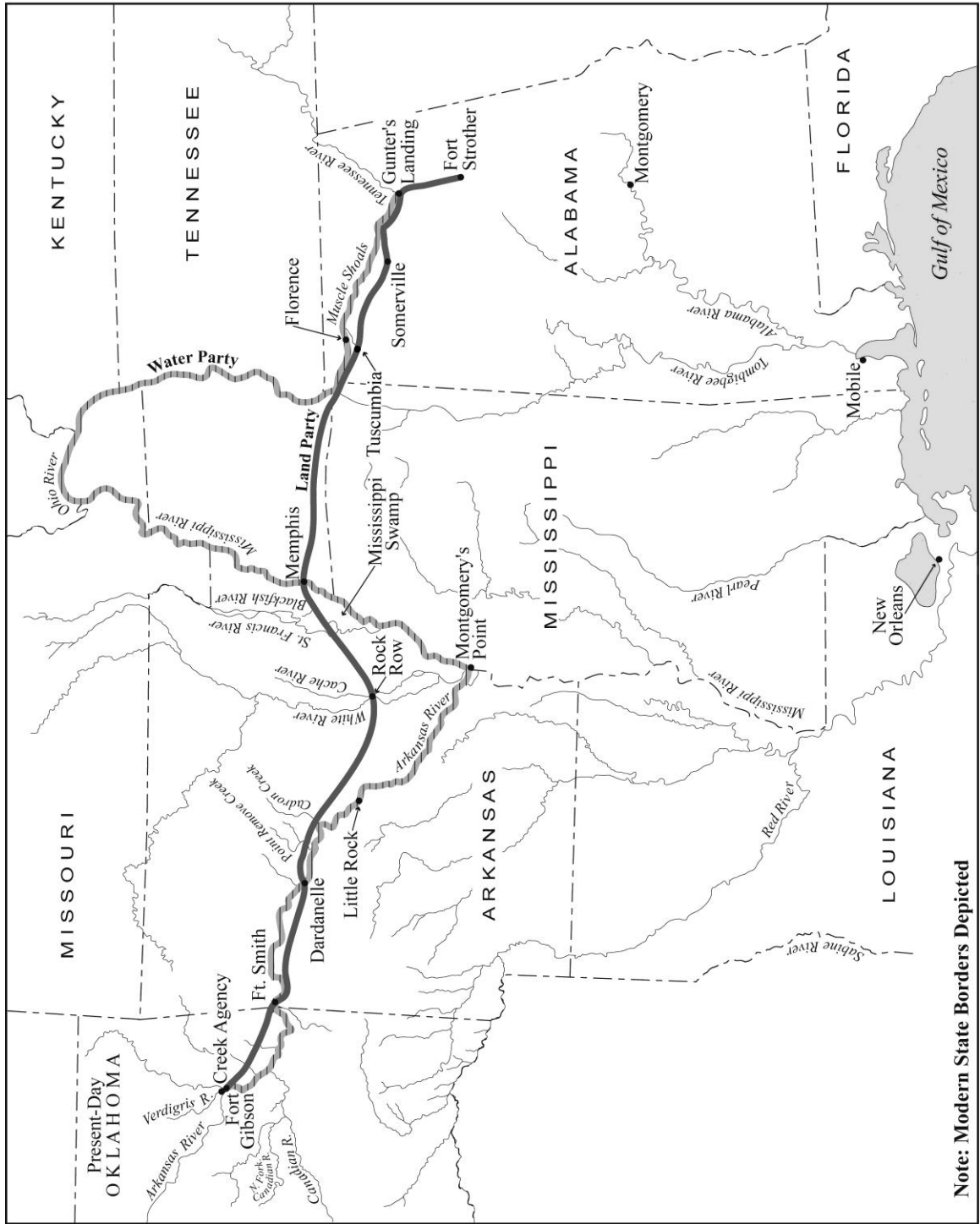
The campaign against emigration waged by the principal headmen of the Nation was not limited to harassing Creek emigrants. The federal government and its property also became a target. Early in 1828, Long Warrior of Emaha town and approximately thirty Creeks, under orders from the headmen of Tuckabatchee, burned a newly built government storehouse in Sylacauga. The house was to be used to store the guns, blankets, butcher knives, and camp kettles that were distributed to Creek emigrants. Although the storehouse was empty, the Creeks threatened to burn any property used for the emigration.²⁷ Around the same time, Tuskeneah physically assaulted William Walker, the son-in-law of the late Big Warrior, who was employed as an emigration subagent. Tuskeneah, the son of Big Warrior was related to Walker through marriage. Walker believed the assault was directed at him because he was working for the government collecting Creeks for the second voluntary emigration.²⁸

²⁶ Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 131-132; Creek chiefs to James Barbour, 17 February 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 176-181, NA.

²⁷ William Walker to Thomas McKenney, 8 March 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration, 1826-1849, reel-237, 174-175, NA; Testimony of Pleasant D. Austin, 8 March 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 881-883, NA; Testimony of William Hudson, 8 March 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 877-880, NA; William Walker warned Creeks in the area around Sylacauga that he was going to build the storehouse in February 1828, see William Walker to Creek Indians, 13 February 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 185, NA; *Alabama Journal*, 11 April 1828.

²⁸ Defenders of Tuskeneah argued that his assault on Walker was over personal matters and not related to his work as emigrating subagent, see Tustunnuggee Emarlar and Creeks to Thomas Triplett, 11 May 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-221, 746-748, NA.

Second McIntosh Party, October 1828 - December 1828



Regardless of whether Tuskeneah had the approval of the National Council, his attacks worked. When all the enrollment camps gathered at Fort Strother in the first week of October 1828 to prepare for their journey west, there were only about five hundred Creeks and their slaves. Moreover, the emigrants were almost entirely Indian countrymen and their families or Creeks with some European ancestry. This was an observation that did not go unnoticed by the *Cherokee Phoenix*, which reported that the emigrants “are called Creeks, though we are credibly informed that there were but few full Indians, most of the party being white men, half breeds, and mulattoes.”²⁹ Many of the emigrants were members of the Coweta *talwa* or Thlakatchka *talofa*. Among those related in some way to the McIntosh family were David McIntosh and fourteen of Roly McIntosh’s slaves. Also emigrating was Daniel Kennard who accompanied the McIntosh exploratory deputation to the Arkansas Territory in the spring of 1827 and forty-year-old Kendall Lewis, another of Big Warrior’s sons-in-law.³⁰ Among those that emigrated in

²⁹ *Cherokee Phoenix*, 5 November 1828.

³⁰ Both of the second-party emigration rolls are found in RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-91, Folder-2006, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Lewis was a trader in the Creek Nation and had rented wagons for use in emigration, see Lewis’ receipts for wagons and horses loaned is found in “The United States Indian Department to Kendall Lewis, RG-75, Entry 300, Box 5, Receipt number 3, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Lewis’ relation to Big Warrior is referenced in Andrew K. Frank, *Creeks and Southerners: Biculturalism on the Early American Frontier* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 92; Lewis was granted a license to trade in the Creek Nation by agent John Crowell, see “Abstract of Licenses Granted,” RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-219, 92, NA; Age of Kendall Lewis from Deposition of Kendall Lewis, NA, Deposition of James Moore, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-136, M-574, reel-27, 777, NA; For Daniel Kennard and the exploratory deputation see Receipt of David Brearley, 19 April 1827, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1995, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487-G, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Daniel Kennard was, no doubt, related to William Kennard who signed the Treaty of Indian Springs, see House Report 98, 19/2 (161), 255-256; John C. Wynn of Coweta was also on the muster roll. He and his family emigrated after redacting their names from the first McIntosh party.

the second party from Thomas Woodward's list of the most prominent Creek families were Kennard, Berryhill, Carr, Lott, and Posey.³¹

Brearley's goal of gathering a large number of Creeks ended in failure. Moreover, just before the party commenced their journey west, many Creeks either changed their mind about emigrating or were prevented from leaving the Nation by Creek headmen. In fact, many Creeks had their names redacted from the muster roll. For instance, Grayson family members Thomas, William, and Walter of Hillabee enrolled and entered their names on the roll but were prevented from leaving the Nation.³² Other Creeks chose to remain behind after enrolling. Joseph Pigeon, a student at the Withington Mission School, enrolled but deserted the rendezvous site before the party left Fort Strother. In the margins of the muster roll, Brearley wrote "Joseph P. run off." Joseph Pigeon stayed behind in Alabama, and was later hanged in Mobile for killing a "cab man." Joseph's family members, Thomas and David Pigeon, also enrolled but remained behind in the east.³³

³¹ Other whites of prominence and their relationship to McIntosh were: Samuel Sells and John Winslett, both of whom served with the Americans against the Red Sticks in the Creek War, see Thomas S. Woodward, *Woodward's Reminiscences of the Creek, or Muscogee Indians, Contained in Letters to Friends in Georgia and Alabama* (Montgomery, 1859; reprint, Mobile: Southern University Press, 1965), 79; Winslett was married to a Hitchiti woman named Hattie Ward who, after Winslett's death, married Lewis Perryman in 1833, see John Bartlett Meserve, "The Perrymans," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 15:2 (June 1937), 166-184; Benjamin Lott (Hitchiti) was given a license to trade in the Creek Nation by John Crowell, see "Abstract of Licenses Granted," RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-219, 92, NA; Benjamin Lott emigrated with William Lott. Woodward notes that the Lott family was prominent in the Creek Nation, see Woodward, *Reminiscences*, 99-100.

³² "Payments to the Sufferers by Being Prevented from Emigrating," United States Congress, Senate Document 512, *Correspondence on the Subject of the Emigrating Indians*, 23rd Congress, 2nd Session, Serial Set 245, Vol. 5, 218.

³³ Woodward, *Woodward's Reminiscences*, 41, notes that Thomas Pigeon was named "Tom Peechin." Tom's brother, Joe Pigeon was a student of Lee Compere's missionary school but was later hanged in Mobile, Alabama for killing a cab-man. Thomas Pigeon is listed along with a David Pigeon (both as Tuckabatchees) on the second party's emigration roll. For their part, neither Thomas nor David made it to Fort Gibson with the second party, as another emigration roll lists them as having "not gone" west in 1828, see 2nd Party Emigration Roll, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-

With these losses, the second emigrating party left Fort Strother on October 8, 1828 with only between four and five hundred emigrants and their slaves. They party traveled with thirty loaded wagons and approximately one hundred horses. The emigrants traveled due north to Gunter's Landing on the Tennessee River. Once there, the second emigrating party was split into two where approximately two hundred women, children, and elderly, boarded flatboats to descend the Tennessee River. The balance traveled by land. The Creeks' journey by water included a trip through the treacherous Muscle Shoals, where the Tennessee River dropped over 160 feet between the eastern shoals and Florence, Alabama.³⁴ The water party then continued down the Tennessee, Ohio, and Mississippi Rivers before arriving at Memphis.³⁵ Again, the Creeks were active participants in their own removal. Pleasant Berryhill and Thomas Posey received compensation for working as "boat hands" from Gunter's Landing to the bottom of the

525, Box-91, Folder-2006, Year-1830, Agent: Brearley, Account number: 14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Woodward also writes that Tom and Joe's father emigrated with the Creeks to Pass Christian, Mississippi during the forced removals of the late 1830s but did not go any farther; Thomas Pigeon was compensated for passage for himself and three Creeks on the steamboat *Mary* from Blakeley to Mobile in April 1837, see RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Also see Second Party Muster Roll, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-91, Folder-2006, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

³⁴ Evidence of the Creeks passing through the shoals is found in Receipt of Henry Davidson, 24 October 1828, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-91, Folder-2003, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD, who is compensated for "Piloting through the little Muscle [Shoals] with emigrating party of Indians;" The Muscle Shoals was considered at the time "the greatest single barrier to navigation of the Tennessee [River]." The Shoals consisted of a mix of hard overlying rock with a softer rock bottom. This mix helped create an extensive series of rapids that saw the Tennessee drop one 163 feet between the eastern shoals and Florence, twenty miles to the west. The Tennessee River also contained many natural obstacles such as islands, reefs, and sand and rock bars that made navigating this stretch of the river very difficult. Donald Davidson, *The Tennessee: The Old River, Frontier to Secession*, Vol. I (New York: Rinehart & Company, 1946), 12-13; *Tuscumbia Telegraph*, 19 July 1828; For a detailed description of a journey through the Shoals see United States Congress, House Document 284, *Survey of the Muscle Shoals*, 20th Congress, 1st Session, Serial Set 175, 5-20; The number of individuals in the water party comes from David Brearley to Peter B. Porter, 12 December 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 136, NA.

³⁵ The *Arkansas Gazette*, 18 November 1828, reports that the Creeks embarked on different boats at Florence, Alabama.

shoals while Pleasant Austin of Tuckabatchee helped pole and steer one of the flatboats to the Ohio River. Samuel Hopwood, of Tallassee town, was paid for steering a boat from Gunter's Landing to Fort Smith and for issuing provisions to the Creeks during their journey west.³⁶

Dry weather allowed the 236 Creeks of the land party to travel easily.³⁷ After leaving the water party at Gunter's Landing the land party passed through Somerville, Hickman's Spring, and near Tuscumbia before crossing Yellow Creek and marching through the Chickasaw Nation on their way to Memphis. The good weather allowed the land party to arrive in Memphis before the water party of women, children, and elderly Creeks.³⁸ Ferriages over the Blackfish (November 1), St. Francis (November 4), and White rivers (November 8) as well as the Rock Row bayou (the following day) appear to have been executed more or less without incident, although a number of Creeks became ill and were issued provisions near the St. Francis River. The land party continued on and crossed the Arkansas River twice, once at Dardanelle (November 20) and again at Fort Smith (November 24). The land on the south side of the Arkansas River was gently rolling and undulating and interspersed with prairie land. The timber consisted of blackjack oak, post oak, hickory, and pine trees. The land party crossed a few streams and creeks that, no doubt, were easily fordable in the dry weather. In fact, the second

³⁶ All receipts are found in RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-91, Folder-2003, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Year-1830, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

³⁷ The number of the land party comes from David Brearley to Peter B. Porter, 12 December 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 136, NA.

³⁸ Route of the land party comes from Abstract of Disbursements of David Brearley, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-91, Folder-1998, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Report of the men arriving in Memphis first comes from the *Arkansas Gazette*, 11 November 1828.

McIntosh party encountered much less difficulty on their journey than the first McIntosh party did almost a year earlier.³⁹ The only evidence of Creek deaths along the route were

³⁹ *Arkansas Gazette*, 3 January 1826; Abstract of Disbursements by D. Brearley, NA, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1998, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD; For more on the descriptions of the route from Little Rock to Cantonment Gibson that included traveling on the south side of the Arkansas River between Dardanelle and Fort Smith, see the *Arkansas Gazette*, 3 January 1826 (italics from the *Arkansas Gazette*). “From Cantonment Gibson to *bayou Banard*, 3 miles, the country is high, dry and gently rolling prairie; and land first quality. This is a considerable stream, running south, and a good ford can be had, on a gravelly bottom. 11 miles, *Green Leaf bayou*—country mostly prairie, timber post oak and black jack. This is a small stream, and fordable. The bottoms are extensive, and land first quality. 18 miles, *Bean’s salt-works*. 19 miles, *Illinois bayou*—country hilly and stony, and land second rate; timber mostly post oak and black jack. This is a large steam, water clear, and bottom gravelly;—a ferry will be required at this point, for nine months in the year. 26 miles, *Vian creek*—part wood-land and part prairie, rather hilly and stony; timber, post oak. This is a gentle stream, running south-west, over which a good ford can be made on a gravelly bottom. 33 miles, *Salisaw creek*—mostly prairie, interspersed with a few post oaks and elms. This is a gentle stream, bottom gravelly, and fordable; bottoms extensive, and timber, oak, gum, elm and hickory. 45 miles, *Skin bayou*—gently rolling, some small prairies, wood-land mostly post oak and hickory; bayou fordable. 60 miles, *Arkansas river at Fort Smith*.—The country is gently rolling and somewhat stony, to a lake in the bottom near the river, which appears to have once been the bed of the Arkansas.—This lake or pond is surrounded by first-rate bottom land; timber, oak, gum, elm, ash and walnut; undergrowth, cane.—From thence to the Arkansas, the bottom is rich and never subject to inundation. The road crosses to the south side of the Arkansas, and a ferry will be required at all seasons. 74 miles, *Big Vash Grass creek*—with the exception of two small prairies, the country is gently rolling wood-land; timber, oak, hickory, &c. This is a considerable stream, running north-east, over which a bridge will be necessary, the probable cost of which will be about \$300. The route lies through some low and wet lands, where a causeway of half a mile will be required. 78 miles, *Rig creek*—part prairie, low and rather wet; the remainder gently rolling wood-land. A bridge will be necessary across this creek. Timber for that purpose is abundant, and the banks good; probable expense of erecting it about \$150. 94 miles, *Six mile creek*—country mostly prairie, some wood-land, gently rolling, timber post oak, &c. A good crossing can be made across this creek but a bridge would be preferable. 98 miles, *Three Mile creek*—gently rolling wood-land; a small stream, and crossing good. 100 miles, *Short Mountain creek*—country a little rolling, timber oak, &c. This is a considerable stream, and a bridge will be required, which will cost about \$300. 116 miles, *Rocky bayou, or Shoal creek*—part prairie, but mostly wood-land; timber, oak, black jack, &c.; crossing good. 119 miles, *Little Shoal creek*. 134 miles, *Arkansas River at Dardanelles*—country gently rolling, part hilly, and some prairie; timber, oak, pine, &c. The road crosses at this point to the north side of the Arkansas, and passes through the Cherokee nation the distance of about 25 miles. . . 141 miles, *Gally creek*—a bridge required across a small miery stream on this route; country gently rolling; timber, oak, hickory, &c.; good ford across the creek. 156 miles, *Point Remove creek*—country gently rolling, part level, some low grounds; a causeway of a few yards will be required in one place, across a cypress swamp; timber, oak, gum, ash, hickory, &c. A bridge will be required across this creek, which will cost about \$300, or a ferry may be established by bestowing considerable labor in improving the landing. 160 miles, *Cherokee boundary line*. 166 miles, *Gap creek*. 174 miles, *Cadron creek*—country part gently rolling, and part low and wet; some causeways will be required, but only for short distances; timber, oak, gum, &c. This is a considerable stream, which will require a bridge at an expense of about \$400; it may be forded when at low stages. 191 miles, *Palarm bayou*—country, broken; timber, oak, hickory, pine, &c. A bridge, which will cost about \$250, will be required on this bayou. 198 miles, *White Oak bayou*. 207 miles and 70 chains, *Arkansas river, opposite Little Rock*—country part hilly, and part low land; timber, oak, pine, &c.

receipts issued for the construction of two coffins and burial for two Creeks who died as the party was moving out of Fort Strother.⁴⁰ The land party traveled at a brisk fifteen miles per day and reached the Western Creek Agency on November 28, 1828. They were on the road for fifty-four days. Also arriving at about the same time as the land party was the exploratory delegation of Creeks that left the Creek Nation and traveled via St. Louis.

Due to the low stage of the Arkansas River, the water party was towed into Fort Gibson by the steamboat *Facility*. In fact, the water party probably did not reach the Western Creek Agency until the last week of December 1828, almost a month after the land party.⁴¹ Once the Creeks arrived, they were immediately placed on the provision rolls that the McIntosh party had been on for almost a year. The second party of emigrants, like the McIntosh party, did not venture too far from Fort Gibson. Towns were not reestablished at this point. Instead, the Creeks' settlements were densely organized near or among the poorer members of the first McIntosh party.⁴² Moreover, it was reported that many of the poorer Creek emigrants of the second party, "were without money" as well as "[clothing] and the [necessities] of life." Because these Creeks were

Across the Arkansas to Little Rock, is 17 chains and 72 links, making the total distance from Cantonment Gibson to Little Rock 208 miles, 7 chains, and 72 links

⁴⁰ Receipts, 9 October 1828, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-91, Folder-2003, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487-O, National Archives II, College Park, MD; One of the Creeks who died might have been Okmulgee Micco (or a member of his family) of Thlakatchka town who was reported dead on the emigration roll at Fort Strother, see second party emigration roll, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-91, Folder-2006, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁴¹ *Arkansas Gazette* 18 November 1828; Report of the men and exploratory deputation arriving at Fort Gibson found in David Brearley to Peter B. Porter, 12 December 1828, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 136, NA; Report of the water party from *Arkansas Gazette*, 23 December 1828; Foreman, *Indians & Pioneers*, 258-259.

⁴² Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934), 151.

in debt, and having exhausted all of their credit, traders in the west refused to issue them provisions.⁴³

In an attempt to compel as many Creeks to emigrate in a third voluntary party, an Osage headman accompanied the agents back to Alabama. The intent was to pledge friendship between the two nations, emphasize the quality of the land, and convince the Creeks of the benefits of moving west. But, his reception in the Creek Nation was not welcome. Opothle Yoholo responded to the Osage chief's presence by noting that "if he comes as a friend, desirous of becoming acquainted with him and his people, he was welcome; but if for the purpose of inducing the Creeks to emigrate, they wanted nothing to do with him; that a great man, Tecumseh, once came among them, and the Creeks ever since have been suspicious of strangers."⁴⁴ For his part, the Osage chief wanted little to do with the Creeks and was "anxious to return to his own people." The federal government, dismayed at the traveling expenses of the headman, chastised Brearley for the cost. Although he conceded that "it was not a sound discretion," Brearley believed that "the Chief ought not . . . be cast off – or left, to find his own way home."⁴⁵

Brearley, hired only to conduct the McIntosh party west, had already commenced collecting Creeks for a third voluntary party when he was fired while in Washington.⁴⁶

⁴³ Thomas Anthony to John H. Eaton, 24 June 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 188-193, NA.

⁴⁴ Quoted in the *Arkansas Gazette*, 8 April 1829.

⁴⁵ David Brearley to John H. Eaton, 16 April 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 225-227, NA.

⁴⁶ David Brearley to John H. Eaton, 15 June 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 220-222, NA; Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 131.

John Crowell, who was aided by his brother Thomas, replaced Brearley.⁴⁷ There were likely a number of reasons for Brearley's release. The cost of Brearley's two emigrating parties was enormous and the government wanted to save money on future emigrations. Moreover, there were a number of complaints against Brearley by the McIntosh party. In a list of eleven grievances, Roly McIntosh and other Western Creeks charged Brearley with fraud and claimed that he kept the money promised to the emigrants in the Treaty of Washington for himself. Brearley was also accused of bringing alcohol into the Creeks' western settlements. They also believed he speculated in Creek provisions, specifically flour, and resold these items at "enormous prices." In fact, the McIntosh party believed that far from any concern for the Indians, Brearley's "Sole object is *speculation*." They also listed "intoxication and disrespectful language to the Chiefs" as a complaint.⁴⁸ But, many prominent Western Creeks did not agree with the charges against Brearley. Illustrating the degree to which the McIntosh party was, at times, divided amongst themselves, John Wynn, William Lott, Samuel Berryhill—all members of Thlakatchka—"and many others," refused to sign the memorandum against Brearley. John Berryhill, who also disagreed with the charges, "was forced to sign by the chiefs."⁴⁹

The deteriorating conditions in the Creek Nation gave the new emigrating agents a better chance at collecting a large number of emigrants. By 1829, settlers from Georgia began moving further west onto Upper Creek land. A number of whites, in fact, had

⁴⁷ John Crowell to Lewis Cass, 22 December 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 553-554, NA.

⁴⁸ Marquis James, *The Raven: A Biography of Sam Houston* (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1929), 111-112; Also see, Thomas Anthony to John H. Eaton, 24 June 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 188-193, NA.

⁴⁹ Thomas Anthony to David Brearley, 23 March 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 303-304, NA.

settled near the home of Tuskeneah as well as in the vicinity of the Upper Creek town of Weogufka. Other intruders were found at Fort Williams on the Creek Nation boundary line. Many of these squatters were “men of notoriously bad and infamous characters” and had become so audacious in their pursuit of property that they took “forcible possession” of Creek houses and fields. Other white families were squatting in the houses of Creeks who had emigrated to the west.⁵⁰ Tuskeneah, a Lower Creek headman from Cusseta, complained to Andrew Jackson that his “white sons and daughters are moving into my country in abundance they are spoiling my lands and taking possession of the Red peoples improvements that they have made with their own labour.”

Many Lower Creeks were also bordering on starvation. Tuskeneah lamented that his people were “in a dreadful condition without any means of subsistence.”⁵¹ Many Creeks continued to defiantly cross into Georgia in search of food and clothing. Georgians reported seeing five Yuchis east of the Chattahoochee carrying “their Guns and Dirks.” When they tried to arrest the Creeks, the Yuchi cocked their guns and “fixed themselves for battle.”⁵² In another instance, residents of Randolph, Lee, Marion, and Muscogee counties in Georgia complained that Lower Creek hunters killed their livestock and they found the carcass of a cow “with her Quarters taken off.” They also

⁵⁰ S. R. Allston to John Crowell, 28 June 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, M-234, reel-222, 112-115, NA; John Crowell to John H. Eaton, 30 June 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 109-110, NA.

⁵¹ Tuskeneah to Andrew Jackson, 21 May 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 441-443, NA.

⁵² A dirk was a short dagger; Affidavit of Samuel Beck et. al., 17 August 1829, NA, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 3-5, NA.

reported that the Creeks had committed at least one home invasion and “even make so bold as to take of young negroes.”⁵³

The theft and occasional murder of Georgia citizens by Creeks prompted the Georgia legislature to prohibit all Creeks from entering the state without a written permit from the Creek Agency.⁵⁴ This did not stop many Lower Creeks, however, and over the next few years, large numbers could still be found in Georgia. Once captured by local militia, the Creeks were taken to Columbus, and then to Fort Mitchell on the west side of the Chattahoochee River. In rare cases, however, a number of Creeks were killed by vigilante white settlers. Tuskeneah of Cusseta, wrote to the president complaining that “the whites have collected themselves in bodies and hunted up such as did cross into Georgia and shot them as if though they were deer.” Between March and May 1829, Tuskeneah noted that “there have been seventeen Red people kill’d by the whites [in Georgia] and nothing thought of more than if they had been so many wild hogs.”⁵⁵

Alcohol was a pervasive problem for the Creeks as well. White squatters arrived in the Creek Nation with alcohol, especially whiskey, to trade to the Creeks for portions of their annuity or on credit at “enormous rates.”⁵⁶ Agent John Crowell observed that “hundreds of families will sell the last [bit] of corn [and] potatoes, for liquor and leave

⁵³ Citizens of Randolph, Lee, Marion, and Muscogee Counties to John Forsyth, 24 March 1829, NA, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 245-247, NA.

⁵⁴ An Act, 10 December 1828/11 March 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, M-234, Creek Agency 1824-1876, reel-222, 157-158, NA.

⁵⁵ Tuskeneah to Andrew Jackson, 21 May 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 441-443, NA.

⁵⁶ Thomas McKenney to Eli Baldwin, 8 October 1829, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-6, 105-107, NA.

the women and children in the most miserable state of starvation.”⁵⁷ Moreover, many whites not only brought whiskey, but opened “drinking houses” near the Creeks.⁵⁸ As a result, government officials noted that alcohol was “destroying the lives of the Creeks like a pestilence.”⁵⁹ By 1833, it was estimated that there were almost four hundred whiskey shops in the Creek Nation.⁶⁰

As a result of these problems, enrollment camps swelled with Creek emigrants looking to ameliorate their suffering. Approximately fourteen-hundred Creeks enrolled for emigration.⁶¹ Among the enrollees, it appears, were Creeks who had broken Creek law and were seeking refuge within the enrollment camps. For instance, in the spring of 1829, the Hitchiti chief Neah Emathla, a veteran of the Seminole war, led a party of twenty Creek warriors to an enrollment camp at Fort Bainbridge. There, they brutally beat two of the potential emigrants, including a woman and “took off [the victims’] ears,” the typical punishment for adultery.⁶² The Creeks and the agents were upset that the government had not protected them in the enrollment camps as they were promised.

⁵⁷ John Crowell to Thomas McKenney, 4 February 1830, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 303-306, NA.

⁵⁸ Tuskenehah haw to Andrew Jackson, 21 May 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 441-443, NA.

⁵⁹ Thomas McKenney to Eli Baldwin, 8 October 1829, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-6, 105-107, NA.

⁶⁰ Jeremiah Austill to Lewis Cass, 5 August 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-223, 519-520, NA.

⁶¹ John Crowell to Thomas McKenney, 1 August 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 118-120, NA.

⁶² Emigrating Creeks to John H. Eaton, 12 April 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 263-264, NA; Tuskeneah admitted that hostile chiefs cut off the ears of the Creeks but told Andrew Jackson that the punishment was “for [violating] the sacred laws of the Creek Nation, and not for emigrating,” see Tuskeneah and Creeks to Andrew Jackson, 20 November 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 37-40, NA.

A few of the emigrants were supporters of the late William McIntosh and were considered to be a part of the third McIntosh party. These Creeks, which included members from the Perryman, Stidham, Bruner, and Reed families, were collected under David Brearley before he was fired.⁶³ Most of the emigrants, however, were Creeks with no apparent connection to William McIntosh or to the previous two McIntosh parties but who had decided to emigrate in order to escape the problems found in the Creek Nation. Many hailed from towns most affected by the Treaties of Indian Springs and Washington. Emigrants from the towns of Hitchiti and Okteyoconnee had lost their land in Georgia, while others, like those from Yuchi, probably suffered from starvation or white encroachment.⁶⁴ Many of the Yuchis were probably those who had been driven from the enrollment camps by Creek headmen in 1828. Creek emigrants at the Fort Bainbridge encampment stated that their reason for leaving the land of their ancestors was because “it was impossible for us to [live] while we were surrounded by the whites.”⁶⁵

Not all of the emigrants were poor, however. Prior to leaving in the third voluntary emigration, they placed claims for lost improvements. Many Creeks owned one or more cabins, a number of acres of fenced land, and in some cases, peach trees.

⁶³ United States Congress, House Report 826, *Creek Nation of Indians*, 8 August 1848, 30th Congress, 1st Session, Serial Set 526, 1-30; Senate Report 215, *Creek Nation of Indians*, 25 July 1848, 30th Congress, 1st Session, Serial Set 512, 5-6; Also see The United States Indian Department to Nelly Perryman, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 785, NA; The United States Indian Department to Rebecca Bruner, NA, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 685, NA; The United States Indian Department to Vacey Reed, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 698, NA; also see Woodward, *Reminiscences*, 99-100.

⁶⁴ Evidence of Yuchi emigrating comes from Crowell hiring a Yuchi interpreter, see Disbursements of John Crowell, 1829, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-105, Year-1831, Agent-Crowell, Account number-15,814, National Archives II, College Park, MD; evidence from other towns comes from receipts, see RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 45, 785, 817, 819, 827, 839, 849, 860, NA.

⁶⁵ Emigrating Creeks to John H. Eaton, 12 April 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 263-264, NA.

The claimants of Wockokoy had anywhere between one to four houses and planted fields that averaged about thirteen acres. One Talladega Creek named Arnotager owned two sixteen square foot double cabins with plank floors, a fourteen square foot cabin, a ten square foot corn house, eight acres of fenced land, and forty peach trees.⁶⁶ Lizer, another Talladega, owned a sixteen square foot cabin, a fourteen square foot cabin, a twelve square foot cabin, two eight square foot corn houses, ten acres, and ten peach trees.⁶⁷ Even Lower Creek emigrants had considerable property. A number of Hatchechubba claimants sought compensation for cabins, corn houses, and peach trees. The wealthiest Hatchechubba Creek, Tuckabatchee Harjo, claimed a sixteen-by-eighteen foot cabin, two other cabins that were sixteen and fourteen square-feet, respectively, a fourteen square-foot corn house, a twelve square-foot corn house, and forty-six acres of fenced land.⁶⁸

Most of the emigrants sold their property, including livestock and waited for agents to begin transporting them west. The emigration of the third voluntary party was stalled on different occasions, however, because of a lack of funds. Some of the emigrants had sold their property, livestock, and crops as early as the latter part of 1828 in anticipation of moving west.⁶⁹ For months, these Creeks waited until the government allocated money for their transportation. In April 1829, approximately two hundred Creeks were collected but could not move because there was no money given to the

⁶⁶ Claim of Arnotager, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 86, NA.

⁶⁷ Receipt of Lizer, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 111, NA.

⁶⁸ Receipt of Tuckabatchee Harjo, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 161, NA.

⁶⁹ United States Congress, House Report 826, *Creek Nation of Indians*, 8 August 1848, 30th Congress, 1st Session, Serial Set 526, 1-30; John Crowell to John H. Eaton, 18 April 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 55-57, NA.

agents. Exasperated, Crowell wrote Washington and noted “on the subject of funds, I regret your having deferred acting upon it. I am required to keep you constantly advised of the progress I am making; in reply I have to remark that no progress can be made without funds.”⁷⁰

It was not until the middle of June when the third voluntary party commenced their journey in earnest. Prior to moving to the rendezvous, the Creeks were concentrated in two large enrollment camps. Approximately nine hundred Creeks waited at the enrollment camp in Pike County, Alabama (probably Monticello). William Walker conducted this party to Line Creek. There the Creeks stopped and waited for another party of five hundred emigrants to arrive from their encampment at Fort Bainbridge.⁷¹ Together the emigrating party marched to the general rendezvous located at Sylacauga, where the public storehouses had been rebuilt.⁷² The party carried with them at least twenty loaded baggage wagons and 157 horses. Once the parties joined, evidence shows they traveled north to Gunter’s Landing. Five flatboats were purchased and navigated through the Muscle Shoals on the Tennessee River to Tuscumbia. The balance of the party walked along the south side of the Tennessee River passing through Somerville and Decatur on their way to Tuscumbia. Receipts also show that a number of wagons passed through Elyton to Tuscumbia. It is unclear, however, if any Creek emigrants accompanied this party. All fourteen-hundred Creeks arrived in Tuscumbia in late June

⁷⁰ John Crowell to John H. Eaton, 14 May 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 74-75, NA.

⁷¹ *Alabama State Intelligencer*, 12 June 1829; The site of Monticello as an enrollment camp comes from Receipts of disbursements, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-104/105, Year-1831, Agent-Crowell, Account number-15,814, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁷² Evidence of the rendezvous site at Sylacauga comes from a number of receipts. For example, see The United States Indian Department to Betsy Vann, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 700, NA.

1829 and “camped near town.”⁷³ Staying in town only a few days, almost one thousand Creeks boarded the steamboat *Pocahontas* with two flatboats in tow at Tusculumbia then traveled to Waterloo before proceeding down the Tennessee River. The remaining 405 Creeks walked to Memphis.⁷⁴

The land party traveled through the Chickasaw Nation and McNairy County, Tennessee before arriving in Memphis, days ahead of the water party. The Creeks crossed the Mississippi River and continued westward. The road along this stretch of the journey was wet and muddy and a number of Creeks were compensated for “cutting road through the [Mississippi] swamp.”⁷⁵ As a result, the land party stretched into a several-mile long train. A post rider who came upon the party, observed that while the head of the party was crossing the St. Francis River, the rear of the party had crossed the Blackfish River and were a few miles behind.⁷⁶ The land party continued on and crossed the White River before traveling through the prairie and the counties of Phillips, Pulaski, Conway, and Crawford in the Arkansas Territory. A number of Creeks became ill along the journey and were forced to remain behind. Agents issued receipts noting that they had “paid negroes at [sundry] times for bringing up the sick.” In fact, a number of

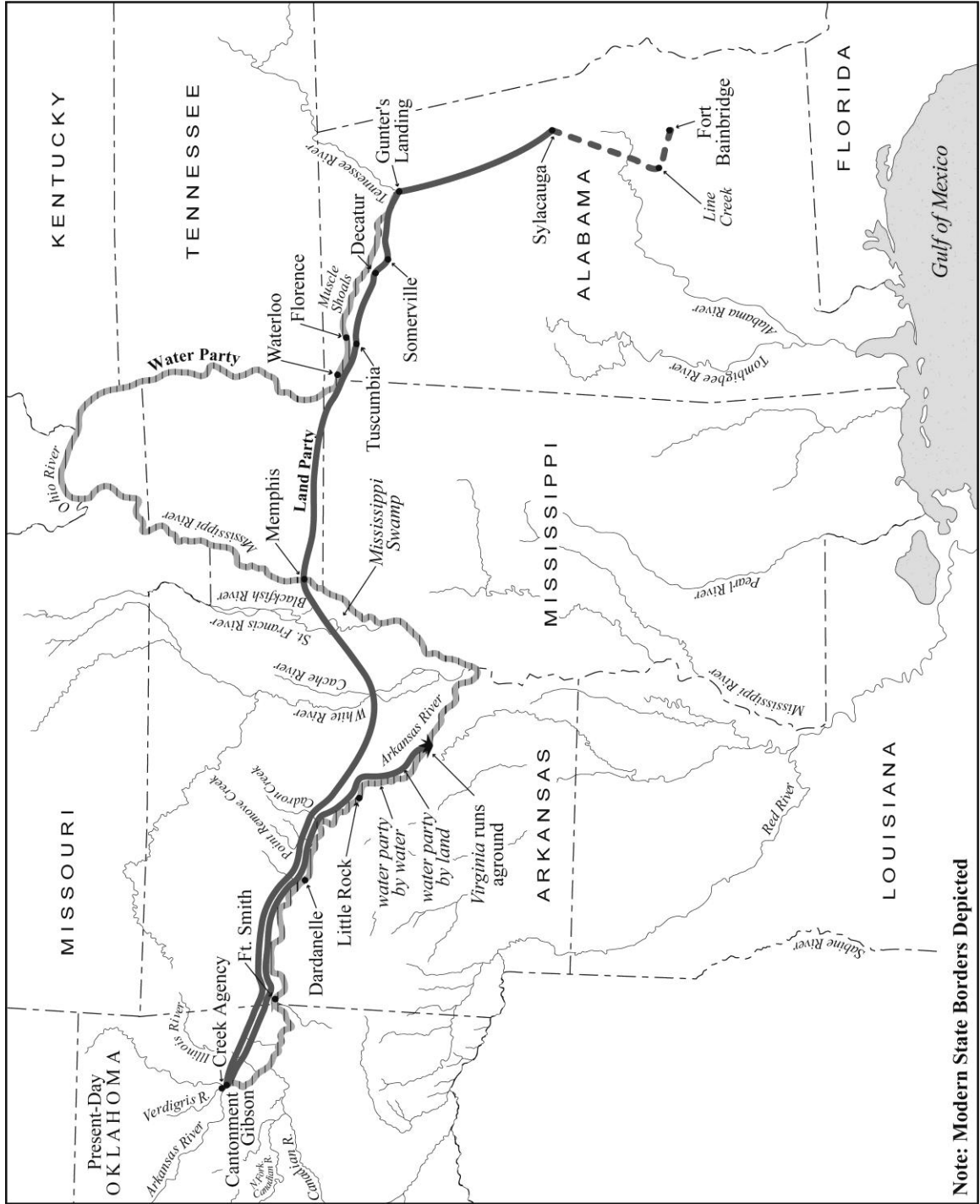
⁷³ *Arkansas Gazette*, 22 July 1829.

⁷⁴ The *Arkansas Gazette*, 22 July 1829; Receipts of disbursements, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-104/105, Year-1831, Agent-Crowell, Account number-15,814, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁷⁵ Receipts of disbursements, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-105, Folder-2284, Year-1831, Agent-Crowell, Account number-15,814, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁷⁶ *Arkansas Gazette*, 22 July 1829.

Third Voluntary Emigrating Party, June 1829 - September 1829



Note: Modern State Borders Depicted

Creeks became sick or died along the way. Even before leaving Alabama, agents issued receipts for “burrying and diging Graves.”⁷⁷

Despite traveling by water, the women and children of the water party, a few weeks behind the land party, arrived in Memphis with a number of sick Creeks on board. In fact, newspapers reported that “considerable sickness has prevailed among the party, and that several deaths have occurred.”⁷⁸ From Memphis, the water party had traveled down the Mississippi River to the mouth of the White River where the Creeks boarded the steamboat *Virginia*.⁷⁹ The Creeks were not on board the *Virginia* long before the steamboat ran aground due to the low stages of the Arkansas River. The accident occurred near Pine Bluff, about sixty miles from Little Rock. With little prospect of the water level rising, the Creeks abandoned the *Virginia*. Those who were able walked along the north bank of the Arkansas River to their destination. The sick emigrants along with those in the feeblest condition, waited along the bank of the Arkansas River for keelboats to arrive that drafted less water.⁸⁰

Many Creeks lost property on board the *Virginia*. The Creeks’ possessions were taken off of the steamboat and left along the riverbank to be picked up by keelboats. As a result of the conditions, however, much of this property “rotted.” For instance, Rebecca

⁷⁷ Receipt of Luther Blake, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-105, Folder-2284, Year-1831, Agent-Crowell, Account number-15,814, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁷⁸ *Arkansas Gazette*, 12 August 1829; There are a few receipts for burials of Creeks in Receipts of disbursements, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-104/105, Year-1831, Agent-Crowell, Account number-15,814, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁷⁹ A contract for use of the *Virginia* was negotiated between Crowell and the steamboat’s owner two months earlier to transport as many as one thousand Creeks no further than Little Rock. The captain offered seven dollars a head which included all provisions or five dollars if Crowell provided his own provisions, see *Arkansas Gazette*, 8 July 1828.

⁸⁰ *Arkansas Gazette*, 19 August 1829.

Bruner reported that a number of her goods “rotted” along the riverbank including eight blankets, 150 yards of homespun, and two feather beds. Her other possessions, like an axe, auger, and a set of pewter plates, forks, and knives were lost and not returned to her.⁸¹ Vacey Reed, who also traveled on the *Virginia*, reported two shawls, six yards of ribbon, a pair of silver wristbands, and a feather bed lost along the riverbank.⁸²

Teehelattee of Wockokoy reported the loss of two blankets, a comb, a pair of earrings, two shawls, twenty yards of heavy, blue cotton fabric and fifteen yards of heavy, white cotton fabric, along with three dressed deer skins, and four pounds of coffee.⁸³

The Creeks of the water party, traveling by land and keelboat, arrived in Little Rock on August 13 and camped near the town until August 16. During their three-day stay, “a considerable number of the party, of both sexes, were constantly in town” and despite their presence, newspapers reported that there were no problems between the Creeks and local residents.⁸⁴ During their stay in Little Rock, a number of Creeks wrote to President Andrew Jackson lamenting that, due to illness, he had “lost some of [his] red children by sickness.”⁸⁵ The Creeks who arrived in Little Rock by keelboat continued west by water. Agents, however, procured a number of wagons to transport the balance of the water party and their baggage by land. The Creeks crossed Point Remove Creek. Receipts were issued at Shoal Creek on the south side of the Arkansas River although it is

⁸¹ The United States Indian Department to Rebecca Bruner, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 685, NA.

⁸² The United States Indian Department to Vacey Reed, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 698, NA.

⁸³ United States Indian Department to Tee-hel-attee, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 883, NA.

⁸⁴ *Arkansas Gazette*, 19 August 1829.

⁸⁵ Emigrating Creeks to Andrew Jackson, 14 August 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, roll-237, 267-268, NA.

unclear whether this was from the land party crossing the river or from the water party stopping at the mouth of the creek. The party continued to Fort Smith and Cantonment Gibson. The last detachment of Creeks from the third voluntary party reached the Western Creek Agency sometime in September 1829.⁸⁶

The Creeks of the third voluntary emigrating party suffered much during their journey. They were sick, hungry, and fatigued. Sam Houston, the former governor of Tennessee, witnessed the emigrating party as they straggled toward Cantonment Gibson, and observed that the condition of the Creeks' was deplorable and their treatment at the hands of the emigration agents,

was enough to shock humanity . . . Between fifty and a hundred Uchees were left in the swamps of Mississippi and I believe have not arrived [at Fort Gibson]. A considerable number of the emigrating party I heard of on the Illinois River about eighteen miles east of Cantonment Gibson; they were nearly all sick, famished, and most of them unable to turn themselves on their blankets. They subsisted principally upon what fish they could catch, and Mr. Flowers, a Cherokee Indian countryman, furnished them some provisions on his own responsibility.⁸⁷

Houston's description is likely the result of the cost-saving measures employed by the agents overseeing the party. The expense to transport one Creek Indian from the Creek Nation in Alabama to the Western Creek Nation averaged \$43.58 under David Brearley. Thomas Crowell's 1829 emigration, however, cost the government only \$21.22 for every Creek emigrant.⁸⁸ And, considering the size of the party and the number sick, the

⁸⁶ Receipts of disbursements, NA, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-104/105, Year-1831, Agent-Crowell, Account number-15,814, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁸⁷ Foreman, *Indians & Pioneers*, 260.

⁸⁸ Elbert Herring to Lewis Cass, 4 March 1834, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-12, 161-162, NA.

expense to conduct the third voluntary party should have been much higher than the first two voluntary parties. Instead, the government spent less than half.

* * *

By the end of 1829, approximately twenty-five hundred Creeks had voluntarily emigrated to the west. Most of them were friends and followers of the late William McIntosh, or were from Creek towns directly affected by the Treaty of Indian Springs. In two years, about 10 percent of the entire population of the Creek Nation had moved west of the Mississippi River. Although the Creek chiefs were adamant that all those who wanted to emigrate had done so by the end of 1829, the government believed that they could convince many more to go west. Agents had hoped that three thousand Creeks would emigrate with the McIntosh party alone, but two years and three emigrating parties later, they were far short of that number. Many Southerners hoped that there would be a renewed effort to remove the Creeks from the borders of Alabama with the election of Andrew Jackson in 1828. Although Jackson did support state Indian policies such as Alabama's extension laws, he continued his predecessor's strategy of compelling, rather than forcing, the Creeks to voluntary emigrate west. But, Jackson soon discovered that he would have no more success at convincing the Creeks to leave the land of their ancestors. But, while the state and federal governments were relatively ineffective at disrupting the day to day lives of the Creek Indians, white settlers were not. These

intruders continued to settle within the Creek Nation illegally into the 1830s and were the ones who pushed the Creeks to their breaking point.

Four

The 1832 Treaty of Washington and the Land Frauds

1829-1835

*“Instead of our situation, being relieved, as was anticipated,
we are distressed in a ten fold manner.”*

—Neah Micco, Cusseta headman, 1832

As 1829 gave way to 1830, Creek headmen found themselves faced with assaults on two fronts. The inauguration of President Andrew Jackson promised an escalation in government attempts to voluntarily remove the Creek Indians from the borders of Alabama. Andrew Jackson was no stranger to the Creeks, nor the Creeks to him. He successfully defeated the Red Sticks during the Creek War in 1814 and Jackson had demanded a huge land cession as a consequence of his victory. But, Jackson never hid his desire to push the remainder of the Creek Nation west and open up the entire state of Alabama for white settlement. The other frontal assault to the Creeks came in the form of white settlers who crossed into the Nation to illegally settle on Creek land. In most cases, these settlers simply squatted on unoccupied land, but there were a number of instances where Creek families were driven from their homes and their crops taken. Whites also exploited the Creeks by selling whiskey and establishing drinking houses near Creek towns. In addition, the outbreak of smallpox coupled with the continued problem of hunger killed untold numbers of Creeks. When the Creeks complained to the new president about their problems, Jackson replied that emigration was their only

solution. In perhaps a last-ditch effort to preserve the Creek Nation even as it appeared to be disintegrating around them, leading Creek headmen traveled to Washington in 1832, to find some sort of resolution. The result was the 1832 Treaty of Washington, a document that gave the Creeks legal title to their land and promised to remove whites who had settled in amongst them. But the treaty came at a steep cost. The Creeks gave up sovereign control of their land and they fell under the jurisdiction of the state and federal governments. To make matters worse, the federal government did not enforce the articles of the treaty to the Creeks' satisfaction and whites continued to encroach on Creek land. Moreover, there were hundreds of incidents of white land speculators cheating Creek families out of their reserves. In fact, far from making their life easier, the 1832 Treaty of Washington pushed the Creeks deeper into despair.

* * *

The emigration of the third voluntary party in 1829 was a personal defeat for the Creek headmen opposed to emigration. Over fourteen hundred Creeks and their slaves emigrated and, despite their best efforts, the headmen were unable to prevent these Creeks from leaving. Undeterred, they continued their campaign against removal. Creek leaders emphasized reports of the unhealthiness of the land in the west and the government's inability to provide all the provisions promised to the emigrants. The Cusseta chief Neah Micco, who succeeded Little Prince as principal chief of the Lower

towns after his death in 1829, along with other headmen, wrote to officials in Washington and noted that although there were reports of Creeks prospering in the west, there were many others who “cannot refrain from writing us the unhealthiness of the country, the many deaths that have taken place among them. Our people view health as the greatest happiness they enjoy. From all accounts that we have received, [the west] is a graveyard.”¹ Indeed, Agent John Crowell acknowledged that the government’s broken promises of support in the west traveled back to the Creek Nation and hindered enrollment for future emigrations.² Creek headmen also made enrolling for emigration more difficult by enacting a policy that forced any would-be emigrant to come before the National Council and plead his or her case for removing. This was more than simple intimidation, and Crowell took this to mean that potential emigrants needed the approval of the National Council in order to emigrate.³

The Creeks also continued to physically impede emigration. In late 1829, Neah Emathla drove off approximately three hundred Creeks enrolled at an enrollment camp. In another instance, a Creek enrollee was shot and killed by another Creek man who opposed emigration. Most Creeks, it was observed, were afraid to even speak of removal.⁴ The Creeks also reiterated their ban on inducing other Creeks to emigrate.

John Dannely was driven from a ball game by the Okfuskee chief Menawa. Menawa told

¹ Creek Indians to John H. Eaton, 8 April 1831, Senate Document 512, *Correspondence on the Subject of the Emigrating Indians*, 23rd Congress, 2nd Session, Serial Set 245, 424-425; For the death of Little Prince see Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 149.

² John Crowell to John H. Eaton, 8 August 1830, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 319-324, NA.

³ John Crowell to John H. Eaton, 18 September 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 122-124, NA.

⁴ William Walker to Thomas McKenney, 8 October 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 292-295, NA.

his warriors that “Dannily must be killed that he talked of going to Arkansas, and was trying to persuade his friends to go with him. That he should be killed, and his property taken and his children should be raised up as other Indians were, and then they would comply with the customs of the nation and that this should be the fate of all his men who spoke of going to Arkansas.”⁵ This followed the killing of Dannely’s brother, Jim who was shot and killed for practicing “witchcraft.” In late 1828, Jim Dannely was charged by the Creeks with “rapidly accumulating wealth . . . that appeared to them so strange and unaccountable.” Fearing the same fate, John Dannely fled and sought the protection of the authorities.⁶

While Creek headmen continued their campaign against emigration, Alabama and the federal government redoubled their efforts to compel the Creeks to move west. This effort was bolstered by the election of Andrew Jackson in whom proponents of Indian removal found a staunch ally. Indeed, scholars have noted that Jackson’s election and his popularity in the South was due, in large part, to his Indian policy and aggressive stance toward removal.⁷ The Creeks, not surprisingly, were troubled by Jackson’s election. In

⁵ John Coffee to John H. Eaton, 16 November 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 248-250, NA.

⁶ *The Macon Telegraph*, 7 January 1828.

⁷ Letter of John Crowell, 11 May 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 63-64, NA; For more on Jackson’s views on the Indians see, Andrew Burstein, *The Passions of Andrew Jackson* (New York: Knopf, 2003), 15-16, 90-91, 127-129, who argues that Jackson’s Indian policy was paternalistic and “uncompromising.” The author notes that Jackson intimated “that Indians otherwise kept the United States metaphorically imprisoned.” Those who try to explain or defend Jackson include Francis Paul Prucha, “Andrew Jackson’s Indian Policy: A Reassessment,” in *Journal of American History* 56 (December 1969), 527-539 who argues Jackson’s Indian policy was dictated by national security and the desire to protect the plan of “civilization;” Robert V. Remini, *The Legacy of Andrew Jackson: Essays on Democracy, Indian Removal, and Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 45-82 argues that Jackson was not motivated by “greed or racism,” or “involved in a gigantic land grab,” and he was “not intent on genocide.” Like Prucha, Remini argues that Jackson’s Indian policy was guided by national security concerns as well as a desire to protect the Indians’ way of life; Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson & His Indian Wars* (New York: Viking, 2001)

fact, nervous headmen dispatched a letter to Jackson soon after he took office congratulating him on his election, while firmly reminding him that the Creeks viewed the 1826 and 1827 treaties as guaranteeing “forever all the lands [the Creeks] now hold [in Alabama].”⁸

But, the headmen’s pleas fell on deaf ears in the Jackson Administration. Jackson was not only committed to more aggressively pushing the Creeks westward in order to open up Alabama for white settlement, he employed new strategies to reach his goal. Almost immediately after taking office, Jackson commenced a passive-aggressive strategy toward the Creeks and removal. Between 1827 and 1829, Alabama asserted legal jurisdiction over the entire state, including the Creek Nation. Unlike John Quincy Adams, who disliked Georgia’s interference in federal Indian affairs, Jackson moved quickly to support Alabama’s extension law.⁹ Jackson then wrote the Creeks saying, “My white children in Alabama have extended their law over your country. If you remain in it, you must be subject to that law.” Only removal prevented such a fate, Jackson wrote.¹⁰ This was one of many messages sent by the Jackson Administration trying to cajole the Creeks into voluntarily emigrating west.¹¹ But, the Creeks received

maintains this argument and notes that Jackson’s Indian policy was supported by most of the American people; Richard B. Latner, *The Presidency of Andrew Jackson: White House Politics 1829-1837* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979), 86-98 notes Jackson’s Indian policy was born out of states’ rights ideology; For a comprehensive examination of Indian policy under Jackson, see Ronald N. Satz, *American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975); Also see, John Buchanan, *Jackson’s Way: Andrew Jackson and the People of the Western Waters* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2001).

⁸ Tuskeneah and Creek Indians to Andrew Jackson, 20 March 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 14-18, NA.

⁹ Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 155-156.

¹⁰ Andrew Jackson to Creek Indians, 23 March 1829, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-234, reel-5, 373-375, NA.

¹¹ Jackson used this tactic on the Choctaws as well. Jackson even sent a talk he gave to the Creeks about the benefits of emigrating to Choctaw headmen in order to compel them to emigrate west, see

mixed messages on the extension law. White traders, who did business with the Creeks and did not want to see them emigrate, told the Creeks that Alabama was bluffing and would not extend its jurisdiction over them. Moreover, they told the Creeks that Alabama did not even want their land.¹²

The Jackson administration tried other ways to get the Creeks to emigrate. Because many government agents believed that an obstacle to emigration was hostility between the McIntosh party and Creek headmen in the east, the government moved to soothe relations between the two parties. Many emigrants, in fact, feared retribution for the execution of William McIntosh should they voluntarily emigrate west.¹³ To overcome this, the federal government invited Benjamin Hawkins and Roly McIntosh to return to Alabama in 1830. The two McIntosh party members became ambassadors from the Western Creek Nation charged with securing peace between the two factions and convincing the eastern Creeks to emigrate.¹⁴ It was a poorly thought-out plan and Creek headmen saw right through the transparent attempt to cajole the Nation to emigrate west.

Andrew Jackson to David Haley, 15 October 1829, Andrew Jackson Papers, Series I, Reel-37, April 17, 1829-March 16, 1830, Number 14,151-14,152, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹² Letter of John Crowell, 11 May 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 63-64, NA.

¹³ John Coffee to John H. Eaton, 24 December 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 252-255, NA; Former Creek agent David B. Mitchell also believed that many of the Creek headmen were concerned about the inevitability of removal and what that meant to their status in relation to the McIntosh party already in the west. Mitchell, who sued Opothle Yoholo over debts in 1829, reported that Opothle Yoholo, “is proud and ambitious and is determined to [maintain] his popularity and he knows if the emmigration goes on the way it [formerly] has he will [lose] all his men and the McIntosh party would have the [ascendancy] at Arkansaw,” see David B. Mitchell to Andrew Jackson, 30 December 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 240-241, NA.

¹⁴ John H. Eaton to the Creek Indians, 20 March 1830, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-6, 343-346, NA; Roly McIntosh to John H. Eaton, 1 May 1830, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 369-373, NA; John H. Eaton to Wiley Thompson, 15 May 1830, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 334-335, NA; Creek Indians to Andrew Jackson, 20 April 1830, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 285-287, NA.

While the federal government may have understood that there was hostility between the Creeks in the east and the McIntosh party in the west, they failed to grasp just how deep this hostility ran. Not surprisingly, McIntosh and Hawkins had little success compelling any Creeks to return west with them. Crowell noted that while the two Western Creeks were in the east, they were “doing much injury to the cause of emigration.”¹⁵ Eaton specifically noted that Hawkins’ presence was a hindrance to enrolling Creeks for removal.¹⁶ But, Hawkins did take some Creeks, mostly family members and supporters, back with him. Along with his nephew Pinkney Hawkins, a Hillabee, Hawkins accompanied the family of Sam Sells of Thlakatchka town. Sells emigrated with the second McIntosh party in 1828 but at the time, had taken only three members of his family and seven slaves to the west. During the 1830 emigration, Sells’ party consisted of twenty individuals along with two large wagons and one carriage. A former slave of Jane Hawkins, who accompanied the emigration, recalled that the Sells party “had plenty of horses” and “a good many” of them traveled to the west on horseback. Both the Hawkins and Sells parties traveled “near together” for the entire journey and paid for their provisions and transportation along the route while they utilized their slaves to pack provisions into the camp each night.¹⁷

¹⁵ John Crowell to John H. Eaton, 30 June 1830, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 315-316, NA.

¹⁶ John H. Eaton to Wiley Thompson, 15 May 1830, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 334-335, NA.

¹⁷ Affidavit of Sarah Davis, 31 December 1885, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA 1807-1904, Special File-285, M-574, reel-77, 100-101; For information on Pinckney Hawkins see, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA 1807-1904, Special File-285, M-574, reel-77, 103, NA; For the Sells family see Creek self emigration claims, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA 1807-1904, Special File-285, M-574, reel-77, 30, NA.

These small family-sized detachments frustrated the president who wanted to see all the Creeks on the west side of the Mississippi River. In 1830, Jackson employed another tactic to try and get the Creeks to emigrate. In an attempt to both save money and put pressure on the Creeks to move west, Jackson stopped all government-sponsored voluntary emigrations until the entire Creek Nation emigrated. The Creeks were not barred from emigrating, but they would have to pay their own way. Jackson also warned the headmen that he would withdraw federal protection from the Creeks by threatening to close the Creek Agency.¹⁸ While the halting of federally-funded emigrations only affected those Creeks willing to move west, the closure of the agency affected all. The Creeks sent a letter to Washington complaining that “there is a probability of the guardian care of our country being withdrawn; this was strange news to our people, and has filled their minds with trouble . . . deplorable as our condition is, it would become much more aggravated should the agency in our country be abolished.”¹⁹ There is little doubt that the administration’s strategy was to let the Creeks fend for themselves under Alabama law. Jackson noted as much when he wrote that “when they find that they cannot live under the laws of Alabama, they must find, at their own expence, and by their own means, a country, and a home . . . [I] now leave the poor deluded Creeks and Cherokees to their fate, and their anihilation.”²⁰ The Creeks would either become fully assimilated yeoman

¹⁸ John H. Eaton to John Crowell, 4 June 1830, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-6, 449-450, NA.

¹⁹ Tuckabatchee Harjo and Ochteachea Emathla to John H. Eaton, 1 February 1831, Senate Document 512, 23/2 Vol. 2 (245), 405-407.

²⁰ Andrew Jackson to William B. Lewis, 25 August 1830, *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, ed., John Spencer Bassett, Vol. IV (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1929), 176-177.

farmers, which was unlikely Jackson believed, or they would be driven to distraction by the state and local governments.

The Creeks who enrolled for emigration were the hardest hit by the government's new course. Many Creeks planned to voluntarily emigrate in 1830 and some Creek enrollees reported that there were "hundreds ready to go." Most were Lower Creeks in Crowell's neighborhood near Fort Mitchell. Jackson knew that stopping all government-sponsored emigrations would hurt these Creeks the most, and he was right.²¹ John Crowell reported that "there were several thousand who expected to be removed last year at the expense of the government, and did not plant any crops, many of whom disposed of their little property preparatory to that event."²²

Among the Creeks preparing to emigrate but unable to afford to do so, were approximately eighty members of the Grayson family. Three Grayson heads-of-family, Walter, William, and Thomas, were initially enrolled to emigrate with the second McIntosh party in 1828. Each was related to Benjamin Hawkins and the late Samuel Hawkins. William Grayson was persecuted in the years leading up to his decision to emigrate because he had married a black woman named Judah and had children by her. In many ways, the Graysons were caught between two factions vying for control of the Creek Nation. On the one hand, they were prominent victims of the traditionalists' efforts to purge the nation of foreign influences. But, William Grayson had also been

²¹ John Crowell to Lewis Cass, 22 December 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 553-554, NA; *Macon Telegraph*, 11 September 1830; *Niles' Weekly Register*, 13 November 1830; Creek Indians to Andrew Jackson, 25 April 1830, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 298-301, NA; John Crowell to John H. Eaton, 8 August 1830, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 319-324, NA.

²² John Crowell to P.G. Randolph, 7 July 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 520-522, NA.

persecuted by the slave-holding faction in the Creek Nation looking to maintain a strict racial hierarchy. Claudio Saunt, who has written about the Grayson family and its black members, noted that because of the increased pressures the Graysons found themselves subjected to, which many times resulted in threats of death and loss of property, the family had resolved by 1829 to emigrate to the west.²³ The emigration roll of the second voluntary party shows that some of the Graysons had, in fact, taken steps to leave the Creek Nation several months earlier in 1828. However, none of the Graysons emigrated with the second party. While the first emigration roll taken at Fort Strother lists the three Graysons, another emigrating roll, probably taken at Cantonment Gibson, lists the three Graysons as having “not gone.”²⁴ The Graysons were also hit hard by the government’s decision not to fund a fourth voluntary emigration in 1830. They, along with other Creeks, filed claims with the government for the monetary value of the crops they had not planted in 1830. For instance, Walter Grayson claimed compensation for “the loss sustained on 80 acres of cleared, tenable land, which was not cultivated in consequence of having been forbidden to do so by the government, whereby I lost a whole crop, in the year 1830.”²⁵ Not surprisingly, many Creeks “seem to be quite uneasy about their situation and think they are not well treated.”

But, the headmen opposed to emigration exerted a little pressure of their own.

Many of the enrollees who had not planted crops in anticipation of receiving provisions

²³ Claudio Saunt, *Black, White, and Indian: Race and the Unmaking of an American Family* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 30-38.

²⁴ Second McIntosh Party Emigration Roll, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-91, Folder-2006, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

²⁵ Copy of the List and Certificate Filed by David Conner, Enrolling Agent, NA, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1833, Agent-Abert, Account number-17,572-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

from the government were subsisting almost solely upon what livestock they had. Seizing on Jackson's decision to halt all federally-funded emigrations, Creek headmen ordered the killing of the Creek enrollees' livestock. In fact, John Crowell wrote to Washington and noted that "the stock of those who had openly declared their intention to emigrate have been destroyed to a considerable extent."²⁶ The headmen were still unwilling to give an inch to the federal government over the issue of removal, even if it meant terrorizing their own people. It goes without saying that the killing of the Creeks' livestock, coupled with the decision of the government not to fund another emigration, exacerbated an already bad situation. Many enrollees were on the edge of starvation.

Still, a number of Creeks did emigrate to the west at their own expense. Among those was a Creek woman from Coweta named Holo Barnett.²⁷ Theophilus Perryman also self-emigrated in 1830 and was forced to abandon one of his wagons in the Chickasaw Nation along the way.²⁸ These self-emigrations were small, consisting of one or two families or extended families of up to two dozen members. In some cases these small emigration parties did not even travel in a single group. A slave girl who accompanied a group of self-emigrating Thlobthloccos west reported that "whilst we moved in day time in separate squads we camped together at night."²⁹

But, most of the Creeks who anticipated emigrating in 1830 had neither the money nor the resources to emigrate themselves. And, for those who remained in the

²⁶ John Crowell to John H. Eaton, 30 June 1830, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 315-316, NA.

²⁷ Creek self-emigration claims, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-285, M-574, reel-77, 6-7, 27, 30-31, 103, 109-110, 114, NA.

²⁸ The United States Indian Department to Theophilus Perryman, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 673, NA.

²⁹ Testimony of Polly Island, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA 1807-1904, Special File-285, M-574, reel-77, 6-7, 109, NA.

east, starvation, disease, alcoholism, and unabated white encroachment continued to be the norm. A severe drought in 1830-1831 produced a smaller harvest than usual. The drought notwithstanding, Crowell observed that “there are hundreds of families who seldom plant as much, as would subsist them a fourth part of the year.” And even when there was an abundant harvest, many Creeks sold their crops for alcohol.³⁰ As a result, many Creeks were reduced to eating roots, berries, and the bark off of trees. In addition, they observed that “whenever an old sugar hogshead or barrel is thrown out, [the Creeks] hasten to it as bees to the honey comb, to lick off the few remaining particles.”³¹

Starvation was so widespread that even white citizens took notice. A number of Georgia residents wrote Andrew Jackson and stated that there were “large bodies of Indians in a state of actual starvation with no means or expectation of relief unless the assistance of the government be extended to them. In the white settlements [adjacent] to them they are daily begging from house to house for the means of subsistence from hour to hour they have abandoned their homes thrown themselves in crowds at the doors of the whites relying alone for existence on the mercies and charities of the community, and if they are not speedily relieved by some general and systematic plan great numbers of them must inevitably perish.”³² White residents pleaded with Washington to give aid to the Creeks,

³⁰ John Crowell to P.G. Randolph, 7 July 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 520-522, NA.

³¹ Adam Boykin and Grigsby E. Thomas to George Gilmer, 1 June 1831, RG 1-1-5, Governor’s Papers, Gilmer, box-13, 2740-06, Georgia Archives.

³² Georgia residents to Andrew Jackson, 31 May 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 564-567, NA; Samuel S. Hamilton to John Crowell, 11 June 1831, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-7, 272-273, NA.

but the federal government, unwilling to promote “idleness” and “dissatisfaction,” refused.³³

Disease was also a recurring problem. There were a number of cases of smallpox reported among the Lower Creeks in 1831.³⁴ Over seven thousand Creeks were vaccinated during a 137-day period which included hundreds of Coweta, Cusseta, Ooseochee, and Chehaw, among others. Over twelve-hundred Creeks were vaccinated at Fort Mitchell, while others were attended to at the national square grounds, “opposite West Point,” Tallapoosa River, and other locales.³⁵ Untold numbers of Creeks died from the disease, most of whom were found lying on the ground outside of their homes. To sanitize the area, the homes and bodies of the dead were destroyed by fire.³⁶ Hoping to contain the disease, Crowell immediately stopped issuing permits to Creeks wishing to cross into Georgia.³⁷

Despite disease and the threats of starvation, white encroachment was still the Creeks’ primary concern. White intruders ranged from relatively benign squatters who illegally cleared a tract of Creek land to establish a farmstead to outlaws who took

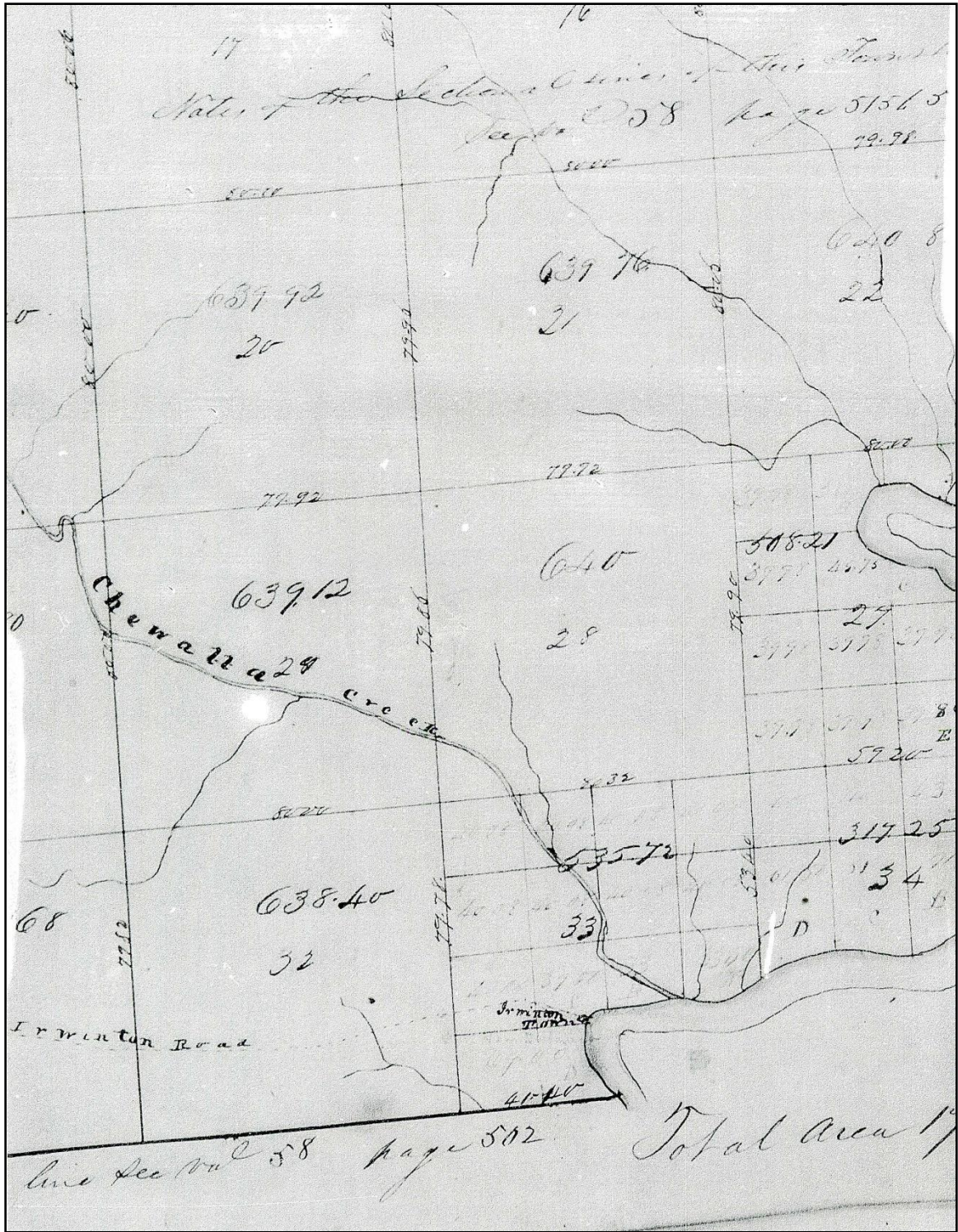
³³ John H. Eaton to George R. Gilmer, 17 June 1831, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-7, 279-281, NA; Samuel S. Hamilton to John Crowell, 25 July 1831, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-7, 306, NA.

³⁴ The epidemic was contained in an area forty to eighty miles from Fort Mitchell, see John Crowell to R. Jones, 28 July 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 524-525, NA; John Crowell to John H. Eaton, 2 July 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 518, NA.

³⁵ United States to Dr. Wharton, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 537-538, NA; Elbert Herring to John Crowell, 12 January 1832, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-8, 137-139, NA.

³⁶ W.L. Wharton to Elbert Herring, 4 February 1832, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-223, 344-346, NA.

³⁷ John Crowell to George Gilmer, 26 July 1831, RG 1-1-5; Governor’s Papers-Gilmer, box-13, 2740-06, Georgia Archives.



(Figure 5) U.S. Land Office, Tallapoosa Land District, Plat Book, Reel-30
 Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

forcible possession of Creek property. In some occasions whites could be relatively polite. For instance, one white man wrote a letter to Washington inquiring whether he could move into the Creek Nation.³⁸ But, the most brazen settlers oftentimes drove Creek families from their homes, burned their houses, and stole their crops and livestock. When the Alabama legislature authorized the construction of the town of Irwinton upon land containing the Creek town of Eufaula, whites wasted little time in driving the Eufaula off and burning their town to the ground (see figure 5). Other whites established their farmsteads secretly within the woodland section of the Eufaula's town fence. This woodland divided the Creeks' different crops and the intruders reasoned incorrectly that the Creeks did not need this portion of land.³⁹

Many of these white settlers who squatted on Creek land were considered by local officials to be of questionable character. A number had rewards out for their capture. While compiling a list of white intruders, a white man hired by the Creeks to list the number of intruders within their Nation, noted that some were known horse and livestock thieves. Others had passed counterfeit money with which they used to cheat the Creeks out of their property. A number of intruders were from Georgia and did not even live permanently in Alabama, but this had not stopped them from establishing farms, mills, and shops on Creek land. A number of whites were found "roving about in the mountains" looking for gold although some believed this was only a cover for horse

³⁸ Joseph Frith to Lewis Cass, 13 August 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 558, NA.

³⁹ Robert Crawford to John Robb, 15 September 1832, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-223, 54-58, NA.

stealing.⁴⁰ But, from the perspective of the Creeks there was not a good white settler. Even when a white squatter was simply trying to make a living in the Creek Nation and largely minding their own business, the Creeks complained that they were still spoiling their timber, soil, and water. Crowell observed that most of the arable land around the Creek Agency at Fort Mitchell had been “run up either with a compass, or chopped round with an ax by white people.”⁴¹

But, not all intruders were operating illegally within the Creek Nation. The extension of Alabama legal jurisdiction over the Creeks not only gave whites rights to portions Creek land, it was sanctioned by the state and federal governments. For instance, when a number of Creeks discovered a company of white men constructing a road from Fort Williams on the Coosa River to West Point, Georgia, the Creek headmen complained that the men were “cuting and spoiling [their] land.”⁴² But, rather than remove the company, Secretary of War John Eaton responded to the chiefs by telling them that the land was Alabama’s and construction of the road could proceed.⁴³

The Lower Creek chiefs sent many letters to government officials and traveled to Washington to complain that whites had “abundantly moved amongst us” and that they

⁴⁰ List of White Intruders Living in Creek Nation, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 548-551, NA.

⁴¹ John Crowell to Lewis Cass, 15 December 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 545, NA.

⁴² Letter of Creek Chiefs, 27 October 1830, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 381-382, NA; Also see F.D. Newcomb to John H. Eaton, 9 September 1830, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 375, NA; F.D. Newcomb to Creek Chiefs, 27 October 1830, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 377-378, NA.

⁴³ John H. Eaton to F.D. Newcomb, 10 November 1830, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 384, NA.

wished “to live in peace upon our own lands.”⁴⁴ Neah Micco and other Creek headmen wrote to Crowell and lamented that “it is painful to us to have so frequently to complain to you of the many [trespasses] upon our lands by the white people.”⁴⁵ When the chiefs demanded that the local militia remove the white intruders they were told that they first needed permission from President Jackson, to which Tuskeneah responded by noting that “this talk was like a clap of thunder upon me.”⁴⁶ There was also the threat of resistance from the squatters over any attempt by the government to remove them from Creek land. South Carolina, at the height of the nullification crisis in 1832, organized a volunteer force to aid Alabamians who were going to be forced off their land by the federal government.⁴⁷ Moreover, white settlers took full advantage of the uncertainty surrounding the new extension law and the Creeks’ weakened position. Creek headmen observed that brazen white settlers cleared land belonging to the Creeks, then threatened that if the Creeks so much as touched their property they would prosecute them to the fullest extent of Alabama law.⁴⁸ It is not surprising that the agents reported that the extension law, more than anything else, weighed the most heavily on the Creeks’ minds, and, in fact, had the effect of increasing the numbers of Creeks willing to emigrate.

Many letters to government officials also warned of bloodshed should the whites not be

⁴⁴ Tuckabatchee Harjo and Ochteachea Emathla to John H. Eaton, 1 February 1831, Senate Document 512, 23/2 Vol. 2(245), 405-407; second quote from Tuckabatchee Harjo and Ochteachea Emathla to Andrew Jackson, 18 February 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 429-430, NA.

⁴⁵ Creek Indians to John Crowell, 13 December 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 546-547, NA.

⁴⁶ Tuskeneah haw to Andrew Jackson, 21 May 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 441-443, NA.

⁴⁷ Message of Andrew Jackson, November [1832?], Bassett, ed., *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, Vol. IV, 493.

⁴⁸ It was estimated that five to six hundred whites had settled around the Creeks, see Neah Micco and Creeks to John Crowell, 13 December 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 546-547, NA.

removed.⁴⁹ John Crowell lamented the increasing number of complaints of whites cheating the Creeks and noted that “far from [the Creeks’ complaints] being exaggerated, I am satisfied [the Creeks’ descriptions] fall short in many instances of the treatment of the intruders towards these helpless people.”⁵⁰

To the leading Creek headmen it must have appeared as if the Creek Nation was disintegrating around them. With no expectation that the government would come to their aid, the leading Creek headmen sent delegations to Washington between 1830 and 1831. The Creeks’ goal was to preserve Creek lifeways, including control over their land, and the removal of white squatters, and they went to great lengths to do so. But, emigration was off the table. Creek headmen would not allow the federal government to cajole them into leaving the land of their ancestors. This was much was made clear in April 1831 when Neah Micco and ten other prominent Creek headmen sent a powerful response to Andrew Jackson’s latest plea for the Creeks to emigrate. Written to Secretary of War Eaton, the Creek headmen stated that, “with considerable reluctance, we have been compelled to refuse a compliance with his wishes towards removing to the west; our aged fathers and mothers beseech us to remain upon the land that gave us birth, where the bones of their kindred are buried, so that when they die they may mingle their ashes together. They view a removal as the worst evil that can befall them.”⁵¹

⁴⁹ Tuckabatchee Harjo and Ochteachea Emathla to Andrew Jackson, 18 February 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 429-430, NA; Tuskenehah haw to Andrew Jackson, 21 May 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 441-443, NA.

⁵⁰ John Crowell to Lewis Cass, 15 October 1832, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-223, 167, NA.

⁵¹ Neah Micco and Creeks to John H. Eaton, 8 April 1831, Senate Document, 512, 23/2 Vol. II (245), 424-425; Thomas McKenney to John H. Eaton, 16 October 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-222, 131-136, NA.

The last in a number of delegations of Creeks arrived in Washington in March 1832 with consent to sell their land to the federal government. Among other things, the Creeks demanded sizable land reserves for each head-of-family and government protection for any Creeks who sold their land. The Creeks and federal government hammered out a treaty, first signed in March then ratified in April 1832 that from the Creeks' point of view seemed to salvage the land and customs of the Creeks from the brink of annihilation.⁵² But, the treaty came at a monumental cost. The moment the Creeks signed the 1832 Treaty of Washington the Creek Nation became a metaphysical concept rather than a tangible entity. The land fell under federal and Alabama control. In return, each Creek family received legal title to parcels of 320 acres with ninety headmen receiving 640 acre plots. Land reserves were arranged according to family and town in order to preserve Creek customs. Each land allotment could be sold under federal supervision if the family chose to voluntarily emigrate to the west but the Creeks had the option of remaining on their land for as long as they wanted. The treaty was creative in the sense that it allowed Creek towns to remain relatively intact, secured land for the Creeks to farm, and allowed them the option of maintaining some semblance of their traditional lifeways. Most importantly, the treaty forced the government to remove white intruders from unallotted Creek land.⁵³ For the Creeks, the treaty seemed to settle the emigration question. Although Jackson continued his calls for the Creeks to remove west

⁵² Green calls the 1832 Treaty of Washington "one of the most important landmarks in the history of the Creek people," Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal*, 170-173.

⁵³ For more on the 1832 treaty see Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, Vol. II , 341-343.

of the Mississippi River, Creek headmen had reason to be optimistic that they would remain on their ancestral lands forever.⁵⁴

Ironically, the 1832 Treaty of Washington also appeared to settle the debate between the Creeks who embraced white culture and the traditionalists who saw it as corrupting the Creek Nation. After decades of contentious, sometimes violent struggle over the direction of the Creek Nation in the face of white encroachment, Creek headmen consented to private ownership of their land. The land reserves, too small for effective hunting, would force the Creeks to become private, yeoman farmers. In fact, the treaty was far from perfect even for Creeks who helped negotiate the document. Headmen, including Opothle Yoholo, for instance, saw the treaty not so much in terms of preserving the five million acres of the Creeks' Alabama land but from the standpoint of individual Creeks having "been confined to narrower [and] narrower limits, until at length they are reduced down to an individual tenure of a half section of land each."⁵⁵

In order to carry out the stipulations of the 1832 Treaty of Washington, government agents took a census of the entire Creek Nation. When the census was completed it showed that there were 21,762 Creeks, of which 6,447 heads-of-families

⁵⁴ The Andrew Jackson wanted the Creeks sell their reserves to white citizens, see Lewis Cass to John J. Abert, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 119-123, NA; Other agents recommended that the government buy up blocks of Creek land, see Enoch Parsons to Andrew Jackson, 12 October 1832, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-223, 295-297, NA; however the government could not purchase the reserves without an act of Congress, see Seaborn Jones to Lewis Cass, 25 July 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 253-259, NA.

⁵⁵ Opothle Yoholo and Creeks to Andrew Jackson, 13 June 1835, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-224, 273-281, NA.

were eligible to receive reserves.⁵⁶ Surveyors also traveled through central and east Alabama dividing the former Creek Nation into thousands of sections and half-sections. Agents taking the census and locating reserves discovered the “greatest mass of Indian settlements” in Coosa, Tallapoosa, Chambers, Macon, and Russell counties and subsequently, these were the most difficult reserves to assign. Coosa County had 1,030 heads of families while Tallapoosa County had 860. Chambers, Macon, and Russell counties had 600, 1,500, and 1,230 heads of families, respectively. Moreover, agents discovered that Creek towns like Yuchi and Hillabee were “extremely diffused” which made assigning reserves that much more difficult.⁵⁷

The way in which reserves were assigned was relatively simple. Agents visited with a town’s headmen to discuss “the great outlines, which are to determine the boundaries of the reservations for each town.”⁵⁸ After visiting a particular town and locating each Creek head of family, agents called a meeting and assigned reserves in the presence of the town chiefs.⁵⁹ Agents allowed headmen and those who had improvements to remain on their land as long as it conformed to the 320 or 640 acre reserve. If an individual’s improvements extended into more than one section or half-section, then only the reserve that contained the Creeks’ house or residence was assigned

⁵⁶ 1832 Census of Creek Indians Taken by Parsons and Abbott, RG-75, M-275, reel-1, 113-196, NA; 6,447 comes from John J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 15 October 1834, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 465-476, NA.

⁵⁷ Coosa County had 1,600 available half-sections while Tallapoosa County had 1,700 half-sections. Chambers, Macon, and Russell counties had 1,350, 1,750, and 1,600 available half-sections, respectively, see John J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 14 November 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 154-158, NA.

⁵⁸ John J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 5 November 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 110-117, NA.

⁵⁹ John J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 15 October 1834, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 165-176, NA.

to them. In many cases, wealthier Creeks lost land while many of the poorer Creeks actually acquired land under the treaty. Benjamin Marshall, however, was granted a special title to his plantation across the river from Columbus, Georgia as a result of his extensive improvements.⁶⁰ Creeks without improvements, generally the poorer Creeks who were still transient in Alabama, were the last to be placed in reserves and were assigned by lot. Called “floaters” by the agents, the Creeks without improvements were situated around members of their town who had improvements and as near the town’s council house as possible, but not closer to the council house than those with improvements.⁶¹

Agents devised a number of ways to eliminate controversy. For instance, if two Creeks had improvements within the same section or half-section then the individual who had lived there the longest received the property. If this could not be determined, the reserve was chosen by lot. In other cases, Creeks whose land was dissected by a navigable waterway—called a “fraction”—were allowed to choose an adjacent “fraction” in order for that person to receive their full 320 or 640 acres. If a Creek head-of-family resided far from other members of their town, as was often the case, they had the choice of remaining on their improvement or “floating” closer to their town.⁶² In fact, there were two instances of entire Creek towns choosing to abandon their improvements and

⁶⁰ Benjamin Marshall sold his plantation for \$35,000, see John H. Brodnax to Lewis Cass, 28 May 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 210-211, NA.

⁶¹ John J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 15 October 1834, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 465-476, NA.

⁶² Copy of Instructions to the Deputy Locating Agents, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 477-480, NA.

“float” so they could reconstitute their town with all residents living together.⁶³ The Creeks were not allowed to choose their own reserve as a result of the trouble of determining who would have first choice. But, some Creeks were told by government officials that they could claim a new, better tract of land before the locating agents assigned reserves. As a result, many Creeks moved onto more desirable land. In fact, agents discovered Benjamin Marshall moving his sister onto a better piece of land before the reserve was assigned.⁶⁴

Agents found assigning reserves much like putting together a complicated jigsaw puzzle and myriad problems emerged. Because there were a limited number of reserves situated on fertile land, it was unavoidable that many Creeks were assigned sections that were agriculturally worthless.⁶⁵ Even some headmen were assigned to agriculturally worthless land. Clerical errors were also common. Some heads-of-families were not included on the 1832 census roll and thus not given reserves. In other cases, Creeks who still lived with their relatives and were not heads-of-families were given land. Creeks were also assigned to land within the reserves of a different town than the one they were from.⁶⁶ Another Creek had his land reserve request rejected because he did not look like an Indian even though he was related to a prominent Creek family. Samuel Brashiers,

⁶³ The name of the town was not given, see John J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 15 October 1834, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 465-476, NA.

⁶⁴ Leonard Tarrant to Elbert Herring, 15 May 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 344-347, NA; John J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 15 October 1834, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 465-476, NA, notes that the Creeks were not allowed to choose their reserve.

⁶⁵ John J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 15 October 1834, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 465-476, NA; J.J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 11 November 1833, RG-75, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 144-148, NA.

⁶⁶ John Ward to Andrew Jackson, n.d., RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 755-758, NA.

whose great uncle was Alexander McGillivray, complained that he did not get a reserve due to “the colour of [his] skin” and the fact that he did not have an Indian wife.⁶⁷

Agents also had to wade through requests by Indians with dubious credentials who were attempting to acquire reserves. Savvy whites reportedly married Creek wives with the sole view of acquiring reserves of land under the treaty. Neah Micco and other prominent headmen complained that these “desperate men are rapidly collecting among us, under colour of authority as indian countrymen, are seizing and occupying our most valuable lands.”⁶⁸ In other cases, Seminoles tried to get reserves in order to escape Seminole removal.⁶⁹

In a few cases, Creeks tried to dictate who was considered worthy of receiving land reserves. For instance, Red Sticks who fled to the Cherokee Nation after the Creek War were not welcomed back by some Creeks. Moreover, in a letter to Andrew Jackson, a number of Creeks argued that “all Creeks remaining in any other Indian Country and having renounced their own country whether they live in the Choctaw Chickasaw or Cherokee Country are not entitled by our laws to any reservation in this country.”⁷⁰ They argued that these Creek refugees would only sell their land to whites then return to the

⁶⁷ Samuel Brashiers to Lewis Cass, 2 November 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 198-202, NA; Brashiers was the son of Rachel Durant whose third husband was a man named Brashiers, see Thomas S. Woodward, *Woodward's Reminiscences of the Creek or Muscogee Indians: Contained in letters to Friends in Georgia and Alabama*, (Mobile: Southern University Press, 1965).

⁶⁸ Neah Micco and Creeks to Lewis Cass, 15 November 1832, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-223, 99-101, NA.

⁶⁹ The four Seminoles were Coathlocco, Talladig Harjo, Cochus Harjo, and Charley Emathla of Davy's (or Cockrane's) town. Each were persuaded by the Creek Indian Jim Boy to emigrate from Florida to Alabama and acquire land under the 1832 treaty, see “Census of Shane Mathla or Davy's or Cockrane's town, May 1833,” Letters Received by the OIA, Florida Superintendency 1832-1837, M-234, reel-288, NA.

⁷⁰ Letter from Creeks, 23 September 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 360-362, NA.

Cherokee Nation. It is unclear if this pertained to all Creeks who had fled from the Nation. Many Creeks who left the Nation returned to apply for half-sections. Mary Ann Battis, for instance, was an adolescent Creek girl in 1827 when the first McIntosh party left for the Arkansas Territory. Although her relatives emigrated, she remained behind in the Creek Nation and later married a Cherokee Indian, moved to the Cherokee Nation, and raised a family. In 1833, Battis and her Cherokee husband petitioned the federal government for a Creek land reserve.⁷¹ Many refugees who returned to the Creek Nation from the Cherokee Nation to apply for reserves were driven away by whites who were purchasing Creek land.⁷²

Once all the land was assigned after 1833 and 1834, most of the empty or unoccupied land in eastern and central Alabama quickly filled with Creek reserves. Reserves were set aside for Creek orphans and five sections were given collectively to the Western Creek Nation.⁷³ In all, 6,696 sections or half-sections were assigned.⁷⁴ One agent who traveled through the Creek settlements in late 1833 reported that except in Coosa and Tallapoosa counties, “there is probably not a township in all the extent of country . . . in which there are not at this time Indian settlements, and where there were not at the time the treaty was made.”⁷⁵ Many Creeks continued living on the same improvements they had lived on for years, while others quickly went to work rebuilding

⁷¹ For her marriage to a Cherokee Indian see Robert Rogers to Lewis Cass, 20 November 1833, RG-75, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 327-328, NA.

⁷² Unsigned letter, 7 March 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 384, NA.

⁷³ Western Creeks to Leonard Tarrant, 27 October 1833, RG-75, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 216-218, NA.

⁷⁴ Mary Elizabeth Young, *Redskins, Ruffleshirts, and Rednecks: Indian Allotments in Alabama and Mississippi, 1830-1860* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 74.

⁷⁵ J.J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 14 November 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 153-156, NA.

their lives. Tyrone Power, a traveler to Alabama in late 1834, observed firsthand the different levels of wealth among the Creeks living across the river from Columbus, Georgia. Power observed that a few of the Lower Creeks “had erected log-houses, cleared a little land, and were also in the possession of a stove or two.” A majority of the Creeks, however, remained on the edge of subsistence. Power noted that the poorer Creeks were “wretched to the extreme: most of the families were living in wigwams, built of bark or green boughs, of the frailest and least comfortable construction; not an article of furniture, except a kettle, was in the possession of this class.”⁷⁶

Despite the appeal of land reserves, the 1832 Treaty of Washington, although significant, failed to accomplish almost all of the goals it set out to achieve. In fact, the treaty had the reverse effect and actually hastened their removal from Alabama. White settlers refused to be removed by the government as stipulated by the treaty and many local marshals were lenient in removing white settlers from Creek land.⁷⁷ When the first settlers were removed from Creek improvements, however, they returned “with a reinforcement; armed and threaten to defend themselves.”⁷⁸ In one case, agents reported that whites living on Creek land were “raising volunteers to resist our government force.”⁷⁹ Fearing possible civil war between Alabama and the federal government, the resistance by white settlers forced the government to acquiesce and disregard the

⁷⁶ Tyrone Power, *Impressions of America During the Years 1833, 1834, and 1835*, Vol. II (London: Richard Bentley, 1836), 134.

⁷⁷ John J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 5 November 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 110-117, NA.

⁷⁸ John Crowell to Lewis Cass, 3 August 1832, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-223, 140, NA.

⁷⁹ Luther Blake to Elbert Herring, 11 September 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 195-196, NA.

stipulation that all intruders be removed. Through the negotiations of Francis Scott Key in 1833, only those whites living on Creek allotments would be removed.⁸⁰

However, the most significant and far-reaching problems related to the 1832 Treaty of Washington were the massive land frauds perpetuated by whites upon Creeks willing to sell and move west. Land companies sprang up with whiskey and food to trade on credit in exchange for title to land reserves. Many Creeks went into debt and were forced to give up their land. When a Creek fled a creditor, the creditors were usually aided by “negro interpreters” who spoke Muscogee, and knew their whereabouts well.⁸¹ The frauds took on many dimensions. Some Creeks were unable to find their reserve and headmen reported that “the white people who are selling in numbers among us, are interested to keep from the knowledge of the Indians the position of their land.”⁸² In other cases, land speculators hired other Indians to impersonate the would-be seller. Either through threats or a small kickback to the impersonating Indian, a land speculator could fraudulently gain access to an unsuspecting Creek’s reserve for rock-bottom prices.⁸³ White land speculators also brought in Creeks who had escaped to Florida. Once these Creeks registered for reserves and were assigned their section, they quickly sold the land to the whites before returning to south.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Young, *Redskins, Ruffleshirts, and Rednecks*, 78-81.

⁸¹ Return J. Meigs to Lewis Cass, 26 September 1834, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 446-450, NA.

⁸² Tuskeneah and Creeks to Lewis Cass, 19 July 1834, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 606-608, NA.

⁸³ For more on the Creek land frauds see Young, *Redskins, Ruffleshirts, and Rednecks*, 73-113.

⁸⁴ F.W. Pugh to Lewis Cass, 24 January 1834, NA, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 1026-1027, NA; Elias Miller to Lewis Cass, 31 May 1834, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 1000-1001, NA.

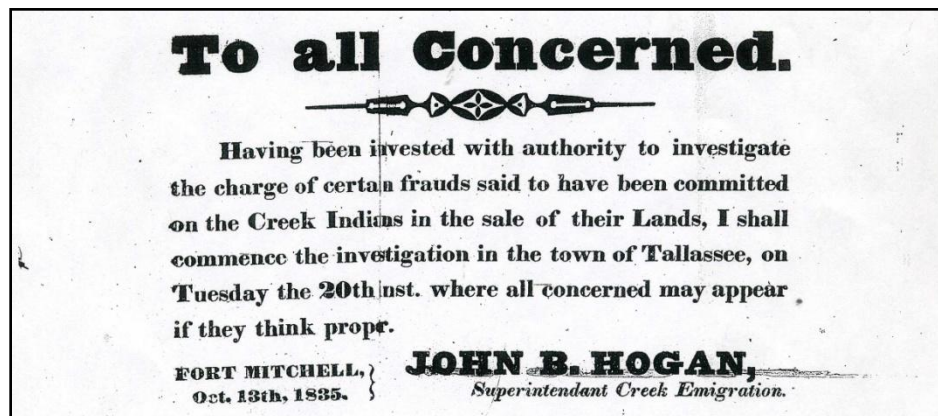
It was not always just land the whites were stealing, however, it was money as well. In many cases Creeks were paid as little as ten dollars to impersonate another Indian who owned a half-section of land. The impersonator, under orders from the whites, lied about owning a particular reserve. Once the impersonator was paid by the white purchaser, in many cases \$400, the Indian turned over all but ten dollars of the money to the white man he worked for. But, if the impersonator was ever reluctant to give the money up, agents reported that whites, “if they cannot get [the money] in any other way they take the indian into another house [and] choak him until he gives it up.”⁸⁵

Many Creeks refused to sell, only to be cajoled into selling for a discounted price. The fraud committed on Tefulgar, a Creek Indian from Tallasseehatchee, is a case in point. His reserve had “second rate” soil but two-thirds of the half-section was considered cultivable. By all accounts Tefulgar wanted to remain upon his half-section. In fact, it was noted that he “was unwilling to sell his land, and had been much persecuted by the whites, who had been after him to purchase his land.” Driven to distraction, Tefulgar escaped toward the Cherokee Nation to elude the speculators. Once discovered, the speculators convinced him to sell. They appraised his land at \$400 but agreed to give him the increased price of \$510. Later, it was acknowledged that Tefulgar’s land was actually worth \$2,000 and the white man who purchased the reserve eventually sold the entire section for \$5,000.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 3 April 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 525-528, NA.

⁸⁶ Tefulgar’s Case, NA, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 451-463, NA.

Land speculators were fully entrenched among the Creeks during the year-and-a-half it took to locate and assign reserves. Many Creeks lost hope of even receiving their land allotment, while other Creeks sold their half-section at discounted prices to speculators because they believed that they were never assigned reserves or that they would never be shown the location of their land. In many cases, Creeks were induced to sign away their half-section while in a state of intoxication. Other Creeks, almost all of whom were illiterate, were persuaded to sign a document they could not read. In a number of cases, speculators told the Creeks it was an agreement for protection from fraud when, in fact, they were signing away the rights to their land.⁸⁷ There were other Creeks who never saw their reserve. As a result of age, illness, or starvation “many of the Indians whose names are on the census roll, have died since it was taken.”⁸⁸ Among those that died, “not a few have committed suicide” because they were devastated by debt and incessantly chased by creditors.⁸⁹



⁸⁷ Return J. Meigs to Lewis Cass, 12 November 1834, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 904-907, NA.

⁸⁸ John J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 5 November 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 110-117, NA.

⁸⁹ Return J. Meigs to Lewis Cass, 26 September 1834, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves M-234, reel-241, 446-450, NA.

The land frauds only got worse in 1835. Land speculators, especially those from Columbus enlarged their operations in 1835 as the result of government's unwillingness to aggressively prosecute those who had earlier cheated the Creeks out of their land.⁹⁰ Almost all the land owned by the Creeks in Barbour County, especially from the towns of Cusseta, Eufaula, and Yuchi, were stolen by land speculators with the town's former inhabitants driven almost twenty miles from their homes into the pine barrens.⁹¹ Agents also reported that "nearly the whole" of Menawa's town of Chatoffsophka, a *talofa* of Okfuskee, "had been stolen." The reserves were later given up by the speculators.⁹² Many Creeks complained to Washington. Yoholo Micco, a chief of the Upper Eufaula along with a number of other Upper Creeks, pleaded with President Andrew Jackson for justice noting "our privileges as a nation in this country forever lost and we as a people in great trouble. Our country is now full of bad white men. Our property we dare not call our own. The land we had given us by the last treaty though unwilling to sell it ourselves, is often stolen from us by bad white men and bad indians while we are at home with our little families. And before we know it our homes are taken from us and we [are] left to suffer."⁹³

But even when investigations into the alleged frauds were conducted, land speculators did everything they could to prevent the Creeks from seeking redress. When the government sent an agent to the cluster of Cusseta reserves on Tolarnulkarhatchee

⁹⁰ Young, *Redskins, Ruffleshirts, and Rednecks*, 85.

⁹¹ John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 14 May 1835 *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1861), 725-726; Neah Micco and Creeks to Andrew Jackson, 25 August 1835, *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, reel-28, 1397-1403, University of Tennessee.

⁹² John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 2 November 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 549-550, NA.

⁹³ Creek Indians to Andrew Jackson, 27 August 1835, *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, reel-28, 1443, University of Tennessee.

Creek to investigate the frauds, the land speculators told the Creeks not to cooperate because he was an emigrating agent with orders to force them to the Indian territory.⁹⁴ In another case, a different investigating agent ordered the Creeks to Columbus to issue their complaints. The speculators, however, told the Creeks that once they entered into Georgia they would be arrested for outstanding debt and sent to the Indian territory. The Creeks requested the agent come to the Alabama side of the river to meet with them but he refused.⁹⁵

The theft of Creek land was committed on such a large scale by a Columbus land company in 1835 that it resembled an assembly line of fraud and deceit. Witnesses observed that in February 1835, these speculators enticed hundreds of Creeks to act on their behalf and impersonate Creek land owners. One witness described the process, declaring that the a land speculator would

go to the agent's book and take off such locations as he wanted, and that were not certified, the town in which the land lay, and the name of the Indian who owned the location; that he would then go to his camp, and take an Indian that he thought would answer his purpose, and drill him, by learning him the name that he was to answer to, the name of the chief of the town where the land lay, and the situation of the town-house, and such other questions as the agent would be likely to ask.

The land speculators brought upwards of five hundred Creeks, enticed by cornmeal and bacon to the woods near the certifying agency in Chambers County. The Indians, according to witnesses, were divided into groups, each controlled by a different land

⁹⁴ John B. Hogan to Lewis Cass, 8 March 1836, *American State Papers* Vol. VI: Military Affairs, 751-753; Residents of Chambers County to Andrew Jackson, 8 April 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 648-649; Robert McHenry to Lewis Cass, 22 July 1835, *American State Papers*, VI, Military Affairs, 664.

⁹⁵ Neah Micco and Creeks to Andrew Jackson, 25 August 1835, *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, reel-28, 1397-1403, University of Tennessee.

speculator all of whom worked in concert in order to fraudulently acquire Creek land.⁹⁶ Other, less corrupt land speculators indignantly railed against the Columbus company noting that ““they have rogued it and whored it among the Indians”” for large swaths of land. ““The harvest is nearly over,”” lamented one speculator not with the Columbus company, ““and perhaps there will never be another such a one.””⁹⁷

The land frauds were so pervasive that they found their way into the popular culture of the time. Johnson Jones Hooper immortalized the role of land speculators and the Creek land frauds in the life of his fictional character Simon Suggs. Hooper described how a Creek land reserve was acquired by marrying a headman’s daughter then leaving her once the land was certified. For his part, Suggs, whose motto was “it is good to be shifty in a new country,” was able to acquire a Creek widow’s land then turn it over to another speculator for a profit.⁹⁸

It was not just the land frauds that made the 1832 Treaty of Washington a flawed document. A majority of the Creeks were forced upon land that was considered to be of poor quality. Only one-fifth, or approximately 960,000 acres of the Creek Nation in Alabama, was considered good land. But, the 6,696 sections and half-sections comprised a total of 2,187,200 acres. This meant that well over half of the Creeks were confined to poor agricultural land once the reserves were assigned after 1833 and 1834. In some cases, entire towns were located on poor land. The Kialigee reserves, for instance, were

⁹⁶ Examination of John S. Green, 16 January 1837, *The New American State Papers*, Indian Affairs, Vol. 9 (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1972), 68; Deposition of Arnold Seale, *The New American State Papers*, Indian Affairs, Vol. 10 (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1972), 57.

⁹⁷ Young, *Redskins, Ruffleshirts, and Rednecks*, 86.

⁹⁸ Johnson Jones Hooper, *Adventures of Captain Simon Suggs Late of the Tallapoosa Volunteers* (Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson and Brothers, 1846), 12, 69-81.

situated “in the most barren and secluded part of the nation.” In previous generations, whenever land became exhausted or was no longer of use to the Creeks, they abandoned the area and sought new ground. Although the Creeks maintained a spiritual connection to their land, they were also very pragmatic in the way in which they sought out better parcels when older land no longer met their needs. But after 1834, the Creeks were no longer able to move around. Creek families were “confined,” as Opothle Yoholo noted, to their half-section. The Creeks could no longer search for better tracts of farming or grazing land without encroaching upon another person’s reserve.⁹⁹

There can be no denying that, from the government’s standpoint, the 1832 Treaty of Washington was a boon. Although they did not condone the actions of the white speculators, government officials including Andrew Jackson, had hoped that the Creeks would sell their reserves to white citizens. Officials knew that while the Creeks were excellent at determining the quality of a piece of land, they were completely ignorant as to its monetary value. But, government officials questioned whether the Creeks would even learn what the monetary value of their land would be within the five year time period.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, most Creeks had no experience with land titles or how they worked. That is why the treaty included a stipulation that required government oversight of Creek land sales for five years. But, there were always more speculators than officials overseeing the transactions. Moreover, the primary avenue of redress, the eastern Creek

⁹⁹ John J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 11 November 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 144-148, NA; Opothle Yoholo and Creeks to Andrew Jackson, 13 June 1835, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-224, 273-281, NA; Young, *Redskins, Ruffleshirts, and Rednecks*, 74; Return J. Meigs to Lewis Cass, 26 September 1834, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 446-450, NA.

¹⁰⁰ Lewis Cass to John J. Abert, 16 November 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 119-123, NA.

Agency, was closed on December 31, 1832.¹⁰¹ Jackson also dismissed Creek agent John Crowell. The 1832 Treaty of Washington was a document that allowed whites to divide and conquer the Creek Indians. Stymied and frustrated in its attempts to circumvent the Creek National Council and aware of the death sentence handed down to Creeks who ceded land illegally, the treaty broke the Creek Nation into manageable parts. There was no longer one National Council to deal with, there were 6,696 potential sellers.

* * *

The 1832 Treaty of Washington was a last-ditch effort to preserve Creek lifeways in the face of white encroachment and the pressures to voluntarily emigrate. Creek headmen believed that their future was so uncertain that they were willing to dissolve the sovereignty of the Creek Nation in favor of legal title to their land. It was a stunning admission that in order to survive, the Creeks had to adopt white conceptions of land ownership. The Creeks, who were continually disappointed that the sovereign claims to their land had historically been disregarded by whites, ceded their land in the hope that whites would finally respect a deed or title. Sadly, the limitations of the 1832 Treaty of Washington and the government's unwillingness to enforce all the stipulations were apparent within months of its ratification. Lower Creek chief Neah Micco discovered this and, in an impassioned letter to Secretary of War Lewis Cass, complained that

¹⁰¹ John Robb to Leonard Tarrant, 22 November 1832, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-9, 382, NA; Lewis Cass to Neah Micco, 21 December 1832, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-9, 434-444, NA.

“instead of our situation, being relieved, as was anticipated, we are distressed in a ten fold manner.”¹⁰²

¹⁰² Neah Micco to Lewis Cass, 27 September 1832, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-223, 95-97, NA.

Five

Voluntary Emigration Resumed

1833-1836

*“The weather is so severe on the little children and old persons
and some of them nearly naked”*

—John Page, Emigrating Agent, 1834

The failure of the 1832 Treaty of Washington was yet another devastating blow to the Creeks. The United States government’s inability or unwillingness to prevent the widespread land frauds rendered a once-promising treaty virtually useless. As a result, life became increasingly stressful for most, if not all of the Creek Indians. Thousands of Creeks waited for recompense for their stolen land, while government officials bickered amongst themselves over what exactly constituted fraud. The government was also understaffed forcing many Creeks to wait years for justice that, in many cases, never came. In the face of these pressures, the government reconvened federally-sponsored voluntary emigration which had been halted under President Jackson’s orders in 1830. Despite their best efforts, however, federal officials could only coax approximately five hundred Creeks to voluntarily emigrate in 1834 and about five hundred more emigrants in 1835. The remaining 20,000 Creeks were resolute in their decision to remain behind on their land reserves to which, in reality, they held onto with only the faintest of legal guarantees.

* * *

The 1832 Treaty of Washington lifted Andrew Jackson's ban on government sponsorship of voluntary emigrating parties. Jackson hoped that the Creeks would quickly sell their reserve and emigrate west, and many Creeks were selling their reserves as soon as they were located. In late 1832 Chilly McIntosh was appointed an emigrating agent and authorized to conduct a party of Creeks west. McIntosh's cousin, former Georgia governor George M. Troup, personally endorsed the application.¹ The government granted McIntosh authority to enroll and remove all the Creeks he could, although they never gave him more than lukewarm support for his endeavor. In fact, Secretary of War Lewis Cass confessed that he was unaware of the full scope of McIntosh's plans.² For his part, McIntosh believed that because many Creeks were on the edge of starvation, were victimized by local grog shops, and had sold their reserves or were induced to sell their reserves by speculators, that perhaps a few thousand would emigrate under his charge. By May 1833, McIntosh had established provision depots and "mortgaged his whole private fortune for means to defray his expenses," yet had only enrolled about three hundred emigrants. As a result, McIntosh was "very destitute of funds" and the Creeks he enrolled were "in a state of suffering." McIntosh needed

¹ Elbert Herring to Lewis Cass, 11 January 1833, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-9, 477-478, NA.

² Lewis Cass to J.J. Abert, 28 May 1833, United States Congress, Senate Document 512, *Correspondence on the Subject of the Emigrating Indians*, 23rd Congress, 2nd Session, Serial Set 245, Vol. 3, 703-705.

government support for the emigration, he argued, or “his life was hazarded.” McIntosh noted that “he had acted in accordance with his authority, and if it were now withdrawn he would be viewed as one who had deceived his friends.” But, McIntosh did not have enough money to emigrate those he enrolled.³ In addition to the lack of progress McIntosh had in enrolling Creeks, the government came to believe that the cost of his emigration would be much higher than if the emigrants were moved under a regular government agent. As a result, McIntosh was ordered to stop collecting more emigrants, although he could proceed with moving the Creeks he had already enrolled.⁴

But, while the federal government may have questioned the efficacy of a McIntosh-led party, Secretary of War Lewis Cass gave another reason for limiting the scope of McIntosh’s emigration. Reiterating the opposition to removing only small numbers of Creeks at a time, the Jackson Administration believed that McIntosh’s party and others like it, would “increase, rather than diminish” the difficulty in compelling the entire Creek population to move west. This, in fact, may give some insight into Jackson’s decision to stop all government-sponsored emigrations in 1830. Cass noted that most of the Creeks who chose to voluntarily emigrate were “unimportant” players in Creek affairs, while all of the principal headmen capable of convincing large numbers of Creeks to emigrate west, were decidedly opposed to removal. But, if all the Creeks who wanted to emigrate did so, Cass believed, then “the friends of the emigrating system

³ J.J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 18 May 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 372-378, NA; Letter to Chilly McIntosh, 18 May 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 395, NA; Eli Shorter to Lewis Cass, 20 April 1833, Senate Document 512, 23/2 (245) Vol. 4, 187-188.

⁴ J.J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 12 June 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 70-89, NA; Elbert Herring to Chilly McIntosh, 4 May 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 393, NA.

would be gone, and its enemies would remain,” with “additional influence.” The Jackson Administration believed that “if the whole tribe remain together, they will soon perceive the necessity of removing, and a wholesome public opinion will operate in effecting [removal].”⁵ This was wishful thinking, however.

In addition, there were probably other reasons the government curtailed McIntosh’s operation. McIntosh reportedly went on a two day drinking and gambling binge. Moreover, a reputed gambler loitered around the camp and attempted to win the Creeks’ money as well as the money the government gave McIntosh for the cost of the emigration. Only the arrest of the gambler and the removal of the encampment across the Alabama River prevented the Creeks from losing all of their money. Still, observers noted that, “McIntosh and all the Indians, men, women [and] children, were drunk.” As a result, many Creeks deserted the general rendezvous and returned home.⁶ Others noted that because McIntosh was heavily in debt, money he received from the federal government would be seized by his creditors.⁷ Others accused McIntosh of working with land speculators in order to gain power-of-attorney over the emigrants’ land reserves. McIntosh, who was called “the dupe or the tool” of “heartless speculators,” along with a number of his hired sub-agents, reportedly used every argument to convince the Creeks to emigrate. Rumors swirled that these speculators had convinced a number of Creeks that wagons filled with silver would be distributed to them opposite West Point, Georgia if

⁵ Lewis Cass to J.J. Abert, 28 May 1833, Senate Document 512, 23/2 (245) Vol. 3, 703-705.

⁶ John Milton to Lewis Cass, 18 June 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 396-399, NA; United States Indian Department to Chilly McIntosh, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-4, 919, NA.

⁷ J.J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 9/12 June 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 70-89, NA.

they emigrated. Subsequently, many Creeks went to collect their share of the silver that never arrived. In order to sustain the lie, the disappointed Creeks were then reportedly told that “the vast wealth contained in the vaults of the Columbus Banks (Georgia) are kept in reserve for them.”⁸

Despite initially enrolling three hundred people, only sixty-two emigrants, twenty-one of whom were slaves, ultimately moved west.⁹ The party left in September 1833 and traveled by land, although a number of slaves belonging to the McIntosh party reportedly were conducted by Benjamin Hawkins the previous spring. Their exact route remains unclear although a Grayson family slave, who emigrated with his own resources, overtook the party at the White River and accompanied them for two weeks before reaching Dardanelle and going off on his own. After the party arrived west, the government discovered that their apprehensions about McIntosh were well founded. Those that emigrated with McIntosh complained that he did not provide regular provisions to the emigrants. Cholar Fixico, one of the emigrants, stated that he “never received any rations, during the whole year” but received a due bill from McIntosh for his years’ subsistence, which could instead be exchanged for goods.¹⁰ When he did provide

⁸ Enoch Parsons to Elbert Herring, 7 June 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-223, 1025-1027, NA.

⁹ Jacob Brown to George Gibson, 3 January 1834, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 40, NA; Sixty Creeks accompanied McIntosh in September, two emigrants went the previous June, see John Campbell to Elbert Herring, 18 December 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 385, NA; The two emigrants may have been brought west in June by Benjamin Hawkins, see John Campbell to Elbert Herring, 4 September 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 382-383, NA.

¹⁰ John Van Horne to George Gibson, 7 May 1834, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 186-187, NA; John Van Horne to Jacob Brown, 25 December 1833, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-4, 931, NA; Also see John Van Horne to Jacob Brown, 18 December 1833,

rations McIntosh was inconsistent at best. Some reported that while McIntosh provided provisions regularly early on, the issuance of food became more irregular over the course of the year. In fact, some complained that they sometimes went a month without receiving food.¹¹ Considering this, it is not surprising that eight emigrants died either during the forty-two day journey or shortly after arriving in the west.¹² In fact, government agents observed that the Creeks brought over by McIntosh were “in a starving condition.”¹³

Despite the failure of McIntosh’s emigrating party, the government proceeded with plans for another voluntary emigration in 1834. In many ways, the timing seemed perfect. Most of the Creeks had received their land reserves by 1834 and many had sold them for much-needed money. For those Creeks who were cheated out of their land, the government, no doubt, believed the controversy would help drive even more emigrants frustrated at the state of affairs, from the former Creek Nation. Indeed, after canvassing the Lower Creek reserves, agents believed that three to five thousand Creeks would emigrate. With the announcement, the government again issued warnings to the leading chiefs and headmen not to interfere with the enrollment process or prevent would-be

Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-4, 921, NA.

¹¹ John Van Horne to George Gibson, April 1834, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 188-191, NA.

¹² “Chilly McIntosh’s muster roll,” 25 December 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 421-423, NA, notes eight deaths; Also see A Muster Roll of Emigrants, 12 December 1833, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-4, 934, NA.

¹³ John Van Horne to George Gibson, April 1834, RG-75, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 188-191, NA.

emigrants from coming into camp. Page reported that as a result of the warning, “some of [the Creek headmen] were so mad and so excited that they actually turned pale.”¹⁴

Despite their bold predictions, the agents had great difficulty convincing many Creeks to enroll. Creek headmen continued to threaten and attack potential emigrants which greatly hindered enrollment. In other cases, Creeks who had sold their land, particularly the Yuchis, were told by the whites that they could remain on their land as long as they pleased. This, no doubt, was allowed so the whites could continue to trade with the Creeks.¹⁵ Many Creeks desirous of emigrating west, refused to do so until their land fraud cases were adjudicated. Moreover, Alexander Hill, who was appointed Special Agent to Superintend the Emigration of Creek Indians, wasted a great deal of time trying to convince Upper Creeks to emigrate despite the fact that the government had had little success there previously.¹⁶ The Upper Creeks, less affected by the treaties of Indian Springs and Washington, were in a much better situation than the Lower Creeks. The Upper towns were also less affected by white encroachment and appear not to have been victimized by land speculators to the same degree as the Lower Creeks.¹⁷ Finally, bad decisions limited the number of enrollees. For instance, Hill established enrollment camps in remote locations far removed from any would-be emigrants. Hill oversaw the enrollment of the Creeks in Alabama, while John Page, who was previously

¹⁴ John Page to George Gibson, 15 September 1834, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1861), 763-764.

¹⁵ John Page to George Gibson, 15 September 1834, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 109-112, NA.

¹⁶ John Page to George Gibson, 7 November 1834, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 114-116, NA; For appointment see Lewis Cass to Alexander Hill, 11 July 1834, RG-75, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 159, NA.

¹⁷ J.J. Abert to Lewis Cass, 9/12 June 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Reserves, M-234, reel-241, 70-89, NA.

an emigrating agent for the Choctaw removal, was appointed to accompany the party west. Page, who complained often about the ineffectiveness of Hill, visited one of the enrollment camps in Fort Hull, Alabama. Upon arriving, Page discovered an enrolling agent, assistant agent, interpreter, and two five-horse wagon teams but only one Creek Indian enrolled. This camp had been operational for three weeks.¹⁸

Agents tried to convince as many Creeks as they could to emigrate through the late summer and fall of 1834. The government ordered the agents not to move the party unless they had collected at least two thousand emigrants. But the small number of enrollees frustrated Hill who delayed the emigration for almost two months in order to collect more Creeks. As winter approached, however, many Creeks who had already enrolled had second thoughts about traveling overland in the cold. Subsequently, a number of emigrants, who had already signed up to emigrate, deserted the encampments and returned home.¹⁹ But, despite the small number of emigrants, it was too late to suspend the emigration until spring. Hill had already collected 286 emigrants and sent them to the rendezvous at Centreville. Two hundred-sixty emigrants collected by Page, were in camp near Fort Mitchell. Despite Page's protestations, the emigrants would travel over land in the dead of winter.²⁰

¹⁸ John Page to George Gibson, 7 November 1834, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 114-116, NA.

¹⁹ John Page to George Gibson, 6 January 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 135-137, NA; John Page to George Gibson, 1 May 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 147-150.

²⁰ John Page to George Gibson, 3 December 1834, RG-75, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 118-119, NA; John Page to George Gibson, 25 April 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 140-146, NA; John Page to George Gibson, 1 May 1835,

Most of the emigrants that remained behind in camp in December 1834 were among the poorest inhabitants of the former Creek Nation and the ones desperate enough to endure the risk of traveling west in the winter. In fact, many of these emigrants probably had little to return to in Alabama. Most had likely sold or been cheated out of their reserve and probably had not planted or harvested any crops. Subsequently, Page issued provisions over a few weeks to about 170 Creeks from “poor families.”²¹ Page observed that “the weather is getting so cold,” and that “what few are going are generally verry poor and destitute of clothing and it would be a prudent and humane act to give it up untill spring.”²²

Not all of the emigrants were poor, however. John Stidham, a prominent Lower Creek of the Sawokli town who had opposed William McIntosh at Indian Springs, emigrated with his wife and twenty-six of his slaves. Four other Stidham heads-of-families appear on the emigration muster roll, as do members of the Marshall family, and four McIntosh slaves. Also appearing on the muster roll was Sampson Grayson, a Creek Indian from a prominent Hillabee family, and thirty-four of his slaves. Sandy Grayson, who emigrated with six family members and William Grayson, who traveled with eight

Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 147-150, NA.

²¹ John Page to George Gibson, 7 November 1834, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 114-116, NA.

²² John Page to George Gibson, 3 December 1834, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 118-119, NA; John Page to George Gibson, 4 December 1834, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 121-122, NA.

family members, also accompanied the party. One hundred-fifteen slaves accompanied the wealthy Creek emigrants.²³

Once the emigrants from Fort Mitchell arrived at Centreville, the party consisted of 530 individuals. Accompanying the emigrants were 213 of their horses and twelve large baggage wagons. The party left Centreville and crossed the Cahaba River on December 26, 1834. Most of the emigrants, Page observed, were “in a dreadful situation to move in the cold weather.”²⁴ The party crossed Hurricane Creek and moved toward the state’s capital at Tuscaloosa. While encamped at Tuscaloosa, the Creeks were invited into the state house and seated in chairs “arranged around the hall below the lower tier of desks.” Eufaula Harjo, who had earlier bid farewell to Alabama’s senators, addressed the representatives from his seat which was recorded in the *Huntsville Democrat*.²⁵ Speaking slowly, in a “low and subdued” voice in the Muscogee language, the chief was interpreted by one of the members of the Grayson family. Eufaula Harjo told the politicians that “in these lands of Alabama, which have been my forefather’s, where their

²³ Muster Roll of John Page, RG-75, E-299, Box-2, Vol.-8, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; For Stidham’s role at the Treaty of Indian Springs see Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 87.

²⁴ John Page to George Gibson, 6 January 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 134-137, NA; John Page’s muster roll shows 630 emigrants including 115 slaves. The roll also shows those emigrants who deserted, see John Page Muster Roll, NA, RG-75, E-299, Box-2, Vol.-8, National Archives, Washington, D.C; number of ponies and wagons from Abstract of Disbursements of John Page, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-184, Year-1836, Agent-Page, Account number-20,726-A, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

²⁵ The headman’s name was Eufaula Harjo see John Page to George Gibson, 27 April 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 157-160, NA.

bones lie buried, I see that the Indian fires are going out—they must soon be extinguished. New fires are lighting in the west—and we will go there.”²⁶

From Tuscaloosa the party moved in a northwestern direction to the town of Columbus, Mississippi. The two month delay nearly crippled the party and the emigrants were forced to travel in harsh weather conditions. From Centreville to Columbus, Page observed that it was “almost impossible to get along, the roads are almost impassable. We have labored from day light till long after dark to get some days 6 miles . . . it has rained and hailed almost every day.” The conditions strained the party and Page noted that “the cold weather is so severe on the little children and old persons and some of them nearly naked that they would perish if they were not attended to. We have to stop the waggons to take the children out and warm them and put them back again 6 or 7 times in a day . . . I wrap them in tents and any thing I can get hold of to keep them from freezing; five or six in each waggon constantly crying in consequence of suffering with cold.”²⁷

²⁶ The full speech as recorded in *Niles' Weekly Register*, 24 January 1835 is as follows: “I come brothers to see the great house of Alabama, and the men that make the laws, and tell them farewell in brotherly kindness before I go to the far west, where my people are now going. I did think at one time that the white man wanted to oppress my people and drive them from their homes by compelling them to obey the laws that they did not understand—but I have now become satisfied that they are not unfriendly towards us, but that they wish us well. In these lands of Alabama, which have been my forefather’s, where their bones lie buried, I see that the Indian fires are going out—they must soon be extinguished. New fires are lighting in the west—and we will go there. I do now believe that our great father, the president, intends no harm to the red men—but wishes them well. He has promised us homes and hunting ground in the far west, where he tells us the red men shall be protected. We will go. We leave behind our good will to the people of Alabama, who build the great houses, and to the men who make the laws. This is all I have to say—I came to say farewell to the wise men who make the laws, and to wish them peace and happiness in the country which my forefathers owned and which I now leave to go to other homes in the west. I leave the graves of my fathers—but the Indian fires are going out—almost clean gone—and new fires are lighted there for us. There are two houses of the men who make the laws—I have already bid farewell to the other house—I now bid farewell to you, and wish not only you but all the people of Alabama, to be happy and prosperous. I leave you in friendship and good will. I have nothing more to say.”

²⁷ John Page to George Gibson, 6 January 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 135-137, NA.

From Columbus, the party moved north along the Tombigbee River before crossing the Buttahatchee River. The party then turned to the northwest toward Memphis, crossing the Tombigbee and Tallahatchie rivers.²⁸ While passing through the Chickasaw Nation in Mississippi, “a considerable number” of Creeks deserted the party. In fact, many of the emigrants had planned on only emigrating as far as the Chickasaw Nation. Page pleaded with them to continue with the party but they “Slip’d off in the night.” Other Creeks, however, chose to remain behind in the Chickasaw Nation in protest once they discovered that they would not receive their rifles and blankets in Memphis. Eufaula Harjo complained to Page that the Creeks were promised many things by Alexander Hill and he had not delivered on those promises.²⁹

Once in Memphis, Page divided the party into two. The steamboat *Henry Hill* and a keelboat were procured to take the emigrants down the Mississippi River, while seventy-two Creeks accompanied the horses through the Mississippi Swamp. While the swamp was inundated with water for most of the year, in January and February 1834, this water had turned to ice. All who traveled through it suffered. In fact, Page noted that “some places [the sub-agent] cut the ice sufficiently wide to drive [the horses] through other places was so wide they had to tie their legs and pull them over.”³⁰ The party continued westward, crossing Blackfish Lake, the St. Francis River, and Rock Row,

²⁸ Abstract of Disbursements of John Page, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-184, Year-1836, Agent-Page, Account number-20,726-A, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

²⁹ John Page to George Gibson, 27 April 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 151-154, NA; For those who deserted near Memphis see Muster Roll, RG-75, E-299, Box-2, Volume-8, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

³⁰ John Page to George Gibson, 25 April 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 140-146, NA; *Arkansas Advocate*, 28 November 1834.

before stopping at Mary Black's public house on the prairie.³¹ Black's settlement was a popular stopover among travelers passing between Little Rock and Memphis. One traveler described her as "a widow of goodly proportions: I have seen fatter women, but not many." The public house was a log building consisting of "two rooms from ten to twenty feet apart, the whole under one roof." One of the rooms was a dining room while the other was a bedroom that contained four single beds. In the rear of the public house was the kitchen and quarters of Mary Black and her family.³²

The emigrants on the *Henry Hill* were not spared from the weather either. The steamboat was detained two or three days on the Mississippi River as a result of high winds. Once the steamboat entered the Arkansas River, ice and sand bars delayed the emigrants by "several days." In fact, a five-mile stretch of the Arkansas River was completely frozen over and the party was detained for two and a half days while the agents attempted to break up the ice. Page cut a number of trees along the riverbanks, hoping that their weight would get the river flowing. The captain even ran the boat into the ice to dislodge it. After breaking the ice sufficiently to allow the *Henry Hill* to continue ascending the river, the water party arrived at Little Rock on February 24.³³

The water party remained in Little Rock for about a week. During this time, the land party, a few days behind, arrived and reconnoitered with the other emigrants. Due to

³¹ Abstract of Disbursements of John Page, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-184, Year-1836, Agent-Page, Account number-20,726-A, National Archives II, College Park, MD; *Arkansas Gazette*, 24 February 1835.

³² George A. McCall, *Letters From the Frontiers* (1868, reprint; Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1974), 280-281.

³³ Jacob Brown to George Gibson, 1 March 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 240-246, NA; John Page to George Gibson, 25 April 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 140-146, NA.

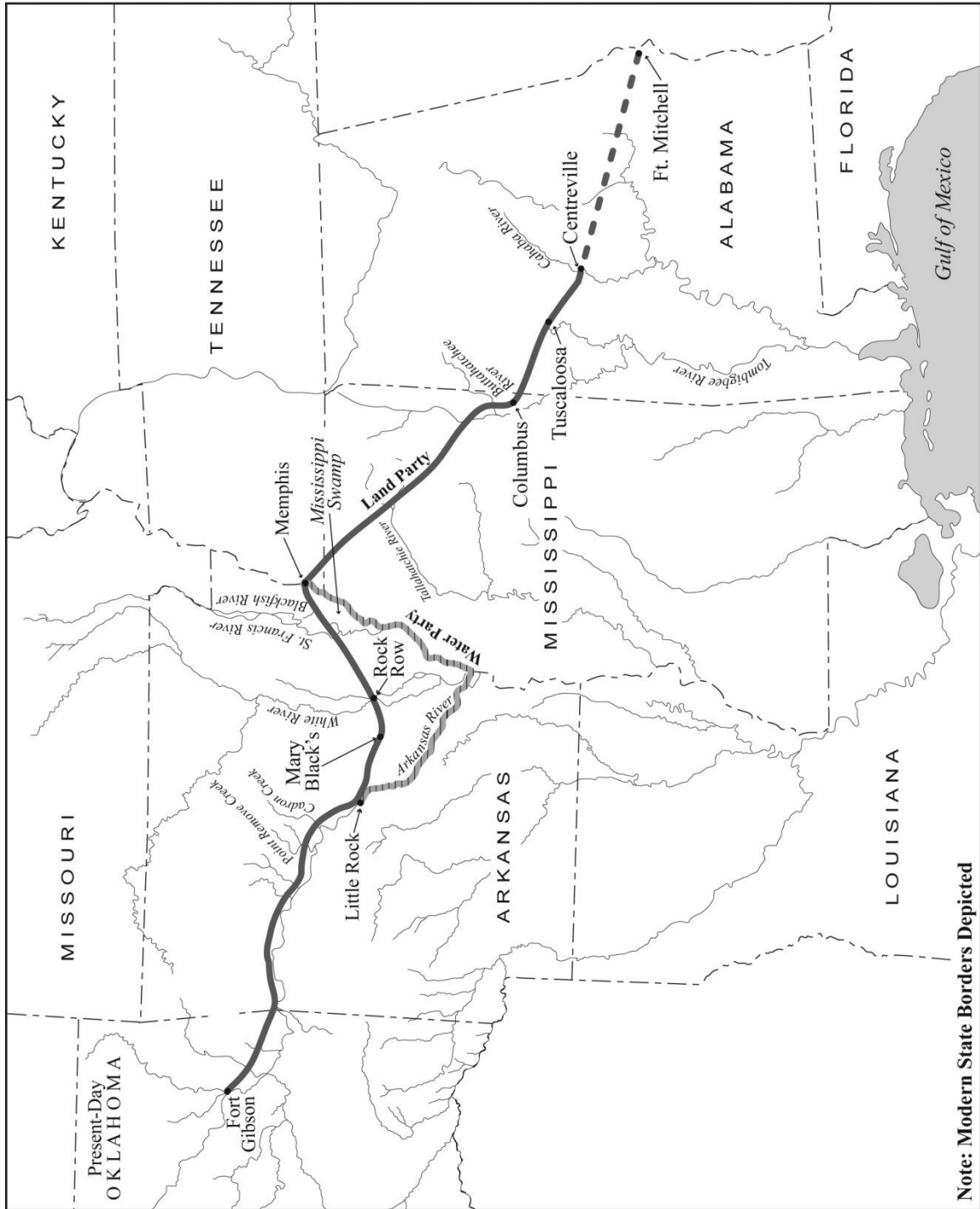
the extreme cold and the fact that many of the emigrants had little clothing, many of the emigrants were sick. Agents, in fact, reported that “two or three have died.” On March 1, 1835, the party left Little Rock and moved westward. Because of the difficulty navigating the Arkansas River beyond Little Rock, all the emigrants traveled by land. The extreme cold strained the Creeks and their slaves. The weather was so cold that agents had to thaw the tents and blankets each morning before they could roll them up and place them in the wagons. The party also stopped a number of times along the route to build fires in order to warm the children and sick emigrants as well as to dry the blankets that were wrapped around them. Page reported hearing “continual crying from morning until night” from the children who rode along with the sick Creeks on top of the baggage in the wagons.³⁴

Compounding the party’s misery was an outbreak of influenza in the white settlements in Arkansas which “soon got amongst the Indians.” Page noted that “three or four” died as a result. In fact, the muster roll shows that at least five Creeks died after leaving Little Rock. One Creek died on March 3, one on March 7, two died on March 9, and one died on March 12.³⁵ Page, who feared that if the party stayed in one place too long the flu would spread among the other emigrants, decided to outrun the disease. Consequently, the emigrants were hurried along over the frozen ground. The party walked along the north side of the Arkansas River crossing Cadron Creek and Point

³⁴ John Page to George Gibson, 25 April 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 140-146, NA; Jacob Brown to George Gibson, 1 March 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 249-250, NA; Also see *Arkansas Gazette*, 24 February 1835; 3 March 1835.

³⁵ John Page to George Gibson, 25 April 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 140-146, NA; Muster Roll, NA, RG-75, E-299, Box-2, Volume-8, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

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Remove Creek.³⁶ Page noted that “many persons pronounced it murder in the highest degree for me to move Indians or compell them to march in such severe weather when they were dying every day with the influenza.” Page, however, believed that half the party would have died if he had not hurried them along. Making matters worse, “a very severe snow storm” hit the party on March 9, while they were 150 miles from Fort Gibson.³⁷

The party arrived at their destination in the last week of March 1835. Ten emigrants died along the route and these were noted in the margins of Page’s muster roll. Nineteen Creeks deserted the party along the journey.³⁸ Because of familial or clan connections, the emigrants of the 1834 party settled within the densely populated Creek settlements along the north side of the Arkansas River. By 1835, this settlement contained 2,135 Creeks and was so densely populated that it stretched for fifteen to twenty miles.³⁹ Many emigrants did not have the means to settle far beyond Fort Gibson.

Despite the small number of Creeks that emigrated in 1834, federal agents and sub-agents continued to canvass the Upper and Lower towns looking for would-be emigrants. The collection process was stalled, however, by Sampson Grayson, who accompanied the 1834 party, but returned to Alabama in 1835. Grayson alleged that during the emigration the agents had only enough provisions for half of the journey.

³⁶ Abstract of Disbursements of John Page, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-184, Year-1836, Agent-Page, Account number-20,726-A, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

³⁷ John Page to George Gibson, 25 April 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 140-146, NA.

³⁸ Muster Roll, RG-75, Entry-299, Box-2, Volume-8, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

³⁹ J. Van Horne to George Gibson, 7 October 1834, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 211-219, NA; *History of American Missions to the Heathen, From their Commencement to the Present Time* (Worcester: Spooner & Howland, 1840, reprint; Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1970), 547.

Consequently, Grayson contended, the Creeks were forced to pay \$100 for adults and \$50 for children, “and be made slaves to the sugar plantations of Mississippi.”⁴⁰ Grayson also noted that many Creeks died along the route as a result of the “cruel neglect” of the agents and that “their dead bodies were denied the right of sepulture.”⁴¹ It is probable that due to the extreme weather and the frozen ground found along the journey, many of the Creeks who died were not given a proper burial. Grayson’s claims hindered the ability of the government to enroll Creeks for an 1835 emigration. Some Creeks who had already enrolled for removal, refused to go west because of Grayson’s reports.⁴²

Creek enrollment was also stymied by a number of land deals that emerged and were presented to the Creeks as alternatives to the Indian territory. All of these deals were based on speculation with the goal of either acquiring Creek land reserves or turning a profit through land sales. None of the schemes were sanctioned by the federal government. In most cases, the speculators were Creeks themselves who understood the general opposition the Creeks had to emigrating to the Indian territory. For instance, one scheme involved moving the Creeks to Fort Hull, Alabama, where Creek sub-agent William Walker, the late Big Warrior’s son-in-law, owned land. Walker convinced Tuskeneah to relocate his people to this tract of land just south of the Federal Road. Walker, in turn, would exchange his Fort Hull land for valuable Creek reserves.⁴³ It is unclear whether Tuskeneah received a kickback for his support of the Fort Hull land deal.

⁴⁰ Isaac Estell to John B. Hogan, 3 July 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 734.

⁴¹ David Conner to John B. Hogan, n.d., *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 734.

⁴² Isaac Estell to John B. Hogan, 3 July 1835. *American State Papers*. Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 734.

⁴³ John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 3 June 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 726.

Agents reported that Tuskeneah sent a talk to the Eufaula advising them not to emigrate west but to “come and join in his colony.”⁴⁴ The deal, however, was never completed.

The most elaborate scheme involved the Creeks purchasing land in the Mexican territory of Texas. Benjamin Hawkins acted as an intermediary and convinced Opothle Yoholo and his followers to buy a 150 acre tract of Texas land north of Nacogdoches. Hawkins and his partners, who owned stores in the Upper towns and were “large buyers of Indian lands,” stood to profit handsomely if they could place two hundred Creek families on the reserve. Sampson Grayson, still unhappy with the Indian territory, also publicly advocated a move to Texas. In 1834, a delegation of Creeks, including Opothle Yoholo, met Hawkins in Nacogdoches and agreed to settle on the proposed land. During their visit, the Creeks met with bands of Alabamas, Coushattas, Seminoles, and Cherokees who had relocated there.⁴⁵ The Creeks were no strangers to Texas. A large number of Alabama, Coushatta, and Kialigee Creeks had already emigrated there at different times between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁴⁶ Moreover, small bands of Choctaws emigrated to Texas in 1832-1833 only to be joined some Shawnee and Seminole emigrants in 1835.⁴⁷ Hawkins and his partners intended to

⁴⁴ W. Blue to John B. Hogan, 4 August 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol., VI, Military Affairs, 740.

⁴⁵ William Hunter to John B. Hogan, 13 July 1835, *American State Papers*. Vol. VI; Military Affairs, 736; John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 9 May 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 724-725; Creek Indians to Andrew Jackson, 13 June 1835, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-224, 273-281, NA; Also see Kenneth Wiggins Porter, “The Hawkins’ Negroes go to Mexico: A Footnote from Tradition,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 24:1 (1946), 55-58; William Bollaert, “Observations on the Indian Tribes in Texas,” *Journal of the Ethnological Society of London*. Vol. 2 (1850), 262-283.

⁴⁶ Sheri Marie Shuck-Hall, *Journey to the West: The Alabama and Coushatta Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008); Self-emigration claims, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-285, M-574, reel-77, 33, 52-71, 81, NA.

⁴⁷ Arthur H. DeRosier, Jr., *The Removal of the Choctaw Indians* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1970), 158.

purchase the Texas land from a Mexican national for \$60,000 and then sell it to the Creeks for \$100,000.⁴⁸

Texas was an attractive option to Opothle Yoholo because it was outside of the jurisdiction of the United States and it appeared to be healthier than the Indian territory. In fact, a number of Indians who had emigrated there years earlier, wrote to the Creeks and underscored the benefits of moving to Texas. In 1833, the chiefs and headmen of the Coushatta and Alabama towns sent a communiqué to the Creeks in Alabama in which they stated that they “doe sympathize with their brethren in their oppression by the Federal Government of the United States and doe recommend to their brethren to leave the United States and doe recommend them to emigrate to the province of Texas” where they “may become powerful [and] happy as we were once want to be before we left you.” The Alabama and Coushatta headmen also boasted that “our Country abounds in all kinds of game.”⁴⁹ Soon after this letter was written, a number of Creek headmen petitioned Lewis Cass to emigrate to the Mexican province. They emphasized the unhealthiness of the Indian territory by noting that “the inclemency of the winter season is so severe . . . [that the elderly] could never endure its piercing cold. The scarcity and unwholesomeness of the water is also another formidable objection to that country.”⁵⁰ For his part, Opothle Yoholo was adamant in his refusal to emigrate to the Indian territory and noted “that their women and children would all die there” and “that if the

⁴⁸ John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 9 May 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 724-725; Jack Gregory and Rennard Strickland, *Sam Houston with the Cherokees, 1829-1833* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 149-150.

⁴⁹ “To the Chiefs [and] head men of the different Towns of the Creek [and] Seminole Nation,” February 1833, MS-158, folder-5, Vermont Historical Society.

⁵⁰ Creek headmen to Lewis Cass, 17 April 1833, MS-158, folder-5, Vermont Historical Society.

United States intended to force his people away to Arkansas they might do so, but they must cut his throat before they could remove his body there.”⁵¹ Emigrating to the Indian territory, Opothle Yoholo feared, “promises nothing better than the final extinction of our race.”⁵²

In 1835, Opothle Yoholo traveled to New Orleans by steamboat carrying \$23,000. The money was borrowed from a speculator in exchange for a draft, signed by all the Upper headmen, for \$32,000. At New Orleans, the money was handed over to the Texas land speculators as a down payment on their reserve. The balance on the price of the Texas land, \$77,000, was to come out of the Tuckabatchee annuity or in exchange for the headmen’s full sections of land, which were considered to be “immensely valuable.”⁵³ But, the plan never got off the ground because it was illegal under a treaty signed with Mexico in 1831 that forbade Indians residing in either nation from crossing the border. Opothle Yoholo and the Tuckabatchees, however, did not get their money back and quickly fell into debt.⁵⁴

In the face of these pervasive problems, many Creeks chose to flee the former Creek Nation and settle amongst the Cherokees. The Creeks believed that they could have a permanent home in the Cherokee Nation. As a result, agents estimated that there

⁵¹ John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 8 April 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 723-724.

⁵² Creek Indians to Andrew Jackson, 13 June 1835, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-224, 273-281, NA.

⁵³ John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 9 May 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 724-725.

⁵⁴ John B. Hogan to Lewis Cass, 8 March 1836, *American State Papers*. Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 751-753; *Niles’ Weekly Register*, 7 November 1835, notes that it was \$20,000; Also see Gregory and Strickland, *Sam Houston with the Cherokees*, 149-150; Edward R. Roustio, ed., *Early Indian Missions: As Reflected in the Unpublished Manuscripts of Isaac McCoy*, (Springfield: Particular Baptist Press, 2000), 276.

were about twelve hundred Creeks living amongst the Cherokees “and their numbers daily increasing.”⁵⁵ Many of these refugees settled in the mountains of north Georgia but some Creeks moved as far northwest as North Carolina. Witnesses in Georgia observed that many Creeks brought along their cattle, hogs, and other property with the intent of creating a new town.⁵⁶ A Moravian missionary in Murray County, Georgia, wrote in her diary that a group of Creeks who had been living among the Cherokees for several weeks came to hear a talk by a missionary even though they were not fluent in the language. The missionary noted that the Creeks fled to Murray County to escape famine and “white oppression” in the former Creek Nation despite the fact that the Cherokees also suffered from a great scarcity of food.⁵⁷

There were also Creeks who wanted to emigrate to the Chickasaw Nation. Two hundred-thirty six Creeks from various towns including Echesehoga, which according to the 1832 census was comprised of Creeks from Thlakatchka and was located “on the waters of the Tallapoosa,” notified President Andrew Jackson that they intended to emigrate among the Chickasaws. The Creeks claimed that “they are all our family connections.” In the spring of 1833, the Creeks sent a delegation to the Chickasaw headmen and obtain their permission to settle amongst them. This was granted. It is possible that the Creeks who escaped into the Chickasaw Nation were members of this band.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Henry Vandeburgh to John Hogan, 11 July 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI; Military Affairs, 736.

⁵⁶ Z.B. Hargrove to William Schley, 6 March 1836, Creek Indian Letters, Talks, and Treaties, 1705-1839, Part 4, 1267, Georgia Archives.

⁵⁷ April 1836, Moravian Missionary Diaries, Murray County, GA, 12, Georgia Archives.

⁵⁸ Testimony of Creek Indians, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 411-413, NA.

Creek support of these land deals, as well as the large numbers of Creeks moving permanently into the Cherokee and Chickasaw nations, shows the degree to which the Creeks were divided during this tumultuous period. Agents noted that by 1835 the Creeks “were divided into three parties and all opposed to each other.” Some Creeks wanted to move to Texas, some to the Indian territory, and the rest wanted to stay in Alabama.⁵⁹ As the Creeks grew more desperate, they began mapping out their own plans for survival. Opothle Yoholo, for instance, did all he could to disrupt Tuskeneah’s plans to emigrate to Fort Hull, while Tuskeneah tried to prevent Opothle Yoholo from selling certain reserves granted under the treaty.⁶⁰ But, even among Creeks who wanted to remain in Alabama, there was some controversy over whether to live peaceably on their land, or resort to violence.

There is no doubt that many Lower Creeks grew more militant during the year 1835. Much of this was the result of the land frauds and starvation found in the former Creek Nation. Some of the threats were over emigration. One Creek Indian, in fact, threatened a sub-agent with death if he attempted to remove him from his land.⁶¹ A number of whites in the former Creek Nation fled their homes in fear.⁶² Some of the threats were in response to violence perpetrated on the Creeks by white settlers. But,

⁵⁹ John Page to Elbert Herring, 28 June 1835, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-224, 231-232, NA.

⁶⁰ Agents believed that the division amongst the Creeks was, in part, the work of land speculators who were actively trying to acquire Creek reserves, see W. Blue to John B. Hogan, 4 August 1835, *American States Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 740; John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 12 October 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 741-742; John B. Hogan to Lewis Cass, 8 March 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 751-753.

⁶¹ John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 9 May 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI; Military Affairs, 724-725.

⁶² John Gayle to John B. Hogan, 18 May 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 727.

most of the violence in 1835 occurred when the Creeks crossed into Georgia. Many continued to steal the settlers' livestock, but other Creeks were emboldened enough to commit a number of home invasions as well. Many white Georgians reported having clothing and cookery stolen by the Creeks. In some instances, the Creeks killed the white resident before looting their homes. One of the more prominent settlers killed was a former Georgia legislator from Appling County. Resistance also included vandalism. A Georgia woman complained that some Creeks had raided her home and took a large quantity of her possessions but not before grabbing her two featherbeds, ripping them apart, and dumping the feathers into a nearby pond.⁶³ The violence also became more coordinated. When twenty whites pursued a number of Creeks suspected of killing livestock, they were met by an ambush of twenty other Indians who engaged them in battle. Later, seven Creeks "stole a negro man" and were pursued by eleven whites who were ambushed by approximately fifty Creeks.⁶⁴ White Georgians also complained about the Creeks who had fled to the Cherokee Nation. The Georgians accused the Creeks not only of "robbing and plundering" local citizens but of attempting to form an alliance with the Cherokees in order to help them "in killing up the white people, and taking their lands back again." Since the Creeks arrived in north Georgia, the whites noted that "the Cherokees have become much more impudent and hostile than they were before."⁶⁵

⁶³ H.R. Ward to Wilson Lumpkin, 14 March 1835, Creek Indian Letters, Talks, and Treaties, Part 4, 1191-1195, Georgia Archives.

⁶⁴ *Niles' Weekly Register*, 21 February 1835; *North Alabamian*, 18 February 1835.

⁶⁵ Wilson Lumpkin, *The Removal of the Cherokee Indians from Georgia: His Speeches in the United States Congress on the Indian Question, as Representative and Senator of Georgia; His Official Correspondence on the Removal of the Cherokees during his two terms as Governor of Georgia, and later as United States Commissioner to the Cherokees, 1827-1841, Together with a Sketch of His Life and Conduct while holding many Public Offices under the Government of Georgia and the United States, prior*

The violence alarmed the white residents of Georgia, Alabama, as well as government officials in Washington. The government notified the headmen of the depredations and a sub-agent visited the Creeks while in council at Coosada to demand that the headmen “restrain their people.”⁶⁶ The headmen responded, much as they had in the past, with assurances that they would do all in their power to stop the violence, but reminded the government that their power had been limited by earlier treaties. The headmen seemed to grasp the irony better than government officials when they wrote Secretary of War Lewis Cass and noted that, “you are aware of the fact that we as a nation can do nothing with offenders of this description, but that they are amendable to the laws of the state where the offenses complained of were committed. All we can do is to aid the civil authority, in bringing the offenders to punishment and this much, so far as lies in our power, we will do.”⁶⁷ A few months later, Creek headmen sent another letter to Washington. In a stinging rebuke, the Creeks noted that “many of our white brethren have fraudulently procured our lands . . . and to this end, they tell our Great Father that our people are committing great depredations upon our white brethren—stealing their horses – perpetrating murders [etc.] we submit for our friend, the Sub-Agent, to communicate to him how far these reports differ from the truth. Those who steal our lands, are enemies to us, [and] our people.”⁶⁸

to 1827, and after 1841, Vol. I (Wormsloe [Ga.] Priv. print.; New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1907), 288-289.

⁶⁶ Leonard Tarrant to Elbert Herring, 24 March 1835, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-224, 247, NA.

⁶⁷ Creek Indians to Lewis Cass, 21 March 1835, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-224, 248-249, NA.

⁶⁸ Creek Indians to Andrew Jackson, 13 June 1835, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-224, 273-281, NA.

It is unclear the degree to which the National Council or Creek headmen still exerted influence over their people. The 1832 Treaty of Washington neutralized the Creek National Council to a certain degree. The Creeks no longer were a Nation in the east in a political sense. They were subjects of Alabama and Georgia law. To this extent, the Creek headmen were correct in their argument that those committing depredations were out of their jurisdiction, so to speak. But, on a social level, the National Council and Creek law still reigned supreme. This is highlighted by the fleeing of a Fish Pond family to the Indian territory to escape Creek justice. In 1835, Arpekkoché Emathla led his family of ten individuals westward, without government money or transportation. The reason given for self-emigrating west was “because one of the young men of the family was charged with being too intimate with the wife of another man, and in order to escape punishment, which was severe under the Creek law or custom, the family came to the Territory.”⁶⁹

Creek militancy may have also increasingly been incorporated into Creek culture and ceremony as well. John Howard Payne, who observed a *busk* at Tuckabatchee in 1835, noted that the ceremonies associated with the Green Corn Dance were particularly violent. This was nothing new. Benjamin Hawkins refers to a Gun-Dance performed by Creek women, and James Adair reports of a *busk* in which the Creeks and Southeastern Indians “take up their war-instruments, and fight a mock-battle in a very exact manner.”⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Deposition of Hotulke Mahthla, 8 October 1886, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-285, M-572, Reel-77, 114-115, NA.

⁷⁰ James Adair, *The History of the American Indians Particularly those Nations Adjoining to the Mississippi, East and West Florida, Georgia, South and North Carolina, and Virginia* (London: 1775 [reprint] Nashville: National Society of the Colonial Dames of America, 1953), 116; Benjamin Hawkins, “A Sketch of the Creek Country, in the Years 1798 and 1799” in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins, 1796-1810*, ed., H. Thomas Foster, III (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 75s-78s;

But, neither Hawkins nor Adair give the same attention or detail as Payne's observations in 1835. Payne noted that the ceremony involved an elaborate war dance as well as the stalking and killing of a number of stuffed puppets. Each puppet was stalked or attacked in a different manner; one was kidnapped, another was flung into the air, stabbed with a knife and scalped, the third puppet was tomahawked, and the fourth shot. After the execution of the puppets the Creek war parties began to "fire indiscriminately." Even young Creek boys participated in the festivities by carrying cornstalks that represented rifles. What is most interesting, however, is that the Creeks accompanying Payne made it a point to note that one of the Creeks who participated in the war dance had shot William McIntosh a decade earlier.⁷¹

While some Creeks became more militant, others grew despondent. Government officials noted, as a result of white encroachment and the land frauds, that "during the years 1834 and 1835, the number of suicides committed by these people was enormously large. The warriors went into the woods, and hanged themselves with grape-vines; and when at last, they did remove, some of the women erected piles of light wood over the remains of their relatives and friends, and burnt them in honor of their memories. Others

The war or gun-dances are only vaguely alluded to in Le Clerc Milfort, *Memoirs or A Quick Glance at my Various Travels and my Sojourn in the Creek Nation* (Kennesaw: Continental Book Company, 1959), 135; It is not mentioned in William Bartram, *Travels through North & South Carolina, Georgia, East & West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges, or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Chactaws: Containing, an Account of the Soil and Natural Productions of Those Regions, Together with Observations on the Manners of the Indians. Embellished with Copper-Plates* (Philadelphia: James & Johnson, 1791), 509-510; No mention of a war dance was given by a traveler who rode a steamboat with a delegation of Creek headmen on their visit to Washington in 1830. During the trip, the *busk* was explained to the traveler, see *Arkansas Gazette*, 30 October 1830.

⁷¹ John Howard Payne, "The Green-Corn Dance," *The Continental Monthly* (January 1862), 17-29.

cut down the fruit trees that grew over the graves of their children, declaring that the white man should not enjoy any benefits of them.”⁷²

Opothle Yoholo also had a fatalistic view of the future and he interpreted the Creeks’ problems as a sign of the end of the world. When Opothle Yoholo was asked about removal and their status in Alabama, the chief responded,

by alluding to the earthquakes, the eclipses of the sun and moon, and stars of unusual appearance, which had been seen and felt about the time of the late war, which portended the gradual declension and final extinction of the Creeks; that since that period they had rapidly declined; that they were doomed to destruction; that Almighty God had so decreed it; that the white people also had their limit of prosperity, after reaching which, and which would be beyond the Mississippi, they also would come to naught, and both they and the Creeks would disappear from the face of the earth.⁷³

After the Texas land deal fell through, Opothle Yoholo, perhaps sensing that he had run out of options, finally consented to emigrate to the Indian territory. Opothle Yoholo sent

⁷² Report of Alfred Balch, 14 January 1837, *The New American State Papers*, Indian Affairs, Vol. 9 (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1972), 497-507.

⁷³ Extract of the Journal of R.J. Meigs, 9 August 1834, United States Congress, Senate Document 425, *Documents relating to Frauds, &c., in the sale of Indian Reservations of Land*, 2 July 1836, 24th Congress, 1st Session, Serial Set 284, 168-169. The first portion of Meigs’ interview with Opothle Yoholo was recorded as follows: “by alluding to the earthquakes, the eclipses of the sun and moon, and stars of unusual appearance, which had been seen and felt about the time of the late war, which portended the gradual declension and final extinction of the Creeks; that since that period they had rapidly declined; that they were doomed to destruction; that Almighty God had so decreed it; that the white people also had their limit of prosperity, after reaching which, and which would be beyond the Mississippi, they also would come to naught, and both they and the Creeks would disappear from the face of the earth; that signs of this already appeared, for when he was at Washington the tables of Congress were every morning laden with papers, which were swept off during the day only to make room for another heap just as great, during the discussion of which the members abused and vilified the President and each other, and it all manifested that before many years our people would begin to destroy each other, and the fate of the Indians awaited us; that a new piece of ground would produce fine crops for a short time, and then it began to deteriorate apace, and presently was turned out as unproductive, and so the white people were and had been prosperous, but they would grow less and less, and at last would cease to be so; and, in short, that it was the nature of all things to sink away to ruin, and the world itself would be destroyed in time; that these things being so, it were to no purpose for man to strive against his fate, but quietly await the end of things; that he had labored to convince his people of all that I had urged, but they paid no regard to him; that they were headstrong and disobedient, and were every day hastening on the ruin and extinction that awaited them, and sinking beneath the rising fortunes of the whites; that if men could converse face to face with God they would do so, and find out of a certainty what the future concealed.”

word that he had "prepared his marching physic" and with "his Tradition[al] Brass plates," and that he would be ready to start in a month. He also notified his people that he was "preparing his travelling clothes, and will put out all his old fire" and not rekindle it until he was west of the Mississippi. Opothle Yoholo requested that the five towns composing Tuckabatchee leave in five or six day intervals so "the road will not be crowded, and there will be no delay at Bridges and Ferries."⁷⁴ Opothle Yoholo sent for wagons in Mobile to transport his family and the other headmen.⁷⁵

The government redoubled their efforts to enroll to as many Creeks as they could for another voluntary party. Sub-agents were hired to canvass the Upper and Lower towns looking for Creeks to enroll. These agents and sub-agents came away from visits to the reserves of the Tuckabatchee, Hickory Ground, Kialigee, Fish Pond, Chockalocha, Ecunchate, Hillabee, Chiaha, Cusseta, and Coweta, among others, convinced that perhaps two or three thousand Creeks would emigrate.⁷⁶

The government also took steps to save money on the next emigration. On September 17, 1835, the federal government signed a no-bid contract with the J.W.A. Sanford & Company for the removal of five thousand Creeks at twenty dollars per

⁷⁴ William Hunter to George Gibson, 3 September 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 580-582, NA.

⁷⁵ John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 17 October 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 453-454, NA.

⁷⁶ Alexander Sommerville to John B. Hogan, 24 July 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 482-484, NA; Benjamin Young to John B. Hogan, 24 July 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 481, NA; John Phipps to John B. Hogan, 18 August 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 496, NA.

person.⁷⁷ If completed by July 1, 1836, the Sanford company would have rights to conduct the remainder of the Creeks west.⁷⁸ It was an audacious plan that spoke either to the delusion of the federal government or the smooth-talking marketing ability of John Sanford. Contracting for removal was first proposed in 1830 by the federal government as a way to save money. The Sanford company was formed in 1834, just before Page's emigrating party left Alabama. At the time, they proposed removing the Creeks for eighteen dollars a person or ten dollars a person to deliver them as far as Memphis.⁷⁹ The government decided to remove the Creeks by contract after Page's emigrating party cost the government almost sixty dollars per person just to get the Creeks as far as Little Rock. Even Page understood that, due to the weather and the incompetence of his sub-agent Alexander Hill, that the cost of his emigration was "enormous."⁸⁰

The contract agreed to by the United States and the Sanford company detailed all practical matters related to the emigration. The contract required the company to emigrate only parties of one thousand Creeks or more. Every fifty to eighty emigrants were assigned to one six-horse wagon able to carry fifteen hundred pounds of their baggage. Provisions were to be supplied to the emigrants and their horses at regular intervals. Travel could not exceed an average of twelve miles per day. And, the

⁷⁷ Contract of J.W.A. Sanford & Co., 17 September 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol., VI, Military Affairs, 782-783; for the no-bid contract see "A brief of the transactions connected with the formation of the Contract with the Alabama Emigrating Company for the removal and subsistence of Creek Indians, and other Contracts for subsistence and transportation subsequent thereto," RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-239, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁷⁸ John W. A. Sanford & Co. to George Gibson, 30 September 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol., VI, Military Affairs, 753-754.

⁷⁹ Alfred Iverson to John Forsyth, 7 November 1834, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 430-434, NA.

⁸⁰ John Page to George Gibson, 25 April 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 140-146, NA.

company received “an amount in proportion to the distance traveled,” for all Creeks who died or were left along the route. For their part, the federal government provided the company with a superintendent of emigration to oversee the enrollment of the Creeks in Alabama and a military agent to accompany the party to ensure that the Creeks were treated “with lenity, forbearance, and humanity.” In cases where a dispute may arise between the military agents and members of the company, the surgeon accompanying the party acted as an arbiter.⁸¹

The Creeks were incensed at the switch to private contractors. John B. Hogan, who investigated the Creek frauds and was hired by the government to act as superintendent of emigration, reported that “the change is obnoxious to the Indians.” In fact, three of the five members of the Sanford company were land speculators who were “unpopular with the Indians, who know them.”⁸² In response to the hiring of contractors Tuskeneah of Cusseta responded by noting that “the Indians will not go with them; they are the very men, who have cheated the Indians out of their lands, and they now want to cheat them out of what little they have left, and while on the march, they will be drove like a parcel of pigs to market.”⁸³ Similarly, the Creeks of the town of Kialigee refused to emigrate with the Sanford company because they believed some of the contractors had

⁸¹ Contract of J.W.A. Sanford & Co., 17 September 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol., VI, Military Affairs, 782-783.

⁸² Letter to John B. Hogan, 21 September 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 777-778; John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 24 August 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 738; John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 4 November 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 744-745.

⁸³ Blue to John B. Hogan, 13 July 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 562-563, NA.

stolen their lands and “would abuse them” along the journey.⁸⁴ In fact, the fear of abuse by the contractors concerned many Creeks who worried that the contractors placed profit above their welfare. Opothle Yoholo and other Creek headmen said as much in a letter to President Andrew Jackson when they wrote that “we believe the health comfort and interest of the Indian will never be consulted but that all their arrangements will be conducted for their own good and pecuniary benefit.”⁸⁵

As a result of the unpopularity of the contractors, the general opposition to leaving the land of their ancestors, and the fear of violence from Creek headmen, the Sanford company had difficulty convincing many Creeks to enroll. To facilitate enrollment the company brought on board Benjamin Marshall, a signer of the Treaty of Indian Springs, to replace an original member who withdrew because of illness. Marshall did not invest in the company but was hired because he had “extensive connexions” among the Creeks. For his part, Marshall offered his services in order to “get his negroes removed” to the Indian territory. He planned on removing his family sometime later. But, the Sanford company overestimated Marshall’s connections. When asked whether the company would reach their required number of one thousand emigrants, Marshall stated that “he did not think the party would be over a few hundred.”⁸⁶

⁸⁴ William Hunter to John B. Hogan, 12 August 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 739-740.

⁸⁵ Creek Indians to Andrew Jackson, 14 January 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-225, 38-41, NA.

⁸⁶ John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 6 November 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 746; John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 12 October 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 741-742; John W.A. Sanford & Co. to George Gibson, 30 September 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 753-754; For distance from Columbus see Travel Account of Dr. B. Randall, October 1835-Early 1836, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry 525, Year-1837, Box 192, Agent-Page, Account number-220, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

In fact, only 511 emigrants enrolled for the emigrating party. Enrollment camps were established at various points in the former Creek Nation. One camp, consisting of two hundred Creeks, was established at the Cusseta reserves forty miles to the northwest of Columbus, Georgia. Benjamin Marshall oversaw another encampment of 160 emigrants, half of whom were blacks, at his brother Joseph's old plantation. Both of these parties joined up with another enrollment camp containing 150 or two hundred Creeks in Tallapoosa County located near Young's Ferry at the Hillabee and Fish Pond reserves. Members of the Marshall and Derasaw families accompanied the party.⁸⁷ On December 2, 1835, the emigrants from the various encampments assembled near Young's Ferry on the Tallapoosa River. The agents intended to enroll the Creeks at this location but were unable to do so effectively as a result of the number of grog shops in the area. The following day the party traveled thirty miles to Wetumpka, before crossing the Coosa River, and encamping four miles in Autauga County, Alabama. Here agents met with each head-of-family and counted a total of 511 enrollees. A few Creeks joined the party later and the muster roll shows 523 emigrants.⁸⁸ Opothle Yoholo, citing the need to settle unpaid debts, remained behind, although he sent twelve of his slaves west in the spring of 1836.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Muster Roll of Creek Indians, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry 525, Box-192, Year-1837, Agent-Page, Account number-220, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Uriah Blue to George Gibson, 1 December 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 239, NA.

⁸⁸ Uriah Blue to George Gibson, 6 December 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 236-237, NA; Edward Deas to George Gibson, 6 December 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 318-320, NA; Muster roll of Emigrant Creek Indians, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 655-657, NA.

⁸⁹ John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 4 November 1835, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 744-745, NA; Muster Roll of [Self]

The party left their encampment in Autauga County and moved toward Tuscumbia on December 7, 1835. Edward Deas was the military agent overseeing the contractors. The Sanford company chose the “northern route” through Montevallo, Elyton, Moulton, and Courtland because, during that time of season, it was better than the road through Tuscaloosa. Despite the fact that the Tuscaloosa route was shorter, the contractors wanted to avoid the hazards that plagued the emigrating party that left Alabama a year earlier. Indeed, Deas noted that the roads were “very good” and the weather “uncommonly fine.” As a result of the favorable conditions, the Creeks traveled more than twelve miles per day, expecting that when the weather turned bad the distance traveled per day would “diminish accordingly” allowing the party to meet the contract’s mileage requirement. The Creeks’ journey still began with an inauspicious start, however. A number of intoxicated Creeks engaged in “an unfortunate quarrel” and one was struck across the head and died of a fractured skull.⁹⁰

The journey through Alabama took two weeks. The Creeks passed through Montevallo on December 10, forded the Cahaba River on December 11, passed through Elyton on December 12, and crossed the Black Warrior River and its forks on December 15 and again on the December 16. The party passed through Moulton on December 19. Leaving Moulton, the party encountered bad roads, which forced the party to travel to

Emigrant Creeks, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 735, NA.

⁹⁰ Edward Deas to George Gibson, 21 December 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 772-773; Journal of Edward Deas, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-6, 33-55, NA; Also see, Gaston Litton, “The Journal of a Party of Emigrating Creek Indians, 1835-1836,” *Journal of Southern History*, 7:2 (May, 1941), 225-242; Also see Travel Account of Dr. B. Randall, October 1835-Early 1836, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry 525, Agent-Page, Account number-220, Year-1837, Box 192, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

Courtland before reaching Tuscumbia. The Creeks arrived near Tuscumbia on December 21, 1835. The contractors intended to continue to Memphis by land but travelers in Tuscumbia “gave such extremely unfavorable accounts of the state of the roads” that the party decided to go by water. A day after arriving in Tuscumbia the agents procured the services of the steamboat *Alpha* and two keelboats which were docked in Waterloo, Alabama about thirty miles away. The *Alpha* was a brand new steamboat purchased for around five thousand dollars by a number of partners in late 1834. It was engaged in running goods from Cincinnati to Rising Sun, Indiana and later between Cincinnati and Portsmouth, Ohio. In December 1835, the *Alpha* was in Waterloo on business at the same time the Creek emigrants arrived in Tuscumbia. The contractors paid the operators of the *Alpha* \$2,200 to transport the Creeks to Fort Gibson.⁹¹

The contractors procured a different steamboat and two keelboats to transport the Creeks from Tuscumbia to Waterloo where the *Alpha* was waiting. The contractors finished loading the wagons and provisions on board these boats on the night of December 22. On that day, one of Benjamin Marshall’s young slave boys died. The water party left Tuscumbia on board the two keelboats on the afternoon of December 23. They arrived at Waterloo on December 24. The following day the Creeks, their wagons, and provisions were loaded onto the *Alpha* and two large keelboats which were lashed to

⁹¹ Journal of Edward Deas, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-6, 33-55, NA; Litton, “The Journal of a Party of Emigrating Creek Indians,” 225-242; John H. Jones, The Autobiography of John H. Jones, 1814-1882, Indiana History Mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University; Also see, R.E. Banta, *The Ohio* (New York: Rinehart & Company, 1949), 294-295.

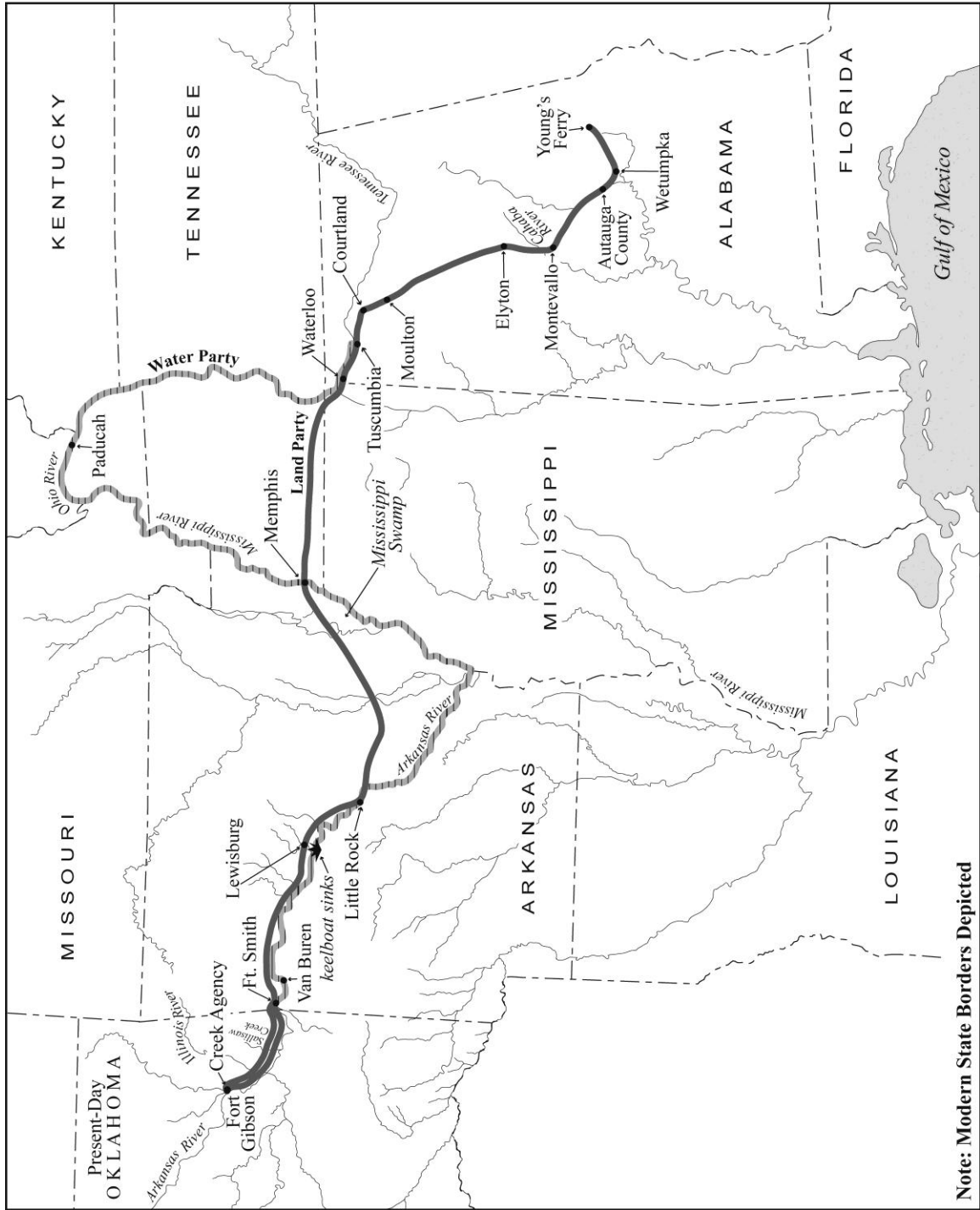
its side. The land party, which accompanied the Creeks' horses, traveled to Memphis over roads that "are almost impassable."⁹²

The water party left Waterloo on December 25 and descended the Tennessee River. Soon after setting out, the contractors constructed temporary cooking hearths on the decks of keelboats to enable the Creeks to cook and keep warm. In addition to this, "other necessary fixtures have also been constructed to preserve cleanliness and pure air in the interior of the boats." John Hewitt Jones, a part owner of the *Alpha* who accompanied the boat as a clerk, observed that the Creek emigrants wore their traditional turbans during the journey. Jones also noted that while on the boats, "a group of little Indians 6 to 8 years old sat on the forecastle flat on deck playing cards." The water party arrived at Paducah, Kentucky at nine o'clock on the morning of December 28. They encamped on one of the islands in the Ohio River, opposite the town. The following day the water party left Paducah and descended the Mississippi River to Memphis.

The Creeks on board the keelboats arrived in Memphis on December 31 where they reconnoitered with the land party. The *Alpha* docked on the Arkansas side of the river in order to prevent the Creeks from obtaining alcohol. Still, a number of Creeks crossed the Mississippi River into Memphis to purchase "saddles, gears, clothes &c." That evening the land party finished ferrying their horses across the river. But, of the 154 horses that left Tuscumbia, only 132 made it to the west bank of the Mississippi River.

⁹² Stephen M. Ingersoll to John D Hunter, 22 December 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 758; Edward Deas to George Gibson, 28 December 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 773; Journal of Edward Deas, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-6, 33-55, NA; Litton, "The Journal of a Party of Emigrating Creek Indians," 225-242; Travel Account of Dr. B. Randall, October 1835-Early 1836, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor; Entry 525, Agent-Page, Account number-220, Year-1837, Box-192, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

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Twenty-two died as a result of the contractors marching the horses twice the number of miles per day outlined in the contract. Moreover, the provisions were not sufficient to sustain the long march and there was not enough forage along the route to supplement the rations. Jones noted that in Memphis, “it was impossible to get away for the Indians must see their ponies and would bring them into camp and make a terrible fuss over them and were very loth to part with them. Some offered to sell a nice little pony for 5\$ for fear they would not go through the trip.”⁹³

The Creeks had reason to be worried about their horses in Memphis. The road through the Mississippi Swamp and the numerous rivers, streams, and bayous that inundated large portions of the journey to Little Rock was in exceedingly poor condition during the latter part of 1835. In fact, the contractors, relying on what travelers had reported, noted that “we have most appalling accounts of the Mississippi swamp. It is said that hundreds of people are in the mire without a prospect of getting out; and it is believed it will be very difficult to get horses through, if not impossible. Their bones may be found one thousand years hence by a different race of men than white men.”⁹⁴

The journey for the water party was less eventful. The weather was mild and the journey relatively easy. The boats came to shore most evenings to camp and allow the Creeks to prepare meals. Some chose to remain on board the boats, although when it

⁹³ John H. Jones, *The Autobiography of John H. Jones*, Indiana History Mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University; Stephen M. Ingersoll to John D. Hunter, 22 December 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 758; Journal of Edward Deas, *Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840*, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-6, 33-55, NA; Litton, “The Journal of a Party of Emigrating Creek Indians,” 225-242.

⁹⁴ Stephen M. Ingersoll to John D. Hunter, 22 December 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 758.

rained most of the Creeks remained on board. Jones observed the Creeks as the boats came to shore during the evenings. Jones wrote that,

It was a fine sight to see the camping of the Indians on the trip. As soon as the Boat was tied to the shore and a plank out the first to leave was the squaws, who gathered up their kit, which was usually tied up by the corners in a blanket in which was their tents, blankets, cook articles &c. They would throw it over their backs and let the tie come across their foreheads, resting on their backs and in one hand take an axe and in the other and under their arm a little papoose and run ashore and up the bank. They would chop trees and make a fire and prepare supper. I often used to walk through the camp of pleasant evenings. It looked like a little village. They parched corn in a kettle and then would pound it in a mortar or deep cut trough in a log and then boil it up and make a very fine dish which they called 'sophka' and would broil their meat stuck on a stick before the fire.

Camping each night also allowed the steamboat and keelboats to be cleaned after passengers had gone ashore.⁹⁵

The *Alpha* passed through the mouth of the White River and the cut-off to the Arkansas River on January 2, 1836. The slow days on the rivers gave the Creeks time to lament their emigration west. An English-speaking Creek Indian played the violin and sang a lamentation on board the *Alpha* during their journey west. Jones recorded the song which went as follows,

“Indians”

Alas! for them—their day is o'er
Their fires are out from hill and shore:
No more for them the wild deer bounds;
The pale man's axe rings through their woods,
Their pleasant springs are dry.
Their children—look! by power oppressed,
Beyond the mountains of the west,
Their children go—to die,

⁹⁵ John H. Jones, *The Autobiography of John H. Jones*, Indiana History Mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University; Edward Deas to George Gibson, 28 December 1835, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI; Military Affairs, 773.

By foes alone their death song must be sung.

There were, however, moments of joy. On January 7, a child was born on the Arkansas River about fifty miles east of Little Rock.

The water party arrived in Little Rock without encamping on January 8. Instead, the *Alpha* remained anchored in the middle of the Arkansas River while some of the agents took a small boat into the town to attend to some business. The Creeks stayed behind to prevent them from obtaining alcohol. It appears that despite the contractors' best efforts, the Creeks did consume whiskey during the journey. Deas noted this in his journal and Jones observed in his autobiography that when the Creeks did drink, "there was a tear round among the Indians. The women (squaws) would down a fellow and tie his legs and tie his arms and let him lay till he got sober."⁹⁶

The next day the boat was delayed several hours while wood was chopped for the boilers. Consequently, the party only traveled about twenty-two or twenty-three miles that day, about half the usual distance. In order to make up time, the contractors decided to run the boats all evening. This had been done on a number of occasions during the first leg of the water party's journey down the Tennessee River, but the boats had come to shore each evening since they entered the Arkansas River. Running all night on the Arkansas River was dangerous due to sand bars, snags, and the rapid rise and fall of the water. Another pilot was taken aboard on January 10 in order to assist in the evening runs. But, despite the extra man, during their first night run on January 10, one of the

⁹⁶ John H. Jones, *The Autobiography of John H. Jones*, Indiana History Mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University; *Journal of Edward Deas*, RG-75, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-6, 33-55, NA; Litton, "The Journal of a Party of Emigrating Creek Indians," 225-242.

keelboats snagged something on the bottom of the Arkansas River and they had to abandon the craft near Lewisburg. Jones observed that this “made a terrible rumpus among the Indians,” and that “it was a very dark night, the stove keel boat sinking fast with about 250 Indians on board, caused great confusion and such a time to get them and their baggage on the Steam Boat. The yelling of the yellow skins, big and little, old and young was not easily forgotten.” For his part, Deas only recorded that one of the keelboats “struck a snag and sprung a leak.”⁹⁷

In fact, the conditions on the Arkansas River continued to plague the water party. The *Alpha* hit a sandbar and ran aground on January 13 and it took until dusk to free it. The *Alpha* struck sandbars again on January 15. The following two days were spent navigating some rapids and the Creeks were landed on shore, while the keelboats were unlashd from the *Alpha* and piloted through this treacherous stretch of river. After running aground on more sandbars, the boats passed through Van Buren and Fort Smith. Because the boats could not ascend the Arkansas River any farther, the Creeks were landed near Fort Smith. The final leg of their journey was by land. The delays on the Arkansas River allowed the land party, not only to catch up with the water party, but to pass them. They were about a week ahead of the water party.

The Creeks disembarked the keelboats and camped along the north bank of the Arkansas River while the contractors tried to procure transportation by land. The party would have used the horses of the land party, but miscommunication prevented the land party from stopping at Fort Smith as ordered. Messengers were sent west to bring back

⁹⁷ Banta, *The Ohio*, 295-296; Journal of Edward Deas, RG-75, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-6, 33-55, NA; Litton, “The Journal of a Party of Emigrating Creek Indians,” 225-242.

the horses so the Creeks could use them during the last portion of their journey. While the Creeks camped near Fort Smith waiting for the horses to return, a child was born into the Coweta headman Kotcher Tustunnuggee's family on January 28. Once the horses arrived, the party, again commenced their journey westward with ten wagons that were pulled by an array of horses, oxen, and mules. One "light four-horse wagon" was engaged to transport the family and baggage of a sick Creek woman. This wagon later overturned, although without serious injury.

During the final leg of their journey the Creeks crossed Sallisaw Creek, Illinois River, the Grand River at Fort Gibson, and the Verdigris River four miles from Fort Gibson. It was here, on the western bank of the Verdigris, that the Creeks requested to stop and muster into the Western Creek Nation. They arrived on February 3, 1836 after traveling for fifty-eight days.⁹⁸

* * *

By the start of 1836, approximately 3,500 Creeks and their slaves had voluntarily emigrated to the Indian territory. This represented only fifteen percent of the entire Creek Nation. The federal government used a number of different strategies to entice or cajole the Creeks west but all were considered failures. One of their last attempts,

⁹⁸ Journal of Edward Deas, RG-75, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-6, 33-55, NA; Litton, "The Journal of a Party of Emigrating Creek Indians," 225-242; Edward Deas to George Gibson, 28 January 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 774; Edward Deas to George Gibson, 5 February 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 774.

threatening to stop the distribution of the annuity money east of the Mississippi River, caused great concern among the Creeks but did not result in a large removal party in 1835. No records are known to exist describing the government's reaction to the failure of the contractors to gather more emigrants. For their part, the J.W.A. Sanford & Company was disappointed with their inability to get more than five hundred emigrants and they noted that "they had lost considerable money on this party."⁹⁹ For their part, the deadline was still a few months away and the Sanford company continued to try and collect Creeks into 1836. But many Creeks did not want to move to the Indian territory and tried instead to emigrate to Fort Hull or Texas. But the government did not approve of these plans and the deals quickly fell through. A vast majority of the Creeks pleaded to remain in peace on their ancestral land in Alabama. But, this proved increasingly difficult as whites defrauded Creeks out of their reserves or illegally squatted on Creek land. The increasingly dire situation of the Creeks compelled a small number of Lower Creeks to commit acts of violence against these white intruders. But, the violence that was sporadic through much of 1835 turned into a full-scale war in 1836. The war gave Andrew Jackson the excuse he needed to forcibly removal all the Creeks from Alabama.

⁹⁹ John Page to C.A. Harris, 20 February 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 544-545, NA.

Six

Life in the West

1828-1835

“The sorrows of three years now rest upon us [and] our load is too heavy to bear!”
—Roly McIntosh and Western Creeks, 1830

Many of the Creeks who emigrated to the west between 1827 and 1835 were McIntosh family members, friends, or business partners and there is little doubt most emigrated with Chilly and Roly McIntosh in order to personally profit from the move. But, there were also increasing numbers of Creeks with no connection to William McIntosh who emigrated for their own personal reasons. Most were Lower Creeks, formerly of Georgia, who had lost their land in the Treaty of Indian Springs and Treaty of Washington and found reestablishing their lives within the borders of Alabama difficult. Others were squeezed out as white intruders squatted illegally on Creek land. Still, others believed that the forced removal of the entire Creek Nation was inevitable, and wanted to settle on a good piece of land before the western lands filled with Indians. But, while most of the Creek emigrants believed moving and settling west would be, at times, difficult there is no doubt that most of the Creeks did not believe it would be as difficult as it turned out to be. Disease, raids by western Indians, the questionable quality of the land, and government tardiness in distributing needed provisions all made life for the

Western Creeks extremely difficult. Even the elite members of the McIntosh party were not immune to the problems found in the west.

* * *

What the McIntosh party found when they first arrived at Cantonment Gibson in early 1828 was a ramshackle garrison and unhappy American soldiers. Work began on Cantonment Gibson in 1824 to replace Fort Smith to the southeast. In 1832 the Secretary of War changed the designation and Cantonment Gibson became Fort Gibson. The garrison's purpose was to protect emigrating white settlers from the increasing number of Indians being removed onto the American frontier. The fort was located three miles up the Grand River on its eastern bank. A natural rock ramp, which extended seventeen feet from the complex to the river, provided a good place for steamboats to land. The fort contained two blockhouses that were constructed after 1824 but even with continual upkeep, the fort was continually "rotting."¹ In fact, travelers noted that the garrison was an unimpressive and "crude" complex. Moreover, the land surrounding Fort Gibson was described by many white travelers as barren, bleak, and generally unsuitable for extensive agriculture. Travelers to the region recorded their encounters with large horseflies, mosquitoes, and torrential rains. Washington Irving found travel in the region difficult

¹ Brad Agnew, *Fort Gibson: Terminal on the Trail of Tears* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 3, 218-219n; For Fort Smith S. Charles Bolton, *Arkansas 1800-1860: Remote and Restless* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1998), 69; For more on the lukewarm reviews of Fort Gibson see Henry Leavitt Ellsworth, *Washington Irving on the Prairie, or A Narrative of a Tour of the Southwest in the Year 1832*, eds. Stanley T. Williams and Barbara D. Simison (New York: American Book Company, 1937), 2-5; Many of the soldiers of the 7th Infantry stationed at Fort Gibson were unhappy, see *The Military and Naval Magazine of the United State*, July 1834, Vol. III, no. 5, 383-385.

because the land was cut up by ravines, thickets, and rivers that flooded often in the spring.² The Creek emigrants discovered this in May 1833, when massive flooding on the Arkansas River destroyed much of their livestock.³

The weather in this region was a contrast in extremes. Henry Leavitt Ellsworth, who accompanied Washington Irving on his travels to the west in 1832, noted that “the flies & mosquitoes abound in summer—in the spring the streams are high & the mud deep—and later in the fall the immense praries are on fire, to destroy both man & beast.”⁴ Moreover, thunderstorms, large hail, and tornadoes were also commonplace.

Government officials who visited the west openly doubted whether any Creeks would voluntarily emigrate if they actually visited the land allotted for them. Roly McIntosh, in fact, had visited the western lands three times to hunt in the years prior to moving there and remembered that the “muskitoes were very bad [and] the country was sickly, the Indians very hostile, that he had very narrowly escaped from them with life two or three times that he had been sick himself and come near dying.”⁵ General Edmund Pendleton Gaines believed that the only way the Creeks would agree to settle in this area was to convince them to visit and explore the region in the fall and winter because “in Summer and Autumn, [the Creeks] might possibly be frightened at the unhealthiness and scarcity of water of some parts of the country through which they may pass. Great care should be taken to render them comfortable, and protect them from the possibility of an attack from

² Washington Irving, *A Tour on the Prairies* (1859; reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 19; Also see, Stan Hoig, *Beyond the Frontier: Exploring the Indian Country* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998).

³ J. Van Horne to George Gibson, 7 October 1834, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 211-219, NA.

⁴ Ellsworth, *Washington Irving on the Prairie*, 6.

⁵ Testimony of Laird W. Harris, 12 June 1825, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-219, 944-945, NA.

the war or hunting parties they may meet with, of other tribes.”⁶ But, the winters were also harsh and much colder than the Creeks were used to in the southeast. In fact, the winters of 1830-1831 and 1833-1834 were particularly brutal.⁷

But, others, like Auguste P. Chouteau, thrived in the west. Chouteau, a trader residing in the region, wrote that the land was rich in water, salt, and the tall grass was superior fodder for horses. Chouteau described a country that abounded in “oak, black walnut, hickory, ash, hackberry, locust, mulberry, pine, cedar, pecan, cherry, and bois d’arc.” A number of different fruits grew in the region including “a variety of fine grapes, plums, black haws, straw and black berries, pawpaws, persimmons, may apples, and a species of pome-granate, which is much esteemed for its flavor.” Chouteau also noted that “the country abounds in wild game, such as the buffalo, elk, deer, antelope, bears, and furred animals; wild horses are found to the north-west in numerous herds.”⁸ Even Washington Irving marveled at the abundance of game and wild animals on the prairie including buffalo, wolf, and wild horses.⁹

In fact, the quality of the land varied greatly. Rich bottomland quickly gave way to soil that was described as sandy or composed of clay that that was so reddish-brown that it appeared to be purple to many observers. There was rich land on the north side of the Arkansas River that stretched for “75 or 80 miles averaging from 3 to 5 miles in width.” This area was also “tolerably supplied with springs.” David Brearley, who

⁶ Edmund P. Gaines to James Barbour, 24 July 1825, United States Congress, House Report 98, *Georgia Controversy*, 5 March 1827, 19th Congress, 2nd Session, Serial Set 161, 299-301.

⁷ Elbert Herring to Lewis Cass, 19 November 1831, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-7, 475-483, NA; For more on the brutal winters of 1830-31 and 1833-34, see *The Military and Naval Magazine of the United States*, August 1834.

⁸ Grant Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, [1934], 1966), 148.

⁹ *Columbus Enquirer*, 15 June 1833.

conducted the McIntosh parties west, believed that the Verdigris River also contained a similar amount of good land. Brearley described the prairies south of the Arkansas River, however, as barren and sterile, although there were some areas with rich bottoms. The bottom lands and prairie on the Canadian River was not as plentiful nor as rich as that of the north side of the Arkansas River, although the land between the junction of the Canadian and Arkansas rivers was considered good. When the McIntosh exploratory deputation traveled west in the spring of 1827, they were told that land on the mouth of the Red Fork River, about 100 miles up the south side of the Arkansas River was also adequate for settlement.¹⁰

Compared to the forests of Alabama, the Western Creek territory was lightly timbered. Trees grew in groves, in many cases along the rivers, and were interspersed among the barren prairies. Roly McIntosh noted as much, and reported that much of the Creek land was “very little timbered.”¹¹ The quality of the land in the Creek tract was also questionable for the raising of livestock. One agent reported that the land the Western Creeks occupied was “not well adapted to raising stock” and, as a result, the Creeks had “very few cattle and hogs.”¹² Henry Leavitt Ellsworth, however, noted that the Creeks “had a great supply of Pork.”¹³ This region was considered sandstone and limestone country and it not only underlay much of the region, the sandstone was

¹⁰ David Brearley to James Barbour, 20 July 1827, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 33-35, NA; Also see Expeditionary Notes, United States Congress, House Report 87, *Remove Indians Westward*, 18 February 1829, 20th Congress, 2nd Session, Serial Set 190, 26-48.

¹¹ Roly McIntosh and Creeks to Andrew Jackson, 21 October 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 348-354, NA.

¹² J. Van Horne to George Gibson, 7 October 1834, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 211-219, NA.

¹³ Ellsworth, *Washington Irving on the Prairie*, 11.

exposed in many areas near the rivers and tributaries. The quality of the water varied as a result. Although there were periods during the year where the Arkansas River could be considered a “tolerably clear stream,” the Canadian and Verdigris rivers had a grayish and muddy complexion. These rivers contrasted sharply to the clear water of the Grand and Neosho. In fact, the water just below Fort Gibson was so clear that one could easily see the pebbles on the river’s bottom even at the river’s high point.

Despite the questions surrounding the quality of the land, the McIntosh party began life in the west with an auspicious start. Within months of arriving at their settlement eight miles from Cantonment Gibson between January and March 1828, the McIntosh party, with the help of the federal government, commenced establishing all the trappings of a Western Creek Nation. Before Brearley left the McIntosh party for Alabama in 1828 he began construction of the Western Creek Agency. The agency was built on the eastern bank of the Verdigris River about three or four miles from the river’s mouth, near a high sandstone bluff. This was near the highest point at which steamboats or keelboats could ascend the river.¹⁴ At some point, the McIntosh party established the Western Creek government with Roly McIntosh as the principal chief. Judges were

¹⁴ United States Congress, House Report 87, *Remove Indians Westward*, 18 February 1829, 20th Congress, 2nd Session, Serial Set 190, 35-48; Also see William P. Trent and George S. Hellman, eds., *The Journals of Washington Irving* Vol. III (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1970).

appointed and a militia established.¹⁵ Schools were also organized, primarily by the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian missionary organizations.¹⁶

At various times, the McIntosh Creeks ventured far from their temporary settlement near Fort Gibson to explore or hunt. For instance, to supplement their harvest, Chilly McIntosh and twenty-seven members of the McIntosh party went on a buffalo hunt in 1828 that lasted almost three weeks. The men returned with twenty-four buffalo but saw almost six-hundred along with a number of deer. As a result of the success of the hunt, the party planned another hunt for the following month.¹⁷ A party of McIntosh Creeks also accompanied an agent to present-day California in the late 1820s. Thomas Woodward reported in his *Reminiscences* in 1858 that he knew a party of Creeks led by a “Capt. John S. Porter, formerly of the U.S. Army, who, some thirty years ago, with a few Creeks of the McIntosh party in Arkansas, visited California and went up the Pacific coast to the Columbia river, and returned by the way of Salt Lake.”¹⁸

Soon after arriving in the west, the McIntosh party planted crops in anticipation of a late-summer harvest. Until their crops ripened, the emigrants were issued provisions for twelve months as promised by the United States government. An adult received a daily ration of approximately a pound of beef, a half-bushel of corn, and a quarter quart

¹⁵ In 1835 the Western Creek government consisted of Roly McIntosh as Principal Chief, Benjamin Perryman as Second Chief, Fushatchee Micco as Commanding General of the Militia, and Chilly McIntosh and Jacob Derasaw as judges, see Isaac McCoy, *Annual Register of Indian Affairs, In the Western (or Indian) Territory 1835-1838* (1835; reprint, Springfield: Particular Baptist Press, 2000), 20-21; also see Josiah C. Nott, *The Physical History of the Jewish Race* (Charleston: Steam-power press of Walker & James, 1850), 27.

¹⁶ John Campbell to Lewis Cass, 11 October 1832, RG-75, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, Creek Agency West, M-234, reel-236, 283-284, NA.

¹⁷ *Alabama Journal*, 22 August 1828.

¹⁸ Thomas S. Woodward, *Woodward's Reminiscences, of the Creek or Muscogee Indians: Contained in Letters to Friends in Georgia and Alabama*, (Mobile: Southern University Press, 1965), 21.

of salt. Children under the age of eight received a half ration. Rations out of this fund were also given for special needs or special occasions. When eleven Delaware Indians visited the Creeks in late June 1828 to exchange gifts of tobacco and beads, they were issued three days rations. When an Indian died, he was taken off the provision list.¹⁹

By August 1828, the McIntosh party had harvested a bumper crop of forty to seventy-five bushels of corn per acre. The Western Creeks also had gardens of beans, pumpkins, onions, cucumbers, cabbages, beets, peas, watermelons, lettuce, radishes, and Irish and sweet potatoes. Brearley personally harvested fifteen-hundred bushels of corn.²⁰ By 1829, the wealthiest members of the McIntosh party had produced such a large surplus of crops that they were able to undersell white contractors. As a result, members of the McIntosh party provided a years' worth of provisions to the 1829 Creek voluntary emigrating party.²¹ In 1830, the Creeks raised in excess of fifty thousand bushels of corn which created a large surplus for sale. That year, the soldiers, agents, and traders at Fort Gibson were able to purchase provisions like poultry, butter, eggs, and wild geese directly from the McIntosh Creeks rather than from white traders.²² Even the poorer Creeks were "every day selling considerable quantities of corn which they carry on their backs and sell to the traders" in exchange for goods.²³

¹⁹ *Alabama Journal*, 22 August 1828; 24 October 1828; Abstract of Disbursements of David Brearley, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, Year-1830, Box-90, Folder-1990, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

²⁰ *Alabama Journal*, 22 August 1828.

²¹ John Campbell to John H. Eaton, 12 April 1830, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency West, M-234, reel-236, 141-142, NA; Grant Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier, 1830-1860* (1933; Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), 16.

²² Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes*, 149.

²³ J. Van Horne to George Gibson, 7 October 1834, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 211-219, NA.

In 1831 Chouteau, a frequent visitor to the western Creek Nation, reported on the condition of the approximately twenty-five hundred emigrants. Chouteau noted that the richest Creeks, which he took pains to note were primarily those with European ancestry, were prospering by raising new crops such as “all the kinds of grains and vegetables common to that latitude; patches of cotton and tobacco and of upland rice, are common to them.” Moreover, some of the elite McIntosh Creeks had upwards of 150 acres where herds of cattle, horses, sheep, goats, hogs, as well as chickens, turkeys, ducks, and geese were raised.²⁴

The wealthiest members of the McIntosh party soon moved away from their temporary settlement near Fort Gibson and established homes and farms on the Canadian, Verdigris, and Arkansas rivers. Many of these wealthy Creeks lived in double log homes and Chouteau reported that many were furnished with “chairs, tables, beds, bedsteads, and in some instances bureaus.” Chouteau described the supper tables of the wealthy Creeks being “neatly set; and a good comfortable dinner, supper or breakfast is served,” and “tea or coffee are in general use.” And, despite living on the American frontier, these wealthier Creeks were still concerned about making appearances and many dressed in the same manner that they had in the east. Men and women, it was pointed out, dressed “according to their respective means to do so in the manner and fashion of the whites.” Creek women rode on side saddles.²⁵

Other observers concurred with these descriptions. One report noted that “the appearance of things among the Cherokees and Creeks of this country, is similar to that in

²⁴ Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes*, 149.

²⁵ Valuation of Improvements, Western Creeks, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 570-583, NA; Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes*, 149.

new and poor white settlements on our frontiers generally. The Indians, perhaps, have more corn growing, more cattle, fewer wagons and less furniture in their houses than the whites alluded to, in proportion to numbers. They make houses and fences like the whites, keep sheep and hogs, and have spinning wheels &c.”²⁶ Kendall Lewis, who moved from the temporary settlement near Fort Gibson to the Canadian River, constructed a dwelling house, storehouse with a cellar and shed, a corn crib, hen house, kitchen, four acres of cleared land, and fifty-four peach trees. Benjamin Perryman moved to the Verdigris River and owned, among other things, a number of houses, including one on the Grand River, as well as corn cribs, rails, eleven acres of cleared land, and thirty-five peach trees. For his part, Benjamin Hawkins owned a “Double House, Floored, Hewed, &c.” along with a number of additional houses, as well as a kitchen, smokehouse, corn crib, and stable.²⁷ Roly McIntosh established a large plantation near present-day Coweta, Oklahoma.²⁸ Even Creeks of more modest means had reestablished their lives to a certain degree. For instance, Missee, who lived on the Arkansas River, owned a house, two acres of cleared land, and six rails.²⁹ Indeed, Washington Irving rode upon a small Creek homestead or village consisting of “two or three log houses, sheltered under lofty trees on the border of a prairie.” The Creek owners had cultivated “small farms adjacent” to their homes.”³⁰

²⁶ Lewis Cass to Andrew Jackson, 16 February 1832, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-8, 275, NA.

²⁷ Valuation of Improvements, Western Creeks, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 570-583, NA.

²⁸ Bert Hodges, “Notes on the History of the Creek Nation and Some of its Leaders.” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 43:1 (Spring 1965), 9-18.

²⁹ Valuation of Improvements, Western Creeks, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-207, M-574, reel-61, 570-583, NA.

³⁰ Irving, *A Tour on the Prairies*, 211.

Many wealthy Western Creeks continued to wear the style of clothing and accoutrements they enjoyed in the east. Irving noted that, in contrast to the Osage who were too poor to indulge in luxury items, the Creeks “dress in calico hunting-shirts of various brilliant colors, decorated with bright fringes, and belted with broad girdles, embroidered with beads: they have leggings of dressed deer skins, or of green or scarlet cloth, with embroidered knee bands and tassels: their moccasins are fancifully wrought and ornamented, and they wear gaudy handkerchiefs tastefully bound round their heads.” In one instance, Irving observed a Creek hunter wearing “a bright blue hunting-shirt trimmed with scarlet fringe; a gayly colored handkerchief was bound round his head something like a turban, with one end hanging down beside his ear;” and on another occasion saw a number of Creeks “in their brightly colored dresses, looking like so many gay tropical birds.”³¹ Observers saw Creek emigrants riding horses with their women walking behind carrying “quite a heavy baggage on their backs” or riding “with three or four slave attendants, following in his trail.” Moreover, the McIntosh Creeks continued the traditional events they had practiced in the east. In fact, a ball game was held between three hundred Creeks in 1830.³²

But, despite these successes, the Western Creeks faced myriad problems. Many Creeks of the McIntosh party were unhappy after arriving in the west and regretted emigrating. In 1829, a delegation of Chickasaws visited Cantonment Gibson to observe the condition of the Creeks in anticipation of their own emigration west. Upon arriving at the Creek settlements the Chickasaws visitors observed the Creek emigrants “in a poor

³¹ Irving, *A Tour on the Prairies*, 20, 22, 213; Also see Trent and Hellman, eds., *The Journals of Washington Irving*, 134-136.

³² *Christian Mirror and N.H Observer*, 22 July 1830.

condition; [and were] continually mourning for the land of their births. The women are in continual sorrow. We are told by the Creeks that the land was poor, and that they were wretchedly situated.”³³ But, the Creeks were one of many Indian groups unhappy with the land they removed to. In 1829, approximately six hundred Quapaw Indians who were “dissatisfied” with their new lands were “wandering about principally within their old bounds on the Arkansas River.”³⁴ Many Creeks were unable to cope with life in the west and, indeed, at least one Creek Indian from one of the first two voluntary emigrating parties committed suicide.³⁵

Disease was also a constant problem. In the fall of 1828, months after arriving in the west, thirteen “very sick” families received medicine for unspecified illnesses.³⁶ Also, within months of the third voluntary party arriving in the west in 1829, a cholera outbreak caused “extreme distress . . . throughout the [western Creek] nation.” Cholera had also spread among the western Cherokees and Choctaws as well.³⁷ The early 1830s was a particularly deadly period in the western settlements and government agents reported that the numbers of Western Creeks living on the Arkansas River “have greatly diminished within the last three years; in consequence of the country being more

³³ *Niles' Weekly Register* 25 July 1829.

³⁴ David Brearley to John H. Eaton, 16 April 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 225-226, NA; Also see W. David Baird, *The Quapaw Indians: A History of the Downstream People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 71-74.

³⁵ “Provision return for the Emigrating Creeks at the Western Creek Agency” RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-90, Folder-1990, Year-1830, Agent-Brearley, Account number-14,487, National Archives, College Park, MD.

³⁶ Chilly McIntosh to Auguste Choteau, 6 January 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency West, M-234, reel-236, 97, NA.

³⁷ Margaret Smith Ross, ed., “Three Letters of Cephas Washburn.” *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, 16 (1957), 174-191.

unhealthy than usual.”³⁸ John Campbell, agent for the Western Creeks noted that approximately three thousand individuals resided in the Western Creek Nation in 1830. After a census was taken in 1833, Campbell observed that the Western Nation consisted of only 2,459 people. It was the result, he noted, of “the prevailing diseases of the country” and the “great want of medical assistance.” Child mortality was also a big problem. In fact, Campbell reported that “there are not more than a fourth of the Indian children that were born in this country now living.” The census showed that there were 423 Coweta living in the Western Creek Nation, 326 Thlakatchka, 300 Big Spring, 251 Talladega, 206 Okteyoconnee, 166 Hitchiti, 131 Eufaula, 120 Coiga, 117 Wockokoy, 100 Coosada, 95 Chowwockolee, 77 Sand Town, 70 Lowocolo, 50 Newyaucau, and 27 Hatchechubba. These numbers included 498 of the Creeks’ slaves who lived in the west.³⁹ As a result of the “extensive prevalence of disease,” several Creek emigrants packed up their belongings and returned to Alabama within a year or two of arriving in the west. They feared that the west “would always be unhealthy.”⁴⁰

Some emigrated Creeks returned to Alabama just to visit friends but still regretted their decision to leave the Creek Nation in the east. John Stuart, a British traveler to Alabama in 1830, observed a recently emigrated Creek Indian who returned to the Creek Nation to visit old friends but lamented his decision to leave “the land of his fathers.”⁴¹

³⁸ John Campbell to Elbert Herring, 20 November 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency West, M-234, reel-236, 370, NA.

³⁹ A Roll of the Census of the Creek Nation west of the Mississippi river, 30 September 1833, United States Congress, Senate Document 512, *Correspondence on the Subject of the Emigrating Indians*, 23rd Congress, 2nd Session, Serial Set 245, Vol. 4, 722.

⁴⁰ Robert Braden to John H. Eaton, 19 June 1830, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration, M-234, reel-237, 298-300, NA.

⁴¹ John Stuart, *Three Years in North America*, Vol. II (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1833), 159.

Other Creeks returned to the east to tend to various personal matters. John Winslett, for instance, traveled back east to the Seminole Nation in Florida to tend to “business.”⁴²

The extreme weather in the western settlements also compromised the general health of the Western Creeks. In 1833 the Western Creek Nation experienced “one of the most destructive floods in these rivers that has ever been known in this country.” The Verdigris River alone was fifteen feet “higher than it was ever known before.” The water limit was up to the Western Creek Agency’s roof. Agents reported that “a great many Indian families have lost their Houses fields [and] crops and every thing that they had to support on.”⁴³ The following year, an “extraordinary” drought destroyed half the corn, although the Creeks still maintained a surplus of 20,000 bushels.⁴⁴

Compounding the problem was the fact that the government was slow to distribute goods promised the Creeks which included rifles, farming implements, and hunting traps.⁴⁵ The Western Creeks constantly complained to Washington that they had not received all the tools promised them by the government. Some of the tardiness was the result of accidents. The massive flooding on the Verdigris River in 1833, for instance, “entirely swept off” the public store house near the Western Creek Agency. Sixteen boxes of rifles were “carried [off] with the buildings” by the flood and destroyed.

⁴² Winslett may have gone back to retrieve some slaves who went to the Seminole Nation prior to his removal, see Deposition of John Winslett, 21 December 1833, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs (Washington, D.C.: Gales & Seaton, 1861), 453; Elbert Herring to John Phagen, 4 June 1832, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 459-460.

⁴³ John Campbell to Elbert Herring, 18 June 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency West, M-234, reel-236, 356-357, NA.

⁴⁴ John Van Horne to George Gibson, 7 October 1834, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 211-218, NA.

⁴⁵ Elbert Herring to John Crowell, 7 February 1832, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-8, 81, NA; also see Thomas McKenney to John Crowell, 22 March 1830, NA, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-6, 348, NA.

About five hundred rifles were recovered and cleaned.⁴⁶ Several months later, in 1834, a boat loaded with goods for the Western Creeks sank below Fort Smith. The inability of the federal government to distribute the necessary tools to the Creeks forced Chouteau, a private trader, to provide the goods for the Creeks instead.⁴⁷

Money issues also plagued the Creek emigrants. Although the McIntosh party was producing enough corn to feed the new Creek emigrants, Roly McIntosh complained that officials had not paid them for the provisions they sold to the government. Moreover, many unlicensed white traders cheated the poorer Creeks out of their produce. Agents observed that “the Creeks commonly get a beggarly price for their corn &c. The traders and contractors reap the profits.” In fact, a common practice among traders and speculators was to purchase a bushel of corn from “poor . . . working indians” for between twenty-five and thirty-seven-and-a-half cents and then sell the same corn for \$1.27 ½ a bushel. If corn was selling for seventy-five cents a bushel, the Creeks were trading it for only fifty-cents in goods.⁴⁸

The government was also slow in paying the McIntosh party their money, thirty dollars per person, for emigrating as promised under the 1826 Treaty of Washington. Roly McIntosh and the Western Creek headmen complained that not only had the thirty dollars not been paid, but they had not received all of the compensation for their

⁴⁶ John Campbell to Elbert Herring, 18 June 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency West, M-234, reel-236, 356-357, NA; John Campbell to Elbert Herring, 15 July 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency West, M-234, reel-236, 359-360, NA; For the 500 rifles see, William Shaw to Elbert Herring, 22 June 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency West, M-234, reel-236, 388, NA.

⁴⁷ Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes*, 149-150;.

⁴⁸ J. Van Horne to George Gibson, 7 October 1834, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 211-218, NA.

improvements in the eastern Creek Nation.⁴⁹ Moreover, the Western Creeks complained about the many agents that were sent to watch over them. Some did not pay the Creeks money owed to them while some were accused of blatantly cheating them out of money or goods. For instance, they claimed that David Brearley “did not take care” of them. In fact, Brearley was accused by Roly McIntosh and other headmen of buying up all the cattle and hogs in the country, then securing the contract to supply the Creeks with beef at an increased price. Moreover, the Creeks complained that Brearley took out “all the Lard—and after selecting all the choice pieces for his own use the balance are issued to us.” Moreover, Brearley sold flour to the Western Creeks at “a very extravagant advance.” The Western Creeks were also not paid for the corn they sold to the government. In response to the inattention of the Creek agents, the western Creeks wrote to Washington saying that “the sorrows of three years now rest upon us—our load is too heavy to bear!” The Creeks threatened that if things did not change for the better the President’s “Muscogee children may seek a new home, very far to [the] setting sun” and that their warriors “will march before their women, and children, and their aged people, until they find rest [and] peace.”⁵⁰

The sale of alcohol was also a problem. In 1829, a white man who traded with the Western Cherokees was arrested and his contraband—thirty-five gallons of cognac brandy, thirty-five gallons of Jamaican rum, forty-five-and-a-half gallons of port wine,

⁴⁹ House Report 826, 8 August 1848, 30th Congress, 1st Session, Serial Set 526, 1-30; Senate Report 215, “Creek Nation of Indians,” 25 July 1848, 30th Congress, 1st Session, Serial Set 512, 5-6.

⁵⁰ Western Creeks to Andrew Jackson, 12 June 1830, *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, reel-15, 1348-1356, University of Tennessee; Western Creeks to Andrew Jackson, 7 March 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency West, M-234, reel-236, 72-74, NA; Charles Joseph Latrobe, *The Rambler in North America MDCCCXXXII-MDCCCXXXIII*, Vol. I (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1835), 134, noted that many of the western agents serving the removed Indians were not honest men.

and eight gallons of Madeira wine—was confiscated.⁵¹ In 1832, approximately sixty barrels of alcohol was illegally smuggled into the Western Creek Nation by a trader.⁵² Despite these arrests, the Western Creeks believed the government did little to prevent alcohol traders from coming into their settlements. In fact, the Western Creeks accused the government agents themselves of trading alcohol. For instance, the Western Creeks noted that they “generally found [Brearley] intoxicated” and accused him of selling “spirituous liquors.”⁵³ But, white traders and government officials did not have a monopoly on alcohol sales in the Western Creek Nation. In fact, the Creeks themselves smuggled alcohol. Traders sold whiskey either to individual Creeks or sold it by the barrel to “some noted Indian” who established a grog shop.⁵⁴ One of these noted Indians was likely Benjamin Hawkins who was arrested for selling whiskey in 1829, although later exonerated.⁵⁵ In 1832, Hawkins bought sixty barrels of whiskey from a steamboat at Fort Smith and sold about forty gallons of it to a Cherokee Indian who then transported it deep into the Western Cherokee Nation.⁵⁶

The Western Creeks also had troubles with bands of western Indians. On a number of occasions, the Creeks had been attacked “by some unknown hostile Indians.” A Creek Indian was killed and the rest “were much alarmed.” Compounding the problem

⁵¹ John H. Eaton to Andrew Jackson, 23 September 1829, *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, reel-13, 1406-1408, University of Tennessee.

⁵² John Robb to John Campbell, 16 August 1832, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-9, 168-170, NA.; For information on the 32 barrels of whiskey confiscated see Elbert Herring to George Vashon, 10 January 1834, NA, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-12, 21-22, NA.

⁵³ Western Creeks to Andrew Jackson, 7 March 1829, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency West, M-234, reel-236, 72-74, NA.

⁵⁴ *Christian Mirror and N.H Observer*, 22 July 1830.

⁵⁵ Jack Gregory and Rennard Strickland, *Sam Houston with the Cherokees, 1829-1833* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 78, 130-131, 150.

⁵⁶ John Campbell to Lewis Cass, 11 October 1832, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency West, M-234, reel-236, 283-284, NA.

was that the Creeks had not received all of their rifles from the federal government. Roly McIntosh alerted the president that small bands of Indians who lived on the southern and western borders of the western Creek lands were repeatedly raiding the emigrant Creeks. The attacks, which generally occurred at night, and lasted for such a short time that an alarm could never be sounded, kept them “in continual alarm for the safety of our people more particularly our women and children.” The western Indians’ knowledge of the land also prevented the Creeks from successfully hunting down the intruders.⁵⁷

The harsh weather of the western lands also exacerbated hostilities between Indian groups. The winter of 1830-1831 was extremely cold and temperatures hovered around zero for long stretches of time. The Osage particularly suffered from a lack of food. The removal of many of the Indian nations west of the Mississippi resulted in a thinning of the wild herds used to sustain the western Indians. By 1831, the Osage not only had limited food to hunt, but limited furs to trade for sustenance.⁵⁸ To ameliorate their immediate sufferings, Claremore’s band of Osage raided the Creek and Cherokee livestock and other property.⁵⁹ The government blamed the depredations on the “extreme and long continued cold weather” of the winter. After a number of complaints were issued by the Creeks and Cherokees, a treaty of peace was organized by government officials in May 1831. In fact, tensions between the Creeks and the Osage ran so high that the agent believed that, had no treaty been made, perhaps upwards of two hundred

⁵⁷ Luther Blake to William B. Lewis, 13 March 1832, RG-217, Entry-525, box-114, folder- 2536, Agent-Crowell, Year-1833, Account number-16,806-A, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Western Creeks to Andrew Jackson, 29 October 1831, *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, reel-18, 1145-1152, University of Tennessee.

⁵⁸ Garrick Alan Bailey, *Changes in Osage Social Organization 1673-1906*, University of Oregon Anthropological Papers, no. 5 (Eugene: University of Oregon,1973), 58.

⁵⁹ Elbert Herring to Lewis Cass, 19 November 1831, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-7, 475-483, NA.

Cherokee, Delaware, and Shawnee warriors would have joined the Creeks in a war party against the Osage.⁶⁰ At the council with the Creeks, the Osage admitted that due to the “uncommon severity of the winter, their people, being very poor and without provisions, were induced to destroy the stock and property of the Creeks.” For their part, the Creek delegation “spoke more in sorrow than in anger” and agreed to forgive the depredations if the Osage compensated them for their losses. Among the articles agreed upon by the Creeks and Osage was the outlawing of “private satisfaction or revenge,” which had been a component of Benjamin Hawkins’ “civilization” program for the Creeks in the east decades earlier. Instead, grievances had to be brought before the western Indian agencies. The treaty also authorized no less than twenty and no more than thirty-nine whippings as the punishment for stealing.⁶¹ Despite this treaty, the Osage continued to kill Creek livestock and steal Creek property. In 1835, the Creeks estimated that their losses at the hands of the Osage was between nine and ten thousand dollars.

The Western Creeks also had difficulties with other Indian groups. Roly McIntosh and other Western Creek headmen complained “in a very grave manner against the Delawares” that “Large hords or them” were within or near their borders “killing and destroying the game.” The Creeks noted that the Delawares had “immense droves of horses pasturing on the cane, killing up all the deer, bear and turkeys; and destroying the Buffaloe that come in or near the Creek country, killing hundreds of them for their skins and tongues, stealing horses from the neighboring tribes and bringing them to the Creek

⁶⁰ Mathew Arbuckle to John H. Eaton, 21 May 1831, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency West, M-234, reel-236, 206-208, NA.

⁶¹ P. L. Chouteau to William Clark, 28 June 1831, Senate Document 512, 23/2 Vol. 2-3 (245), 498-500; Treaty between the Osage and Creeks, 10 May 1831, Senate Document 512, 23/2 Vol. 3 (245), 504-505.

country.” The Creeks feared that other Indian groups would blame them for stealing their horses which would bring them “into collision with their neighbors.”⁶²

The Creeks also had prolonged hostilities with the Comanche and Pawnee Indians. In the summer of 1832, a one hundred-man war party led by a Cherokee Indian but also consisting of Creek and Delaware Indians, was organized to strike at the Pawnees and Comanches who had encroached on their hunting grounds. When Western Creek headmen heard about the war party they were able to compel all but one Creek Indian to return to the western Nation. The party set out for the Red River but stopped when they came upon a party of ten or twelve “defenseless and unoffending” Indians not related to the Pawnee or Comanche. The Creek, Cherokee, and Delaware war party killed three of the Indians, including a thirteen-year-old girl, who “was first taken as a prisoner, and two of the Cherokees claiming her a dispute arose about who had the best right to her, they got exasperated and one of these immediately killed the girl to prevent the other from giting her.” When the war party returned, the Creeks moved to punish the Creek man who participated in the assault. Upon hearing this, the Cherokee party invited the Creek delegates into the Cherokee territory some three to four miles from Fort Gibson. Once the Creek delegates arrived, however, they were verbally assaulted by the Cherokees for pulling their warriors from the war party. The Cherokees then stabbed two of the Creeks’ horses to death and threatened to go to war with them if they punished the Creek Indian.⁶³ In early 1836, bands of Comanches and Pawnees attacked and killed all

⁶² R.A. McCabe to F.W. Armstrong, 5 April 1835, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency West, M-234, reel-236, 598-599, NA.

⁶³ John Campbell to Lewis Cass, 22 September 1832, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency West, M-234, reel-236, 278-279, NA.

the traders at Coffee's Trading House on the Red River in the Pawnee territory. Reports noted that "fifty or sixty Americans and some Creeks and Osages were butchered."

Chilly McIntosh reportedly "[swore] vengeance" against these Indian groups and the *Baltimore Patriot*, which reported the incident, predicted that he would add upwards six or seven hundred Creek men to join the infantry and dragoons.⁶⁴

In some cases, the Creeks aided other Indian groups. In 1828, months after arriving in the west, James Derasaw accompanied a band of Cherokees to Texas to attack the Tawakoni Indians. The war party was organized as a response to the killing and scalping of three Cherokees who had gone to the Tawakoni country "to take horses." The Cherokees were ambushed, scalped, and their bodies propped on stakes. Derasaw and the Cherokees returned to Texas sometime later to avenge their deaths. The war party took the Tawakoni village by surprise. The journal of a Cherokee warrior who participated in the battle noted that "scarcely any guns were fired, but the Tomahawk drank human gore." Women and children were not spared and neither were the fleeing survivors who were "cut down as fast as overtaken."⁶⁵

As a result of the many problems found in the Western Creek Nation, many new Creek emigrants remained in the temporary settlements near Fort Gibson despite opportunities to emigrate beyond the garrison. In fact, most of the new emigrants simply established compact settlements near the emigrants from previous parties along the Arkansas River. Conversely, the wealthiest members of the McIntosh party had the

⁶⁴ *Army and Navy Chronicle*, 21 April 1836.

⁶⁵ This was originally written by John Ridge as told by John Smith who participated in the battle, see Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "The Cherokee War Path" *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 9:3 (September 1931), 233-263.

means to leave their initial settlement near Fort Gibson and establish homes, farms, and plantations in other locations.⁶⁶ By the mid-1830s there were 2,135 Creeks and their slaves in settlements on the north side of the Arkansas River that stretched for miles. Indeed, missionaries noted that the some of the settlements in the Western Creek Nation were ““one extended village, as thickly settled as some of the smaller parishes in New England.”” This is corroborated by the missionaries at the Ebenezer mission station which was established “in the midst of a dense [Creek] Indian population, three miles north of the Arkansas river, and fifteen west of Cantonment Gibson.” A number of Creeks, however, did venture somewhat beyond Fort Gibson to settle. For instance, 175 Creeks were on the south side of the Arkansas River, fifty lived on the north side of the Verdigris, and almost seven hundred lived near the Canadian River.⁶⁷

Within these dense settlements missionaries established mission schools and churches. A number of Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian missions and schools were established between 1829 and 1832.⁶⁸ Most of these were located between the Arkansas and Verdigris rivers.⁶⁹ In May 1832, a two-day revival meeting was held in the Western Creek Nation which yielded a number of new converts.⁷⁰ That year there were eighty-one Presbyterian members in the Western Creek Nation along with sixty-five Baptists

⁶⁶ *Arkansas Gazette*, 19 March 1828.

⁶⁷ J. Van Horne to George Gibson, 7 October 1834, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 211-219, NA; *History of American Missions to the Heathen, From their Commencement to the Present Time* (Worcester: Spooner & Howland, 1840, reprint; Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1970), 547; Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes*, 151n.

⁶⁸ Isaac McCoy, *The Annual Register of Indian Affairs: In the Western (or Indian) Territory 1835-1838* (Springfield: Particular Baptist Press, 2000), 21-22; Walter N. Vernon, *Methodism in Arkansas 1816-1976* (Little Rock: Joint Committee for the History of Arkansas Methodism, 1976), 48-49.

⁶⁹ Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier*, 141-142.

⁷⁰ *Arkansas Gazette*, 20 June 1832.

and two hundred Methodists. Although most of these Christians were blacks ““a number of young Creek men were actively assisting the missionaries.””⁷¹

The number of Creek Christians was miniscule, however. In fact, missionaries observed that there were too many missions and not enough Christian converts. For instance, the Presbyterians established a mission station seven miles from the junction of the Arkansas and Verdigris rivers while the Baptists established a mission only two miles away. The Methodists had missions and schools scattered around the Arkansas River. Only a few Creeks, like Chilly McIntosh’s half-sister Mary Capers Brown and James Perryman, a Creek from Big Spring who emigrated with the first McIntosh party, were prominent Creek Christians in the west. Perryman worked closely with a Presbyterian missionary and together they translated the first Christian primer in the Muscogean language called *I stutsi in Naktsokv* (The Child’s Book). Perryman was also a Methodist preacher.⁷² James Perryman’s half-brother Henry, a member of Sand Town, who also emigrated with the first McIntosh party, helped translate portions of the Bible into the Muscogean language.⁷³

But missionaries were controversial in the western Creek Nation. Roly McIntosh disliked their presence because he believed that, ““we want a school, but we don’t want any preaching; for we find that preaching breaks up all our old customs—our feasts, ball plays and dances—which we want to keep up.”” In fact, a law was established against

⁷¹ Walter N. Vernon, “Beginnings of Indian Methodism in Oklahoma,” *Methodist History* 17:3 (April 1979), 127-154.

⁷² Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier*, 141-142; For the primer’s title see Angie Debo, *The Road to Disappearance* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), 117.

⁷³ Wade Crawford Barclay, *Early American Methodism 1769-1844*, Vol. Two (New York: The Board of Missions and Church Extension of The Methodist Church, 1950), 197.

preaching in the Western Creek Nation punishable by fifty lashes.⁷⁴ The Creeks opposed to missionaries in the Western Nation also accused missionaries of breaking Creek laws. For instance, Reverend John Fleming, a Princeton Theological Seminary graduate, who ran the Union Presbyterian mission, was assaulted by a Creek headman for preaching to the Creeks' slaves. The Western Creeks also disapproved of the preaching of abolitionism within their territory. In 1836, Roly McIntosh ordered the removal of another missionary for reportedly seducing a Creek woman.⁷⁵ Indian agents ordered all the missionaries out of the Western Creek Nation in 1836 at the request of the Creeks.⁷⁶ The reception the missionaries received by in the Western Creek Nation shows the conflicting and often contradictory cultural attitudes of the McIntosh party. Many members of the McIntosh party were more than willing to participate fully in the economic culture of white America. Moreover, much of their social culture was adopted from whites including the prevalence of bilingualism, the organization of their government and laws, and the types of possessions they owned and coveted.

Despite these successes, the Creeks soon faced another significant problem. In May 1828 the Western Cherokees signed a removal treaty of their own that gave them almost seven million acres of land. Like the McIntosh party, the Cherokees were allowed to select their reserves and, in fact, they chose "a valuable portion of lands previously granted to the Creeks." The federal government was initially unaware of the mistake and

⁷⁴ Vernon, "Beginnings of Indian Methodism in Oklahoma," 144.

⁷⁵ Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier*, 142-143.

⁷⁶ C.A. Harris to William Armstrong, 16 November 1836, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-20, 138, NA.

blamed the lack “of correct information of the geographical situation of the country.”⁷⁷

Neither the Creeks nor the Cherokees were willing to concede the land, however.

Compounding the problem was that a number of Cherokees had already moved into the Creek territory. The Cherokees established farmsteads and refused to leave.

Interestingly, the Western Creeks protested the Cherokee encroachment onto their lands despite the fact that a number of McIntosh Creeks had settled in the Choctaw tract in 1828, claiming they did not like the land they inhabited.⁷⁸ But for the members of the McIntosh party who resided near the Cherokee intruders, the controversy drove them to distraction, and the issue remained unresolved for almost five years. It was not until 1833, that the Creeks and Cherokees agreed to a treaty that adjusted the boundary line slightly. Both sides conceded land, but for the Creeks living in what became the Cherokee boundary, the Treaty of Fort Gibson meant another, albeit smaller, removal. Creek land and improvements that were inside the Cherokee tract was appraised and the Creeks compensated accordingly. Among other things, the Creeks and Cherokees received from the United States an additional blacksmith, and wheelwright or wagon-maker, tools, one ton of iron, 250 pounds of steel, one thousand dollars for educational purposes, “four patent railway mills” for grinding corn, and twenty-four cross-cut saws.⁷⁹

The Treaty of Fort Gibson also authorized bands of emigrating Seminoles to settle within the Western Creeks’ tract of land. In 1832, the Seminoles signed the Treaty of Payne’s Landing, a removal document that set aside land for the Seminoles in the

⁷⁷ Isaac McCoy to P.B. Porter, House Report 87, 20/2 (190), 20.

⁷⁸ Letter found in Sarah Fountain, ed., *Authentic Voices: Arkansas Culture, 1541-1860* (Conway: University of Central Arkansas Press, 1986), 120-121.

⁷⁹ Charles J. Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*. Vol. II (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), 388-391.

Western Creek Nation.⁸⁰ The Creeks resented the fact that the Seminoles would be considered a distinct nation within their country and that Creek territory was taken to accommodate the emigrants. Instead, Western Creek headmen wanted the Seminoles to give up their claim of sovereignty and become politically and culturally absorbed into the Western Creek Nation. In doing so, the Creeks believed that the Seminoles “would be more cordially received and would live more amicably, than if they should be placed in the Creek Country as if they were a separate community.” In fact, when a delegation of Seminoles arrived in the west to explore their new tract of land, one Creek Indian remarked that because the Creeks and Seminoles were once one people in the east that they should again become one people in the west. The Creeks reported that the Seminoles agreed to this claim.⁸¹ The federal government was indifferent, and noted that “it is entirely optional with [the Seminoles] to agree to or reject it.”⁸²

But, the Seminoles had no desire to settle amongst the Creeks. The Seminoles feared that they would be legally subjugated under Creek laws and assimilated into Creek culture. Moreover, Seminole traditionalists worried that settling among the Creeks threatened their lifestyle including their right to own slaves. As was the case for most cultures, slave-owning was a status symbol and a source of power. The wealthiest members of the Western Creeks also owned slaves but Seminole elites feared that, if forced to live amongst the Creeks, their black slaves would be stolen and their power

⁸⁰ See “Treaty with the Seminole, 1832, Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*. Vol. II, 344-345; John K. Mahon, “Two Seminole Treaties, Payne’s Landing, 1832, and Ft. Gibson, 1833,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 41:1 (July 1962), 1-21.

⁸¹ Jane F. Lancaster, *Removal Aftershock: The Seminoles’ Struggles to Survive in the West, 1836-1866* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 13-15.

⁸² Elbert Herring to Wiley Thompson, 7 July 1834, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-13, 126-127, NA.

base eroded.⁸³ The government did little to resolve these problems and when the Seminoles emigrated in different waves in the late 1830s and early 1840s, they were required to settle amongst the Creeks. Many emigrants refused and disputes over land and tribal sovereignty remained unresolved for the Seminoles until 1856.⁸⁴

* * *

The first few years of settlement in the west proved to be very difficult for the Creek emigrants. Despite producing large surpluses of crops and establishing homes and plantations, the Western Creeks faced constant problems. Disease, raids by western Indians, the inability of the federal government to distribute promised utensils, and extreme weather, were a few of the many troubles that prevented a smooth transition to life in the west. After voluntary emigrating, there is little doubt that many of the Creeks regretted leaving the borders of Alabama, and a few went so far as to emigrate back to the east. But, there was no looking back for the elites of the McIntosh party. Roly McIntosh, a low-level Creek headman in the east, was thrust into the role of principal chief of the McIntosh party after the execution of William McIntosh in 1825. When the first Creeks arrived in present-day Oklahoma, Roly McIntosh became the Western Creeks' principal headman. But, Roly McIntosh understood that a power struggle loomed if any high-ranking Creek headman emigrated west. This became a reality in 1836 as the first

⁸³ Kevin Mulroy, *Freedom on the Border: The Seminole Maroons in Florida, the Indian Territory, Coahuila, and Texas* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1993), 35-36.

⁸⁴ "Treaty with the Creeks, 1856," Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*. Vol. II, 756-763; Lancaster, *Removal Aftershock*, 24-62, 115.

members of the Creek National Council arrived after their forced removal from Alabama. And, at least initially, it was unclear how the headmen of the west and those from the east would receive each other.

Seven

The Second Creek War and the Forced Removal of Creek Prisoners

January-October 1836

There were several who committed suicide rather than endure the sorrow of leaving the spot where rested the bones of their ancestors.

—Jacob Rhett Motte, army surgeon, 1836

Despite the use of contractors, only about five hundred Creeks and their slaves arrived in the Indian territory with the fifth voluntary emigrating party in early 1836. Federal officials remained resolute in their determination to remove the entire Creek Nation to the Indian territory. The J.W.A. Sanford & Company, still under contract to emigrate five thousand Creeks, continued to enroll Creeks for removal. They opened a number of enrollment camps and anticipated a late-April 1836 emigration.¹ But, in addition to the general opposition to emigration from the Creeks, enrolling more emigrants was also stymied by the increased violence committed by a number of Lower Creeks. These Creeks, primarily Hitchiti, Yuchi, and Chehaw, were the ones most affected by the treaties of Indian Springs and Washington of 1825 and 1826, respectively. They were also victims of the land frauds associated with the 1832 Treaty of Washington. Having faced years of dislocation and starvation this small band of Creeks decided to lash out at white settlers. The violence that had been isolated and sporadic in 1835,

¹ John W. Sanford to George Gibson, 28 March 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VII, Military Affairs (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1861), 762.

intensified in 1836. By the spring of 1836, the eastern and central portions of Alabama were in a state of open war.

* * *

It was an inauspicious start to the year 1836 in the Chattahoochee Valley. In January, a number of Georgians blundered upon a group of Chehaw men asleep around a campfire on the Georgia side of the Chattahoochee River. Firing at the camp, the whites killed one Creek man and wounded another. In one of the most defiant acts of resistance to white encroachment since the Creek War of 1813-1814, upwards of “thirty or forty” Chehaws crossed into Georgia and avenged the attack. They succeeded in killing two white men. Earlier, eight members of the Georgia guard shot an “old,” unarmed Creek Indian who was picking cotton. A number of the Lower Creek towns, particularly the Yuchi, Hitchiti, Eufaula, and Chehaw, were pushed to the breaking point as the result of land frauds, starvation, and white violence and encroachment. When General Daniel McDougald, an infamous land speculator and head of a Georgia militia, threatened to cross the Chattahoochee and preempt the escalation of Creek hostilities, John B. Hogan, knowing what a tinderbox the former Creek Nation had become, warned that “should General McDougald, however, persist in crossing into Alabama, he will be attacked, I have no doubt, and it will be the means of creating a Creek war.”² Moreover, Hogan

² John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 30 January 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs (Washington: Gales & Seaton: 1861), 748-749; John B. Hogan to C.C. Clay, 30 January 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 749; John Page to George Gibson, 9 April 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 767-768.

noted that “for the last three days I have each day visited the three towns that have been considered hostile, and the conduct and appearance of those people are changed. *Not an Indian came* to the council fire but was armed with his rifle, *knife, pouch, horn, &c.*, ready for battle.”³

Agents sensed a palpable change in the mood of many of the Creeks in the southern sections of the former Lower Creek Nation in January 1836. The frustration that had enveloped the Creeks in 1834 and through 1835 turned to rage in 1836. There were a number of reasons why. The land fraud investigations were moving at a slow pace and justice seemed to elude a number of the Creeks. Hogan, who was in charge of investigating the frauds, drew the ire of the J.W.A Sanford & Company because the thorough investigations into the frauds, they felt, slowed the pace of enrolling Creeks for emigration. In addition, many speculators opposed the investigations either because they feared being arrested for their role in the frauds, or they wanted to keep the frauds going. Hogan noted as much saying, “I have had much opposition to this investigation since I came into this district [Barbour County, Alabama], and the opposition to the investigation seems to be systematized.” Creditors also harassed the Creeks for debts, some of which they did not owe. For instance, in May 1836, Opothle Yoholo was arrested for an outstanding debt. An exasperated contractor lamented that Opothle Yoholo had been detained “for a debt for which he is as much responsible as he is for the national debt of Great Britain.”⁴

³ John B. Hogan to Lewis Cass, 5 February 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 750-751.

⁴ John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 30 January 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 749; John W. A. Sanford to George Gibson, 14 May 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI,

The Creeks were victimized in other ways by whites. In late 1835 and early 1836, a phrenologist traveled through the Creek reserves “digging up a number of Indian skulls and carrying them off.” The phrenologist was likely Josiah Nott, a physician and racial theorist who also measured a number of Choctaw and Seminole skulls in the Southeast. The desecration was profoundly insulting and it was not surprising that Nott’s actions “greatly incensed” the Creeks. In fact, one Creek headman who had had his land stolen, “spoke up with great bitterness and said: ‘He would 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.’” The Creeks threatened to kill the man who had shown Nott the location of the skulls.⁵

In rare cases, the Creeks were victimized by other Creeks. Paddy Carr was the son of an Irishman and a Creek woman. According to Thomas L. McKenney, the former head of the Indian Office, and James Hall, Carr was born near Fort Mitchell and spent much of his childhood under the care of John Crowell. At age nineteen, Carr served as interpreter to the 1826 delegation that negotiated the Treaty of Washington. Carr later married one of William McIntosh’s daughters and was exceedingly wealthy. He owned between seventy and eighty slaves, landed property, and a large stock of horses and

Military Affairs, 763; John B. Hogan to Lewis Cass, 8 March 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 751-753.

⁵ John B. Hogan to Lewis Cass, 8 March 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 751-753; also see Reginald Horsman, *Josiah Nott of Mobile* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 58; For descriptions of Creek skulls see, Josiah Nott and George R. Gliddon, *Indigenous Races of the Earth: or, New Chapters of Ethnological Inquiry* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1857), 337.

cattle. Carr also worked for Daniel McDougald and had stolen the Hitchiti chief, Neah Emathla's land reserve. Hogan described Carr as "a rogue."⁶

The Creeks were caught in the middle of these problems. The Yuchi, for instance, had lost much of their reserves to land speculators. In fact, Hogan declared as a result, that the Yuchi "have a deep sense of injury, and do not easily forget it," and the agent observed that many of the contractors had become deeply afraid of them. One land speculator, in fact, "was glad to get away [from them] as fast as possible" after visiting their town. Some Yuchis killed a man who ran a store near their reserves and his brother. This was no random act, and Hogan noted that "the Indians knew who they were shooting at" when they killed the men. But, agents feared traveling alone around a number of Lower Creek towns, including Eufaula, Hitchiti, and Chehaw. John Page, the Superintendent of Creek Removal, who as disbursing agent carried large sums of money with him, was told not to travel through the Creek territory by himself.⁷

As a result of the problems, many of the Creeks stung worst by the land frauds began allying themselves around the chiefs most outspoken against emigration. The Cusseta headman, Neah Micco, for instance, was popular among many Lower Creeks for his stay-at-all-costs rhetoric. Neah Micco sent a letter to Andrew Jackson in January 1836 pledging peace but reminding the president that while there were "bad Indians," there are also "some bad white men" as well. Neah Micco's followers included the

⁶ Thomas McKenney and James Hall, *History of the Indian Tribes of North America, with Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of the Principal Chiefs. Embellished with One Hundred and Twenty Portraits, from the Indian Gallery in the Department of War, at Washington* (Philadelphia: Daniel Rice and James G. Clark, 1842), 23-24.

⁷ John B. Hogan to Lewis Cass, 8 March 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 751-753; John Page to George Gibson, 9 April 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 767-768; John Page to George Gibson, 11 April 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 768.

prominent Hitchiti chief Neah Emathla. Neah Emathla had spent much of his life among the Seminoles in Florida and was a veteran of the Seminole War against the United States in 1817. He had “a high reputation as an assassin,” according to Hogan. Neah Emathla had pledged to emigrate in 1835, but changed his mind when the contract with the Sanford company was made. When Hogan visited him at the Hachechubba square ground in February or March 1836, Neah Emathla was much less open to emigration. In fact, Hogan reported that Neah Emathla told him that “he had a higher chief to whom he must look for orders, and if his chief would say get up and go, he would do so, but until he did say *go* he would stay.” This “higher chief” was Neah Micco.⁸

The Creeks’ sense of defiance was nothing new, but agents believed it was heightened by the successes the Seminoles were having against the United States in Florida. The Creeks found inspiration in the Seminoles, in part, because the Seminoles themselves were Lower Creeks. Bands of Creeks migrated to Florida in three waves between 1702 and 1820. Between 1702 and 1740 numbers of Creeks traveled to Florida to raid Spanish settlements and the Apalachee Indians who were their allies. Permanent settlements were established during the second phase between 1740 and 1812 and were used by hunting parties who sought out the large bear and deer populations in Florida. The third phase of colonization of Florida by the Creeks occurred between 1812 and 1820 as many Upper and Lower Creeks fled the Creek Nation to escape white encroachment, land cessions, and the aftereffects of the Creek War.⁹

⁸ John B. Hogan to Lewis Cass, 8 March 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 751-753.

⁹ James W. Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 3-6; Also see Brent Richards Weisman, *Unconquered People: Florida’s Seminole and Miccosukee Indians*

The close link between the Lower Creeks in the southern regions of the former Creek Nation and the Seminoles inevitably meant that there was mutual interest in each other's affairs. In fact, when a Seminole headman sold land to the United States, a situation similar to that of William McIntosh and the Treaty of Indian Springs, a number of Lower Creeks did not hesitate to react. In 1833, a number of Creeks crossed into Florida and attacked John Blount, the Seminole chief who had ceded land on the Apalachicola River to the federal government. Blount intended to emigrate with his band of people to the west. In addition to beating Blount, the Creeks took with them the widow of a Seminole chief, her three children, and her cattle and hogs. The Creeks claimed that the woman was "their kindred." The Creeks also took hostage twelve Seminole men from Davy Elliot's town.¹⁰ Blount believed that the attack on him was retaliation for ceding his people's land and planning to emigrate west. In fact, Blount had been threatened before and had felt "some fear of violence" from the Creeks and Seminoles who were opposed to emigration.¹¹

(Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1999); Edwin C. McReynolds, *The Seminoles* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957).

¹⁰ David M. Sheffield to William Duval, 23 February 1833, Letters Received by the OIA, Florida Superintendency 1832-1837, M-234, reel-288, NA; Covington in *The Seminoles of Florida*, 68.

¹¹ James Gadsden to Andrew Jackson, 12 February 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Florida Superintendency 1832-1837, M-234, reel-288, NA; William P. Duval to Elbert Herring, 3 March 1833, Letters Received by the OIA, Florida Superintendency 1832-1837, M-234, reel-288, NA; Also, in February 1833 a number of Seminoles, on an exploratory expedition, visited the Creeks in the West, see James Gadsden to Lewis Cass, 3 February 1833, Letters Received by the OIA, Seminole Agency Emigration, M-234, reel-806, NA; Before the 256 members of John Blount's and Davy Elliot's party of Seminoles emigrated west, cholera and other sickness killed forty-seven people. Fifty others escaped into the Creek Nation, see Seminole Indians to Andrew Jackson, 10 November 1833, Letters Received by the OIA, Seminole Agency Emigration, M-234; reel-806, NA; An 1833 census of the Seminole towns corroborates that a handful of Seminoles did leave Florida for Alabama. Some settled the Lower Creek town of Eufaula, see Census of Seminole towns in Florida, 1833, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Florida Superintendency 1832-1837, M-234, reel-288, NA.

The Seminoles were also important to the Creeks because they had proven that they could successfully stand up to the United States. The Seminoles had their own war with the United States in 1817, four years after the start of the Creek War. And, by the last week of December 1835, the Seminoles had won a number of battles—the Dade Massacre, the killing of Seminole Agent Wiley Thompson at Fort King, and halting the Army’s progress in the Battle of Withlacoochee. After Thompson was killed, the Seminoles placed his scalp on a ten-foot high pike.¹² Hogan wrote that there were many Creeks “who read and write, and can, and no doubt do, communicate to them the Florida news.”¹³ In fact, many Lower Creeks understood the report to suggest that the Seminoles had defeated the Army altogether.¹⁴ The government feared that many Creeks would join the Seminoles or engage in hostilities themselves.¹⁵ The number of Creeks who went to Florida to aid the Seminoles is unclear. While John Page believed that “there are not 100 Creeks” among the Seminoles, agents in Florida estimated that the number of Creeks probably did not exceed six hundred.¹⁶

¹² Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 75-82; Also see, John K. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War 1835-1842* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1985); Frank Laumer, *Massacre!* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1968); Frank Laumer, *Dade’s Last Command* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995); John Bemrose, *Reminiscences of the Second Seminole War*, ed., John K. Mahon (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966); John Missel and Mary Lou Missel, *The Seminole Wars: America’s Longest Indian Conflict* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 95-100.

¹³ John B. Hogan to Lewis Cass, 5 February 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 750-751; Citizens in Florida also feared the Creeks would join the Seminoles, see James M. Denham and Keith L. Huneycutt, Ed., *Echoes From A Distant Frontier: The Brown Sisters’ Correspondence from Antebellum Florida* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 21, 31-32, 42.

¹⁴ J.S. McIntosh to Thomas Jesup, 7 May 1836, United States Congress, House Document 276, *In Relation to Hostilities of Creek Indians*, 6 June 1836, 24th Congress, 1st Session, Serial Set 292, 4.

¹⁵ Lewis Cass to James K. Polk, 18 February 1836, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-18, 83-84, NA.

¹⁶ Lieutenant Joseph Harris’ Florida Removal, Estimate of Funds for the 4th Quarter, 10 September 1836, Letters Received by the OIA, Florida Superintendency, 1832-1837, M-234, reel-288, NA; John Page to George Gibson, 27 March 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 766-767; Hogan did

Most Lower Creeks had little interest in helping the Seminoles, and were more concerned with making a stand on their own land. The Seminole victories merely showed the Creeks that it could be done. Between late March and early May 1836, a number of Lower Creeks made a series of hostile movements near white settlements which prompted the settlers to abandon their plantations. It was a scare tactic. The Creeks only had to present themselves, and without any fight, gained access to the settler's crops and possessions. Emboldened, these Creeks continued taking possession of white plantations and using violence to do it.¹⁷

The Second Creek War began in the first week of May 1836 in Barbour County, Alabama. While the Sanford company had a number of Creeks who were receiving provisions in preparation to emigrate, the commencement of the Second Creek War essentially ended the company's attempt to voluntarily emigrate more Creeks. In fact, in early May, the company discharged their teams and agents working for them. There is evidence that the Second Creek War was not simply the escalation of hostilities that had begun months earlier but instead a premeditated event. Originally, Neah Micco, Neah Emathla, Tuskeneah of Cusseta, and the Ooseochee chief Octruchee Emathla planned attacks on Fort Mitchell and Columbus as retaliation for years of white encroachment and the land frauds. For reasons unclear, these headmen delayed their plans. But, warriors from the towns of Hitchiti, Yuchi, Ooseochee, and Chehaw grew impatient, however, and decided to raid local plantations and farmsteads anyway. On May 5, warriors killed a

not believe 600 Creeks were in Florida, see John B. Hogan to George Gibson, 23 January 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 748.

¹⁷ John Page to George Gibson, 9 April 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 767-768; John Page to George Gibson, 8 May 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 768-769.

man in the community of Glennville. Later that day, two settlers were shot as they rode near the Yuchi towns and two days after that another white man was killed when Creeks entered a house and shot the owner as he lay in bed. By early May, the Creeks occupied all the white plantations “in three or four towns” in the southern section of the former Lower Creek Nation. Before the month was over, these Creeks had plundered stage coaches along the roads running through the former Creek Nation, cut off the flow of mail, and sacked the town of Roanoke. White settlers fled into Georgia or into larger towns such as Lafayette, Columbus, and Montgomery. Creeks living near the Chattahoochee who did not participate in the hostilities, fled to Fort Mitchell, Tuskegee, Ben Marshall’s reserve across from Columbus, or among the Upper Creeks in Macon County.¹⁸ Witnesses later noted that “the country between this point [and] Tuskegee exhibits a mournful spectacle of devastation [and] waste—Every mansion is burn’t the cattle driven off—Cribs of corn plundered [and] the whole country deserted.”¹⁹

For those Lower Creek warriors, the attacks proved fruitful and many were able to procure “corn cribs, houses full of meat, all the stock in their possession, plenty of clothing in their possession, and some money.”²⁰ In fact, U.S. soldiers or members of the militia who happened upon Neah Emathla’s camp in June 1836, found axes, corn, meat

¹⁸ John Thaddeus Ellisor, “The Second Creek War: The Unexplored Conflict,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1996), 106-124; Thomas McKenney and James Hall, *History of the Indian Tribes of North America*, Vol. II, 14, noted that Saugahatchee was the first to revolt; John Page to C.A. Harris, 20 February 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration, M-234, reel-238, 544-545, NA; John Page to George Gibson, 8 May 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 768-769; E.G. Richards, “Reminiscences of the Early Days in Chambers County,” *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 4:3 (Fall 1942), 417-445.

¹⁹ B. Patterson to C.C. Clay, 22 June 1836, Alabama Governor: Clay, 1835-1837, Administrative Files, reel-6, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

²⁰ John Page to George Gibson, 16 May 1836, *American State Papers*. Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 771.

“articles of dress [and] furniture were found lying upon the ground.”²¹ Other camps contained stolen slaves, as well as expensive furniture, writing paper, china, and cut glass. They also found provisions such as “purloined beef, bacon and pork in large quantities, both cooked and uncooked.” This was a rich bounty for Lower Creeks accustomed to lean times.²²

The commencement of large-scale violence did not come as a surprise to the agents living among the Creeks. John Page wrote to his superiors in Washington and noted that, “the hostility that has broken out among the Lower Creeks did not astonish me in the least; I have been looking for it.” Another agent observed that “The whites have stolen from the Indians, and the Indians are only getting it back again.”²³ A traveler to Alabama the year before was also not surprised at the outbreak of violence by the Creeks. He blamed white settlers for forcing the Creeks into a starving condition and observed during his journey that “such was the scarcity of provisions then amongst them that they had barked the oak trees on the road, just as a tanner would, to get the inner rind as a substitute for bread. There was no garbage that they would not greedily devour.” The Creeks also were reduced to eating dead and decaying livestock including a hog “which had died of disease five or six days previously.”²⁴

The violence did not come as a surprise to the Upper Creeks either. Opothle Yoholo believed that the war was the result of whiskey traders and “sand-shakers” (land

²¹ B. Patterson to C.C. Clay, 22 June 1836, Alabama Governor: Clay, 1835-1837, Administrative Files, reel-6, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

²² Ellisor, “The Second Creek War,” 180.

²³ John Page to George Gibson, 12 May 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 770-771.

²⁴ George F. Salli to Lewis Cass, 13 May 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-225, 151-152, NA.

speculators). Tuckabatchee Micco, Opothle Yoholo, and a number of other Creek headmen who did not engage in the war, wrote to the Secretary of War Lewis Cass and lamented that some of the Lower Creeks had “taken the blood of their White Brothers.” But, the Creeks again noted that the extension law and 1832 Treaty of Washington had usurped the National Council. The headmen noted that, “we once had it in [our] power to bring to justice such persons as acted in this way but since our laws have been taken from us we have it not in our power . . . could we have the Laws that we had in Father Washington[’s] time we could control our people but that day is passed.”²⁵ It is unclear if the Second Creek War came as a surprise to the Western Creeks. But, when news of the wars’ outbreak filtered back to the Western Creek Nation, they were quick to absolve themselves of any blame. The government assured them that they were not and subsequently noted that “the Western Creeks are no doubt satisfied that they will not be regarded as liable for any of the acts of the hostile party.”²⁶

The Second Creek War was more than a simple uprising; it was a rage-induced race-war against white settlement in the American South. Neah Micco, for instance, vowed to take back the Lower Creek’s Georgia land all the way to the Ocmulgee River.²⁷ A number of Creek headmen engaged in battle told federal agents that “we can whip the white people.”²⁸ These agents also noted that the Creeks only targeted the whites and the “Negroes they do not kill.” When Creek warriors broke into a house and killed the

²⁵ Creek Indians to Lewis Cass, 10 May 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, 1824-1876, M-234, reel-225, 46-48, NA; C.C. Clay to Lewis Cass, 3 June 1836, Alabama Governor: Clay, 1835-1837, Administrative Files, reel-6, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

²⁶ C.A. Harris to Mathew Arbuckle, 13 October 1836, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, M-234, reel-20, 45, NA.

²⁷ Ellisor, “The Second Creek War,” 145.

²⁸ John Page to George Gibson, 20 May 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 771-772.

owner, they let the three slaves present live telling them that “they intended to kill all the white people.”²⁹ In fact, in only “one or two instances” did the Creeks kill the blacks along with the whites, although the Creeks were known to confiscate the whites’ black slaves.³⁰

Moreover, the Creeks did more than just kill, they made statement killings. The Davis family, including their seven children, “were all killed, and their heads cut off; one child they threw into the yard and the hogs eat it nearly up.”³¹ The Creeks also exacted revenge by burning the homes of former Creek agent John Crowell and Paddy Carr. The Creeks confiscated seventy of Carr’s slaves. The violence soon spread as far north as LaFayette in Chambers County and Tuskegee and Tallassee in the west. Perhaps as many as three thousand Creeks had waged war against white settlements.³²

In response to the violence, by the third week of May, the federal government had suspended all investigations into the alleged frauds, dismissed Hogan, and declared that Creek emigration had become “a military operation” to be “intrusted to the military authorities.”³³ Voluntary Creek emigration became forced Creek removal. In another letter, Secretary of War Lewis Cass declared that “as to the situation of the Creek Indians, the President has thought that the state of hostilities will justify their immediate and entire

²⁹ John Page to George Gibson, 8 May 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 768-769.

³⁰ John Page to George Gibson, 12 May 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 770-771.

³¹ John Page to George Gibson, 16 May 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 771.

³² Ellisor, “The Second Creek War,” 107-114.

³³ George Gibson to John B. Hogan, 20 May 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VI, Military Affairs, 776.

removal.”³⁴ By late May, Thomas S. Jesup and Winfield Scott were ordered to put down the Creeks and affect “the unconditional submission of the Indians.” Once the Creeks were captured they “must be disarmed, and sent immediately to their country west of the Mississippi.”³⁵

Those engaged in the war were Lower Creeks except for a number of Creeks from the Upper town *talofas* of Sougahatchee and Loachapoka. In fact, many Upper Creeks supported the United States in ending the hostilities. The United States acted quickly, bringing Opothle Yoholo and Menawa, who fought against Jackson at Horseshoe Bend and led the force that executed William McIntosh, to their side. These headmen prevented the Upper Creeks from joining the war on the side of the rebels.³⁶ Moreover, a number of Lower Creeks also aided the federal government. With the help of their Creek allies and local militias, the United States was successful in capturing a number of rebel leaders. In the second week of June, Neah Micco, who had earlier refused an offer of a peaceful surrender, finally succumbed and surrendered to authorities.³⁷ Soon thereafter, he was stripped of his chieftaincy, known as being “broken,” by Opothle Yoholo, Menawa, and seventeen other headmen of the Nation.³⁸

³⁴ Lewis Cass to Eli Shorter, 21 May 1836, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-18, 447-448, NA.

³⁵ Lewis Cass to Thomas Jesup, 19 May 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VII, Military Affairs, 312-313.

³⁶ Ellisor, “The Second Creek War,” 109, 116, 138-139, 177-178; Thomas S. Jesup to Lewis Cass, 11 June 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VII, Military Affairs, 325.

³⁷ John Page to C.C. Clay, 31 May 1836, Alabama Governor: Clay, 1835-1837, Administrative Files, reel-6, Alabama Department of Archives and History; Ellisor, 176-178; Thomas S. Jesup to Winfield Scott, June 15, 1836, *American State Papers*, Vol. VII, Military Affairs, 332.

³⁸ Opothle Yaholo and Creeks to Thomas Jesup, 26 June 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-15, Folder-Letters Received During the Creek War, 1836-38, From Camps and Forts, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Soon, Neah Emathla was captured.³⁹ The headman Tallassee Fixico, also known as Okfuskee Yaholo, fled to a military camp waving a white flag and professing to be friendly but was arrested when Creeks aiding the federal government recognized him as a Creek rebel. Tallassee Fixico was later shot through the heart during an escape attempt.⁴⁰ Opothle Yoholo led a party of Creek volunteers against the Sougahatchee *talofa* and they succeeded in capturing one of their headmen. Soon thereafter, the Sougahatchee chief was killed after slipping through his handcuffs and escaping the guardhouse at Tallassee.⁴¹

Many of the captured prisoners were held in the Montgomery County jail. Handcuffed left-hand-to-right-hand in groups of two, twenty-one Creeks were confined together in a twelve foot by sixteen foot cell. One inch diameter iron bars guarded the windows. Although there was a chain around their necks and padlocked to their handcuffs, the Creeks only had one hand secured and “leaving one hand at liberty.” Taking advantage of this, along with one of the guards’ “brutish intoxication,” the Creeks were able to pick their cuffs with a knife or nail, bend the window bars and escape their cell. They subsequently dug underneath the prison fence and escaped into

³⁹ Thomas Abbott to Thomas Jesup, 13 June 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-16, Folder-Letters Received from the Secretary of War, March to December, 1836, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; For Jim Henry see B. Patterson to Thomas Jesup, 22 June 1836, NA, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-15, Folder-Letters Received from the Quartermaster, 1836-1841, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; *Independent American*, 2 February 1859.

⁴⁰ C.O. Pascalis to C.C. Clay, 21 May 1836, Alabama Governor: Clay, 1835-1837, Administrative Files, reel-6, Alabama Department of Archives and History; E. Shackelford to C.C. Clay, 22 May 1836, Alabama Governor: Clay, 1835-1837, Administrative Files, reel-6, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

⁴¹ John H. Brodnax, H.W. Russell, E.C. Randall, William Sparks, and Wiley Harbin to C.C. Clay, 22 May 1836, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Alabama Governor: Clay, 1835-1837, Administrative Files, reel-6; Alabama governor C.C. Clay noted that Opothle Yoholo told him that the Upper Creeks were “suffering for the means of subsistence—almost, if not quite, in a state of starvation,” C.C. Clay to Lewis Cass, 3 June 1836, Alabama Governor: Clay, 1835-1837, Administrative Files, reel-6, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

Montgomery.⁴² The militia, with the help of some friendly Creeks, quickly tracked down some of the escapees and in a shootout near Tallassee, killed three of them.⁴³ But it was not just the men who were desperately trying to elude emigration. When a small party of women and children were captured in August 1836, the Georgia volunteers discovered that the Creek women had killed six of their children “who were unable to keep up with them in their flight.”⁴⁴ When nearly 150 Creeks were taken prisoner and held at Fort White Plains and Fort Henderson, two blockhouses in Chambers County, many arrived with wives and two or three children in tow.⁴⁵ Even the Creeks considered friendly to the United States lashed out at the whites. For instance, a number of Creek men who were waiting to be employed by the U.S. Army were ordered to the forts in Chambers County because they planned on “plundering the houses [in Chambers County] left by the white people.”⁴⁶

The war continued into July and August 1836, shifting from eastern Alabama to the swamps of southern Georgia and northern Florida.⁴⁷ Many Creeks eluded capture by

⁴² George Goldthwaite to C.C. Clay, 4 June 1836, Alabama Governor: Clay, 1835-1837, Administrative Files, reel-6, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

⁴³ C.C. Clay to Major General Patterson, 6 June 1836, Alabama Governor: Clay, 1835-1837, Administrative Files, reel-6, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

⁴⁴ J.S. McIntosh to Thomas Jesup, 13 August 1836, RG-94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-12, Folder-Letters Received from Officers of the Army, names beginning with “Me” and “Mackay,” National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁴⁵ A roll of Indian Names Taken Prisoners at Forts Henderson + White Plains, RG-94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-24, Folder-Letters Received, Creek/Seminole Affairs, July 1836, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁴⁶ Letter of 19 June 1836, RG-94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-24, Folder-Letters Received—relating to Creek & Seminole Affairs, June 1836 (10 of 12), National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁴⁷ Ellisor argues that “the real fighting” occurred in southern Georgia and northern Florida, Ellisor, “The Second Creek War,” 196-366.

hiding in the swamps while some hid in the lofts of houses.⁴⁸ Other Creeks continued to flee to the Cherokee Nation. In August, troops passed through Benton County, Alabama and crossed Terrapin Creek when they picked up a fresh trail of some Creeks leading up a mountain. When they reached the top, they found thirty-one Creeks (ten men, two boys, and nineteen women and children) encamped. The Creeks told the officer that they had just returned from a *busk* near Wetumpka and “were determined not to emigrate and that they were on their way to Cherokee to avoid it.”⁴⁹ In fact, some military officers speculated that there were no less than a thousand Creeks hiding in the mountains.⁵⁰

The first detachment of Creek prisoners, including Neah Emathla and Neah Micco, were chained and immediately sent west in July 1836. They were transported by the J.W.A. Sanford & Company.⁵¹ Jacob Rhett Motte, an army surgeon imbedded with a company of soldiers fighting the Creeks and Seminoles in 1836, observed Neah Emathla and his people as they waited forced removal to the Indian country. Motte wrote in his journal in early July 1836 that,

it was a melancholy spectacle as these proud monarchs of the soil were marched off from their native land to a distant country, which to their anticipations presented all the horrors of the infernal regions. There were several who committed suicide rather than endure the sorrow of leaving the spot where rested the bones of their ancestors. One old fellow was found hanging by the neck the night before he was to leave Fort Mitchell for the far West; preferring the glorious uncertainty of another world, to the inglorious misery of being forced to a country of which he knew nothing, but dreaded every thing bad. This indifference to life

⁴⁸ Letter to Thomas Jesup, 15 July 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-24, Folder-Letters Received, Creek/Seminole Affairs, July 1836, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁴⁹ James Wood to Thomas Jesup, 15 August 1836, John W.A. Sanford Papers, Correspondence, 1835-1839, container-1, folder-3, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

⁵⁰ C.H. Nelson to J.W.A. Sanford, 19 August 1836, John W.A. Sanford Papers, Correspondence 1835-1837, container-1, folder-3, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

⁵¹ J.C. Watson to C.A. Harris, 14 January 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration, M-234, reel-238, 893-897, NA.

was displayed by the Indians on many occasions; for though apparently great in open battle, yet death by their own hands presented no terrors to them . . .

One of this very party of emigrating Indians on his arrival at Montgomery [Alabama] attempted his escape; but when caught and secured in a waggon, by some accident got possession of a very dull knife; with this he made several ineffectual efforts to cut his throat, but it not proving sharp enough, he with both hands forced it into his chest over the breast-bone, and by successive violent thrusts succeeded in dividing the main artery, when he bled to death. Similar instances of suicide were very common, and served forcibly to exhibit how strong the “*amor patriae*” burned in their breasts. With them their country was life, and without the former the latter was valueless. To them how applicable the words of Horace—“*dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*” [“it is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country”]

A party of five hundred who had been taken captive, and brought to Fort Mitchell, were necessarily sent off in chains. The men were handcuffed two together, and a long chain passing between the double file connected them all together. The stoical disposition of these forest philosophers was strongly displayed, for neither their physical nor mental sufferings could elicit from them the least indication of distress, except occasionally the utterance of an emphatic ‘*ta*’ whenever two of them pulling in opposite directions would jerk one another by the wrists. The women followed drowned in tears, and giving utterance to most distressing cries; the children joined in from sympathy, for they were yet too young to participate in the unenviable feelings of their parents. The smaller ones were comfortably disposed off [of] in the waggons, which followed in the rear.

Motte noted that Neah Emathla was shackled in chains at a prison camp just before he was forced west in July 1836. He found the headman unrepentant. In fact, Neah Emathla believed his participation in the war was justified because of the numerous land frauds committed on the Creeks by the white speculators. Indeed, Motte noted that Neah Emathla “glories in being the avenger of his people’s wrongs.” But, he was also a fierce defender of his people and his family. When soldiers wanted to kill his son who was also captured, Neah Emathla, “broke loose from his guards and posting himself in

front of his son, bared his breast and entreated his captors not to touch his boy, but to kill him instead.”⁵²

The Creek prisoners were marched from Fort Mitchell to Montgomery almost ninety miles away handcuffed in double-file formation with a chain connecting each prisoner. The party consisted of about sixteen hundred Creeks including women and children who followed behind the men.⁵³ Neah Emathla was one of approximately three hundred Creek prisoners divided into three squads and escorted by two companies of artillery. Those who were unable to walk, including the women and children, were placed in wagons. Along the journey the Creek women were “shedding tears and making the most bitter wailings. It was a deplorable sight . . . chains are worse to them than death.”⁵⁴ The march from Fort Mitchell was exhausting and John Page noted that “it is very slow moving them in irons, chained together, and Montgomery is the nearest point we could take water.” Page also reported that “Crowds of people are flocking [to the Creek prisoners], some to get their horses, some their negroes, and others their guns, that were taken by the Indians when their plantations were plundered.”⁵⁵ Despite the presence of soldiers three Creeks escaped into the swamp on their way to Montgomery.⁵⁶

⁵² Jacob Rhett Motte, *Journey into Wilderness: An Army Surgeon's Account of Life in Camp and Field during the Creek and Seminole Wars 1836-1838* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1963), 19-21.

⁵³ J.C. Watson to C.A. Harris, 14 January 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration, M-234, reel-238, 893-897, NA.

⁵⁴ *Army and Navy Chronicle*, 28 July 1836; *Niles' Weekly Register*, 23 July 1836.

⁵⁵ John Page to George Gibson, 2 July 1836, *American State Papers*. Vol. VII, Military Affairs, 953.

⁵⁶ Jonathan Milton to Thomas Jesup, 11 July 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General's Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-12, Folder-Letters Received from Officers of the Army, 1836-37 (Names beginning with “B”), National Archives, Washington, D.C.

As the prisoners marched west, they were joined by more Creeks at Tuskegee. After arriving in Montgomery, the Creek prisoners were forced to remain in town for about six days to wait for another party of about six hundred Creeks to arrive from Tuskegee.⁵⁷ This delay allowed a number of Creeks opportunities to either end their misery or try and escape. One Creek drew a knife and slit his throat as he was being wheeled down the street. In another instance, a Creek father and son were killed when they tried to escape. The father and son were due to appear in Georgia on capital offenses and while in the process of being turned over to the Georgia authorities the son grabbed an axe while his handcuffs were being removed and struck one of the men in the head. The son ran about a hundred yards before he was shot dead. The father then picked up the hatchet and proceeded to strike the man a second time but was bayoneted by a guard.⁵⁸

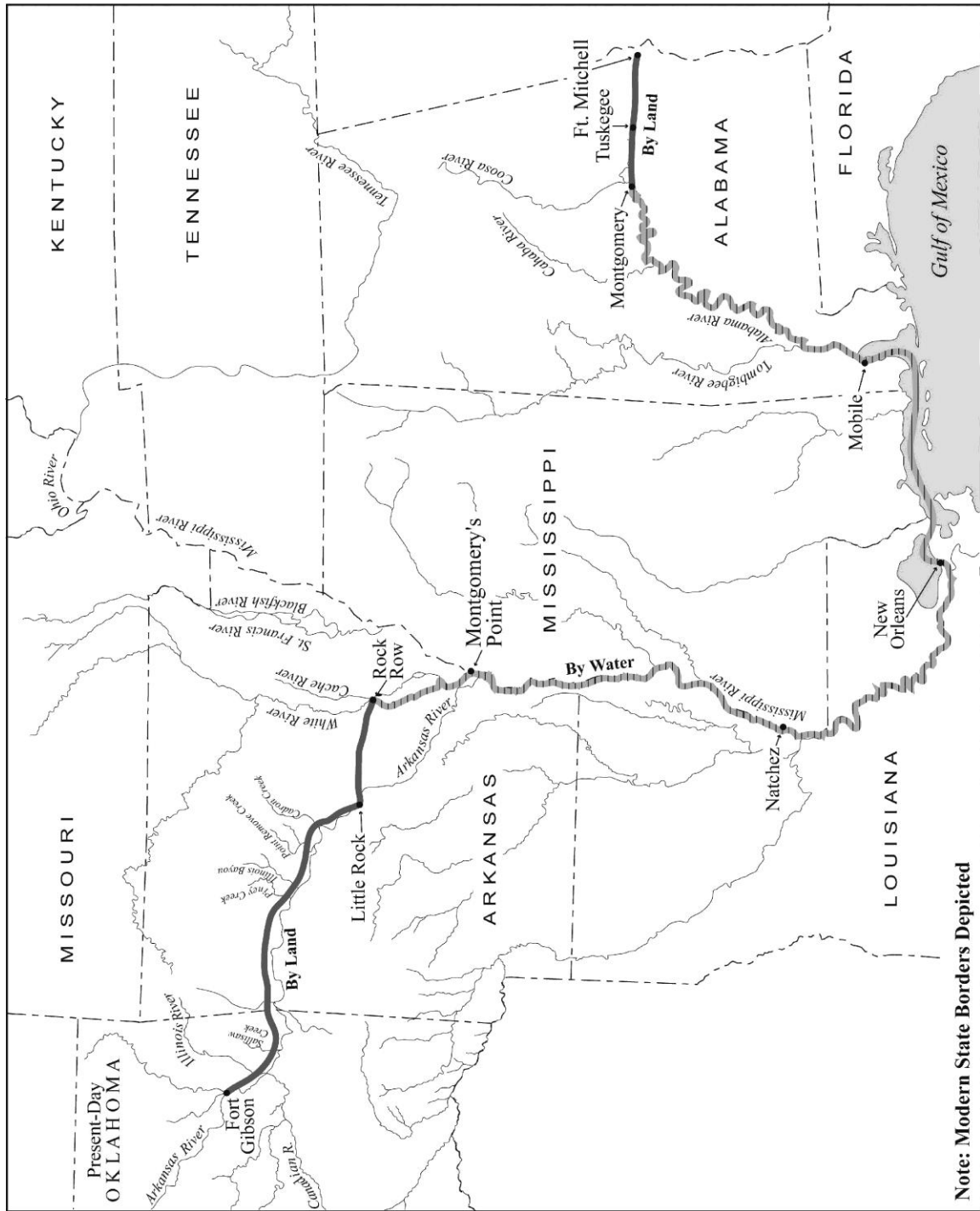
Once all the Creeks had arrived in Montgomery, the party consisted of 2,495 men, women, and children.⁵⁹ This number did not represent all the Creeks who had participated in the Second Creek War. In addition to those killed, a number of Creeks were held behind for prosecution by Alabama and Georgia authorities.

⁵⁷ J.C. Watson to C.A. Harris, 14 January 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration, M-234, reel-238, 893-897, NA; J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 12 July 1836, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1837, Box-197, Agent-Barry, Account number-507, National Archives II, Washington, D.C.

⁵⁸ Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, [1932], 1972), 154; Jonathan Milton to Thomas Jesup, 18 July 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General's Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-12, Folder-Letters Received from Officers of the Army, 1836-37 (Names beginning with "M"), National Archives, Washington, D.C.; J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 12 July 1836, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department—2nd Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1837, Box-197, Agent-Barry, Account number-507, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁵⁹ C.A. Harris to Joel R. Poinsett, 5 February 1838, *American State Papers*, Vol. VII, Military Affairs, 952.

First Detachment of Creek Prisoners July 1836 - September 1836



Among those was Jim Henry, a Creek Indian from the town of Chehaw who once worked as an interpreter and clerk at Fountain & Stewart's mercantile store in Columbus. Jim Henry is generally given credit for burning the Euchee Creek bridges and leading the attack on the town of Roanoke, Georgia.⁶⁰ Jim Henry, along with a number of other captured prisoners, did not emigrate west in 1836 because they were detained in Montgomery "to answer for [their] crimes." His wife, however, accompanied the first detachment of Creek prisoners west. Newspapers reported that the farewells given between Jim Henry and his wife were "truly affecting."⁶¹ Other Creeks were tried and hanged across the river from Columbus in the town of Girard (modern day Phenix City). The executioner reportedly asked the seven condemned Creeks if they felt guilty for their role in the depredations. Six of the Creeks said no, while the seventh expressed regret for killing an infant child, but nothing more.⁶²

On the night of July 14, 1836 a detachment of over twenty-three hundred Creek prisoners left Montgomery and descended the Alabama River to Mobile. The party consisted of Creeks from a number of Lower Creek towns including nine hundred Yuchis and five hundred Cussetas. The Creek prisoners traveled on two steamboats. Approximately, fifteen hundred Creeks rode the *Meridian*. The remaining eight hundred Creeks, almost all of whom were Yuchis, traveled on the steamboat *Lewis Cass*. Both boats towed two barges. J. Waller Barry, the government agent overseeing the

⁶⁰ Eugene Current-Garcia and Dorothy B. Hatfield, eds., *Shem, Ham, and Japheth: The Papers of W.O. Tuggle Comprising His Indian Diary Sketches & Observations Myths & Washington Journal in the Territory & at the Capital, 1879-1882* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1973), 46; *Army and Navy Chronicle*, 28 July 1836; Ellisor, "The Second Creek War," 119-120.

⁶¹ *Army and Navy Chronicle*, 11 August 1836.

⁶² Robert M. Howard, *Reminiscences* (Columbus: Gilbert Printing Company, 1912), 2.

detachment of prisoners, divided the Creeks and Yuchis into different boats because “it was found next to impossible to prevent strife between the Creek [and] Uchee women.” A platoon of forty men from the Alabama Artillery Number One was placed on each boat with orders, “to shoot any who might evince a hostile spirit, or attempt to escape.”⁶³

Despite this show of force, the Creek prisoners still were brazen enough to plan at least one escape attempt. Jonathan Milton, commander of the Alabama Artillery, who accompanied the prisoners on board the *Meridian*, discovered at about three o’clock in the morning “arrangements in progress among upwards of thirty of the Indians to escape.” Although he did not know if the Creeks planned to use force, Milton ordered the guards to point their guns at the Creeks and this halted their plans. In fact, Milton reported that the would-be escapees had no idea their plans had been made known “until they discovered the entire guard, on the hurricane deck in readiness to fire upon them— They then became quiet.” The following day Neah Emathla gave a talk to his people and noted that it was useless to try and escape.⁶⁴ Conversely, the Yuchis on board the *Lewis Cass* did not have “the slightest disposition to escape.”

The talk Neah Emathla gave to his people worked. The Creeks did not evince any further desire to escape and “appeared convinced that . . . they could not alter the fate

⁶³ J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 14 August 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 816-817, NA; Jonathan Milton to Thomas Jesup, 18 July 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers- Jesup, Entry-159, Box-12, Folder-“Letters Received from Officers of the Army, 1836-37, (Names beginning with “M”), National Archives, Washington, D.C.; J. Waller Barry to Thomas Jesup, 16 July 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers- Jesup, Entry-159, Box-11, Folder-“Letters Received from Officers of the Army, 1836-37 (Names beginning with ‘B’”), National Archives, Washington, D.C.; number of Cussetas from J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 28 July 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 837-838, NA.

⁶⁴ Jonathan Milton to Thomas Jesup, 18 July 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-12, Folder- “Letters Received from Officers of the Army, 1836-37 (Names beginning with “M”), National Archives, Washington D.C.

which awaits them, [and] they become every day more [and] more reconciled to it.” As a result, the agents allowed the Creeks some freedoms. For instance, whenever the boats landed to procure wood, the Creeks were allowed to go on shore and relax. Milton observed that the Creeks “all were playful, in fishing [and] swimming” during these respites. When the boats were ready to depart, a bell was rung and the Creeks always “came aboard without delay.”⁶⁵

The Creek prisoners reached Mobile, Alabama on July 16.⁶⁶ The two steamboats landed below the city of Mobile.⁶⁷ The boats were quickly cleaned and loaded with provisions including clean water and the party soon left Mobile bound for New Orleans. Around midnight on July 17 “a very severe gale” battered the boats. The Creeks were “stowed away in the holds of the barges” or “kept in the center” of the craft to shelter them from the storm. But, despite these precautions, Barry was “for some time apprehensive lest we should lose some of the Indians overboard.” The Creeks “were frightened, [and] consequently submissive [and] obedient.” No Creeks were killed as a result of the storm, although one Creek child died on the boat after leaving Mobile.

The party continued through Lake Pontchartrain and landed near New Orleans on July 18. The sick and infirm, along with the Creek children and the emigrants’ baggage was placed on one of the barges and towed up one of the city’s canals by the Creeks themselves. Although the agents established camp on the highest and driest location they

⁶⁵ Jonathan Milton to Thomas Jesup, 18 July 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-12, Folder-Letters Received from Officers of the Army, 1836-37 (Names beginning with “M”), National Archives, Washington, D.C.; J. Waller Barry to Thomas Jesup, 16 July 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-11, Folder-Letters Received from Officers of the Army, 1836-37 (Names beginning with “B”), National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁶⁶ J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 16 July 1836, RG-75, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 830-831, NA.

⁶⁷ Foreman, *Indian Removal*, 154.

could find, it was still considered relatively “low [and] wet” and “by no means a good one for a camp.” Still, it was the best location they could find.⁶⁸ The condition of the encampment was made worse by heavy rains that plagued the party during much of their stay in New Orleans. The *New York Observer* reported that the Creeks “have made a temporary lodgment along the bank of the new canal, below the basin at the foot of Julia Street. The excessive rains . . . have proved peculiarly unfortunate to these poor savages . . . With the aid of a few staves and boards, some tattered canvass and soiled blankets, they have put up a few rude tents, which afford them, however, but feeble protection against the driving rains.”⁶⁹ Neah Emathla rejected an offer of a blanket by defiantly stating that “I am the enemy of the white man. I ask, and will accept, nothing at his hands.”⁷⁰

The Creeks departed New Orleans on July 21, after a few days detention “in consequence of the difficulty of procuring suitable boats for their transportation.”⁷¹ The party ascended the Mississippi River in three steamboats with a barge in tow. Five hundred Cussetas traveled on the steamboat *Majestic*, while the *Lamplighter* carried eight hundred Creeks including Neah Emathla and Neah Micco. The balance of the party traveled on the steamboat *Revenue*. Because the Creeks were no longer a threat to escape

⁶⁸ J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 19 July 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 820-821, NA; *Army and Navy Chronicle*, 1 August 1836; 1 September 1836; Eugene H. Abadie to George Gibson, 21 July 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 804-805, NA; *Arkansas Gazette*, 2 August 1836.

⁶⁹ *Niles' Weekly Register*, 6 August 1836.

⁷⁰ W. H. Sparks, *The Memories of Fifty Years: Containing Brief Biographical Notices of Distinguished Americans, and Anecdotes of Remarkable Men; Interspersed with Scenes and Incidents Occurring During a Long Life of Observation Chiefly Spent in the Southwest* (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, 1872), 476.

⁷¹ J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 20 July 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 834, NA.

or commit depredations, the Alabama Artillery Number One did not accompany the party any farther and they returned to Alabama. A day after the party left New Orleans, a Creek man died. Barry noted that “he was very old had no complaint—no pain—his physical powers were almost entirely destroyed, so much so, that the pang of death itself passed without causing a struggle.” Another Creek Indian died after leaving New Orleans when “a child was killed instantly by the falling in of the deck of a keelboat employed to transport them.” The deck was overcrowded.⁷²

The party stopped near Natchez to clean the boats and allow the Creeks to rest on shore. The emigrants continued ascending the Mississippi River, then entered the mouth of the White River, and landed at Rock Row on July 30. Although the agents wanted to ascend the Arkansas River to Fort Gibson, the river was too low to reach their destination by water. As a result, the Creeks were forced to walk the remainder of their journey to Fort Gibson on foot. But, the change in plans sent the agents and contractors scrambling to find wagons and teams and the Creeks remained at Rock Row for over a week. Even worse, their encampment was “very unfavorable” because there was no potable water and no protection from the heat, “which was most excessive.”⁷³

⁷² J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 23 July 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 837-838, NA; J. Waller Barry to Thomas Jesup, 16 July 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-11, Folder-Letters Received from Officers of the Army, 1836-37 (Names beginning with “B”), National Archives, Washington, D.C.; also see Eugene Abadie to George Gibson, 20 October 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 800-802, NA; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, 157.

⁷³ J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 10 August 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 823-824, NA; J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 23 July 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 837-838, NA; J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 20 July 1836, NA, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 834, NA.

Still, many Creeks found time to play and relax at Rock Row. The Creeks held dances and ball plays to pass the time. They also hunted and fished to supplement their rations. But, while the Creeks were described as appearing “cheerful [and] well disposed,” by the agents, this did not mean that they did not engage in small acts of resistance. For instance, the chains and handcuffs that had previously been worn by the Creek prisoners were packed in barrels and brought to Rock Row on board the steamboat *Revenue*. The barrels were then brought to shore and stored amongst the “thirty or forty” other barrels containing meat and provisions. One night the barrels containing the chains and handcuffs were “rolled into the river by the Uchee Indians” and lost. Other acts of resistance included refusing to march with the rest of the emigrants. Neah Micco and his people, for instance, threatened to remain behind once the party commenced their journey by land to Fort Gibson.⁷⁴

The Creeks left their encampment at Rock Row on the evening of August 8. Despite their earlier refusal, Neah Micco and his people accompanied the party “with apparent cheerfulness.” The party left at night to avoid travel through the prairies in the extreme heat of the day. In fact, the party traveled primarily at night and camped during the daytime. The contractors procured over twenty wagons but this was still “insufficient” for such a large party. Although the nine hundred Yuchi had “very little baggage,” many of the wagons were “loaded up in a great measure with old women [and]

⁷⁴ J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 10 August 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 823-824, NA; J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 14 August 1836, NA, RG-75, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 816-817, NA.

children.” Still, Barry noted that there were “many that should be transported who are compelled to walk.”⁷⁵

The party reached the neighborhood of Little Rock on August 10. The journey by land was not without incident, however. A number of Creeks “committed depredations on orchards [and] corn fields” of local white residents. Agents were unable to control the Creeks or punish them for their crimes until the headmen became involved and established a punishment of fifty lashes for any person stole food. Incidentally, the following day, two Yuchi girls were caught violating the rule and “were whipped before the whole camp.” But, the occasional theft of produce by some Creeks from the settlers’ fields was little compared to the difficulty the party had with local whites themselves. In fact, Barry noted that the Creek emigrants were victimized by “the most depraved, lying, cut-throat scoundrels I ever met with. They would come into camp with offers of service to assist us in seizing whiskey [and] other liquors, [and] at the same time, be selling it to the Indians behind our backs.” Barry issued rifles to a number of Creek men to hunt in the woods along the route and even let them venture off on their own away from the party. In fact, the agent noted that “the young men can easily hunt through the woods all day [and] be up with the party in time to camp.” The Creeks were able to kill “a great many deer” after the party left Rock Row.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 10 August 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 823-824, NA; J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 14 August 1836, RG-75, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 186-817, NA; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, 156, 156n.

⁷⁶ J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 10 August 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 823-824, NA; J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 14 August 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 816-817, NA.

Sickness plagued the party for much of their journey. By the time the Creeks passed Little Rock there had been “between 40 and fifty deaths” since leaving Fort Mitchell. Thirty-five of the deaths were children. In fact, Dr. Eugene Abadie, the surgeon accompanying the party, reported only six deaths after arriving at New Orleans. Most of the illnesses were fever and “Bowel complaints.” After leaving New Orleans, however, the number of deaths swelled. Part of this was the weather. While at Mobile, Barry noted that the weather was “exceedingly warm [and] unpleasant,” but while at New Orleans the Creeks were subjected to heavy rains. Sickness was also blamed on the crowded conditions found on the steamboats *Lewis Cass* and *Meridian* as the party descended the Alabama River in the intense July heat. Accidents also killed a number of Creeks. Moreover, many Creeks supplemented their rations with green fruit obtained at Rock Row and drank the muddy waters of the Mississippi River while on board the boats. The agents reported that this contributed to the number of cases of “bilious and congestive fevers, dysentery, diarrhea, and cholera infantum,” among the emigrants. In addition to administering medicines, the doctor and his assistant treated the sickness with rations of rice.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 16 July 1836, RG-75, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 830-831, NA; Eugene Abadie to George Gibson, 14 August 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 807-808, NA; Eugene Abadie to George Gibson, 20 October 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 800-802, NA; Receipts issued by J. Waller Barry, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1837, Box-197, Agent-Barry, Account number-526, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

The Creek prisoners arrived at Fort Gibson on September 3, 1836. They encamped on the western bank of the Verdigris River.⁷⁸ Approximately eighty Creeks died along the way, including thirty-seven children under the age of five and thirteen Creeks under the age of ten. Among those killed was a woman who died when she fell out of a tree twenty-five miles from Fort Gibson while picking grapes.⁷⁹ Having suffered from sickness, extreme heat, heavy rains, and long marches, it is not surprising that the Creek prisoners were in bad shape when they arrived at Fort Gibson. One witness noted that he had “never seen so wretched and poor a body of Indians as this party of Creeks; they have really nothing.”⁸⁰

As the Creek prisoners waited in camp, tensions ran high in anticipation of a reunion between Roly McIntosh and Neah Micco and Neah Emathla. In fact, agents observed that the McIntosh party viewed the new emigrants “with jealousy and distrust.” Moreover, Roly McIntosh was concerned that his power and authority would be “superceded or abridged” by the arrival of Neah Micco and Neah Emathla.⁸¹ Newspapers even reported that the Western Creeks and Western Cherokees played a ballgame in the Western Cherokee Nation and formed an alliance at a secret council that upheld Roly McIntosh as the principal chief of the Western Creeks against any potential claim by Neah Emathla. Military officers at Fort Gibson braced for any potential violence that

⁷⁸ J. Waller Barry to George Gibson, 4 September 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 814, NA; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, 156.

⁷⁹ Eugene Abadie to George Gibson, 20 October 1836, RG-75, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-5, 800-802, NA; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, 156.

⁸⁰ Foreman, *Indian Removal*, 157.

⁸¹ C.A. Harris to B. F. Butler, 1 December 1836, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-20, 190-247, NA.

might occur over “the rival claims of Roly McIntosh and Nea Mathla to the chieftainship of the tribe.”⁸² A council was called and Roly McIntosh told the new arrivals “that they were willing to meet the new emigrants as friends, provided they would submit to the laws now in force.” Neah Emathla responded by telling McIntosh, “that the laws they, (the Western Creeks,) had passed, were made for their good, and as they had prospered under them, they (the emigrants,) were willing to unite under them, and try to live together peaceably.”⁸³

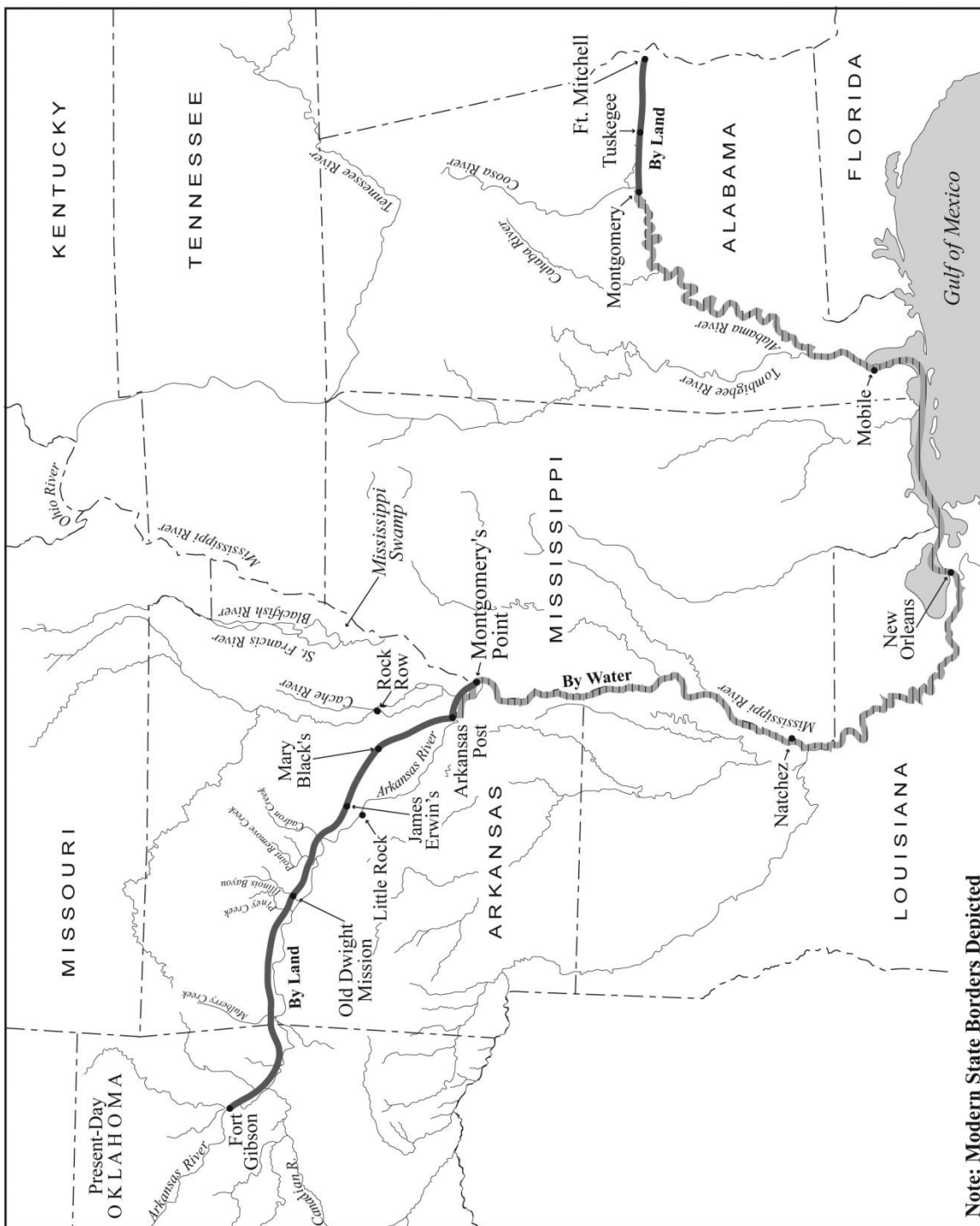
On August 2, 1836 a second detachment of 210 Creek prisoners, primarily women and children, left Montgomery on the steamboat *Lewis Cass*. The party arrived at Mobile on August 6 and boarded the steamboat *Mezeppa* for New Orleans. The party passed through Lake Pontchartrain, then disembarked the steamboat and boarded train boxcars which carried the Creeks to a barracks in New Orleans. The Creeks left New Orleans on August 10 and ascended the Mississippi River in the steamboat *Mobile*. The *Mobile* was bound for St. Louis and the party could only travel on the steamboat as far as Montgomery’s Point at the mouth of the White River. As they ascended the Mississippi River, the experiences of the Creeks of the second detachment was little better than that of the first. In fact, Francis S. Belton, who oversaw the party, observed that the “health of the party [was] very bad.”⁸⁴

⁸² *Army and Navy Chronicle*, 29 September 1836.

⁸³ C.A. Harris to B. F. Butler, 1 December 1836, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-20, 190-247, NA.

⁸⁴ Journal of F.S. Belton, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 519-526, NA; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, 158.

Second Detachment of Creek Prisoners August 1836 - September 1836



Note: Modern State Borders Depicted

The Creeks reached the mouth of the White River near Montgomery's Point on August 15. They disembarked the *Mobile* and prepared for their journey by land to Fort Gibson. But, because of the number of Creeks that were sick and infirm, the agents and contractors procured a keelboat to allow these Creeks to bypass the swamps that inundated the area around the White River. Consequently, the party remained at Montgomery's Point for a number of days while a boat was rented for the water party and carts procured for the land party. During this time "several" Creeks died of "congestive [and] intermittent fever." On August 22, 1836 the contractors and agents negotiated a contract with a keelboat owner to take the sick and infirm as well as their baggage as far west as Arkansas Post. The contract stipulated that the keelboat be furnished with "suitable bunks or birth places, and a Cabin partition and proper flooring to keep the Indians dry and wholesome and also a fire place on deck for cooking."⁸⁵

The water party departed Montgomery's Point sometime around August 23. There was "great reluctance" on the part of many of the water party to be separated from their families and they were "very suspicious of evil intended them." On the night of August 23 a flatboat stopped along the river and sold quantities of whiskey to the land party. Consequently, as they walked westward on August 24, the agent noted that "the whole marching party are drunk." What alcohol that had not been consumed was confiscated and destroyed but not "without some bad feelings and threats." The journey by land was also complicated by the poor quality of the ox carts that the contractors

⁸⁵ Journal of F.S. Belton, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 519-526, NA; Articles of Agreement, 22 August 1836, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1838, Box-258, Agent-Belton, Account number-2195, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

procured. Many of the good wagons were already being used by the first detachment of Creek prisoners that had passed through that area some weeks earlier. Other wagons were used by volunteers marching to Fort Towson on the Red River. The carts Belton procured broke down often and the party had to wait for them to catch up with the main party. The land party crossed the White River and its cutoff and buried a Creek man who died.

The water party reconnoitered with the land party on August 28. The Creeks, all traveling by land, continued in a northwesterly direction. As the party passed through the prairie, they stopped at Mary Black's on September 9 and James Erwin's on September 11. The Creeks struggled as they crossed Arkansas. There were about fifty Creeks sick and the agent noted that death "occasionally carries off" the weakest emigrants. The party crossed the Cadron Creek on September 16 and Point Remove Creek on September 17 along roads that were "nearly impassable." The party continued westward, passing Illinois Bayou by ferry just below the old Dwight mission, in rain that fell "in Drenching torrents." On September 25 the party crossed Piney Creek and Mulberry Creek on September 21 and 25, respectively.

The Creeks arrived at Fort Gibson and were turned over to the agents at Fort Gibson on October 3, 1836. Of the 210 emigrants that left Montgomery on August 2, seventeen were detained by the civil authorities, nineteen died on the route, and nine were unaccounted for. Only 165 Creeks from the second detachment of Creek prisoners arrived at Fort Gibson. All the Creek prisoners arrived in the Indian territory underdressed and susceptible "to great suffering from the [inclemency] of the

approaching winter.” The Creeks were supposed to receive blankets upon reaching Fort Gibson but there were not enough to be distributed. The government had to dispatch agents to New York to procure enough blankets for the Creek prisoners.⁸⁶ In total, 2,498 Creek prisoners departed Montgomery, Alabama in the summer of 1836. Only 2,159 arrived at Fort Gibson in between September and October 1836. The government reported that 339 died or went missing.⁸⁷

* * *

Although a relatively small number of Creeks participated in the Second Creek War, the outbreak of violence negatively affected the entire Creek population. Despite all their efforts, the federal government’s policy of allowing the Creeks to voluntarily emigrate was largely a failure. Moreover, there was little reason to believe many more Creeks would agree to go west, despite the best estimations of the J.W.A. Sanford & Company. But, when a small band of Lower Creeks began committing depredations against local white settlers, it gave Andrew Jackson an excuse to force the remainder of the Creeks across the Mississippi River. The approximately twenty five hundred Creeks who were chained and forced on board steamboats at Montgomery was only a prologue to Creek removal. In fact, governmental and military agents were preparing to forcibly remove the remaining fourteen-thousand Creeks to the west. And, this was despite the

⁸⁶ Journal of F.S. Belton, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 519-526, NA; C.A. Harris to Jacob Brown, 28 November 1836, RG-75, Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, M-21, reel-20, 181-183, NA.

⁸⁷ J.C. Watson to C.A. Harris, 14 January 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 893-897, NA.

fact that none of these Creeks had participated in the depredations, and in fact, many had helped the United States during the Second Creek War.

Eight

The Forced Removal of the Creek Indians

August 1836-February 1837

*“The Indians [are] very discontented. Every thing appears to go wrong.
I am disgusted with Indian Emigration.”*

—Mathew Bateman, Emigrating Agent, 1836

The commencement of hostilities of the Second Creek War officially ended voluntary removal of the Creek Indians. The policy of voluntary removal was largely a failure due to the small number of Creeks who emigrated west. But the war gave Andrew Jackson an excuse, in his mind, to forcibly remove the entire Nation to the Indian territory. The first forced removal was of Creek prisoners, approximately twenty five hundred in all, who were shackled and placed on board steamboats at Montgomery, Alabama. But, Jackson was unwilling to let the remainder of the Nation, even those friendly to the United States, remain on their ancestral homeland. Even before the two detachments of Creek prisoners arrived at Fort Gibson, American soldiers moved in to round up the remaining sixteen thousand Creek Indians. The Creeks were assigned to large detachments, told to rendezvous at various places within the former Creek Nation, and ordered to march west on their assigned routes. The company hired to remove the Creeks was the Alabama Emigrating Company, which won the bid to transport the Creeks west at \$28.50 per person. The company employed a number of holdovers from

the J.W.A. Sanford & Company. The contractors provided transportation, provisions, and medicine when needed. Military officers and a surgeon accompanied the detachments to ensure the Creeks' comfort and safety. But, the movement of sixteen thousand people proved to be extremely difficult and the Creeks faced obstacles at almost every turn.

* * *

As the Creek prisoners continued toward Fort Gibson, the government began the process of rounding up the remaining Creeks in Alabama. The Creeks were assigned to five large detachments that contained between one and three thousand people. Camps were established at a number of locations around the former Creek Nation and each detachment had a central rendezvous location where the Creeks congregated in preparation for their departure. On August 17, 1836, Thomas Jesup issued "Orders No. 63" organizing two detachments of Creeks under Chief Opothle Yoholo.¹ Out of respect for his authority, Opothle Yoholo was assigned to the first detachment and ordered to rendezvous with his people three miles west of Tallassee. By late August this party contained approximately 2,400 Creeks.² Detachment two, consisting of 3,142 Creeks,

¹ Orders No. 63, 17 August 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General's Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-25, Folder-Orders and Letters Sent by General Jesup, August 1836 (1 of 4), National Archives, Washington, D.C.

² Number of Creeks from "The U.S. in Account Current with the Alabama Emigrating Company, 1836, 1837 & 1838," RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-239, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Location of camp three miles from Tallassee is from The United States to Noah Felton, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1839, Box-306, Agent-Bateman, Account number-3797-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

rendezvoused near the town of Wetumpka.³ On August 22, Jesup issued “Orders no. 67,” which organized detachments three through six.⁴ This was later amended to include five detachments. Detachment three consisted of all Creek towns along both banks of the Tallapoosa River extending from Tallasee in the south to Horseshoe Bend in the north. The most notable among this detachment was Menawa of Okfuskee. Their rendezvous, with 2,420 Creeks, was four miles east of Talladega.⁵ Detachment four contained 1,169 emigrants from Randolph, Benton, and Talladega counties including four hundred Creek refugees from the Cherokee Nation. They encamped four miles north of Talladega.⁶ Detachment five consisted of 1,943 Creeks, primarily from the towns of Cusseta and Coweta, led by Tuckabatchee Harjo and Jim Island. Tuckabatchee Harjo’s camp was at the Creek town of Cusseta in Chambers County, while Jim Island’s Creeks were encamped opposite West Point, Georgia. The camps converged at LaFayette, Alabama.⁷

Preparation for removal from Alabama was emotionally difficult for the Creeks.

The loss of their remaining ancestral land had come after a bitter, decade long struggle to

³ Journal of R.B. Screven, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1838, Box-237, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁴ Orders No. 67, 22 August 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-25, Folder-Orders and Letters Sent by General Jesup, August 1836 (1 of 4), National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Number of Creeks from “The U.S. in Account Current with the Alabama Emigrating Company, 1836, 1837 & 1838,” RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-239, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁵ Journal of Edward Deas, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁶ Edward Deas to George Gibson, 27 September 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-6, 121-125, NA.

⁷ John Sprague to Thomas Jesup, 4 September 1836, RG-94, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-19, Folder-Letters Received from Various USMC Officers, 1836-1838, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Journal of John J. Sprague, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

maintain their sovereignty in the face of white encroachment and government hostility. While they tended to practical matters such as packing their possessions into wagons and receiving much needed food, the Creeks also took great care to close their ceremonial life in the east. A number of Creeks were chosen to carry the sacred items used in the annual *busk* and other ceremonies west. They traveled in advance of the detachments and no Creeks were allowed to pass them. For instance, the Cowetas carried with them the large conch shells out of which they partook of black drink.⁸

Whenever a Creek town was relocated in the past, the council ground and town fire was also moved with the people. Great care and ceremony accompanied the removal of the town fire and the re-consecration of new ground. This was no different for the Creeks during forced removal. There are, however, no documentary records detailing how the Creeks closed down their towns and square grounds or removed the sacred fire. But, oral histories survive. In the 1930s the Works Progress Administration sent interviewers through the Muscogee Nation in Oklahoma to collect oral narratives. Many deal with removal and a few stories explain the process of traveling west with the town fire. According to narrative, the town of Fish Pond chose two men to care for the town fire prior to removal. Before their detachments commenced their march west, each man took a burning piece of wood from the town's fire and they were responsible for keeping it burning until they consecrated their new square ground in the west. The Fish Pond embers were used to start a camp fire each night the party stopped. When camp was

⁸ This is referenced by James Island in 1842., see, Grand Foreman, ed., *A Traveler in Indian Territory: The Journal of Ethan Allan Hitchcock, late Major-General in the United States Army* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 128; Island was in detachment five in 1836, see Sprague's Emigration Journal, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry- 525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

broken in the morning and their travels resumed, two more pieces of burning wood were taken by the two men and carried with them. This process was repeated until they re-lit their town fire in present-day Oklahoma.⁹ Similarly, the Creeks of Okchai chose two men, and overseen by the *talwa*'s micco, to carry and care for the town's fire on their journey west. These two men were designated fire-carriers and no other person could handle the town's embers during the journey. Moreover, these men were under strict orders to abide by the micco's commands. They could not to mingle with women or drink from a cup used by women. The fire-carriers were also told to only eat certain *humpeta hutke* ("white meals") such as white Indian corn bread and white *sofkee*.¹⁰

The Creeks made other preparations in anticipation of their journey west. Menawa—who fought Andrew Jackson at Horseshoe Bend in 1814, carried out the execution of William McIntosh in 1825, and accompanied the delegation that signed the Treaty of Washington in 1826—left the enrollment camp at Talladega and spent the night before he was to emigrate in his town of Okfuskee. With regard to his last night on his ancestral homeland, Menawa stated that "last evening I saw the sun set for the last time, and its light shine upon the tree tops, and the land, and the water, that I am never to look upon again." Just before departing with detachment three from Talladega, Menawa gave a portrait of himself to a white man and noted that "I am going away. I have brought you this picture—I wish you to take it and hang it up in your house, that when your children look at it you can tell them what I have been. I have always found you true to me, but

⁹ Interview of Mose Wiley, 22 November 1937, Indian Pioneer History Collection, Works Progress Administration Project S-149, reel-16, Vol. 49, 380-381, Oklahoma Historical Society.

¹⁰ Interview of Simon Johnson, 22 September 1937, Indian Pioneer History Collection, Works Progress Administration Project S-149, reel-16, Vol. 31, reel-11, 299-302, Oklahoma Historical Society.

great as my regard for you is I never wish to see you in that new country to which I am going—for when I cross the great river my desire is that I may never again see the face of a white man!”¹¹ And, while Opothle Yoholo, no doubt, emotionally prepared himself for departing the land of his ancestors as well, he was also concerned with other practical matters. For instance, Opothle Yoholo sent off a number of communiqués to government agents requesting an increase in the amount of provisions issued to his people along the route as well as gaining assurances from the government that there would be protection from the McIntosh party in the west. Opothle Yoholo noted that “I have been and still are recognized by the Government as the Principal Chief of the Creek nation, and should any of the Creeks West object to me as such, I wish time to consult, and arrange all our difficulties which I hope we can do in a friendly way.” Opothle Yoholo also requested to stop for an extended period of time within the state of Arkansas to settle the difficulties between the Creek prisoners such as Neah Micco and those who aided the government in capturing them. Opothle Yoholo and other headmen noted that these Creeks evinced “bad feelings towards us” and they feared reprisals from them.¹² For his part, when asked about his inevitable meeting with the McIntosh party, Menawa responded by noting that “they do not know me who suppose I can be influenced by fear. I desire peace, but would not turn my back on danger. I know there will be blood shed, but I am

¹¹ Thomas McKenney and James Hall, *History of the Indian Tribes of North America, with Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of the Principal Chiefs* Vol. II (Philadelphia: Daniel Rice and James Clark, 1842), 104-105.

¹² Mathew Bateman to Thomas Jesup, 16 July 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-15, Folder-Letters Received during the Creek War, 1836-1838 (From Camps and Forts), National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Opothle Yoholo to Mathew Arbuckle, 14 November 1836, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687-A, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Creek Indians to James Conway, 7 March 1836, 16 July 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box1a, Folder-PI-17, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

not afraid. I have been a man of blood all my life; now I am old and wish for peace.”¹³

Other Creeks prepared for emigration by purchasing jewelry. One oral narrative noted that Creek women purchased jewelry such as “diamond rings, ear rings, [and] gold bracelets” because they “were celebrating before leaving their homes in Alabama.”¹⁴ In fact, John Sprague, who oversaw detachment five, observed that many Cowetas and Cussetas “expended what little they had . . . for some gaudy article of jewelry.”¹⁵ And yet, there were many Creeks who found it difficult to comprehend what was happening to them. Oral narratives described the “awful silence” found in the emigration camps caused by the shock of impending removal.¹⁶

While the Creeks emotionally and physically prepared for their journey, the contractors prepared for the logistics of removal. Routes were established, provisions and transportation collected, and days set aside for departure. Originally, August 25 and 26, 1836 were the days for detachments one and two to begin moving, respectively.¹⁷ The other detachments were ordered to begin their march between August 29 and September 5.¹⁸ But, Opothle Yoholo demanded more time so the Creeks and headmen could finish arranging their affairs, and the government obliged by postponing departure

¹³ McKenney and Hall, *History of the Indian Tribes*, Vol. II, 104.

¹⁴ Interview of Mary Grayson, 5 August 1937, Indian Pioneer History Collection, Works Progress Administration Project S-149, reel-16, Vol. 105, reel-35, 474-477, Oklahoma Historical Society.

¹⁵ John Sprague to C.A. Harris, 1 April 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 739-756, NA.

¹⁶ Interview of Mary Hill, 19 April 1937, Indian Pioneer History Collection, Works Progress Administration Project S-149, reel-2, Vol. 5, 104-107, Oklahoma Historical Society.

¹⁷ Orders No. 63, 17 August 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General's Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-25, Folder-Orders and Letters Sent by Gen. Jesup, Aug, 1836 (1of4), National Archives, Washington, D.C.

¹⁸ Orders No. 67, 22 August 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General's Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-25, Folder-Orders and Letters Sent by Gen. Jesup, Aug, 1836 (1of4), National Archives, Washington, D.C.

day for five days.¹⁹ Opothle Yoholo and his people were the first to take up their line toward Memphis and they left their rendezvous near Tallassee on August 31, 1836. They carried with them thirty-eight wagon teams and about seven hundred horses.²⁰ They were followed by detachment five which left their encampments at Cusseta and near West Point on September 5 carrying with them forty-five wagons “of every description” and about five hundred ponies; detachment two which commenced their journey by crossing the Coosa River at Wetumpka on September 6; detachment four left Talladega on September 8; and detachment three began moving on September 17, 1836.²¹

In addition to staggering the departure days of the Creek detachments, each party also had a prescribed route through Alabama to Memphis. This was done primarily to space the detachments enough to ensure a steady supply of provisions and to avoid particularly bad roads. The agents and contractors in charge of Opothle Yoholo’s party

¹⁹ John Page to George Gibson, 9 November 1836, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-197, Year-1837, Agent-J.W. Barry, Account number-507, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

²⁰ Bateman noted that some of the Creeks of detachment one broke camp on August 30 when he moved “a portion of the Indians from the lower to the upper part of the Encampment”, see Journal of Mathew Bateman, NA, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687-A, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Number of wagons and horses of detachment-one found in “The U.S. to the Ala. Em. Co.,” RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1837, Box-239, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

²¹ For detachment-five see J.T. Sprague to C.A. Harris, 1 April 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 739-756, NA; J.T. Sprague to George Gibson, 16 October 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 640-642, NA; for detachment-two see Journal of R.B. Screven, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1838, Box-237, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD; for detachment-four see Edward Deas to George Gibson, 27 September 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-6, 121-125, NA; for detachment-three see Journal of Lieut. Edward Deas, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Number of wagons and horses of detachment-five found in “The U.S. to the Ala. Em. Co.,” RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1837, Box-239, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

planned a route to Memphis through Wetumpka and Tuscaloosa in Alabama, and Cotton Gin Port in Mississippi.²² Detachment two's route was established through Elyton.²³ The planned routes of detachment three and four, which rendezvoused in the northern section of the former Creek Nation near Talladega, was due north to Gunter's Landing on the Tennessee River. Waiting at Gunter's Landing was approximately a thousand Creek refugees who had escaped to the Cherokee Nation over the past decade.²⁴ Accompanied by soldiers, the Creek refugees marched to Gunter's Landing in anticipation of being picked up by detachment four. After reconnoitering, the party swelled to over two thousand emigrants. Detachment four crossed the Tennessee River at Fort Deposit Ferry and proceeded to Huntsville before crossing the Tennessee River again at Savannah, Tennessee and continuing toward Memphis.²⁵ Detachment three, about ten days behind detachment four, turned west near Gunter's Landing and followed the south bank of the Tennessee through Somerville and Decatur because the Creeks were "much opposed to crossing the River." Detachment five left Chambers County, Alabama and made a direct line toward Tuscumbia by way of Elyton.²⁶

²² Journal of Mathew Bateman, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687-A, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Mathew Bateman to Thomas S. Jesup, 12 September 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General's Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-11, Folder-Letters Received from Officers of the Army 1836-37 (numbers beginning with "B"), National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²³ Journal of R.B. Screven, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1838, Box-237, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

²⁴ Edward Deas to Thomas Jesup, 30 August 1836, RG-94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-15, Folder-Letters Received During the Creek War, 1836-38, From Camps and Forts, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

²⁵ Edward Deas to George Gibson, 27 September 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-6, 121-125, NA.

²⁶ Journal of John J. Sprague, NA, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

Six to eight hours of travel by land, covering around thirteen to fifteen miles per day, was typical for the Creek emigrants. The agents generally broke camp at between five o'clock and eight o'clock in the morning, although in some cases there were delays. It took some time to get the entire party moving each morning. For instance, Edward Deas, the military agent in charge of overseeing detachment three, noted in his journal that "in moving a Party of the present size; a space of time of more than an hour generally elapses, between the starting of the first of the Indians [and] the Baggage Wagons, and the time at which the whole body has left the last nights encampment [and] is fairly on the road." The Creeks usually traveled until one o'clock and five o'clock in the afternoon and then established camps for the evening. Deas, who kept some of the most detailed accounts of the Creeks' journey noted that "in stopping also the interval between the arrival of the first of the Indians [and] their wagons, at the new place of Encampment, and the time at which the whole party comes up, is generally from one to two hours [and] sometimes more than that space of time."²⁷

Life in these nighttime encampments was a flurry of activity. In fact, Deas hired "servants" to assist in the "menial offices of cooking, grooming their horses, and the like, all incidental to the camp life." The servants also aided in erecting the large tents, chopping firewood, and building fires.²⁸ Observers traveled through the encampment of detachment four while at Huntsville and noted that the Creeks were divided into clans or

²⁷ Journal of Edward Deas, NA, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

²⁸ Edward Deas to William B. Lewis, 13 February 1838, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-295, Year-1839, Agent-Deas, Account number-3594-A, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

families. Witnesses reported seeing the Creek women making fires and cooking food while the men were “loitering about or stretched upon a blanket” and “scores of playful children scattered around.”²⁹

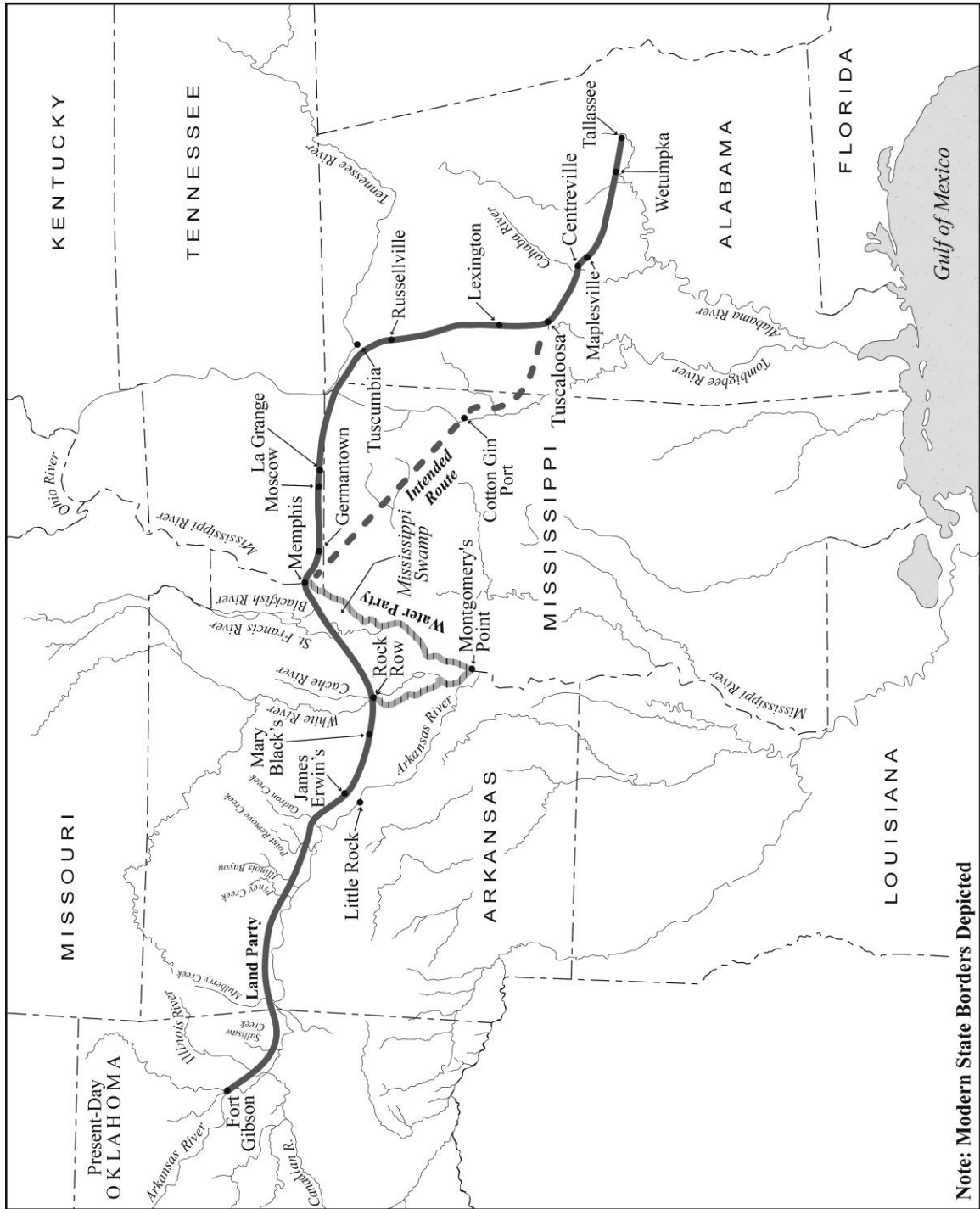
The Creeks’ journey was complicated by many factors. Even before commencing, many of the Creeks were poor and malnourished and not in a condition to travel long distances. Many Creeks also had not harvested their crops due to the exigencies of the Second Creek War.³⁰ Moreover, large numbers of Creeks were monetarily poor and had little possessions as a result of the hardships of the previous decade. This was particularly true for the Cowetas and Cussetas of detachment five. John T. Sprague, the military agent overseeing the party, noted “to say they were not in a distressed and wretched condition, would be in contradiction to the well known history of the Creeks for the last two years. They were poor, wretchedly, and depravedly, poor, many of them without a garment to cover their nakedness. To this there was some exceptions, but this was the condition of a large portion of them.” Moreover, Sprague observed that the Creeks of detachment five “were in a deplorable condition when they left their homes.”³¹

²⁹ *National Intelligencer*, 10 October 1836.

³⁰ Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians* (1932, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), 176.

³¹ John T. Sprague to C.A. Harris, 1 April 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, “Creek Agency, Emigration,” M-234, reel-238, 739-756, NA.

Detachment One - August 1836 - December 1836



Note: Modern State Borders Depicted

Local whites also posed problems for the emigrating Creeks along their journey. Many “hangers-on” sold whiskey to the Creeks while they were in camp waiting to migrate.³² While attempting to break camp at Tallassee, Bateman was “exceedingly annoyed by Sheriffs and Constables, who detained the Chiefs on Writs for debt.” A few days later, saddles, blankets, and horses were confiscated from Opothle Yoholo’s party as they passed through Wetumpka. One Creek emigrant had six horses taken. Two days later the Creeks of detachment one were once again “much troubled last night by white people (drunken white people).” The headmen, at the suggestion of the agent, placed a guard of forty Creeks around their camp.³³ Similarly, the Cowetas and Cussetas who comprised detachment five were subject to harassment from local whites who robbed the Creeks “of their horses and even clothing.”³⁴ The military agent overseeing detachment two observed that “it is painful to reflect that, at the very moment of leaving their old homes peaceably in search of new ones, the Indians should have had their camps beset by a gang [of] swindlers, horse thieves and whiskey-traders, practicing every species of fraud that is calculated to disgrace the human character.” He even noted that the whites “anticipated” the route of the Creeks “and an abundant supply of whiskey furnished on the road-side.”³⁵ The Creeks in detachment three were also troubled by speculators as

³² Mathew Bateman to Thomas S. Jesup, 27 August 1836, RG-94, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-15, Folder-Letters Received During the Creek War, 1836, Montgomery, Alabama, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

³³ Journal of Mathew Bateman, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687-A, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

³⁴ John T. Sprague to C.A. Harris, 1 April 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 739-756, NA.

³⁵ Journal of R.B. Screven, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1838, Box-237, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

they waited in camp near Talladega. Deas reported that “there are many speculators hanging about the camp, [and] various demands made upon the Indians.” Many of the whites were trying to obstruct the emigration because their business was based on trade with the Creeks.³⁶ Even local white settlers, who did not necessarily harass the Creeks, still came to gawk at the emigrants. In fact, the Creeks of detachment five were “enrolled and prepared for removal in [the] presence of a large crowd.”³⁷

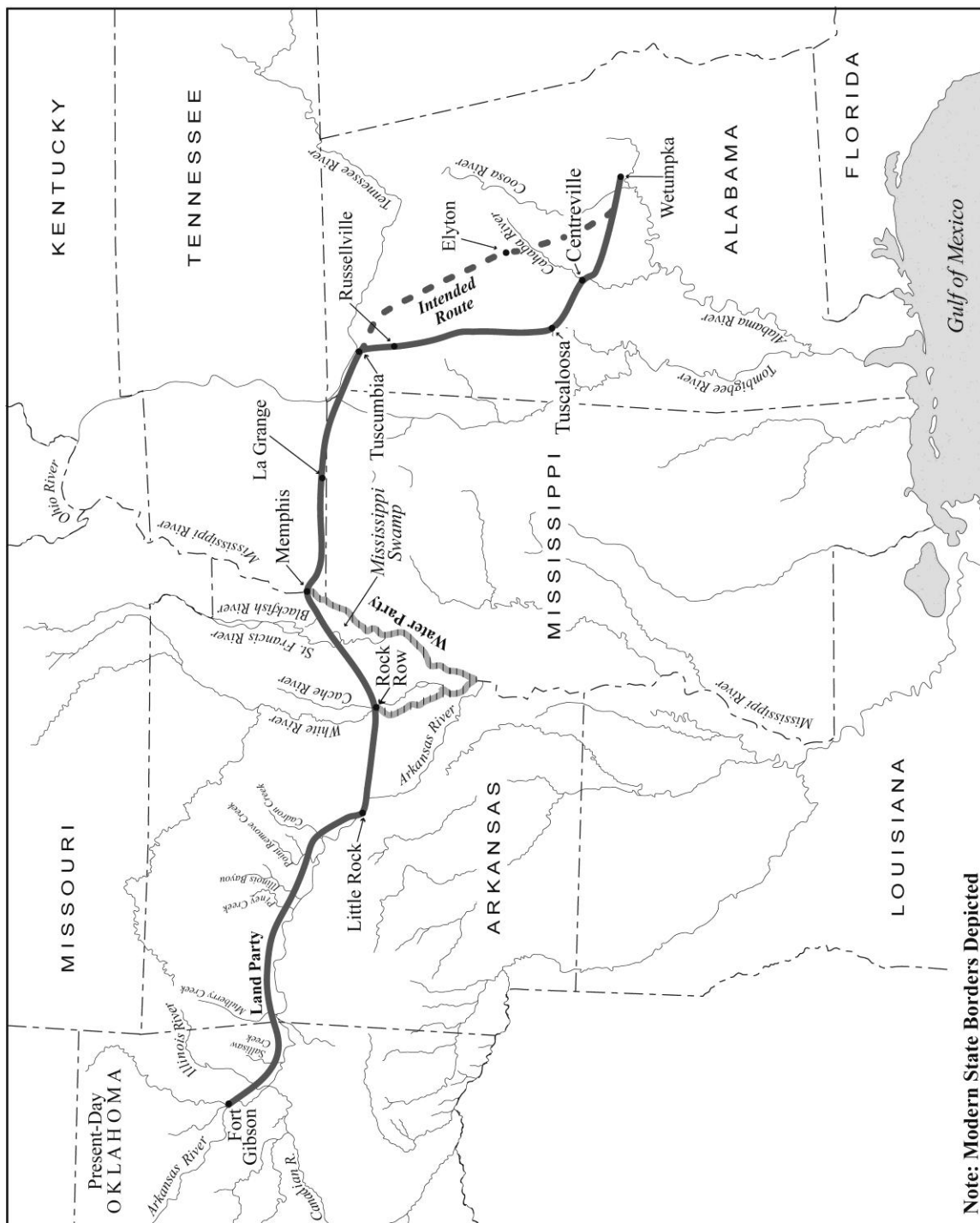
The Creeks also had problems with other Creeks during their journey. For instance, as detachment five traveled to the northwest from their encampments, about 120 Lower Creeks who participated in the Second Creek War and had hid in the Chewacla swamp, inquired about joining up with the party. Sprague agreed but replied that only if they came in immediately would they be “received as friends and treated as other indians.”³⁸ Between one hundred and 150 of these Creeks, including women and children, eventually joined the party. As these Creeks traveled with the detachment they “kept themselves aloof lest they might be treated as hostiles.” Tensions between these Creeks and the main party soon arose, however. Sprague, in fact, noted that “there has

³⁶ Edward Deas to Thomas Jesup, 30 August 1836, RG-94, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-15, Folder-Letters Received During the Creek War, 1836-38, From Camps and Forts, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

³⁷ Journal of John J. Sprague, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

³⁸ John J. Sprague to Thomas S. Jesup, 4 September 1836, RG-94, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-19, Folder-Letters Received from Various USMC Officers, 1836-1838, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Detachment Two - September 1836 - December 1836



Note: Modern State Borders Depicted

been at times great dissatisfaction in the camp originating I think with a party of hostile Indians who joined me from a swamp the third night on our march.”³⁹

The route chosen for a particular detachment, at times, posed problems as well. For instance, while encamped at Tuscaloosa, detachment one changed the direction of their intended route through Mississippi because of the lack of provisions and the bad roads. Instead of passing through Cotton Gin Port, Mississippi, Bateman decided to go through Moulton but later changed his mind again and the party traveled through Russellville, Alabama.⁴⁰ This also affected detachment two which planned on traveling through Elyton. When the Creek headmen of detachment two discovered that they were not going to travel to Tuscaloosa as Opothle Yoholo had, they demanded a change of plans. As detachment two camped for the evening near where the road forked to Tuscaloosa and Elyton, a number of Creek headmen met with the agents at nine o’clock in the evening to voice their concerns. The agents and contractors used “every argument” to dissuade the Creeks against a change of plans, including the possibility that there would not be enough food along the route to accommodate both detachments. The Creeks, however, would not acquiesce. In fact, the headmen noted that “we were directed to follow in the foot-steps of Opoth-lo-yoholo and rather than disobey this command we are willing to starve the five days.” The agents and contractors finally

³⁹ John Sprague to C.A. Harris, 1 April 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 739-756, NA; John J. Sprague to George Gibson, 16 October 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 640-642, NA.

⁴⁰ Journal of Mathew Bateman, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687-A, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Mathew Bateman to Thomas S. Jesup, 12 September 1836, NA, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-11, Folder-Letters Received from Officers of the Army 1836-37 (numbers beginning with “B”), National Archives, Washington, D.C.

agreed to the Creeks' demands and provisions were furnished that allowed detachment two to travel through Centreville, Tuscaloosa, and Russellville, before dissecting the northeastern corner of the Chickasaw Nation.⁴¹

Travel was also complicated by the presence of alcohol in the camps. In fact, many Creeks traveled west completely intoxicated. Agents observed intoxicated Creeks “would come . . . singing into camp late at night, threatening the lives of all who came within their reach.”⁴² While this slowed the progress of the party, the Creeks' safety was also jeopardized. Within days of setting out from Tallassee, Spony Fixico from detachment one, was shot by his brother during a drinking binge. He “died in a few hours.”⁴³ Similarly, while near Somerville, Alabama, Nocose Yoholo, a Hillabee from detachment three who was about six miles behind the rear of his party, got drunk and quarreled with a white man who then shot him with a pistol. Edward Deas, the military agent overseeing the detachment, left the main party to visit the injured Creek emigrant whom he found still intoxicated but “not dangerously wounded.” Indeed, Deas complained that “there are almost always persons at every small town or settlement who are base enough to persist in selling [alcohol] to [the Creeks] even after the evil consequences have been fully explained.” Alcohol was, according to the agent, “the

⁴¹ Journal of R.B. Screven, NA, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1838, Box-237, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687, National Archives, College Park, MD; also see “Notes Relative to the Claim of the Alabama Emigrating Company for Extra Compensation in the Removal of Creek Indians,” RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1838, Box-239, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁴² John Sprague to C.A. Harris, 1 April 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 739-756, NA.

⁴³ Journal of Mathew Bateman, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

cause of more disturbances [and] difficulties in the camp, than all others put together.” A few days later, a number of Creeks became intoxicated and “some fighting took place.” No Creeks were killed although “several were wounded.”⁴⁴ R.B. Screven, who oversaw detachment two, estimated that the sale of whiskey on the roadside accounted for “more than one half” of all the problems they encountered along the route.⁴⁵ But, it was not just white residents and traders selling alcohol to the Creeks. As detachment one passed through the Chickasaw Nation and encamped on Yellow Creek in Mississippi, Mathew Bateman reported that the “Indians generally drunk. Got their Liquor from the Chickasaw Indians.”

But, many of the problems the Creeks faced along their journey were far beyond their control. A combination of bad roads, inclement weather, and the lack of potable water compounded the difficulty of their travels west. The roads the Creeks traveled on through Alabama, the Chickasaw Nation in Mississippi, and Tennessee to Memphis varied between “very good” and “horridly bad.” As the Creeks of detachment one left Alabama and entered the Chickasaw Nation in Mississippi, agents observed that “the Indians and the ponies lame. Their feet being worn out traveling over the gravel roads.” A few days later, it was reported that “Roads bad. Indians’ feet sore. Ponies giving out.

⁴⁴ Journal of Edward Deas, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Edward Deas to George Gibson, 27 September 1836, Indian Removal to the West, 1832-1840, Files of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence, reel-6, 121-125, NA.

⁴⁵ Journal of R.B. Screven, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry- 525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

Chiefs cross.”⁴⁶ The Creeks of detachment three traveled along stretches of road along the south side of the Tennessee River that were “dusty” and “consequently extremely unpleasant to travel.”⁴⁷

Complicating matters was the mountainous terrain the Creeks passed over in the northern portions of Alabama, the weather, and the lack of potable water. The conditions the Creeks experienced oscillated between “very warm” days and being bombarded by “torrents” of rainfall. And, despite the rain, potable water was exceedingly scarce. These factors compounded the fatigue of the parties. The scarcity of water forced many of the detachments, at times, to travel several miles farther per day along those same bad roads in search of a clean spring or stream. For instance, after a long ten hours of walking over “very hilly and rough” roads in the Chickasaw Nation, the Creeks of detachment five encamped for the evening after traveling seventeen miles. John T. Sprague, the military agent who oversaw the party, remarked that the distance that day “was accomplished with great difficulty and with much fatigue to the Indians; but the scarcity of water compelled the party to go much farther than was proper for the comfort and convenience of the Indians.” Travel over the bad roads with little water to drink stretched the Creeks to their limits, and many did not arrive in camp until nine o’clock at night—about four hours after the main party had stopped for the evening. Some days later, a portion of the detachment did not arrive in camp until the following morning. Indeed, as they

⁴⁶ Journal of Mathew Bateman, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁴⁷ Journal of Edward Deas, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

approached Memphis the Creeks and the wagons of detachment five were “strewn for twelve or fifteen miles” along the road.

The Creeks of detachments one and five complained bitterly about how far they had to march each day. Bateman entered in his journal that the Creeks were “discontented” and they “complain of the distance travelled per day.”⁴⁸ In detachment five, the Creek headmen did more than just complain, they took matters into their own hands. While encamped in Morgan County, Alabama, the Cusseta headman Tuckabatchee Harjo and other principal chiefs met with the contactors in their tent and demanded a day of rest for their people. To make his point, Tuckabatchee Harjo refused to accept the rations issued to him and “advised his people not to take them” either. The contractors refused the headman’s request and Tuckabatchee Harjo “evinced much anger and left the tent saying the ‘word is out.’” Sprague tried to convince the headman to continue until they found a location with more provisions. Tuckabatchee Harjo eventually consented and continued on, but the following day, after a fourteen mile march, he reiterated his demands and his people “commenced throwing out their baggage from the waggon.” About two hundred Creeks remained behind as detachment five broke camp and continued toward Memphis. Tuckabatchee Harjo and his people rejoined the party two days later.

The Creeks of detachment five also had problems with the contractors assigned to conduct them. Sprague observed that there was “great dissatisfaction in camp arising from the fatigue of the party and the disregard paid to their comfort” by the contractors.

⁴⁸ Journal of Mathew Bateman, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

Many Creeks were left along the road by the contractors or for other reasons. For instance, a wagon driver refused to pick up a “lame man” who was “seated by the side of the road.” Instead, the driver “declined doing it and drove off.” Sprague noted that “the waggons and agents are always ahead and no one remains to provide for them” and that the Creeks were “subject to the insolence and indifference of the [contractors].” In some cases the wagons were too full to carry ailing Creeks. Sprague observed, “one blind man and one in the most perfect state of decrepitude” who were forced to walk because there was no room on the wagons. Sprague could do little but assure these Creeks that “tomorrow they should ride” on a wagon. Some Creeks had their possessions thrown out of the wagons and left along the road by the contractors. So many Creeks needed transportation that Sprague purchased wagons himself “for the purpose of bring[ing] up the lame and blind and sick which had been left through the negligence of the Agents.” When the contractors refused to pay for the wagon, the agent became so angry he told them that “the disregard to the comfortable conveyance of the Indians I could not endure any longer.” The neglect of the contractors in tending to the Creeks who fell to the rear of the party meant that many emigrants came “into camp late at night, loosing their rations, and totally unfit to proceed the following day.” In fact, the morning after a particularly long march, agents counted approximately 190 Creeks who “were unable to get up, among these were many sick, feeble and the poorer class of Indians.” When Sprague confronted one of the contractors about limiting the party’s travels to no more than twelve miles per day, the contractor glibly noted that “he should not obey it.” The poor treatment by the contractors and the long distances traveled per day created a deep

sense of resentment and anger among the Creeks of detachment five. While traveling through Tennessee, four Creeks attacked the party's interpreter "with the determination to kill him" and claimed that he was "engaged with the white men in driving them on like dogs." Fortunately for the Creeks, the most negligent contractor quit the Alabama Emigrating Company under pressure while near Memphis.⁴⁹

The Creeks were granted days of rest, however. The Creeks of detachment one spent a day in camp two miles west of Tuscaloosa in order shoe horses, repair wagons, and to give the emigrants "an opportunity to wash their clothes" and relax. Before reaching Memphis, detachment one had three more rest days spaced approximately a week or two apart.⁵⁰ The Creeks of detachment three remained in camp to rest once between Somerville and Decatur, Alabama and again three miles west of Purdy, Tennessee. The Creeks also remained in Tuscumbia for about twenty-four hours in order to trade with local merchants.⁵¹ And, two days after Tuckabatchee Harjo and two hundred of his people elected to remain behind after complaining about the lack of a rest day, detachment five spent a day of rest at Town Creek near Decatur, Alabama.⁵²

Even with periodic days of rest, sickness and death plagued all detachments as the Creeks moved toward Memphis. Much of this was a combination of fatigue,

⁴⁹ Journal of John T. Sprague, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Auditor, Entry- 525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD; John Sprague to C.A. Harris, 1 April 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 739-756, NA.

⁵⁰ Journal of Mathew Bateman, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁵¹ Journal of Edward Deas, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁵² Journal of John T. Sprague, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Auditor, Entry- 525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

malnutrition, and the weather. Many Creeks were undernourished prior to leaving Alabama because they could not gather the year's crops.⁵³ This was exacerbated, at times, by the scarcity of provisions along the route. As detachment five passed through the Chickasaw Nation, the agent noted that corn and provisions were "scarce."⁵⁴ In other instances, the contractors did not supply full rations to the emigrations. For instance, Mathew Bateman sent a written request to the contractors to "apply a remedy" to the low quantities of meat issued to the Creeks. The Cussetas and Cowetas were supplied fresh beef from "a large herd of cattle [that] were driven ahead of the train." But, gathering corn was more difficult and time consuming and "the Indians were often obliged to take their rations after dark. This caused great confusion and many were deprived of their just share." The lack of provision depots along the road caused "great inconvenience" for detachment five.⁵⁵

The weather and conditions along the road was also a factor. The Creeks traveled through intense heat interspersed with heavy rainfall. On Wednesday, September 21, as detachment one traveled toward Russellville, Bateman noted that the day was "hot" and the "Thermometer 96°." Dehydration, no doubt, afflicted many Creeks. While traveling through the Chickasaw Nation, Bateman, wrote in his journal that the "number of deaths increasing, old men [and] women [and] children dropping off." Indeed, a few days earlier, a frustrated Bateman noted that "the Indians very discontented. Everything

⁵³ Mathew Bateman to Thomas Jesup, 16 July 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General's Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-15, Folder-Letters Received during the Creek War, 1836-1838 (From Camps and Forts), National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁵⁴ Journal of John T. Sprague, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁵⁵ John T. Sprague to C.A. Harris, 1 April 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 739-756, NA.

appears to go wrong. I am disgusted with Indian emigration.”⁵⁶ Indeed, Opothle Yoholo and other Creek headmen noted that there was “much sickness among our people” on the way to Memphis and a list of Tuckabatchees who died shows that many were children. For instance, Oche Yoholo’s son, described as “a little boy,” died along the road as did a number of the other Creeks’ sons and daughters. Opothle Yoholo and other headmen noted below the list that “some have died absent from their friends and we are sorry. Their friends will be sorry when they hear it, but we must all die some time, we must listen to all talks, some times they bring good news and some times bad news.”⁵⁷ Indeed, the agents in charge of the detachments issued a number of receipts for the construction of coffins and the digging of graves. One receipt was issued for the purchase of one thousand feet of board for the construction of eleven coffins.⁵⁸ A receipt was also issued for the construction of a coffin and “furnishing grave” for the Cusseta chief Okfuskee Yoholo, who died on October 19 while in Memphis.⁵⁹ Accidents also occurred although not all were fatal. For instance, Billy Spillen, a Creek Indian who traveled with

⁵⁶ Journal of Mathew Bateman, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁵⁷ Creek Indians to Thomas S. Jesup, 9 October 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-24, Folder-Letters Received Regarding Creek/Seminole Affairs, Sept-Dec 1836, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁵⁸ The United States to James Alexander, 13 December 1836, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-306, Year-1839, Agent-M.W. Bateman, Account number-3797-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁵⁹ Lt. Sprague to William Spickernagle, 19 October 1836, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-197, Year-1837, Agent-Sprague, Account number-547, National Archives II, College Park, MD

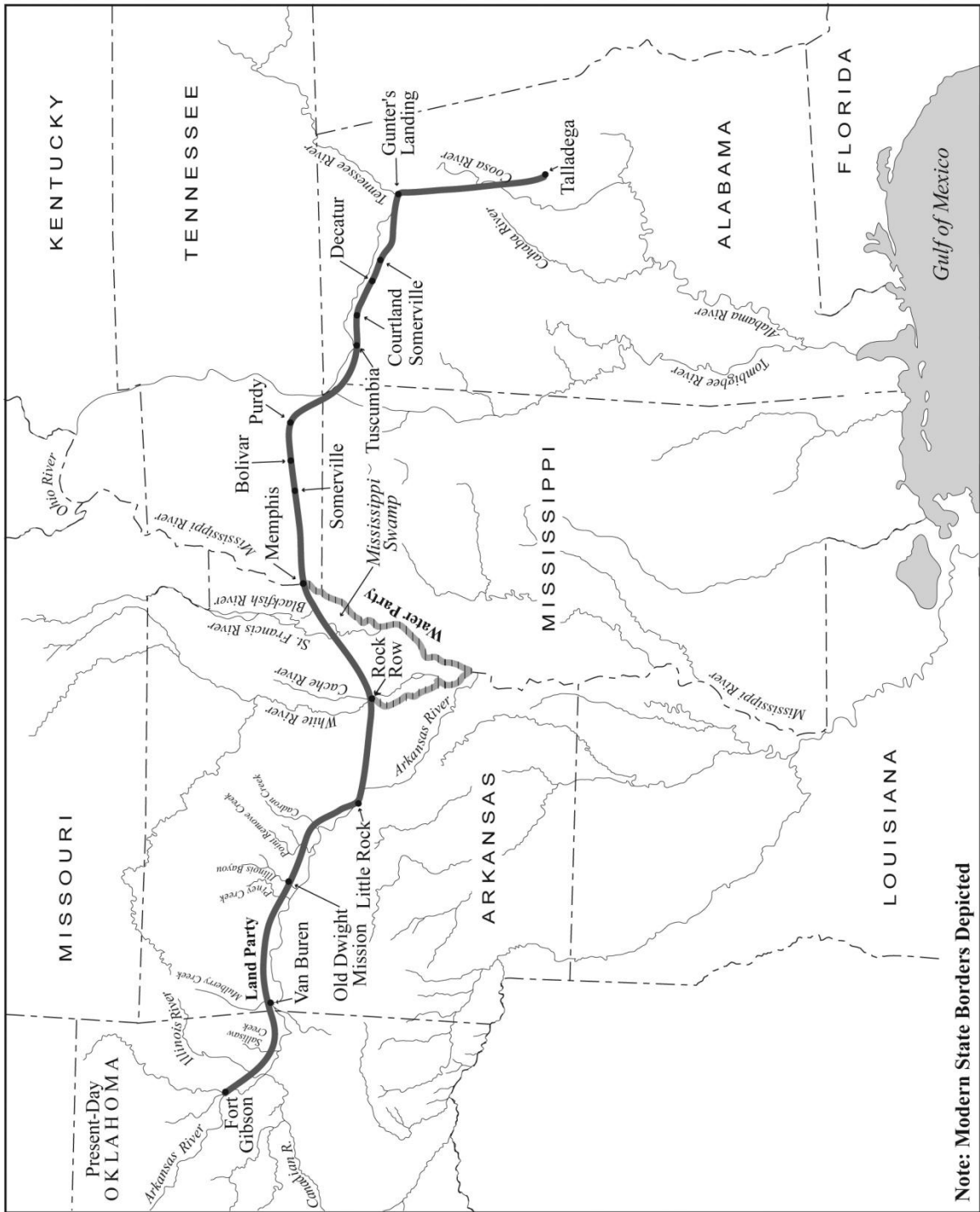
detachment five, was “accidentally burned” on his way to Memphis and left at the home of a local resident because he was “unable to travel.”⁶⁰

The scarcity of water and provisions was compounded as the once-staggered detachments began catching up to the rear of the party ahead of them. This occurred first at the end of September in the Chickasaw Nation, when detachment five ran up against the rear of detachment two which was only a few days behind detachment one. Sprague observed that having caught detachment two “makes our situation still more unpleasant and O, poth-le-olo’s party having camped here a few days previous has been the means of draining the country of its resources.” The military agents of detachments two and five met and made arrangements to separate the parties. The agent of detachment five agreed to take the right fork and detachment two the left fork when the roads divided seven miles westward. Detachment five then moved north and traveled through the towns of Purdy, Bolivar, Somerville, and Raleigh in Tennessee. Detachment two took the southern road and followed Opothle Yoholo’s detachment through La Grange, Tennessee. This required the Creeks of detachment two to walk fifteen to twenty miles extra. The roads converged again twenty miles east of Memphis. While near Bolivar, detachment four moved close enough to the rear of detachment five that Sprague sent a communiqué eastward ordering that party of Creeks not to pass them on the road.⁶¹

⁶⁰ John H. Love, 21 March 1838, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-239, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁶¹ Journal of John T. Sprague, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department—2nd Auditor, Entry- 525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

Detachment Three - September 1836 - January 1837



Despite trying to separate the detachments, all the parties bottlenecked at the Mississippi River. Only one detachment could ford the river at a time. Moreover, due to the nearly impassible condition of the swamps that lay west of the Mississippi River, the Creeks were forced to wait even longer until steamboats were procured to transport them around the swamp to Rock Row. Still, the Creeks were required to cross the Mississippi River and embark on steamboats on the west bank. Those Creeks and contractors accompanying the horses traveled through the swamp by land. But, each detachment would have to wait its turn. Subsequently, by early October all five detachments—approximately 12,800 Creeks—were lined up in a train that extended for over one hundred miles from Memphis. For instance, on October 9, 1836 detachment one was encamped two miles east of Memphis, detachment five was two miles west of Raleigh, Tennessee and seven miles from Memphis; detachment four was a few miles behind detachment five near Raleigh; detachment two was encamped on the banks of the Wolf River, sixteen miles east of Memphis; and detachment three was encamped three miles west of Purdy, Tennessee and approximately one hundred miles east of Memphis.⁶²

Detachment one began crossing the Mississippi River on October 12, 1836. All the detachments used a steamboat as a ferry, with a small flatboat attached to its side to transport the horses across the river. Once on the west bank of the river, the Creeks used

⁶² Journal of John T. Sprague, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Journal of Mathew Bateman, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Journal of Edward Deas, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Journal of R.B. Screven, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry- 525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

another steamboat to transport them to Rock Row. After crossing the Mississippi River, detachment one was divided into two. Approximately five hundred Creeks accompanied the horses through the Mississippi Swamp, while the balance boarded the steamboat *Farmer* for their trip to Rock Row.⁶³ Because the wagons could not make it through the swamp they did not accompany the horses and instead were dismantled and placed on board the steamboats. They were then reassembled at Rock Row.⁶⁴ Opothle Yoholo and the water party of detachment one reached Rock Row on Monday, October 17, four days after leaving Memphis. The *Farmer* then returned to conduct the next party. As soon as detachment one left Memphis, detachment two took up the old position of Opothle Yoholo's party. Like detachment one, they crossed the Mississippi River and, once on the west bank, waited for steamboats. In addition to the *Farmer*, two other steamboats were used in service—the *John Nelson*, and *Lady Byron*. Keelboats were also used and towed behind some of the boats. Detachment two finished crossing the Mississippi River on October 21, the following day the party was broken into thirds. A portion of the party, along with the remainder of detachment one boarded the *Farmer* while the balance of the water party, about thirteen hundred Creeks, boarded the *John Nelson*. The remainder of

⁶³ Journal of Mathew Bateman, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD; For information on the steamboat and flatboat see Deas' Emigration Journal, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry- 525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Opothle Yoholo and other Creek headmen noted that "we will cross [the Mississippi River] very slow as the boats are small," see Creek Indians to Thomas S. Jesup, 9 October 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General's Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-24, Folder-Letters Received Regarding Creek/Seminole Affairs, Sept-Dec 1836, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁶⁴ Information on the wagons comes from Journal of John T. Sprague, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry- 525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

the party accompanied the horses by land through the swamps.⁶⁵ This process was repeated until all five detachments left Memphis. Four of the five detachments used steamboats to transport them to Rock Row. Detachment five, which was the third party to cross the Mississippi River at Memphis, was determined to avoid the congestion caused by the encampment of detachments one and two at Rock Row. Instead, most of the Cowetas and Cussetas boarded the *John Nelson*, after its return from conducting detachment two to Rock Row, and traveled to Little Rock by water. The land party, consisting of approximately five to six hundred Creeks, accompanied the horses through the swamps.⁶⁶

Despite the convenience of steamboats the Creeks were generally opposed to water travel. The fear of sickness was one objection to steamboat travel but a “greater dread was being thrown overboard when dead” and denied a proper Creek burial.⁶⁷ Indeed, Opothle Yoholo and his people initially objected to traveling by water but later agreed to do so. Similarly, Tuckabatchee Harjo, in detachment five, requested to travel by land to Fort Gibson. While the rest of their detachment waited for their turn to cross the Mississippi River, an exploratory party of four Creeks, led by Sprague, crossed the river to explore the condition of the swamps. The first fifteen miles of road to the west of the Mississippi River was considered good but soon afterward the land became wet and the party determined that “it was impossible to pass through with loaded waggons.” The

⁶⁵ Journal of R.B. Screven, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1838, Box-237, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁶⁶ Journal of John T. Sprague, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD; John Sprague to C.A. Harris, 1 April 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 739-756, NA.

⁶⁷ *Arkansas Gazette*, 15 November 1836.

swamp got worse as the Creeks continued westward and within five miles the party discovered that the land was “almost impassible on horseback.”⁶⁸ The Creeks who went by land faced dozens of miles of road inundated with water. Even the swamps beyond the St. Francis River toward Rock Row were in terrible shape. Those who traveled by land through this section reported that the roads were “as bad as possible [and] almost impassible.” Between the Cache and St. Francis rivers the land was described as “one continued bog.” Because the soil was composed of red clay that was two or more feet thick, the water did not drain easily and there were long stretches where the Creeks trudged through standing water. Much of the road running through this section of the swamp was created by digging “two parallel Ditches, and throwing up [and] forming the Earth between them.” The trenches on either side of the road were used to drain away the water, and where the water did drain the road was generally good and dry. However, in the fall of 1836 there was not “more than a mile or two” of dry road. The roads were worse the closer one was to the St. Francis River where “in addition to the mud, the water was nearly up to a Horse’s back.” The route through the swamp also contained the occasional pothole, which were large enough that “it is with some difficulty that a horse can pass.”

Despite these conditions, many Creeks were determined to travel solely by land. For instance, the Fish Pond chief Tuscoona Harjo and the Okfuskee headman Menawa, “refused to go by water as many of the Indians have a strong prejudice against Steam

⁶⁸ Journal of John T. Sprague, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry- 525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

Boats.” These headmen took with them approximately five hundred of their followers.⁶⁹ Their journey through these swamps was incredibly laborious. The Creeks of the land party were constantly delayed due to the difficulty of travel and sickness. Moreover, the contractors were negligent. For instance, the contractors charged with accompanying the land party through the swamps did not accompany the party the entire way but abandoned the Creeks near the St. Francis River. Moreover, only two provision stands were established between Memphis and the Cache River. One provisional stand was located seventeen miles from Memphis while the other was located at Strong’s Stand, two miles west of the St. Francis River and twenty-two miles beyond the first provisional stand. This meant that the Creeks traveling by land still had a fifty-six mile stretch without any place to receive food.⁷⁰ Without regular issuance of provisions, the Creeks were forced to halt their westward progress to hunt in the swamplands in order to supply their immediate needs.⁷¹ The Creeks also hunted so they could prepare skins to protect them from the cold. In fact, the Cowetas and Cussetas of detachment five who traveled by land through the swamp, sent out word that they would rejoin the party “when they had got bear skins enough to cover them they would come on.”⁷² The Creeks were scattered along the road in intervals of a half mile or more, and many, like Tuscoona Harjo, were delayed due to the bad roads and sickness in their family. Other Creeks traveled by land

⁶⁹ Journal of Edward Deas, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁷⁰ Edward Deas to George Gibson, 22 November 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 553-556, NA.

⁷¹ Journal of Edward Deas, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁷² John Sprague to C.A. Harris, 1 April 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 739-756, NA.

determined to take their time. For instance, Narticker Tustunnuggee, the brother of Tuckabatchee Harjo, along with one hundred others, remained in the Mississippi Swamp into the third week of November and “were determined to take their own time in coming.”⁷³ But, some of the agents were fully aware of the symbolic nature these swamps had for the Creeks. Because of its isolation from people, it was “here, they felt independent” and “were almost out of the reach of the white-men.”⁷⁴

Despite the hardships of travel through the swamps, it is not difficult to understand why the Creeks were reluctant to travel by steamboat. In fact, the steamboats themselves could be very uncomfortable. The boats were at the mercy of the weather or the conditions of the river and were detained often. For instance, while on the Arkansas River, detachment five on board the *John Nelson* was delayed three hours in a dense fog-bank. They were again delayed almost a month later when members of the crew squabbled amongst themselves. The Creeks remained on board the *John Nelson* for three hours before the issue was resolved.⁷⁵ A portion of the Creeks of detachment three, on board the *Lady Byron*, were also detained after the boat ran aground sometime after leaving Memphis.⁷⁶ And, when the weather did improve, the Creeks found steamboat travel could be exhausting and unpredictable. For instance, concerned with the rising

⁷³ Journal of John T. Sprague, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁷⁴ John Sprague to C.A. Harris, 1 April 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 739-756, NA.

⁷⁵ Journal of John T. Sprague, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry- 525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁷⁶ Journal of Edward Deas, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

water on the Arkansas River the day before, Sprague discovered the waters suddenly dropping in the middle of the night. With “no time to be lost,” the Creeks were awakened and forced to break camp at two-thirty in the morning, and within an hour, were again ascending the Arkansas River. The Creeks were also not guaranteed an uninterrupted passage to their destination. For instance, rising waters on the Arkansas River created a strong current that slowed the progress of the *John Nelson* and detachment five was forced to jettison the two large flatboats that carried the Creeks. Half the Creeks onboard the flatboats were forced to wait along the riverbank near Arkansas Post until they could be transported to Little Rock, while the other half of the party had to squeeze onboard the *John Nelson*. Consequently, their steamboat journey, which began as being “very comfortable nor much crowded,” soon became “very much crowded.” Moreover, the overcrowding of the steamboats created sanitation problems. As the *John Nelson* moved closer toward Little Rock, the agent overseeing the detachment noted that “the Boat for the last three days very dirty and exceeding[ly] offensive.” It is not surprising then, that after camping on shore for the evening the Creeks boarded the boat the next morning “with great reluctance.”⁷⁷ There was also an element of danger on board the boats. While on board the *Lady Byron*, a Creek emigrant “was killed by falling into the Fly-wheel of the Engine, whilst in a state of intoxication.”⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Journal of John T. Sprague, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁷⁸ Journal of Edward Deas, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

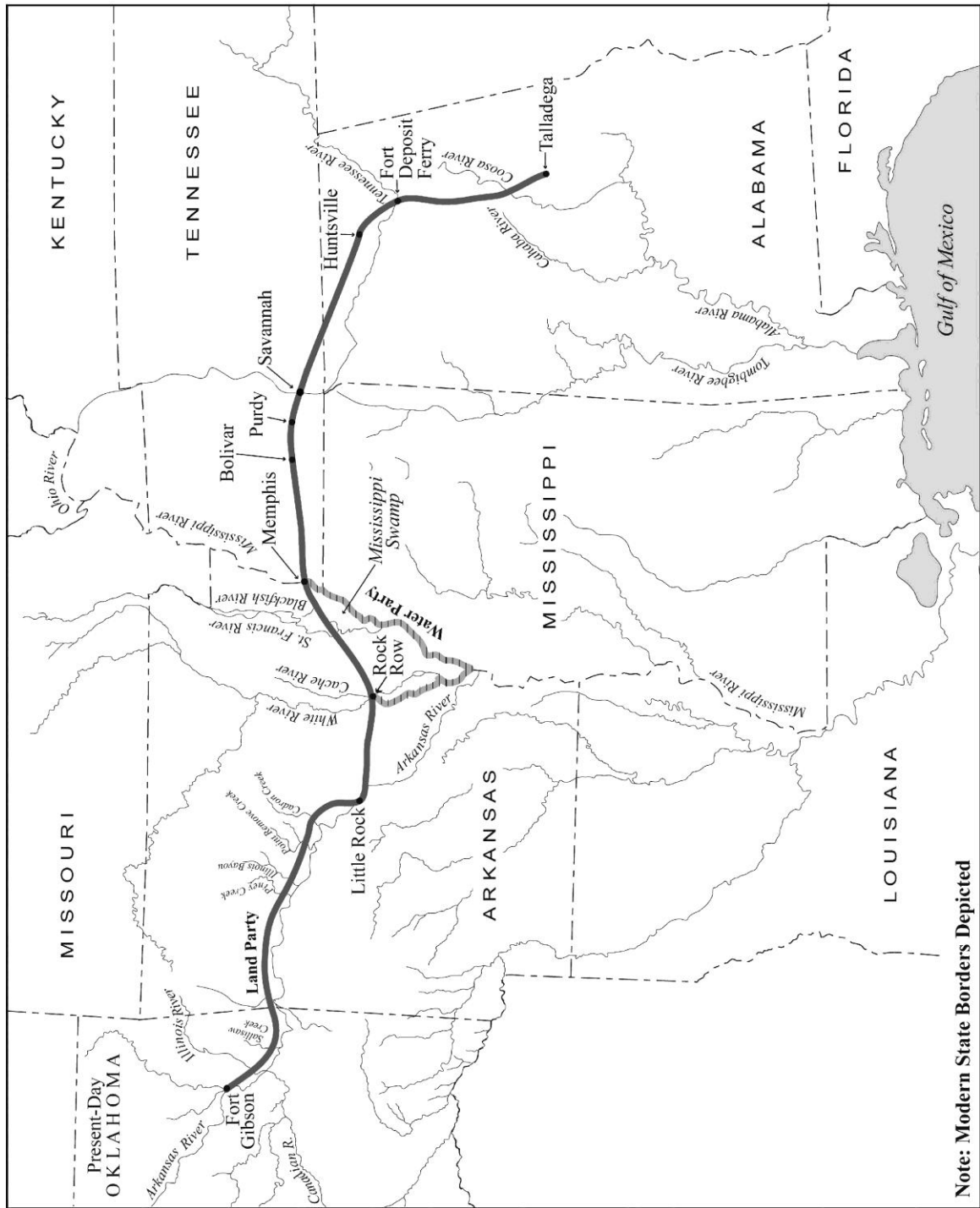
The four detachments landed at Rock Row by the steamboats remained in camp until the land party arrived to reconnoiter with them from the swamps. While in camp, rain fell in “torrents” and the weather was becoming increasingly cold. Bateman observed that camp at Rock Row was “very disagreeable” and noted that although the Creeks were relatively healthy there were two cases of sickness that “smack of Cholera.” On November 1, detachment one broke camp and traveled by land over the “most horrid” road toward the prairie. Thirty wagons were “bogged down” within two miles of setting out from Rock Row. Soon, the party was scattered along the road and many Creeks and wagons fell a number of miles behind the main party.⁷⁹ The three other detachments arrived at Rock Row on the heels of detachment one, encamped until the land party arrived, and then commenced their journey over the same bad roads in heavy rain and cold weather. In fact, in places “the wagons cut through in many places nearly up to the hubs of the wheels.”⁸⁰ Another agent lamented that, while traveling through the Arkansas prairie, the Creeks “suffered exceedingly from cold.”⁸¹ Despite having broken camp, the detachments were not able to wait for all of the Creeks who had gone by land. In fact, there were still between three and four hundred Creeks, composed of many

⁷⁹ Journal of Mathew Bateman, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁸⁰ Journal of Edward Deas, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁸¹ Journal of R.B. Screven, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1838, Box-237, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

Detachment Four - September 1836 - December 1836



different detachments, still in the swamps and without provisions or the means to ford the rivers.⁸²

Leaving the stragglers behind, the detachments continued west toward Little Rock. The water party of detachment five, traveling on the *John Nelson*, arrived there first on November 3, 1836. The Creeks disembarked the steamboat and commenced walking westward. The *John Nelson* was sent eastward to pick up the Creeks who were forced to ditch their flatboat near Arkansas Post. Both the land and water parties reconnoitered near Dardanelle. Despite pleas from the agents, Tuckabatchee Harjo refused to board the boat for their final leg to Fort Gibson and this caused many of the Cussetas to refuse going by water as well. Only three hundred emigrants agreed to continue west by steamboat. The following day the agents and contractors again tried to coax the Creeks on board the *John Nelson*, but rather than convincing any more to go by water, many of the three hundred already on board changed their minds and took their baggage off the boat. Their stated reason for going by land was that “they had been told that they were to be taken into a distant country where they were to be placed under soldiers and their men placed in irons.” The agent convinced many of them that the report was untrue and 395 Creeks and their possessions continued on the *John Nelson* to Fort Gibson. The sick, feeble, and elderly of detachment five arrived at the garrison on November 22. Most of the Creeks of detachment five, however, chose to brave the cold weather and “violent rain” and walk overland. Sprague noted that the party struggled as “four, five and six waggons were down in the mud at once.” The weather was

⁸² Edward Deas to George Gibson, 22 November 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 553-556, NA.

“extremely cold” and unfavorable enough that when the Creeks of detachment five stumbled upon the *John Nelson* at the mouth of Spadra Creek, after its return from Fort Gibson, there was little hesitation among most of the party to board and continue west by water. Approximately one thousand Creeks traveled on the river, the balance mounted their horses and continued by land. But, the comfort of the steamboat was short-lived. The *John Nelson* ran aground at Fort Smith and the Creeks had to walk the rest of the way to Fort Gibson.⁸³

The other detachments either arrived in Little Rock or passed to the north of Little Rock between November 6 and November 27, 1836. Detachment three spent a number of weeks encamped near Little Rock waiting for the Creeks who had traveled by land from Memphis, to arrive from the swamps. Among those was Menawa and “a considerable number” of Creeks from different towns, who reportedly, were “still two or three days’ journey behind the party.” Wagons and provisions were sent eastward from near Little Rock to collect these Creeks. Into the first week of December, “several” hundred Creeks remained on the eastern bank of the White River “without the means of crossing” due to the neglect of the contractors. The land party eventually arrived near Little Rock but Tuscoona Harjo, Menawa, and four hundred of their people, refused to travel much farther beyond that that. Menawa was too intoxicated to travel while Tuscoona Harjo “evinced a stubborn obstinate disposition and every thing that could be said to persuade him to travel was in vain.” Most of these Creeks rejoined detachment

⁸³ Journal of John T. Sprague, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD; John T. Sprague to C.A. Harris, 1 April 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 739-756, NA, noted that approximately sixteen hundred Creeks boarded the *John Nelson* at Spadra Creek.

three by the last week of December. Tuscoona Harjo, who had “a considerable sum of money [and] good Ponies” demanded to walk the rest of the way “at his leisure.” He was accompanied by between one hundred and 150 of his followers.⁸⁴

While encamped near Little Rock and even after continuing westward, a number of Arkansans accused the Creeks of depredations against their property. Many reported that the Creeks had killed their hogs and cattle, burned their fence rails (for firewood), and steal their corn and vegetables.⁸⁵ The military agents overseeing the detachments denied these claims and argued that there was little proof the Creeks had done anything to the property of local settlers.⁸⁶ Edward Deas, overseeing detachment three, noted that the Creeks were regularly furnished with provisions during this portion of their journey and the Creeks had hunted “a great deal of game” to supplement their diet. Moreover, Deas “examined the fences in the neighborhood, and find that they are in as good a condition now as they were upon our arrival at the present Encampment.” The reason the settlers were fabricating stories about the Creeks, Deas believed, was because “the presence of so many Indians raises the price of corn [and] other supplies and that the above charges are made a pretext for having the Indians removed from the neighborhood.”⁸⁷ Despite the lack of proof, Arkansas governor James Conway rejected the request of Opothle Yoholo to stop for an extended period within the state and he demanded that the Creeks hastily

⁸⁴ Journal of Edward Deas, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁸⁵ James Conway to Edward Deas, 6 December 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 564-565, NA.

⁸⁶ Edward Deas to James Conway, 8 December 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 566-569, NA.

⁸⁷ Journal of Edward Deas, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

continue to the Indian territory.⁸⁸ Opothle Yoholo consented to take care of his business at Fort Gibson.⁸⁹

The Creeks faced even more problems with weather, bad roads, and swampy land as they moved beyond Little Rock. The land to the west of Little Rock was hilly and the roads varied from “good” to “horrid.” Moreover, the region was littered with several small streams, bayous, and swamps. Opothle Yoholo and the Creeks of detachment one passed over roads in western Arkansas that were “very boggy and covered with water,” and there were days when the rear of the party did not make it to camp for the evening. Even as the parties traveled into the Indian territory the roads and rivers were just as treacherous. As Opothle Yoholo’s party traveled through the Western Cherokee Nation in the Indian territory, agent Bateman cryptically wrote in his journal, “Roads bad. Night cold. Indians suffer.”⁹⁰ Similarly, detachment two tried a number of times to cross the Illinois River, eighteen miles to the east of Fort Gibson, without much success. During one attempt, a mess wagon overturned in the water and a horse drowned.⁹¹

The weather, as the Creeks passed through western Arkansas into the Indian territory, was worse than at any point during their journey. Temperatures dropped well below freezing and the “torrents” of rain turned into snow. Lieutenant Bateman lamented

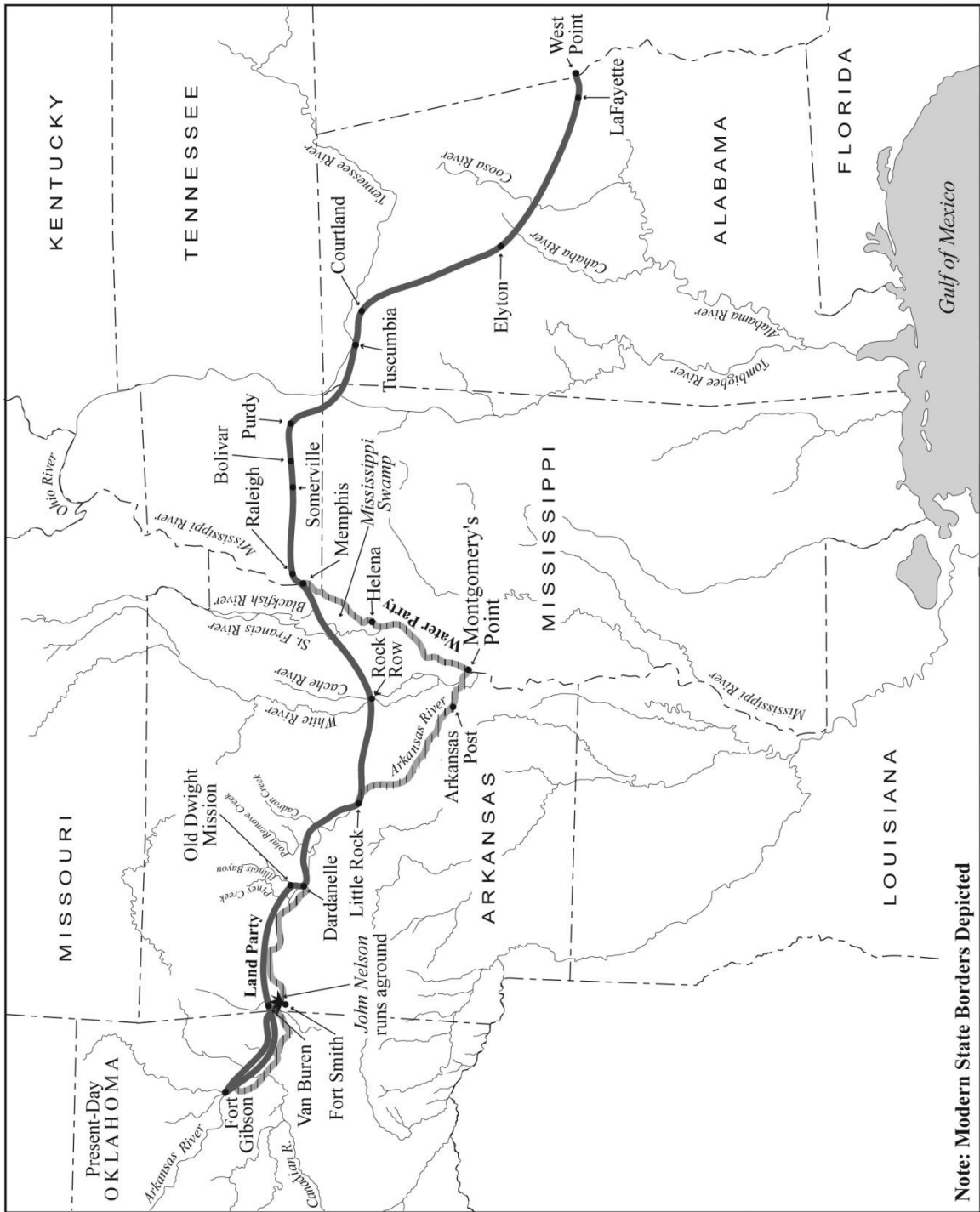
⁸⁸ John Conway to Edward Deas, 6 December 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 564-565, NA.

⁸⁹ Opothle Yoholo to Mathew Arbuckle, 14 November 1836, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry- 525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687-A, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁹⁰ Journal of Mathew Bateman, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁹¹ Journal of R.B. Screven, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1838, Box-237, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

Detachment Five - September 1836 - Decemberr 1836



Note: Modern State Borders Depicted

that “the ground is covered with snow and ice, the thermometer stands at zero. The winter has set in with great severity. The Indians must suffer much.”⁹² In fact, some estimated that the Creeks marched through up to eight inches of snow during the last leg of their journey.⁹³ Compounding the problem was that the Creeks traveled overland in the snow and ice, and in temperatures near zero, in their summer clothing. The Creeks, who had left the former Creek Nation in the Alabama heat of August and September, arrived in the Indian territory in the middle of winter. Much of their winter clothing, unnecessary at the beginning of their journey, was packed deeply in the baggage wagons or, in some cases, on board steamboats. For instance, prior to leaving Alabama, the contractors were able to convince Opothle Yoholo and his people to pack all items deemed “not necessary on the march” into steamboats which would then travel ahead of the party and be waiting for the Creeks upon their arrival at Fort Gibson. Most of these items were farming utensils such as ploughs and chains, bedding, and cookware such as pots. But agents noted that the baggage also included the Creeks’ blankets, clothing “and other articles necessary for protection from the severity of the season.” Subsequently, upwards of twenty tons of Creek property was placed in a storehouse at Wetumpka prior to being shipped west. But, these items were unavailable to the Creeks as they traveled west in the cold, nor was it waiting for them when they arrived at Fort Gibson. Subsequently, Opothle Yoholo and approximately six thousand of his followers were

⁹² Mathew Bateman to C.A. Harris, 20 December 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 532, NA.

⁹³ John Stuart to A. Jones, 15 January 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 19-22, NA; Deas’ Emigration Journal, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

huddled at Fort Gibson in want of blankets and clothing “to protect them from the cold.”⁹⁴

The Creeks of the other detachments also suffered from extreme cold. Many of the Creeks of detachment three were “without shoes [and] badly clothed.”⁹⁵ In fact, oral narratives described the Creeks leaving bloody footprints in the snow.⁹⁶ Sprague observed that “The indians suffer greatly from being in their bear feet and thinly clad.”⁹⁷ The Cowetas and Cussetas of detachment five struggled to make it to Fort Gibson. The military agent overseeing the party observed, “the sufferings of the Indians at this period were intense. With nothing more than a cotton garment thrown over them, their feet bare, they were compelled to encounter cold sleeting storms and to travel over hard frozen ground. Frequent appeals were made to me to clothe their nakedness and to protect their lacerated feet.” The contractors “could sympathize with them,” the agent noted, “but could not relieve them.” The contract only stipulated the company provide provisions

⁹⁴ Mathew Arbuckle to C.A. Harris, 18 December 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 9-10, NA; John Page to C.A. Harris, 6 February 1837, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-239, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD; John Page to C.A. Harris, 28 February 1837, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687-A, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁹⁵ Journal of Edward Deas, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁹⁶ Interview of J.W. Stephens, 22 March 1938, Indian Pioneer History Collection, Works Progress Administration Project S-149, reel-23, Vol. 68, 109-112, Oklahoma Historical Society; One oral narrative notes that “they walked until the underneath parts of their feet were bleeding, and they had to limp but kept coming on toward the new land,” see interview of William Benson, 22 September 1937, Indian Pioneer History Collection, Works Progress Administration Project S-149, reel-5, Vol. 14, 410-415, Oklahoma Historical Society.

⁹⁷ Journal of John T. Sprague, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Party, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

and transportation, not clothing.⁹⁸ On December 25, 1836 a witness to the arrival of the Creeks in the Indian territory wrote a letter that was later published in the *Arkansas Gazette*. The author, who was likely a working for the government, observed that,

Thousands of [Creeks] are entirely destitute of shoes or covering of any kind for the feet; many of them are almost naked; and but few of them have any thing more on their persons than a light dress, calculated only for the summer, or for a very warm climate; and the weather being warm when they left Alabama, many of them left their heavier articles of clothing, expecting them to be brought on in steam-boats; which has yet been only partially done. In this destitute condition, they are wading the cold mud, or are hurried on over the frozen road, as the case may be. Many of them have in this way had their feet frost-bitten; and being unable to travel, fall in the rear of the main party, and in this way are left on the road to await the ability or convenience of the contractors to assist them. Many of them, not being able to endure this unexampled state of human suffering, die, and it is said are thrown by the side of the road, and are covered only with brush, &c. where they remain, until devoured by the wolves.⁹⁹

Others witnessed the Creeks' arrival at Fort Gibson. One officer of the government noted that "the condition of the Creeks yet on the road to Fort Gibson, is most terrible. It is said that they are strewed along the road for a great distance . . . many of them are almost naked, and are without shoes—the snow for five days, has been from 4 to 8 inches deep—and during the first and second days of the storm, women and children were seen bending their way onward, with most Piteous and heart rending cries, from cold."¹⁰⁰

Indeed, the physical remains of removal could be seen years after the Creeks and other Indians arrived in the west. In 1839, a government agent addressing the Creeks in council, noted that "almost every hollow tree had become a grave for some of them, and

⁹⁸ John Sprague to C.A. Harris, 1 April 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 739-756, NA.

⁹⁹ *Arkansas Gazette*, 3 January 1837.

¹⁰⁰ John Stuart to A. Jones, 15 January 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 19-22, NA.

that their path was now become white with the bleached bones of the Muscogees.”¹⁰¹ In 1841 Friedrich Gerstäcker, a German adventurer, visited Arkansas and reported seeing “numerous square holes cut in the fallen trees showed where the squaws had pounded their maize to make bread. More melancholy traces were visible in the bones of human beings and animals which were strewed about. Many a warrior and squaw died on the road from exhaustion, and the maladies engendered by their treatment; and their relations and friends could do nothing more for them than fold them in their blankets, and cover them with boughs and bushes, to keep off the vultures, which followed their route by thousands, and soared over their heads; for their drivers would not give them time to dig a grave and bury their dead. The wolves, which also followed at no great distance, soon tore away so frail a covering, and scattered the bones in all directions.”¹⁰²

Many Creeks themselves wrote to the government complaining about their treatment at the hands of contractors and the harsh conditions. A number of Cussetas of detachment three wrote to their military agent John T. Sprague and noted that ““you have heard the cries of our women and children . . . our road has been a long one . . . and on it we have laid the bones of our men, women, and children. When we left our homes the great General Jesup told us that we could get to our country as we wanted to. We wanted to gather our crops, and we wanted to go in peace and friendship. Did we? No! We were drove off like wolves . . . lost our crops . . . and our peoples’ feet were bleeding

¹⁰¹ *Arkansas Gazette*, 27 March 1839.

¹⁰² Friedrich Gerstäcker, *Wild Sports in the Far West: The Narrative of a German Wanderer beyond the Mississippi, 1837-1843*, Eds., Edna L. Steeves and Harrison R. Steeves (Durham: Duke University Press, 1968), 277.

with long marches. . . We are men . . . we have women and children, and why should we come like wild horses?”¹⁰³

The Creeks arrived at their destination at Fort Gibson between November 1836 and January 1837. Opothle Yoholo’s detachment arrived first, followed by detachment five, detachment four, and detachment two. Detachment three arrived last on January 23, 1837.¹⁰⁴ The Creeks were turned over to the federal government and placed on provisions. The Alabama Emigrating Company tallied up the arrivals, the deaths, and the pro-rated cost of transporting Creeks who died along the way. In their account submitted to the government, the contractors reported that they emigrated 2,318 Creeks and their slaves of detachment one with seventy-eight deaths; 3,095 Creeks and slaves of detachment two with thirty-seven deaths and eighteen births along the way; 2,818 Creeks and slaves of detachment three with twelve deaths; 2,330 Creeks and slaves of detachment four with thirty-six deaths; and 2,087 Creeks and their slaves of detachment five with twenty-five deaths.¹⁰⁵

Once arriving at Fort Gibson, the leading Creek headmen faced an emotional reunion with Roly McIntosh the principal chief of the Western Creeks. There was still considerable hostility between the parties. William McIntosh and his followers were traitors for selling the Creeks’ Georgia land and were solely responsible for the forced

¹⁰³ Foreman, *Indian Removal*, 176.

¹⁰⁴ John Sprague to C.A. Harris, 1 April 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 739-756, NA.

¹⁰⁵ “The U.S. in Account Current with the Alabama Emigrating Company, 1836, 1837 & 1838,” RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-239, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD; the eighteen births from Journal of R.B. Screven, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1838, Box-237, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

removal of the entire Creek Nation. Still, many of the McIntosh party had not forgiven the Creeks for executing William McIntosh over a decade earlier. Moreover, neither side was quite sure what to expect once Roly McIntosh and Creek headmen such as Opothle Yoholo finally met again face to face. In fact, there was considerable speculation and misinformation regarding potential hostilities between these two parties. For instance the *New York Journal of Commerce* reported that Chilly McIntosh had vowed to kill all Creek headmen who did not show fealty to him and his party.¹⁰⁶ For their part, government agents anticipated bloodshed. But, none of this happened. Despite the fact that there was “much feeling between the McIntosh party and those who have lately emigrated with their chief Apathle ho lo” the representatives of both parties met on relatively friendly terms and smoked the peace pipe and drank “a glass of old rye, (perhaps new corn).” The presence of the United States Army, no doubt, contributed to the peacefulness of their reunion.¹⁰⁷ This was not a lasting peace, however, only a temporary truce. There was no reconciliation between the two parties and the government believed Opothle Yoholo and his people needed to “be removed from Roly McIntosh and his people some distance.” They established their new settlement near the Canadian River, some seventy miles from the Choctaw Agency.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in *Niles' Weekly Register*, 12 November 1836.

¹⁰⁷ William Armstrong to C.A. Harris, 24 December 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 6-7, NA; Mathew Bateman to C.A. Harris, 8 January 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 47-48, NA; *Arkansas Gazette*, 10 January 1837.

¹⁰⁸ William Armstrong to C.A. Harris, 24 December 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 6-7, NA; William Armstrong to C.A. Harris, 10 May 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency 1824-1876, M-234, reel-225, 240-241, NA.

* * *

The forced removal of the Creek Nation to the west would have been inconceivable prior to 1825. Even after the signing of the Treaty of Indian Springs, the Creeks worked diligently to counter the federal and state Indian policies at almost every turn. But, 1836 was a watershed year in the history of the Creeks. Unable or unwilling to put up any longer with white encroachment, starvation, and the land frauds, a small band of Lower Creeks commenced hostilities against white settlements in 1836. At that point the Creeks' fate was sealed. These Lower Creeks did not cause forced removal, they only hastened it. White squatters would not have stopped streaming onto Creek land and it is unlikely that the federal or state governments would have done much more in the future to stop it. There are no records of the reaction of the Creeks not connected to the McIntosh party, but who voluntarily emigrated between 1827 and 1835, to the arrival of the forced emigrants. Many of these Creeks chose to emigrate because they believed forced removal inevitable and chose to go west early. It is probably unknowable whether or not they felt somewhat justified by the difficult decision they made to turn their backs on the Creeks in the east by trying and survive in the west. It is also unclear whether the hardships they faced west of the Mississippi made their reunion with the newly arrived members of their *talwa* that much more difficult. However, a full reunion could not happen until all the Creeks had emigrated to Fort Gibson. And, in January 1837, there

were still approximately four thousand Creeks remaining in the former Creek Nation as well as living among the Chickasaws, Cherokees, and Seminoles in the east.

Nine

The Removal of the Refugee Creeks

1837-1838

*“Creek Warriors were confined in Irons, preparatory to leaving
for ever the Land of their births!”*

—John James Audubon, 1837

Over fourteen thousand Creeks were removed from Alabama in the year 1836. For these Creeks, their long fight to remain on the land of their ancestors was over. Many did not go without a fight and were transported on the initial part of their journey west on steamboats under the guard of the militia. The rest went peacefully with begrudging consent. But, the emigrants who arrived in the Indian territory in late 1836 and early 1837 were not the last Creeks to leave Alabama or the southeast. In fact, anywhere between three and four thousand Creeks still remained in the east. Most of these Creeks were the relatives of those who volunteered to fight the Seminoles in Florida. As an enticement for their service, the federal government promised that the family members of the Creek warriors would be allowed to remain in central Alabama until their tour of duty was over. In addition, hundreds of Creeks were hiding among the Cherokees, Chickasaws, or Seminoles, or in the swamps of Alabama.

* * *

As the five large detachments of Creeks left Alabama in August and September 1836 for Fort Gibson, many Creeks remained in the southeast undetected. These included those Creeks who had actively participated in the Second Creek War or at least openly resisted removal and had not been captured by the United States Army. Most of these Creeks were known to be hiding in the swamps or in sparsely inhabited parts of southern Georgia. Others simply refused to come into camp and enroll for removal. Some Creeks had arrived in camp over the summer of 1836 only to abscond before their actual departure date. For instance, Fushatchee Fixico escaped from an emigrating camp and told the others that “he will neither emigrate nor be taken alive.”¹ Similarly, it is doubtful that all the Lower Creeks hiding in the Chewacla swamp joined detachment five as it moved out of Chambers County, Alabama, in September 1836. Although it was estimated that between one hundred and 150 Creeks joined the party, John Sprague was told by a local white resident that there were other members of this band who never intended to join the party but “expressed to him their enmity to the whites and their determination to remain there.”² Estimates placed the number of Creeks still in hiding in

¹ S. Churchill to Thomas Jesup, 29 September 1836, RG-94, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-15, Folder-Letters Received During the Creek War 1836, Headquarters Fort Mitchell, National Archives, Washington D.C.

² J.T. Sprague to Thomas Jesup, 7 September 1836, RG-94, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-19, Folder-Letters Received from Various USMC Officers 1836-1838, National Archives, Washington D.C.

Alabama or Georgia at four to five hundred, and agents discovered “signs of them, however” which “are frequently found in the corn and potatoe fields.”³

There were also a few thousand Creeks who remained in Alabama, however, with the permission of the federal government. These were the relatives of Creek warriors recruited to fight the Seminoles in Florida. Before leaving Alabama, military agents visited each detachment of Creeks and asked the headmen if they were willing to offer any of their men for service in Florida. Agents visited Opothle Yoholo’s party as they passed through Wetumpka. Forty Creeks agreed to fight and left detachment one immediately, although agents later noted that as many as 235 of Opothle Yoholo’s people were ultimately mustered into service.⁴ Other prominent Creeks offered their services, including the headman Echo Harjo, Jim Boy who was originally assigned to detachment three, and Paddy Carr.⁵ But other headmen, like Cusseta chief Tuckabatchee Harjo, “was decidedly against” offering his services and “but few of the Indians” of detachment five “were inclined to go to Florida.”⁶ The exact number of Creeks who served in Florida is unclear, although perhaps as many as 750 fought on the side of the United States against

³ S. Churchill to Thomas Jesup, 29 September 1836, RG-94, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-15, Folder-Letters Received During the Creek War 1836, Headquarters Fort Mitchell, National Archives, Washington D.C

⁴ For the forty see, Journal of Mathew Bateman, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1838, Box-237, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Reynolds, Account number-1687-A, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Journal of John G. Reynolds, notes the return of 157 of Opothle Yoholo’s people on August 19 and 78 more on September 15, see Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

⁵ Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University; Orders No. 67, 22 August 1836, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-25, Folder-Orders and Letters Sent by General Jesup, August 1836 (1 of 4), National Archives, Washington D.C.

⁶ J.T. Sprague to Thomas S. Jesup, 7 September 1836, RG-94, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-19, Folder-Letters Received from Various USMC Officers 1836-38, National Archives, Washington D.C.

the Seminoles.⁷ And, despite any difficulty they may have had in convincing the Creeks to join the United States in Florida, the government still met its target of recruiting between six hundred and a thousand Creek soldiers.⁸

The government enticed the Creeks to volunteer with various promises. For instance, the Creek headmen who served in Florida received \$10,000 “to be disposed of as they may see fit,” if the Creeks under their command performed “in good faith.” The government also promised to use their 1837 annuity to pay off accumulated debts and “to get clear of the ruinous suits against them.” An agent was also appointed to settle their land claims. The Creeks who served were organized into companies and paid for their services as soldiers. Those with horses were paid as mounted volunteers.⁹ In addition to the government’s offerings, the Creeks made demands of their own. The first was that their family members be allowed to remain in Alabama under the protection of the federal government until their tour-of-duty was completed. The government subsequently placed the Creek family members in three large encampments at Polecat Springs, Echo Harjo’s home thirty miles east of Polecat Springs, and at Fort Mitchell. Here the relatives of the warriors were issued provisions and protected from local white settlers.¹⁰ The government also assured the Creeks that those serving in Florida would be

⁷ John T. Sprague, *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War* (1848; reprint, Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), 162.

⁸ Thomas McKenney and James Hall, *History of the Indian Tribes of North America, with Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of the Principal Chiefs* Vol. II (Philadelphia: Daniel Rice and James Clark, 1842), 95-96, noted that Jim Boy raised an army of 776 warriors; Thomas S. Jesup to Chambers, 28 August 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 592-593, NA.

⁹ Thomas S. Jesup to Chambers, 28 August 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-237, 592-593, NA.

¹⁰ John Page to C.A. Harris, 9 January 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 508-510, NA.

discharged by February 1, 1837 in order to allow the Creeks to emigrate with their families to the Indian territory in time to plant crops.

Despite the assurances given, and perhaps unbeknownst to them, the headmen actually committed their warriors to an “indefinite” length of service.¹¹ This allowed the government leeway in extending the Creeks’ tour-of-duty, and this is exactly what they did. Despite the fact that “it was distinctly understood . . . that they were to be allowed to return to Alabama in time to remove . . . before the season for planting their corn,” the federal government underestimated the time and resources it would take to put down the Seminoles. Consequently, the Creeks remained in Florida long past February 1, 1837. Adjutant General Thomas S. Jesup, who oversaw the war with the Seminoles, stated as his rationale for extending their service by noting that, “had [the Creeks] left me on the 1st of February according to the assurances given to them I must have called into service at least two regiments of militia or volunteers to have taken their places, at a heavy expense.” Jesup also believed that it would have taken too long to discharge the Creeks and replace them with a militia. In return, Jesup told the Creeks that the government would issue provisions to them and their families, once they emigrated west, for almost two years.¹² But, this was small consolation. Instead of a five month deployment, the Creek warriors remained in Florida for over a year. The extended service strained the capabilities of the Creeks and many were worn down by the hard service.

¹¹ Letter of 9 September 1837, RG-94, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-28, Folder-Orders Sent by Gen. Jesup & Staff, Sept. 1837 (1of 2), National Archives, Washington D.C.

¹² Thomas S. Jesup to B.F. Butler, 7 March 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 395-396, NA; Thomas S. Jesup to W.E. Freeman, 9 September 1837, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-239, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

But, the decision to extend the Creek warriors' tour of duty had consequences far beyond just the Creeks fighting in Florida. Their family members also suffered despite promises made by the government to protect them. Local whites in Alabama grew impatient with the presence of large numbers of Creeks near their settlements especially after more depredations were committed in Alabama in late 1836 by a number of Creek Indians. Much of this renewed violence was committed by Creeks who had not been captured during the Second Creek War. Although government officials declared the major operations of the war over by the summer of 1836, the Creeks who had not been captured simply moved the battlefield to southern Georgia and north Florida. Other Creeks remained in Alabama but hid in the swamps. Once the troops left Alabama, many of these Creeks returned and recommenced their attacks. On December 29, 1836, a number of these Creeks attacked a plantation on Cowikee Creek in Barbour County. The Creeks burned the complex except for the slave quarters, and killed one of the owner's field hands.¹³

In response to the murders, the agents overseeing the removal camps ordered the warriors to surrender their weapons. At Echo Harjo's camp the Creeks were congregated into a small complex "less than half a mile square." Although the agents were confident that none of the Creeks in the camps had committed any depredations, the actions were deemed necessary "to appease the citizens" of Alabama. The Creeks remained in the

¹³ John Thaddeus Ellisor, "The Second Creek War: The Unexplored Conflict" (Ph.D. diss, University of Tennessee—Knoxville, 1996), 265-271; John Tate to Dixon H. Lewis, 8 January 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 441-443, NA.

small complex through January 1837.¹⁴ But, the violence continued. This included the killing of a man, his overseer, and five slaves in late January. The house was subsequently burned by the Creeks. When friends returned to bury their bodies the Creeks ambushed them, killing two and wounding five.¹⁵ In response to the violence, companies of men, including some from Georgia, who had mustered into service, went in search of the perpetrators. The whites targeted the removal camps housing the families of the Creeks serving in Florida. In addition to being an easy target, the whites, no doubt, were suspicious of a number of formerly “hostile” Creeks who had surrendered and joined the other Creeks in camp.

But, local whites were indiscriminate in their persecution of the Creeks. On February 5, a group of white men, recently mustered into service, arrived at Echo Harjo’s camp and placed a number of Creeks under their guard “without provisions, [and] in most instances a blanket to shelter them from the inclemency of the weather.” The whites then pillaged Creek property and stole some of their money and guns. The men left but took with them a number of Creek men and boys and placed them in the stockade under armed guard at Tuskegee. Later that day, two companies of white men from Pike and Barbour counties also came into Echo Harjo’s camp. The men stayed for a few hours during which time they pillaged the houses the Creeks had abandoned, then left. On their return, they stopped by the home of Anne Cornells, a wealthy Creek woman. The men carried off two free blacks and an Indian child before “setting fire to and wholly destroying all

¹⁴ Sloan to Henry Wilson, 31 March 1837, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-24, Folder-Letters Received regarding Creek/Seminole Affairs 1837, National Archives, Washington D.C.

¹⁵ John Page to C.A. Harris, 3 February 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 504-506, NA; Ellis, “The Second Creek War,” 276-277.

her houses, fodder stacks, and movable property generally including three hundred dollars in Bank Bills.” The whites then travelled to the encampment of Creeks at Polecat Springs. While there, a number of whites from one of the companies killed ninety-year-old Lochchi Yoholo who had been excused from the camp due the “infirmities of age” and “deafness.” The old man was found “lying in one corner shot in the breast and his head litterally stove in, with as I supposed butts of muskets.” The men also attempted to rape a fifteen year old Creek girl, before she ran off and was shot in the leg. The Creeks reported that the whites raped or attempted to rape a number of Creek women in the camps and, on many instances, stole their ear rings and blankets.¹⁶

Nine of the twelve officers of the companies were in favor of taking the warriors from Polecat Springs to Tuskegee. Subsequently, the agent overseeing the camp gave the Creeks the option “either of going to Tuskegee as prisoners and separating from their families or leave the nation with them.” The agent noted that “there was no hesitation they preferred the latter and in thirty six hours afterwards with but four five horse teams, my party of upwards of nineteen hundred strong were on the march.” Before the Creeks left Polecat Springs for Mount Meigs, Alabama, whites pillaged Creek property including horses, cattle, corn, furniture, and farming utensils.¹⁷ P.T. Barnum, traveling from Columbus to Montgomery, witnessed a number of Creeks at these posts under armed guard in Alabama. Passing through Tuskegee, Barnum observed fifteen-hundred Creeks

¹⁶ Sloan to Henry Wilson, 31 March 1837, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-24, Folder-Letters Received regarding Creek/Seminole Affairs 1837, National Archives, Washington D.C; John G. Reynolds to Henry Wilson, 31 March 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

¹⁷ John Reynolds to Henry Wilson, 31 March 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University; For reports on the monetary losses see John Reynolds to Henry Wilson, 12 April 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

encamped. Days later, as he passed through Mount Meigs, Barnum saw twenty five hundred Creeks.¹⁸

On February 20, the whites returned to Echo Harjo's camp. Two days later the whites notified the agent that they were determined to remove the remaining Creeks to Tuskegee. Sensing that there was little he could do, the agent ordered the Creeks to begin packing on February 23, and "in half an hour the whole camp was on the march! In consequence of having no means of transportation, I directed them to deposit their effects in my quarters, etc., until waggons could be procured to remove them to Tuskegee; but in the mean time the house was broken open [and] plundered of most articles of any value." The whites stole 145 of the Creeks' ponies, sixty head of cattle, two hundred hogs, one hundred bushels of corn, one hundred beehives, sixty-three guns, cooking and farming utensils, and money.¹⁹ John James Audubon, who traveled through the southeast during this time, also observed a number of Creeks under the guard of the militia. Audubon reported seeing,

100 Creek Warriors were confined in Irons, preparatory to leaving for ever the Land of their births! –Some miles onward we overtook about two thousands of these once free owners of the Forest, marching towards this place under an escort of Rangers, and militia mounted Men, destined for distant lands, unknown to them, and where alas, their future and latter days must be spent in the deepest of Sorrows, affliction and perhaps even phisical want—This view [was] produced on my mind an afflicting series of reflections more powerfully felt than easy of description—the numerous groups of Warriors, of half clad females and of naked babes, trudging through the mire under the residue of their ever scanty stock of Camp furniture, and household utensils—The evident regret expressed in the[ir] masked countenances of some and the tears of others—the howling of their numerous dogs; and the cool demeanour of the chiefs,—all formed such a Picture

¹⁸ Phineas Taylor Barnum, *The Life of P.T. Barnum* (New York: Redfield, 1855), 193-196.

¹⁹ Foreman, *Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 182.

as I hope I never will again witness in reality—had Victor being with us, ample indeed would have been his means to paint Indians in sorrow—.²⁰

Thus, despite promises to allow the Creeks to remain in central Alabama, the federal government ordered all the Creeks to Mobile Point. Nearly four thousand Creeks, including relatives of the Creeks fighting in Florida and those captured hiding in the swamps, were congregated near Montgomery in preparation for descending the Alabama River in steamboats. The *Montgomery Advertiser* reported the condition of the Creeks and in an article noted that, “the spectacle exhibited by them is truly heart rending; with all their cruelties, they are human beings and no man of feeling can look upon their present destitute condition . . . while our citizens are rolling in ease and luxury, those who are natives of the country are in the most abject poverty, dependent for their subsistence on the charity of the government.”²¹

The Creeks left Montgomery on three steamboats. The first detachment of about eight hundred Creeks traveled on the *John Nelson* and arrived at Mobile Point on March 18. The second and third detachments, traveling on the *Chippewa* and *Bonnets O Blue*, arrived at Mobile Point the following day.²² The agents established an encampment for the Creeks while they waited the arrival of the warriors from Florida. The news of the Creek families having been removed to Mobile Point eventually reached the Creek warriors fighting in Florida. They probably found out from warriors who were

²⁰ John James Audubon, *Letters of John James Audubon 1826-1840*, Volume Two, ed., Howard Corning (Boston: The Club of Odd Volumes, 1930), 145-146.

²¹ *Montgomery Advertiser*, 8 March 1837.

²² Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University; The *Chippewa* also carried about eight hundred Creeks, see *National Intelligencer*, 3 April 1837.

furloughed to Mobile Point to recover from illnesses they had acquired in Florida.²³ Jesup reported that, while some of the warriors “were satisfied,” with the decision, many others were angry.²⁴ The news of their relocation particularly angered the Lower Creeks and it complicated the government’s war with the Seminoles. In fact, Jesup noted that the Lower Creeks fighting in Florida, “if not disposed to favor the Seminoles are at least not very zealous in our cause. With the exception of a very small portion of them they were zealous and true until they received information of the removal of their families from Alabama, and the outrages committed upon them there.” Jesup noted that the Upper Creeks “do not participate with the Lower Creeks in the excitement produced by recent events” and he attributed this to the fact that many of their family members had emigrated with Opothle Yoholo the previous fall. Jesup did observe, however, that the Upper Creeks were “broken down by hard service and disease—are unfit for duty and are extremely anxious to join their families.”²⁵ Indeed, at least one Creek soldier committed suicide while in Florida.²⁶

While at Mobile Point, the agents overseeing the Creeks, along with Creek volunteers, went on reconnaissance trips around Mobile Point to search for Creek refugees hiding in the swamps. Some were believed to have participated in the Second

²³ One hundred-seventy one Creeks left Fort Brooke in Florida for Mobile Point on the steamer *Merchant* on 13 June 1837, see “List of Creek Volunteers, who left this place for Mobile in the Steamer *Merchant* on 13th June 1837,” RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-1A, Folder-PI-17, National Archives, Washington D.C.

²⁴ Thomas Jesup to Joel Poinsett, 11 April 1837, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-27, Folder-Letters Sent, April 1837, National Archives, Washington D.C.

²⁵ Thomas Jesup to C.A. Harris, 18 July 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 424-426, NA.

²⁶ Ochee Yoholo was listed as having committed suicide on July 22, 1837 while at Fort Brooke. He is listed in Returns of Troops in Florida, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-32, Folder>Returns of Troops, June 1837, 2 of 2, National Archives, Washington D.C.

Creek War or were aiding the Seminoles, while others fled to escape emigration. In late April 1837, agents collected a number of Creeks including a few Yuchi refugees hiding near Black Water Bay. Agents used interpreters and even the captured prisoners themselves to coax the refugees from their camps. On April 27, “two hostile men, a woman and child” surrendered to agents and later that day, thirty-seven “friendly” Creeks also gave themselves up. On April 30, thirty-two more “hostile” Creeks surrendered. These Creeks, seventy total, embarked on the steamboat *Watchman* for Pensacola. During their journey, the *Watchman* came under the protection of the frigate *Constellation* and its guns. At Pensacola, the Creeks were transferred to the steamboat *Champion* and arrived at Mobile Point at one o’clock in the afternoon on May 1. Almost three weeks later, the *Champion* transported thirty-three more fugitive Creeks to Mobile Point. Also on board was Hobiochee Yoholo, a Creek volunteer serving in Florida who was permitted a leave-of-absence to visit his family at Mobile Point after the death of his brother at Pensacola.²⁷

The expeditions to apprehend more fugitive Creeks continued into the late summer 1837. In June 1837 agents traveled to Alaqua Creek in Florida in search of a number of fugitive Creek camps. Many of the Creeks hiding in the swamps of Florida were victimized by American soldiers or local whites. Agents found a number of the Creeks’ old camp grounds which were broken up soon after a number of Indians were massacred nearby. The attack, which occurred near the end of May 1837, seven miles from La Grange, Florida at the edge of a large swamp, was committed by other Indians

²⁷ Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

under the sanction of American commanding officers. There, in a “space of about fifteen or twenty feet in diameter, [was] where the poor women with children upon their backs were inhumanly butchered the cries of the children were distinctly heard, at a house distant a quarter of a mile, after their mothers were shot down the children’s brains were deliberately knocked out—the women’s Ears cut off, for the purpose of obtaining their Ear rings and in several instances scalped.” Agents noted that many of the Creek refugees were victimized by “so many barbarous outrages” that many were afraid to emerge from their hiding places.²⁸ This was even true if the Creeks wanted to surrender to the authorities. For instance, on a number of occasions, fugitives attempted to give themselves up peacefully but every time they tried they were shot at by whites. As a result, these Creeks were understandably skittish and the agents used Creek scouts and interpreters who accompanied them to coax the fugitives from their camps. Once found, these Creeks were described as having “suffered severely in different skirmishes with their troops and were measurably destitute of clothing, much dispirited and nearly broken down with fatigue.” The agents and friendly Creeks continued through the woods to a swamp between Pine Log Creek and the Choctawhatchee River, where they found another camp of fugitive Creeks. Sixteen or eighteen of the Creeks surrendered, but twenty men and “several women and children refused” noting that they wanted to settle

²⁸ John G. Reynolds to Henry Wilson, 4 June 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University; Also see Brian R. Rucker, “West Florida’s Creek Indian Crisis of 1837,” *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, 69:3 (January 1991), 315-334.

among the Seminoles. The agents also searched the Yellow River and East Bay where a group of fugitive Creeks had made their headquarters.²⁹

While federal agents were trying to capture the refugee Creeks in south Alabama, Edward Deas was trying to find the Creeks who fled to the Cherokee Nation in the north. Soon after turning over the Creeks of detachment three to the agents at Fort Gibson, in January 1837, Deas traveled back to Alabama and was appointed the superintendent of Creek emigration in the Cherokee country.³⁰ It was estimated that there “cannot be less than one thousand” fugitive Creeks living amongst the Cherokees.³¹ Deas arrived at Gunter’s Landing in March 1837 where he found 150 refugee Creeks encamped under guard of the Tennessee volunteers. The agent then traveled to New Echota where he was briefed on the locations of the Creeks in the Cherokee country. Most of the refugees were near Coosawattee which was eighteen miles from New Echota and near Red Clay on the Tennessee-Georgia line. There were also untold numbers of Creeks “scattered” in the North Carolina mountains or on the banks of Valley River.³² The Creeks primarily inhabited land in the Cherokee Nation that was described as being “thinly settled, or barren.”³³ Most were in a starving condition.

²⁹ Henry Wilson to C.A. Harris, 4 September 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 931-933, NA.

³⁰ Edward Deas to Andrew Moore, 16 May 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel 238, 237-238, NA; John Wool to Edward Deas, 30 March 1837, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1837, Box-220, Agent-Deas, Account number-1080-C, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

³¹ John E. Wool to Joel R. Poinsett, 31 March 1837, United States Congress, House Document 46, *Brigadier General Wool*, 9 October 1837, 25th Congress, 1st Session, Serial Set 311, 68-70.

³² Edward Deas to C.A. Harris, 30 March 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 199-202, NA.

³³ Journal of Edward Deas, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 251-281, NA.

Despite their condition, most of the Creeks did their best to try and avoid capture. Most Creeks hid when approached by emigrating agents or local militia. In a few instances, however, there was violence. When troops traveled to Red Clay to apprehend two hundred Creeks believed to be encamped there they discovered that many of the refugees had fled to the mountains. Troops scoured the region looking for Creek encampments. When one detachment stumbled upon a refugee camp, a number of Creeks fled for safety while the balance “of the Indians made Battle.” One Creek Indian fired his rifle at the troops but surrendered when a gun was pointed in his face. Another Creek Indian shot arrows while “yelling [and] calling on the [Creeks] to Return [and] Fight.” Troops shot the Creek and “he lived six Days [and] Dyed of the wound the next Day.” In addition to the 122 Creek refugees captured by these troops, the Valley River troops apprehended ninety, the Georgia troops one hundred, and another detachment seventeen. The soldiers noted that while detained, “the Creeks all appear very sulkey.”³⁴ For their part, the Creeks reported that “two of our men were killed, one man shot through the thigh and arm and three children lost in the flight of their mothers and have not been found.” Moreover, whites destroyed the Creeks’ crops “and took away much of our other property,” while living among the Cherokees.³⁵

By May 1837, 543 refugee Creeks were encamped four miles south of Gunter’s Landing in preparation for their removal west. Approximately one hundred Creeks were captured in the North Carolina mountains, while the balance were apprehended near

³⁴ Joel Hembree to John Tedder, 26 April 1837, Tedder Papers, Correspondence, III-G-1, folder 14, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

³⁵ Creek Indians to John Ross, 14 August 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 456-457, NA.

Coosawattee and Red Clay. These Creeks, about 350 in number, were brought to Ross Landing and conducted to Gunter's Landing by boat. There they joined 195 Creeks already encamped. The refugees hailed from the towns of Chiaha, Hillabee, Tallasseehatchee, Terrapin Creek, Talladega, Chockolock; Emahee, Concharke, Oakchonalegee, Fish Pond, Wewoka, Topofka, and Potoshatchee.³⁶ Many of these Creek refugees "were found in the most wretched condition and in some cases, naked, [and] starving." Dysentery was also reported in camp which primarily affected the Creek children.³⁷

Deas decided that going by water was a more efficient way to travel with Creeks who were likely to escape any chance they could get. The Alabama Emigrating Company purchased nine flatboats to descend the Muscle Shoals on the Tennessee River. Four of the flatboats were "of the largest class," approximately eighty feet long, while the others were between forty and fifty feet long. On May 16, 1837 Deas finished enrolling the refugee Creeks on his muster roll and turned over the party to the contractors. The Creeks were brought to the water's edge of the Tennessee River. By ten o'clock in the evening the party was descending the river with the current. The boats traveled throughout the night but were forced to stop for five hours at Ditto's Landing, thirty miles from Gunter's Landing, because of high winds. The party continued down river until two o'clock on the morning of May 18, when more high winds forced the flatboats to come ashore. Sensing a chance to escape, fifteen Creeks fled from the boats and escaped into

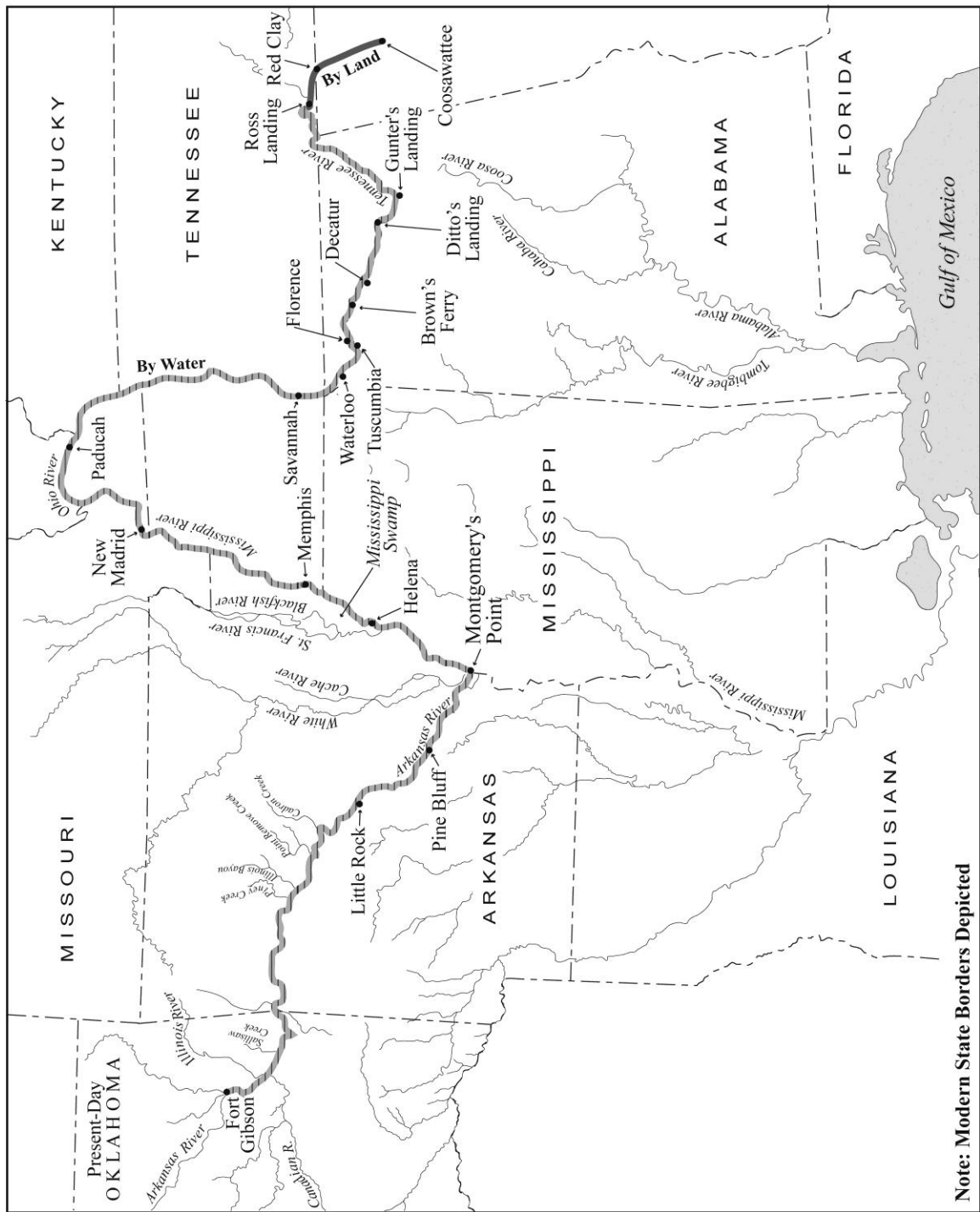
³⁶ Muster roll of Creek Indians, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 223-231, NA.

³⁷ Edward Deas to C.A. Harris, 10 May 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 214-217, NA.

the night. On May 20, a storm blew in that forced the boats to land near Brown's Ferry (twelve miles below Decatur). Seventy-one more Creeks escaped. Deas offered a dollar reward for any Creek brought in but only fifteen were recovered. Fifty-six ran toward the mountains about five miles away.

On May 21 the party continued down the Tennessee River, passing through Elk River shoals to Lamb's Ferry, where they procured experienced pilots and deck hands to navigate the treacherous Muscle Shoals section of the river. Deas reported that the journey through the shoals took about six hours from the time they entered the rapids to the time they reached the foot of the shoals. This portion of the Tennessee River varied in width between two and three miles and was littered with small, rocky islands that made navigation dangerous. Moreover, the Creeks passed through sections of river that became very rapid. The boats spent the evenings on the north bank of the Tennessee River, about six miles above Florence. Between May 22 and 23, the party passed through Florence, Tuscumbia, and landed at Waterloo, where they party boarded the medium-sized steamboat *Black Hawk*, with a large keelboat and two of the large, eighty-foot flatboats, in tow. Cooking hearths were constructed in one of the flat boats and on the deck of the keelboat. None of the boats had a "fixture" onboard, however, that would have allowed the Creeks to wash while en route.

Emigration of Creek Refugees in the Cherokee Nation, May - June 1837



Note: Modern State Borders Depicted

On May 24, the party reached as far as Savannah, Tennessee, where they abandoned one of the flatboats that slowed the steamboat down. Before the day was over, a small child, who died after a prolonged sickness, was buried. The following day the *Black Hawk* passed Paducah, Kentucky and the Creeks encamped in the state of Illinois near the mouth of the Ohio River. To this point, the Creeks experienced weather that was unusually cold for the season and “drizzling” rainfall. Another child died as a result, Deas believed, of “the folly of its mother, in putting it in cold water.” On May 26, the party passed through New Madrid and the following day passed through Memphis. The boats did not stop in Memphis because there were rumors that a number of Creeks would attempt an escape into the Chickasaw country. With the steamboat continuing to travel at night, the *Black Hawk* reached Helena on May 27 and Montgomery’s Point on May 28 before passing through the mouth of the White River and the cutoff to the Arkansas River. The next day, “an Indian man [and] a very old woman” died. On May 30, the boats passed through Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and the following day reached Little Rock. A Creek girl and a Creek woman who had suffered from tuberculosis for over a year both died on board the boat on May 31 and June 1, respectively.

On June 2 and 3, the *Black Hawk* passed through Fort Smith and Fort Coffee, where another infant passed away. The Creeks arrived at their destination on the Verdigris River on June 4.³⁸ Immediately after landing on shore “a large number of them dispersed through the Country” before they could be mustered.³⁹ Agents believed that

³⁸ Journal of Edward Deas, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration, 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 251-281, NA.

³⁹ J.R. Stephenson to C.A. Harris, 13 June 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 815, NA.

this was the result of the Creeks' "anxiety to visit their friends." The Creeks were eventually tracked down and mustered into the Western Creek Nation. Of the 543 Creeks that left Gunter's Landing, only 463 arrived in the west. Eighty died along the route or deserted the party.⁴⁰

Deas arrived back in Alabama to locate and enroll the remaining Creeks in the Cherokee Nation. Agents estimated that there were still "3 or 400 more lurking in the mountains."⁴¹ Deas believed that there were at least two or three hundred alone at Coosawattee.⁴² Most of these Creeks were living on the edge of survival. One agent discovered a Creek camp with "about 60 destitute of clothing and without any thing to eat." These Creeks gave themselves up, but after encamping for the evening they escaped back into the woods. The agent found nine Creeks "5 of them had some little clothing, the other 4, a woman and 3 children, were so nearly in a state of nudity, that I had to send blankets out, for them to cover their nakedness, before they would come in and without a shoe to their feet." The agent issued rations and clothing, including shoes to these Creeks. One of the women in the camp was the daughter of a Creek chief who had aided the United States during the Second Creek War. She and her children were found wearing only "part of an old blanket, not a yard square." Moreover, they noted that "blood was running out of her and her children's legs; they had parched them so by

⁴⁰ J.R. Stephenson to C.A. Harris, 18 June 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 824, NA; Muster roll of Emigrant Creek Indians, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 836-843, NA; Also see Muster Roll of Emigrant Creeks who Arrived West 4th June 1837, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-239, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company—Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁴¹ Nathaniel Smith to C.A. Harris, 29 May 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 792-794, NA.

⁴² Edward Deas to C.A. Harris, 2 August 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 302-304, NA.

the fire, to keep warm, that where the twigs, touched them, as they came in the blood ran freely.” Food and clothing were issued but the woman and her children later fled the camp.⁴³

Despite their condition, whenever agents approached the Creeks hid, fled, or refused to talk to the agents about emigration.⁴⁴ Agents appealed to the Cherokees in council for assistance in extracting the Creeks from their territory. They were confident that they had secured the cooperation of the council as well as Cherokee headman John Ross.⁴⁵ But, the Creeks who lived in the Cherokee Nation sent an impassioned letter to Ross. Writing from Red Clay, the Creeks pleaded with Ross to allow them to remain amongst the Cherokees. They reminded him of the history of friendly relations between the two nations, noted that there was no objection raised by the Cherokees when they first arrived, and reaffirmed that blood or marriage connected most of them to the Cherokee people.⁴⁶ After some delay, the Cherokee responded to the agent’s request to give up the Creeks. The Cherokee council noted that although they had no power to protect the Creeks and would recommend the Creeks comply with the government’s wishes, they would do little to aid the government in rounding up the fugitives. Moreover, the council expressed their confidence that the government would not resort to force to extract the Creeks from their borders. The Creeks could stay. The council also reaffirmed that “the

⁴³ Nathaniel Smith to C.A. Harris, 29 May 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration, M-234, reel-238, 792-794, NA.

⁴⁴ Edward Deas to C.A. Harris, 2 August 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 302-304, NA.

⁴⁵ Edward Deas to C.A. Harris, 2 August 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration, M-234, reel-238, 302-304, NA; Edward Deas to C.A. Harris, 11 August 1836, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 308-309, NA.

⁴⁶ Creek Indians to John Ross, 14 August 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 456-457, NA.

Creeks and Cherokees had always been friends that the country of each had been a refuge to the other in misfortune.” After being allowed to stay, the Creeks formerly rejected the agent’s request to enroll for removal.⁴⁷ Many Creeks had married into Cherokee families and “appear to consider themselves the same people.”⁴⁸ Realizing that it was virtually impossible to gather enough Creeks, even through military force, to justify an emigration, agents determined that “the Creeks now in the Cherokee Nation shall be permitted to share the fate of the Cherokees, to stay as long as they stay and to go when they go.”⁴⁹

While Deas was collecting Creeks in the Cherokee country over the spring, summer, and fall of 1837, over two thousand Creeks still remained at Mobile Point waiting for their warriors to be discharged from service in Florida. While the delay in the return of the Creek warriors from Florida had allowed the Creek family members in Alabama to be victimized by white settlers, the delay also allowed the Creeks now at Mobile Point to be exposed to sickness. The first death occurred on March 24, and by early July, ninety-three Creeks had died at Mobile Point.⁵⁰ Mobile Point, agents observed, was “exceedingly unhealthy and many of the children have died” from diarrhea which the agents believed the Creeks contracted from drinking stagnant water.⁵¹ Mobile Point turned out to be a breeding ground for illnesses, including diarrhea, dysentery, and

⁴⁷ William Lindsay to Joel Poinsett, 21 September 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration, 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 454-455, NA; Edward Deas to C.A. Harris, 30 August 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 318-319, NA.

⁴⁸ Edward Deas to C.A. Harris, 9 September 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 321-323, NA.

⁴⁹ William Lindsay to Joel Poinsett, 21 September 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 454-455, NA.

⁵⁰ John G. Reynolds to John Page, 31 July 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

⁵¹ J.M Woodfin to John Reynolds, 13 June 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

intermittent fever.⁵² Agents reported that that as a result of the diseases, “the Creek Indians at [Mobile Point] are becoming very discontented” and “the citizens in the vicinity are becoming alarmed.”⁵³ Some Creeks, likely trying to escape the disease, fled Mobile Point and made their way into the interior of Florida. Almost fifty Creeks, including women and children, were apprehended on the Perdido River and Escambia Bay.⁵⁴ The sick were placed on beds made of planks. Soldiers at the post, however, removed the planks which forced the sick Creeks “to lie on the hard bricks exposed to the dampness of the earth.”⁵⁵ Some Creeks required extreme treatment. For instance one Creek Indian needed an arm amputated and was transferred to a hospital in Mobile.

Compounding the problem was that the contractors of the Alabama Emigrating Company failed to furnish the Creeks with fresh beef while at Mobile Point.⁵⁶ While the contractors searched local farms for fresh meat, many Creeks took matters into their own hands. Residents of south Alabama noted that many Creeks, in parties of between five and twenty individuals, fled their encampment at Mobile Bay to hunt white settlers’ livestock. These Creek hunters were scattered over a large area between Mobile Bay and the Perdido River. Oystermen at Bon Secour sold the Creeks ammunition and whiskey,

⁵² G.A. Nott to John Reynolds, 31 July 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

⁵³ John B. Hogan to C.A. Harris, 22 July 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 382-383, NA.

⁵⁴ Henry Wilson to C.A. Harris, 4 September 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration, M-234, reel-238, 931-933, NA.

⁵⁵ J.M. Woodfin to John G. Reynolds, 10 June 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

⁵⁶ Henry Wilson to C.A. Harris, 11 May 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 915, NA; Agents at Mobile Point argued that the rations were “good” and ample, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

and many residents feared that, in addition to the loss of their livestock, the Creeks would join the Seminoles.⁵⁷

But the sickness and disease among the Creeks at Mobile Point became so bad that agents had little choice but to move the Creeks to a healthier location. In June 1837, Mathew Bateman, who had returned from accompanying Opothle Yoholo's detachment to Fort Gibson, along with another agent, traveled by boat to Dauphin Island to explore possible camp sites.⁵⁸ Sensing that the land was no healthier than that at Mobile Point the agents rejected Dauphin Island as a possible location.⁵⁹ But agents continued to scout locations. On June 23, an emigrating agent, an assistant surgeon, and thirty-eight Creek headmen, traveled on the steamboat *Farmer* to the islands between Mobile Point and Bay St. Louis, Mississippi—including Cat Island, Ship Island, and Horn Island—to look for healthier land. Horn Island and Ship Island were rejected by the Creeks “in consequence of the barrenness of the soil, the abundance of musquetoos and the low situation of the ground.” Moreover, the proprietor of Cat Island refused to let the Creeks occupy that place. Eventually, Pass Christian, Mississippi, was selected as the site of the new encampment because it was “high, dry, and airy, with three or four springs of excellent

⁵⁷ Citizens of Blakely, Alabama to Joel Poinsett, 17 June 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 377-379, NA.

⁵⁸ Mathew Bateman to C.A. Harris, 18 June 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 106-108, NA; A month later, Bateman was called to Mount Vernon, Alabama to sit on a board of enquiry regarding a possible court martial of an unspecified defendant. He died suddenly on the morning of July 31st, 1837 while at Mount Vernon, see J. Edmund Blake to C.A. Harris, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 118-119, NA; Bateman had fallen from a horse and seriously injured himself in late February or early March 1837, see John Page to C.A. Harris, 7 March 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 561, NA.

⁵⁹ John Page to Thomas Jesup, 27 July 1837, RG-94, Adjutant General's Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-16, Folder-Misc. Letters Received (5 of 6), National Archives, Washington, D.C.

water and beautifully shaded with large oaks, hickory and other flourishing trees.” It was also a refuge for residents of New Orleans during the sickly season of summer.⁶⁰

The agents moved the Creeks to the wharf at Mobile Point in anticipation of taking the *John Nelson* to Pass Christian.⁶¹ John Page, who oversaw the emigration, reported that they had “great difficulty getting [the Creeks] on board the Boat there were a great number sick many of them died on the warf before they could get on board and some died immediately after they embarked and we had to bury them, this detained the Boats some time.” On the evening of July 7, 1837 the first detachment of Creeks left Mobile Point for Pass Christian. They arrived the afternoon of the following day. Compounding their misery, on the boat’s return to pick up another detachment, a storm blew in and the boats could not dock at the wharf. The storm lasted two days forcing the Creeks to remain at Mobile Point. The agents reported that they did all they could to shield the Creeks from the weather but the storm still “rendered the situation of the Indians very unpleasant.” The Creeks remained on the wharf through the storm because they were unwilling to “spoil their Physic,” by returning to their former encampment.⁶² It took a number of days to ferry the Creeks to Pass Christian. The last of the detachments

⁶⁰ J.M. Woodfin to John Reynolds, 27 June 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

⁶¹ The United States to William J. Beattie, 21 July 1837, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-240, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1722, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁶² John Page to Thomas Jesup, 27 July 1837, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-16, Folder-Misc. Letters Received (5 of 6), National Archives, Washington, D.C.; John Page to C.A. Harris, 15 August 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 607, NA.

arrived at Pass Christian in the third week of July. Despite the death and disease, there were at least twenty-three births while the Creeks were at Mobile Point.⁶³

Although Pass Christian was a much healthier location, many Creeks who had contracted their illnesses at the previous, camp died. In fact, within days of arriving at Pass Christian, twenty-five Creeks died over a two day period. By July 31, 1837, eighty-four Creeks had died at Pass Christian.⁶⁴ Most of these were young children or the elderly. By August, however, the number of new cases of sickness had decreased sharply and agents noted that “the sick are convalescing very rapidly.”⁶⁵ Moreover, agents reported that the Creeks were “perfectly satisfied” with their new camp. Agents purchased cloth and made tents for the party. The contractors furnished fresh beef, bacon, corn, and beans “so the Indians have their choice of Rations.”⁶⁶ Observers, who visited the Creeks’ camp at Pass Christian, reported that ““their tents are rude and slight, though some of them betray a neatness almost amounting to elegance; for even with these children of nature there are evidently classes or grades. There is too, an aristocratic or ‘West End’ of the encampment, where the squaws are better dressed—where the papoose

⁶³ Muster Roll of John Reynolds, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Muster Roll of J.J. Sloan, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁶⁴ John Reynolds to John Page, 31 July 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

⁶⁵ John Reynolds to C.A. Harris, 27 August 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

⁶⁶ John Page to Thomas Jesup, 27 July 1837, RG-94, Adjutant General’s Papers-Jesup, Entry-159, Box-16, Folder-“Misc Letters Received, 5 of 6, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

swings in a neater cradle—and where the lodges are furnished with cleaner beds and culinary utensils than in any other quarter.”⁶⁷

The Creeks were allowed to leave camp for short periods to hunt and fish and to engage in “other necessary amusements.” The Creeks were granted a five mile radius from which they could venture, however, a number of Creeks traveled as far as “twenty to forty miles” without the authorization of the agents.⁶⁸ In fact, local residents some distance from the Creek encampment reported small bands of four to six Indians “hovering about” and that “signs of killing stock, had in many instances been seen.”⁶⁹

But sickness was not the only problem the Creeks faced. The emigrants were also victimized by local whites at Pass Christian. Alcohol traders illegally sold whiskey to the Creeks. Two agents were assigned to guard the encampment, one near a boat landing and the other a mile from their camp, for the purpose of suppressing the sale of alcohol.⁷⁰ It did not work. The problem became so prevalent that, in one instance, the agents destroyed the barrels of alcohol from a trader who would not cease and desist from selling to the Indians. Local authorities at Pass Christian later arrested two government agents for assault and battery.⁷¹ Intoxicated Creeks who wandered away from the protection of government agents also proved to be easy prey to local white residents. For

⁶⁷ Foreman, *Indian Removal*, 186.

⁶⁸ John Reynolds’ Circular, 2 September 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

⁶⁹ John Reynolds to C.A. Harris, 9 September 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

⁷⁰ John Page to C.A. Harris, 4 August 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 599, NA.

⁷¹ The agents were fined one hundred dollars for the offense, for their part the whiskey traders were fined twenty dollars per offense—a fine they reportedly could not pay, see John Reynolds to C.A. Harris, 2 September 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 655-657, NA; For the charge of assault and battery see E. Ogden to C.A. Harris, 4 September 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 484, NA.

instance, “many” Creeks traveled to Biloxi, about sixteen miles from Pass Christian, to purchase alcohol and subsequently “lost their pocket books or wallets containing considerable amount of money.”⁷² Even sober Creeks were cheated out of money. Chisse Harjo tried to exchange fifty dollars for the same amount in silver at a merchant’s store in Biloxi. The store owner took the Creek’s money but closed the shop before the silver was provided.⁷³

The number of Creeks on the gulf swelled as the Creek volunteers arrived at Pass Christian from Florida. They did not return in one detachment but in smaller parties on different days and months. For instance, on August 19, 1837, 208 Creek volunteers returned from Florida, 157 of which came from Opothle Yoholo’s detachment. On September 13 the Tallassee headman Echo Harjo, and sixty of his people, returned from Florida. Two days later, seventy-eight more of Opothle Yoholo’s volunteers arrived at Pass Christian.⁷⁴ Fugitive Creeks also continued to arrive into September. On September 16, for instance, seventeen Creek refugees were transported from Pensacola to Pass Christian.⁷⁵

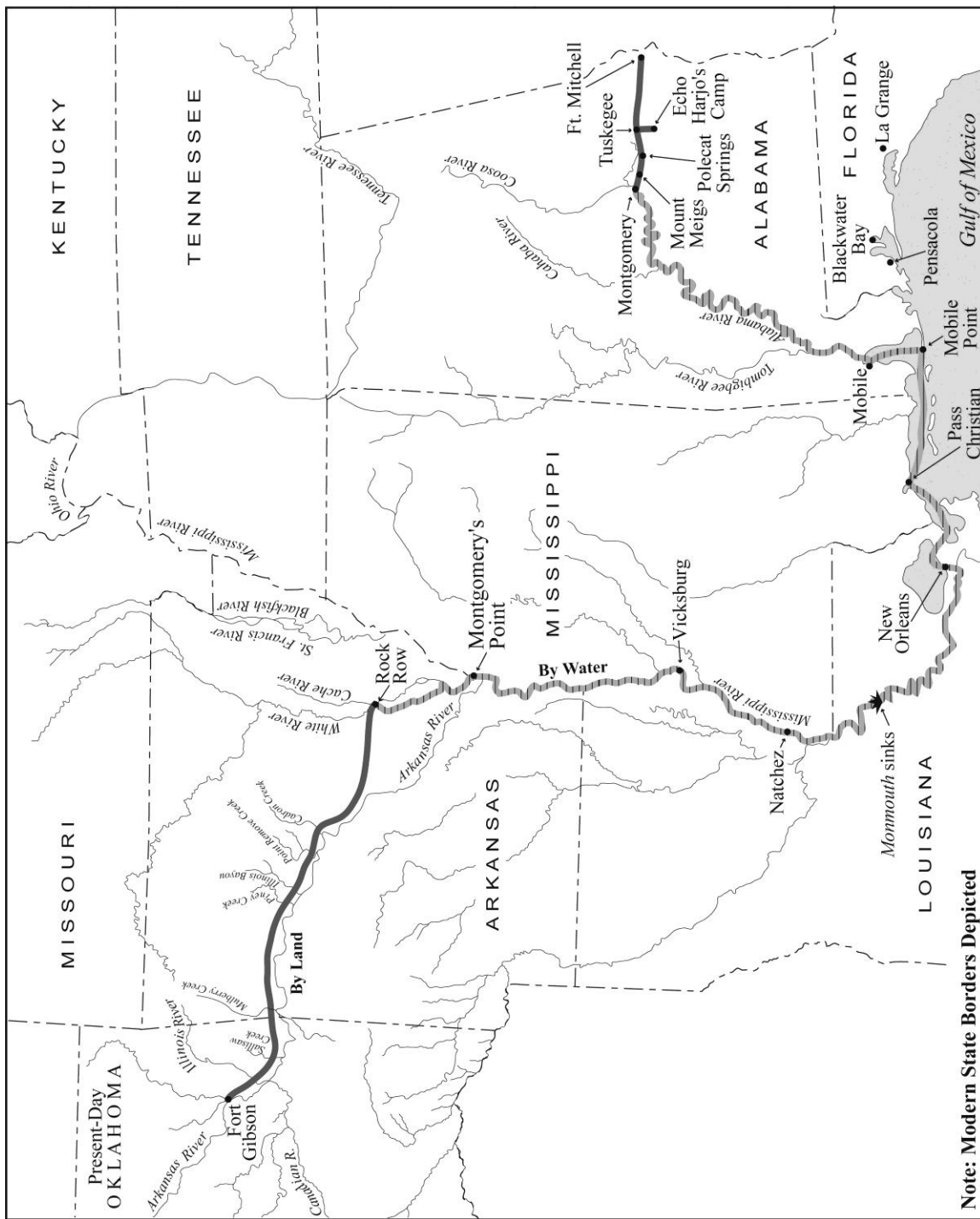
⁷² John Reynolds to J. Wooldridge, 30 September 1837, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-239, Year-1838, Agent-John Page, Account number-1701-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁷³ J.J. Sloan to J. Wooldridge, 3 October 1837, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-239, Year-1838, Agent-John Page, Account number-1701-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁷⁴ John Reynolds to William A. Campbell, 14 September 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

⁷⁵ John Reynolds to C.A. Harris, 13 September 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

Detachment Six: Florida Volunteers and Their Families, March 1837 - January 1838



In September the government notified the Alabama Emigrating Company to prepare transportation for the Creeks at Pass Christian. Because of the season and the likelihood that the rivers would be at their low stages, an agent was sent up the Mississippi River to the Arkansas River to report on the conditions. The report was sobering. The agent noted that “if you leave the Pass before the first of October you will suffer for water dreadfully—you cannot get further than the mouth of White River by water, and the roads are so bad you cannot get here by land with waggons.”⁷⁶ As a result of the report, agents in Pass Christian decided to commence the emigration between October 5 and October 10, 1837.⁷⁷ The route established was by water as far as Rock Row, if possible, and then by land the rest of the way to Fort Gibson. The contractors procured steamboats, each with a capacity of between 150 and 280 tons. Wagons were also purchased and ordered to wait at Rock Row until the party arrived.⁷⁸ The contractors planned to use each steamboat and barge to transport between eight hundred and a thousand Creeks. Thomas S. Jesup, however, demanded that each boat was “not to exceed five hundred Indians.”⁷⁹ But, the contractors fought many of these regulations. Among other things, they argued that the contract signed a year ago stipulated that no

⁷⁶ John Page to John G. Reynolds, 1 September 1837, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-239, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁷⁷ John G. Reynolds to William A. Campbell, 14 September 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

⁷⁸ “Comments upon the Statement of ‘fact + principals’ drawn up by Col. Buck of the Indian Bureau upon the subject of Extra Charges made by the Alabama Emigrating Company for the removal of the Creek Indians,” RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-239, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD; John Reynolds, 15 September 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

⁷⁹ William A. Campbell to John Reynolds, 15 September 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division Princeton University; John Reynolds to William A. Campbell and William Beattie, 18 September 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

fewer than a thousand Creeks remove at a time. They also protested the amount of transportation the government required the company to provide to transport the Creeks' extra baggage.⁸⁰ In response, the government suspended the commencement of the emigration.⁸¹

It was not until the middle of October 1837, that almost all of the Creek volunteers arrived at Pass Christian from Florida and were mustered into the emigrating party.⁸² By October 16, 1837, approximately two to three hundred Creeks, led by their headman Jim Boy, embarked on the steamboat *Mazeppa* for New Orleans.⁸³ They ascended the Mississippi River from New Orleans on the steamboat *Cavalier*.⁸⁴ On October 23, the remainder of the party left Pass Christian.⁸⁵ They passed through New Orleans and settled twelve to fifteen miles above the city to avoid catching the yellow fever that was prevalent in that city. There the Creeks waited for the other parties which were delayed several days due to poor weather.

⁸⁰ William Beattie and William A. Campbell to John G. Reynolds, 23 September 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

⁸¹ John G. Reynolds to William Beattie and William A. Campbell, 5 October 1837, Journal of John G. Reynolds, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Princeton University.

⁸² The last detachment of warriors were scheduled to arrive at Pass Christian on the steamboat *Tomochichi*, see Thomas Jesup to W.E. Freeman, 9 September 1837, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-239, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁸³ Foreman, *Indian Removal*, 186-187.

⁸⁴ "Notes relative to the claim of the Alabama Emigrating Company for extra compensation in the Removal of Creek Indians," NA, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-239, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

⁸⁵ J.J. Sloan to C.A. Harris, 23 October 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 860-861, NA; Also see Muster Roll of Emigrant Creeks (Felton), RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-238, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

By the end of October, 1837, the entire party was ascending the Mississippi River in at least six steamboats—the *John Nelson*, *Yazoo*, *Farmer*, *Far West*, *Monmouth*, and *Black Hawk*.⁸⁶ The *Monmouth* was an aging steamboat considered unfit for travel and about to be dismantled when it was commissioned to transport 611 Creeks up the Mississippi River. On October 31, as the *Monmouth* ascended the river, it passed Profit Island as all boats did that were traveling north on the Mississippi River. Instead of passing the island on the side reserved for northbound travel, however, the *Monmouth* ascended on the opposite side leaving it vulnerable to collision from boats descending the river. While the *Monmouth* traveled this dangerous route at night in a drizzling rain, it was cut in two by the steamboat *Trenton* which was being towed by the *Warren*. The *Monmouth's* cabin detached from its hull, drifted for a period in two pieces, before sinking.⁸⁷ Three hundred-eleven Creeks died in the collision or later drowned in the

⁸⁶ J.J. Sloan to C.A. Harris, 3 November 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 863-864, NA; Foreman, *Indian Removal*, 187.

⁸⁷ Foreman, *Indian Removal*, 187-188; *Macon Telegraph*, 13 November 1837. The *Telegraph* noted the incident happened as follows: "From Mr Eastman the senior partner of the firm of Messrs Eastman and Brothers of this city, by whom the *Monmouth* was owned, we learn the following particulars. Mr Eastman was on board at the time of the accident, which occurred on the evening of the 31st October, and was consequently a spectator of all occurred. He informs us that the *Monmouth* was chartered by the Alabama Emigrating Co through the agency of Col W A Campbell, to transport the Creek Indians from New Orleans to Arkansas. On her passage up the Mississippi, when near the head of Prophet's Island, Mr. E. was standing on the larboard wheelhouse of the boat, and hearing the pilot of the *Monmouth* ring the bell, he immediately went forward and asked why the bell was rung? The pilot had scarcely replied, 'don't you see,' when at that moment the steamer came in contact with a ship with such violence, as to break in the bows of the *Monmouth* and causing her immediately to be filled with water. As soon as the ship passed by, the steamer was run ashore, and with such lines as could be procured; made fast. Scarcely had she however reached the shore, when the hull sunk and the cabin floated down stream in two parts, on one of which was Mr E with several of the officers of the boat and probably two hundred Indians. The steamboat *Warren* which was towing the ship immediately on the happening of the accident, rounded to and made for the portion of the wreck of which we have just spoken, and rendered every possible assistance in saving the lives and property of the Indians. The *Yazoo* and *John Nelson* steamers which were also laden with Indians, were soon on the spot, rendering all the aid in their power. Mr. E. informs us that the night of the accident was dark with a drizzling rain, and that neither the ship nor the steamboat that had her in tow, were discovered by any person on the *Monmouth*, until the moment before the vessels came in contact."

river, including four of Jim Boy's children.⁸⁸ The *New Orleans True American* opined on the tragedy that

the fearful responsibility for this vast sacrifice of human life, rests on the contractors for emigrating the Creek Indians. The avaricious disposition to increase the profits on the speculation, first induced the chartering of rotten, old, and unseaworthy boats because they were of a class to be procured cheaply; and then to make those increased profits still larger, the Indians were packed upon these crazy vessels in such crowds, that not the slightest regard seems to have been paid to their safety, comfort, or even decency. The crammed condition of the decks and cabins, was offensive to every sense and feeling, and kept the poor creatures in a state unfit for human beings.⁸⁹

Accounts of the tragedy that have been passed down through Creek oral tradition described relatives of those who perished on the *Monmouth* walking along the edge of the Mississippi River to identify the bodies that had washed up on shore.⁹⁰

While the Creeks traveling up the Mississippi River were coming to terms with the tragedy of the *Monmouth* sinking, agents were in Mississippi trying to remove the Creeks who had fled to live among the Chickasaws. Some of these Creeks had fled prior to the Second Creek War, but many had also escaped the large detachments as they passed through Memphis in the fall of 1836. It was estimated that approximately five hundred Creeks lived among the Chickasaws in 1837.⁹¹ Reuben E. Clements, a former surveyor in the Creek Nation, was assigned to enroll and emigrate these Creeks to the

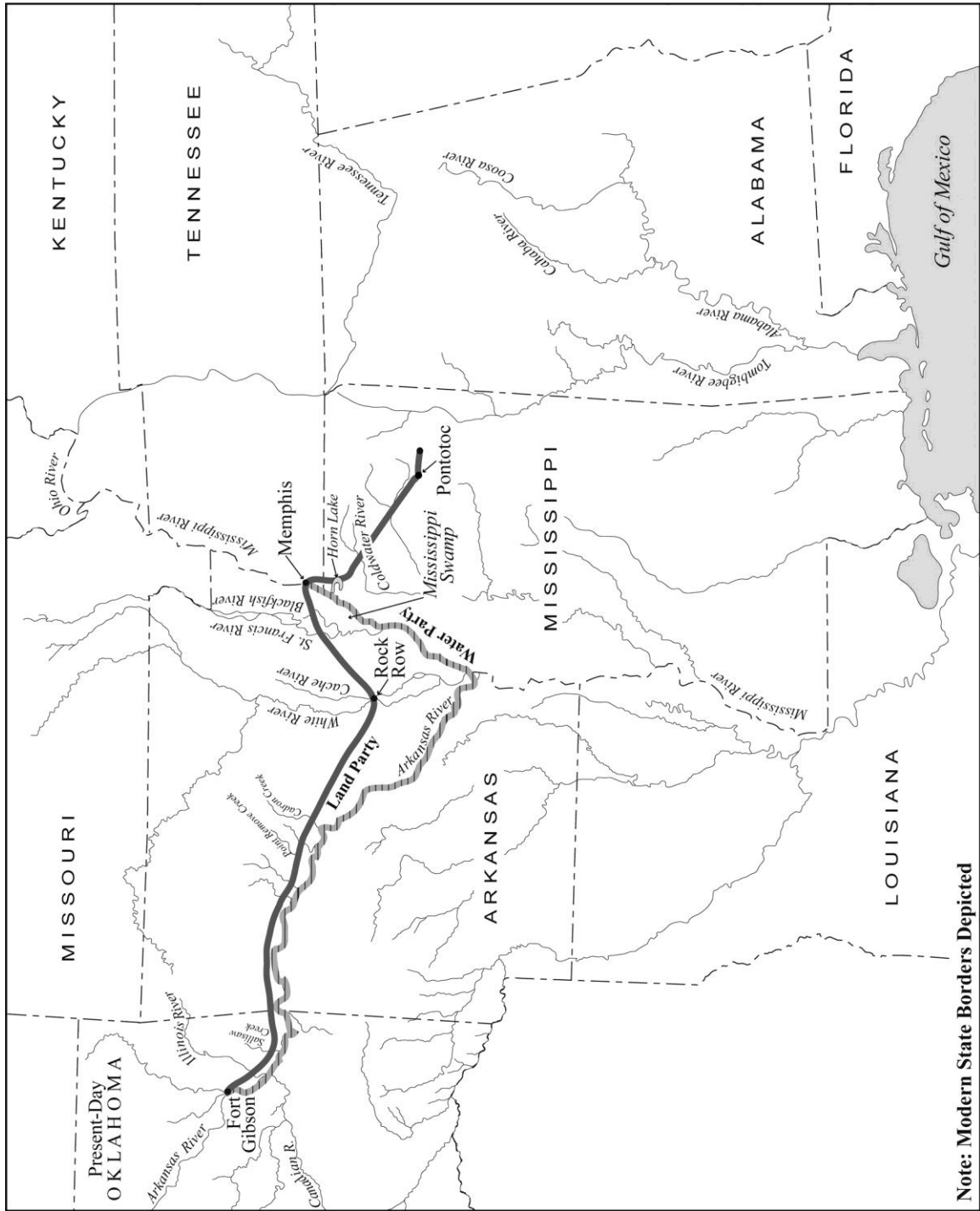
⁸⁸ *Army and Navy Chronicle* V, 314; McKenney and Hall, *History of the Indian Tribes of North America*, Vol. II, 25.

⁸⁹ Quoted in *Arkansas Gazette*, 28 November 1837.

⁹⁰ Interview of Thomas Barnett, 24 June 1937, Indian Pioneer History Collection, Works Progress Administration Project S-149, reel-5, Vol. 13, 453-458, Oklahoma Historical Society.

⁹¹ R.E. Clements to C.A. Harris, 25 September 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 161, NA.

Emigration of Creek Refugees in the Chickasaw Nation, November 1837 - December 1837



Note: Modern State Borders Depicted

Indian territory.⁹² Government agents combed Pontotoc, Itawamba, and De Soto counties looking for Creek fugitives. There were Creek settlements located thirty miles east of Pontotoc in Itawamba County, as well as a number of Creeks living about thirty miles south of Memphis, including approximately one hundred living on Horn Lake.⁹³ In September 1837, Clements established enrollment camps twenty miles east of Pontotoc and a second camp thirty miles from Memphis. Clements met with the Creeks in council hoping to entice them into camp.⁹⁴ But, enrolling these Creeks proved extremely difficult primarily because the Creeks were so spread out and were living in a “dispersed situation.”⁹⁵ Clements reported that the Creeks living amongst the Chickasaws were “outlaws [who] have fled from [their] own tribe for murders and crimes they have committed on their own people.” Most had been afraid of returning to Alabama to face punishment for their crimes. However, violence appeared to be commonplace for many of these Creeks. Clements reported that while he was engaged in enrolling them one Creek man “attacked another for killing his brother several years ago cut his skull in several places and opened his lungs and would have finished him had he not been prevented by some friends of his victim.” Another Creek man was stabbed to death and threats of bodily harm were reported in another case. Alcoholism appears to be a primary

⁹² Clements was nominated after Kemp Holland declined the position, see A.M.M. Upshaw to C.A. Harris, 13 September 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 885, NA.

⁹³ R.E. Clements to C.A. Harris, 20 September 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 163-164, NA; A.M.M. Upshaw to C.A. Harris, 21 July 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 883, NA.

⁹⁴ R.E. Clements to C.A. Harris, 20 September 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 163-164, NA.

⁹⁵ R.E. Clements to C.A. Harris, 11 October 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 174, NA.

culprit. Clements believed these Creeks to be “the most hostile and savage Indians I have ever known.”⁹⁶ In fact, Clements noted that he had “great difficulty to get along with them.”⁹⁷

Even more problematic was getting the Creeks to move west. Clements only was able to enroll 257 Creeks who waited at their rendezvous one mile away from a camp of emigrating Chickasaws.⁹⁸ Like most of the other Creeks who emigrated in the previous years, the Creek refugees who lived among the Chickasaws were considered to be “in a very low state of health and being almost destitute of warm clothing.”⁹⁹ When the agent gave orders for the Creeks to commence their journey to Memphis, the Creeks “bid defiance and said they would not start until the Chickasaw started.” As the agent wrote his superiors in Washington while on the march from Pontotoc, he was “just in the rear . . . [of] about one thousand Chickasaws.”¹⁰⁰ The Creeks marched behind the Chickasaw detachment and crossed Coldwater River before reaching Memphis where they took the steamboat *Itasca*, with a large keelboat in tow, to Fort Gibson. The keelboat contained “comfortable births and places for cooking.” A land party, consisting of thirty Creeks and seventy ponies, walked from Memphis to Fort Gibson. The water party arrived at their destination on November 30, 1837. The land party left Memphis on November 20,

⁹⁶ R. E. Clements to C.A. Harris, 18 November 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 179-181, NA.

⁹⁷ R.E. Clements to C.A. Harris, 1 November 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 176-177, NA.

⁹⁸ R.E. Clements to C.A. Harris, 1 November 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 176-177, NA; Jacob Brown to Gouverneur Morris, 6 April 1838, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-239, 30-34, NA.

⁹⁹ Report of Gouverneur Morris, 9 April 1838, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency, Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-239, 19-29, NA.

¹⁰⁰ R.E. Clements to C.A. Harris, 1 November 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 176-177, NA.

the same day the *Itasca* left Memphis with the water party, and reached the St. Francis River on November 25. The Creeks crossed Cadron Creek, Point Remove Creek, and Palarm Creek before arriving at Fort Gibson on December 27, 1837.¹⁰¹ But, as was the case with the Creeks in the Cherokee and Seminole territories, many Creeks were so entrenched among the Chickasaws that they were left to be removed with them.¹⁰²

While the Creeks formerly residing among the Chickasaws were moving toward Fort Gibson, the Creeks who had served in Florida and their families were attempting to recover from the *Monmouth* disaster. Upon receiving news of the wreck of the *Monmouth*, the three steamboats that were ahead of the *Monmouth* were ordered to stop their progress at the mouth of the White River. An agent, probably traveling on the *John Nelson*, returned down river to investigate the accident and aid the other agents and Creeks who had survived the wreck.¹⁰³ The steamboat *Yazoo*, traveling behind the *Monmouth*, also came to help. The pilots and hands on board the *Yazoo* discharged the boat's load along the shore and spent three days "coasting below the wreck" aiding in the recovery efforts.¹⁰⁴ Once the Creeks were on board, the *Yazoo* and *John Nelson* continued northward to the mouth of the White River where it reconnoitered with the

¹⁰¹ Jacob Brown to Gouverneur Morris, 6 April 1838, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-239, 30-34, NA; Report of Gouverneur Morris, 9 April 1838, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-239, 19-29, NA; Receipts, NA, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1838, Agent-Gouverneur Morris, Account number-1837-A, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

¹⁰² Also see Monte Ross Lewis, "Chickasaw Removal: Betrayal of the Beloved Warriors, 1794-1844," (Ph.D. diss., North Texas State University, 1981), 187.

¹⁰³ "Notes relative to the claim of the Alabama Emigrating Company for extra compensation in the Removal of Creek Indians," RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-239, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

¹⁰⁴ Officers of the steamboat *Yazoo*, 16 November 1837, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-237, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687-A, National Archives II, College Park, MD; *Macon Telegraph*, 13 November 1837.

Black Hawk, Far West, and Farmer. The party then ascended the White River to Rock Row. From Rock Row, the Creeks walked westward overland. Documents show that the party crossed Piney Creek and Mulberry Creek. They arrived at Fort Gibson in late December 1837 or early January 1838. The Alabama Emigrating Company tallied up the arrivals, the deaths, and the pro-rated cost of transporting Creeks who died along the way. They reported to the government that the company emigrated 3,471 Creeks from the former Creek Nation to Mobile Point and Pass Christian, and 3,352 Creeks from Pass Christian to Fort Gibson. They also noted that 296 Creeks died “after leaving Pass Christian” most, if not all, of whom perished on the *Monmouth*.¹⁰⁵

* * *

The major operations of Creek removal ended in early 1838 when the last of the Creeks from Pass Christian arrived at Fort Gibson. Their arrival, more or less, coincided with the ten-year anniversary of the arrival of the first McIntosh party. Within that decade, approximately twenty-three thousand Creeks either voluntarily emigrated or were forced west by military personnel. The lands of Alabama, which had been inhabited by the Creeks and their ancestors for generations was now almost exclusively occupied by

¹⁰⁵ “The U.S. in Account Current with the Alabama Emigrating Company, 1836, 1837 & 1838,” RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-239, Year-1838, Agent-Alabama Emigrating Company-Reynolds, Account number-1687-B, National Archives II, College Park, MD; The government was still engaged in emigrating Creeks from Florida through 1838 and into 1839, see Abstract of Disbursements and receipts, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Box-278, Year-1839, Agent-Boyd, Account number-3041-A, F, National Archives II, College Park, MD.

whites. Soon cotton was planted on the same soil that once grew Creek corn and other crops. Railroads dissected Creek hunting grounds. Cities, many taking the name of the Creek villages they had displaced, were platted and built. But there were still a small number of Creeks in the east. Small band of Creeks remained among the Chickasaws, Cherokees, and Seminoles, and did not arrive in the Indian territory until those Nations were forced west. Others lived as small, yeoman farmers on individual farmsteads among the surrounding white society. Still others, like the modern Poarch Creeks own land near Atmore, Alabama and remain there today.

Conclusion

After 1837

*“But now the wolf has come. Men who are strangers tread our soil.
our children are frightened & the mothers cannot sleep for fear.
This is our situation now.”*

—Opothle Yoholo and Creeks, 1861.

As the year 1837 came to a close the Creek Indians were forced to come to terms with a new reality. For the approximately 23,000 Creeks in the Indian territory, this meant reestablishing new homes, towns, and fields. The Creeks relit their town fires and consecrated their new land. The Creeks also did their best to recreate their former lifeways in the west. But, the memory of life in the east was never far from their minds. For most Creeks, the events of the last decade were almost inconceivable. Within twelve years, the Creeks lost all of their land in Georgia and Alabama, endured hunger, alcoholism, and were victimized by violence committed by white settlers. Just as devastating, the Creeks endured unspeakable emotional turmoil. For ten years Creek headmen did their best to disrupt the removal of their people across the Mississippi River. They enacted laws against emigrating or advising anyone to emigrate. They sent warriors to attack the Creeks waiting in enrollment camps. In addition, they traveled to Washington often to petition the government for redress. When they were not visiting the president, Creek headmen were writing letters to him on behalf of their people.

In the 150 years prior to removal, the Creeks dealt with threats to their sovereignty in pragmatic ways. They incorporated other Indian groups into their “confederacy,” thereby ensuring strength in numbers. When colonial governments threatened to envelope them, the Creeks centralized their government and met other nations as a nation. When Georgians threatened the Creek Nation after the revolution, Creek headmen neutralized them by normalizing relations with the United States. But, in many ways, this was always a juggling act. The Creeks found themselves constantly reacting to new threats. The Creeks responded to these threats in a number of ways. They negotiated new treaties with the United States, even if it meant ceding tracts of their land. They wrote letters and petitioned the government for redress on hundreds of occasions. And, in a moment of desperation, they went to war with themselves and local white settlers.

The Creeks also drew upon these strategies during the removal epoch. Ultimately, however, it was not enough to maintain control of their sovereignty in the east. By the 1830s, the challenges the Creeks faced were simply too great. The Creeks faced external threats from the state governments of Alabama and Georgia and the federal government, especially under Andrew Jackson. They were also constantly persecuted by white traders and speculators, and overrun by white settlers. The Creeks also faced internal threats from William McIntosh and his followers. This was too much for any group to overcome.

The Treaty of Indian Springs and the 1826 Treaty of Washington were devastating to the Creek Nation. These treaties were the primary reason the Creeks were

forced west in 1836 and 1837. Many Lower Creeks from Georgia did not resettle within the borders of Alabama in 1827 and they began long period of transience and starvation. In addition, the Lower Creeks lost much of the buffer between their towns and the whites. White traders and settlers no longer had to travel long distances to reach the Creek settlements and towns, they only had to cross the Chattahoochee River. Moreover, whites had congregated in towns like West Point and Columbus in Georgia, and Irwinton in Alabama. As a result, the Creek Nation was soon overrun by land speculators, whiskey traders, and squatters. The treaties of Indian Springs and 1826 Washington also facilitated voluntary removal which did much to divide the Nation both physically and ideologically. The conditions created by these two treaties created such a quagmire of despair that in 1832, the Creeks sold their remaining land to the United States. The land frauds and deteriorating conditions found in the eastern sections of the former Creek Nation instigated the Second Creek War. The “friendly” Creeks could have fought forced removal as the Seminoles did in Florida. But after ten years of betrayal, disappointment, and failure the Creeks resigned themselves to removing west.

The final insult to the Creeks was their brutal march westward. The Creeks were rounded up and ordered to begin their journey in late August and early September 1836. The government and contractors knew the Creeks would not reach Fort Gibson until the winter months and yet they did not delay the emigration until spring. The contractors did not take extra precautions to ameliorate the potential sufferings of the Indians either. The winter clothing and blankets of Opothle Yoholo and his people were left in storage while they suffered from frostbite and exposure. The contractors also did not supply the food

depots adequately for the Creeks traveling through the Arkansas swamps and many Creeks suffered as a result. In many instances the contractors were merely indifferent or neglectful. In extreme cases they were callous and inhumane. But despite all of this emotional and physical suffering, the Creek people survived.

* * *

For most of the Creeks forced westward in 1836 and 1837, adjusting to life in the Indian territory was extremely difficult. The new emigrants faced myriad problems. They were forced to find new land, construct new homes, and plant new fields. Disease was a problem for the new Creek emigrants and approximately 3,500 died of bilious fevers within the first months after arriving in the Indian territory.¹ Many Creeks were unwilling to start over and, within months of arriving, parties of twenty to thirty were returning east to live among the Seminoles in Florida. Opothle Yoholo also was not happy with life in the Indian territory and continued to advocate for a move to Texas. Many Creeks, in fact, held out hope that they would be able to move beyond the jurisdiction of the United States. Some Creeks did go to Texas, including Benjamin Hawkins who died there sometime before 1838.² But, others did not even have a chance to restart their lives in the west. Neah Micco, a principal headman of Cusseta and one of the leaders of the Second Creek War, died near Fort Gibson in the latter half of December 1836, after residing in the Indian territory for only a few months. Others were so

¹ Isaac McCoy, *The Annual Register of Indian Affairs In the Western (or Indian) Territory, 1835-1838* (Springfield: Particular Baptist Press, 2000), 276.

² *Niles' Weekly Register*, 27 April 1837; McCoy, *The Annual Register*, 276.

despondent that they took their own lives. Among those was seventy-year-old Citchy Cornels who hanged himself aboard the steamboat *Dolphin* at Cincinnati while the passengers were at dinner. Moreover, rumors swirled of great dissatisfaction amongst the new Creek emigrants. Many, the newspapers reported, had little inclination to plant corn and some had even destroyed their fences and other property. Some Creeks even went so far as to threaten western white settlers. For instance, the reports, gleaned from an informant, reported that “the old women among them have been heard to declare, *as soon as the green corn is fit to pull*, THE WHITE PEOPLE MUST LOOK OUT!” For their part, the Creeks of the McIntosh party denied that the new emigrants had destroyed their property or threatened local whites. And, in a surprising touch of empathy, noted that the new emigrants “look up to the government for the fulfillment of the promises their agents have made them. When that is done, all will be right with the Muscogee people.” But, despite the rhetoric of peace and reunion, there was much hostility early on between the McIntosh party and those who came in 1836 and 1837. In fact, the tension between the two groups became so intense over the summer of 1838 that federal agents feared that it could have led to a third Creek war.³

Despite the hardships, most of the Creeks did resettle, rebuild, and replant. None of the Creeks of the voluntary emigrations from 1827-1836 had reestablished their towns to any extent by 1837. But, with the arrival and resettlement of 16,000 Creeks at the end of that year, this began to change. After the Cowetas and Cussetas of detachment five were enrolled into the Western Creek Nation in December 1836, many were accompanied by Sprague thirty-five miles beyond Fort Gibson. The agent noted that “I

³ *Arkansas Gazette*, 10 January 1837; 4 July 1837; 30 May 1837; 20 June 1837; 27 March 1839.



The Western Creek Nation

Adapted from, Frank G. Speck, *The Creek Indians of Taskigi Town* (New York: Kraus Reprint Corp., 1964).

encamped them upon a prairie and they soon after scattered in every direction, seeking a desirable location for their new homes.”⁴ The Creeks of the other detachments, no doubt, did the same and by 1838 one observer noted that “two or three places begin to assume the appearance of hamlets.” Indeed, by the end of the next decade, a number of Creek towns were reestablished, with many taking the same names as those found in the southeast. After forced removal ended in late 1837, most of the Upper Creeks settled some distance from the Lower Creeks who primarily resided near the Arkansas River. The Upper Creeks settled primarily on the Canadian River and its branches, about fifty miles away. In 1842, Major-General Ethan Allan Hitchcock, who investigated the frauds in the supply of provisions to the Indians, toured the Western Creek Nation and estimated that there were forty-five Creek towns. Hitchcock counted about eight hundred Yuchis living in the west, two or three hundred Hitchitis, and “but three families of the Natchez Indians.” Hitchcock also observed “two small towns” of Alabamas, one of which was called Oakchoyuchee. Hitchcock took two censuses of the new emigrants in the years after forced removal and noted that the Creek population increased after a sharp decline between 1836 and 1838. Still, pinpointing the exact number of Creeks in the west was difficult. Other travelers placed the number of Creeks in the Indian territory in the early 1840s at around 15,000. A Commissioner’s *Report* in 1844, however, stated that the number of Creeks in the west was 24,594.⁵

⁴ John Sprague to C.A. Harris, 1 April 1837, RG-75, Letters Received by the OIA, Creek Agency Emigration 1826-1849, M-234, reel-238, 739-756, NA.

⁵ McCoy, *Annual Register*, 162, 275-278; Grand Foreman, ed., *A Traveler in Indian Territory: The Journal of Ethan Allan Hitchcock, late Major-General in the United States Army* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 121-122; for the 15,000 see John D. Lang and Samuel Taylor, *The Report of a Visit to Some of the Tribes of Indians, Located West of the Mississippi River* (New York: M. Day &

The observations of Hitchcock and other travelers to the west in the decade after removal give some insight into the location and composition of the Western Creek towns. Hitchcock visited the town of Tuckabatchee, located fifteen miles from North Fork, in 1842. He noted that the Tuckabatchees had reestablished their square ground complete with the traditional four, open-air sheds. The buildings were about six feet high and covered on three sides with mud. Partial partitions divided each building into thirds. Upon each partition rested two earthen bowls about a foot in diameter where hot coals were placed for the headmen to light their pipes with. Unlike other Creek towns in the west, the Tuckabatchees had also reconstructed their hot house, which was on the west side of the square. Twelve, eight-foot high posts, about nine or ten feet apart supported the structure that was 120 feet in circumference. The conical roof was twenty feet high and made of a series of “horizontal pieces” lashed with leather to the ends of other horizontal beams. Shingles covered the roof. In the center of the hot house was the Tuckabatchee town fire. Near the hot house was a small, enclosed shed that housed the sacred brass plates brought from Alabama.⁶

Samuel Washington Woodhouse, a surgeon and naturalist, who accompanied a government survey team in the Indian Territory in 1849-1850, also visited a number of these fledgling Western Creek towns. The town of Chiaha, Woodhouse noted, was reestablished in the northern portions of the Creek tract on a high ridge near the Cherokee

Company, 1843), 30; Also see Michael F. Doran, “Population Statistics of Nineteenth Century Indian Territory,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 53:4 (Winter 1975-1976), 492-515.

⁶ Location of Tuckabatchee from The United States to Corbett, 31 March 1838, RG-217, GAO, Treasury Department, Second Auditor, Entry-525, Year-1841, Box-353, Agent-Stephenson, Account number-5874, National Archives II, College Park, MD; Foreman, *A Traveler in Indian Territory*, 113-116; Angie Debo, *The Road to Disappearance* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), 122, argues that the Creeks did not reconstruct their public buildings to the same degree that they had in the east.

line. Woodhouse noted that the Chiahas established their town on the ridge “so that they may see round the country for miles.” This was “a large town extending many miles” with their houses spread out some distance from each other. He considered them poor and their homes “not very comfortable.” Woodhouse noted that there were many Seminoles amongst the Chiaha. Woodhouse also attended a barbeque at the town of Coweta located about five miles north of the Arkansas River. Coweta was located near a small prairie, a grove of timber, and stretches of “Rocky hills of Limestone.” Upon their arrival the party noticed some young men playing cards and young boys playing ball. Woodhouse and his party were treated to a cut of beef from a leg bone that had been cooked on a spit or “scaffold” over an open fire. The beef was served with corn bread. Approximately, nine and a half miles from the Coweta Mission, Woodhouse visited Thlakatchka but gave no descriptions of the town.⁷

Josiah Gregg, a merchant and explorer who traveled the Santa Fe Trail a number of times between 1831 and 1840 also noted the composition of Western Creek towns. Gregg, who visited the Creeks in 1839, wrote that only the poorer Creeks had settled to any degree in towns or villages. The wealthiest Creeks lived as Southern planters on large plantations which were worked by black slaves. They generally lived some miles from the other members of their town. Gregg, who visited the Creeks just about the time they were beginning to reestablish their towns, noted that “these ‘towns’ are rather settlements than villages, being but sparse clusters of huts without any regularity.” But,

⁷ John S. Tomer and Michael J. Brodhead, *A Naturalist in Indian Territory: The Journals of S.W. Woodhouse 1849-1850* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 98, 134, 148-150, 201.

among these settlements the Creeks had cultivated “large fields, which are cultivated in common, and the produce proportionally distributed.”⁸

Soon other Creek towns were reestablished. Among the most prominent were different villages of Yuchis located in the northwest section of the Creek country. To the southeast of the Yuchi settlements, along the Deep Fork, were other reconstituted Creek towns such as Newyaucau, Ooseochee, Hitchiti, Okfuskee, and Cusseta, to name a few. South of the Deep Fork was the North Fork and Canadian rivers where the towns of Tuskegee, Talladega, Wockokoy, Tuckabatchee, Hillabee, and Tallassee towns, among others, were resettled.⁹

Creek Indians continued to emigrate to the west long after the mass migrations of 1836 and 1837 had ended. Karpitcher Fixico, a sixty-five year old man from Hitchiti, emigrated from Alabama to the Indian territory in 1840. A number of Creeks emigrated to Texas and later to the Indian territory. Tusekiah Chartre, a fifty-year-old man from Okfuskee, emigrated to Texas from Alabama in 1839 and from Texas to the Indian Territory in 1842. Other Creeks emigrated from Alabama to other Indian nations before settling among the Creek country in present-day Oklahoma. Tolthlartarke emigrated from Alabama to the Cherokee Nation before settling in the Creek Nation in 1848. Mickis Emathla, a forty-three-year-old man from Okfuskee emigrated to the Chickasaw Nation before moving to the Creek Nation in 1840. Perhaps the most circuitous route

⁸ Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, ed., Max L. Moorhead (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), 400-401.

⁹ See Frank G. Speck, *The Creek Indians of Taskigi Town* (New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1964); also see Morris Edward Opler, “The Creek ‘Town’ and the Problem of Creek Indian Political Reorganization,” in Edward H. Spicer, ed., *Human Problems in Technological Change: A Casebook* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1952), 165-180; Douglas A. Hurt, “The Shaping of a Creek (Muscogee) Homeland in Indian Territory, 1828-1907” (Ph.D. diss. University of Oklahoma, 2000).

west was conducted by Eliza Ancil, a twenty-seven-year-old Creek woman from Hickory Ground. Ancil left Alabama in 1843. She settled in Mississippi before moving to Arkansas in 1845. In 1847 she moved to the Choctaw Nation in the Indian territory and finally settled among the Creeks in 1849. And, of course Arwike emigrated from Alabama in 1855.¹⁰

Some Creeks returned eastward, if only for a short time. In 1854-1855, Opothle Yoholo returned to Washington, D.C. and met with President Franklin Pierce. He was one of a number of other Indian headmen comprising a delegation that visited Washington during that time. While meeting with President Pierce at the White House, Opothle Yoholo met with Virginia Clay-Clompton, the daughter of former Alabama governor C.C. Clay. Clay-Clompton reported that the approximately eighty-year-old headman was wealthy—worth about \$80,000 and owned a plantation run entirely by black slaves. Opothle Yoholo was cordial to the governor's daughter despite the history between the two families. Clay-Clompton also noted that while he looked stunning dressed in his face paint and the “brilliant red blanket” with black borders that he wore, there was “an air of weariness and even sadness” on his face.¹¹ It was, no doubt, the by-product of thirty years' struggle to maintain Creek sovereignty in the face of white encroachment.

The decade after removal was a time of continuity and change for the Creeks. The Creeks maintained many of their ceremonies, traditions, and forms of recreation in

¹⁰ Self-emigration Claims, RG-75, Special Files of the OIA, 1807-1904, Special File-285, M-574, Reel-77, 13, 21, 32, 47, NA.

¹¹ Virginia Clay-Clompton, *A Belle of the Fifties: Memoirs of Mrs. Clay, of Alabama, Covering Social and Political Life in Washington and the South, 1853-66, Put into Narrative Form by Ada Sterling* (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1905), 108-110.

the west. The *busk* continued to be a mainstay of Creek ceremonial life. It was a time of celebrating the new year and the new harvest with singing and dancing. The sacred brass plates were removed from their shed and cleaned before they were presented in the square. The Creeks also maintained the war dance complete with the stalking of stuffed effigies of their enemies. But, the *busk* in the west, no doubt, evolved as it celebrated items of regional significance. For instance, the Creeks held a buffalo dance each year during the Green Corn Ceremony. This was the case in the east as well. John Howard Payne, who observed the dance in Alabama in 1835, found it remarkable considering that the Creeks, along with the other animals they celebrated during the *busk*, had “survived all traces of the buffalo itself.” But, the buffalo was commonplace for the Western Creeks. The western buffalo dance included ceremonial objects such as the scalp of a buffalo “with the horns and tail attached.” During the ceremony, the Creeks danced “about in a circle, uttering sounds in imitation of the animal they represent, with their bodies in a half-bent position, supporting their weight upon their ball-sticks, which represent the forelegs of the buffalo.”¹² Ball plays were also common. Woodhouse observed a number of ball games during his travels through the Western Creek Nation in 1849-1850. One game was between Upper and Lower Creeks while another was between the towns of Coweta and Tallassee.¹³

¹² John Mix Stanley, *Portraits of North American Indians, With Sketches of Scenery, Etc.*, (Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution, 1852), 10; John Howard Payne, “The Green-Corn Dance,” *The Continental Monthly* (January 1862), 17-29.

¹³ Foreman, *A Traveler in Indian Territory*, 132-137; For contemporary Green Corn Ceremonies see Jason Baird Jackson, *Yuchi Ceremonial Life: Performance, Meaning, and Tradition in a Contemporary American Indian Community* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003); W.L. Ballard, *The Yuchi Green Corn Ceremonial: Form and Meaning* (Los Angeles: American Indian Studies Center, University of California, Los Angeles, 1978); Tomer and Brodhead, *A Naturalist in Indian Territory*, 102-104, 156-157; Also see Amelia Rector Bell, “Creek Ritual: Path to Peace” (Ph.D. dissertation. University of Chicago,

Religion continued to play an important role in the lives of the Creeks, although for some, the type of religion changed. Although the McIntosh party initially objected to the presence of missionaries, Christianity was formally accepted in the Creek Nation in 1848. That year, Chilly McIntosh converted to Christianity and later became a Baptist preacher. Before the 1840s, most of the Christians in the Indian territory were black. Travelers to the Creek country in 1842 observed “an uneducated slave” leading a congregation of Creek and black worshippers. They noted that many of the Creeks’ slaves were “approved preachers.” But, throughout the 1840s much of the original hostility to Christianity began to wane. A number of converts were still whipped and fines were imposed by the Council for any Creeks who neglected to partake of Black Drink during ceremonies, but many Creeks could practice their religion in the open without fear of retribution.¹⁴ Jim Henry, a prominent leader in the Second Creek War, became a Methodist preacher in the Indian territory.¹⁵

Still, most Creeks maintained their traditional cosmology. Tuckabatchee Micco, for instance, noted in 1842 how the Great Spirit created the earth and people. He retold how messengers were sent from the Great Spirit to give the Creeks fire as well as corn and tobacco. Just as they continued with traditional religion, many Creeks maintained their opposition to Christianity. Tuckabatchee Micco, for example, told Hitchcock that the Creeks did not like Christianity nor understand it. Opothle Yoholo was hostile to

1984); Lester B. Robbins, “The Persistence of Traditional Religious Practices Among Creek Indians,” (Ph.D. diss, Southern Methodist University), 1976.

¹⁴ Debo, *The Road to Disappearance*, 120-121; Lang and Taylor, *The Report of a Visit to Some of the Tribes of Indians*, 30; Also see Peter John De Smet, SJ, *Western Missions and Missionaries: A Series of Letters* (1859; [Reprint] Shannon: Irish University Press, 1972), 316.

¹⁵ Eugene Current-Garcia and Dorothy B. Hatfield, eds., *Shem, Ham, and Japheth: The Papers of W.O. Tuggle, Comprising His Indian Diary Sketches & Observations, Myths & Washington Journal in the Territory & at the Capital, 1879-1882* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1973), 42.

Christian missionaries and noted that “a man will much more surely get to heaven by worshipping the brass plates than in any other way.”

But, many things changed for the Creeks. Roly McIntosh, an “underling chief [of] inferior degree” in the east, became the principal headman of the Creeks in the west. This did not change after forced removal. Although Opothle Yoholo maintained much of his status after emigrating to the Indian territory in 1836, it was Roly McIntosh who was “the acknowledged principal chief of the Creek Nation.” When the annuities were paid out to the headmen, Roly McIntosh received one thousand dollars to Opothle Yoholo’s eight hundred dollars. Benjamin Marshall, who served as an interpreter, received nine hundred dollars.¹⁶ The enmity between the two factions continued to remain high long after the execution of William McIntosh and removal. This, in part, explains why the Upper and Lower towns were much more autonomous and distinct than they had been in the east. In fact, in the years after forced removal, the Upper and Lower towns maintained their own councils and had little to do with each other. But, on February 17, 1839, approximately fifteen hundred Creeks gathered at an unspecified council ground for the first nation-wide Council that had taken place in years. There were one thousand Creeks from the Upper towns and five hundred Creeks from the Lower towns represented. Chilly McIntosh interpreted the talks given by a number of the chiefs.¹⁷ Headmen were chosen from the Upper and Lower towns, although Roly McIntosh’s status was elevated over that of his Upper Creek counterpart.

¹⁶ Foreman, *A Traveler in Indian Territory*, 93, 111-112, 115-116, 123-127.

¹⁷ *Arkansas Gazette*, 27 March 1839.

Once the Council was reestablished, the Creek Nation created entirely new laws or modified old ones. Adultery was punished by cutting off the ears and the nose of the offender. Rape was added to the criminal code and punishable by fifty lashings for the first offense, one hundred lashes and the loss of an ear for the second offense, and death for the third offense. Creeks who used drugs to induce abortion were also subject to fifty lashes. The punishment for murder was modified to allow for instances of self-defense or accidents. The Council exerted more influence over Creek *talwas* in the west than they had in the east. The Council made decisions for all Creek towns and no *talwa* could nullify a decision made on the national level.¹⁸

Laws concerning slavery also took on added importance for some of the Creeks in the west. By the early 1840s, travelers estimated that there were “three or four thousand slaves” in the Creek Nation in the Indian territory. In 1842, approximately two hundred slaves escaped from their Creek and Cherokee masters. John D. Lang and Samuel Taylor, who were visiting the Creek Nation, observed that “this caused much excitement, and a posse was sent after them from both nations. Both Church and State seemed aroused on account of these desertions, and ready to make every possible effort to recover them at all hazards, and in future to enact more rigid laws for the government of their slaves, and for binding their chains more strongly upon them.”¹⁹ Soon after this incident, the Creeks passed a series of oppressive black codes between 1842 and 1859. These laws protected the Creeks’ slave property, curtailed the freedoms of freed blacks,

¹⁸ Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 409-410; Debo, *The Road to Disappearance*, 123-127.

¹⁹ Lang and Taylor, *The Report of a Visit to Some of the Tribes of Indians*, 30.

and banned abolitionist school teachers, among other things. Moreover, Creeks could not marry blacks nor could they assist fugitive slaves.²⁰

These black codes and the Southern planter culture enjoyed by some wealthy Creeks created a schism in the Creek Nation. This had dire consequences for the Creeks during the American Civil War. At the height of the secession crisis in 1860-1861, the Creeks broke into “loyal” and “southern” factions. Many members of the McIntosh party, along with a number of Creeks who despised the United States because of removal, were secessionists. In February 1861, a partially-attended Creek Council passed laws that forced free blacks into servitude. While most of the principal headmen were in Washington, the Council’s law required each freedman to choose a Creek master by March 10, 1861, or be sold to the highest bidder. When Civil War broke out on April 12, 1861 in South Carolina, agents representing the Confederate States traveled to the Indian territory to sway allegiances. In June and July 1861, while many principal Creek headmen were meeting with the Plains Indians, the pro-southern Creeks as well as a number of Choctaws, Chickasaws, Cherokees, and Seminoles pledged their allegiance to the Confederacy. The signatures of a number of absent headmen were forged.

A number of Southern Creek regiments were organized comprised of some of the most famous family names in the Creek Nation: Kennard, Stidham, Grayson, and McIntosh, among others. For his part, Opothle Yoholo wanted to stay out of the war entirely. He sent a letter to Abraham Lincoln pleading for protection from Confederate agents and the McIntosh Confederates. Approximately seventeen hundred Creeks joined

²⁰ Claudio Saunt, *Black, White, and Indian: Race and the Unmaking of an American Family* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 74-75; Debo, *The Road to Disappearance*, 126-127.

the Confederate cause. Daniel McIntosh, Chilly McIntosh's half-brother, led one of the regiments, while Chilly McIntosh led another. The Southern Creeks were zealous in their persecution of blacks and the Creeks loyal to Opothle Yoholo. Much of this animosity was residual hatred from the execution of William McIntosh in 1825. By mid-1861 thousands of Creeks loyal to Opothle Yoholo, along with a number of Seminoles, Delawares, Kickapoos, Wichitas, Shawnees, and Comanches congregated near the junction of the North Fork and Deep Fork. Many came with their livestock and possessions in tow.

In late 1861, Opothle Yoholo and his followers sought refuge in Kansas. Along their journey north they were pursued by the McIntosh regiments and Confederate forces led by Douglas Cooper, an agent for the Choctaws. Before Opothle Yoholo reached Kansas, the two sides fought a number of skirmishes. Two hundred-fifty of Opothle Yoholo's party were killed near the Kansas line in December 1861. The survivors, many traveling in light clothes, continued on "in blood and snow." Many died of exposure. Over one hundred amputations were performed on these refugee Creeks and one person observed seeing "a little Creek boy, about eight years old, with both feet taken off near the ankle." Opothle Yoholo died in Kansas sometime around 1863.²¹

Still, a small band of Creeks were able to maintain their sovereignty in Alabama. Most of those who remained were allies of Andrew Jackson during the first Creek War,

²¹ Saunt, *Black, White, and Indian*, 91-107; Debo, *The Road to Disappearance*, 142-176; Christine Schultz White and Benton R. White, *Now the Wolf Has Come: The Creek Nation in the Civil War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996); Lela J. McBride, *Opothleyaholo and the Loyal Muskogee: Their Flight to Kansas in the Civil War* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2000); G.W. Grayson, *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy: The Autobiography of Chief G.W. Grayson*, ed. W. David Baird (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 59-60.

or their descendants, who obtained a reserve of land under Article I of the Treaty of Fort Jackson in 1814. In 1836, land reserves were granted to a number of Creek families, and by 1845 there were approximately 160 Creeks and their slaves living in south Alabama. The government tried to compel these Creeks to emigrate west and in 1849 forty-four Creeks emigrated to the Indian territory. Still, others remained and lived on individual farmsteads. Throughout the twentieth-century, the descendants of these Creeks organized a council and filed a number of petitions with the Indian Claims Commission. In 1984, the Poarch Band of Creeks received federal recognition. In addition to their reserve near Atmore, Alabama, the Poarch Creeks received a thirty-three acre tract of land near Hickory Ground in Wetumpka, Alabama.²²

* * *

Memory and remembering for the Creek Indians was, and is, shaped by the ability to retell an “experience.” More than simply recounting facts or events an “experience” draws upon the emotions of the story teller and the listener. It transcends “past-present-future” to make the story come “alive again.” For the Creeks in the Arkansas Territory, Indian territory, and Oklahoma, “perception, reality, and causality interacted for their

²² J. Anthony Paredes, “Back from Disappearance: The Alabama Creek Indian Community,” in Walter L. Williams, ed., *Southeastern Indians Since the Removal Era* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979), 123-141; Also see Marie West Cromer, *Modern Indians of Alabama: Remnants of the Removal* (Birmingham: Southern University Press, 1984), 83-96; Also see Lucius F. Ellsworth and Jane E. Dysart, “West Florida’s Forgotten People: The Creek Indians From 1830 Until 1970,” *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, 59: 4 (April 1981), 422-439.

understanding of history.”²³ Indeed, just as the Creeks had different experiences during the removal epoch, their memories of removal were equally as diverse. In 1842, many of the Upper Creeks were still “so hostile to the whites and so much exasperated by cheats put upon them in Georgia and Alabama.”²⁴ Many of the McIntosh Creeks, however, viewed emigration through the lens of the death of William McIntosh. Almost forty-years later, they still had not forgiven Opothle Yoholo.

Because emotion plays such a prominent role in Creek conceptions of their history it is not surprising that removal narratives oftentimes appear to be especially brutal. In 1937, for instance, Uppahake Watkoche retold a story handed down from her ancestors that described the Creeks being placed in “barrels and kicked down hill” by the whites during the forced removals. Lucendy Dunzy of Wetumpka, recounted a story of Creeks being “placed in groups with bells tied around their necks and driven like cattle and some of them whipped.”²⁵ While these events might have occurred, there is no documentary evidence to support it. And, because the listener is equally responsible for interpreting the meaning of stories, it is possible that the interviewer missed the point entirely. Perhaps these narratives were partially constructed through the lens of the emotional turmoil their ancestors experienced. The Creeks might have exaggerated a story to convey its significance. In the case of Uppahake Watkoche and Lucendy Dunzy, it may have been a tool to emphasize their ancestors suffering or to highlight the

²³ Donald L. Fixico, *The American Indian Mind in a Linear World: American Indian Studies and Traditional Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 22-23, 26.

²⁴ Foreman, *A Traveler in Indian Territory*, 112.

²⁵ Interview of Uppahake Watkoche, 25 September 1937, Indian Pioneer History Collection, Works Progress Administration Project S-149, reel-16, Vol. 49, 35-37, Oklahoma Historical Society; Interview of Lucendy Dunzy, 22 October 1937, Indian Pioneer History Collection, Works Progress Administration Project S-149, reel-8, Vol. 23, 127-129, Oklahoma Historical Society.

barbarity of the whites.²⁶ Or, perhaps it was real. The chains and shackles the Creek prisoners wore probably made a sound similar to that of bells as the Creeks marched overland.

W.O. Tuggle, a Georgia lawyer who was appointed to represent the Creek Nation in claims against the United States between 1879 and 1882, kept a journal of his visit to the west. Many of the Creeks he encountered had stories about life in Alabama or Georgia. One black man Tuggle encountered “was singing a bad song about what a good time he used to have in Ga when he had two wives & was a young man.” Tuggle also met Osceola’s sister while in the Creek Nation. The woman was born in Georgia and emigrated to the Indian territory in 1838. Tuggle noted that “when I used the words ‘West Point. Chattahoochee’ she would smile & chuckle—She was pleased when I asked her how old she was. She did not know—Knew she was 14 in 1838.”²⁷ And so it was for almost all of the Creeks and other Indians who were forced west that removal was the defining moment of their lives.

But, whites too, constructed their own memorials to the Creeks and their removal from the southeast. In 1859, the steamboat *Cusseta* traveled up the Chattahoochee River to Columbus, Georgia. Onboard was William Aston who marveled at the boat’s name as well as the Creek names found throughout Georgia and Alabama. He noted that “they are almost the only memorials to remind us, not only of the Indian past, but our country’s

²⁶ Also see Jason Edward Black, “Remembrances of Removal: Native Resistance to Allotment and the Unmasking of Paternal Benevolence,” *Southern Communication Journal* 72:2 (April 2007), 66-88.

²⁷ Current-Garcia and Hatfield, *Shem, Ham & Japheth*, 49.

past.”²⁸ J.S. Buckingham probably put it in even better perspective, however. Stopping at a hotel in Columbus, Georgia in 1839, Buckingham paused to admire a full-length portrait of a prominent Creek headman. Sensing the irony, Buckingham noted that “Though the people of America seem anxious to get rid of the actual presence of the Indian people, and have them transported to the westward of the Mississippi, they have great admiration for their principal warriors, as if their names and exploits formed part of the national history of their country.” But, Buckingham probably did not know exactly how important that headman was to white Georgia history or why this particular Creek leader was displayed in that Columbus hotel. But, the locals knew. The portrait of the headman Buckingham observed was of William McIntosh.²⁹

²⁸ William Aston, *Heart Whispers; or, A Peep Behind the Family Curtain, Interspersed with Sketches of a Tour Through Nine Southern States, Contained in a Series of Letters to His Wife* (Philadelphia: II. Cowperthwait & Co, 1859), 167.

²⁹ J.S. Buckingham, *The Slave States of America*, Vol. I (London: Fisher, Son, & Co, 1842), 247.

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