

ACQUISITION BY FORAY

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ACQUISITION BY FORAY

An Abstract
Presented to
the Graduate Council of
Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Jeffrey Lynn Thomason

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ABSTRACT

The transfer of Spanish Florida to the United States was one of the earlier events which laid the foundation for the American policy soon to be called "manifest destiny." "Acquisition by Foray" explores some of the possible sources of conflict between the newest nation on the North American continent and the oldest power. Much deeper, though, this conflict can be seen as a residual effect of an earlier attempt from Great Britain to dominate the North American continent. The earlier English attempt to acquire the Spanish-claimed territories simply passed to her former colonies after their successful revolt.

During the 16 century, Spain, owning two-thirds of the Western Hemisphere, was the wealthiest and most powerful colonial empire. By 1818 the Spanish empire had long since decayed, and Spain was a weak nation futilely trying to suppress the revolts in most of her American colonies. The United States was still only a growing power, but it was a power to be reckoned with in North America. It was only natural that the seed for expansion implanted by "Mother England" would ripen in her former children at Spain's expense. This thesis attempts to describe the acquisition of Florida in the light of a fully developed Anglo-Spanish rivalry for control of the continent and not simply in terms of Andrew Jackson versus the Indians.

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Jeffrey Lynn Thomason entitled "Acquisition by Foray." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in history.

Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:

Minor Professor
or
Second Committee Member

Third Committee Member

Accepted for the Council:


Dean of the Graduate School

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CHAPTER I

SPAIN HOLDS THE ACE

By the terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1783, the United States of America was recognized as an independent nation, and the province of Florida, held by Great Britain, was returned to Spain. The youngest power in North America became a neighbor of the oldest power. The friendly atmosphere that presumptively would develop since the United States owed a debt of gratitude to Spain for helping the former English colonies receive their independence never occurred. In examining the past relationship between the Spanish colonies and the English colonies in North America, friendship was found to be almost nonexistent.

The planting of English colonies south of Virginia brought to the Spanish Florida frontier a conflict which was to continue for more than a hundred years. Virginia settlers established themselves along the Carolina coast on the Chowan River in 1653. A charter was issued to the Carolina colony in 1663, and in 1672 the settlement of Charleston began.¹ The British settlers of South Carolina incited the Lower Creeks to raid the Spanish missions on Saint Catherines Island, Georgia, which were abandoned in 1685.²

¹Mark F. Boyd, Hale G. Smith and John W. Griffin, Here Once They Stood (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1951), p. 107.

²David H. Corkran, The Creek Frontier, 1540 - 1783 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), pp. 48-49.

In 1701 the War of the Spanish Succession found France and Spain allied against the British. In 1702 Governor James Moore of South Carolina led a force of over 1,200 state militia and Indian allies to Florida where they destroyed part of St. Augustine. In the following year, 1703, Governor Moore led another expedition of 1,500 Yamassee Indians and 50 militiamen to destroy the Apalachee Indian towns in northwest Florida (Leon County, Florida). Not only did the English force return with 1,400 Apalachee prisoners for slave labor, but they also burned the missions, massacred a priest, and destroyed a Spanish relief column. Two years later, a Spanish and French force unsuccessfully attacked Charleston; however, the English retaliated by invading Pensacola in 1708.³

In 1732 the British established the Georgia colony as a buffer zone between South Carolina and Spanish Florida. Later in 1740 and again in 1745, Governor James Oglethorpe of Georgia attempted to capture St. Augustine, but he failed each time.

By this time, a final struggle for control of the North American continent and a final showdown between England, France, and Spain were beginning to take shape. The French and English colonists, along with their Indian allies, were again fighting on the Pennsylvania frontier in 1754. The conflict was called the French and Indian War by the colonists, but in Europe this struggle was known as the Seven Years' War. The results of the Seven Years' War were of deep significance all over the globe.

³Charlton W. Tebeau, A History of Florida (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971), pp. 55-56.

In North America, France was eliminated as a territorial power forever even though two Napoleons tried to make a comeback in the following century. Great Britain, after the French and Indian War, retained possession of Canada and most of the land east of the Mississippi River. The Treaty of Paris in 1763 placed Florida and its Indians in British hands.⁴

The British divided Florida into two parts with the Chattahoochee and Apalachicola Rivers separating the east from the west province. East Florida included the peninsula with its northern boundary extending from the mouth of the St. Mary's River on the east coast and extending westward to the mouth of the Flint River. West Florida included the territory west of the Apalachicola to the Mississippi River. The northern boundary was placed at the 31st parallel.⁵ The 31st parallel had been the southern boundary of the Carolina land grant by Charles I in 1663. At this time it was thought to be the correct latitude of the St. John's River in northern Florida. When Oglethorpe planted his Georgia colony 69 years later, he attempted to acquire the land down to the St. John's River. In 1767 the 31st parallel was extended northward to 32° and 28'. The region north of the 32nd parallel was reserved for the Muskogee Indians whom Britain was attempting to influence.⁶

During the twenty years of British ownership, steps were taken to make the Floridas an economic asset to Great Britain. Dr. Andrew Turnbull

⁴Alvin M. Joseph, Jr., American Heritage Book of Indians (American Heritage Publishing Company, 1961), pp. 217-218, 230.

⁵Tebeau, op. cit., p. 75.

⁶Hubert Bruce Fuller, The Purchase of Florida (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), p. 34.

received over 60,000 acres in land grants. He developed a great colony called New Smyrna on the east coast. Turnbull had been British consul at Smyrna in Asia Minor. Florida appealed to Turnbull because he felt it was a place where Mediterranean people could work in a similar climate. Turnbull decided to bring over 1,500 Greek refugees called Minorcans. These people were fleeing Turkish tyranny. Under some form of indenture, these people would cultivate indigo on the land. Their forced labor proved backbreaking, yet New Smyrna prospered.⁷

A program of roadbuilding was also undertaken to connect East and West Florida, and over a period of three years, Britain spent \$580,000 for internal improvements. As a result of prosperity aided by government expenditures, most Europeans in Florida were loyal to Great Britain during the American Revolution.

When Florida changed from Spanish to British hands in 1763, most of the Spanish people emigrated to their newly acquired Louisiana Territory or to Cuba. Shortly, the new English province of Florida attracted many countrymen because of the amount of available land. When the Revolutionary War began, Florida became a refuge for many Tories. In 1778 it was estimated that nearly 7,000 Loyalists from the southern colonies had emigrated to Florida. When the news of the signing of the Declaration of Independence reached St. Augustine, John Hancock and Samuel Adams were hanged and burned in effigy by a cheering crowd of Loyalists.⁸

⁷Marjory Stoneman Douglas, Florida, the Long Frontier (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 108-109.

⁸Fuller, op. cit., pp. 16-18.

During the Revolutionary War, a military party from Florida cooperated with a British force from New York in an attack on Savannah, Georgia, in 1778. In the following year, April 12, 1779, Spain declared war on Great Britain. However, Spain allied with France instead of the American colonies. Some of the very same problems that would be confronting Spain in less than 10 years concerning the United States were becoming a source of friction with Great Britain.

After the Treaty of 1763 ended the French and Indian War, the British empire became the most extensive in the world. It included almost all of North America east of the Mississippi River and most of the sugar-producing islands in the West Indies. Not only Great Britain's economic advantage in North America, but also her military successes made her rivals with the Spanish.

France had lost most of her colonies to Britain, and Spain had suffered a humiliating defeat. These incidents made them both prime contenders to humble Great Britain. France had ceded the Louisiana Territory west of the Mississippi River to Spain to compensate her for Florida's loss under the terms of the 1763 Treaty. Spain took over Louisiana to keep it out of British hands and to create a buffer state for New Spain.

Spain's immediate neighbor was Britain, and almost at once problems between the two colonies of Louisiana and Florida began. Under the provisions of the Treaty of 1763, Britain had the right to navigate the Mississippi River. Apparently that was all Britain could expect. Spain commanded the west bank of the Mississippi and Britain the east bank, except near the mouth where Spain controlled the island of Orleans, which included both banks. Spain permitted British ships to

sail upstream, but would not allow seamen ashore on either bank. This situation, along with the lack of warehouse facilities at New Orleans, stymied British commerce on the river. Although Britain protested that this practice was in violation of the free navigation clause granted her, Spain wouldn't listen. Shortly, Britain's trading vessels just passed New Orleans altogether and began contrabanding with Indians around St. Louis. A battle for Louisiana's fur trade was emerging, and Spain was unable to alter the tide for the British.⁹

British traders expanded into the Spanish province of Texas where trade had been dominated by the French. Between the Sabine and Rio Grande Rivers, there was an extensive, unpopulated coastline with many inlets and coastal islands. This was an ideal situation for British smugglers. In the decade after the French and Indian War, there was considerable commerce between the British and the Indians who came along the coast to trade.¹⁰

Spain and France closely watched the events leading to the American Revolution. They were prepared at once to aid the rebel colonists in order to weaken Great Britain. At first Spain viewed with alarm the idea of a new nation in North America so near her own territory. However, the Revolution progressed and the Americans looked toward actual independence.¹¹ Despite more than \$645,000 in prior aid given to the rebels by Spain, Spain neither made an alliance with the United States nor officially recognized their independence. Although Spain was willing to go to extremes to humble Britain, including sending arms to the rebels, she was not inclined

⁹J. Leitch Wright, Jr., Anglo-Spanish Rivalry in North America (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1971), pp. 111-116.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 118.

¹¹Hubert Bruce Fuller, The Purchase of Florida (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), p. 20.

officially to recognize the United States' independence or to support a movement in which Americans were overthrowing their mother country's bonds. There was just too much unrest in the Spanish colonies to run such a risk. Spain and the United States had entirely different notions about the fate of the two Floridas, which had become Loyalist asylums, and about navigation of the Mississippi River.¹²

The possibility of a Spanish alliance had long been a pleasing topic of debate in the Continental Congress, and in 1778 suggestions were made as to what Congress could offer Spain as an inducement for alliance. Finally in September, 1779, Congress decided on four points which must be included in any treaty of alliance with Spain. They were (1) a precise and invariable western boundary of the United States; (2) the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi River; (3) the possession of the Floridas; and (4) the lands on the left or eastern side of the Mississippi River.¹³

With these four terms as a basis, John Jay was directed to conclude a treaty of alliance in Madrid. These offers, however, did not coincide with Spanish ideas; and in February, 1780, they replied:

That on the first article, it is the idea of the cabinet of Madrid that the United States extend to the westward no farther than settlements were permitted by the royal proclamation of 1763.

On the second that the United States do not consider themselves as having any rights to navigate the Mississippi River, no territory belonging to them being situated thereon.

¹²Wright, Jr., op. cit., p. 126; and Wright, "Lord Dunmore's Loyalist Asylum in the Floridas," Florida Historical Quarterly, (April 1971), p. 371.

¹³Fuller, op. cit., p. 22.

On the third that it is probable that the king of Spain will conquer the Floridas during the course of the present war.

On the fourth that the lands lying on the east side of the Mississippi are possessions of the crown of Great Britain and proper objects against which the arms of Spain may be employed for the purpose of making a permanent conquest for the Spanish crown.¹⁴

Some members of Congress were willing to barter away our right to navigate the Mississippi River in order to secure an alliance. Most of Congress believed that giving away the navigation right must never be the price of any treaty, no matter how beneficial.

Anticipating the thought that Spain should capture the Floridas, the United States directed Jay to find an arrangement that would enable the United States to share free navigation of the rivers which ran through the Floridas and emptied into the Gulf of Mexico. Spain replied that the present generation would not want this right of navigation and that future generations could well dispose of the question should it become a live one. The King of Spain, Charles III, considered owning the Mississippi River far more important than any other Spanish colonial possession.¹⁵

After the Battle of Yorktown, peace negotiations began in Paris in April, 1782. To bring Spain into the war against Britain, France told Spain that she would assist her in reconquering Gibraltar, Minorca and the Floridas, which were now in Britain's hands. Now that the war was over in America, France and Spain were making furious but futile efforts to capture the Rock of Gibraltar. America was also unaware that France had pledged to assist Spain in the negotiations to gain the

¹⁴Hubert Bruce Fuller, The Purchase of Florida (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), p. 23.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 24-26.

Mississippi Valley region. This would restrict Americans to the other side of the Appalachian Mountains.

The French wanted an independent United States, but they also secretly favored a weak United States that would be confined to the Atlantic coast. The French decided to tip the British diplomats about these Family Compact "secrets" before the talks began. The French thought that maybe something could be decided about Gibraltar to soothe Spain through under-the-table negotiations with Great Britain.

The Americans in Paris, however, found out about the French scheme and dispatched a special emissary to London. The British Prime Minister, Lord Shelburne, was only too happy to deal with the Americans separately. He was delighted with the prospect of being able to break the American-French alliance and, of course, to alienate Spain.¹⁶ The United States could now speak for themselves at the conference table. In the final treaty, which was signed on September 3, 1783, the United States was given free navigation on the Mississippi River. The southern boundary of the new nation, which was the northern boundary of Spanish Florida, was fixed at the 31 parallel.

The results of the Treaty of 1783 transformed Spain from something of an ally to the United States to a complete rival. Spain never recognized these provisions which had been ceded by King George III.

¹⁶ Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964), pp. 32-34, 41, 44, & 45. The Family Compact, which was negotiated in 1761, bound France to act in close concert with Spain on decisions involving war. In April, 1779, France agreed to help Spain fight until Great Britain surrendered Gibraltar on the terms conducted at Aranjuez.

Spain said that Great Britain had no authority to give the United States, or anyone else, free navigation privileges. Spain claimed that the Mississippi River was ceded to her in 1763 and that her forces had conquered and still possessed two harbors--Mobile and Pensacola--in West Florida. Under the terms of the Treaty of 1763, Britain was given the right of navigation because West Florida bordered the east bank. Britain claimed that she had the right to pass her navigation privileges along to the United States even though she no longer possessed the territory.

Spain also said that she would not recognize the 31st parallel as her northern boundary. She stated that under the British occupation of the Floridas, the boundary had been 32° 28'. The boundary of 31° was based on the charter of Georgia given by King George II. Spain felt that King George II had had no right to grant the charter since it embraced territory that then belonged to Spain. Spain refused to evacuate this territory which ran more than a hundred miles farther north to the mouth of the Yazoo River.

With the return of Florida to Spain and the independence of the United States, the concern of Great Britain with the Florida boundaries ceased. In the future, Spain would think twice before getting involved in any "get rich, can't miss" territorial scheme. Not only did she not regain Gibraltar, but her own territory in North America was also claimed by the very nation that she had helped create.¹⁷

While Spain wondered how she was going to hold on to her possessions, the United States government had the task of securing control of the disputed land from the individual states. At the beginning of the

¹⁷Hubert Bruce Fuller, The Purchase of Florida (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), p. 23.

American Revolution, all of the land from Florida's northern boundary to the Great Lake region was claimed by seven of the thirteen states. The states' claims were based on the crown-granted sea-to-sea charters.

While Congress was squabbling with her states over the ownership of the Spanish-held territories, Spain braced herself for an invasion by those American perennial shock troops--the speculators and traders.¹⁸ These speculators were soon followed by the frontiersmen. The frontiersmen were restless, independent people who were accustomed to making their own laws with little respect for their weak, faraway Federal government. International law and lengthy negotiations meant nothing or little to them. Their immediate problem was the necessity for free navigation of the Mississippi River, and if it could not be obtained in any other way, the Westerners were ready to rely on means that would later memorialize them--their own guns.¹⁹ As the Spanish watched these people sweep over their debatable land between Louisiana and Georgia like the "Goths and Vandals, with the Treaty of 1783 in one hand and a carbine in the other," Spain's principal task was to hold back that surging horde.²⁰

Spain's most effective weapon against the Americans was to control the mouth of the Mississippi River. By closing the river to American trade, she could strangle the Americans economically as the frontiersmen needed the river to market their bulky, agricultural products. Spain realized that she must use this method carefully because it could lead the frontiersmen to retaliate by forming filibustering expeditions against her.²¹

¹⁸Ray A. Billington, Westward Expansion (New York: Macmillan Company, 1954), pp. 199 & 228.

¹⁹Abraham P. Nasatir, Spanish War Vessels on the Mississippi, 1792-1796 (Hartford: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 7-8.

²⁰Billington, op. cit., p. 228. By 1785 some 50,000 pioneers had come over the Alleghenies.

The Spanish governors also made treaties with the Indians living within the claimed territories. There were two types of treaties. One was a mutual defensive alliance treaty, and the other type dealt with small areas of Indian lands upon which Spain erected forts and warehouses to supply trading goods to the Indians.²² The Spanish even tried to develop their own intensive colonization plan by bringing in Spaniards from other colonies.

After the 1786 aborted Jay-Gardoqui Treaty in which the United States almost approved delaying the Mississippi River negotiations for 25 years, Spain turned to intrigues among the western settlers. Spain tried to persuade these settlers to separate themselves from the United States and become economic Spanish vassals. Although James Wilkinson of Kentucky was the first to originate the plan of intrigue in 1786, the Spanish liked the idea and participated in it.²³

In June, 1784, Spain, holding the ace card, closed the Mississippi River to American shipping. In 1790 during the Nootka Sound Crisis, Britain called her hand. Being afraid of a possible British-American alliance, Spain finally agreed to the American demands by signing the Treaty of San Lorenzo in 1795. This treaty only added more fuel to the American inflamed desires to have the entire region. Not to be bluffed, England aided a former American Loyalist, William Augustus Bowles, in an attempt to capture the Floridas.²⁴

²² Jack D. L. Holmes, "Spanish Treaties with West Florida Indians," Florida Historical Quarterly, (October 1969), pp. 140-154.

²³ Nasatir, op. cit., pp. 14-18.

²⁴ J. Leitch Wright, Jr., William Augustus Bowles (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1967), pp. 25-28.

Bowles's small expedition, in which he captured Fort St. Marks in Florida, showed the Spanish rulers just how weak they were militarily. However, more important than this, it strengthened a growing belief that Louisiana was an expensive luxury and must be sold before England or the United States took it by force. Louisiana was just too expensive to keep. Spain discovered that France was anxious to buy it, so she decided in October, 1800, to fold her hand from Louisiana and retire to Florida to watch the outcome of this struggle along with her Indian allies.²⁵ The deal went to France who had dreams of a vast new empire. Napoleon began shuffling a brand new deck, and he let all the old players know that now they were playing by his rules.

²⁵A. P. Whitaker, The Mississippi Question, 1795-1803 (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1962), pp. 176-178.

CHAPTER II

THE WILD ONES

The United States cast its greedy, land-hungry eyes upon Florida less than two months after she had taken possession of the Louisiana Territory. Thinking that the French government would support the claim, Robert Livingston and James Monroe, who negotiated the Louisiana Purchase, advised the United States concerning their new purchase. They maintained (particularly Livingston) that the Perdido River, 220 miles west of the proposed Louisiana boundary, was the eastern boundary of their newly acquired territory. Neither President Jefferson, nor his Secretary of State, James Madison, hesitated to accept this advice. On February 24, 1804, Congress formally put this in writing by passing the Mobile Act. Besides making provisions for establishing civil government in Louisiana, it also authorized the President to establish a customs district with Mobile as its port of entry.¹

Jefferson at first tried the quiet channels of diplomacy, but they netted him nothing. He next sounded a blast in his annual message of December, 1805, when he referred in a bellicose tone to relations with Spain and hinted at the necessity of raising 300,000 soldiers for defense and offense. His obvious purpose, of course, was to frighten the Spaniards into yielding West Florida. Jefferson then confidentially asked Congress

¹Thomas P. Abernethy, The South in the New Nation (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1961), pp. 330-331.

for a secret appropriation of two million dollars to be used in facilitating the negotiation. The fiery John Randolph of Virginia denounced this scheme as a barefaced attempt to bribe Napoleon into forcing Spain to cede Florida. Despite whatever truth there was in Randolph's accusation, Jefferson did enter into negotiations with Napoleon.

In the end, Jefferson's highly questionable tactics brought him no nearer to his goal. He exposed his gullibility to Napoleon, aroused the distrust of Spain, and embittered the British, who resented his intrigues with Napoleon. Jefferson, however, kept his eyes steadfastly on his prize to the end. On the eve of retiring from the presidency, he was heard to say, "We must have the Floridas and Cuba."² It was another seventeen years before the United States could raise the flag over Florida. Standing between Florida and America's desire for her was a neutral country who owned her and nearly 20,000 Creek Indians scattered around her borders.³

The Creeks had first come in contact with Europeans in the 1500's with the Spanish explorations and the early Spanish and French attempts to establish settlements along the Carolina and Florida coasts. The Creeks, or Muskogee Indians, of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries lived in what is now central and northern Alabama and Georgia. According to the eighteenth century British writer, James Adair, who as a trader travelled the Indian country, the English called them "Creeks" after the many streams and rivers of their country.⁴

²Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964), p. 165.

³James W. Covington, "Migration of the Seminoles into Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly, (October 1969), p. 343.

⁴David H. Corkran, The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), p. 3.

Verner Crane, a twentieth century historian, derived the name "Creek" from Ochise Creek or the Ocmulgee River in Georgia by which the Indians lived when the English began to have heavy trading contacts with them. "Muskhoge," James Adair said, means "dwellers in the swamps." From their name, "Muskhoge," anthropologists have classified them as Muskogean, a large group of Indian tribes who speak related languages.⁵

By the 1670's with the British establishing a colony in Carolina, more British traders and explorers probed into the Creek country toward the Spanish settlements along the Georgia coast. During the next generation, many Creeks, along with their neighbors the Yuchi, joined the British in their slave raiding expeditions on the Spanish missions.

The Creeks in 1712 made peace with the French settlers on the Gulf Coast and started the trade negotiations. The British Carolinians in 1713 tried to check the Creek defection to the French by building a large trading warehouse among the northern Creeks. The Creeks were in a favorable position to trade in European markets. However, the promise of trade preferences by the British wasn't kept, and in April, 1715, this led to the Yamassee War.⁶

The Yamassee Indians, who were related to the Creeks, moved to the Carolina coast from St. Augustine to be near the British trade. The Yamassees prospered in trade, but they had also accumulated a huge debt as a result of over extended credit by the Carolina traders. Hard pressed by their own creditors, the traders had begun to collect by force the Indian debts.

⁵Ibid.

⁶William Brandon, The Last Americans (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), pp. 251-252.

They seized Yamassees wives and children to sell as slaves. As a result, the Creeks came to the Yamassee's aid, but both were forced to retreat from a combined British-Cherokee army.

The Creeks in August, 1715, made a decision to move from the Ocmulgee River deeper into the Georgia interior along the Chattahoochee-Flint River valleys.⁷ The town of Coweta (Phenix City, Alabama) became the capital of the original Creek Confederacy, which was organized by Chief Old Brim in 1716. Chief Brim's immediate purpose of forming a confederation was to strengthen his people for war against the British allied Cherokees. Chief Brim also understood the need of France, England and Spain, in their long contest for territorial possessions, to have the friendship of Indian tribes in strategic locations. He expected to find advantages for the Creeks in the diplomatic bids of the European powers for the Creeks' support.⁸

The Creek confederation included a population of nearly 20,000 Indians scattered throughout Georgia and Alabama in over sixty towns. The confederation represented different cultures, languages and environments. The English traders classified the confederation into two principal divisions--the Upper Creeks, who lived along the Coosa and Tallapoosa branches of the Alabama River, and the Lower Creeks, who lived in the valleys of the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers along the lower Georgia-Alabama line.

Creek Villages were located usually along the banks of a river, stream or near a spring. These Indians raised corn, melons, beans and pumpkins. When the soil became unproductive, they moved to another site.⁹

⁷Covington, op. cit., p. 344.

⁸Edwin C. McReynolds, The Seminoles (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), p. 12.

⁹Robert S. Cotterill, The Southern Indians (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), pp. 9 & 21.

The Apalachees, Calusas and Timucans were the original tribes in Florida at the time of Spanish explorations. The Apalachees lived along the west coast of Florida from Apalachee Bay to the Apalachicola River. The Calusas lived along the northeastern coast, and the Timucans settled along the St. John's River across to the Suwannee River. It has been estimated that these three tribes numbered around 25,000. The peaceful and somewhat civilized Apalachees were the first Florida Indians to suffer almost complete annihilation. In 1704 Governor James Moore of the Carolina colony with 50 colonial soldiers and 1,000 Lower Creeks, who were then allies, invaded the Apalachee area. They destroyed most of the Spanish missions and captured 1,300 Apalachee Indians to be returned to Carolina as slaves.¹⁰

Carolina slave traders, disease, and war with the Spanish all contributed to the extermination of the Timucans by 1705. Over the years, anthropologists have been searching for clues on what happened to the Calusa Indians. Searching for the French Huguenots, Pedro Menéndez's fleet landed around the Calusas' headquarters in 1566. He estimated the tribe numbered around 15,000. By 1763 there was very little word of them. In the late seventeenth century, European wars and slave trading had eliminated them.¹¹

The new locations along the Chattahoochee River did not satisfy all the Lower Creeks. In the fall of 1716, Upper and Lower Creek deputies and warriors visited Pensacola where they took an oath of allegiance to Spain.

¹⁰James W. Covington, "The Apalachee Indians Move West," Florida Anthropologist, (December 1964), pp. 221-225.

¹¹Milton Meltzer, Hunted Like a Wolf (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1972), pp. 15-16. Spanish Florida Governor Pedro Menéndez de Avilés destroyed the attempted French Huguenot colony called Fort Caroline at present-day Jacksonville. In 1763 when Britain acquired Florida, there were approximately 80 Calusa families there. They later migrated to Cuba where there is no further record of them.

Several Upper Creek leaders were sent to Mexico City to become vassals of the vicroy.¹² While in Pensacola, the Lower Creeks indicated to the Spanish that they wanted to settle the fertile lands abandoned by the Apalachees. In 1716, 1717 and 1718 Lieutenant Pena was sent into the Lower Creek territory to secure Spanish allegiance and to ascertain how many Indians wanted to settle in Florida. Although Pena could not convince Chief Old Brim that an alliance was necessary, he learned from Sepeycoffee, Brim's son, that six villagers would shortly move to Apalachee. The Spanish reestablished Fort St. Marks in 1716 in Apalachee Bay which had previously been destroyed by pirates in 1682. The Spanish were anxious to resettle Apalachee province, so the migration of the Lower Creeks was actively encouraged.¹³

Unfortunately, the Spanish lacked money to purchase many gifts for the Indians. The six villagers, who Sepeycoffee promised would come to visit the Fort in 1718, received no gifts and very little food. The villagers decided it was better for their people to remain in southern Georgia. For the next thirty years the Spanish did their best to attract the Creeks to the Apalachee area, but when they failed to deliver sufficient gifts as promised, the Indians decided to stay where they were.¹⁴

By 1732 the Lower Creeks realized that it would be better to resume trading again with the British on the Carolina coast than with the Spanish at Apalachee. The gifts and goods which the Spanish promised the Creeks

¹²David H. Corkran, The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), p. 60.

¹³Dorris L. Olds, "Some Highlights in the History of Fort St. Marks," The Florida Anthropologist, (June 1962), pp. 33-35.

¹⁴James W. Covington, "Migration of the Seminoles into Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly, (October 1969), pp. 345-346.

were so inferior to that of the British or French that it caused one Creek to complain, "King of Spain no good. English goods, give much much."¹⁵

As early as 1728, Carolina sent an expedition which attacked the Yamassees, Spain's allies. Chief Brim, convinced that the Spaniards were no longer able to protect the Yamassees and that there would be no immediate improvement in trading goods, consented to break relations with them. Carolina sent him presents and lifted a trade embargo which had been placed on the Creeks 10 years before. In 1730 Chief Old Brim died, and Youhowlakee became the leader.

In 1732 Youhowlakee visited James Oglethorpe on the future site of Savannah. There Oglethorpe listened to the Chief explain why the Creeks were giving their lands along the coast and the Savannah River for the founding of the colony of Georgia. Youhowlakee said, "We are come 25 days' journey to see you . . . when I heard you were come, and that you were good men, I knew you were sent by HIM who lives in heaven, to teach us Indians wisdom."¹⁶

Motives of all kinds were no doubt present in the making of Indian alliances with Europeans, in efforts to open European trade to the Indians, and even in Indian requests for missionaries; but the motive most commonly given by Indian orators for wanting to establish relations with Europeans was that of learning the European's higher wisdom. The Creeks, by most accounts, were superior people. It seems reasonable

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶William Brandon, The Last Americans (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), pp. 247-248.

that some of them may have been sincerely motivated by nothing more than a wish to sit at the feet of the people from heaven and learn better things.¹⁷

By the 1740's, British traders swarmed into the interior of the Creek country from their coastal settlements. These traders were not ideal teachers of that higher wisdom the Indians sought. From the beginning the British trader, more commonly Irish or Scottish, was notorious for trickery, vices, brutality and trouble. Benjamin Franklin said, "Many quarrels and wars have arisen between the colonies and the Indian nations through the bad conduct of traders."¹⁸

Dependence of the Indians upon white man's goods forced them to cast aside their age-old methods of killing game for their own immediate needs. The Creeks too began killing as much game as possible in order to trade animal skins for guns, flints, powder, blankets, dyes, beads, iron utensils, and assorted odds and ends. In order to find the rapidly vanishing herds of deer, Indian hunters made longer trips away from their families. Probably the reasons for the migration of the first Creek tribes to Florida were the reduction of the game animals and the influx of white settlers into Georgia in Indian territory.¹⁹ Florida was rich in fish and game and a wide variety of berries, fruits and vegetables. Indians, who wished to put plenty of space between themselves and the white man, could find an ample supply of food there.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid. p. 255.

¹⁹Carol I. Mason, "Eighteenth Century Culture Change Among the Lower Creeks," Florida Anthropologist, (September 1963), pp. 65-79.

William Bartram, a botanist from Philadelphia, travelled in the South and later wrote a book of his experiences. In the spring of 1773 he made a field trip from Philadelphia to Florida. Bartram travelled by ship to Charleston and made his way across Georgia into Florida. Bartram lived among one Lower Creek tribe who migrated from Georgia and gave very interesting insight into what these early Seminole tribes were like.²⁰

Bartram lived with the Oconee Indians who had settled along the Oconee River in central Georgia. They migrated to Florida, settled around the Alachua Prairie (near Gainesville, Florida), and built a town called Cuscowilla. The Oconee Indians mingled with the other tribes, but they continued the Muskogean customs. The Oconee in time were known as the Alachua Indians.

Bartram was impressed with the Alachuas communal method of farming. He wrote:

Each family at Cuscowilla supplied itself from a small individual garden. Two miles from the village was a common field which everyone worked together. The field was enclosed by a fence to keep out the animals. Each family had their own section marked off at planting time. At harvest time each family carries their crops from the field. There is a large crib or granary erected in the plantation called the king's crib. To this each family carries and deposits a certain quantity, according to his ability or inclination or none at all if he so chooses. In appearance the crib seems a tribute or revenue to the micco (king), but in fact is designed for another purpose, that of a public treasury to which every citizen has the right of free and equal access when his own private stores are consumed. The granary also serves to assist neighboring towns whose crops may have failed, accomodate strangers or travelers and any exigencies of the state.²¹

²⁰ William Bartram, *Travels of William Bartram*, ed., Mark Van Doren (Philadelphia: Macy-Masius, 1928 reproduction of 1791 edition), pp. 5-6.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 400-401.

Bartram goes on to give us an interesting glimpse of their social behavior:

A man goes forth on his business; he calls in at another town; if he wants food, rest or social conversation, he confidently approaches the door of the first house he chooses, saying, "I am come." The good man or woman replies, "You are; it's well." Immediately food and drink are ready; he eats and drinks a little, then smokes tobacco, and converses either of private matters, public talks, or the news of the town. He rises and says, "I go!" The other answers, "You do!" He then proceeds again and steps in at the next habitation he likes, or repairs to the public square, where are people always conversing by day, or dancing at night, or to some private assembly, as he likes. He needs no one to introduce him, anymore than the blackbird or thrush . . .²²

The Alachua Indians had one of the largest settlements in Florida during the 1770's with a population of several hundred persons and a considerable number of Yamassee slaves. The slaves were permitted to intermarry with free Indians, and the children of these mixed marriages were free.²³ The Alachuas showed evidence of contact with the Spanish by their silver crucifixes and the Spanish words in their speech.

Other large settlements during the 1770's were in Leon and Levy Counties. Talahasochte, another town, was on the banks of the Suwannee River in present-day Levy County. These Oconee Indians were excellent boatmen. They built cypress canoes which could hold as many as twenty to thirty men, and they made frequent trips to the Florida Keys, the Bahamas, and Cuba. On the trips to Cuba, they traded deer skins, furs, dried fish, and honey for cigars, coffee, rum, and sugar.²⁴

²²Ibid., pp. 385-386.

²³McReynolds, The Seminoles (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), p. 16.

²⁴James W. Covington, "Migration of the Seminoles into Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly, (October 1969), p. 348.

These early bands of Oconee and later Hitchiti Indians were non-Muskogee-speaking people. The Hitchiti, who migrated to Florida about the same time as the Oconee, lived on the Flint River on the Georgia-Florida border. The Hitchiti spoke a language that was clearly Muskogean, yet it was different from that of the Creeks so it raised many questions concerning their background.²⁵

In Bartram's time, about half of the Florida Seminoles spoke Creek and the other half Hitchiti. In later years the speech of the Seminole Indians became more closely related to that of the Creek tribe. The Mikasuki were Seminoles living in the area about Lake Miccosukee in present-day Leon County. Their speech and their place-names indicate kinship with the people of the Sawokli towns which were on the lower Florida-Georgia border.²⁶

In 1783, British Florida was returned to Spanish rule. During the twenty-year period of British rule, Panton, Leslie and Company, a British firm, had developed a monopoly of the Indian trade. Spanish governors at Pensacola and St. Augustine agreed that the British firm should continue a monopoly of trade. They alone had the trade goods, the capital and experience that the trade required.²⁷

Alexander McGillivray, the son of a Scotch trader and his prominent Creek wife Sehoy (daughter of the French General Marchand), initiated an

²⁵Mark F. Boyd, Historic Sites Around the Jim Woodruff Reservoir Area, (Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 169, 1958) pp. 215-216.

²⁶McReynolds, op. cit., p. 11.

²⁷Charlton W. Tebeau, A History of Florida (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971), pp. 94-95.

Indian treaty with the new Spanish government. McGillivray was known as the foremost citizen and diplomat of the Creek Confederacy. The Creeks valued his leadership. Because he was well-educated, he understood the ways of the white men thoroughly. At Pensacola in 1784, he negotiated a treaty with the Spanish officials by which it was agreed that Spain should enjoy a monopoly of the Creek trade and give protection to the entire Creek-Seminole nation.²⁸

The name "Seminole" was first used in 1771 by a British Indian agent, John Stuart. The word has been given several meanings, all somewhat related. To Stuart it meant "wild people," because these Indian bands liked to live apart from the other bands. To other whites, it meant "runaways." The Indians identified as Seminoles spoke of themselves as "the people of the peninsula." At first "Seminole" referred only to the Alachua Indians and their many offshoots. By 1810 it encompassed all Florida Indians whether they spoke Muskogee or Hitchiti.²⁹

These were a happy people or at least they were in Bartram's eyes when he recorded in 1773:

This handful of people possess a vast territory of all East Florida and the greatest part of West Florida, which being naturally cut and divided into thousands of islets, knolls and eminences, by the innumerable rivers, lakes, swamps, vast savannas and ponds, form so many secure retreats and temporary dwelling places, that effectually guard them from any sudden invasions or attacks from their enemies. . .

²⁸Jack D. L. Holmes, "Spanish Treaties with West Florida Indians," Florida Historical Quarterly, (October 1969), pp. 140-141.

²⁹Milton Meltzer, Hunted Like a Wolf (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1972), pp. 29-30.

Thus they enjoyed a superabundance of the necessities and conveniences of life, with the security of person and property, the two great concerns of mankind. The hides of deer, bears and wolves, together with honey, wax and other products of the country, purchase their clothing and domestic utensils from the whites. They seem to be free from the whites. They seem to be free from want or desires. No cruel enemy to dread, nothing to give them disquietude, but the gradual encroachments of the white people. Thus contented and undisturbed, they appear as free as the birds of the air, and like them as volatile and active, tuneful and vociferous.³⁰

³⁰William Bartram, Travels of William Bartram, ed., Mark Van Doren (Philadelphia: Macy-Masius, 1928 reproduction of 1791 edition), pp. 182-183.

CHAPTER III

UNPROVOKED ATTACK

"Nothing to give them disquietude but the gradual encroachments of the white people. . ." What William Bartram saw as only a faint threat to the Seminoles would become, within a few years, a terrible menace. The American Revolution, fought in the name of independence, freedom and equality, birthed a new nation that would allow the Indians none of these rights. Almost at once, the citizens of the United States showed they would not live peacefully side by side with Indians on their southern border or Indians anywhere.¹

Since the American Revolution, almost all the political leaders in the United States had shown interest in the political future of Spanish America. American sentiment for the independence of the Spanish colonies was almost always mixed very strongly with American expansionist feeling. Thomas Jefferson, as early as 1786, expressed the amazing fear that Spain could not hold Spanish America "until our population can be sufficiently advanced to gain it piece by piece."² During the period of 1793-1794 when Citizen Genet's intrigues of developing anti-Spanish feeling were strong in the West, a plan was set against Louisiana and Mexico under the

¹ John Keats, Eminent Domain (New York: Charterhouse, 1973), p. 217.

² Charles Carroll Griffin, The United States and the Disruption of the Spanish Empire, 1810-1822 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), p. 44.

leadership of George Rogers Clark. Clark, who volunteered his services, was made a major general of the "Independent and Revolutionary Legion of the Mississippi." Agents with well stuffed pockets were sent west to enlist recruits. They had the secret approval of Secretary of State Jefferson. General Clark supervised boat building, recruit drilling, and he issued proclamations urging support for the expedition. Genet's supporters of this scheme spoke of "liberating" these provinces, but Clark talked of "striking Spain a vital blow" and of the ease of "conquering" all Spanish America. The doom of Spanish Louisiana seemed imminent. Only when Genet was recalled late in 1793 did the whole movement collapse.³

In 1798 Colonel William Blount, a senator from Tennessee, was connected with a letter that contained the plans for another avenue of invasion. Basically, Blount's scheme was to transfer New Orleans and the neighboring districts to the British by means of a joint expedition of an English naval force and a combined frontiersmen and Indian force which was to be raised on the western frontier. Blount was involved in land speculations in Tennessee. He wanted to organize an English company for the purchase of his property. Blount dreaded the consequences of a transfer of the outlet of the Mississippi to the French, a military rather than a commercial nation. He believed it was in the interests of Westerners that Louisiana pass into the possession of the English. Upon the basis of this information found in Blount's letter, the House of Representatives presented articles of impeachment.⁴

³Ray A. Billington, Westward Expansion (New York: Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 238.

⁴Hubert Bruce Fuller, The Purchase of Florida (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), pp. 80-81.

In the end, Blount's case was never reviewed and decided on its merits. A legal technicality ended the first impeachment proceedings, as has been the case of later federal impeachment trials. It is certainly sad that his case was never tried since it might have resolved many questions that would later be asked by future generations on the involvement of elected officials in these murky intrigues characteristic of this time.⁵ Blount later became a popular leader in Tennessee where he was looked upon as a martyr for his part in such a noble cause.

Also in 1798 rumors that Spain was thinking of ceding Louisiana to France prompted Alexander Hamilton and Rufus King to organize another invasion. The proposed attack was to be a joint Anglo-American attack on the Spanish colonies, but it was averted by President John Adams. However, American revolutionary principles went hand in hand with American ambitions as Rufus King wished to prevent France from dividing the Spanish colonies into small republics. Alexander Hamilton wrote that the United States "ought certainly to look to the possession of the Floridas and Louisiana" and "to squint at South America."⁶

It was in connection with Aaron Burr's "conspiracy" that American expansionists turned to the "liberation" of the Spanish colonies in Central and South America. While Aaron Burr's affair was in progress, Francisco de Miranda, a South American revolutionary, came to the United States. Miranda wanted to organize an expedition to liberate

⁵ William H. Masterson, William Blount (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1954), pp. 321-323, 341-342. On July 8, 1797, the U.S. Senate, by a 25 to 1 margin, voted to expel Blount, who was released on bail. The House of Representatives in Blount's trial ruled on January 10, 1799, that senators were not impeachable civil officers. Therefore, Blount's case was dismissed by the House for lack of jurisdiction.

⁶ Charles Carroll Griffin, The United States and the Disruption of the Spanish Empire, 1810-1822 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), p. 45.

his native Venezuela. He found the atmosphere around New York favorable to his plans. He sailed from New York with a number of volunteers on what turned out to be a wholly unsuccessful attempt at revolution by filibuster. There had been a lot of sympathy for Miranda's scheme, but after this failure, the desires to liberate South America turned to Florida instead.⁷

The "storm for liberty" first broke loose in Spanish West Florida in the Baton Rouge area bordering on the Mississippi River. In July, 1810, a revolutionary convention composed of British, Spanish and American traders and land speculators met. After a series of meetings, they decided to proclaim independence.⁸ Taking advantage of the political confusion that had existed in Spain since Napoleon's control, the rebels were determined to seize this opportunity to establish a new government.

Philemon Thomas, an American, was ordered by the convention to capture the Spanish garrison at Baton Rouge. Raising a force of 104 men, Thomas captured the garrison which was defended by twenty soldiers, and Governor Carlos Delassus. On September 23, 1810, the rebels promptly declared the independence of West Florida. However, unknown to the rebels, President James Madison on October 27, 1810, issued a proclamation annexing the region west of the Perdido River to the United States as a part of the Louisiana Purchase. Foreseeing possible complications, Madison authorized Governor W. C. C. Claiborne of Louisiana to occupy it. On November 2, Governor David Holmes of the Mississippi Territory was also instructed to assist in the occupation.⁹

⁷Joseph F. Thorning, Francisco de Miranda: World Citizen (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1952), pp. 172-174, 179-183.

⁸Ray A. Billington, Westward Expansion (New York: Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 270. and Hubert Bruce Fuller, The Purchase of Florida (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), pp. 182-183.

⁹Thomas P. Abernethy, The South in the New Nation, 1789-1819 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1961), pp. 356-359.

Governor Vízente Folch, knowing he could not stop the Americans militarily and apparently hoping to halt any further extensions, wrote the American commandant of Fort Stoddert on November 25, 1810, that the Floridas could be delivered to the United States. Folch immediately suspended collecting any duties on goods on American vessels. Folch's letter to Major Edmund Gaines, the commandant of Fort Stoddert, was given to John McKee on December 2 and taken to Washington.¹⁰ McKee hurried to Washington to show the letter to President Madison, whose administration moved immediately to take advantage of the opportunity. On January 3, 1811, the President submitted to Congress Folch's letter and asked for the authority to take temporary possession of any part or parts of East Florida threatened by any foreign force or voluntarily surrendered by the Spanish authorities.¹¹

Congress acted promptly. On January 15, 1811, the President received and signed the West Florida Bill. The act authorized the President to take possession of all or any part of Florida east of the Perdido River. Madison, now having the authority to accept Folch's offer, appointed John McKee, an Indian agent, and General George Mathews, a former governor of Georgia and Revolutionary veteran, to act as his special agents in accepting Folch's surrender.¹²

On January 17, McKee wrote to Folch outlining the proposed terms for surrender. This document was given to Ralph Issacs, Mathews's secretary, to be delivered to Folch in Pensacola. Issac reached Folch

¹⁰ Rembert W. Patrick, Florida Fiasco (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1954), pp. 3-4, 11-14. On November 30, 1810, Folch wrote his superiors in Cuba that unless he received support by January 1, 1811, he would be forced to offer the Floridas to the Americans.

¹¹ Thomas P. Abernethy, The South in the New Nation, 1789-1819 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1961), p. 358.

¹² Julius W. Pratt, The Expansionists of 1812 (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1957), pp. 74-75.

on February 25 and was informed that the Governor had changed his mind about surrendering. Folch said that he had been ordered to hold Florida at all costs and had been supplied with \$50,000 to enable him to do so.¹³

While Mathews's secretary Ralph Issac was in Pensacola, Mathews and McKee were on the southern Georgia coast. Mathews found that the St. Mary's River, which ran along side of the town, had British ships engaged in smuggling goods from the Spanish-owned Amelia Island. Amelia Island, situated at the mouth of the St. Mary's River just off the Florida coast, was a haven for smugglers. The area abounded in lawless characters and adventurers, many of whom were actual fugitives from justice. Against these outlaws, the Spanish authority seemed nonexistent since there was hardly any semblance of law and order.¹⁴

Mathews had official instructions to assist a revolutionary movement in this area of East Florida.¹⁵ In order to start a rebellion in East Florida similar to Baton Rouge, Mathews needed an influential resident of Spanish Florida. He found his man in John McIntosh, a former Georgian who had become a well-to-do planter.¹⁶ Their plan was simple. They would create a local authority for the purpose of transferring the territory to the United States, and General Mathews would act for the United States in accepting it.

¹³Charles Carroll Griffin, The United States and the Disruption of the Spanish Empire, 1810-1822 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), p. 29.

¹⁴Abernethy, op. cit., pp. 357 & 363.

¹⁵From the Secretary of State to General George Mathews and Colonel McKee, January 26, 1811, in James D. Richardson (ed.), Messages and Papers of the Presidents (New York: Bureau of National Literature, Inc., 1897), Vol. I, pp. 491-492.

¹⁶Patrick, op. cit., p. 56.

Mathews believed that the United States army and naval forces in the area would support him.¹⁷ Mathews openly recruited men by offering them land in amounts appropriate to their status and by offering some of them offices in the new government. To Spaniards who would join, he guaranteed their property, their religious freedom, and payment of any claims against Spain.¹⁸

On March 13, 1812, General Mathews and his small army of 80 men took possession of Amelia Island and of the country opposite to it on the mainland of Spanish Florida. On Amelia Island the Americans' first objective was Fernandina, a small town held by a garrison of 10 men who shortly surrendered. After raising their flag over the city, Mathews's men began the march on to St. Augustine.

Approaching St. Augustine, Mathews demanded its surrender. The Spanish governor, Juan de Estrada, refused to confer with him. The Americans encamped at Moosa Old Fort about two miles away. In the end Mathews's force was not large enough to capture St. Augustine, and Madison decided against reinforcing the Mathews's army. On April 4, 1812, Madison revoked Mathews's power as special agent of the West Florida Bill.¹⁹

Actually Madison had not given up hope of success in Florida. He named Governor David Mitchell of Georgia special agent to provide for the orderly evacuation of Americans from Florida because they had been led to

¹⁷ From the Secretary of State to General George Mathews and Colonel McKee, op. cit. and Pratt, op. cit., pp. 81-82.

¹⁸ Patrick, op. cit., p. 56-58.

¹⁹ From the Secretary of State to General George Mathews, April 4, 1812, op. cit., pp. 492-493. Mitchell was to remain in Florida and continue Mathews's previous efforts to pry Florida from Spain. On July 2, 1812, the U.S. Senate rejected a bill authorizing occupation of East Florida. Madison had no choice but to recall Mitchell.

expect the protection of the United States. Mitchell tried to reestablish relations with the Spanish governor but failed. On July 6, 1812, the the administration advised Mitchell to withdraw his troops, although there would be similar American forays.²⁰

One of the main reasons that Americans wished to obtain Florida was to end the practice of Spanish-given asylum to runaway slaves. As the price of slaves went up, every runaway slave became an even more painful loss to the planters. The newly invented cotton gin was one cause of higher slave prices because it made cotton production more profitable. Another reason was the 1808 Non-Importation Law which banned the importation of slaves into the United States.²¹

With the supply of slaves from outside the United States legally cut off, the whites turned to smuggling slaves into the area. With its long, thinly settled coastlines and its nearness to Cuba, Florida became an ideal base for slave smugglers. Slaves, which had been priced at a dollar a pound, now brought \$300 to \$400 a person in Florida by 1808 and twice that in 1818.²² Slave ships from the Caribbean sailed their black cargoes up Florida waterways, where agents took them over and sneaked them across the border to be sold at the American plantations.²³

²⁰Charlton W. Tebeau, A History of Florida (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971), pp. 107-108 and Secretary of State to D. B. Mitchell, May 27, 1812, in James D. Richardson (ed.), Messages and Papers of the Presidents (New York: Bureau of National Literature, Inc., 1897), Vol. I, p. 495. Other patriot attempts: Colonel Daniel Newman of Georgia Militia, 1812; Colonel John Williams's Tennessee Volunteers, 1813; and Buckner Harris's Georgia Patriots, 1814.

²¹Kenneth W. Porter, "Negroes and the East Florida Annexation Plot, 1811-1813," Journal of Negro History, XXX (January 1945), pp. 9-29.

²²Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, American Negro Slavery (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1929), pp. 370-371.

²³James Parton, Life of Andrew Jackson, II (New York: Mason Brothers, 1860), p. 397.

Indians were used as slaves when the Europeans first settled on the eastern coastline. Although many Indian slaves were put to work in the colonies, the general policy was to export them, for Indian slaves would flee to the forests. The white settlers feared that these Indians would conspire with other tribes to rise against them. It was safer to ship the red slaves to New England or the West Indies.²⁴ In time Negro slavery was introduced in the colonies, and the ones who managed to escape made their way into Florida.

As early as 1738, the British Carolina colony demanded that the Spanish governor of St. Augustine return the fugitive slaves who were living in Florida. The Spanish governor refused because in 1704 Spain had allowed slaves from the British colonies to enter. To prevent escaping of slaves was one of the principal objectives of establishing a free colony between South Carolina and Florida. It was thought that this colony, called Georgia, would give the Carolina planters protection against runaway slaves.²⁵

The fugitives as early as 1736 formed their own separate communities and soon came into contact with the Indians living in the surrounding area. About this time, Indian tribes from Georgia began migrating into Florida. Later these Indians would be known collectively as Seminoles. The Spanish looked for buffer settlements along their border to hold the British back. When the British regained Florida in 1763, the Spanish took some of these

²⁴Joshua R. Giddings, The Exiles of Florida (Gainesville: University of Florida, 1964 reproduction of the 1858 edition), p. 2. By the 1730's Negro slavery had permanently been established in the southern British colonies.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 2-3.

fugitives to Cuba with them, but most of them kept moving into the remote interior part of Florida along with the Creek Indians.²⁶

It was during the time of British control (1770's) and during the American Revolution that blacks became slaves of the Creeks and Seminoles. Indian leaders saw the prestige of slave owning and exchanged cattle, hogs or horses for blacks. The British also made gifts of blacks to Creek chiefs to reward them for their services in the Revolution.²⁷

Slavery under the Seminoles was so different from what it was under the whites that John Lee Williams wrote that in 1834 the Seminoles' slaves:

live in villages separate and, in many cases, remote from their owners, and enjoying equal liberty with their owners, with the single exception that the slave supplies his owner annually, from the product of his little field, with corn, in proportion to the amount of the crop; and in no case that has come to my knowledge, exceeding ten bushels; the residue is considered the property of the slave. Many of these slaves have stocks of horses, cows, and hogs, with which the Indian owner never assumes the right to intermeddle.²⁸

Such news travelled fast among the southern slaves. Slaves who could manage to do so fled south to Florida and placed themselves under the protection of the Seminole chiefs.²⁹ They paid in return a small tribute of grain or livestock. The men carried guns, and in battle they served under their own black captains. Since no racial bars were raised against them, intermarriage was common. Those who knew English or Spanish,

²⁶Kathryn Abbey Hanna, Florida, Land of Change (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), pp. 199-200.

²⁷Porter, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

²⁸John Lee Williams, The Territory of Florida, 1832, Herbert J. Doherty, Jr., ed. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1962), pp. 45-46.

²⁹Rembert W. Patrick, Aristocrat in Uniform: General Duncan L. Clinch (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1963), p. 25.

as well as the Seminole language, became interpreters or spies. Many blacks, wise in their understanding of the white man's ways, became valued advisors. They were fully trusted by the Seminoles in both war and council. Each recognized the common interest that bound them together. Together they stood a better chance of resisting their former captors. Having more to lose, the blacks fought as hard as the Indians.³⁰

The free blacks were sometimes called maroons. They were runaway slaves from the northern plantations who allied themselves with the Seminoles. Among them were the fugitives who had just recently escaped, as well as those who were born among the Seminoles because they were descendants of earlier runaways. The blacks born among the Seminoles were still claimed by the southern planters from whom their parents had fled. By 1816 there were an estimated 1,400 blacks living among the Seminoles of which 200 were slaves.³¹

Here perhaps was the root of the conflict that led to American military intervention into Spanish Florida from 1816-1818. On the American side of the international boundary separating Georgia from Florida were the planters who not only wanted more land, but they also wanted labor to work it. However, on the Spanish side, were the Indians who had the land and sheltered the runaway slaves, and these people didn't want to give them up.

³⁰Giddings, op. cit., p. 53-54.

³¹Rembert W. Patrick, Florida Fiasco (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1954), pp. 182-184.

After Buckner Harris's attempted settlement of the Alachua Plains failed in 1814, the remaining settlers fled to Georgia. Harris's failure to liberate Florida was the last attempt to do what had been initiated by General Mathews under the Madison administration. Although the Seminoles at the outset of these rebellions had maintained neutrality, it was Harris and his "Patriots" who had destroyed it by murdering Seminoles and hunting blacks.³²

The land-hungry settlers, who had fled back to Georgia, feared more than the Seminoles and their black allies; they were afraid of a general uprising of all the Indians of the southern frontier. These settlers' fears were well founded. Knowing well the white man's ambitions, Tecumseh, the great Shawnee leader, tried to form an alliance of many tribes with British aid to resist the Americans.³³

Spanish officials looked with disfavor upon the ever advancing tide of pioneers from Georgia to the Tombigbee River in Alabama. British agents found receptive listeners among the Spaniards, Seminoles, and the Creeks. The frontiersmen who had lived north of the St. Mary's River were now spreading westward across the Flint and Chattahoochee River valleys, and these settlers inherited a tradition of hostility from the Seminoles because they were all considered descendants of the coastal English colonists. Moreover, the settlers who lived south of the Ohio River, including those of Virginia, Carolina and Georgia frontiers,

³²Ibid., pp. 268-283.

³³Albert K. Weinberg, Manifest Destiny (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1936), pp. 385-386.

linked together the policies of Indian removal to the West and the expulsion of Spain from Florida. As population of these western lands grew, it was only natural that their views would have weight in the nation's capital.³⁴

Tecumseh came south and made his plea to the Creek nation in 1811. He maintained that the whites were nearly a match for all the Indian tribes together and that they were too strong for any one tribe to resist. He said that unless the Indians support one another in a common bond, the whites would soon conquer each tribe separately.³⁵

Tecumseh's call for armed unification was answered by Pushmataha, the Choctaw orator. Pushmataha argued that the Indians should not fight, but work out ways of living with the whites. He added that it would be a war against a people whose territories were then far greater than their own and who were better provided with all the necessary implements of war. Finally Pushmataha concluded, "Where is the necessity or wisdom to make war upon such a people?"³⁶

The Choctaws and the Chickasaws took Pushmataha's advice, but the Creeks split over Tecumseh's policy. The Lower Creeks stood for peace and allied themselves with the Americans. When the conflict between Britain and the United States erupted into the War of 1812, Tecumseh joined the British and was joined by the Upper Creeks, who were later called the Red Sticks.

³⁴Edwin C. McReynolds, The Seminoles (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), pp. 42-44.

³⁵H. S. Halbert and T. H. Ball, The Creek War, 1813 and 1814 (University: University of Alabama Press, 1969), pp. 42-44.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 44-45.

Surprisingly, it wasn't the Red Sticks who started the war; it was the Americans instead. A band of 36 Red Stick warriors were returning from Pensacola to their lands with supplies when Colonel James Caller and 180 men of the Mississippi militia ambushed them at the Battle of Burnt Corn. The Red Sticks shortly retaliated by destroying Fort Mims in August, 1813.³⁶ Andrew Jackson, major general of the Tennessee militia, called out thousands of troops to defeat the Red Sticks at Horseshoe Bend on the Tallapoosa River in March, 1814. Several months later in August, 1814, Jackson forced the Creeks to cede two-thirds of their land (over twenty million acres) to the United States in the Treaty of Fort Jackson.

The L-shaped tract of ceded land extended along the Georgia-Florida border, which was land claimed by the Seminoles. However, it wasn't the Red Sticks who signed the Treaty of Fort Jackson, but the friendly Creeks. After the battle, the Red Sticks fled southward to Florida not only to escape Jackson's army, but also to receive British arms and to continue the conflict. The Americans nevertheless insisted that all Creeks were legally bound by the treaty.³⁷

When the War of 1812 ended, the British left a fort on the eastern side of the Apalachicola River in Florida. It was about sixty miles below the United States border. The fort was heavily stocked with weapons and ammunition, including eight cannons.³⁸ Free blacks, descended from

³⁶Ibid., pp. 44-45.

³⁷J. Leitch Wright, Jr., "Notes and Documents," Journal of Southern History, 34 (November 1968), p. 566.

³⁸Vide Official Report of Sailing Master Loomis as contained in Joshua R. Giddings, The Exiles of Florida.

runaway slaves had been living in this region for generations.³⁹ They promptly made the fort their headquarters to guard their farms and grazing lands which stretched fifty miles up and down the river. Over three hundred blacks, including women and children, garrisoned the earthen fort, while perhaps another thousand lived in the surrounding region.⁴⁰

The Negro Fort, as it was called, drew to the safety of its walls restless slaves from the plantations of Georgia and Alabama. These slave owners along the border complained bitterly when they saw their labor assets drained away. The planters found a sympathetic ear in the army officers stationed along the southern frontier, many of whom were slave owners themselves such as General Edmund P. Gaines. General Gaines was commander of the newly built Fort Scott, which was constructed to watch for any trouble from the Negro Fort.⁴¹ Gaines often wrote to Secretary of War, William Crawford, about the menace of the Negro Fort. He referred to the blacks as "outlaws," "pirates" and "murderers."⁴² The blacks around the fort knew nothing of these communications between Gaines and his superiors, as they were busy farming and caring for their families.⁴³

However, President James Monroe's administration had other thoughts about letting the blacks along the Apalachicola River live in peace.

³⁹Joshua R. Giddings, The Exiles of Florida (Gainesville: University of Florida, 1964 reproduction of the 1858 edition), pp. 35-36.

⁴⁰McReynolds, op. cit., p. 74.

⁴¹Jackson to Gaines, March 12, 1816, Annals of Congress, 15th Cong., 2nd Sess., Document No. 122 (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1825).

⁴²Gaines to Crawford, Ibid., Document No. 119.

⁴³For a detailed glimpse on the lives of these former slaves, read Giddings, The Exiles of Florida.

On March 15, 1816, Secretary of War, William H. Crawford, ordered General Andrew Jackson, now the Commander of the United States Forces in the South to instruct the Spanish governor of Pensacola, Mauricio de Zuniga, to destroy it. If the governor refused, Jackson was ordered to do so himself.⁴⁴ On April 23, 1816, Jackson followed his orders and wrote Governor Zuniga. The Spanish in time replied that they would have to be instructed by the Captain General of Cuba first.⁴⁵

Before even writing the Spanish governor, however, Jackson on April 8, 1816, had already decided his course of action by writing to General Gaines:

I have little doubt of the fact, that this fort has been established by some villians for the purpose of rapine and plunder, and that it ought to be blown up, regardless of the ground on which it stands; and if your mind shall have formed the same conclusion, destroy it and return the stolen Negroes and property to their rightful owners.⁴⁶

It was quite remarkable that General Jackson could so easily accuse the blacks of plotting "rapine" and "plunder" from a point sixty miles south of the United States. The truth instead seemed to indicate that the blacks were content to stay far away from the Americans. Throughout the entire official correspondence concerning the First Seminole War, there is no mention of any crime committed by these former slaves, nor is there any mention in the official correspondence of who was responsible for these "stolen Negroes."⁴⁷ Obviously they had stolen only themselves to freedom.

⁴⁴ From Secretary Crawford to Jackson, March 15, 1816, in John Spencer Bassett (ed.), The Correspondence of Andrew Jackson (Washington: Kraus Reprint Co., 1927), Vol. II, p. 236.

⁴⁵ Correspondence II, pp. 242-243.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 238-239.

⁴⁷ Giddings, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

On General Gaines's order, United States supply vessels went down the river escorted by Navy gunboats. Colonel Duncan L. Clinch commanded battalions of Georgia militia and 150 Creeks. The Creek chiefs at first promised over 500 warriors, but confessed to Clinch that they had tried to do everything in their power, but the Creeks refused to go against the Negro Fort. Clinch even offered the Creeks free corn and \$50 for each Negro captive, but the Creeks didn't like the idea.⁴⁸

On July 17, 1816, Clinch's troops marched toward the Negro Fort while two gunboats under the command of Jairus Loomis, who was escorting supply vessels, arrived at the mouth of the Apalachicola River on the Gulf. On July 24, Clinch's forces reached the vicinity of the fort and began a reconnaissance of the terrain while they waited for Loomis's gunboats. On July 25 Clinch's force had cleared away the brush, erected a battery of cannon and began firing on the fort although the Americans had not been fired upon. On July 26 the combined military-naval forces met, and on the next day, completely destroyed the fort by killing 270 men, women and children. The American forces captured sixty four blacks, who were returned to Georgia to be reclaimed as slaves.⁴⁹ The Americans were surprised by the amount of property that was found unharmed: 163 barrels of powder (500 more kegs were found outside of the fort), 3,000 rifles still packed in the original shipping boxes, 1,000 pistols and

⁴⁸James W. Silver, Edmund Pendleton Gaines (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), pp. 61-62.

⁴⁹Rembert W. Patrick, Aristocrat in Uniform: General Duncan L. Clinch (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1963), pp. 31-33.

500 swords. Clinch estimated the value of this material at \$200,000. He gave the Indians most of it, but the undamaged eight pieces of artillery was kept by the American army.⁵⁰ The Spanish government protested this invasion and asked for the return of the property captured. The Americans replied that it had belonged to the blacks, who were now captured and not to the Spanish government.

The remaining black settlers along the Apalachicola River after the destruction of the fort fled east. They found shelter in Chief Bowlegs' Old Town on the Suwannee River. The Seminoles, who were presently at peace with the United States, were impressed with the powerful weapons the soldiers possessed. It wasn't long before some Seminoles realized also that this awesome power could be directed against them. Quietly the Seminoles began thinking of ways to obtain better weapons to protect themselves.

In the spring of 1817 a Scottish trader named Alexander Arbuthnot came in his own schooner from the Bahamas to engage in trade with the Seminoles. He brought with him such articles as beads, knives, blankets, lead and clothing to be exchanged for skins. Arbuthnot developed sympathy for the Seminoles as in August, 1817, he recorded:

These men are children of nature; leave them in their forests to till their fields and hunt the deer, and graze their cattle, their ideas will extend no further; and the honest trader, in supplying their moderate wants, may make a handsome profit of them. They have been ill treated by the English and robbed by the Americans; cheated by those who have dealt with them, receiving goods and other articles at most exorbitant prices for their peltry, which have been much undervalued. I say the English ill treat them. After making them parties in the war with America, they leave them without a pilot, to be robbed and ill treated by their natural and sworn enemies, the American.⁵¹

⁵⁰Silver, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

⁵¹James Parton, Life of Andrew Jackson, II (New York: Mason Brothers 1860), p. 413.

With the increasing influx of settlers on the Seminole claimed lands on the Florida-Georgia border, the main task of Gaines's troops was to keep the powder keg from exploding. There were atrocities and retaliation by both whites and Indians. A "talk" delivered by Gaines to one of the neighboring chiefs around Ft. Scott, King Hatchy, helps illustrate the emotions:

Your Seminoles are very bad people; I don't say whom. You have murdered many of my people, and stolen my cattle and many good horses that cost me money; and many good houses that cost me money you have burned for me; and now that you see my writing, you'll think I have spoken right. I know it is so, you know it is so; for now you may say I will do upon you at random. But just give me the murderers, and I will show them my law. . . I tell you this that is you do not give me up the murderers who murdered my people, I say I have got good strong warriors with scalping knives and tomahawks. You harbor a great many of my black people among you at Sawahnee. If you give me leave to go by you against them, I shall not hurt anything belonging to you.⁵²

King Hatchy replied:

You charge me with killing your people, stealing your cattle, and burning your houses. It is I that have cause to complain of the Americans. While one American has been justly killed, while in the act of stealing cattle, more than four Indians have been murdered while hunting by these lawless freebooters. I harbor no Negroes. When the Englishmen were at war with America, some took shelter among them, and it is for you white people to settle those things among yourselves, and not trouble us with what we know nothing about. I shall use force to stop any armed Americans from passing my towns or my lands.⁵³

This feeling was also shared by another Seminole chief of a village named Fowltown, which was 14 miles south of Fort Scott. The village was near the Florida line but was still on land claimed by the United States under the Treaty of Fort Jackson. The Fowltown chief resolved to hold

⁵²American State Papers, Military Affairs, Vol. I, pp. 723-724.

⁵³Ibid.

his lands and resist by force any further settlements by the American settlers. Early in November, 1817, he told Colonel Twiggs, the commander of Fort Scott, "I warn you not to cross, nor cut a stick of wood on the east side of the Flint River. That land is mine. I am directed by the powers above and the powers below to protect and defend it. I shall do so."⁵⁴

A few days after General Gaines arrived at Fort Scott with reinforcements, Colonel Twiggs told him what the Fowltown chief had said. General Gaines sent a runner to the chief requesting him to come to Fort Scott for talks. The chief replied, "I have already said to the officer commanding at the fort all I have to say. I will not go."⁵⁵

Gaines immediately sent Colonel Twiggs with 250 men with orders to bring the chief and his warriors in. On November 21 before dawn, Twiggs' force reached Fowltown where they were fired upon. The soldiers returned the fire, killing four warriors and one squaw while the remaining Indians fled. Twiggs entered the village, and shortly the village was burned by General Gaines.

The die was cast as the revenge of the Seminoles for this act happened nine days later when they ambushed a party of soldiers coming up the Apalachicola River toward Fort Scott.⁵⁶

⁵⁴Parton, op. cit., pp. 428-429.

⁵⁵Ibid. p. 429.

⁵⁶Edwin C. McReynolds, The Seminoles (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), pp. 80-81.

The press in the United States blazoned the news of the massacre. Editors denounced it as a savage sacrifice of human life.⁵⁷ Americans were whipped into a rage against the Seminoles for what was called an "unprovoked" attack.

"Unprovoked." It was the same accusing word used by President James Monroe in his March 25, 1818, message to Congress concerning the previous year's trouble with the Seminoles. "The hostilities of this tribe were unprovoked," he said. No mention was made of the massacre of blacks and Seminoles at the Negro Fort, or the destruction of Fowltown.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Charles Carroll Griffin, The United States and the Disruption of the Spanish Empire, 1810-1822 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937) p. 163.

⁵⁸ To the Senate and House of Representatives, March 25, 1818, in James D. Richardson (ed.), Messages and Papers of the Presidents (New York: Bureau of National Literature, Inc., 1897), Vol. I, p. 600.

CHAPTER IV

TO CHASTISE A SAVAGE FOE

Before the official accounts of the hostilities along the Florida-Georgia border had reached Washington, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun on November 12, 1817, ordered Gaines to rescue Amelia Island from more "liberators."¹ In June, 1817, a band of fillibusters landed upon Amelia Island, just off the coast of northeast Florida, under the command of "General" Gregor McGregor. McGregor, who was from Scotland, was one of the many Europeans who went to the assistance of the South American Spanish colonists while they were rebelling against Spain. Unsatisfied with the turn of events, McGregor, gathering a band of patriots, sailed from South America. He decided to strike another blow at Spanish power by seizing Florida. In order to seize Florida, McGregor with 50 followers seized Amelia Island to be used as a base for their future operations.²

In December, 1817, McGregor, being unsuccessful in his ambitions, decided to leave Amelia Island, but his followers remained. They were soon joined by another patriot, Commodore Luis Aury and 150 men; however, they were chased away by United States forces. General Gaines was to command the troops so that Amelia Island could be in protective custody.³

¹American State Papers, Military Affairs, Vol. I, p. 689.

²James Parton, Life of Andrew Jackson, II (New York: Mason Brothers, 1860), pp. 421-422.

³Charlton W. Tebeau, A History of Florida (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971), p. 112.

When Gaines's dispatches finally reached Calhoun, Gaines had already secured Amelia Island. The administration, fearing the effect at such a moment of the absence of a general officer from the scene of hostilities, decided to direct Major General Andrew Jackson, the commander of the Division of the South, to take command of the situation.

It wasn't until Gaines had retraced his steps to Georgia that he received the latest instructions from Calhoun dated December 26, 1817. Calhoun gave him the choice of either returning to Fort Scott and assume the command until Jackson arrived, or to penetrate Florida directly from Amelia Island in order to attack the Seminoles. Gaines decided to return to Fort Scott.⁴

Jackson's orders to proceed to Fort Scott and assume command of the forces there reached him at Nashville on January 11, 1818. These orders also authorized him to concentrate all of the nearby available force of his division in that quarter, and should he deem their numbers insufficient, he was further authorized to call on the executives of adjacent states for an additional militia force.⁵

There were eight hundred regular troops under General Gaines around the Fort Scott area and a thousand Georgia militia, which were under the command of Brigadier General Thomas Glasscock. In addition to the regular troops and Georgia militia, which were already in the field, Jackson decided it was necessary to raise two mounted regiments of Tennessee Volunteers and to enlist the aid of friendly Creek Indians.

⁴James W. Silver, Edmund Pendleton Gaines (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), pp. 74-75.

⁵American State Papers, Military Affairs, Vol. I, p. 690.

There were problems concerning the Georgia militia which Jackson would have to face. Jackson knew that the militia could only be drafted for three months (Militia Act of 1792), and Jackson feared that they would have to be disbanded before the campaign could be completed. Jackson left Nashville on January 22 and would arrive at the site of the Negro Fort on March 16. The journey to the fort took nearly two months. The second problem appeared when approximately 600 of the original 1,000 militia fell back on a provision of the Militia Act of 1792 which stated that the militia could not be compelled to leave the state.⁶

When Jackson received his orders from Calhoun, the governor of Tennessee was in Knoxville, so Jackson began to raise troops on his own responsibility. On January 20 Jackson informed Secretary Calhoun that on the previous day the officers who had commanded the Tennessee Mounted Volunteers in the Creek War had met in Nashville and agreed to raise a force which would number 1,276 men. These Volunteers were to assemble on the southern Tennessee line on February 1 near Fayetteville, which was used for the same purpose during the Creek and Indian War. The Volunteers enlisted for a period of six months.⁷

The Volunteers were placed under the immediate command of Colonel A. P. Hayne, the Inspector General, who appointed Colonel Williamson and Colonel Dyer as the two regimental commanders. Officers numbered 113, and the enlisted numbered 1,163. Of these, at least 800 were veterans of the Creek War or the Louisiana campaigns during the War of 1812.⁸

⁶Walter Millis, American Military Thought (New York: Bobbs Merril Co., 1966), pp. 59-62.

⁷ASP, Military Affairs, Vol. I, p. 690.

⁸Report on the Advance of the U. S. Troops into West Florida, 15th Cong., 2nd Sess., Document No. 100 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1819), p. 26.

Although this force was known collectively as the Tennessee Mounted Volunteers, it also included two companies of Kentucky Volunteers under the command of Captain Crittenden and Captain Marshall. In addition to the Kentucky units, there was one company of Mississippi Volunteers under the command of Captain Bonnell.⁹

The Volunteers marched to Fort Scott through Alabama via Fort Jackson and Fort Mitchell. They then crossed the Chattahoochee River to reach Georgia, went on their way to Fort Gaines and finally reached Fort Scott. Arrangements were made to have supplies from Fort Hawkins (presently Macon) intercept the Volunteers enroute in Alabama, but these provisions never materialized due to faulty government contractors. This delay caused the Volunteers to cross into Georgia above Fort Gaines. This prevented them from meeting with Jackson at Fort Scott.

General Jackson left Nashville on January 22, 1818, escorted by two companies of rangers commanded by Captain Boyle and Captain McGist. These two companies were known as the "life guard" and consisted of seven officers and 140 men. These were both Tennessee and Kentucky troops.¹⁰ On January 27 Jackson stayed in Huntsville and wrote Secretary Calhoun. Jackson complained about the quality of weapons his troops had and the need for the government in the future to establish arsenals in the event of any similar circumstances.¹¹ Nine days later he reached Jackson County, Georgia. Jackson wrote John Eaton to complain about the wet

⁹Augustus C. Buell, History of Andrew Jackson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), p. 130.

¹⁰Report on the Advance of the U. S. Troops into West Florida, op., cit., p. 27.

¹¹Correspondence II, pp. 350-351.

and muddy roads. He said that he hoped to reach Fort Hawkins (Macon) in a few days.¹² Jackson arrived at Fort Hawkins on February 9th. Here Jackson heard about the 600 men of the Georgia militia who had abandoned the war and returned home. Jackson learned also that the government contractors had failed to provide the supplies needed for his Tennessee troopers. All was not bad news, however. Jackson was told that Gaines, the month before, had instructed General Glasscock's force to construct a depot on the east side of the Flint River not far from the friendly Indian village Chehaw Town. The name of the depot was called Fort Early, named for a former Georgia governor. It was located sixty miles above Fort Scott. Here supplies from Hartford and Fort Hawkins were to be deposited. Equally as good news, Jackson was delighted to learn that Gaines had requested Governor Rabun of Georgia to call up a fresh militia force. This new force was to have assembled at Hartford on February 1st. It was to consist of over four battalions of infantry.¹³

Jackson on February 10th wrote a letter home to his wife telling her of the current military problems and of the new Georgia militia that was being raised. Jackson went further and displayed some of his confidence about the Georgia militia: ". . . but from the spirit that prevails, and common rumor, I have little expectation of many of those drafts being got to the field. Georgia at present does not display much patriotism."¹⁴

¹²Ibid., p. 352.

¹³ASP, Military Affairs, Vol. I, p. 690.

¹⁴Correspondence II, p. 353.

Jackson pushed on to Hartford (near present-day Hawkinsville in Pulaski County) and arrived on February 12. In Hartford, Jackson met General Gaines who had a newly raised Georgia militia of 900 men. As for provisions, Gaines purchased over 1,150 hogs which would be driven with the Georgia militia on February 19 to Fort Early. At Fort Early the men would receive their equipment. Jackson and General Glasscock's Georgia militia departed Hartford on February 19th and didn't reach Fort Early until February 26 because of bad roads and swollen streams. One of Glasscock's men, a young lieutenant named John Banks, kept a diary. He recorded the following description of the march from Hartford to Fort Early:

On Monday night, the 16th, our company with one other was ordered down the river to meet a party of hostile Indians, who we heard were advancing up the river. We marched about eight miles that night, very cold, had much water to wade through. We camped at 1 o'clock. Early next morning we continued our march four miles further, made no discovery and returned to the encampment that night. On the 18th we commenced the line of march for Fort Early on Flint River. On the 26th we reached the fort. From Hartford to this place we had an unpleasant march of it. The distance is only 48 miles which took us eight days' hard march. It rained nearly all the time, the waters were very high, we had to build some bridges and flats to cross the creeks on. We carried our baggage wagons till we got within ten miles of the fort, found it impractical to carry them any further. They were dismissed and we took our provisions on our backs, officers and all, and performed the balance of the expedition without a wagon. When we left Hartford we had some live pork, which we drove with us, and some flour. We suffered considerably for provisions before we reached the fort, for our flour soon gave out and left us nothing but the pork.¹⁵

At Fort Early the Georgia militia arrived along with General Jackson, his two "life guard" companies and a body of Indians. These Indians, forerunners of a mighty host of friendly Creeks who would join Jackson, were recruited from the Chehaw village outside of Fort Early.

¹⁵John Banks, Autobiography of John Banks, ed. E. Leonard (private printing, 1936), p. 10.

The Chehaw Indians received the tired hungry American troops with a hearty welcome, and supplied them with all the corn they could spare. Every warrior in the village, fit for service, joined the army. Only left behind in the village were the aged, the sick and the women.¹⁶

General Gaines did not accompany the army to Fort Early when they arrived on the 26th. A few days before, on February 20 as the army was just south of Hartford, Gaines received some alarming news from Fort Scott. Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Arbuckle, Fort Scott's commander, sent word that he was intending to abandon the fort because of a lack of provisions. With Jackson's approval, Gaines sent an Indian messenger with orders to Arbuckle directing him to remain at Fort Scott. Gaines, on seeing a need to insure this order, decided to return to Fort Scott and resume command in person. He promptly departed for Fort Early, ahead of the column, where he expected to find a large supply boat. Instead he and the 12 men who accompanied him found a much smaller boat than expected and on February 22 set off down the Flint River to Fort Scott. They had optimistically expected to travel night and day and hoped to reach Fort Scott by the evening of the 23rd. On the evening of February 23, the boat struck a rock and sunk with the baggage and eight barrels of meat. Major C. Wright, the assistant adjutant, along with two soldiers were drowned.¹⁷

For six days Gaines and his men plunged through the wilderness. They were exhausted by hunger and cold. Finally, after going nearly five

¹⁶James Parton, Life of Andrew Jackson, II (New York: Mason Brothers, 1860), p. 442.

¹⁷James W. Silver, Edmund Pendleton Gaines (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), p. 77.

days without food and wearing only a pair of pantaloons, Gaines led his men into Jackson's camp then at the Negro Fort. A few days later, Jackson informed Arbuckle that, "Gaines is now with me, at the head of his brigade, in good health."¹⁸

After waiting futilely a day at Fort Early (12 miles south of present-day Cordele on the Flint River) for flour from the contractors, Jackson marched the army toward Fort Scott on February 27. The army marched northwest along the Flint River until they could find a favorable crossing point ten miles north of Fort Early.¹⁹ On March 2 the column passed through another Chehaw village which had a white flag hoisted. The army was able to purchase corn, potatoes and ground peas from this old Creek town, which had refused to fight the Seminoles. On the March 3 the army marched to the Kinchafoonee Creek where a bridge had to be constructed in order to cross the creek.²⁰ There is a monument near the vicinity of the old Chehaw village erected by the state of Georgia. It commemorates Andrew Jackson's efforts near the present town of Doverel.

The army once again resumed the march toward Fort Scott in a southwest direction. On March 6 near the present-day town of Blakely, a band of about 600 Indians under the command of "Majors" Lovett and Kennard, joined the army. This addition increased the Indian strength to 1,000 warriors.

In the previous year, July, 1817, Gaines had given some thought to recruiting an auxiliary force of 500 to 600 friendly Creeks. After

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Captain Huger Young, *A Topographic Memoir on East and West Florida*, 1818, reprinted in *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XIII (January 1935), pp. 133-135.

²⁰Banks, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

the hostilities of Fowltown occurred, Gaines sent Colonel David Brearly of the 7th Infantry to Fort Mitchell (Alabama) in January, 1818, to enlist Indians. The Indians responded with enthusiasm, and probably before Brearly realized how deeply he was involved, some 1,500 Indians were recruited. The Indians were organized into a regiment under Colonel McIntosh. McIntosh divided his force into two commands. He commanded the first band, and they moved to the west side of the Chattahoochee (Alabama side). The other band was placed under Major Lovett, which descended on the east bank and joined Jackson's forces on March 6.

Colonel McIntosh had commanded the friendly Creeks under Jackson at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1814. Upon Jackson's recommendation, McIntosh had been commissioned a colonel in the United States Army. During the Seminole campaign, he was promoted to brigadier general and commanded a force of 1,612 braves. Besides General McIntosh, Jackson appointed 95 of his warriors as officers from the rank of colonel to ensign. Due to the extra heavy consumption of supplies by the Indians, Colonel Brearly was later court-martialed, but he was acquitted when it was proven that he had been following Gaines's orders.²¹

In the evening of March 9 some 46 days after leaving Nashville, General Jackson reached Fort Scott with his 1,100 hungry men. As yet there was still no word from Colonel Hayne and the Tennessee Volunteers, and at the time, of General Gaines either. Jackson found himself in a predicament at Fort Scott. He was now in command of 2,000 men, and his entire stock of provisions consisted of just one quart of corn and three rations of meat per man. There were no supplies in his rear, for he had swept the country

²¹ Report on the Advance of the U. S. Troops into West Florida, 15th Cong., 2nd Sess., Document No. 100 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1819), p. 26.

during his line of march of everything fit to eat. He had two choices: either to remain at Fort Scott and face starvation, or to go forward and find provisions.²²

Jackson had been notified by Colonel Gibson, the Quartermaster General in New Orleans, that he was sending two sloops with provisions to Fort Scott. The sloops were to depart New Orleans on February 12th. Lieutenant Colonel Arbuckle previously had sent a boat from Fort Scott to meet the supply vessels as they were coming up the Apalachicola River. Jackson felt he could get the provisions faster if he marched down the Apalachicola River to intercept the boat which had been sent from Fort Scott.²³

While at Fort Scott, Jackson incorporated the greater part of the regular troops stationed there into his own force. The regular troops were part of the 4th and 7th Infantry which had been sent from Fort Montgomery, Alabama, to reinforce Fort Scott. Jackson left a detachment of 60 men, largely from the 7th Infantry, under the command of Major E. Cutler to garrison Fort Scott.

Jackson formally assumed command on the morning of March 10. He ordered the livestock to be slaughtered, which with one quart of corn were to be issued to each man. Then he ordered the line of march to cross the Flint River and descend along the east bank of the Apalachicola River into Spanish Florida.²⁴

²²James Parton, Life of Andrew Jackson, II (New York: Mason Brothers, 1860), pp. 442-443.

²³ASP, Military Affairs, Vol. I, pp. 698-699.

²⁴Ibid.

On March 12 Jackson crossed into Florida. Who gave Jackson authority to do this is still debatable.

Before Jackson received his orders from Secretary Calhoun on January 11, 1818, which had been dated December 26, 1817, to take command of Fort Scott, he had written a private letter to President Monroe. Jackson had been reading General Gaines's dispatches to Washington, and he was aware of the situation on the border. On December 16, 1817, Secretary Calhoun wrote to Gaines:

Should the Seminole Indians still refuse to make reparations for their outrages. . . it is the wish of the President that you consider yourself at liberty to march across the Florida line and to attack them within its limits, . . . unless they should shelter themselves under a Spanish post. In the last event, you will immediately notify this Department.²⁵

After reading this order to Gaines, Jackson wrote to Monroe on the subject:

The executive government has ordered, and as I conceive, very properly, Amelia Island to be taken possession of. This order ought to be carried into execution at all hazards and simultaneously the whole of East Florida seized, and held as indemnity for the outrages of Spain upon the property of our citizens. This done, it puts all opposition down, secures our citizens a complete indemnity and saves us from a war with Great Britain or some of the continental powers combined with Spain. This can be done without implicating the government. Let it be signified to me through any channel (say Mr. J. Rhea) that the possession of the Floridas would be desirable to the United States and in sixty days it will be accomplished.²⁶

Jackson claimed in his "Exposition" (this was a statement prepared for publication in his lifetime, but wasn't printed until after his death) that Monroe sent for Mr. Rhea (a Congressman from Tennessee), showed him the letter and requested him to answer it by saying the President approved

²⁵Ibid., p. 689.

²⁶Correspondence II, pp. 345-346.

of its suggestions. Jackson said he received the answer at Big Creek, which was four miles from Hartford, Georgia. This was when he was on his way to take command of Fort Scott.

In the latter part of 1818, Congress launched an investigation of the Seminole conflict. One of the questions which Congress wanted to find the answer to was, "Who authorized Jackson to go into Florida?" It was during this investigation, Jackson says, that Mr. Rhea came to visit him. Mr. Rhea, at the President's request, asked Jackson to burn the letter as Monroe was afraid that if Jackson should die, or by some accident, that it may fall into the hands of those who would make an improper use of it. Jackson gave his promise to Mr. Rhea and destroyed the letter on April 12, 1819. Jackson said only three people ever read Monroe's reply. They were Jackson, Mr. Rhea, and Judge Overton.²⁷

Monroe, however, said the "Rhea letter" never existed and that Jackson simply read into his instructions something that never existed. Monroe admitted that he received Jackson's letter, but that he was sick at the time and didn't read it until the campaign was over. Monroe denied that he ever intended Jackson to proceed on this course of action. However, in a letter that Monroe wrote Jackson dated July 19, 1818, it appears that Monroe was setting his course of action. In this letter, Monroe tells Jackson that since it is very likely that there will be some type of investigation and that in order to escape any scandal, they should get their story together. Monroe outlined his defense and said if it was to apply to Jackson, then Jackson would have to change his official reports.

²⁷Parton, op. cit., pp. 435-436.

Monroe even suggested that, "If you think proper to authorize the Secretary or myself to correct these passages, it will be done with care, though, should you have copies, as I presume you have, you had better do it yourself."²⁸

A short time later, Monroe once again wrote Jackson on the subject outlining, in view of the position Monroe was in, Jackson's best defense. In Monroe's letter dated October 20, 1818, the President told Jackson to write a letter (which would be made public) saying he misunderstood his instructions and to:

State your view of them, and on which you acted. This will be answered, so as to explain ours in a friendly manner by Mr. Calhoun, who has very just and liberal sentiments on the subject. This will be necessary in the case of a call for papers by Congress, (Jackson still had possession of the Rhea letter) as may be. Thus we shall all stand on the ground of honor, each doing justice to the other, which is the ground on which we wish to place each other.²⁹

There are many indications that Jackson was operating on instructions, which officially didn't exist. However, since the subject is so broad, the important thing is that Jackson, a military man, thought he was carrying out the instructions of his commander-in-chief, whether they were implied or not.³⁰

²⁸James Monroe, *The Writings of James Monroe*, ed. Stanislaus Murray Hamilton, Vol. VI (New York: AMS Press, 1969), pp. 54-61.

²⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.

³⁰For further references on the "Rhea Letter," see Parton, II, pp. 432-439; Fuller, pp. 238-244, who favored Jackson; Bassett, *Correspondence II*, pp. xi-xv; and W. P. Creeson, *James Monroe* (Hamden, Connecticut: Shoe String Press, 1971), pp. 303-306; Harry Ammon, James Monroe, the Quest for National Identity (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), pp. 415-417. Bassett, Creeson and Ammon favored Monroe's version.

On March 13 the army had travelled twenty-four miles in the two days that it had marched from Fort Scott. On that day, they met the long awaited boat that Lieutenant Colonel Arbuckle had sent down the Apalachicola River to get some immediate supplies from the slower moving vessels from New Orleans. The men saw the boat coming up the river from a bluff, which they named "Provision Bluff" (present-day Alum Bluff).³¹ There the army had its first full meal since leaving Fort Early three weeks before.³² Three days later, on March 16, they reached the old site of the Negro Fort which had been destroyed 16 months before. The day before they arrived, General Jackson celebrated his 51st birthday.

Jackson decided to wait there for the main supply vessels, which were supposedly coming up the river, although he hadn't heard any news from them. Consequently, Jackson decided to put the men on half rations and ordered his aid, Lieutenant James Gadsden, an engineer officer, to reconstruct the fort. Jackson planned to use the newly constructed fort, which he named Fort Gadsden after his aid, as a base for his future operations and for the protection of provisions.

Nine days later on March 25, the supply vessels finally arrived, and General Gaines had rejoined the army after his near fatal experience on the river. There Jackson directed Captain McKeever, the naval commander escorting the supply vessels, to transport his supplies to Fort St. Marks. Further, Jackson directed McKeever to:

Cruise along the coast toward St. Marks, and as I advance, capture and make prisoners of all, or every person, or description of persons, white, red or black, with all their goods, chattels and effects, together with all crafts, vessels or means of transportation by water,

³¹Captain Huger Young, A Topographic Memoir on East and West Florida, 1818, reprinted in FHQ, XIII (January 1935), pp. 138-139.

³²ASP, Military Affairs, Vol. I, pp. 698.

which will be held possession of for adjudication. I shall march this day, and in eight days will reach St. Marks, where I shall expect to communicate with you in the bay, and from the transports receive the supplies for my army.³³

Jackson marched from Fort Gadsden on March 26 with eight days of rations. They marched for six miles until they reached the Ocklochnee River on March 29. There the army made nineteen canoes and by 8 o'clock that evening, most of them were on the other side. This point is now known as Jackson Bluff, and is located in the western part of Leon County. By morning the next day, March 30, they resumed their march across the northwest part of Leon County.

On March 30, Jackson was notified by his advanced Indian scouts that there was a hostile Indian village four miles from his location. That night Jackson ordered Major Twiggs, with one company of the 7th Infantry together with 200 warriors, to advance on the village called Tallahassee. Twiggs was to surprise the village by daybreak of March 31. On the morning of March 31, Twiggs found that the village was deserted. and from all indications, it had been evacuated several days before.³⁴ John Banks recorded the event:

On Tuesday, the 31st, arrived at a town called Tallahassee. The Indians had abandoned it before we got there. We passed an old Indian lying near a pond, dead. She had not been dead long from her appearance; she had been left there to die by the Indians who fled before us; she was lying on the ground by some ashes and a dirt pot. We burnt the town (this is the present capital of Florida). We found some cattle that day which were distributed amongst the soldiers.³⁵

³³Ibid., p. 699.

³⁴Young, op. cit., pp. 142-143.

³⁵John Banks, Autobiography of John Banks, ed. E. Leonard (private printing, 1936), p. 12.

The army passed through the village around noon on the 31st and made camp a few miles from present-day Lake Jackson. That evening Jackson finally heard from Colonel Hayne's Tennessee Mounted Volunteers. An advanced detachment of nearly 400 men under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Elliott made their way into Jackson's camp.

On the following morning, April 1, the remaining Tennessee Volunteers under Colonel Hayne and the friendly Creeks under General McIntosh joined the main column. Jackson now commanded a force of 1,800 soldiers and militia and 1,500 Indians. As Jackson approached a lake (Lake Jackson) a mile and a half away, a party of hostile Indians were discovered near the marshy lake.³⁶ John Banks recorded this:

The day before we reached this place the Tennessee horsemen joined the army. We had a battle with the Indians. They met us a mile from town. They fled before us, but continued to fire back. The Tennesseans, being mounted, pressed them through the town. They took to a swamp. Eleven Indians were found dead on the ground. We took some prisoners. One of the Tennesseans was killed and five wounded. We got between four and five hundred cattle, some horses, hogs, poultry and about one thousand bushels of corn. Here we had a plentiful feast. The cattle were put in a pen near the camp. I shall never forget the melancholy effect produced on me by the simultaneous lowing of the cattle, howling of the dogs and chirping of the young chickens.³⁷

That afternoon, the army advanced 16 miles to another lake (Lake Miccosukee), which was estimated to be eight miles long, two to three miles wide and from two to five feet deep. There on the west of the lake, the army camped on the side of a small bluff. Tradition has it that when the army camped there, Jackson carved his initials,

³⁶Federal Writers' Project, ed., Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), p. 441.

³⁷Banks, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

"A. J.," on a huge rock right off Jackson's Ledge. Since the time that Jackson spent the night there, however, a dam has been constructed to raise the lake's water level and consequently, the rock remains mostly submerged.³⁸

On the next day, April 2, General Gaines with a large force was ordered to attack a reportedly hostile village on the south side of the lake. Instead, Gaines found the village abandoned. In the village was found a large number of cattle and 50 scalps hanging from a red pole. The army remained there until April 5 when they departed to Fort St. Marks. Jackson ordered the village burned.³⁹

The army covered the thirty-mile trip to Fort St. Marks in one and a half days. They arrived late in the evening of April 6. Fort St. Marks (San Marcos de Apalache) is located four miles up the St. Marks River from the Gulf. It is located just above the confluence of the St. Marks and Wakulla Rivers. At this time, it was garrisoned by 70 Spanish soldiers. Large ocean-going vessels once anchored in the nearby Apalachee Bay and sent their small boats upstream to the fort. The fort served as a communications link between St. Augustine and Pensacola by land, and it furnished a direct sea route to Vera Cruz and Havana while under Spanish control. Besides offering protection from frequent pirate raids, the fort has served as a religious mission house and a principal trading center with the Indians.

³⁸Elizabeth Mays, "The March of Andrew Jackson in the First Seminole War" (unpublished Master's thesis, Emory University, 1923), pp. 74-76. and personal account of Jeffrey Lynn Thomason upon a visit to Lake Miccosukee in February, 1975.

³⁹Federal Writers' Project, op. cit., p. 440.

The day before the Americans camped outside the fort, April 5, an American schooner, under the command of Captain McKeever, arrived at the harbor with supplies for Jackson as planned. Captain McKeever ran up the British flag as he came in. Thinking it was a friendly ship, the famous Upper Creek Red Stick leader, Hillis Qadjo (Francis the Prophet), along with his chief aide, boarded the vessel. McKeever welcomed them both aboard and made them prisoners. They were hanged the next day on Jackson's orders.⁴⁰

When the army halted outside the walls of St. Marks, Jackson sent Lieutenant Gadsden with an explanatory letter of his objects and purposes to the fort's commander. The letter was presented to Francisco Luengo, the Spanish commander, and he learned what Jackson wanted. Jackson said he had come "to chastise a savage foe, who, combined with a lawless band of Negro brigands, had been for some time past carrying on a cruel and unprovoked war against the citizens of the United States."

Jackson had already met and put to flight parties of hostile Indians. He had received information that those Indians had fled to St. Marks and found protection within its walls; that both Indians and Negroes had procured supplies of ammunition there; and that the Spanish garrison, from the smallness of its numbers, was unable to resist the demands of the savages. Jackson said, "to prevent the recurrence of so gross a violation of neutrality, and to exclude our savage enemies from so strong a hold as St. Marks, I deem it expedient to garrison that fortress with American troops until the close of the present war."⁴¹

⁴⁰ Dorris L. Olds, "Some Highlights in the History of Fort St. Marks," The Florida Anthropologist, (June 1962), pp. 33-38.

⁴¹ James Parton, Life of Andrew Jackson, II (New York: Mason Brothers, 1860), pp. 450-451.

The Spanish commander replied that the Indians and Negroes had never obtained supplies, or any encouragement from Fort St. Marks. On the contrary, the Indians had menaced the fort with assault because they had been refused supplies. With regard to delivering up the fort entrusted to his care, Luengo said he had no authority to do so, and must write on the subject to his government. Luengo, however, did offer to open up his hospital to Jackson's sick and wounded troops.

This note was delivered to Jackson on the morning of April 7. Jackson immediately took possession of the fort. The Spanish flag was lowered; the "stars and stripes" was raised.⁴²

John Banks also recorded the surrender of St. Marks:

On Sunday, the 5th, we commenced our March for St. Marks (a Spanish fort on the sea coast). On Monday evening, the 6th, we arrived in sight of St. Marks. We sent to the fort a white flag, which was responded to by a similar one on the part of the fort. From this time, the commissioned officers were allowed admittance in the fort. We continued to pass and repass till Tuesday morning, the 7th, when General Jackson ordered a battalion of regulars to march in, while the gates were open, and take possession of the fort. I happened in the fort at the time. The Spaniards seemed very much alarmed at this movement of the army. They made a feeble effort to command their cannon but were forced away by the regulars; not a gun was fired. I suppose there were not exceeding sixty or seventy men in the fort, but with this number, they could have made a strong resistance. The fort is situated in the fork of two small rivers so we could only approach in one direction.⁴³

Inside the fort, Jackson found Alexander Arubthnot, a Scottish trader and a friend and advocate of the Indians. "He is in confinement," wrote Jackson, "until evidence of his guilt can be collected."⁴⁴ Meanwhile,

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ John Banks, Autobiography of John Banks, ed. E. Leonard (private printing, 1936), p. 13.

⁴⁴ Parton, op. cit., p. 454.

Jackson had the Spaniards sent to Pensacola, and he made plans for another operation against his savage foe.

For two days the army remained at Fort St. Marks. Jackson's next stop was to be Chief Boleck's (or Bowlegs') village on the Suwannee River, presently called Old Town. Chief Bowlegs was quite a legend in his own time. It was said that his father was William Augustus Bowles, the American Tory who captured Fort St. Marks in the 1790's.⁴⁵ Ironically, during the War of 1812, Chief Bowlegs had offered his services to General Mathews and his "Patriots," but he was told he was not welcome.⁴⁶ Chief Bowlegs' town was 107 miles south of Fort St. Marks. The route was through a flat and swampy wilderness along the coast. On April 9, Jackson issued eight days of rations to his troops, and they marched in a northeast direction.

By April 11 the army had marched along the west side of the St. Marks River and passed the Natural Bridge. That night as the army camped near the Econfina River, sentinels heard the moaning of cattle and barking of dogs. A search of the area was made, but nothing was found. The next morning, April 12, a party of Indians was discovered nearby. General McIntosh and his Creeks, together with 50 Mounted Volunteers, attacked these Indians and chased them for three miles. The savages had 37 people killed, 98 women and children taken prisoner, and 700 head of cattle and other livestock confiscated. McIntosh reported that he lost three men and had five wounded.

⁴⁵J. Leitch Wright, Jr., William Augustus Bowles (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1967), pp. 172.

⁴⁶Rembert W. Patrick, Florida Fiasco (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1954), p. 180.

The army resumed its march toward the Suwannee River. After three more days of marching, on April 15 Jackson, on hearing that Bowlegs' town was six miles away, decided to make camp. He had planned to rest the troops and strike the village early in the morning. Shortly, six hostile Indians were seen fleeing toward the village. Jackson, assuming that they were spies, decided to attack the town immediately.⁴⁷

At sunset Jackson formed his troops in battle line formation. Jackson was anxious to destroy this village because it was regarded as the symbol of Seminole and black resistance. After the destruction of their fort on the Apalachicola 18 months before, the blacks had resettled here among the Seminoles and the blacks who had lived here previously. The village was surrounded by swamps and could only be approached through narrow paths which made it difficult for an army to reach. Here lived many blacks who were born and raised in this area.⁴⁸

The village had been warned by a letter from the Scottish trader, Arbuthnot, to his son, who ran a trading store near the village. The hostiles had enough time to move their women and children across the river to safety. The Indian warriors and blacks coolly awaited Jackson's approach.⁴⁹

Jackson had divided his army into three groups to attack the village. Probably visualizing another Horseshoe Bend, Jackson ordered

⁴⁷Captain Huger Young, A Topographic Memoir on East and West Florida, 1818, reprinted in FHQ, XIII (January 1935), pp. 144-145.

⁴⁸Joshua R. Giddings, The Exiles of Florida (Gainesville: University of Florida, 1964 reproduction of the 1858 edition), pp. 52-53.

⁴⁹Hubert Bruce Fuller, The Purchase of Florida (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), p. 249.

the whole army to rush forward. Though badly outnumbered, the 300 Indians and blacks decided to make a fight of it anyway.⁵⁰

As Jackson's troops charged into the village, their right group, the Tennessee Volunteers under Colonel Dyer, came directly into the blacks' fire. The blacks' fire was so fatal that Dyer's Volunteers faltered and ceased advancing. They gave signs of falling back. The left wing of the American forces, composed of Colonel Williamson's Volunteers, made a successful charge against the Seminoles. The Seminoles gave way, and Jackson's middle group, the friendly Indians under the command of Chief Kinard, were suddenly brought into action to sustain the right wing. This caused the hostiles to fall back to the river.

The reports give eleven hostiles killed, and three blacks were taken prisoner. Jackson's forces reported only 13 wounded. Besides taking prisoners, Jackson and his men confiscated 2,700 bushels of corn, nearly 90 head of cattle, and a number of horses.

Gaines was ordered to pursue the savages, but they had scattered in various directions. Jackson on the next day, April 17, entered the town and ordered it burned.⁵¹

That night as the army slept, they were suddenly awakened by gunfire. It seemed that Robert Ambrister, a former British officer, and three companions had mistakenly walked into the American camp. On one of Ambrister's companions, a black, a letter was found written by Arbuthnot to his son.

⁵⁰James Parton, Life of Andrew Jackson, II (New York: Mason Brothers, 1860), pp. 461-462.

⁵¹ASP, Military Affairs, Vol. I, pp. 700-701.

Arbuthnot's letter said for his son to gather up their merchandise aboard his vessel (located a few miles away at the mouth of the Suwannee River) and proceed to a safe place. Arbuthnot recommended the Cedar Key Islands. He said that this exit was necessary because Jackson was leading a force to the Suwannee.

Jackson ordered Gadsden to seize Arbuthnot's vessel and arrest Ambrister and companions. Jackson used the vessel to transport his sick and wounded back to St. Marks while he returned with the army and his prisoners. This battle at Chief Bowlegs' village ended the First Seminole War. The next phase of fighting would be against the Spanish.

On April 20 General Glasscock's Georgia militia marched back to Hartford, Georgia, to be disbanded. On April 24, General McIntosh and his Indians were dismissed.⁵² By April 25, General Jackson with his Volunteers, the regulars, and the prisoners were back in Fort St. Marks. It had been 13 weeks since Jackson left Nashville.

⁵²John Henry Eaton, Life of Major General Andrew Jackson (Philadelphia: McCarty and Davis, 1828), pp. 268-287.

CHAPTER V

"RIGHT FOR PICKING"

When Jackson returned to Fort St. Marks, he ordered a special court to investigate charges against Alexander Arbuthnot and Robert Ambrister. The trial began on April 26, 1818, and Arbuthnot was the first to face charges. It must have felt strange to him, looking at the faces of the 14 officers appointed by Jackson. They were not only his accusers, but they were also his judge and jury.

Arbuthnot was charged with three offenses: (1) inciting the Creeks to war against the United States; (2) acting as a spy and supplying them with munitions of war; and (3) inciting the Indians to murder William Hambly and Edmund Doyle.¹ The third charge was dropped because the court determined it had no jurisdiction in the matter. The evidence against Arbuthnot of inciting the Creeks was a combination of hearsay and a letter which he was supposed to have written. The court, however, failed to produce the letter. Other letters were produced, but each of these showed that Arbuthnot always advised the Seminoles to maintain peace with the United States.²

¹The Trials of A. Arbuthnot and R. C. Ambrister (London: James Ridgeway, Picadilly, 1819), pp. 3-4.

²Ibid., pp. 7-8.

The "acting like a spy" charge was dropped, but Arbuthnot was found guilty of supplying the Indians with munitions because ten kegs of gunpowder were found at his trading post along the Suwannee River. Arbuthnot answered the charge that ten kegs of powder would only supply a thousand Indians for two months of hunting. Arbuthnot tried to call Ambrister as a witness, but was refused because Ambrister had charges against him too. Arbuthnot tried to convince the court to get the letter that he allegedly wrote to an Indian chief that was supposed to have incited him to war. It was no use; Arbuthnot was found guilty of the two charges and sentenced to be hanged.³

Ambrister's case was next. He had two charges against him: (1) aiding and comforting the enemy and (2) waging war on the United States. The court accused Ambrister of stealing Arbuthnot's vessel, plundering his store, and ordering a band of warriors to oppose the Americans. Ambrister made no formal defense, but put himself at the mercy of the court. He was found guilty and was sentenced to be shot. However, a court member decided to change his vote, and Ambrister was sentenced to a year of hard labor and 50 lashes on his bare back instead.

On April 29, while Jackson was departing with the army to Fort Gadsden, he approved the sentence of Alexander Arbuthnot. Jackson then said he approved the first sentence which Ambrister had received

³Ibid., pp. 52-53.

and that he disapproved the second sentence. While Jackson's army marched to Fort Gadsden, Arbuthnot was hanged from a yardarm on one of his own vessels, and Ambrister was executed by a firing squad.⁴

Jackson arrived in Fort Gadsden on May 2, 1818, and there he wrote Secretary Calhoun the details of his East Florida campaign. Jackson said that the Indians in West Florida were given information on his army's movements, as well as, the ammunition from Pensacola. Jackson also felt that Pensacola was being used as a base of operations for the Indians to launch attacks upon American settlements. Jackson made it clear that he intended to prevent this even if it meant taking the port city.

After a few days of rest at Fort Gadsden, Jackson, at the head of 1,200 regular and volunteer troops, commenced his march to Pensacola on May 7. Sixteen days later, Jackson's forces were nearing the outskirts of Pensacola when he received a dispatch from Governor José Masot of the Territory of West Florida. The dispatch dated May 22, 1818, read in part:

Having been informed of . . . your command passing the Frontiers and entering the Territory of West Florida under my charge, against which proceedings I protest. As an infringement and insult offered to his King and Master, obliges me in his name to declare to your Excellency to leave the boundaries, and if you . . . proceed contrary to my expectations I will repulse you force to force. The results in this case will. . . disturb the present harmony existing between our nations, but as I will only oppose . . . your approach I shall not consider myself the aggressor. You will therefore be responsible before God and men for the consequences and results of the same.⁵

⁴Ibid., pp. 60, 78 & 79.

⁵Correspondence II, p. 371.

If this dispatch from Governor Masot was intended to overcome Jackson and induce him to withdraw his forces, then this dispatch failed miserably. Masot's message only aroused and excited Jackson. He hurriedly answered Governor Masot's letter.⁶

Sir, I am informed that you have orders to fire on my troops entering the city . . . I wish you to understand distinctly that if such orders are carried into effect, I will put to death every man found in arms. The regular soldiers must be placed under the direction and care of my troops until an answer is obtained from the Governor to my communication to prevent unpleasant occurrences.⁷

On May 24, 1818, Jackson's troops marched into Pensacola. Governor Masot had fled to Fort Carlos de Barancas on the west entrance of Pensacola Bay, where he prepared to defend his position.⁸ Jackson claimed that a band of Indians, with Governor Masot's approval, had murdered a border family named Stokes. At the same time, many articles from the Stokes's house had been stolen. No inquiry of the Stokes murders was made by Spanish officials even though a resident of the area recognized one of Mrs. Stokes's dresses among the goods being openly peddled by a band of Indians.

Jackson said that he hurried into Pensacola and took possession of his supplies. Then he demanded possession of the Spanish garrison to be held by American troops until a guarantee could be given for the safety of the frontier. Governor Masot, however, refused to surrender.

⁶ Hubert Bruce Fuller, The Purchase of Florida (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), p. 255.

⁷ Correspondence II, loc. cit.

⁸ Francis Paul Prucha, Military Posts of the United States, 1789-1895 (Milwaukee: North American Press, 1966), p. 59.

Jackson approached the garrison with one nine-pound cannon and five eight-inch howitzers. The Spanish opened fire upon the Americans, which was returned. In the evening the Spanish surrendered.

Jackson wrote about the final events of Pensacola to a friend:

It is true I had my ladders ready to go over the garrison's walls, which I believed the garrison learned, and so they were afraid of a night attack and surrendered. Thus, sir, I have given you a concise statement of the facts, and all I regret is that I had not stormed the works, captured the Governor, put him on his trial for murder of Stokes and his family, and hung him for the deed. I could adopt no other way to put an end to the war, but by possessing myself of the strongholds that was a refuge to the enemy, and afforded them the means of offense.⁹

Jackson formally took possession of Pensacola on May 29, 1818, when he issued his Proclamation on taking Possession of Pensacola. In his Proclamation, Jackson stated how the United States would control Pensacola:

Colonel King will assume the command . . . as military and civil governor. The Spanish laws . . . affecting personal rights and property will be enforced. Colonel King will take possession of the archives of the province. It is all important that the record of titles and property be secured. The revenue laws of the United States will be established and Captain Gadsden appointed to act as collector with full powers to nominate such sub officers as . . . will be necessary.¹⁰

The reasons that Jackson gave for the United States demanding the surrender of Pensacola were that Governor Masot had refused to allow a United States naval supply vessel with provisions bound for Fort Crawford to sail up the Escambia River duty free, which had "exposed my troops

⁹James Parton, Life of Andrew Jackson (New York: Mason Borthers, 1860), pp. 499-500.

¹⁰Correspondence II, pp. 374-375.

to the severest privations." Additionally, the fact that Governor Masot received hostile Indians in Pensacola and St. Marks "had made himself contributory to the war."¹¹

On June 2, 1818, Jackson on his return trip to Nashville, wrote to Monroe and Calhoun from Fort Montgomery. To the President, Jackson wrote: "The possession of St. Marks, Ft. Gadsden and Ft. Carlos de Barancas [Pensacola] puts an end to all Indian wars." To Secretary Calhoun he wrote: "The Seminole War may now be considered closed. Tranquility is again restored to the Southern Frontier."¹²

After eight months of campaigning, the United States military force was practically in control of Spanish Florida. Without a declaration of war upon Spain, an officer of the United States army had arrested Spanish officials, punished the Spanish Indians, and executed two British subjects. The diplomatic maneuvers with Britain and Spain which followed were closely connected with the domestic policies of the southwest frontier settler and the slaveholding citizens of the South. Both of their basic purposes centered upon the expulsion of Spanish authority from Florida and the removal of the Florida Indians to the Louisiana Territory. The United States continued its negotiations to buy Florida from Spain. After receiving the complete account of Jackson's invasion into Florida and learning that American troops were now stationed in Pensacola and St. Marks in place of Spanish troops, Spain called the existing negotiations over. Spain declared it would not enter into further discussions concerning Florida until the American troops were evacuated from Spanish soil. Spain then

¹¹Ibid., p. 379.

¹²Francis Paul Prucha, The Sword of the Republic (London: Collier-Macmillan, Ltd., 1969), p. 133.

proceeded to look for a mediator, which would be useful to avoid any future hostilities in this Spanish-American crisis.

Spain looked for another nation to act as a mediator that would hopefully be sympathetic to her cause. Shortly, Spain realized that Britain was the best possible choice. Not only were they just recent allies from the War of 1812, but Britain also had a grievance toward the United States resulting from the same subject that was irritating Spain-- Jackson's invasion of Florida. Jackson's invasion and his execution of Arbuthnot and Ambrister, British citizens, nearly led to a rupture between the United States and Britain. Robert Castlereagh, the British Foreign Secretary, claimed credit for avoiding war over the executions. He said: "Such was the temper of Parliament, and such the feeling of the country, that war might have been produced by holding up a finger; and an address to the Crown might have been carried by one, by nearly a unanimous vote."¹³

Not only did Spain ask Britain to intervene in the diplomatic discussions, but it also asked if she would assist Spain in removing the American troops on her borders before entering negotiations, and if need be, use force to see that the Americans did leave. In return for the requested British support, Spain offered some Florida trading concessions.¹⁴

Britain, however, was not very interested in perhaps provoking a war over such meager returns. With American settlers pouring into the southern frontier region and with the several smashing victories over the Creeks, the Florida Indian trade had lost much of its appeal.

¹³Bradford Perkins, Castlereagh and Adams, 1812-1823 (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964), pp. 289-290.

¹⁴J. Fred Rippy, Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain Over Latin America, 1808-1830 (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), pp. 68-70.

After 1815 Britain had given up any ambitions of becoming entangled in Florida, and she certainly was not interested in committing herself to use force merely to support the Spanish regime there. However, Britain was opposed to the United States acquiring more territory, so the best Britain could do was to offer Spain her good offices.¹⁵

The United States, thinking she had nothing to gain by arbitration, turned the proposed mediation offer down. The United States felt, either rightly or wrongly, that such men as Arbuthnot, Ambrister, and Bowles were somehow associated with British designs on Florida, even though Britain denied a relationship. The United States was convinced that eventually she would have Florida and that all she would have to do is wait. Events proved that assumption correct as strong anti-Jackson reaction developed in the United States, and Monroe ordered the troops out of Florida.¹⁶

Secretary of State John Q. Adams insinuated in November, 1818, that Spain must control the Indians who still were dissatisfied with the Treaty of Fort Jackson. If Spain failed to do that, then more than likely there would be another invasion, and this time, the troops would remain. Because Britain wouldn't support her and because of her inability to control her hostile Indians and blacks, Spain feared that the United States would take Florida from her by force.

Reluctantly, Spain realized that her best move was to enter into actual discussions and stall for the best terms available. This is what she did after concluding the Adams-Onís Treaty in 1819. In this treaty, Spain was to give up her claims to both Floridas in return for a definite boundary which recognized Texas as part of New Spain.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁶ J. Leitch Wright, Jr., Anglo-Spanish Rivalry in North America (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1971), p. 187.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 188.

Spain delayed ratifying the treaty for two years. She still hoped that she could bargain for more concessions from the United States, or obtain British support in her behalf. Spain wanted Britain to intervene in a positive fashion that would forestall giving up Florida. If nothing else, Spain felt it was less unfortunate to see Florida wind up in British rather than American hands. At least Britain and Spain, both with Gulf coast colonies, might make common efforts in containing the Americans. Spain attempted to sell Britain the colony if Britain would advance \$6 million so that Spain could satisfy fully the United States' claims. Britain would get Florida in the bargain. However, Spain wanted to repurchase Florida as soon as she was financially stable. There was really little possibility that Spain could repay the \$6 million, and an excellent possibility that Britain would acquire Florida. Castlereagh would have nothing to do with this. Belatedly, Spain ratified the treaty with the United States, and when General Jackson, for a third time within a decade, marched into Pensacola, he marched in as governor. It also marked the final phase of the conquest of Florida, which had begun in De Soto's time.¹⁸

After the Florida cession in 1821 and the successful Mexican Revolution of the same year, Anglo-Spanish rivalry in North America ceased. It had begun unpretentiously in the sixteenth century when English ships began fishing off Newfoundland and when John Hawkins began looking at the east coast of Florida. Viewing Britain's diplomatic movement concerning Florida after 1815, it is well established that this rivalry could hardly have ended less notably. To be sure, if you could have accompanied Governor Moore or Oglethorpe against St. Augustine or St. Marks, there

¹⁸Phillip Coolidge Brooks, Diplomacy and the Borderlands (New York: Octagon Books, 1970), pp. 191-192.

would have been sufficient excitement and pageantry entwined with a rivalry so deep that it would pass intact from one generation to another, never letting one forget that he is of Anglo heritage. Neither did this heritage remain intact to one country such as Englishmen, but it has spread to other Europeans under English auspices who have poured into North America. The heritage has certainly attracted the English merchants and manufacturers lured by American raw materials and by growing markets. The Anglo heritage stimulated English colonization and expansion. It was expansion, which in itself, gave even a maturer outlook on the Anglo heritage. No matter who the man was that came before the Anglo arrived--either Indian, trader, furtrapper, or hunter--they were viewed the same from the eyes of expansion for they were principally concerned with following flocks, i.e. things that live above the soil that either roam, crawl or fly.

The Anglo was more concerned with things he could grow in the soil. Others left the land as they found it, while the Anglo changed or altered it by building roads, bridges, and houses.

Since Spanish immigrants, with few exceptions, regularly went to Mexico and South America and Spanish merchants and manufacturers hardly ever were in a position to exploit Florida's resources effectively, it is hard not to conceive that, even if Spain had taken Guala back in 1742, this would have merely delayed the inexorable English advance.¹⁹

After the American Revolution the main question was whether Britain would attach part or all of the Mississippi, Ohio and Missouri River valleys, including the Floridas, to Canada. This issue was in the balance from 1783 to 1815. The question was resolved in 1815 because

¹⁹Wright, op. cit. pp. 189-190.

Britain, with a healthier respect for the power of the United States, was exhausted after a quarter of a century struggle against France. Coming more under the influence of Adam Smith's "laissez faire" doctrine, which placed little emphasis on colonies, Britain put aside the dream of carving out a colony in the heart of North America at the expense of Spain and the United States. It was not surprising that Britain did not encourage the Creeks and Seminoles after 1815. Possibly both Francis the Prophet and William Augustus Bowles finally realized that, after almost three centuries, Britain had abandoned her policy of acquiring territory in North America at Spain's expense. The seed of the Anglo heritage, which Britain had sown into her first colonies along the eastern coast, would by 1815 begin to bloom; and under the care of manifest destiny, develop a good crop from one edge of the continent to the other.

By 1821 Florida was "right for picking."

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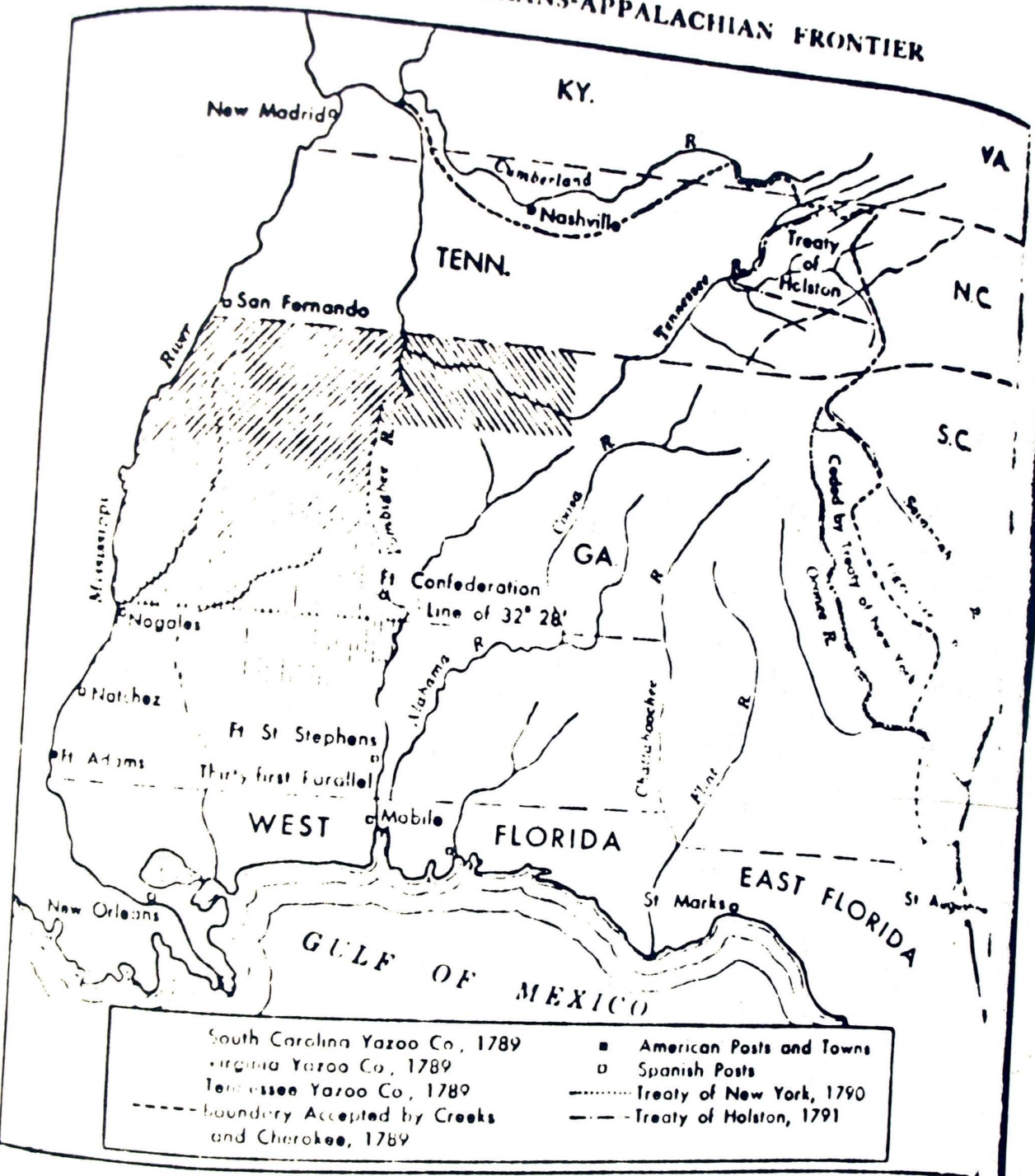
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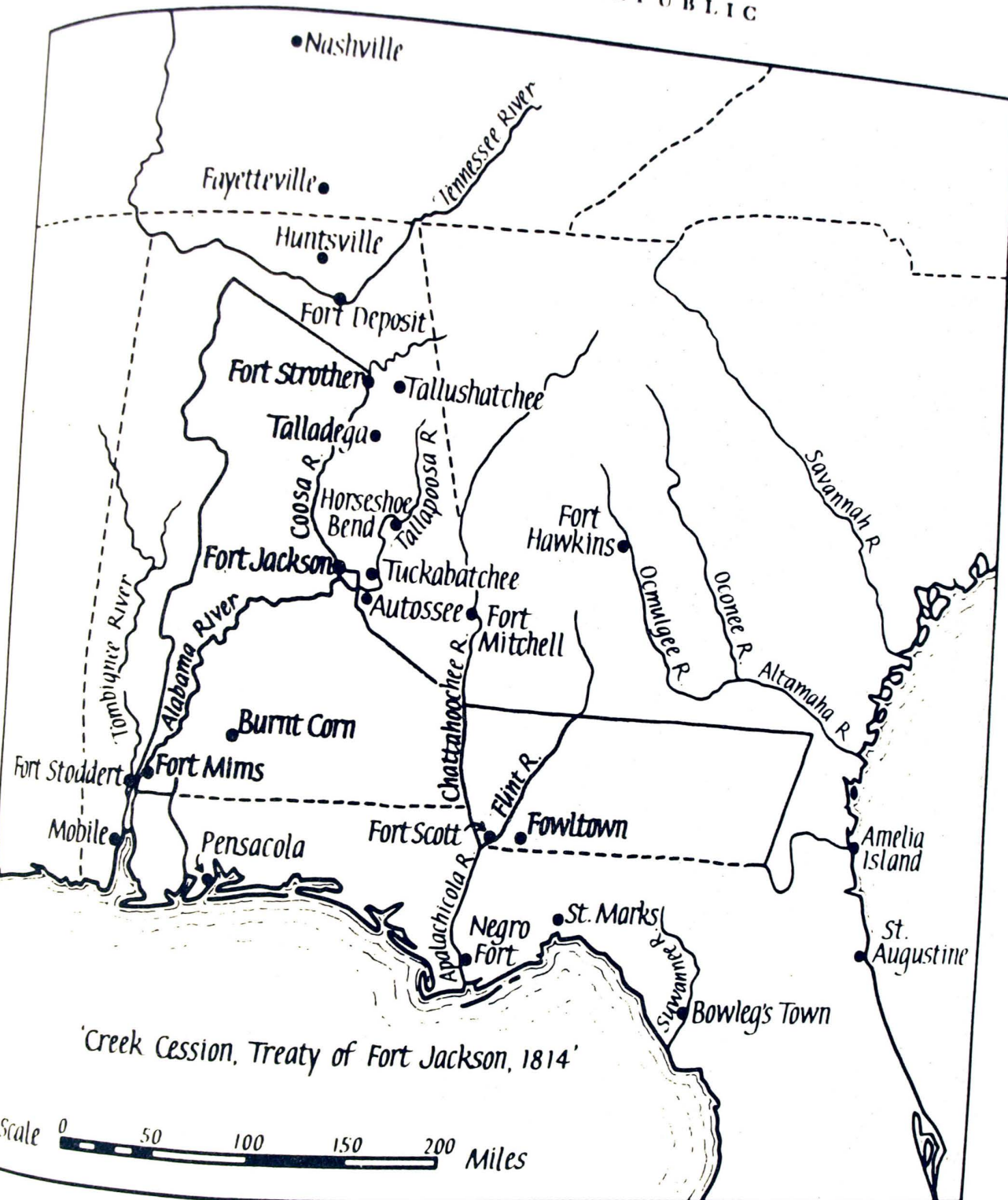
MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

SECTION II: THE TRANS-APPALACHIAN FRONTIER



Spanish-American Relations in the Southwest, 1789-1803

THE SWORD OF THE REPUBLIC



The Southern Frontier, 1813-1818

*Taken from The Sword of the Republic by Francis Paul Prucha.

FORT GADSDEN

EARTHWORKS

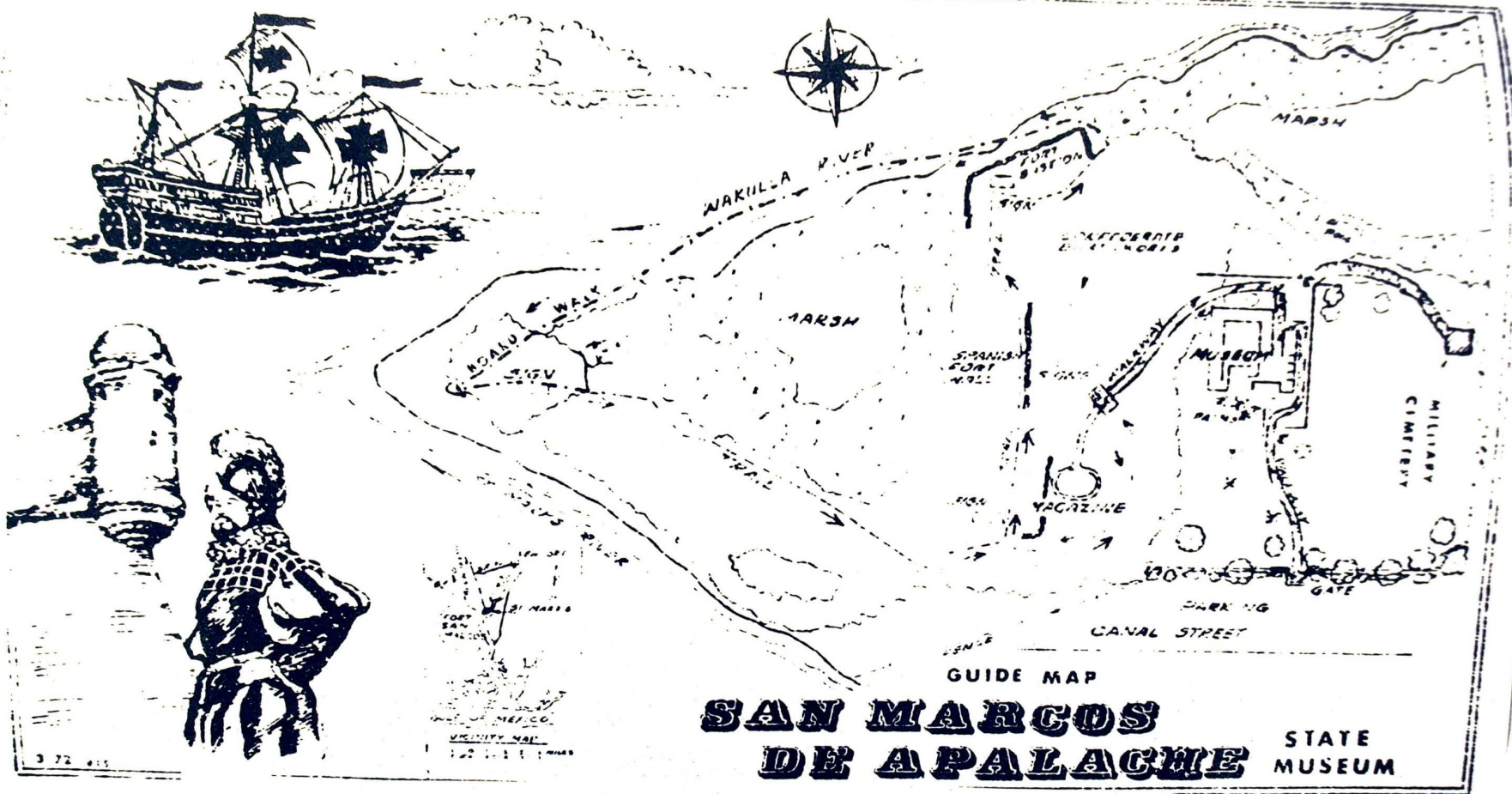
NEGRO
FORT

TRENCHES

OLD
FORT GADSDEN

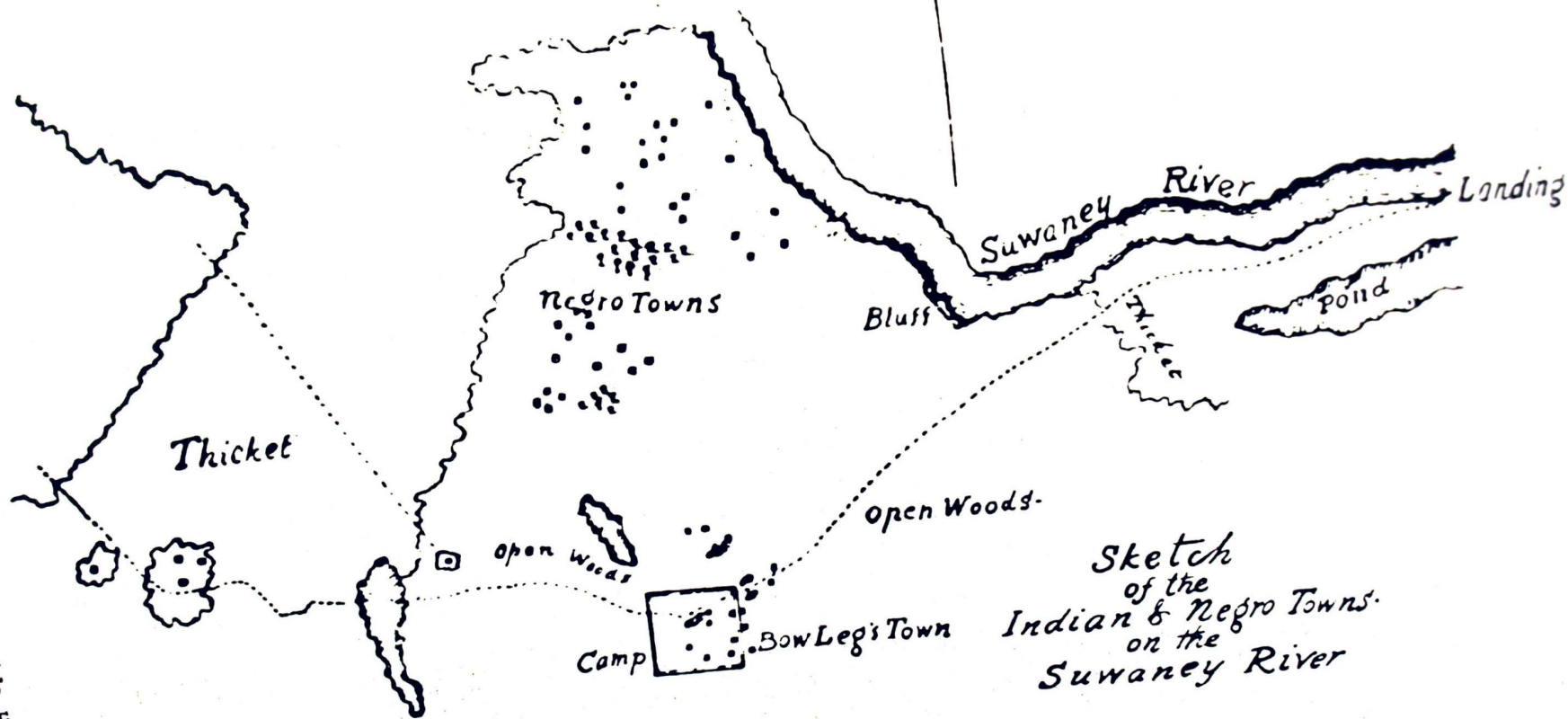
APALACHICOLA RIVER

Only the remains of earthworks and trenches exist at the fort today.



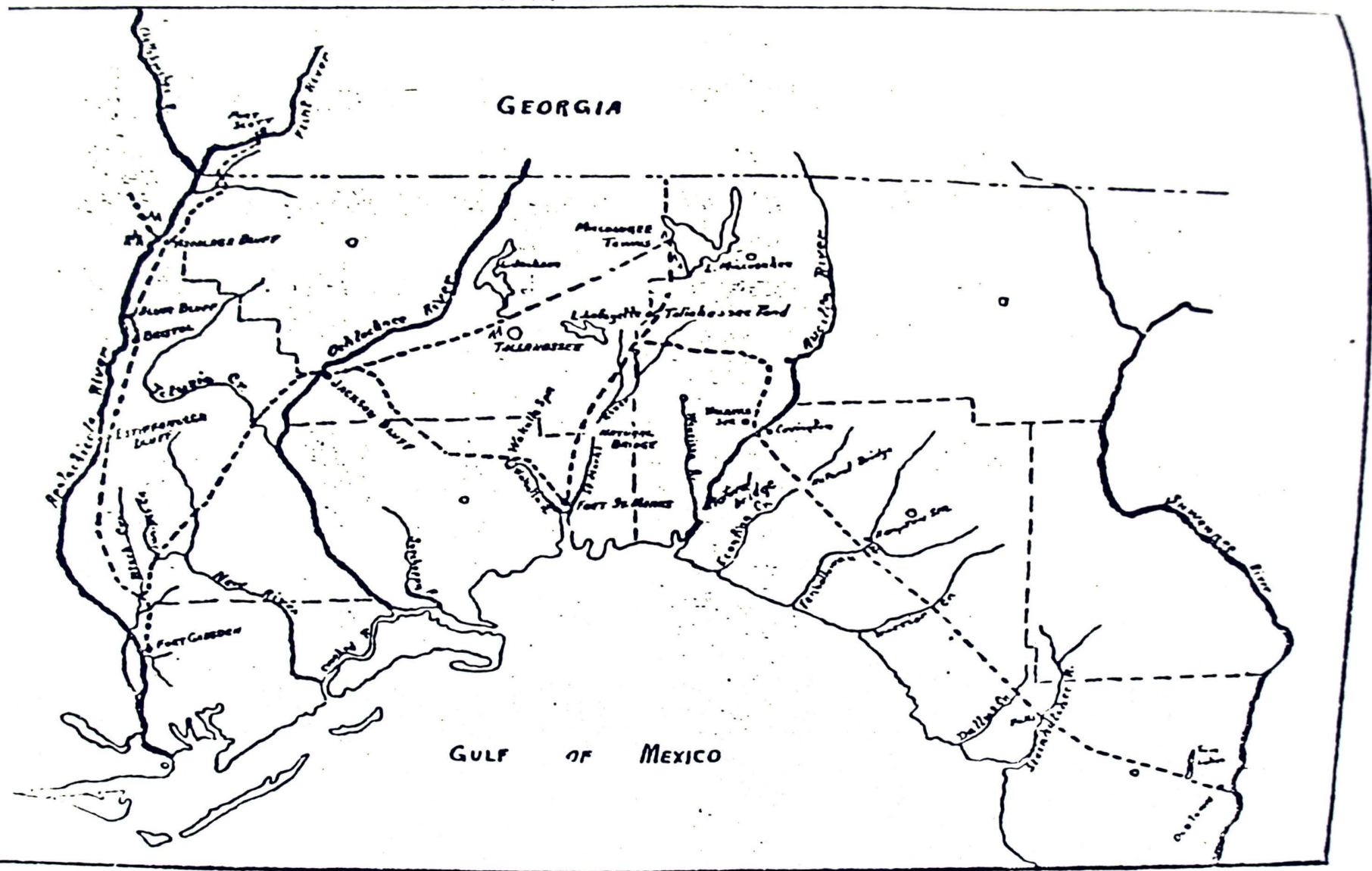
*Taken from a San Marcos de Apalache State Museum print-out, Florida
 Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Recreation and Parks, San Marcos,
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*Taken from Florida Historical Quarterly
(October 1969).



*Sketch
of the
Indian & Negro Towns.
on the
Suwaney River*

Scale of two inches to a mile.



Jackson's Route In East Florida, 1818.