

The “Civilizing” Influence of Slavery

The Introduction of African-American Slavery into the Creek Nation and the Spread of  
American Slave Society into the Southern Frontier

Jacob Goldenberg

Advisor: Professor Alan Brinkley  
Second Reader: Professor Barbara J. Fields

April 2013  
Columbia University in the City of New York  
Department of History

## Abstract

Prior to its founding as an English colony, modern-day Georgia was populated largely by members of what the English termed to be the Creek Confederacy, a loosely unified conglomeration of various tribes and language groups. Over the course of a century, from Georgia's founding in 1733 until the removal of the Creeks to lands west of the Mississippi in the early 1830s, Creek lands were slowly adopted into southern slave society. This thesis will focus on the evolving attitudes of American slave-owners towards the presence of slavery among the Creeks of Georgia, and how slavery's growth affected Creek society and sovereignty east of the Mississippi. During the colonial period, the Creek country was an uncontrolled cultural breeding ground on which a new and unique society with slaves began to emerge. It was during this period that some Creeks themselves first came to own slaves and European slave-owners first came to live among the Creeks. Despite the incongruence of native Creek social life with this system of slavery based on racial difference, African slavery became a recognizable part of life in the Creek country, for Creeks and the new foreigners among them.

The years following the Revolutionary War saw slave-owners shift gears as they looked towards colonizing more Creek lands and expanding their slave society into the interior. This expansiveness of slavery precipitated an evolution of federal policy, inspiring the adoption of the American "civilizing" program whereby Creeks and other native groups would be encouraged to adopt European style economic and labor practices, including the ownership of African slaves. The United States found important allies for its "civilizing" mission in the growing number of Creek slave-owners, some of whom soon came to dominate Creek tribal politics. Over time, the "civilizing" program succeeded in establishing a foothold for American slavery in the Georgian interior, but not without years of struggle and occasional outbursts of violent resistance. This thesis will track this "civilizing" influence of slavery in the early years of the American republic, whereby the presence of slavery in Georgia worked to undermine traditional native society and replace it with slave society.

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	Page 4
Chapter 1: The First Creek Slaves.....	Page 11
Chapter 2: “Civilizing” the Creeks and the Spread of Slavery.....	Page 24
Chapter 3: Fork in the Road: The Red Stick War and the Triumph of Slave Society.....	Page 45
Epilogue.....	Page 60
Bibliography.....	Page 62

## Introduction

Upon his arrival in his new colony of Georgia in the early 1730s, Governor James Oglethorpe promptly set about establishing formal ties of friendship with the neighboring native tribes. Among the native peoples already inhabiting what would become the colony of Georgia were members of what the English termed to be the Creek Confederacy. The Creeks, or to use a more traditional cognate Muscogeans, were actually composed of a number of tribes who, in the words of a native Creek historian writing a century after Oglethorpe's arrival, simultaneously worked to "retain their primitive tongues and customs" while remaining "inseparably united by compact and consolidated by individual and national interest."<sup>1</sup> Despite the close ties of these various tribes and populations, Creek society, both internally and in its relations with the English and later American colonizing powers, would long endure divisions along linguistic, cultural and geographic divides. Yet Governor Oglethorpe remained blissfully unaware of the complex and dynamic history which would follow his initial treaty with the Creeks when he set out among them in August of 1733.

As he explained to his colony's first settlers, Oglethorpe hoped "that through your good example the settlement of Georgia may prove a blessing and not a curse to the native inhabitants."<sup>2</sup> Oglethorpe's dream of providing a boon to Georgia's surrounding native peoples certainly comes through clearly in the language of the treaty which he co-signed with a large

---

<sup>1</sup> George Stiggins, *Creek Indian History: A Historical Narrative of the Genealogy, Traditions, and Downfall of the Ispocoga or Creek Indian Tribe of Indians*, eds. Virginia Pounds Brown and William Stokes Wyman (Birmingham: Birmingham Public Library Press, 1989), 25. This paper will primarily focus on the Creeks who remained in Georgia and Alabama until removal. By the mid-eighteenth century native populations in Florida had severed political ties with their neighbors to the north. As this study is focused on the spread of slave-society over certain lands in particular, the history of African slavery among the Seminoles of Florida is outside its central focus. See Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Power, Property and the Transformation of the Creek Indians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 35.

<sup>2</sup> "Oglethorpe's Treaty with the Lower Creek Indians," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (1920): 3, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40575623?seq=1>.

number of Creek chiefs and warriors. Among other things, the treaty guaranteed to “maintain and preserve an inviolable Peace, Friendship and Commerce between the said Head men of the...Creeks and the People the said Trustees have sent and shall send to inhabit and settle in the Province of Georgia.”<sup>3</sup> The treaty promised “to see Restitution done to any People of your Towns” for damage committed by Georgian traders living among them, and further guaranteed that no Georgians would illegally settle beyond the boundaries of the already conceded Creek lands.<sup>4</sup> Had these agreements stood the test of time, Governor Oglethorpe’s dream of lasting friendship and mutual benefit for both Creeks and colonizers might indeed have been realizable.

Sadly, over time it became clear that Oglethorpe’s idealistic vision of Anglo-Creek relations would never be achieved. As social and economic changes wrought by Anglo-American colonization spread throughout the following century, Creek sovereignty was slowly undermined through numerous formal treaties culminating in the final removal of all Creek peoples to beyond the Mississippi.<sup>5</sup> Yet Oglethorpe’s rhetoric, in which the English would provide a civilizing blessing to these savage natives, endured far longer. The American federal government actively sought to impose the “benefits” of European practices on native tribes throughout North America, with a particular focus on the Creek Nation.<sup>6</sup> One of the central aspects of the United States’ “civilizing” program regarding the south’s native tribes was a barbarity which grew up alongside English colonization in the American southeast: the American system of slavery.

---

<sup>3</sup> “Oglethorpe’s Treaty with the Lower Creeks,” 15.

<sup>4</sup> “Oglethorpe’s Treaty with the Lower Creeks,” 8-12.

<sup>5</sup> For a collection of the formal treaties between the Creeks and the United States, which track the federal government’s continued encroachments onto Creek Lands, see Charles J. Kappler, comp. and ed., *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1903), Vol. 2, <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/Kappler/>. Some other earlier colonial treaties will be discussed and cited below.

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to Thomas Jefferson, Creek Agency, July 11, 1803, in *Letters, Journals and Writings of Benjamin Hawkins: Vol II, 1802-1816*, ed. C.L. Grant, (Savannah: The Beehive Press, 1980). See Chapter 2.

This thesis will focus on the evolving attitudes of American slave-owners towards the presence of slavery among the Creeks of Georgia, and how slavery's growth affected the history of Creek society and sovereignty east of the Mississippi. In the early years of Georgian history, trade with the Creeks was the central aspect of the Georgian economy.<sup>7</sup> During these years, colonial policy was characterized by a fear of population mixing between Africans and natives, and accordingly the influx of slavery into Creek society in pre-Revolutionary years was sporadic and haphazard.<sup>8</sup> This situation allowed for an uncontrolled and unregulated cultural breeding ground on which a new and unique society with slaves began to emerge. Claudio Saunt has written about this period, emphasizing native Creek opposition to the values of the slave-society emerging in the east.<sup>9</sup> This study will draw much from the grounds Saunt has laid, but further emphasize how the needs of American slave-owners engendered colonial policies through which this new type of slavery began to spread among the Creeks. Though they failed to shut off the movement of slaves entirely into the frontier, colonial powers succeeded in significantly impacting how the first experiences of Africans in Creek society would unfold.

If colonial policy was dictated by fears of Afro-Creek collusion, the years following the Revolutionary War saw American slave-owners shift gears as their expansive slave-society grew in population and profitability. Slave grown cash crops supplanted the Indian trade in the Georgian economy.<sup>10</sup> Slave-owners now looked west.<sup>11</sup> The Creeks of western Georgia were no

---

<sup>7</sup> Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek-Indian Trade with Anglo America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), xiii, 58.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel F. Littlefield, *Africans and Creeks, From the Colonial Period to the Civil War* (Westport: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1979), 14-19 provides details on early colonial policies and fears of African-Creek collusion.

<sup>9</sup> Claudio Saunt "The English Has Now a Mind to Make Slaves of Them All': Creeks, Seminoles and the Problem of Slavery," *American Indian Quarterly*, 22, No. 1/2 (Winter-Spring 1998), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1185115>.

<sup>10</sup> Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 169, 182-5.

longer simply a potentially subversive population or partners for trade; they were occupiers of desirable land claimed by the state of Georgia and on which republican American citizens were destined to reside. So was born the “civilizing” program of the federal government, in which slavery would be encouraged and actively spread among the Creeks rather than proscribed. It was this shift in policy that ensured the eventual incorporation of Creek lands into American slave society and spelled the doom of traditional Creek society and sovereignty east of the Mississippi.<sup>12</sup> Thus slaves were not the only ones to suffer from this barbaric system’s spread west. Creek slave-owners, some unwittingly, helped hasten their own culture’s forced removal by adopting this foreign institution.

Over time many Creeks came to realize the implications of allowing a slave society encroaching on their lands to force its practices upon them. Armed resistance followed. But after a civil war among the Creeks, contemporaneous with the War of 1812, traditionalists were defeated and largely expelled from Georgian and Alabaman lands. Creek and American slave-owning power would be permanently enshrined in the Creek country north of Florida. Slavery would be formally and legally entrenched among the Creeks in these final two decades before removal, as the now shrunken Creek country played a pivotal role as a buffer between the exiled native pockets of resistance to the south and expanding federal authority.<sup>13</sup> Organized violent

---

<sup>11</sup> Adam Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005). Chapters 1 and 2 of Rothmans book highlight the ideological underpinnings of this shift and its affects on the frontier.

<sup>12</sup> Kathryn E. Holland Braund, “The Creek Indians, Blacks, and Slavery,” *Journal of Southern History*, 57 no. 4 (November 1991): 616-636. Braund discusses the workings of the “civilizing” program within Creek lands following the Revolutionary War and its influences on the spread of slavery. This thesis will supplement her account by discussing the motivations which engendered that policy and the changes it represented for the American colonizing program (unless otherwise noted, further citations of Braund refer to this article).

<sup>13</sup> For early Creek slave codes, see Antonio J. Waring, “Laws of the Creek Nation,” laws 3, 20-2, 26, 31, 34, in William C. Sturtevant, ed., *A Creek Sourcebook* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1987). On the Creek country as a divide between friends and enemies of American civilization, see Joel W. Martin, *Sacred Revolt: the Muscogeese’s Struggle for a New World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 165.

resistance to slavery was pushed deep into Florida, far away from the slave society which now finally and permanently occupied much of modern day Georgia and Alabama.<sup>14</sup>

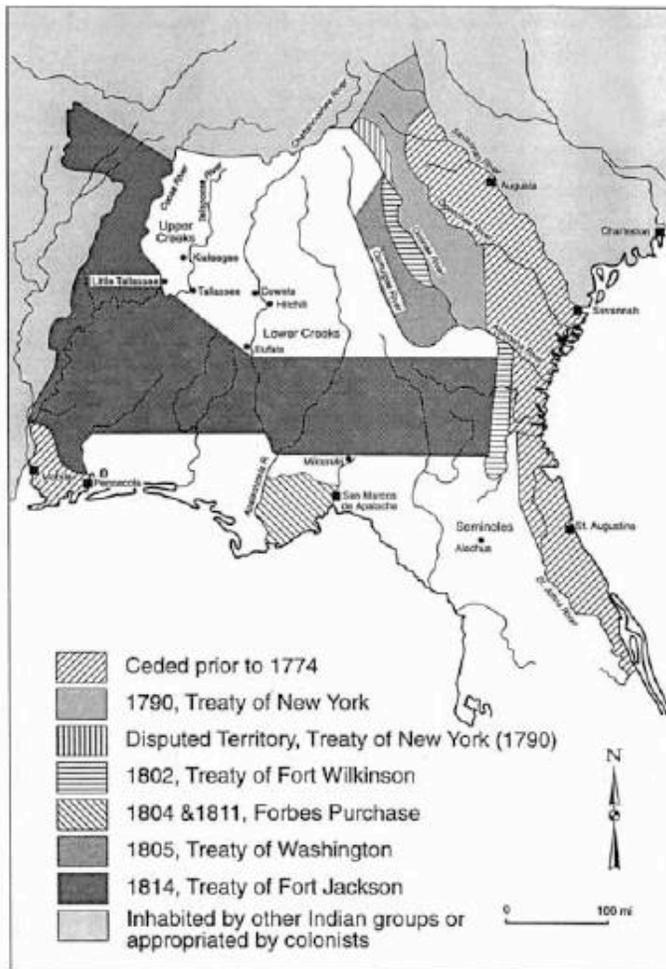


Image 1

*A map of Creek land cessions through 1814. This thesis will focus on the spread of slavery in the upper portion of the Creek country, i.e. north of modern-day Florida or Seminole country. The largest cession, in which nearly twenty-five million acres were ceded, was signed under duress by pro-American Creeks following the Creeks' civil war (known as the Red Stick War) of 1813.<sup>15</sup>*

Scholars have tended to view the increased presence of slavery among the Creeks in the years after American independence primarily as a byproduct of the chaos of war.<sup>16</sup> But

<sup>14</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to Thomas Pickney, Fort Toulouse, April 25, 1814 and Benjamin Hawkins to William Hawkins, Fort Toulouse, April 26, 1814, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 679-80.

<sup>15</sup> Saunt, *A New Order*, 271. Drawn by Mike Feeney, Campus Graphics and Photography, University of Georgia. Chapters 2-3 of this thesis will discuss the meaning of these cessations in depth. See also Kappler, "Treaty of Fort Jackson."

<sup>16</sup> Braund, 618; Martha Condray Searcy, "The Introduction of African Slavery into the Creek Indian Nation," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 1 (Spring, 1982), pp. 21-32.

something more needs to be said to explain how the expansion of slavery among the Creeks proved so lasting and influential. The American system in which slaves were exclusively persons of African descent and in which African peoples by virtue of ancestry were denied full membership in society would not and could not be replicated in traditional Creek society. The Creeks lacked, among other things, private property, a commitment to commercial agriculture, internal cohesion or effective and organized law enforcement.<sup>17</sup> Yet despite these incongruities, the presence of African slaves owned by Creeks slowly expanded, with near 300 among the Upper Creeks alone in the 1790s and more than 900, or about five percent of the total population still inhabiting the Creek lands east of the Mississippi, living amidst the Creeks as slaves by 1832.<sup>18</sup> Before removal was accomplished, slavery had become a recognizable and pervasive aspect of Creek life. The active efforts and designs of the American colonizing program can account for this unlikely story.

American policy-makers hoped that this new and foreign system of human property could be made permanent by modifying Creek society. Along the way, traditional Creek practices that had been irreconcilable with slavery as it was transported from Georgia would fade and disappear. It was during this period that formal and written Creek laws emerged, the first of which were directly concerned with slavery. Meanwhile, over time commercial practices and private use of land supplanted traditional Creek economic practices such as communal landownership.<sup>19</sup> The federal government dreamed of erasing traditional native cultures and incorporating their lands into the expanding American nation and southern slave-society, and slavery itself proved a useful tool towards achieving this end.

---

<sup>17</sup> Saunt, *A New Order*, 119-120.

<sup>18</sup> Saunt, "Slaves of Them All," 166; U.S. Congress, Senate Document 512, 23rd Congress, 1st Session, *Correspondence on the Emigration of the Indians*, 1832 Creek Nation: Alabama Census, <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~texlance/1832census/index.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> Saunt, *A New Order*, 164.

Yet a large number of Creeks would never fully embrace the American slave system and the racism inherent in it. Sections of the Creek population refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of these European-American impositions, and they remained staunch defenders of traditional Creek culture and sovereignty. And as the first Anglo-American colonists had foreseen, Creek opponents of foreign influence would find ready allies among the slaves of the southeast. African slavery among the Creeks would always function in a loose and fluid manner with characteristics atypical of the system on which it was modeled.

The attempt by slave-owning powers to impose American practices and influence among the Creeks and the resistance of portions of the native population and the Africans among them to such an end, would be the conflict on which Afro-Creek slavery turned. The American system of slavery was consciously superimposed onto Creek life by a foreign colonizing power. Yet the reality of this imposition on the ground was created and determined by slaves and their masters themselves, no matter what policy statements or formal laws were propagated by American and Creek slave-owners. It was these people's experiences, actions, desires and wills that guided the fate of the American system of slavery among the Creeks, and why, despite the ever growing presence of slavery, the attempt to impose widespread acceptance of this foreign model among the Creeks ultimately failed. To bring slave society into Creek country, the Creeks would have to be removed.

## Chapter 1: The First Creek Slaves

Just as the “civilizing” rhetoric that would come to characterize American policy in the southeast can be traced back in Georgia at least as far as James Oglethorpe’s founding of the colony in 1733, so too can a concern for the security of slave property and the system of slavery based upon African descent be observed even at this early stage. Article six of the 1733 treaty between Georgia and the Lower Creeks stipulated that the Creeks “do promise to apprehend and secure any Negro or other slave which shall runaway from any of the English Settlements to our Nation,” for whose return the Creeks were promised two guns if alive and one blanket if dead.<sup>20</sup> Amazingly, this provision was secured despite the pending banning of slavery in the colony of Georgia, presumably reflecting a concern with the slaves of the Carolinas and Virginia to the north.<sup>21</sup>

Of great concern was the fear, pervasive among the southern English colonies, that a joint force of imported Africans and native Creeks in opposition to the expansion of English power might emerge.<sup>22</sup> During these early years, slavery was subordinate to the primary source of income for the colony of Georgia, the fur trade.<sup>23</sup> The danger that African slavery’s spread into the frontier might pose to the trade can best explain the provision in Georgia’s foundational bylaws regulating the Indian trade which forbid the use of “any Negro or other slave in the Indian Country.”<sup>24</sup> Yet just as Oglethorpe’s idealism proved ineffectual, so too did his attempt to

---

<sup>20</sup> “Oglethorpe’s Treaty with the Lower Creeks,” 14.

<sup>21</sup> The founders of Georgia sought to prevent the presence of any Africans in their colony by banning slavery and the presence of Africans entirely. Thus this provision would primarily have concerned the slaves of the neighboring colonies of Virginia and South Carolina. See Allen D. Candler. ed., *The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, (Atlanta: The Franklin Printing and Publishing Company and The Franklin-Turner Company, 1904-26), vol. 1: 40, 363.

<sup>22</sup> Littlefield, 14-19.

<sup>23</sup> Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 42.

<sup>24</sup> Allen D. Candler. ed., *Colonial Records of Georgia*, vol. 1: 40.

prevent the influx of African peoples among the Creeks. Laws regulating the presence of Africans in the backcountry would be employed by Georgia's trade regulators up until the Revolutionary War.<sup>25</sup> Yet within a few decades, the Anglo-American system of slavery would be playing an integral role in the frontier economy.

It was the desire to increase production and profits from cash crops that led to the preponderance and growth of the slave system in the English colonies east of the Creeks. Yet no such need existed among the native peoples who historically inhabited the American southeast. Before outside pressures intervened following the Revolution, Creek society remained obstinate in its general refusal to adopt European customs such as commercial agriculture, private property, and modern farming techniques. The Creeks had already encountered Anglo-American forms of slavery prior to Georgia's founding, primarily through dealings with the Carolinas. But though the Creeks had participated actively in the exchange of Indian slaves with earlier colonists, they evinced no desire to own slaves themselves. Despite their willingness to trade in Indian slaves, this practice had faded by the early eighteenth century.<sup>26</sup> As long as traditional labor practices persisted, the Creek Confederacy would remain an obstacle beyond which the American slave system could not fully extend its reach.<sup>27</sup>

These traditional practices remained prevalent among the Creeks throughout the colonial period. William Bartram, traveling throughout the Creek lands in the 1770s, described native forms of landownership and agricultural labor which were still practiced among the Creeks during his time. As Bartram observed, among the Creeks "the soil, with all its appurtenances of

---

<sup>25</sup> "Regulations for the Better Carrying on the Trade with the Indian Tribes in the Southern District (1767)," 4, 21. A supplementary note by the author of the regulations explained why the presence of Africans was being regulated: "Negroes and mulattoes are employed by traders to plant in the nations and may form dangerous connections with the Indians." Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, appendix.

<sup>26</sup> Martin, 58-60.

<sup>27</sup> Saunt, *New Order*, 38.

the whole Muscogulge Confederacy or Empire, is equally the right and property of every individual inhabitant.”<sup>28</sup> The Creeks did not fence off privately owned land as did their new European-American neighbors. Rather, the Creeks held “all their possessions in common,” and when one was “in want of any necessary that he or she sees ... the request (for it) is forthwith granted.”<sup>29</sup> The lack of a commercial economy and general sharing of resources among the Creeks prevented any need or desire to use slave labor for profit during this early period.<sup>30</sup>

Discounting Bartram’s obviously idealistic picture of early Creek society, in which any semblance of avarice and greed was entirely alien to native life, there is much evidence to support his descriptions of the pre-Revolutionary Creek world.<sup>31</sup> For one, his picture of a society lacking in private property and founded upon shared use of resources is upheld by numerous other sources, including native Creek historians.<sup>32</sup> There is also archeological evidence upholding the notion that Bartram does indeed reliably describe traditional southeastern agricultural labor practice.<sup>33</sup> He tells us how “every town or community assigns a piece or parcel of land...called the *town plantation*.” This field was to be worked by “all the citizens, as one family” and eventually divided into shares according to any particular family’s individual needs. Subsistence was the primary aim of Creek agricultural labor, and could be achieved with ease without the aid of slave labor. Accordingly, slave labor conferred no advantage upon Creeks living in such a traditional manner. Were Creek society allowed to function in such a manner

---

<sup>28</sup> William Bartram, “Observations on the Creek and Cherokee Indians, 1789,” 37, in William C. Sturtevant, ed., *A Creek Sourcebook* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1987).

<sup>29</sup> Bartram, 41.

<sup>30</sup> Braund, 622

<sup>31</sup> Saunt, *New Order*, 38.

<sup>32</sup> Stiggins, 51-4.

<sup>33</sup> Charles H. Fairbanks, “Creek and Pre-Creek,” 51-5, in William C. Sturtevant, ed., *A Creek Sourcebook* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1987); Amber M. VanDerwarker and Kandace R. Detwiler, “Gendered Practice in Cherokee Foodways: A Spatial Analysis of Plant Remains From The Coweeta Creek Site,” *Southeastern Archaeology*, 21, no. 1 (Summer 2002), 21-2, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40713484>.

perpetually, the incursions of the American slave system would probably have remained minimal or peripheral.

Indeed, Bartram does describe just such an early Creek “plantation” operating on the outskirts of Creek society by the end of the colonial period. He explains that there were “very few instances amongst the Creeks, of farms or private plantations out of sight of the town,” yet Bartram visited one belonging to one mestizo Creek known as “*Bosten* or Boatswain.”<sup>34</sup> Boatswain cultivated multiple acres and had well developed and furnished improvements upon his lands. Among Boatswain’s possessions Bartram lists fifteen negro slaves. These “slaves” were not perpetually confined to a life of slavery, but rather lived and existed in a sort of middle-ground somewhere between slave and free. Many of them were “married to Indians; and enjoyed equal privileges with them; but they are slaves till they marry, when they become Indians or free citizens.”<sup>35</sup> Boatswain’s behavior accorded with traditional Creek practice, by which a captive slave could be granted full membership to his owner’s tribe or clan if granted a Creek spouse. Though Boatswain was unique in Bartram’s eyes for his adoption of the European practices of large-scale agriculture, accumulation of property, and the ownership of African slaves, Boatswain felt no need to import the foreign notion of slavery as a life-long and inherited status.

Bartram leaves behind no account as to how Boatswain acquired all his African slaves.<sup>36</sup> Colonial laws at this time forbade the introduction of African slaves into Creek lands. Yet by virtue of the Creek Confederacy’s proximity to the southern slave owning colonies, many

---

<sup>34</sup> Bartram, 37.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*, 38.

<sup>36</sup> Boatswain probably acquired his different slaves in multiple ways. Saunt, *New Order*, 56, tells how one such slave was purchased by Boatswain from a group of Creeks who had kidnapped the slave from New Orleans.

African slaves found their way to the Creeks during this early period as runaways.<sup>37</sup> Some were taken captive and forced to return to their original owners, others were embraced and initiated as members of Creek society, and still others lived outside the bounds of either Creek or Anglo-American society in the vast uninhabited backwoods of the frontier. However they arrived in his possession, Boatswain's practice of enslaving his Africans and eventually offering them freedom was just one option among many Creeks could follow. At the very least, Boatswain's experience demonstrates just how ineffectual were the colonial laws aimed at preventing this population mixing. No rigid rules could govern how the experiences of free or enslaved Africans who found their way into the Creek Confederacy would unfold during the colonial period.

Colonial authorities appreciated the incompatibility of traditional Creek social life with this new type of slavery, and sought to use this to their advantage. Accordingly, as the presence of slaves in the English colonies increased, colonial governments essentially employed Creeks as slave catchers. Treaties and informal agreements regularly included provisions for the return of runaway slaves, with the dual goal of cutting off an outlet for slaves' to escape and preventing collusion between Africans and Creeks.<sup>38</sup> The policy was partially successful, with a good number of runaways returned to colonial authorities by the Creeks during these years.<sup>39</sup> Yet, as we shall see, it was ultimately a futile project. The presence of blacks among the Creeks was relatively common by the end the colonial period, and no amount of colonial pressure could

---

<sup>37</sup> Zellar, *African Creeks: Estelvste and the Creek Nation* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 8-10.

<sup>38</sup> "Oglethorpe's Treaty with the Lower Creeks," 14; Candler, ed., *Colonial Records of Georgia*, vol. 38: pt. 1, 343, cited in Martha Condray Searcy, "The Introduction of African Slavery into the Creek Indian Nation," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 66 no. 1 (Spring 1982), 31. These are two treaties, bookending Georgia's colonial period, employ this same tactic. For others, see Littlefield, chapter 1.

<sup>39</sup> Searcy, 22-26.

ensure the return of all runaways in the Creek backcountry.<sup>40</sup> Despite their best efforts, colonial authorities could not prevent the influx of African peoples and slaves into the Creek world.

Yet colonial policies seeking the return of runaways did result in some unintended consequences which would ultimately serve the purposes of the Anglo-American colonizing enterprise in a number of ways. Slave-owners sought to fortify their emerging slave-societies by preventing African-Creek collusion and securing their property in slaves. Neither of these ends was perfectly achieved. Yet their policies did bring about an initial extension of the arm of the American slave-power into Creek lands, introducing foreign concepts of personal and perpetual ownership of human property and the a model of slavery based on racial difference, while simultaneously furthering the appreciation and presence of the manufactured goods of the European economy among the Creeks.

The attempts at separating Creeks and African slaves, though only partially successful, still impacted how African slavery would first come to be practiced among the Creeks. Consider the experiences of one David George. Born on a Virginian plantation in the early eighteenth century, George provides a unique first-person account of the life of a Creek slave prior to the Revolutionary War. George's master treated him badly, so George eventually ran away deeper into the Virginian frontier. Yet rumors of his master's continued search for him reached his ears, so "before they came after me again...I ran away up among the Creek Indians."<sup>41</sup> Despite laws forbidding his presence, George found many opportunities to run away and find work before finally arriving in Creek lands from hundreds of miles away. The frontier at this time was vast, open, and ineffectively regulated. Though his personal account may be unique, George's early life experiences as a runaway in Creek country were not entirely atypical.

---

<sup>40</sup> Braund, 617.

<sup>41</sup> David George, "An Account of the Life of David George," Black Loyalist, [http://blackloyalist.com/canadiandigitalcollection/documents/diaries/george\\_a\\_life.htm](http://blackloyalist.com/canadiandigitalcollection/documents/diaries/george_a_life.htm).

Once among the Creeks, George was eventually discovered and, after being tracked and followed, he was seized and taken possession of by one of their leaders: “One of these Indians was a King, called Blue Salt; he could talk a little broken English. He took, and carried me away seventeen or eighteen miles into the woods to his camp....” George described himself as his owner’s “prize” rather than slave. He was forced to work in a number of different tasks, including digging ground, fence building, and agricultural labor. Though the products of his labor were controlled and owned by Blue Salt, George worked on a diverse array of menial tasks rather than in the production of a single crop for profit. He adds that he was well fed, and though he “worked hard...the people were kind to me.”<sup>42</sup> Of course, certain European-American slave-owners could treat their slaves kindly as well. Yet George’s experiences depict a society which in general practiced a leniency in slave control very unlike the model of slavery emerging in the colonies.

George would be in Blue Salt’s possession for only a few months. Eventually his original owner’s son somehow found him at a distance George supposed to be some eight hundred miles from his home plantation, and arranged his return from Blue Salt in exchange for “rum, linen, and a gun.”<sup>43</sup> It was such a result colonial policy aimed at, and indeed many Creeks were willing to participate in such exchanges. But there were also at this time Europeans who saw fit to disregard the laws governing the presence of slaves in the backcountry. David George managed to find one such colonist before being successfully returned to his Virginian owner and thus was able to remain the Creeks for a number of years.

Before the exchange with Blue Salt was finalized, George again ran away and began working for another Creek “king” named Jack of the Natchez tribe for a few weeks. Soon

---

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*

George was passed into the possession of one Mr. Miller, an employee of the English backcountry trader George Gaulfin or Galphin.<sup>44</sup> These white traders played a key role in the early introduction of many European practices among the Creeks. Of the few “plantations” among the Creeks hinted at by Bartram, almost all were operated by foreign traders. Long before the federal government’s adoption of the “civilizing” program, these European-American traders and slave-owners had already unwittingly implemented certain aspects of the as-yet unborn program among the Creeks, including the ownership of African slaves in Creek country, despite its illegality.

Let us use the character of George Galphin as an introduction into the types of characters to be found among these English traders. Galphin became extremely wealthy through the backcountry Indian trade, amassing thousands of acres on which worked 128 slaves at the time of his death in 1782.<sup>45</sup> In addition to introducing monetary debt among the Creeks, a notion foreign to their native culture, Galphin and traders like him furthered the demise of old Creek culture by engendering a dependence on European goods. To pay off their mounting debts, the Creek hunting season during which furs were sought out for trade with Europeans was continually extended, further altering Creek family structures and labor practices.<sup>46</sup> Even Galphin’s very habitation seemed to impart foreign influence. His grandson would later claim that George Galphin constructed the first European-style brick house in the backcountry. Its

---

<sup>44</sup> George, “An Account.” The Natchez were one of the distinct tribal language groups who operated within the Creek confederacy. See Stiggins, 37.

<sup>45</sup> J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *Creeks and Seminoles: The Destruction and Regeneration of The Muscogugle People*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 57; Saunt, *New Order*, 54. Ball State University, “Historical Archaeology At George Galphin’s Silver Bluff,” <http://mdgroover.iweb.bsu.edu/GPR%20Silver%20Bluff.htm>. Excavations of his property show that though Galphin did grow some indigo, the majority of his slaves were employed in his commercial enterprise. Even the types of labor of slaves among the Creeks differed sharply from the labor extracted from slaves in the coastal colonies.

<sup>46</sup> Wright, Jr., 40.

imposing edifice was a harbinger of the “civilization” fast encompassing the lands of the Creek Confederacy.<sup>47</sup>



Image II

*An 1868 sketch of the remnants of Galphin's trading house in Creek country. The building was elevated on a bluff at about 25 feet in the air, so would have been quite a prominent feature in the surrounding countryside.*

For Galphin, acting as an emissary of European lifestyles among the Creeks was probably just an inadvertent byproduct of seeking out personal wealth and profit. Though he laid a foundation American policy-makers could later build upon, he lived a life quite different from the typical white farmer which the “civilization” program would promote. For one, though the government would later promote education as a part of its program, Galphin remained illiterate throughout his life, as did many of his fellow traders. Even the literate among this class could not always secure a similar education for their children in the backcountry, especially when these children were the offspring of European-Creek relationships.<sup>48</sup>

Another of Galphin's “uncivilized” habits, also common with many Euro-American traders, was a penchant for exogamous marriage and mating. Galphin simultaneously and unabashedly cohabited with four wives or mistresses, one white, two Creek, and one African.

---

<sup>47</sup> John Bartram and Francis Harper, “Diary of a Journey through the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida from July 1, 1765, to April 10, 1766,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 33 no. 1 (December 1942), page 65, image XII, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1005551>.

<sup>48</sup> Thomas S. Woodward, *Reminiscences of the Creek, or Muscogee Indians, contained in letters to friends in Georgia and Alabama*, (Montgomery: Barrett & Wimbish, Book and General Job Printers: 1859), June 21st, 1858; Chief G.W. Grayson, *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy*, ed. W. David Baird, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press: 1988), 32; Andrew K. Frank, *Creeks and Southerners: Biculturalism on the Early American Frontier* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press 2005), 62-3.

Through his Creek wives, Galphin fathered children who, by virtue of Creek matrilineal practices, were fully entitled to membership of the tribe. Like many of his peers, Galphin bequeathed to his mixed-blooded offspring his property, including property in slaves.<sup>49</sup> Wills or patrilineally inherited property did not exist in traditional Creek society.<sup>50</sup> The children of these mixed marriages were also among the first tribesmen to practice slave-ownership and commercial agriculture. Their rise to political power among the Creeks would play a key role in the process of welcoming the “civilizing” program and eventually in accepting removal.<sup>51</sup> Thus while acting in defiance of certain European norms, these European-American traders and their slaves helped lay the seeds of the “civilized” practices the federal government would later import into Creek society.

Indeed, it was not just the traders but also slaves who brought with them whatever familiarity they had with European practice to the Creeks around them. For example, David George is best remembered for helping to introduce Christianity into the Creek backcountry, and with Galphin’s permission and support helped to cofound a successful Church on his property.<sup>52</sup> Another of Galphin’s slaves who was influential in the founding of the Silver Bluff Church, named Ketch, worked as an interpreter for Galphin and was instrumental in the establishment and success of Galphin’s massive trading house in the Creek backcountry.<sup>53</sup> Ketch’s role as an interpreter was one in which Creek slaves were commonly employed, and slaves played an important role in linguistically bridging European and native cultures in years to come.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Lachlan McGillivray, “Last Will of Lachlan McGillivray,” June 12, 1767, <http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cmamcrk4/crkdox27.html#anchor1047473>; George Galphin, “Will of George Galphin,” *The Family of Joseph Alston and Caroline Green Hatcher*, <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=7213&id=I08347>; Saunt, *New Order*, 57.

<sup>50</sup> Stiggins, 51-7.

<sup>51</sup> Saunt, *New Order*, 2. Rothman, 37. See chapters 2-3.

<sup>52</sup> George, “An Account.”

<sup>53</sup> Woodward, November 3rd 1858.

<sup>54</sup> Littlefield, 41-45; Zellar, 11.

Some scholars have argued that these slaves helped mitigate European influence among the Creeks.<sup>55</sup> By manufacturing goods in Creek country rather than buying them from traders, and acting as a linguistic buffer between Creeks and Europeans, slaves in a sense lessened the direct influence of European peoples, but not of European culture and civilization. In fact, slavery's presence had the opposite effect. Slaves helped pave the way for European encroachments into Creek lands by bringing European-style goods and languages directly into the heart of Creek country. These slaves had no conscious desire to undermine traditional Creek sovereignty. Rather, they functioned as passive and unknowing messengers inaugurating a cultural exchange that would become central to federal policy in the years following the Revolutionary War.

Ketch's role in Galphin's life extended beyond the bounds of master-slave relations that were typical in the colonies to the east of Creek country. Ketch was the uncle of one of Galphin's nieces; Ketch's sister and Galphin's African wife Mina were the same person. Despite her African ancestry, Galphin arranged a good marriage for his "mulatto" daughter to a fully white Irishman in his employ and left them substantial property in his will. The close ties between Ketch and his owner are further exhibited by the arrangements made following Galphin's death to ensure Ketch and his family were provided for in his old age.<sup>56</sup>

Of course, certain American slave owners also took pains to ensure the health and happiness of the enslaved offspring they fathered. Yet the contrasting nature of these geographically separated situations remains noteworthy. For one, Galphin's daughter and her offspring were not forced to live as slaves in the Creek backcountry despite her mother's color and status. This was in direct opposition to the slave codes emerging in the colonies, laws which

---

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Woodward, November 3rd 1858.

would not be found among the Creeks for decades.<sup>57</sup> Galphin's behavior was also more public and open than one would imagine could be tolerated by the emerging southern slave-society. Numerous accounts of publicly recognized African-European marriages among the Creeks are known, and probably much more undocumented relations of this type existed in the unregulated backcountry.<sup>58</sup> Many Creeks' unwillingness to segregate marital and familial relations would continue to frustrate American colonizing powers until the final years before removal.<sup>59</sup>

Certainly there were some aspects of southern slave society emerging among the Creeks by the end of the colonial period. But though the incursions of the slave economy had begun to make headway into the frontier by this time, the cultural exchange would remain loose and uncontrolled until the years following the revolution. Creek society remained too vast and closely tied to its traditional ways to easily or willingly capitulate at the first appearance of a few foreign immigrants. Slavery trickled in, but illegally and in a form determined solely by the few individuals directly concerned rather than in accordance with the will of an external power. It would take the conscious power and efforts of the federal government to ingrain this foreign economic system.

With the dawn of the Revolutionary War, the fears, desires, and ideologies that engendered the policies of American slave-owners would evolve, and the introduction of slave property among the Creeks would be understood anew as advantageous rather than dangerous to the American colonial enterprise. The needs and workings of the slave society of the seaboard states had long dictated American colonial policy relative to the native peoples of the southeast.

---

<sup>57</sup> Not until the 1820s would such laws first be promulgated among the Creeks. Waring, "Laws of the Creek Nation," laws 3, 20-2, 26, 31, 34.

<sup>58</sup> Wright Jr., 80-83.

<sup>59</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate Document 512, 23rd Congress, 1st Session, *Correspondence on the Emigration of the Indians*, 1832 Creek Nation: Alabama Census, <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~texlance/1832census/index.htm>.

It should come as no surprise that slavery itself would play an essential role in the realization of the federal government's "civilizing" and colonizing mission in the newborn American republic.

## Chapter 2: “Civilizing” the Creeks and the Spread of Slavery

In 1790, the federal government signed its first formal treaty with the Creek Confederacy in the temporary capital of New York City. Although almost sixty years had passed since Oglethorpe’s treaty, the two documents had much in common. Like the young colony of Georgia, the infant United States declared that “there shall be perpetual peace and friendship between all the citizens of the United States of America, and all the individuals, towns and tribes ... composing the Creek nation of Indians.” In another article, the United States would “solemnly guarantee” to perpetually uphold Creek rights to the lands still under their control.<sup>60</sup>

Another caveat of the treaty familiar from earlier colonial compacts was the stipulation that American-owned slaves among the Creeks be returned. Yet the wording of this article and the means of enforcing it had significantly changed from colonial times. A new status quo was emerging after the Revolutionary War: “The Creek Nation shall deliver as soon as practicable ... all citizens of the United States, white inhabitants or negroes, who are now prisoners in any part of the said nation.”<sup>61</sup> The “negroes” in question were now not simply runaways but “prisoners” of the Creeks. No reward was initially offered for their return; rather, such an effort was deemed necessary to ensure a return to peaceful relations between the parties. Of course not everything had changed. American slave-owners fared little better in ensuring the timely return of slaves lost among the Creeks. Disputes over the return of these slaves would last for decades, and claims over these slaves would regularly be used as justification for American interventions into Creek lands throughout this period.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Kappler, “Treaty with the Creeks, 1790,” Articles 1,5.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*, Article 3.

<sup>62</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to Daniel Stewart, Creek Agency, October 13, 1810, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 571-3; U.S. Congress, *American State Papers*, Senate, 16th Congress, 2nd Session, *Indian Affairs*, vol. 2, page

The upheaval of the Revolutionary War and the frontier conflicts in the years following had introduced large numbers of slaves among the Creeks, serving to further push the Creeks towards accommodating a slave economy.<sup>63</sup> Uncontrolled population movements during the Revolutionary War brought many slaves to Creek country as runaways and refugees, and forced some white slave-owners in the backcountry (such as George Galphin) to flee, leaving some of their slaves behind.<sup>64</sup> British officers, seeking to enlist the Creeks in their cause, promised to leave to them whatever spoils of war they might capture from the rebels, including property in slaves. Hundreds of slaves could be seized in a single raid, and despite their best efforts, Revolutionary-era authorities “could not prevail on them to part” with this booty.<sup>65</sup> The Revolutionary War accelerated the chaotic and sporadic movement of slave property into the Creek country, and introduced new aspects of slave society among the Creeks, such as the slave trade.<sup>66</sup>

The Revolutionary War only initiated this expanded interest in slave property among the Creeks. Indeed, Creeks would continue to seize American slave property into the early years of the republic. The expulsion of British authority did little to settle the southeastern frontier. Spanish authority remained in the southeast and often encouraged the Creeks to violently resist American colonization efforts.<sup>67</sup> Meanwhile, hostilities between the newborn state of Georgia and the Creeks continued throughout the 1790s in response to the continued settlement of Georgians on Creek lands. The retaliatory seizure of Georgian slave property was a known Creek

---

252-4, <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsp&fileName=008/llsp008.db&recNum=261>; Wright, 98.

<sup>63</sup> Braund, 618; Martha Condray Searcy, pp. 21-30

<sup>64</sup> George, “An Account.”

<sup>65</sup> Gov. James Wright to Lord George Germaine, Savannah, July 31, 1779, in *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society* (Savannah, Georgia Historical Society: 1873), vol. 3, 256.

<sup>66</sup> Saunt, *New Order*, chapter 2.

<sup>67</sup> Carondelet to McGillivray, New Orleans, September 14, 1792, in *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 338.

tactic during this period.<sup>68</sup> Slavery and slaves continued to trickle into the Creek world, not just as runaways, but now thanks to the active efforts of Creeks themselves. An awareness of the value of slave property, and an increased willingness by some to exploit that value at the expense of their American neighbors, was continuing its spread through Creek country.

In step with the spreading of slavery was the United States government's persistent desire to regulate that movement. The recurring seizure of slaves by Creeks during these years, combined with the failure to secure the return of earlier slave captives, explains the following clause inserted into yet another American-Creek treaty signed in 1796 designed to ease hostilities on the Georgian frontier:

The Creek nation shall deliver, as soon as practicable...all citizens of the United States; white inhabitants and negroes who are now prisoners in any part of the said nation, agreeably to the treaty at New-York, and also all citizens, white inhabitants, negroes and property taken since the signing of that treaty.<sup>69</sup>

Remarkably similar in language to the similar stipulation found in the Creek Treaty of 1790, this clause also allowed state marshals to enter Creek lands to seek out these runaways. As was true in the colonial period, the increased presence of American slaves in Creek territory after the Revolutionary War would also bring increased American influence and authority.

But this 1796 clause would be the last of its kind to be included in a formal federal treaty with the Creeks for a number of decades. Predictably, this clause proved as ineffective as other such efforts to secure a wholesale return of American slaves among the Creeks.<sup>70</sup> The impracticability of this strategy when implemented on a tribal scale proved insurmountable. As chiefs and American agents lacked the power or influence to find all stolen slaves in the Creek

---

<sup>68</sup> James Jackson, *Papers of James Jackson, 1781-1798*, Lilla M. Hawes ed., in *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society*, ed. Lilla M. Hawes (Savannah, Georgia Historical Society: 1955), vol. 11, 61, 88. Jackson's papers discuss in detail the story of these conflicts. Cited here are examples of Creeks seizing negroes as slaves. See also Saunt, *New Order*, 126.

<sup>69</sup> Kappler, "Treaty with the Creeks, 1796," Articles 1,5.

<sup>70</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to Daniel Stewart, Creek Agency, October 13, 1810, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 571-3; *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, vol. 1, Document No. 59, 546.

backcountry, subsequent laws would require future slave claims to be filed on an individual basis.<sup>71</sup> The logistical difficulties of ensuring the return of slaves stolen by the Creeks eventually forced Georgians to accept cash compensation rather than the return of the slaves themselves. Further, these clauses were applied only to slaves actively seized by the Creeks after the Revolutionary War. Wartime slave seizures would be left alone, and became the recognized slave property of the Creeks.<sup>72</sup>

A larger evolution of federal aims, goals and attitudes regarding native peoples, their lands and slavery must be accounted for in examining this shift in American policy (as well as the apparent newfound appreciation of Creeks for slave property). The willingness to allow the presence of *any* African slaves at all in the backcountry represents a stark shift. In earlier times, slave owners worked to achieve a near absolute separation of Indians and Africans, deemed essential to the health and security of an emerging slave society. After independence, federal Indian policies proved no less subject to the needs of slave-owners.<sup>73</sup> But an examination of state and federal policies implemented on the Georgian frontier shows how the needs of southern slave society had changed following the revolution. Though still employing certain holdover strategies from earlier colonial Indian policy, these early United States treaties simultaneously signaled a shift towards a new method of supporting slave society among the Creeks.

This strategy centered around the federal government's adoption of the "civilizing" program, which aimed at spreading European-American cultural practices among native tribes, with the end goal of subsuming Indian civilizations and peoples into the American republic.

---

<sup>71</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to John Joyce, Cusseta, December 5th, 1797, in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 264-5.

<sup>72</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to Daniel Stewart, Creek Agency, October 13, 1810, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 571-3; *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, vol. 1, Document No. 59, 546. See also Hawkins, Journal of July 2, 1804, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 475.

<sup>73</sup> Rothman, 37.

Article 12 of the 1790 treaty with the Creeks laid the groundwork of a plan by which “the Creek nation may be led to a greater degree of civilization, and to become herdsmen and cultivators, instead of remaining in a state of hunters.”<sup>74</sup> The federal government promised to furnish the Creeks with agricultural instruments and livestock, and official federal agents were ceded private tracts from Creek lands on which they were to live as examples of the benefits and virtues to be had from “so desirable a pursuit” as private agriculture.<sup>75</sup> In later treaties, similar clauses would pledge more money, goods, and even blacksmiths to be sent into Creek country “in consideration of the friendly disposition of the Creek nation towards the government of the United States.”<sup>76</sup>

Of course, the Creeks would be coerced into demonstrating their “friendly disposition” with further cessations of land, including tracts in the midst of the Creek’s country to be set aside as U.S. military outposts, trading posts, federal agencies and model private farms.<sup>77</sup> A new form of republican ideology was emerging, an ideology which deemed the exportation of American civilization into the west both necessary and inevitable.<sup>78</sup> There was now an active force pushing at the Creeks to forsake their native practices in favor of the ‘benefits’ of American republican civilization. In some sense, slavery’s spread was just another part of this process, no different from animal husbandry or smithery.

But by virtue of the Creek Confederacy’s location right on the border of an expansive and growing slave society, the connections between slavery and “civilization” ran far deeper. Early American slave owners played a leading role in devising and implementing the “civilizing”

---

<sup>74</sup> Kappler, “Treaty with the Creeks, 1790,” Article 12.

<sup>75</sup> On these farms slaves were housed and employed. See Image III.

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*, “Treaty with the Creeks, 1796,” Article 8; “Treaty with the Creeks, 1802,” Article 2.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*, “Treaty with the Creeks, 1796,” Articles 3-4; “Treaty with the Creeks, 1802,” Article 3

<sup>78</sup> Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 63-8.

program.<sup>79</sup> The idea of “civilizing” natives grew in conjunction with a racist ideology based upon African peoples’ supposed fitness for a life of slave labor, and the Indians’ capacity for slave-ownership. The Americans who actually worked to bring the tenets of this program to fruition among the Creeks tended to be themselves slave-owners, evincing a belief that the presence of slavery coincided with increased “civilization” among the Creeks.<sup>80</sup> No longer would American slave-owners aim at separating Creeks and slaves. The emergence of the American republic marked a shift in the history of Afro-Creek slavery, as slave society chose to colonize Creek country rather than isolate it.

Understanding how and why American independence would engender such a shift requires considering the thought of a key figure in both the development and implementation of the plan to bring American civilization into the frontier -- Thomas Jefferson. A slave-owner, republican visionary, and leader of westward expansion, Jefferson encapsulated the diverse ideological underpinnings of the “civilizing” program. Jefferson’s plans to spread slavery into the frontier were intricately tied in with his entire republican ideology. A brief consideration of his motivations and modes of thinking will shed light on how some of America’s most powerful slave-owners came to see southeastern native peoples as important allies for the necessary spread of slave-society west across the American continent.

Though himself a large plantation owner with hundreds of slaves, Jefferson’s revolutionary ideology produced in him a deep discomfort with what he judged to be the role of

---

<sup>79</sup> The first federal treaties (cited above) which established the program were signed by American slave-owners such as George Washington and Benjamin Hawkins (some of the Creeks who signed them were also slave-owners). It was Hawkins who would be sent among the Creeks to implement the “civilizing” program by slave-owning Presidents Washington and Jefferson. Hawkins’s experiences, and the key role Jefferson played in developing the ideologies underpinning the program, are discussed below. See also Rothman, Chapter 2.

<sup>80</sup> Benjamin Hawkins, “A Sketch of the Creek Country,” in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins, 1796-1810*, ed. Thomas Foster (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press: 2003), 66s.

slavery in the newborn American republic. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson decries the effects of slave-ownership on republican virtue, and he evinces a hope that his nation might be on the path to an emancipation of its African slaves.<sup>81</sup> Yet his racism would never allow him to contemplate integrating a freed black population with a white republican citizenry. Africans were “inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind,” and thus to allow an emancipated free black population to live alongside their white counterparts would spell the death of the Jefferson’s republican experiment. Only one solution remained: freed slaves had “to be removed beyond the realm of mixture.”<sup>82</sup>

This catch in Jefferson’s thinking, the need to end slavery without living among freed slaves, helped engender another central aspect of Jefferson’s republicanism: the necessity of westward expansion. Jefferson hoped to “diffuse” the United States’ slave population across the American continent. Spreading American seaboard slaves across western lands would mitigate the harsher aspects of slavery and better facilitate peaceful emancipation.<sup>83</sup> The urgency of diffusion was not lost on Jefferson. America’s slave population was growing rapidly during his lifetime, especially in his home state of Virginia, which was home to the most slaves of any state.<sup>84</sup> Attributing their increase to mild treatment, Jefferson noted, “this blot in our country (i.e. slavery) increases as fast, or faster, than the whites.”<sup>85</sup> These demographic and ideological shifts forced Jefferson to push slavery into the west.

---

<sup>81</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, in *Writings*, comp. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1984), 288-89.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, 270.

<sup>83</sup> Lacy K. Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 74; Rothman, 24.

<sup>84</sup> Rothman 2-3.

<sup>85</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, in *Writings*, comp. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1984), 214.

Thus two seemingly unrelated aspects of Jeffersonian republicanism, American expansionism and American slavery, were in fact intricately intertwined. Jefferson's republican dream hinged on his success in spreading the American slave population into the frontier. He needed inland populations "to receive slaves from the other states," thereby "dividing that evil, [which] would lessen its danger."<sup>86</sup> With this goal in mind, Jefferson allowed for the peoples naturally inhabiting America's vast frontier to be introduced to the benefits of owning property in slaves in the early stages of the American republican experiment through the "civilizing" program.

For the civilizing program to have any chance to succeed, certain other conditions had to be met. Chief among these was that as a people or "race," Native Americans had the capacity for eventual incorporation into the American republic, a capacity the African race lacked. To Jefferson, the success of the American republican experiment hinged on the capacity of the American landscape to breed men capable of harboring republican virtues. His racial conceptions of Native Americans reinforced this possibility. In contrast to Africans, to Jefferson Indians were "formed in mind as well as in body, on the same module with the 'Homo sapiens Europæus.'"<sup>87</sup> Their historical shortcomings in intellectual achievement could be explained by their lack of a written alphabet.<sup>88</sup> Unlike the enslavement of Africans, the enslavement of Indians was "inhuman."<sup>89</sup> Thus the same racial ideologies which made the movement of slaves into the Indian frontier desirable to Jefferson also explained how and why such a movement would even be possible.

---

<sup>86</sup> Thomas Jefferson to John Dickinson, Washington, D.C., January 12, 1807, in *Writings*, 1169.

<sup>87</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, in *Writings*, comp. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1984), 187.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, 189.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, 186.

So Creeks and natives like them were only backward and untrained American citizens in the making. The civilization program would ready the Creeks for incorporation into southern slave society, and the actual task of making citizens of the Creeks fell to Benjamin Hawkins, who under Presidents Washington and later Jefferson was “Principal Agent for Indian Affairs South of the Ohio River.”<sup>90</sup> Hawkins lived among the Creeks from 1796 until his death. He established his federal headquarters at the “Creek Agency” deep in the Creek country, which functioned both as an outpost of federal authority and as a model plantation. Hawkins worked hard to promote civilization among his Creek neighbors by example, practicing many of the behaviors he encouraged or impressed upon them.

One of the behaviors Hawkins worked to model was the “civilized” approach to using and owning African slaves. On the lands of the Creek agency, among the livestock pens, mills, and smitheries were twelve “Negro Houses.”<sup>91</sup> Hawkins employed his slaves in a variety of agricultural labors on his several hundred acres of land.<sup>92</sup> He would at times lend out his slaves’ labor to his Creek neighbors to demonstrate “civilized” practices such as the building and operating of looms.<sup>93</sup> No longer was the American form of slavery practiced amongst the Creeks only by mestizo traders or natives who behaved as they saw fit. There now resided in the Creek country a southern planter actively modeling and encouraging the “civilized” behaviors of American slave society. The presence of men like Hawkins among the Creeks would only multiply in the years to come.

---

<sup>90</sup> *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, vii.

<sup>91</sup> Rothman 36. See Figure II.

<sup>92</sup> “Letters of Benjamin Hawkins: 1796-1806” in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 9; Benjamin Hawkins, “A Sketch of the Creek Country,” in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 56s.

<sup>93</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to William Eustis, Creek Agency, January 6, 1811 and June 1, 1811, *The Hawkins Letters*, 580, 589. When doing so, Hawkins could not help but laud his own benevolence

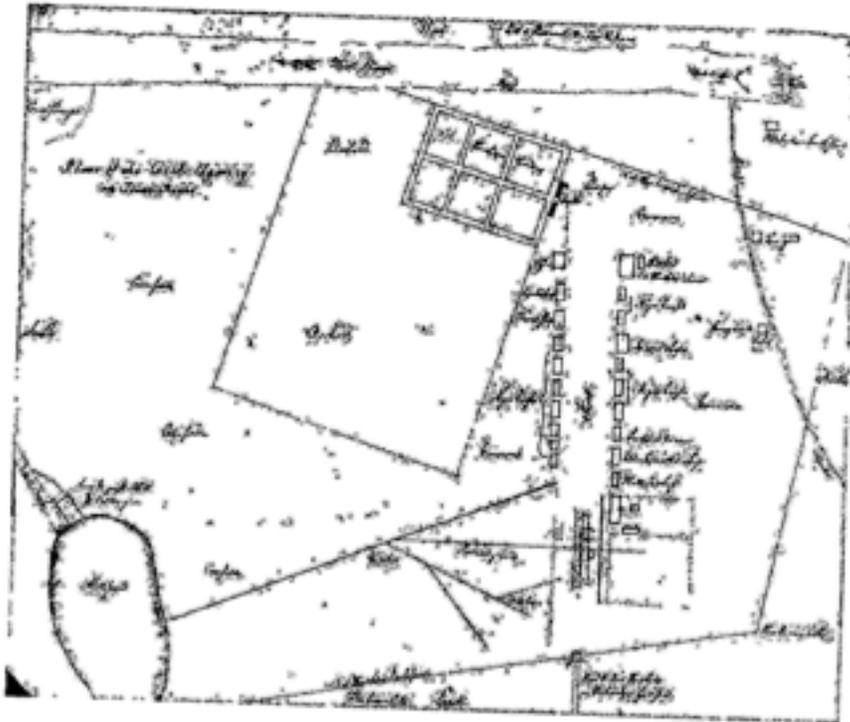


Image III: "Plan of the Creek Agency on the Flint River, drawn around 1810. The Creek Agency was the headquarters of the Jeffersonian program for civilizing Southern Indians. Note the twelve "Negro houses" among the double row of buildings...COURTESY OF MORAVIAN ARCHIVES, WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA."<sup>94</sup>

A copious writer, Hawkins' letters and journals writings provide great insight into the workings of the civilization program on the ground, and the changes and conflicts it engendered. At heart, his writings provide a window into the aims and goals of the civilizers themselves. In an 1804 letter to Thomas Jefferson, Hawkins considers "the idea of incorporating them (i.e. the Creeks) with us." Hawkins found the greatest threat to the successful incorporation of the Creeks into American society to be the illegal settlement of eastern Creek lands, which he felt retarded the civilization process by exacerbating Creek hostility to his efforts. As Hawkins explained to Jefferson: "If we succeed in bringing the Indians around accommodate Georgia to Ocmulgee we shall have gained much as that boundary will satisfy Georgia...for ten or twenty years, which will

<sup>94</sup> Rothman 36.

give time as well as the means to perfect our plan of civilization.”<sup>95</sup> The creation of more American slave states on Creek lands was inevitable; at issue was whether the Creeks could be made to endorse this process.

Conflicts between the Creeks, the state of Georgia, and the federal government frustrated Hawkins throughout the first decade of the nineteenth century. In 1802, Georgia ceded its claims to western frontier lands to the United States, which promised to extinguish native titles to those lands.<sup>96</sup> But neither Georgian authorities nor its frontier inhabitants were happy with the speed at which the United States was securing that cession, and thus Georgians continually (and illegally) moved onto Creek lands during this period. Hawkins was forced to mediate these conflicts, and he hoped for greater patience and cooperation on the part of Georgia as the civilization program could be put into effect. In a letter to Georgian Senator John Milledge, Hawkins pleaded: “Until Georgia shall have acquired from the Indians all the land she wants, she should cooperate with the agents of government ... In this way the Indians will gain a confidence in the justice of their neighbors and be induced .... to accommodate them.”<sup>97</sup> The aim of the civilization process was thus fundamentally to inculcate support for the spread of American influence over Creek lands. With the multiplication of the slave and free population of Georgia and the introduction of highly profitable upland cotton into the backcountry, this process took on an ever-increasing sense of urgency in the early 1800s.<sup>98</sup>

Often, the conflicts between the Creeks, the federal government, and Georgia directly concerned the movement of slave property. In October of 1810, Hawkins was informed that Georgia had appointed an agent to enter Creek lands in search of stolen property, including

---

<sup>95</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to Thomas Jefferson, Creek Agency, July 11, 1803, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 455-6.

<sup>96</sup> Rothman, 40.

<sup>97</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to John Milledge, Creek Agency, October 12, 1803, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 462.

<sup>98</sup> Rothman, 46-7.

slaves. Hawkins writes to the agent somewhat frustrated as to “why the State of Georgia took this business out of its legal and proper channel ... and not let them come as directed by the Law.”<sup>99</sup> Hawkins argued that claims for recently stolen slaves “should be under the direction of the President” or other federal officials, and Georgia had tarried unduly in seeking the return of slaves stolen under the Treaties of 1790 and 1796, which exempted slaves stolen during the Revolutionary War from re-seizure. Hawkins also calls into question the legitimacy of some of the specific claims filed by Georgia:

I see a negro charged by David Blackshear as stolen by the Indians at 544.50 when it is known here that the negro run away, was apprehended in the agency, stole a horse, made his escape and was killed some where in East Florida....some other regularities in this class appear, but not necessary to be noted.<sup>100</sup>

Hawkins’ complaints with the state of Georgia all surround the changes in federal policy with regard to the presence of slaves among the Creeks since the adoption of the civilizing program. He reminded Georgia that slaves lost during the Revolutionary War now belonged to the Creeks, that the Creek nation was no longer responsible for the return of runaways but only of stolen slaves, and that these issues now fell under the jurisdiction of the federal government rather than with the states. In these ways, the process of bringing civilization into the Creek nation simultaneously readjusted the processes by which the presence of African slaves among the Creeks were regulated.

But what exactly did being “civilized” entail? Hawkins’ writings provide essential insight into how the process of civilization was meant to unfold on the ground. As a starting point, his “Sketch of the Creek Country in the years 1798 and 1799” provides an in depth survey of the Creek Confederacy early in the history of the “civilizing” program, and lays out the priorities and

---

<sup>99</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to Daniel Stewart, Creek Agency, October 13, 1810, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 571-3.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*

concerns of the Creeks' chief "civilizer." A typical entry, for the town *Hill-au-bee* or Hillabee, included the following descriptions:

The land on these creeks ... is broken and stoney, with coarse gravel ... the upland is generally stiff, rich and fit for culture .... The villages are badly fenced, the Indians are attentive to their traders; and several of them are careful of stock, and have cattle and hogs and some few have horses ... the Indians promised the agent, in 1799, to begin and fence their fields; they have one hundred and seventy gun men.<sup>101</sup>

Hawkins was chiefly interested in how far each Creek village and town had gone towards incorporating "civilized" economic practices of such as animal husbandry and the working of privately fenced lands. The bulk of the "Sketch" is comprised of descriptions of the varying degrees of receptivity of different sections of the Creek Confederacy to civilization, and Hawkins' efforts to encourage Creek towns to further the process. Only ten years after Bartram had found the Creeks still strongly attached to traditional labor practices, in Hawkins' eyes the Creek landscape had radically changed, thanks in large part to the active efforts of the federal government.

Yet Hawkins' "Sketch" also evinces an interest in the Creek country's capacity for profitable agriculture, seemingly irrespective of whether or not the Creeks wished to take advantage. In addition, Hawkins also tellingly takes account of the number of gunmen residing in each Creek town. In the introduction to the first printing of the "Sketch of the Creek Country" published in Georgia in 1848, about fifteen years after removal, it was noted that five distinct hand-written manuscripts of the "Sketch" were found. The introduction offers the following explanation for this phenomenon: "The most plausible motive for this curious multiplication .... was the desire of speculators in Indian lands, to learn the topography, resources and character of

---

<sup>101</sup> Hawkins, "A Sketch of the Creek Country," in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 44s.

the Creek country.”<sup>102</sup> Hawkins was thus simultaneously working to facilitate the absorption of the Creek country into the American republic in a number of ways. Civilizing the Creeks was an important step towards achieving this goal, but so too was taking account of the landscape on which the Creeks resided and their capacity for violent resistance to colonization.<sup>103</sup> Ultimately, the civilization program was only a part of a larger plan: the incorporation of the lands of the Creek country into the expanding American south.

The southern society with its eyes trained on the Creeks’ lands was, of course, a slave society. In tracking the expansion of “civilization” into Creek society, Hawkins would often use the presence, usage, and treatment of slave property as a barometer of his program’s progress. In his description of the town *Eu-fau-lau*, Hawkins begins with a typical survey of the landscape. He discusses the prevalence of stock raising, respect for personal property, and the cultivation of rice and corn. But here Hawkins adds that “several of these Indians have negroes, taken during the revolutionary war, *and where they are, this is more industry and better farms.*”<sup>104</sup> Hawkins is referring to slaves given to the Creeks for serving the British during the previous war, the very slaves who, in a shift from colonial policy, the federal government had allowed the Creeks to keep. As Hawkins realized, the presence of these slaves helped further the effective adoption of American labor practices. To be a civilized farmer in the Old South, it certainly helped to employ slave labor.

---

<sup>102</sup> WM. B. Hodgson, Introduction to “A Sketch of the Creek Country,” in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 4s.

<sup>103</sup> It is noteworthy that as an addendum to his “Sketch,” Hawkins seems to have added an account of how the different Creek towns sided during the Red Stick War of 1813, as if the final attempt of the Creeks of Georgia and Alabama at violent resistance to civilization was a fitting end to his “Sketch.” The “Sketch” was believed to have been written in 1800, but the final pages refer explicitly to the events of 1813. Hawkins, “A Sketch of the Creek Country,” in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 83-5s.

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, 66s. The italics are found in the original text, an added emphasis rarely employed by Hawkins.

The references in Hawkins' writings and letters to the presence of slaves among the Creeks are revealing not only of his attitudes, but also of the varying ways in which Creeks' reacted to the introduction of the foreign practices of American civilization. Despite his best efforts, Hawkins could never prevail on all Creek slave-owners to adopt white attitudes towards the usage of their slaves. Efau Haujo was a powerful Creek chief who had "five black slaves, and a stock of cattle and horses; but they are of little use to him."<sup>105</sup> Instead, Efau Haujo had been trained to rely on gifts and bribes from colonial authorities for his support. In later years, Efau Haujo's unruly slaves would spark conflicts with his more civilized neighbors.<sup>106</sup>

Efau Haujo was not the only Creek slave-owner who failed to take full advantage of his human property. Sophia Durant was the sister of Alexander McGillivray, the very powerful mestizo chief of the Creeks during the revolutionary period who operated a well-functioning and highly profitable plantation and trade house. Sophia came into possession of much of McGillivray's slave property following his death in 1793, but though "in possession of fourteen negroes, she seldom makes bread enough, and they live poorly." Hawkins also decried that her sister Sehoi, who "has about thirty negroes, is extravagant and heedless, neither spins nor weaves, and has no government of her family."<sup>107</sup> Perhaps least civilized of all, Sophia's husband was "mixed with African blood."<sup>108</sup>

Similarly, in another section of the Creek country, Hawkins was chagrined to find that "the black people here are an expense to their owners ... They do nothing the whole winter but

---

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*, 30s.

<sup>106</sup> Hawkins, Journal of February 9, 1802, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 475. Discussed below.

<sup>107</sup> Hawkins, "Sketch of the Creek Country," in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 40s.

<sup>108</sup> Hawkins, "Letters of Benjamin Hawkins" in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 43.

McGillivray's sisters would eventually lose their slave property to other relations, and disputes over these slaves would cause Hawkins problems for decades. See *The Hawkins Letters*, 556, 740.

get a little wood, and ... cultivate a scanty crop of corn barely sufficient for bread.”<sup>109</sup> Thus at times Hawkins was forced to recognize that the ownership of slaves did not always accord with increased “civilization.” Even years into the “civilizing” program, sections of the Creek country would remain attached to traditional forms of slave-ownership, evincing little interest in commercial agriculture and profit.

But alongside these more traditional Creeks, the presence of “civilized” slave-owners was ever increasing. These men played active roles in aiding Hawkins to advance the civilizing program. One such slave-owner was Robert Grierson of *Hill-au-bee* or Hillabee. Hawkins praised Greirson for having “by a steady conduct, contributed to mend the manners of these people.” Greirson ran a thriving plantation on which he grew cotton for commercial sale and operated a “manufactory of cotton cloth.”<sup>110</sup> In all, Greirson farmed thirty acres on which grew a number of subsistence crops as well. He possessed “40 negroes” and vowed to Hawkins that he “can, and will contribute his aid in furthering the views of the government.”<sup>111</sup>

In the same town as Efau Haujo resided a mixed-blooded slave-owner named Alexander Cornells or Oche Haujo. Cornells embodied the virtues of civilization Hawkins preached, including proper treatment of his slaves. His family were the proprietors of “good farms ... good fences, a fine young orchard and a stock of hogs, horses, and cattle.” They practiced spinning and Cornells’s Indian wife had the “neatness and economy of a white woman.” Cornells himself was “very attentive to all improvements suggested to him...He retains his Indian dress, but has the manners of a well bred man.” Significantly, he employed “nine negroes under good government.”<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*, 49.

<sup>110</sup> Hawkins, “Sketch of the Creek Country,” in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 44s.

<sup>111</sup> Hawkins, “Letters of Benjamin Hawkins” in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 30-1.

<sup>112</sup> Hawkins, “Sketch of the Creek Country,” in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 31s.

Cornells was not only a relatively wealthy slave-owner, but also served Hawkins as an official assistant and interpreter.<sup>113</sup> His generation's rise to power and influence among the Creeks, at the expense of their more traditional neighbors such as Efau Haujo, is emblematic of larger shifts in Creek society. By virtue of his maternal Creek ancestry, Cornells was a full member of the Creek tribe and of chiefly rank. But his mixed upbringing and the arrival of "civilization" imparted unto him an appreciation for the benefits to be had from accommodating and aiding American influence.<sup>114</sup> The rise of certain mixed-blooded Creeks, most of them slave-owners, to political power during these years greatly accelerated the progress of civilization.<sup>115</sup> In this period, to possess significant political influence required good relations with federal authority, so over time those Creeks who adopted "civilized" practices came to dominate the emerging sphere Creek national politics.<sup>116</sup>

A conflict between Cornells and Efau Haujo highlighted the emerging tensions these changes caused in Creek society. In February 1802, Efau Haujo called Hawkins to levy complaints about his treatment at the hands of Cornells. Upon Hawkins' arrival, "Cornells the interpreter informed the agent that the conduct of the old man (i.e. Efau Haujo) had displeased him very much .... that the old man had no corn and his negros were under no government."<sup>117</sup> As Hawkins had himself observed some years earlier in his "Sketch," Cornells complained that Efau Haujo continued to allow his slaves to live idly and sought to support himself solely on gifts from the United States. Cornells eventually confronted Efau Haujo publicly: "I told him

---

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, 30s.

<sup>114</sup> For a genealogy of the Cornells family, see Woodward, November 3, 1858. It is interesting to note that Efau Haujo and Alexander Cornells were actually related by marriage (Cornells married Efau Haujo's daughter).

<sup>115</sup> Saunt, *New Order*, 2; Rothman, 57. Greirson's descendants would also rise in the Creek political ranks.

<sup>116</sup> It was under Hawkins' influence that a national Creek political council first emerged. See Hawkins, "A Sketch of the Creek Country," in *Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 67-8s.

<sup>117</sup> Hawkins, Journal of February 9, 1802, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 410.

yesterday in the public square, that I was Chief of this land as well as himself .... Never for five years had the least probability hinted at that the Chiefs were to be clothed and fed by the United States .... If you red people will help yourselves the United States will help you ... preserve your lands from encroachments.”<sup>118</sup> In response, Efau Haujo called upon Hawkins to recognize his right to federal support by virtue of his chiefly rank and earlier treaties.<sup>119</sup>

In earlier years government agents might have been more willing to accommodate slave-owners like Efau Haujo. But Hawkins now sought to employ his influence to impress upon Efau Haujo the need to “put your negros ... to work, make them pen and milk your cattle, let me see your fields enlarged and well fenced.”<sup>120</sup> Hawkins wanted Efau Haujo to accommodate not only the American practices in the Creek country, but prepare for the presence of American citizens as well: “You must bring the old Chiefs to consent to sell their waste lands for present use .... when I hear and know this, I shall take pleasure in helping you.”<sup>121</sup> Within a month, Efau Haujo had called for the chiefs of the Creek nation to gather for negotiations with the federal government.<sup>122</sup> These negotiations resulted in more land cessations to the United States in what would become Georgia and Florida, as well as the establishment of new American military outposts. In return, direct payments to chiefs were promised. Among the signers were Efau Haujo, Cornells, and a number of other slave-owning Creeks.<sup>123</sup>

But behind all these conflicts surrounding Creeks and Americans over the civilizing program and use of slaves, what sorts of labor were slaves actually employed in? To what degree did slaves’ experiences among the Creeks compare with slaves in the American south? Just as

---

<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *ibid.*, 410-11.

<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*, 411.

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *ibid.*, March 7, 413.

<sup>123</sup> Kappler, “Treaty with the Creeks, 1802.”

the receptivity of Creeks to civilization varied drastically, so too did the treatment of slaves. On certain plantations such as McGillivray's or Greirson's slaves may have been employed in labor not unlike their counterparts on typical large Georgian plantations. In very exceptional cases, such as McGillivray's, some of these larger plantations would even employ overseers.<sup>124</sup> But even on Greirson's large farm we are told that "red, white and black" worked together in unison in spinning and weaving.<sup>125</sup>

The sparse population and frontier conditions of the Creek country generally encouraged fluid and cooperative relations between slaves and their owners. Stories of slaves working alongside whites or Indians and Creeks in common appear regularly.<sup>126</sup> Perhaps because of the high rates of bilingualism among African Creeks, they were also frequently employed as messengers for the Creek Agency throughout the backcountry, and also in the important role of interpreter, roles which afforded them prestige and even the opportunity for political agency.<sup>127</sup> And because of the Creeks' rapidly developing economy, certain types of skilled labor could often only be performed by slaves. For example, Hawkins allowed two of his slaves to dedicate their time to operating a loom "as a present from me to the Creeks."<sup>128</sup> Thus the expanded exploitation of slave labor was not only part of the "civilizing" program, but also a means towards achieving its final ends. During the early republican period, slaves themselves helped ready the frontier for settlers and introduced and expanded the presence of foreign European-American social and economic practices among the Creeks.

---

<sup>124</sup> *McGillivray of the Creeks*, 61; John Pope, *A Tour Through the Southern and Western Territories of the United States of North America*, (New York: Charles L. Woodward, 1888), <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=qFQTAAAAYAAJ>, 46-51.

<sup>125</sup> Hawkins, "A Sketch of the Creek Country," in *Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 44s.

<sup>126</sup> Hawkins, "Letters of Benjamin Hawkins," February 21, 1797, in *Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 86.

<sup>127</sup> "Letters of Benjamin Hawkins," in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 298, 464; Woodward, November 3rd, 1858.

<sup>128</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to William Eustis, Creek Agency, June 1, 1811, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 589.

Yet at the same time, the vastness of the Creek country and the apprehensions many Creeks continued to feel towards American civilization's encroachments allowed large portions of the Creek slave population to live relatively isolated from the ever expanding reach of slave-society. As noted earlier, one of the sisters of former Creek chief Alexander McGillivray cohabited with one of her African slaves as husband and wife, and his other sister seemed not to mind that "her negroes do but little, and consume every thing in common with their mistress."<sup>129</sup> Thomas Woodward, a mixed-blooded slave-owner, noted some years later that Indian slaves "are raised to man or womanhood with their owners; and in many instances they are better raised — always on an equality."<sup>130</sup> One of Hawkins' agents reported that his slave found life among the Creeks so superior to his prior experiences of enslavement that "he has declared he would rather die before he would be brought out of the nation."<sup>131</sup>

The viewpoint largely missing from this story is that of the vast numbers of Creeks who, lacking in literacy or a political outlet to express themselves have left no record of their feelings about "civilization." We know from Hawkins and his peers that "civilizing" the Creeks was never entirely successful, an admission even the program's biggest proponents at times were forced to concede. Large numbers of Creeks remained strongly dissatisfied with the changes to their society and distrustful of the slave society encompassing their country. Hawkins gives rare voice to these dissenters in a revealing anecdote: "Some of the Indians grumble & groul [*sic*] about the trees that are cut down round the blacksmith's shop; they say a fort is to be built & they

---

<sup>129</sup> Hawkins, "The Letters of Benjamin Hawkins" in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 43.

<sup>130</sup> Woodward, November 3rd, 1858. It must be noted that Woodward's credibility seems a bit dubious considering he also characterized the treatment of all American slaves as "kind." Still, his emphasis on the degree of equality experienced by Creek slaves in contrast to American slaves is telling.

<sup>131</sup> "The Letters of Benjamin Hawkins" in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 268.

are to be made slaves of.” Hawkins laughed off their worries, explaining that “the walls of the fort will be rails & and the garrison would consist of cabbage, collards, turnips, beans, &c...”<sup>132</sup>

But in reality these Indians, whoever they were, were probably far more perceptive than Hawkins acknowledged. An emerging gap between the new propertied elite and more traditional minded Creeks would continually widen during Hawkins’ tenure in the Creek country. Despite Hawkins’s best efforts, he could not prevent these tensions from sparking a violent conflict within Creek society. If dissenting voices were silenced for the first decade of the nineteenth century, their war cries were heard loud and clear when they finally took up violent and organized resistance to American “civilizing” power in 1813. And just as they had for the previous century of Creek history, African slaves would play a central role in the unfolding of this conflict, both as central objects of concern for the opposing parties, and as active players in the events of the ensuing Red Stick War.

---

<sup>132</sup> *ibid.*, 477.

### Chapter 3:

#### Fork in the Road: The Red Stick War and the Triumph of Slave Society

In September of 1811, Hawkins reported the prophet and war leader Tecumseh's first appearance among the Creeks. Arriving with a delegation of tribesmen from the north and west, Tecumseh brought with him the symbolic war pipe, "the object of the war pipe...to unite all the red people in a war against the white people."<sup>133</sup> Tecumseh, who had been traveling among the eastern tribes to encourage resistance to American civilization and who himself had some Creek ancestry, did not persuade the Creeks to partake of the war pipe in late 1811. With Hawkins present, he was reluctant to appear overzealous.<sup>134</sup> But in private talks throughout the nation, Tecumseh revealed that he was determined for war with the Americans.<sup>135</sup> Tecumseh was preaching to a nation which had long been internally divided. He would find wide-ranging support, especially among the Upper Creeks who were more distanced from Hawkins' Creek Agency and the encroachments of civilization and largely dissatisfied with the changes brought about by American influence.<sup>136</sup>

---

<sup>133</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to William Eustis, Tookaubatche, September 21, 1811, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 591.

<sup>134</sup> Saunt, *New Order*, 235.

<sup>135</sup> Stiggins, 85.

<sup>136</sup> Big Warrior and Tustunnuggee Hopoie to Benjamin Hawkins, Coweta, August 4, 1813, in *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, vol. 1, 851.

The Red Stick War, as the Creeks' civil war is known because of the red-tipped spears wielded by the anti-American hostiles, was destined to be a fork in the road in Creek history. Hawkins had managed to maintain relative peace in the Creek nation for over a decade, but his civilizing efforts had only served to allow the growing divides in Creek society to go unchecked. The uprising did not emerge from a vacuum. Outside pressures from the British, Spanish, northern tribes, and American civilizers all brought long brewing internal Creek tensions to a boil. The political supremacy to which certain mixed-blooded Creeks had ascended had left the dissatisfied no peaceful outlet for their frustrations.

Creek attitudes towards the Red Stick's movement were diverse and varied on the individual and regional level. The choice to pursue violent resistance to American colonization was a drastic one, one which would mean life or death for thousands of Creeks. The Red Stick's primary enemy, generally speaking, was American civilization.<sup>137</sup> But as has been noted throughout this thesis, the American civilization that Red Sticks sought to oppose was a slave civilization. Accordingly, the marks of slave society, including slaves themselves, were of central concern to the Red Stick movement, and slaves' own actions and behaviors would play a key role in affecting the outcome of the conflict. If the Red Stick War was not a war to end slavery in the Creek country, it was at the very least a war designed to stop the spread of a slave society.

Violence did not emerge among the Creeks until early 1813, some time after Tecumseh led Indian uprisings further north and the War of 1812 had commenced. One Upper Creek chief named Little Warrior was sent north, "on a public message of peace and friendship" to the

---

<sup>137</sup> Saunt, *New Order*, 255-6.

Shawnees to visit Tecumseh and his British allies.<sup>138</sup> Somehow, the message got lost in transition. On his way home, perhaps inspired by his northern compatriots or perhaps under the false impression that war had already begun in the Creek country, Little Warrior attacked and killed seven whites near the mouth of the Ohio River.<sup>139</sup> Hawkins immediately demanded from the Upper Creek chiefs that Little Warrior and his conspirators be brought to justice. Before his demand reached had reached the Upper Creeks, Little Warrior spoke before the chiefs in council and called upon the Creeks to take up arms against the Americans. An Upper Creek chief reported to Hawkins that Little Warrior was “severely reprimanded by the rest of the Chiefs and ordered immediately to leave the council house as a man unworthy to have a seat in it.”<sup>140</sup>

A few days after Little Warrior’s speech to the council, Hawkins was chagrined to find that “the Chiefs are more alarmed than I have ever known them to be before. The mischiefmakers seem determined to try their strength.”<sup>141</sup> After being reprimanded by the powers of the Upper Creek chiefs in the council, Little Warrior fled into the Creek backcountry. As they assured Hawkins, the Upper Creeks chiefs sought him out to bring him to justice, but were constantly met with violent resistance. Once they had found and killed Little Warrior and his party, other hostiles in turn vowed to take revenge on the chiefs. So began the Creek’s civil war.<sup>142</sup>

Letters from the besieged Upper Creek chiefs to Hawkins in early 1813 shed light on the underlying disconnect between formal Creek powers and the anti-American hostiles. In a letter to

---

<sup>138</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to the Upper Creek Chiefs, Creek Agency, March 25, 1813, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 631.

<sup>139</sup> See *The Hawkins Letters*, 631-4 and *ASP, IA*, vol. 1, 846; Woodward, April 2, 1858;

<sup>140</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to the Upper Creek Chiefs, Creek Agency, March 25, 1813 and Benjamin Hawkins to John Armstrong, quoting Alexander Cornells, Creek Agency, March 29, 1813, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 631-2; Rothman, 125.

<sup>141</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to John Armstrong, Fort Hawkins, April 6, 1813, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 633.

<sup>142</sup> Cussetah Micco to Colonel Hawkins, Cussetah, July 10, 1813, *ASP, IA*, vol. 1, 849.

Benjamin Hawkins, the chiefs described the conflict as one between “old-chiefs” and “young warriors;” the “old chiefs kept in their council,” but could not persuade their “young warriors” to bring to justice those Creeks who had recently attacked whites.<sup>143</sup> The old chiefs were eventually “obliged to attack them like as their enemy.” Tellingly, this letter was signed by three mestizo slave-owning Creeks, who remained loyal to the United States and Hawkins throughout the conflict. These men felt no need to couch their intent in conciliatory language; they meant “to kill all our red people that spill the blood of our whites.”<sup>144</sup>

Both sides in the Red Stick War would use the language of color to identify friends and enemies as the conflict unfolded. Hawkins understood the first war pipe to be sent to the Creeks in 1811 as one designed to pit “red” against “white.”<sup>145</sup> Another mixed-blooded Creek slave-owner remembered Tecumseh as having offered during his initial journey to the Creek country a talk at which “no white man was allowed to be present. Tecumseh stated the object of his mission; that if it could be effected, the Creeks could recover all the country that the whites had taken from them.”<sup>146</sup> Whether or not Tecumseh had indeed spoken in these terms, that his opponents recounted his message in such language is equally telling. On the other side, the rhetoric was no less charged. During the Ft. Mims massacre, a decisive Red Stick victory which helped shock the federal government into action, a Red Stick supposedly told a slave hiding in the corner to “come out, the Master of Breath has ordered us not to kill any but white people and

---

<sup>143</sup> See *The Hawkins Letters*, 631-4 and *ASP*, IA, 846.

<sup>144</sup> Big Warrior, Alexander Cornells and Willam McIntosh to Benjamin Hawkins, *ibid.*, Tuskaubatchee, April 26, 1813, *ibid.*, 841.

<sup>145</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to William Eustis, Tookaubatche, September 21, 1811, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 591.

<sup>146</sup> Woodward, October 31, 1858. Woodward heard the speech recounted by Red Stick William Weatherford, who was present at the talk.

half breeds.”<sup>147</sup> As the Red Stick War was a war fought against a civilization built upon notions of racial difference, skin color seemed an apt vocabulary by which to label opposing parties.

But color is far too simple a dichotomy through which to examine the Red Stick War. The Red Sticks were not interested in “race-war” or a war against “white” peoples generally. Indeed, they found important allies in the British and Spanish. There was no contradiction in “anti-white” Red Sticks seeking arms from their allies, “the Spaniards,” who offered “a horse load of arms to every town ... to enable them to prosecute the war with the United States.” As the Spanish and Creeks both understood, “the destruction of every American is the song of the day.” In discussions with Peter McQueen, a mixed-blooded leader of the Red Sticks, the Spanish “Governor promised a supply of arms and ammunition from Havana, if the Indians went to war with the United States.”<sup>148</sup> The fundamental target for the hostiles were Americans and their Creek allies. These groups could thus be equally well described as *Ecunnaunuxulgee*, which meant peoples who greedily desired for control of Native lands; “white” was just another useful nomenclature by which to subsume these parties under one term.<sup>149</sup>

That men like Peter McQueen would identify with the Red Sticks further undermines the “red” versus “white” rhetoric often used to describe the belligerents. Hawkins, in his “Sketch” written a decade before the Red Stick War, described “Peter McQueen, a half breed” as having “a valuable property in negroes and stock and begins to learn their value.”<sup>150</sup> But McQueen never evolved into the “civilized” slave-owning southerner Hawkins envisioned him becoming. With the outbreak of the Red Stick War, McQueen readily abandoned all his property and wealth to be

---

<sup>147</sup> Hawkins, Creek Agency, September 17, 1813, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 665.

<sup>148</sup> *ASP, IA*, vol. 1, 852.

<sup>149</sup> Martin, *Sacred Revolt*, 122.

<sup>150</sup> Hawkins, “A Sketch of the Creek Country,” in *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins*, 26s.

burned by American forces.<sup>151</sup> Once the Red Sticks were defeated, he fled down to Florida to join the Seminole resistance. Upon request that he work to achieve “by every means the emigration of Negroes from Georgia and the Carolinas, McQueen vowed to “get all the black men we can to join your warriors.”<sup>152</sup> Forsaking the legacy of his European ancestry, McQueen would spend the rest of his life in violent opposition to the civilized practices such as slave ownership he had previously enjoyed.

Yet not all slave-owning Red Sticks permanently abandoned the fruits of American civilization. In contrast to Peter McQueen, Red Stick leader William Weatherford saw his time with the Red Sticks as a temporary sojourn. Weatherford was an instrumental leader in the Red Stick campaigns, including the Ft. Mims massacre.<sup>153</sup> During this time, he welcomed runaway slaves into his forces, gleaning information “from runaway Negroes who joined the hostile Indians to assist in exterminating the white people and be free.”<sup>154</sup> But following the decisive defeat of the Red Sticks to Andrew Jackson in 1814, Weatherford fled from the fleeing Red Sticks and snuck back into Jackson’s camp. They had a long conversation, in which Weatherford explained “the Red Sticks are nearly all killed. If I could fight you any longer, I would most heartily do so. Send for the women and children. They never did you any harm. But kill me, if the white people want it done.” Jackson judged Weatherford to be a worthy man and pardoned him for his Red Stick sympathies.<sup>155</sup>

Weatherford subsequently established a thriving plantation in what became Monroe Country, Alabama. One of his contemporary Alabamans explained how “Weatherford became a

---

<sup>151</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to the Secretary of War, *ASP, IA*, vol. 1, 852. In later skirmishes, McQueen’s slave property would be targeted and seized. See Hoithleponiyau to Col. Hawkins, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 656.

<sup>152</sup> Saunt, *New Order*, 278.

<sup>153</sup> Stiggins, 103-6; 110-13.

<sup>154</sup> Stiggins 104-5.

<sup>155</sup> Woodward, October 31, 1858; Pickett Chapter XLII.

permanent citizen of the lower part of the county of Monroe, where, upon a good farm, well supplied with negroes, he lived, maintained an excellent character, and was much respected by the American citizens for his bravery, honor and strong native sense.”<sup>156</sup> Despite his time as a Red Stick, Weatherford was welcomed back into slave society, and his “civilized” peers, both Creek and American, lauded his virtues. Thus the “civilizing” dream of complete integration into the emerging American republic was not entirely elusive; the exceptional Creek Indian, aided with a bit of European ancestry and some slave property, could indeed achieve the Jeffersonian ideal of American citizenship.

As the violence continued to unfold into the summer of 1813, Alexander Cornells, still the official interpreter for the Upper Creeks, clarified the grounds on which the conflict had been sparked. In July of 1813, around three months after Little Warrior’s murders, Cornells wrote to Hawkins that “the chiefs are much surprised that the plan of the prophets should have been kept so long a secret from them. They looked on it as a sort of madness or amusement for idle people.” By associating the plan of the prophets with the “idle,” Cornells used the same language Hawkins and American powers had long employed to describe “uncivilized” Creeks. Cornells continued more explicitly: “The prophets are enemies to the plan of civilization, and advocates for the wild Indian mode of living.” Blaming the movement on invasive outside forces such as Great Lakes tribes and the British, to Cornells the Red Stick uprising signaled the arrival of a new outside force set on challenging the preeminence his favored foreign culture for the Creek country.<sup>157</sup> The Red Stick War war against American civilization had begun in earnest by the summer of 1813.

---

<sup>156</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> *ASP, IA*, vol. 1, 846.

The first major pitched skirmish of the Red Stick War was the so called Battle of Burnt Corn in August of 1813. As Red Stick sympathizers led by Peter McQueen sought to obtain ammunition and supplies from Spanish Florida, they were raided in what is today southern Alabama by pro-American forces comprised of about “30 half breeds and white people.” Two Americans were lost. Meanwhile, Hawkins reported that the Red Sticks had “two killed, and one negro.” If Hawkins felt the need to separate Red Sticks from their African-Creek allies, the Red Sticks surely did not. This is just the one among many incidents in which the Red Sticks willingly embraced the aid of slaves and free black persons in their resistance to American power. Meanwhile, the Americans managed to seize four of McQueen’s slaves in response.<sup>158</sup>

The Battle of Burnt Corn was really no more than a minor skirmish. American forces did succeed in preventing the immediate arrival of Spanish military support to the Upper Creeks, but McQueen’s Red Sticks were in “high spirits” at their relative success. Meanwhile, the Red Sticks continued to travel throughout the Creek country destroying signs of civilization such as farms, cattle, and horses.<sup>159</sup> The Greirsons, (the spelling by now Anglicized as Grayson) had all of their “cattle, horses and negros” stolen. Grayson soon emerged as a secret American informant, providing Hawkins and his allies with important information about Red Stick movements and activities among the Upper Creeks. He reported the warm welcome given to “the men sent from the upper town for ammunition” upon their return.<sup>160</sup>

Raids and skirmishes of this sort would continue throughout the summer of 1813. As mestizo and American owned property was continually destroyed, and Red Stick property burned in retaliation, slaves began to take note of the chaos engulfing Creek society. At the Battle of Burnt Corn, “negroes” acted as belligerents and messengers on either side of the

---

<sup>158</sup> Hawkins, Journal of August 16, 1813, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 656-7.

<sup>159</sup> Saunt, *New Order*, 254-8.

<sup>160</sup> Hawkins, Journal of August 16, 1813, in *The Hawkins Letters*, 656-7.

conflict.<sup>161</sup> Over time, slaves came to more visibly identify the Red Stick cause with their own. One mixed-blooded Creek tells of “runaway Negroes who joined the hostile Indians to assist in exterminating the white people and be free.”<sup>162</sup> He added that the slaves felt “their freedom would come about when the Negroes and the Indians would conquer and destroy the white people, according to the say of the prophets.”<sup>163</sup> That slaves would find the prophetic message which was variably described as anti-white and anti-civilization so appealing is revealing of the intertwined challenges to racism, slavery and the American civilization seeking to colonize the Creek country offered by the Red Sticks. Years after the conflict, one Red Stick warrior lamented this strategy, arguing that, “the proud and warlike Muscogees on this occasion had compromised the dignity of their nation in stooping so low as to call to their aid the services of such a servile and degraded race as negroes to assist them in fighting the battles of their country.”<sup>164</sup> But if certain leaders in the war effort rejected or ignored the common ground between slaves and Red Sticks, the challenge the Red Sticks posed to slave society was clearly not lost on slaves themselves.

This pattern of minor skirmishes and seizure and burning of property was rerouted by the infamous “Fort Mims Massacre” of August 30, 1813. Located deep in the Creek country in modern day Alabama, just north of Spanish Florida, Fort Mims became a refuge for propertied Creeks fearing for their lives and wealth. Among the fort’s approximately four hundred inhabitants were one hundred slaves.<sup>165</sup> As a symbol of propertied power and American civilization in the Creek country, the Red Sticks planned and executed an attack on the fort in the

---

<sup>161</sup> For slaves as messengers as Burnt Corn, see Stiggins, 99.

<sup>162</sup> *ibid.*, 105.

<sup>163</sup> *ibid.*, 120.

<sup>164</sup> H.S. Halbert and T.S. Ball, *The Creek War of 1813 and 1814* (Montgomery: White, Woodruff & Fowler, 1895), 258-9.

<sup>165</sup> Gregory A. Waskelkov, *A Conquering Spirit: Fort Mims and the Redstick War of 1813-1814* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006), 33.

late summer of 1813, a surprise attack which caught the inhabitants of the fort entirely off guard. The fort was burned, and most of its inhabitants killed. Not counting slaves, less than fifteen of the inhabitants were kept alive as prisoners. In all, probably some three hundred men, women and children were massacred by the Red Sticks and their allies at Fort Mims.<sup>166</sup>

Slaves and free blacks played an important role in determining the outcome of the battle at Fort Mims. Two slaves in the fort reported spotting the Red Stick forces prior to the attack, but were accused of lying and flogged for seeking to cause an uproar.<sup>167</sup> After the battle, escaping runaway slaves would be the first to report the outcome of the attack on Fort Mims to Hawkins and the American powers.<sup>168</sup> On the other side, the role of slaves was even more instrumental. The Red Sticks used runaway slaves to learn the layout of the fort and plan for their attack.<sup>169</sup> During the battle, the Red Stick charge was supposedly initially repulsed, and “they would not have commenced their attack anew, but the Negroes would not cease.” Thanks to their encouragement, “the Indians were urged on to the charge and renewed the attack.” That most every inhabitant of the fort, including livestock, was put to death, but the lives of slaves were spared implies an appreciation of the support to the Red Stick cause slaves would offer.

With this massacre and the seizure of near one hundred slaves by the Red Sticks, American powers were shocked into action. Colonial era fears of Afro-Creek collusion and combined resistance to slave society’s spread seemed to be coming true. Worries that America’s Indian allies would abandon them, and that slaves would learn of the Red Stick successes and their practice of welcoming runaways abounded. With the combined aim to crush Red Stick resistance and seize Spanish West Florida, Andrew Jackson was instructed to levy a force of

---

<sup>166</sup> See Stiggins 107-14, and Hawkins, *The Hawkins Letters* 664-6 for accounts of the massacre itself.

<sup>167</sup> Pickett, XXXVII.

<sup>168</sup> Hawkins, *The Hawkins Letters*, 663-6.

<sup>169</sup> Stiggins, 108.

2,000 men and head into the Creek country.<sup>170</sup> By the fall of 1813, the Creek civil war had a new key player: the United States.

The arrival of Andrew Jackson into the Creek country signaled a turning point in the Red Stick War.<sup>171</sup> Without giving too much space to military details, it suffices to explain that the arrival of American military aid signaled the doom of the Red Stick cause and of subsequent Creek or African organized resistance to the spread of slave society into Georgia and Alabama. Jackson never lost a pitched battle with the Red Sticks. Though plagued by hunger and discontent, Jackson and his soldiers methodically moved through the Creek country, burning any villages loyal to the Red Sticks. Red Stick losses tended to outnumber those suffered by the Americans and their allies by factors of ten or more.<sup>172</sup>

Jackson's campaign exacerbated the affects of Red Stick pillaging from the previous summer, and hunger spread throughout the Creek nation.<sup>173</sup> But though even civilized Creeks had to pay a price for the uprising, the cost for those who had identified with the Red Sticks was especially high. By the time of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, the final battle of the Red Stick War, the Creeks had been decimated. The Battle of Horseshoe Bend, fought in March of 1814, was the last stand of the Red Sticks in the Creek country north of Florida. Of about one thousand Red Stick warriors, perhaps seven or eight hundred were slain. The remainder fled down to Florida to continue their resistance to slave society in what remained Spanish Florida.<sup>174</sup> So ended formal resistance to American power in these lands.

---

<sup>170</sup> Rothman, 128-9; Willie Blount to Thomas Flourney, *ASP, IA*, vol. 1, 855-7.

<sup>171</sup> For that matter, Jackson's campaigns in Creek country could also be considered a turning point for all of American history, sparking his rise to popularity which culminated in two presidential terms.

<sup>172</sup> Rothman, 130-2, 134-5.

<sup>173</sup> Benjamin Hawkins to John Armstrong, Creek Agency, June 7, 1814; July 19, 1814; in *The Hawkins Letters*, 682, 689-70.

<sup>174</sup> Pickett, XLII.

The Red Stick War not only quelled immediate resistance to slave society, but laid the groundwork for the spread of American cotton country into the southwestern interior. American officials saw intervention in the Red Stick War as an opportunity to formally subsume more Creek lands and thereby entrench their society in the Creek frontier. Following the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, Major General Thomas Pickney informed Hawkins as to the federal government's aims in ensuing negotiations with the Creeks. Pickney made little effort to couch his desires in the friendly and amicable language familiar from earlier American-Creek treaties: "The Government of the United States, willing to spare the dispersed remnant of these miserable people, who may be disposed to atone for their former misdeeds...communicate to them the following terms, upon which peace will be granted to them."<sup>175</sup>

The peace American powers sought to impose on the Creeks would include the forfeiture of the more than half of Creek lands north of Florida, the formal separation of Georgian and Alabaman Creeks from Seminole tribes in Florida, and the surrender of any prophets remaining in the Creek country. Pickney justified these forced cessions as due payment for American intervention: "The United States will retain so much of the conquered territory as may appear to the Government thereof to be a just indemnity for the expenses of the war."<sup>176</sup> The Red Stick War afforded the federal government the opportunity to accelerate the goals of the civilization program, and incorporate Creek lands into the American republic as conquered lands rather than through coerced assimilation. In addition to seizing thousands of acres for American control, more American forts and roads were to be built in what remained of the Creek country. Anti-American dissidents were expelled, and American power was brought in to replace them. In the

---

<sup>175</sup> Pickney to Hawkins, Confluence of the Coosa and Talapoosa Rivers, April 23, 1814, *ASP, IA*, vol. 1, 857.

<sup>176</sup> *ibid.*

final treaty signed at Fort Jackson (built on the site of Horseshoe Bend) in August of 1814, nearly twenty five million acres were ceded by the Creeks to the federal government.<sup>177</sup>

The treaty was signed under duress by those Creeks who had remained loyal to the United States throughout the conflict, as most Red Stick leaders had been killed or had fled south. The Creek country was thus essentially dissected, with more than half of it now set aside for American settlers. Meanwhile, the Creeks who signed the Treaty of Fort Jackson were promised restitution for their property lost during the war (including property in slaves). Scholars have shown how this process only further exacerbated the pre-war wealth gaps which had come to define Creek society. The Treaty of Fort Jackson was in a sense a bargain between land-ceding chiefs and the United States which only further welcomed the model of civilized ownership of property and accumulation of wealth which the Red Sticks had opposed into Creek society.<sup>178</sup>

The newly reformed Creek country assumed a shape which proved to be especially advantageous to American slave-owners. As Georgian settlers continued to move into the Creek country, the ceded lands and isolation of violent resistance deep into the southern interior created a geographical protection for American slave property and civilization.<sup>179</sup> Following the Red Stick War, British and Spanish agents in Florida continued to press Seminoles and refugee Creeks into violent resistance to slave society. The British armed any runaways who made their way into Florida. In October of 1814, Hawkins reported that “some signal...has been agreed on between the Seminoles, the negros and British.” In one night alone, Hawkins learned of fourteen runaways from the Creek nation into Florida. By the winter of 1815, Hawkins believed there was

---

<sup>177</sup> Kappler, “Treaty with the Creeks, 1814.” See also Image I.

<sup>178</sup> Saunt, “Taking Account of Property: Stratification among the Creek Indians in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 57, no. 4 (2000).

<sup>179</sup> Jackson consciously planned for the land cession to provide such protections. See Martin, *Sacred Revolt*, 165.

a combined force of three hundred “whites,” “Indians” and “blacks” armed in Spanish Florida, among them 80 blacks capable of bearing arms. British agents would continue to encourage runaways to flee to Florida in the months to come.<sup>180</sup>

Of course the presence of any armed slaves or free blacks in the southeast was problematic for American slave society. But while they worried over the implications of African Seminoles for Georgian slavery, Hawkins and his peers took solace in the fact that the majority of the runaways were from the Creek country. What remained of the Creek lands would function as a buffer by which to protect the slave property of the United States. Though some Georgian slaves were lost into Florida as well, the majority of slave losses were suffered by Creek mestizo slave owners.<sup>181</sup> Hawkins would eventually send Creek warriors into Florida to seek out these runaways, promising a certain fee for each slave delivered to Fort Hawkins.<sup>182</sup> Hawkins’ goal here was not to keep African peoples out of the Creek country; it was to seek the return of slaves into that country, thereby securing the foothold of slave society in the Creek lands north of Florida by increasing the presence and security of slave property among the Creeks.

The Red Stick War did not immediately result in the complete acceptance of the tenets of slave society by all Creek peoples. Indeed, distrust or disinterest in the American form of slavery continued to exist among the Creeks in Georgia and Alabama until removal. But what the Red Stick War did signal was the final gasp of organized and violent resistance to American slave

---

<sup>180</sup> Hawkins, *The Hawkins Letters*, 698, 717. These armed ex-slaves would eventually occupy and defend the “Negro Fort” which bothered Hawkins and his slave-owning peers for a number of years. It would not be destroyed until after Hawkins’ death in 1816. For a description of the fort, see *The Hawkins Letters*, 748. See also Saunt, *New Order*, Chapter 12.

<sup>181</sup> *The Hawkins Letters*, 702-4.

<sup>182</sup> Hawkins to Tustunnuggee Hopoie, Fort Mitchell, April 30, 1816, in *The Hawkins Letters*,

society in these lands prior to the Civil War. By the December of 1815, Creeks in Georgia were once again being arrested for stealing American slaves.<sup>183</sup>

Soon laws would be enacted by the Creeks themselves to reinforce these practices. The first set of written Creek laws, dated to 1817, directly concerned slavery. The first three Creek laws established punishments for murder. Hawkins, who had passed on a year earlier in 1816, had long impressed onto the Creeks the need to update their laws governing murderers. He would have been quite satisfied with the result achieved. The first and second Creek laws decreed that only the murdering party would be punished upon good proofs of his intent to kill. The third Creek law declared: "If a negro Kill an Indian, the negro shall suffer death. and if an Indian Kill a negro he shall pay the owner the value." Later laws forbid slaves from owning property and established official Creek nation outposts for the return of domestic runaways. One law even declared that Afro-Creek children would be denied inheritance, as "it is a disgrace for our people to marry a Negro."<sup>184</sup> The ideologies of the American south had become the ideologies of the Creek elite.

These laws could only be sporadically enforced, so American slave society would never be replicated fully and perfectly in lands of the Creek nation until after removal. Especially among the Upper Creeks, pockets of the Creek nation ignored the influence of invasive slave society and continued to deal with African peoples in more traditional manners. Slaves continued to obtain property (which would now occasionally be seized) and mixed marriages continued.<sup>185</sup> But unlike earlier times, these practices were now legally and socially proscribed. The encroachments of slave society would continue their acceleration in the years to come.

---

<sup>183</sup> Hawkins to William H. Crawford, Creek Agency, December 8, 1815, *ibid.*, 766.

<sup>184</sup> Waring, "Laws of the Creek Nation," 12, and laws 3, 17, 20-2.

<sup>185</sup> Littlefield, Jr., 85-7.

By the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century, the need to control the movement and behavior of slaves had become a central concern for the Creek nation even in its internal workings. If in earlier years the federal government worried over how to regulate slavery among the Creeks, slavery's spread had transferred these problems to the Creeks themselves. Following the Red Stick War, Creek society in Georgia and Alabama had formally and permanently become a society with slaves.

### Epilogue

Scholars have discussed the expansiveness inherent to American slave society.<sup>186</sup> The struggle over the fate of frontier lands relative to the presence of slavery was the central political issue of the antebellum period. When slave-owners were finally denied further outlet for the spread of their society, civil war ensued. But earlier struggles over western lands had brought the various sections of the American nation to the brink of violence before 1860. As early as 1790, before the Treaty of New York was signed, Creek chief Alexander McGillivray observed that “the eagerness which Washington shows to treat with me on such liberal terms, is not based, I am persuaded, on principles of justice or humanity. Rather I believe that his true end is that of restraining the malevolence of the northern and eastern states against the southern.”

---

<sup>186</sup> Eugene Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press: 1989), chapter 10. Rothman, chapter 1. Ford, chapter 4.

The process of removal which was arranged for and executed over the 1820s and 1830s further highlighted these emerging sectional tensions between the slave and free states. In 1825, at the Treaty of Indian Springs, Creek chiefs led by mestizo slave-owner and known American sympathizer William McIntosh signed away the last remaining Creek lands east of the Mississippi in exchange for lands in the Indian Territory (modern Oklahoma) and large personal bribes.<sup>187</sup> McIntosh was put to death for violating a Creek law forbidding further land cessions to the Americans, and in 1826 another treaty was signed nullifying the treaty of Indian Springs.<sup>188</sup> But Georgia still considered the earlier treaty valid, and began unilaterally pushing for settlement on its Creek lands. Meanwhile, many Creek slave-owners allied with the McIntosh party began their movement into Indian Territory following McIntosh's treaty, temporarily decreasing the presence of slavery among Creeks east of the Mississippi.<sup>189</sup>

In a speech before congress in 1827 during debates over the validity of the Treaty of Indian Springs, Missouri Congressman Thomas Hart Benton gave voice to the potentially drastic implications of allowing the tensions between Georgia and the federal government over settlement of the Creek country to grow unabated. As Georgians continually violated federal treaties by settling on Creek lands and the federal government considered violent intervention, Benton warned: "We have arrived at a crisis when one of the members of this confederacy...has rendered it necessary to resort to the military power of the General Government, to coerce her into submission." Benton continued: "In such contests, and however unequal, the seeds of disunion would be thickly sown."<sup>190</sup> As Benton understood, the struggle to move slave society

---

<sup>187</sup> Kapler, "Treaty with the Creeks, 1825."

<sup>188</sup> *ibid.*, "Treaty with the Creeks, 1826"

<sup>189</sup> Littlefield, Jr., *Africans and Creeks*, 110-1.

<sup>190</sup> "Relinquishment of the Claims of the Creek Indians to Lands in Georgia" *ASP, IA*, vol. 2, 870-1.

into the Creek frontier foreshadowed the dangers slavery's expansion posed to American national security.

The subject of this thesis has not been to examine the implications of slavery's spread among the Creeks for the constitution of the United States. Rather, what this study has sought to show is how early on American slave-owners came to realize the importance of the frontier to the fate of their peculiar institution. As slave-owners worked to mold the movement of slavery west according to their needs, many paid a heavy price. Among those directly impacted by slavery's expansion were the people who historically resided in lands fated for incorporation into the American south. The erasure of Creek society from the lands of Georgia and Alabama is one small piece of this larger antebellum narrative.

## Bibliography

### 1. Primary Sources

Baker, Lindsay T. and Julie P. Baker. *The WPA Oklahoma Slave Narratives*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996.

Bartram, John and Francis Harper. "Diary of a Journey through the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida from July 1, 1765, to April 10, 1766," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 33 no. 1 (December 1942), i-iv, 1-120.

Candler, Allen D. et. all, eds. *The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*. 38 vols. Atlanta: The Franklin Printing and Publishing Company and the Franklin-Turner Company, 1904--.

Caughey, John Walton. *McGillivray of the Creeks*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press: 1938.

George, David Lloyd. *An Account of the Life of Mr. David George from Sierra Leone in Africa Given by Himself in a Conversation with Brother Rippon of London, and Brother Pearce of Birmingham*. Canada's Digital Collections: Black Loyalists.

Accessed from: [http://blackloyalist.com/canadiandigitalcollection/documents/diaries/george\\_a\\_life.htm](http://blackloyalist.com/canadiandigitalcollection/documents/diaries/george_a_life.htm)

Galphin, George. "Will of George Galphin," *The Family of Joseph Alston and Caroline Green Hatcher*, <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=7213&id=108347>.

Georgia Historical Society, *Collections*. 21 vols. Savannah: Georgia Historical Society, 1840-1989.

—"Oglethorpe's Treaty with the Lower Creek Indians," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (1920), 3-16, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40575623?seq=1>.

Grayson, G.W. *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy: The Autobiography of Chief G. W. Grayson*. Edited by W. David Baird. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

Hawkins, Benjamin. *The Collected Works of Benjamin Hawkins, 1796-1810*. Edited by Thomas Foster. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003.

—*Letters, Journals and Writings of Benjamin Hawkins: Vol. II, 1802-1816*. Edited by C.L. Grant. Savannah: The Beehive Press, 1980.

Jefferson, Thomas. *Writings*. Compiled by Merrill D. Peterson. New York: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1984.

Kappler, Charles J., ed. *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*. University of Oklahoma Library. Accessed from: <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/Kappler/>

Library of Congress. *A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation*. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lawhome.html>

Pope, John. *A Tour Through the Southern and Western Territories of the United States of North America*. New York: Charles L. Woodward, 1888. <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=qFQTAAAAYAAJ>

Pickett, Albert James. *History of Alabama and Incidentally of Georgia and Mississippi from the Earliest Period*. Alabama: 1851. Accessed from: <http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cmamcrk4/pkttfm.html>

Rawick, George P., ed. *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*. 19 vols. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Company, 1972.

Rootsweb. "Among the Creeks." <http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cmamcrk4/index.html#anchor450454>

Rootsweb. "Creek Indian Records." <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~texlance/main.htm>

Stiggins, George. *Creek Indian History: Historical Narrative of the Genealogy, Traditions and Downfall of the Ispocoga or Creek Indian Tribe of Indians*. Edited by Virginia Pounds Brown. Birmingham: Birmingham Public Library Press, 1989.

Sturtevant, William C. *A Creek Source Book*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1987.

Waring, Antonio J. *Laws of the Creek Nation*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1960.

Woodward, Thomas S. *Woodward's Reminiscences of the Creek, or Muscogee Indians, contained in letters to friends in Georgia and Alabama*. Montgomery: Barrett & Wimbish, Book and General Job Printers, 1859. Accessed from: <http://www.his.jrshelby.com/creek/woodward.htm>

## 2. Secondary Literature

Ball State University, "Historical Archaeology At George Galphin's Silver Bluff," <http://mdgroover.iweb.bsu.edu/GPR%20Silver%20Bluff.htm>.

Braund, Kathryn E. Holland. "The Creek Indians, Blacks, and Slavery," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 57, No. 4 (Nov., 1991), pp. 601-636.  
—*Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek-Indian Trade with Anglo America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993.

Ford, Lacy K. *Deliver Us from Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Frank, Andrew K. *Creeks and Southerners: Biculturalism on the Early American Frontier*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005.

Genovese, Eugene. *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1989.

Halbert, H.S., and T.S. Ball. *The Creek War of 1813 and 1814*. Montgomery: White, Woodruff & Fowler, 1895.

Littlefield, Jr., Daniel F. *Africans and Creeks: From the Colonial Period to the Civil War*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979.

- Naylor, Celia E. *African Cherokees in Indian Territory: From Chattel to Citizens*. University of North Carolina Press, 2008.
- Martin, Joel W. *Sacred Revolt: the Muscogees' Struggle for a New World*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.
- May, Katja. *African Americans and Native Americans in the Creek and Cherokee Nations, 1830s to 1920s: Collision and Collusion*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1996.
- McCoy, Drew R. *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980.
- Purdue, Theda. "Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society." PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 1979.
- Rothman, Adam. *Slave Country: American Expansions and the Origins of the Deep South*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005.
- Saunt, Claudio. *A New Order of Things: Property, Power and the Transformation of the Creek Indians*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- "The English Has Now a Mind to Make Slaves of Them All": Creeks, Seminoles, and the Problem of Slavery" *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 1/2 (Oct., 2000), pp. 733-760.
- "Taking Account of Property: Stratification among the Creek Indians in the Early Nineteenth Century," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 57, no. 4 (2000).
- Searcy, Martha Condray. "The Introduction of African Slavery into the Creek Indian Nation." *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 1 (Winter-Spring, 1998), pp. 157-80.
- VanDerwarker, Amber M. and Kandace R. Detwiler. "Gendered Practice in Cherokee Foodways: A Spatial Analysis of Plant Remains From The Coweeta Creek Site," *Southeastern Archaeology*, 21, no. 1 (Summer 2002), pp. 21-8, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40713484>.
- Waselkov, Gregory A. *A Conquering Spirit: Fort Mims and the Redstick War of 1813-1814*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006.
- Wright, J. Leitch Jr. *Creeks & Seminoles: The Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulge People*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986.

Zellar, Gary. *African Creeks: Estelivste and the Creek Nation*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007.