The onset of the nineteenth century was associated with substantial transformations that challenged American Indians of the Southeast. Tribes such as the Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Choctaw became more integrated into the developing world market economy. Herding and raising cash crops gradually replaced hunting and barter as a means to pursue wealth. Yet not all Southeastern Indians experienced prosperity. Among the Creeks living in present-day Alabama and Georgia, growing resentment about westward expansion by white settlers and the concomitant loss of tribal hunting grounds fostered the creation of an Anti-American, nativist political and religious movement. Known as the Redsticks (named after the “red stick of war”), this faction was inspired by Tecumseh and his brother, the Shawnee Prophet, Tenskwatawa. They encouraged American Indian communities from the Ohio Valley to the southern frontier to resist assimilation into Euro-American society and to fight American encroachment onto Indian lands. The Redstick movement culminated into the Creek Civil War from 1813 to 1814—in the midst of the War of 1812—where loyalties split across town and clan lines.

As part of ethnohistorians’ recent efforts to focus on the individual lives of American Indians in the Native South, this paper will examine why American Indian leaders like William Weatherford (Hoponika Fulsahi, or the Truth Maker), who had French, Scottish, and Creek
ancestry, joined the Redstick faction. Questions that will be addressed include: how Weatherford’s ancestry and clan ties played a role in his leadership and decision-making in the years leading up to the war; why Weatherford led a violent attack on a white and Métis settlement at Fort Mims in 1813, inspiring deadly American reprisals; and how the civil war weakened clan and town unity among the Creek peoples, especially among the Métis population. On a larger scale, this paper will reveal the complexities of American Indian relationships with each other and with the American Republic during the early nineteenth century. Although the rebellion was eventually extinguished by General Andrew Jackson’s Tennessee militia and allied Creek and Cherokee warriors, the movement’s nativist message of returning to ancient traditions, beliefs, and practices had a lasting impact on American Indian communities. In order to fully understand and capture Creek perspectives and worldviews, ethnohistorical data—including historical documents, archaeological and anthropological evidence, and oral history—will be used throughout this study.

* * *

William Weatherford and the Métis Creeks

The Creeks, like other southeastern tribes, experienced a new world with European colonization of North America. The people that Europeans lumped together as “Creek Indians”—so likely named because of the numerous streams and rivers near their towns—were indeed very diverse even though they shared a common ancestral past (known as the Mississippian Culture, 1000-1600 C.E.) before the arrival of Europeans. These distinct, autonomous communities referred to themselves and their neighbors as Alabamas, Coushattas, Abhikas,
Yuchis, Cowetas, and the like. These people joined flexible alliances in order to protect their collective interests in trade and diplomacy vis-à-vis European Indian agents in the eighteenth century. The Coushatta leader Alexander McGillivray later formalized this fluid alliance of towns and declared in 1790 that he was the leader of a united Creek Nation. The Creek Nation’s collective alliance led many Europeans in the southeast to identify Coushattas, Cowetas, Abhikas, etc. as “Creeks,” so it became increasingly difficult to distinguish between groups. To complicate matters, British traders in the eighteenth century labeled the Creek towns above the confluence of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers as the “Upper Creeks,” and to those peoples south on the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers as “Lower Creeks.” Understanding these differences is important, but for the purposes of this study the term “Creeks” will be used throughout to identify these people as a collective group when town affiliation is unknown or when describing general trends of the whole.

By the late eighteenth century, the Creek worldviews had transformed resulting from a century or more of intermarriage and extensive trade with Europeans. In many cases, trade and intermarriage went hand in hand. Members of Creek talwas (towns) often invited Europeans to establish trading posts and forts within their territory in order to obtain valuable and essential trade goods in exchange for deerskins. For example, the Alabamas and Coushattas (included among the Upper Creek towns) invited the French in 1715 to build Fort Toulouse in the center of their town at the convergence of the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers near present-day Montgomery, Alabama. Alabama and Coushatta men assisted with the construction of the fort and it became quickly evident to the French that the Alabamas and Coushattas were an integral part of the survival of the fort. Alabama and Coushatta women provided food and other necessities for the garrison; to the chagrin of the French, it was often at an exorbitant price. Moreover, because of
the complete lack of women at the fort or in Louisiana territory for that matter, it is no surprise that intimate relationships between French men and Indian women developed. Here is where many of the Creeks became part of the Métis class, often referred to as “mixed bloods.”

William Weatherford, *Hoponika Fulsahi*, or the Truth Maker, was an example of the amalgamation of European and Creek worlds. Born on 28 September 1780, Weatherford’s background was quite diverse. His great-grandfather was Captain François Marchand, the French commander of Fort Toulouse, who had married (formally or not) a prominent Coushatta woman of the influential Wind Clan, Sehoy I, from the Upper Creek Coushatta town of Coosada. Before his own men killed Marchand in a mutiny in 1722 due to a lack of food, supplies, and pay, he and Sehoy I had a daughter, Sehoy II, who married a Scottish trader, Malcolm McPherson. During this marriage, Sehoy II gave birth to Sehoy III, who later married a Scotsman who had at least half Southeastern Indian ancestry, Charles Weatherford, William’s father. Interestingly, Sehoy II (William Weatherford’s grandmother), whose second marriage to Scottish trader Lachlan Laith McGillivray led to the birth of their son, the renowned Alexander McGillivray (William’s maternal uncle).

Weatherford’s lineage had a mixture of European and Creek/Coushatta ancestry, but Creek society was matrilineal and matrilocal. Creeks traced both clan affiliation and status through the mother’s family instead of that of the father—different from that of European cultures. European men also had to obtain the approval of the woman’s clan, usually by the maternal uncle, before such relationships progressed; a suitor had to prove he was a good hunter, an appropriate provider, and of good character. After the marriage ceremony, whether European or traditional Creek (which was more common), on the first morning after her marriage, the new bride placed beans on the fire to cook her husband’s first meal. The ceremony, known as
asaamachi among the Alabamas and Coushattas, called for a wife to “forget” about the food by going back to sleep, thereby scorching and ruining her husband’s first meal—an act that surely astonished European men who were more familiar with patriarchy. This practice, which continued through the twentieth century, indicated a husband’s new place in the woman’s household and that the man’s role was subordinate. Weatherford and those like him also were raised strictly by their mother’s family. Children belonged exclusively to their mother’s clan and lineage, not to their European father. Weatherford, for example, was raised by his mother’s extended family, in particular his uncle, Alexander McGillivray, who taught him Creek skills, customs, traditions, and discipline.4

It is important to note that Creek women in particular had influence over their European husbands concerning politics. Traditionally Creek men dominated political life, but women could influence their husbands with anger, tears, ridicule, indifference, and, above all, matrilineal kinship to bridge the gap between the private and political spheres. Women often received the support and even encouragement of female relatives.5 Such female influence, then, factored into Creek men’s decisions, including those of William Weatherford on the eve of the Creek War.

Marriages between the two cultures and the Métis offspring that followed in such relationships were definitely a political and economic opportunity for both Creeks and Europeans. Each group stood to gain access to lucrative trade. By the first decade of the nineteenth century, many Creeks from Upper and Lower towns had embraced the growing Southern market economy. The deerskin trade that had dominated the eighteenth century was in decline due to falling market prices and overhunting, but the plantation economy quickly replaced it. Many Métis Creeks, who had more connections with European traders and exposure to new modes of living, began to participate in the slave trade and establish plantations for cash
crops or livestock farther south near Mobile, known as the Tensaw region. They became knowledgeable on commodity values of slaves, trade goods, and livestock. It was one way to replace their livelihood. This economic and social transition of the Métis Creeks, however, left many Creeks behind. More traditional Creek hunters instead became increasingly indebted to corrupt traders. This inequity among the Creeks caused conflict; there was a growing divide and resentment between those Métis Creeks who had accepted European hegemony and profited from the market economy and those that retained more traditional roles. Though such division grew within the Creek Nation, most Creeks agreed that American encroachment onto their lands should be stopped.

*The Redstick Movement and Weatherford’s Dilemma*

Prior to and during the French and Indian War in 1754, the Creeks held the balance of power as French, British, and Spanish emissaries vied for Creek alliances in their attempts to establish colonies in southern North America. Creek towns sued for peace with their neighbors and pursued diplomatic neutrality as British and French powers struggled for hegemony over the South. The Creek alliance of diverse towns (often referred to collectively as the Creek Confederacy or Creek Nation) had proven to be a source of strength and power during the contest for empire. Yet many townspeople, most notably Weatherford’s Coushatta relatives, broke their attempts to remain neutral with their Creek neighbors and instead supported their French kinsmen at Fort Toulouse. Many provided the French assistance and supplies, ironically acquired from British traders and agents. The eventual cessation of hostilities between the two empires ultimately destroyed Creek negotiating leverage. They were no longer able to exist in the middle between larger entities.
After the French evacuation of colonial settlements in North America in 1764, Creek power had diminished drastically. Southeastern tribes had to accept the British and later American presence in the South. To some groups, the Creek alliance was no longer useful, so they broke their ties and migrated west to seek a new center. Those that remained witnessed countless encroachments onto their lands by white Americans in the next decades. During this troubling time, Tecumseh and the Shawnee Prophet, Tenskwatawa, travelled to many American Indian towns in the southeast and spread their message of returning to traditional ways and restoring tribal sovereignty. Tecumseh, who was part Creek, condemned tribal leaders who had allowed the sale of large tracts of American Indian land to scrupulous traders or government agents. Tecumseh instead argued for a return to traditional values that stressed communal ownership of land and the rejection of Western materialism. His brother, Tenskwatawa, toured the Indian country, encouraging men to stop drinking alcohol (a habit that nearly killed him), to avoid eating European foods like wheat or raising livestock such as cattle or pigs, and to leave their white spouses and Métis children. The Shawnee brothers gave other American Indians a religious and political message that focused on renewal of native beliefs and the promise of American Indian power. A pan-Indian movement had begun.

In many ways, the Creeks were in the proper mindset for Tecumseh’s movement. Creek leaders had pledged their lasting friendship with the United States and ceded a large portion of their hunting grounds to the federal government in 1790 under the Treaty of New York; it settled territorial disputes with the state of Georgia in exchange for government annuities that would later be used to pay off Creek debts. Many Creeks faced economic hardship from this decision, especially those that continued to rely on hunting as their livelihood. Moreover, in 1811 a federal road project brought American settlers straight through Creek country that ultimately led
to increased land encroachment. That same year, Tecumseh travelled to the South attempting to convince other tribes to join him. He met with the Creeks at the Upper Creek town of Tuckabatche and informed them that he had the support of Northern tribes and the British. While most Creek leaders refused to support Tecumseh’s cause, many young men who were frustrated with Creek acquiescence of American hegemony whole-heartedly supported the movement.¹⁰

American Indian agent Benjamin Hawkins who witnessed Tecumseh’s talk to the Creeks recognized his powerful message and subsequent impact. Hawkins wrote that the Creeks had many conflicts with Georgians over land disputes, but they had remained at peace with the whites for over fifty years since the American Revolution. As war seemed inevitable between Great Britain and the United States, however, Hawkins witnessed open Creek hostility towards American settlers. According to Hawkins, Tecumseh and possibly British agents influenced and encouraged a portion of the Creek Nation—most notably the Upper Creek towns—to attack the Americans. They “took arms, without the slightest provocation, and at first committed great ravages.”¹¹ Hawkins realized that a war was underway.

It is understandable why many traditional Creeks, who had suffered economically and politically since the last decades of the eighteenth century, would support Tecumseh’s message and create their own nativist movement. Métis Creeks, on the other hand, stood on the opposite end. Eschewing western European values, customs, and materialism threatened Métis status and wealth within the Creek Nation. Considering this obvious fact, historians have been perplexed for generations regarding William Weatherford’s decision to join and lead the Redsticks; his motivations are unclear and there are many contradictory historical claims on the subject. A large part of the confusion stems from his Métis background and his elite status in Creek society.
Why would such a man risk his wealth, status, and life for a cause that seemed to oppose those like him?

Unfortunately Weatherford’s own thoughts and perspectives are lost because of the lack of records left behind. Moreover, unlike many Métis Creeks, Weatherford refused to learn to read and write despite the constant prodding from Alexander McGillivray (his maternal uncle); instead Weatherford mastered the spoken English language and French (from another maternal uncle, Le Clerc Milford), and some Spanish. Despite these gaps, ethnohistorical analysis indicates that Weatherford identified with his mother’s clan and her relatives in the Upper Creek town of Coosada—not the Metis Creeks.

Weatherford ultimately supported the Redsticks, but there is evidence suggesting that he was hesitant. One of William Weatherford’s descendants, J.D. Dresbach, wrote an account of the events between Weatherford and Tecumseh in 1811 in the square ground of Tuckabatchee. In it he suggests that Weatherford was cautious about taking sides. According to oral history, Weatherford tried to convince his kinsmen that the Creeks needed to remain neutral. He believed that both the Americans and British were their enemies and spoke with “a forked tongue.” And as much as he wanted to drive the white man from all Indian lands, Weatherford believed that the Americans were too powerful and would likely conquer again. He was firm in his position that to join either the British or the Americans would lead to his people’s destruction.

Weatherford’s possible reluctance to wage war conforms to past neutrality policies of the Wind Clan. His kinsmen had witnessed prosperity in the 1750s when many Upper Creek towns implemented such neutrality strategies on the eve of the French and Indian War (1754-1763). Upper Creek towns, in particular those associated with Weatherford’s Coushatta kinsmen,
largely stayed out of the majority of the fighting save a few war parties and skirmishes aiding the French garrison, to whom they had kinship ties. Moreover, his infamous uncle (also from the Wind Clan), Alexander McGillivray, who declared himself the leader of a united Creek Nation in 1790, was famous for his strategies of playing off imperial powers, including the Spanish, British, and Americans in order to benefit the Creeks and his own interests. Weatherford no doubt, then, knew of these past strategies from his education from Alexander McGillivray; it would appear that on the eve of war in 1811, Weatherford was concerned that this time he and others would be destroyed if partisanship prevailed; it would have made the most sense to take the examples of the past and opt for diplomacy and non-alignment.

In order to decipher the motivations of Weatherford, we must understand his connection to his mother’s people, members of the influential Wind clan that supported the Redsticks. Josiah Francis (Hillis Hadjo, or crazy-brave medicine) was one of the leading Redstick warriors from the Wind clan and was known as the “Alabama Prophet”; Francis’ grandmother was Sehoy I, Weatherford’s great-grandmother. While the historical record for Francis is very murky, it is likely that he influenced Weatherford on a spiritual-level. According to reports from Alexander Cornells, a Métis Creek who assisted Indian agent Benjamin Hawkins, prophets like Josiah Francis were attacking the “civilization plan” by advocating “the wild Indian mode of living.” Hawkins later reported in July 1813 that that there was a “sudden explosion of this Fanaticism.” He was concerned that “its boasted magic powers deters them [Creeks] from obeying the calls of their Chiefs.” Weatherford’s upbringing was strictly traditional in that he had no formal education in the Western sense and relied on his mother’s clan for guidance and instruction, especially on religious matters.
Weatherford also likely had been influenced by his third wife, Supalamy Moniac, who intensely supported the Redsticks. Little records exist regarding her viewpoints, but evidence suggests that she and her father, John Moniac, accepted Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa’s spiritual message of renewal. According to his relative J.D. Dreisbach, Weatherford had been intensely connected to his native spirituality, even towards the end of his life. Dreisbach related one memory that while on a hunting trip in 1824, Weatherford spotted a white deer that had been killed. He was deeply moved and went home, where he told his family that a member of the hunting party would soon hunt in the spirit land of his ancestors; the next day Weatherford died. This story demonstrates that despite the defeat of the Redsticks and his later acquiescence of the American presence in Alabama, Weatherford kept his traditional religious beliefs of his mother’s people.

Weatherford also lived in the Upper Creek country in or near his mother’s town of Coosada until after the Creek War when he moved farther south. Coosada was a known center for nativist sentiment. Many of the Coushatta leaders there, such as Captain Sam Isaacs (who was married to Alexander McGillivray’s daughter), despised the rejection of native ways by the Métis Creeks, who mostly opposed the Redsticks and later remained loyal to the Americans. Weatherford’s continued residence among his Coushatta kinsmen likely swayed him to join as the town of Coosada led efforts to gather Redstick support among other Upper Creek towns. The specific reasons why many members of the Wind clan ultimately supported the Redsticks are not clear, but it was enough to influence Weatherford to join the their cause.
The Fort Mims Controversy

On 30 August 1813 at around 11:00 in the morning, Weatherford and 700 Redsticks—armed with red-painted war clubs, knives, and muskets—attacked Fort Mims. The fort was attached to one of the largest plantations in the area (at least ten buildings on the property) owned by Samuel Mims. There were approximately five hundred people that resided within the fort’s stockade, including twenty Metis Creek and white families (with 50 or more children), one hundred of their slaves, and the rest, Tensaw militiamen and Mississippi Territorial Volunteers. Hopoie Tastanagi, Far-off Warrior, who was the principal leader of the war party, gave the signal to begin the attack on the unsuspecting militiamen.\(^\text{19}\)

Without firing a single weapon, the Redsticks stormed the fort on the east side, which was left partially open from a sand drift. The Redsticks scaled the walls and quickly found other exposed entrances, except the fort’s blocked inner gate. Three out of the four Redstick leaders who Paddy Walsh—one of the Alabama prophets—made invincible to American bullets by his magic were killed immediately when they reached the fort’s center. A melee began and the Redsticks killed at least half of the Mississippi Volunteers between the fort’s inner and outer gates. Owing to the fort’s faulty design, the Redsticks fired their weapons from three sides of the fort’s walls, which should have only been accessible to defenders; 100 militiamen and 250 civilians struggled to find safety. Paddy Walsh thought that there would be very little casualties on their side, though the initial losses did not discourage him. As the battle continued, Walsh ran around the perimeter of the fort, believing that if he did it three times, the bullets targeted at the Redsticks would stop the bullets or make them fly up in the sky. On his third lap a militiaman wounded him, but he yelled at his men to take the fort; the Métis Creeks called back at him in the Muscogean language to come and try.\(^\text{20}\)
Even though the Redsticks had penetrated the outer walls, they suffered many casualties and the militia held their ground. According to reports, the Redsticks withdrew to reassess their situation after three hours of fighting. Weatherford argued that they should retreat, knowing that they had inflicted great damage but that they too had suffered more casualties than expected. The Redsticks, however, rejected Weatherford’s suggestion. In the remaining hours, Weatherford left the fort and travelled north to the plantation of David Tate (his half-brother), where he told the slaves to hide from the Redstick war parties. According to later accounts, he refused to stay at the fort because he knew great bloodshed would follow. Based on archaeological evidence and first-hand accounts, approximately 247 American and Metis Creek men, women, and children died. After the destruction of Fort Mims, the remaining Redsticks killed livestock, burned surrounding buildings, and looted nearby properties.\textsuperscript{21}

If we can trust the sources noting Weatherford’s reluctance, the question that remains is why did he hesitate and why did the Redsticks proceed with a violent massacre? There is a good reason to believe that Weatherford was reluctant to kill those inside Fort Mims. First, some of them were his fellow Metis Creek kin, mostly through marriage connections. Second, as a leader of the Creeks, he fully understood the ramifications of such a bloodbath; Americans also would seek retribution. So, historians have tried to understand why he failed to stop such a violent attack on men, women, and children. Here ethnohistorical analysis proves useful. When considering the Creek \textit{talwas} (or towns) and the role of \textit{tastanagis} (head warriors), these men, or the \textit{mikos} (or chiefs) lacked dictatorial control over the townspeople. Instead, talwa leaders offered their best advice and sometimes led them into battle.\textsuperscript{22} These men involved in the Fort Mims massacre were emboldened by Tecumseh and the Prophet’s messages; Americans were the true enemy and had been responsible for the murder of countless Creek lives.
It is also important to understand clan law among the Creeks in order to fully grasp the Creek worldview and the Redsticks’ actions. Before the attack on Fort Mims, the Redsticks had been betrayed by thirty Métis Creeks led by Dixon Bailey. Bailey, along with his men, escorted 150 white militiamen into Creek country and attacked an unsuspecting Redstick encampment around mid-day during their meal on 27 July 1813 at Burnt Corn Creek. Rumors had spread about the Redsticks’ ability to gain valuable supplies and ammunition from the Spanish in Pensacola, Florida in preparation for a larger assault in the region. The combined American and Métis force fought for three hours and killed between 12 to 20 Redsticks, including a Creek woman, and lost only 2 of their own. The battle was short and relatively insignificant considering the small amount of deaths on both sides. Yet it had a lasting impact on the Redsticks. They believed that the Métis Creeks had betrayed their own people by assisting the white militia that by some accounts also mutilated the slain Redsticks; they also fought and killed their own brethren. It is no coincidence, then, that many of the Métis Creeks involved in Burnt Corn Creek, namely Dixon Bailey, were also inside Fort Mims.

The Redsticks believed that the Métis Creeks had killed their kinsmen at the Battle of Burnt Corn. Therefore clan retribution (sometimes referred to as blood law) was the immediate action that needed to be taken. Clan retaliation or revenge of a member’s death—whether accidental or not—was a long-standing social institution inherited from the Creeks’ Mississippian ancestors. Clan members in these circumstances would seek out the offenders. Based on ancient customs that existed before European contact, upon their capture clan members would tie the prisoners to a pole and would encourage them to sing a war song while being tortured. After the prisoners expired, clan members would remove the scalps and cut them into pieces. Then they would tie the pieces to pine twigs and lay them atop the roof of the house of
the murdered person, whose blood they had avenged. They believed this act appeased their clan member’s soul. Kinsmen would then celebrate for three days and three nights. Another Creek tradition in the eighteenth century against non-Creek enemies or traitors of the talwas was death by burning.25

If one considers these traditions, such clan retaliation against those at Burnt Corn Creek was necessary, in particular the leadership of the Métis Creek, Dixon Bailey. U.S. Indian agent Benjamin Hawkins noted rumors had spread shortly after the Battle of Burnt Creek that the Redsticks sought to take revenge on the Métis Creeks involved. George Stiggins later confirmed this belief when he stated that the Redsticks’ aim was to destroy the fort because “they knew that there was a great many men in there that they had devoted to destruction to revenge the burnt corn fight.”26 Not only did the Redsticks burn the fort to the ground, but they also cut up the scalps of their enemies into over 200 pieces.27 According to their customs, this act would have appeased their fallen brethren.

The Redsticks’ actions against those inside Fort Mims, while brutal, was in accordance to their beliefs and traditions. Those at Fort Mims had sided with the Americans—against their Creek brethren—and they would pay with their lives. Based on the teachings of Tecumseh and the Alabama prophets, returning to their traditions that Americans had tried to eradicate was critical if they wanted to restore Indian sovereignty. Moreover, it was important to remove permanently the Americans and those who supported them from Indian lands in order to reverse the imbalance in their world.
The Fate of Weatherford and the Creek Nation

After the battle at Fort Mims, Americans and many Creek Métis vilified the Redsticks as reckless murderers. Americans sought their own retribution; they burned Upper Creek towns and villages with a vengeance. The Redsticks’ final stand took place at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend on 27 March 1814, where Andrew Jackson, the Tennessee militia, and allied Cherokees and Creeks cut them down. Andrew Jackson occupied the former grounds of French Fort Toulouse and renamed it Fort Jackson. Jackson left the Redsticks on the verge of collapse. At the end of April, Weatherford boldly walked into Jackson’s camp and surrendered himself and his men. According to accounts, Weatherford fully expected to be executed for his role in the attack on Fort Mims and his other actions against the American troops, but Jackson spared his life. Some historians have suggested that Jackson (who also had Scottish ancestry) pardoned him because he respected Weatherford’s honor and character; he was a defeated, but not humbled leader.  

The events after Weatherford’s surrender to Jackson are not easily understood. It is unclear where he remained after that point, but records indicate that he no longer fought with the last Redsticks. Instead, Weatherford attempted to persuade them to lay down their weapons and surrender. Other accounts from many of his unreliable biographers suggested that he befriended Jackson and even stayed with him at the Hermitage, his home in Tennessee (which is unsubstantiated). What we do know is that Weatherford assisted American troops in finding the remaining Redstick warriors and forcing their surrender. This action has baffled historians for generations. Why would he turn against the cause that he supported and fight the same people that he had committed himself to earlier?
Unfortunately historians do not have any evidence to answer this question. However, we can speculate that after Weatherford’s surrender, he began to consider how he and his family needed to maintain their status and wealth in face of the Redstick defeat. He likely understood that Americans had committed to westward expansion, costing Southeastern tribes their lands. If he aided the Americans in the last stages of the Creek War, he stood to gain favor with diplomats and erase his role as a Redstick leader. As the war ended, Weatherford largely disappeared from public life and established a large plantation that supported 300 slaves in southern Alabama, where other Métis Creeks embraced what historian Claudio Saunt refers to as “the new order.”

The Creek War ended on 9 August 1814 with the Treaty of Fort Jackson. Creek representatives were forced to cede twenty-three million acres of their lands in what was then considered Mississippi Territory, which included most of present-day central and south Alabama and parts of southern Georgia. Interestingly, the Treaty of Ghent that was signed on 24 December 1814 to end the war between Great Britain and the United States included a provision in Article IX that reversed the Treaty of Fort Jackson. Article IX restored lands claimed by Indian nations allied to the British during the war. Jackson and his supporters, however, ignored this stipulation and the land cessions under the Treaty of Fort Jackson held. Thus, Upper Creek towns, largely destroyed during the end of the war, were forced to move east of the Coosa River. The Treaty of Fort Jackson would ultimately allow white Americans to settle on the prime, fertile lands that the Creeks had inhabited for generations. And this step was only the beginning.

Before the Creek War, the majority of Creek Indians had lived in relative peace with whites and it seemed that gradual assimilation into white society seemed possible, especially among the Métis Creeks. Some historians even have suggested that if not for the destruction of Fort Mims and the subsequent deaths of white men and women at the hands of the Redsticks,
Indian removal may not have been as immediate.\textsuperscript{32} Whether or not this can be argued is uncertain, especially as Creek land became more and more desirable to white Americans who migrated west in search of their own material wealth. What is certain, however, is that the Redsticks’ actions at Fort Mims and the leadership of Weatherford throughout the war had a lasting impact on Americans’ attitudes towards the Creeks (whether involved or not) and the Southeastern tribes as a whole; after this point Americans increasingly called for their removal west of the Mississippi River.

Yet Weatherford and his kin fared better than most. After his surrender to Jackson, his kinsmen tried their best disassociate him with the Redstick movement, especially his involvement with the Fort Mims massacre. He became known as the “Red Eagle,” a “civilized” Métis who was led astray. Poems were written about him and he became a legendary figure. Historians later portrayed him in the same light as the legendary confederate general in the American Civil War, Robert E. Lee, who, like Weatherford, never wanted to go to war but felt compelled to fight with his fellow Southern brethren. Weatherford’s role at Fort Mims diminished, and he became part of American Indian mythology.

After Andrew Jackson signed into law the Indian Removal Act of 1830, Southeastern tribes were no longer able to remain east of the Mississippi River. For the Creeks, including Upper and Lower towns, the Treaty of 1832 led to their removal to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma, in which they lost their ancestral homelands and countless lives of men, women, and children during the long process of emigration. As removal began, eleven prominent Métis Creek family members appealed to the federal government to remain in Alabama because of their assistance with the Federal Road project. The Weatherfords, Stiggins, Durants (relatives of William Weatherford), and others, received approval from the government and remained on their
lands in southern Alabama. Known as the “Poarch Band of Creek Indians,” in 1984 the United States established the Poarch Creek Indian Reservation in near Atmore, Alabama. Today, they are the only federally recognized tribe that remains in Alabama.

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NOTES


2 Shuck-Hall, Journey to the West, 52-63.

3 Benjamin W. Griffith, Jr., McIntosh and Weatherford: Creek Indian Leaders (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1988), 3-4; Waselkov, Fort Mims, 36-37.

4 The husband moved to his wife’s town, where her clan resided. Unlike their European counterparts, Creek women had individual autonomy and depended on their clans, not their husbands, for support. Although the relationship between father and son was meaningful, the two were members of different clans and were not each other’s closest male relatives according to the matrilineage. James Adair, The History of the American Indians, ed. Samuel Cole Williams (London: Charles Dilly, 1775; reprint ed., New York: Argonaut Press, 1966), 6, 147; Benjamin Hawkins, A Sketch of The Creek Country, in the Years 1798 and 1799 (1848; reprint, Savannah: Georgia Historical Society, 1916), 73; William Bartram on the Southeastern Indians, eds. Gregory Waselkov and Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 58; Interview of Jeff Abbey, July 25, 1938, in Lyda Averill Taylor Papers, Richard Yarborough Collection, Center For American History, University of Texas at Austin.

5 Ibid.


7 Shuck-Hall, Journey to the West, 111-113.

8 Ibid.


12 Griffith, *McIntosh and Weatherford*, 11, 94.

13 J.D. Dreisbach to Lyman Draper, 7-8 July 1874, reprinted in Waselkov, *A Conquering Spirit*, 301, n.49.

14 J.D. Dreisbach to Lyman Draper, 7-8 July 1874, reprinted in Waselkov, *A Conquering Spirit*, 301, n.49.


17 Waselkov, *Fort Mims*, 94.


20 Stiggins, *Historical Narration*, 62-64.


24 Woodward notes that according to Redstick descendants, another reason for the violence at Fort Mims was due to atrocities committed by the militiamen at Burnt Creek, including skinning Redstick bodies to make horse bridles and taking scrotum sacks to make tobacco pouches. See Woodward, *Reminiscences*, 35-36.


27 Waselkov, *Fort Mims*, 147.


