

7-2008

RENDERS IT NECESSARY THAT WE  
SHOULD BE PREPARED' A  
REEXAMINATION OF THE MILITANT  
SOUTH thesis IN TERRITORIAL FLORIDA

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“RENDERS IT NECESSARY THAT WE SHOULD BE PREPARED”  
A REEXAMINATION OF THE MILITANT SOUTH  
THESIS IN TERRITORIAL FLORIDA

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate School of  
Clemson University

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

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by  
Franklin Evan Nooe  
August 2008

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Accepted by:  
Rod Andrew Jr., Committee Chair  
Paul Christopher Anderson  
Donald M. McKale

## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the effect of Native Americans on the martial tradition in the Old South. As proposed by John Hope Franklin, the proximity of Southern settlements to Indian tribes aroused grave apprehension regarding the safety of the settlers from hostile attack. This thesis seeks to illustrate a specific example of his assessment. Therefore, the work is focused on the events of the Seminoles in Florida and to a lesser extent the Creeks in Alabama and Georgia. Chronologically the thesis focuses on approximately 1800-1842. Geographically the text is concerned with Florida and the border areas. This thesis argues that the presence of the Seminole Indians instilled a martial tradition in Southerners. This occurred due to the depredations by Native Americans in Florida and the perceived danger to white settlers. Not only Florida, but also the border states, perceived a threat from the continued presence of the Seminole tribe. The Militant South thesis is defined as encompassing both the violent, bellicose stance of the white, male Southerner along with enthusiasm for martial ideals. This is in line with Franklin's use of *militant*, both in his title and in his text, as he does not limit the explanation to "militaristic" or "martial," as pertaining only to militias, military schools, or the federal army, but also referring to personal violence.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my parents. Without their steadfast belief in my abilities, I would not be where I am today.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In no way was writing this thesis an independent endeavor. First and foremost, I must thank the dedicated effort put forth by my chair advisor, Dr. Rod Andrew Jr. His assistance helped guide this work from a twenty-five page paper in an independent study class (that Dr. Andrew directed) to a conference paper and finally to the thesis you see before you. Every typographical and grammatical error that is not present can be attributed to his diligent reading of countless drafts. It is also necessary to thank Dr. Paul Christopher Anderson who allowed me to consume his office hours while he helped guide me in the specific direction I choose for this work. I must also extend my gratitude to Dr. Donald McKale for challenging me in his class and taking his time to be a member of my committee.

Research was also not an individual activity. James Cusick, Curator of the P.K. Young Library of Florida History, at the University of Florida was an immense help with guiding me through the primary source material and making suggestions for further research while I spent two weeks digging in special collections in Gainesville. At Clemson University, the people who make up the Resource Sharing and Inter-Library Loan Department at Cooper Library tracked down almost every newspaper that was used in this thesis. This work would not reflect the quality in research that it does without their work and this invaluable service offered at Clemson University.

I also feel obligated to thank my fellow graduate students. Companionship and

support in trying times is often overlooked and I do not wish to imagine what going through this process would have been like without the friends I have made while at Clemson University. Specifically, I want to thank Daniel Grafton, Eric Lager, and Bill McKinney. At least for me, our Esso discussions on coursework and our theses helped me work through material more than I realized at the time.

Finally, I must thank Clemson University and the Department of History. Over the past two years they have demanded high standards and given me the opportunity to grow personally and intellectually. The efforts of the University and Department have forever made me proud to call myself a Clemson Tiger.

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## INTRODUCTION

First published in 1956, John Hope Franklin's The Militant South: 1800-1861 set the groundwork for the historical examination of a distinct, Southern martial tradition. Franklin took a categorical approach that loosely followed a chronological progression through the time period indicated in the title. From the onset Franklin sought “to identify and describe those phases of life that won for the antebellum South the reputation of being a land of violence.”<sup>1</sup> He summarized his main arguments for a martial south as the persistence of a rural environment, proximity to Native Americans, fear of slaves, and an old-world concept of honor in the region. Portrayed as a highly emotional, aggressive person, the antebellum Southerner left a lasting impression on the region. Southerners and outside observers from Europe and the North supported claims that spread the South's reputation for militancy.<sup>2</sup> Those observers “made more than [a] passing reference to those phases of Southern life and culture that suggested a penchant for militancy which at times assumed excessive proportions.”<sup>3</sup>

To Franklin the Southerners' identity was ingrained with belligerent outlook. The Southerner “gladly fought, even if only to preserve his reputation as a fighter.”<sup>4</sup> Franklin argued that violence in the South was valued and was something that brought praise and stature to an individual. A sense of personal sovereignty gave rise to violence found at

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<sup>1</sup> John Hope Franklin, *The Militant South: 1800 - 1861* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002) xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Franklin, xiii, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, xiii.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 13.



every level of the social scale, from ritualized conflict such as duels to impromptu forms such as bar fights. Southerners praised violence in whatever form to preserve a man's self-worth, even in the event of defeat. One wife, for example, told her husband that "she would rather be the widow of a brave man than the wife of a coward."<sup>5</sup> According to Franklin, a dead man who did not hesitate from violence was more respected than the man who avoided it.

Franklin's categorical attributions to the reasons behind a bellicose South, i.e. rural environment, slavery, and Indians, are at times vague. Historians such as Eugene Hollon have characterized frontier society by violence produced from lawlessness and the innate need to survive. In light of this, what made southern violence distinct from that of the frontier?<sup>6</sup> For instance, the West maintained a rural setting and the North did experience intense Indian hostilities prior to the American Revolution. However, as will be shown, these two elements were a significant factor throughout the antebellum period in the southeast. The significant difference in characterizing the South as "Militant" is the respectability of violence and the encouragement of martial endeavors within an established Southern society.

Despite Franklin's diligent and enduring research, his categorical method leaves some specifics lacking. As he proposed, the proximity of Southern settlements to Indian tribes "aroused grave apprehension regarding the safety of the settlers from hostile

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>6</sup> W. Eugene Hollon, *Frontier Violence: Another Look* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

attack.”<sup>7</sup> It is the objective of this work to assess the events surrounding the Seminoles in Florida and to a lesser extent the Creeks in Alabama and Georgia. It will focus chronologically on 1812-1842, a time frame only marginally examined by Franklin. Geographically the text is concerned with Florida and the border areas. The presence of the Seminole Indians instilled a martial tradition in Southerners affected by the Seminoles and Creeks. This occurred due to the depredations of Native Americans in Florida and the perceived danger to white settlers.

What exactly constitutes a martial tradition? For this work the Militant South thesis encompasses both the violent, bellicose stance of the white, male Southerner along with enthusiasm for martial ideals. This is in line with Franklin's use of *militant*, both in his title and in his text, as he does not limit the explanation to “militaristic” or “martial traditions” pertaining only to militias, military schools, or the federal army instead, he also includes personal violence as a trait of a “militant” society. Opponents of the Militant South thesis criticize its merits by using a stringent definition of the term. Specifically Robert E. May and Marcus Cunliffe do not interpret southern characteristics such as personal violence as influencing a Martial Tradition. These historians have overlooked cultural and environmental elements that influence a society to be more militaristic. Furthermore, these historians have overlooked the effects of Indian wars as a whole.

This thesis is constructed around three research chapters preceded by an

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<sup>7</sup> Franklin, 25.

introduction and followed by a conclusion. Footnotes are utilized along with a full bibliography of sources. The first chapter has a very straightforward objective: show how the territorial settlers of Florida were plagued by violence and fear induced by the Seminole Indians. Even before Florida was a United States territory the Seminoles raised concern among the border inhabitants. The Seminole Indians' involvement in the Florida "Patriot War" arguably turned the war against the invading Americans. The volunteer army, primarily made up of Georgians but also a group of Tennessee volunteer militia, sought to obtain retribution against the Seminoles motivated by depredations against St. Mary's, the border city between Georgia and Spanish Florida. Prior to American acquisition of the territory the Seminole Indians had a reputation for being hostile towards American settlers. The second example is the case of a plantation murder perpetrated by a small band of Seminole Indians. The seemingly unprovoked attack horrified the local citizens and they quickly mustered a force to pursue the murderers. The third example examines the plight of Florida settlers during the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842. During the war civilians were frequent victims of Seminole warfare. Seminole cultural traditions encouraged the attack of protected individuals in Southern society. This further angered white Southerners and created tension between the two groups.

The second chapter evaluates the Militant South thesis in a unique and new approach. Developing southern communities in Florida, Georgia, and Alabama continued to experience one problem that plagued the South as a whole throughout the antebellum

period. The continued presence of the Seminole Indians terrified the white settlers of Florida as previously argued. In response to seemingly random attacks on property and person by the Seminole Indians, Florida citizens adopted distinct patterns of behavior to cope with the Indian threat. Newspapers, letters, and government reports reveal a frightened populace that looked to the federal army for protection. Settlers showed a strong enthusiasm for a peacetime standing army. The Florida communities were relatively small and isolated. As such, they could not adequately defend themselves with their local militias. They had no qualms about petitioning government officials to station companies of federal troops within their communities. These feelings were evident among the populace and government officials, such as Territorial Governor William Pope DuVal.

The third chapter examines the response to the outbreak of the Second Seminole War in neighboring states and to a lesser extent within Florida. Particularly Georgia, South Carolina, and Alabama exhibited strong enthusiasm to support their “suffering brethren” in Florida. These states pledged men, money, and munitions to stop the “savage” foe from inflicting more depredations against the innocent inhabitants. Through published declarations of support in local newspapers we can see how communities publicly proclaimed their enthusiasm for martial endeavors and exhibited martial readiness. This is where the most racially charged language is used to describe the Seminoles. Words such as “savage,” “barbarian,” and “red devil” appeared in vivid accounts of attacks on “innocent” white settlers.

It is the hope of this work to show that the effects of a continued Native American presence induced a fighting spirit in Southerners. The martial tradition in the Old South has been attacked by historians claiming it is nothing more than a result of Southerners' defensive posturing against abolitionism in the 1850s or postwar "Lost Cause" rhetoric to ease the humiliation of defeat. It is important, however, to examine the southern martial tradition independent of the immediate causes and effects of the Civil War. In addition, the North did not experience a prolonged Indian presence in the same way as the South during the first half of the nineteenth century. The South still had to deal with hostile Native Americans into the 1840s. This fact by itself adds to the uniqueness of the South. Secondly, relying heavily on Don R. Higginbotham's "The Martial Spirit in the Antebellum South: Some Further Speculations in a National Context" and Bertram Wyatt-Brown's examination of "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" by Nathaniel Hawthorn, this thesis supports the historical argument that it was largely the North that changed and the South remained similar to its colonial likeness. Lastly, and most importantly, this work argues that there was a distinct southern martial tradition that preceded the Civil War and this idea was not solely a myth created by "Lost Cause" writers, although it was certainly perpetuated in the post-war years.

## A NATIVE FOE

The Seminole Indians maintained a prominent presence in Florida through the first half of the nineteenth century. Even before the United States acquired the territory from Spain the Seminoles represented a threat along the southern frontier. Brent Richards Weisman has stated that “the years between 1812 and 1858 were filled with nearly incessant hostilities and tensions between the Seminoles and the citizens, soldiers, and government.”<sup>8</sup> White civilians often found themselves caught in the middle during the decades long struggle between the encroaching white settlers and the Seminoles. Not only were settlers normally the instigators of hostilities but also the primary target for retaliatory measures. The Seminole Indians did not differentiate between combatant and civilian. A white United States soldier stationed at Fort King was as likely a victim as a plantation owner.

Seminole and white cultural differences and similarities created a tense environment. As the two groups came into increasing contact they began fighting over land and resources. These disputes shaped white, Southern culture territorial Florida. Largely induced by fear and suspicion, Southerners had to maintain a vigilant militant preparedness with the perceived possibility of an Indian attack looming. As the years progressed these emotions deepened in Southern society. Settlers had to be prepared to

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<sup>8</sup> Brent Richards Weisman, *Unconquered People, Florida's Seminole and Miccosukee Indians*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), 43.

react to the next raid, murder, or depredation that might take place.

By first examining the Florida Patriot War of 1812 one can see how the Georgians along the border feared the presence of the Seminoles. There were constant tensions and an awareness of possible hostilities brought upon the frontiersmen at the hands of the Seminoles. In fact, the involvement of the Seminoles was a key factor in turning away the invading Georgian volunteer army from Spanish Florida.

After the acquisition of the territory by the United States settlers from the southern states moved into the newly open land. However, this was already the Seminoles' home. Disputes between settlers and Indians often became violent. Although Seminole aggression was most typically taken out on white property it was not uncommon for the Seminoles to act out violently towards individuals.

Finally, during perhaps the darkest hour of U.S. military history, the Second Seminole War, natives openly attacked civilians and their homes. This was representative of both the Seminole way of war and the nature of their desperate struggle to remain in their homeland. In many ways it was the civilian white settler who was pushing the Seminole out of his homeland. Therefore Seminoles saw white settlers as much of an enemy as they did the federal troops.

Even upon discovery of the peninsula native inhabitants of Florida made a strong impression with early explorers. Prior to the American Civil War the territory was under the control of five different nations. The famous Spanish explorer Ponce de León first discovered it in 1513. In his quest for gold and glory, he sailed in vain down the coast of

the Florida Keys and Tortugas. He periodically disembarked to explore the coast and confronted “hostile Indians whose appearance gave no indication of wealth.”<sup>9</sup> Still the Spanish laid claim to the territory and maintained colonial rule until 1763. However, it was not a peaceful rule. Border wars flared up as the English colonies expanded south. The Yamassee War of 1715 was one of many Indian conflicts. Specifically cited at the start of the Second Seminole War contemporaries saw the Yamassee War in southwestern South Carolina as a continuation of hostile Indian. Although the Southerners of the mid-1830s were 120 years removed from this colonial Indian conflict one author felt that “the fierce and warlike spirit of that powerful tribe, seemed to spring up from their graves.”<sup>10</sup> Combined with Creek and Catawba, the Yamassee Indians attacked the encroaching South Carolinians with backing from St. Augustine. Carolinians responded and demanded a buffer state to be created with financial support to place fortifications across the border in southern Georgia.<sup>11</sup>

In 1732 King George II of England granted James Oglethorpe the right to settle Georgia. Oglethorpe quickly became a warrior and the new colony hastily built forts and stationed men from Savannah to St. George. The Spanish Florida Governor José Simeon Sánchez was forced to relinquish claims to the territory because of an inadequate force maintaining Spanish territory. Outraged by Sánchez's decision Spain immediately called

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<sup>9</sup> Rembert W. Patrick, *Florida Under Five Flags*, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1955), 2.

<sup>10</sup> William Wragg Smith, *Sketch of the Seminole War and Sketches During the Campaign, by a Lieutenant of the Left Wing*, (Charleston: Dan J. Dowling, 1836), 25, South Carolina Historical Society, Rare Books: R 973.5.D69 S64 1836.

<sup>11</sup> Patrick, *Florida Under Five Flags*, 15.



home the defeated Governor. The Spanish government repudiated the land cessation and summarily executed the former Governor. Spain then moved reinforcements to St. Augustine and prepared for war. The British Crown gave Governor Oglethorpe command of the Georgia and Carolina forces to use in response. Years of indecisive warfare commenced on the border.

By 1763 Florida changed hands to English ownership. After the defeat of Spain and France, England was able to ransom Cuba for the peninsula. This sparked an influx of settlers from the British American colonies. Men of “all faiths and nationalities freely came” to Florida. Although Spanish rule had been broken the “country was [still] inhabited by intractable Indians who resisted conquest.”<sup>12</sup>

When Great Britain lost the colonies in the Revolutionary War Florida was not declared independent. However, there was no longer a practical ability to sustain British rule in the territory. The peninsula was simply too vulnerable for the British to maintain the colony. Britain decided to abandon the territory and cede the land to Spain in 1783.<sup>13</sup> The British made a smart decision because it was not long before expansion-minded Americans were eyeing Florida as the next frontier. During the Florida Patriot War of 1812 the Seminoles played an integral part both in motivating action against Spain amongst the Georgia settlers and in stymieing American victory.

The disputes leading up to the border war between the United States and Spain

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 24.

were, as James G. Cusick states “in part from a frontier environment . . . where law and justice were often enforced by private retaliation.” The Americans monitored the Seminoles in the area with concern. Spain pursued a policy of friendship and goodwill towards the natives. The Spaniards sent gifts to the chiefs of the major Indian towns across the border. These men were an important ally in the event of a border dispute with the Americans. The tribes in the area could put hundreds of warriors in the field and also controlled trade in pelts, cattle, and horses throughout the peninsula. The Florida Indians used the possibility of an alliance with Spain as a bargaining chip when dealing with the United States government officials. At best, during times of peace trade was blocked to the Georgians by the Seminoles. During times of war, fear of the Indians put the Georgia border counties in a state of alarm.<sup>14</sup>

In June 1800 the border city of St. Marys was distraught by a recent murder committed by Indians against a white man. This murder did not even take place on the United States side of the border. A man was “killed in his field, scalped, and partly burned, and mangled in a horrid manner” within a mile of St. Augustine. The atrocity committed on Spanish soil elicited a concerned response towards the Indians. Defensible measures had to be taken in case the Indians redirected their efforts north. A St. Marys inhabitant justified this necessity by assuming that:

the nature of the restless savages that even without invitation they would sooner travel one thousand miles on foot to do mischief, than by earnest

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<sup>14</sup> James G. Cusick, *The Other War of 1812: The Patriot War and the American Invasion of Spanish East Florida*, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2007), 46-47.

solicitation they would go five miles to do a good act, or even be induced to sit so long still in peace.<sup>15</sup>

It was inevitable that the “savages” would eventually turn against the whites at St. Marys. It was the nature of these primitive beings to “do mischief” and St. Marys had to act quickly because they were much less than one thousand miles away. This incident proved to be characteristic of Indian-U.S. relations for nearly the next fifty years.

The attempt to wrestle control of East Florida from Spain was as much at the behest of Southern frontiersmen as it was the desire of President James Madison. With control of the territory, Southerners could hope to subdue the Indian threat. “The Indians”, reported *Niles Register* were “incorrigible in their cruelties. They are the natural enemy to a civilized state . . . [and] they resemble wolves, who would rather be exterminated than domesticated.”<sup>16</sup> The initial plan was designed to have former Governor of Georgia George Mathews incite a rebellion against Spain in northern Florida and transfer authority to the United States. To do so, Mathews enlisted the aid of Georgia citizens and a few East Florida settlers to invade Spanish Florida.<sup>17</sup>

Although portrayed by Joseph Burkholder Smith as a government conspiracy to overthrow a foreign power in line with the events surrounding Vietnam, the invasion of

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<sup>15</sup> Two letters. Lengthy accounts saying that Bowles, with a party of Indians, blacks, and whites, has crossed the St. Johns River to menace the outlying plantations around St. Augustine, “Philadelphia Gazette and Daily Advertiser,” Philadelphia, PA July 21, 1800, (Gainesville: Goza, University of Florida Digital Library Center) [<http://fulltextt6.fcla.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=flnp;idno=UF00002336;sid=8a403fa28589804665dff971bfedae59;cc=flnp;rgn=div1;view=text;n ode=UF00002336%3A1>], hereafter cited as “Two Letters, July 21, 1800.”

<sup>16</sup> *Niles Register*, November 15, 1878, Vol XIII, 191 cited in Rembert W. Patrick, *Florida Fiasco: Rampant Rebels on the Georgia-Florida Border 1810-1815*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1954), 48.

<sup>17</sup> James W. Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida*, (Gainesville: The University Press of Florida 1993), 28.

Spanish Florida was met with enthusiasm by Southerners looking for adventure.<sup>18</sup> The men who invaded Florida were volunteers from Georgia. By the end of 1811 Matthews enlisted 150 volunteers and appointed Lodowick Ashley as chief field officer. Ashley was well suited for this position. Though he had little education, “shared the harsh values of [the] southern frontiersmen.” Descendant of one of the southern counties leading families, the rank and file identified him as one of their own and naturally saw him as a leader. Ashley shared with these men the desire for more land, a distrust of the East Florida Spaniards, and fear of “marauding Indians.”<sup>19</sup>

The men along the border had as much invested in the takeover of Spanish Florida as President Madison. The Seminoles has been a nuisance to stability in the region. The Indians continued to play one white power off another depending on the situation. The border inhabitants had a shared enemy that they feared could act at random against their towns. Living with a hostile neighbor encouraged the Georgia Southerners to be prepared. If the Indian was destined, as *Niles Register* reported, to be the “natural enemy of the civilized state” then attack was perceived as inevitable.

When the Georgians invaded the Spaniards hastily attempted to put up a defense. Governor Juan José de Estrada quickly sent a messenger, Justo Lopez, to warn the Seminoles of the American invasion. Governor Estrada was the supreme military and political official in the Spanish province. It was up to him to safeguard Spanish interests

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<sup>18</sup> Joseph Burkholder Smith, *The Plot to Steal Florida, James Madison's Phony War*, (New York: Arbor House, 1983).

<sup>19</sup> Cusick, 75.

in the region by whatever means he felt suited the situation. However, not all the legal residents of Spanish Florida felt safe asking for assistance from the Seminoles. William Craig, a Spanish magistrate of Irish descent in the St. Johns district, wrote Governor Estrada and requested that the Seminoles not be sent to his area. The idea of an auxiliary force of Seminole warriors greatly concerned Craig. In his letter he stated that the “inhabitants seem to dread them very much, and with good reason.”<sup>20</sup> Although Craig's allegiance was questionable, it was the inhabitants that feared the presence of the Seminole Indians. The land owners of the St. Johns district did not feel comfortable watching armed and uncivilized Indians defending their town. Even though the Americans had plundered Fernandina the idea of inviting Seminoles into their community did not sit well.<sup>21</sup>

Back on the other side of the invasion the invading Georgians had solicited minimal support from inhabitants of northern Florida. Under the guise of an internal rebellion against Spain the men called themselves the Florida Patriots. After securing Fernandina the Patriots headed for St. Augustine on March 25, 1812 to begin their siege. Up to this point the Patriots had advanced with little resistance and they predicted their invasion would continue just as smoothly. Although other factors eventually contributed to the forced withdraw of the Patriots around St. Augustine the primary concern was the involvement of the Indians. One Patriot leader notified his contacts in Washington and

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<sup>20</sup> Letter from Craig to Estrada, March 17, 1812 from the East Florida Papers, Section 32, Library of Congress in James G. Cusick, *The Other War of 1812: The Patriot War and the American Invasion of Spanish East Florida*, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2007), 133.

<sup>21</sup> Cusick, 44, 62, and 133.

expected to meet no “formidable opposition except the Indians.” Just the possibility of Seminole involvement on behalf of the Spanish was as much a concern as factors such as the Spanish governments resolve to resist, possible English involvement, or the grand fortress of the Castillo de San Marcos.<sup>22</sup>

By April the rumors of Seminole participation became too much. George Mathews traveled to Fort Picolata to have a conference with the primary chiefs in the area. Mathews planned to negotiate a treaty of neutrality with Seminole leaders Payne and Bowlegs.<sup>23</sup> The Patriots initially had a successful meeting. Payne assured Mathews of their neutrality during the border dispute. This was a devastating blow to the Spanish government. Governor Estrada immediately sent an appeal to aid the entrenched Spaniards.<sup>24</sup> Both sides knew what Seminole support meant. If the Spanish could entice the Indians to side with them it would have disastrous consequences for the Patriot's siege attempt. The Patriots could not protect their supply lines or flank. The Seminoles could use quick-moving attacks at weak points anywhere between Amelia Island and St. Augustine.

To rally support in Washington citizens of Greene County petitioned President Madison to recognize the sovereignty of the Florida Patriots and take control of the territory. They believed that allowing Florida to remain under the control of another nation presented threats to the United States but particularly the border areas. The

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 144.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 166

<sup>24</sup> Rembert W. Patrick, *Florida Fiasco: Rampant Rebels on the Georgia-Florida Border 1810-1815*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1954), 104.

petitioners asserted that the British and Spanish used Florida to:

annoy our Southern coasting trade, and to pursue with success the odious abominable practice of smuggling; and in possession of the Florida will not our enemy have it greatly in her power to stir up against us the merciless and unrelenting savages immediately bordering upon us.<sup>25</sup>

While the natives were not the sole reason to act, they were cited as a threat to personal security. If Madison saw British impressment of United States sailors as a valid reason to go to war against Great Britain then surely taking Florida could be justified by the desire to protect its inhabitants from a savage enemy.

In June reinforcements arrived at St. Augustine and Sebastián Kindelán y O'Regan arrived to take control of the office of Governor from Estrada. The former Governor then returned to his responsibilities as commander of the infantry. Despite promised neutrality Governor Kindelán approached the Seminoles again.<sup>26</sup> This time the Spanish were in luck.

The treatment of the Seminoles by the white invaders worked in the Spaniards' favor. When Mathews had been assured Seminole neutrality the Seminole leader Payne offered support for the Americans and wished to attack the Spanish. However, Mathews rebuffed his offer and treated Payne "like a common cur." The attitude that the Natives were below the dealings between the white powers insulted Payne and Bowlegs. With the combination of propaganda surrounding what the Americans would do with Seminole

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<sup>25</sup> Citizens of Greene County to President James Madison, August 13, 1812 in Georgia-East Florida-West Florida and Yazoo Land sales, 1764-1850, 185-188, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta in Billy Lee Akins "Georgia and the War of 1812," Masters Thesis at Georgia Southern University, 1968, 68-69.

<sup>26</sup> Cusick, 184, 186.

land, Governor Kindelán exploited the disregard with which Mathews treated the Seminoles.<sup>27</sup>

Bowlegs also was incensed by the disrespect towards his people. When Mathews demanded a declaration of peace towards the Americans and Seminole promises to refrain from involvement or risk being the invaders' next victim, the Seminoles' hand was forced. The chiefs refused to tolerate being treated as junior partners while events unfolded in their homeland.<sup>28</sup> News of Patriot land grants for volunteers further influenced the decision to fight against the Americans. Five hundred acres were promised to each Patriot volunteer in the heart of Seminole territory.<sup>29</sup> Bowlegs and Payne agreed that it was now time to push the Americans out of their backyard. Indians from several upper Creek towns joined the Alachua and Alligator tribes to repel the Americans. Their numbers were estimated to be around 200 men and they accomplished just what Kindelán had hoped.<sup>30</sup>

In aiding the Spaniards the Indians had certain expectations. The Seminoles received weapons, powder, gifts, and the promise to keep any spoils of war from the Spanish Governor. Kindelán went a step further and offered to pay \$10 for every Patriot scalp collected and a bounty of \$1000 for the scalp of John Houston McIntosh.<sup>31</sup> In addition, the Governor also offered a bottle of rum for each killed Patriot. In late July

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<sup>27</sup> Patrick, *Florida Fiasco*, 181.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 185.

<sup>29</sup> Cusick, 213-14.

<sup>30</sup> Patrick, *Florida Fiasco*, 185.

<sup>31</sup> Cusick, 214.



“Kindelán unleashed his bands of Seminoles” and they attacked white plantations along the St. Johns River.<sup>32</sup>

Rumors of Kindelán's offer reached the citizens of Camden County, Georgia. They held a public meeting in which they discussed the bribes offered to the Seminoles to commit murder against the white settlers. Depredations by the Seminoles extended into their community. The anticipated murders and recent pillaging required the county militia to be called out in Camden. The meeting attendants extended their grievances that this “performance of military duty [was] more justly ought to be expected from the troops of the United States.”<sup>33</sup> As long as the Seminoles could retreat to a foreign nation they presented a threat to the border inhabitants.

The desire to put a stop to Indian depredations reached beyond the Florida-Georgia border area. The Tennessee Volunteer militia took a particular interest in the events surrounding the Americans and Seminoles. Near the end of 1812 the adjutant general of the Tennessee militia, Colonel John Williams, made a general call to arms to enlist men to travel to Florida. In his announcement Williams specifically stated that this was an expedition to exterminate an Indian threat that assembled “in such numbers as to threaten the destruction of our troops.” The “deranged Monarch, venal Prince, and corrupt Ministry” of Spain enlisted “the savages, those hell hounds fitted only for deeds

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<sup>32</sup> Joseph H. Alexander, “Swamp Ambush in East Florida,” *Military History*, Vol. 14, No. 7 (March 1998):38-45, 42.

<sup>33</sup> *Savannah Republican*: Savannah, Georgia – October 15, 1812 in Billy Lee Akins “Georgia and the War of 1812,” Masters Thesis at Georgia Southern University, 1968, 69.

of ferocity, who seek victory by the indiscriminate slaughter of all ages and sexes.”<sup>34</sup>

The decision to employ Seminole assistance by the Spanish government was deplorable to the Tennessee man. These less than civilized marauders did not respect the privilege that women and children received in Southern society as non-combatants. It was up to the men of Tennessee to ensure the safety of women and children under the threat of the scalping knife.

Colonel Williams also insisted that the men of Tennessee must act quickly. Disgusted with debate in Washington, he stated that “while others talked [Tennessee] was prepared to act” in the face of an Indian threat. It was necessary for these men to:

go to the scene of action, and there present themselves ready to share with their brethren, the dangers and glories of the [battle]field – not to wait the slow formality of being dragged from home by compulsory orders.<sup>35</sup>

No matter what awaited the Tennessee volunteers, it was dishonorable for them not to act hastily. Although there was little possibility of a draft to go to Florida, to be conscripted into duty was reprehensible. Honor required a man to present himself and face any danger head on.

Williams equated service in battle to defending dependents and serving a patriotic duty, and argued that “Freemen ought to risk something.” There was little concern that the men's expenses be covered for if they “can thus be useful to the county, they will be

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<sup>34</sup> *Nashville Democratic Clarion and Tennessee Gazette*: Nashville, Tennessee – November 23, 1812 in Rembert W. Patrick, *Florida Fiasco: Rampant Rebels on the Georgia-Florida Border 1810-1815*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1954), 226.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

more than compensated.”<sup>36</sup> At their own cost the men of the Tennessee volunteer militia were willing to travel, mostly on foot, to Florida to fight against the Seminole Indians.

Why were these men even concerned with events in Florida and why were they so enthralled with fighting Indians? Rembert Patrick proposed that there was a shared kinship among Southerners afflicted by Indian hostilities. The Tennesseans' “proximity to the powerful Creek Confederation and their natural hatred of Indians made them respond with alacrity when danger threatened.” In this split state, Westerners shared little in common with Easterners. The inhabitants of Eastern Tennessee did not have the wealth, plantations, or slaves present in the western part of the state. However, in this diverse state Eastern and Western Tennesseans met on “common ground in a mutual fear of the Indian.” Though these two sides of the state had dissimilar geographies and economic concerns they could unite against not only nearby Indians but Indians across the region.<sup>37</sup> At the start of the Second Seminole War, as will be shown later, this commonality played a key role to elicit volunteers from the Deep South.

The Seminoles who participated in the warfare of East Florida presented a unique threat and created a sense of panic throughout the area. The ambush and hit-and-run tactics of the Seminoles ended the Patriots' siege attempt. The Patriots were as much a victim of a siege attempt in the field as the Spaniards were holed up in the Castillo de San Marcos. The Seminoles who roamed the countryside cut off the advanced Patriots'

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Patrick, *Florida Fiasco*, 225.

supplies and reinforcements. When the Patriots did finally withdraw from the field they had to make a fighting retreat. On their trek back to their border encampment the Seminoles still ambushed the retreating volunteers.<sup>38</sup>

George Mathew's attempt on Florida was unsuccessful. This was due in large part to the involvement of the Seminole Indians. The Seminoles were able to aid the Spanish and disrupt the American expedition; however, as in the case of the Tennessee volunteer militia the Indians incited outrage among Southerners. Their continued presence in what was soon to be a United States territory raised alarms in the Deep South. With the eventual acquisition of the territory from Spain settlers began moving into the region. These new inhabitants increasingly came in contact with the Seminoles and hostilities ensued. From acquisition until the Second Seminole War at the end 1835 Seminoles took out their frustrations on infringing whites. The victims of these attacks were often civilian settlers.

Prior to the Second Seminole War hostilities between whites and Indians left a mark on territorial Florida. Tension existed between the two groups as they moved closer and closer together. Whites continued to view their presence with suspicion and fear. Although white on white violence was not lacking in the territory, Indians as a group were viewed as a specific threat to white safety.

White civilians were often targets of renegade Seminoles looking to exact retribution on the infringing settlers. In 1817, just along the border in St. Mary's Georgia,

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<sup>38</sup> Cusick, 235.

the Garrett family fell victim to Seminole hostility. The attack was on a woman and children, which particularly angered Southerners who viewed these groups as protected dependents. While her husband was away Mrs. Garrett's home was invaded; she was shot, stabbed, and then scalped. However, the intruder did not stop there. Her two children were also murdered, presumably put to death in a similar fashion. The oldest child was described as a toddler while the younger was still just an infant.<sup>39</sup>

Frontiersmen in the area quickly made a public call to obtain justice. Motivated by emotion these men were nervous and angered by the gruesome act. In Southern society women and children were protected groups that had no place in violence or warfare. Further incensing the frontiersmen was the raiders' penetration of a Southern domicile and denigration of the patriarch's mastery over his domain. It was the responsibility of the household patriarch to secure and protect his household. This was more than a simple murder of three individuals. In many ways it was an attack on Southern society. Such an assault on community demanded retribution by the Southern honor ethic.<sup>40</sup>

The attack on the Garrett household was not an isolated incident nor did the impact of the murder diminish with time. Nearly a decade later an almost identical murder occurred near Tallahassee. In early December 1826:

A cruel and cold-blooded murder of a man and four infant children was

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<sup>39</sup> John & Mary Lou Missall, *The Seminole War's, America's Longest Indian Conflict* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 33.

<sup>40</sup> Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), See Chapter 2: "Primal Honor: Valor, Blood, and Bonding."

committed near the Ocilla river . . . by a party of indians, presumed to belong to the Creek tribe. On Tuesday they went to the house of a Mr. Carr, shot a Mr. Trueluck, burned the house and butchered four children. The mother of this family with her infant child [were absent] thus fortunately escaping the same fate. . . 15 or 20 of our citizens instantly started for that place. The Indians had left the neighborhood; they have been traced to the Ocilla, but not yet overtaken . . . yesterday thirty-five mounted men from Gadsen County passed through this place to join the other party. - The militia for their promptness in turning out upon this occasion, certainly deserve very great credit.<sup>41</sup>

Civilians in the area were greatly distraught by the violence committed at the hands of the Indians. The men in the area reacted according to Southern cultural norms.

The group of men who committed the murders were described simply as Indians; however in this incident they were given the demarcation of being Creek. They were not seen or reported as individuals but as cold-blooded, murdering Indians. Had this been an attack made by a group of white men their names would have been reported and not simply described by a group identity.<sup>42</sup>

The reported savagery of these murders was also striking in each case. The women and children were not simply murdered but butchered and scalped. The appalling nature of the murders quickly became tied to Native American violence in Florida. The victims of their attacks further established their savagery in white Southern minds. The newspaper automatically assumed that had the absent mother and her infant been home there was no possibility that they would have been spared. It was merely a fortunate

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<sup>41</sup> *Florida Intelligencer*: Tallahassee, Florida – December 12, 1826.

<sup>42</sup> This point is best illustrated when comparing Indian attacks against whites versus the reporting of duels amongst white men. When a duel was reported the names on the individuals were almost always recorded.

coincidence that they did not meet “the same fate.”

As previously stated the attack on the Carr family was more than a murder of individuals by marauding Creek Indians. In many ways it attacked the societal mores held by white Southerners. In response, it was not only the responsibility of law enforcement or the family patriarch to exact retribution. As reported by the *Florida Intelligencer* 15 to 20 men instantly left for the burned down home to offer their services. These men commenced tracking the party of Indians even though they were known to be dangerous. Within a few days time the Gadsen County militia offered their services and pursued the Indians through the dense Florida wilderness. The paper championed their efforts and stated that they “deserved very great credit” for their promptness in action. As a potential enemy could attack anywhere, anytime martial readiness and quick action was praised and necessary.

Florida territorial Govern William P. DuVal was well aware of the state of white-Indian relations. The citizens of Alachua County petitioned him in 1826 to request for more protection from Indian hostilities. Despite the depredations committed by the Seminoles DuVal felt that “the whole Indian Nation was under more complete controle, and order than any other nation of Indians that can be found in the limits of the United States.” Even when considering the recent murders DuVal claimed that Indian depredations were primarily limited to “killing of hogs and cattle, and pillaging plantations.” DuVal put the blame of Seminole depredations at the feet of a band approximating 200 Indians residing near the Ocilla and Suwannee Rivers. This group was

denounced by the other Seminole bands for their violent behavior. The Governor also felt that there was little he could do as these Indians “can never be managed but by force” and DuVal did not have the resources to “restrain their excesses.”<sup>43</sup>

Still DuVal was concerned about potential danger to whites and feared that “worse consequences may be expected.” There was little he or the Florida government could do to stop the disorderly band of Indians. If things did not get worse DuVal predicted at least the Indians would continue to kill cattle and hogs.<sup>44</sup> It was a grim outlook for the territorial Governor to hold but also a realistic one. As time went on and more Indian transgressions took place it was less likely that Southerners would view these acts as committed by individual Indians. Newspaper accounts rarely identified individual Indians expected of crimes. It was a detailed account if the paper even reported a specific tribe that was suspected of hostilities. By the start of the Second Seminole War every Indian in Florida and the Deep South was viewed with suspicion.

White settlers were not always innocent victims of Indian violence. There were several cases of white men taking matters into their own hands and dispensed their own forms of punishment. The summer prior to the start of the Second Seminole War Fort King was still a place of frequent interaction between whites and Natives. However, as the summer passed tension remained high. The Indian Agent at Fort King, Wiley

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<sup>43</sup> Governor DuVal to Thomas L. McKenney, April 5, 1826 – Clarence Edwin Carter, *Territorial Papers of the United States Vol. XXIII Florida Territory 1828-1834* (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1959) 500-02, Territorial Papers hereafter cited as: Item Title, Date - *TP Vol.*, Page Number.

<sup>44</sup> Governor DuVal to Thomas L. McKenney, April 5, 1826 – *TP Vol. XXIII*, 500-02.



Thompson, made perhaps one of the gravest insults against a Seminole leader in the area. One evening when Osceola was in the fort he became abusive and Thompson ordered him locked in chains for the night. Osceola fought against his chains, screaming throughout the night. The next day Thompson released him under the condition that Osceola bring all of his followers in to the fort in accordance with the Treaty of Payne's Landing. Thompson was warned by a subordinate that Osceola would not forget this insult and encouraged the Indian Agent to keep him under supervision. Regrettably for Thompson, he ignored this advice.<sup>45</sup>

A few months prior to this shaming Thompson held a meeting with eight chiefs in the area. He declared that whites would no longer sell gunpowder to the Seminoles. Osceola was particularly angered by this slight.<sup>46</sup> One observer declared that to an Indian, “the best test of a white man's friendship, is the permission to obtain arms, powder, and lead.” Well aware of the status of Blacks in southern society Osceola questioned “Am I a negro? a slave? My skin is dark, but not black. I am an Indian – a Seminole. The white man will not make me black.” Combined with his further treatment as a slave chained within Fort King, Osceola proclaimed that he would “make the white man red with blood; and the blacken him in the sun and rain, where the wolf shall smell of his bones, and the buzzard live upon his flesh.”<sup>47</sup>

Again during the summer prior to the start of the war violence broke out between

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<sup>45</sup> Missall, 91.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 90.

<sup>47</sup> J.T. Sprague, *The Origins, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War*, (Tampa: University of Tampa Press, 2000), 86.

Indians and whites that resulted in deaths on both sides. One June 19<sup>th</sup> an Indian in Alachua County was caught in the act of theft against a white man's property. The local men “rashly took the law in their own hands by binding the man to a tree and flogging him.” The commotion and yelling aroused nearby Indians to come to the captured man's aid. His cries “brought some of his companions from the thickets . . . and they immediately fired upon the settlers.” Well armed, the white settlers returned fire and killed one Indian and wounded another.<sup>48</sup>

One of the white men involved, Mr. Walker, wrote to Thompson and demanded further satisfaction for the attack made by the Indians. Although the Indians were arguably defending their comrade against the settlers' rough frontier justice it was apparent to Mr. Walker that the Indians had to be further punished. Thompson replied and congratulated Mr. Walker's efforts of forming a company to “scour the county” to find the offending Indians. However, Thompson was wary and insisted that the men be “aware of the delicate character of relations with [the Indians], and that all causeless irritation be avoided.”<sup>49</sup>

Hostiles between whites and Indians in Florida continued to escalate. In December of 1835 Osceola began an organized resistance and thus started the beginning of the Second Seminole War. As during the last two decades in Florida civilians were not

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<sup>48</sup> John Bemrose, *Reminiscences of the Second Seminole War*, (Tampa: University of Tampa Press, 2001), 29.

<sup>49</sup> Woodburne Potter, *The War In Florida: Being An Exposition Of Its Causes And An Accurate History Of The Campaigns Of General Clinch, Gaines, And Scott*, (Baltimore: Lewis and Coleman, 1836), 18-19, reprinted by Kessinger Publishing's Legacy Reprints.

spared and they were actively engaged in the war. In their fight for survival the Seminoles attempted to destroy everything that represented white infringement upon their historical homeland. This was not limited to repelling the United States army. The Seminoles attacked homes, crops, women, and children. They were in a desperate struggle but their method of warfare, as will later be shown, outraged neighboring Southerners. Any white person on the Florida peninsula was a potential casualty of the tomahawk during the Second Seminole War.

After the attack on Dade's troops and the murder of Wiley Thompson Florida settlers panicked. In southern Florida inhabitants fled further south into the Keys. Many took shelter near the fort at Key West. Writing from Key West John Gardiner contacted Lieutenant James Duncan at Fort Brooke to inform him about the situation. Inhabitants were:

drawn towards its center [the fort], and preparing for a visit from the Indians who have driven the People at Cape Florida to Indian Key. The Citizens have formed a patrol to keep a look out at night, and have the barge cruising at the east end of the Island.<sup>50</sup>

This scene was repeated across the peninsula. Settlers feared for their lives when they learned the Seminoles were on the war path. Seminole warfare against the whites did not spare traditional noncombatants.

Along the St. Johns River Seminoles did not spare property or homes. They acted quickly and by the end of December settlers in the area had abandoned

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<sup>50</sup> Joe Knetsch, "*Florida's Seminole Wars 1817-1858*," (Charleston: Arcadia, 2004), 73.

their homes for safer locations. The settlement at New Smyrna was reported burned to the ground along with the plantations of Dunham, Major Heriots, Hunters, Cruger, Williams, and the Andersons at Dunlawton along with the sugar works owned by Dupeyster.<sup>51</sup>

The reminiscences of George Gillett Keen offer a glimpse into the striking impression that Indian violence during the Second Seminole war left on Southerners. Keen was eight at the start of the war and grew up in Columbia County.<sup>52</sup> He was left with a racist and biased opinion of the Seminole Indians stating that he “had as much sympathy for a pond alligator as [he] had for a Seminole Indian” and that you might as well try to “make a catch dog out of a wolf as to make a white man out of an Indian.”<sup>53</sup>

Even fifty years after the war Keen still claimed that “if he had it his way he would kill every one of [the] Seminole tribe.” This was directly in response to the murder of a family in a neighboring town. Keen recalled that Bill Locklier had traveled to Alligator Town and came across the burning homes of John Bonnell Jr. and Sr. As Locklier approached the homes he saw sixty Indians swarming the two burning structures. Locklier swiftly rode his horse to nearby Blounts Ferry school house to warn the town. One of the warned men, Joe Howell, realized that his family was between him and the Indians. As Howell was trying to get to his family:

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<sup>51</sup> Knetsch, 76; *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – Early January, 1836.

<sup>52</sup> James M. Denham and Canter Brown Jr., “*Cracker Times and Pioneer Lives: The Florida Reminiscences of George Gillett Keen and Sarah Pamela Williams*,” (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 27-28; Columbia County that Keen was referring to is now actually called Suwannee County which is in North Florida between Jacksonville and Tallahassee.

<sup>53</sup> *The Florida Index*: Lake City, Florida – October 13, 1899 in Denham and Brown Jr., 28.

he got within eighty yards of the house [and] he saw the red Devils in thirty feet of the house. One Indian saw him and took deliberate aim at him. Howell was sitting on his horse, . . . the Indians shot but the bullet missed its mark. Just at this juncture the savage heathens entered the house and began shooting his family.

Four of Howell's children escaped with their lives. His two eldest daughters were forced to hide for the night on a river bank, one with a bullet wound “clear through her body.”<sup>54</sup>

Keen also recalled an event at the end of February 1842 in which a white family was not as fortunate. An Indian raiding party was pursued by whites near Old Town Hammock traveling along a newly constructed road. The Indians came across the home of Dick Tillises. Tillises:

was not home, so the heathens fell on a helples woman and killed Mrs. Tillis, and thought they had killed Miss Mahaly Hyatt and four children. They shot the young lady in the back, the bullet coming out her breast, and then stabbed her in each side; and they shot little Jim Tillis with a spiked arrow, it entering the back and coming out in the breast, leaving the arrow in him, and then struck him with a grubbing hoe over the left eye, then struck fire to the building and left the place.<sup>55</sup>

Occurrences such as these happened across Florida wherever settlers were exposed during the Second Seminole War. Indians' assault on white noncombatants increased racial and prejudicial attitudes towards the Seminoles by white inhabitants. The refusal of Seminoles to engage their white enemies in traditional “civilized” warfare infuriated both white civilians and the military.

Throughout the period examined white and Indian cultures were in conflict with

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<sup>54</sup> *The Florida Index*: Lake City, Florida – November 10, 1899 in Denham and Brown Jr., 30.

<sup>55</sup> *The Florida Index*: Lake City, Florida – December 22, 1899 in Denham and Brown Jr., 39.

each other and in many ways this cultural conflict perpetuated violent hostilities between the two groups. Throughout Florida's territorial phase these two groups prescribed to divergent and similar cultural norms that guided violent behavior and reaction to violence.

The Seminoles and white Southerners both saw violence as a necessity and an opportunity for men to prove their masculinity and achieve recognition. For the Seminoles, males' bold and fearless action was required to become a respected warrior. Seminoles often had to earn their adult name through a courageous act. Although given a name at birth, boys were given an adult name after proving themselves as men and could even be given a third name for accomplishing more outstanding exploits.<sup>56</sup> Scalping victims was used to prove conquest in battle upon return. After a fight the scalps were attached to a pole and placed in the center of the dance ground in celebration of victory. During other Seminole ceremonies young men were subjected to cuttings on their outstretched arms by sail-needles, awls, and flints. They were encouraged to prove their masculinity by “taking the pain without wincing.”<sup>57</sup>

Seminole cultural differences also ensured continued conflict with whites. As with other southeastern tribes the Seminoles were based on a matrilineal, clan society.<sup>58</sup> These matrilineal clans traversed tribal affiliations and created a clan network among the southeastern tribes. At times these clans even took precedent over tribal identity among

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<sup>56</sup> Covington, 9.

<sup>57</sup> Weisman, 49, 64 and 93.

<sup>58</sup> Weisman, Chapter 2: “Camp and Clan.”

clan members. Therefore revenge and warfare took a community based outlook. The killing of an individual was not just a slight against him but also against the clan to whom the victim belonged. Thus it was up to a clan member, traditionally male, to seek vengeance against the offending clan, not necessarily the individual who committed the offending act.

These cultural conditions explain why Seminoles eagerly pursued and killed women and children while conducting warfare. An elderly woman was not considered a noncombatant and was just as likely a potential victim while tending to crops as was a young Indian warrior. An attack on an individual was an attack on the clan. Additionally, in the clan based outlook women were more than victims of opportunity. Women perpetuated clans and lineages within Indian culture. If a woman was killed in an act of war her lineage was effectively eliminated regardless of the number of surviving males, and the clan had to absorb a strong blow. In this sense an attack on women was not an attack against that specific individual but an attack against the clan and tribe. Theda Purdue states that this point is further made by the mutilation of pregnant women. She claims “native mutilation involved symbolism, and the murder of a woman coupled with feticide symbolized the end of a people.”<sup>59</sup>

This clan-based outlook that allowed for and encouraged the killing of women and children in warfare was in direct conflict with 19<sup>th</sup> century United States ideals and

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<sup>59</sup> Theda Purdue, *Cherokee Women, Gender and Cultural Change, 1700-1835*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Bison Books, 1999), 87-88.

Southern attitudes concerning violence and honor. The Southern honor-based method of violently dealing with grievances is typified in the duel. In the duel “judgments could be made about the manliness and qualities of leadership that the antagonist exhibited.”<sup>60</sup>

Although affiliated party members are involved, the violence is centered around an individual obtaining satisfaction from an offending party. Two men were placed on the dueling grounds and given the opportunity to prove themselves face-to-face down the barrel of a gun, or other weapon of their choosing. Even in the event that a family may have been a victim of slander an offended individual still looked to obtain retribution from the individual who committed the slander, not necessarily the family of the offender.<sup>61</sup>

As long as the Seminoles remained in Florida they presented a potential threat to Southerners. As shown, they could be exploited by a foreign power, raid neighboring states, or inflict harsh warfare against the local populace. Southerners had to be vigilant with the possibility that an Indian attack could take place at any time. Fear and suspicion forced them to keep their guard up and maintain a ready militant stance. As the years progressed these emotions deepened in Southern society. Settlers had to be prepared to react to the next raid, murder, or depredation that might take place. Throughout the South

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<sup>60</sup> Bertram Wyatt-Brown, “Andrew Jackson's Honor,” *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring 1997):1-36, 13.

<sup>61</sup> John Lyde Wilson, *The Code of Honor or Rules for the Government of Principals and Seconds in Dueling*, (Charleston: James Phinney, 1858, made available by Harvard University Libraries and Google [<http://books.google.com/books?id=usEiFvrXbf8C&printsec=frontcover&dq=%22The+Code+of+Hon+or+or+rules%22>].



it became increasingly clear that Southerners could not imagine a safe region living side-by-side with an Indian neighbor.

## PETITIONS FOR PROTECTION

For more than fifty years white settlers of the Florida Territory were engaged in conflict with the Seminole Indians. From the acquisition of the territory to the removal and subjugation of the Seminoles by the United States, settlers lived in fear of their native neighbors. Hostilities between these two societies resulted in three wars, an untold number of killings, and incalculable destruction of property. This chaotic environment had a profound impact on the white settlers who moved into the area. Their individual experiences developed conflicting attitudes with assumed national norms. As Alexis de Tocqueville has stated about the United States, men in “democratic countries do not naturally have a military spirit.” Yet, in Florida, a military spirit was instilled in the settlers of the territory. This temperament was a product of their perceived danger from hostile Native Americans. This spirit comprised more than courage and martial ability. Despite the claims of many historians, the settlers of this territory did not fear a large standing army. It is the purpose of this paper to expose a part of that development, specifically in relation to how and why these attitudes developed towards the federal army.

As will be shown, the Florida settlers subscribed to an appreciative acceptance and approval of a standing army during peace time. They frequently petitioned the government for an increased federal army presence in their communities. This affinity for martial endeavors transformed Florida culture in the period between the First and Second

Seminole Wars (roughly 1818-1842). A distinct society emerged in which a militant culture became a necessity. Whites were forced either to acclimate to the violent and martial nature of frontier life or leave. In the example of Old Florida it is possible to closely examine the qualifications that historians have defined as part of the Militant South thesis. However, before getting into the specifics of Florida it is important to determine how historians have outlined this historical debate.

In the last half century John Hope Franklin's The Militant South: 1800-1861 has been standard reading on this topic. Stressing the persistence of a rural environment in the South, the proximity to Native Americans, the fear of slave rebellion, and an old-world concept of honor, Franklin views the belligerence of Southerners as ingrained in their identity. He states that the Southerner “gladly fought, even if only to preserve his reputation as a fighter.”<sup>62</sup> In the rural environment in which it was “impractical to rely on the rather feeble protective arm of the government,”<sup>63</sup> it was a necessity for the individual to develop a means of self-protection. However, Franklin spends few pages directly discussing the effects of Native Americans on southern culture.

Bertram Wyatt-Brown's analysis of honor completely ignores Native Americans, although explains Southerners' behavior in terms of attitudes and commonly held beliefs.<sup>64</sup> The honor of a man was either bestowed or taken away by the evaluation of his community. Wyatt-Brown argues that white males found violence necessary to maintain

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<sup>62</sup> Franklin, 13.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 34.

<sup>64</sup> See *My Kisman, Major Molineux* by Nathaniel Hawthorne as examined by Wyatt-Brown in *Southern Honor, Ethics and Behavior in the Old South*, chapter 1.

social status, and honor was kept alive by the inhospitable and dangerous environment in which the master ruled in fear and the threat of violence. The only way for an offended party to maintain honor was to meet the challenge head on, even when it was expected that one individual would die for his honor.

More recent scholarship by Rod Andrew Jr. found that in the late Antebellum period Southerners embraced the ideals of a military education while the nation at large was still suspicious of a strong Federal army. Americans saw West Point, in particular, as a haven for producing elitist, aristocratic officers that “held a monopoly over the nation's military power.”<sup>65</sup> However, Southerners assumed that a military education and training produced a more “virtuous, disciplined, and law abiding citizenry.”<sup>66</sup> According to Andrew “Southerners had a remarkable tendency to reconcile militarism with republicanism,” a viewpoint that differed from attitudes in the North.<sup>67</sup> It was in the South that military education flourished, as the emphasis on soldierly virtues were deemed fundamental elements of a complete man and a worthy citizen.<sup>68</sup>

Marcus Cunliffe's Soldiers and Civilians: The Martial Spirit in America describes the United States as “a nation both peace-loving and violent, indifferent to military activity and yet given to many forms of military enthusiasm.”<sup>69</sup> He attacks John Hope

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<sup>65</sup> Rod Andrew Jr., *Long Gray Lines: The Southern Military School Tradition, 1839-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 10.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>69</sup> Marcus Cunliffe, *Soldiers and Civilians: The Martial Spirit in America, 1775-1865* (London: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc, 1973) 27.

Franklin's Militant South Thesis as being based on circumstantial evidence. Cunliffe sees personal violence in the South portrayed in the context of being militant or militaristic, as separate from a regional martial spirit.<sup>70</sup> Cunliffe argues that “Lost Cause” mythology shaped opinions of post-bellum Americans to think that the South must have been a more militant society to hold off the Union for so long.<sup>71</sup> He does concede a Southern propensity to dueling and fighting, but concludes that this hardly contributes to a distinct “Martial Spirit.” Most interesting is that Cunliffe spends little time on Native American wars. This is particularly interesting when you consider that United States army was occupied fighting Native Americans within the continent more than they were fighting regular armies sent by foreign powers from 1789-1861.<sup>72</sup>

In *Dixie's Martial Image* Robert E. May also proposes that the Militant South thesis largely came out of “Lost Cause” ideology in which “the region's defeated warriors were enshrined as gallant sons who had shown more bravery than the Yanks.”<sup>73</sup> May also questions the premise of Southern militarism itself. He cites Thomas Jefferson's efforts to scale down the federal army and John C. Calhoun's resistance to fully commit to the Mexican-American War. He attacks historians such as Franklin who “have lumped

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 340.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 373.

<sup>72</sup> Fred Anderson and Andrew Cayton, *The Dominion of War: Empire and Liberty in North America, 1500-2000*, (New York: Viking, 2005). This work emphasizes that although the Revolutionary War, World War II, and even the American Civil War are the traditional depictions of the American military in action, these wars are not characteristic of the majority of U.S. conflict.

<sup>73</sup> Robert E. May “Dixie's Martial Image: A Continuing Historiographical Enigma,” *Historian*, 40:2 (February 1978): 216.

violence and militarism together as part of a basic syndrome.”<sup>74</sup> By citing discipline as the very essence of military life, May attempts to discredit duels and fighting as contributing to a Militant South.

Historian R. Don Higginbotham turns the Militant South thesis on its head by arguing for a martial North. Focusing on the colonial period and the early Republic, he attempts to negate the distinctiveness that historians have proposed for the South and sees a martial tradition that transcended sectional boundaries. This martial spirit was present in New England from the time when the Puritans invaded America bringing guns and munitions to overpower Indian resistance. He states that if “slavery and fears of [a] black uprisings contributed to a strain of southern violence and violence contributed greatly to a martial spirit, it can surely be argued that the Indian had the same impact on New Englanders.”<sup>75</sup>

In assessing the Militant South Thesis as a whole several problems and contradictions arise. The largest problem presents itself in historians' use of language. Militant, martial, and militaristic are carelessly used in some works, often interchangeably. I have defined the Militant South thesis as encompassing both the violent, bellicose stance of the white, male Southerner along with the enthusiasm for martial ideals. This is a combination of both Andrew and Franklin's definition of the term. When Franklin is using *militant*, both in his title and in his text, he is not limiting the

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> R. Don Higginbotham, “The Martial Spirit in the Antebellum South: Some Further Speculations in a National Context,” *Journal of Southern History* Vol. LVIII, No. 1 (February 1992): 7.

explanation to “militaristic” or “martial,” as pertaining only to militias, military schools, or the federal army, but also referring to personal violence. Specifically May and Cunliffe do not interpret southern characteristics such as personal violence influencing a Martial Tradition. These historians have overlooked the discipline that developed in the execution of duels and promotion of military education. However, Andrew's definition of “militarism,” defined as the “exaltation of military ideals and virtues,”<sup>76</sup> does conclude traits such as discipline and responsibility characterized the Southern affinity for military education.

One of the examinations this field most needs is a strong comparative study of militant ideals in the North and South. While Cunliffe has examined this in a single chapter, the comparison desperately needs to be a book-length study standing on its own. Another step in the right direction for a clear picture of the Militant South thesis would be to move away from events surrounding the Civil War. Some historians will continue to argue that the arms buildups in the 1850s was due to aggressive posturing in opposition to the North, not Southern predispositions to militant or martial values. Only by finding evidence, or lack there of, independent of Civil War preparation can this claim be unbiasedly assessed. If Higginbotham's claim of the colonial North being as militant as the colonial South is true, then proponents of the Militant South thesis should be encouraged to determine why. Under the assumption that during the period between the Revolution and the Civil War the South was distinctly militant, what changed in the

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<sup>76</sup> Andrew, 2.

North and what exactly was retained in the South to create such divergent cultures 1861? In this sense it is of the utmost importance that researchers examine the early South in much the same way that Higginbotham has the eighteenth-century North. A search for the origins of the Militant South will most likely either prove or refute the claim that southern militance was only a reaction to sectional tensions.

To examine the Militant South independent of the Civil War we can take a page from Higginbotham's assessment of the effects of Indian wars on colonial New England. What has not been considered in detail are the effects of the prolonged regional Indian warfare on the Southern populace. Higginbotham cited the Seven Years War and King Philip's War as inducing a martial spirit in New Englanders; however, he did not consider the corresponding effect on the South. It is easy to show violent conflict throughout the South between whites and Native Americans but there is much more to be considered. By examining just one of the southeastern tribes we can see the profound effect they had on their white neighbors. The proximity of Seminoles and encroaching white settlers created a protracted struggle with hostilities from 1817 to 1858.<sup>77</sup> During this period the United States was officially at war with the Seminole Indians for nearly thirteen years. Throughout the region newspapers were dominated by news from the front, particularly during the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842. While coverage was nationwide, "news of the war in Florida caused more concern among Southerners than among those living

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<sup>77</sup> Knetsch.



elsewhere in the nation.”<sup>78</sup> Citizens of the South quickly organized to aid their neighbors. Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Virginia raised volunteer companies to aid the distressed Floridians.<sup>79</sup>

The most unique development in Florida was the settlers' attitudes regarding a standing army. The federal army frequented the inhabitants of Florida throughout the period of the Seminole Wars. The role of a federally controlled standing army was a contentious issue in antebellum America. Some historians argued, “the American people have always disliked the idea of a large regular army in peacetime.”<sup>80</sup> Historians John and Mary Lou Missal cite the events surrounding the revolution and George III's use of the oppressive and overwhelming English army. The founding fathers created a system that they felt put the army under civilian and Congressional control while keeping the army “ridiculously small.”<sup>81</sup> Still, even the most democratic army was viewed with suspicion. Tocqueville observed that though highly effective, standing armies were too ambitious for power to be trusted in a free republic. “Even with precautions,” Tocqueville stated, “a large army in the midst of a democratic people will always be a source of great danger.”<sup>82</sup> Massachusetts Representative Elbridge Gerry perhaps stated American concerns best when addressing Congress in 1783 claiming that:

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<sup>78</sup> Missal, 104.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid; Letter to Secretary of War Lewis Cass, February 15th, 1836, Indian Affairs - Florida Seminoles Collection, Special and Area Studies Collections, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, hereafter cited as: Item Name, Date, IA – FSC, UF; Volunteers, *The Georgia Messenger* – Macon, Georgia February 18, 1836.

<sup>80</sup> Donald Jackson, “Jefferson, Meriwether Lewis, and the Reduction of the United States Army,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 124, No. 2, (April, 1980); 91.

<sup>81</sup> Missal, 47.

<sup>82</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. Phillips Bradley (New York: Knopf, 1945), II, 270.

“standing armies in time of peace are inconsistent with the principles of republican Governments, dangerous to the liberties of the free people, and generally converted into destructive engines for establishing despotism.”<sup>83</sup>

By the Jacksonian period some antebellum Americans even turned their suspicion towards lesser organized military organizations. Working men and their leaders even began to question the traditional state-based militia.<sup>84</sup>

At a time when the nation at large was suspicious of the federal army citizens of territorial Florida saw it as a source of protection. Just prior to the outbreak of the Second Seminole War citizens in Hillsborough County requested the increased presence of federal troops. Twenty-seven men of the county directly petitioned the Secretary of War for aid. Although they did not report physical conflict they felt additional troops were necessary to “keep the Indians in check and to protect the lives and property of the now helpless settlers.” With Indian Removal well underway the non-compliance of the Indians further threatened their livelihood. With their “persons and property entirely at the mercy of the Indians” the residents begged “that suitable measures would be taken to afford the protection that the situation justly required.”<sup>85</sup> With the Seminoles exacting retribution in response to Removal the citizens of Hillsborough County felt it was the place of the federal government to offer protection.

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<sup>83</sup> Address to Congress by Elbridge Gerry, Representative of Massachusetts June 2, 1784, *Journals of the Continental Congress*, XXVII, ed. Gaillard Hunt (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968) 518-519.

<sup>84</sup> Arthur A. Ekirch, Jr., “The Idea of a Citizen Army,” *Military Affairs*, Vol. 17 No. 1 (Spring 1953): 30-36, 30.

<sup>85</sup> Memorial to the Secretary of War By Inhabitants of Hillsborough County, November 1834 – *TP Vol. XXV*, 69-70.

In the midst of the Second Seminole War white settlers exhibited this same pattern of behavior. No less than forty-one citizens of Madison County Florida requested that a federal unit be reassigned to their location in 1839.<sup>86</sup> After they were lulled into a false sense of security and encouraged to “reoccupy their plantations; long abandoned homes and to proceed in cultivating their plantations . . . numerous murders” afflicted the area. In early March of that year there were “several cases [of] indiscriminate butchery of whole families” by the unrestrained Seminoles.<sup>87</sup> The Madison County citizens specifically mentioned that although they were most alarmed by a recent attack they had been “exposed continually to the hostile attacks of the Indians.”<sup>88</sup> In the face of war these citizens had no qualms about a federal unit being posted in their community. It was a welcomed and desired sight. One may attempt to dismiss this as wartime hysteria and expect the community to fall in line with the traditional opinions of the nation towards the federal army in peacetime. However, when looking at the previous decade a clearer picture is painted.

White fears of Seminole hostilities were provoked by more than simply fleeting causes. Prior to Removal and the start of the Second Seminole War requests for the presence of a standing army poured in from St. Augustine to Alachua. Petitioners requested that a “force necessary to keep the Indians in their boundaries” be supplied to

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<sup>86</sup> Madison County Petition, circa 1839, William Davenport Papers, Special and Area Studies Collections, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, hereafter cited as: Davenport Papers, UF.

<sup>87</sup> Memorial to the President By the Legislative Council, 1839 – Clarence Edwin Carter, *TP Vol. XXV*, 589-93.

<sup>88</sup> Madison County Petition, circa 1839, Davenport Papers, UF.

the governor immediately.<sup>89</sup> Otherwise they predicted a “war of extermination”<sup>90</sup> against the encroaching Seminoles. One might expect such a brash statement at the onset of major hostilities. This specific petition, however, was sent to the President of the United States on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1826, nine years prior to the Second Seminole War and eight years after the cessation of official warfare during the First Seminole War.

Even before Florida was a United States territory the Indians of the region were causing problems for settlers along the frontier. At the turn of the eighteenth-century, St. Marys was a boisterous frontier settlement in Camden County, Georgia.<sup>91</sup> This was the farthest south American settlement before entering Spanish controlled Florida. Such a precarious location subjected the settlers to raids by Florida Indians. Since these Indians did not reside in United States territory it was difficult for St. Marys citizens to exact retribution on these Indians when they fled back to Spanish Florida. At least one citizen of this border town publicly requested assistance from the commanding officer of the federal troops in Georgia. The St. Marys citizen, A. Planter, requested that “the very fine troops of Cavalry at Fort Wilkinson, on the Oconee . . . would be much better and more usefully employed on this frontier.” Planter felt that there was little defense against Indian raids and St. Marys was a “very ill garrisoned frontier.”<sup>92</sup> Even before the acquisition of the Florida by the United States settlers along the border knew that martial force was needed to maintain order.

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<sup>89</sup> Petition to the President of the United States, March 6th, 1826, IA - FSC, UF.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Cusick, 35.

<sup>92</sup> Two Letters, July 21, 1800.

In a prophetic letter, Colonel Mathew Arbuckle of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry stationed at Fort Scott, Georgia voiced concern about the Indian situation to Secretary of War John C. Calhoun in August of 1821. Arbuckle suspected that the Seminoles would become more aggressive as more settlers and a stronger military force moved into the territory. He was concerned that the inhabitants that resided near the Florida-Georgia line were an easy target for the Seminoles to exact retribution. He stated that the Seminole chiefs did not “believe that they can long restrain their ill disposed from committing such acts when there is no military force in this quarter except the Garrison of St. Marks.” Arbuckle felt that these acts of theft and plundering would “most probably lead to unpleasant consequences.”<sup>93</sup> It is hard to believe Arbuckle could envision the brutality of the Second Seminole War. However, he was absolutely correct in stating that settlers would continue to populate the territory and continue to request the protective presence of the federal army. It seemed as though little could be done to stop this dangerous cycle.

By the time the Adams-Onis Treaty was ratified by the U.S. and Spanish government in 1821 there was already a substantial American population in Florida and Arbuckle's predictions were quickly proving true. Something needed to be done to maintain order. William Pope DuVal was appointed the first territorial governor of Florida.<sup>94</sup> DuVal was a native of Richmond, Virginia and born to a large family of

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<sup>93</sup> Letter from Colonel Mathew Arbuckle, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Fort Scott, Georgia to Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, August 28, 1821 in *The Papers of John C. Calhoun* Vol. VI 1821-1822, Ed. W. Edwin Hemphill (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972) 357-358, 358.

<sup>94</sup> Andrew Jackson was the first military governor before Florida was officially a United States territory. William Pope DuVal was the first appointed territorial governor.

Huguenot descent. He left for Kentucky at a young age and “had a wide experience in the backwoods life of that section.” He even became a member of Congress representing Kentucky for several years.<sup>95</sup> He eventually decided to study law and in 1804 began his practice. After a short stint as a territorial judge in Florida he was commissioned as Governor on April 17, 1822. DuVal explored several avenues to quell hostilities between the Seminoles and the growing settler population. Increased federal rations for Natives, mandates that regulated White-Seminole trade, and even forbidding whites to settle near Seminole towns did not restrain violence between these conflicting societies. Governor DuVal finally decided to look outside the territory for help.<sup>96</sup>

In DuVal's effort to maintain peace he concurred with the settlers' desire to increase Federal troops in the area. He was also worried about the willingness of the Florida populace to take up arms against the Seminoles. DuVal attempted to calm white settlers by requesting that additional federal troops be stationed along the southern border of Alachua County. The settlers did not oppose this measure. At the end of 1825 he asked Secretary of War James Barbour to expand the federal force and “recommended the establishment of a [military] post” to bring order and obedience to the area.<sup>97</sup> In a letter to Secretary Barbour he stated that 300 Indians had “returned from the country assigned to them . . . [and that] complaints [were] made daily against” them. The settlers were ready

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<sup>95</sup> S. Walter Martin, *The Territorial Period of Florida, 1819-1845*, PhD Dissertation at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1942, 69.

<sup>96</sup> John K. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War 1835-1842, Revised Edition*, (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1985) 35-36.

<sup>97</sup> Letter to Secretary of War, James Barbour from Florida Territory Governor DuVal, December 12, 1825, IA - FSC, UF.

“to take up arms and repel the intrusion” if the government did not act quickly. In an effort to quell the fervor of the Floridians, DuVal requested additional Federal assistance and contacted the commanding officer of the Alachua militia to prevent the whites from taking to arms in response to Seminole depredations.<sup>98</sup>

In the summer of 1826 General Winfield Scott gave an order that greatly distressed the citizenry in St. John's County and the city of St. Augustine in particular. After the War of 1812 he had been appointed to the position of commander of the eastern district in the federal army. Scott no longer felt it was necessary to hold down so many troops in territorial Florida. He ordered the removal of a single artillery company from St. Augustine.<sup>99</sup> This set off vehement protest from the citizens and government officials in the area. Governor DuVal was inundated with requests for a more forceful military presence in the territory. A worried St. Augustine citizen, on behalf of the small plantation and cattle owners of the county, wrote the governor “humbly begging” for immediate assistance.<sup>100</sup> He stated that the Indians settled on the St. John's River had been increasing in number and became more aggressive towards them. Indians openly taunted whites for their lack of protection and whites were continuously threatened by raids. Upon a request by the white inhabitants to the Indians to stop raiding their plantations they received the reply that the Indians “were not afraid of the white men [in St. Augustine]; white men here has got no soldiers and if the white people in the county offer to punish them for

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<sup>98</sup> Letter to Secretary of War, James Barbour from Florida Territory Governor DuVal, December 16, 1825, IA - FSC, UF.

<sup>99</sup> Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War 1835-1842*, 64.

<sup>100</sup> Letter to Governor DuVal, July 18th, 1826, IA - FSC, UF.

killing cattle, they have forty warriors on this side of the St. John's and they will not only kill all [the] cattle but all the white people.”<sup>101</sup> The Seminole Indians realized that after the First Second Seminole War and continued white encroachment they were no longer in a position of strength. However, as shown they were not entirely powerless to affect the Florida settlers. The Seminole's most important weapon was whites' fear of Indian attack. A simple “rumor of Indian hostilities was enough to clear the countryside of settlers.”<sup>102</sup>

For the inhabitants of St. Augustine a single letter to DuVal was not enough to express their concern of Indian depredations and appreciation of Federal troops stationed in their community. On July 19th, 1826 at least twenty-four citizens petitioned Secretary Barbour through a locally appointed federal official and requested an increased federal presence. In addition, the Collector of Customs in St. Augustine, John Rodman, accompanied a letter with the petition that expressed his apprehension about the Federal troops recently withdrawn.<sup>103</sup> Rodman reassured the Secretary of War that although there were only twenty-four signatures on the petition that they were the “most respectable inhabitants of this place [and that] many more names might have been obtained . . . but it was thought unnecessary.”<sup>104</sup> In this particular instance the inhabitants were “aggrieved by the late removal of one of the companies of United States troops” from their

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Missall, 63.

<sup>103</sup> Irene A Wright, *The Odyssey of the Spanish Archives of Florida* in *Hispanic American Essays: A Memorial to James Alexander Robertson* edited by James Alexander Robertson and A. Curtis Wilgus, (Manchester, NH: Ayer Company Publishing, 1942) p 177 – Cites John Rodman as the Customs Collector of St. Augustine during this time frame.

<sup>104</sup> Letter to Secretary of War James Barbour from Customs Collector of St. Augustine John Rodman, July 25<sup>th</sup> 1826 - IA - FSC, UF.



community.<sup>105</sup> Specifically petitioners deemed the small company of approximately fifty soldiers left behind was inadequate protection against the Indians. They requested that the removed unit “may be speedily returned, or that some other company may be sent hither, without delay, and that for the future, at least two full companies may be kept” in St. Augustine.<sup>106</sup>

Prior to sending the petition Rodman had taken it upon himself to write Secretary Barbour. In his letter he stressed the importance of the military presence to St. Augustine. Rodman insisted that the citizens considered their “lives and property in imminent danger.”<sup>107</sup> The “Indians were wandering all over the country, in a famished state, and continually committing depredations upon the property of the inhabitants, and threatening their lives.”<sup>108</sup> In the nascent territory the state militia was still largely unorganized and lacking direction from the governor, according to Rodman. He also went on to accuse Governor DuVal of not visiting the St. Augustine area and being “entirely ignorant of the real state of affairs” in the district.<sup>109</sup> A few years earlier DuVal had taken a hiatus from the territory to handle personal matters back in Kentucky. As a result of his absence and perceived disinterest in Florida some people felt that he should be asked to resign. DuVal even complained about his salary, the humid Florida climate, and the inhospitable people

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<sup>105</sup> Petition to Secretary of War James Barbour, July 19<sup>th</sup> 1826 - IA - FSC, UF.

<sup>106</sup> Petition to Secretary of War James Barbour, July 19<sup>th</sup> 1826 - IA - FSC, UF.

<sup>107</sup> Letter from John Rodman to Secretary of War James Barbour, July 11, 1826 - IA - FSC, UF.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

with whom he had to deal. A Florida newspaper openly called for his resignation.<sup>110</sup> It is of little wonder why the citizens of St. Augustine may have felt ignored. To Rodman and the petitioning St. Augustine citizens it seemed disastrous to remove the federal troops. Even with the absence of major warfare the inhabitants of St. John's County valued the deployment of federal troops and even requested the larger force to return. There was no animosity towards the federal army and it provided the community a strong sense of security.

The following month Governor DuVal penned a letter to the Secretary of War addressing some of Rodman and the St. Augustine area citizens' concerns. DuVal confirmed Rodman's apprehension over the militia in St. John's County. However, St. John's and Escambia<sup>111</sup> Counties were the only two in the settlement that had not performed a company muster. For some indeterminable reason they were lacking leadership. DuVal had taken it upon himself to “excite . . . [the] citizens to form themselves into Corps.”<sup>112</sup> He also requested of the Secretary to send two-hundred muskets and one-hundred rifles to help equip the deprived militia companies. However, training the militia to be a disciplined fighting force would take time. DuVal needed a more immediate answer to keep tension between the Indians and settlers from boiling over into open warfare. He requested that a “detachment of regular troops be ordered from Pensacola or Tampa Bay to land at Fort St. Marks and scour all the country between

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<sup>110</sup> Martin, *The Territorial Period of Florida, 1819-1845*, 72.

<sup>111</sup> Escambia County is located in the Florida panhandle and in present day is the most western Florida county.

<sup>112</sup> Governor DuVal to Secretary of War, August 29, 1826 – *TP Vol. XXIII*, 635-37.

that place eastward thro[ugh] Alachua County destroying all the Indian settlements out of their limits.”<sup>113</sup> The governor felt this immediate solution would quell the agitation of the white settlers who had “for some time been ready to redress by force of arms the wrongs and injuries they” had sustained.<sup>114</sup> DuVal, Rodman, and the St. Augustine petitioners succeeded. On August 31, 1826 Secretary Barbour responded to DuVal stating that although regard to the “public service made it necessary” to remove the Artillery company the outcry from St. John's County had “solicited its return, or the substitution of another on the ground of apprehended Indian hostilities.”<sup>115</sup> Still, by no means was this the end to fears of Indian hostilities.

Six years prior to the out break of official hostilities Florida inhabitants again requested a stronger Federal troop presence. This time it was in Alachua County, where more than one-hundred settlers were dissatisfied with the deployment of a company recently stationed at Fort King (present-day Ocala). Alachua County’s affinity for both federal and local military endeavors is well documented in a letter to the President. The citizens petitioned Andrew Jackson in October of 1829 to “request that a garrison of four companies of U.S. Troops [be] stationed” nearby.<sup>116</sup> They felt that such a small force at Fort King was inadequate to quell an Indian uprising and “afforded no possibility of

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Secretary of War to Governor DuVal, August 31, 1826 – *TP Vol. XXIII*, 637-38.

<sup>116</sup> Petition to Andrew Jackson from the Inhabitants of Alachua County, October 1829 – Harn, Ed *Inhabitants of Alachua County to the President*, USGenNet – Florida Independent History and Genealogy: Affiliated with the American History and Genealogy Project: Alachua County, Document Mentioning Harn and Alachua County [<http://www.usgenet.org/usa/fl/county/alachua/Harn/Harn10.html>]

protection to [their] families.”<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, the petition also requested of the President “that one-thousand stand of arms with ammunition”<sup>118</sup> be sent to the Sixth Regiment of the Florida Militia.

With the outbreak of hostilities growing closer Florida settlers responded to the crisis. DuVal still attempted to restrain the martial spirit of the settlers; however, inhabitants from “several parts of the territory” were determined to “take up arms and avenge themselves.”<sup>119</sup> At the start of the Second Seminole War Floridians eagerly provided men and financial support to defend their home and people. With the purpose of “raising a fund to be distributed as a gratuity among those . . . who volunteer[ed] to march against the hostile Indians in Florida” seventy-five people pledged more than seventeen-hundred dollars for the cause in June of 1836.<sup>120</sup> In Apalachicola citizens were no longer willing to wait for federal assistance. To protect their persons and property it was necessary to take matters into their own hands and the community quickly organized. At a public meeting, members first resolved that a “Committee of Safety” be established to ensure the safety of place, but particularly that of women and children. The council requested that the Lieutenant Colonel of the county militia assemble all citizens of the town, liable to military duty, every afternoon at five o'clock for inspection. Further requested was “in addition to the regular militia, a Company be formed of such as are

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Letter to Secretary of War, James Barbour, from Governor DuVal August 8, 1826- IA - FSC, UF.

<sup>120</sup> Roll of Donors, June 1836 – P.K. Young Library of Florida History - Miscellaneous Manuscript Collection, 00,129 - Special and Area Studies Collections, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.

usually exempt, consisting of individuals under or over age, and who may still be able to act, in an emergency, with system and effect.”<sup>121</sup> The citizens of Apalachicola, Florida refused to hesitate in the face of danger. They speedily organized and put the burden of defense upon themselves in the absence of a federal force.

As has been shown, at least for the territory of Florida, white Southerners held a positive outlook towards the military and did not shy away from martial endeavors. Their attitudes stemmed from the most practical of all concerns; self-preservation. The language used in these petitions displays concern and anxiety about their safety. Particularly causing distress was the danger towards women and children. Whether white Southerners in the territory actually lived in ever-present danger of being murdered by Indians is irrelevant. Their perceived danger lasted almost fifty years. Their ingrained fear is evident in these petitions, letters, and newspaper articles. In looking to the military for security, a standing army was not seen as an abrasive or overbearing functionary of the federal government to be abused by a tyrant. The concrete benefits far outweighed the abstract and ideological costs.

Besides protection, there can be many assumed advantages of a large military presence within a developing community. Specifically mentioned in one petition to the President by the citizens of Alachua County was the desire to employ federal troops to assist in opening or repairing nearby roads.<sup>122</sup> While it is irresponsible to make similar

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<sup>121</sup> Public Meeting, “Apalachicola Gazette,” Apalachicola, FL May 21, 1836.

<sup>122</sup> Petition to the President by the Citizens of Alachua County, January 1832 – *TP Vol. XXIV*, 644-45.

assertions about the South as a region it is appropriate to acknowledge that the South as a region endured a prolonged Indian presence throughout the first half of the nineteenth-century. Even a cursory examination of readily available sources suggests similar occurrences in Georgia and Alabama. In St. Mary's, Georgia a woman and her two infant children were brutally murdered by Lower Creek Indians in February of 1817. The mother, Mrs. Garrett, was shot and killed, stabbed, and then scalped. Of the two children, the eldest, at age three, also scalped. It can only be imagined that the youngest did not have enough hair on his head to merit the effort. After the murders, the house was plundered and set a blaze. Neighboring residents reacted quickly and with force upon hearing the gunshot. They assembled with arms and attempted to pursue the renegade band, but were only able to track them so far. It was through Archibald Clarke, Intendant of St. Mary's Georgia, which the local citizenry attempted to secure protection from the Federal army. Clarke petitioned General Edmund P. Gaines, commander of the Southern Military District, that on this “extensive and entirely unprotected frontier, the poor and innocent inhabitants have been exposed to calamities.” Clarke also indicated that this was not an isolated incident and the memory of previous depredations were still causing concern among the residents. As in the case of the Florida territory, St. Mary's citizens requested a “detachment of troops” to be placed within their community to ensure order and security.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Archibald Clarke, Intendant of St. Mary's, Georgia to General Gaines February 26, 1817 – American State Papers: Indian Affairs, vol. 2, 155. I would like to thank Dennis Matthew Stevenson for bringing my attention to this source in his Masters Thesis, *War, Words, and the Southern Way, The Florida*

Similar attitudes were present in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama near the Black Warrior River. On October 7, 1818 citizens petitioned Governor William W. Bibb that they were in “great distress on account of the large parties of hostile Indians passing through the country.” Directly prompting this petition was the murder of three unidentified children and a Negro. Nearly twenty inhabitants requested the territorial governor aid in the form of “men and as many arms as may be” supplied to prevent the inhabitants “families from falling a sacrifice [to the Indians] and also take such measure as may prevent any more parties [of Indians] from again entering” the community. In this petition there is a definite sense of a community under siege. Not only did they hope to stop the Indians from entering their territory but they felt as though Indians were able to penetrate their community at will. The citizens of Tuscaloosa County looked to their governor to find security in an expansion of arms and fighting men.<sup>124</sup> One of the most telling accounts of the influence of hostile Indians on Southern settlers is presented in a letter from Thomas C. Hunter to Governor William W. Bibb. In the same Black Warrior River area, Hunter wrote to confirm the nominations of militia officers for eight area platoons. In closing, Hunter begged Bibb:

“to suggest to your Excellency the propriety of having the Field and Staff officers appointed at as early a period as possible, our frontier situation and the hostility of the neighboring Indians - renders it necessary that we should be prepared – in case of an order from your Excellency for a Draft, or volunteers.”<sup>125</sup>

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*Acquisition and the Rhetoric of Southern Honor*, the University of Florida, 2004.

<sup>124</sup> Petition to Governor Bibb by Inhabitants of Tuscaloosa County, October 7, 1818 - *TP Vol. XVIII*, 429-30.

<sup>125</sup> Letter to Governor Bibb from Thomas C. Hunter, March 29, 1818 – *TP Vol. XVIII*, 286.

In this letter Hunter clearly stated that a local martial force is required as a result of a perceived Indian threat. A primary objective of maintaining a local militia and ensuring that the local populace could defend the community was to stop possible Indian attack. What should be even more convincing is that this letter did not reference this need in relation to a recent Indian attack. If these glimpses of Georgia and territorial Alabama and the occurrences in the Florida Territory are any indication of the rest of the region then both supporters and critics of the Militant South thesis must reexamine the standard interpretation of how the South is characterized as a militant region.

While these observations of a militant culture in antebellum Florida, Georgia, and Alabama are by no means the final word on the debate, it is nearly impossible to deny the Militant South thesis. As space does not allow this paper to dwell on traditions of personal violence such as duels in the Old South, it is still worth restating that critics have attacked the case solely in terms of martial values and militarism while they have bypassed how the South was a more aggressive and overtly violent region.

For the Florida territory historians should also be reconsidering the assumption that the nation as a whole distrusted and disliked a federal standing army. In Higginbotham's concession that slavery made the South violent he does not consider the fact that Southerners had to deal with the threat of a black uprising and Native Americans simultaneously which, according to his argument, should double the possibility of



violence in the region.<sup>126</sup>

In regards to the attack on the South's martial values, how is the common occurrence of fights and duels reasoned into their refutation of the Militant South thesis? In the South men involved in these events were deemed more respectable for engaging in this violent behavior. This lends support to the thesis that the ethic of honor was an obvious and important part of a distinctly Militant South. These values encouraged violence and militarism throughout the region as an opportunity for white men either to gain or maintain status. The perceived hostile Savages of the Florida territory pushed the settlers into a state of martial readiness. Settlers encouraged the presence of a standing peace-time army. The practical advantages far outweighed any ideological qualms about a standing army in a democracy. Also, settlers quickly organized their communities when thought to be in the presence of danger. They looked outside the standard norms of community defense eliciting support from the previously assumed too old and too young. This martial tradition was induced by necessity as a result of their environment. In the example of Florida we can see how societal traits interacted with place to transition the territory from violent to militant to martial.

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<sup>126</sup> Higginbotham, 7.

## AMICUS FLORIDAE

To the people of the United States in the 1830s the Second Seminole War was often referred to as “*The Florida War*.”<sup>127</sup> Perhaps it was given this title due to a white centered outlook on the war that denied adroit Seminole execution or possibly because contemporaries could never imagine an Indian conflict lasting almost seven years. Another possibility is that at the start of the war Americans could not see a patterned resistance by the Seminoles that spanned across five decades. No matter what the name, the Second Seminole War is often referred to by another name: a military embarrassment. Although the United States claimed victory in 1842 the U.S. army was repeatedly humiliated by relatively small bands of “savages” that lived off the land and often had their women and children hiding in the brush not far from the front line. The honor and glory that were supposed to characterize nineteenth-century civilized warfare were almost totally absent in the hammocks and swamps of Florida.<sup>128</sup> However, the war did not start this way.

The men of the Deep South, particularly South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama, responded to the Indian threat with vigilance. The Second Seminole War offered the opportunity to display the cultural acceptance and enthusiasm for martial endeavors. Men

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<sup>127</sup> Newspaper articles, government documents, and personal correspondence simply reference what we know as The Second Seminole War as *The Florida War*. Also see J.T. Sprague, *The Origins, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War*, (Tampa: University of Tampa Press, 2000), the first credible and complete history of the war originally published in 1848.

<sup>128</sup> Missall, xvii.

in the Deep South fervently displayed a state of martial readiness at the start of the war. Men were not only expected to fight, but to act in a prompt and decisive manner. Leading men of southern communities took it upon themselves to organize relief efforts to arrange for munitions and volunteers to engage the Seminoles. Those who, for whatever reason, were not able to embark immediately on their adventure to the Florida peninsula had to answer to the community. However, at the same time they could request assistance from the community in fulfilling their masculine obligations. In this way they could maintain their honor. In many ways the outbreak of the Second Seminole War was as much a welcomed opportunity for these border states as it was a devastating nightmare for the Florida settlers.

For the first two years of the conflict the war dominated front-page space in newspapers, reaching a national audience.<sup>129</sup> However, the war in Florida caused more concern among Southerners. Up until the Civil War the southeast had a substantial Indian presence. It was little more than fifteen years prior to the Second Seminole War that residents of Alabama and Georgia had fought against the Creek Indians with General Andrew Jackson.<sup>130</sup> In South Carolina memories of hostilities with the Cherokee Indians were only a few generations removed. The colonial-era battles were likely still fresh in the minds of South Carolinians with the final touches being put on the Treaty of New

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<sup>129</sup> Survey of *Niles' Weekly Register* from 1836-1839 in Missall, xvii.

<sup>130</sup> This war also involved a large number of volunteers, particularly from Tennessee commanded by General Andrew Jackson. See Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars*, (New York: Penguin Group, 2001), Chapter 4 and also Frank Lawrence Owsley Jr., *Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands: The Creek War and the Battle of New Orleans 1812-1815*, (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2000) for the most complete account of the Creek War.

Echota in early 1836 and the subsequent removal of the tribe.<sup>131</sup>

Proximity was a key determinant to the level of involvement by southern states in the Second Seminole War. Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina displayed a special interest in the war. These states eagerly sent men to aid the suffering inhabitants of Florida and fend off the savage foe. Southern urban centers such as Mobile, Alabama, Macon and Savannah, Georgia, and Charleston, South Carolina publicly proclaimed their support for the Florida settlers. Men from rural areas of the state funneled through these hubs en route to Florida. These states pledged men, money, and munitions to stop the “savages” from inflicting more depredations against the innocent inhabitants. Through published declarations of support in local newspapers, communities publicly asserted their enthusiasm for martial endeavors and exhibited a martial readiness to react immediately. Language defining honor and racial superiority colored these public statements. The men of these states refused to be called cowards and saw an adventure in defeating a racially inferior opponent. Words such as “savage,” “barbarian,” and “ravenous beast” were common in vivid accounts of attacks on “innocent” white settlers. Regardless of how honorably the war ended, it started with Southerners asserting their masculinity and honor through war, violence, and martial readiness. The South and the United States as a whole would know that these men did not shirk from their obligated duty and that they refused to bring dishonor on themselves or their state.

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<sup>131</sup> For an account of hostilities between whites and Cherokees see John Oliphant *Peace and War on the Anglo-Cherokee Frontier, 1756-63*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001). “Treaty With the Cherokee, 1835” in *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, Vol II, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), 439-49; made available by HeinOnline, [<http://heinonline.org/>].

Tensions between whites and the Florida Indians were never completely resolved. It seemed probable that a full blown war between the United States and the Seminoles might erupt prior to December of 1835. One of President Andrew Jackson's most controversial acts ensured that some form of conflict would occur soon between the Seminoles and the U.S. government. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 ensured an impending dispute between the Indians and U.S. forces.

The Act itself was a contentious issue in Congress and passed by slim margins in both the House and Senate. However, as John K. Mahon has pointed out, “certain members who no longer had an Indian problem in their states sternly opposed the measure.”<sup>132</sup> Robert Adams of Mississippi, Hugh Lawson White of Tennessee, and John Forsyth and Wilson Lumpkin of Georgia insisted on the importance of the removal bill. Senator Theodore Frelinghuysen of New Jersey, Peleg Sprague of Maine, and Ascher Robbins of Rhode Island adamantly opposed the bill with opposition speeches and lobbying through religious organizations.<sup>133</sup> Pennsylvania congressman Joseph Hemphill also published an article which condemned the removal policy. The debate over removal raged for weeks in Congress. Generally, delegates from northern and eastern states opposed the bill, while delegates from western and southern states favored it. John Forsyth even argued that states should have the right to “exercise sovereignty over

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<sup>132</sup> Mahon, 72.

<sup>133</sup> Theda Perdue and Micheal Green, *The Cherokee Removal, A Brief History with Documents*, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1995), 114.

Indians, about old treaties and proclamations, and about natural law.”<sup>134</sup> Theda Perdue characterized the debate as “northern anti-Jackson representatives doing battle against southern Democrats.”<sup>135</sup> The Indian issue began taking on sectional undertones. New England opponents appealed to benevolent Christian values as to why the Indian, specifically the Cherokees, should be able to remain in their place. In the South expansion and perceived fears of Indian hostilities proved to be a potent motivator for removal.

Upon receiving pressure from Indian agents to remove west of the Mississippi, many of the Native Americans in Florida felt betrayed. In September of 1823 chiefs representing the tribes in Florida met at Moultrie Creek, approximately five miles south of St. Augustine, with U.S. officials to arrange a land settlement. Four hundred and twenty-five Native Americans from across Florida, which included some women, attended the meeting. Seventy chiefs and warriors directly participated in the deliberations over two weeks, with Neamathla acting as the primary Indian representative. Local Florida settlers even came out to see the spectacle.

In the settlement the Indians gave up claims to the entire territory of Florida in exchange for a defined, protected land in central Florida.<sup>136</sup> The United States government agreed to provide certain provisions for the transition to the reservation and (what became a major issue disputing Seminole removal) to supply food, farming tools,

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<sup>134</sup> Anthony F.C. Wallace, *The Long, Bitter Trail: Andrew Jackson and the Indians*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 70.

<sup>135</sup> Theda Perdue *The Cherokee Removal*, 115.

<sup>136</sup> Mahon, 42-4.

livestock, and “an annual sum of five-thousand dollars a year, for twenty successive years.”<sup>137</sup> The text of the treaty makes no mention of a future removal. It in fact states that “the United States promise to guaranty to the said tribes the peaceable possession of the district . . . assigned them.”<sup>138</sup> The only reference to a change in land was regarding the possible expansion of the Indian territory if the Chiefs and Indian Agent deemed the assigned land insufficient. At the very least the treaty should have been applicable for twenty years so that the U.S. government could finish paying out the agreed annual sum. This should have secured the Seminoles on their assigned land until September of 1842, which was coincidentally the year the Second Seminole War ended.

With Removal in full force by 1832 James Gadsen was sent to Florida to ensure that the Seminoles would be moving west with rest of the southeastern tribes. The negotiations were much more inconspicuous than the signing at Moultrie ten years before. There were no public onlookers, no mass of Native American participants, and Gadsen did not even keep minutes of the talks. The treaty was signed on May 9, 1832 by seven chiefs and eight sub-chiefs.<sup>139</sup> The treaty stated that “the Seminole Indians [were to] relinquish control to the United States all claim to the lands they . . . occupy in the Territory of Florida” and that they will “remove within three years.”<sup>140</sup> The treaty signing

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<sup>137</sup> Treaty of Moultrie Creek; September 18, 1822 in Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties Vol. II, Ed. by Charles J. Kappler, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), 203-207: made available by HeinOnline, [<http://heinonline.org/>].

<sup>138</sup> Treaty of Moultrie Creek.

<sup>139</sup> Mahon, 75.

<sup>140</sup> Treaty of Payne's landing; May 9, 1832 in Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties Vol. II, Ed. by Charles J. Kappler, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), 344-45: made available by

at Payne's Landing was shadowed in allegations of coercion and deception for the Seminoles to give up their land and relocate to Arkansas. One Indian chief claimed that all signers were forced. Another claimed that all the signatures on the document were forgeries. Even if the signatures were legitimate, this treaty in no way held the same credibility as the Treaty of Moultrie Creek, which had a much broader representation of the Florida Indians.<sup>141</sup>

When ordered, factions of the Seminole Indians refused to emigrate. In mid-1835 Indian Agent Wiley Thompson summoned the Natives around Fort King to make them aware that the United States government was no longer interested in negotiating. The agent read a letter from Andrew Jackson, often referred to as “The Great White Father,” which stated that the Indians were to be removed by force if necessary. A month later the Seminoles informed that same Indian Agent that they would not emigrate.<sup>142</sup> War seemed imminent and in November of 1835 the commanding officer at Fort King, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander C.W. Fanning, wrote the commander of federal forces in Florida, Brevet Brigadier General Duncan L. Clinch that “there appears to be a general disaffection of the Indians, and, no doubt, War is determined. . . We have fallen into the error committed at the commencement of every Indian War: The display of too little force- The attempt to do too much with inadequate men.”<sup>143</sup>

Organized and intentional hostilities by the Seminoles commenced on December

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HeinOnline, [<http://heinonline.org/>].

<sup>141</sup> Mahon, 75.

<sup>142</sup> Missall, 90.

<sup>143</sup> Duncan L. Clinch to the Adjutant General, November 29, 1835 – *TP Vol. XXV*, 199-201.



28, 1835. There was not an official declaration of war by the United States Congress in retaliation. By proclaiming an official declaration of war the United States government would put the Seminoles on the same level as previous belligerent powers, such as Great Britain or Spain. The United States would give credibility to the sovereignty of the Seminoles by declaring war as though it were an independent nation. Instead, the government treated the tribe more like dependents who had stepped out of line and now had to be reprimanded by the “Great White Father.” By commencing an undeclared war against the Seminoles, or for that matter any Indian nation, the United States was able to continue the policy of treating the Seminoles as a subject of the state. This type of relationship was also inherently unequal. In many ways it was representative of the assumed racial inferiority of the Seminoles by the United States government. However, to ensure the “red children” did not step too far out of line the United States Congress appropriated \$620,000 by the end of January 1836 for the Secretary of War to use to “defray the expenses attending the suppression of hostilities with the Seminole Indians in Florida.”<sup>144</sup>

The Seminoles began their war with a shot that killed Indian Agent Wiley Thompson and a lieutenant outside Fort King. Osceola and a small band of Seminoles ambushed them while walking from the fort to the sutler's cabin. Thompson was shot fourteen times and the cabin's inhabitants were also slain.<sup>145</sup> Southwest of this location,

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<sup>144</sup> The United States Statutes at Large Vol. 5, Ed. Richard Peters, (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1846), 1: made available by HeinOnline, [<http://heinonline.org/>].

<sup>145</sup> Missall, 96.

en route to the fort, Major Francis L. Dade and two companies of soldiers were ambushed and slaughtered by Indians near Bushnell, Florida. Only three men survived the attack, all badly wounded.<sup>146</sup> One of the three survivors had crawled the sixty miles back to Fort Brooke in Tampa with “one arm useless, one leg unable to bear his weight, without food, and half naked.” He was left with “his right pelvic bone shattered, a Seminole bullet in his right lung, [and] a whole through his shoulder that was never going to heal.”<sup>147</sup> It was almost two weeks before the fate of Dade's command was known. This is how the longest and most expensive war in U.S. history began; isolated, undeclared, and against a native enemy.<sup>148</sup> War was determined but Lieutenant Colonel Fanning had not considered the outpouring of support from the neighboring southern states. Volunteers rushed to aid the white settlers in Florida at the first notice of war.

In Charleston, South Carolina the *Charleston Mercury* printed an article on December 28, 1835 stating that although some depredations may have recently been committed by the Seminoles there had not been “any authentic accounts from the frontier” that a war had ensued.<sup>149</sup> If only the editors of the *Mercury* could have know about events surrounding Dade’s command on the morning of the printing. However, Charleston must have been one of the first cities outside Florida to discover that war had commenced between the United States and the Seminole Indians. The very next day the

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<sup>146</sup> Michael Gannon, *Florida, A Short History*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 32.

<sup>147</sup> Frank Laumer, *Dade's Last Command*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995), 6.

<sup>148</sup> Gannon, 32.

<sup>149</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – December 28, 1835. The depredations cited were reported through Tallahassee and took place in early to mid December.

same paper reported “INDIAN HOSTILITIES!!” and gave the “Latest Intelligence from the Theatre of War.” The report chronicled surprise attacks by hostile Indians, primarily upon civilians and their homes. In areas around Lake George and Fort King the Indians “had burned all the houses and destroyed property.” A store in Palatka was also set ablaze.<sup>150</sup>

By the fourth of January the *Savannah Republican* was regularly receiving and printing news of the Florida War. The paper expected “the savages of the forest” to be quickly brought under control by General Duncan Clinch and “Florida's Gallant sons.” In describing one of the first engagements the paper reported that Seminoles only fired while hiding in the hammocks. Nonetheless General Clinch was a “gentleman of tried and great ability, experience and bravery” and anticipated to quickly crush the Indian resistance.<sup>151</sup>

Communities farther from the Florida Territory learned about the conflict shortly after. In North Carolina the port town of Wilmington was one of the first to report on the troubles in Florida.<sup>152</sup> The *North Carolina Standard* in Raleigh was not far behind with its announcement of an “INDIAN MASSACRE” on January 7, 1836. The *Standard* in particular depicted a bleak picture for white settlers in Florida with the Seminoles on the war path. It reported that the Indians “were burning all the dwellings in their course, and

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<sup>150</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – December 29, 1835.

<sup>151</sup> Excerpt from *The Jacksonville Courier* December 31, 1835 reprinted in *The Savannah Republican*: Savannah, Georgia – January 4, 1836.

<sup>152</sup> *The Wilmington Advertiser*: Wilmington, North Carolina – January 1, 1836.

murdering such of the inhabitants as had not previously made their escape.”<sup>153</sup> In western North Carolina news of the start of the war appeared by the middle of January.<sup>154</sup> The papers depicted the same savage warriors plundering the country side in search of settlers to scalp and homes to raze.<sup>155</sup>

Depending on the isolation of the community news of the Florida War reached Southerners by varying times. In Macon, Georgia residents were well aware of the outbreak of hostilities by the middle of January 1836, but possibly sooner.<sup>156</sup> Macon's landlocked position slowed the arrival of news as most traveled first through major port towns.

The *Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot* first broke the story in Mobile, Alabama on the morning of January 11. The headline on the second page boldly stated “INDIAN MASSACRE!” The first major news reaching Alabama regarding the start of the war was the defeat of Dade's command. The article gave a brief account of the savagery that characterized the fighting and conduct of the Indian assailants by reports from the “three survivors who arrived a week afterwards, all wounded.” The entire detachment sent from Tampa Bay to Fort King was “attacked by an overwhelming

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<sup>153</sup> *The North Carolina Standard*: Raleigh, North Carolina – January 7, 1836.

<sup>154</sup> *Western Carolinian*: Salisbury, North Carolina – January 16, 1836.

<sup>155</sup> *Greensborough Patriot Weekly*: Greensborough, North Carolina – February 24, 1836

<sup>156</sup> *The Georgia Messenger*: Macon, Georgia – January 14, 1836. This article was an excerpt printed from the *Savannah Georgian* on January 10, 1836. However, the microfilm of the *Georgia Messenger* examined was missing December 25-30, 1835 and January 1-7, 1836. It is likely that Macon newspapers had reported on the Florida War during these missing dates but not much before the printed article on January 14, 1836. Port towns such as Savannah, Charleston, Mobile, and Wilmington were usually the first to receive news. Macon's land-locked location most likely would have slowed the dissemination of news as it traveled over land.

number of Indians” at about eight o'clock in the morning. In uncivilized form, the Indians shot and killed Major Frances Dade immediately; however, Captain Frances gallantly rode forward but was also cut down.<sup>157</sup>

After an hour the detachment was reduced to thirty men who were almost all wounded, the Mobile paper reported. Even in pain the remaining men “threw up a slight breastwork” to fend off the attacking Indians. At eleven o'clock the Indians returned and “completed the slaughter of the whole corps.” At some point in the melee the three wounded survivors managed to escape into the woods and witness as the savages “rushed in and butchered the wounded.”<sup>158</sup>

The paper described the slaughtered men as “noble fellows, who perished in the highest degree of gallant[ry].” Even though the fighting was “so close, that the Indians cut them down with knives, and they were obliged to throw away their guns, or strike with the butts” the soldiers were presented as honorable men who “obeyed every order and stood their ground.”<sup>159</sup> Southern newspapers described the white soldiers as exhibiting the honor, grace, and fortitude expected of civilized warfare. The Indians on the other hand were portrayed as showing no decency in their conduct of war. The Seminoles ambushed an unsuspecting army and not only refused to disengage a defeated force, but went so far as to mutilate the dead and wounded strewn about the battlefield. In the Mobile paper's account there was little a reader could imagine honorable about the

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<sup>157</sup> *Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*: Mobile, Alabama – January 11, 1836.

<sup>158</sup> *Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*: Mobile, Alabama – January 11, 1836.

<sup>159</sup> *Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*: Mobile, Alabama – January 11, 1836.

Indians of Florida.

No matter when these papers published the news of the outbreak of hostilities in Florida, they all had one theme in common. Accounts stressed that Floridians were up against a savage enemy. This foe did not differentiate between civilians and combatants. One South Carolina citizen equated the Seminoles to a wolf stalking sheep with no herder. He stated that the “Seminole was a ravenous beast of prey, prowling, at the dark hour of midnight, when no Shepard is out on the hill, and no whistle warns the devoted lambs that the wolf is on the walk.” The Florida settlers were at the mercy of the “ruthless knife, or keen edged tomahawk of the blood thirsty savage.”<sup>160</sup> In a plea to gather support, a St. Augustine man wrote the *Charleston Mercury*. He described the Seminoles as savages in which the settlers had no “reason, in nature or experience, to rely upon promises and fidelity.” He went on to equate them to wild beasts that may be no more expected of taming than wild “tigers and wolves in our woods.”<sup>161</sup> With the start of the war the Seminoles became subhuman. They did not think, act, or have the same morals as the whites they were helplessly slaughtering.

Newspapers garnered support for the Floridians by presenting a bleak picture for anyone remaining in the territory. *The Georgia Messenger* exploited this to present a dire picture of territorial Florida and rally support for volunteers. It printed that “the whole of Florida east of the Suwannee River was crying for help, and without immediate aid, the

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<sup>160</sup> Cohen, Myer M., *Notices of Florida and the Campaigns: A Facsimile Reproduction*, Ed. by Rembert W. Patrick with an Intro. by Colonel O.Z. Tyler Jr., (University of Florida Press: Gainesville, 1964), 106-07.

<sup>161</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 19, 1836.

lives of a large portion of our fellow citizens, men, women and children, were to be sacrificed by the ruthless savage.”<sup>162</sup> Tales of civilians' homes being burned down by the rampaging savages spread through southern newspapers. Private letters quickly made their way into newspapers as an efficient way to relay news of the destruction. A North Carolina newspaper reprinted an extract from a citizen in St. Augustine that gave great alarm to the destruction at the hands of the Seminoles:

The whole country south of St. Augustine has been laid waste during the past week, and not a building of any value left standing. There is not a single house now remaining between this city and Cape Florida, a distance of 250 miles, -- all, all, have been burnt to the ground.<sup>163</sup>

Men in South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama did not sit idly by. The men and communities in these states responded before any official call for support came out. In some cities volunteers organized immediately to depart for Florida. Others set up beneficent committees to arrange for munitions, money, or food to be sent to Florida. This war offered an opportunity for men in the Deep South to partake in military glory and display their honor and courage.

Three days after the *Charleston Mercury* notified the city of the war the paper published notice of a “Public Meeting” concerning the events in Florida.<sup>164</sup> This was the first of two Public Meetings held by the citizens of Charleston in January. The meeting was organized by the city Intendent, the Honorable Edward North, at the behest “of many

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<sup>162</sup> *The Georgia Messenger*: Macon, Georgia – January 14, 1835

<sup>163</sup> *Private Letter* reprinted in *The Greensborough Patriot*: Greensborough, North Carolina – March 15, 1836.

<sup>164</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – December 31, 1835.

respectable citizens, and in accordance with the popular will.”<sup>165</sup> North wasted no time and requested that the “citizens assemble at the City Hall this day” at noon. Although organized at the direction of the city Intendent, the *Charleston Mercury* described the meeting as “in compliance with a very general feeling in [the] city, and [acting] at the request of a number of respectable persons.” Reportedly, it was not just government officials in Charleston that were concerned over the “suffering fellow-citizens in Florida.” Respectable people of the community felt it their duty to find a way to help abate the suffering of the Floridians at the hands of the hostile savages. Just underneath this notice was an account of “numerous volunteers among [the] young fellow-citizens.” With the heading “Honorable,” these men “promptly answered the call to the aid of” the Florida settlers.<sup>166</sup> Although the public meeting did not immediately specify what kind of aid the people of Charleston were going to give, the Seminole War caused enough apprehension among the citizenry to publicly announce that they must do something.

Some men decided to forgo the debate and discussion of what exactly should be done and took it upon themselves to head to Florida to join the war immediately. News of these eager men's exploits quickly reached North Carolina. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of January the *Wilmington Advertiser* reported that volunteers from Charleston had already departed to assist with the “considerable mischief” made by the Seminoles.<sup>167</sup> Exactly how many men left was not reported in the *Mercury*. One of them was James Ormond. The

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<sup>165</sup> Cohen, 107.

<sup>166</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – December 31, 1835.

<sup>167</sup> *Wilmington Advertiser*: Wilmington, North Carolina – January 8, 1836.



*Charleston Courier* proudly told of his exploits. Ormond was supposedly one of the first individuals to leave Charleston to “volunteer his services to aid the Floridians.” For all practical reasons his letter was of little consequence. He was merely patrolling an area of Bulowville waiting for more troops to proceed into the interior of Florida. He had not fired his gun; he had not even seen an Indian.<sup>168</sup> However, he represented Charleston's devotion to a fighting spirit and martial readiness to act when needed. When Ormond's company was engaged by the Indians he received more praise. According to the account his company was badly beaten having been surprised on their right flank and forced to retreat across a river. Ormond was wounded four times in the skirmish. His courage and description of the enemy was even more colorful when described in the paper:

Mr. James Ormond, the gallant young volunteer who was the first to offer his services to resist the savages, who were wielding the tomahawk and scalping knife, over the defenseless inhabitant of Florida . . . bears the marks of his determined bravery, having received *four* wounds in the skirmish.<sup>169</sup>

It is evident that the city of Charleston openly approved of his and the other volunteers' actions. Their decisions reflected positively on the them, the city, and even South Carolina as a state. The paper declared that what they were doing was nothing less than “Honorable.”<sup>170</sup>

The results of the meeting were published the next day in all the Charleston newspapers by the charge of the secretary Myer M. Cohen. Charlestonians were not

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<sup>168</sup> *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 25, 1836.

<sup>169</sup> *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 28, 1836.

<sup>170</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – December 31, 1835.

deterred by the rainy and cold weather.<sup>171</sup> Six resolutions were unanimously passed by the “numerous and respectable” people in attendance, and five dealt directly with getting volunteers to Florida. The participants recognized “with great anxiety” that “their countrymen in Florida [were] exposed to the rage of a ruthless and savage enemy.”<sup>172</sup> A committee of seven honorable and respected men were appointed to:

undertake the details necessary for embodying such volunteers as may offer their services, and making arrangements for sending them on, in case of need, to the assistance of the people in Florida.<sup>173</sup>

The Committee Chairman, General Hayne, offered to furnish volunteers with arms and necessary supplies. Hayne described these men's actions as a “gallant and patriotic enterprise.”<sup>174</sup> The meeting participants felt it was appropriate to request that the City Council use city money to:

provide the necessary means for the transportation and subsistence of the Volunteers who may be raised and sent to the succor of our fellow citizens in Florida.<sup>175</sup>

The participants declared that their concerns represented those of the community. By requesting that the Charleston City Council fund the volunteers' expedition they asserted that they were acting in tandem with the feelings of the city.

One of the final resolutions adopted involved the federal army. The committee members and those who attended agreed that it was advantageous to consult with the

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<sup>171</sup> Anna Carol Lesesne, *A Journal commenced by A.C. Lesesne, 1836*, (34/38) South Carolina Historical Society.

<sup>172</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 1, 1836.

<sup>173</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 1, 1836, Public Meeting, Second Resolution.

<sup>174</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 1, 1836, Public Meeting, Third Resolution.

<sup>175</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 1, 1836, Public Meeting, Fourth Resolution.

“commanding officer” of the U.S. forces in Charleston. They pledged their support by “informing him of their willingness to cooperate in such measures” that would help the relief of the citizens of Florida. The citizens in Charleston sought out a harmonious and collaborative effort with the federal army.<sup>176</sup>

News of the Charleston meeting quickly reached across the Deep South. In Mobile the local paper printed a report of the events on the 14<sup>th</sup>. In many ways the citizens of Mobile looked to Charleston to make the first move. The paper openly praised the citizens for their prompt organization. If there was to be occasion for “volunteers, arms, or supplies to be forwarded to Florida” then Mobile would follow their lead.<sup>177</sup>

Little detail can be known about most of the people that made up this public meeting. However, one of the respectable gentlemen who organized the meeting left a written record of his account in Florida and gave some insight as to why he volunteered. The secretary, M.M. Cohen, published Notices of Florida and the Campaigns, a manuscript highlighted by his experience in Florida during the first few months of the war. Cohen was by no means a soldier. He was born in 1804, so he was in his early thirties when he departed for Florida in late January 1836. He had made his living before and presumably after the war as a school teacher and lawyer. In 1824 he had established an English and Classical Seminary in Charleston which he operated until his admission to the Bar in 1829. Described as active in patriotic and political affairs, Cohen was a

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<sup>176</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 1, 1836, Public Meeting, Fifth Resolution.

<sup>177</sup> *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – January 14, 1836.

member of the Washington's Birthday Committee and the Washington Volunteers.<sup>178</sup> He served less than four months with General Abraham Eustis. Cohen's service was limited to the “left wing of General Scott's triple offensive against the Indians on a round trip from St. Augustine” to Fort Brooke at Tampa.<sup>179</sup>

Cohen saw the war in Florida as an opportunity for excitement and a chance to fulfill a patriotic duty. He entered upon his “military operations, namely, [for] a wild wish for adventure, and a humble hope to be useful!”<sup>180</sup> It is not possible to account for the precise thoughts of his fellow participants at the Charleston meeting. But the result of unanimous decisions on all resolutions indicates that these citizens were in agreement that a force should go if there was a determined need for volunteers. Cohen went on to recall that the city of Charleston was stirred with sympathies on notice of the Florida War. He described the war and the enemy stating that:

the cause of Florida was a good cause, and that hers was no manly enemy waging equal battle, in the broad face of day, in behalf of violated rights; but an ambushed foe, in mockery of the most solemn treaties, striking, like a cowardly assassin.<sup>181</sup>

Cohen denounced these attacks on the Floridians and refused to accept any justification from a “cowardly assassin.”

The Charleston citizenry was excited by the honor to aid their fellow citizens.

Cohen also portrayed the war as a democratic struggle with a diverse group of men

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<sup>178</sup> Cohen, xxxviii-xxxix.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid, xii.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, 106.

participating as volunteers. Describing the feeling of the community he extolled the sacrifices of the volunteers coming from many walks of life. Men left:

the peaceful pursuits of commerce, and the profitable employ of time and capital; to give up the student's pen for the soldier's sword, and his book for a shield, and to exchange the hammer of the worthy mechanic, for the musket of a militia man.<sup>182</sup>

The plight of the Floridians appealed to both young and old, rich and poor. Students, artisans, and financiers all saw it as their responsibility to put down the tools of their trade and grasp the “musket of a militia man.”<sup>183</sup>

Cohen and the other members of the Charleston meeting felt that the community was in favor of their martial measures, particularly regarding the calling for volunteers. Directly under the printed resolutions appears a notice directing volunteers wishing to aid the Floridians who to contact. The committee organized to accept either full companies or individuals “to proceed, if necessary, to St. Augustine, for the defense of the inhabitants of Florida from the attacks of the Seminole Indians.” The committee was confidently relying on the “zeal and patriotism of their Fellow-Citizens, should their services be required, for the defense of their brethren in Florida.”<sup>184</sup>

On January 6<sup>th</sup> *The Mercury* reported that the committee appointed by the citizens of Charleston made good on their resolutions. The Chairman, Robert Y. Hayne, “consulted freely with Gen. Eustis, the commanding officer of the U[nited] States forces on this station, and tendered their cooperation in all such measures as might be deemed

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid, 107.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 1, 1836.

necessary.” However, General Eustis underestimated the threat to the Florida territory. He deemed that the forces present under General Clinch and the mounted volunteers under General Call were “fully adequate to subdue any force of Indians and Negroes that could possibly be raised in Florida.”<sup>185</sup> General Eustis's made this assessment prior to notification of the status of Dade's command in Busnell, Florida.

Even though General Eustis assured the citizens of Charleston that volunteers were not needed they insisted on being ready. The possibility of the opportunity to display their martial enthusiasm through battle and eagerly volunteering could not be passed by. To do so may subject the men of Charleston to claims of cowardice. With women and children potentially in grave danger a man of honor was emasculated if he did not act with his gun.

The United States officers in Charleston, however, did forward ammunitions and supplies from the garrison to St. Augustine. Underestimating the threat the paper assumed that “the next accounts [from Florida] will dissipate all grounds of apprehension.” Eustis felt that it was not necessary to accept arms, supplies, or volunteers to be forwarded to Florida on the part of the citizens of Charleston. Still, the paper declared that “the disposition manifested by the citizens of Charleston to come forward for the relief of the inhabitants of Florida, on this occasion, was honorable to the city, and will doubtless be duly appreciated by them.” Despite being passed over for immediate departure to the front the volunteers stated that they were to remain in a state of readiness should they be

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<sup>185</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 6, 1836.

need.<sup>186</sup> It was not be long before the Charlestonians discovered that events in Florida were getting worse.

Merely three days later an account relayed the troubled nature of events in Florida. Things seemed far from being under control:

Our Fellow-Citizens were apprised by the papers . . . of the distressed condition of the people of St. Augustine; who, in addition to other evils and peril, are threatened with the horrors of famine. To contribute to their relief, is the dictate not only of feeling but of duty, - and we are glad to perceive that a subscription for the purpose of dispatching a supply of provisions.<sup>187</sup>

Between the sixth and the ninth of January accounts from Florida grew increasingly worse. Finally this editorial declared that the citizens of Charleston must respond. It was an issue of duty and propriety. Charleston was obligated to aid their fellow citizens.

The steam boat John Stoney left on the twelfth for St. Augustine. Acting in conjunction with General Eustis, the Committee of Citizens supplied provisions for the suffering inhabitants of Florida. Heading for St. Augustine, along with a detachment of United States troops, was a supply of corn and flour to hopefully hold over the starving refugees.<sup>188</sup> On January 13<sup>th</sup> the city of Charleston received a visitor from Florida. Major Williams, the aid-de-camp of General Hernandez, the Commandant of St. Augustine, had pulled in the previous night. Upon arrival he immediately took counsel with General Eusitis and the Committee that could be reached at such a late hour. As the group met, Major Williams expressed his belief that the “arrival of the arms and ammunition already

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<sup>186</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 6, 1836.

<sup>187</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 9, 1836.

<sup>188</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 12, 1836.

forwarded, with the detachment of troops, and supplies will have the effect of restoring tranquility, and giving security to St. Augustine.<sup>189</sup> While holding their own public meeting the citizens of St. Augustine issued a resolution “in which the thanks of the citizens are tendered to the the citizens of Charleston, for the prompt conduct . . .in affording relief.”<sup>190</sup> The citizens of Charleston still stood at readiness despite Major William's portrayal of security on the frontier. These citizens of Charleston soon found out that William's statements were at best ill informed.

Even with Major Williams's assurances that the federal troops would soon have the situation in Florida under control the citizens of Charleston refused to sit idly by. The Committee called a second Public Meeting to address the situation on the twenty-first. The men of the Committee appealed to the “patriotism of the community to give a general attendance, and be prepared to vote for the adoption of the most active and energetic measures” to aid Florida.<sup>191</sup> The new meeting chairman, General Hamilton, read an inspiring narration of why action was immediately necessary. Hamilton claimed that where the federal government was slow to act for the protection of Florida it was the duty of the citizens of Charleston to aid their brethren.

Events also seemed to show that a special relationship existed between Charleston and St. Augustine. The first aid ship, the John Stoney, was sent directly to aid those citizens. During the American Revolution the English used St. Augustine as a exile

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<sup>189</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 13, 1836.

<sup>190</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 19, 1836.

<sup>191</sup> *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 21, 1836.



colony for Patriots. When the British managed to occupy Charleston several men were banished to the city. One of these men, Josiah Smith, recorded a most hospitable stay in the city. Smith genuinely seemed to enjoy living in the city and was able to attend balls and other social events. The Charleston exiles were also able to receive regular supplies from Charleston and the occupying British officials.<sup>192</sup> There also most likely existed a previous commercial relationship between the two Atlantic coast port towns. Also, by the newspaper accounts read by Charleston citizens, the Florida country side was abandoned. Most civilians were reportedly hold up in forts and hastily built stockades. On the east coast of Florida St. Augustine was really the only option for distributing aid.<sup>193</sup>

Hamilton continued to play on the sympathies of the crowd to elicit support. He restated how the Indians had “undisputed possession of the Territory, from Tampa to Jacksonville.” There were also overtones relating to the masculine obligation to protect dependents. Hamilton harped on the necessity to protect women and children twice during his speech. They were “surrounded by savages” and volunteers must “arrest the tomahawk and scalping knife [who] made even defenseless women and children their victims.”<sup>194</sup> As a Southern male it was necessary to afford protection for a group defined as dependents in an organic society. Even if those suffering in Florida were not biologically kin they were still dependents by proxy.

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<sup>192</sup> Diary of Josiah Smith Jr., One of the Exiles from Charleston to St. Augustine during the British Occupation 1780-1781, Smith, Josiah, 1731-1826. *Diary of Josiah Smith, Jr., 1780-ca. 1932.* (34/48) South Carolina Historical Society.

<sup>193</sup> *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 22, 1836.

<sup>194</sup> *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 22, 1836.

One item that was missing from Hamilton's rousing speech was details about the destruction of Dade's command. It was not until the day the second meeting was announced that notice of the loss near Bushnell, Florida reached Charleston. This was behind notices received in Georgia and Alabama. This seems very possible due to the fact that Charleston was receiving the majority of its news about Florida directly from St. Augustine. Communication across central Florida was largely cut as Hamilton reported the Seminoles had “undisputed possession” of most of central Florida. The first and very unclear mention of the defeat of Dade was received via *The Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*. The *Charleston Courier* printed the excerpt on January 20<sup>th</sup>, which ran in the *Mobile Register* on January 11<sup>th</sup>.<sup>195</sup>

The resolutions adopted at the meeting assured the departure of numerous volunteers from Charleston to St. Augustine. The attendants resolved that any cost incurred by the Committee “in sending succor and supplies” to Florida was to be assumed by the citizens of Charleston either through their public authorities or voluntary contributions. They quickly set up the logistics of sending forces with the Charleston city council and General Eustis.<sup>196</sup> Five of the Charleston banks pledged loans to fund the operation. Each advanced “\$5,000 for the aid of Florida, with the expectation that it will be viewed by the General Government as a loan, and be refunded.”<sup>197</sup>

The meeting participants also insisted that the city of Charleston be in contact

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<sup>195</sup> *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 20, 1836.

<sup>196</sup> *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 22, 1836.

<sup>197</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 22, 1836.

with the public authorities in Savannah. Although by this time Georgia was already sending volunteers they hoped to coordinate their efforts to create a more effective front against the Seminoles. Naturally, Charleston stated that they would focus their men and materials in St. Augustine while the Committee suggested that volunteers from Savannah proceed to Picolata<sup>198</sup> and Jacksonville.<sup>199</sup> If a defensive line was formed from Jacksonville to Picolata to St. Augustine then a safe zone could theoretically be established encompassing the north-east tip of Florida while still maintaining ocean-accessible transport in these three towns.

By the day after the meeting more than one-hundred men enrolled as volunteers. *The Courier* expected just as many to be added to the ranks that same day. An article championed the efforts of Augusta, Georgia. There, “that little city furnished one hundred and sixty volunteers . . . and her city council liberally made an appropriation for their equipment and support.” A banker and a clerk who volunteered were also guaranteed pay while they served and guaranteed their jobs upon their return. The spirited conduct of Augusta had “the proper effect, and the whole populace became zealous in the cause,” reported the paper. The *Courier* publicly proclaimed the Augusta response as admirable and hoped that the same occurrences would be emulated in Charleston.<sup>200</sup>

On Saturday the twenty-third a meeting was called at Seyle's in downtown Charleston to begin the organization of “all those who have volunteered to proceed to the

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<sup>198</sup> Picolata is on the east bank of the St. John's River, approximately 20 miles west of St. Augustine and 30 miles south of Jacksonville.

<sup>199</sup> *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 22, 1836.

<sup>200</sup> *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 23, 1836.

defense of St. Augustine.”<sup>201</sup> Two days later the *Courier* boisterously announced that the call “was responded to in a manner that became the citizens of Charleston.” The original purpose of the meeting was to begin the organization of possible volunteers. However, “after the object of the meeting was stated, lists of Volunteers, already organized, were handed in.” On Sunday the Sumter Guards and Irish Volunteers had offered their services but were turned away due to the complete complement already organized at Seyle's. Not to be discouraged, “some of the men of the companies [were] determined to proceed to the scene of action, under any circumstances.” It was their obligation to fight and these men refused to be left out.<sup>202</sup>

A volunteer company from Hamburg, South Carolina managed to make it to the meeting just in time. Although only twenty men, they were accepted with “joyous acclamation.” Among their ranks was a fourteen year old boy who “could not be restrained from joining the expedition, by the most earnest entreaties.”<sup>203</sup> What enticed his absolute zeal is not stated. A boy this young was most likely looking to war for the same opportunities as any young man. With battle and victory came prestige and honor. The willingness to fight represented the “primitive concern with courage as a social value.” By volunteering to fight the Seminoles this young man was pursuing the most effective means of “exhibiting and defending personal, family, regional, and national

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<sup>201</sup> Seyle's is reported to be a Masonic Lodge on Meeting Street in downtown Charleston in *A Portion of the People: Three-Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life* by The Mckissick Museum, ed. by Theodore and Dale Rosengarten (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 15.; *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 23, 1836.

<sup>202</sup> *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 25, 1836.

<sup>203</sup> *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 25, 1836.

honor.”<sup>204</sup>

The city of Charleston routed volunteers and militia from around the state. The increase in soldiers left a striking impression upon observers. Anna Caroline Lesesne was impressed by the martial displays of the volunteers prior to departing for Florida. After a Sunday morning at Church she took “a carriage ride by the Citadel . . . [where] everything there has a remarkable appearance, so many persons marching to go to Florida to fight against the Indians.”<sup>205</sup> The citizens of Charleston were well aware of the dilemma in Florida and the response that was mobilized in their city. In a city where militia parades were common this must have been an impressive sight to give a “remarkable appearance” to the citizenry.

For the South Carolina volunteers somewhere between 120 and 150 men were reported to be heading out. They were made up of the city militia companies: the Washington Volunteers, the German Fusiliers, and the Washington Light Infantry and the Carolina Volunteers from Hamburg. The paper proudly reported the overwhelming and prompt response by the men of the city. It stated:

A sense of feeling which cannot be repressed, impels us to say, that there is no company, that there are no men among us, who will shrink when their services are required for the defense of their fellow citizens, let the foe be whom it may.<sup>206</sup>

It was the place of honorable men to act quickly and decisively when challenged. The Charleston newspapers could proudly claim that the men of their city were not cowards.

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<sup>204</sup> Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 191.

<sup>205</sup> Lesesne, 1836, (34/38) South Carolina Historical Society.

<sup>206</sup> *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 25, 1836.

As for those men who were not rendering their services to aid their fellow citizens they were praised for their promptness and eager resolution to serve. However, this was not enough.

The same day that the *Courier's* lauding of the men of the city was printed the Irish Volunteers, who had been left out, printed their own meeting resolutions. After being notified that they could not partake in the expedition to Florida the company held an impromptu meeting at the Washington Hotel. They resolved that the whole force of the company was to stand in readiness should their services be needed. They also claimed that the reason they were not ready on Saturday as the other companies were was due to “the uncertainty [of] who would be the principal officer to command the expedition.”<sup>207</sup> For all practical purposes it was irrelevant to publish these resolutions. All of the Irish Volunteers were present at the meeting. They did not need to use the paper to communicate a message to their fellow volunteers. The Irish Volunteers used the public announcement to maintain their honor and respectability and assure the community that they were eager to fight. They made sure that the community did not assume them to be cowards because they were not going in the initial wave with the other Charleston companies. By blaming their tardiness on hierarchical concerns they still presented a company that desired to act courageously in battle. The former Public Meeting Secretary M.M. Cohen was aware of this. In his journal he stated that he greatly regretted the Irish

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<sup>207</sup> *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 25, 1836.

Volunteers not partaking in the expedition on “their account, not his.”<sup>208</sup> Cohen felt that if honor and glory was to be had in Florida then it was better with “fewer men, the greater share of honor.”<sup>209</sup>

Delayed due to bad weather, the Charleston volunteers headed for St. Augustine on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January, one of the few fair weather days during the month aboard the Dolphin and Santee.<sup>210</sup> The Charleston City Council sent provisions and munitions at the expense of the city. Although the city banks had pledged \$25,000 in immediate loans it became unnecessary. The city council appropriated \$10,000 for the aid of Florida. The amount appropriated was sufficient for all purposes and the volunteers graciously declined the bank loans.<sup>211</sup> The city newspapers proudly printed the names of the two-hundred some odd Volunteers who made up the Washington Volunteers, German Fusiliers, Hamburg Volunteers, and the Washington Light Infantry that departed for Florida.<sup>212</sup> The *Mercury* lauded the martial spirit of the city claiming that more than double the number that General Eustis was authorized to accept pledged their service.<sup>213</sup> The *Courier* described the men as a “gallant detachment.” The paper expected the men to obtain “all the usual military honors, which they so eminently deserved” and to “prove an

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<sup>208</sup> Cohen, 107.

<sup>209</sup> Cohen was quoting Henry V before the Battle of Agincourt: “If we are marked to die, we are enow To do our country loss; and if to live, The fewer men, the greater share of honor.” in Cohen, 113.

<sup>210</sup> Lesesne, 1836, (34/38) South Carolina Historical Society; *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 27, 1836.

<sup>211</sup> *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 27, 1836.

<sup>212</sup> *Charleston Courier* and *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 26, 1836.

<sup>213</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 26, 1836.

honor to the City and State to which they belong.”<sup>214</sup>

Whereas historians John Mahon and the Missalls have reported that General Eustis was the chief agent in readying the Charleston volunteers these public meetings present a different interpretation.<sup>215</sup> After receiving notice of the events in Florida, Secretary of War Lewis Cass sent General Eustis a letter on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January. Secretary Cass directed Eustis to “gather all the troops that could be spared and lead them to St. Augustine.”<sup>216</sup> It is unclear exactly what day Eustis received this notice. It is possible the letter was received after the second Public Meeting. However, even if it was not, the citizens of Charleston had already rallied on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1835 to attempt to send volunteers. In fact, even with the decline for volunteers by Eustis, after the meeting some still headed to Florida at their own accord. Even when considering the relationship between the federal army detachment and the Charleston citizens, it was the latter that took the initiative.<sup>217</sup> When the Charleston volunteers were finally able to proceed to Florida, by most accounts Eustis was not able to take “all the troops that could be spared.” At least two volunteer companies had to be turned away. Captain Magrath even offered the services of his steam boat, the *Augusta*, to transport volunteers free of charge. He also pledged to fulfill his paternalistic obligation by bring back to Charleston the

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<sup>214</sup> *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 26, 1836.

<sup>215</sup> Mahon, 138 and Missall, 104.

<sup>216</sup> Letter to General Eustis from Secretary of War Lewis Cass, January 17, 1836 in Mahon, 138.

<sup>217</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 1, 1836, Public Meeting, “*Resolved*, That the Chairman be requested in behalf of this meeting to communicate with the Commanding Officer of the U.S. on this station in relation to the measures proper to be adopted for the relief of our fellow-citizens in Florida – and to inform him of our willingness to co-operate in such measures.”



suffering women and children in St. Augustine.<sup>218</sup> The citizens of Charleston were eager to proceed to Florida to protect their brethren. The populace was the motivating element that produced support, not simply a call for aid from Washington.

On January 22 J. Hamilton, the Chairman of the Charleston Committee, wrote an open letter to Savannah public officials pursuant with the corresponding resolution of their meeting the night before.<sup>219</sup> The letter, along with the response by city officials, was published in the *Savannah Republican* on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Hamilton described the devastated state of the suffering inhabitants of Florida. Hamilton hoped that the quick action taken by Savannah and Charleston could help “protect the women and children from the tomahawk and scalping knife.”<sup>220</sup>

The Savannah citizens had already undertaken a unilateral expedition to relieve the “citizens of Florida, against the murders and massacres committed by the Indians.” Almost a month earlier there was a meeting held in which some of the “most respectable citizens” of the city volunteered. There were also funds raised to transport and equip the volunteers at no expense. It is not said how many men volunteered for this inaugural expedition but three officers were elected. The men left for Florida on December 29,

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<sup>218</sup> *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 25, 1836; this account was also reprinted in the *Savannah Republican*: Savannah, Georgia – January 26, 1836 under the heading “PATRIOTIC.”

<sup>219</sup> *Charleston Courier*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 22, 1836, “*Resolved*, That the Committee open an immediate correspondence with the public authorities of Savannah, suggesting to them the expediency of their succoring with men, munitions and provisions, the posts of Picolata and Jacksonville, on the St. Johns, whilst the citizens of Charleston should keep up a constant communication with St. Augustine, and dedicate our resources to the safety, provisioning and defense of that post, until the General Government should afford the requisite assistance.”

<sup>220</sup> *Savannah Republican*: Savannah, Georgia – January 25, 1836.

1835.<sup>221</sup> Although volunteer efforts were well under way by the time Hamilton's request reached Savannah, the cooperative effort was well received. A meeting was held among the Savannah Public Committee with Mayor Gordon in attendance. The group unanimously resolved that the Savannah volunteers were to be sent down the St. Johns as suggested by the Charleston Public Committee.<sup>222</sup> Two days before the Charleston letter was printed the Savannah citizens had called their own Public Meeting to address the growing concern regarding their southern neighbor.

The Savannah citizens most likely held their meeting for many of the same reasons why the Charlestonians had. News in Savannah showed an increasingly bleak picture in Florida. On the 19<sup>th</sup> the city found out about the ill fate of Commander Dade. The printed report was the same grotesque excerpt received in Charleston from the *Mobile Chronicle*. Dade's troops were described as being butchered by anywhere from 800 to 1000 hostile savages.<sup>223</sup> By the time this notice was printed Secretary of War Cass had already contacted William Schley, the Governor of Georgia. Secretary Cass notified the Governor that Duncan Clinch was authorized to call out the Georgia militia if needed to subdue the Indian threat in Florida. However, the notice reassured Governor Schley that “there was just reason to believe that the regular and militia forces employed there were sufficient to subdue the Indians.”<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> *North Carolina Standard*: Raleigh, North Carolina – January 7, 1835.

<sup>222</sup> *Savannah Republican*: Savannah, Georgia – January 25, 1836.

<sup>223</sup> *Savannah Republican*: Savannah, Georgia – January 19, 1836.

<sup>224</sup> Letter from Secretary of War Lewis Cass to Georgia Governor William Schley, January 8, 1836 printed in the *Savannah Republican*: Savannah, Georgia – January 21, 1836.

The leading men of the city organized the public meeting. Coincidentally, another Cohen was appointed as secretary by the name of Octavas. Although having the same last name it was through their mothers that they were most closely related.<sup>225</sup> Octavus's mother Belle Moses was the sister of Myer M. Cohen's mother Eleanor Moses. They were first cousins through their mothers, however, and not immediately related by their family name.<sup>226</sup> The Savannah citizens adopted similar measures to Charleston. They desired to ready a volunteer force, procure provisions, and secure funding for their expedition. One thing unique to Savannah, though, was that the Committee feared reprisal from the Seminoles. Due to their closer proximity the meeting participants felt as though they needed to be vigilant against Indian retaliation.<sup>227</sup> The *Republican* had previously printed accounts of depredations by Creek Indians.<sup>228</sup> To secure the home front the Savannah Committee resolved that any man not volunteering to go to Florida, between 15 and 50, form a "city guard, divided into four companies." When the Florida volunteers departed the city guard was expected "for immediate duty, for the protection

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<sup>225</sup> Although not directly related through their family name they were presumably descendants from the Jewish Cohen family that immigrated from Europe prior to the Revolution. By most accounts these men retained their Judaism while becoming "Southern." In Charleston, Jews were numerous and prospered in a friendly environment. In Savannah, Jews were able to integrate into Southern culture most importantly by their adoption of the honor ethic and were not strangers to dueling in the city. See Charles Reznikoff, *The Jews of Charleston, A History of an American Jewish Community*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1950) and Mark I. Greenberg, "Becoming Southern: The Jews of Savannah, Georgia, 1830-70," *American Jewish History*, 86:1 (March 1998): 55-75.

<sup>226</sup> Malcolm Henry Stern, *First American Jewish Families: 600 Genealogies, 1654-1988*, p 35, 39, and 205; made available by The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, [<http://www.americanjewisharchives.org/aja/FAJF/intro.html>].

<sup>227</sup> *Savannah Republican*: Savannah, Georgia – January 25, 1836.

<sup>228</sup> *Savannah Republican*: Savannah, Georgia – January 02, 1836; The *Mobile Register* also printed concerns about the Creek Indians taking to the war path on the 19th, 26th, and 27th of January 1836.

of the city.”<sup>229</sup> Savannah's proximity to the Seminoles required the city to stay on guard. Although Seminole and Creek raids typically stayed to western Georgia and the Florida panhandle during the early parts of the war the citizens of Savannah showed concern.<sup>230</sup> The random nature of Indian attacks took their toll on the Georgians and they considered themselves as much in need of protection as the Floridians. However, an equal martial spirit was evident in another port town out of reach of the marauding Seminoles.

Due to the western location of Mobile, Alabama the city learned of Dade's defeat before or just about the same time as the assassination of Indian Agent Wiley Thompson at Fort King. The account of Dade's defeat was most vivid in the Mobile newspapers and was the source of information throughout rest of the South.<sup>231</sup> The papers read on January 11, 1836 “INDIAN MASSACRE, Major Dade was shot down immediately,” and “the Indians returned to complete the slaughter . . . and butchered the wounded.”<sup>232</sup> The destruction of Dade's command was immediately memorialized. They were said to have perished “in the highest degree of gallantry.”<sup>233</sup> The commander of Fort Brooke described one man as having the

highest and noblest impulses. He stepped forth to save a husband's and a parent's feelings, nay a wife's life, he himself standing in all those dear

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<sup>229</sup> *Savannah Republican*: Savannah, Georgia – January 25, 1836.

<sup>230</sup> *Savannah Republican*: Savannah, Georgia – January 26, 1836 and in the *Wilmington Advertiser*: Wilmington, North Carolina – January 15, 1835. The *Wilmington Advertiser* in fact states that “citizens of that section are embodying, and wait but arms, equipments and ammunition to put a stop to the Indian depredations.” To say the least, the Georgians in that section were eager to engage the Creeks.

<sup>231</sup> When printing accounts of Dade's Massacre Charleston, Savannah, and several North Carolina newspaper all used excerpts from Mobile, Alabama newspaper.

<sup>232</sup> *Mobile Daily Commercial Register and Patriot*: Mobile, Alabama – January 11, 1836; hereafter referred to as *Mobile Register*.

<sup>233</sup> *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – January 11, 1836

relations . . . Here were the noblest sacrifices combined; first for his country, and then for humanity and friendship.<sup>234</sup>

The 98 bodies were buried on the battle ground when a body of soldiers, led by Captain Belton, finally came for their remains in mid-February 1836. The remnants were hardly recognizable. The enlisted men were placed in two mass graves and the eight officers were placed in a third. The six-pound cannon that was spiked to prevent its use against the defending soldiers “became their monument, till their country or comrades shall proudly place their fame in full relief in the fundamental paths of men.”<sup>235</sup>

The men slaughtered by the Seminoles had a special relationship to Mobile. Both Captain George Washington Gardiner's Company C, Second Regiment Artillery and Captain Francis S. Belton's Company B, Second Artillery had come from gulf coast stations before arriving at Fort Brooke in Tampa. Gardiner's command was out of Fort Pickens near Pensacola, Florida while Belton's was previously stationed in Mobile at Fort Morgan.<sup>236</sup> Perhaps this helps to explain part of the reason for Mobile's fervent, martial response.

The day after notice of Dade's defeat citizens of Mobile held a meeting to “prepare resolutions suited to the exciting emergency” and issued a notice of a meeting that evening.<sup>237</sup> In describing the resulting community meeting the *Mobile Register* printed one of the most passionate responses to the war. A general description of the

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<sup>234</sup> Belton to Jones, March 25, 1836, Orderly Book, Company B, records of U.S. Regular Army Mobile Units, National Archives and Records Service quoted in Laumer, 8.

<sup>235</sup> Laumer, 9.

<sup>236</sup> Laumer, 12-13.

<sup>237</sup> *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – January 12, 1836.

meeting stated that:

measures are in progress to provide arms, ammunition, equipments and provisions, so that the volunteers may be enabled to march at the moment their services may be required. The deep regret for the massacre of so many of our brave citizen soldiers, has awakened a spirit of retributive vengeance against their remorseless destroyers in the bosom of every man in this community, and all are ready and anxious to aid in the extermination of a foe, whom nothing short of extermination can subdue.<sup>238</sup>

Not only were the citizens of Mobile eager to go to war in response to the Seminole attack but they proposed a war of extermination. They would not be satisfied not until every Seminole on the peninsula was destroyed.

In Mobile the committee measures were “adopted without a dissenting voice.” They acknowledged similar sympathies as had occurred in Charleston and Savannah. The first resolution was that the citizens of Mobile “regard with great anxiety the perilous condition of our brethren of Florida, and deeply deplore the loss of the gallant officers, and brave soldiers massacred on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December.”<sup>239</sup>

The involvement of volunteers followed a similar patten as previously seen. The Mobile Committee appointed twenty men to organize the volunteers into companies. These companies were then expected to wait in readiness until coordination with the federal army could be arranged. They also expected the city, state, and federal officials to take care of the expenses. In the same eager spirit as the other Public Meetings held, the

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<sup>238</sup> *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – January 13, 1836.

<sup>239</sup> *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – January 13, 1836.

Mobile citizens “instantly responded” to the call.<sup>240</sup>

Finally on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January the call for volunteers was issued in the *Mobile Register*. The volunteers were called to report immediately with the subheading “For the protection of the defenseless Women and Children of Florida.” This notice ran two days in a row to ensure that all the pledged volunteers were aware of the call. The Indians were again characterized as savages, indiscriminately wielding their tomahawk to kill any white that crossed their path. Women and children were not spared.<sup>241</sup>

By the middle of February the federal army was ready to integrate the Mobile volunteers. Colonel Lindsay of the United States Army was sent with authority from General Scott to make a requisition from the Governor of Alabama for a full regiment from the state.<sup>242</sup> On February 11<sup>th</sup> the executive department in Tuscaloosa issued notice that the War Department “made a requisition . . . of the militia of the state of Alabama.” The War Department requested one regiment of infantry or infantry and riflemen not to exceed five companies.<sup>243</sup> Colonel Lindsay arrived in Mobile the next day and was given the power to draft men if necessary. The *Register* saw this as preposterous. It was “undoubtedly creditable to the public spirit and patriotism, [that] volunteers . . . come forward.”<sup>244</sup> The *Flag of the Union* in Tuscaloosa hoped that the Alabama citizens would

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<sup>240</sup> *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – January 13, 1836.

<sup>241</sup> *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – January 27 and 28, 1836.

<sup>242</sup> *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – February 2, 1836.

<sup>243</sup> Open Letter from Executive Department, Governor of Alabama Clement C. Clay, February 11, 1836 reprinted in *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – February 20, 1836.

<sup>244</sup> *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – February 2, 1836.

“immediately volunteer . . . and thereby honor themselves and the State.”<sup>245</sup> Colonel Lindsay did not have to wait long.

Shortly, Mobile was presenting “quite a military appearance.” Three companies of volunteers had arrived from Tuscaloosa and more were expected soon. Increasing the “military appearance” of the city were federal troops from New Orleans. They had recently been reassigned from their station to head to Tampa Bay and were stopping over in Mobile. Colonel Lindsay was quickly overwhelmed with the number of volunteers who wished to head to Florida. The *Register* again chided the thought of a draft. Volunteers had been mustered “to a much larger number than the quota named. A draft would be required to decide, not who should go, but who must stay.” The martial response of the citizens of Alabama was something the state found pride in. The volunteers were “raised at a few days notice, from a few counties in the State, who first heard of the call.” The effort was considered an “honorable proof of the promptness and gallantry of the Alabama character.”<sup>246</sup>

Adding to the troops in Mobile were 700 volunteers from New Orleans, in addition to the federal troops en route to Florida. However, an additional 300 also desired to render their services to protect their brethren in Florida. The city council of New Orleans appropriated five thousand dollars to equip the volunteers. Additionally, the citizens of the city subscribed a thousand dollars more for their trip. Still, this only

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<sup>245</sup> Undated excerpt from *The Flag of the Union: Tuscaloosa, Alabama in the Mobile Register: Mobile, Alabama* – February 22, 1836.

<sup>246</sup> *Mobile Register: Mobile, Alabama* – February 24, 1836.



allowed for the supply and transport of half of the extra volunteers. These men mustered in Louisiana and traveled by steamboat to Mobile. Upon arrival, Colonel Lindsay had to turn away the extra one-hundred and fifty men who traveled to Mobile to partake in the expedition. Since the request for troops had already been met in the city it was “with much regret that [Lindsay] was compelled to decline the service of the corps, which, by zeal it had already manifested, has given a pledge for its gallantry and good conduct.”<sup>247</sup>

Alabamians gave glowing praise to the men who were lucky enough to render their services as volunteers. Their promptness to service elicited a prideful response. These men were not only eager to fight but to behave otherwise was seen as dishonorable. The Alabama paper may have summed it up the best: “Their promptness and gallantry, do their patriotism and public spirit infinite honor, and throw a luster upon the character of the State.”<sup>248</sup> The overwhelming response created a “struggle for the honor of volunteering” and the Mobile paper made sure to give credit to those who were first to serve. The paper listed the number of men and the names of officers so that the community could recognize their service. There were 230 men from Tuscaloosa County, two companies from Montgomery County, and one company from Pickens, Fayette, and Wilcox Counties. There were estimates of over 600 men with more on the way.<sup>249</sup> The insulting possibility of needing a draft to organize troops increasingly became a farce.

The women of Mobile also took part in the martial festivities. On March 1<sup>st</sup> the

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<sup>247</sup> *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – February 26, 1836.

<sup>248</sup> *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – February 27, 1836.

<sup>249</sup> *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – February 27, 1836.

first Alabama volunteers departed for Tampa. Mrs. B.L. Barnes took it upon herself to present those men “the very appropriate gift of a beautiful banner.” The evening prior to their departure there was a short ceremony in front of her residence on St. Joseph street. The volunteer company formed in front of her home and in the true fashion of a Southern Lady, a male acquaintance addressed the soldiers on the behalf of Mrs. Barnes. In response, the commanding officer gave a short and modest address of thanks.<sup>250</sup>

The same evening a similar event was taking place in front of the court house. The Montgomery Blues were honored by Messrs. H. Goldthwaite and J.F. Ross. The Blues were presented with a “handsome standard” and Goldthwaite gave an “animated oratory” sending the volunteers to “punish the murderous savages.”<sup>251</sup> A company of volunteers from Dallas were also received in favor by the women of Mobile.<sup>252</sup> They received the compliments of a flag from an unnamed source and also a banner from the Ladies of Cahawba. Although the men were already gallant in their foray to protect the Florida settlers the banner was sure to “make them invincible.”<sup>253</sup>

The remainder of the Alabama volunteer regiment was presumably sent off with as much pride and thanks as these men. The *Mobile Register* described them as “fine a set of men as were ever gathered together for such an occasion, - all vigorous, healthy, and in the prime of life, generally between twenty and 35 years of age.” There were no misguided assumptions that they were a ready and tried fighting force. However, “with a

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<sup>250</sup> *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – March 1, 1836.

<sup>251</sup> *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – March 1, 1836.

<sup>252</sup> Dallas is a county in north-west Alabama.

<sup>253</sup> *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – March 10, 1836.

little discipline and drilling” the men were expected to “make a soldierly appearance, creditable to the character of the State.” They were sure to do “themselves and their country honor and service, by their gallantry in the field.”<sup>254</sup> The men's shortcomings as a regular fighting force was not a major concern. Once in the field discipline did prove to be a problem. The amateur volunteers were unhappy about the lack of liquor and the necessity of having to carry their own packs through the Florida wilderness. The Alabama volunteers became angry with Colonel Lindsay and reportedly came close to mutiny regarding an issue over the Seminole scouts. However, in spite of the dissension John K. Mahon states that they were able to function as a military unit. After all, it was the battle and glory that the volunteers came for, not the mundane details of a soldier's life.<sup>255</sup>

Back home the papers and the community focused on their martial readiness and Alabama's ability to produce an excessive number of volunteers. The men who went to meet the enemy at the first call followed the honor ethic of the Old South. The citizens saw the men who served as fulfilling their obligation to the code of honor and to their masculinity. Newspaper editors and orators portrayed the volunteers as protectors and defenders of their suffering brethren in Florida. It was necessary for them to respond, especially when women and children were portrayed as endangered by the savage tomahawk.

In the experience of the New Orleans volunteers who were not accepted by

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<sup>254</sup> *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – March 2, 1836.

<sup>255</sup> Mahon, 153-54.

Colonel Lindsay we can see how these expectations were fulfilled. As previously stated New Orleans had already meet its limit and 150 men in excess were equipped and transported at the cost of the New Orleans community. When the Alabama limit had already been met the extra New Orleans volunteers faced returning to their homes without fulfilling their necessary obligations. With news of this tragedy the Mobile community gave them the means to fulfill their “gallant purpose.” The Mobile Guards supplied the men with arms while a “few gentlemen” of the city raised money and supplies so that “these men should have some opportunity to share in the enterprise which they had taken so much pains to join.” 107 volunteers were then sent on their way to Tampa to be received into the service by order of the General in command. The Mobile citizens felt that these men “were anxious . . . in their patriotic determination [and] should not be defeated in their wishes for the want of pecuniary means.”<sup>256</sup> By all accounts they made it to serve in Florida.

Newspapers in the Deep South reported other states sending volunteers too. Volunteers from Boston were reported arriving in Savannah en route to Florida at the beginning of March estimated at ninety in number.<sup>257</sup> The *North Carolina Standard* also reported 100 regulars sent from New York were expected about the same time in Savannah. However, it is not certain if this is not the same people being reported twice.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> *Mobile Register*: Mobile, Alabama – March 3, 1836.

<sup>257</sup> *Georgia Messenger*: Macon, Georgia – March 3, 1836.

<sup>258</sup> *North Carolina Standard*: Raleigh, North Carolina – March 3, 1836; this account states that the troops are expected from New York, however, does not explicitly say if they are from New York. The Boston troops reported in the *Georgia Messenger* also traveled via New York to Savannah. Both accounts are

The number of volunteers from Richmond, Virginia were also a relatively large. The Richmond Volunteer Rifle Company sent 117 men to fight the Seminoles.<sup>259</sup> Sixty-six Richmond Blues and almost one-hundred Hussars arrived on January 21<sup>st</sup> from Virginia to volunteer.<sup>260</sup> Even with these contributions the volunteers responding to the Second Seminole War were overwhelmingly from the Deep South. As shown, volunteers were pouring in to Florida from “all parts of Georgia, South Carolina, and Alabama.”<sup>261</sup>

Through this examination of the Deep South and the start of the Second Seminole War several conclusions can be made. At the forefront is that white Southerners were not only eager to go to war but were able to do so quickly. Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and Louisiana all exceeded their requested volunteers to go to Florida. In Alabama, South Carolina, and Georgia a draft was authorized by the federal government if needed; however, the overwhelming response in these states made that decision void. Men were actually turned away in some cases and the *Mobile Register* stated that a draft was needed to determine who would have to stay. Southerners regarded the notion that these states could not deploy an effective fighting force through volunteers as an insult.

Another aspect of the response in the Deep South was how quickly the quotas for men was met. In just a few days men in these states traveled near and far to get to the port towns in their states to volunteer. There are two key reasons why this was possible. First, most communities took it upon themselves to consider a course of action when news of

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excepts taken from Savannah news but is not dated in the *Georgia Messenger*.

<sup>259</sup> *Georgia Messenger*: Macon, Georgia – February 18, 1836.

<sup>260</sup> *Savannah Republican*: Savannah, Georgia – January 22, 1836.

<sup>261</sup> *Western Carolinian*: Salisbury, North Carolina – February 13, 1936.

the Florida War reached them. If the death of Indian Agent Wiley Thompson did not spark enough concern, news of Dade's massacre surely did. These initial public meetings, independent of federal and in some cases state government participation, prepared the communities for eventual participation in the war. The meetings searched for financial assistance and signed up volunteers. The chairmen, or other elected officials, quickly got in contact with the federal army officer in their local communities. This is where communities found the greatest assistance - through the federal army's supply of munitions and transport to Florida. When the federal army agent was ready to sign up volunteers the public meetings had already prepared a regiment.

A second major component was the involvement of independent militias. Most men did not sign up as single volunteers. As in Myer Cohen's case, he was a member of the Washington Volunteers. In this situation, his involvement as secretary at the first Public Meeting in Charleston provoked the interest of almost seventy other militia members to volunteer. In preparing to depart for Florida the Charleston militias held a mass meeting, presumably to arrange for volunteers. The night of the second Charleston Public Meeting that issued the call for volunteers the Ancient Artillery, Charleston Riflemen, Cadet Riflemen, Irish Volunteers, Sumter Guards, Washington Volunteers, and the 16<sup>th</sup> Regiment all held meetings of “immediate” and “special importance.”<sup>262</sup> The Florida volunteers were coming from a pool of men already associated with martial endeavors. They were familiar with drill, weapons, and the hierarchy of the military.

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<sup>262</sup> *Charleston Mercury*: Charleston, South Carolina – January 21, 1836.

These men were preparing for war and now that one started nearby they had a chance to display their talents.

Another consideration of this examination is the reaction of and towards those who were not initially able to participate as volunteers. In South Carolina and Alabama two unique examples appear that show the importance of fulfilling the masculine obligation to the honor ethic. First in South Carolina the Irish Guards were not permitted to travel with the volunteers enlisted with the federal army. These men were discouraged and made additional attempts to ensure that they could participate; however, they did not succeed. When the first wave of volunteers left for St. Augustine these men were left behind. It was necessary for these men to show the community that they were not cowards. They immediately held a meeting to discuss their dilemma. Then they published the outcome of that meeting. They reassured the community that they would stand in martial readiness and were prepared if called upon. In this way they could maintain their honor in spite of the fact that they were not en route to do battle with the Seminoles.

The example of the extra New Orleans volunteers in Mobile showed the communities' expectations of men's roles in a society following the honor ethic. These volunteers were excluded for the same reasons as the Irish company in South Carolina. However, in both Mobile and New Orleans the community rallied financial and material support so ensure that these men were able to partake in the war. This not only shows that the New Orleans community was insistent that these men fight but that the citizens of Mobile felt the same way, even though these men were not native sons.

Still, further conclusions can be drawn from these examples. The volunteers were publicly appealed to on notions of protecting their suffering brethren. However, this was not the only motive for volunteering. By the accounts of General Eustis in Charleston and Colonel Lindsay in Mobile they had enough troops to subdue the Seminoles and take back the peninsula. At the time, federal authorities did not deem these men necessary to rescue the suffering inhabitants of Florida. Therefore, it was not simply the desire to offer protection to the Floridians that motivated their desire to serve in battle. Their eager response best shows the presence of a martial tradition in the Deep South and an acceptance of the honor ethic.



## CONCLUSIONS

John Hope Franklin's The Militant South stated that the Old South's martial tradition was greatly influenced by a Native American presence throughout the region. However, Franklin spent only a few pages examining in detail what this really meant. Historians who stand in opposition to the thesis put forth by Franklin did not even consider Indian wars during the first half of the nineteenth century. Marcus Cunliffe and Robert E. May specifically looked at the Mexican-American War and the War of 1812. Even historians of the United States military rarely give more than a cursory glance at Indian wars.<sup>263</sup> In many ways the Southern Indian wars were unique during these fifty years of American history. They were more frequent and more costly across the South when compared to these two wars involving a foreign power. For the South the enemy was not across some vast ocean or separated by a rough frontier. The Yamasee, the Cherokee, the Creek, and the Seminoles were all potential enemies waiting in the backyard of Southerners.

It is important to note, if this has not already been made clear, that Southerners

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<sup>263</sup> Many works that even focus on small military conflicts and the federal army still ignore Indian wars, as examples see Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft, *America's First Battles: 1776-1965*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986) and Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, (New York: Basic Books, 2002). Historians who at least marginally consider the effects of Indian wars on the federal army are Robert M. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue: 1848-1865*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1967), Edward M. Coffman, *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), and Francis Paul Prucha, *The Sword of the Republic: The United States Army on the Frontier: 1783-1846*, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1969). Still the historians who do consider Indian wars and the federal army focus primarily on the western frontier, not the southeastern tribes.

and Native Americans were not in an eternal battle of extermination. Many settlers in Florida catered to the Seminoles by setting up trading posts and conducting business with them. Even when there was a violent confrontation between white and Indian it was often a representative from the Indian tribe that brought the offending renegade to justice.

Perhaps Wilbur J. Cash's assessment of the Southerner as an emotionally motivated being that ascribed to a "savage ideal" was not completely misguided. What is most important to consider is how the actual events that did occur and the perceived potential of more violence affected the martial tradition in the Deep South. As Cash stated, even "if actual danger was small, it was nevertheless the most natural thing in the world for the South to see it as very great, to believe in it, fully and in all honesty, as a menace requiring the most desperate measures if it was to be held off."<sup>264</sup> White settlers throughout Florida and the neighboring states knew that if a band of Indians went on the war path they were most likely on their own. There was no way the federal army could protect all of the isolated and rural towns across Florida. As seen at the start of the Second Seminole War, civilians in Florida and the nearby states were able to act more quickly than the federal army. The potential threat necessitated a constant state of martial readiness. Communities had to have the men and supplies who were willing to defend their homes when confronted with an enemy. At the start of the war Southern newspapers lauded these men who acted quickly. To stand up in the face of danger without hesitation

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<sup>264</sup> Wilbur J. Cash, *The Mind of the South*, (New York: Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, 1991), 115.

was a supreme example of honor. It was a display before the community of willingness and eagerness to fight.

As Rembert Patrick states there was a “common ground in a mutual fear of the Indian” in eastern and western Tennessee.<sup>265</sup> It is hoped that this work has shown that Patrick's assessment of Tennessee can now be applied to the Deep South. At the start of the Second Seminole War there was a sense of duty and unity from other Southern states towards Florida. Across the region men were forced to stay behind due to the excessive number of volunteers trying to defend their brethren in Florida. For whatever reason men in Louisiana, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina saw it as their duty to send money, munitions, and men over land and sea to aid the suffering inhabitants. Myer M. Cohen of the Charleston Public Meeting felt a sense of Southern unity when he responded to the start of the Second Seminole War. He felt that the “gallant Volunteers” who responded to the Indian violence were “emanating from one family, all sons of the South.”<sup>266</sup> The volunteers from South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Louisiana were all part of this family of Southerners.

Each of these states had previously experienced what can only be trivialized as an Indian problem. The Indian violence that took place in these states left a mark on their societal perceptions. The Deep South had a common enemy in which the region could find unity fighting against. In many ways the racial attitudes of the region caused

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<sup>265</sup> Patrick, *Florida Fiasco*, 225.

<sup>266</sup> Cohen, 108.

Southerners not to see a Seminole tribe but yet another Indian problem. Therefore, although states such as Tennessee and South Carolina were in no real danger of a Seminole attacks they still acted swiftly. There was a sense of kinship and brotherhood that prompted these nearby states to act with such haste.

There is something absent from this work that almost seems obligatory to any examination of the antebellum South. Slavery and African-Americans have almost entirely been omitted from this examination. The simple answer to why this approach was taken is because this is what the sources examined lent itself to. Historians such as Milton Meltzer, see little separation between slavery and the violence that took place against the Seminoles in territorial Florida.<sup>267</sup> There is no doubt that some events were motivated by racial prejudice against Blacks. One example would be the naval bombardment of the Negro Fort along the Apalachicola River in 1816. However, in this examination of Florida and the Deep South there was little concern about free Blacks or slaves in the region upon response to Seminole hostilities. Public meetings that took place in Mobile, Apalachicola, Savannah, Macon, and Charleston were not concerned with slavery and the status of free blacks among the Seminole tribe. Racially charged language was specifically directed towards Native Americans. First and foremost, Southerners were motivated to protect and defend the men, women, and children in Florida were threatened by Indian depredations.

The only specific mention of slaves came from a minority of the petitions

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<sup>267</sup> Milton Meltzer, *Hunted Like a Wolf: The Story of the Seminole War*, (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 1972).

examined for federal protection by the Florida inhabitants. However, again, slavery was not the primary concern when these inhabitants were asking for protection. The necessity for federal protection was due to Seminole violence and was always the first and primary concern of these petitioners. As stated, these petitions were often sparked due to a recent, violent encounter with an Indian. If mentioned, slavery was referenced by petitioners who had witnessed Seminoles destroy their plantations and steal their slaves. This was often done in the same lines referring to the need for federal protection to ensure the safety of other property such as homes, crops, and livestock. In many ways, slaves were simply another form of property for which the inhabitants of Florida asked for federal protection.

As for the petitions themselves they offer a previously unconsidered aspect of the Militant South thesis. These petitions refute the assumption that the American populace as a whole was suspicious of a standing army. Given the proper circumstances the concrete benefits far outweighed the ideological disquiet associated with a federally funded peacetime army. For the settlers afflicted by Indian hostilities their community was hardly considered at peace. The alarm shown by the activities of the Seminole tribe through the 1820s and 30s desensitized the settlers' concern over inviting a standing army into their community. For Florida, at least, the federal army was a way to ensure stability and safety in an otherwise hostile region.

In assessing the conclusions of this work and comparing them to that of Don R. Higginbotham's "The Martial Spirit in the Antebellum South: Some Further Speculations in a National Context" it is apparent that the antebellum South closely resembles colonial

New England in regards to Indian warfare. Higginbotham's descriptions of 18<sup>th</sup> century Indian wars in New England were still being played out in the South during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. New England's closest Indian concerns were pushed west past the Old North-West Territory while the Deep South was still threatened by strong, coordinated Native American presence. The last remnants of a Native American threat to New England were annihilated by William Henry Harrison at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811 which took place in western Indiana.<sup>268</sup> By this time any substantial Indian presence was pushed past the Ohio River Valley and the Shawnee that Harrison defeated posed more of a threat to Kentucky and Tennessee.

The regional positions taken by New England and the South towards Indian Removal should also be taken into consideration. The regions held divergent views on what to do with the tribes in the southeast. As Theda Perdue notes, Northerners no longer had to deal with the problems that arose from living with an Indian neighbor.

It is the hope of this labor that a more thorough examination of the effect of a prolonged Native American presence on Southern culture has been achieved. Interpreters of the Militant South thesis will no longer simply dismiss this factor as an unsubstantiated, categorical assessment. In Florida one can see that there were significant concerns over the Seminole threat. This elicited approval of the federal army and requests for the placement of federal army detachments in or nearby Florida communities. At the

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<sup>268</sup> Winthrop D. Jordan and Leon F. Litwack, *The United States, Conquering a Continent Volume 1*, (United States of America: North West Publishing, 2002), 180-182.

start of the Second Seminole War every white inhabitant in the territory was a potential casualty. The state militia was the first to respond and men across the state initiated measures for the protection of their families and towns. In the neighboring states men responded to the call to arms. They were determined not to be labeled cowards and showed a martial readiness on par with that displayed at the start of the Civil War. The fears surrounding the Seminole were in part responsible for the development of a martial tradition in the Old South.

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