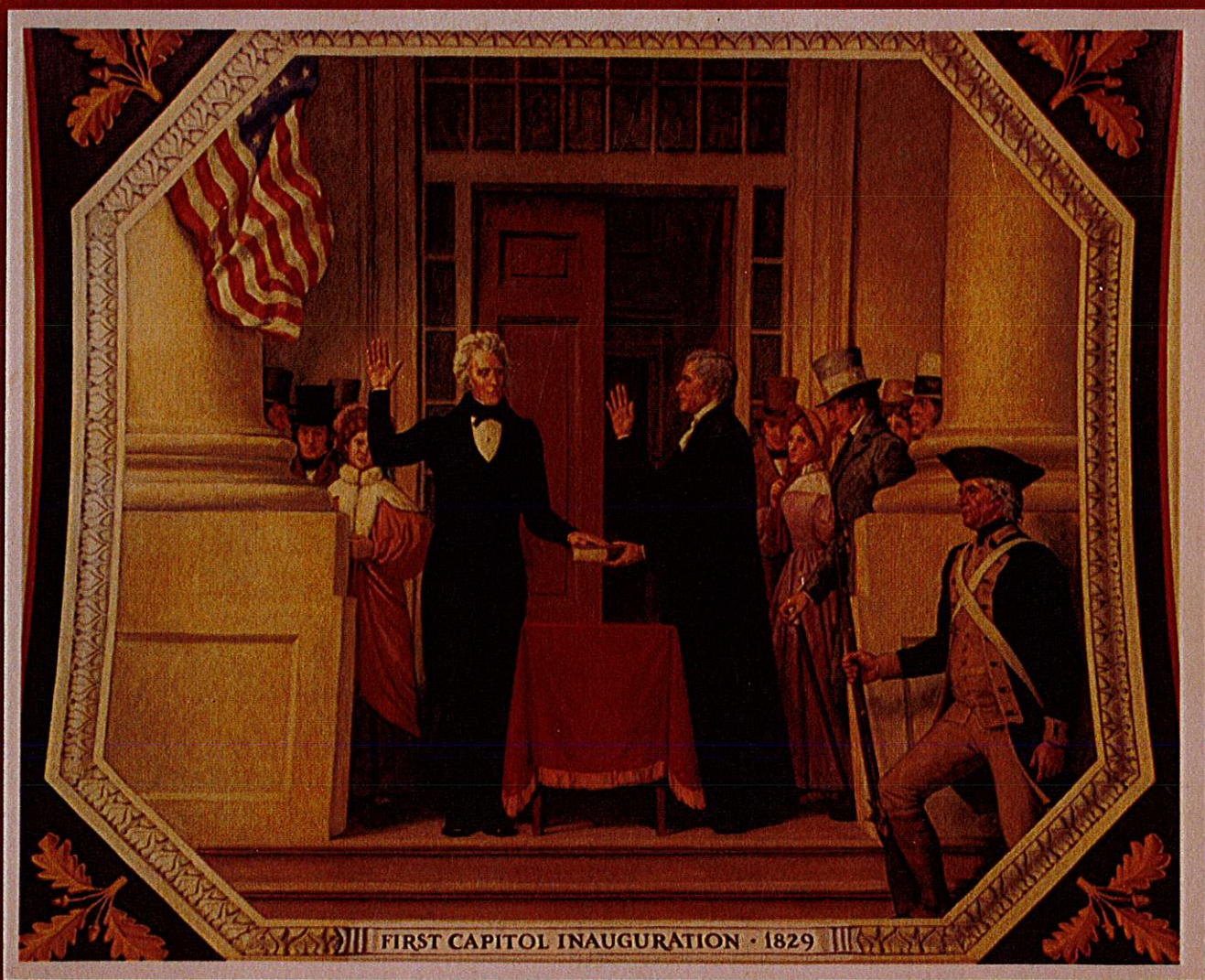


Tennessee Historical
QUARTERLY



FALL 2017

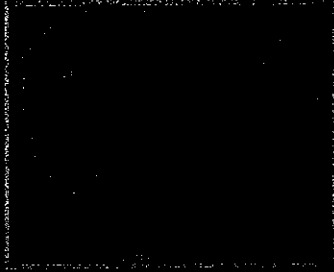
Tennessee Historical QUARTERLY

VOLUME LXXVI FALL 2017 NUMBER 3

A publication of the Tennessee Historical Society in cooperation with the Tennessee Historical Commission.

FRONT COVER

Chief Justice John Marshall administers the oath of office to new President Andrew Jackson on March 4, 1829. (Painting on east portico, U.S. Capitol, Library of Congress)



BACK COVER

By the 1850s, Jacksonian Democrats opposed the new Republican Party, which ran on the platform of "Free Labor, Free Speech, and Free Territory" in the 1856 presidential election. (Library of Congress)



- | | |
|-----|--|
| 212 | Andrew Jackson at 250
BY RICHARD BLACKETT |
| 214 | Andrew Jackson: A Populist for Our Age?
BY JOSHUA A. LYNN |
| 218 | Andrew Jackson's Populism
BY HARRY L. WATSON |
| 240 | The "Great Depression," the People's Bank, and Jacksonian Fiscal Populism in North Carolina, 1819–1833
BY ROBERT RICHARD |
| 258 | Ambivalence in the Settler Colonial Present: The Legacies of Jacksonian Expansion
BY LAUREL CLARK SHIRE AND JOE KNETSCH |
| 276 | From the Money Power to the Antislavery Power: Jacksonian Democracy and White Supremacy after Jackson
BY JOSHUA A. LYNN |
| 292 | Tennessee History Day Report |
| 295 | Contributors |
| 296 | Guidelines |

The *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* (ISSN 0400–3261) is published quarterly for \$35 per year by the Tennessee Historical Society, 305 6th Ave. North, War Memorial Building, Nashville, TN 37243–0084. Periodicals postage paid at Nashville, TN.

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or membership should be addressed to Membership Director, Tennessee Historical Society, 305 6th Ave. North, Nashville, TN 37243–0084. Phone: 615–741–8934. This number may be obtained at \$10.00 per copy, plus tax and postage, if applicable.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Tennessee Historical Society, 305 6th Ave. North, Nashville, TN 37243–0084.

Correspondence concerning contributions and manuscripts for the quarterly should be addressed to Kristofer Ray, Editor, P.O. Box 89, Post Mills, VT 05058 Kristofer.Ray@dartmouth.edu.

The Tennessee Historical Commission and the Tennessee Historical Society disclaim responsibility for statements, whether fact or of opinion, made by contributors.

*AMBIVALENCE IN THE SETTLER
COLONIAL PRESENT:
The Legacies of Jacksonian Expansion*

BY LAUREL CLARK SHIRE AND JOE KNETSCH

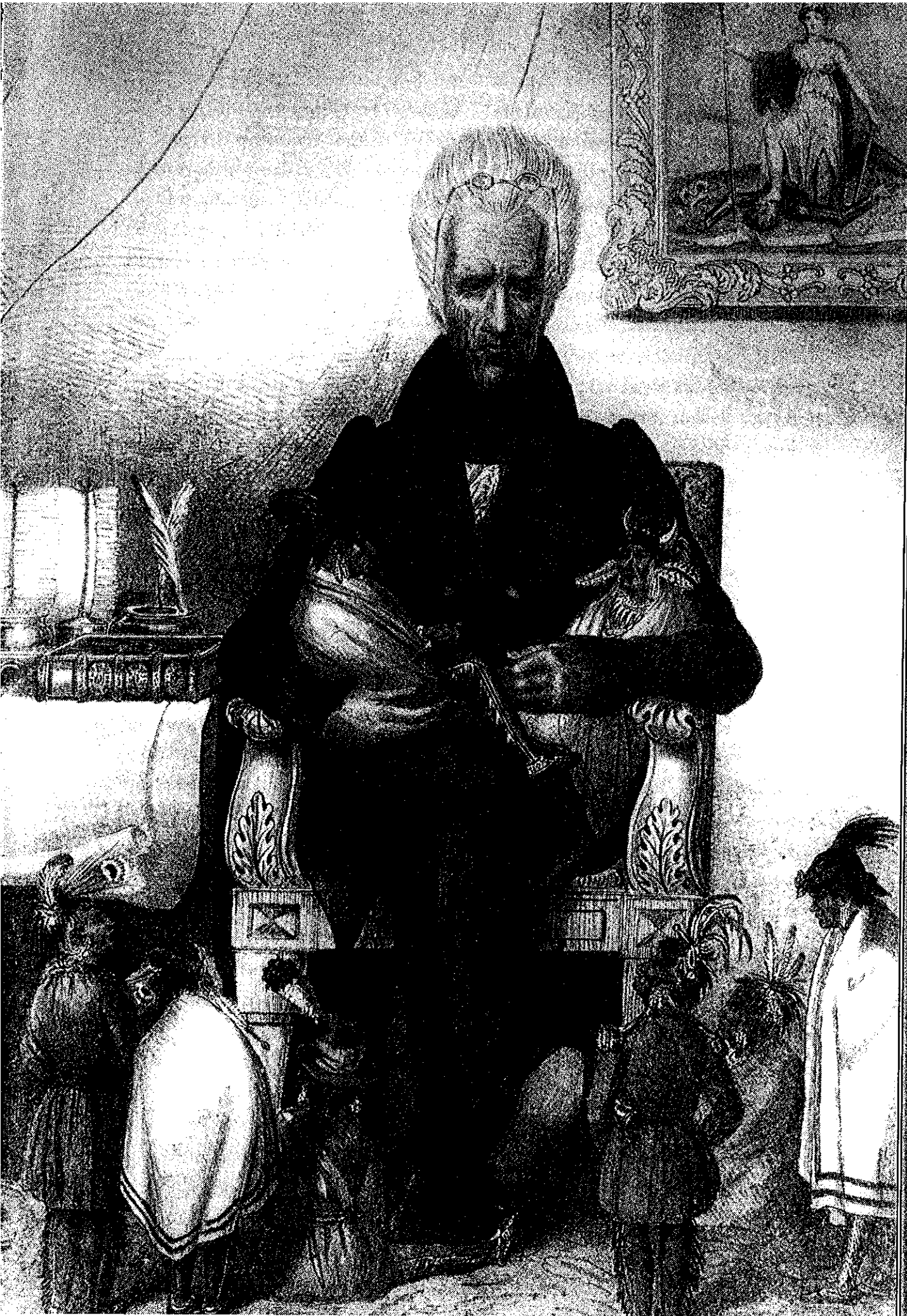
Among his many legacies, Andrew Jackson aggressively helped expand U.S. national boundaries in the nineteenth century. Perhaps even more significantly, later U.S. imperialism drew upon policies and legal precedents established in the Jacksonian period. Indeed, without Jackson, the United States would look very different today, but it likely would have accrued fewer historical liabilities. Whether one loathes or admires him, Americans owe Jackson some form of recognition.¹

It is a difficult historical truth that our ancestors did terrible things to carve out and defend the first modern “democratic republic.” European and American settlers stole land from some people, and labor from others. They waged war on Indigenous people for centuries, encroached upon their homes, killed many people, and pushed the survivors onto some of the least viable

land in North America. Racial slavery stole labor, and repressed the personhood, self-determination, and social relations of the people that the slave trade ripped from Africa and brought to the Americas.²

Some of us, here in the present, inherited the privileges that previous settlers created through violence and exploitation. It seems to us that, at the very least, we should be truthful about that. Most white Americans, however, express ambivalence about this history, if not total denial. We struggle to find ways to feel proud of the patriot founders and their vision of “liberty and justice for all” even as we recognize that they failed, from the very beginning, to create liberty or guarantee justice for all. Indeed, liberty for some depended on injustice for others, since the land and labor out of which many whites wrought their independence came from Indigenous Americans and kidnapped Africans. On

Andrew Jackson aggressively helped expand U.S. national boundaries in the 1800s, at great cost to Native Americans and to enslaved people looking for freedom. (Jackson as Great Father, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan)



the occasion of the 250th anniversary of Jackson's birth, we advocate that we take a hard look at the ways in which he and his supporters—the Jacksonians—sought to win advantage for white settlers. Rather than treating him with unexamined patriotic pride, let us use our ambivalent relationship to our national past, as white inheritors of settler colonialism in North America, to reframe Andrew Jackson and "Jacksonian Democracy." (The relatively new field of settler colonial studies focuses on the history of places like the U.S., Australia, Canada, Brazil, and South Africa, where imperial powers sent families to establish claims to territory. Those families settled permanently, created nation states that eventually declared independence from the empire, claimed "native" status for their children, and sought to eliminate competing Indigenous claims to the lands they occupied.) Jackson and his supporters expanded American power, trade, and borders in the American South at great cost to Native Americans and to enslaved people looking for freedom. The legacies of his actions reverberate today, particularly among the descendants of those they dispossessed.³



Andrew Jackson emerged as a heroic Indian fighter and patriot during the conflicts of the 1810s, at a time when American leaders and settlers sought to expand U.S. territory in many directions: north into

the Great Lakes and Canada, west into the Louisiana territory, and south toward the Gulf of Mexico. While three U.S. invasions of Canada failed in the North, Andrew Jackson's efforts in the southwestern borderlands paid off, and he achieved some of the only clear military successes for the U.S. in this period—at Horseshoe Bend, New Orleans, and in Florida. Jackson's successes made him a household name and a national hero, secured more land for white families, and established stronger borders for racial slavery.⁴

Jackson's expansionist career began when he led U.S. forces into the midst of the Creek Civil War during the War of 1812. After he defeated the Red Sticks at Horseshoe Bend in 1814, the Treaty of Fort Jackson forced the most powerful Native nation in the South to cede 23 million acres of land. Some of this land belonged to the Lower Creeks and Cherokees who had fought with the U.S. against the Red Sticks. Jackson ignored their recent cooperation in favor of capturing more land for white Americans. A few months later, Jackson famously defended New Orleans from British invaders with the help of allied warriors of Native and African descent. His unexpected victory against the vaunted British Army, although it came after the U.S. and Great Britain signed the Treaty of Ghent, enhanced Jackson's reputation and preserved the U.S.'s claim that it could control and defend the lands of the Louisiana Purchase, some 530 million acres of land west of the Mississippi.

His clearest accomplishment in terms of national expansion, however, came in Florida, in the wake of the War of 1812. On behalf of the U.S., Jackson invaded the Spanish colony of Florida in 1814 and 1818, breaking international and constitutional law in the process. Spain eventually succumbed to this pressure and the Transcontinental Treaty added another 37.5 million acres of territory to the U.S. Of course, Jackson's most infamous contribution to the spread of white American settlements would occur after he became president, under the Indian Removal Act he shepherded into law in 1830.⁵

Jackson did not single-handedly acquire these territories or make these policies. Many other leaders, and scores of American settler families and voters worked in tandem to enlarge the country and expand racial slavery in the early nineteenth century and after. Removal sentiment crystallized under Jackson in the 1830 Indian Removal bill, but historians cannot attribute the responsibility for Indian Removal to only one man, or even one political party. As historian Theda Perdue notes, driven by "greed, racism, and political posturing," American sentiment in favor of Indian Removal pervaded U.S. society in the nineteenth and into the twentieth century.⁶ Although a small minority of Americans argued that Indian Removal and slavery were immoral, unjust, and inconsistent with U.S. values, the white majority chose their own interests over the democratic promises of their

nation. Jackson's supporters justified this choice—seemingly in conflict with the notion of civic goodness that the founders believed required true patriots to put the public good ahead of their own personal gain—by espousing an American nationalism with distinctly racial and expansionist undertones. Pro-expansion Jacksonians believed that the extension of U.S. rule signified human progress. White Americans, they believed, brought democratic governance, Christian civilization, and order to frontier territories. Their continuing "success" at adding to the country's territory surely indicated God's favor. Furthermore, as the population increased from women's reproductive labor and from immigration, Americans seemed destined to occupy ever more space in North America.⁷

Over the course of American history, white settlers have displaced almost all Native peoples at least once, and often in successive generations. In the 1830s and 1840s alone, the federal government ordered the U.S. military to coerce over 60,000 Indigenous people from the U.S. South under federal Indian Removal policy, and more than 12,000 of them died in campaigns of resistance, internment camps, or en route to the western lands set aside for them. Life did not get any easier there, where the land was mostly too barren to sustain them, old and new enmities elicited cycles of inter- and intra-tribal violence, endemic disease and poverty inflicted suffering, and white swindlers (many employed in the Bureau of

Indian Affairs) looked for opportunities to defraud them. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the U.S. military or settlers violently displaced many more thousands of Indigenous people from the Ohio Valley and the "Old Northwest" as well as from the South.⁸



The Florida frontier in the 1810s provides a fecund field to refocus historical vision on the legacies of Jacksonian expansion in Indian country. Jackson supported and later enacted many American military and political efforts to seize and colonize Florida. He understood that the state was central to his efforts to secure the southern border, an important defensive barrier for U.S. sovereignty and southern slavery. Beyond its geopolitical location, Florida offered very attractive agricultural lands near ports on the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. Land-hungry white Americans eagerly sought to capture some of that land. They hoped that large tracts of "free" or inexpensive land, linked by fresh and salt water to commercial markets, would enable them to rise into the ranks of the elite planters (as Jackson himself had done).⁹

From the perspective of Jackson and those who supported him, Spain created the conditions that necessitated U.S. intervention in Florida. Its Spanish colonial population remained tiny and consistently outnumbered by Indigenous

and Anglo-American populations. Spain's focus on exploiting labor and natural resources, rather than colonizing territory with settlers, encouraged very hospitable and flexible Spanish policies towards Native and African Americans. The Spanish consistently traded and pursued peace with Florida's Native inhabitants, which kept them well supplied with weapons, which they did indeed use to protect themselves from white American invaders. By the 1810s, Native Americans in Florida numbered somewhere between 4,000 and 6,000 souls, living in several dozen towns and villages in northern and central Florida. They farmed and raised livestock, and sold excess produce to European colonists. At least five hundred people of African descent (called *estelusti* by the Indigenous people) lived among them or in separate (but allied) villages. These "Black Seminoles" occupied and could move between several different social locations, including enslavement, adoptive kinship, marriage, and political and military alliance. Although contemporary whites expressed grave concerns about the "Indian negroes" in Florida, the Seminoles categorized people by their kinship ties as members of clans or extended families, not as "black," "white" or "Indian" (at least in the early nineteenth century). Indigenous people in Florida practiced a form of racial slavery, but also organized their lives in ways that challenged the stability of racial categories and southern slavery.¹⁰

Spanish colonial policies also supported an intermediate caste of mixed-race free people, known as maroons, as a buffer between slaveholding whites and enslaved Africans. The opportunity for individual enslaved persons to become free discouraged collective slave insurrections. Runaways from slavery, or descendants of such self-emancipated persons, therefore comprised another group of free Floridians of African descent present by the 1810s. They had reached St. Augustine in the previous two centuries, where Spanish officials freed them if they took an oath of allegiance to Spain and declared themselves faithful Catholics. Black and mixed-race residents of Spanish Florida participated in the social and economic life of the province, including the militia. In 1738 colonial officials sent hundreds of free blacks to build and garrison a fortification two miles north of St. Augustine, Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, or Fort Mose. Although Spanish colonists also held Africans in bondage, Spain thus created the first town populated by free people of African descent and authorized by a European power in North America.¹¹

Spain's alliances with Native and free black Floridians only strengthened as the power of their rivals in British North America grew in the eighteenth century, while Napoleon occupied and weakened Spain in Europe. Nationalist movements emerged throughout its colonies in the Americas, and so with dwindling resources available in Florida, Spain

increasingly depended on alliances with the Native and black communities of East and West Florida, which controlled most of the region throughout the Second Spanish period (1783–1819). Beyond St. Augustine and Pensacola, no power truly dominated, and the norms of Indigenous and African American peoples determined the outcomes of conflicts and negotiations as often as the rules of engagement endorsed by Europeans. This fluid middle ground made American slaveholders very nervous. Of course, if they had been willing to end or limit the spread of racial slavery, or to respect the land and cultural rights of Indigenous people, they might have enjoyed friendly alliance with them, too. Instead, slavery further inflamed tensions on the southern border, along with the constant pressure of British interests. American slaveholders, arguably the most powerful group of U.S. voters in this era, understood that Florida's Indigenous and maroon communities offered enslaved people a convenient and enticing route to freedom just across their southern border. Fearing a rebellion against slavery and irritated by the trickle of runaway slaves into Florida, the United States fully exploited the diplomatic and military dangers of a potential British, Indigenous, and Black alliance in Florida, and framed its invasions of Florida as necessary for self-defense.¹²

Using Indigenous and European alliances as justification, Jackson and his supporters framed their efforts as a kind of defensive imperialism, a precursor of the



Jackson supported and enacted many American military and political efforts to seize and colonize Florida. The state was central to his efforts to secure the southern border, an important defensive barrier for U.S. sovereignty and southern slavery. (Charles Blacker Vignoles and Henry Schenck Tanner. *Map of Florida*. [S.l., 1823] Library of Congress)

aggressive nationalism that would emerge later as “Manifest Destiny.” Sometimes, they even justified invading Spanish Florida by citing recent violence against “innocent,” vulnerable white settler families, especially white women and children, who by occupying Indigenous or foreign land not technically within U.S. borders had made it “home” to Americans before diplomacy or military invasion occurred. Florida’s populations, natural resources, ports, and geopolitical location supplied Americans with a prime ground where they might allow their greed and racism free rein in the name of “national security” and the “defense of white families.” Such political posturing could provide justifications for violence against autonomous communities of Indigenous people and African Americans who just happened to live near promising ports and fertile land along the southern border of U.S. racial slavery. Capturing Florida for the U.S., they believed, would remove any threats from Indigenous, maroon, or European enemies along the southern border, open more land to white families, and shut down a southern route to freedom for runaways from enslavement.¹³

Aside from the addition of millions of acres of land, Jackson’s conquest of Florida set important legal precedents. Arguments over large Spanish land grants made before 1818 used the “Right of Discovery” doctrine to negate the land claims of Native groups. This stated that only Christian nations of Europe or

European descent could “own” North American lands, which Indigenous people only “occupied” and had not “developed.” Americans also likened Indians, runaway slaves, maroons, and free blacks to wolves, pirates, and outlaws under early U.S. law: “uncivilized” or “savage” persons who, while subject to domestic law, enjoyed no rights under it. Under this creative (some might say hypocritical) legal framework, runaways from slavery and Indigenous people could be lawfully punished for breaking laws that, in turn, did not protect their property or their rights. Further, American lawyers also placed them outside the protection of international law by representing them as people without a nation, non-citizens who could not constitute a sovereign nation under international law. This inconsistent understanding of Native sovereignty continues to plague Native American courts and communities today. Via these legal shifts, Americans rendered the enslavement of Africans and African Americans, and the expulsion of Native Americans, lawful, domestic concerns. That is, legal forms of theft that no international body could question. As Deborah Rosen has recently illustrated in her book, *Border Law*, for many Americans of Jackson’s era in the early 1800s, the law existed to protect and defend the rights of white Americans. In service to national security and expansion, many Americans found it perfectly acceptable to violate it, particularly when the victims were not white.¹⁴



Events in Florida provoked U.S. anxiety even before the War of 1812. With Spain distracted, in 1810 President James Madison encouraged a convention in West Florida to declare the colony (the Florida panhandle west of Pensacola, now southern Alabama and Mississippi) independent of Spain. West Florida's white residents complied, and immediately requested U.S. annexation. Confident from that result, and anxious to neutralize any threat from East Florida as the U.S. entered the War of 1812, Madison sent Revolutionary War veteran George Mathews to St. Augustine to encourage a similar convention. Mathews exceeded his diplomatic mission and led his own filibuster into Florida, which captured Amelia Island in March 1812 but failed to capture St. Augustine when the Seminoles came to the aid of the Spanish. Native forces destroyed Mathews's "Patriot Army" in the fall, and terrorized whites by scalping colonists and capturing slaves. Then, due to the impending war with Great Britain and to the reticence of New Englanders who feared adding another slave state, President Madison asked the Patriots to withdraw. When they did, Spain concentrated its military force in St. Augustine, leaving the rest of East Florida in the hands of deserting soldiers, maroons, and Indians. The outcomes of the "Patriot War" reinvigorated American fears of the Seminoles and their African

American allies, providing justification for another attempt to invade Florida in the near future.¹⁵

Anxieties about Florida worsened when the Seminoles, like Indigenous forces along the Canadian border, allied with British interests against the United States in the War of 1812. As the Patriot War disrupted Northeast Florida in 1813, Jackson commanded American militia forces in brutal reprisals against the Creek Red Sticks just north of Florida, who had allied with the British. As Red Stick refugees fled south after that conflict, they joined the Seminoles. Next, Great Britain launched attacks on the United States from Pensacola in 1814. In response, Jackson seized Pensacola for the U.S., but held it only until Spain negotiated their withdrawal in 1815. Britain had recruited thousands of Native and African American allies in Florida, and although the war ended before a significant number of them joined the fight, they fortified the notion that autonomous Native and African Americans in Spanish Florida threatened U.S. security.¹⁶

Frustrated that Spain still tolerated (in fact, relied on) autonomous Native and African American allies in Florida, the United States attacked again. In 1816, forces under Duncan L. Clinch destroyed the "Negro Fort" on the Apalachicola River, which the British had left well supplied after the War of 1812, and had remained occupied by free and runaway blacks. The attack killed over 250 people, but dozens of



During the War of 1812, Madison sent George Mathews to annex Florida to the U.S. The Seminoles aided the Spanish, destroying Mathews's "Patriot Army" and terrorizing whites by scalping colonists and capturing slaves. Another attempt to invade Florida lay in the near future, under Andrew Jackson. ("Massacre of the Whites...", 1836, Library of Congress)

free black survivors fled into East Florida, where they reinforced the intransigence of the Seminoles and Red Sticks.¹⁷

In the aftermath of these battles, Florida remained obviously unstable, making it a vulnerable target. Seeking to exploit that, two more filibusters invaded Fernandina in northeast Florida in 1817. American, not Spanish, forces repelled them.¹⁸ Meanwhile, cycles of borderland violence escalated along the inland border of North Florida. Throughout 1816 and 1817, reciprocal cattle raiding continued, and Seminole forces "massacred" whites along the Georgia border, where increasing numbers of squatters encroached. In February 1817, a party of Seminole warriors attacked and killed a white family in southeastern Georgia. In November 1817, U.S. troops destroyed Fowltown,

a Native village in the Florida-Georgia borderlands, where Neamathla and his people refused to capitulate to the Treaty of Fort Jackson and remove to the west (they were not among the Creeks who had signed the treaty). In retaliation, a group of Seminole, Black Seminole, and Creek Red Stick warriors attacked a U.S. Army supply boat on the Apalachicola River. In what newspaper reports would call the "Scott Massacre," they killed over thirty-five people; among them thirty-three men and six soldiers' wives. Unconfirmed, sensational press reports claimed that the attackers killed four children by bashing their heads against the side of the boat. Officials in Washington cited this attack when they ordered Jackson to proceed to Florida and "chastise" the Creeks and Seminoles.¹⁹

In response to Spanish and British alliances with Native and African American forces in Florida, repeated filibustering invasions, and cycles of frontier violence between white settlers and Indigenous people, Jackson launched a full-scale invasion of Florida under orders of Secretary of War John C. Calhoun in early 1818. President James Monroe had only authorized U.S. forces to follow Seminoles who crossed back across the border into Georgia. He had specifically instructed them not to attack Spanish forts. He did not respond to Jackson's request to use the Scott Massacre as an excuse to seize East Florida, which Jackson interpreted as tacit consent.²⁰

With Jackson's invasion in March 1818, the "First U.S.-Seminole War" began. Jackson established headquarters on the site of the Negro Fort and marched a large force (composed of regulars, volunteers, Lower Creeks, Cowetas, Choctaws, and a small contingent of Cherokees) east to Miccosukee. They attacked Indian villages in middle and western Florida along the way, and killed few warriors, but destroyed extensive villages and captured hundreds of cattle and the Seminoles' food stores. Although displaced and lacking resources, most of the Seminoles and their allies remained alive and more determined than ever to resist U.S. invaders.²¹

Jackson's decisions in the next phase of the war had major consequences. At St. Marks, an important gulf port, Jackson captured British trader Alexander Arbuthnot. A Scottish merchant from the

Bahamas, Arbuthnot began trade with the Indigenous Floridians in 1817, offered them competitive prices, and advocated for their land rights. Subsequently, Robert Ambrister, an unfortunate former British naval officer and veteran of the War of 1812, lost his way and found himself in a U.S. encampment. Jackson organized a brief "trial" of Arbuthnot and Ambrister, and a U.S. military tribunal convicted both of aiding and supplying enemies of the United States. He ordered the executions of both men on April 29, 1818, although the tribunal had sentenced Ambrister to fifty lashes, not death. Jackson's decision to change that sentence and execute both men communicated to the Seminoles and their potential allies that Americans would not tolerate their collaboration, even in Spanish territory where the U.S. lacked any legal jurisdiction. Jackson violated the laws of war and international diplomacy during this episode, as the actions of two British subjects in Spanish territory lay outside of any U.S. national or military jurisdiction. Furthermore, their "trial" ignored the normal rules of evidence and due process, and their deaths violated the U.S. constitution, which granted Congress, not military commanders, the power to execute enemies under the laws of war. His actions against Arbuthnot and Ambrister elicited mild diplomatic protests from Spain and Great Britain and enormous debate in the U.S. over Jackson's flagrant disobedience to the law. Ultimately his supporters, arguing that American national interest trumped

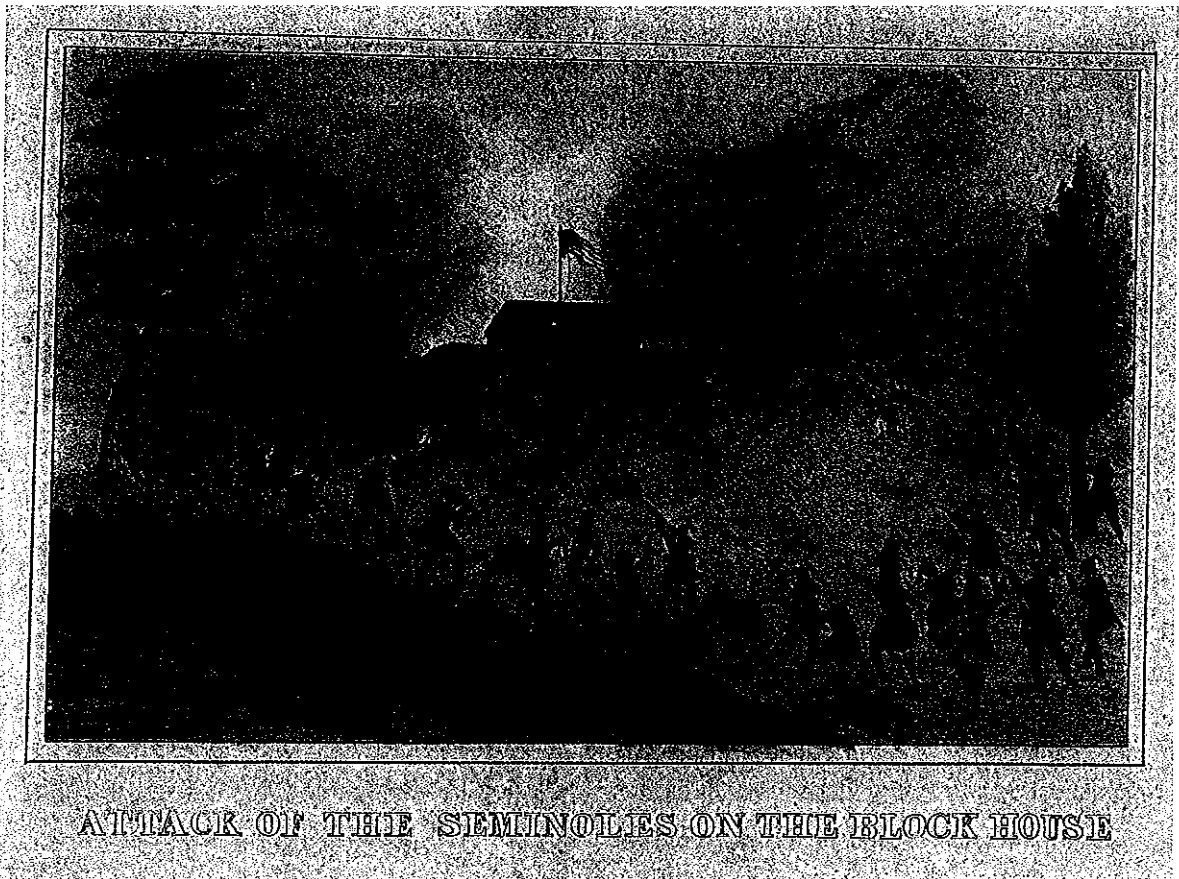
the rule of law, prevented Congress from officially censuring him. Cloaking expansionist aggression as self-defense, Jackson justified his actions as vengeance for the deaths of white women and children, even as he targeted Seminole homes and families (deaths that did not elicit the same concerns as his execution of two British men). He framed the invasion as vital to American national interests, since Spain had failed to rid the southeastern borderlands of threats to U.S. sovereignty, and refused to deport British agents who aided Native and African American "hostiles."²²

While it did not exterminate the Seminoles, the First Seminole War did force Spain's hand. In May 1818, as debate raged over Jackson's decision to execute two British subjects, he captured Pensacola again. Formal negotiations soon began and, in 1821, Congress ratified the Adams-Onís treaty. In exchange for Spain's claims to Florida, the United States conceded Texas (which it had claimed as part of the Louisiana Purchase) and assumed \$5 million in Spanish debts held by Americans. A hero now several times over, Jackson escaped any sanctions because most Americans credited this favorable diplomatic outcome to his aggression. President Monroe appointed Andrew Jackson as the first governor of the new U.S. Territory of Florida in March 1821, and Jackson accepted only on the condition that he could resign as soon he organized a territorial government. He left for Tennessee in October, 1821.²³

Although Jackson succeeded militarily, the Seminoles had cannily refused to engage his larger force, and their continued survival and resistance frustrated him. They survived to fight in the Second U.S.-Seminole War (1835–1842) and again in the Third U.S.-Seminole War (1855–1858). Although U.S. forces removed approximately 4,500 of their ancestors and killed at least 1,500 Seminoles during those conflicts, the Seminole Tribe of Florida numbers over 4,000 people today, and proudly remains undefeated by U.S. forces. In the west, approximately 17,000 people are members of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma.²⁴



Although some Native Americans fiercely survived such efforts to eradicate them, Indigenous peoples today remain the poorest people, on average, in the United States. Some 175 years after the Jacksonians' ethnic cleansing campaign in the southeast, 6.6 million people claim American Indian or Alaskan Native heritage, about 2% of the population of the U.S.A in 2015. Among those who claimed only Native identity²⁵, 26.6% lived in poverty (compared to 14.7% of the nation overall). The median household income among them was \$38,530 in 2014, about one-third (30.1% or \$17,245) less than the \$55,775 median household income of the nation overall. Over a fifth of these people lacked health insurance in 2015



ATTACK OF THE SEMINOLES ON THE BLOCK HOUSE

Although Jackson succeeded militarily in 1818, the Seminoles refused to engage his larger force, and their continued survival and resistance frustrated him. They survived to fight in the Second U.S.-Seminoles War (1835-1842) and again in the Third U.S.-Seminoles War (1855-1858). ("Attack of the Seminoles...", 1837, Library of Congress)

(20.7%, versus 9.4% of the nation overall). Only 53.1% of these families owned their own home, compared to 63% of the whole U.S. population. Fewer of them had achieved a high school education by age 25 than the national average in 2014 (82.7% versus 87.1%), and the gap widened among those who had earned a bachelor's degree or higher (only 19.1% of American Indians or Alaskan Natives as compared with 30.6% of the nation overall).²⁶

While essentialist, racist explanations might rationalize this situation as the result of genes or biology, logic dictates that repeated land thefts, violent displacements, and other traumas, which did not begin or end with Jacksonian era removal, created the grinding poverty and injustice under which Native Americans live today. Federal policy could also attempt to end it. Americans and their government could choose to guarantee housing, clean water, health care, education, and meaningful

treatment for trauma to Native peoples. Those most privileged by the bloody gifts of the Jacksonian era could choose to face and to address this legacy.²⁷

Aside from a lack of political will, Americans have not yet recognized or sought to rectify the gross plundering that took place in the Jacksonian era for another reason. Although Indian Removal failed to remove all the Indians, it did make them nearly invisible in American culture. I (Laurel Clark Shire) first noticed this as a new professor: no matter how many times I reviewed the fact that millions of Indigenous people live in the U.S. today, my students continually spoke and wrote about them in the past tense. They erased them from the present, again and again, in part because their textbooks did so.²⁸ Their habits of erasure produce strange assumptions in the present—that those people who own that casino cannot possibly be “real Indians” or that they don’t “look like real Indians,” because real Indians wear headdresses, long braids, and buckskins.²⁹ This became even more apparent to me when I began teaching in Canada, where students do not speak of and write about First Nations people only in the past tense. Thanks to a decades-long effort at Truth and Reconciliation there, far more awareness of the continuing existence, survival, and challenges faced by Indigenous people in Canada exists today. White Canadians do not necessarily express less racism towards them, and intense poverty continues among Indigenous communities, but

at least the overwhelming cultural amnesia has lifted. Unsettling conversations about land rights, residential schools, missing and murdered Indigenous women, and the legacies of trauma take place in churches, community centers, and public squares all over Canada. See, for example, discussions of “The Blanket Exercise,” an intercultural communications module during which participants stand on blankets that are slowly folded into ever smaller shapes as they read aloud multiple perspectives on the ways that colonial rule eroded the land base and sovereignty of Indigenous peoples in North America.³⁰

Indigenous scholar Jean O’Brien and historian of the Native South Theda Perdue, among others, have offered some compelling explanations for Americans’ inability to see the 6.6 million Indigenous people in the U.S. today. Perdue notes that Indian Removal in the U.S. South failed to remove all the Indians, but did “obscure” their “continuing presence.” While the ethnic cleansing campaigns of the 1830s and 1840s removed many Native people, remnant populations persisted in the east, as did post-removal nations in the west. After the Jacksonian era, however, historians do not know how to include Native peoples, now scattered and historically disconnected, in historical narratives. That means that students do not learn of the myriad ways in which local, state, and federal officials sought to expel those who remained in the South, or obliterate their Native identity by categorizing them

as “colored” and/or allotting tribal lands into individually held plots. None of this is mitigated by the trend in postbellum U.S. history to frame America as inevitably moving toward progress and “modernity,” while Indians, as Jean O’Brien puts it, “can never be modern.” As she discovered, since the nineteenth century countless local and regional histories have systematically written Indians out of existence in New England. Behold: an insidious pattern—pervasive removal sentiment, historiographical practices that render Indians pre-modern and part of the past, and, of course, a construction of America as the place of progress. Together, these American habits of mind (only some of which fall squarely on the shoulders of historians) conspire to obscure Native American history and contemporary populations. We will never be able to see Indians or tell the truth about American settler colonialism, let alone work towards reconciliation or justice, so long as these patterns persist.³¹

These are the legacies—violence, injustice, cultural amnesia—we must grapple with in any consideration of Jackson’s America. Indeed, these are legacies we must grapple with in any discussion of U.S. history, since nearly every president before Jackson, including George Washington, had also induced or coerced Native peoples to move westward. Willing to use or ignore the law when convenient for national interests, Jackson ruthlessly pursued U.S. goals, and the interests of white, male Americans like himself. As a result of pro-expansionist

policies like his, many more white American families became freeholders in the nineteenth century. Individual advancement and national enlargement, however, encouraged the expansion of slavery and relied on the dispossession, displacement, and deaths of Native Americans. Surely those events form a theme in American history that we should remember somberly and with regret. Jackson may have enlarged the country, but he did so by violating many of its formal founding principles. If he had not done so, the United States would have different borders and fewer historical burdens today.

Informed, historically literate Americans must feel at least some ambivalence about him, if not a sense of frustrated revulsion that we owe him as much as we do. Having inherited this bloody gift—of territory, and of cultural attitudes about white American superiority and entitlement, (which have pervaded American history since its beginning)—will we continue to honor his memory, or will we use this anniversary to seek reconciliation with those harmed or killed under Jacksonian rule? We believe that we have an ethical responsibility to reconsider Jackson, not as a frontier hero, but as the epitome of American ambivalence about our past. For us, the Jacksonians invoke the ghosts of racial slavery and settler colonialism that continue to haunt us, and our democracy, in the present.

The authors thank Carla Joubert for her comments on drafts of this essay.

1. Laurel Clark Shire, *The Threshold of Manifest Destiny: Gender and National Expansion in Florida* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 197, 247 n. 5.

2. Patrick Wolfe, "Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race," *American Historical Review* 106 (2001): 866–905; Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

3. Shire, *Threshold of Manifest Destiny*, 3–14.

4. Frank Lawrence Owsley, Jr., and Gene A. Smith, *Filibusters and Expansionists: Jeffersonian Manifest Destiny, 1800–1821* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997), 3, 22–24; Alan Taylor, "Settling and Unsettling Borders: Continental Legacies of the War of 1812," J. J. Talman Lecture Series, Western University, November 4, 2013.

5. Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire* (New York: Harper & Row), 1977.

6. Theda Perdue, "The Legacy of Indian Removal," *Journal of Southern History* 78, no. 1 (2012): 3–36, quote p. 6.

7. Owsley, Jr., and Smith, *Filibusters and Expansionists*, 2–4; Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995); Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation* (New York: Knopf, 1963); Reginald Horsman, "The Dimensions of an 'Empire for Liberty': Expansion and Republicanism, 1775–1825," *Journal of the Early Republic* 9 (1989): 1–20; Eliga H. Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 1–3.

8. Perdue, "The Legacy of Indian Removal," 6–7; Jane F. Lancaster, *Removal Aftershock: The Seminoles' Struggle to Survive in the West, 1836–1866* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994),

3; Walter Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism: A History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes*, 3rd ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972); Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, eds., *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004).

9. "Wire-grass" settlers from Alabama and Georgia were especially keen to enter Florida, see Joe Knetsch, "Range War in the East: Conflict over Cattle and Land on the Georgia-Florida Borderlands," *Proceedings of the 90th Annual Meeting of the Florida Historical Society* (Tampa, Florida), April 1993; Shire, *Threshold of Manifest Destiny*, 3, 22, 44–45.

10. Shire, *Threshold of Manifest Destiny*, 1–2, 6–9, 102–104, 227 n.3; Patricia Seed, *American Pentimento: The Invention of Indians and the Pursuit of Riches* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001); Deborah A. Rosen, *Border Law: The First Seminole War and American Nationhood* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 12–20, 54–63.

11. David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 179–182; Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 29–60.

12. Shire, *Threshold of Manifest Destiny*, 19–21; John Paul A. Nuño notes that racialization increased during and after the British period, but that the middle ground lasted until the Second U.S.-Seminole War; see his "Making Africans and Indians: Colonialism, Identity, Racialization, and the Rise of the Nation-State in the Florida Borderlands, 1765–1837," (PhD diss., University of Texas-El Paso, 2010), 241–243. See also John Paul A. Nuño, "República de Bandidos: Challenges to Emergent Racial Hierarchies in the Florida Borderlands in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 94 (Fall 2015): 192–221.

13. Perdue, "The Legacy of Indian Removal," 6; Shire, *Threshold of Manifest Destiny*, 11–12, 55–101
14. Blake A. Watson, "The Doctrine of Discovery and the Elusive Definition of Indian Title," *Lewis & Clark Law Review*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (2011): 995–1024; Blake A. Watson, "Buying West Florida from the Indians: the Forbes Purchase and *Mitchel v. United States* (1835)," *FIU Law Review*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2014): 361–390; Rosen, *Border Law*, 5–9, 37, 69, 92, 102–184; Kevin Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of U.S.-Indigenous Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 2007; Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2014).
15. William C. Davis, *The Rogue Republic: How Would-Be Patriots Waged the Shortest Revolution in American History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011); David A. Bice, *The Original Lone Star Republic: Scoundrels, Statesmen & Schemers of the 1810 West Florida Rebellion* (Clanton, AL: Heritage Publishing, 2004); James G. Cusick, *The Other War of 1812: The Patriot War and the American Invasion of Spanish East Florida* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 2007); Owsley, Jr., and Smith, *Filibusters and Expansionists*, 61–81.
16. Robert Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars* (New York: Viking, 2001), 54–79; Michael Paul Rogin, *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (New York: Knopf, 1975), 150–159; Cusick, *The Other War of 1812*, 301.
17. Joe Knetsch, *Florida's Seminole Wars, 1817–1858*, (Arcadia Publishing: Charleston, S.C.) 2003, 18; John Missall and Mary Lou Missall, *The Seminole Wars: America's Longest Indian Conflict*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 26–31; Nathaniel Millett, *The Maroons of Prospect Bluff and their Quest for Freedom in the Atlantic World* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013.)
18. Gregor MacGregor, a Scottish veteran of several South American revolutions, led the first attempt in June 1817. Later that year, Robert Aury, flying the flag of the Mexican Revolution, made another attempt on Fernandina. Owsley Jr. and Smith, *Filibusters and Expansionists*, 61–81, 103–163; Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars*, 19–20, 26–31, 37–38; John K. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835–1842*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1985 revised edition [o. 1967]), 21–24; Knetsch, *Florida's Seminole Wars*, 18, 26–27.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Daniel Scallet, "'This Inglorious War': The Second Seminole War, the Ad Hoc Origins of American Imperialism, and the Silence of Slavery" (PhD diss., Washington University in St. Louis, 2011), 59–62; Missall and Missall, *The Seminole Wars*, 32–51; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 18–28; Knetsch, *Florida's Seminole Wars*, 23–41; Rosen, *Border Law*, 142–146, 194.
23. "Treaty of Amity, Settlement, and Limits Between the United States of America and His Catholic Majesty," 1819, reprinted in "Adams-Onís Treaty," Francis Newton Thorpe, *The Federal and State Constitutions Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies Now or Heretofore Forming the United States of America, Compiled and Edited Under the Act of Congress of June 30, 1906* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1909); Knetsch, *Florida's Seminole Wars*, 24–41; Rosen, *Border Law*, 199; Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire, 1767–1821* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, o. 1977), 423–424.
24. Shire, *Threshold of Manifest Destiny*, 213–214 n. 39; Seminole Tribe of Florida, <http://www.semtribe.com/History/NoSurrender.aspx> (accessed October 19, 2017); Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, <http://sno-nsn.gov/culture/aboutsno> (accessed October 19, 2017).

25. Those who claim single-race American Indian or Alaskan Native identity (exclusive of those who claim more than one racial identity).

26. Of those 6.6 million people, 3.74 million claimed exclusively American Indian and Alaska Native heritage, while the remainder claimed Indigenous roots in combination with one or more other racial designation. "Facts for Features: American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month," November 02, 2016, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2016/cb16-ff22.html>. (accessed October 19, 2017).

27. Perdue, "Legacy of Indian Removal," 11–17, 28–32.

28. James Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, 2nd Edition (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007, 0.1995), 93–134.

29. Jessica R. Cattelino, *High Stakes: Florida Seminole Gaming and Sovereignty* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Devon Miheuah, *American Indians: Stereotypes and Realities* (Atlanta: Clarity Press, 1996).

30. <https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org/exercise-understanding-kairos-blanket-exercise/> (accessed October 19, 2017); for information on the processes, findings, and recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada, see <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=905> (accessed October 19, 2017).

31. Perdue, "The Legacy of Indian Removal," 3; Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xi–xiii.