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THE REMOVAL OF THE CREEK INDIANS FROM  
ALABAMA TO THE INDIAN TERRITORY  
IN 1836

By

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THE REMOVAL OF THE CREEK INDIANS FROM  
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Long before the removal of the Creek Indians from their Alabama homes to the West, many of their leading men saw the war clouds rising and heard the distant though distinct rumbling of the guns that were to banish them forever from the homes of their forefathers and make them strangers in a strange land beyond the Mississippi.<sup>1</sup> Colonel Benjamin Hawkins, agent and commissioner of the United States government, had, for several years, displayed much wisdom and policy in managing them, but they always remained dissatisfied, and were particularly so when, in 1811, a portion of their chiefs granted a public road through the heart of their country. It was known as the Federal Road, and extended from the Mims' Ferry upon the Alabama to the Chattahoochie.<sup>2</sup> The Creek Indians saw that soon they were to be crushed by the gradual closing in of the Georgians on the east and the Tombigbee people on the west, and many of them contemplated expulsion or extermination of the latter at no distant date. McGillivray had fought a diplomatic battle with the invading whites; but it was left to William Weatherford to defend with rifle and tomahawk the rights of the Creeks to their ancestral domains against an aggressive race. The first Creek war, fought in 1813-14,

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1. Pickett's Alabama, (Owen's Edition) pp. 382-83.  
2. Ibid. p. 510.

which left to the Creeks only about 150,000 square miles of territory. The boundaries of this territory were as follows: "Beginning at a point on the eastern bank of the Coosa river where the south boundary line of the Cherokee nation crosses the same; running thence down the said Coosa river with its eastern bank, according to its various meanders to a point one mile above the mouth of Cedar creek at Fort Williams, thence east two miles, thence south two miles, thence west to the eastern bank of the said Coosa river, thence down the eastern bank thereof according to its various meanders to a point opposite the upper end of the Great Falls, (called by the natives Weatumpka), thence east from a true meridian line to a point due north of the Ofuc̄skee, thence south by a like meridian line to the mouth of the Ofuc̄skee, on the south side of the Tallapoosa river, thence up the same according to its various meanders to a point where a direct course will cross the same at a distance of ten miles from the mouth thereof, thence a direct line to the mouth of Summachico creek which empties into the Chattahoochie river on the east side thereof below the Eufala town."<sup>1</sup> This territory included what are now the following Alabama counties: Calhoun, Cleburne, Clay, Coosa, Chambers, Tallapoosa, Randolph, Russell, and Macon, and a part of Elmore, Barbour and Bullock.

The removal of the Creek Indians in 1836 by the Federal government was in accordance with an agreement made with the state of Georgia in 1802, when Georgia ceded to the Federal government the land now included in Alabama and Mississippi.<sup>2</sup> To

1. Brewer's Alabama, p. 34, note.

2. Bassett's Life of Andrew Jackson, p. 685; Encyc. Britannica, Vol. 11, pp. 756-57.

meet this obligation, agents were kept among the Indians to prevail on them to give up their homes here for lands west of the Mississippi. Colonel Hawkins and Colonel Hogan were appointed Creek agents, and after living for years among them finally persuaded them to make a treaty with the Federal government in 1832---the so-called Treaty of Cusseta---by which they ceded all their lands east of the Mississippi river for a specified sum of money and homes out west.

Andrew Jackson was no friend to the Indians, so the drastic demands in the Treaty of Fort Jackson which were strenuously opposed by Big Warrior and other chiefs need not surprise the student of history. Most of the Creek lands were taken, it is true, but this would not have been half so bad had the author of the treaty lived up to his own contract. The Treaty of Fort Jackson, the second article of which states specifically that the United States would guarantee to the Creek nation the integrity of all their reserve territory was not kept on the part of Jackson. The second article further states that a permanent peace shall ensue from these presents, forever, between the Creek nation and the United States.<sup>1</sup> This provision was also later disregarded. Andrew Jackson, speaking in reference to the Creek Indians in 1829, said: "This emigration should be voluntary; for it would be as cruel as unjust to compel the aborigines to abandon the graves of their fathers and seek a home in a distant land."<sup>2</sup> Whatever the above statements were intended

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1. U.S. Statutes at Large, Indian Treaties, Vol. 7, p. 121.

2. Parton's Life of Andrew Jackson, Vol. 3, p. 276.

to mean, or whatever the Creek Indians had a right to believe they meant, surely they had a right to believe that the United States would not be an aggressor in any future trouble. The Creek Indians, by the Treaty of Cusseta in 1832, did cede to the United States all of their lands east of the Mississippi river, but they were to be allotted lands in the Creek territory and were to be allowed to go west or to stay, as they pleased.<sup>1</sup> In the face of the above, Lewis Cass, Secretary of War under Jackson, in an official communication of May 20, 1836, stated that "The President has deemed it essential that the Creek Indians shall now be removed, whether willing or unwilling to go."<sup>2</sup> The Secretary of War, in a letter the day before to Major Thomas S. Jessup (who was to command in the Creek territory) said: "It will be proper . . . . to treat these Indians with the kindest attentions, and to send them off as speedily as practicable. . . . Still, however, they must be removed by military force if necessary. . . . It is very important that these people should be immediately sent off. You will assure them that the government is anxious to do them justice."<sup>3</sup> A similar letter was addressed to Governor Clay of Alabama on March 12, 1836, in which the Secretary of War said, "Every consideration of humanity and policy, both as regards them and our own citizens, requires their immediate and entire removal."<sup>4</sup> Such was the conclusion of the

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1. U.S. Statutes at Large, Indian Treaties, Vol. 7, pp. 366-68.
  2. Amer. State Papers, Military Affairs, Vol. 6, p. 1031.
  3. Ibid. Vol. 6, p. 672.
  4. Ibid. Vol. 6, p. 623.

chief executive of the United States after having guaranteed to the Creek Indians the right to remain if they wished in the territory which they had ceded to the United States; in short, the hour had come for the Indian to go, and thus he complains:

"Still to the white man's wants there is no end:  
He said, Beyond these hills I will not come,  
But to the western seas his hands extend,  
Ere yet his promise dies upon his tongue."<sup>1</sup>

It has been seen that the Federal government had placed agents among the Creek Indians to persuade them to give up their homes here for homes west of the Mississippi. These agents necessarily had to be men of considerable diplomatic ability; but this does not argue that they were conscientious in the methods used to persuade the Indians to go, for the Indians were led to believe that the agents in whom they had implicit confidence would superintend their removal as soon the Indians had ceded their lands to the Federal government and had attended to their personal affairs. It seems that the government had at first personally undertaken the work of the removal of the Creeks, and that this method was very satisfactory to the Indians, for they were persuaded to go because of the confidence that they had in the agents who were, as the Indians believed, to conduct them. But later it was found that the Indians could be removed cheaper by private contract, and this method was resorted to. The Indians objected to this change of plan, for rumors had come back that the contractors had in mind their own selfish interests and many of the Indians rebelled on this point. The

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1. Drake's Indians of North America, p. 437.

leading chiefs, including Opothleyoholo and Little Doctor, addressed a letter to the President, a part of which is as follows: "We have in our former communications spoken to our father of the new method of emigrating his Creek children by contract. . . . When we came to the determination to never again rekindle our council fires on the east side of the Mississippi, it was under the belief that we were to be removed under the superintendence of Colonel Hogan; and we now say to you in the undisguised language of sincerity that our people are opposed to and protest against being removed by the present emigrating company; but beseech our great father to say to our people that they can go, as they formerly expected to go, with Colonel Hogan and under his control. And we vouch that our people will take their line of march and go without a murmur; but we fear, unless the plan of emigration is changed, our people will be found lingering behind in a state of degradation for years to come, for a large majority of the nation have already expressed a determined opposition to the present contractors."<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding this complaint, it does not appear that the contract method of removal was entirely abandoned; though in some way the hostile feeling was abated, for we find Opothleyoholo addressing the President the following note, dated April 14, 1836:

"We are now all ready for removing---nothing prevents but having the right of selling our land. Last fall (we) many of us would have moved, but the situation of our land prevented it."<sup>2</sup> It seems at this point that the chief hindrance to the removal

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1. Amer. State Papers, Mil. Affairs, Vol. 6, p. 685.  
 2. Ibid. Vol. 6, pp. 722, 782; Vol. 7, p. 954.

lay' in the unsettled conditions arising out of the disputes over the lands allotted the Indians by the Treaty of Cusseta in 1832, and not out of any serious objection to the contract method of removal.

It may be well to examine the situation of the Indian lands in order to ascertain the nature of the trouble. We have already discussed the situation according to the treaty of Fort Jackson, and have located the territory in question; and now let us investigate the provisions of the Treaty of Cusseta (1832). We read from the second article as follows:

"When the treaty has been ratified, and when the lands have been surveyed, ninety principal chiefs of the Creek tribe are to be allowed to select one section each, and every other head of a Creek family is to be allowed to select one half section each, which tract shall be reserved from sale for their use for a term of five years, unless sooner disposed of by them, and twenty sections shall be selected under the direction of the President for the orphan children of the Creeks, and divided and retained or sold for their benefit as the President may direct."

In addition to these lands the sixth article provided that the Creek tribe was to have twenty nine sections to be allotted to members of the tribe as they say fit. Article IV states that "At the end of five years, all the Creeks entitled to these selections and desirous of remaining shall receive patents therefor in fee simple from the United States." Article V provided that all intruders were to be driven out, and that all settlers

were to be removed as soon as their crops were gathered until their lands were surveyed and the Indians had made their selections. The exact language is: "Intruders shall be kept off of these selections for five years, or until sold to white people."<sup>1</sup> The white people not only refused to remove, but at once began to flock into the newly acquired territory, and the attempt on the part of the Federal deputy marshall to restrain the occupation of the land and to remove the settlers came very near to causing open hostilities between the Federal and the state governments. The danger growing out of this situation was averted, however, by the timely mission of Francis Scott Key to Alabama.<sup>2</sup>

The treaty had hardly been officially stamped before immigrants began to come into this territory in great numbers, not only from adjoining counties in the state, but from several of the older states; and by December of 1832, thousands had settled in East Alabama. Immigrants continued to come, and the Indians for more than a year addressed letters of complaint to the War Department in regard to violations of the terms of the Treaty of Cusseta. Jeremiah Austill, United States marshall, was ordered to cause the removal of all intruders, with military force if necessary. Hardeman Owen, Commissioner of Roads and Revenue in Russell county, had settled upon some of the lands selected by the Indians, and had committed other outrages (so it

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1. U. S. Statutes at Large, Indian Treaties, Vol. 7, pp. 366-68; Brewer's Alabama, pp. 50-51.

2. Brewer's Alabama, p. 51, note; Alabama Historical Society, Publications of, Vol. 4, p. 153; Pickett's Alabama, (Owen's Ed.) pp. 686-87.

was alleged by the Indians), and when an attempt was made to arrest him he resisted and was killed by Federal soldiers who had been sent to take him. There was much dissatisfaction over the manner in which Austill handled the situation, and soon excitement rose to fever heat. Governor Gayle addressed a letter to the War Department in which he denied that the settlers had encroached upon the rights of the Indians, and claimed that "the sovereignty of a state implies the control of all the people within her borders." Mr. Cass replied that the provisions of the Treaty of Cusseta would be rigidly enforced by the War Department. Governor Gayle laid the correspondence before the General Assembly when it met in November, 1833, but no action was taken, due to the fact that Francis Scott Key of Maryland, Federal Commissioner, had arrived in Tuscaloosa, then the capital of the state.

Mr. Key lost no time, but went to work in true diplomatic style by first paying his compliments to the chief women of the city. On December 16, 1833, he addressed a formal communication to Governor Gayle, stating the terms that the President had authorized him to make; in substance these: That the surveys of the reservations allotted to the Indians in the ceded territory would be completed by the 15th day of January, 1834, and that the government would make no removal of settlers from the land outside of these Indian allotments. Furthermore, the intruders upon the Indian reservations would have the power to purchase the Indian titles to the lands which they occupied.

Mr. Key's compromise was satisfactory to Governor Gayle and the people of the state. But the settlement of the controversy between the state and Federal authorities did not adjust the

friction between the Indians and the intruding whites, and by the spring of 1836 the long-endured wrongs broke into open rebellion.

It was charged that unscrupulous white men worked to defraud the Indians out of the lands allotted them, and that this precipitated the Creek outbreak in 1836.. We have examined a letter from Colonel John B. Hogan to General Gibson that gives some light on this point, and which we quote:

"Mobile, Alabama, April 3, 1835.

"I am told that they will give an Indian ten dollars to personate another Indian who possesses a valuable piece of land; they carry him before the agent, who opens his book and finds an Indian of that name entitled to a piece of land, and the agent asks if he is the same man; the reply is in the affirmative. 'Are you willing to sell to this man?' 'Yes.' 'What are you to get?' 'Four hundred dollars.' The money is laid down, and the agent hands it to the Indian who retires; others outside the door receive back the money, all but ten dollars, and if they cannot get it in any other way they take the Indian into another house and there choke him until he gives it up. Perhaps the very next day the proper Indian comes with another person to sell his land, and he is found on the book to have already sold it. The agent does not know him, but tells him to bring proof that he was not there before; this proof must be white proof. They go to the man who has obtained the land, and he pretends that he does not know one Indian from another, and asserts that he bought from a man who called himself that name. .... And thus the poor devils are robbed without a chance of

redress. .... It is to the interest of such men to detain the Indians where they can plunder them with impunity."<sup>1</sup>

Colonel Hogan spent several months in the heart of the Creek country, and then addressed a letter from first hand knowledge to General Gibson, dated Fort Mitchell, February 1, 1836, which is as follows:

"I have no doubt but the Indians have been most grossly sinned against; that they are hostile I have never believed; but that they have ample cause of complaint I do know; and I do verily believe that this excitement has been formed by designing men and that with the hope of putting a stop to the investigations now going on."<sup>2</sup>

As we view the contents of the foregoing letters, we do not wonder that the Indians resorted to the only means of redress open to them. The gross injustice done them in the sale of their lands, coupled with innumerable other crimes against them, once more brought the Creek warrior into prominence.

The Indians began their depredations about Fort Mitchell in the second week of May, 1836, and soon the whole of that part of the Creek country was in a high state of excitement. Men, women, and children were butchered in the most cruel manner known to savage practices; homes were burned, farms laid waste, and the live stock and negroes were either killed or driven off. Those who escaped the Indians made their way across the Chattahoochie to Columbus, Georgia, for safety.<sup>3</sup> In a short while the

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1. Amer. State Papers, Military Affairs, Vol. 6, p. 722.
  2. Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 749.
  3. Niles' Register, Vol. 14, pp. 205-06.

white population had abandoned the country to the Indians, and they proceeded to destroy everything without opposition. The authorities became alarmed, and the President, through the Secretary of War, addressed a letter to Governor Clay of Alabama, informing him of the appointment of General Jessup to the command of the United States troops in Alabama, and calling upon the governor to aid in every possible way to suppress the Indian outrages.<sup>1</sup> General Brantley, who was in charge of the state troops at Montgomery, informed Governor Clay of the conditions in the Creek country, and advised his immediate presence with at least 5,000 men. The governor left that very afternoon for Montgomery, where, on May 20, 1836, he made a proclamation to the Creeks, threatening them with the severity of the law should they conceal any of the war party. Governor Clay then held a conference with Cpothleyoholo in the old Montgomery Hall, and prevailed upon him to aid in the prosecution of the war with some 1,500 warriors. The friendly Indians, through Governor Clay's influence, played no little part in hastening the conflict to a final conclusion.<sup>2</sup>

The military authorities formed definite plans against the enemy, whose strength was variously estimated by well-informed persons to be from 1,500 to 5,000.<sup>3</sup> As early as February 18, 1836, Governor Clay was called upon to furnish a

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1. Amer. State Papers, Indian Affairs, Vol. 6, p. 1033.  
2. Flag of the Union, May 15, June 4 & 25, July 23, 1836.  
3. Amer. State Papers, Military Affairs, pp. 951-52; Mobile Register, Nov. 16, 1836; Flag of the Union, June 4, 1836.

regiment of infantry to be mustered into the United States service, and to serve as a "regiment of observation" upon the Creek Indians; but when they assembled at Vernon, Autauga county, there was no one to take command and equip them. So they for the most part returned to their homes.<sup>1</sup> Governor Clay appointed General Benjamin Patterson commander-in-chief of the state troops, and instructed him to bring down with him from north Alabama whatever troops were available.<sup>2</sup> President Jackson first appointed General Jessup to the chief command of the United States forces in the Creek country; but later he placed General Scott in command.<sup>3</sup> The troops of Georgia, under Generals McDougal and Sanford, were to guard the boundary along the Chattahoochie, to prevent any Creeks from escaping to the Seminoles and to cooperate with Alabama and Federal troops under General Jessup, operating from the lower part of the Creek country. Troops had already been placed along the southern border of the Creek country from the headwaters of Conecuh to Erwinton (now Eufaula) on the Chattahoochie, to intercept any communication between the Creeks and the Seminoles from that point. The southern line was further strengthened by a force under General Moore, stationed at Fort Henderson on the Pike county line. A small force was early assembled at Line creek, near Montgomery, but it is not definitely

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1. Flag of the Union, Feb. 20, 1836.

2. Ibid. May 24, 1836; Pickett's Alabama, (Owen's Ed.) pp. 651-52.

3. Amer. State Papers, Indian Affairs, Vol. 6, p. 1033;  
Niles' Register, Vol. 14, p. 257.

known just what part they played in the war. There were about 2,500 whites and friendly Indians stationed at Tuskegee, headquarters of the army, to act as circumstances directed. The Indians were hemmed in on all sides, and being poorly organized, they were soon forced to surrender.<sup>1</sup> There was no encounter that savored of a battle except the one that took place on Pea river in Pike county. There was a party of about three hundred Indians who were making their way from the old homes on the Tallapoosa to join the Seminoles in Florida; and it seems that they had committed some depredations near Midway, in Barbour county, while on their way. General William Welborn was sent to capture them. The conflict was fierce, but the Indians were soon dispersed to the swamps with a loss of about seventy three warriors killed and several wounded. The loss of the whites was slight compared with that of the Indians.<sup>2</sup>

Shortly after the war broke out, the Indians began to surrender, and by July 15 most of them had been made prisoners.<sup>3</sup> By June 20, Neahmathla had been captured, and Neahmico had joined the friendly Indians under Echorhargo, thus leaving the war party virtually without a leader. In a letter from General Patterson to Governor Clay, dated June 22, 1836, he said: "On yesterday we were informed that they would make an unconditional surrender of their prisoners and arms, restore the negroes and horses they had taken, and throw them-

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1. Niles' Register, Vol. 14, pp. 206 & 321; Flag of the Union, May 15, 28, June 18, 25, & July 23, 1836; Mont. Advertiser, June 11, 1836; Pickett's Alabama, (Owen's Ed.) p. 652.

2. Pickett's Ala., (Owen's Ed.) p.690; Brewer's Ala., p.505; Brown's Alabama, p. 170.

3. Niles' Register, Vol. 14, pp. 329 & 334; Flag of the Union, June 4, 25, July 2, 9, 1836.

selves upon the clemency of the state.

"On this day, about 300 warriors and 560 women and children came to our camp and complied with the terms proposed. Others have gone to Fort Mitchell, and still others to friendly camps; and from all information that we can obtain there are not more than one hundred straggling parties who have evinced their intention to resist the peaceful operation of the laws."<sup>1</sup>

George L. Medlock, a private soldier, wrote in a letter dated at Tuskegee, July 1, 1836, that "I visited today Echee Hagos' camp, where there are about 2,500 Indians. I got there about three hours after the surrender of the half-breed, Jim Henry, who, it is said, has caused more mischief than every other Indian. I saw him start under guard for headquarters at Camp Long about twenty-five miles from here. Just before he left, he requested permission to dress. He went off for a short time, and returned a fashionably dressed gentleman. His clothes were of the finest broadcloth and casimer. He looked more like a courtier than a warrior. . . . They say that he is about twenty years of age, and I have no doubt that it is true."<sup>2</sup>

"The Creek War Concluded," was a welcome headline that appeared in The Flag of the Union July 9, 1836. The full contents were read with even more interest. An extract is as

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1. Flag of the Union, June 25, July 2, 1836.

2. Ibid.:

follows: "We have the gratifying intelligence to announce the termination of the war with the Creek Indians. . . . . All the hostile Indians with few exceptions have submitted unconditionally and without resistance to the Alabama troops and have given up their arms." At last the war was over, and by the end of the year the Creek territory was cleared of its unfortunate but troublesome population.<sup>1</sup>

The number of men enlisted in the military service for the Creek war of 1836 is not definitely known; nor is there any available information giving the exact number of the Creeks to be removed from the territory. In regard to the number of soldiers enlisted we have an official statement for the month of June, which is as follows: Regulars, 1,103; militia, 9,055; total, 10,158.<sup>2</sup> It can be seen that almost the entire strength of the army lay in the militia, but this does not argue that Alabama furnished all of them, for we have good authority that Georgia and Tennessee furnished at least 3,000 troops.<sup>3</sup> As for the number of Creek Indians to be removed, we can only give the numbers approximately. The Mobile Register of September 14, 1836, quoting the Columbus Sentinel, states that "upwards of 13,000 souls are all on their way to the far West. Jim Boy and his warriors, with a few others from the lower towns, all under the command of Colonel Love, go to Florida, leaving their families at home until

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1. Flag of the Union, July 2, 1836; Pickett's Ala. (Owen's Ed.) p. 690; Mobile Register, Nov. 16, 1836.

2. Amer. State Papers, Mil. Affairs, Vol. 7, p. 354.

3. Niles' Register, pp. 257 & 321; Flag of the Union, July 23, 1836.

they return, when they will put off for the same destination." Again the same paper, quoting from the Arkansas Gazette, states that "about 15,000 of the tribe are now travelling the state from east to west, makinh an almost continuous line from Rock Roe to our western boundaries." Governor Clay's message to the state legislature is in part as follows: "Those belonging to the hostile party----three thousand or more----were promptly removed at the close of hostilities ..... and since thirtieth of August about 14,000 of the friendly party, making in all about 17,000, have been removed. None remain except the warriors who are aiding against the Seminoles in Florida, and their families,---about 4,000. These will follow at close of campaign."<sup>1</sup> These figures, which are probably the most reliable, give 21,000 Creek Indians to be emigrated to the West. But this number does not include some 2,500 Creeks who settled in the Cherokee territory about 1835. We can only suppose in the absence of good authority that they emigrated to the West with the Cherokees in 1838.<sup>2</sup>

The actual transit of such a mass of humanity, however well arranged and supervised, necessarily carried with it considerable suffering; but by the terms of the contract with the agents for the removal, much of the evil that otherwise would have attended the emigration was prevented. The price

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1. DuBose's Alabama, p. 125; Brown's Alabama, p. 170; Pickett's Alabama, (Owen's Ed.) p. 691; Mobile Register, Nov. 16, 1835.
  2. DuBose's Alabama, p. 125; Brown's Alabama, p. 170; Pickett's Alabama, (Owen's Ed.) p. 691.

paid per head for the removal was twenty dollars, and of course the government had to have some way to check up the heartless contractors, to see that the Indians were not mistreated on the journey, and that they were all delivered to the charge of the proper authorities on their arrival in the Indian Territory. The terms of the contract provided that the Indians when traveling across the country were not to be forced to travel more than twelve miles a day on an average, that wagons were to be provided for their baggage, small children, and such of the old women as were unable to walk; and that officers of the government, independent of the contractors, should deliver the Indians to the charge of the contractors, superintend the emigrating parties, and certify to the muster roll on reaching their destination in the Indian Territory.<sup>1</sup> The Indians were collected into small parties of — from 1,000 to 3,500 in number, and emigrated by various routes. Sometimes they were taken by steamboats down the Alabama river to Mobile, thence to New Orleans, and then up the Mississippi and its tributaries to the Indian Territory.<sup>2</sup> But by far the greater number were taken over land by various routes. There is a reference which states that a party of Creek Indians left Wetumpka on December 6, 1835, and proceeded by way of Tuscumbia, Memphis, and the Arkansas river, landing in the Indian Territory February 2, 1836. This same reference

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1. Niles' Register, Vol. 14, p. 348; Mobile Reg. Dec. 14, 1836; Amer. State Papers, Military Affairs, Vol. 6, p. 776-77, & 782.

2. Niles' Reg. Vol. 14, p. 329 & 348.

mentions that a party of emigrant Creek Indians passed through Tuscaloosa on their way to the West in 1835.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Thomas Maxwell states that a party of Creek Indians, headed by Opothleoholo, passed through Tuscaloosa in 1835, and we might readily conclude that this was the same party referred to above, but for the fact that there is ample evidence that Opothleoholo was an active figure in the Creek Territory during the Creek war of 1836, and that he headed a party of 2,700 Indians on their way to the West during the month of July of the same year.<sup>2</sup> In view of the different authorities that we have examined, we believe that Mr. Maxwell was mistaken, and that he really meant to state that Opothleoholo led his party through Tuscaloosa in the summer of 1836.

There is something pathetic in the passing of the Creek Indian from his native land! I fancy that I see him taking a one last look at the scenes which bore the highest charm to him----the graves of his ancestors and his hunting grounds--- before he turns his face westward. Fortunately, however, we do not have to depend upon our imagination altogether to get a glimpse of the passing Indian, for many writers have preserved these scenes for us as they actually occurred. One writer states that "from Fort Mitchell the contractors for the removal of the Creeks have started 1,600 Indians, men, women and children, for the Arkansas. The hostile warriors, handcuffed, marched in double file, a long train of wagons conveying

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1. Amer. St. Papers, Mil. Affairs, pp. 772-74.

2. Tuscaloosa, its Origin and Name, p. 65; Am. St. Papers, Mil. Affairs, Vol. 7, p. 954.

the children and such of the women as were unable to walk followed in their wake!"<sup>1</sup> Under date of July 20, 1836, the New Orleans Bulletin records that "There are some 1,500 Indians here awaiting further transportation. There are some fine looking young warriors among them. There are Indian damsels, too, who need only the culture of a more refined state of society to create no little envy among even more polished dames, the observed of all observers!"<sup>2</sup> The Arkansas Gazette of September, 1836, mentions that several hundred Indians passed there on their way to their new homes. "They presented a most pitiable scene---old men and women, dirty, haggard, and travel-worn from the long journey, drooped their way westward. Even the youth and children bore a distressed look. This party suffered considerable privation for the want of food and other supplies----and what they succeeded in procuring was at enormous prices----the Indians lost several hundred horses of an inferior kind."<sup>3</sup> But the scenes that are probably of greatest interest to the people of Alabama are those recorded as having taken place about Tuscaloosa, then the capital of Alabama. Dr. Josiah H. Foster records from memory that "In their emigration westward, some of them camped where the University Observatory now stands. With other boys, I had visited their camp and bought from them a few trinkets. We had gone again to visit another camp across the river, where we saw some boys and girls---fifty or more---between the ages of twelve and twenty years, not clad in modern bathing suits, but all 'in the dress that nature gave

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1. Niles' Reg. Vol. 14, p. 348. 2. Ibid. Vol. 14, p. 382.  
 3. Mobile Register, Sept. 14, 1836.

them, or in undress uniform,' all paddling like ducks in the creek. I had seen Opothleoholo and his lithe and graceful daughters and heard the great chief talk in eloquent pathos of their grief on leaving their hunting grounds and the graves of their fathers."<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Virginia Clay-Clopton, after having held a conference with Opothleoholo in Washington during his visit at the head of a delegation of Creeks in 1854-55, says: "While I was still a child, I had seen this now aged warrior. At that time 5,000 Cherokees and Choctaws<sup>2</sup>, passing West to their new reservations beyond the Mississippi, had rested in Tuscaloosa, where they camped for several weeks. The occasion was a notable one. All the city turned out to see the Indian youth dash through the streets on their ponies. They were superb horsemen, and their animals were as remarkable. Many of the latter, for a consideration, were left in the hands of the emulous white youth of the town. Along the river bank, too, carriages stood, crowded with sightseers watching the squaws as they tossed their young children into the stream that they might learn to swim. Very picturesque were the roomy vehicles of that day, as they grouped themselves along the shores of the Black Warrior, their capacity tested to the fullest by the belles of the little city, arrayed in dainty muslins and bonnetted in the sweet fashions of the times."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Tuscaloos News, July 20, 1919.

2. Mrs. Clay-Clopton probably meant Creek Indians.

3. A Belle of the Fifties, pp. 108-09.

The Indians for the most part had been removed over the various routes by the close of the year 1836, and the soil of the Creek country was forever freed from the fear of an Indian uprising. Only Pickett is worthy to pay them one last tribute:

"Brave natives of Alabama! To defend that soil where the Great Spirit gave you birth, you sacrificed your peaceful savage pursuits! You fought the invaders until more than half your warriors were slain! The remnant of your warlike race yet lives in the distant Arkansas. You have been forced to quit one of the finest regions upon earth, which is now occupied by Americans. Will they, in some dark hour, when Alabama is invaded, defend this soil as bravely and as enduringly as you have done? Posterity may be able to reply.<sup>1</sup>

The struggle is over, and thus the Indian laments:

"I will go to my tent and lie down in despair;  
 I will paint me with black, and will sever my hair:  
 I will sit on the shores where the hurricane blows,  
 And reveal to the God of the Tempest my woes;  
 I weep for a season on bitterness fed,  
 For my kindred are gone to the mounds of the dead;  
 But they died not of hunger or wasting decay:  
 The steel of the white man has swept them away!"<sup>2</sup>

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1. Pickett's Alabama, (Owen's Ed.), p. 611.
  2. Drake's Indians of North America, p. 343.

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