

Volume XXXIII

January-April 1955

Numbers 3 and 4

The
FLORIDA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

OSCEOLA DOUBLE NUMBER

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Office of publication, Tallahassee, Florida
Published quarterly by

THE FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Gainesville, Florida

OSCEOLA: PORTRAITS, FEATURES, AND DRESS

by JOHN M. GOGGIN

The most colorful figure of the unpopular Second Seminole War, Osceola, the Seminole war leader, early caught the imagination of the American public.¹ As a result, although we lack details of his early history, we have a good amount of data for his military career, and numerous comments on his appearance. He was the subject of several original sketches and paintings, as well as numerous engravings taken from them. However, differences between some of these "from life" renderings, raise the question of exactly what Osceola did look like!

Because of this problem we will examine the various portraits, paying especial attention to the less well-known examples and concentrating on the work of J. R. Vinton who probably drew the first sketch of Osceola in May, 1837 at Fort Mellon. In addition, will be described a number of personal objects, including ornaments, belonging to Osceola which aid in establishing the authenticity of detail of some of the paintings.²

An excellent pioneer historical study of the portraits of Osceola has laid the foundations in this field (McCarthy, 1949). Portraits not available to that author will be discussed in this paper, but we will not attempt to exhaustively review those discussed by McCarthy.

1. This paper represents a contribution from the research program of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Florida. The author gratefully acknowledges the aid and cooperation of various museum staffs who have aided in his broader program of Southeastern ethnohistory and Seminole culture in particular. Specific recognitions of aid will be given in the appropriate places in this paper.

I am grateful to W. C. Sturtevant for reading this manuscript and making many worthwhile suggestions.

2. A general survey of the Seminoles may be found in Neill (1952) (see *Bibliography* following) while Boyd (1951) presents an excellent account of the war during the period of Osceola's participation, and in the present issue of this *Quarterly* gives a general account of his life (Boyd, 1955).

The Portraits
The Work of J. R. Vinton

John Rogers Vinton (1801-1847) served as a captain in the United States Army during the Second Seminole War. During this period he met Osceola at least once and perhaps later. The known meeting was at the Armistice at Fort Mellon on Lake Monroe in May, 1837. He subsequently appears as the leader of an expedition across the Everglades into the Big Cypress in 1842 (Sprague, 1948, p. 380). Following his Florida campaign, Vinton played a conspicuous part in the Mexican War - dying in battle at Vera Cruz, March 22, 1847 (Anon., 1907, 370-371).

Early Army experiences in topographical work may have offered training in the draftsmanship he displayed later. During his Florida experiences Vinton drew at least three, and perhaps more sketches of Osceola, as well as several landscapes. Writing in 1840 Vinton states that "My Osceola is on thick pasteboard and too large to send by mail. . ." This original has never been found.

Vinton's 1838 Portrait. Joseph E. McCarthy (1951) in his valuable contribution to Osceola iconography discusses an Osceola sketch initialed by Vinton and dated 1845, and bearing the notation "during the Armistice, May 1837." He speculated whether this was drawn from an original 1837 sketch or whether the 1845 example was the first Vinton sketch.

It now seems clear that there was an original full-length sketch made in 1837. Although it is now lost, there does exist a very rare print which can only have been based on such a sketch (Plate 2).³ Actually we don't know whether this was done from the sketch Vinton mentions in 1840 or from an-

3. Copy in the P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida.

other smaller copy which would have been sent to the engraver in New York.

This depicts a full-length figure entitled "Osceola" standing on a lake or stream bordered by cypress and cabbage palm trees. The head is in profile but the body is in three-quarter view. Print area measures $8\frac{1}{4}$ by $10\frac{1}{8}$ inches on a cropped sheet.

The accompanying legend states "Sketched from life at Lake Monroe, Florida, while he was on parole at that post in 1837 by Capt. J. R. Vinton of the United States Army." J. H. Bufford was the delineator and lithographer. It was "Published by Wm. W. Hooper, 126, Nassau St., N. Y.," and "Entered according to act of Congress by Wm. W. Hooper in the year 1838 in the Clerk's Office of the Southern District of New York." ⁴

Osceola is dressed in a typical Indian hunting shirt of the period which reaches to the knees. It is characterized by long sleeves and a ruffle across the shoulders and chest. Moccasins cover his feet and are met by tight fitting leggings fastened by a row of small buttons on the outside of the leg. These are supported by tied garters which seem to have a light design on a dark background. Another pair of garters seem to secure the junction of moccasin and legging. A scarf and four crescent gorgets are suspended from the neck and a woven decorated belt, supporting a knife and sheath, encircles his waist. Long pendant earrings hang from his ears while two dark plumes are held in place at the back of his head by a loosely wrapped head band or turban. All in all, the costume is exactly what one could expect for the period.

The general body build seems to be correctly proportional, but the head is somewhat disharmonic. The ears appear too large but this lengthening may be due to long wearing of heavy earbobs. The face is characterized by a heavy chin and large nose, giving a coarser appearance than is found in most of

4. This has apparently only been reproduced in Mayo (1901).

Osceola's portraits. Whether this is Vinton's depiction or is due to the engraver is unknown. In any case this is a much more "Indian looking" portrait than many later examples.

Vinton's 1845 Portrait. The most publicized of the Vinton portraits, although actually known for only a few years, is the one previously mentioned and dated 1845.⁵ It was one of five pencil sketches prepared by Captain Vinton in 1845 at the request of a fellow officer of the Florida War, Dr. Jacob R. Motte. They were designed as illustrations to accompany Motte's book on the Seminole War. After more than a hundred years this work has finally been published and four surviving original sketches have been reproduced (Motte, 1953).

Of primary interest to us, is the portrait "Osceola at Lake Monroe during the Armistice, May 1837." It is signed J.R.V. - 1845.⁶ While in very much the same pose as the 1838 portrait the picture varies greatly in details. Legging and moccasins are not differentiated and the buttons are on the front of the leg. Garters are very carelessly depicted and quite unrecognizable as to form; the same is true with the belt.

The hunting shirt is radically different. It is short sleeved (a feature not seen in any other contemporary shirt) and the top ruffle covers the shoulders like epaulets and does not extend across the chest. The four silver crescent gorgets are present but the earrings are lacking, while the turban and plumes are essentially similar. Additional items are a rifle in Osceola's right hand and a shoulder pouch.

An even greater difference can be seen in the head. It is much better proportioned but more European and delicate in line.

Because of these differences one might suspect that the 1845 drawing was made from memory without the aid of his

5. Original drawing is in the collection of Mark F. Boyd, Tallahassee.

6. This portrait has been reproduced in Cash (1945), McCarthy (1949), Motte (1953), and as a frontispiece in *Florida Affaire* a reprint edition of Boyd (1951) prepared by the Florida Board of Parks and Historic Memorials.

original sketch. Also, as we see in a letter of Vinton's quoted further on, the Captain felt that some embellishment of the natural Seminole costume and appearance was desirable if one would present their "vesture by any wiles of taste." However, Jacob Motte (1953, p. 141) states that "I can testify to [this portrait] being the most correct likeness ever taken of him. The face is a remarkably striking likeness, as he appeared previous to his capture."

Vinton's undated drawing. An undated and unsigned pencil sketch attributed to J. R. Vinton (Plate 1) and undoubtedly drawn by him, is in the files (Photo print no. 18412) of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York.⁷ The small sketch (measuring approximately $2\frac{3}{4}$ by 3 inches) is mounted above two neatly cutout cards bearing the following notes:

A correct likeness of Osceola the Seminole Chief engaged in the Florida War 1835, and taken prisoner by me under orders of Genl. Jessup[!], in October 1837.

Joseph M. Hernandez

Brigd. Gnl. Commd. E.F.M.

[rubric]

This drawing is a bust of Osceola depicted in the same shirt and with the same ornaments as in the 1838 print. The delineation of the features falls between the 1838 and 1845 portraits but perhaps a little closer to the earlier example. A sketch close to this was undoubtedly used by J. M. Bufford in engraving the 1838 print.

The verification of this drawing as a likeness of Osceola by General Joseph A. Hernandez is of considerable interest. Under orders from General Jessup this commanding officer of the Florida Militia was the man who seized Osceola under a white

7. I am grateful to Mr. E. K. Burnett, Assistant Director, for the opportunity to study this drawing and for the photograph reproduced here.

flag at Camp Peyton. He should have had some familiarity with Osceola.

This sketch or one closely similar seems to have been the source of the engraving of Osceola made by "N. Orr and Richardson" of New York to illustrate Sprague's history of the Florida War (1848, opposite p. 101). In turn, a much cruder engraving derived from the same original or the first engraving, signed "N. Orr Co." is found in Giddings (1858).

Vinton's undated painting. There is at the present time a painting of Osceola in the possession of W. F. Tompkins, Richmond, Virginia. Little is known concerning this work, but intrinsic details and a letter * from Vinton to the present owner's grandfather indicate that Vinton was interested in this or a similar painting. The letter addressed to Lt. C. Tompkins, U.S. Artillery, Fredericktown, Md. is as follows (with two final paragraphs not relating to this subject deleted):

St. Augustine

July 18th, 1840

My dear friend

It is some weeks since I had the pleasure to receive your letter of the 28th April. Interested as I certainly was, in the subject of young Hubard and his design of an historic painting illustrative of Indian characters, I have endeavored to provide something "pour servir," as the French say, in the way of sketches to aid him in the matter of costumes. My Osceola is on thick pasteboard and too large to send by mail, and as yet I have not had time to make up any thing worthy of Mr. Hubard's attention with my pencil. But I shall not lose sight of the subject, and by the time I come to the North may possibly have some sketches that will be at his service I shall certainly try to see him, & shall be proud to make his acquaintance.

* The author and the *Quarterly* express appreciation of the kindness of General Tompkins, of the Executive Committee of the Virginia Historical Society, for permission to publish this letter.

Suppose you & I concoct something, picturesque & striking, illustrative of some of the scenes we have witnessed here among the Indians! Hubbard [!] is just the man to paint & group & we (& you especially) have had opportunities of beholding some active scenes which are well worthy of being consigned to canvass. I am glad to find you so much interested in this beautiful art. There is none I doat on more. As to costume, my Oseola would serve Mr. H. but imperfectly as a guide or copy. You know how plain & vulgar the Seminoles dress in general & the artist must therefore borrow largely from his fancy if he wd. paint their vesture by any wiles of taste. On occasions of ceremony however there are certain peculiarities of costume which are seldom departed from. For instance The ostrich plumes which decorate the heads of the Chiefs. These are worn differently by different individuals. CoaHarjo wore his on the front part of his head and so did most of the other chiefs I saw, with certain modifications, - but Osceola was peculiar for wearing his always on the opposite side and hanging off to the rear, as I have drawn them. Then the gorget of 4 Or 5 silver crescents hanging from the neck over the breast, - then the red sash round the waist, - sometimes a silver band round the forehead - never the plumes I believe, or the gorgets. Still I know not whether these are imperative distinctions, or how far the privates are interdicted from indulging their passion for finery. I only recite what has happened to fall under my own observation.

....

....

I write in great haste, but believe me always,

Your attached friend
[signed] J. R. VINTON

Presumably Vinton must have supplied Mr. Hubbard or some other artist sketches of some sort. The figure is in the Vinton style, depicting Osceola sitting on the bank of a stream bordered by cabbage palms, prairies, and hammocks. The costume is basically the same as in the other Vinton pictures but much less precise. Whatever the sketches were like, the result, if not anthropologically accurate, is certainly "picturesque" as Captain Vinton desired.

Comparative Notes. In all of the works attributed to Vinton we can see a definite style. This is especially apparent in the treatment of his head. Then too, the clothing and accoutrements are basically the same although there has been a tendency to simplify and generalize them from the 1838 print, through the 1845 drawing, and the undated painting. This tendency may have been due to working from memory or in an attempt to make Seminole clothing more attractive to the American audience as Vinton seemed to feel necessary.

The Fort Moultrie Portraits

After the capture of Osceola at Camp Peyton (south of St. Augustine), on October 21, 1837, he and other members of his party were imprisoned in St. Augustine. On January 1, 1838, the group was removed to Fort Moultrie, Charleston, South Carolina. Here the renowned war leader became the center of attention from all sides. At least two paintings and an unknown number of sketches were made of him in his most formal and decorative attire in the short weeks before he died on January 30, 1838.

The Work of George Catlin. George Catlin (1796-1872) is perhaps the most famous of all painters of the American Indian.⁸ Between 1832 and 1840 he visited most of the Indian tribes east of the Rocky Mountains, compiling a major pictorial documentary record of portraits and scenes from Indian life.

8. A modern critique of his work is given by DeVoto (1947, p. 391-40), while Donaldson (1886) is the earliest full study.



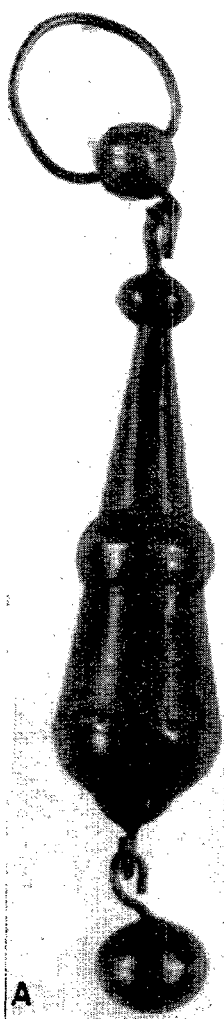
Plate 3. Finger-woven wool garter belonging to Osceola.
Scale 1/3.



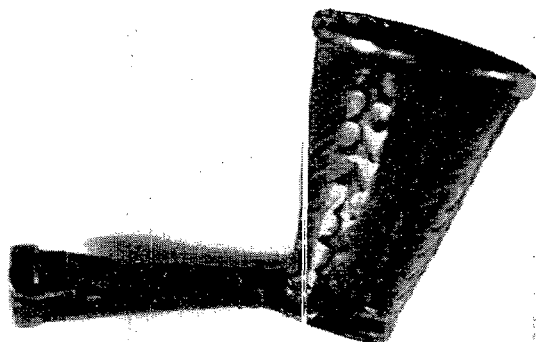
Plate 4. Osceola, Fort Moultrie, S. C. January, 1838. By Robert John Curtis.



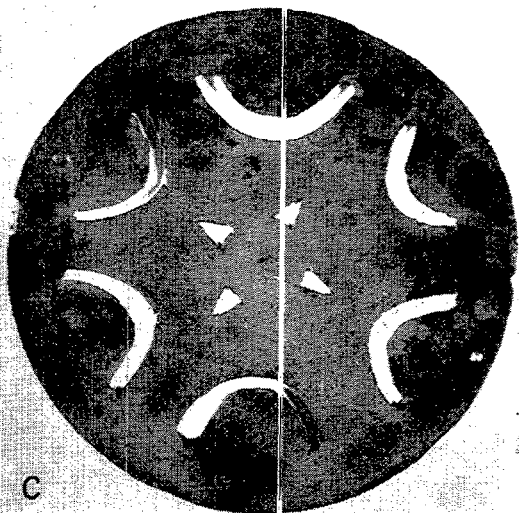
Plate 5. Osceola, Fort Moultrie, S. C. January 1838. By George Catlin.



A



B



C

Plate 6. Personal objects belonging to Osceola. A, Silver earbob; B, Brass pipe bowl; C, Circular silver gorget. Varying scales.

These were exhibited in the United States and abroad and used as the basis of engravings illustrating several successful books, the best known (Catlin, 1844) running into a number of editions.

George Catlin was invited to paint Osceola and the other Seminole leaders and arrived at Charleston on January 17. He immediately commenced work, and by January 25 he had finished two portraits of Osceola.

The first of these, no. 301 in Catlin's catalog, is a waist length portrait showing him with his usual costume, and in addition wearing three strands of beads of different types and a peculiar shoulder sash which has no counterpart in Seminole or Southeastern art (Plate 5).⁹ The design of alternating leaves and diamonds appears to have been formed by white beads sewn on a cloth or leather background. Despite the uniqueness of this sash Osceola probably wore it, as Catlin explicitly states that he painted Osceola exactly as he saw him. Moreover, a group of officers, including Captain Morrison signed a statement January 26 that "the Indians sat or stood in costume precisely in which they are painted, and that the likenesses are remarkably good" (Coe, 1898, p. 108).

The second portrait, no. 308 in Catlin's catalog, is perhaps much better known, if not in the original, in terms of prints and prints derived from copies. This is unfortunate because Catlin's own print of this is one of his poorer pieces of work.

In speaking of this portrait Catlin (1844:2, p. 219) says:

I have painted him precisely in the costume in which he stood for his picture, even to a string and a trinket. He wore three ostrich feathers in his head and a turban made of a vari-colored cotton shawl - and his dress was chiefly

9. This is an often reproduced picture. Swanton (1946, pl. 45, 1) erroneously attributed it to King and derives his illustration from McKenney and Hall. They never used this portrait. The present illustration is used by courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution.

of calicoes, with a handsome bead sash or belt around his waist, and a rifle in his hand" (Catlin, 1844:2, p. 219).

Here again we find Osceola wearing his usual costume and accoutrements, but with some additions (see illustration on this cover).¹⁰ A shot pouch (made of skin ?), powder horn and rifle are added and over the hunting shirt he wears an open jacket. He now appears wearing what were probably silver bracelets tied with long ribbons or wool yarn.

Of the two portraits this is the most dramatic but is by far the poorer and the engraving is below Catlin's usual quality (Catlin, 1844:2, pl. 298). There is a very distinctive quality of "stringyness" about this due to the lines of the garments and the quality of the hanging fringe. This makes it easy to recognize the source of many later copies.

Catlin apparently was very much interested in the work he did at Fort Moultrie and exhibited considerable pride in the details and accuracy of his work. However, in his enthusiasm he makes what very likely is a mistake which has been perpetuated by many writers. He stated in a newspaper article (Foreman, 1953, p. 357) in reference to Osceola that "His portrait has never yet been painted." As we will see, considering the Curtis portrait, Osceola was painted shortly before Catlin's arrival.

The Curtis Portrait. There exists at the present time in the Charleston (South Carolina) Museum a small portrait of Osceola done in oil on canvas (Plate 4).¹¹ Unfortunately few details are known about the circumstances under which this painting was made. It is, in the writer's opinion, the finest depiction of Osceola. Museum data simply state that this was "Painted January, 1838 by Robert John Curtis for Dr. Robert L. Baker during the subject's imprisonment at Fort Moultrie, S. C."

10. A good reproduction of the original may be found in Stovall (1954).

11. This photograph was furnished by, and is reproduced through the courtesy of, the Charleston Museum, Charleston, South Carolina.

Curtis seems to have been a native of Charleston but little is known about his life. He is reported to have studied in Philadelphia under Neagle and Sully. References to his work appear as early as 1833, but he never appears to have been very successful (Rutledge, 1949, p. 155-156).

The Osceola painting was apparently done by Curtis shortly after the chieftain's arrival in Charleston. The *Charleston Mercury* (Jan. 8, 1838) notes that:

A very striking portrait of Osceola by Mr. Curtis may be seen for a few days at Mr. Bakers in Broad Street. The artist has given, with great fidelity, the intelligent and melancholy countenance which distinguishes the chief.

An account in another contemporary newspaper states that in this portrait:

The artist has been completely successful in delineating his features and cast of countenance. Any person who has ever seen the original will readily recognize the likeness.

It is possible that more than one example of an Osceola portrait by Curtis exists. The *Charleston Mercury* (Jan. 23, 1838) reports that:

Mr. R. J. Curtis respectfully announces to the public and all who are desirous to obtain a correct copy of the portrait of the famed Indian Chief Osceola or Powell that he will furnish copies at thirty dollars. . .

The existing painting, apparently the original, measuring 24 by 30 inches is obviously the work of a trained portrait painter, one of the forerunners of the group who during the middle nineteenth century were to give us our best depictions of the early American Indians (Ewers, 1949, pp. 233-234).¹²

12. As far as has been determined this has been reproduced only in Swanton (1946, Pl. 44) where it was slightly cropped on the right side.

Osceola is painted from the waist up. He wears the clothing that is depicted more or less accurately in all the Fort Moultrie portraits. Over a hunting shirt he wears a similar open jacket of flowered cotton (?), the so-called "medicine-man's coat" of the modern Seminole. A shawl hanging over the left shoulder and passing under the right arm is loosely knotted in front while a kerchief is tied around the neck. A figured cloth headband supports white and black plumes. Hanging from the ears are two long distinctive silver earbobs while three carefully depicted silver crescent gorgets are suspended from his neck. Over the right shoulder he wears a fingerwoven bead and wool sash with the white glass beads clearly shown. Another is seen tied around the waist. This has been tied in the back with the long wool fringe brought around to the front on top of the sash and tied again with the ends hanging loose.

While the face shows some European influence, either as a result of his possible mixed ancestry or due to the artist's rendition, there is also a strong Indian feeling with the cheek bones emphasized. The chin has a massive appearance seen in other Osceola portraits. From the intrinsic details this is probably the most authentic representation of Osceola's garments and ornaments, if not his features.

Several references are found in contemporary Charleston newspapers to a lithograph of Osceola made by William Keenan, another Charleston artist, in February 1838. Although based on the Curtis portrait it was a full-length figure. One newspaper describes it as follows:

The Indian chief is standing in full costume, upon the front beach of Sullivan's Island, the background being occupied by the Fort, and a part of the breakwater. The likeness is good, the drawing free and correct, and the *tout ensemble* strikingly graphic.

No copies of this work have been seen by the writer.

Portraits based on unknown sketches. During Osceola's detention at Fort Moultrie, it is reported that several artists "took likenesses of him, one of the finest of which is that taken for the War Department" (McKenney and Hall, 1934:2, p. 389). The originals of these have been lost, but prints, probably made from them, are known. Their main interest lies in their wide distribution over the years, some being reproduced in various editions of that classic work, *History of the Indian Tribes of North America* by McKenney and Hall.

Joseph E. McCarthy (1949) in his study considers these depictions in some detail, illustrating them with handcolored reproductions which are very close to the originals. Therefore, we will only consider certain points about each.

The first of the artists to be considered is the successful painter, Charles Bird King, who became an Indian portraitist for the War Department. The original portrait of Osceola, used to make the print in the first folio edition of McKenney and Hall (1838-1844), is generally attributed to King (McCarthy, 1949, p. 32). It is believed that in his War Department capacity he painted a portrait of Osceola based on a sketch by an unknown artist which was sent up from Charleston. However, editors of the most recent edition of McKenney and Hall (1934:2, p. 391) point out that there is no reference to such an original painting in the Rhees *Catalogue* of King paintings, nor is there in Ewers' (1954) list, and there is no example in the Harvard Peabody Museum collection of the copies of King's paintings made by Henry Inman.

In any case, the existing print is clearly derived from an original other than Catlin. Since most of the portraits in McKenney and Hall's work were done by King, there is a strong possibility that he also was the source of this one. Therefore

we will attribute this to King, with an awareness that conclusive proof is lacking.

Whatever the source was, this print seems to be one of the better Osceola portraits at least in details of costume, although the features are strongly European. The moccasins and leggings are typical, with buttons on the front, while the garters are the usual examples. The three crescent gorgets and the shoulder sash are typical, as is the belt worn in Osceola's usual fashion of tying in back and bringing the fringe around to the front. The turban and plumes also are similar to those found in other renderings. The pose with a rifle is similar to that in Catlin's portrait and the original sketch for this may well have been made while Catlin was painting. The one extraneous note in the picture are several Plains Indian tipis in the background.

Later quarto editions of McKenney and Hall, for example that of 1854, substituted another print of Osceola attributed to an unlocated painting by Robert Matthew Sully. He too had worked for the War Department and may have used the same sketches as King (McCarthy, 1949, p. 35). The prints are remarkably similar and for all practical purposes Sully's is a copy of King's with a general overall blurring of texture and details.

A third colored print which has gained wide circulation is one illustrating Brownell's *The Indian Races of North and South America*. It is attributed by McCarthy (1949, pp. 39-40) to S. A. Waldo and William Jewett, the former doing the head and the latter the body and costume. In this writer's opinion, this rather crude work, is derived completely from Catlin's print or original, rather than from original sketches. This is indicated by details depicted only by Catlin, such as silver bracelets with ribbon ties, and the general "stringyness" of the costume.

The "Death Mask" and the Collin bust. According to C. H. Coe (1898, p. 112-113) "a death-cast of the head and shoulders

of the dead chief [Osceola] was taken before burial; this is now in the Smithsonian Museum, Washington, D. C." In answer to recent inquiries that institution states that they do not have such a mask or any record of ever possessing it (communication, F. M. Setzler to Julien C. Yonge, Sept. 12, 1954). *

However, Dr. Setzler does note the presence of a plaster bust of Osceola modeled by Achille Collin "reputedly, in part after a painting by George Catlin made five days prior to Osceola's death, and, in part from a mask taken after his death at Fort Moultrie in 1838." The costume details are similar to Catlin's first portrait but the face is quite different.

- - - -

THE APPEARANCE OF OSCEOLA

In trying to determine which of the various portraits gives the best likeness of Osceola it is necessary to evaluate them in terms of intrinsic quality and to equate them with the many contemporary descriptions of Osceola himself. However, before we attempt that, it is perhaps best to briefly consider the broader problem of the appearance of Indians of the Eastern United States as they were depicted by Colonial and early American artists. This matter has arisen in many areas, and it has received some attention (Ewers, 1949; Weitenkamp, 1949).

*The *Charleston Mercury* (March 21, 1838) describes this cast interpreting certain aspects of Osceola's personality in the best phrenological tradition from the contour of his head:

"The cast, taken from Oseola, after death to be seen at Dr. Cohen's, will prove quite a treasure to the Phrenologists. The head is very fully developed in the forward and higher regions, exhibiting according to the system of their science, a great preponderance of the moral and intellectual over the animal. The large development of distinctiveness and combativeness is counterbalanced by a large organ of benevolence. The organ of music is defective, and we are not musicians enough to know whether in connection with this deficiency his preferring as he did the trombone, to all the other instruments at the theatre, corroborates or opposes the truth of phrenology. He preferred it for its greater noise, probably; and we are not sure whether noise is or is not music. Amativeness is not remarkable, philoprogenitiveness large, inhibiteness large, veneration very large. The outline of the forehead is perpendicular. It is altogether a very remarkable head, and the casts will be eagerly sought by Artists and men of science."

Racial Features in Early Indian Portraits

The remarkable European-like appearance of many of the Eastern Indians in early portraits has raised certain questions. Is this their true appearance or the result of depictions made by classically trained European artists? Some conclusions about this can be reached. It is quite clear that the drawings of the early Colonial period, while often correct in ethnographic detail, made no realistic effort to reproduce the facial features of the Indians. The work of such early men as Jacques Le Moyne in Florida and A. de Batz in Louisiana are good examples of such treatment. On the other hand, the classical treatment of Indian features, exemplified by the work of Benjamin West, is the other extreme.

Nevertheless, by the nineteenth century there were gifted portrait artists painting the Indians. Even in their work we find such an elusive European quality that the question does arise, again, did the Eastern Indians have a more European-like appearance. The late renowned physical anthropologist Earnest A. Hooton examined available portraits and early photographs of these Indians. He concluded that they probably did look more European than did the Indians of the western Plains (Hooton, 1933, pp. 152-153).

Therefore in evaluating the likenesses of Osceola let us keep in mind three points. First there was a tendency of many artists to give European features to their Indian subjects. Secondly, it seems clear that many of the Eastern Indians were somewhat more European-looking. And, third, we must remember the possibility that as often stated, Osceola was of mixed white and Indian ancestry.

Contemporary Descriptions of Osceola

While numerous descriptions of Osceola exist, in general they are of somewhat limited value, as they emphasize his character or personality rather than actual physical details.

Nevertheless, some data are available, and although in places contradictory, they tend to be consistent in many details.

One of the earliest descriptions, derived from a February, 1836 newspaper account is given by Foreman (1953, p. 328):

He is a half-breed - is about 6 feet high, of a spare frame, and has a "lean and hungry" look. At first sight you would suppose him feeble; but on a closer view, you will find him of a structure well knit and sinewy; his face is all vivacity and marked as it is with the worn lineaments of incessant thought and ever active passions, it is strikingly expressive.

From about the same time we have the description of M. M. Cohen (1836, p. 235):

His nose is Grecian at the base and would be perfectly Phidian but that it becomes slightly arched. There are indomitable firmness and withering scorn in the expression of his mouth - tho' the lips are tremulous from intense emotions, which seem ever boiling up within him.

Another eyewitness account is given by Jacob Motte (1953, pp. 140-141):

He was at the time of his capture about thirty five years old; and his person, rather below than above common height, was elegantly formed, with hands and feet effeminately small. He had a countenance expressive of much thought and cunning, and though when captured evidently sad and care-worn, the fire of his flashing eyes was unsubdued. His forehead was tolerably high, and cast in an intellectual mold - the upper portion which was generally concealed by his hair being worn low and hanging out in front expressed dignity and firmness, while the full arched brow indicated a man who thought much, and intensely. His eyes were black and piercing; and when

animated were full of dark fire, but when in repose they were softer than the soft eye of woman. His mouth, when relieved by a smile, wore an expression of great sweetness; - and his lips were chiseled with the accuracy of sculpture.

One of the last descriptions is that of George Catlin based on observations made shortly before Osceola's death (Catlin, 1844:2, p. 220):

In stature he is about at mediocrity, . . . ; in his face he is good looking; with rather an effeminate smile . . . ; and his general appearance and actions those of a full-blooded and wild Indian.

Sprague's description may or may not be based on personal observation. He says (Sprague, 1848, p. 101):

In stature, he was about five feet, eight inches, with a manly, frank, and open countenance.

McKenney and Hall give two descriptions of Osceola. The first (McKenney and Hall, 1934:2, p. 364) saying:

His European descent is said to have been distinctly indicated in his complexion and eyes, which were lighter than those of his people, as well as in his features and expression of his countenance.

Further on, basing their data on manuscript data from an Army officer they note (McKenney and Hall, 1934:2, p. 368):

He was of light frame, a little above common stature and finely formed, his complexion light, and the expression of his countenance cheerful and agreeable.

Discussion. In general the greatest similarity of all of these statements is their agreement that Osceola's personality was distinctive and pleasing. This winning personality is brought out again and again in other places. There are dissenting ac-

counts, though, such as Potter's (1836) but he seems to have been rather prejudiced.

In terms of physical details there seems also to be a general agreement that he had somewhat delicate and European-looking features characterized by their mobility. This expressiveness of his face seems to have struck many observers. The greatest variation in accounts is in his height given as average, below average, to above six feet, but this is something difficult to estimate. There does seem to be an agreement, too, that his build was light to average, in any case not heavy.

Conclusions

There appears to be enough data to indicate that the delicate, somewhat effeminate, and somewhat European appearance of Osceola as he is depicted by various artists is based on reality. Contemporary observations of his appearance confirm this.

In studying the existing portraits of Osceola we can conclude that only certain originals, *i.e.*, the undated Vinton drawing, (*Pl. 1*) the Curtis portrait, (*Pl. 4*) and the first Catlin portrait (*Pl. 5*) have any approach to reality. In the prints the engravers apparently took considerable freedom in their reproductions of Osceola's features with often very strange results.

Differences exist between the above mentioned portraits. These may be due in part to the artists' skill, the date of the work (in case of the Vinton versus the Curtis and Catlin portraits), or other factors. I believe, however, a significant factor was Osceola himself. He seems to have been an emotional person with a highly expressive face. To an artist, such a person would present numerous facets. It seems very likely that each of these depictions represents the author's response to Osceola's expressive character.

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PERSONAL BELONGINGS OF OSCEOLA

With few exceptions the costume and jewelry of Osceola

are typical of the Seminoles and closely related to those of the Creek and Yuchi. These three tribes form an Eastern unit in Southeastern art and material culture styles as compared to a Western group including Choctaw, Chickasaw, Alabama, and Koasati (Goggin, 1952).

Osceola seemed to have been proud of his finery, judging from contemporary reports; and after his death it apparently was sought as souvenirs by Army personnel. Grant Foreman (1953, p. 358) quotes a contemporary newspaper account as follows:

Capt. P. Morrison in command of the Indian guard sent to Maj. H. J. Hook Osceola's effects as follows: four black and two white ostrich feathers, large silk shawl used for head dress, a splendid belt made of ornamented beads, an Indian belt ornamented with beads, a blue guard made of beads, three silver gorgets, and a hairbrush with a glass mirror on the back.

Of this group of objects we have no trace at the present time. However, Arthur Woodward (personal communication, Sept. 10, 1954) tells me that he has seen silver gorgets attributed to Osceola. These then could have come from this group.

A second group of Osceola's personal belongings came into the possession of Dr. Frederick Weedon of St. Augustine, his physician at Fort Moultrie. These include a pipe and silver ornament given to him by Osceola. (*Pl. 6*). These are presently in the possession of a great-granddaughter, Mrs. Mary Weedon Keen of Tallahassee (Ward, 1955).¹³ Another group of Osceola's belongings obtained by Dr. Weedon includes a wool garter (*Pl. 3*) and pair of silver earbobs. (*Pl. 6*) These were presented to the Alabama Department of Archives, Montgomery,

13. Gratitude is expressed to Mrs. Keen for allowing their reproduction here, and to Mr. Peter Brannon, Director, for photographs of the garter and earbobs.

by a great-granddaughter Mrs. Robert Blount of Tallahassee. It is not known whether these were given to Dr. Weedon or whether he removed them from Osceola's dead body, as he did Osceola's head.

Clothing

There are only a few descriptions of Osceola's clothing. At the time of his capture Jarvis (1906, pp. 4-5) noted that he was:

. . . dress'd in a blue calico shirt, leggings of red cloth with a row of buttons on the outside of the leg & a red print shawl wrapp'd around his head and another his neck and shoulders.

In a description of Osceola's death written to George Catlin, Dr. Weedon noted (Catlin, 1844:2, pp. 221-222):

his full dress . . . , his shirt, his leggings and moccasins - girded on his war belt - his bullet pouch and powder-horn, . . . ; he carefully arranged his turban on his head, and his three ostrich plumes that he was in the habit of wearing in it.

Both of these descriptions, and Catlin's previously given, equate well with the dress shown in the various portraits. Moreover, it is typical of Seminole dress as a whole.

Shirt. The shirt, or as it was often called the "hunting-shirt," was a simple tunic-like garment with long sleeves and reaching to just above the knees. It was at this period usually made of printed cotton and had various decorative ruffles applied across the chest or on the shoulders. This is well illustrated in the 1838 Vinton print and the King print. The cut of the garment has continued down until present times among the Florida Seminole where a few elderly men still wear the shirt, although the ruffles are no longer added.

The whereabouts of Osceola's shirt is unknown. He was probably buried in it.

Coat. A loose fitting jacket or coat made from cotton cloth was often worn over the shirt. It is characterized by elaborate ruffles on the shoulders and back and is believed to have been derived from 18th century English styles. It is long sleeved, open in the front and is about as long as the shirt. These also have continued in use among the Florida Seminole where they are worn by old men on formal occasions. This has given rise to their name, "medicine-men's coat."

Osceola is shown wearing a coat of this type in the Curtis and two Catlin portraits. Its whereabouts is unknown, but a "jacket" formerly belonging to Osceola is reported in possession of the Moravian Historical Society, Narbeth, Penn.

Belts, Sashes, and Garters. Bead decorated belts, sashes, and garters of various kinds were typical of the Southeast. Among the Seminole, finger-woven (a type of braiding) articles of this type were common (Goggin, 1952, Fig. 1). These are formed from strands of wool yams of various colors, often interbraided with yarn strands which have beads strung on them. They are quite long with fringes at each end as long or longer than the belt proper. The diamond, V, or W design seems to have been the favorite form as late as to early in this century and always represents rattlesnakes (Skinner, 1913, pp. 71-72).

Practically all of the portraits of Osceola show him wearing finger-woven belts and garters, and most of the Fort Moultrie pictures show him with a similar sash worn over the shoulder as well. These pictures show the manner in which they are worn quite well.

The garters are worn just below the knee. They are tied in front and serve to support the leggings. There seems to have been two favorite methods of wearing the belt. One is to tie the belt in the back, bringing the fringe around to the front, over the belt, where it is tied again and the short remaining fringe left to hang loose. This is the method preferred

by Osceola. The other technique is to tie the belt on the side allowing the fringe to hang down almost to the knee.¹⁴

The shoulder sash is worn over the left shoulder crossing the breast to be tied on the right side at the waist. This was Osceola's custom.

A second type of shoulder sash found in the Southeast is one made of wool trade cloth decorated with bead embroidery (Goggin, 1952, Fig. 2). This type is rare among the Seminole and when found is used to support a pouch (Goggin, 1951). Osceola is shown in Catlin's first portrait wearing what may be an embroidered sash with an unusual design. Not enough is shown to determine whether Osceola's sash supported a pouch or not.

Judging from the account previously quoted the "splendid belt made of ornamented beads, [and] an Indian belt ornamented with beads," given to Major Hook, were probably the belt and shoulder sash shown in the Fort Moultrie portraits. However, the second may refer to the embroidered bead sash and the first to either the finger-woven sash or belt.

The Curtis portrait shows these to have been quite similar with a running diamond design woven in dark green and black yarn bordered by white glass beads. Those in the King print in the identical pattern are in the same colors of blue and black. These specimens have not been located.

We are fortunate in locating one of Osceola's garters from the Dr. Weedon collection (Plate 3). It is in very poor condition at the present time, but it appears to have measured (without fringe) about 11 inches long and 4 to 5 inches wide. It is finger-woven of wool yarn with a braided fringe. Apparently a plain wool and two colors of dyed wool were used but they have faded so badly that the original color cannot be determined; they could have been the blue and black shown

14. See the picture of Noco-Shimatt-Tash-Tanaki (Emory, 1857, opp. p. 52.)

in the King print. In design they are also identical with those in this print.

Turban. During the 18th and early 19th century the Seminole head covering or turban was simply trade cloth casually wrapped around the head. The more elaborate forms of the late 19th century had not yet developed. All portraits of Osceola show him wearing a simple turban of what seems to have been a flower patterned material. The descriptions, previously quoted, of his "large silk shawl used for head dress," "varicolored cotton shawl," and "red print shawl wrapp'd around his head" equate with the portraits. The present whereabouts of this is unknown, although it is one of the items sent to Major H. J. Hook. The turban in the Curtis portrait has red, white, and green printed flowers on a brownish background.

All pictures of Osceola show him wearing black and white plume feathers at the back of his head in his turban. It is not always clear from the pictures exactly how many were worn but there seems to be the usual number, two black and one white. This number is confirmed by both Catlin and Weedon, however, in items sent to Major Hook there are four plumes.

All references to these plumes refer to them as ostrich plumes, and indeed they appear like that in the various portraits. They must have been obtained in trade being used in preference to native egret plumes for their greater fullness. Both were used by later Florida Seminoles.

Neckerchiefs. Several of the portraits of Osceola show him wearing one or two neckerchiefs. Judging from other portraits of the period, it seems to have been a general practice and one generally followed by the Florida Seminole to the end of the century. At present only old men use several neckerchiefs for everyday wear.

Oscola's specimens appear to be trade goods and the Jarvis descriptions refer to a shawl around "his neck and shoulders." The location of these are unknown; judging from Dr. Weedon's

account of Osceola's burial they were buried with him (Ward, 1955).

Moccasins. Most portraits of Osceola show his moccasins in more or less detail. They appear to be the typical form still found rarely among the present day Seminole. These are made of tanned buckskin, usually smoked or dyed a light or red brown. They are made from one piece of material gathered together in a pucker on top of the foot.¹⁵ The whereabouts of Osceola's moccasins are unknown; they were probably buried with him.

Leggings. The typical leggings of the Seminoles, and most of their neighbors, were made of tanned buckskin. However, for dressier and more formal occasions these Indians made leggings from trade cloth, especially woolen broadcloth. Those worn by Osceola appear to be tightly fitted examples of this type and are closely similar in all pictures. The use of this form died out in Florida early in this century with buckskin becoming the preferred material and the cut much less fitted.

The only description of Osceola's leggings is given by Jarvis (1906, p. 4) who describes them as "leggings of red cloth with a row of buttons on the outside of the leg." This color is the same as that in the Catlin, King, and Sully pictures. The placement of the buttons, probably round brass ones, is interesting as they are stated to be on the outside of the leg and are so shown in the first (1838) Vinton portrait. But in the 1845 Vinton drawing and the various Fort Moultrie portraits they are shown as the front of the leggings. From my experience with leggings I am inclined to believe that they were properly on the outside and when shown in front they are the result of the artist's placement. Osceola's leggings may have been buried with him as no references to them are known.

Jewelry

Jewelry seems to have been a favorite decorative item among Southeastern Indians, far back into prehistory and the 19th

15. See Hatt (1916, p. 153) for data on Seminole moccasins.

century Seminole followed this old tradition. Originally most of the jewelry was made of native materials but with the introduction of new materials, especially metals by the Europeans, these were eagerly adopted.

Silver became a favorite material for jewelry in the 18th century. At this time English traders introduced quantities of simple silver bracelets, brooches, earbobs, earrings, and gorgets into the region. These were made by Colonial silversmiths and often bear the touch marks of well known craftsmen. By the end of the century, the Indians themselves began to work silver (from coins) and we have several references to jewelry being made by the Seminoles during the period of the Second Seminole War. This craft continued through the century but has almost died out among the Florida Seminole (Goggin, 1940).

Crescent gorgets. These lunar or crescent shaped silver pendants were quite popular among the Southeastern Indians until the beginning of this century. They have a very interesting history, which has been summarized by Arthur Woodward (1926). Originally gorgets of this form were 18th century European officers insignia being derived from earlier armor. They were first given by the English to Indian chiefs as recognition of rank. Later, as these became popular, they were made for general Indian trade and eventually were made by the Indians themselves.

The form is quite typical and generally consistent. The shape is of a crescent, three to six inches across with rounded points and an upper convex surface. A raised ridge decorates the border with a convex boss at each point. All portraits of Osceola show these more or less clearly and the Curtis picture gives good detail.

The Vinton portraits show Osceola wearing four gorgets while the later examples show only three. He must have disposed of one in the intervening year for only three are listed as being sent to Major Hook. The gorgets reported by Arthur

Woodward (personal communication, Sept. 10, 1954) may have come from this group.

Circular gorget. One of the items given to Dr. Weedon by Osceola was a circular silver gorget with a cut-out design (Plate 6, C). This is $2\frac{1}{8}$ inches in diameter, reputedly "made of a silver dollar beaten thin" (Ward, 1954). The design is very simple and formed by rather crudely cutting out sections of the disk. It is obviously Indian made because of design and crudeness of technique. This ornament does not appear on any of the Osceola portraits, but since it is relatively small this is to be expected.

To the student of Seminole silver work this ornament is of considerable interest since cut-out silver work is rare for this period, making its major development among the Florida Seminole in the 20th century (Goggin, 1940). This may represent an ear pendant rather than a gorget.

One of Osceola's contemporaries, Ichu Tustennuggee, is shown wearing cut-out silver ear pendants (McKenney and Hall, 1934:2, opp. p. 208). This and the present specimen are the only Seminole examples of the cutout technique for the period. However, an earlier Creek example is known. This came from a Creek Indian burial in Alabama and, like Osceola's, it is a circular gorget with simple cut-out designs but it has in addition surface engraving.¹⁶

Earbobs. In most of Osceola's pictures he is shown wearing long distinctive earbobs. These are in most detail in the Curtis portrait. Among the items obtained by Dr. Weedon are a pair of silver earbobs, apparently the identical ones worn in the Curtis portrait (Plate 6, A). A ring through the ear suspends a long cone, which in turn has a small pendant hollow ball. Overall length is $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches. This could be of Indian manufacture but is more likely of white workmanship.

16. On exhibit in the Alabama Department of Archives, Montgomery, Alabama.

Earbobs of this and similar forms were quite common in the Southeast in the 18th and early 19th centuries. The Cloud, a fellow prisoner of Osceola's, is shown wearing similar earbobs (Catlin, 1844:2, pl. 299), but has two in each ear! The Florida Seminole seem to have given up this earring early in the 20th century and variations of it were popular with the Mississippi Choctaw until quite recently.

Bracelets. In Catlin's (1844:2, pl. 298) second Osceola portrait he fairly clearly depicts, considering his technique, what appear to be bracelets. From our knowledge of Seminole and Southeastern silverwork we can say that these were probably thin flexible silver bracelets tied on the wrist with ribbons or thongs. These passed through holes at each end of the bracelet and after being tied hung in a long fringe below. There is no mention of these in any of the descriptions and their whereabouts is unknown.

Beads. Although beads were very popular with the Seminoles they are worn by Osceola only in the two Catlin portraits. Several strings of variously shaped beads are indicated. They were probably glass beads obtained from traders. From archeological data we know that the most popular Seminole bead of this period was the faceted blue glass form, although clear and other colored faceted beads were present. The whereabouts of Osceola's beads is unknown.

Miscellaneous Objects

Among the Osceola items listed as being sent to Major Hook by Captain Morrison are "a blue guard of beads,. . . and a hairbrush with a glass mirror on the back." There is no further data on these and their present location is unknown.

Other possessions which can be noted are his shot pouch and powder horn mentioned by Dr. Weedon which are shown in the second Catlin portrait. The powderhorn is typical of those used on the frontier in the period. However, the shot

pouch is not the elaborate Seminole type with the bead embroidered pouch and wide shoulder strap (Goggin, 1951). This appears to have a narrow strap and the pouch seems to be of skin with the hair or fur still remaining. In form, though, the pouch is typical with a long triangular flap. Simple forms like this were perhaps more commonly used; variations of these have been collected in Florida in this century.

Pipe. Another of the objects given to Dr. Weedon by Osceola is a small brass pipe (Plate 6, B). This is a very unique object and while the type has not been recorded before it appears to be of Indian workmanship and probably is typical of the period.

The pipe consists of two parts, a short stem and bowl soldered together. The bowl is an inverted truncated cone in shape with a neatly turned rim and flat bottom. It measures $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches high with a mouth diameter of $\frac{7}{8}$ inches. The short stem, tapering towards the bowl is $1\frac{1}{8}$ inches long with an orifice $\frac{3}{8}$ inches in diameter. A reed stem was probably inserted in this.

Both the bowl and stem are decorated with palmate *repousse* designs. These do not appear to be Seminole. From their nature and the way the seams cut them it is probable that the Indian smith obtained a piece of flat decorated American brass. This he cut, shaped, and soldered to make an efficient pipe bowl.

Although this is the only specimen of this kind known, it is very possible that metal pipe bowls were more common than realized. We have at least one more contemporary reference from General George A. McCall who comments on "smoking my silver-bowl pipe, made by an Indian silversmith while at Colonel Humphrey's Agency" (McCall, 1868, p. 209).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the present work we have studied all known original portraits of Osceola and all contemporary or near contemporary prints made from known or lost original sketches or paintings.

We have attempted to determine which of these present realistic likenesses of Osceola on the basis of their intrinsic qualities and considering the descriptions of Osceola given by contemporary observers. Secondly, we have tried to evaluate the dress of Osceola depicted in various portraits, depending on some actual items formerly belonging to Osceola, on the dress worn by other Seminoles in contemporary portraits, and finally in terms of general Southeastern art and material culture styles.

It seems quite clear that the only portraits which can be depended upon to present reasonable likenesses of Osceola are original sketches and paintings. All of the prints based on originals show a more or less distortion by the engraver. Of the four originals, that of Vinton, Curtis, and the first Catlin portrait, probably are more or less realistic. The second Catlin portrait is quite poor, perhaps due to being hurried too much. The variations between these portraits may reflect the varying skill of the delineators. Perhaps it also reflects the mobile quality of Osceola's expression mentioned by so many observers.

In contrast to the treatment of Osceola's face the print engravers in general seem to have done a much better job with details of his dress. This with few exceptions is very typical of contemporary Seminole and seems to be fairly consistently reproduced in most portraits. The best details of costume are probably found in the 1838 Viuton print, (Pl. 2) the Curtis portrait, (Pl. 4) and the King print. While the last is somewhat stylized, the colors and details are remarkably accurate.

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THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE HEAD OF OSCEOLA

by MAY MCNEER WARD

During the last few years interest in Osceola has been increased by the controversy between Florida and South Carolina over the grave of the famous Seminole chief. South Carolina has the headless bones of Osceola, buried on Sullivan's Island in Charleston harbor, where he died in Fort Moultrie, and Floridians think that the grave should be in Florida where he lived, and refused to leave voluntarily.

Ever since the death of Osceola on January 30, 1838, there have been rumors and much speculation about the disappearance of his head. Some historians have believed that vandals robbed the grave of the head, and there have been various accounts published.

Published stories about the taking of the head have said that the body was disinterred and the head stolen from the grave. That is not true. The descendants * of Dr. Frederick Weedon, of St. Augustine, Osceola's physician who was with him when he died, have always known the facts, but have not made them public generally.

The Weedon family, in Florida, had a close connection with Osceola, for Mary Thompson Weedon, the wife of the St. Augustine physician, was the sister of General Wiley Thompson, whose murder by Osceola was a cause of the Seminole War of 1835. Dr. Frederick Weedon, a colonel in the army of General Andrew Jackson, had settled in St. Augustine, had a plantation, and was the Fort Marion physician. He attended Osceola from the time that he was imprisoned in the fort, until he died at Fort Moultrie. Dr. Weedon was a friend of

* The great-grandchildren are: Dr. Frederick R. Weedon, of Jamestown, N. Y.; Mr. Harry Lee Weedon, of Tampa; Mrs. Mary Weedon Keen, of Tallahassee; Colonel James Weedon McNeer, of Alexandria, Va.; and the present writer, Mrs. May McNeer Ward, of Leonia, N. J. who has recently found additional documents which confirm and supplement those handed down in the family.

the Seminole chief, and went, at Osceola's request, to Charleston with the captive Indians.

While the Seminoles were in prison there, where they were sent on the steamer Poinsett, for safe-keeping after the sensational escape of Wildcat and twenty others from Fort Marion, George Catlin and some other artists came to paint the portraits of the chiefs. Catlin also became a friend of Osceola, and later published in his *Notes on the North American Indians* the following description of him:

"The most conspicuous at this time is Osceola, commonly called Powell, as he is generally supposed to be a half-breed, the son of a white man (by that name) and a Creek woman. In statue he is about at mediocrity, with an elastic and graceful movement; in his face he is good-looking, with rather an effeminate smile; but of so peculiar a character that the world may be ransacked over without finding another just like it. In his manners, and all his movements in company, he is polite and gentlemanly, though all his conversation is entirely in his own tongue and his general appearance and actions, those of a full-blooded and wild Indian."

Catlin finished his portraits, and left at about the time that Osceola was taken ill. Dr. Weedon wrote an account of the death scene to Catlin, and it was later published by him.

Osceola regarded Dr. Weedon as his best friend among the white people, and gave him several of his possessions when he died. Osceola's small brass pipe, with its engraved design of palm leaves, and an ornament made of a silver dollar beaten thin and punched with decorative holes (illustrated in this number) are in the possession of Mrs. Keen. Dr. Frederick R. Weedon has several other relics, including two important letters.

Our grandfather, whose name was William Weedon, remembered very well, when he was a child, seeing the head of

Osceola, and talked to his family about the circumstances involved in the strange story. When Osceola died Dr. Weedon published the following statement in the *Charleston Courier*. It was republished in the *Apalachicola Gazette*, Feb. 26, 1838.

"Death of Osceola - As no doubt a curiosity exists in the public mind to know the causes which led to the death of Osceola the distinguished Seminole Chief, and as many reports may be circulated on the subject, I have deemed it advisable to give publicity to a statement of the circumstances attending his last illness. I am compelled, moreover, to do this from another motive - the sense of duty which I owe to myself and those entrusted with his safe-keeping - being conscious that nothing has been omitted in the discharge of that trust, which could, in any way, have contributed to the health and comfort of the deceased.

"On the 26 of January, ultimo, he was attacked in the night with a violent quinsy, of which I was informed very soon after, and hastened to his room. He was then laboring under considerable difficulty of deglutation and respiration, accompanied with pain and inflammation of the tonsils. To prevent suffocation it was necessary to support him in nearly an erect position. His pulse was full, quick and hard. Blood was instantly drawn and an emetic and blister prescribed. At this moment an Indian entered the room, who, as I afterward understood, was in high esteem as a Prophet and Doctor. From the moment of his entrance there was a refusal to take anything. Finding myself debarred from the administration of suitable remedies, and feeling the responsibility devolving upon me, I requested Prof. B. B. Strobel, to visit the patient with me, He attended and used his best exertions to prevail on the patient to submit to treatment, such as scarification, leeching, etc. - but he pertinaciously refused; not but what he would

have been disposed to acquiesce, had he not been overruled by the influence of his family.

(signed) - F. WEEDON, Assistant Surgeon"

"Fort Moultrie, Sullivan's Island, Feb. 5,"

This was followed by a statement from Dr. Strobel:

"At the request of Dr. Weedon, I visited Osceola at Sullivan's Island. I saw him in the evening by candle-light, - he was lying on his blanket before the fire, his head propped up, and two Indian women (one on each side of him) employed bathing his neck with warm water in which some herbs had been steeped. He was breathing with much difficulty, his brow contracted, and his countenance indicating great bodily pain. His pulse was full and quick, his skin hot and dry.

"I requested his permission, through the interpreter, to examine his throat, to which he assented I discovered that the tonsils were so much enlarged as greatly to impede respiration, and that the mucuous membrane of the Pharynx was in a high state of inflammation. As there was some danger of suffocation unless the disease was arrested I proposed to scarify the tonsils. The patient referred us to his conjurer, who was sitting on the floor, covered up in his blanket, with all the air and dignity of a great man. He said, 'No!' I next proposed to apply leeches to the throat and back of the ears - The conjurer said 'No!' I proposed lastly some medicine and a stimulating wash to be applied internally - which he also refused - saying that if the patient were not better in the morning he would give him up to us - I urged, entreated, and persuaded him to do something, for although I did not doubt his ability to cure, in the woods where he could have access to his roots and herbs - yet here he was placed under different circumstances and as he had no means within his reach, begged him to yield up the patient to us. All was in vain, and we were finally compelled to abandon Osceola to his fate.

"In conclusion, I have no hesitation in declaring that I entirely coincided with the views and prescriptions of Dr. Weedon, and believe that had he been permitted to put them in practice, the patient would have recovered."

"(signed) B. B. STROBEL, M. D.

Prof. of Anatomy, Medical College, S. C.
Charleston, 5th. Feb. 1838"

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Soon after Osceola's death Dr. Weedon wrote this report of it to George Catlin:

"About half an hour before he died, he seemed to be sensible that he was dying; and although he could not speak he signified by signs that he wished me to send for the chiefs and for the officers of the post, whom I called in. He made signs to his wives (of whom he had two, and also two fine little children by his side) to go and bring his full dress, which he wore in time of war; which, having been brought in, he rose up in his bed, which was on the floor, and put on his shirt, his leggings and his moccasins - girded on his war belt - his bullet pouch and powder-horn, and laid his knife by the side of him on the floor. He then called for his red paint, and his looking-glass, which was held before him, when he deliberately painted one-half of his face, his neck and throat, - his wrists - the backs of his hands, and the handle of his knife, red with vermillion; a custom practiced when the irrevocable oath of war and destruction is taken. His knife he then placed in its sheath, under his belt and he carefully arranged his turban on his head and his three ostrich plumes that he was accustomed to wearing in it. Being thus prepared in full dress, he laid down a few minutes to recover strength sufficient, when he rose up as before, and with most benignant and pleasing smiles, extended his hand to me and to all the officers and chiefs that were around him; and shook hands with us all in dead silence; and also with his wives and little

children; he made a signal for them to lower him down upon his bed, which was done, and he then slowly drew from his war-belt his scalping knife, which he firmly grasped in his right hand, laying it across the other on his breast, and a moment later smiled away his last breath, without a struggle or a groan."

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Osceola's Head

This is the true story of the disappearance of Osceola's head, as given to us by our grandfather. After the death of the Seminole chief, Dr. Weedon was able to be alone with the body. During this time he cut off the head, but left it in the coffin with the scarf that Osceola habitually wore tied as usual around the neck. Not long before the funeral Dr. Weedon removed the head and closed the coffin. Thus, the body was not dug up after burial and the head taken by unknown vandals, as various accounts have stated. Osceola was buried without his head.

Dr. Weedon took the head back to St. Augustine with him, and kept it in his home on Bridge Street, where he also had his office, preserved by an embalming method that he had worked out himself.

Why did he do this? It is hard to know his motives, for we are so far removed by time from the events and the way of thinking of those days. However, doctors then thought nothing of collecting heads of savage tribesmen. Medical museums had collections of heads brought in by sailors from South America, Africa and the South Seas. Phrenology was considered important, for the shape of the skull was thought by scientists to show intelligence as well as talents and aptitudes. Dr. Weedon was an unusual man, and his methods of child training would not find favor today, for he used to hang the head of Osceola on the bedstead where his three little boys

slept, and leave it there all night as punishment for misbehavior.

His daughter Henrietta married a physician, Dr. Daniel Whitehurst, of New York. Dr. Weedon gave the head to his son-in-law five years after the death of Osceola, and Dr. Whitehurst presented it, in 1843, to the most distinguished surgeon of his day, Dr. Valentine Mott. Dr. Mott had been the teacher of Dr. Whitehurst, and was one of the founders of New York University Medical School, as well as of the New York Academy of Medicine.

The following two letters are in the possession of Dr. Frederick Weedon, of Jamestown:

St. Augustine, Fla.,
Oct. 2, 1843

Dr. Valentine Mott,
New York.
My Dear Sir:

Accompanying this, you will be handed the head of the celebrated Seminole Chief, Osceola, a man who in recent years filled a large space in the eye of the American public, if indeed not the civilized world. The strong sentiment which is manifested in the fate of the aborigines of this country and the policy of the government in consolidating them westward are as creditable to the feelings of humanity, as calculated to elicit apprehension at a result, which may ultimately prove a check to the adventurous enterprize of our countrymen. This territory, as you are aware, is but just relieved from scenes of a sanguinary character - too long protracted for its happiness, but growing out of a policy of the removal of the Red Man. Among those distinguished for [illegible], in an eminent degree was Osceola: Brave and active in war, - he was equally docile in peace and from once having been a firm friend of the white man, he became his bitterest foe. He it was who killed General Thompson, the Indian Agent at Fort King, and

by this act, buried the calumet of peace, and lit up the flame, which for six years, burned with such desolating waste over this unhappy land. In obtaining the head of such a man, I am aware that the sentiments of the ultra philanthropist would be shocked at what would be [illegible] desecration of the grave, and much sympathy would be expended that a child of the forest with qualities commanding admiration and regard should be conveyed to the tomb, a headless corpse. But with the scientific and intelligent, such influences are of little worth, and in the preservation of the dead we do no violence to the feelings of humanity or even the stronger attachments of love. I am aware that the classic lands of Greece and Rome, the isles of the sea, many a well fought field of Europe, have alike given up their evidences of life, and in your cabinet of heads, we travel into the distant past, and hold communion with those of times that were. In looking around me, where to place it, for preservation and [illegible] I know of none more than yourself who would [illegible] these intentions, and among the gifted and eminent of our own land, none to whom with more propriety I could make a tender of it. Be pleased to accept the [illegible] of respect with which I am,

Your very obedient servant,

D. W. WHITEHURST, M. D.

Dr. Mott's acceptance of the head follows:

My Dear Sir:

I delayed returning you my thanks for the Head of Osceola, until Dr. Peck should do me this favor of la [illegible] to you, I promised him a letter and had it - but unfortunately out when he [illegible]

No one can realize such a [illegible] than I do, and I esteem it as a particular favor that you have presented it to me. It will be deposited in the collection and preserved in my library at home, for I fear almost to place it in my museum at the Uni-

versity. - temptation will be so strong for someone to take it. Your letter will be attached to the head, and I shall place as labels upon it - the name of the Donor.

I send you at this time our circular for the next academic year, which has just come from the press. You will be gratified to hear of the success of your Alma Mater.

Yours very truly,

VALENTINE MOTT

What happened to the head of Osceola? Dr. Mott eventually placed it, with public identification of the source of the gift, with his head collection in his museum of pathological specimens. A catalogue now in the library of The New York Academy of Medicine, and published in 1858, has the following listing, under:

“Miscellaneous - No. 1132 Head of Osceola, the great Seminole chief (undoubted). Presented by Dr. Whitehurst of St. Augustine.”

This was the catalogue of the Surgical and Pathological Museum of Valentine Mott, M.D.L.L.D., Emeritus Professor of Surgery in the University of the City of New York.

In 1866 Dr. Mott's Surgical and Pathological Museum caught fire, and part of his collection was thus destroyed. So far as we can determine Osceola's head was lost in this fire. Our grandfather also said so. This is the true story behind the mystery, as it is known to the descendants of the man who took the head.

THE PARENTAGE OF OSCEOLA

After a search for whatever has come to light on the early life of Osceola, Charles H. Coe summarized his findings and his conclusions for the *Florida Historical Quarterly*.¹

His belief came to be that Osceola "was a full-blooded Indian," and this seems probable to the Editor of this *Quarterly*.

Contemporaneous knowledge of Osceola came largely through his part - his leadership - in the Seminole War. Four participants each published a volume on the War: Captain John T. Sprague,² Lieutenant M. M. Cohen,³ A Late Staff Officer (Woodburn Potter),⁴ and A Lieutenant of the Left Wing (W. W. Smith).⁵ Sprague published his work some years after the War. The others published theirs during or immediately after their service.

Coe writes: "It is commonly believed . . . that Osceola . . . was the son of an Englishman named Powell, a trader among the Creek Indians of Georgia, by a Creek Indian woman." He then quotes from the four authors:

Cohen (pp. 233,234): "Oceola's [!] mother, after the death of his father, married a 'pale face' of the name of Powell, after whom the step-son was sometimes called. . . . His grandfather was a Scotchman, his grandmother and mother were full Indians . . . Oceola is therefore a quarter-blood . . . [which his complexion and eyes indicate, being much lighter than those of the Indians generally.]"

A Lieutenant of the Left Wing writes: "Oseola [!] is a half-breed (his father an Englishman) of the Red Stick tribe of

1. Coe, Charles H.: "The Parentage and Birthplace of Osceola." *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XVII, No. 4, (April, 1939) pp.304-311.

2. Sprague, John T.: *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War* (557pp.) New York, 1848.

3. Cohen, M. M.: *Notices of Florida and the Campaigns*. (240 pp.) Charleston 1836

4. A Late Staff Officer [Woodburn Potter] *The War in Florida, Being an Exposition of its Causes, and an Accurate History of the Campaigns of Generals Clinch, Gaines, and Scott*. (184 pp.) Baltimore 1836.

5. A Lieutenant of the Left Wing [Smith. W. W.]: *Sketch of the Seminole War, and Sketches During a Campaign*. (311pp.) Charleston, 1836.

Creeks - [his complexion is rather lighter than that of the Seminoles generally, who are not as dark as many other tribes of Indians. . . .]

Sprague is next quoted: (100-101): "His [Oseola's] father's name was William Powell, an Englishman, who for forty years had been a trader in the nation, and whose wife was an Indian woman. In the year 1808, when a feud occurred among the Creeks, they separated by mutual consent, she preferring to go to Florida, when a division of the family took place. The father retained two daughters; the mother and the boy, then four years old, settled in the vicinity of the Okefenoke Swamp. Soon after she was again married, when, with her child and husband she removed to a hammock near Fort King."

The following, though not quoted by Coe, is Captain Sprague's opinion of As-se-se-he-ho-lar (Oceola) (p. 101):

"In stature he was about five feet eight inches, with a manly, frank, and open countenance. From boyhood he was noted for his independence and self-possession, and always treated the whites with great dignity, almost amounting to insolence. In all dances, ball-plays, and games, he was distinguished. In council the old chiefs looked with surprise at his bold opposition to the Treaty of Payne's Landing. . . the experienced counsellors of the nation treat[ed] him with great respect.

"He threw aside the ridiculous mummerly of sages and prophets, their forms and superstitions, and openly declared his views and opinions, regardless of consequences. . . . Feeling conscientiously right himself, he infused the same spirit into others, who with renewed resolution adhered to their opposition to the treaty. From his youth he lived with the Seminoles, and he felt that their fortunes were his own. To [his children] he was kind and affectionate. In advising the warriors, when starting upon a war-party, he always enjoined them to spare the women and children. 'It is not upon them,' said he, 'that we make war and draw the scalping knife, it is upon men; let us act like men.' "

Coe continues: "A prominent newspaper in the territory at this period intimates that Osceola was an Indian, saying: 'It is proper to observe that he ought not to be called "Powell" as that is only a nickname. His Indian name is Osceola, and by that name he should be distinguished.'⁶

"The author of a carefully prepared book [The War in Florida]⁷ says that 'Assiola' is the correct orthography of the chief's name; that he is a Red Stick Indian, and that 'Assiola or Powell' does not speak the English language.

"The fact that Osceola could not speak English is, in itself, evidence that he was a pure-blooded Indian."

Coe also quotes Woodward:⁸ "Oceola [!] was the great grandson of James McQueen, and the son of an Englishman named Powell." And from Welch:⁹ ". . . he was undoubtedly a throughbred Seminole."

The Editor believes that Welch is untrustworthy, and that a good percentage of Woodward's multitudinous statements, many made years afterwards, would be incorrect, especially regarding the birth-place and parentage of Osceola. He concurs with Coe in the following quotation:

"The most reliable and convincing testimony, however, is that of George Catlin,¹⁰ the famous painter of Indian portraits. No one then living was more competent to express an opinion on the subject. He had spent a lifetime among the Indians of North America, had painted the portraits of the most prominent chiefs, their home life and their hunting excursions. On learning of the capture of Osceola and his followers, and their confinement in Fort Moultrie, Charleston harbor, Catlin immediately journeyed to that place to meet them. He was well known

6. *The Herald*, St. Augustine, Florida, Jan. 13, 1836.

7. *Staff Officer* (see n. 4) pp. 10-11, 158.

8. Woodward, Thomas: *Reminiscences of the Creek or Muscogee Indians*, Georgia Historical Society, 1859.

9. [Welch, Andrew]: *Osceola Nikkanochee, Prince of Econchatti*. London, 1841, p. 23.

10. Catlin, George: *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs and Conditions of the North American Indians*. London (edition) 2 vols. 1844, pp. 218-221.

to all Indians as their friend, and this group was especially glad to see him. Undoubtedly they hoped that he might do something to effect their release.

"Every night, Catlin tells us, the chiefs visited with him in his room at the fort, telling him of their troubles and their treacherous capture by General Jesup under a flag of truce. During his visit he painted the portraits of the chiefs - two chiefs - two of Osceola. The painter thus had extended opportunity to study closely Osceola's features and actions.

"A full account of his visits with the chiefs and his opinion of the parentage of their leader, is given in one of his priceless works, of which the following is an extract [from Catlin]: 'I am fully convinced from all that I have seen and have learned from the lips of Osceola and from the chiefs who are around him, that he is a most extraordinary man, and one who is entitled to a better fate. . . in his manner and all of his movements in company he is polite and gentlemanly, though all his conversation is entirely in his own tongue, and his general appearance and actions those of a full-blooded and wild Indian.'

"On one occasion Osceola himself said: 'I am an Indian - a Seminole.'¹¹ At another time, in the presence of an Army officer, he repudiated with great scorn the rumor that he was part white, saying:¹² 'No foreign blood runs in my veins; I am a pure-blood Muscogee.'¹³

"It probably never will be known, beyond a doubt, which of the two states, Georgia or Alabama, is entitled to the honor of having produced this famous chief. But the present writer believes, after carefully considering the claims of the various authors and their reputations for accuracy, that Osceola was born east of the Chattahoochee River, in Georgia, about the beginning of the nineteenth century." (End Coe)

11. Sprague, *op. cit.* p.86.

12. Storrow, Thomas W.: "Osceola, the Seminole War Chief." *Knickerbocker or New York Monthly Magazine*, XXIV, 428.

13. The circumstances of these statements of Osceola are not recorded, nor who it was who translated them. Usually the interpreters were Negroes, former slaves, for few of the Indians knew any English, except, likely, the names of articles they wished - powder, lead, etc.

NOTES ON MODERN SEMINOLE TRADITIONS OF OSCEOLA

by WILLIAM C. STURTEVANT

Romantic interest among whites in the figure of Osceola began even before his death, and has continued ever since. His abilities as a warrior, his dramatic flair, and the well-publicized circumstances of his capture and of his death in captivity soon thereafter, account for this interest. Many who know nothing else about the Seminole know Osceola's name and some of the white folklore about him. He is almost certain to crop up in casual questioning of the Seminole today by tourists and others. On one occasion, I was present when a customer asked a leading Seminole entrepreneur in his Tamiami Trail store, "Are you people Osceolas or Seminoles?" ! It is thus not surprising that Seminole traditions of the man have been influenced by the white folklore concerning him. ¹ Credence as independent historical evidence is due only to those parts of Seminole tradition which are not also part of the common white folklore about Osceola, nor are likely to have been influenced by this folklore and the resultant increased importance of Osceola's position in Seminole historical tradition.

One point on which Seminole tradition may be correct is Osceola's sib ² affiliation. One well-informed old Mikasuki man told me that Osceola was a member of the Alligator sib, which is now extinct, but he did not know whether he was Creek (*i.e.*, Cow Creek or Muskogee) or Mikasuki. Another man, perhaps somewhat better informed on traditional history, stated

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1. For this reason, I made little effort to collect such traditions during anthropological field-work among the Florida Seminole between 1950 and 1953. My thirteen months in the field were supported by grants from the Department of Anthropology and the Peabody Museum of Yale University, as part of their Caribbean Anthropological Program aided by funds from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Inc.
 2. The Seminole and the related Creek are divided into numerous named matrilineal descent-groups, for which I prefer the term "sib" rather than "clan."

that Osceola belonged to the sib called (in Mikasuki) aktayahca:Li:, ³ a term of unknown meaning which according to this informant is merely another name for the Snake sib. This man believed that Osceola's native language was Creek, rather than Mikasuki. The Alligator sib among the Florida Seminole was linked to the Snake sib - that is, marriages between their members were not permitted. This was apparently not true among the Creek, and with them the aktayahca:Li: were a separate sib but linked with the Snake sib; the aktayahca:Li: were present in most Upper and Lower Creek and Oklahoma Seminole towns (Swanton, 1928a:155, 123-127. See *Bibliography* for source references). The close association of Alligator and aktayahca:Li: with Snake introduces some doubt as to the reliability of the traditions assigning Osceola to either of these sibs, for all Seminole know that traditionally chiefs were chosen from the Snake sib, and Osceola is now believed by many to have been a chief. However, the man who stated that Osceola belonged to the aktayahca:Li:, said that he was a war-chief, "boss" of the warriors, rather than a true chief, and that the several chiefs "worked for him" during warfare. This seems to agree with documented history.

Cory (1896: preface to 2nd. ed.) was told by some Florida Seminole that Osceola was a member of the now-extinct Eagle sib. This sib was not mentioned by my informants, but is listed by Swanton (1928a: 123-127) for four Creek towns, including two off-shoots of Tulsa. This last may be significant, since Swanton (1922:412) says, without giving any source, that Tulsa was Osceola's original town. However, aktayahca:Li: also occur at Tulsa off-shoots.

One informant said that Osceola was the illegitimate son of a Scotchman and an Indian woman. This information may however be discounted as not independent, since this has been

3. For the system used here for writing Mikasuki and Creek, see Sturtevant, 1953:66-67.

commonly believed by whites, and my friend probably knows that it has.

Two versions of Osceola's proper Indian name are extant among modern Mikasuki Seminole. One name, asonyaholi:, is derived from Creek asonwa, 'Spanish-moss,' (which occurs as an initial element in modern names), plus the common final name-element - yaholi:. The latter is interpreted by modern Seminole as referring to a minor busk official who shouts ka: or yo: between the rounds of the Feather Dance (see Sturtevant, 1954:61). Perhaps the original meaning of this name-element is that given by Swanton (1928b:485, 544): yahola was the name of an important Creek male deity; when the black-drink was served and at several other times during the annual busk the "yahola cry" was given, which was "supposed to resemble the call of the deity himself," and went approximately a:a:a: ti:i:i:.

The other form in which Osceola's name is recalled is asi:yaholi. A young man now living on the Tamiami Trail was given this as his adult name "after Chief Osceola" - the boy's English surname is also "Osceola." The initial asi: - could not be translated; perhaps it is from the Creek assi:, the name for the black-drink of yaupon holly leaves (*Ilex vomitoria* Ait.; see Swanton, 1928b:544; Gatschet, 1888: 112; Speck, 1937: 195-197.) This black-drink is not now used by the Florida Seminole. This last form and interpretation of Osceola's adult name is undoubtedly the correct one, and is the one given by Swanton (1928a:105), Williams (1837:273), and (in part) Read (1934:26), Woodward (1939:8-9, 110-111), and Motte (1953: 138). The form asonyaholi: probably results from a re-interpretation of the unknown initial element to make it correspond to an element still in use.

The other principal interpretation which has been proposed by writers is "rising sun" (Smith, 1836:5; McKenney and Hall, 1934 v. 2:363-364; Willson, 1911:21; Coe, 1898:24, 1939:310).

This is certainly erroneous; it seems to be based on a supposed resemblance of the first two syllables of the name to Creek *hasi*, 'sun,' with a groundless and fanciful translation of the remainder to agree with this meaning. "Rising sun" is impossible as a Creek or Seminole adult name, by comparison with the large number of such names on record. Attempts such as that of McKenney and Hall (1934 v. 2:363-364) to interpret the variant English spellings of Osceola as standing for different Creek names, are also erroneous. All such variant spellings derive ultimately from the one Creek name. It is worth mentioning that the literal meanings of Creek and Seminole adult male names, of which *asi:yaholi:* is an example, have nothing to do with the personal characteristics or experiences of their owners.

The modern Seminole English surname "Osceola" is derived from the English pronunciation of the name, rather than from the original Indian name - evidence that this, like other Seminole patronymics, is a rather recent adoption of a name first applied by the whites. In Mikasuki contexts, the English name is pronounced *asyoli:*.⁴

According to the genealogies I have collected, all or very nearly all the living Florida Seminole (both Mikasuki and Cow Creek) surnamed Osceola are descended from Charlie Osceola, *fosyaholi:*, of the Bird sib, and his wife Nancy, of the Tiger sib. Charlie Osceola's band affiliation is not known to me; Nancy was Mikasuki - although her mother was a member of the Creek-speaking band, her father was Mikasuki and they lived among her father's people. Charlie and Nancy had five sons, all surnamed Osceola, and two daughters. Four of these sons had children who grew to adulthood and left descendants. One married a Cow Creek woman and went to live with that band,

4. From both this pronunciation and the original Indian name, one may conclude that for the pronunciation of the first vowel in "Osceola" in English, "o" as in "hot" rather than as in "open" is preferable.

leaving four Cow Creek sons. The others also had sons as well as daughters. Most of the Osceolas among the present Tamiami Trail group are the families of three brothers, grandchildren of Charlie and Nancy Osceola. Some or all of these Trail Osceolas claim, at least to outsiders, to be descended from "Chief Osceola." A member of this group recently stated that the famous Osceola was his "great-great-grandfather" (U.S. Congress, 1954:1067). By this reckoning, the father of Charlie Osceola would be "Chief" Osceola. A very well-informed Mikasuki man, whose mother was a daughter of Charlie and Nancy and who as a boy was very close to his maternal grandmother, categorically denied that he or any of the present Seminole "Osceolas" are related to the historic warrior, although he knows that some Seminole now put forward this claim - Osceola is "just their name," *i.e.*, their English patronymic. I tend to believe this statement, in spite of some documentary hints to the contrary and the claims of some other Seminole. My friend did not recall the names of Charlie Osceola's parents, although he stated that his father belonged to the Snake sib and his mother to the Bird sib. Robert Osceola, a son of Charlie and Nancy, and a middle-aged man in 1900-1910, is stated by Cory (1896:7) to have been a grandson of the famous Osceola, and by Harrington (1908) to have been a nephew of this man. A younger brother of Robert, Tommy Osceola, according to the Dimocks (1908:312) was "a grandson of the great Osceola." Nancy Osceola, the mother of these men, was met by the Ingraham expedition near Ft. Shackleford in 1892; two members of the expedition reported that she said she was the widow of the great Osceola (Marchman, 1947:11; Ingraham, 1892:5). The Dimocks (1908:315) also refer to her as the "widow of the great Osceola." Mrs. Willson (1911:155) mentions a newspaper account of Nancy Osceola's death, probably about 1910, which made the same claim; Mrs. Willson says, probably on the authority of old Tallahassee, a Cow Creek man, that this

story is incorrect: "Old Nancy was the squaw of a half-brother of Osceola."⁵ Although Nancy's sons cannot have been both sons and grandsons of "Chief" Osceola, Mrs. Willson's statement and Harrington's belief that a son of Nancy was a nephew of the great Osceola can be understood as being in agreement. However, as we have seen, a grandson of Nancy, who knew her well, denies these stories. His evidence is probably more reliable than the accounts quoted, for popular writers have always been most interested in Osceola, and we may be certain that the information they give was gotten in response to leading questions, if not made up out of whole cloth.

According to Dr. Weedon who was with Osceola when he died, his two wives and "two fine little children" were at Fort Moultrie with him (Catlin, 1913 v. 2:251). They must have gone subsequently to Indian Territory, with the other Seminole at Fort Moultrie. There is still a remote possibility, although it seems unlikely, that there were other children of Osceola who were never captured and remained in Florida. The fact that the most vocal modern claimants to descent from Osceola are Mikasuki speakers, while Osceola himself was Creek, is not an argument against the validity of their claim. Band affiliation, and the accompanying native language, follows residence rather than descent. After a century, it is very likely that any given man will have descendants in both bands, although the majority will belong to the band of his wife (residence being usually, but not invariably, matrilocal, and marriage usually, but not invariably, within the band). Enough doubt remains so that it would be advisable to investigate the question of Osceola's descendants further; this should be done by attempting to push back geneologies of possible descendants, rather than by asking them (or others) point-blank whether

5. A photograph of the old woman, who was born apparently about 1815, may be seen in Willson, 1896, facing p. 20.

they are descendants of Osceola. It is perhaps of interest that a missionary among the Oklahoma Creek in the 1870's or 1880's is said to have stated that two sisters of Osceola were then living in Oklahoma (Brooks, 1886:104).

One historical text, collected in English, is given here as an example of Mikasuki Seminole tradition regarding Osceola. The English is slightly revised from that used by the informant; material in square brackets and footnotes is mine rather than the narrator's.

- - - -

There were two men who were war chiefs (not whole chiefs), asonyaholi: [Osceola] and his partner kowakoci: [Coacoochee, Wildcat]. They went to fight each year. Once someone wanted to make a peace treaty, but asonyaholi: didn't like it. They took them into an office one time, where somebody wrote on a piece of paper and told them, "I want you to do this: be good friends [with us], and not fight." There were two or three men with asonyaholi:, [who was] the war chief, head man. Asonyaholi: took [his] knife and cut all the way through [the paper], and said, "That's [like] your heart, [and] my work." He didn't want to listen, and they sent him back home. They were fighting all the time. He [Osceola] had a lot of people, and he made them fight every year. When someone [white ?] had been friendly for two or three years, he [an Indian ?] didn't want to do it [*i.e.*, fight]. He [Osceola] said, "I know the white man, he has two tongues, forked; he speaks with one tongue and then the other, two [different] things. I don't like that, [and I] won't make friends [with the whites]."

At St. Augustine there was a fort made before this by the Spaniards. Close by, to the west, there was a big thick hammock where the Indians lived. The women and children stayed there and the men went out to fight. They stayed there years and years. Some [whites] said, "You Seminoles are [our] good

friends, but asonyaholi: and kowakoci: are bad people. If we catch them and send them out west, then maybe you Seminoles will be friendly with us." Someone knew where he lived and went to asonyaholi: and persuaded him to go to St. Augustine under a flag of truce. Perhaps a mile and a half away they made camp, and walked to the office in St. Augustine. Captain Johnny (kapinca:ni:) ⁶ talked to asonyaholi:, while his people listened. He talked about half a day. They had an interpreter, who asked them when they got back to camp, "Do you think that fellow speaks the truth this time?" Somebody said, "Yes." The interpreter said, "No, it looks to me like he's thinking something else." And [just] then soldiers on horseback came, all wearing white coats. Asonyaholi: told his men to get guns and knives, but the horses came fast, and surrounded them. Through the interpreter, they told them to give their knives and guns, and got them all. Then he [Captain Johnny ?] told asonyaholi:, "You thought I wouldn't win, ever - but this time I win, I've captured you." But asonyaholi: said, "No, my head [*i.e.*, thinking] is just like before, you haven't won."

Then they took them all over and locked them up in the St. Augustine fort, and locked the outside door. But kowakoci: walked in and out, through the locked doors, whenever he wanted to. At night, he walked around looking. He saw a lot of rope, and one little hole, like a pencil, with iron bars close together, about two feet long. He bent the iron, and the soft stone cracked, but it wasn't [a] big enough [hole] for a man (I've seen it [interpolated the narrator]). He tied the rope on the iron bars, and put it down outside. About midnight, the people went through the hole and down the rope to the ground. Pretty soon it would be daylight, so kowakoci: took them into the woods, not far. Then somebody blew a horn and the soldiers woke up and got their horses ready. It

6. I do not understand this reference; the talk referred to was conducted by Brig. Gen. Joseph M. Hernandez.

was about daylight. Kowakoci: hid his people under the leaves in a palmetto patch and told them not to move. Then he walked far, but they didn't find him.⁷

Asonyaholi: stayed there [in the fort] for a few days. At that time there was yellow fever, and his people got sick and died and were buried not far from the fort - asonyaholi:'s kin-folks. The white people thought maybe they all would die, so they put them on a boat and took them to a little island near Charleston called 'Cedar Island' (acinokantakli:). They kept them there awhile. One soldier who'd been shot in the hand before, but was all healed up, saw Chief asonyaholi: there and shot asonyaholi: in the heart. He died,⁸ and they cut his head off, buried his body on that island, and carried his head off. His people went to Oklahoma, and kowakoci:'s people also went to Oklahoma [later]. They told each other where he died, and later visited Florida⁹ and told about it.

After the escape, kowakoci: killed a white man and his wife and boy. His kinfolks got scared; they didn't want to get killed like asonyaholi:. They thought, "Maybe if they get kowakoci:

7. Other traditions of this escape emphasize more than this one the magical powers Wildcat possessed. He is said to have magically reduced the size of his people so that they could get through the hole, to have put the gun-carrying guards to sleep so that the escape was unobserved, and to have caused the ground to move back under the feet of the fleeing Indians, to increase their speed. One traditional account of the escape states that two menstruating girls had to be left behind in the fort, since it was "against their law to touch girls that were menstruating." Some younger, less well-informed Mikasuki have told me that it was Osceola, rather than Wildcat, who arranged and led the escape. For an excellent account of what is known and can be deduced about this escape, see Porter, 1944. Coacoochee's use of "medicinal roots" to reduce weight, which Porter doubts, may refer to some magico-medical procedure utilizing bits of medicinal plants which most Seminole warriors undoubtedly carried on their persons.
8. On another occasion, the man who told his story remarked that Osceola had powerful personal magic, and in fact was a sorcerer: "bullet go through [him], he don't die - I think he [was the] last one [with this particular type of power]."
9. This may refer to Seminole brought to Florida from Indian Territory in subsequent attempts to persuade the remaining Florida Indians to surrender and emigrate, or perhaps less likely, to visits of Oklahoma Creek and Seminole to Florida within the last thirty years.

they'll leave us alone." Somebody told on him and the white soldiers got him. Just two people were captured, taken to Tampa, then on a boat to New Orleans. After that the soldiers fought the rest of them - they thought the white people told the truth, but it wasn't so [because they kept on fighting after capturing Osceola and Wildcat]. After kowakoci: went to Oklahoma, they fought two or three or four places: Kissimmee, Ocala, somewhere near Indian River, Okeechobee, west of Brighton, the other side of Kissimmee Billy [Strand], and Pine Island (co:yiscoko:li: [in the Everglades, not the Pine Island in Charlotte Harbor nor the one near Davie]).

Many more traditions of Osceola are certainly extant among the modern Cow Creek and Mikasuki Seminole, but I believe this one is a good illustration of how little they will add to historical knowledge. The main incidents in this account are precisely the ones most common in white folklore, and little or no additional information of a probable nature is offered. Careful investigation might yield some few details which could be believed, but historical subjects on which there is little or no popular white interest and knowledge are more rewarding for this type of research.

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THE WHITE FLAG

In the long history of the American Indians no name is more widely known than Osceola. At the time of his death especially, he was talked of throughout the entire country. Towns in a score of states were named for him, and there are three counties which bear his name - in Iowa, Michigan, and Florida. This was largely because of a small piece of white cloth: the violation of a flag of truce under the orders of General Jesup, then in command of the Army in Florida. Standing under the white flag, Osceola was seized, imprisoned, and died soon afterwards in captivity. He was a remarkable man; but, except for that seizure, would not have been known outside of Florida and the nearby states which furnished volunteers for the war.

Was General Jesup justified in the violation? Both sides are presented here. Included are Jesup's official reports to the War Department, and his letter in defense of his action, written twenty years afterwards. Also, an effort is made to present the side of the Indians through other contemporaneous documents, though these were not written for that purpose, and most of them are from the records of the Army. (*Ed.*)

It seems the Army, as would be expected, approved the seizure, if not all the men individually. Doubtless the majority of Floridians, in sympathy with those near the Indian region, also approved; even though they had lived at peace with all the Indians for years, and many had good friends among them. On the frontier the settlers had been driven from their homes to congregate in the towns for protection by their own rifles and those of the Army and militia; for at times they were in fear of their lives from the lawless element of the Indians and Negroes, who could not be restrained by the more peaceable chiefs. A few of the whites had been shot and scalped and many homes plundered and burned by that element.

The End Justified the Means (?)

So, with some of the settlers it was a question of survival, and to them and to most Floridians, the end justified the means. Some historians agree with that - that the Indians were to be captured, even by any subterfuge. Jesup, in his defense avoids that plea, except perhaps through implication. His contention is that the white flag, which he himself suggested to the Indians that they make use of, was not strictly a flag of truce.

Sentiment and approval changed with distance, and throughout the country was overwhelmingly against General Jesup's action. He made every effort, then and later, to justify the seizure, but condemnation became so widespread by the public at large as well as in Congress, that the Secretary of War was asked by Congress for a report, and the House of Representatives published the several reports as their *Document 327*: "Letter from the Secretary of War in reply to A Resolution of the House of Representatives . . . as to whether any Seminole Indians coming in under a flag of truce, or brought in by Cherokee Indians acting as mediators, have been made prisoners by Gen. Jesup."

Below are extracts from General Jesup's reports to the Secretary of War and the Quartermaster General, together with the report of General Hernandez.

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St. Augustine, October 20, 1837.

(Confidential.)

Lt. R. H. Peyton, Fort Peyton.

Should Powell [Osceola] and his warriors come into the fort, seize him and the whole party. It is important that he, Wild Cat, John Cowagee, and Tustenugge, be secured. Hold them until you have my orders in relation to them.

THOMAS S. JESUP,
Maj. Gen. commanding.

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St. Augustine, October 22, 1837.

Hon. J. R. Poinsett,
Secretary of War

Sir: . . . I have the satisfaction to inform you that Asseen Yoholo (Powell) [Osceola] is my prisoner, with nearly all the war spirits of the nation. The chief came into the vicinity of Fort Peyton on the 20th and sent a messenger to General Hernandez, desiring to see and converse with him. The sickly season being over, and there being no further necessity to temporize, I sent a party of mounted men, and seized the entire body, and now have them securely lodged in the fort. . . .

TH. S. JESUP

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Picolata, November 17, 1837

Major T. Cross
Acting Quartermaster General
Washington city.
Dear Sir:

. . . I desire that the seizure of Powell and the other chiefs and warriors may be understood by my friends. . . .

I gave Lieutenant Powell a confidential order to seize them if they should come into the fort. I learned from General Hernandez that they could not be induced to come into the fort, and the messenger whom they sent in desired the general to meet them in their camp without an escort, saying he would be perfectly safe among them without troops. . . . I had no doubt the intention of the Indians was to seize a sufficient number of officers to exchange for Philip and the Euchee chiefs. . . . I informed him [Gen. Hernandez] that I was inclined not to permit the Indians to escape, and I gave him a memorandum of the heads of the conversation I desired him to hold with them. [:]

Ascertain the object of the Indians in coming in at this

time; also their expectations. Are they prepared to deliver all the negroes taken from the citizens at once? Why have they not surrendered them already, as promised by Coa-Hajo, at Fort King? Have the chiefs of the nation held a council in relation to the subjects of the talk at Fort King? What chiefs attended that council, and what was their determination? Have the chiefs sent a messenger with the decision of the council? Have the principal chiefs, Micapony, Jumper, Cloud, and Alligator sent a messenger; and if so, what is their message? Why have not these chiefs come in themselves?

The general departed to Fort Peyton accompanied by a number of officers and citizens. I followed . . . [and sent] orders to General Hernandez to seize all the party if the talk was not satisfactory. . . . Their answers were evasive and unsatisfactory . . . and I sent an order to seize them.

TH. S. JESUP

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In the following July, by resolution, the Senate, through the President, requested a report from General Jesup "of his operations whilst commanding the army in Florida." The report (eight printed pages) was published in the Senate series of documents.¹ The following are extracts from that report:

Washington City, July 6, 1838.

To the Hon. J. R. Poinsett,
Secretary of War
Sir:

. . . the commanding office at Fort King reported the arrival of several Indians in the vicinity of that post; and stated that the chiefs were desirous of communicating with me. I proceeded thither and held conferences with them. . . . They ex-

1. 25th Congress, 2nd. Senate Doc. 507 (July 7, 1838)

pressed an earnest desire for peace, but declared the majority of the Indians to be averse to leaving the country. They were distinctly informed that preparations to emigrate must be preliminary to any discussion in relation to peace; that I would confer with them on no other subject; that they must make up their minds to fulfil their treaty and emigrate; that when prepared to communicate to me that determination, a deputation would be received from them; and they were directed to use a white flag to secure them from the attacks of any of our scouting parties that might be out at the time of their approach; . . . [Coa Hadp] said that the chiefs of the nation proposed a council on the St. Johns in a few days, where their whole policy would be discussed, and particularly, at his instance, the question of emigration; but he was certain that Appiacca would prevent the council if possible, or at all events oppose the execution of the treaty. . . . In the mean time he desired that hostilities should cease on both sides. Being then in the midst of the sickly season, I assented. . . but few chiefs attended the council, and those who attended, though they made a law to punish any of their people who should commit depredations upon the white inhabitants, decided not to leave the country.

As I had informed the chiefs at Fort King that I would hold no communication with the Seminoles unless they should determine to emigrate; as I had permitted no Indian to come in for any other purpose but to remain; as they were all prisoners of war, or hostages who had violated their parole; as many of them had violated the truce entered into at Fort King, by occupying the country east of the St. Johns, by allowing predatory parties to go to the frontier, and by killing at least one white man, and as the white flag had been allowed for no other purpose than to enable them to communicate and come in without danger of attack from our parties, it became

my duty to secure them on being satisfied of the fact that they intended to return to their fastnesses. . . . I accordingly required General Hernandez to seize them. . . .

[sometime later] . . . it was reported to me that several Indians were waiting for me with a flag. I met them. A young chief, Halleck-Hajo, conducted the conference on their part. He spoke of the wretched condition of the Indians, and of their ardent desire for peace; but declared that the greater part of them wished to remain in the country; that they would thankfully receive from us any part of it, however small, that we might think proper to assign for their residence. He added that if required to leave the country they must go. I demanded hostages or the surrender of their arms. He would not consent to either, from the impossibility of enforcing obedience to such a measure. . . .

I directed the Seminole chiefs to meet me in council on the 20th. None of the chiefs attended the council, and I directed Colonel Twiggs to seize the whole party. . . .

The villages of the Indians have all been destroyed; and their cattle, horses, and other stock, with nearly all their other property, taken or destroyed. . . ; and the small bands who remain . . . have nothing of value left but their rifles. . . .²

I have the honor to be,

Sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

THOMAS S. JESUP

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As we have no similar Seminole report from their angle of the seizure, and in an effort to include their side, it should be suggested that perhaps the Indians did not receive or did not understand Jesup's message stating that

2. It might interest the reader to know that the Seminoles continued the war for four years longer.

the white flag in this instance should have a different significance from that to which they were accustomed - one which, in accordance with his orders, was to be quite different from its use throughout history. (*Ed.*)

The various agreements with the Indians were usually made with a mere handful, and these few in making them, would often deny that they had any authority to speak for anyone but themselves - pointing out the impossibility of their compelling obedience on the part of the others. This was one of the basic causes of the war.

Another cause of continuous disagreement was the fact that all councils with the Indians, including Osceola who spoke no English,³ had to be carried on through an interpreter, usually a Negro.

Criticism of the seizure of Osceola and his band was not silenced by General Jesup's explanations. If the Army approved, the public through the years continued to criticize his action, so much so that, twenty years later he came to his own defense again in a statement to the *Daily Intelligencer* (Washington) October 13, 1858:

STATEMENT BY MAJOR-GENERAL JESUP

A matter has recently been brought into discussion with which my name was connected some twenty years ago, and, though explained at the time, seems not even now to be well understood. It has been published in a neighboring print, on the authority of a distinguished professional and public man, that the Seminole Indian warrior Osceola, who by the murder of General Thomson [!] and other atrocities began the Seminole war, "was captured by treachery and fraud," . . .

3. Catlin, Geo.: *Letters . . . N. American Indians*. London, 1844, II. 220; Staff Officer: *The War in Florida*, Baltimore, 1838, 158; Storrow, Thos. W.: *Osceola*. . . . Knickerbocker, XXIV, 445.

. . . I, as the representative of the Government, ordered the seizure and retention of that warrior.

Osceola had come into Fort Peyton, a few miles from Saint Augustine, not on my invitation nor that of any other officer; . . .

In a conference which I held with the Seminole chiefs, at their own request, but a few weeks before, I had assured them that I would hold no further conference with them except to receive from them the notice of their readiness to fulfill their obligations under the treaty at Payne's Landing and of their capitulation with me at Fort Dade; . . .

The chiefs expressed some apprehension that in coming to me they might be attacked by my scouting parties, and their people be scattered. To enable them to join me without danger of attack from these parties, I provided them with a quantity of white cotton cloth, to be used as flags in communicating with any of those parties they might fall in with, and with my outposts; but the flags were to be used for no other purpose. And the chiefs were distinctly and positively told that none of them nor their people must attempt to come in again but to remain. When Philip's messenger, his son Coacoochee, left Saint Augustine to communicate with his people on the St. John's, there were but few troops at the post. On meeting with Osceola he informed him that he could with an hundred warriors take the place and release his father. Warriors enough arrived to have taken the place had the force not been increased; but, before they came in, I had thrown in large reinforcements. I had become acquainted with their designs through Indian negroes some of whom remained with the Indians and possessed the contract pay, and I received from them information of all that took place, or was about to take place, among them. When Osceola found there was no

chance of taking Saint Augustine, nor of releasing the prisoners, he determined to return, as I was informed by the Indian negroes about him. But he, with all who had accompanied him, had come in with the distinct understanding that they were not to return. He was a prisoner who had violated his parole of honor; he had killed one of my messengers in a time of truce, when going under the sanctity of a flag with a message to the chiefs of his neighborhood; . . . he had forfeited his life by the laws and usages of war. . . .

. . . It was my duty to the country to detain them, and I directed that all should be securely detained.

. . . Osceola had by his repeated violations of the usages of war forfeited his life, particularly by his attempt to use a flag for hostile purposes at Saint Augustine, which made him a spy,. . . in place of punishing him, I sent him out of the country to Charleston, a prisoner. In my course on that occasion I was influenced alone by the high obligations of public duty; and if called upon to act in a similar case today, were the circumstances the same, I should consider it my duty to the country to act as I acted then.

TH. S. JESUP

Gen. Jesup here goes much beyond his official reports. Possibly his spy accusation and the suggested hanging, if they had any foundation, had grown through resentment and through the years in the mind of an old man of seventy.

Some months before the seizure, General Jesup, in a report to Secretary of War Poinsett, wrote (June 7, 1837) :⁴

"... The principal chiefs met me in council on the 1st. inst. and I might have seized them and captured their camp;

4. *Am State Papers. Military Affairs*, vol. VII. p. 872.

but such an act would have been an infraction of the treaty, and the capture of 2 or 3 hundred Indians would have been a poor compensation for the violation of the national faith. The Indians now have no confidence in our promises, and I, as the representative of the county here, was unwilling to teach a lesson of barbarism to a band of savages

REPORT OF GENERAL HERNANDEZ ON HIS SEIZURE OF THE INDIANS

Headquarters Forces East of the St. John's, ⁵
 St. Augustine, October 22, 1837

Major General Th. S. Jesup
 Commanding army of the South
 General:

The Indian chief Coacoochee having, conformably to his engagement, when he was permitted to depart from this, returned . . . and having reported that about one hundred Indians would be at Pellicer's creek on the following day, among whom would be Oseola and Coa Hajo, I proceeded. . . to meet these Indians . . . and I procured a promise from them to move northwardly to the neighborhood of Fort Peyton. ⁶

On the. . . 20th . . . John Cavallo, with another Indian, accompanied by Lieutenant Peyton, arrived in town, with information that Oseola and Coa Hajo, with the Indians, had encamped near Fort Peyton, and stating that they expected to see me there on the following morning. . . the 21st . . . Leaving Fort Peyton, I found the Indians encamped about a mile south of that post. . .

. . . I had given the necessary instructions to Major Ashby to ensure their capture if it should become necessary. . . believ-

5. 25th Cong. 2nd. H. Rep. *War Dept.* Doc. 327, p. 5.

6. This contradicts Gen. Jesup's statement that Osceola had come into Ft. Peyton ". . . not on my invitation nor that of any other officer"; also, his stated belief that Osceola and his band were on the way to attack Ft. Marion and free Philip.

ing from the dispositions of the Indians that they did not mean to surrender, they were completely surrounded in about ten minutes after I reached their encampment. I found there Oseola and Coa Hajo, with a force which I then estimated at about sixty warriors.

In the prosecution of my purposes in this interview, I learned that the Indians were perfectly disposed to bring in the negroes and property taken from the inhabitants during the war, but that they were by no means prepared to surrender themselves; and their answers to the questions put to them in regard to the breach of their stipulations made with you at Fort King, I conceive to be wholly evasive and unsatisfactory. Indeed, their answers were generally so. From these circumstances, and agreeably to your express order, conveyed to me during the *talk*, that they should be made prisoners, I gave a signal, previously agreed on, and the troops closed in on them. . . .

. . . I have little doubt that the purposes of the Indians were far from being such as might have been expected under the circumstances; and I am convinced, on our determination to capture them, that nothing but the promptitude and efficiency of the movements of the troops under my command prevented the effusion of blood; for the arms of the enemy, artfully covered by deer-skins, as if carelessly thrown on the ground occupied by them, were ready and evidently prepared for action, and to prevent surprise. . . .

On my way [there] . . . I met 74 negroes, brought in by the Indians. . . .

Accompanying this, I beg to transmit to you a minute of the *talk* held with these Indians, which will show the answers given to the questions you desired me to put to them; from all which, it is manifest that they had not come here with an intention of remaining.

I have the honor to be, general, with much respect, your obedient servant,

JOSEPH M. HERNANDEZ,
Brig Gen'l com'g.

"Notes of a talk between Brigadier General Hernandez and the Indian chiefs Osinyohola (or Powell) and Coahajo, on the 21st October, 1837, taken by Major K. B. Gibbs, aid-de-camp. [Interpreter not stated.]

General. What people have come with you?

Chiefs. All that are well and they could gather.

General. I speak to you as a friend: what induced you to come?

Chiefs. We come for good. . . .

General. What do you expect from me?

Chiefs. We don't know.

General. Have you come to give up to me as your friend?

Chiefs. No, we did not understand so; word went from here, and we have come; we have done nothing all summer, and want to make peace.

General. In what way to make peace?

Chiefs. They thought they would come in and make peace, with liberty to walk about.

General. Are you ready to give up all the property that you have captured?

Chiefs. We intend to do so, to bring in what is due to the white people; We have brought a good many negroes in now.

General. Why did not Micanopy, Jumper, and Cloud, come instead of sending a message?

Chiefs. They all got the measles and could not come.

General. What word did they send by you?

Chiefs. When they get stronger they will come and see you.

General. I am an old friend of Philip's and wish you all well; but we have been deceived so often, that it is necessary for you to come with me; you can send out a messenger; you shall stay with me and none of you shall be hurt. . . .

Chiefs. We will see about it. . . .

General. I have brought Blue Snake to prove what I say is true.

Blue Snake said that all the General said is true. But he understood the Indians were to be allowed to return. . . .

"The arms and baggage of the Indians were now ordered to be collected, and the line of march taken up for St. Augustine.

K. B. GIBBS, A.D.C."

Captain N. S. Jarvis, an Army Surgeon, was present at the seizure. He writes: ⁷

"In a conference of Gen. H. [Hernandez] with Philip [Seminole chief] it was proposed to send out Coacoohy and another Indian to induce Powell, whose camp they represented to be not far off, to come in for the ostensible purpose of having a talk. Coacoohy was sanguine he could induce him to do so. He was to carry a talk of Philip to him, and said he would be absent about 10 or 12 days. At the expiration of that time he return'd, bringing word that Powell was coming and would be in [in] a day or two. Within that time intelligence was sent to St. Augustine that the renown'd Os-cin-ye-hola or Powell Osceola with 80 of his warriors was waiting within a mile of Camp Peyton 7 miles from town, and the Gen'l. immediately set out to hold a *talk* and what was pretty well known before to take him and his party. . . .

7. Capt. N. S. Jarvis: "An Army Surgeon's Notes on Frontier Service, 1833-48." *Journal of the Military Service Institution*. Sept.-Oct. 1906.

"On our arrival at their camp which we discovered at a short distance by a white flag flying,⁸ the Indians immediately gather'd around us shaking hands with all the officers. My attention was of course first directed to discover Os-cin-ye-hola. He was soon pointed out to me, but I could have designated him by his looks as the principal man among them. Nothing of savage fierceness or determination mark'd his countenance, on the contrary his features indicated mildness and benevolence. A continued smile played over his face, particularly when shaking hands with the officers present.

"After an extended talk the Gen'l lifted a signal agreed upon and the troops closed in."⁹

Samuel Forry, another Army surgeon, in letters to Lieut. J. W. Phelps,¹⁰ wrote of the seizure:

(St. Augustine, October 19, 1837) ". . . The Indians have not the least idea of emigrating. . . . If these people once get into our power they will be held as fast as the old Fort can make them. . . . They come with the view of having a talk and a ball play, and eating and drinking. Gen. Jesup and staff got here yesterday, doubtless concocting some direful plans to entrap the poor savage. (October 21, 1837): Powell's camp was about a mile from the fort [Peyton] and he received us standing beneath a white flag. . . . The Indians bore it like philosophers. . . ."

8. To the southeastern Indian white signified peace, and a general custom was to wear a white plume or wing when on a peaceful mission: Adair, James: *The History of the American Indians*. London, 1775, p. 159; Swanton, John R.: *44th An. Rep. Bur. Eth.* p. 238. For a striking example of the use by the Seminoles of a flag made of white heron's wings see: Coe, C. H.: *Red Patriots*, 1898, p. 196.

9. Jesup to Jones, Oct. 2, 1837: (MA. 348) "The Seminole chief Coacoochee having come in as the bearer of a flag, I have on full consideration of all the circumstances of the case considered it due to the sanctity of the flag to permit him to return." Also: Jesup to Sec. War, Feb. 17, 1837: "Abraham has just come in with a flag. . . ."

10. *Florida Historical Quarterly*, VII (July, 1928) pp. 88,90.

John Ross, a Cherokee Indian of high character, with a number of his band, were brought to Florida by the War Department to endeavor to induce the Indians to surrender and emigrate to the West. The following is a part of Ross's report to Sec. of War Poinsett relating to the seizure of Micanopy's band under a white flag on orders of Gen. Jesup.

Washington City, January 2, 1838 ¹¹

Hon. Joel R. Poinsett

Secretary of War

Sir: . . . the Cherokee deputation who were charged with the duty of endeavoring to restore peace between the Seminole Indians and the United States, in the character of mediators . . . penetrated the deep swamps and hammocks of Florida, under the escort of Coahachee, one of the captive chiefs; . . . they met the Seminole and Mickasucky chiefs and warriors in council, and there delivered to them the talk which I, with your approbation, had sent them. After reading and fully explaining its import through the interpreter, the assembled chiefs and warriors at once agreed to receive it in friendship, as coming through their red brethren the Cherokees, with the utmost sincerity and good feelings, from their elder brother the Secretary of War, who represents their father, the President of the United States. When the usual Indian ceremonies on this occasion, in smoking the pipe of peace, &c., were concluded, Micanopy, the principal chief, with twelve others of his chieftains, and a number of their warriors, agreed to accompany the Cherokee deputation, and accordingly went with them, under a flag of truce, into the headquarters of the United States army, at Fort Mellon. After this successful meeting, further steps were taken for inviting all the people to go in; and whilst some were coming in, the escape of Wild-cat from the fort at St. Augustine, and other events altogether beyond the control

11. H. Rep. Doc. 327: note 5 above.

of the Cherokee deputation, produced a sudden and unexpected distrust and change of determination in the minds of the chiefs and warriors of the nation who were still out in their fastnesses. Upon being informed of this fact, it is reported that General Jesup immediately ordered his troops to be put in motion for hostile operations, and also caused all the chiefs and warriors who had come in under the Cherokee flag to be forthwith made prisoners of war; they were then placed in the hold of a steamboat, and shipped to the fort at St. Augustine, and there imprisoned. . . . Under this extraordinary state of the affair, [!] it has become my imperious though painful duty, for the defence of my own reputation, as well as that of the deputation who acted under my instructions, for carrying out the humane objects of this mediation; also, in justice to the suffering chiefs and warriors, whose confidence in the purity of our motives, as well as in the sincerity of the Government, by the assurances held out to them under your authority in my talk, had thus placed themselves under the flag of truce before the American army, and I do hereby, most solemnly protest against this unprecedented violation of that sacred rule which has ever been recognised by every nation, civilized and uncivilized, of treating with all due respect those who had ever presented themselves under a flag of truce before their enemy, for the purpose of proposing the termination of a warfare.¹² Moreover, I respectfully appeal to and submit for your decision, whether justice and policy do not require at your hands that these captives should be forthwith liberated, that they may go and confer with their people, and that whatever obstacles may have been thrown in the way of their coming in to make peace may be removed. In a word, under all the circumstances of the case,

12. Catlin (*op. cit.* p. 220) who, through an interpreter, had many talks with Osceola ("a most extraordinary man") while painting his portrait, was told of the war and "...the mode in which they were captured, of which they complain bitterly."

so far as the particular captives alluded to are concerned, I feel myself called upon, by every sense of justice and honor, to ask that they may be released and placed at liberty, to determine with their people what to do under all the circumstances of their affairs, as freely and untrammelled as they were previous to the council held with them by the Cherokee mediation, as it was through the influence of the Cherokee talk they had consented to go under the flag of truce into (General Jesup's headquarters. . . .

JOHN ROSS. [Koo-we-skoo-we.]

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The seizure of Osceola was made good use of by the politicians of the period in attacks of the opposition upon the Van Buren administration; and the abolitionists also picked up and used the incident in their continuous campaigns. Whatever seed was sown by either, fell on very fertile soil, and the harvest has made Osceola famous from then until today.

OSCEOLA AND THE NEGROES

by KENNETH W. PORTER

Osceola, if not the most important Indian leader in the Seminole War (1835-1842), is certainly the best known. His fame is largely due to the circumstances of his capture and death, but the Abolitionist movement of his own day also contributed. That Osceola was driven into hostility to the United States by the seizure and reduction to slavery of one of his wives, the daughter of an Indian chief and a runaway Negro woman, is one of the best-known and most generally accepted "facts" of his career. Actually, the story, so far as it concerns Osceola, is unsupported by trustworthy contemporary evidence. Apparently it was either sheer fabrication by an Abolitionist propagandist or else was inspired by a kidnapping which involved a woman unconnected with Osceola. The kidnapping into slavery of a part-Negro Seminole woman was entirely possible. Runaway slaves and their descendants, who legally were still slaves, were an important element in the Seminole tribe; slavers frequently seized Negroes and part-Negroes living among the Seminole and spirited them away into servitude. Old Econchattemicco (Red Ground King), an important Seminole chief, lost a part-Negro granddaughter in this way; it is possible, indeed, that it was her kidnapping which gave rise to the story of Osceola's wife.¹

Osceola's actual Negro connections, although well authenticated, are, however, little known, probably because they lack romantic appeal. The runaway slaves and their descendants among the Seminole were almost unanimous in their determination to resist removal from Florida; they were convinced that if the Seminole were assembled under military control for transportation to the Indian Territory, the Negroes would be

1. Kenneth W. Porter, "The Episode of Osceola's Wife: Fact or Fiction?," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 26 (1947), pp. 92-98.

seized and enslaved. The great majority of the Seminole Indians were also, for various reasons, opposed to removal; Osceola was the most conspicuously militant and outspoken of a number of hostile chiefs. His uncompromising attitude toward Seminole removal brought him into close relations with such Negro leaders as Abraham, head-chief Mikonopi's principal interpreter and adviser.²

When the Seminole War broke out in December, 1835, one of its most alarming features, to the whites, was the prominence and activity of the Seminole Negroes and the extent to which the plantation slaves hastened to join the hostiles.³ When, early in March, 1837, Gen. T. S. Jesup succeeded in negotiating a removal treaty with a number of Seminole chiefs, it was only on condition that their "property" should be safeguarded and their "allies" permitted to accompany them to the Indian Territory. The Indians understood that these rather cryptic expressions signified their Negroes, some of whom were actually their *bona fide* property, although the majority were fugitive slaves or their descendants. Gen. Jesup, however, was immediately besieged by angry planters in search of runaway slaves, and decided, under great pressure, to attempt to recover the Negroes who had joined the Seminole since the outbreak of the war. He succeeded in winning the support of Coi Hajo, second chief of the St. Johns River Seminole.

A good many Negroes, who had accompanied the Seminole unwillingly or unenthusiastically or who had found the hardships of Indian life more than they had bargained for, promptly took advantage of the cessation of hostilities to "come in." Other runaways, however, were less amenable. A band of

2. Kenneth W. Porter, "The Negro Abraham," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 25 (1946), pp. 1-43.

3. Kenneth W. Porter, "Florida Slaves and Free Negroes in the Seminole War, 1835-1842," *The Journal of Negro History*, vol. XXVIII (1943), p. 390. Kenneth W. Porter, "John Caesar: Seminole Negro Partisan," *JNH*, Vol. XXVIII (1943), p. 53.

Negroes on Cedar Creek defiantly informed Coi Hajo's emissaries that they had not captured them and could not return them.

Osceola put himself at the head of opposition to the surrender of runaway Negroes. When Coi Hajo announced in council that runaway Negroes should be returned, Osceola, rising in a rage, declared that so long as he was in the nation it should never be done.⁴ Osceola was moved by both public and personal considerations. He had never accepted the agreement of March, 1837, and therefore opposed any action which would deprive the tribe of warriors or workers. Osceola, moreover, who was not a Seminole chief but a Red Stick Creek from Georgia, had no hereditary claims to leadership. His band consisted of warriors who were without close ties to hereditary leaders and who were attracted by his personal qualities of militancy, courage, and intelligence. Negroes, the element most strongly opposed to removal and with the loosest allegiance to the hereditary chiefs, were naturally most susceptible to Osceola's appeal. His early personal following especially, therefore, was recruited in good part from among the Negroes, altho it also included some of the hot-headed and particularly recalcitrant Mikasuki.

Early in January 1837, Osceola was surprised and his band disrupted, he himself escaping with only three warriors. As his headquarters at the time of this disaster were a Negro village in the Panosufkee Swamp, of the fifty-five prisoners captured from his band only three were Indians.⁵ Osceola was thus confronted with the necessity of building up his band again from the beginning, and runaway Negroes such as the defiant fugitives on Cedar Creek were his most promising candidates. Small wonder that he was enraged at Coi Hajo's proposal to

4. Florida Historical Society Library (photostats): Lieut. R. H. Peyton, May 24, 1837, to Harney.

5. *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, vol. VII, pp. 825-826

deprive him of such recruits by turning them over to the whites.

Osceola's opposition to the surrender of runaway Negroes and the resistance of freedom-loving Negroes themselves naturally checked the Seminole, and particularly the Negro, movement toward the emigration camp at Tampa Bay. Even the "Indian Negroes" - Negroes born or long domiciled among the Seminole - who had already assembled at the camp became uneasy at the appearance of slave-hunters. After the recent runaways had been surrendered, would the next step be the seizure of the "Indian Negroes"? Osceola, the young chief Wild Cat, and the young Indian Negro chief John Cavallo diligently cultivated these suspicions. Finally, early in June, most of the Indian Negroes and many Indians fled the camp.⁶ Gen. Jesup's plan for the termination of the Seminole War had split on the rock of Osceola's opposition to the surrender of any Negroes, whatever the date of their capture or flight.

The break-down of the agreement and the flight of the Negroes gave Osceola the time and opportunity for fresh recruiting. By October his following included sixty or seventy Negroes, mostly, it seems, recent runaways; his Indian followers must have been comparatively few. The spokesman of seventeen Negroes, nearly all slaves of Major Heriot, who surrendered early in October, said that he was from "Powell's [Osceola's] town, . . . on a large lake above Lake Monroe." He had been permitted to leave in order to make salt, and reported that there were still "about fifty negroes with Powell. . . they all want to get away as the Indians half starve them. . . they . . . live almost exclusively on the pounded root of the Palmetto."⁷ The informant, of course, may have been ascribing his own personal sentiments to Osceola's fifty Negroes, and it is even

6. ASP, MA, VII, 871.

7. National Archives, AGO, Capt. Harvey Brown, Ft. Marion, Oct. 8, 1837, to Lieut. J. A. Chambers (196/447).

more probable that he was telling his white masters the news which he thought they would most enjoy.

Osceola was seized shortly after, and his Negroes, presumably, either surrendered or attached themselves to other chiefs.

The story about the enslaving of Osceola's part-Negro wife is probably untrue, but that his importance as a Seminole war-chief was partly as a commander of Negro warriors is well-substantiated by contemporary documents.

THE SITE OF OSCEOLA'S VILLAGE IN MARION COUNTY, FLORIDA

by WILFRED T. NEILL

Archeology is generally thought of as being concerned with prehistoric man, but the application of archeological techniques to sites of the historic period often yields valuable data. As recently as 1948, no archeological site had been found that could be attributed to Seminole Indian occupation; the Seminole Period in Florida was known from historical sources alone.¹ This situation was soon remedied. Goggin² investigated the site of Spaulding's Lower Store on the St. Johns River, recovering a large quantity of colonial artifacts, Seminole pottery, and trinkets intended for the Indian trade. Goggin *et al.*³ described a historic Indian burial, doubtless Seminole, from the Zetrouer site near Gainesville. A number of Seminole or Lower Creek sites had previously been discovered by Bullen⁴ in the Chattahoochee Valley. Seminole material was recovered by Griffin⁵ from old Fort Gadsden. A promising Seminole site, found by Julian Granberry at Winter Park,⁶ has been under investigation by John M. Goggin, who has also recovered artifacts of the Seminole Period from the vicinity of Middleburg, Clay County.⁷ In 1953 Neill⁸ located a Seminole site near Silver Springs, Florida.

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1. Goggin, J. M., "Florida Archeology - 1950." *The Florida Anthropologist*, nos. 1-2 p. 17. Gainesville, 1950.
 2. Goggin, J. M., "A Florida Indian Trading Post, circa 1763-1784." *Southern Indian Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, 35-38. Chapel Hill. 1949.
 3. Goggin, J. M., M. E. Godwin, E. Hester, D. Prange, and R. Spangenburg, "An Historic Indian Burial, Alachua County, Florida." *The Florida Anthropologist*, nos. 1-2, 10-25. Gainesville. 1949.
 4. Bullen, R. P., "An Archeological Survey of the Chattahoochee River Valley in Florida." *Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences*, vol. 40, no. 4, 101-125. Washington. 1950.
 5. Griffin, J. W., "An Archeologist at Fort Gadsden." *Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 3, 254-261. St. Augustine 1950.
 6. Mentioned briefly by Sleight, F. W., "Seminole Site." *Florida Anthropological Society Newsletter*, no. 19, p. 1. (Place varies) 1952.
 7. Footnote in Goggin, J. M., Space and Time Perspective in Northern St. Johns Archeology, Florida." *Yale University Publications in Anthropology*, no. 47, p. 62. New Haven. 1952.
 8. Neill, W. T., "A Seminole Site in Marion County, Florida." In press.

During 1953 and 1954, Neill ⁹ investigated the site of old Fort King (1827-1843), near Ocala, Florida. A portion of the site showed no evidence of habitation since the fort was abandoned. This portion yielded over 1,000 artifacts, thought to be characteristic of early American occupation in the area. These include fragments of dark green glass rum bottles, some of them with chipped edges suggesting use as scrapers; clay pipes, of a late variety with a basal spur; blue feathered edge chinaware and a much smaller quantity of green feathered edge; Staffordshire printed ware; flower-painted ware; plain white ironware; gun flints, of both European and local stone; nails of all sizes, square in cross-section and tapering gradually from head to point; musket balls and smaller lead shot; and many other artifacts in lesser quantities. Also found were faceted beads of blue glass, intended for the Seminole trade if not actually worn by the Indians; a potsherd with a brushed surface, doubtless Seminole; and two plain aboriginal sherds possibly of Seminole manufacture. ¹⁰ The sutler's store at Fort King catered to the Indians as well as the whites, and so material recovered from the fort give an idea of the artifacts to be expected on local Seminole sites of the same time period.

Four or five Seminole villages were once located at no great distance from Fort King, and among them was Osceola's settlement. Earlier sources usually described Osceola's village simply as being "in a hammock near Fort King" ¹¹ or "near the present site of Ocala." ¹² Land grant records are more explicit.

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9. Neill, W. T., "Studies at the Site of Fort King, Marion County, Florida." In press.
 10. Some Seminole pottery vessels, while still damp, were brushed with a bundle of fibers. This brushed ware is readily identified. Other Seminole vessels were plain; and small, weathered sherds of this plain ware are not so readily distinguished from certain earlier pottery types. For descriptions of Seminole pottery, see Bullen, 1950, p. 103; and Goggin, 1952, pp. 112-113.
 11. Sprague, J. T., *The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War*, etc. p. 101. New York, 1848.
 12. Coe, C. H., *Red Patriots: The Story of the Seminoles*. p. 29. Cincinnati. 1898.

A certain L. Funck applied for a grant which, when the area was subsequently platted in 1843, was listed as the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Sect. 11, T 16 S, R 21 E. The location was described as being "one mile west of Osceola's town, near the land of the Reinhardt's".¹³ (One need not assume that "west" in this case meant due west; in early descriptions of property, both distances and directions were often stated in very general terms.) The Reinhardt application did not mention the Indian settlement, which in any event was not necessarily on the Reinhardt lands.¹⁴ Local tradition places Osceola's village very precisely: on what is now the John W. Edwards property, about four miles south-southwest of the Ocala city limits and seven miles southwest of Fort King. The locality is approximately one and one-half miles north of the Reinhardt lands and one mile northeast of the old Funck property.

Cutler¹⁵ stated, "The site of Osceola's Village near Ocala is now occupied by four silos and a feed lot for cattle, and is owned by. . . John L. Edwards". Ott¹⁶ commented, "Osceola had his home near Bradley's Pond, about three miles SW of Ocala". In so stating, Ott may have followed Clarke.¹⁷

Bradley's Pond still exists. The stream that feeds it has been dammed farther up, and so the pond has been considerably reduced in size. It lies on the Edwards property, and is now called "the old Bradley Pond". The bases of the silos mentioned by Cutler are still to be found, on higher ground just east of the pond.

13. *Applications for Land under Armed Occupation Act*. Archives of Field Note Division. Tallahassee. Also see Boyd, M. F., "The Seminole War: Its Background and Onset." *Florida Historical Quarterly*, vol. 30, no. 1, p. 53, footnote. Tallahassee. 1951.

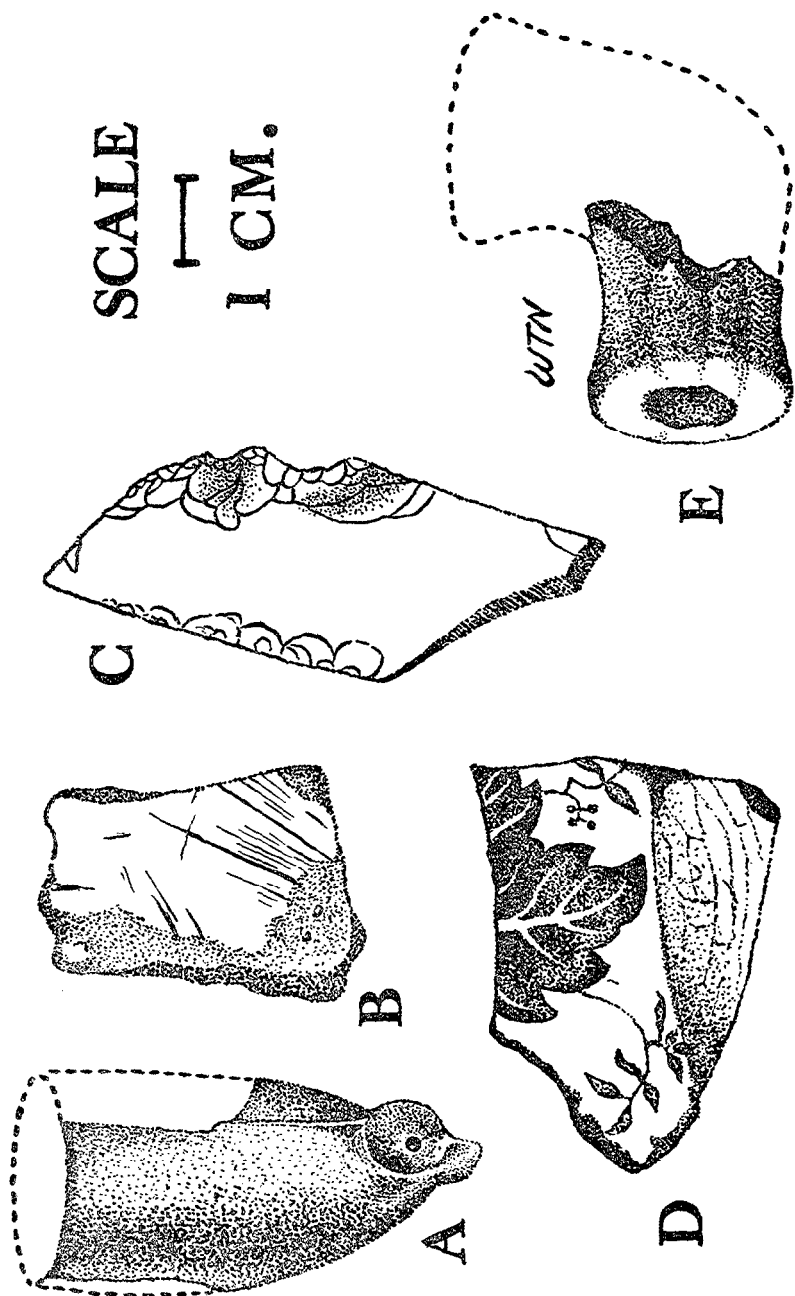
14. Reinhardt's holdings changed hands in 1849, and the transaction was recorded in the *Marion County, Florida, Deed Record Book "Q"*, pp. 764-765. The property was described therein, but with no mention of Osceola's village.

15. Cutler, H. G., *History of Florida, Past and Present, Historical and Biographical*. 3 vols. vol. 1, p. 543. Chicago. 1923.

16. Ott, E. R., "Ocala Prior to 1868." *Florida Historical Society Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 2, p. 88, footnote. St. Augustine. 1927.

17. Clarke, J. O. D., *A Sketch of Ocala and Marion County*. Republican Press. 1891. Not seen.

SCALE
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Artifacts from the site of Osceola's village. A, bowl of clay pipe (outline restored). B, sherd of Seminole pottery. C, glass fragment with chipped edges, possibly used as a scraper. D, sherd of blue transfer-printed china-ware. E, "elbow" pipe of glazed clay (possible bowl outline restored).

During times of hard rain the pond may rise and overflow even its older basin. Overflow was probably much greater before damming of the stream, and it is not surprising that all traces of habitation, modern or otherwise, are to be found well up on the high ground above the pond. The surrounding country is hilly; it was once covered with a live-oak hammock, as evidenced by a few remaining copses. However, nearly all of the area has been cleared, and is periodically harrowed and plowed. It is now covered in summer with pasture grasses and corn fields. When the site was first examined in 1953, the area had been cleared to the very ground, facilitating the search for evidence of Seminole occupation. Superficial stratigraphy had been destroyed by repeated plowing, however.

Studies have scarcely begun at the site of Osceola's village; preliminary remarks are warranted only because they are especially pertinent to the present symposium. Evidently the site and its environs were inhabited by Indians long before the coming of the Seminole, for flint chips and projectile points have often been turned up by the plow. Artifacts probably attributable to the Seminole have been found more or less aligned on the high ground east of the pond, between the old silo and the present-day Edwards home. Evidence of a later, non-Seminole occupation was found near the southeastern end of the old pond basin. In one area, Seminole artifacts may have been commingled with those of the later occupation.

The Seminole portion of the site to date has yielded but 23 items: one faceted bead of blue glass; four fragments of clay pipe stems and a broken pipe bowl, (*see fig.*) A; a broken, rudely made "elbow" pipe of glazed clay, E; one sherd of aboriginal pottery with a brushed surface, B; two plain aboriginal sherds; two pieces of dark green bottle glass; one bit of pale bluish-green glass which may have been used as a scraper, C; four scraps of blue featheredge china; two fragments of blue transfer-printed ware (one shown in D); three pieces of plain

ironware; and one bit of fine white china with a floral design in red and green. This last specimen, and the elbow pipe, have no counterpart in the Fort King material. Several other artifacts, possibly Seminole, were found mixed with obviously later material where two areas of habitation appeared to overlap. Among them were a flattened, subrectangular chunk of iron, three small bits of slate,¹⁸ fragments of a stoneware jug, four pieces of plain white ironware, and a nail of the early American type.

Very few artifacts were recovered from the Seminole portion of the site, and these only after repeated visits over a period of months, during which time the whole area had been plowed. The 23 items attributed to Seminole occupation were found over an area about 500 feet long and 75 feet wide. Perhaps they had been dragged about by repeated harrowing. Alternatively, Osceola's village may have been strung out along the higher ground bordering the pond. The encampment, being very close to the American military base of Fort King, was abandoned when hostilities broke out;¹⁹ and the Indians probably left very few of their possessions behind. It is not out of the question that the deserted village was raided for "souvenirs" after Osceola had attained fame.

Of course, further work may reveal a heavier concentration of artifacts in some portion of the site. However, this is not regarded as likely, for most of the surrounding fields were carefully searched at a time when they were free of grass and weeds. Additional material may be concealed by farm buildings that border the site to the north, or by other buildings and a lawn that border it to the south. As yet, no examination has

18. A similar bit of slate was recovered from the Fort King site.

19. Writing from Fort King, Wiley Thompson (letter to Gen. George Gibson, dated Dec. 7, 1835) stated, "The Indians in this section of the nation, immediately succeeding the murder of the chief, Charley Emartla, assembled at the towns called Big Swamp and Long Swamp. On yesterday morning I received information that they have all disappeared. . . ." Big Swamp was an inappropriate name for a large hammock region southwest of Fort King, and the Big Swamp village was Osceola's. See map in Boyd, 1951, p. 28.

been made of the brushy hillsides to the west of Bradley's Pond. These do not lie on the Edwards property, and are not traditionally associated with Osceola's village.

There is a local tradition that Osceola sent smoke signals from the high hills on the eastern side of the Edwards property. This belief may have some foundation in fact. Although the Seminoles are not known to have used smoke signals, they probably built large fires at times. (At a 1953 Corn Dance, held by the Cow Creek Seminole near Fort Drum, a veritable bonfire sent a tall plume of smoke into the sky for hours; it was visible for miles around.) Quite possibly, the soldiers at Fort King and the settlers at Ocala often saw the smoke of Seminole fires.

It is not surprising that traditions of Osceola and his village should have persisted locally. Although Marion County was not officially created until 1845, there were white pioneers in the area at a considerably earlier time, and Fort King was first manned in 1827, before Osceola became an acknowledged war leader of the Seminole. Judging from the afore-mentioned Funck application, the Indian village site was a well-known landmark when the Ocala area was first settled.

OSCEOLA AND THE CHARLESTONIANS

Charleston Courier, January 3, 1838:

"ARRIVAL OF THE INDIAN CHIEFS AND WARRIORS

"The steamer Poinsett, Capt. Tratchen [Stratton?] arrived at this port on Monday last from St. Augustine, having on board Petcarin [?] Morrison, Capt. 4th Infantry, supt. emigration Seminoles; Dr. Bredon [Weedon], Act. Asst. Surgeon, U.S.A.; Lieut. Hathaway, 4th Art.; Lt. Whar-ton, 6th Inft. commanding detachmant, U.S. Troops; Chief Micanopy, principal chief, Coahadjo, King Philip, Oceola, Little Cloud, and 116 warriors, and 82 women and children. The whole under command of Capt. Morrison with a guard of 40 U. S. soldiers. We are pleased to learn that from the excellent management of Capt. Morrison the Indians are satisfied to emigrate with him. We likewise understand that their conduct while on board the Poinsett was distinguished by good order and sobriety. All of them were landed at Sullivan's Island, and confined within Fort Moultrie."

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Ibid. (adv.):

"NEW THEATRE

This evening Jan. 6

"OSEOLA and the other INDIAN CHIEFS will be in attendance."

Idem, Jan. 6:

From an editorial:

"... we have heard within a day or two, very bitter things said of Osceola, by a few persons. In our humble opinion, he has been to the full, as much sinned against as sinning. Treacherous he may have been, but we cannot forget that he was provoked by treachery, and captured by treachery. We are fairly even with him. We now

owe him the respect which the brave ever feel toward the brave; which the victorious cannot violate without brutality towards the vanquished, which the commonest laws of humanity and civilization enforce towards prisoners of war. We sincerely trust that no citizen of Charleston will so far forget the character of a Carolinian, as to offer indignity to a fallen man. A tear of forgiveness and generous sympathy is much better due to the once terrible, now stricken warrior of the Seminoles."

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Osceola was buried near the Fort and Charlestonians enclosed it with a paling and erected a marble slab at the head with a suitable inscription. (see Boyd: ASI-YAHOLO OR OSCEOLA, *post*)

Charleston Courier (January 1838):

Includes numerous articles and references to Osceola and the other Seminoles.

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In the *Charleston Mercury* (Feb. 6, 15, 1838) there are reprinted from the *New York Star* a long letter and a description of Osceola's character which are so florid and apparently so much exaggerated that their composition might be attributed to the circumstances under which they were written.

ASI-YAHOLO OR OSCEOLA

by MARK F. BOYD

Of the numerous Indian leaders who have attracted the attention, the interest, or the sympathy of the people of the whole United States, albeit they never derived any practical advantage therefrom, the notoriety attained by the Seminole leader known as Powell or Osceola, probably drew to that individual more attention than has been given to any other Indian before or since. This fame arose from his resolute opposition to enforced emigration from Florida. His motives were regarded as patriotic, and real or fancied romantic episodes of his career have become a part of our folk-lore. Although seizure and deportation thwarted him, a handful of his people, imbued with his determination, succeeded in attaining their common objective.

A biographical sketch of any Indian offers nearly unsurmountable difficulties. Owing to the absence of written Indian records and his own unlettered condition, we are not able to view Osceola directly, but are compelled to observe him as reflected in the eyes of those who were generally his opponents. These images, though usually sympathetic, are nonetheless distorted, and a clear picture is thus unobtainable. Its very dimness has encouraged most writers to give a romantic embellishment to his portrait. While flesh on the bones of such a study as this is often provided by contemporaneous anecdotes, we come to the conclusion that in the case of Osceola, most of these appear apocryphal. Should he have possessed any knowledge of English this was carefully concealed, and all communication with him was through interpreters. It is noted that all the purported utterances of Osceola encountered are expressed in faultless English, disregarding that most if not all of these translations came

The QUARTERLY expresses its appreciation and its thanks to the author of this article for assistance in its printing, which was much beyond our resources.

from the lips of some unlettered Negro. In effect these underwent still further translation when rendered into polished English. It is likely the latter affords the explanation for the different versions of some of his purported utterances which have been recorded. As a Creek, Muskogee must have been his mother-tongue, while from his intimate association with the Mikasukies, he must certainly have acquired familiarity with the related Hitchiti language.

The Anglicized version of the Muskogee name of our subject has become orthographically standardized as Osceola, although the variants Asseola, ¹ Assiola, ² Oceola, ³ Oseola, ⁴ and still others are contemporaneously encountered. These are elisions on the one hand, of Usso (or Ussa) Yaholo, ⁵ or on the other hand, of Hassee Ola, ⁶ As-sin Yaholo, ⁷ Ossen Yaholah, ⁸ Os-cin-ye-hola, ⁹ As-see-a-hala, ¹⁰ Assyn-ya-hola, ¹¹ Yose-ya-hola, ¹² and As-se-se-he-ho-lar, ¹³ as well as others. McKinney ¹⁴ stated that while *Osceola*

1. McKenney, Thomas L., and Hall, James (1934). *The Indian Tribes of North America*, etc. New edition. Edited by F. W. Hodge and D. J. Bushnell. 3 vols. Edinburgh. II: 363.
2. [Potter, Woodburne] A Late Staff Officer (1836). *The War in Florida*: etc. Baltimore. 9.
3. Motte, Jacob Rhett (1953). *Journey into Wilderness*. Edited by James F. Sunderman. Univ. of Fla. Press. 136. McCall, Major General George A. (1868). *Letters from the Frontiers*. Philadelphia. 329.
4. Hitchcock, Capt. A. E., testimony of. *Court of Inquiry-Operations in Florida*. House Doc. 78, 25th Cong. 2d Ses. Jan. 8, 1838. 622.
5. Woodward, Thomas S. (1859). *Woodward's Reminiscences of the Creek or Muscogee Indians*, etc. Montgomery. 9.
6. [Smith, W. W.] A Lieutenant of the Left Wing (1836). *Sketch of the Seminole War*. Charleston. 5.
7. Williams, John Lee (1837). *The Territory of Florida*, etc. New York 273.
8. Undated report of Lieut. Col. Harney to Gen. Jesup. *Army and Navy Chronicle*. IV, 329, 1837. (Hereafter cited as the "Chronicle")
9. Jarvis, Capt. N. S. (1906). "An Army Surgeon's Notes on Frontier Service." *Journal of the Military Service Institution*. Part 2. XXXIX (5): 278.
10. Westcott, James D., to E. Herring, Nov. 5, 1833. *Causes of the Seminole Hostilities*, etc. House Doc. 271, 24th Cong. 1st Ses. (June 3, 1836) 97.
11. Motte, *op. cit.* 138.
12. Anon. letter from St. Augustine, n.d. *Niles' National Register*, LIII, 165.
13. Sprague, John T. (1848). *The Origin, Progress and Conclusion of the Florida War*; etc. New York. 100.
14. McKenney and Hall, 1934. II: 363. Cohen, M. M. (1836). *Notices of Florida and the Campaigns*. Charleston and New York. 234.

would be correctly rendered as *Rising Sun*, this is an erroneous orthographical adaptation, and that the form *Asseola* more nearly approximates the Indian speech, as the name is derived from *Asse* = Black Drink, and *ola* = water-fall, inferring that the name implied a great capacity for this ceremonial beverage. Others, including Moore-Willson¹⁵ give the roots the significance of *Asse* = sun, and *Ola* or *he-ho-lar* = rising, *i.e.*, *Rising Sun*. Explanation for this confusion is afforded by Woodward,¹⁶ who related that among the Red Stick refugees in Florida was a well-known half-breed chief named *Hossa Yoholo* or *Singing Sun*, with whom the then little-known *Ussa Yoholo*, our subject, became confused, shortly after the rise of the latter to prominence. According to a most competent Muskogee scholar,¹⁷ the correct orthography is *Asi-Yaholo*, from *Asi* = Black Drink, and *Yaholo* = Singer, referring to the long drawn-out cry sung by the serving attendant while each man at the busk is, in his turn, quaffing the Black Drink. It thus is a busk title rather than a name. It is unfortunate that the orthography has become standardized as *Osceola* rather than as *Asseola*.

In view of its implication, it is evident that the title *Asi-yaholo* was conferred after the attainment of manhood, as was also the later mentioned "Talcy" or Talassee Tustenuggee, his probable ceremonial name. In view of his youth when brought to Florida, it is certain that these titles were bestowed subsequent to arrival. The former is indicative that he discharged the duty corresponding in the annual feast of the busk or green-corn festival. Should this assumption be correct, it emphasizes our ignorance of his Indian childhood names. At the time when he was an adolescent in 1818, Woodward¹⁸ spoke of him

15. Moore-Willson, Minnie (1896). *The Seminoles of Florida*. Philadelphia. 20.

16. Woodward, *op. cit.* 44.

17. Thomas, Cyrus. Article *Osceola*. In Hodge, F. W., Editor (1912). *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*. 2 vols. Bull. 30, Bur. Am. Ethnology, Smithsonian Inst., Washington, D. C. II: 159.

18. Woodward, 44

as Billy Powell, which is reminiscent of his reputed father or step-father, William Powell. Even after he became prominently known to the whites as an adult, he was commonly referred to as Powell. In this study we shall employ that name when discussing his early life, and Osceola when referring to him in his manhood.

Birth and Parentage

No writers have alleged that he was derived from either the original Seminole stock, *i.e.*, the Alachua Indians, or the very early Creek immigrants to Florida. The opinion is unanimous that he and his immediate relatives were immigrant Red Stick Creeks, arriving in Florida subsequent to the Battle of Tohopeka. Accepting this as likely, wide divergence nevertheless exists in the statements relating to the place of his birth and his parentage. However it is our opinion that from critical examination of many scattered, apparently unrelated, and even seemingly contradictory facts, a pattern emerges which gives a clearer picture of his probable origin.

The year of his birth is not known. Statements that he was born in the period between 1800 and 1806, or specifically in 1804, are apparently derived from estimates of his age after he attained prominence. It would appear certain that at the time of his death he had attained early middle age.

Osceola himself is stated to have declared that he was a Creek of pure blood,¹⁹ and Catlin²⁰ expressed the opinion that his general appearance and actions were those of a full-blooded and wild Indian, although adding that he was generally supposed to be a half-breed. His mother was generally acknowledged to have been a Creek woman, full-blooded or otherwise, but the greatest contradiction arose in connection with his pa-

19. Coe, Charles H. (1898). *Red Patriots: The Story of the Seminoles*. Cincinnati, 28.

20. Catlin, George (1926). *North American Indians*, etc. 2 vols. Edinburgh. II: 247.

ternity. It is generally admitted that his mother was married at one time to a white trader of English birth named Powell. Benjamin Hawkins²¹ spoke of a William Powell as a trader at Tallassee in the Upper Nation, at that time a man of little property and apparently unambitious. Hawkins further²² related a visit paid to a William "Pound" at Tallassee in 1796, who had resided four years in the Nation, had a pretty little Indian woman, and one child. Since Hawkins nowhere else mentioned a man of this surname as resident either in Tallassee or elsewhere in the Nation,²³ the name "Pound" is likely an error for Powell. Could this child have been the later Osceola? The criterion of age appears to exclude this possibility.

Several accounts allege that Osceola's mother had had a previous Indian husband who was the father of Osceola, prior to her marriage with Powell. These state that this husband was a half-breed, son of a Creek woman by a Scot.²⁴ The statement of Woodward at least merits serious consideration, and in our opinion credibility, as Woodward had an unparalleled acquaintance with contemporary Creeks. He declared that his mother was Polly Copinger, and his father the little Englishman, William Powell. He traced the ancestry of Billy Powell or *Ussa Yoholo* back through three generations to James McQueen, a Scotchman who lived among the Creeks from 1716 to 1811, dying at the extraordinary age of 128 years. Woodward said he was the first white man he heard of as permanently residing among the Creeks. He married a Tallassee woman, and among their children, two, a son Peter, and a daughter Ann, require our attention. Peter McQueen (Talmuches Hadjo) became prominent, at least in the eyes of General Jackson, as a "notorious Red Stick" and a Florida refugee, his party being

21. Hawkins, Col. Benjamin (1916). *Letters of, 1796-1806*. Collections Georgia Historical Society. IX: 168.

22. Hawkins, 5. 23. Hawkins, 195.

24. Cohen, 234; McKenney and Hall, 1934: II: 360.

25. Woodward, 9. 26. Hawkins, 195.. 27. Cohen, 235; Smith, 5.

assailed by McIntosh's warriors on the Econfina river in Jackson's campaign of 1818. The daughter Ann married one Copinger, probably the trader mentioned by Hawkins²⁶ as stationed at Ecunhutkee, a town on the west side of the Tallapoosa below Tallassee. From his surname it is inferred he was either white or half-breed, and probably of Spanish origin as well. Ann had one daughter, Polly, who as related, married William Powell, with at least one son, Billy, as issue.

The uncertainties of his geneology will never permit an accurate appraisal of the degree of his white heritage, but be this as it may, it was observed that his complexion was lighter than that of Indians generally, as mentioned by Cohen²⁷ and by Smith.²⁷ Since in our opinion the facts we adduce are confirmatory of Woodward, we give his account credence though Coe and some others are skeptical of the correctness of Woodward's statements.²⁸ Osceola's mother and her husband are stated to have separated because of Indian feuds,²⁹ some alleging this occurred as early as 1808 at the time of the second Creek cession,³⁰ at which time two daughters are said to have remained with the husband, while the boy accompanied his mother.³¹ It must be admitted that such a division of children is not to be expected of a family having an Indian mother. Powell pere is reputed to have remained among the Lower Creeks, and emigrated with them in 1836.³² The wife and son are alleged to have left the Nation, going first to the vicinity of the Okefenoke swamp, and later to Florida, near Peas creek.³³ Red Stick fanaticism disrupted many Indian families, and it is more likely that the disruption of the alliance of Polly Copinger and William Powell occurred as a result of Red Stick dissention in 1814, rather than in 1808.

28. Coe, Charles H. "The Parentage and Birthplace of Osceola." *Florida Historical Quarterly*. XVII: 310.

29. Sprague, 100. 30. Sprague, 100. 31. *Ibid.* 100. 32. *Ibid.* 100.

33. *Ibid.* 100; McKenney and Hall, II: 367. 34. Sprague, 100.

While statements regarding Billy Powell's birthplace are all consistent with the idea that he by origin was a Creek, they differ as to its location. Among those given are the vicinity of the Chattahoochee river in Georgia;³⁴ a location adjacent to the Tallapoosa river in Alabama;³⁵ while a site in Macon County, Alabama was minutely described by Woodward,³⁶ which would essentially corroborate the Tallapoosa localization. Woodward stated that Billy Powell was born in a cabin located in an old field situated between Uphapee (Nufaupha, Ufapee) creek and a tributary known as Catsa Bogah, which discharges just below the railroad crossing (Western Railway of Alabama) on the west (or Montgomery) side of the Uphapee. He declared that the later railroad ran close to if not over the site.

From the data in the two preceding paragraphs, the conclusion that Osceola, had he remained in Alabama, would have been regarded as a Tallassee Indian appears certain. Only on the basis of this conclusion can we understand the remark of Cohen,³⁷ "our hero is of the Talcyc [*sic, i.e., Tallassee*] tribe, and has charge of them." These probably represented survivors or descendants of Peter McQueen's band.

Boyhood and Flight to Florida

The terms of the treaty of Fort Jackson at the end of the Creek War bore hard even on the friendly faction, and the irreconcilable Red Sticks, to escape its restrictions, left the Nation and slowly made their way south to the Spanish frontier. According to Woodward³⁸ these included the bands of Savannah Jack, Francis or Hillis Hadjo, the Otissee chief (Homathlemico), Hossa Yoholo, and Peter McQueen, totalling about a thousand warriors with their women and children. The boy Billy Powell accompanied his grand-uncle, Peter McQueen.

35. Croffut, W. A., Editor (1909). *Fifty Years in Camp and Field. Diary of Major General Ethan Allen Hitchcock*. New York and London. 82.

36. Woodward, 9. 37. Cohen, 234. 38. Woodward, 44.

These halted on the Yellow (Water) river, and had about decided to establish themselves on the Choctawhatchee river, when they received an invitation from Colonel Edward Nicolls of the British Colonial Marines, to join him at the post he had established on the Apalachicola river in the fall of 1814. With the exception of the band of Savannah Jack, all made their way eastward to the vicinity of the Apalachicola, where the material aid afforded them by Nicolls must have appeared providential. They likely remained at the British post at least until the departure of Nicolls with the British garrison late in the spring of 1815. In this interval Francis and McQueen enthusiastically promoted Nicolls's designs, and were reported by Hawkins³⁹ to have been seen in British uniform at the outpost near the confluence. When Nicolls finally withdrew, he invited Francis to accompany him to England, where the latter remained several years. Although Nicolls delivered the richly stocked British post into the hands of the Indian and Negroes, it is not evident that the wandering Red Sticks continued here long after Nicolls' departure, as no allusion to their presence at the "Negro Fort" was made at the time of its destruction in 1816. Some, at least, became established in a hammock on the west side of the Wakulla river, in the vicinity of the Spanish post of St. Marks, where they likely remained until early in 1818. It is not known whether McQueen's band was accommodated at this settlement. They did, however, actively collaborate with the Indians of Fowl Town and Mikasuky in the hostile acts which kept the Georgia frontier in a turmoil until Jackson's campaign of 1818.

On this campaign, Jackson was accompanied by a large force of Indian auxiliaries. T. S. Woodward,⁴⁰ then a militia

39. Hawkins, Col. Benjamin (1815). *Letters of June 14, 1814 and February 20, 1815, to Governor Early*. Telemon Cuyler Collection, University of Georgia, Athens.

40. Woodward, 44. 41. Not the Aucilla river as stated by Woodward.

major, accompanied the army as commander of these. He had raised the small party of Chehaws himself, but it is probable that his relationship to the large force of Lower Creeks under McIntosh was no more than nominal, if at all recognized by McIntosh. Be that as it may, he closely accompanied the Indians. During the march of the army from St. Marks to the Suwanee on April 12, an Indian encampment was surprised on the Econfina or Natural Bridge River ⁴¹ and attacked by the Indians under McIntosh and Woodward. This turned out to be the band of Peter McQueen and his refugee partisans. In Jackson's report of this affair ⁴² he related that 37 enemy warriors were killed, and there were captured six men and 97 women and children. McQueen and an unknown number of warriors escaped. There was also discovered with them, and released, the Mrs. Stuart who had been an Indian captive since the occasion of the surprise attack on Lieut. Scott's party on the Apalachicola river. After this affair Jackson was sought out by an old woman among these prisoners, who plausibly could have been Billy's grandmother, Ann Copinger, whom he told that if McQueen was secured and carried to the commandant at St. Marks, her people would be received in peace and taken to the Upper Nation. He said the old woman was much pleased, and was given a letter to this effect addressed to the officer at St. Marks, and set at liberty, an act presumably including the other captives exclusive of the men. Later, writing from the Suwanee on April 20, Jackson said that having heard nothing further from McQueen, he believed that the old woman had complied with her part of the obligation, making a rather ambiguous statement. It is dubious that the old woman either knew of or could infer McQueen's whereabouts, and her pleasure, if not dissimulation, was expressive of the prospect

42. *Jackson to Calhoun, April 20, 1818.* 700. American State Papers. Military Affairs. I (1832) Washington, D. C. 43. Woodward 44.

for release. The importance of this episode to us, lies in the statement of Woodward that, Billy Powell, "then but a lad", was one of the captives. Presumably he was released with the other prisoners by the old woman's capitulation. His reference to Billy Powell as a lad at this time, suggests that he then was an adolescent of perhaps 12 to 14 years of age, rather than of 18, which possibility exists from the spread of years in the estimates previously given. Furthermore, had he been in the neighborhood of 18, presumably of fighting age, it is hardly probable that Jackson would have released him with the others.

On his flight from the scene of this disastrous surprise, Peter McQueen with an unknown number of warriors eluded Jackson and sought safety in distance. Neamathla later mentioned his having established a village somewhere below Tampa Bay by 1821.⁴⁴ From this it may be inferred that in some manner he was joined by the old woman and her band of parolled women and children. We have no idea how long this establishment endured, as Woodward stated that Peter died not long after Jackson's campaign, on an island on the Atlantic side near Cape Florida. Lacking precise information, we regard it as not unlikely that Billy Powell and his mother finally found their way to this settlement. The allusion to an early Florida residence on Peas creek⁴⁶ suggests that this actually occurred. It is plausible that at her release, the old woman desired to keep out of Jackson's way, and likely led her refugees into the present Madison county and established contact with the disorganized Mikasukies, who were then attempting to reestablish their economy in that area after Jackson dislodged them from the vicinity of the lake. That she actually did so, is suggested by the statement that Billy Powell's mother first removed to the vicinity

44. *Talk with three chiefs of Florida Indians*: 10. Letter from Secretary of War *Indians of Florida*. House Doc. 51, 17th Cong. 2d Sess. Jan 30, 1823.

45. Woodward, 44. 46. McKenney and Hall, II. 367. 47. Sprague, 100.

of the Okefenoke Swamp, then regarded as having a much greater extension than is actually the case, and remained with the Mikasukies until she learned of McQueen's survival and the site of his establishment, whereupon they all moved down to Peas creek. Although this settlement may have broken up on McQueen's death, this seems unlikely in view of the later mentioned facts in relation to Holata Mico. On the dissolution of this tie, or Billy's mother having acquired a new husband among the Mikasukies, they may have removed to the north end of the reservation to be among their former companions in adversity, the Mikasukies.

One would infer that Billy was the only filial companion of his mother during their hegira to Florida. The statement is made ⁴⁷ however, that after arrival in Florida, she secured another husband, who might, as suggested have been a Mikasuky. No direct statement concerning issue of this marriage has been encountered. However, in an account of the surrender of Osceola's two wives at Fort Mellon late in 1837, it is mentioned that they were accompanied by his sister. ⁴⁸ Forry ⁴⁹ mentions Yohahadjo as Osceola's brother-in-law. We have no means of ascertaining whether these allusions pertain to one, or to two different women. The Florida residence and remarriage of Osceola's mother by that date could have been of sufficient duration to have produced at least one nubile daughter.

Dr. Welch ⁵⁰ makes several unsubstantiable allegations which should be noted to show their preposterous character. Among them is the tale of a liaison between a Lieutenant or Captain John Graham of the U. S. Army, stationed in Florida prior to the outbreak of the war, with an orphan niece of Osceola,

48. Quotation from *Savannah Georgian* of Dec. 8: *Chronicle* V, 394.

49. Forry, Samuel (1928). Letters of, Surgeon, U. S. Army, 1837-38. *Florida Historical Quarterly*, VI: 206.

50. [Welch, Dr. Andrew] Written by his *Guardian* (1841). *A Narrative of the Early Days and Remembrances of Oceola Nikkanochee, Prince of Econchatti*, etc. London. 49.

by whom he had three children, later abandoning his family. Although no other notice of this episode has been encountered, it is worthy of mention that Heitman's Register ⁵¹ lists an officer of this name belonging to a unit assigned to Florida at this period. Contemporary tales of uncertain authenticity allege Osceola manifested a friendly attitude toward this officer even after the outbreak of hostilities. Graham may have developed an intimacy with Osceola while stationed at Fort King, and exhibited a friendly attitude toward the latter's little daughter. ⁵² Welch further alleged that his own Indian "ward", whom he called Osceola Nikkanoochee, was the son of a sister of Osceola, who, he stated, had been married to Econchatimico, living on the Chattahoochee river. He further declared that Econchatimico was an active participant in the hostilities on the Alachua frontier in 1836. There is no reason to believe that Econchatimico was ever in this region subsequent to his transit of it to attend the Moultrie Creek Council of 1823, and although subjected to white molestation, lived peacefully on his Chattahoochee reservation until his removal west in 1838, and even contributed the services of a number of his band to aid the Army in the campaigns of 1836. Although Catlin observed Welch's ward later in England and made his portrait, Welch's work must be regarded as a fabrication of fiction rather than a presentation of fact.

An interesting allusion to relatives of Osceola is afforded by the reports of the conference between the Cherokee delegation, and Osceola and the other chiefs and warriors confined in Fort Marion, during November 1837. In the course of their conversations, one of the Cherokees was said to have found a first cousin in Osceola. ⁵³ In the first of these tales, the individual

51. Heitman, Francis B. (1903). *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, etc. 2 vols. Washington, D. C. I:467, 468.

52. Storrow, Thomas W. (1844). "Osceola, the Seminole War Chief." *Knickerbocker Magazine* XXIV. 440.

53. *Augusta Constitutionalist*, n. d.:364. *Chronicle* V, Dec. 7, 1837. *New York Commercial Advertiser*, n.d.: 394. *Chronicle* V, Dec. 21, 1837.

is said to have been the Cherokee interpreter, in the second, the orator. It is unlikely that either one or the other could have been Osceola's cousin in the English sense of that word, and we assume that the statement implies mutual recognition of membership in the same clan.⁵⁴ Unfortunately the anecdote does not disclose the clan affiliation of either.

Tallassee vs. Tallahassee

The preceding paragraphs bring into relief the meagerness of data bearing on the origin and adolescence of Billy Powell or Osceola. Despite this deficiency, they do, when correlated with contemporary events, permit a certain degree of interpretation. But when we approach the period of his early manhood, covering approximately the final decade or more of his life, the absolute poverty of information makes the previous deficiency appear as relative richness. Evidently Osceola was not the only Tallassee to mingle with the Mikasukies in the northern part of the reservation. These, although small in numbers (seven according to Potter⁵⁵), appear to have become his earliest followers, and he their recognized leader. Thus he was referred to as the Talcy (*i.e.* Tallassee) Tustenuggee before attaining prominence.⁵⁶ Possession of the title of *Tustenuggee* would be an acknowledgment of a capacity for leadership, and the exhibition of qualities recognized as superior to those expected of the ordinary warrior or *Tassikaya*. Probably as an expression of this recognition, he is said to have often been employed in police work by the Agent and chiefs,⁵⁷ principally in apprehending Indians who strayed beyond the limits of the reservation. This duty must have made him well-known to the successive Agents, to Humphreys, Phagan, and Thompson. As

54. Swanton, John R. (1928). Social Organization and Social Usages of the Indians of the Creek Confederacy. *42d An. Rep. Bur. Am. Ethnology*, Smithsonian Inst., 1924-25. Washington, D. C. 114-118.

55. Potter, 1836: 11. 56. Cohen, 1836: 234.

57. *Ibid*, 235; McKenney and Hall, 1934, II: 373. 58. Cohen, 234.

an agent of Mico-an-opa, it is said he was also occupied in bringing the obstreperous Mikasukies to subjection, a responsibility which he discharged so as not to acquire their permanent enmity, but their respect and subordination. As relations worsened, these Tallassees were recognized as aligned with the Mikasukies, and as their leader, Osceola was regarded as subordinate to Holata Mico (Blue King).⁵⁸ Although Holata Mico was said to have been war chief of the Mikasukies, he actually seems to have been leader of the Peas creek band of Tallassees. For reasons now unknown, Thompson is said to have made him a present of an expensive rifle, especially purchased in New York.⁵⁹

English orthography has resulted in two variants of a Muskogee word meaning "old town", namely *Tallassee* and *Tallahassee*. Several places in the old Creek territory bear the name Tallassee, although better known as applied to an important town of the Upper Creek Nation, where, as has been shown, old James McQueen resided. It is inferred that Peter McQueen's refugee Red Sticks were largely if not exclusively composed of Indians from Tallassee. Billy Powell himself was rated as a Tallassee. The only Indian town known whose orthography is as Tallahassee (Talofa) was that in Middle Florida, more or less on the site of the present state capital. This was established on or adjacent to the site of the Spanish post of San Luis in the middle of the 18th century by one Tonaby, who claimed to be a native of Coweta. The strength of the band appeared to decline after Tonaby's death, as in 1818 the Tallahassee band headed by Okiakhija, is said to have numbered only 15, and when lead by Chefixico in 1824, was of small consequence and does not appear to have played any conspicuous part in the troubles we discuss. As the war progressed, a tendency appears for writers to use the form *Tallahassee*, when it appears obvious

59. *Ibid*, 68; Smith, 1836, 5; Welch, 1844, 32. 60. Forry, 144.

they meant *Tallassee*. The substitution was natural, owing to an almost identical pronunciation, a similar significance, and an increasing familiarity with the spelling of the name of the territorial capital. We have become inclined during the course of this study, to suspect that where certain Indians, associated with the Mikasukies, are referred to as Tallahassees, it is not a reference to Chefixico's tiny band, but to be taken as Tallassees, alluding to the survivors and descendants of Peter McQueen's band of fugitive Red Sticks. Thus Forry⁶⁰ in 1837 wrote of "that part of the Mikasuky tribe that originally constituted the Tallahassees, etc." Jesup⁶¹ in the same year, wrote of Holata Mico, as principal chief of the Peas creek Tallassees and chief of the band of which Osceola is sub-chief. The number of Tallassees in the northern part of the reservation likely became considerable, as a Tallassee village and pond are shown on the 1836 map of the seat of war in the Games's section of Document 78. In 1880 MacCauley⁶² found the Seminoles living in five widely separated settlements. Shortly after this date, the Muskogee speaking Cat Fish Lake and Fish Eating Creek settlements consolidated with that at Cow Creek, thus constituting the present Cow Creek band. According to Spoehr⁶³ these are now largely concentrated on the Brighton reservation, with a few scattered camps west of Fort Pierce. In 1941 they numbered about 175 persons, constituting approximately one-fourth of the then existing Seminole population. According to MacCauley, the Cat Fish Lake and Cow Creek Indians called themselves "Talahassee Indians" in 1880. More recently Spoehr⁶⁴ found that the Cow Creek band was divided into five matri-

61. Jesup to Poinsett, Nov. 4, 1837: 887, Mil. Aff. (1861) VII.

62. MacCauley, Clay (1887). "The Seminole Indians of Florida." *5th An. Rep. Bur. Am. Ethnology*, Smithsonian Inst. 1883-84, Washington, D. C. 508.

63. Spoehr, Alexander (1941). *Camp, Clan and Kin among the Cow Creek Seminole*. *Anthropological Series* Vol. 33 (1), Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago. 9.

64. *Ibid*, 14.

lineal exogamous clans, four of whom, Panther, Bird, Deer, and Snake, were totemic, while the fifth, known as "Talahasee", was non-totemic. According to Spoehr's informants, these formerly all lived at Cat Fish Lake. While it might appear that currently the designation "Talahasee" is used in a more limited sense than formerly, it is not unlikely that limitations of time and unfamiliarity with the speech prevented MacCauley from securing a comprehensive insight into the scope of this word, as he did not detect that the Florida Indians comprised two language groups. From the foregoing considerations we entertain the tentative opinion that those Muskogee speaking Seminoles of South Florida, commonly known as "Tallahassee", are probably not descendants of Chefixico's band, but are derived from Peter McQueen's band of refugee Red Sticks from Tallassee.

Osceola on reaching manhood contracted matrimony, but our information on this is meager. It is conclusively known ⁶⁵ that at the time of his captivity he was served by two wives who were reputedly sisters. They were reported as young and comely, and although they prepared but one "table", they occupied separate lodges. Whether or not in earlier years he observed monogamy is uncertain. It was alleged that he had a wife who was daughter of a Negro woman, and that she, as the descendant of an escaped slave, was seized and taken from Osceola on the occasion of a visit to the trading post near Fort King, and remanded into slavery. As Porter ⁶⁶ has shown, this tale appears to be derived from an untrustworthy source ⁶⁷, and is devoid of contemporary substantiation. This was alleged as the reason why Osceola became so bitterly hostile to the Agent, General Thompson. Sprague ⁶⁸ claimed

65. Cohen, 237; McKenney and Hall, II-389, Storrow, 443.

66. Porter, Kenneth W. (1858). "The Episode of Osceola's Wife, Fact or Fiction?" *Florida Historical Quarterly* XXVI. 92.

67. Giddings, Joshua R. (1858). "The Exiles of Florida." Columbus, Ohio. 98.

that Osceola's wife was a Creek woman named Che-cho-ter (Morning Dew), by whom he had four children. Be these tales as they may, it is certain that after Osceola's capture, two wives with two children voluntarily surrendered at Fort Mellon, and were permitted to join him in confinement at Fort Marion.

Personal Characteristics

In physique, Osceola was described as being middle sized or below common height, well proportioned but of slight build, and slightly hump-backed (presumably meaning round-shouldered), with hands and feet effeminately small. His hair was black, but not as coarse as that of a full-blood, his eyes deep and restless, with a continuous expression of thought and cunning. His voice was said to be clear and shrill.⁶⁹ He was reputed to possess great physical endurance, a characteristic which doubtless contributed to his reputation as a hunter and ball-player.⁷⁰ Potter⁷¹ gives the least favorable account of his personality, alleging that he did not possess the nobler Indian characteristics, but was perverse and obstinate, exhibiting a low and sordid spirit which produced difficulties in intercourse, that his talents were not above a mediocre level. Smith⁷² on the other hand, declared that he combined the gallantry, cool courage and sagacity of the white, with the ferocity, savage daring, and subtlety of the Indian. By Motte⁷³ he was said to exert an autocratic influence over his followers by superior sagacity and shrewdness, and from his adherents exacted the homage due from vassals and dependants. He had the reputation of being averse to the killing of women, children, and prisoners. Motte declared that if half of what was said about him was true, he was a most remarkable man. Jarvis,⁷⁴ who observed Osceola at the time of his capture, stated that from his looks he could have designated Osceola as the principal

68. Sprague, 1848: 100. 69. Cohen, 234; Smith, 5; Motte, 141.

70. Cohen, 235. 71. Potter, 11. 72. Smith, 6. 73. Motte, 140.

74. Jarvis, 277-278.

Indian present, that his countenance was expressive of mildness and benevolence, devoid of any suggestion of fierceness or determination. In all respects his personality exhibited the most marked contrast to that of another prominent Seminole leader, Coacoochee, who although fine looking had a countenance indicative of ferocity and daring, openly boasted of his exploits in braining children, and was credited with the scalping of Mrs. Jane Johns.

Residence

Three years after the Treaty of Moultrie Creek, the Agent, Colonel Gad Humphreys, established the Agency (in 1826) in the Big Swamp, in an area beyond the northern part of the reservation, to which the Indians were granted temporary occupancy. The following year a military post, Fort King, was constructed a short distance to the eastward.⁸² Captain Drane, in testifying⁸³ at General Gaines Court of Inquiry, stated that the Mikasuky tribe inhabited the country north of the Withlacoochee river in the direction of Fort King, their range extending southwestwardly (*sic.* clearly in error for northwestwardly) from Fort King, known as the Wetumpka country. In the period before the beginning of hostilities, Osceola resided in the Big Swamp⁸⁴ or Ouithlocko.⁸⁵ When the area was surveyed in 1843, the site of his former residence apparently fell in Section 12, T.16 S, R.21 E.⁸⁶ It is noteworthy that after Jesup began his winter campaign of 1837-38, when Osceola's days in captivity were running short, Jesup dated a letter⁸⁷ to the Secretary of War on January 2, 1838, from "Fort Christmas, *Powell's Camp*", a situation approximately 25 miles southeast of Fort

82. Boyd, Mark F. (1951). The Seminole War: Its Background and Onset. *Florida Historical Quarterly*. XXX (1). Reprinted with title "Florida Aflame" by the Florida Board of Parks and Historic Memorials.

83. Drane, Capt. G. S., testimony of, *Court of Inquiry-Operations in Florida*. House Doc. 78, 25th Cong. 2d Ses. Jan. 8, 1838. p. 657.

84. Smith, 42; McKenney and Hall, II: 367.

85. Potter, 9. 86. Boyd, 1951: 53.

87. Jesup to Poinsett, Jan. 2, 1838: 894. Mil. Aff. (1861) VII.

Mellon. This evidently was his last place of residence before capture. It is likely that the occupation of the most northerly Indian lands by the Mikasukies, is attributable to their proximity to their old territory in Middle Florida.

Beginning Tension

In the nine year interval between negotiation of the Treaty of Moultrie Creek in 1823 and that of Payne's Landing in 1832, Billy Powell was attaining maturity without attracting the recorded attention of officials at either the Agency or the neighboring military post. Limitations of space prevent consideration of the background against which his talents were finally revealed. Some degree of orientation may be secured from the writer's paper, "The Seminole War: Its Background and Onset", published in this *Quarterly*, XXX, 3-115.⁸⁸ (Florida Aflame).

Cohen⁸⁹ related that at the Payne's Landing council in May 1832, Osceola, with a band of from 30 to 40 warriors, posted himself in a position closer to the camp of Colonel Gadsden than that occupied by any of the other Indian bands. He is alleged to have justified himself for this action by naively declaring that he was more like the white man than they. Whatever may have been his motive, it may have reflected a friendly attitude, perhaps a desire to protect the Colonel and his suite from rowdy Indians, Mikasukies in particular. It is not known whether this was done at his own initiative, or on the suggestion of the Agent or of Mico-an-opa. His alleged declaration suggests that he was fully conscious of his white heritage, and sought to give it expression through propinquity with other whites. Other than the possible exercise of uncertain police duties, Osceola's then humble status made his presence at this council inconsequential. He was not asked to express his opinions,

88. Boyd, 1951: 23-58. 89. Cohen, 235.

90. Minutes of Council of Oct. 23-24, 1834: *Indian Hostilities in Florida*. Sen. Doc. 152, 24th Cong. 1st Ses. 16-28. Feb. 10, 1836. (See also Mil. Aff. (1861) VI: 56-80)

neither did he venture to assert them, at least in open council, nor was he sufficiently influential to be invited to the table to affix his mark to the treaty.

The terms of the treaty of 1832 stipulated that the Indians living in the Big Swamp and vicinity, who were chiefly Mikasukies, were to remove in 1833. While the Indians were in a state of stupefaction over the magnitude of the diplomatic disaster resulting from this treaty and its Fort Gibson sequel of 1833, it is likely, had the government been prepared to move swiftly in 1833, the entire emigration project could have been realized in that year with the sullen compliance of the Indians. The government, however, took no steps to this end until after the belated ratification in 1834. In anticipation of early removal, the Indians of the Big Swamp had not planted during the season of 1834. The crops of 1833 had been short, and that of those who did plant in 1834 was scanty. The provision shortage in the Big Swamp became acute, and though the government finally authorized distribution of a limited amount of corn, hunger compelled many Indians to indulge in pillage, both within and without the reservation. Frustration and hunger aroused their resentment, in particular that of the Mikasukies. Osceola likely not only entertained his full share of this resentment, but probably actively encouraged and stimulated this attitude in others.

A Revealed Leader

Late in 1834 the government was ready to insist on compliance with the treaty. The Agent, then General Thompson, called a council in the fall, when the annuity was available for distribution. Before the assembled Indians, on October 23, he announced that they were expected to remove by the following spring, and propounded four questions relating to arrangements for their emigration, to which he desired their opinions. The Indians countered with a request to hold a pri-

vate session to frame their replies. Thompson arranged to receive a secret report on their discussion. He learned that on convening, Osceola had promptly, and without invitation, addressed the assembly, urging a united opposition to emigration, and resistance to any efforts to effect this end. They then sought Holata Amathla's opinion, and in substance his remarks urged compliance without resistance. When the council reassembled on the following day, the Agent expressed his desire to learn of their wishes, expecting their tenor would reflect Holata Amathla's views. To his surprise, none of the speakers, Mico-an-opa, Jumper, Holata Amathla, or Charley Amathla, proffered the desired information, but instead, conveyed their belief that the Treaty of Moultrie Creek had seven more years to run. Osceola's remarks in the private session appear to have completely influenced the sentiments of the Indians. After expressing his surprise that their remarks disregarded the treaty, the Agent had them again retire for further deliberation. At the adjourned meeting on the following day, the Agent was still denied his replies. The chiefs reiterated the view that the Moultrie Creek treaty was valid for 20 years; that their assent to that of Payne's Landing had been obtained by fraud, and expressed general objections to removal. Mico-an-opa denied that the mark purporting to be his on the Payne's Landing document was genuine, but in rebuttal the Agent asserted it was, declaring that Mico-an-opa had actually touched the pen. The exasperated Agent then drew a gloomy picture of their future, particularly that of Mico-an-opa, should they continue to remain in Florida. At this point, Osceola, who was seated by Mico-an-opa, was observed to speak to him. The Agent then announced that no further annuity payments would be made in Florida, to which Osceola replied that he did not care whether any more was ever paid. In closing, the Agent expressed the hope that on mature reflection they would act like honest men,

and not compel him to report them as faithless to their engagements. Osceola, then surprisingly acting as spokesman, stated that the decision of the chiefs was given, and that they had no intention of giving any other, while Mico-an-opa declared that he did not intend to move. The Agent declared it to be his conviction that they were wilfully disposed to be dishonest. In a letter to the Indian Commissioner, Thompson referred to Osceola as a "bold and dashing young chief. . . , vehemently opposed to removal," and stated that when he was observed to speak to Mico-an-opa, he, according to the interpreter, urged him to be firm.⁹⁰

Insofar as we are aware, Osceola's appearance at the council of October 1834, apparently in the capacity of a full participant, is noteworthy as marking the first occasion he attracted public attention of the whites. His expressions at that time, although limited, struck a more defiant note than those of the other chiefs. It is interesting to speculate as to whether these represent the self-assertions of a hot-head ambitious for prestige and power among his tribesmen, or the considered expressions of a selfless individual convinced that firm opposition afforded the surest defense of Indian interests. Both views have had their proponents. Be this as it may, this episode marked the beginning of his career as we know it.

While probably all of the Seminoles were averse to removal, a minority, disgusted with the tribulations they experienced, manifested a reluctant inclination to comply with the wishes of the government. Prominent among these were two brothers, Holata Amathla and Charley (Chalo = trout) Amathla, who had been members of the western delegation. Associated with them in this attitude was another ex-delegate, Fuke-luste Hadjo (Black Dirt). Their bands comprised several hundred individuals. In opposition to them was a hard core of Mikasukies, including Sam Jones, and the Tallassee, Holata Mico, with

whom Osceola was associated, who were vehemently opposed to emigration, and sought to increase the number of their partisans through intimidation. Following the October council, both Holata Amathla and Fuke-luste Hadjo informed the Agent that their lives had been threatened, and they feared for their safety.⁹¹ Thompson, probably realizing that he could not afford them effective protection, permitted them to withdraw from the reservation with their bands.

When Secretary of War Cass read the report of the October council, he directed the Agent to call another meeting to present a talk from him. At that time the Indians were largely dispersed on their hunts, but the few who could be reached assembled at the Agency on December 26 and 27, 1834. The Secretary's talk was read and explained, and the Indians were told that if they would not remove willingly, they would be compelled to do so by force. On conclusion of this phase of the conference, the remainder of the meeting consisted of a heated interchange between the Agent and others, principally Osceola. The Agent finally adopted a conciliatory attitude, and succeeded in eliciting from Osceola the acknowledgment, "I know you are my friend and friend to my people," from which he concluded that the meeting closed in good feeling.⁹²

Further reports from Florida indicated that neither the arguments or the threats of Thompson or of Cass had convinced the Indians that the recent treaties had obligated them to remove. President Jackson felt obliged to intervene personally, and prepared and transmitted a forceful and admonitory message covering much the same ground as the others.⁹³ Advantage was taken of a previously scheduled conference at the Agency

91. Thompson to Herring, Oct. 28, 1835 (*sic*, 1834). *Ibid*; 17.

92. Minutes of Council of December 27, 1834. *Ibid*; 29-32.

93. A. Jackson to the Seminoles, February 16, 1835: 163-164. *Supplemental Report on the Causes of Indian Hostilities*. House Doc. 271, 24th Cong. 1st Ses. June 3, 1836. (See also Mil. Aff. (1861) VI:

late in March 1835 to present Jackson's talk to the chiefs. In reply, Jumper pointed out that many chiefs were still absent, and asked that they be reconvened on April 20 in order to have a full council.⁹⁴ They assembled on April 22, in the presence of Generals Thompson and Clinch, with a very large representation of chiefs. The treaty, as well as the President's talk were reread, and the Indians asked for their decision. As spokesman for the chiefs, Jumper reiterated Indian opposition to removal, yet indicated an aversion to hostile resistance should the government employ force to oblige them to go. His expressions were supported by others. To silence the discussion, which seemed interminable, Clinch declared that he had been sent to enforce the treaty, and had warriors enough to do it, the only question being whether they would go of their own accord or by force. The absence of Mico-an-opa was conspicuous when the council reconvened on the following day. Thompson, knowing that Mico-an-opa's opinions influenced a number of the leaders, asked Jumper whether Mico-an-opa intended to abide by the treaty. Jumper reluctantly admitted that he did not. On this admission, the Agent injudiciously declared that the names of five chiefs, the principal leaders of the opposition, including Mico-an-opa, Jumper, Holata Mico, Arpeika or Sam Jones, and one other, were stricken from the roll of chiefs, and stated that they would no longer be recognized as councillors. A document acknowledging adherence to the treaties of Payne's Landing and Fort Gibson was prepared and submitted on the following day to the Indians remaining in the council after this purge. Sixteen chiefs reluctantly affixed their marks to this in token of submission. Although acquiescing in removal, they expressed unwillingness to be incorporated with the Creeks in the West. It was further agreed that these would assemble at Tampa Bay for embarkation by January 15,

94. Minutes of Council of March 29, 1835 Doc. 152: 35-36.

1835, a date selected in order to permit the gathering of their crops, the utilization of the fall round-up for the collection of their cattle, and to permit of their arrival on their new lands in time for spring planting.⁹⁵ Circumstances indicate that the mark of Osceola was not attached to this document.

Did He Knife the Treaty

Perhaps the most romantic of the many and widely diffused anecdotes concerning Osceola, describes how, on being invited to approach the table and affix his mark to a "treaty", he, instead of picking up the pen, drew his knife, which with a flourish he plunged through the document before him, pinning it to the table, at the same time exclaiming in anger: "The only treaty I will execute is with this",⁹⁶ or "This is my mark, and I will make no other".⁹⁷ Since allusion to such an episode is made by Cohen,⁹⁸ the tale must have been current at an early date, a circumstance contributing to plausibility. It is strange that Thompson's reports of the successive councils make no allusion to this, since he had already identified Osceola as one authors who allude to it, of the council at which it may have occurred. Thus Brevard⁹⁹ in one place ascribed it to an improbable council in the spring of 1834, and in another place to the October 1834 council, in the latter of which both Storrow¹⁰⁰ and Sprague¹⁰¹ concur. Both Cohen¹⁰² and Coe¹⁰³ attribute it to the April 1835 council. Welch¹⁰⁴ places it at an impossible council of December 1835. Surprisingly, the National Archives attaches a note to the copy of the Treaty of Fort Gibson which they preserve, calling attention to a lateral crack or tear from

95. Minutes of Council of April 22-23, 1835. Doc. 152: 37-41.

96. Sprague, 80. 97. Storrow, 430. 98. Cohen, 56.

99. Brevard, Caroline M. (1924). *A History of Florida from the Treaty of 1763 to our own Times*. Ed. by James A. Robertson. Florida State Historical Society, DeLand, Florida. I: 118, 167.

100. Storrow, 430. 101. Sprague, 80. 102. Cohen, 234.

103. Coe, 50. 104. Welch, 29. 105. Sprague, 80. 106. Cohen, 234.

the center fold, which, in an attached memorandum, is identified on the authority of Sprague,¹⁰⁵ as the mark of Osceola's knife! Should this anecdote represent an authentic episode, it is our belief, from the circumstances related, that the council of April 23, 1835, is the only meeting at which the requisite conditions prevailed. Support for this view is afforded by Cohen,¹⁰⁶ who related that Osceola declared Holata Mico's disapproval of the document was his reason for not signing it. Confirmation as later described, is provided by Osceola's subsequent promise to affix his mark *publicly* to it, as the price he paid for his release from irons. This implies the occurrence of an earlier and equally public refusal, with or without the flourish of a knife.

Public Humiliation

A serious episode occurred in the latter part of May 1835 which involved both Osceola and General Thompson. The latter related¹⁰⁷ under date of June 3, that "a few days before, Osceola, one of the most bold, daring and intrepid chiefs in this nation. . . more hostile to emigration, and who has thrown more embarrassments in my way than any other, came to my office and insulted me by some insolent remarks. He had done so before. . . and when apprized of the consequences should he do so again, he apologized and I forgave. On this occasion I confined him in irons. . ." Truly a colorless and matter of fact statement of a act which had consequences the Agent could not foresee. He made no allusion to the subject which incited Osceola's remarks. A host of allegations of the cause of Osceola's anger have been made by various writers. Among them: (a) from seizure of his part-negro wife as a slave;¹⁰⁸ (b) for seizure of Osceola's private liquor;¹⁰⁹ (c) remonstrance over maltreatment of certain Indians;¹¹⁰ (d) indignation over Agent's withdrawal of powder and lead from sale;¹¹¹ (e) occurrences

107. Doc. 271: 197. 108 Giddings, 98. 109. Potter, 76.

110. Potter, 86. 111. Sprague, 86.

at the April council.¹¹² In our opinion, the last is the most plausible reason, a view supported by the terms which lead to his release. Be this as it may, it is said that after this outburst, the Agent asked Lieut. Col. Fanning of Fort King to place Osceola under arrest. A detail of four soldiers was sent to apprehend him, and, after a hard scuffle, he was secured about 200 yards from the fort, while uttering bitter imprecations addressed to the Agent.¹¹³ He was placed in irons and confined in the fort, where for hours he remained in a state of frenzy. Thompson related that on the next day, Osceola sent word to him that he was willing to sign the acknowledgment of April 23 if he were released. Osceola was informed that unless he could provide satisfactory security for his good behaviour, his confinement must continue. Osceola sent for some of the amenable chiefs (including Charley Amathla)¹¹⁴ and solicited their intercession, which they made. Thompson then informed him that his profession would be put to test, that he would be released on his promise to return in five days, and, in the presence of these chiefs in council, sign the acknowledgment. Professing repentance, he promised to do so, and asserted he would bring others with him for this purpose. Thompson related that on the day he wrote, Osceola reappeared with 79 of his people, men, women, and children, and redeemed his word. Thompson believed he had won a convert, and for a short period Osceola's deportment supported this belief. The expensive rifle Thompson presented to Osceola is said to have been given with the object of effecting reconciliation. However Osceola probably could not have been subjected to any indignity which could have afforded greater humiliation, and in his lasting resentment, must have longed for an opportunity to effect adequate retaliation.

Mention should be made of the last council, held, at the

112. Storow, 432; Coe, 50; Drake, Samuel G. (1845). *The Book of the Indians*; etc. 9th Ed. Boston. Book IV: 73.

113. Potter, 86. 114. Smith, 8. 115. Doc. 271: 104-106.

request of certain of the chiefs, between the army officers stationed at Fort King, and 10 principal and 17 sub-chiefs on August 19, 1835. The latter group included six of those who signed the acknowledgment of April 23. It is of interest to note that among those present was Assiola or Powell, whose name is listed among those of the principal chiefs, rather than among the sub-chiefs. If he was involved in the episode attributed to April 23, this may indicate that he was ranked as a principal chief at that time. At this council, Holata Amathla was the sole speaker. His speech, while indicating acquiescence in emigration, was a plea for an Agent assigned exclusively to the Seminoles after their removal, with the request that General Thompson be continued in that post. The army officers were properly non-committal, and the proceedings were submitted to the War Department through General Clinch, who in transmittal, favorably endorsed the petition. The government returned a harsh and peremptory refusal to this plea. Indian reaction to this attitude was the likely cause of the defection of most of the 16 chiefs who had promised to remove.¹¹⁵

Mikasuky Policy Dominated the Seminoles

We cannot concern ourselves with minor instances of friction between Indians and settlers which occurred in the closing months of 1835 in which Osceola is not known to have been involved. During October it became rumored that a secret council had been held in the Big Swamp, at which time the attitude previously exhibited by the recalcitrant Mikasukies, appears to have been adopted as the policy of the Nation. Allegedly this imposed a sentence of death on any Indian who undertook to dispose of his livestock, or made other preparations for emigration. When news of this action reached Holata Amathla, he, with certain of his co-chiefs and their bands fled to Fort Brooke for protection, where they arrived on Novem-

ber 9. Another of the chiefs who intended to emigrate, Charley Amathla, remained at his village in the Wetumpka area.¹¹⁶

General Thompson and the War Department were confident that in compliance with the acknowledgment of April 23, a substantial number of Indians would assemble at Tampa Bay in January 1836 for removal west, and preparations for their accommodation went on apace. The Indian signatories of that document were advised to bring their cattle to the Agency for disposal, and Thompson advertised a sale of these to begin on December 1. On November 30 Thompson reported¹¹⁷ the murder of Charley Amathla by Osceola, as having occurred on the 26th, but did not relate the circumstances. Whatever details the whites ever learned of this affair must have been secured from Indian or Negro informants who had garbled versions. This probably explains why the accounts given by Potter, Cohen, Smith, and others vary substantially, and we doubt that a reliable account of the place and circumstances can be given. It is alleged that on this date a party of 400 Indians lead by Holata Mico, Abraham, and Osceola surrounded the dwelling of Charley Amathla, and demanded that he become an opponent of emigration, to which he gave a refusal, and was thereupon told that he must either join the opposition or die. Osceola was in the act of leveling his gun to fire at him, when Abraham intervened, and proposed that all in the party withdraw for a council, which was done. This deliberation evidently left execution of the mission to Osceola. Undaunted by this demonstration, Charley Amathla meanwhile proceeded to the Agency to further preparations for his departure for Tampa. At the Agency he expressed the opinion that he might be killed. While on his way homeward with two daughters and a Negro, he was surprised a short distance from the Agency by Osceola and 12 companions, who lay in ambush. Although he charged

116. Boyd, 1951: 55-56. 117. Doc. 271; 241.

his attackers, Charley Amathla fell, pierced by 11 balls. It is not known whether those with him were also attacked. Thereafter a few of his band fled to Fort King, but most joined the hostiles.¹¹⁸ Long after his remains were buried by a party of soldiers.

Thompson related¹¹⁹ that immediately following this affair, the Indians in the vicinity of the Agency abandoned their settlements and congregated at the towns called the Big Swamp and Long Swamp, but by December 6 they had disappeared from these situations. Their destinations were the subject of conjecture, with the Cove (the labyrinth of Lake Tsala Apopka) of the Withlacoochee river deemed the most likely area.¹²⁰

Having consolidated their position through expulsion and murder of those chiefs who had agreed to emigration, it was now clear that the opponents of removal had determined on armed resistance. The government officials in the territory, as later evident, had consistently underestimated the number of the Indians, but these, conscious of their numerical superiority to the then feeble garrisons of the Florida posts, apparently concluded the troops could be readily handled. Parties of roaming Indians were observed with increasing frequency across the entire frontier, and the alarmed Alachua settlers abandoned their homes and congregated for safety in or near emergency stockades (Fort Crum, northeast of Alachua prairie; Fort Defiance at Micanopy; Fort Gilleland at Newnansville) which they erected. General Clinch had troops erect a stockade about the buildings on a speculative sugar plantation (Auld Lang Syne) which he was developing south of Micanopy, to which was given the name of Fort Drane. To this post was withdrawn half of the garrison at Fort King. In realization that their move to increase the military force in Florida could not be achieved in time to deal with the critical situation, the War

118. Potter, 94; McKenney and Hall; II-380. 119. Doc. 271: 243.

Department, on December 9, authorized the Governor of Florida to place at the disposal of General Clinch such a militia force as he might require. In anticipation of this action, General Hernandez, commander of the East Florida militia brigade, alerted his force on his own initiative, and sent several companies of militia under Colonel Warren to Fort Crum. General Call also raised a similar force from the Tallahassee area which he lead to Alachua.

Osceola and Early Hostilities

On December 17, plantations near Micanopy and Wacahouta were raided by one or more parties of Indians. On the next day General Clinch sent a militia force under Colonel Warren to scout in the raided area. Their wagon train with an escort was surprised south of Alachua prairie near Black Point by about 80 Indians said to have been lead by Osceola. When attacked, the escort fled to Micanopy. While the Indians were plundering the wagons, Captain McLemore's company of Warren's force, of about 30 men, arrived upon the scene. The captain ordered a charge to which order only about twelve of his men responded. He consequently was obliged to retreat with the heavy loss of eight killed and six wounded. Meanwhile Call effected a junction with Warren on the 12th, their combined force amounting to about 500 men. On the 20th this force returned to the scene of the skirmish and recovered some of the baggage. Call pushed on toward Micanopy, and in the vicinity of that place had a brush with the Indians, in the course of which he had four men wounded, while four dead Indians were discovered. Call with the territorial militia then reported to General Clinch at Fort Drane on the 24th.¹²¹ By the 26th Clinch had withdrawn all except one company from Fort King to Fort Drane, with the idea of striking a blow with

120. Potter, 9. 121. Boyd, 1951; 57. 122. *Ibid*, 69. 123. Sprague, 89.

the combined regulars and militia at the Indians believed to be concealed in the Cove of the Withlacoochee.

Vengeance

Osceola evidently now considered the time propitious to settle with General Thompson for the humiliation he had undergone at the Agent's order. With a number of companions, believed to have numbered from 40-60 Mikasukies, he may have lurked about Fort King for several days before the opportunity arose. On the afternoon of December 28, General Wiley Thompson with Lieut. Constantine Smith, was strolling a few hundred yards beyond the Agency office when they were fired upon from ambush by the unsuspected Indian party. Both fell, the former pierced by 14 balls, the latter by two. The Indians immediately proceeded to the sutler's house nearby, where Rogers the sutler, a clerk, and a boy were killed. A few escaped from the house. Although the Indians penetrated into the store-room of the house, they secured no plunder, as Rogers' stock had been removed to the fort. Rogers' cook, hiding in the vacant store-room, identified Osceola on his entrance to the room, while a few friendly Indians at the fort recognized his peculiar and shrill war yell.¹²² The large party with Osceola, would substantiate Alligator's later statement to Sprague¹²³ that they had expected it would be necessary to attack Fort King to get at Thompson. After this affair, the officers at that post became apprehensive for the safety of the force proceeding from Fort Brooke, which had been expected for a week.

Organized Hostilities

Major Dade's little force, en route to Fort King from Fort Brooke, marched into a prepared ambushade on December 28. During the subsequent hot engagement which lasted several hours, the entire force, with the exception of three men, was wiped out. According to the account later given by Alligator

(Halpater Tustenuggee) to Sprague,¹²⁴ there were 280 Indians engaged, their leaders being Mico-an-opy, Jumper, and Alligator. Sprague was told that earlier opportunities for attack had been neglected because of the absence of Osceola and Mico-an-opa. Osceola as related, was detained at Fort King. With the arrival of Mico-an-opa, and the belief that the last favorable opportunity for an ambush would soon be lost, attack in this particular situation was determined upon, despite the absence of Osceola. Alligator said that the Indian losses were three killed and five wounded. Three badly wounded soldiers bearing news of the disaster, incredibly reached Fort Brooke individually and successively on December 29, 31, and January 1. However Clinch did not learn of Dade's fate until about January 20, when the news reached him by a circuitous route.¹²⁵

The forces of Jumper and Alligator returned to their camp in the Wahoo Swamp the day of the ambush, east of and adjacent to the Withlacoochee river, and were soon joined by Osceola. All must have been highly elated by their successful exploits, and likely celebrated them as adequately as their resources permitted. These rejoicings must have been interrupted by the arrival of scouts relating that a column of troops from Fort Drane was proceeding toward a ford on the Withlacoochee.¹²⁶ This force under Clinch included about 280 regulars of six companies and about 500 militia under Call and Warren. Clinch's objective was the Indian camps believed to be situated in the Cove. He was misled by his guides, and reached the river about two and one-half miles below the ford. The army began to cross early on the 31st. About half the force had crossed when the Indians, who had been awaiting them at the ford, learned of their situation and moved down and began to attack those on the south side. A sharp engagement lasting about an hour resulted. Osceola, dressed in an army

124. *Ibid*, 90. 125. Boyd, 84-105. 126. Sprague, 92.

uniform coat, the significance of which was not then appreciated, was observed on the field, actively directing Indian operations. The retirement of the Indians was later said to have been occasioned by the wounding of Osceola in the arm. Clinch's force suffered the loss of four killed and 59 wounded, and Alligator later admitted that three Indians were killed. Thus checked in his attempted passage of the river, and faced with immediate loss of militia support from expiration of enlistments, Clinch withdrew with the regulars to Fort Drane. The Indians appeared to have withdrawn voluntarily from the engagement, with the conviction that they had checked Clinch's movement against their camps. Following this affair, there was contemporary circulation of the tale that Osceola had peremptorily ordered his warriors to spare the life of Lieut. John Graham, an individual previously mentioned.¹²⁷

The month of January 1836 was a period of inaction for the small forces in the three frontier army posts. The only report of activity in the Alachua area at this time, was a raid conducted by a militia party of 200 men under Colonel Parish, who had a skirmish with a large Indian force at an unspecified location, from which the Indians withdrew during the night. The losses on either side are not recorded. Parish is said to have continued his course to Osceola's town, presumably that of the Big Swamp, which he destroyed. Undoubtedly it had been abandoned.¹²⁸

Major General E. P. Gaines, commander of the western military department, was in New Orleans when he received news of Dade's defeat, and hastily raised a force consisting of the 4th Infantry with about 700 Louisiana volunteers, who were embarked for Tampa Bay on February 4, 1836, which they reached on the 8th, 9th and 10th. Here at Fort Brooke, Gaines found a further company of the 4th, and four companies of the 2d Artillery. With this force of 980 men, Gaines left

127. Boyd, 1951: 73-84. 128. Smith, 66.

Tampa on the 13th, proceeding north on the military road toward Fort King, where he arrived on the 20th, without having encountered any hostile Indians. In conference with Clinch at that place, it was concluded impractical for the force to remain at Fort King, and that a return to Fort Brooke should be made by a route west of the Withlacoochee, the river to be crossed at the site of Clinch's recent engagement. This place was reached on the 27th, but Indian opposition to a crossing being experienced, the army moved to a position lower down on the next day. Encountering further opposition, Gaines fortified his camp (Camp IZARD), within which his force was closely invested by the Indians, and subjected to sporadic attacks. Expresses were sent to Clinch, the first of which asked for provisions and a diversionary operation by Clinch, the second that a relieving force come directly to Camp IZARD. Meanwhile the administration had, on January 21, entrusted the Florida operations to Major General Winfield Scott.

Our interest in Gaines's situation at Camp IZARD arises from the circumstance that on the night of March 5th the camp was hailed by a stentorian voice, the owner of which was generally identified as a Negro, and more specifically as Abraham, although also alleged to have been that of Caesar. This asked for an interview on the following day, to which proposal assent was given. On the morning of the 6th the enemy was observed defiling to the rear of the camp under a white flag. Major Barrows with Hagan the interpreter were sent to meet them, also under a white flag. Abraham and Jumper advanced from the former. Barrows was shortly joined by Doctor Harrell and Captain Marks, and the Indians further contributed Osceola and Coahadjo. Barrows asked what they had to communicate. Jumper replied through Abraham, as Barrows later reported to Gaines, that the Indians did not want to fight any more and wished Gaines to go away. On learning this, Gaines ordered

Captain Hitchcock to continue the parley. Hitchcock asked Barrows and Harrell to accompany him as witnesses, and Hagan as well to eavesdrop on the Indians' remarks among themselves. They were met by Jumper, Osceola, and Alligator, with an unnamed interpreter. Jumper said they had lost many, did not wish to lose more, and wished for peace. Hitchcock replied that Gaines had been sent to enforce a peace, but not to investigate the causes of the war. He further expressed a presumption that they had satisfied their wrongs, alluding to the destruction of Dade. This evoked from Osceola his only remark during the parley, which was translated as "I am satisfied." The conference adjourned to the afternoon, and Gaines instructed Hitchcock to tell them that he lacked authority to make terms, but that if they desired peace, they should refrain from further acts of hostility, go back south of the river, and await summons to a council with a chief (General Scott) soon expected. At this point the parley was interrupted by the arrival of Clinch's relieving force, and the Indians scattered. In the main we have followed the account of Hitchcock,¹²⁹ and of Potter.¹³⁰ However the latter included many anecdotes, which since he was not in attendance at the parley although present in the camp, are under suspicion as apocryphal. However he does categorically deny the tale that Osceola solicitously inquired after the welfare of Lieut. John Graham.

There has been much argument as to whether the Indians at this time were sincere in their expressed desire for peace. Hitchcock¹³¹ believed, and we think on good grounds, that they were, since from the time of the withdrawal of the troops from the river until the beginning of Scott's campaign, that is from March 5th to 26th, there was a cessation of hostilities.

Gaines was now informed of Scott's presence in Florida, and of his plan for a campaign against the hostiles. Consequently

129. Croffut, 1909: 94; Doc. 78: 622-623; McCall, 1868: 329.

130. Potter: 156-159. 131. Doc. 78: 631. 132. *Ibid* 662.

on March 9 he delivered command of the army to Clinch, which was withdrawn to Fort Drane, where it arrived on the 11th.

Since our subject is Osceola rather than an account of the first two years of the Seminole war, consideration of Scott's campaign is omitted, because we have not found mention of Osceola as identified as opposing any of the components of the army in any of the encounters, all minor, of the campaign, although it would seem incredible that he was absent from the field. This elaborately planned campaign failed either to reveal the Indians' hiding places or bring about any decisive action. The progress of the large columns was probably closely followed by the Indians, who likely concluded the force was too large to afford the Indians any advantage. They slipped between the columns as readily as grains of dry sand pass between the fingers.

The only allusion to Osceola encountered in this interval was offered by Captain G. S. Drane,¹³² who related that during the absence of Clinch's command with the right wing, the wife of (Indian) Billy Amathla, one of the army's guides, was carried off by the hostiles from the vicinity of Fort King. Shortly after the return of the army to Fort Drane, she made her escape and rejoined her husband at that place, where the captain had several conversations with her through an interpreter. She related that Osceola had urged her to quit her husband and join the Mikasukies. He told her that his men had whipped the whites and driven them out of the country, and that it was their intention to drive the whites from Fort King and Fort Drane where they would get a supply of ammunition and then drive all the *Alachuas* (i.e. volunteers) as far as the Suwanee, when they would have all of the country southward to themselves. She stated she had heard Osceola repeatedly declare that he would never make peace with the whites.

In the rear of Scott's marching columns, hostilities continued along the Alachua frontier. The most audacious exploit was

an attack on Fort Drane on the night of April 20, which was repulsed by the garrison of ineffectives under Captain Landrum, the only loss being the theft of 17 army horses from the pasture.¹³³ Such incidents coupled with the discharge of the volunteers at the close of Scott's campaign, produced a state of panic among the settlers, who again left their homes to congregate at Newnansville. On learning of this situation, Governor Call ordered Colonel Sanchez of Alachua to call out the full strength of his regiment, which, with reinforcements from Duval County, were placed under the command of Colonel Warren. In this uneasy situation, General Scott was unexpectedly relieved in Florida, and transferred to direct operations against the hostile Creeks in Alabama.

Command of the army in Florida was tendered to General Clinch, but he, uninfluenced by the implied honor, insisted on resigning from the Army, and departed from Fort Drane about the middle of May. On acceptance of Clinch's resignation, the command was then given to the Governor of Florida, R. K. Call, who was a brigadier general of the militia. Call had actively solicited the appointment from his patron, President Andrew Jackson, and expressed hopes of conducting a summer campaign, then regarded as a hazardous venture, a project which however, he did not realize.

At the close of Scott's campaign, one of the units of his regular force was stationed at Fort Defiance, Micanopy. On June 9 a large Indian party was discovered close to this post. Major Heileman sent out three detachments, totalling about 70 men under Captain R. B. Lee, to attack them. The Indians were encountered near Tuscawilla Lake, and driven off with loss to the force of seven wounded.¹³⁴

133. Report from Darien, April 12: 141. *Niles' Weekly Register*, April 30, 1836, L.

134. Heileman to Call: 57; Lee to Call: 62. Message from the President *** *Correspondence between the War Department and Governor Call* ***. Sen. Doc. 278, 26th Cong. 1st Ses. March 12, 1840.

Flood and Ebb

Major Heileman assumed command of Fort Drane, the principal post manned by regulars, on June 11. Fevers, undoubtedly malarial, were prevalent among the garrison, and upwards of one-third of the command was ill. Heileman quickly contracted the infection, and died on June 27. On orders from General Call to evacuate that unhealthy post, Captain Merchant withdrew the troops on July 19 to Fort Defiance. While on their march, this force was attacked at Wilika Pond within one mile of Fort Defiance, and again when only a quarter mile distant, by an Indian party with an estimated strength of 250. These were repulsed with the aid of a sortie from the fort.¹³⁵

Recalling Osceola's boast to the wife of Billy Amathla, it is likely that he recognized the abandonment of Fort Drane as his long awaited opportunity to occupy that post without bloodshed. The military, without doubt, were soon aware of this Indian movement, and plans were made for their dislodgement, which received the approval of Major B. K. Pierce upon his arrival at Fort Defiance on August 21. Assuming command, Pierce left Micanopy early on the same morning with 110 men and a field piece. Fort Drane, 10 miles distant, was reached about sunrise, and immediately attacked. The occupants were found to be a force of about 300 Mikasukies, with women and children, commanded by Osceola, who was both seen and heard. After a vigorous engagement, lasting about an hour, the Indians were driven out and into a nearby hammock, which could not be penetrated by Pierce's exhausted and inferior force. Pierce lost one killed and 16 wounded, while ten dead Indians were counted. The troops were withdrawn to Fort Defiance.¹³⁶ From Hollingsworth's account,¹³⁷ it does not appear that the Indians

135. Maitland to Call. Doc. 278: 66. 136. Pierce to Crane. Doc 278: 75.

137. Hollingsworth, Henry (1942-44). Diary of, "Tennessee Volunteers in the Seminole War." Ed. by Stanley F. Horn. *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* I (3,4); II (1,2,3). 1-356.

reoccupied Fort Drane prior to the arrival of the Tennessee volunteers on October 1. As we will later show, this occupation of Fort Drane shortly after its abandonment as unhealthy by the army, likely initiated the subsequent decline in Osceola's fortunes.

General Call with a small force of Florida militia and Tennessee Mounted Volunteers arrived near Fort Drane on October 1,¹³⁷ and surprised a small party of Indians, all of whom it was believed were killed. On the supposition that this indicated that the Indians near the fort were unaware of the approach of the army, the remaining distance was covered at a forced march. No evidence of recent Indian occupation of the fort was discovered, but a large smoke was seen to the eastward, investigation of which was negligently deferred to the following day. A detachment of 200 men was sent to reconnoiter this area on the 2d, which discovered, at the distance of about one mile from the fort, an Indian encampment of about 150 huts, with accommodations estimated as sufficient for from 500 to 1000 Indians. It gave the appearance of having been precipitately abandoned the day before. It was evident that the arrival of the army had been discovered, despite the precaution taken. Call believed this to have been an encampment of Mikasukies lead by Osceola.¹³⁸ Another report¹³⁹ said the trail of the fleeing Indians was directed toward the Withlacoochee. At a later date, Hollingsworth declared that on the arrival of the army on October 1, Osceola was lying ill at the Indian camp.

Space does not permit consideration of Call's two campaigns. As a consequence of provision shortage, the first was of brief duration and futile, which diminished his prestige to the extent that early in December he was superseded in command of the army by Major General T. S. Jesup. Before this occurred, how-

138. *Ibid*: I-355; Call to Sec. War. Doc. 278: 86.

139. Correspondence from St. Augustine, Oct. 15: 286. *Chronicle* Nov. 3, 1836; III.

ever, he completed his second campaign, during which his force scouted the Cove and other swamps adjacent to the Withlacoochee. He did succeed in bringing on two sharp engagements in and near the Wahoo Swamp, as a consequence of which the hostiles were ejected and scattered. Osceola's apparent non-participation in these affairs is doubtless attributable to his illness.

Jesup's Armistice

With the army's supplies replenished, it departed from Volusia on December 12 under its new commander. Jesup's immediate plans were vague, but he concluded that operations along the Withlacoochee while en route to Fort Brooke would most profitably utilize the limited remaining time of the Tennessee Volunteers, and possibly result in an encounter with Osceola. Several new posts were established on the march, including Fort Armstrong on the site of Dade's battle, and Camp (Fort) Dade where the military road crossed the Big Withlacoochee. Early in January Jesup returned to Fort Armstrong and sent out several detachments to scour the countryside. He reported on January 10, 1837, that one such party had surprised a Negro camp, securing 16 Negro prisoners who were of Osceola's band. By these, and particularly by Primus, a Negro who had been among the Indians since Gaines's blockade at Camp Izard, he was told that Osceola had been flushed from a hiding place in a Negro camp in Panasoffke Swamp on the Withlacoochee, and that though he was sick, he escaped with his family and three warriors. He was credited with ability to raise a following of 100 warriors. Although Jesup moved his command down the river as far as Fort Clinch near its mouth, the number of prisoners secured was so small that he became convinced that there were no more than small parties of fleeing Indians along the river. By his most recent captives he was told that Osceola had gone to the Ocklawaha. After sending

Major McClintock with 80 regulars to reoccupy Fort Drane and drive away the small bands infesting that area, Jesup returned to Fort Armstrong on the 19th. Having learned that a large body of Indians headed by Mico-an-opa, Jumper, and Alligator, were located about the headwaters of the Ocklawaha, Jesup, disregarding for the time being his interest in Osceola, set off with the 2d brigade under Colonel A. Henderson from Fort Armstrong on the 22d for Lake Ahapopka. From a prisoner secured during a skirmish at this place, it was learned that the main body of the Indians had retreated in a southeastwardly direction. These were found on the 27th in and near the Great Cypress Swamp, and were promptly attacked. After a sharp engagement the Indians dispersed, and the army camped on Lake Tohopekaliga. On the 28th a prisoner was sent to Jumper and the other hostile chiefs, offering peace on fulfillment of the treaty terms. The prisoner returned on the 29th with pacific messages from Alligator and Abraham. Jesup was visited on the 31st by Abraham, who returned on February 3 with Jumper, Alligator, and others. With these he concluded an agreement for all the chiefs to meet with him at Fort Dade on February 18, pending which event hostilities were to cease. The army left the field on its return march on the 4th, and covered the 70 miles to Fort Armstrong by the 7th. Jesup was highly elated over the prospects.¹⁴⁰

Some anxiety developed from failure of the Indians to arrive at Fort Dade on the 18th. However Alligator came in on the 25th, accompanied by Ho-la-ah Toochee (or Davy), nephew of Mico-an-opa, and reported that the Indians were so widely scattered they could not assemble by the 18th. The latter reported the Indians were all desirous of peace, but he would not express their attitude on emigration. Jesup told him that peace was contingent on emigration, and that the presence of

140. Operations under Maj. Gen. Jesup: 827-829. Mil. Aff. (1861) VII

Mico-an-opa was indispensable for negotiations. They agreed on a full council for March 4, and on departure left 12 hostages with Jesup.¹⁴¹

Mico-an-opa disregarded Jesup and did not appear at Fort Dade. However on March 6, Jumper, Ho-la-ah Toochee, and Yahooloochee (Cloud), empowered by Mico-an-opa, signed at that place what Jesup called a capitulation. They agreed to the immediate cessation of hostilities, to immediate emigration west, immediate withdrawal to the south side of the Hillsborough river, and assemblage by April 10 of all of the chiefs and warriors in a camp at a site near Tampa Bay to be designated by Jesup, where they would be subsisted by government pending emigration. The Seminole were assured of security in their lives and property, and that Negroes, their bona fide property, should accompany them, and as guarantee for their faithful performance of these promises, hostages, of whom Mico-an-opa was to be one, were to be placed in Jesup's custody. On the 15th Jesup reported to the Secretary of War that the Indians were beginning to assemble, and while he had no doubt of the good faith of the chiefs, he was doubtful of the effectiveness of their control over the young warriors.¹⁴²

On March 26 Jesup reported that Yahooloochee with 200 of his people were at Tampa, and that he had been assured by the Indians on the St. Johns that they would observe Mico-an-opa's order to emigrate. He believed the war ended, but feared the effect of indiscrete acts committed by settlers. An unofficial account from Tampa on April 16, said that all the chiefs except Osceola and Philip had come in by that date.¹⁴³ At Tampa the Indians were lodged in two camps, the farthest 12 miles distant. The Indians were not under restraint, but came and went as they pleased. On the 23d, Jesup reported that while Jumper, Mico-an-opa, and other principal chiefs were

141. *Ibid*: 833, 865. 142. *Ibid*: 834, 886.

143. *Savannah Georgian* April 24: 282. *Chronicle* May 4, 1837, IV.

there with him, their people came in slowly. Many Indians became alarmed over reports spread by mischievous whites that they were to be executed, and thereupon fled. Others were reported to be fearful of the measles, which had spread to the Indian camp from the army, in which it had been prevalent. The presence of slave hunters in Tamps furthermore alarmed the Indian Negroes, and most of these left. On May 8, Jesup reported that all of the chiefs had declared their readiness to obey Mico-an-opa's order for emigration, and expressed his own belief that all would embark in the course of the summer.¹⁴⁴

However the Indians along the St. Johns did not come into Tampa, but congregated at Fort Mellon. An officer writing from that post in May, related that Osceola had arrived there on the 3d, in company of all of the Mikasukies and Sam Jones. Other arrivals at that place included Coahadjo, Tuskeneha, Philip, and Coacoochee. It was reported that Ho-la-ah Toochee, nephew of Mico-an-opa, was nearby with the main body of the Nation. Indian encampments were scattered over a radius of 20 miles around the post. Estimates of the number congregated varied from a total of 2500 including women and children, to 2500 warriors alone. The large assembly at Fort Mellon, which appears to have greatly exceeded the number congregated at Tampa, was doubtless determined by convenience, and indicates the extent of Indian dislodgment from the Withlacoochee area. Those at Tampa were probably the so-called "hostages" with their immediate bands. Lieut. Col. Harney, the commanding officer of this post, reported that Osceola enjoyed the hospitality of his tent on the night of the 3d-4th Expressive of the cordial feeling which prevailed, was the arrangement by Osceola, of a ball-play for the entertainment of the garrison. In appearance, Osceola was described as "care-worn", or "gloomy and thin." The opinion was entertained that the Indians would depart for

144. Jesup to War Department: 837-867. Mil. Aff. (1861) VII.

Tampa about the 9th.¹⁴⁵ An officer who left Fort Mellon on the 16th related in Savannah that on permission granted by an undisclosed credulous officer, the Indians had been permitted to go to their towns, on promise to return in three to four days. Not returning by that time, a messenger sent after them returned with Coahadjo, who declared that they would leave for Tampa about the 20th.¹⁴⁶ There is no indication that any one in authority suspected that this withdrawal might forecast a reversal in the outlook for immediate emigration, or that the Indian coup to be described was already planned.

Osceola's Coup Frustrates Jesup

On June 7 Jesup reported that the principal Creek chief (probably Nocose Yaholo) had informed him on the 1st that in a few days an attempt would be made by a party of Mikasukies to kill or abduct the chiefs Mico-an-opa, Jumper, and Cloud, whose camp was about eight miles from Tampa. On receipt of this news, he ordered Major Graham, who was stationed with a mounted company and 120 Creek warriors about four miles from Mico-an-opa's camp, to send out spies at night to observe the movements of the Indians. Two spies were sent into the camp on the night of the 1st, and again on the night of the 2d, but they either disobeyed or failed to report. Jesup held the mounted men at the fort, as well as those at Major Graham's camp, ready to move at a moment's notice. It was not until the morning of the 3d that their absence was discovered, when they already had a 12 hour start, and pursuit would be useless.¹⁴⁷ From unofficial accounts it appeared that on the night of the 2d, 200 Mikasukies lead by Sam Jones and Osceola surrounded the camp of these chiefs and forced them

145. *Charleston Courier* May 12: 313. *Chronicle*, May 18; Report from Jesup: 329. *Chronicle*, May 25; *St. Augustine Herald*: May 18: 347. *Chronicle* June 1, 1837, IV.

146. *Savannah Republican* May 22: 348. *Chronicle* June 1, 1837, IV.

147. Jesup to Poinsett: 871. *Mil. Aff.* (1861) VII.

to leave. Mico-an-opa was reported as having refused to go, saying that he had signed a treaty and proposed to abide by it. He was told that if he did not go his blood would be spilt, to which he replied saying kill him there and quickly. The abductors ignored his objections, and Mico-an-opa was forced on a horse and carried off, while Jumper, having sold his mount was forced to walk.¹⁴⁸ These chiefs had been in council with Jesup on the 1st, when Jesup already was aware of the scheme, and could have siezed them, and captured their camp, but he desisted from such a course as an infraction of the capitulation. In his opinion the affair was an act of abduction rather than an absconding, a point of view which relieved the lost hostages of blame. The number departing was set as high as 700, and afterwards not more than 130 were said to remain near the fort, Abraham being among the latter. The hopes of an early peace were dashed, and Jesup in his disappointment, asked to be relieved of the Florida command. On reconsideration of his action, he withdrew his request.

Hostilities were not renewed in the months following the scattering of the Indians, probably because the army did not take the initiative, as the summer months were regarded as unhealthy. On the evacuation of Fort Foster, one "Bowlegs", brother of Alligator, was brought unwillingly to Tampa. He related that Mico-an-opa and Jumper with their people were on the Casseeme (Kissimmee) creek, three days march from Tampa. He stated that Osceola and his party were in the neighborhood of Volusia, and was quoted as having said that the Indians would remain quiet until they saw what the whites intended to do.¹⁴⁹

Guile Against Guile

Our attention will now be focused on events along the St. Johns river. Early on the morning of September 9, General

148. *Globe* n. d.: 393. *Chronicle* June 22, 1937. IV.

149. Miller to Jesup: 840. Mil. Aff. (1861) VII.

Hernandez succeeded in capturing Philip and his band by a surprise night attack on his camp, located in the vicinity of Dunlawton Plantation. This was effected without bloodshed on either side. On the following morning he similarly surrounded and surprised the camp of Uchee Billy at a point not far from Philip's camp. The entire Indian party was captured, although one was killed on either side. Hernandez brought his captives into St. Augustine, where they were confined in Fort Marion (Fort San Marcos).¹⁵⁰

At the solicitation of Philip, Hernandez permitted one of the recent captives, Tomoka John, to depart with a message from Philip to his family, requesting them to come in and share in his captivity. Tomoka John returned to the camp of the detachment which awaited him on the 26th, accompanied by Philip's son Coacoochee, and three other Indians under a white flag. The detachment immediately returned to the city, however permitting Coacoochee to dress in his finery before entering. He announced that in consideration of having come in voluntarily, he expected to be permitted to return without hindrance, and promised to use his influence to bring in his people, with stolen Negroes and cattle.¹⁵¹

Coacoochee was permitted to depart on October 2, having promised to return in 14 days. As good as his word, he returned on the 17th with Philip's brother and his own youngest brother, and further brought the highly interesting news that Osceola, with some other chiefs and about 100 Indians, was a day's journey in his rear, desirous of coming in for a conference.¹⁵²

On the 18th two Indians sought an interview with Hernandez. The spokesman professed to represent Mico-an-opa, Ho-la-ah Toochee, and Jumper, and to be the bearer of a message from Osceola, who announced his intention to be in for a talk, and

150. Motte, 116-123. 151. *Ibid*: 131, 134.

152. *Ibid*: 136. 153. *Ibid*: 137.

expressed regrets for past errors, together with a desire for peace. Jesup meanwhile had arrived in St. Augustine. On October 20 Osceola and his party encamped near Fort Peyton, and sent an invitation by John Cavallo to Hernandez, asking the latter to visit him without an escort. Jesup, suspecting some treachery, forbade Hernandez from going without a strong escort. Jesup also sent orders to Lieut. Peyton, commanding at Fort Peyton, to seize Osceola and his party should they all come into the fort. Jesup supplied Hernandez with an interrogatory of seven questions to be put to the Indians, with orders that if the replies to them were not satisfactory, the Indians were to be seized.¹⁵³

Hernandez, after instructing Major Ashby, commander of the escort of about 200 mounted men in the procedure to be followed, preceeded the escort to Osceola's camp, about one mile from Fort Peyton. Jarvis, who accompanied Hernandez's staff, related that the camp could be discerned at some distance by the white flag flying. Osceola received them standing under the white flag. Osceola with his principal companions greeted Hernandez and the officers of his staff with hand-clasps, a ring was formed, and the talk began. The Indians stated they had come on the invitation of Philip, transmitted by Coacoochee. They denied intention to give themselves up, but said they wanted to make peace. The interrogatory dealt mainly with topics touched on at Jesup's previous conference with Coahadjo at Fort King. The Indians said the council promised at that time was called, but only a few chiefs appeared so that nothing was done. The Indians stated that Mico-an-opa, Jumper, and Cloud all got the measles and could not attend, but had sent word that when stronger, they would come to see Hernandez. Hernandez then told them that the officers had been deceived enough, and that it was necessary for them to come with him, to which he received the reply, "We will see about it."

Hernandez then gave the signal and the conferees were surrounded and taken prisoners.

Jarvis related that when the troops approached the Indians showed no surprise, and that when the signal to close in was given, several arose from curiosity to observe the maneuver, but none exhibited fear or terror. Although each Indian had his rifle, loaded and primed nearby, none of them had opportunity to raise one. It was reported that during the conference Osceola exhibited uneasiness, but became calm when he found himself a prisoner. The name of the respondent to the interrogatory is not known, but was likely Coahadjo. In addition to Osceola and Coahadjo, 12 other chiefs were secured, with 71 warriors, who were said to be nearly all Mikasukies, six women, and four negroes, with 47 rifles. After the Indian arms and baggage were collected, mounts were provided for Osceola, Coahadjo, and one other, and with the others afoot, were marched to St. Augustine between a double file of soldiers and confined in Fort Marion. Jarvis rode beside Osceola the whole distance. We observed that while Osceola was obviously unwell, he was in no manner downcast. It was later believed Osceola's motive in coming was to contrive the release of Philip, either by stratagem or assault. The entire absence of children, and the meager number of women with the party, was not indicative of a peaceful mission devoid of guile.¹⁵⁴

The seizure of Osceola provoked the expression of a great deal of sympathy for him in the press, with a corresponding criticism of Jesup. It would be difficult to understand how, given the opportunity, Jesup could have done otherwise than to seize Osceola and the other Indians, and not have been derelict to his duty. Jesup furthermore was thoroughly disillusioned by the June coup.

154. Motte, 138; Forry, (VII-1): 90; Jarvis, (XXXIX-5): 278. Reports of Hernandez and Gibbs: 5-8. House Doc. 327, 25th Cong. 2d. April 11, 1838. Jesup to Poinsett: 886. Mil. Aff. (1861) VII. Jesup, Nov. 17, 1837: 262-263. *Niles' National Register* Dec 23, 1837. Jesup, LIII.

Captivity

About the middle of November the delegation of five Cherokees selected on the invitation of the administration by John Ross, the principal chief of that Nation, arrived in St. Augustine. Their mission was to persuade the Indians to cease hostilities. Probably so they could later assure the hostiles that they had seen the prisoners and describe their treatment, they were invited by the officers in that city to meet the prisoners in the fort. A highly elaborate interview was staged, the participants wearing all their finery. Free conversation was permitted, and Osceola was quoted in the reports as saying that he was tired of fighting, and that when he saw his Great Father would tell him so, and then set out for his new home toward the setting sun, but was too sick to say more.¹⁵⁵ Previous allusion has been made to this interview. From St. Augustine a runner bearing pipes and tobacco was sent to announce the presence and purpose of the mediators to Mico-an-opa and Sam Jones.

Vanquished by Malaria

An army surgeon, Dr. Forry,¹⁵⁶ saw the captives professionally while they were confined in Fort Marion. He believed the Indians, Osceola included, did not regret capture, their only anxiety was reunion with their families. He stated Osceola then labored under an intermittent fever (probably tertian malaria). This, we believe to be a most significant statement. It will be recalled that Osceola and his band occupied the post of Fort Drane a short time after its garrison was evacuated in the summer of 1836 because of the unhealthfulness of that post. The rampant illness could hardly have been anything else than malaria, and the intensity of the epidemic must have permitted the infection of a large proportion of the anopheline mosquitoes thereabout, which were certainly abundant. These

155. *Augusta Constitutionalist* n. d.: 364. *Chronicle* Dec. 7, 1837, V.

156. Forry, (VII-1): 95. 157. Jarvis (XXXIX-5): 286.

must have been still abundant when Osceola and his band occupied the fort. During this exploit Osceola and probably many of his followers must have acquired the infection. It is noteworthy that most observers who subsequently commented on Osceola's appearance, stress an aspect which one would expect to observe in a sufferer from chronic malaria. It is likely that at the period when Osceola was described as a fugitive attended only by his family and three warriors, he was acutely ill. * Call himself was a victim of malaria during his campaign. Certainly after Call's force drove him away from the vicinity of Fort Drane, excepting only his part in the abduction of Mico-an-opa from Tampa, Osceola evidently was inactive. We conclude that at the time of his capture he was an enfeebled, ill, and tired man, perhaps not overly averse to the prospect of capture.

Coacoochee's detention in Fort Marion, after the other chiefs had come in through persuasion, undoubtedly rankled, as he at any rate had not exhibited any desire to give up his freedom. The commanding officer of Fort Marion must have been amazed when Osceola, on the morning of November 30, informed him that Coacoochee had escaped from the fort. Osceola sent word to Jesup that he as well as his people could have left in the same manner, but scorned to do so.¹⁵⁷ When roll was called it was found that 19 other Seminoles, including two women, had accompanied Coacoochee. As Porter¹⁵⁸ pointed out, this break released the one man capable of assuming the

* Since the foregoing was written, the Editor has called attention to the following item which appeared in the Tallahassee *Floridian* of December 16, 1837:

"A gentleman lately from St. Augustine states that Powel[l] during the last year has suffered severely from chills and fever, which, with the injury he received by a shot through the hand at the Withlacoochee, has prevented him from taking much part in the war."

This confirmation also establishes contemporary recognition that Osceola's inaction was ascribable to the poor state of his health.

158. Porter, Kenneth. "Seminole Flight from Fort Marion." *Florida Historical Quarterly* XXII 113-133.

leadership of a significant number of Seminoles and reviving the spirits of the other chiefs. The break came too late for the news of the escape to reach Mico-an-opa and his close associates and deter them from coming into Fort Mellon. Coacoochee shortly established contact with Alligator and Sam Jones, the only other important chiefs remaining at large. Under their joint leadership, the rallied Indians fought Colonel Zachary Taylor in the battle of Okeechobee on December 25, 1837, the hottest battle of the entire war. It does not seem unreasonable to believe that but for this incident, the war might have been brought to a close in 1837.

Meanwhile the Cherokee negotiators had proceeded to Fort Mellon in the company of Coahadjo, where they arrived on November 26. Although Jesup was skeptical of the possible value of their services, he nevertheless approved the terms of their contemplated talk, prepared by John Ross,¹⁵⁹ which proposed negotiation of a treaty with Presidential approval, and amnesty to "Osceola Powell" and the principal actors. News of their coming had reached Mico-an-opa, and on the 27th runners arrived from him with the message that he would meet them at a creek 40 miles from the fort in two days. The Cherokees departed for the rendezvous at Chickasawhatchee creek (the present Taylor creek entering the St. Johns just below the outlet of Lake Poinsett), where after smoking a preliminary pipe, they held a council with the Seminoles on November 30 and December 1, and presented their proposals. Mico-an-opa and 12 chiefs agreed to return with them to Fort Mellon.¹⁶⁰

On November 30 a small party of Indians, including the runner sent from St. Augustine, and Negroes came into Fort

159. *Memorial of the Cherokee Mediators*: 7. House Doc. 285, 25th Cong. 2d.

160. Savannah dispatch, n.d.: 382. *Chronicle* Dec. 14; *Commercial Advertiser*, and *New York American*, n.d.: 394. *Chronicle*, Dec. 21, 1837, V. Jarvis, 1906, (XXXIX-5): 285-286. Various letters, Jesup to Poinsett: 886-891. Mil. Aff., VII.

Mellon and surrendered; their numbers variously reported, as from 4-5 warriors, 10-13 women, and 11 children. They were stated to be Osceola's people. Among the women were "two wives of Osceola and his sister", or "two of Osceola's wives", as well as two children. They were accompanied by from 30-40 Negroes in wretched condition. Their arrival was said to represent a flight from the hostiles, and was probably motivated by a desire for reunion. Jesup promptly sent them to St. Augustine.¹⁶¹

On December 3 the Cherokee delegation with Coahadjo, accompanied by Mico-an-opa, Cloud, Tuskegee, Sam Jones's nephew, and Nocose Yahala, came into Fort Mellon. The absence of Sam Jones was attributed to a fear that Jesup would make good his threat to dress him like a woman if he ever got him into his power. According to Jesup they surrendered, but by the Cherokees were declared to have entered under a white flag. Jesup admitted that the course reported as followed by the Cherokees met with his approval. On the 5th a council was held with these Indians. Jesup inquired as to their expectations in coming into camp, to which Mico-an-opa replied that he desired peace and would fulfill the treaty. Jesup then demanded the immediate surrender of the families of the prisoners at St. Augustine, the surrender of Sam Jones with his people (Mikasukies), and of all others camped within a four days march. This was assented to, and seven days allowed for Jones' people, and ten days for those of Mico-an-opa and Cloud to come in. Messengers were dispatched with these orders from the chiefs, and the wait began. Jesup was not hopeful of the outcome, but held the beforementioned as hostages. Sam Jones's nephew evidently concluded he could not assure his uncle that Jesup would accord him the same treat-

161. Jesup to Poinsett: 890. Mil. Aff. VII. Jarvis, (XXXIX-5) 285. *Savannah Republican*, n.d. and *Savannah Georgian* Dec. 8: 394 *Chronicle* Dec. 21, 1837, V.

ment given the other chiefs, and made a precipitate departure. Likely by this time Coacoochee had established communication with Sam Jones, which lead to a prompt change in the latter's mind. The Cherokee delegation had accompanied the messengers, and returned on the 14th without bringing in any further Indians. Jesup now considered the mission of the Cherokees a failure, and thereupon seized all of the Indians near the fort, including the before-mentioned chiefs, totalling 78. These as well as the protesting Cherokees, who were denied communication with the prisoners, were placed on board a steamer bound for St. Augustine.¹⁶² Jesup justified the seizure of Mico-an-opa and Cloud on the ground they were fugitive hostages, and he was now convinced that the war could only be settled by battle.

A Forecast of the Final Solution of the Seminole Problem

On arrival at St. Augustine, the Cherokees sought and were granted an interview with the captive chiefs in the fort, as they desired to clear themselves of any charge of treachery, but the captives denied that they entertained any such suspicions. According to John Ross, Colonel Sherburne, professedly acting on the suggestion of Jesup, inquired of the captives in the presence of the Cherokees, whether, if the government would assign them the country south of a line drawn from Tampa Bay to the East Coast, they would guard that frontier against foreign invasion, deliver runaway Negroes, and end the war in friendship and good faith. The chiefs were astounded, and said they only waged war to gain these ends. Sherburne then asked whether, in the event such a plan were sanctioned, any of those chiefs would visit Washington to ratify such a treaty. The chiefs were polled, all expressed themselves as willing except Philip, who said he would only when convinced that the word of the United States would not be broken. Osceola plucked a white feather from his turban, and gave it with a scarf, to

162. Jesup to Poinsett: 890-891. Mil. Aff. VII. Doc. 327: 9; Doc. 285: 11

Sherburne, saying "Present these to our white father in token Osceola will do as you have said."¹⁶³

The *Army and Navy Chronicle* quoted a St. Augustine paper of December 23, which stated that it was understood that orders had been received from Jesup for the removal of all the Indians in Fort Marion to Charleston. When this news was communicated to them, it was said they received it with very bad grace. Coacoochee's escape had convinced Jesup that the old fort was an insecure cage for important prisoners. About the last of December the whole group of Indians, including Mico-an-opa, Osceola, Philip, Coahadjo, and Cloud, with 116 warriors, and 82 women and children, were embarked on the *SS Poinsett* for Charleston, where they arrived on January 1, 1838, and were transferred to Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island. Their deportment on the journey was reported to have been good. After arrival, Osceola was allowed the freedom of the enclosure, and to receive visitors in his room. On the 6th, he and the other chiefs were induced to attend a performance of the play "Honey-moon" at the Charleston theater. The celebrity of the prisoners attracted many visitors; and the artist Catlin came to Charleston to paint the portraits of the Seminole chiefs. They were loquacious with Catlin, frequenting his room until late at night, and related through an interpreter their version of the war and of their capture, of which they complained bitterly.¹⁶⁴

Death of Osceola

Catlin was informed by Dr. Weedon, surgeon of the post, that Osceola would not live many weeks, and the artist observed a rapid decline in his face and flesh during the sittings. Before completion of his portrait, Osceola developed an acute attack

163. Doc. 285: 17.

164. *St. Augustine Herald*, Dec. 23: 42. *Chronicle* Jan. 18, 1838, VI; Coe, 102, 109; Catlin, 247.

of quinsy or putrid sore throat, a topical diagnosis which has several etiological implications, but which could not have been related to his chronic malaria infection, which however, had probably lowered his vitality. Osceola refused the ministrations of Dr. Weedon, preferring to be treated by an Indian physician. On the night of the 27th, Catlin and the officers sat up with Osceola, as he was believed to be dying. He rallied, and at the time of Catlin's departure on the 29th, hope of recovery was entertained. Instead he grew rapidly worse, and died on the 30th, with his wives, "his two fine little children", and others in attendance. He evidently realized that his end was approaching, and insisted on being clad in his finery. Dr. Weedon furnished Catlin with a minute description of his last moments.¹⁶⁵

Osceola was buried near the main entrance of Fort Moultrie, his obsequies being attended by all Indians in the fort, citizens, and a military escort, which fired a salute over the grave. The grave was later enclosed by a paling, and a Charleston resident, a Mr. Patton, provided a marble headstone inscribed:

O C E O L A
Patriot and Warrior
Died at Fort Moultrie
January 30th, 1838

A photograph of the grave as it was over 50 years ago was reproduced by Coe.¹⁶⁶ It soon became known that the corpse had been decapitated.

Dr. Forry¹⁶⁷ wrote a friend from St. Augustine on March 25, 1838, that: "Old Dr. Weedon is about publishing the life of Osceola. Powell has quizzed [*i.e.* mislead] him most sublimely. The Doctor has Osceola's head here in his possession."

Soon afterwards the remaining prisoners were sent West.

165. Catlin, 251. 166. Coe, 112. 167. Forry, (VII-1): 101.

Philip died en route below Fort Gibson. It is presumed that Osceola's wives and children went with the party, but Coe¹⁶⁹ was unable to trace their after movements.

The decapitated remains of Osceola are probably the only remains of an Indian partisan of that war which lie in a known and identifiable grave. There, far from his homeland, and except for the early desecration, they have remained for more than a century in the tranquility which was denied him during his life in Florida.

The best contemporary appraisal of Osceola we have encountered is provided by the writer of an anonymous letter dated Charleston, January 31:¹⁶⁸

We shall not write his epitaph or his funeral oration, yet there is something in his character not unworthy of the respect of the world. From a vagabond child he became the master spirit of a long and desperate war. He made himself - no man owed less to accident. Bold and decisive in action, deadly but consistent in hatred, dark in revenge, cool, subtle, and sagacious in council, he established gradually and surely a resistless ascendancy over his adoptive tribe, by the daring of his deeds, and the consistency of his hostility to the whites, and the profound craft, of his policy. In council he spoke little - he made the other chiefs his instruments, and what they delivered in public, was the secret suggestion of the invisible master. Such was Osceola, who will be long remembered as the man that with the feeblest means produced the most terrible effects.

168. Anonymous letter: 353. Niles' *National Register*, Feb. 2, 1838. LIII.

169. Coe, 1898: 119.

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