



"The Prophet;" Shawnee Who Influenced the Red Sticks

Volume 39, Number 4
April 2012

The April Meeting

Tuesday, April 24, 2012, 3:00 p. m

The Thomas E. McMillan Museum

The Program: Fort Mims: Past, Present, and Future

Meet Our Guest Speaker: Claudia Campbell

Claudia Campbell, President of the Fort Mims Restoration Association, writes that having been born and raised in Tensaw, Alabama, she was the youngest of five children to Carl and June Slaughter. She recalls that her mother took her to place flowers and "have a service" at Fort Mims from early childhood.



Claudia Campbell

She was "off to Tuscaloosa after high school" for further education and graduated from UAB with a degree in nursing. She practiced nursing in many

areas including ER, ICU, and Recovery.

Retired three years ago after 37 years— Claudia now finds herself busier than ever being the President of the Fort Mims Restoration Association.

Claudia was a recent guest at an ECHS meeting to promote the "Sponsor a Log" Program, a program to help build a blockhouse at the site of the fort, hopefully completing it in time for the 2013 celebrations honoring the 200th year of the fort. Ω

Fort Mims: The Past

Entitled "A Battlefield of the Creek War," this version of the Fort Mims Massacre is from the website <<http://www.exploresouthernhistory.com/fortmims1.html>>.

There is an old saying in the South, "The Good Lord willing and the Creek don't rise." The phrase has nothing to do with running streams, but instead is a flashback to the days of the Creek War of 1813-1814 and, particularly, the Red Stick attack on Fort Mims, Alabama. *Note: The phrase comes from a letter Benjamin Hawkins,*

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The May Meeting, May 22, 2012

Program TBA

CONDOLENCES

The Society offers its condolences to our president, Tom McMillan, on the loss of his brother, Ed Leigh McMillan.

Ed Leigh, 71, of Brewton died Thursday, March 29, 2012, after a long illness.

(Continued from page 1)

United States Indian Agent to the Creeks of the southeast, when President Thomas Jefferson wrote and asked him to return to Washington.

Fort Mims was a rough log stockade constructed in 1813 around the home of Samuel Mims, an early settler of Baldwin County, Alabama. The powerful Upper Creeks of Central Alabama were not particularly hostile towards Mims and his neighbors. Many, in fact, were related to the early settlers and Creek warriors often traded with and visited Mims and other residents of the Tensaw settlements.

This "live and let live" attitude changed, however, when a civil war broke out in the Creek Nation. On one side were the Red Sticks, followers of a nativistic religion taught by the Alabama Prophet Josiah Francis.

They believed in a return to native ways and a rejection of white society and culture. Opposing them were the principal leaders of the nation, including the Big Warrior, who lived very much according to the white plan of "civilization" for the Creeks.

The war did not immediately threaten white settle-



MASSACRE AT FORT MIMS

An 1858 engraving of the massacre at Fort Mims, an attack on settlers and allied Native Americans on August 30, 1813, by the Red Stick faction of the Creeks.

Public outcry sparked the initial military action against the Creek Nation that would usher in the Creek War of 1813-14" (the Encyclopedia of Alabama

<<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1121>>.

than 250 of them were dead.

The Battle of Fort Mims, also known as the Fort Mims Massacre, began as the people of the fort were gathering for their noon meal. The main gates of the fort were open and there was a general lack of concern about the possibility of an attack. Hundreds of Red Stick warriors, led by the famed Creek warrior William Weatherford, suddenly stormed from the woods surrounding the fort and rushed the open gate and walls.

ments around the fringes of the nation. In fact, it was an action by the settlers themselves that brought the war to their own doorsteps. In July of 1813, a rough and tumble band of territorial militia attacked a Red Stick supply train at Burnt Corn Creek, Alabama. Blood was drawn and the families of the killed and wounded Red Sticks swore vengeance on their white neighbors.

That vengeance came on August 30, 1813, when Red Stick warriors attacked a woefully unprepared Fort Mims. Hundreds of men, women and children had gone to the fort for safety after the debacle at Burnt Corn Creek. By the time the battle was over, more

(Continued on page 3)

TENSKWATAWA, THE PROPHET (sketch on page 1, bottom left)

"Tenskwatawa (c. 1775-1836), also known as 'The Prophet,' was a Shawnee leader who, with his brother, Tecumseh, pushed for Native Americans to adhere to traditional customs and reject white people's ways. The Red Stick faction of the Creeks that carried out the Fort Mims Massacre included followers of Tenskwatawa and Tecumseh." (Encyclopedia of Alabama).

Fort Mims: The Present



Part of the Restoration Projects Ongoing at Fort Mims, this is a section of the restored stockade walls.

Picture courtesy of
www.exploresouthernhistory.com/fortmims1.html



Scene inside the stockade walls from one of the yearly re-enactments of the battle.



Soldiers from Fort Rucker at Fort Mims (left)

This visit was training for these future warrant officers on what to do and not do in defense of a site. (Picture courtesy of a [Mobile Press-Register](#) article for February 2012)



Indian Warrior Reenactor

Fort Mims: The Past *cont'd*

(Continued from page 2)

The alarm was spread and the men of the fort grabbed their weapons and rushed to beat back the attack. Major Daniel Beasley, the commander of the fort, was killed as he tried to close the gate. The battle raged throughout the afternoon. Despite their initial surprise, the occupants of the fort fought bravely, as did the Red Stick attackers. Finally, however, Fort Mims was overwhelmed by the ferocity of the attackers.

The exact number of people killed in the attack is sub-

ject to some debate. Estimates range from around 250 to more than 550. The same is true of Red Stick losses, estimates for which range from around 100 to more than 300.

Although the attack on Fort Mims was a retaliatory strike for the white attack on the Red Sticks at Burnt Corn Creek, it was considered an outrage by the people of Georgia, Tennessee and the Mississippi Territory. Three armies soon converged on the Creek Nation and the Red Stick forces were finally cornered and defeated by Andrew Jackson at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend the following year. Ω

Fort Mims: The Future



Fort Mims Marker

The year 2013 will mark the 200th year celebration. The Restoration Association hopes to have the blockhouse, which would be the centerpiece of the stockade, finished in time for the anniversary.

A Mobile Press-Register article by Kim Lanier relates that a master plan for preservation has been presented to the Fort Mims Preservation Association.

These plans could include an amphitheatre and stage outside the stockade as well as an artifact building (“Master Plan for Preservation of Fort Mims Site Taking Shape”

<http://blog.al.com/live/2010/08/master-plan-for-fort-mims-taki.html>

Saturday, May 5, 2012
Alger-Sullivan Historical Society's
2nd annual
SAWMILL DAY
AND CAR SHOW



Panhandle Auto Club and all others invited
Trophies for Best in Show and top ten
Bring YOUR Car!
(\$25.00 registration fee)

FOOD, FUN, ENTERTAINMENT

- *Melissa Majors and her Escambia/Santa Rosa Twirlers*
- *Daniel and Henry Leonard and Bobby Holland*
- *BJ's Barbeque*
- *Southern Pride Dance Group of Atmore*
- *Museum Tours*
- *Yard Sale Items*
- *Come see the Progress on Old 100*
- *Bethel AFM Church of God Choir*
- *Holley Driver*
- *Don's Ice Cream Snacks*
- *Heather Leonard Dance Group*
- *Danielle Scott singing Country Gospel*
- *Northview High School Dancers*
- *Cold soft drinks*
- *And MORE*

BRING THE FAMILY AND LAWN CHAIRS—JOIN US FOR THE DAY!
 610 4TH STREET, CENTURY, FLORIDA (850-256-3980)

Escambia County Towns Word Search

Remember those old word search puzzles from when you were a kid? Well, they're not just for children!

Studies show completing puzzles like word searches can help maintain mental acuity.

If you like this one, we'll find some harder ones. Email or phone us and let us know what you think.

Towns List

Atmore	Wawbeek
Flomaton	Riverview
Brewton	EastBrew-
Damascus	ton
Dixonville	Robinson-
Teddy	ville
McCul-	Foshee
lough	Hammac
Pollard	Poarch
Canoe	Roberts
Nokomis	Wallace
Keego	Sardine

XWQPKEEGOSURDYC
 VAICVEDIROBERTS
 KLELLIVNOXIDAGT
 ELROBINSONVILLE
 EALPYRZIKTKOLBD
 BCHGUOLLUCCMORD
 WEGVGJLEAAWUPEY
 ARVWNDZIH CROOWD
 WGMHAMMACANOETA
 PFFVWEIVREVIROM
 OFLOMATONPZGONA
 ADFCKPNPNOKOMIS
 RPNLJEEHSOFETHC
 CNOTWERBTSAEAGU
 HRKSARDINEFARHS

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Fort Mims - Most Brutal Indian Massacre in US History

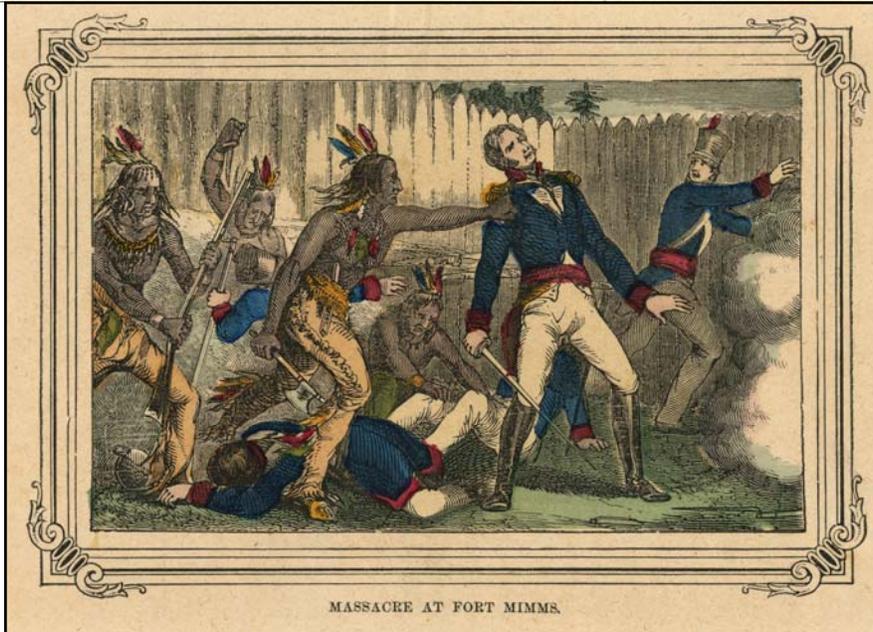
The author of this article is a participant in an activity called "geocaching," described as "a real-world outdoor treasure hunting game. Players try to locate hidden containers, called geocaches, using GPS-enabled devices and then share their experiences online." This is the description of his experience at the site in August of 2010.

Rural Alabama is not a place where you would expect to find a battlefield of historical significance from the War of 1812, but there is one. Northwest of Tensaw off of Highway 80 in Baldwin County is a small historical site that memorializes a terrible event that took place there.

There is no visitor center or park rangers. No bookstore or museum. No snack machines. Until recently, not one geocache could be found within a mile of the place. There are a few outlines where buildings once stood and a partially re-constructed wooden palisade. It is isolated, quiet and a little bit creepy.

Most people have never heard of it. Even Internet information is scarce. This is Fort Mims. On August 30, 1813, almost 1,000 Creek Indian warriors slaughtered 500 men, women and children in what can only be described as an orgy of killing. It remains to this day the largest and most brutal Indian massacre in American history.

After this introduction, the author gives this discussion of the Battle of Fort Mims and the larger



context of the history of the period.

War Returns to America

The seeds of Fort Mims were sowed right after the American Revolution. The Creek Indians lived in modern day western Georgia and Alabama. The British, the Spanish and the

French were all trying to influence events in the region and chip away at the new nation's territory. They were also looking for allies should war come again.

To accomplish this, they all sought alliances with the Creeks. The British were particularly aggressive in these efforts. The Americans, of course, sought their own influence with the Creeks and had a decided advantage.

The white settlers and the Creeks lived in peace. Most of the settlers were of Scotch-Irish descent and marriages between Anglos and Creeks were common. This resulted in a sizeable mixed blood population and it was not unusual for such persons to have both an Anglo and a Creek name. One such individual was William Weatherford, whose Creek name was Red Eagle.

Weatherford was an impressive person and natural leader. He stood 6' 2" in a time when your average male was about 5' 5". He had jet black hair and black eyes that "...could bore a hole right through you." He never learned to read or write but spoke Creek and English with native fluency and was a

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

Diagram of Fort Mims

This engraved diagram of Fort Mims is located at the site of the Fort.

It is based on a map or drawing found among the papers of General Claiborne.

Claiborne was the commanding officer in charge of the American forces sent to protect the settlers in the area



The photograph of the diagram is taken from the article "Fort Mims - Most Brutal Indian Massacre in US History" at <http://www.offthebeatenpath.ws/battlefields/FortM>.

The description and explanation of the diagram is taken from "rootsweb" at <http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cma>.

1. **Block house** (that is the upper left corner of the stockade)
2. **Pickets cut away by the Indians** (to the right of the block house)
3. **Guard's Station** (next to cutaway pickets)
4. **Guard House** (house just below station)
5. **Western Gate** (opening at extreme top)
6. **This Gate was shut, but a hole was cut by the Indians** (just below the Western Gate)
7. **Captain Bailey's Station** (this is **Dixon Bailey** -- in the middle right-- the area jutting out, that hut structure)
8. **Stedham's House** (the small house to the upper right of **Mims'** house -- which is right in the middle)
9. **Mrs. Dyers' house** (the house between **Stedham's** and **Mims'** houses)
10. **Kitchen** (the structure to the upper left of **Mims'** house, by the tree)
11. **Mims' House** (the building right in the middle of the stockade)
12. **Randon's House** (to the lower right of **Mims'** House, down by the soldiers' tents)
13. **Old Gate-Way -- open** (directly below **Mims'** House -- the opening)
14. **Ensign Chambliss' Tent** (first tent, just to left of Old Gate-Way)
15. **Ensign Gibbs' Tent** (tent to left of **Chambliss'** tent)
16. **Randon's** (next tent to left)
17. **Captain Middleton's** (next tent to left, next to tree)
18. **Captain Jack's Station** (The large house on the left, where stockade juts)
- 19., 20., 21. **Port-holes taken by Indians** (to left of **Captain Jack's Station**)
22. **Major Beasley's Cabin** (the small house below the officers's tents)
23. **Captain Jack's Company** (the 2 rows of tents below **Major Beasley's Cabin**)
24. **Captain Middleton's Company** (the 2 rows of tents on the right, opposite those of **Captain Jack's Company**)
25. **Where Major Beasley fell** (where the logs bow, at the bottom of the stockade)
26. **Eastern Gate, where the Indians entered** (the opening in the stockade where Beasley fell) Ω

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gifted orator.

The long-simmering feud between the U.S. and England turned into the War of 1812. The British actively solicited the Creeks with offers of weapons and money. Some of the Creeks went for it. One of the factions which sided with the British was called the Red Sticks, named for their red war clubs.

Their leader was William Weatherford aka Red Eagle. The Red Sticks had no love for the British but were weary of white settlement, the watering down of their bloodlines by inter-marriage and the loss of hunting grounds. Considered the radical faction of the Creek Nation, they began terrorizing the southern frontier.

FORT MIMS BECOMES A TARGET

As tensions mounted in the region, settlers banded together for defense and began building defensive fortifications. Since the US Army was fully engaged with the British, it fell to local militia to man the forts. One such cantonment was at the house of Samuel Mims. Mims was a prominent local businessman and farmer who had gotten wealthy by establishing and running a toll ferry across the nearby Alabama River. His farm had crops and livestock. A palisade was constructed that enclosed an acre of ground with the Mims house in the center.

Soon there were over 500 people living within its walls including 120 militiamen commanded by Major Daniel Beasley. Shelters were constructed along with utility buildings and a blockhouse at the southwest corner. There was also a well, so they had fresh water inside the walls. They were confident that they could handle anything that came along.

As dangerous and volatile as the region was, open warfare had been avoided so far. That was about to change. In July, 1813, the militia found out that the Red Sticks had been to Pensacola to receive a large shipment of weapons from the British. There were also rumors on the frontier that the British were pay-

ing money for scalps.

The militia decided to attack the Creek party. A hastily formed force, led by Colonel Joseph Callar, was sent to intercept and attack the Red Sticks and their pack train. This militia force consisted of 180 whites, mixed bloods and friendly Creeks. One of Callar's officers was Captain Dixon Bailey. Bailey was an experienced and savvy Indian fighter and of mixed blood himself

On July 27, 1813, the Creeks were ambushed as they were bedding down on the banks of **Burnt Corn Creek**. The militia's initial success was stalled when they stopped to root through the supplies they had just captured. The Creeks were able to regroup and counterattack, driving off the soldiers and saving some of their supplies. Captain Bailey distinguished himself in the battle and kept it from turning into a disaster after the militia assault fell apart.

The Red Sticks viewed this pre-emptive attack as an act of war and immediately started planning their paybacks. Captain Bailey was the second-in-command at Fort Mims and had been recognized. The revenge target would be Bailey's command.

The militia attack at Burnt Corn Creek had only succeeded in escalating a bad situation into a hot war, with both sides blaming the other for starting it. The battles that followed came to be known as the Creek Indian War. It is considered part of the War of 1812.

THE ATTACK AND DEFENSE OF FORT MIMS

For several weeks, everyone was on high alert and expecting an attack. Gradually though, the intensity wore down and people got back into their old routines. The frontier seemed quiet but unbeknownst to the Mims defenders, Red Eagle was conducting detailed scouting and planning his attack.

In the week before the attack, there were several sightings of Creek warriors. Patrols were sent out

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but found nothing. Soon the reports were dismissed out of hand. The day before the attack, the Creeks were staged and hidden less than a mile from the fort. That night, about 300 of them moved to a ravine 400 yards from the east gate, which was the only gate open in the stockade. The larger and better covered west gate was permanently closed. The Creeks chopped it open during the battle.

The remaining 500 Creeks encircled the fort and concealed themselves in the thick forest and brush. The 300 in the ravine would rush the gate to start the attack as the other 500 came over or through the wall.

August 30 dawned as another sunny, hot and steamy Alabama summer day. The gate opened. People worked in the fields and came and went on business. Children played. Soldiers played cards. Nobody was expecting an Indian attack, especially at mid-day.

At noon, the dinner bell rang calling in everybody for lunch. Red Eagle waited a few minutes to make sure everyone was inside then launched the attack. The Creeks sprinted across the 400 yards of open field and vegetable gardens using available cover and not making a sound. The defenders were caught completely by surprise.

Survivor accounts told of the Indians being within 50 yards of the gate before anybody saw them. Then all hell broke loose. The attackers were inside the gate before it could be closed. The first defender to die was Major Beasley, who met them head on just inside the gate as he rallied his men.

Captain Bailey, who was the target of the Creek vendetta, took command. He had found through hard-won experience that Indian attacks started out ferociously but tended to fade away if met with stiff resistance. The whole idea of a sustained five hour Indian attack was not in their playbook. Bailey rallied and organized the defense expecting that the

attack would run out of steam. However, the Red Stick warriors were fired up and determined to carry this thing through to the end.

The Creeks who sprinted inside were armed with clubs and tomahawks for rapid close-in killing. Other Creeks with rifles circled the perimeter and began firing from the outside through the firing apertures and gaps in the logs. The women and children took cover where ever they could find some or joined in the fight themselves.

Much of the fighting was hand-to-hand. Led by Captain Bailey, the defenders put up a ferocious resistance, killing or wounding as many as 300 Creeks. The attackers chopped several holes in the palisade so they could enter from another direction and better encircle the dwindling defenders. The battle raged for almost three hours but the citizen soldiers were finally overwhelmed by sheer numbers and no where to go.

THE MASSACRE

The Creeks broke off the attack but stayed near the fort. For the next two hours, they looted, recovered their dead, treated their wounds and ate and drank. During that two hour interlude, the settlers chopped a hole in the palisade behind the loom house at the center of the north wall. Fifteen people were able to escape into the thick vegetation known as cane-brake. There could have been more but most were too terrified to move.

Then the Creeks came back to finish the job. Still vengeful from the encounter at Burnt Corn Creek and enraged at the deaths of so many of their warriors, they returned to the now undefended fort and butchered everyone in it with tomahawks, knives and fire.

The Mims house had a root cellar that was crammed with people. The house was torched. People who escaped the flames were killed and mutilated. The scene repeated itself at the kitchen, the

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loom house and other structures. Everything burned to the ground except the blockhouse, which was only partially destroyed.

The only people spared were the black slaves, who were taken prisoner and made slaves of the Creeks

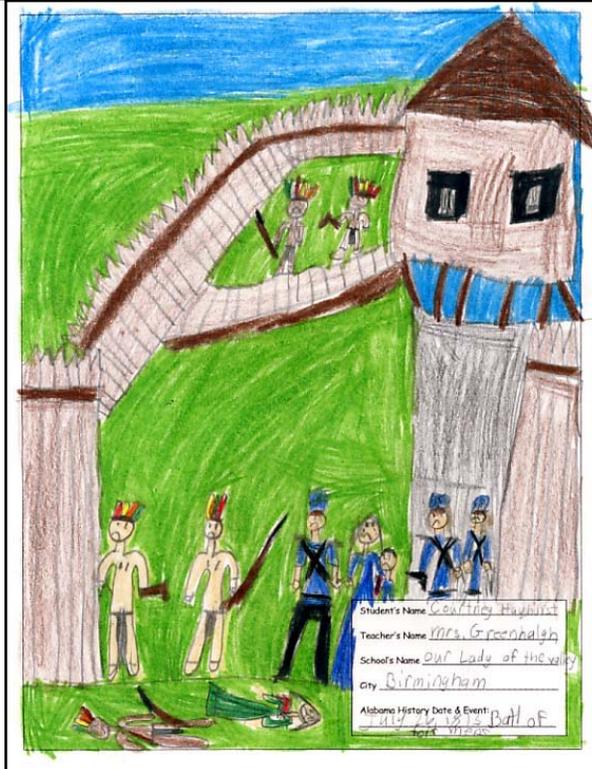
THE AFTERMATH

Two weeks after the massacre, a militia force arrived to count and bury the dead. What they found certainly ranks as one of the most gruesome scenes imaginable. Bodies and body parts lay everywhere. Many had been scalped and mutilated. Predators and scavengers had torn bodies apart and consumed them.

As the detail picked through the burned out buildings, they found more human remains though barely recognizable as such. In the root cellar of the Mims house, the fire had been so hot that everything in it - metal, clay, wood, human, everything - had been incinerated to a fine powder with only small shards remaining to identify what had once been there.

When word of the Fort Mims massacre got out, General Andrew Jackson led a force of Tennessee militiamen and Cherokee Indians against the Creeks. He pursued them for months without a decisive engagement.

On March 27, 1814, he finally cornered them and finished them off at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend on the Tallapoosa River near present day Alexander City, AL. At that battle, the Creeks used their cap-



**Fort Mims Student Art
Painting by Courtney Hayhurst
From Alabama Department of Archives
and History**

tured black slaves as human shields but Jackson's men killed them too. The battlefield is now a National Military Park.

The defeated Creek forces were forced to give up their lands, which were immediately opened to settlement. Some of them went off to Florida, where they continued to fight in the First Seminole War. Others were exiled further west to Arkansas and eventually to Oklahoma.

William Weatherford aka Red Eagle surrendered. Some historical accounts relate that he wasn't real keen on the attack after he found out that the Red Sticks had blood relatives in the compound, but his concerns were brushed aside. Jackson

spared him in exchange for brokering peace talks with the Creeks. Weatherford was paroled and returned to Monroe County, AL, where he became a successful planter until his death in 1824. His grave site is about one mile from Fort Mims.

Captain Dixon Bailey survived the battle but was severely wounded and soon died of those wounds. His young son, who was sick with some unknown ailment at the time, escaped out from behind the loom house during the two hour lull but ran into the Creeks and was clubbed to death.

Andrew Jackson of course went on to be President of the United States, mostly on his reputation as a warrior. Ω

The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Plan of Civilization

The following article by Robbie Ethridge of the University of Mississippi on the plan for taking Indian lands is from the online [Encyclopedia of Alabama](#).

The plan of civilization was a federal development program created in the 1790s to address the so-called "Indian problem," the much-debated question among American politicians about how to go about opening up American Indian lands to Euro-American settlement.

The task of implementing the plan of civilization among the Creek Indians of present-day Alabama and Georgia went to federal Indian agent, Benjamin Hawkins, who lived among the Creeks from 1796 until his death in 1816.

The stated purpose of the plan of civilization was to train Indian men and women in ranching, farming, and cottage industries such as cloth making. The public face of the plan suggested that through such training Indians would become self-sufficient farmers, selling small surpluses on the market. The underlying goal of the plan, however, was to settle Indians on small farms and thus force them to give up hunting on their vast territories.

Then, as American needs for land increased, the Indians in theory would be more willing to give up their holdings. The federal and state governments, so the thinking went, then could acquire peacefully Indian lands through treaty.

The plan of civilization conspicuously ignored the fact that the American Indians, many of whom had



Government agent Benjamin Hawkins (1754-1816) lived and worked among the Creek and Cherokee Indians to promote the so-called "plan of civilization."

been agriculturalists for millennia, were already more than capable of clothing and feeding themselves. Moreover, the Creeks and other southern Indian groups were already experimenting with cash crops, and they had already diversified their market endeavors with cattle and hog ranching when the deerskin trade began to decline after the American Revolution.

Hawkins used money, in the form of annuities that the Creeks acquired

through land cessions to purchase spinning wheels, looms, plows, cotton gins, blacksmith tools, and other articles he thought necessary to implement the plan of civilization. Because of the plan's agricultural base, Hawkins consulted much with Creek women, who, in Creek society, were in charge of the farming.

Hawkins knew that their support would be instrumental to the success of the plan and was pleasantly surprised when they embraced it. Creek women generally were protective of traditional Creek culture, but in the agricultural sphere, they were quite progressive. They had been experimenting with introduced crops throughout the colonial era, and by the end of the eighteenth century, sweet potatoes, and rice were grown along with the indigenous corn, beans, and squash they had grown for centuries.

They had also begun experimenting with commercial crops such as cotton, and with Hawkins' aid, they intensified those efforts. Creek women

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also learned spinning and weaving. Even though they could still make cloth by finger-weaving indigenous fibers, they preferred European-manufactured cloth, which they had been buying since it first became available over a century earlier. Under the plan of civilization they now had the necessary machinery to make cloth more efficiently, thus freeing them from having to purchase it.

One crucial aspect of the plan that inspired much resistance among the Creeks was the curbing of men's hunting activities. Among the Creeks, women farmed and men hunted, and to be a man was to be a hunter. A man working in the fields was a source of ridicule, and men were offended and embarrassed at being asked to undertake agricultural work.

Hunting also was tied closely to Creek national territories. In their treaty negotiations, Creek representatives invariably argued against land cessions on the grounds that they needed all of their land for hunting, and hunting was considered a legitimate and mutually recognized claim to national lands. In Creek eyes, then, giving up the hunt was tantamount to giving up their land. So, even though Creek men recognized that the deerskin trade was floundering and that they needed a commercial alternative to it, they refused to abandon commercial hunting.

Because of the economic uncertainties of the deerskin trade, many Creek men and women had already turned to commercial livestock raising. In fact, Hawkins found the Creeks well on the road to becoming ranchers at the time of his arrival in 1796. Almost every family owned cattle, hogs, and horses, and some individuals owned large herds. The Creeks raised cattle and hogs, in part, for their own consumption, but Creek ranchers drove most of their stock to markets in Mobile and Pensacola, where they were sold on the hoof.

They used the proceeds to purchase cloth, guns, ammunition, metal goods, and other manufactured items. Some Creek families became full-time ranchers and began to acquire substantial wealth, and a few used their assets to purchase African slaves. These Creeks adopted American notions of private property, and, by the late eighteenth century, clear class divisions had emerged in Creek society.

The plan of civilization, on its surface, fit well within the changing economic situation of Creek life at the end of the 18th century. But Creek opinion about the program had been divided from the beginning. Every Creek man and woman understood that America's underlying motivation of the civilization plan was land acquisition, and this fostered tensions between those who viewed the plan as necessary to their cultural survival and those who viewed it as heralding its destruction. These tensions contributed to a Creek civil war, known as the Creek War of 1813-14.

The Red Sticks, Creek rebels likely named after the red war clubs they carried, directed their wrath against anything and anyone associated with the plan of civilization. They threw Creek-owned plows and looms into the rivers. They killed hogs, horses, and cattle, all symbols of America and the plan of civilization. Fearing an uprising, the United States government sent troops under Andrew Jackson to engage the Red Sticks, who were finally defeated in August 1814 at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend.

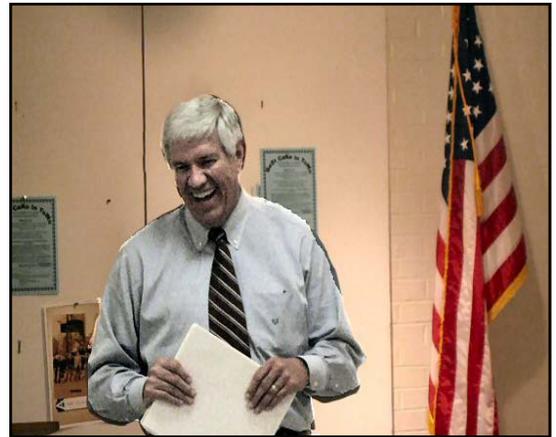
Afterwards, the devastated Creeks tried to rebuild their national economy through farming and stock raising.

By this time, however, American officials saw expulsion rather than the plan of civilization as a more expedient way to deal with the "Indian problem," and they dropped the effort in favor of forcing the Indians to relocate to Indian Territory (now Oklahoma), accomplished through the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Ω

Snapshots from the ECHS March Meeting



From the left, Ellen O'Barr, Dr. Deidra Dees, and Chelsey Wilson, visitors from the Poarch Creek Indian Reservation, who are doing research in the Alabama Room.



Speaker Yank Lovelace Answering Questions after the Program.



Members and Guests Enjoying Refreshments in the Elvira McMillan Parlor.



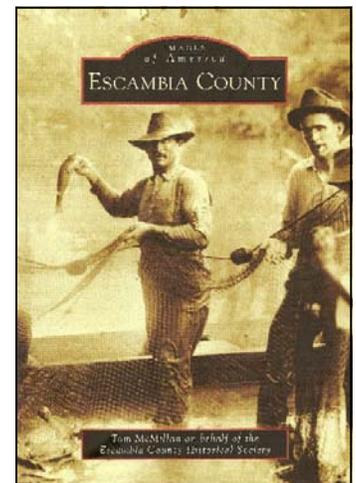
At the Refreshment Table: Jerry Simmons and Hostess Jacque Stone.

Escambia County

The long-awaited book (at right) on Escambia County, Alabama, compiled by Tom McMillan is in stock, among other places, in the Alabama Room at the Thomas E. McMillan Museum on the campus of Jefferson Davis Community College.

A picture and history book, McMillan has located many never-before published photographs from around Escambia County and added descriptive captions. You can see the County as you've never seen it before with pictures contributed by folks from all over.

Get your copy (\$21.99 plus tax) and Tom will be happy to autograph it personally for you at the next meeting! Ω



Snapshots *cont'd*



**June Martin and Ginny Clark
enjoying refreshments after the
program.**



**Speaker Yank Lovelace
During the Program**

**Paul Merritt
and Darryl
Searcy Also
Enjoying the
Refreshments.**



**On the table (below) is the antique
Chocolate Service which had been on
display in the JDCC President's office,
now returned to the Elvira McMillan
Parlor.**



**The Chocolate Set was Donated to the
Museum by Myrtle Wiley MacDonald in
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The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Girl on the Red Velvet Swing: Evelyn Nesbit

An Alger-Sullivan Historical Society column from the Tri-City Ledger for October 30, 2008 by Jerry Simmons

It's unusual to find an old-timey national – especially an international – celebrity having ties to this area. John Bush, nephew of Century's long-time postmaster, the late Miss Eva Vaughn, recently sent me a yellowed and fragile article from the distant past. With no date and no indication from which newspaper it came, I engaged the trusty Internet for research. It was a column, "Broadway," written by a Dan Walker, from the New York Daily News, sometime after 1937.

This story begins with the tragedy and fame and ends again with tragedy of a young girl, born on Christmas day in 1884. Evelyn Nesbit's father died when she was eight years old, leaving the family in poverty. As an adolescent, she began to support her mother and younger brother by working as an artist's model. They moved to New York City when she was 16 and secured more prestigious modeling jobs. She also worked on Broadway as a chorus girl. She starred in a few silent films and was immortalized in Charles Dana Gibson's "Gibson Girl" illustrations. In the mid-1950s, she was a consultant for a movie, "The Girl in the Red Velvet Swing," loosely based on her life. But nothing gained her as much fame as the Stanford White murder case in the early 1900s.

A New York millionaire and architect, Stanford White met Evelyn and was immediately smitten. In his apartment near Madison Square Garden

he had a red velvet swing, with which he cavorted with his other conquests. He enticed Evelyn to the apartment and she posed for photographs. He took advantage of her after plying her with champagne.

White and Evelyn's relationship was a short one although they remained friends. Another admirer, Harry Kendall Thaw, romanced Evelyn Nesbit but when she disclosed her former relationship with White he became jealously enraged and beat her. Even though Shaw abused Evelyn terribly, she consented to marriage in 1905.



A sultry Evelyn Nesbit pose



Harry Kendall Thaw, husband of Evelyn Nesbit circa 1905

A year later, Harry Thaw and Evelyn ran into Stanford White at a rooftop performance of a new musical, and Thaw shot White three times in the face. Thaw was put on trial for the murder, but the jury deadlocked. In a second trial, in which Evelyn testified for him, Thaw pled insanity. Evelyn was granted a divorce.

After years of substance abuse, Evelyn Nesbit overcame her addiction problems. She taught ce-

(Continued on page 16)

The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Girl on the Red Velvet Swing: Evelyn Nesbit *cont'd*

(Continued from page 15)

ramics and was technical advisor on “The Girl in the Red Velvet Swing.” The 1955 movie was about her love triangle with Thaw and White.

By the time Dan Walker met Nesbit, he been writing the Daily News Broadway column since 1937. His was a familiar face at restaurants and backstage at theatres, and in chatting with Evelyn, he told her about a picture he owned of her. She questioned him how he obtained it.

He explained it had been a gift from friends from Detroit with whom he’d spent a winter in Western Florida. This visit resulted from something that had happened after he and a pal had seen a murder movie. The buddy argued with him about a murder movie they had seen. The kid picked up a pistol, said, “This is the way it was,” and fired a bullet into Walker's chest.

According to Walker, “... a slow convalescence had prevented my return to school. Believing that a change might hasten recovery, my father permitted me to accept an invitation from the Heckers [of Century] to spend the winter in the country. The [Hecker children] would be away at boarding school in Asheville, but I was to remain with the father and stepmother at Tannenheim, as their place was called, and earn whatever small money I needed by raising chickens.

“Tannenheim was about five miles from Century, the location of the great Alger-Sullivan lumber mills (in which the Heckers [had an interest]), and the same distance from Flomaton, the railroad junction just over the Alabama line. It was a huge white house, with large columns reaching to the third story, in the southern colonial tradition, and crowned a low hill. Set amid acres of fragrant long-

(Continued on page 17)

“Tannenheim,” a mansion outside of Century, Florida, about one mile west of Century Boulevard on Highway 4-A. Built originally by Frank C. Hecker of Detroit, it was willed to Johnny Hare, Mrs. Hecker's nephew, then sold at auction in the early 2000s.

A story goes that Frank J. Hecker, a millionaire and one of the founding stockholders of the Alger-Sullivan Syndicate, which built the huge sawmill at Century in 1901, had his son, Frank C. Hecker, move to Century to look after his financial investment. Frank C.'s wife said she would not live in a God-forsaken pine woods unless a house was built reflecting their social standing. So—Tannenheim was built. Ω



The ECHS *Journal* Section

The Girl on the Red Velvet Swing: Evelyn Nesbit *cont'd*

(Continued from page 16)

leaf pine, it suggested some old Greek temple, and was one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen.

“My host chose to be a country squire the hard way, and would have neither telephones nor automobiles. In more than one emergency I was obliged to saddle a horse at midnite and ride miles over lonely dirt roads to Belvoir, the plantation of the Hinmans, our nearest friends. It was a pleasantly monotonous existence, with little for the three of us to do after supper but sit in the library before a roaring, four-foot log fire and play cards or dominoes or read. I pored over old theatrical magazines and can still quote some of the [articles].

“I never learned anything about raising chickens that winter (that experience could fill a book), but paradoxically I did absorb much about the faraway world of art, music and the drama.

“The boys' grandparents, the senior Heckers, visited us at Christmas, and from them I heard much of London...They had been personal friends of Whistler; had, in fact, paid his burial expenses... I learned even more through the Hinmans. Uncle Gene wasn't interested in much beside breeding horses, but Auntie Bess, as we called her, was both musician and artist, and had lived much of her life in New York and Chicago. I worshipped her, and at every opportunity would saddle the cow pony, Little Johnny Jones (named after a George M. Cohan show) and ride over to Belvoir to see her.

“When spring came, I would hike across the intervening fields and creek bottoms, climb rail fences and cut across peach orchards bright with April bloom to see Auntie Bess; to sit at her feet—she was an invalid—and hear her reminiscences of concerts, opera, art exhibitions and the theater.

“Returning from these visits, I would sometimes lie for hours outstretched under the soughing pines,

dreaming that some day I, too, might see something of this great outside, wonderful world. I do not know if Auntie Bess still lives, ...but if she does and these lines should chance to reach her, they will convey my life-long appreciation of her kindly interest in one eager, white-faced little Cracker boy whom she's probably forgotten all about by now.

“Hanging over my bed in the boys' room at Tannenheim was a picture which I admired so greatly that the Heckers made me a present of it—the hand-colored photograph of an exquisitely beautiful young woman, wrapped in a gaudy Japanese kimono and stretched full-length on a white bearskin rug, her luxurious, blue-black hair done up in a pompadour, her eyes closed and her extended hands relaxed as if in sleep. They explained that the subject was a famous show girl named Evelyn Nesbit—but I could supply the rest of the story myself. The original, hand-made frame was long since broken, and only recently I took it into a 45th street shop to be reframed. The girl who took the order stared a long time at the picture. ‘A remarkably beautiful woman,’ she remarked. ‘Who is she, may I ask?’”

A question many who saw her wanted to know.

The article stops there, but suffice it to say that 2,000,000 New York Daily News readers read about the Heckers, Tannenheim, Century, and Flomaton. I don't know who the Hinmans were or where Belvoir was; perhaps Walker used literary license, or maybe he used a pseudonym for someone near the Heckers, perhaps the Hausses. We had our fifteen minutes of fame and didn't know it. Ω

Evelyn died in a nursing home in Santa Monica, California, on January 17, 1967, at the age of 82.

The full story of Evelyn Nesbit is told at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evelyn_Nesbit

ECHOES
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