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<https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-1k2g-8d60>

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CIVILIZING THE SAVAGES: CHEROKEE ADVANCES, WHITE SETTLEMENT,
AND THE RHETORIC OF REMOVAL

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the American Studies Department
The College of William and Mary

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by

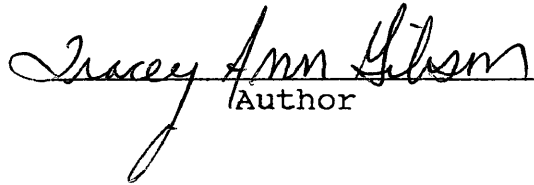
Tracey Ann Gibson

1995

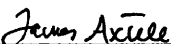
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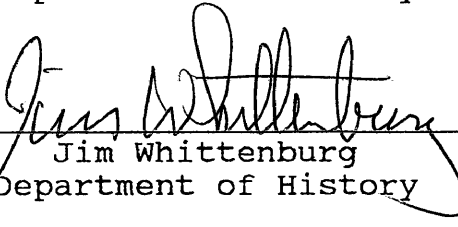
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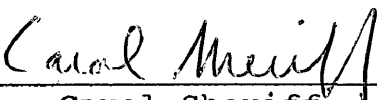

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ABSTRACT

This study examines both the Cherokee Indians and the surrounding white population in light of the arguments used in support of the Removal Bill of 1830.

Using the criteria of those seeking the Indians' western removal, the level of "civilization" among the Cherokees in 1830 is explored and compared to that of contemporary white backcountry settlers. The terms used to define "civilization" are derived from the words of removal proponents and explicit judgements left to contemporary observers.

The findings suggest that it was the white settlers, and not the Cherokee Indians, who fell short of the removal rhetoricians' own definition of civilization.

Prologue

In 1827, the state of Georgia began a vociferous campaign for the removal of its Indians west of the Mississippi River. Emboldened by Andrew Jackson's election to the presidency, Georgia pressed the United States government to honor an 1802 agreement between the United States and Georgia, which promised the voluntary and peaceable relocation of Georgia's aboriginal population in return for Georgia land cessions. By the spring of 1830, a bill providing for the western removal of all Indians came before the House and Senate. The humanitarian rationale behind this proposal was that the United States government had, since the eighteenth century, spent large sums of money to "civilize" the Indians. These measures, proponents of the bill argued, had failed. The Indians, they insisted, were threatened with extinction; their numbers were steadily declining, and those Indians remaining had been debauched by contact with the whites. In order to circumvent their total annihilation, proponents argued, the remnants should be moved beyond the reach of white civilization and there allowed either to resume a nomadic hunter's life or to become civilized at their own pace.

In the case of the Cherokees, however, rhetoric did not mirror reality. Since the Treaty of Holston in 1791, the Cherokees had made steady and impressive progress in mastering the art of civilized life. Under this treaty, the federal government supplied the tools with which the Cherokees might

carve a new, "civilized" economic and social countenance for themselves. Using the plows, looms, livestock, and skilled craftsmen sent to their nation by the government, the Cherokees did just that. They began to raise and export livestock, to plant orchards and build corncribs, and to grow cotton with which to spin their own garments. By 1830, the Cherokees had consciously effected tremendous changes in their social, political, and economic structure. A centralized, constitutional government ruled in place of the old tribal council, and subsistence hunting had been abandoned in favor of farming and trade.

The Cherokees had also made impressive improvements in their lands--roads and ferries criss-crossed the nation; cotton gins, stores, and mills dotted the countryside; total Cherokee improvements were estimated to be worth \$2.2 million in 1828. In that same year, a newspaper printed in both English and Cherokee was established; the editor estimated in 1830 that over half of the adult male population could read and write Cherokee, and many could read both Cherokee and English.

Yet the bill calling for the Cherokees' removal passed the House and Senate in 1830. Supporters of the bill insisted that the Cherokees had made claims on land which they did not inhabit and had not improved. They insisted that Cherokee improvements were limited to a handful of mixed elites and that the rest lived a savage life in drunken squalor.

This characterization more accurately described the

condition of the surrounding white community. The southern backcountry had by 1830 devolved into a violent, disorderly world deeply imbued with a sense of white superiority. Few institutional controls were in place to police behavior, and few in power were seriously interested in instituting such controls. In 1830 Georgia was a sparsely settled frontier; there were few improved roads, and outside the well-developed areas along the Savannah River, most Georgians lived as rudely as the poorest Cherokee citizen. Farmers had flocked to the Georgia upcountry to escape the exhausted soils of the Carolinas and Virginia, bringing with them the same wasteful practices that had exhausted those soils. Many came to await the expulsion of the Indians and to fulfill the term of residency required for participation in the Georgia land lottery. The abundance of cheap land thus drew opportunists with little commitment to establishing stable, improved communities. Emphasis on agricultural innovation and conservation was minimal; land was viewed as a disposable commodity to be used and discarded. As a result, communities in Georgia were often characterized by a temporary style of building and were inhabited by a shifting and often shiftless population. In short, it was the white settlers, and not the Cherokee Indians, who did not fit the removal proponents' own definition of civilization.

Much has been written on the remarkable progress of the Cherokee Indians in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The primary focus of many of these works is the

changes wrought in Cherokee society under the pressure of government-sponsored civilization programs and westward expansion; others focus on missionary activity among the Cherokees. Most seek, in one form or another, to establish a baseline for measuring Cherokee civilization and thus to expose the hollow claims surrounding the removal debates. Yet a baseline provides a useful measure only by way of comparison; Cherokee "civilization" must be placed in context. The Cherokees were judged to have fallen short on the gauge of civilization proffered by contemporary whites. No current historical work explicitly addresses the removal issue in the terms defined by the proponents themselves.¹

In this study, I have taken the arguments tendered in support of Indian removal as the point of departure and have examined both Cherokees and their white counterparts in that light. If, as removal rhetoricians insisted, Cherokee territorial claims were rightfully preempted in favor of more civilized inhabitants, the strength of this argument cannot be assessed without first holding the proposed inhabitants to the rhetoricians' own standards. In so doing, I have attempted to suspend presentist judgements, for I argue that social values in 1830 can not and should not be made to reflect our own. I have attempted to give the principal players an opportunity to speak by using direct quotations whenever possible and allowing their words to underscore my own, for I contend that the only fair way to judge the past is to allow those who lived in the past to testify for themselves.

Chapter One

Acculturation and Accommodation

"It seems to me visionary to suppose," Andrew Jackson asserted in his First Annual Message of 1829, "that in this state of things claims can be allowed on tracts of country on which...[the Indians] have neither dwelt nor made improvements, merely because they have seen them from the mountain or passed them in the chase." These same Indians, he complained, "having...made some progress in the arts of civilized life," had recently "attempted to erect an independent government within the limits of Georgia and Alabama." This, he argued, was not in their best interest. Indians were nomadic hunters who wanted no more than to "retire from river to river and from mountain to mountain;" they had no real title to the land on which they lived. It would be better for all concerned, he insisted, to relieve them of the burden of their eastern homeland and allow them to peacefully resume a "wandering life" and return to their "savage habits."¹

Jacksonian Indian policy was, from the outset, thus marked and marred by the problem of perception and the question of land. The tribe he spoke of did not "retire from river to river." The Cherokee Indians occupied the same territory in 1829 they had inhabited since the colonial era; they did not subsist by the hunt, nor were their habits savage. Yet, on the strength of Jacksonian rhetoric, a bill

providing for their removal to lands west of the Mississippi was introduced in Congress in the spring of 1830. Proponents of the bill argued that the U.S. government had, since the eighteenth century, spent large sums to "civilize" the Indians. These measures, they insisted, had failed. The Indians were threatened with extinction; their numbers were steadily declining, and those Indians remaining lived in filth and drunken squalor. In order to prevent total annihilation, they argued, the remnants should be moved beyond the debauching reach of white civilization and there allowed either to resume a nomadic hunter's life or to become civilized at their own pace. "The Indians themselves are an anomaly upon the face of the earth," wrote Secretary of War Lewis Cass in 1830, "and the relations which have been established between them and the nations of Christendom are equally anomalous. Their intercourse is regulated by practical principles, arising out of peculiar circumstances."²

The peculiar circumstances he spoke of were, however, largely of the Jackson administration's making. In the 1829 message, Jackson informed the Cherokees that they could no longer expect to be treated as sovereign entities. They had, as he saw it, two choices: to "submit to the laws of the States" or "emigrate beyond the Mississippi."³ These were new "practical principles," not wholly upheld by historical precedent. Since the early days of the Republic, the national government had regulated intercourse with the Indians. The Continental Congress had moved almost immediately upon

convening to take Indian policy out of the hands of the colonies. Indian neutrality, in light of "the present commotions,"⁴ was of inestimable value and securing it became the province of the new government. Three departments responsible for three different regions of the American frontier were established to regulate relations with the Indians residing there, while the Articles of Confederation provided that "the United States in Congress assembled shall also have the sole and exclusive right and power of...regulating the trade and managing the affairs with the Indians, not members of the States, provided that the legislative right of any State within its own limits be not infringed or violated."⁵

In the years to follow, the government treated with the Indians as with foreign nations, sovereign both in rule and in residence. The Constitution gave Congress the power to regulate trade with Indian tribes and the President the authority to make treaties. By the late eighteenth century, state intervention in Indian policy was minimal and the federal government had written Indian policy into law. The Intercourse acts of 1793 and 1796 set the boundaries of Indian territories and marked "the first designation of the Indian Country in statute law."⁶ These acts were designed to regulate trade and to prevent fraudulent or unfair purchases of Indian land and became, in only slightly modified form, the law of the land in 1802. Under this 1802 law, agents from the War Department were sent to live with the Indians for the

express purpose of cultivating "peace and harmony," by monitoring the conduct of both the members of the Indian nations and the white citizens who settled or traded there. The agents were also charged with the responsibility of introducing "the arts of husbandry and domestic manufacture, as means of producing and diffusing the blessings attached to a well regulated civil society."⁷

The Treaty of Holston in 1791 between the United States and the Cherokees carried a similar provision, expressly designed to bring the Cherokees out of the forest and into the fields. Under the terms of the treaty, blacksmiths and carpenters were sent to the nation, along with spinning wheels, looms, draft animals, plows, and other agricultural implements. The Cherokees themselves were amenable to this program. In 1792, the Cherokee leader Bloody Fellow reminded the Secretary of War:

The treaty mentions ploughs, hoes, cattle and other things for a farm; this is what we want; game is going fast away from us. We must plant corn, and raise cattle, and we desire you to assist us...

We wish you to attend to this point. In former times we bought of the trader goods cheap; we could then clothe our women and children; but now, game is scarce and goods dear, we cannot live comfortably.⁸

The loss of hunting grounds had made change necessary. By the close of the eighteenth century, the Cherokee Nation had ceded 82,277 square miles of territory.⁹

Pressure upon the Cherokees to give up land was to continue well into the nineteenth century. Each land cession

brought more pressure to bear on Cherokee culture, which prompted change. In 1805, 1806, and 1807, a leading Cherokee chief made several cessions of land from which he profited personally; in 1807, he was executed for receiving bribes. A bitter rift erupted among different Cherokee factions, some in favor of acculturation, others wishing to cling to the traditional Cherokee mode of life, stretching Cherokee unity to the breaking point. Several chiefs proposed that the nation be divided in two; others suggested that Cherokee land be parcelled out to individual Cherokee families who would then become American citizens. Return J. Meigs, their federal agent, used the opportunity to try to convince the Cherokees to give up their land in the east and immigrate to the west. In response, the national council "adopted a strategy of national political unification, government centralization, and economic change as a way of preserving their homeland." The Cherokees resisted removal; Bloody Fellow spoke on behalf of the nation when he told Meigs that "he had no inclination to leave the country of his birth. Even should the habits and customs of the Cherokee give place to the habits and customs of the whites....He was for preserving them together as a people."¹⁰

The Cherokees again faced the threat of removal in 1814, following the defeat of the Creeks and their subsequent cession of tribal lands. Georgia lay claim to a strip of Cherokee land bordering the Creek cession and pressured the Cherokees to accept further territorial reductions. Under

duress, a delegation of Cherokee chiefs signed treaties which resulted in the loss of over two million acres of land. In 1817, another group of chiefs signed a removal treaty allegedly on behalf of the entire tribe. But the bulk of the nation wished to remain and worked to renegotiate the terms. In 1819, the treaty was rescinded, but the nation was forced to cede 6,000 square miles of additional territory. In the years between 1804 and 1819, 23,988.25 square miles had been ceded in eight separate treaties.¹¹

The pressure for Cherokee land cessions continued unabated. An expanding cotton market abroad whetted the American appetite for land. Settlers and land speculators alike were hungry "to convert unused Indian land into commercially productive cotton fields," and the push for internal improvements fed the frenzy.¹² Before his election to Congress, Wilson Lumpkin traveled through Cherokee country in hopes of convincing the Cherokees of the need for a canal connecting the Tennessee River Valley to the Georgia coast. The Cherokees refused. The dissatisfied voices of land speculators and internal improvements advocates were joined by those of "race-proud" Georgians, anxious to be rid of this free nation of color living in their midst. If the Cherokees enjoyed the protection of the federal government as a sovereign people, they reasoned, how long before the precedent would be used for Georgia slaves?¹³

In 1827, Georgia initiated a campaign designed to force the United States government to uphold the compact of 1802,

where, in exchange for Georgia's cession of the land out of which Alabama and Mississippi were carved, the government had agreed both to assume Georgia's colonial land debt and to seek the voluntary removal of the Indians. Georgia began by extending the jurisdiction of Georgia courts in counties bordering the Cherokee Nation to include crimes committed by or against whites within the Nation, and by threatening to extend state law over the entire Nation, if a removal treaty were not passed in the next session of Congress. Georgia demanded the right to "cause obedience to [her laws] from all descriptions of people, be they white, red, or black, who may reside in her limits,"¹⁴ insisting that all lands within Georgia borders belonged to the state by right of discovery. The Cherokees, they argued, were untitled occupants, "tenants at will", and the U.S. government was bound by the compact of 1802 to extinguish Indian titles.¹⁵

On December 13, 1827, Georgia Congressman Wilson Lumpkin placed the following resolution before the House Committee on Indian affairs: "Resolved, that the Committee on Indian affairs be instructed to inquire into the expediency of providing, by law, for the removal of the various tribes of Indians who have located within the States or Territories of the United States to some eligible situation west of the Mississippi River."¹⁶ But this resolve had a Cherokee counterpart. After the Treaty of 1819, the Cherokees had vowed "never again to cede another foot of land." In 1827 they had written this vow into law; the Cherokee Constitution,

adopted in July 1827, fixed the "boundaries of this Nation... unalterably" and made it illegal for any citizen of the Nation to sell improvements to any representative or member of the United States.¹⁷

But Georgians were as intent upon removal as the Cherokees were upon staying. "I had in view relieving my own state from the incumbrance of her Indian population," Wilson Lumpkin admitted in his account of the process, "and, with her, all the other states in like condition." Lumpkin undertook the study of Indian policy and carefully abstained from entering into other congressional debates, in order that he might be taken seriously on the subject of Indian removal. He was also, he added almost as an afterthought, eager to better the condition of the Indians "by placing them beyond the jurisdiction and control of the state government, and where the Federal Government might, unmolested by state authority, carry out its benevolent designs of preserving and civilizing the remnant tribes of the original race."¹⁸ Lumpkin assiduously worked to build congressional support and, confident that Andrew Jackson would be the next president, bided his time until the next congressional session.¹⁹

Jackson's election emboldened legislators in Georgia as well. In late 1828, Georgia annexed Cherokee lands to counties in northwest Georgia. Effective June 1, 1830, Georgia law was to be extended over the Cherokee Nation and all Cherokee laws were to become null and void. The Cherokees protested to both the President and Congress. The President's

reply dashed any hope of federal protection; Jackson made it clear that the U.S. government would not step in to protect Cherokee sovereignty²⁰. In his First Annual Message, he reiterated this position: "I informed the Indians inhabiting parts of Georgia and Alabama that their attempt to establish an independent government would not be countenanced by the Executive of the United States, and advised them to emigrate beyond the Mississippi or submit to the laws of those States."²¹ The federal policy of "civilizing" the Indians, he argued, had failed. By purchasing Indian lands, the government had "thrust them farther into the wilderness. By this means," he went on to say, "they have...been kept in a wandering state and...have retained their savage habits."²² The removal bill, the Jackson Administration insisted, was a purely humanitarian proposal; it was the only thing which would prevent the Indians from becoming extinct. "Surrounded by the whites with their arts of civilization," Jackson insisted, "which by destroying the resources of the savage doom him to weakness and decay, the fate of the Mohegans, the Narragansett, and the Delaware is fast overtaking the Choctaw, the Cherokee, and the Creek."²³

To lend his position intellectual credibility, Jackson enlisted the aid of the former governor of the Michigan Territory, Lewis Cass. In an article in the North American Review, Cass laid out the rhetorical stance of the pro-removal forces. He contended that none of the treaties signed with the Indians over the years was ever intended to convey to them

"the sovereignty of the territory, or the absolute dominion of the soil." The Indians enjoyed only the "right of occupancy," which was "compatible with their habits and pursuits." Their habits and pursuits were, of course, hunting and war; they were "a barbarous people, depending for subsistence upon the scanty and precarious supplies furnished by the chase." They were "prodigals" who satisfied "the wants of today at the expense of tomorrow...the facts," he insisted, "are before us." Federal Indian policy designed to "better their condition" had utterly failed. "What tribe has been civilized by all this expenditure of treasure, and labor, and care?" he asked. "Where is the tribe of Indians who have changed their manners...who have exhibited any just estimate of the improvements around them, or any wish to participate in them?"²⁴

They were, as many contemporaries involved in the debates surrounding the Removal Bill pointed out, residing in Georgia. "Agriculture," said Representative George Evans, "is their employment. They are not warriors." Why then, asked Senator Peleg Sprague, was the government insisting that they be sent "from their cotton fields, their farms and their gardens," proposing to "remove them from their looms, their work-shops, their printing press, their schools, and churches...to frowning forests, surrounded by naked savages?"²⁵ The tribes inhabiting the territory the Jackson administration offered the Cherokees were not, he insisted, noble savages of myth and lore. They were not "specimens of loftiness of spirit, of

bearing, and of savage heroism," as James Fenimore Cooper and others portrayed them,²⁶ but "fierce and warlike barbarians" who posed a distinct threat to the Cherokee and other tribes to be removed there.²⁷ The Cherokees, opponents of the Removal Bill argued, were by all contemporary definitions a civilized people. They were proof that Indian nature was not inalterably fixed, as removal apologist Colonel Thomas McKenney maintained, to allow only one of two extremes--the savage Indian, to be seen "striding amidst the bodies of the slain" or "seated over some favorite victim, with his fingers dripping with blood, and his face disclosing a ferocious smile, as he enjoyed the sight of the quivering limbs, and the agonies of the dying;" or the debauched Indian, who followed "the cravings of...(an) inordinate thirst" for alcohol and involved themselves "in every variety of wretchedness."²⁸

Neither of these images fit the Cherokees in 1830. In the years between the Treaty of Holston and the removal debates, Cherokee society had undergone tremendous change. Before prolonged interaction with European colonizers, the Cherokees had, indeed, relied primarily on hunting and fishing for subsistence, and only marginally on the cultivation of the soil. Women raised tobacco, beans, corn, and squash, and gathered nuts, seeds, and berries. But wild meat was the dietary mainstay. Bear, deer, wolf, turkey, elk, buffalo, and pheasant were hunted with blowguns or bows and arrows for their meat, feathers, or pelts. Cherokee men wore deerskin breechcloths on a daily basis and leggings, warm robes, and

moccasins as the weather required; feather cloaks were highly prized ceremonial garments. The man's hair was plucked to a crest, while the woman wore hers long and flowing; her daily attire consisted of a short deerskin skirt. Both men and women were tattooed, and their ears elaborately ornamented.²⁹

After contact with the colonists, however, Cherokee dress and habits began to change. By 1715, one out of every two Cherokee warriors owned a gun. Breeches, hats, shoes, and linen shirts became popular among Cherokees living near trading posts. One observer noted in the mid-eighteenth century that, while Cherokee men still wore their hair in a crest, it was usually shaved rather than plucked, and their bodies were often tattooed with gunpowder. He also recorded that the Cherokees were cultivating more than just tobacco and corn; they raised "vast quantities of pease, beans, potatoes, cabbages...not to mention a number of other vegetables imported from Europe", as well as horses and hogs, "but neither cows nor sheep."³⁰

An 1802 traveler's description exposed quite a number of other changes, particularly in the Cherokee mode of dress. While the men still wore breechcloths, they were not of deerskin; they wore "a slip of blue cloth" pulled between their thighs and fastened "before and behind, to a sort of girdle." They still wore moccasins, but loose-hanging shirts had been added to their everyday attire. "When full dressed," the traveler observed, "they wear a coat, waistcoat, and hat....A man's shirt and a short petticoat form the dress of

the women." No longer did they wrap themselves in robes of fur; in cold weather, Cherokee men and women wrapped themselves "in a blue rug, which they always carry with them...an essential part of their luggage." He also noted that, while wild meat remained their dietary mainstay, "the carbine is the only weapon they make use of." He observed them carrying "ginseng and furs, chiefly of bear, stag, and otter skins" to the trading house and exchanging them for "knives, hatchets, and other articles they stand in need of." And he was told by others who had traveled among the Cherokees that they "make a rapid progress" in "cultivating their possessions....Some of them have good plantations, and even negro slaves. Several of the women spin and manufacture cotton stuffs."³¹

White intrusions into Cherokee territory fostered greater change by the end of the eighteenth century. Pressure from the expanding colonies gradually forced the Cherokees onto lands less suited for hunting and better suited to raising crops and livestock. As early as 1793, the Cherokees appear to have been successfully raising cattle. After a punitive raid in Cherokee country, John Sevier reported to Tennessee Governor Blount that he and his men "took and destroyed near three hundred beeves many of which were the best and largest kind."³² Benjamin Hawkins, agent to the southern Indians and frequent visitor to the Cherokees in the 1790s, observed with satisfaction the changes in the Cherokee way of life. In his travels through Cherokee country in 1796, he reported passing

"two Indian women on horseback, driving ten very fat cattle to the station for market."³³ He spoke with Cherokee women who were raising and spinning cotton, making baskets and earthen vessels, and Cherokee men who were raising livestock and employing the plow.³⁴ He stayed in the home of a family who served him "good bread and potatoes for supper, and ground peas and dried peaches;" they provided corn for his horses, and "had a number of fowls, hogs, and some cattle, the field of 4 acres for corn fenced, and half an acre for potatoes."³⁵ In 1797, Silas Dinsmoor, an agent residing with the Cherokees to aid them in "civilized pursuits", reported seeing at one place "42 1/2 yards of good homespun and some more ready for the loom."³⁶ One Cherokee woman, noted Hawkins, reported raising enough cotton to purchase a petticoat; another expressed the desire for more instruction in ways in which the Cherokee might "turn their labour to account like the white people." In April 1797, Hawkins was called to settle a Cherokee-Creek territorial dispute and was obliged to ask Cherokee farmers to vacate the property. The Indians requested to be allowed to harvest their fruit and grain crops before moving, which they were allowed to do. "Among the Cherokees," Hawkins wrote a friend in 1797, "every thing progresses as well as I had a right to expect."³⁷

To "turn their labour to account like the white people" became an important objective for many Cherokees. They were, in effect, engaging in cultural warfare. They had abandoned the idea of turning back the tide of settlers militarily,

reportedly on the advice of one of their chiefs: "We must not war," Doublehead told his people upon his return from Philadelphia in 1794. "I have seen more white men in one town, than would be sufficient to eat all the Indians if made into a pie." Encirclement by the presence and mores of the whites created a siege mentality; to embrace cultural change and political consolidation appeared the only way to survive.³⁸

And change they did. In 1801, Return J. Meigs was assigned to live with the Cherokees under the government's civilization program. In addition to protecting the integrity of Cherokee territory by expelling white squatters, Meigs worked to distribute among the Cherokees agricultural implements and the knowledge required to use them. "It appears to me from the present temper of the Indians," he wrote the Secretary of War in 1802, "that the raising of Cotton and Sheep and manufacturing of the produce of these articles may be easily carried to a very considerable extent and thereby accelerate civilization, even amongst those who have been strongly attached to hunting life."³⁹ He saw to it that blacksmiths were settled in the nation, and that they understood that they were to teach the Indians the trade. He supplied the Cherokees with wheelwrights, carpenters, and other artisans. He distributed cotton cards and copper pots among the women.⁴⁰

His efforts were both welcome and rewarded. Much of his time was spent honoring the requests of the different town

chiefs for various tools. Meigs heard often from one town chief called The Glass. He wanted a blacksmith, writing paper, and agricultural implements for the use of his people; on one occasion he requested four weeding hoes, four grubbing hoes, four plows, and four axes for his town, and the same for the leader of a neighboring town. In 1807, town leaders Big Halfbreed, Jobber Sam, Bird Eye, and George Miller requested one plow and one wheel apiece. The value the Cherokees had come to place on useful implements was reflected by an early nineteenth-century request for changes in the nature of annuities. In 1803, Cherokee leaders complained to Meigs that the previous year's selections of embroidered muslin, silk stockings, earrings, and ostrich feathers were wholly unsatisfactory. They wanted instead:

50 Brass Kettles of different sizes, 100 Tin Kettles of all the different sizes, 200 pairs of Cotton Cards, 1000 Blankets, 80 fur hats, 50 lbs. Thread, 100 ps.(pieces) Calico, 50 ps. Common Cotton Stripes, 100 ps. Strouds (course blankets), 100 yards of Scarlet Broad Cloth-- Second quality, 50 ps. Broad Ribbon, 6 Gross of Silk Handks., 10 m. Needles, 12 Gross Quality bandings, 30 ps. Linen not fine, 4 lbs. Vermillion, 1 Gross of Scizzars.⁴¹

Other means of turning "their labor to account like the white people" also became of interest to the Cherokees. In 1802, the Cherokee leader Doublehead sent Meigs his regrets for not coming to trade with him; "I am so Engaged Hunting and Gathering my Beef Cattle," he explained, "that I expect it will be a moone or two before I can come." His real purpose in writing, however, was to request that Meigs build for him

a boat, "a good Keal Boat some 30 to 35 feet in length and 7 feet wide" mounted with two guns for "Descending the River to Orlians" to trade. "I am determined," he added, "to see up the White and Red Rivers in my route and oppen a trade with the western wild Indians."⁴²

Not only were the Cherokees looking to establish trade routes outside Cherokee country, but trade routes within the territory were opening as well. In 1803, a road was run from the Hiwassee River south into Georgia; stores and public houses soon dotted its path. By 1809 there were thirty wagons owned by Cherokees, who traveled the roads in trade, to purchase lumber at one of three sawmills, or to have grain ground at one of thirteen grist mills in the nation. Forty-nine silversmiths operated within the nation; five schools boasted ninety-four scholars. Major John Norton wrote after a visit to the Cherokee country in 1809: "They are now enabled justly to appreciate the benefits arising from an extensive territory, and are tenacious in retaining it. They feel their independence, and are anxious to improve their government,-- they enact laws which new exigencies demand; and, in every respect, seem to be on the road of becoming...an enlightened and civilized nation." The Cherokees, he pointed out, owned at least as many draught animals as there were people, "as in many civilized Countries." There were, in fact, more than three times the number of livestock as people. In 1809, 12,500 Cherokees owned more than 45,000 horses, cattle, sheep, and pigs.⁴³

In his journal, Norton also pointed to a characteristic of Cherokee society which caused a number of problems for them in the years between 1808 and 1810. "Their constitution," he wrote, "the qualifications of their Chiefs, and the small share of power with which they are invested, seem not to be fully adequate to guard the territory and interests of the Nations from the encroachments of designing neighbors."⁴⁴ Cherokee land in the eighteenth century was still communally owned and controlled by the town, with the tribe as a whole exercising little control over it. As pressure for land cessions increased, various chiefs profited by disposing of land without tribal approval. A standing committee of thirteen was created in 1809 to manage business when the governing council of town chiefs was not in session. Its decisions still required council approval, but the committee provided a more efficient means of settling issues than seeking consensus from fifty different village delegations on every question, especially important in managing complex treaty negotiations. In 1808, the Cherokees also moved to codify law, writing punishments for robbery and theft into statutes. Previously, tribal law was loose and unstructured, and the old clan-revenge system of justice prevailed. Under the old system, punishment for murder was meted out to the offending member's clan rather than to the actual killer. In 1810, clan revenge was outlawed and the perpetrator made accountable for his crime.⁴⁵

The Cherokees moved closer to a centralized form of

government during and after the removal crisis of 1817-19. Even after the creation of the committee in 1809, unauthorized sales of land continued to plague the Cherokees. In the spring of 1817, the village delegations met and adopted a six-article constitution. Under this constitution, the thirteen council members were to be elected to two-year terms; they were also fully responsible for negotiating treaties. More land cessions that summer, however, prompted the council to reconvene in the fall. This time the council passed a law imposing the death penalty on anyone disposing of Cherokee land without the council's permission and made certain that copies of the new laws were distributed to the heads of families throughout the Cherokee nation.⁴⁶

At the same time, the council voted to allow missionaries to establish schools in the nation. Cherokee leaders had become convinced that the nation's children needed education if they were to hold their own against encroaching whites. As early as 1801, the Moravians had been allowed to preach in the territory, provided they agreed to open a school for Cherokee children. Around 1817, the Baptists, the Methodists, and representatives from the Foreign Board of Missions were allowed to come into the nation under the same conditions.⁴⁷

In 1818, the Brainerd school opened. In the years to follow, men who would form the intellectual vanguard of the Cherokee nation--Elias Boudinot, John Ridge, and David Brown--would be educated at Brainerd. While enrollment was originally to be held to sixty, enthusiastic Cherokee parents

bringing children from remote areas often caused the number to swell to eighty or more. Brainerd missionaries were careful to insure that the school was not dominated by whites and half-breeds and took in as many full-bloods as possible. In June 1818, a twenty-four-year-old full-blood who supported himself by hunting and trapping asked to be admitted. He was delighted when the school agreed (not without skepticism) to educate him, and asked only to be allowed time to hunt to buy clothes. The mission told him that hunting was not permitted, that he would be allowed to earn money by laboring in the field. "He appeared well pleased with this," noted Cyrus Kingsbury in the Brainerd journal. The following winter, he returned and "offered himself a scholar." He told the missionaries he had attended school briefly as a child, and "after he left school, he studied his spelling book...until it was worn out." He had "ever since a desire to learn to read, but being too poor to support himself at school, and having worn out his book, he had given up the hope of learning." Upon learning of Brainerd, he resolved to "try to enter school as soon as he could. He said he was never before in this part of the Nation, and had been seven days coming." His desire was to "obtain light" and carry it back to his own impoverished corner of the nation. Towards this end, he traded his one possession, his gun, for a suit of clothes and set to work. He was to become the leading interpreter for the Brainerd Mission.⁴⁸

The determination to learn to read and to educate the

remainder of the nation was not limited to the more acculturated mixed-breeds and whites, nor to a few exceptional full-bloods. Cherokee leaders approved of the drive as well. In 1819, the last of the chiefs to speak only Cherokee visited the mission at Brainerd. Chief Pathkiller told the missionaries through interpreters that he was delighted that the children were learning to read and write. He and his under-chief, The Boot, promised to tell Cherokee people everywhere "that it was very good to send their children there." In 1822, Reverend Abraham Steiner of the Moravian Mission to the Cherokees noted that more Cherokee children were being sent than the schools could accommodate. "Many of their youths can read and write," he informed the Secretary of War, "and I found among them, more especially half-breeds, as much knowledge as is commonly met with in persons of the same grade in civilized life." ⁴⁹

Over the years, the Brainerd mission would be called upon repeatedly to establish schools in various corners of the Cherokee nation.⁵⁰ Other denominations also operated missions and schools in the nation. While education for the Cherokees was "regarded by missionaries generally as a by-product of their main efforts, [it] was of first importance to the majority of Indians seeking progress in the white man's pattern."⁵¹ In 1822, a Cherokee man named Sequoia invented a syllabary which enabled Cherokees to learn to read and write Cherokee with remarkable ease.⁵² By 1825, a great many could read and write in their own language and a growing number were

mastering the English language as well. In 1803, all ten Cherokee chiefs signed with an "X" a request to be presented to the federal government by agent Meigs. But in 1827, petitions and letters written by Cherokee leaders in their own hand and in English were presented to the government by Cherokee leaders themselves. By 1830, Elias Boudinot estimated that half the adult male population could read and write Cherokee and they could read of their own accomplishments in The Phoenix, a paper written in both English and Cherokee and edited by Boudinot. One observer described a delegation of Cherokee leaders in Washington pleading against removal in 1830 as "men of liberal education, polished in their manners, and worthy of any society. The propriety and dignity of their demeanors," he continued, "are...commanding, prepossessed, and attractive. They enforce respect and esteem."⁵³

In his 1826 Address to the Whites, Boudinot himself provided perhaps the most compelling evidence of Cherokee success in turning "their labour to account like the white people". Eager to prove to the world that the Cherokees were a civilized people, the future editor of the Phoenix traveled the country in 1825, speaking to white audiences about the progress and promise of the Cherokee people⁵⁴. The figures he presented, when compared to the census taken by the Indian agent Meigs in 1809, were indeed quite promising. In these years, the number of sheep and hogs owned by the Cherokees doubled--in 1809, there were 19,778 hogs; in 1826, 46,000.

The number of looms shot from 1,572 to 2,488; wagons, from 30 to 172; plows from 567 to 2,943--a 500% increase. The list goes on--in 1809 there were 13 grist mills in the nation; in 1826, there were 31. The number of sawmills went from only 3 to 10. There were no ferries listed in 1809; by 1826, there were 18. The number of schools had jumped from 5 to 18 by 1826. And while in 1809 Meigs listed no blacksmiths or cotton gins, by 1826 the Cherokee Nation boasted 62 blacksmiths and 8 cotton gins.⁵⁵

These figures provide an image wholly inconsistent with the picture painted by the proponents of removal. In dress, in manner of life, in distribution of wealth, Cherokee society was comparable to contemporary southern white society. Samuel Worcester, a missionary who had resided with the Cherokee for over four years, described them in a letter to a northern newspaper in 1830. "At the last session of the General Council," he wrote, "I scarcely recollect having seen any members who were not clothed in the same manner as the white inhabitants of the neighboring states." Only elderly Cherokee men, he pointed out, retained traditional dress, and only in part. "The younger men almost all dress like the whites around them, except that the greater number wear a turban instead of a hat." Most Cherokee clothing was made by the women, of cotton from their husbands' fields. Worcester went on to say that

Agriculture is the principle employment and support of the people....As to the wandering part of the people who live by the chase...I

certainly have not found them, nor ever heard of them, except from the floor of Congress.... It is true that deer and turkies are frequently killed, but not in any sufficient numbers to form any dependence by means of subsistence.... The ground is uniformly cultivated by means of the plow, and not, as formerly, by the hoe only.

The houses of the Cherokees are of all sorts; from an elegant painted or brick mansion, down to a very mean log cabin. If we speak, however, of the mass of the people, they live in comfortable log houses, generally one story high, but frequently two; sometimes of hewn logs, and sometimes unhewn...⁵⁶

At the time of the removal debates, the Cherokees were living at least as well as, and in some cases better than, their white neighbors. The Cherokee Nation owned 2,948 plows distributed among 13,943 people, which amounted roughly to one plow per family of four or five. Many Cherokees were quite well-to-do; John Ross, with his "large and elegant white House...handsomely furnished" and tended by twenty slaves, was one of the more prominent examples. He was, it is true, not representative of the Nation as a whole; but neither were wealthy planters representative of southern whites as a whole. In 1828, Boudinot estimated Cherokee improvements to be worth \$2.2 million. There were approximately 2,600 Cherokee homes, some with numerous outbuildings, cribs, and barns, valued at \$520,000; there was \$250,000 worth of fencing, and \$8,000 in orchards. In short, the Cherokees were not a poor people.⁵⁷

Late in 1828, gold was discovered in the Cherokee nation. By 1829, one Cherokee citizen witnessed "the Georgians...flocking over the line by the scores; they have not as yet made a break upon our plantations," he wrote, "but

they have made heavy threats." As early as 1826, the Cherokees had filed numerous complaints concerning white incursions onto their lands to steal horses, hogs, sheep, and cattle. In one instance, fifty head of cattle were stolen from an Indian man and his wife, and their son was badly beaten. Two chiefs wrote in 1826 to say that white men were threatening to "cut down their corn, and have a war, and have their land, and etc." Indian agent Colonel Hugh Montgomery predicted that if the depredations continued, there would "not be a horse left on this side of the nation, and few cattle or hogs." In 1830, the Cherokee delegation in Washington informed the President that there were "hundreds of white men searching and digging for gold within the limits of the nation," and John Ross echoed their alarm: "There are not less than one thousand white men, citizens of the United States, engaged in this public robbery...It is estimated that these transgressors procure from 1500 to 2000 dollars worth of gold per day."⁵⁸

By this time, the Cherokee Nation was without redress; the Removal Bill had passed into law, their constitution had been declared null and void, and their right to make and enforce laws abrogated as a breach of Georgia's own. Those pushing hardest for Indian removal hid behind a facade of humanitarian rationale. But the remarkable advances in Cherokee culture bear witness to far less altruistic motives. The presence of rich mineral deposits on the five million acres of fertile Cherokee land lying within Georgia's borders,

it may be argued, presented a greater temptation to those eyeing it than the thought of dispossessing fourteen thousand souls provided checks upon their conduct. The Cherokees would ultimately be dispossessed by settlers from a backcountry culture in many ways less civilized than the Cherokees' own.

Chapter Two

A Walk on the White Side

"A few thousand half civilized men, both indisposed and incompetent to the faithful discharge of the duties of citizenship, and scattered over a territory so extensive," asserted Wilson Lumpkin in December 1831, "can never enjoy the inestimable blessings of civil government." While ostensibly depicting the condition of the Cherokees, Lumpkin more accurately described the condition of the surrounding white community. Products of a cultural milieu distinctly different from that in the settled and prosperous areas along the Atlantic seaboard, the inhabitants of the Georgia backcountry were often described by contemporaries as a violent, poorly educated lot engaged in a bare minimum of subsistence agriculture. Indeed, much of the territory beyond the pale of eastern American society was inhabited by "half-civilized" men and women "both indisposed and incompetent to the faithful discharge of the duties of citizenship," scattered over vast tracts of undeveloped country and living without the "blessings of civil government."¹

The earliest settlers of the American backcountry migrated to Pennsylvania from Ireland and Scotland in the eighteenth century to escape poverty in their native lands. Arriving to find little or no affordable land available, they squatted on lands outside the ken of colonial administrators and established a "social, economic, and political...culture

distinct from--and generally in conflict with--that of the eastern seaboard."² Over time they pushed south into the wild, unsettled lands of the Great Valley of Virginia, where to William Byrd in the eighteenth century they looked much like "the Goths and Vandals of old."³ There they were joined by landless colonists; by freed or runaway indentured servants; by debtors and criminals in flight from the law; or by married men seeking to escape familial bonds. They lived in rude log cabins furnished with crude, homemade furniture and raised only the crops required to meet their immediate needs; they neither fenced nor improved land beyond the confines of their own houses and gardens, simply leaving livestock to forage in the woods. To Byrd, the backcountry was "a 'Lubberland' where slothful settlers lived in primitive squalor."⁴

Large landowners like Byrd had hoped to attract hard-working and deferential settlers who would create a stable frontier society under the hegemonic control of the gentry. But backcountry inhabitants had their own ideas about the society they wished to create and stubbornly resisted social, political, and economic control by the eastern elite. As the number of backcountry inhabitants swelled, it became apparent to those in well-settled and well-ordered areas that backcountry order was not their own. Byrd described the inhabitants of the eighteenth-century Carolina backcountry as "5 or 6000 Ignorant, mean, worthless, beggarly Irish Presbyterians" who constituted the "Scum of the Earth and

Refuse of Mankind" and were given to "Gross Licentiousness, Wantonness, Lasciviousness, Rudeness, Lewdness, and Profligacy. They will," he lamented, "commit the grossest Enormities before my face, and laugh at all Admonition."⁵

While Byrd's assessment may have been overly harsh and class-bound, the sentiment was widely shared. By the early nineteenth century, easterners viewed the backcountry with something akin to fear and abhorrence. Criminals, debtors, and scoundrels alike dropped out of civilized eastern society and precipitated in the backcountry. The absence of institutional checks on behavior left many free to pursue their own ends; the criminals themselves often came to represent the strong arm of the law, meeting violence with violence as they grasped for the brass ring in a game played under their own rules. Those trying to lure settlers to the South and West had to contend with this image. "To go to the West," admitted Robert Baird in his 1834 Emigrant's and Traveller's Guide to the West, "or to the 'Back Woods,' as it formerly was called," was to many tantamount to removal "into a heathen land, a land of ignorance and barbarism, where the people do nothing but rob, and fight, and gouge." While admitting that "there is indeed much destitution of moral influence and means of instruction in many, very many, neighborhoods and towns of the West," Baird insisted that this negative image was the product of the biased attacks on American society found in contemporary English travel journals.⁶

Indeed, if eastern American attacks on backcountry society were harsh, English attacks were positively scathing. To aristocratic Europeans, even the towns and cities in many of the Atlantic states had a rude, rustic air about them; but the backcountry appeared nothing short of barbaric. While English aristocrat Margaret Hall in 1828 described Americans as "queer people...very queer people indeed," she was nonetheless "charmed with New York" and found the ladies in Philadelphia "more stylish and better dressed" than any American women she had encountered. But she found the roads and inns in the backcountry intolerable and the inhabitants "gruff and uncivil. The houses they live in," she wrote, "are the most wretched hovels I ever saw in my life, log hovels not even weathertight....and as for the universal intelligence much talked of in this country," she continued, "it is not in the South, at all events, that it is to be found."⁷

In 1825, Karl Bernhard, the Duke of Saxe-Weimar, toasted Pennsylvania as "the asylum of unfortunate Germans;" but the duke found little to honor with lifted glass in Georgia. "Everything contributed to give me an unfavorable impression," he wrote. "The inhabitants of Georgia are regarded in the United States under the character of great barbarians, and this reputation appears really not unjustly conferred."⁸ While in Washington in 1831, English gentleman Thomas Hamilton was highly amused by the attire of backcountry Congressmen. Their "worsted stockings" and rough garments, made "evidently by some tailor of the back woods, were of a fashion...somewhat

provocative of a smile....They might be seen," he continued, "parading the apartments with ladies of aspect not less unique, and sometimes even more grotesque than their own." He was not at all amused by squatters in the Mississippi River Valley. "Outcasts they literally are," he wrote. "Many have fled for crimes, to a region where the arm of the law cannot reach them. Others are men of broken characters, hopes, and fortunes, who fly not from justice, but from contempt....They locate where they please, without troubling themselves about any title to the land they occupy."⁹

All across the old Southwest, these men of broken characters and fortunes were fanning out in search of land. Much of the land they coveted was still occupied by the original Indian owners; but "Alabama fever" was sweeping the American backcountry. Bernhard saw numerous "wagoners or immigrants moving to the...backwoods" during his journey through the South in 1826. These migrants, he noted, were headed for newly ceded Creek lands in Alabama and Georgia in hopes of "speculating among the Indians" and later setting "to hewing and building." They traveled in wagon caravans, camping at night. "The horses of such a caravan," observed Bernhard, "are tied to the side of the wagon, and stand feeding at their trough; near the wagon is a large fire lighted up....At this fire the people sleep in good weather, in bad, they lay themselves in or under the wagon."¹⁰

These immigrants were prodded and lured by travel guides extolling the virtues of cheap land in the old Southwest.

"There is in the Valley of the Mississippi," gushed Robert Baird in 1830, "an immense extent still of the finest land in the world, which may be purchased at the small sum of one dollar and a quarter per acre; and the prospect is that it will be attainable for even a smaller sum." Baird estimated that four or eight million people could have farms or plantations "of no inconsiderable size" and that hundreds of thousands of others could engage in manufacturing, trade, and the transportation of goods and commodities along the river. In his 1818 emigrant's guide, William Darby praised the fertile lands of Alabama. Alabama's "position in an agricultural and commercial point of view," he raved, "is extremely advantageous. From the circumstances of so much of the area included within its limits, having been purchased from the savages at the time of the creation of the territory, its political birth is extremely auspicious." Alabama was, according to Darby, "a most desirable field for youthful enterprise....By an accumulation of benefits," he concluded, "the moment is very favorable for an instant and great influx of inhabitants."¹¹

The moment was indeed right. The War of 1812 and the ensuing peace with Great Britain in 1814 had removed the last important political obstacle blocking the American move west. There were, of course, other human obstacles, but the Indian inhabitants were of little consequence in expansionist America. Baird's travel guide provided enthusiastic reports of great tracts of land "to which the Indian title has been

extinguished" and prospects of even greater tracts once the Indians were removed.¹² "The lands belong to the people!" was the cry--the white people, that is. The opening of the Trans-Appalachian backcountry spawned a tremendous wave of land speculation and created intense competition for potential settlers. Communities in eastern seaboard states were drained as the tide of westward migrants swelled to a virtual flood. "I have often stood and viewed with wonder," wrote Baird, "whole caravans of emigrating families, having sometimes a dozen wagons in company, as they passed along the streets of Louisville, Cincinnati, Brownsville, Pittsburgh, or Wheeling. I have a thousand times met them on the summits of the Alleghenies...as they passed, wagon after wagon, the women and children sometimes riding, and often walking after in an irregular line, and the men driving the teams or urging on the livestock...as they make their long and toilsome way across these lofty mountains, seeking a new residence, in an almost unknown land."¹³

Within six years of the creation of the General Land Office in 1812, 3.5 million acres of public lands had been sold. In the South, rising cotton prices fed rising land prices as 23 million acres of land wrested from the Creeks in 1814 were offered for sale at prices as high as \$50 to \$100 an acre. "Ten years can scarcely elapse," wrote Darby enthusiastically in 1818, "before the Alabama [territory] must assume her rank amongst the states of the American Union, and close the column of republics from the Canadian lakes to the

gulf of Mexico, and from the Atlantic ocean to the Sabine river." He was wrong; scarcely one year elapsed before Alabama was admitted as a state, and scarcely ten years elapsed before politicians bent on closing Darby's "column of republics" ascended to power. Westward migration changed not only the human geography of the nation; it altered the political landscape as well.¹⁴

Until the late 1820s, the Republican administration of John Quincy Adams had maintained a policy of selling public lands in a systemized manner at prices high enough to offset the national debt. Adams was not in favor of encouraging rapid settlement by offering public lands at a low price, fearing the destabilizing effect of "the diffusion of a thin population over a great surface." Cheap land would depopulate the East and discourage the creation of a stable base of capital in both the East and West. Adams and his supporters argued that high land prices both filled the coffers and managed settlement, satisfying "the demand for land created by the existing population" without "promoting migration beyond its natural and necessary progress."¹⁵ His opponents, however, charged that Adam's resistance to land reform proposals was solely "for the purpose of preventing migration to the west--for the purpose of preserving the population to the old states." Land-hungry settlers and congressmen from the burgeoning states in the South and West pressured the Adams administration to adopt measures which allowed for a more rapid distribution of the public domain. "The public

lands," cried The New York Times, "the public lands--this is the exciting theme, which brings every man to his seat, and every other question--tariff, roads, revenue, education--all slide insensibly into this." Adams's failure to address the land issue added to his general unpopularity in the American backcountry, paving the way for a new president, Andrew Jackson, who would brutally address the land issue to his backcountry constituents' satisfaction.¹⁶

Andrew Jackson was in every way a product of the early American backcountry. Jackson was born in the Carolinas to Scots-Irish parents; he was, according to one biographer, "wild and reckless," with an "ugly side that labeled him a bully." Though "a badly informed man" who could write only passably, Jackson nonetheless could swear "a blue streak." Imbued at an early age with a hatred of the British, Jackson became the quintessential backcountry hero. He fought the British in the American Revolution and again at New Orleans in 1812; he then turned his attention to fighting Indians on the American frontier. He was notorious both for gambling and duelling; he was himself shot in the arm after attacking Thomas Benton in 1813. Jackson was, in short, a violent man for violent times.¹⁷

Jackson began his rise to the presidency as a Tennessee lawyer, having managed to wedge enough law study between card games, cockfights, and drunken parties to pass as a professional. He soon passed into a more lucrative profession, that of land speculation. Jackson accumulated a

good deal of land in payment for his services as a lawyer; his holdings were already impressive when Tennessee entered the Union in 1796. After a brief stint as a Congressman, Jackson turned to a variety of business activities--operating a store, breeding horses, trading in slaves--but he derived most of his wealth from the purchase and sale of land. Jackson's life epitomized most backcountry settlers' fondest dreams.¹⁸

It was to this burgeoning group of backcountry settlers Jackson would appeal in his 1828 bid for the presidency. Pitted against the Harvard-educated Adams, Jackson characterized the contest as one between the interests of the common man and that of the privileged elite, between those "who desire the settlement of the western lands and those who wish them to remain a howling wilderness." When Jackson won the 1828 presidential race, one old acquaintance of Jackson's exclaimed, "Well, if Andrew Jackson can be President, anybody can!" To many, it appeared as though the howling wilderness had come to Washington. The festivities which followed Jackson's inauguration seemed to confirm their worst fears. "The reign of KING MOB seemed triumphant," lamented Justice Joseph Story. The mob celebrating Jackson's ascent to power was, according to one Congressman, "one uninterrupted stream of mud and filth." In their determination to meet their president, rough-shod and inebriated well-wishers, many of them, noted the Congressman drily, "subjects for the penitentiary," broke White House china, trampled furniture, and spilled gallons of liquor on mud-soaked White House

carpets. It was, concluded the Congressman, a "regular Saturnalia."¹⁹

The political ascendancy of the backcountry was apparent on the local level as well. One political observer in Kentucky noted with alarm the new breed of politicians attaining office with a smile and a promise to the rabble, appealing to acquisitive appetites rather than intellect. Reckless land speculation had created a debt crisis in Kentucky and a confrontational debate was raging in the 1825 Kentucky legislature. The current governor of Kentucky, the observer noted, was a man "destitute of private worth or political honesty" with "nothing to recommend him to the notice of the people but the assiduity of his attentions to them, and the ardour with which he espoused the relief measures." Debt relief and land reform were the popular cries; the new majority wanted immediate gains at any cost. "When the storm of passion which now agitates shall be hushed," mused the observer, "and posterity shall look up the stream of ages to the present crisis...what think you will be...the fate of those, who with Gothic rudeness now trample on the constitution of their country, when this grand inquest shall be held, when the motives of actions shall be weighed in the balance of impartiality?"²⁰

Perhaps this observer was no more impartial in ascribing "Gothic rudeness" to the politicians and inhabitants of the American backcountry in 1825 than was William Bird in 1720. But by 1825, a new tenor wholly in tune with the spirit of

acquisition sounded throughout American life . "Where every man is engaged in driving hard bargains with his fellows," wondered one European visitor, "where is the honoured class to be found into which gentlemanlike feelings, principles, and practice, are necessary as an introduction?" Many Americans had not only thrown off all pretenses to noblesse oblige, but strong communal ties as well. It was every man for himself in Jacksonian America, each determined to come up a victor. After a visit to America in 1833, European C.D. Arfwedson summed it up thus--"In the midst of a population so composed, of which a great proportion is daily moving, and cannot be said to belong exclusively to [one community]....accustomed constantly to see emigrants, with whom they form new acquaintances, they show a degree of indifference to each other, and this characteristic influences their actions, and stamps them with a certain want of feeling." Backcountry settlers rarely remained in one place long enough to raise a family and were thus indifferent to building permanent institutions for educating and governing their progeny. "But another generation will come," posited Arfwedson hopefully, "which, born on the spot, will forget the prejudices and peculiarities of parents. The light of intellect, now only glimmering, will then burst into a blaze, and, diffusing its influence over all classes, equalize the inequalities in the character of the people. Who can doubt of the beneficial effect it will produce on the general mass of people in the Western States?"²¹

But the civil institutions which Arfwedson hoped would have a beneficial effect on the intellect and manners of backcountry inhabitants were not in place in the 1830s. The thin dispersal of population over the vast American frontier had, as Adams feared, dispersed the available capital over too great an area to properly support schools, libraries, and stable civil governments, or to encourage the economic development which would support these institutions. Older communities in the East were often decimated as firm bases of monetary and human wealth were siphoned off into the backcountry. In parts of South Carolina, once thriving towns were reduced to empty shells surrounded by barren fields; roads fell into disrepair, houses stood empty, and exhausted soil was left to wash down into the rivers and gullies. "The disposition to emigrate," observed one South Carolina statistician in 1830, "originated from three causes; first from the wearing out of the lands; second, from the increase of families... third, from inclination to wander, arising from exaggerated descriptions of new and better countries, which operate like a talisman upon the minds of many, particularly the more idle part of mankind."²²

Whether from the "idle part" or the upper class of American society, backcountry immigrants quickly adapted to their new surroundings. "The higher classes," admitted one American traveler in 1830, "have some of that high polish rubbed off by these... contacts with their less civilized fellow-citizens; but the humbler classes decidedly gain what

they lose."²³

But by 1830, the gain was not considerable enough to perpetuate an enlightened civil society, particularly in the southern backcountry. The "prejudices and peculiarities" of the early settlers of William Byrd's "Lubberland" were augmented by those of second- or third-generation descendants of planters committed, like Byrd, to plantation agriculture and a system of slavery. In the southern backcountry, Scots-Irish, German, and English yeoman farmers were gradually joined by eastern elites moving south and west in search of fresh land. This, according to historian Richard Beeman, set in motion a "dynamic historical process--the transmission of culture from older and more settled regions to the frontier." What evolved was an "explicitly and even virulently racist" society committed to the idea of white supremacy. While the majority of southern white farmers in the early-nineteenth century neither owned slaves nor plantations, they nonetheless became committed to the continued subjugation of the darker, "inferior" races, black and Indian. Planters in turn left behind their commitment to strong institutional controls and dominated southern society by their own power and presence rather than by a fair and well-ordered system of laws. Poor whites migrating to fresh lands in Georgia and Alabama carried with them this loose commitment to formal institutions of law and order. "In an extensive district of country where the expense of police establishment cannot be borne by a few inhabitants, scattered at considerable distances from each

other," surmised James Stuart upon visiting the South in 1830, "no better scheme perhaps can be devised than that the inhabitants should, with a view to their security, place themselves under control of some one of their number, in whom they have confidence." And those in whom they had confidence were generally those skilled in the use of force.²⁴

While Jacksonian Americans in general placed inordinate emphasis on feats of individual bravery, the warrior ethic became highly exaggerated in the thinly settled South. "With the people of this country," noted J.S. Buckingham, "courage seems to be regarded as the greatest virtue under heaven; and almost every vice is palliated in those who manifest this virtue in an eminent degree...Hence the lenity shown to those who murder their fellows by the pistol and the bowie knife, in duels and street affrays. Hence the admiration of General Jackson," a man "whose military exploits," Buckingham observed dryly, "reckon up as more than nine-tenths" of his "collective merits." But feats of bravery and military exploits had become the collective merits defining fitness to rule in the southern backcountry. Kentucky boatmen boasted that they were "half-horse, half-alligator, with a cross of the wild cat." One 1830s Georgia humorist introduced a story thus: "In the younger days of the Republic, there lived in the county of _ _ two men, who were admitted on all hands to be the very best men in the county; which, in the Georgia vocabulary, means they could flog any other two men in the county."²⁵

The ability to wage a ferocious fight was a badge of

honor in the nineteenth-century South. Backcountry fighting was, according to the Englishman William Blane, "conducted upon a plan, which is only worth the most ferocious savages. The object of each combatant," he observed, "is to take his adversary by surprise" and "gouge him, or poke out his eye, or bite off his nose." Blane described basic "backwoods" attire as a rough hunting shirt, a rifle, a tomahawk, and a knife. Games were generally competitive and often violent in nature. Gambling on cards and billiards, wrestling, and cockfighting were favorite pastimes, with frequent intermission for recourse to the whiskey jug. "Their manner of life," he wrote, "makes them, in some degree, partake of the Indian character, though they by no means have the same nobleness of sentiment, and high sense of honor."²⁶

Even backcountry religious gatherings had a highly individualistic and somewhat rowdy air about them. Dominance by established churches or church hierarchies was shunned, and feeling the "call" rather than acquiring an education established a minister's credibility in southern backcountry churches. Worshippers would often fling themselves about in a rolling, rollicking frenzy during emotionally charged sermons. One observer vividly described the contortions commonly seen at camp meetings. "One of the most mysterious exercises among the people was what was called the jerks," he wrote. "Sometimes their heads would be jerked backward and forward with such violence that it would cause them to utter...a sharp, quick sound similar to the yelp of a dog; and

the hair of the women to crack like a whip....I have seen persons exercised in such a way that they would go all over the floor with a quick, dancing motion, and with such rapidity that their feet would rattle upon the floor like drumsticks."²⁷

Southern backcountry ideas about social, political, and religious control had thus markedly diverged from those of the North and East by the early-nineteenth century. The collective religious or legal restraints which characterized northern temperance or sabbath observance movements were rejected in the South as impingements on personal liberty. After an 1824 tour through the South, Jeremiah Evarts of the American Board of Foreign Missions lamented that Southerners "seldom associate or confer together for any common purpose; and they get into such habits of living alone, that it seems almost impossible to impart to them the same principles of social conduct as exist in people in different circumstances."²⁸ Well-educated eastern missionaries like Evarts sent to convert "heathen" backwoods Southerners were shunned, as were attempts to establish institutions for higher learning in the South. Education was linked to the eastern elite, and the eastern elite to laws which hampered personal freedom. Members of a gentry hoping to create class distinctions like those in Europe needed education, not "citizens of a free and independent republic."²⁹ "Gentlemen," wrote one Southerner, "I hope you do not conceive it at all necessary that everyone should be able to read,

write, and cipher." Those who spent their lives "in the cotton patch, or at the plow, or in the cornfield" did not require education, he reasoned; if one were nothing more than a "plain farmer, or mechanic" such skills were not only "of no manner of use, but rather a detriment."³⁰

While northern states worked to establish public schools, states in the South resisted anything which smacked of compulsion or centralization. One in three children in Connecticut and one in four in New York State attended school in 1830. But in the South, public school systems were virtually nonexistent, even in older Atlantic seaboard states like North and South Carolina. North Carolina finally created a public school fund in 1825, but legislative proposals to establish academic institutions repeatedly met defeat. The proposed measures were not even aimed at implementing universal education; only the poor and the handicapped were believed to be appropriate targets for state-sponsored programs. Similarly, in South Carolina only those at the very top or at the very bottom of the social scale received any formal schooling. Teachers in the South were described as "proverbially and justly bad" and "unfit for anything else."³¹

In the southern and western states, the situation was even worse. In 1830, Alabama had no common school system of any kind supported by law. Congress had granted to the state 1/36th of all public lands for the construction of public schools; but most towns simply let the land lie vacant or sold

it and invested the proceeds. In the 1820s, Tennessee created a school fund with the money received from the sale of ceded Cherokee lands; but in 1830 the money was still sitting in a Tennessee bank. Louisiana was in 1830 still too sparsely settled with "adventurers from all ranks of society, many indigent, and some criminal" persons, according to William Darby, to support even the notion of public schools. And of Mississippi, Baird's 1830 emigrant's guide could only posit hopefully that "much interest is now felt on the subject of education." Darby recommended that anyone migrating to the Southwest carry any books they might need, for "except in Lexington, Kentucky, and Pittsburgh, book printing is not yet done to any considerable extent west of the Allegheny."³²

Southerners not only resisted provisions for educating their numbers; they rejected changes which would improve their agricultural productivity as well. Most of the inhabitants of the southern backcountry moved often, replicating the same wasteful agricultural patterns at each locale. They would generally clear enough land to meet their immediate needs, raise one or two crops, and then, when erosion and soil depletion began to take its toll, move on. In a speech before Congress, a visitor to one Alabama county vividly described the results. "In traversing that county," he said, "one will...observe fields, once fertile, now unfenced, abandoned and covered with those evil harbingers, fox-tail and broomsedge...Indeed, a country in its infancy, where fifty years ago, scarce a forest tree had been felled by the axe of

the pioneer, is already exhibiting the painful signs of senility and decay, apparent in Virginia and the Carolinas." Interest in scientific agriculture and soil improvement did not take hold in the South until the 1830s, and even then was limited to wealthy planters growing staple crops for export. Thrifty agricultural practices were of little interest to poor whites in the southern backcountry in 1830. The surfeit of land in proportion to the population encouraged extensive and exploitative agricultural methods, and highly productive intensive agriculture practices were ignored. The plow was only slowly coming into use, crop rotation was almost unheard of, and little attention was paid to the care and breeding of livestock. Livestock was simply left to forage in the woods until time for slaughter, and the cultivation of grains or the planting of orchards or other marketable produce was minimal.³³

This was, in part, a function of ignorance and resistance to change; but it was also a function of the absence of economically viable markets, which was, in turn, a result of retarded southern economic development. Only a small percentage of the southern white population had either the means or the education to encourage economic growth. Most of the wealth in the South was concentrated in the hands of plantation owners with twenty or more slaves, a group which constituted only two- to five-percent of the total white population in most southern states. Planters were little interested in backing improvements which did not suit their

needs; they exported rice, sugar, cotton, indigo, and tobacco, and imported or produced any necessary goods using slave labor. They had little need of manufacturing concerns or transportation facilities beyond those that served their own needs. Roads and ferries beyond the pale of settled southern river bottoms were thus few and far between and often in serious disrepair.³⁴

Poor whites were as uninterested in internal improvements, industrialization, or encouraging market growth as were planters. Internal improvements meant taxation; industrialization would require that they labor for another white man; and market growth meant that they would have to be productive. Just as there was a decided absence of organized social and political life, there was an equally marked absence of organized economic life in the backcountry. Whether attributing the cause to the warm, unhealthy climate and sickly populace, the slothful habits of the original settlers, the weakness of communal bonds culminating in an "ideology of non-success," or the degenerative effects of slavery, Europeans, Northerners, and some Southerners alike lamented the lack of industriousness in the South.³⁵

The state of Georgia was no exception. A sparsely settled frontier in 1830, there were very few improved roads in Georgia, and outside of the long-established communities along the Savannah River, most Georgians lived a primitive life. Poor farmers flocked to the Georgia upcountry to escape the exhausted soils of Virginia and the Carolinas, bringing

with them the same wasteful practices that had exhausted those soils. Many came to wait for the expulsion of the Cherokees and to fulfill the residency requirements for participation in the Georgia land lottery. The abundance of cheap land in Georgia thus drew opportunists who had been raised in the violent southern backcountry and who brought with them no commitment to establishing stable and enduring communities.³⁶

Between 1803 and 1833, 22,404,250 acres of land in Georgia were distributed in eight different Georgia land lotteries. During the same period, the population of the state increased by only 345,270. Land was so plentiful that by 1830 only two-thirds of the lands granted under the lottery of 1820 had been claimed. One-hundred percent of the population was listed as rural in the 1790 census; in 1830, ninety-eight percent of Georgians still lived in rural settings.³⁷ When Scottish-born John Melish traveled to the state in 1806, he found the "whole country round" Savannah "one dull scene, which excited no interest....The country in the vicinity," he noted, "contributes but little to the supply of the city. To the south it is sandy and barren for a considerable distance." Rice and cotton grown on plantations around the Savannah River constituted the only major commodities marketed in Georgia, "and Savannah being the only shipping port in it, is, of course, the general mart for the disposal of these articles."³⁸

Traveling from Savannah to the capital of Georgia at Louisville, Melish found the roads "far from inviting" and

"the bridges broken down." After swimming his horse across several swollen waterways and crossing "pine barrens, swamps, and muddy creeks," Melish found Georgia's capital to consist of "100 dwelling houses" and 550 inhabitants, half of whom were slaves. Later that year the Georgia seat of government was moved from Louisville to Milledgeville. In 1826, Darby's Universal Gazetteer attributed to Milledgeville "a state house, a branch of the state bank, 2 or 3 places of worship, and 2 or 3 printing offices." In 1830, Milledgeville had grown to include "several places of worship" and a penitentiary housing 92 convicts. By contrast, 1830 Savannah had 7,423 inhabitants and "a number of fine public buildings, the most conspicuous of which," wrote Darby, "are the Exchange, Academy, and Presbyterian church....In all there are 8 or 9 places of public worship and 10 public squares."³⁹

Yet "civilized" Savannah paled in comparison to Charleston, South Carolina. "Within the city [of Charleston]," wrote Darby in 1830, "exist all those institutions which mark a wealthy community. The most noted public edifices are the Exchange, City Hall, 6 Banking Houses, a Guard House, an Arsenal, 2 college buildings, academical and medical, a large fire-proof building....for the greater security of public documents, at an expense of \$60,000, Court House, numerous places of public worship...2 markets, St. Andrews Hall, an Alms House, an Orphan Asylum, and many other charitable institutions, richly endowed." Wealthy Charlestonians promenaded about town in expensive coaches and

carriages, on their way to the theater or some other affair at which "no coloured people or dogs" were allowed. Of Charleston's 30,289 inhabitants, only 12,928 were white, most of whom lived in abject poverty; the other 17,361 were slaves and free persons of color. Compared with New York City, Charleston was itself something less than civilized. Darby described New York as "the most populous, wealthy, commercial and important city in the United States....The bay of New York..,is one of the finest harbors in the world...The shores on both rivers are lined with wharves and slips...and is well-furnished with light-houses and forts." New York had in 1830 "30,000 dwelling houses, stores, manufactories, and churches," a half-million dollar City Hall, banks, markets, an important merchant's exchange, and 202,589 inhabitants. Twelve public schools served the educational needs of 24,952 students. There was also, according to Darby, "the Protestant Episcopal School, the mechanics school, besides numerous schools for both sexes....The number of literary, scientific, religious, benevolent, and other societies in the city of New York," he continued, "is almost innumerable." There were "11 daily newspapers, 9 semi-weekly, 29 weekly...2 Spanish and 1 French, 3 semi-monthly and 2 monthly."⁴⁰

Georgia, on the other hand, had in 1830 only 12 newspapers of note in the entire state. County weeklies full of local news, gossip, and runaway slave advertisements served the reading needs of most Georgians. Literacy rates were as low as twenty percent of the adult white males as late as

1850; they were probably even lower in 1830, as very few Georgians received at that time even a rudimentary education. In 1822, a poor school fund of \$500,000 was established, but the money was invested in bank stock and only the interest distributed. Very little money was ever actually distributed in the 1820s, however, since most Georgians held "that there was no more justification in taking a man's money to pay for the 'schooling' of his neighbor's children than to take his plow and team to till another man's field."⁴¹ Though several bills were introduced in the Georgia legislature in the 1820s to establish a common school system, the measures repeatedly went down to defeat. Legislation providing for common schools in Georgia was not passed until 1839; and it was not until 1857 that concrete plans to implement a statewide school system were developed.⁴²

The cause for this delay lay in the complexion of the Georgia legislature itself. The majority of the seats in the legislature were held by men of agrarian interests who did not feel any obligation to provide services, educational or otherwise, to anyone besides their own families or the destitute. There were a handful of poor schools, but poor whites were unwilling to declare themselves paupers in order to obtain an education for their children, opting instead for autonomous ignorance. Governor Gilmer pointed out proudly in 1830, "We have no such class as poor. Our lands are so cheap, and the absolute necessities of life so easily obtained that the number of dependent poor are scarcely sufficient to give

exercise to the virtue of charity in individuals."⁴³

While there may have been few "dependent poor" in Georgia, there were even fewer charitable institutions which could have served their needs. "In the house of assembly," observed John Lambert in 1808, "a member who aims at popularity has only to oppose all public works and improvements that are likely to take the money out of the pockets of the people, and he is sure to gain his end."⁴⁴ Not only did public schools and benevolent institutions suffer, but Georgia economic growth was stunted as well. The abundance of cheap land and the ease with which the "absolute necessities of life were obtained" did little to prompt change. There were no manufacturing concerns in Georgia in 1820; goods were either imported or manufactured at home. Only twenty-four business corporations had been chartered by 1820--thirteen aimed at developing transportation, five banks, two insurance companies, and one first-stage textile processing mill. Apparently little progress toward improving transportation had been made by 1830, for traveler after traveler lamented the condition of Georgia roads. In 1808 a traveler rode over bridges "composed of a few loose planks, with openings wide enough for a horses' leg to slip through." Another traveler in 1828 found the bridges in the Creek Indian lands "better than several in the christian state of Georgia;" while another likened traversing Georgia roads--"if road[s] [they] ought to be called"--to "navigating by means of the stars over the trackless ocean." Even the streets of Savannah

in 1820 remained unpaved and "except in the middle path, which is a heavy disagreeable sand...covered in grass." Water transportation was rudimentary; not until 1828 did a steamboat ascend the Chattahoochee as far as Columbus. Three canals were chartered in 1818; only one was finished and that not until 1831.⁴⁵

Even if Georgians had been temperamentally disposed to internal improvements or commerce, they rarely stayed in one place long enough to effect them. By 1830, Milledgeville was "entirely deserted by men of business;" they had already moved on to fresh conquests in western Georgia. By the time most settlers came to Georgia, they had often moved several times, each time leaving behind several family members and acres of exhausted soil. The availability of thousands of acres of cheap land obviated a sense of permanence and discouraged agricultural innovation. Even cotton planters built impermanent homes like those of subsistence farmers. "All the houses that you meet with on the roadsides in this country," observed James Stuart in 1830, "[are] two square pens, with an open space between them, connected by a roof above and a floor below." The only differences which delineated the homes of planters from the Georgia rabble were the presence of slave quarters and stables.⁴⁶

By 1830, Georgia settlers were quite accustomed to the absence of strong communal ties and the lack of social and political cohesion. They were described by John Lambert in 1808 as "indolent and dissipated; not very scrupulous...fond

of money to excess, but careless by what means it is obtained. Even in a public capacity," he observed, "they will frequently resort to means not the most honourable, as was the case in the Yazoo Bubble." So many Georgia lawyers and legislators had been implicated in the 1802 Yazoo land fraud that the legislature was forced to turn to a "penniless and restless" Virginia emigrant who had "never read fifty pages of law" as a superior court judge. Early Georgia political factions developed around various groups of immigrants from different states who would, according to Lambert, "frequently pluck out an eye, or bite off a nose, for the honour of their respective States." Gambling, duelling, and cockfighting were favorite pastimes. Even court days in backcountry Georgia often degenerated into general melees. "Upon public days in 1828 and 1829," reminisced one Georgian, "the writer has frequently seen a considerable number of people come riding into town...when, within a few hundred yards of town, they would bring a whoop or two and come into town at a gallop, pass nearly across the Square, wheel and gallop back in front of the little store and call for a half-pint of whiskey....By the middle of the afternoon the most of them would be quite happy, and several couples stripped for a fight, many of them with a woman holding onto them to prevent it."⁴⁷

In short, the Georgia backcountry in 1830 was a violent world ruled by violent men. In 1825 John Clark, a man characterized by historian Ulrich Bonnell Phillips as having a distinct "liking for personal broils of any kind," was

elected governor of Georgia. "The pervading anxiety" surrounding the election, wrote Phillips, "was as great as if the freedom of the country were in suspense instead of the election of one hot-head or another...with no appreciable question of policy at stake." Clarke personified the new order of backcountry politicians; according to Phillips, Clarke was "not a very able man....Educated as much on the Indian warpath as in the log cabin school, with more to fear from arrows and bullets than from the schoolmaster's rod, and perfectly fearless of either, he developed into an adroit Indian fighter, carried his rough and ready principle into politics, and so became a politician of the extreme Andrew Jackson type."⁴⁸

A number of "extreme Andrew Jackson types" rose to political prominence in Georgia. One historian has attributed the nineteenth-century Georgian proclivity for violence to the "frequent conflicts with the Indians" which "kept alive in Georgia a warlike spirit."⁴⁹ But by 1830, Georgia Indians had for the most part ceased to molest Georgia settlers; Georgians were instead molesting the Indians. The Cherokees were surrounded by a rapacious white society clamoring for their removal. For more than three decades, the Cherokees had heeded the admonitions of their leaders and assiduously striven to obey the letter of the law and to "turn their labour to account like the white people."⁵⁰

It may be argued that they were more successful in doing so than were their white contemporaries--the 1830 Georgia

backcountry was not "civilized" by almost any standard. The county to which the Cherokee nation was annexed in 1828, Carroll County, was in 1830 inhabited by "a few thousand half civilized men, both indisposed and incompetent to the faithful discharge of the duties of citizenship" scattered over an extensive territory and living without "the inestimable blessing of civil government." When Basil and Margaret Hall traveled through the county in 1828, Mrs. Hall described with some amusement a "town" at the falls of the Chattahoochee. "Basil says that he has seen a town without inhabitants," she wrote her sister, "but that he never before saw inhabitants without a town. To such a place we have now got." The Halls were escorted about a town with "streets staked out amongst the trees" and paraded through a "thick forest" which the guide informed them was "the heart of the city" around which "nice villas" would be constructed. "All this," wrote Mrs. Hall, "is to be," for the town then consisted only of "some temporary buildings erected to shelter the numerous bidders...who are waiting for the sale of lots which is to commence in July....The little temporary streets," she continued, "presented a strange appearance, little log and frame houses, most of them intended to be moved to some other situation a few months hence." Many of these settlers perhaps had just one year past been in Milledgeville, complaining "what an infernal shame it was, that such a quantity of virgin cotton land should be suffered to remain in the possession of the infernal Creek Indians." And many would a few years hence

perhaps be moving into the lands of the Cherokees. While some of their numbers may have recognized the emptiness of removal rhetoric, few challenged the results. One Georgian who argued on behalf of the Cherokees challenged a man of God by asking,

"Parson, is not our State doing a grievous wrong, for which God will hold us and our children to fearful accounts?"

"Yes, Judge," replied the reverend, "it looks very much as you say."

"Looks!" shouted Underwood, "Looks!!" "But is it not so?"

"Yes!" responded the preacher. "I reckon it is as you say. But then, Judge...we want the land!"

Judge Underwood could only shake his head in reply and lament, "Yes, we want the land! Good God Almighty!"⁵¹

Epilogue

Whereas white colonists in the eighteenth century were forced to appeal to the government to prevent Cherokee depredations on their land and livestock, by 1830 the opposite was true. Poor whites virtually surrounded the Cherokee nation, greedily eying Cherokee improvements; they seized Cherokee plantations and stole Cherokee livestock. They mined with impunity Cherokee gold on Cherokee land. While the Cherokee nation strove to obey the letter of the law, ever fearful that any breach would spell disaster, the surrounding white population grew louder and more brazen in defiance of it. The Cherokees had done everything in their power to rise to the colonial challenge, only to find that the rules had been changed.

In retrospect, it does seem "visionary to suppose that in this state of things" claims were allowed on "tracts of country on which...[settlers] had neither dwelt nor made improvements, merely because they...[had] seen them from the mountain or passed them in the chase." The Georgia backcountry was settled by men who had continually "thrust...[themselves] farther into the wilderness," by men and women still "in a wandering state," retiring "from river to river and from mountain to mountain." The Cherokee Indians were condemned as roving barbarians living only for the hunt; yet they were dispossessed by those who were themselves hunters of fortune and empire, nomads engaged in the restless

pursuit of wealth. Their weapons took the form of chains and compasses, maps and axes, with which they carved a new face into the landscape. In the end, these savage newcomers' right to lay claim to Cherokee lands would be upheld by law, and the aboriginal inhabitants would discover that, no matter how hard they tried to carve a new face for themselves, in 1830 and long after, civilization wore a white face.

NOTES

Prologue

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14. Young, "The Exercise of Sovereignty," 45; Georgia Acts, 1827 quoted on 49.
15. Evarts, Speeches, iv; Prucha, American Indian Policy, 152.
16. Lumpkin, Removal of the Cherokee Indians, 44.
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19. Ibid, 48.
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21. Filler and Guttman, Removal of the Cherokee Nation, 16.
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