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OSCEOLA: PORTRAITS, FEATURES, AND DRESS

by JOHN M. GOGGIN

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Portraits
The Work of J. R. Vinton

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Vinton's undated drawing. An undated and unsigned pencil sketch attributed to J. R. Vinton (Plate 1) and undoubtedly drawn by him, is in the files (Photo print no. 18412) of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York.⁷ The small sketch (measuring approximately 2³/₄ by 3 inches) is mounted above two neatly cutout cards bearing the following notes:

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

Joseph M. Hernandez

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

[rubric]

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

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

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

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

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

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

St. Augustine July 18th, 1840

My dear friend

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

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

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

....

....

I write in great haste, but believe me always,

Your attached friend
[signed] J. R. VINTON

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

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

The Fort Moultrie Portraits

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

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

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

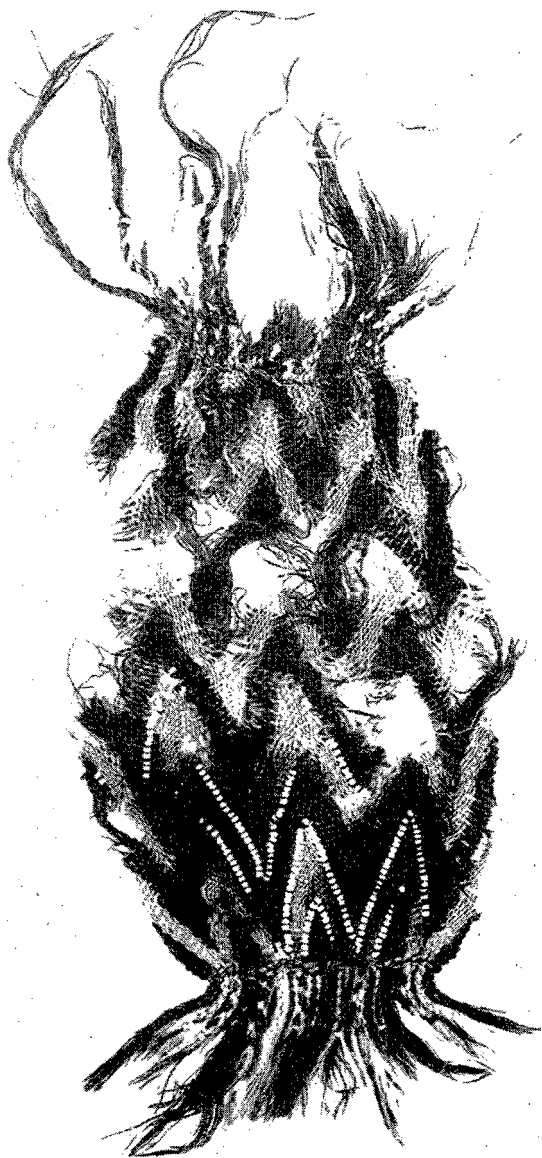


Plate 3. Finger-woven wool garter belonging to Osceola.
Scale 1/3.



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



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

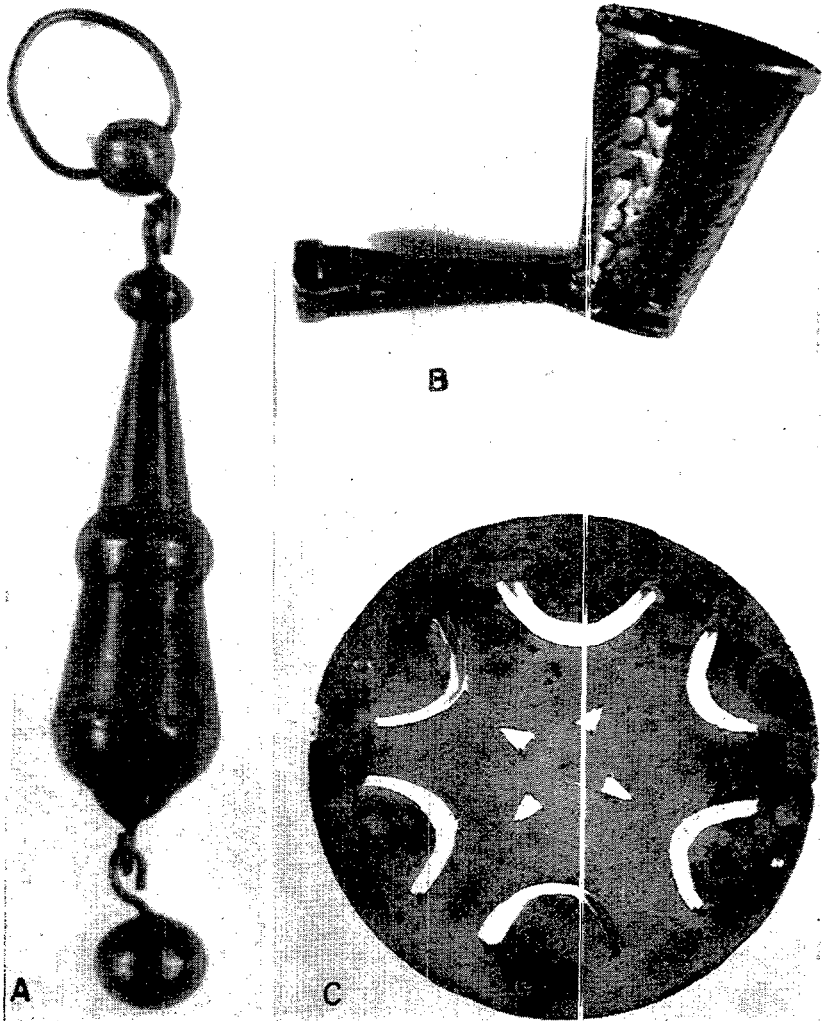


Plate 6. Personal objects belonging to Osceola. A, Silver earbob; B, Brass pipe bowl; C, Circular silver gorget. Varying scales.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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THE APPEARANCE OF OSCEOLA

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

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

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

Racial Features in Early Indian Portraits

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

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

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

Contemporary Descriptions of Osceola

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusions

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

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

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

PERSONAL BELONGINGS OF OSCEOLA

With few exceptions the costume and jewelry of Osceola

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Clothing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jewelry

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Miscellaneous Objects

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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

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

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

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

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