

**The North Little Rock Site
on the
Trail of Tears National Historic Trail:
Historical Contexts Report**

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Introduction

The North Little Rock site was little more than the north side of the Arkansas River opposite Little Rock when the Indian Removal Act was passed in 1830. Only a few farms and a ferry occupied the landscape that would become one of the most important sites related to Indian removal. During the next decade and a half, as the Removal Act was executed, thousands of Choctaws, Muscogees, Florida Indians, Chickasaws, and Cherokees were removed from their ancestral lands east of the Mississippi to new areas west of Arkansas. The existing travel routes ensured that a majority of these tribal people traveled by the North Little Rock site on the river or passed through it, either to cross at the ferry and go southwest to the Red River country, or to take the Military Road to the northwest toward Fort Smith. During removal more than 40,000 tribal people moved through the site. From the time the Choctaw removal began in late 1831 until the end of the 1830s, large groups of Indians were common on the roads and at the North Little Rock site: Choctaws, Muscogees, Chickasaws, Florida Indians, and Cherokees. Steamboats passing by the site carried contingents of those tribes as well as of the Florida Indians, who were removed almost entirely by water. The presence of such large numbers of removal parties at the site made it the most important terminal on the removal routes through Arkansas. Indeed, it can be safely said that what is now North Little Rock and its surrounding area (including Little Rock), was the site of more concentrated activities related to the removal of the five large southeastern tribes than any other place along the projected Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. In addition, a large share of the millions of dollars the government spent on removal of the southeastern tribes found its way into Arkansas and proved to be the catalyst for the growth and development of major transportation systems as well as the general economy of Arkansas.

Because the North Little Rock site was at the intersection of the major land and water routes used in removal, it provides an excellent context for illustrating the historical significance of removal for not only the Cherokees, specifically addressed in Public Law 100-192 (1987), but for the other four tribal nations and the American nation as well. What follows is a presentation of historical evidence and interpretation that will help National Park Service personnel develop an interpretive plan that will present the North Little Rock site as one of the most important sites accessible to visitors along the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. Presented first is a description of the physical features of the site and its surroundings; second, a description of land and water routes that brought removal parties to, and took them from, the site; third, a detailed historical documentation of Indian removal through the site; fourth, an analysis of conditions of travel on the routes in Arkansas; fifth, evidence of cultural survival on the trail; sixth, descriptions of tribal individuals who passed through the site; and seventh, an analysis of the economic and social impact of removal in Arkansas.

Part II: Physical Features of the North Little Rock Site and Its Surroundings, 1830-Present

To assist in evaluating the possibilities for interpreting the North Little Rock site as a major site on the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail, it is necessary to examine the physical features of the site and its surrounding areas that might provide contexts for interpretation for the general public. Following, therefore, is a historical survey of the occupation of the site, followed by descriptions of physical features at North Little Rock and Little Rock related to Indian removal.

Historical Survey of Occupation of the North Little Rock Site

The future significance of the North Little Rock site in Indian removal was ensured by its location at the intersection of major transportation routes in Arkansas Territory. When removal began, the most practical routes through Arkansas were the rivers. The Arkansas was the greatest of these, and the only one to cross the territory east to west, but it was not without problems. Water levels fluctuated with rainfall upstream, and in periods of low water, steamboats were forced to dock or set at anchor until the water rose. However, navigation remained possible up to certain points on the river for most of the year. These places benefited from the constant movement of people and goods, and the settlement highest up the river to be reached year round enjoyed great business as most merchants and entrepreneurs considered it the drop-off point for the settlements up river or settlements in the interior at a distance from the stream. On the Arkansas, this settlement was Little Rock, named for the "Little Rock," which branched out like "five fingers" into the water and provided a natural dock for steamboats.¹

In addition to its location on the Arkansas River, the North Little Rock site was near one of the oldest land routes in the region: the Southwest Trail, which crossed the river about four miles below the site, connecting Missouri and the Red River country. When Little Rock became the territorial capital in 1821, a ferry there became a necessity. The first ferry owner at the North Little Rock site was Edmund Hogan, who established a ferry directly across from the "point of rocks," perhaps as early as 1816.² By the time Indian removal began, the ferry was owned by Robert Crittenden, formerly acting governor of Arkansas Territory. His ferry was the point where the military road, constructed in 1827, left the river bank and led north and west toward Fort Smith.

The Military Road was the only practical route for land travelers from central Arkansas to the Indian country west of Arkansas. Built first to connect Little Rock and the military post at Fort Smith, it extended beyond that point to Fort Coffee and Fort Gibson in Indian Territory by the time removal began. Land travelers from Memphis and other points east had no direct land route through eastern Arkansas to the eastern terminus of the military road at Crittenden's ferry. Yet that was the direction that all overland removal parties would have to take. A crude road ran from Arkansas Post by way of the Grand Prairie to Samson Gray's on Bayou Meto near present-day Jacksonville, and there intersected the Southwest Trail, by then called the Daniels Ferry

Road.³ In 1826, construction began on a projected road from Memphis to Little Rock. A route was cleared from the Mississippi opposite Memphis, through the Mississippi Swamp, to a few miles beyond William Strong's just west of the St. Francis River, but it soon became apparent that a direct route to Little Rock was not feasible because of the swamps in the Cache River and Bayou de View watersheds. Thus in late 1827, a new route was laid out. Beginning at the sixty-fourth mile marker west of Memphis, the road went southwesterly to Mouth of Cache, the original name for present-day Clarendon, where there was a ferry over the White River. From there the route went northwesterly across the Grand Prairie to Samson Gray's, to which settlement a road had been contracted to be built from Little Rock earlier that year (See Part III).⁴ This road ran northeast from the river bank east of Crittenden's ferry, passed through the cypress swamps, skirted the low hills near the point near the present-day Springhill exit on Interstate 40, and continued eastward to intersect the Daniels Ferry road near the point where present-day Fairfax Street joins State Highway 161.

In February 1832, David Rorer opened a second ferry on the North Little Rock site about a quarter of a mile below Crittenden's, which was leased at the time to John H. Cocke, who owned a farm on the north side, and James H. Keatts.⁵ Rorer had come to the area in 1826. At that time, Alexander S. Walker owned a large farm near the North Little Rock site, and Wright Daniel (sometimes written Daniels), had a farm on the river near Big Rock where he had first settled, west of Crittenden's ferry. In 1816 he had moved four miles down the river to the old Francis Imbeau grant, where he opened a ferry and, later, a stage route to Arkansas Post. Nuttall, who visited Daniel in 1819, described this site as the point where the Southwest Trail crossed the river: "From this place proceeds the road to St. Louis, on the right, and Mount Prairie settlement, and Natchitoches on Red River, on the left. From all I can learn, it appears pretty evident that these extensive and convenient routes have been opened from time immemorial by the Indians. . . . The distance from Mr. Daniels', on the banks of the Arkansas, to Red river, is believed to be about 250 miles. The Great Prairie being from here to the north-east, is said to be about 40 miles distant, and there is likewise a continuation of open plains or small prairies, from hence to the Cadron settlement." In 1827, Rorer married Daniel's daughter, Martha Daniel Martin, widow of James Martin, who had died the year before. When Daniel died in 1827, Rorer ran Daniel's farms and bought ferry rights on the Arkansas near Big Rock, although he did not, at that time, attempt to establish a ferry. In the settlement of Daniel's estate in 1829, Rorer and his wife became owners of the James H. Martin home and other property on the north bank opposite Little Rock.⁶ Though Rorer would ultimately own more than 600 acres, it was the northeast fractional quarter of Section 2, Township 1 North of Range 12 West that became important in removal history, for it was there that he established his ferry. This site is at the foot of present-day Locust Street (on early maps as Woodruff Street), immediately east of the point where the Interstate 30 bridge reaches the north bank.

Rorer's Ferry, commonly referred to thereafter as the lower ferry, presented formidable competition for the Crittenden Ferry, or Little Rock Ferry, which had enjoyed a monopoly on ferriage at apparently exorbitant fees. Rorer installed a new type of ferry described as "Brown's patent improvement in the propulsion of ferry boats," which operated using a series of buoy boats and crossed twice as fast as the old-style ferry. Rorer also maintained a tavern and stable as a public house for the accommodation of

travelers who arrived too late to be ferried across the river, for it operated only in daylight. The tavern was one large room, where all guests, men and women slept. Rorer allegedly had the eccentric habit of going about the room, jerking covers from people's faces to see who was in bed. He was said to have parties that lasted all night, with a fiddler who could only play one tune, "Roaring River."⁷

On May 2, 1832, the Arkansas Gazette described Rorer's "Novel Mode of Ferrying": "One end of a rope or wire chain, of sufficient strength for the purpose, and long enough to reach diagonally across the river, is made fast on one bank only, above the landing-place, at as great a height from the ground as practicable, and extended to within a few feet of the Ferry-boat, (an ordinary Ferry-flat), to which the other end of the rope or chain is connected by a rope passing through pulleys at each end of the boat, and over the steering wheel and round the upper gun-wail, so as to form an angle above the boat. The main rope is kept out of the water by three buoy boats, built nearly in the form of a half-circle—a greater or less number of which are required according to the width of the stream to be crossed. The boat, suspended as it were by the rope in this manner, is propelled diagonally across the stream, by the force of the current operating on a lee-board, placed against the upper gun-wail [sic] of the boat, which is raised or lowered at pleasure by means of a wheel and pulleys. The boat when under way lies quartering across the current, with her bow up stream at an angle of about 45 degrees. The position of the boat is never changed—running, with one end foremost in crossing the river, and with the other foremost when returning."⁸

On October 16, 1832, William F. Pope arrived at Rorer's house. In later years he offered the following description of the ferry, which confirms the Gazette's earlier description: "In construction it differed but little from those now in use on our smaller streams, consisting of a long flat bottomed hull, with two bows. It was the method of propulsion that made it unique. This was accomplished by means of buoys or buoy boats, as they were called. These buoy boats were about twelve feet long and some four feet wide amidships, the two ends coming to a sharp point. These buoy boats were some fifteen or twenty in number and were staunchly built, and entirely floored over. In the center of each of them was a post, varying in height from three to ten feet, according to the location of the buoys. At the top of each of these posts was a large pulley, through which a large rope, one and one-half inches in diameter, ran. This rope was attached to a large cottonwood tree on the north side of the river, opposite the foot of Main Street and about fifty feet above the ground. The other end of the rope was passed through the pulleys on the buoy boats. These boats were distributed along at regular intervals, the last on being located about one hundred and fifty feet above the ferry landing on the Little Rock side. The rope passing through the pulleys on the last buoy boat had a slack of about fifty feet. To this part of the large rope a pulley was attached, through which a smaller rope ran and was fastened to each of the upper corners of the ferry boat. At each end of the boat was what was called a leeboard, some fifteen inches wide, and which was raised or depressed by a lever. On starting from either shore this leeboard was so depressed as to swing the end of the boat quartering upstream, the buoy boats assuming the same position. The action of the water against the leeboard gave the necessary impetus to the ferry boat to carry her across the river. On coming to within forty or fifty feet of the shore a vigorous pull upon the rope would straighten the course of the boat directly across the river and bring it to the landing. To prevent the buoy boats from

drifting together a smaller rope was tied to the same cottonwood tree lower down, and attached to the bottom of the posts on the buoy boats. The speed of a ferry boat propelled in the manner I have attempted to describe was very rapid, indeed, almost equal to that of steam."⁹ This ferry was used during the Choctaw removal in the 1832-1833 removal season.

In June 1833, everything on the site, including Rorer's Ferry, was destroyed by a flood that had higher waters than anyone in the region could remember. Albert Pike, writing a few years after the flood, described it this way: "There came a succession of heavy rains, and the river rose to high-water mark. The rise was red, and salt, and evidently came from the desert prairie. The rains ceased, and people supposed the rise was over. Suddenly the river began to swell higher and higher. The water came down colder and clearer. The snows had melted on the Rocky Mountains. . . . The river was filled with fragments of houses, dead cattle, huge trees, rushing on to the Mississippi. Cattle, hogs, even deer and bear, unable to escape from the bottoms, were all drowned. . . . The crops were ruined; whole farms were filled up with sand; and the channel of the river entirely altered. Such is the Arkansas."¹⁰ According to the Gazette, "All of the plantations on the north side of the Arkansas, for several miles above and below this place, are under water. Scarcely an acre of land under cultivation has escaped and a number of out-houses have been swept off. We are really distressed to hear, that nearly the whole of Maj. [James] Danley's dwelling house, about a mile and a half above town, has been swept off, and a deep channel cut through his plantation, through which the water runs with great velocity, sweeping the plantations below of Mr. [Conway] Scott, Col. [Alexander S.] Walker, Mr. [John H.] Cook [Cocke] and Mr. Rorer."¹¹

Rorer replaced his buoy boat ferry with a horse-drawn ferry in 1834. This ferry was described by G. W. Featherstonhaugh, an English geologist, that year. He approached the North Little Rock site on the Military Road from the northwest and described the scene that greeted him: "Evening was drawing nigh, when we came to a rich black alluvial bottom, upon which, the weather having been dry for some time, we found a good road. I was well aware what this bottom indicated, and a little after sunset we came upon the bank of the far-famed Arkansa [sic]. The river was a delightful object to us; at length we saw the waters gliding along, that rise amidst the glens and valleys of the Rocky Mountains, and, to our great satisfaction, also beheld the town of Little Rock on the opposite side of the river, in which we hoped to find some repose and amusement for a few days, before advancing to the Mexican frontier. The river was unusually low, and we had to get down a very precipitous track to reach the team-boat that was to ferry us across. On board of this we led our horse, and soon reached the opposite bank, where the ascent was so very abrupt that it was with great difficulty we got Missouri [his cart] to the top."¹²

This ferry was used to ferry Chickasaws across the river as well as to ferry subsistence and forage from the Little Rock side to supply removal parties at the North Little Rock site. Rorer sold the ferry along with his extensive land holdings on the north side of the river to William E. Woodruff, publisher of the Arkansas Gazette and contractor for supplying subsistence and forage for removal parties.¹³ Other than the structures at Rorer's ferry and whatever structures, if any, were at the Little Rock ferry, the North Little Rock site consisted of small farms. This is how Albert Pike said the site appeared in October of 1833: "Directly opposite the town is a bottom about a mile wide,

only cleared in here and there a spot; and about two miles above the town, an abrupt promontory, called Big Rock, juts into the river on the north side.”¹⁴ This, then, is how it would have appeared to the Choctaws, who arrived there a month later (See Part IV). The impression of William Wyatt, who traveled through the site in November 1836, the same period as Muscogee removal, was this: “Started on the morning of the 19th and traveled 10 miles to Little Rock. Saw some good bottom land on the north side of the Arkansas river. Crossed in a horse boat and entered the town of Little Rock. This is a considerable town, situated on the south side of the Arkansas river, and on a beautiful rock bluff—being high, having a smooth back country for miles—and presents a beautiful appearance on the river.”¹⁵

Although the town of D’Cantillon was laid off and platted at the site in 1838 and 1839, nothing that resembled a town was established until much later in the nineteenth century.¹⁶ The promoters advertised “a good opening for a trading house, especially of heavy goods and family groceries,”¹⁷ but terrain worked against such development. Much of North Little Rock sits in the basin of a former cypress swamp. Plats of the area from the mid-1850s and maps from the 1860s show a land dominated by cypress swamps, with scattered cultivated fields along the river (See Illustrations 1 and 2). Indeed, even in the early twentieth century, the swamps dominated the landscape (See Illustration 3). Swamps and the site’s potential for flooding, as in 1833, deterred capital investment. Artists’ renderings of the site during the Civil War and later periods show few dwellings or other structures near the river front (See Illustrations 4, 5, and 6). As late as 1889 the population of Argenta, as it was called by then, was only 1500, and, a contemporary source said, “It has grown almost wholly since the Civil War.”¹⁸ Argenta was incorporated in 1904 and the name officially changed to North Little Rock.

Physical Features Related to Removal through the Site

Today no structures exist that stood at the time of removal. However, a number of miles of streets and roads within the city and its surrounding region follow the exact or approximate routes used in removal. From the east the Memphis-to-North Little Rock route followed State Highway 161 from Jacksonville to Prothro Junction on Highway U. S. 70. From there it turned west, following the approximate route of Broadway to its intersection with State Highway 165. There it angled southwest, following Washington Avenue for about two blocks and angled southwest again, becoming what is now Lincoln Avenue. Lincoln reaches a dead end at Buckeye Street on the eastern edge of the former site of railroad shops built in the late nineteenth century. West of that area, the route followed Ferry Street, which is only a few blocks long and is obliterated by structures about two blocks east of the old Rorer Ferry site directly east of the Interstate 30 bridge (See Illustrations 7 and 8).

The ferry site itself at the foot of Locust street is occupied by the North Little Rock Marina, with a public boat launching ramp. Land configuration at the site has been altered by revetment and partially covered by water levels raised by construction of the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System by the U. S. Corps of Engineers in the 1960s. Maps from the 1950s indicate that Ferry Street at that time still came into the old ferry site, and photographs from the 1960s offer some details regarding the site before inundation (See Illustrations 9 and 10).

From the ferry site the road closely followed the riverbank just under a quarter of a mile to the site of Crittenden's Ferry, where the Military Road toward Fort Gibson left the river. This segment of the road lies within the city's Riverfront Park. (See Illustration 11)

After leaving the river at Crittenden's Ferry, the Military Road followed what is now Main Street north and turned to the northwest, passing through the break in the hills at Levy and thereafter following approximately the route of State Highway 365. Much of this segment of the route at the North Little Rock site has been obliterated by the Union Pacific rail yards and shops, and little of it is evident in the present-day street patterns of the city (See Illustration 12).

Physical Features Relative to Indian Removal at Little Rock

Although only two removal parties of Choctaws are known to have gone directly through the village of Little Rock in 1831, it is the point of reference in most removal documents related to the site. Afraid that the Choctaws would spread cholera among the local citizens, the city fathers in 1832 asked the United States to build a road from Rorer's ferry east of town to intersect the road leading to Washington and the Red River country (later known as the Military Road). The bypass road apparently followed what is now Ferry Street from the river, but no other evidence of this road exists in Little Rock street patterns. Apparently the bypass road had been obliterated soon after removal by city platting. William E. Woodruff, in directing people to his ferry in 1842, indicates right angles in his directions to travelers who came up the Military Road to Little Rock: "Travelers arriving from the south will turn to the right, at DeBaun's corner, (Alhambra), and proceed down Markham to First Street (4th street below), which will lead them to the river in sight of the Ferry landing."¹⁹

Steamboats carrying removal parties sometimes docked at the Little Rock at the foot of present-day Rock Street. Rarely were Indians allowed off the boats, but a notable exception was Cherokee Chief John Ross and his party, whose steamboat Victoria docked and Cherokees came ashore to bury Ross's wife Quatie in the City Cemetery.²⁰ Only the top few feet of the Little Rock outcropping are visible above the water level today (See Illustrations 13 and 14).

Albert Pike gives the following description of Little Rock as it appeared in 1833: "The houses are a motley mixture; consisting of every variety, from brick blocks of two stories to log cabins—standing in a juxtaposition. The greater number, however, are shingle palaces. There are no public buildings, (unless you give the churches the name, of which there are three, two wooden and one brick, except the State house. . . . It is a great, awkward, clumsy, heavy edifice, of brick, with a smaller building on each side—one a court house, and the other for secretary's office, &c. The main building is partly covered with tin; and is commonly called 'Pope's folly'—after the Hon. John Pope, Ex-governor of the territory, its projector."²¹

Only three or four buildings stand in Little Rock today that stood during all or part of removal. The Old State House, on which construction began in 1833, with its prominence high above the river would have made it visible to Choctaws and Chickasaws who crossed the river and to Muscogees, Florida Indians, and Cherokees, whether they passed upstream aboard boats or remained on the north bank and went up the Military

Road as the Bell Detachment did (See Illustrations 15 and 16). At Third and Rock streets is the Hinderliter Grog Shop and at Second and Rock the Woodruff Print Shop (See Illustration 17).²² The latter, which at the time of removal had a second story, has peripheral significance to removal. William E. Woodruff's newspaper, the Arkansas Gazette, received contracts for publishing the government's proposals for bids to supply rations and forage for removal. Many of the forms used for receipts came from his press. Woodruff was also the contractor for subsistence and forage for a number of removals as well as half owner of the ferry formerly owned by Rorer, operating it during the Chickasaw removal. Hiram Abiff Whittington worked for Woodruff. In 1830, in a letter to this brother, Whittington described the structure in the context of Little Rock: "You must know that Little Rock is a place half woods, half water, and half clay (not Henry), with log cabins strewed about here and there without any regard to order, regularity or convenience, and now and then a frame house is seen standing like a yellow-leg among a flock of peeps; besides about a dozen brick buildings, one of the largest of which is the one wherein your humble servant earns his daily bread by the sweat of his brow. It is a two-story house, with four rooms upstairs and four down. The largest room above is the printing office, Mr. Woodruff has an office on the lower floor, where he edits the paper, keeps a book-store, transacts a land agency business, etc. His wife and one child, mother-in-law, etc. occupy the balance of the house."²³

The McHenry House, now known as the Ten Mile House, on Stagecoach Road (Highway 5, formerly a part of the Military Road) was a public house, supply depot, and encampment point for Chickasaw and, perhaps, Choctaw removal contingents (See Illustrations 18 and 19). The present structure, dating probably from the mid-1830s, replaced the original log structure, according to present-day owners.²⁴

Undetermined Sites

At both the North Little Rock site and at Little Rock were other features of significance to removal, but their exact locations remain undetermined.

On the North Little Rock site, William E. Woodruff, who operated the lower ferry, apparently maintained a store house. In November 1838, Lt. Edward Deas, who was attending the Bell Contingent of Cherokees, shipped "a considerable quantity of the baggage, pot-ware and etc." of the group to Little Rock. George W. Long and Latham Rankin accompanied the cargo. Woodruff received \$10 for storage and for handling the baggage "from the steam boat to the store house," where he held it until December 15, when the Cherokees arrived at the North Little Rock site.²⁵ The absence of receipts for ferriage of the baggage suggests that it was stored on the north side, where the Bell party encamped. The location of the structure has not been determined. At that time, Woodruff owned the lands surrounding the ferry site. Somewhat later, in 1842, he advertised that he had livestock lots on both sides of the river near the ferry for the convenience of drovers. He also had at that time five stores and houses to rent on Water Street at the lower landing on the Little Rock side.²⁶

The United States also maintained a warehouse on the Little Rock side. Captain Jacob Brown used it to store leftover items following removal seasons and to keep rations delivered by steamboat.²⁷ In December 1838, John Percifull hauled six loads of pork and flour from the warehouse to the Little Rock Ferry for subsistence of the Chickasaws.

His charges indicate a short haul at a dollar a load, compared to the two dollars he charged for each load of corn hauled from Pope's farm to the ferry and four loads of fodder from Keatts' farm to the ferry.²⁸ In 1837 a local teamster was hired to transport rations from the steamboat landing to warehouses "situated in the upper part of the city."²⁹ The language indicates that it was away from the river, and may well have been where the Arsenal was later built. However, the site of the government warehouse remains uncertain.

Also uncertain is the location of a government lot, which Captain Brown fenced in early 1832. In February 1832 he wrote, "I have commenced fencing in a lot of about eighty acres, three miles from this, on the river; the advantages of which will be to receive the teams on their return to this place from the Kiamichi, where they will be refitted, the wagons put in repair, harness, &c, the crippled and broken down oxen and horses nursed and recruited, and the whole put in readiness for subsequent emigrating movements; in the mean time, they will be used to fill the several depots with provisions. . . . The land I am fencing belongs to the United States. A detachment of the 7th infantry having occupied it, and having erected several cabins, renders the position valuable for this service, as it will give quarters for the teamsters, blacksmiths, wagon repairers, and stowage for all the utensils belonging to the wagon train; tents, provisions, &c." When the troops abandoned the site, it was called Camp Interference and was described as being "about 3 miles below this town, near the bank of the Arkansas."³⁰

Finally, another yet unidentified feature is what was commonly referred to as Camp Pope, consistently described as three miles south of Little Rock.³¹ It was an encampment site used by Choctaws and Chickasaws before their journey from Little Rock to Fort Towson (See Section IV for various references to this site). Best estimates place this site near the junction of Roosevelt Road and Asher Avenue. Three Mile Creek, which is associated with this site but has not been identified, may be the small branch of Fourche Creek that crosses Asher Avenue just beyond Roosevelt Road.

Notes

1. Grant Foreman, "River Navigation in the Early Southwest," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 15 (June 1928), 44-46; Dallas T. Herndon, Centennial History of Arkansas (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing, 1922), I: 3.
2. Hogan, a Georgian, had served in the War of 1812 and settled on the river opposite the "Little Rock" shortly thereafter. When Thomas Nuttall visited the site during his 1819 journey up the Arkansas river, he noted that "there are a few families living on both sides upon high, healthy, and fertile land." From Hogan's place, he could look across the river at the Little Rock: "The façade or cliffs, in which it terminates on the bank of the river is called the Little Rock, as it is the first stone which occurs in this place. . . formed of a dark greenish coloured, fine-grained, slaty, sandstone, mixed with minute scales of mica, forming what geologists commonly term the grauwache slate, and declining beneath the surface at a dip or angle of not less than 45 degrees from the horizon." Thomas Nuttall, A Journal of Travels into the Arkansas Territory During the Year 1819, ed. Savoie Lottinville (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 115. Some sources say

Hogan established the ferry as early as 1818, but Nuttall makes no mention of it. Hogan sold the ferry in 1820 to William Russell, who the following year sold the ferry rights and a piece of land on the north side to Robert Crittenden and William Trimble. It was in Crittenden's hands when removal started. See Walter M. Adams, North Little Rock (Little Rock: August House, 1986), 20, 23. See also Alonzo D. Camp, "Ferries Over the Arkansas," Pulaski County Historical Review, 29 (Fall 1981), 52n.

3. For evidence of the Arkansas Post road, see, e. g., advertisement for stage route, Arkansas Gazette, September 19, 1832, and announcement of contracts for Choctaw rations, Arkansas Gazette, September 26, 1832.

4. For a history of road building over the eastern sixty-four miles, see Julia Ward Longnecker, "A Road Divided: From Memphis to Little Rock Through the Great Mississippi Swamp," Arkansas Historical Quarterly, 44 (1985), 203-219. See also Arkansas Gazette, November 13, 1827

5. Arkansas Gazette, April 11, 1832.

6. Adams, North Little Rock, 20, 25; Margaret Ross, "Lawyer David Rorer Dabbled in Politics During Nine Years in Arkansas Territory," Arkansas Gazette, May 21, 1967; Pulaski County Records, Deed Book E, p. 440 and Book F, p. 110-114; "David Rorer," Dictionary of American Biography, Dumas Malone, ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), 16:153-154. The Francis Imbeau property lay south and east of the junction of Highway 70 and Highway 165 in Rose City. Traces of the old post road appear on early plat maps. The road went north to Samson Gray's on Bayou Meto, through Moss's Prairie, and southeast through the Grand Prairie. Nuttall visited Daniel in 1819. Nuttall, A Journal of Travels, 114-115.

7. Ross, "Lawyer David Rorer"; Ross, "Lawyer David Rorer's Ferry Was a Landmark in the Pioneer Days of Little Rock," Arkansas Gazette, May 28, 1967.

8. Arkansas Gazette, May 2, 1832.

9. See William F. Pope, Early Days in Arkansas (Little Rock: Frederick W. Allsopp, 1895), 74-76

10. Albert Pike, "Letters from Arkansas," New-England Magazine, 9: 266-267, retrieved from <http://cdl.library.cornell.edu>.

11. Arkansas Gazette, June 19, 1833.

12. G. W. Featherstonhaugh, Excursion through the Slave States. Reprint ed. (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1968), 94.

13. Arkansas Gazette, April 8, 1834; Margaret Ross, "Lawyer David Rorer's Ferry."

14. Albert Pike, Letters from Arkansas (New York: George Dearborn, 1836), 29.

15. William N. Wyatt, Wyatt's Travel Diary, 1836 (Chicago: Private Printing, 1930), 10.

16. Adams, North Little Rock, 30-33.

17. Arkansas Gazette, July 18, 1838.

18. Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Pulaski, Jefferson, Lonoke, Faulkner, Grant, Saline, Perry, Garland, and Hot Spring Counties, Arkansas (Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1889), 404.

19. Arkansas Gazette, February 9, 1842. J. DeBaun was a merchant; the Alhambra was apparently the name of his store.

20. Arkansas Gazette, February 6, 1839.

21. Pike, Letters from Arkansas, 30.

22. For brief sketches of the history of these two structures, see the web site of the Historic Arkansas Museum: <http://www.arkansashistory.com/homes.asp>.
23. Margaret Smith Ross, ed., Letters of Hiram Abiff Whittington, 1827-1834 (Little Rock: Pulaski County Historical Society, 1956), 18.
24. Leslie Newell Peacock, "What Price History?" Arkansas Times, June 29, 2001; Frederick Hampton Roy and Charles Witsell, How We Lived: Little Rock as an American City (Little Rock: August House, 1984), 35-36.
25. Wayne Gibson, "Cherokee Treaty Party Moves West: The Bell-Deas Overland Journey, 1838-1839," Chronicles of Oklahoma 79 (Fall 2001), 327, 335n.
26. Arkansas Gazette, February 2 and 9, 1842.
27. See, e. g., 23rd Congress, 1st Session, Senate Executive Document 512, I: 232, hereafter cited as Document 512.
28. Receipt No. 3, Chickasaw Emigration C1039-38, Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, National Archives Microfilm Publication M234, Roll 144
29. Receipt No. 2, Pitcher and Walters, Chickasaw Emigration C816-38, ibid.
30. Document 512, I: 436; Arkansas Gazette, February 1, 1832.
31. See, e. g., Arkansas Gazette, January 4, 1832.

Part III: Removal Routes and Transportation

Indian removal was America's first experiment in moving large numbers of people over long distances. Thus two of the primary concerns in any research on removal are the routes traveled and the modes of transportation. The North Little Rock site offers a rare opportunity to examine both subjects because of its location at the convergence of major land and water routes through the state. Tribal people who passed by or through the site had traveled by practically every mode of transportation available at the time. Those who traveled the water routes went by sailing ships, steamboats, or towed keelboats and flatboats, or a combination of them. Those who traveled by land had done so by train, wagon, or ox cart or on horseback or by foot. Of the other states through which the routes passed, Arkansas had the least developed system of roads. The terrain, especially the swamps of eastern Arkansas, caused many removal parties to use a combination of land and water routes or to split into different parties and take separate routes. Navigation of the Arkansas River was at times unpredictable, and in times of low water, the North Little Rock site became a place where parties decided to continue to Indian Territory by land or to take their chances on the river.

Because of the strategic location of the North Little Rock site on the removal routes, the following survey of the major land and water routes at the beginning of removal as well as the changes in routes occasioned by removal will provide historical contexts for interpretation at the site.

Roads

The capital of Arkansas Territory had been established at Little Rock only a decade before the first removal party came through the North Little Rock site. Shortly after its establishment, territorial and national officials realized that settlement of the interior of the territory and military protection of its western frontier depended on construction of a road system. Travelers from the northeast could take the Southwest Trail that crossed the river just below Little Rock and continued southwest to the Red River country. It was travel directly across the territory from Memphis to points west that became the prime concern. Thus in early 1824, Congress passed legislation authorizing the construction of a military road from Memphis to Little Rock. During the next year a route was surveyed, and contracts were let for construction in the summer of 1826. Much of the road to the sixty-fourth mile west of Memphis had been completed when Lt. Charles Thomas, superintendent of the construction, reported in 1827 that the bottom lands of the Cache River and Bayou de View presented insurmountable obstacles to construction and asked for a change in the route. From the sixty-fourth mile, he proposed that the route go southwest to Mouth of Cache (present-day Clarendon), where there was a ferry over the White River. William Strong built this segment of the road in 1828. That year, as well, the road from Mouth of Cache to the headwaters of the Bayou of the Two Prairies between present-day Jacksonville and Furlow was completed in fairly

short order because the terrain through which it passed was high grassland known as the Grand Prairie.¹

Meanwhile, construction had gone forward on the western end of the Memphis to Little Rock road. Prior to construction of the Military Road, few roads existed in the area surrounding the North Little Rock site. In addition to the Southwest Trail from the north, a road from Cadron (near present-day Conway) went directly east to Crossroads, where it intersected the Southwest Trail, went on to Oakland Grove (later renamed Austin, now Old Austin), skirted the headwaters of the Bayou Meto and Bayou of the Two Prairies, and went southeast through the Grand Prairie to Arkansas Post. In 1826, Wright Daniel established a stage that ran every two weeks from his ferry, up the Southwest Trail to Oakland Grove, and from there to Arkansas Post. After the Military Road from Mouth of Cache to Little Rock was completed, the road from Arkansas Post was rerouted to connect with that road at Mrs. Black's public house near present-day Tollville. In 1827, Samson Gray of the Bayou Meto settlement received a contract to build fifteen miles of road from Little Rock to the Bayou of the Two Prairies, where the road from Mouth of Cache would meet it. By the end of 1827, the Military Road from Crittenden's Ferry at the North Little Rock site to Fort Smith had been nearly completed.²

When removal began, then, a system of roads connected the North Little Rock site east to Memphis and both west and southwest to Indian Territory. The road left the Mississippi opposite Memphis and went west, crossing Shell Lake, Blackfish Lake, and St. Francis River, all of which had ferries. From the St. Francis, the road crossed Crowley's Ridge by way of Village Creek to William Strong's public house north of present-day Forrest City. (See Illustration 20). From there it continued west across the L'Anguille River, which was bridged, to the sixty-fourth mile west of Memphis. There it turned southeast, passing near present-day Brinkley to Mouth of Cache (now Clarendon), where there was a ferry. From the White River, the road passed westerly across the Grand Prairie to Brownsville, just north of present-day Lonoke, west from there to present-day Jacksonville, where it joined the old Southwest Trail, turned south, crossed the Bayou Meto, which had been bridged, followed the old trail to the present-day McAlmont community, where it turned southwest, skirted a low range of hills, dropped off into the river basin, crossed a small cypress swamp, which had been bridged, and followed the high ground between two large cypress swamps to the river bank just east of Crittenden's Ferry. This road appears on 1855 plats and Civil War era maps of the area (See Illustrations 1 and 2)

Removal revived the segment of the old Cadron to Arkansas Post road between Cadron Creek and a point near Brownsville, which had received less use after construction of the Military Road between the North Little Rock site and Fort Smith. This route took travelers from Mrs. Black's public house in the Grand Prairie to James Erwin's settlement or "stand" at Oakland Grove, past Crossroads and the headwaters of Palarm Bayou to Cadron. Officials preferred that removal parties that had no reason to go to the North Little Rock site use this more direct route from the Grand Prairie to Indian Territory.³

Removal also caused a change in the road from Memphis that had significant bearing on the North Little Rock site. Anticipating Choctaw removal through the central part of the territory, Congress appropriated funds in 1832 to repair the road from Memphis to Little Rock, placing the repairs under the direction of newly appointed

Territorial Governor John Pope. Instead of repairs, Pope authorized a rerouting of part of the road. The contract for the first five miles from Crittenden's Ferry went to David Rorer and his friends Samson Gray and Samuel M. Rutherford. This was without question a political deal, which was fortunate for Rorer, whose ferry enterprise had suffered from restricted business because the Memphis road led to Crittenden's Ferry, bypassing Rorer's by 200 to 300 yards. Rorer had intended to cut a private road to intersect the public road when politics intervened in his behalf. In earlier years, Gray had had the contract for improving the original road and had built bridges over Bayou Meto and over a cypress swamp near the North Little Rock site. Thus he knew the area well. They began construction at Crittenden's Ferry, routed the road along the river bank to Rorer's Ferry and from there along the river and northeasterly to intersect the Daniel Ferry road and from there northerly to its juncture with the Bayou Meto-Little Rock road near Willie Beasley's farm (See Illustration 1).⁴ The five miles of road that Rorer and his partners constructed would have taken it approximately to present-day Prothro Junction. This route, through the Rose City section of North Little Rock, is on high ground, the land falling sharply away to the river bottom on one side and gradually away to former swamp land on the other.

The new road gave Rorer the advantage. Because most of the traffic came from the east, travelers arrived at his ferry first. Crittenden and his friends argued that Pope had rerouted the road to destroy the Crittenden Ferry. Pope's and Rorer's friends countered that Crittenden's prices were "extortion," which people were tired of, that it was Rorer's modern ferry that had destroyed Crittenden's business, and that the new road crossed no swamps but followed high ground until it intersected the old. The political controversy raged, and there were attempts to sabotage the road until January of 1833, when the Pulaski County court declared Rorer's the public road to Bayou Meto in place of the old one.⁵

By the time Rorer's new road was completed, Choctaw removal was once more underway. When the removal "season" of 1832-33 got under way, the fate of Crittenden's Ferry was sealed and the future of Rorer's assured by the cholera epidemic then raging along the Mississippi. The Indians, who had contracted the disease at Memphis, would not be allowed to cross at Crittenden's Ferry and go through Little Rock but would be routed to the east of town by way of Rorer's because of local fear that they would spread cholera. The city leaders of Little Rock asked Captain Jacob Brown, the disbursing agent for Indian removal at Little Rock, to have a road built from the river on the east side of town to connect with the existing road to Washington south of town to prevent the Choctaws from infecting the people.⁶ The crossing point on the east side of town was David Rorer's ferry, which landed at the foot of present-day Ferry Street. The road that Brown opened probably followed a portion of Ferry street south. With this event, the Rorer-Crittenden controversy was laid to rest. All remaining Choctaw contingents and, later, all Chickasaw contingents crossing the river did so at the lower ferry.

Removal and Internal Improvements

Indian removal coincided with the period when Arkansas was making its transition from territory to state and was beginning to develop its economic base. It also

coincided with efforts on the part of territorial leaders to encourage immigration to the territory. Leaders pushed for federal aid in road construction and improvement on that basis, but early on realized that removal provided an additional telling argument for appropriations for internal improvements.⁷ In 1832, for example, William Clark wrote to Senator William Hendricks of Indiana regarding the road from Helena to Mouth of Cache: “It is unquestionably a road of very great importance to Arkansas and it will aid the general government much in the removal of the Indians.” To his letter A. H. Sevier added a postscript: “This point is immediately opposite the Chickasaw nation of Indians—when they migrate, they will of course travel this road. It should be improved in time for them.”⁸ In November 1833, in a similar vein, in a memorial to Congress, the Territorial Assembly sought improvement of the road from Arkansas Post to Mrs. Black’s in the Grand Prairie, arguing in part that the road would “facilitate the removal of that portion of the Southern Indians who may be destined to locate on the waters of Arkansas & be the means of great savings in transportation to the Government.”⁹

Construction and improvement of roads, however, did not guarantee convenient transportation. The quality and, therefore, condition, of the roads in Arkansas varied. For many years after statehood in 1836, the state did not provide revenue for road construction.¹⁰ The military roads were unquestionably the best, but they were far from adequate. Particularly problematic throughout the removal period was the segment of the Military Road between Memphis and the St. Francis River. In 1834 appropriations were made for surveying and reconstructing the road, which was rerouted in some places (See Illustration 20). The road from the St. Francis to the North Little Rock site was considered unfinished as late as 1836 and 1837, when estimates were made on the costs of completing it.¹¹ Despite efforts at improvement, however, the forty-mile stretch, usually referred to simply as the “Mississippi Swamp,” was subject to flooding much of the time and was either impassable or almost so most of the time. The Swamp, perhaps more than any other single factor caused removal parties or their conductors to choose water transportation rather than land.

Waterways

When removal began, steam navigation had already proved feasible on the Arkansas and White rivers, the two waterways that brought removal parties either part way or the whole way to the North Little Rock site.¹² In times of normal or high water, primarily in the spring, it was possible for steamboats to carry Muscogees and Florida Indians by way of the Mississippi and Arkansas from New Orleans to Fort Gibson, Choctaws from Vicksburg; and Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Muscogees from Memphis. Cherokees could travel the entire distance from Tusculumbia, Alabama, by way of the Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas. In times of low water, however, steamboats had difficulty reaching Little Rock or grounded on sandbars at various points below it, such as Fourche Bar about seven miles downstream. In 1831, appealing for funds to clear the river of snags and other obstructions, Arkansans used the prospect of Indian removal to make their arguments. William Trimble, speaker of the Arkansas House, said that “every branch of the river is, or shortly will be, lined with numerous tribes of Indians, with whom the Government contemplates a continual and friendly intercourse. The subject could not be the less interesting to the nation, and to the Territory, should those relations

be changed, (which is not improbable,) and we should find ourselves assailed by a savage alliance—a numerous, fierce, and desolating foe.”¹³ By 1832, snags had become such a hazard that the U. S. House of Representatives sought to improve navigation by transferring government snag boats from the upper Mississippi and Ohio during the winter months. Removal of obstructions began in early August 1833, and by the following February, the snag boats Archimedes and Heliopolis had worked their way up river as far as Little Rock.¹⁴

Water levels on the Arkansas, preferences of the contractors and conductors, or simple convenience made use of the White River an acceptable alternative. At no time during removal was it impossible to ascend from its mouth to Rock Roe, a few miles below Mouth of Cache. There, Indians and supplies were offloaded, and the removal parties traveled overland by way of the Military Road from Mouth of Cache through the Grand Prairie to the North Little Rock site or from the Grand Prairie near Brownsville to Cadron by way of Crossroads.

Low water on the Arkansas increased activity related to removal at the North Little Rock site. In those times, Little Rock became the turnaround point for the larger, deeper draft steamboats. The site thus became a transfer point for many removal contingents, some taking the Military Road toward Fort Gibson and others transferring to lighter draft boats that could ply the shallow waters upstream. A roll call of steamboats employed in Indian removal at the site includes the following:

In Choctaw removal the Reindeer, Walter Scott, Brandywine, Harry Hill, Archimedes, Thomas Yeatman, and Volant;

In Muscogee removal, the Harry Hill, Lamplighter, Majestic, Revenue, John Nelson, Thomas Yeatman, Black Hawk, Lady Byron, and Fox;

In Florida Indian removal the Compromise, Fox, Itasca, Renown, Liverpool, Ozark, Mt. Pleasant, Livingston, Tecumseh, North St. Louis, Buckeye, Orleans, John Jay, Little Rock, President, Swan, Lucy Walker, Quapaw, and Cotton Plant;

In Chickasaw removal the Cavalier, Fox, DeKalb, and Kentuckian;

In Cherokee removal the Little Rock, Itasca, Smelter, and Victoria.

Most of these boats were involved in the regular traffic on the Arkansas, and advertisements for them were commonplace in the Arkansas Gazette.¹⁵ Two of the boats, the Victoria and Lucy Walker, were Cherokee owned. Lighter draft boats such as the Fox, Mt. Pleasant, Tecumseh, and North St. Louis were brought into service at Little Rock at times of low water to carry removal parties upstream.

Before boarding steamboats in New Orleans, a number of the Florida Indian removal parties had sailed to the mouth of the Mississippi aboard brigs such as the Laurence Copeland and schooners such as the Harbinger. From there the sailing ships were towed by steamer to the U. S. Barracks at New Orleans, where passengers were transferred to steamboats that brought them to the North Little Rock site.

Overall, the water routes provided the quickest and least difficult method of moving large numbers of Indians from east to west (See Part IV [Chickasaw Removal] and Part V [Conditions on Boats] below).

Notes

1. For details of the funding, planning, and construction of these roads, see Julia Ward Longnecker, "A Road Divided: From Memphis to Little Rock through the Great Mississippi Swamp," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 44 (Autumn 1985), 203-219.
2. "Military Roads," American State Papers, Military Affairs (1831), 4: 27. See also Arkansas Gazette, February 25, 1825; January 3, 1826; March 20, June 12, August 21, September 4 and 18, October 2 and 30, November 13, and December 4, 1827; January 8, 1828. For Gray's involvement in road and bridge construction, see Carolyn Yancey Little, "Samson Gray and the Bayou Meto Settlement, 1820-1836," Pulaski County Historical Review 32 (Spring 1984): 2-16. Carolyn Kent supplied information on the stage route. Kent to Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., July 29, 2003, authors' file.
3. 23rd Congress, 1st Session, Senate, Executive Document 512, I 443. See also Arkansas Advocate, October 31, 1834 and December 4, 1835; Arkansas Gazette, September 26 and October 10, 1832, October 32, 1834, and December 4, 1835. Carolyn Kent of Jacksonville, Arkansas, has extensive unpublished research on this route.
4. Margaret Ross, "Lawyer David Rorer Dabbled in Politics During Nine Years in Arkansas Territory," Arkansas Gazette, May 21, 1967; Little, "Samson Gray and the Bayou Meto Settlement, 1820-1836," 11-12.
5. Arkansas Gazette, January 8 and 16, and April 24, 1833; Ross, "Lawyer David Rorer."
6. Arkansas Gazette, November 7, 14, and 21, 1832; Arkansas Advocate, November 14, 1832.
7. See, e. g., Memorial to Congress by the Territorial Assembly, November 2, 1831, in Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., Territorial Papers of the United States- Arkansas Territory 1829-36 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1934), 408.
8. Ibid., 508.
9. Memorial to Congress by the Territorial Assembly, November 5, 1833, in Ibid., 830.
10. Robert B. Walz, "Migration into Arkansas, 1820-1880," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 17 (Winter 1958-59), 321.
11. See 23rd Congress, 2nd Session, House Document 83; 24th Congress, 1st Session, House Document 300, 1; "Amount of Appropriations Necessary to Complete Certain Military Roads," American State Papers, Military Affairs (1837), 6: 985.
12. A steamboat reached the North Little Rock site as early as 1822. For background on steamboat traffic on Arkansas waterways preceding and during removal, see Grant Foreman, "River Navigation in the Early Southwest," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 15 (June 1928), 34-55, and Duane Huddleston, "The Volant and Reindeer, Early Arkansas Steamboats," Pulaski County Historical Review 14 (June 1976), 21-33; Mattie Brown, "River Transportation in Arkansas, 1819-1890," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 1, No. 4 (1942), 342-354; and Sarah Fitzgerald, "Steamboating the Arkansas," The Journal. Fort Smith Historical Society 6 (September 1982), 2-25.
13. 22nd Congress, 1st Session, House Document 227, 4.
14. Ibid., 1-5; Arkansas Gazette, January 21 and February 4 and 11, 1834.
15. See e.g., advertisements and steamboat registers in Arkansas Gazette, March 22 and May 10, 1836, and May 9, May 30, and June 6, 1838. For details about some of the boats on the list, see Huddleston, "The Volant and Reindeer," 21-33; Foreman, "River Navigation in the Early Southwest," 34-55.

Part IV: Historical Documentation of Indian Removal Through the North Little Rock Site

Removal through the North Little Rock site began with the Choctaws in 1831, continued with brief interruptions until 1843, and ended in 1859 with the last major party of Florida Indians to remove under provisions of the Treaty of Payne's Landing (1832). The following narrative documents the major removal parties of Choctaws, Muscogeas, Florida Indians, Chickasaws, and Cherokees at the site, presented in the order in which each tribe's removal began. It makes no attempt to document the countless individuals or small family groups from all tribes who removed on their own resources or without conductors during that period.

Choctaw Removal through the North Little Rock Site

Legal authority for removal of the Choctaws was the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, signed on September 27, 1830, and ratified on February 24, 1831, making the Choctaws the first of the southeastern tribes to sign and ratify a removal treaty under the Removal Act of May 28, 1830. A census of the Choctaws that year totaled 19,554 who ostensibly would have to be moved from their homelands in Mississippi to their new lands west of Arkansas, lying between the Red River on the south and the Arkansas and Canadian rivers on the north. Even before the treaty was ratified, Choctaws sent private exploring expeditions west to locate choice places to settle, and Choctaws began to move west on their own in small groups. On their return trip home, the first exploring party met some of these groups on the road. The "official" Choctaw exploring party was headed by district chief Netachache, conducted by George S. Gaines, and included district chief Mushulatubbee. Both of these chiefs were powerful leaders. Netachache, a nephew of Pushmataha, had distinguished himself as a warrior and became chief of Pushmataha District in the mid-1830s. Mushulatubbee, also a distinguished warrior, had become chief in 1809. The third district chief, Greenwood Leflore, refused to go. The party went west in November 1830 and returned by way of Washington and Little Rock, where they arrived in early February, 1831 on their overland journey home.¹

By the time the exploring party left Mississippi, Greenwood LeFlore was deeply involved in Choctaw removal. Arguing that it was better for the Choctaws to escape the bad influences of the Mississippians, he organized a number of removal parties, sent them west, and became the agent to dispose of the property of those who left, thus enriching himself. These parties were poorly organized, outfitted, and provisioned and after hard winter travel arrived destitute in the West. They crossed Mississippi and traveled across southern Arkansas by way of Ecor a Fabre and Washington to the Kiamichi country.²

In 1831, the U. S. government finally began to lay groundwork for the systematic removal of the Choctaws by placing removal under the direction of Commissary General George Gibson. Despite the best intentions of his agents, early removals were conducted

on a trial-and-error basis, for such mass movements of populations had not been attempted before. Though the system was fraught with miscalculations and serious mistakes, there evolved during the next two years a practice whereby the majority of Choctaws would embark from Memphis or Vicksburg, travel up the Ouachita or the Arkansas as far as possible, and complete their journey by land. Contracts were let to local farmers in Arkansas to supply rations for the people and forage for animals. Supplies were gathered at depots located at strategic points on the route.³ Many of these stations on the central route became well known during the early 1830s: William Strong's, north of present-day Forrest City; Rock Roe, east of Roe; Mrs. Black's in the Grand Prairie; Samson Gray's, and the North Little Rock site or Little Rock, depending upon the routes the removal parties took.

By fall of 1831, Arkansans were anticipating the arrival of the Choctaws. Before the planting season that year, removal agents urged Arkansas farmers to plant corn and forage crops and produce as much beef and pork as they could to help supply rations for the Indians. In May, contracts were advertised for wagons, horses, oxen, and drivers, and in July for corn, beef, and salt to be taken to the supply stations along the route. Then on November 28, the Arkansas Gazette at Little Rock boldly proclaimed, "The Indians Are coming!!!" During the next two weeks, the paper reported the arrival of Choctaws at Arkansas Post. Finally, on December 18, the vanguard of removal parties arrived: 18 or 20 Choctaws driving 100 horses. They had crossed the Mississippi at Memphis, pushed through the Mississippi Swamp, and crossed the Grand Prairie. They encamped at the North Little Rock site for two days and then went up the Military Road toward Fort Smith.⁵ Indian removal through the North Little Rock site had begun.

Winter 1831-32 Removals

The first major group of Choctaws to reach the North Little Rock site consisted of 594 people in David Folsom's party, conducted by Lieutenant Stephen V. R. Ryan (See Illustration 21). They had traveled from Vicksburg to Arkansas Post aboard the Reindeer with a keelboat in tow, arriving on November 26. Originally destined for Little Rock, they had been unloaded at the Post so that troops bound for Fort Gibson could have the Reindeer for transport. There, they joined two other groups consisting of some 1,500 who were camped in the bitterly cold weather, poorly provisioned, and awaiting transportation. Folsom's party remained until December 13, departing with 44 wagons and 150 horses. There was little they could do during this period to protect themselves against the weather. On December 10 the temperature had gone down to zero, and during the following week the average temperature was 12 degrees. Folsom's party arrived at the North Little Rock site on December 21, destined for the Red River. They spent the next seven or eight days in crossing the river at Crittenden's Ferry, a small hand-drawn boat, and going into camp three miles south of Little Rock. On December 29, the group began its trek towards the Red River.⁶ The encampment site for this group became a regular stop for groups headed for the Red River. Often referred to as "Three Mile Creek" or "Camp Pope," its exact location has not been determined. The road leading from Little Rock followed the Wright Avenue and Asher Avenue corridors, and three miles from what was then Little Rock, would have placed the encampment most likely

somewhere near the juncture of Asher Avenue and Roosevelt Road (See Illustration 22). The next group arrived from Arkansas Post on the Reindeer with a keelboat in tow on January 15, 1832. Followers of Netachache, they had traveled from Vicksburg to Arkansas Post on the Walter Scott. Under the direction of Wharton Rector of Little Rock, the 1,100 Choctaws were unloaded about a half mile below Little Rock and moved three miles south to Camp Pope where they set up camp to await the arrival of the public wagons that would take them southwest to the Red River country. The Reindeer, meanwhile, returned to Arkansas Post for another load, and Rector's party awaited a group of 300 to 400 of their members who were en route by land from Arkansas Post.⁷

On the evening of January 22, the Reindeer returned with another group of 500 Choctaws conducted by special agent Dr. John T. Fulton, a former Little Rock physician and postmaster turned removal agent. These were followers of Mushulatubbee. Under the direction of Peter Pitchlynn, 406 had traveled to Memphis, intending to go overland to Fort Smith. They had found the Mississippi Swamp impassable, however, and Fulton had engaged the Brandywine to take them to Arkansas Post, where they transferred to the Reindeer bound for Little Rock. They remained aboard the Reindeer, anchored in the river overnight, and proceeded upstream the next day. Mushulatubbee's followers settled on the Arkansas, in part, to escape the influence of the missionaries, who had settled in the Red River country. It was Mushulatubbee's people that painter George Catlin visited in 1834, painting Mushulatubbee himself and Peter Pitchlynn as well as the Choctaw ball game and Tullock-chish-ko, the famous ball player (See Illustrations 23 and 24).⁸

Also on January 22, another group of about 400 Choctaws with from 200 to 300 horses, arrived at the North Little Rock site overland from Arkansas Post. Headed by Choctaw Robert M. Jones and conducted by Colonel Childress, these were the remainder of Rector's party (See Illustration 25) They crossed the river at Crittenden's Ferry, replenished supplies, and joined Rector's group at Camp Pope. By early February, all of the Choctaws encamped at Camp Pope had been sent in the direction of the Red River.⁹ This was the last major removal through central Arkansas during the removal "season" of 1831-32 and the last parties of any tribe to go directly through the town of Little Rock.

Winter 1832-33 Removals

Taking advantage of the Choctaws' experiences during the previous winter's removal, government agents developed a better-organized plan for the winter of 1832-33. Instead of Arkansas Post and Little Rock as gathering points for large numbers, officials determined to send them through Rock Roe on the White River. Those departing from Vicksburg or Memphis by steamboat could be taken directly there. Those who traveled from Memphis by land could follow the public road through the Mississippi Swamp to William Strong's just west of the St. Francis River. From there they could take the public road southwest to Mouth of Cache (now Clarendon) and be ferried across the White to join those at Rock Roe or travel directly toward Little Rock across the Grand Prairie.¹⁰

Ration contracts were written to ensure that the Choctaws would pass by Little Rock as quickly as possible. Ration depots were set up at strategic places along the routes. The first station west of Rock Roe was Mrs. Black's public house in the Grand Prairie, which served as a depot for all groups. To prevent the Choctaws bound for Fort

Smith from stopping at Little Rock, their next supply station was at Erwin's Stand, present-day Old Austin, about twenty-five miles north of the North Little Rock site, and the one after that was Palarm, northwest of the site. These groups, then, would simply pass through the region by way of the road from the Grand Prairie to Cadron.¹¹ Those crossing the river to go south to the Red River would be supplied at Mrs. Black's, then "at the north bank of the Arkansas river, opposite Little Rock," and next at Hurricane Creek near present-day Benton. Groups taking this route would quickly pass by Little Rock.¹²

These plans, however, frequently failed in implementation because of the cholera epidemic that reached Arkansas in the fall of 1832. Cholera had been progressing southward from Louisville and St. Louis and had arrived at Memphis when the first contingent of Choctaws arrived there in late October. These were followers of David Folsom, who arrived in two groups led by Wharton Rector. When the Reindeer arrived to transport them to Rock Roe on November 1, only 457 would board because they rightly associated the cholera with the steamboats. The remaining 400 with their horses and wagons started overland, directed by Lt. Joseph A. Phillips. By the time the Reindeer reached Rock Roe on November 5, two had died of cholera, and while they waited the two weeks that it took for the overland party to catch up, more than twenty died. They would lose about that many more after they left Rock Roe on November 14. On November 12, they were joined by a party from Greenwood Leflore's district, numbering 617, who arrived aboard the Harry Hill and Archimedes under the direction of Captain S. T. Cross. The combined party, as they took to the road, numbered about 1,400.¹³

On November 18, Folsom's party of about 800, conducted by Lt. Joseph A. Phillips, and Leflore's party, conducted by S. T. Cross began to arrive from Rock Roe. It was a rainy, cold day, and some of the wagons were delayed by mud because a new road only recently cut by ferry owner David Rorer and his partners had not been packed down by traffic. Phillips reported that the contractors who had agreed to supply the ration station at the North Little Rock site had failed to do so, but he was able to obtain hard bread and bacon from Disbursing Agent Captain Jacob Brown at Little Rock. Cross reported two deaths from cholera in his group that day, and when they arrived at the river, they went into camp with Phillips' group. Choctaws straggled in late that night and during the next day, which was cold and windy, making a ferry crossing too dangerous. They remained in camp, and the conductors issued rations to the Choctaws as they came in. There were three new cases of cholera. Cross and Phillips agreed that it would be better to separate, keeping a day's interval between the parties on the road. Cross's would go first. He issued rations and forage and late in the day began crossing the river at Rorer's Ferry, for by then, the city leaders had insisted that the Choctaws be rerouted around town by a new road, cut specifically for them to prevent their going through town. That road connected to the lower, or Rorer's, ferry. On November 20, a very cold day, Choctaws continued to arrive at the north bank of the river, while Cross's party completed its crossing and marched three miles and camped while some of the wagons were being repaired in Little Rock. Early the next morning, they began their march toward the Red River. Meanwhile Phillips' group had remained in camp at the North Little Rock site. On November 21, his group crossed the river and went into camp at

Three Mile Creek, where Phillips issued rations and reported three additional cases of cholera. Early on November 22, they followed Cross's party toward the Red River.¹⁴

By the time these groups departed the North Little Rock site, two other groups were on their way from Rock Roe. One consisted of about 1,800 Concha, Six Towns, and Chickasawhay people from Netachache's district who had reached Rock Roe aboard the Thomas Yeatman, the Volant, and the Reindeer. From Rock Roe they traveled in two groups, the Conchas under Lt. William R. Montgomery and the Six Towns and Chickasawhays under Lt. Isaac P. Simonton. F. W. Armstrong, the agent for Choctaw removal west of the Mississippi, traveled with these groups. Leaving Rock Roe on November 22, they reached Mrs. Black's in the Grand Prairie, where they overtook another contingent under Captain. John Page. Like Page's group, they were ill with cholera, and by the time they began to arrive at the North Little Rock site on November 27, nineteen members of the party had died.¹⁵

Simonton's and Armstrong's groups, numbering about 1,800, encamped at the North Little Rock site, receiving provisions and preparing to cross the river on Rorer's ferry. An estimated 600 Conchas, including Netachache, crossed on November 30 under the direction of Lieutenant Montgomery. Another group consisting of 629 Conchas crossed on December 1 under the direction of Lt. Jefferson Van Horne. The Chickasawhays and Six Towns people, also numbering about 600, crossed and were directed by Lieutenant Simonton. These groups left immediately for the Red River.¹⁶ These were the last Choctaw parties to go through the North Little Rock site during the 1832-33 season.

Page's group, meanwhile, had taken a different route. His was a combined detachment, primarily from Mushulatubbe's district, bound for Fort Smith. When they arrived at Memphis on November 3, most of the Choctaws refused to board the steamboats, which they associated with the spread of cholera. William Armstrong, the agent in charge of removal east of the Mississippi, left his jurisdiction and accompanied the Indians through the swamp. During the seven days it took them to reach Strong's Stand, many had died. At Rock Roe the boat and overland parties were rejoined. Directed by Wharton Rector and accompanied by Page, these 1,300 Choctaws set out with a train of 80 wagons. They were encamped at Mrs. Black's, with cholera raging among them, when they were overtaken by the group that Francis Armstrong accompanied. This group, because they were headed for Fort Smith, took the route by Erwin's Stand and Crossroads to intersect the Military Road at Cadron. Page's group was at Dardanelle by December 6. Page had arranged for subsistence for the group as far as Memphis, with no complaints, he said. His expenses were considerably less than they would have been for supplies from private contractors. Only when they reached Arkansas, where subsistence had been contracted, did the Choctaws begin to complain about short measures and receiving rations late. Out of the money he saved, he claimed, "I cut a road forty miles through a wilderness country. It was cheaper to do this than travel the old road, which was very bad, and a great distance out of our way: and, if the Creeks and Chickasaws should remove it is evident this will be the cheapest and best route for them to take, as also the balance of the Choctaws, whether they go to Red river or Arkansas."¹⁷

In early January, 1833, another group of Choctaws, apparently the last to remove during the winter of 1832-33, passed through the region on their way to Fort Smith.

These were about 500 of Mushulatubbee's people who had attempted to remove themselves. They had struggled through the Mississippi Swamp to a point about forty miles west of Memphis, where they gave up, built temporary shelters, and hunted to survive. William Armstrong found them in mid-December and sent them west under the direction of Wharton Rector. The Arkansas Gazette reported on January 9 that they "passed up through the Big Prairie, a day or two ago, on their way to Fort Smith," apparently by Erwin's Stand and Crossroads to Cadron.¹⁸

Winter 1833-34 Removals

The only contingent of Choctaws to pass through the North Little Rock site during the winter of 1833-34 reached there on November 27, 1833. Originally numbering more than 800, the group had reached Memphis in late October. About three hundred along with wagons and baggage were transported by the Thomas Yeatman with a keelboat in tow to Rock Roe, where they arrived on November 9. The others pushed through the Mississippi Swamp, which was surprisingly passable that season. The combined party traveled from Rock Roe to Mrs. Black's, where they divided into two groups. One of 176 under John M. Millard was going to Fort Smith, and the other of 641 under Captain John Page was going to the Red River. The former traveled west from Crossroads north of the North Little Rock site and did not pass through the site. The latter arrived at the site on November 27 and spent that day and the next crossing the river. Page, who had arranged for subsistence of his group the year before, found subsistence in Arkansas expensive. Corn was forty cents a bushel at Memphis, but two dollars on the Arkansas because a flood in June had destroyed the crops in the river bottoms.¹⁹ Rorer's ferry at the North Little Rock site had also been destroyed. Rorer installed an up-to-date ferry the following spring. What type of ferry he had in operation in the fall of 1833 is uncertain.

Subsequent Removals

Choctaw removal under provisions of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek officially ended in November of 1833. However, removals of small parties under other terms continued during the late 1830s and through the 1840s. All of these parties traveled by water, those on the Arkansas passing the North Little Rock site on their way.

Muscogee Removal through the North Little Rock Site

Although some Muscogees had voluntarily removed after passage of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, their enforced removal to Indian Territory did not really begin until after the signing of their treaty with the United States in 1832. That year, the Arkansas Advocate reported that 2,500 had removed and that 20,000, still remaining primarily in Alabama, were yet to go west.²⁰ All of those still to remove, whether traveling by water or land, would pass through Arkansas on the way to Indian Territory. Those who traveled by water would pass by the North Little Rock site, and most of those who went by land would go through it.

In addition to the anguish that attended departure from their ancient homelands, the Muscogees faced rigors of travel that the Choctaws, who had removed earlier, had not faced. Choctaw removal had been managed by the government. Contracts for rations and forage were let, and supply stations established at strategic points along the routes through the territory. Although the system at times failed, it was better managed than it was during Muscogee removal, which was placed first in the hands of the J.W.A. Sanford Emigrating Company and later contracted to the Alabama Emigrating Company, whose agents were lax in performing their duties and consistently exhibited an insensitivity to the needs of the Muscogee people. Whereas commodities had been in relatively good supply during the Choctaw removal and Arkansans along the route had enjoyed good profits, goods were more scarce during Muscogee removal, and prices in local markets were driven up. While some Arkansans took advantage of the market and engaged in price gouging, others began to feel resentment for the high prices caused in local markets by removal. That resentment was transferred to the Muscogees and, ultimately, to the Indians of Indian Territory as removal continued during the 1830s.

Page Party, 1834

The first major party to go through Arkansas was led by Captain John Page from Fort Mitchell, Alabama. This party of 630 had traveled by way of Tuscaloosa, Alabama; Columbus, Mississippi; and Memphis. By the time they reached Memphis, they had suffered greatly from the cold weather and exposure because they lacked adequate clothing. At Memphis, the party split. The majority of the people were placed aboard the steamboat Harry Hill for transportation to Fort Gibson, while the remainder, led by William Beattie of the Sanford Emigrating Company, driving a herd of about 200 horses, started overland toward Little Rock. Because of inclement weather and ice on the Arkansas River, it took the Harry Hill almost three weeks to reach Little Rock, where low water forced it to stop on February 24, 1835.²¹ The Muscogees were landed at the North Little Rock site, where they camped to wait for the overland group led by Beattie, who had already passed Mrs. Black's public house in the Grand Prairie by the time the Harry Hill arrived. In the camps, sickness had prevailed, and many had died. In this party were sixty-six slaves, who accompanied their owners: Jelka Hadjo, David Marshall, Thomas Marshall, Sally Stidham, John Stidham, Chou-e-hoc, and Whon Hoakey. There were also fifty-four slaves who traveled without their owners; and a "mulatto" named Charles, with four in his charge, traveled independently. The party left the North Little Rock site by wagon on March 1, bound for Fort Gibson. They encountered snowstorms and terrible road conditions, and did not reach their destination until March 28. Only 469 had survived the journey.²²

Fish Pond, Kealedji, and Hilibi Contingent, 1836

The next major party of Muscogees came through Arkansas in January 1836, also conducted by William Beattie. Lieutenant Edward Deas of the U. S. Army accompanied the group to make sure the people were provided for under the terms of the contract for their removal. The group consisted of 511 people from Fish Pond, Kealedji, and Hilibi towns, organized near Wetumka on December 6, 1835, by Benjamin Marshall, a half-

blood Muscogee member of the emigrating company, who with his family of eight and nineteen slaves, were in the party. Their route took them overland by way of Montevallo, Elyton, Moulton, and Tuscumbia, Alabama. From there they traveled by steamboat to Waterloo, where they were placed aboard the Alpha and two keel boats for the trip west. Besides Marshall's slaves, this group included 81 others, who traveled with their owners, and 34 blacks who traveled independently of their owners, including 12 of Opothleyahola's and 7 of Tuckebatche Micco's. Though slaves were included in most Creek removal parties, this party and the one preceding it included the vast majority of the 333 slaves that the Muscogees took west during 1835 and 1836.²³ On January 8, 1836, the Alpha with its two boats in tow arrived at the North Little Rock site and remained anchored for only one hour before starting up river again. Lieutenant Deas wrote in his journal that day: "The Boats got under way this morning about 7 o'clock, and we have come to-day between 30 & 40 miles. We passed through Little Rock in the afternoon without stopping and are now a few miles above that place. The Small Boat was sent on ashore at the town for a few minutes, but it is always a disadvantage to allow the Indians to stop at any place where they can obtain liquor. The most peaceable and apparently well disposed when sober sometimes becomes the most refractory and troublesome when intoxicated. There are some examples of this with the present Party."²⁴ Because of low water, the party did not reach Fort Smith until January 22.²⁵

Eufaula, Chiaha, Hichiti, Kasihta, and Yuchi Contingent, 1836

A few weeks after Deas' and Beattie's parties came through Arkansas, ads were run in the Arkansas Advocate and the Arkansas Gazette for proposals for subsistence of the Muscogees. In the ad, Capt. Jacob Brown, Disbursing Agent for Indian Removal, predicted that a large emigration, an estimated 5,000 Muscogees, would be moving through Arkansas to Indian Territory in 1836 and 1837.²⁶

In August of 1836, a party of 2,300 arrived at the North Little Rock site, having come overland from Rock Roe. These were primarily Eufaulas, Chiahas, Hichitis, Kasihtas, and Yuchis, whose resistance to removal and retaliation for fraud and violence against their people in the summer of 1836 had resulted in what Americans called the Creek "war." When the last of the main leaders, including Jim Henry, Echo Hadjo, and Eneah Micco, were captured or had surrendered in July, their people were rounded up and immediately sent to the West. From a staging point near Tuskegee, the men and boys were handcuffed and chained and marched double-file some ninety miles to Montgomery. Wagons followed with children, old women, and the sick. From Montgomery 2,498 were transported by boat to Mobile, where 2,300 were transferred to steamboats that took them to New Orleans, arriving there on July 18. They camped on the banks of the canal at the foot of Julia Street and, under the charge of the J. W. A. Sanford Emigrating Company, were put aboard the Lamplighter, Majestic, and Revenue for transportation to Rock Roe on the White River. Reaching there on July 29, they remained until August 8 while contractors obtained the wagons and livestock necessary to take them overland to Fort Gibson. Because only twenty wagons could be procured, many of the children, old women, and infirm had to walk, traveling at night because of the intense heat during the day. Although there had been acts of resistance at Montgomery and at Rock Roe, by the time they reached the North Little Rock site, they

were “peaceable and entertaining themselves in camp by ball playing, fishing, etc.,” according to Lt. John Waller Barry, disbursing agent for the party. From the North Little Rock site, the contingent continued overland along the Military Road to Fort Gibson, which they reached September 3.²⁷

These were without question the most destitute Indians Arkansans had seen. Rounded up and dealt with as prisoners of “war,” they had no time to prepare for their march. Most who had meager personal effects were obliged to carry them from Rock Roe westward because adequate transportation had not been arranged. The Yuchis had been sent on their way with practically nothing. Diet to which they were unaccustomed resulted in dysentery and diarrhea. In the summer season, fevers and cholera infantum were common. Fifty of those who died were children, and most of the others were the old and infirm. One had committed suicide, one had been shot by a soldier, and one had been bayoneted. Between New Orleans and Rock Roe, the rotten deck of a barge on which they were being towed collapsed, killing one and injuring several others. On their arrival in Indian Territory, Captain William Armstrong wrote that he had “never seen so wretched and poor a body of Indians as this party of Creeks; they have really nothing.”²⁸

The remainder of the “war” prisoners had been left at Montgomery. The party consisted primarily of women and children, the old, and the infirm. They left Montgomery on August 2, directed by Captain F. S. Belton, taken by steamboat to New Orleans. Despite extensive sickness among them, they were placed aboard the Mobile, which took them to Montgomery’s Point at the mouth of the White. By then a number had died. The sick were placed aboard a keel boat to be taken up the Arkansas, and those who could walk were marched through the swamps to Arkansas Post, which they reached on August 25. Because of the Texas-Mexican conflict, Arkansas volunteers had rallied and had gone to Fort Towson to replace regular troops, taking the available horses and wagons with them. It was not until September 6 that Belton could start his contingent west with what few rickety carts he could procure. They reached Mrs. Black’s public house in the Grand Prairie on September 9 and from there went across the Grand Prairie to Erwin’s Settlement, near present-day Old Austin, where they stopped on September 11. Belton’s journal for that date details the difficulties of their travels: “During the passage of the prairie, it has, with the exception of two days of scorching sun, rained almost all day and night. The situation of the Indians is deplorable. The sick exceed fifty of the small party and death occasionally carries off the weakest. The wagons or carts have been over loaded & great difficulties surmounted. To reach settlements forced marches have been necessary. Paid off & discharged the carts engaged at Post Arkansas.” At Erwin’s, Belton engaged three additional wagons for the Indians and one for the officers, and his procurement reflects the economic realities of central Arkansas at the time: “These are miserable small & old vehicles, poor teams and harness but better cannot be done. The charges too are high indeed the people taking advantage of an obvious necessity, & having heard of larger parties in the rear, very indifferent about engaging at all. What better can be done? The sick require attention to their situation & weakness, & the very elements are against us. There is nothing other in prospect. The best wagons being with the large hostile party in charge of Lt. Barry and the volunteers marching from the neighboring settlements for Fort Towson have engaged every good thing of the kind at enormous prices. The country is sparsely settled; we are at the mercy of circumstances.” Belton’s party traveled west from Erwin’s by way of Crossroads. On

September 14 they traveled twelve miles in a downpour to Greathouse's, and the next day, also in the rain, fifteen miles to Newell's at Palarm Bayou. By the time they reached their destination, nineteen had died and nine were missing.²⁹

Cusseta and Coweta Contingent, 1836

During November and December of 1836 several groups from the Muscogee Nation emigrated through Arkansas as U. S. officials began systematically to execute the provisions of the removal treaty. These parties had begun staging up in August. A military officer accompanied the parties to ensure that contractors met their obligations. The first to reach the North Little Rock site was a group of about 900 aboard the Steamboat John Nelson. This group was part of a contingent accompanied by Marine Lieutenant John T. Sprague.³⁰

The original contingent of nearly 2,000 had departed Tallassee on September 5. It consisted of nearly all of the remaining members of Cusseta and Coweta towns, including more than a hundred who had been hiding since the end of the summer's "war." Tuckebatche Hadjo, whom Sprague called "the principal Chief" of the region, had delayed preparations for removal because their crops had not been gathered and their livestock had not been sold. Once they reluctantly took up the march, their overland journey to Memphis had been fraught with the usual difficulties of overland travel. Added to these, however, was the indifference of the agents of the Alabama Emigrating Company, who were in charge of subsistence. Concerned for their profits, they departed camp whether the people were ready or not and made forced marches of up to twenty miles a day, leaving stragglers strung out along the route. They were reluctant to give the people a day of rest so that stragglers could catch up. After their arrival at Memphis on October 9, Sprague threatened to rescind the contract and assume responsibility for subsistence himself if the requirements of the contracts were not met. His threat was effective, for he later wrote: "The ready acquiescence of the Agents of my detachment to all my wishes, after crossing the Mississippi, deserves my decided approbation; they were unremitting in every emergency." Some of the men associated with the Alabama Emigrating Company had been part of the J. W. A. Sanford Emigrating Company. Most were speculators, and some were downright Indian haters. Sanford, for example, had made a name for himself as commander of the Georgia Guard that had for years harassed the Cherokees in their own nation³¹ A generous assessment of his views is that he cared little for the welfare of those Indians who fell under his contract.

Tuckabatche Hadjo's contingent remained at Memphis from October 9 to October 27. When they arrived, two other contingents were already there: Opothleyohola's contingent, accompanied by Captain M. W. Batman and a second group accompanied by Lieutenant R. B. Screven. And there were two behind Sprague's: Lieutenant Edward Deas' and John A. Campbell's. There were an estimated 13,000 members of the Muscogee Nation awaiting transportation across the Mississippi or down it to the mouth of the White. However, a lack of steamboats delayed movement. Because the Mississippi Swamp on the Arkansas side was impassable for wagons at that time of year, the conductors decided to take wagons, baggage, women, and children to Rock Roe by boat and send the men through the swamp with the horses. The party accompanied by Sprague was the third to leave Memphis, after Batman's and Screven's. Sprague,

however, sought to get ahead of these groups in order to acquire an advantage in obtaining subsistence. Thus he put about 1,500 women and children with a few men, equipment, and baggage aboard the John Nelson and two flat boats, which would take them directly to Little Rock, and sent between 600 and 700 men with the horses through the Mississippi Swamp.³²

The John Nelson unloaded a part of the group at the North Little Rock site on November 3, 1836. Swift current on the Arkansas had made towing the two flat boats impossible, so Sprague had left the remainder of the party encamped at Arkansas Post.³³ On November 6 the John Nelson returned to bring them up river. Meanwhile the majority of those who had gone overland through the Swamp joined those in camp at the North Little Rock site on November 4 and brought a message with them. Sprague wrote: "Many remained behind and sent word, that 'when they had got bear skins enough to cover them they would come on.' Here, they felt independence, game was abundant and they were almost out of the reach of the white-men. At first, it was my determination to remain at Little Rock until the whole party should assemble. But from the scarcity of provisions and the sale of liquor, I determined to proceed up the country about fifty miles and there await the arrival of all the Indians. Tuck-e-batch-e-hadjo refused to go. 'He wanted nothing from the white-men and should rest.' Every resting place with him was where he could procure a sufficiency of liquor. The petulant and vindictive feeling which this Chief so often evinced, detracted very much from the authority he once exercised over his people. But few were inclined to remain with him."³⁴ Subsequent events suggest that Sprague was likely wrong in his estimation of this man (See, e. g., Part VII below).

Thus on November 5 and 6, Sprague's party took up the march, leaving Tuckebatche Hadjo and a few of his followers, probably his family, behind at the North Little Rock site. Sprague's party traveled until they reached the supply station at Kirkbride Potts' place near present day Pottsville and there went into camp to wait until the remainder of his party could catch up.³⁵

There, as at the North Little Rock site, Tuckebatche Hadjo's party had members scattered behind them on the road. From Potts' place up river, Sprague had sent men back along the road as far as the Mississippi Swamp to find stragglers and bring them on. He wrote: "They collected, subsisted and transported all they could get to start by every argument and entreaty. A body of Indians under a secondary Chief, Narticher-tus-ten-nugge expressed their determination to remain in the swamp in spite of every remonstrance. They evinced the most hostile feelings and cautioned the white-men to keep away from them."³⁶ The stragglers that Sprague's agents picked up reached the North Little Rock site, probably on November 13 or 14, for they reached Potts' camp on November 17. Meanwhile, the John Nelson, which had gone back to Arkansas Post for the rest of the contingent, picked up Tuckebatche Hadjo at the North Little Rock site, probably on November 13, for it arrived at Lewisburg on November 14, and the chief rejoined his people at Potts' place.³⁷ The group arrived at Fort Gibson on December 7. Remarkably, only twenty-nine people died in this group, fifteen children and the rest old, feeble, or "intemperate."³⁸ But they arrived without Tuckebatche Hadjo. When Sprague's party left Potts' place, the chief remained, and was still on the road.

Opothleyohola's Contingent, 1836

While Tuckabatche Hadjo's contingent was still at the North Little Rock site, there were several thousand members of the Muscogee Nation on the way from Memphis. Two parties attended by Lieutenant R. B. Screven and Captain M. W. Batman had crossed the Mississippi before Sprague, but the decision to hire the John Nelson had put the latter in front. Also on the road were contingents headed by Lt. Edward Deas and John A. Campbell.

Batman had left Tallassee with Opothleyohola's contingent of 2,700 on August 31, 1836, but, because of claims against the Muscogees and other delays, did not reach Memphis until October 9. When they passed Tuscaloosa, the papers said, "They all presented a squalid, forlorn, and miserable condition, and seemed to be under the influence of deep melancholy and dejection. They are said to have left their homes with great reluctance but are becoming more reconciled to their destiny. Their situation excited much sympathy and commiseration in the breasts of our citizens, and many a heartfelt regret was uttered at the necessity which compelled us to remove them to the Far West." On October 13, some 1,200 of the party, primarily the followers of Opothleyahola, were put aboard the Farmer and reached Rock Roe four days later, while the remainder with their horses went overland. They were reported at Erwin's Stand, less than two days' march from the North Little Rock site, on November 3. From Erwin's Stand on November 7, Opothleyahola wrote Governor James. S. Conway, informing him that he had written permission from General Jesup to halt within the limits of Arkansas while he visited with General Edmund Gaines and transacted "other business" for his people, ten or twelve thousand of whom were now in the state. "We are here with friendly feelings," he said. Also signing the letter were Little Doctor, Mad Blue, Tuckabatchee Micco, and Ned, Opothleyahola's black interpreter (See Illustration 26). This party traveled from Erwin's to Cadron, for on November 8, the Arkansas Gazette reported that the party had "passed the cross-roads, 25 miles north of this place, for the west, on Thursday last." Batman's party eventually passed Sprague's, arriving at Fort Gibson on December 7. Batman attributed the slow progress of his party through Arkansas to rainy weather and bad roads.³⁹

Campbell's Party, 1836

John A. Campbell's contingent of 1,170 had been gathered by Lieutenant Edward Deas in Talledega district in early August and taken to Gunter's Landing, Alabama, where their numbers had swelled to 2,000. Deas sent this party on to Memphis under Campbell's direction by way of Huntsville and returned to Talledega to gather another party. Campbell's group reached Memphis on October 25 and went into camp a half mile below Memphis to wait while the other parties ahead of them crossed.⁴⁰ They departed Memphis on November 5, and, following the lead of parties before them, sent the equipment and part of the people by boat to Rock Roe and the remainder of people with the livestock through the Mississippi Swamp.⁴¹ On November 8, the Arkansas Gazette reported that Campbell's contingent was ten to twelve days away. This group apparently went west by way of the Grand Prairie and Crossroads. They made remarkable progress in comparison to the others; even though they were next to last in crossing the Mississippi, they arrived at Fort Gibson third in line behind Opothleyohola's and Tuckabatche Hadjo's.

Screven Party, 1836

Conducted by William McGillivray under the direction of Lt. R. B. Screven, another contingent had left Wetumka on August 6, numbering 3,022. They had increased by 120, probably from picking up stragglers, by the time they reached Memphis in early October. They, like the groups before them, split into two, part going by boat to Rock Roe and others going overland with the horses. They did not reach the North Little Rock site until November 20. Screven, like Sprague, laid the blame for his slow progress at the feet of the subsistence contractors.⁴²

When Screven reached the North Little Rock site, the 3,200 Muscogeese in his group encamped within “a mile and a half of Little Rock.” There, Screven took an extraordinary step, asking Governor James S. Conway to do whatever was necessary to keep the Muscogeese on the north side of the river. This group was not only in a sad condition, but the Arkansas public had begun to grow weary of Indians. As commodities became scarce and prices climbed, Arkansans began to blame the Muscogeese. The editor of the Arkansas Gazette complained that this was the third party to go through in three weeks, with others on the way. “Although they are by no means hostile or threatening,” he wrote, “yet they are, unquestionably a great annoyance to the public—and ought always to be sent with a strong guard.”⁴³

Deas Party, 1836

The last major contingent of Muscogeese to pass through the North Little Rock site was conducted by Lieutenant Edward Deas. After Deas had sent Campbell’s group on the way to Memphis, he returned to Talladega where he gathered another party of 2,320 and took them by way of Decatur, Courtland, and Tuscumbia, Alabama. They reached Memphis on October 25 and went into camp with Campbell’s group a half mile below Memphis to await their turn to cross.⁴⁴ Like the others before him, Deas decided to split his group into two, sending part by boat and others overland through the Swamp. However, at the last minute a large number for some reason refused to board the boats and started overland with a conductor Deas assigned to them, beginning their journey on November 5. At Rock Roe, Deas encountered the difficulties that Screven’s party had faced. Contractors had failed to stockpile sufficient supplies, and the conductor who had started overland from Memphis came in with only part of his party. The rest were strung out along the road without food or transportation. Deas waited until November 19 for the stragglers to come in. When they failed to do so, he went back over the road, as far as Strong’s on the St. Francis and found between 300 and 400 stragglers, some belonging to Batman’s and Screven’s parties, who had been abandoned by the contractors. He made arrangements to have them brought on and returned to Rock Roe to catch up with his party.⁴⁵

The main body of this party reached the North Little Rock site on November 27, 1836. Deas ordered them to remain encamped until the stragglers between there and the St. Francis had joined them.⁴⁶ While encamped, the Muscogeese became the focus of local resentment that had begun to surface with earlier parties. It primarily took the form of complaints of theft from unnamed citizens of Arkansas. Whether these allegations were made because of prejudice against the Indians or by greed, Arkansans were likely hoping

to make money off the Muscogees by claims of theft and destruction of property. The officers associated with these parties wrote letters to the Governor of Arkansas and to their superior officers complaining about these unfair accusations. One letter printed as fact in the Arkansas Advocate made it sound as if the Creeks were killing livestock along the trail throughout the state of Arkansas.⁴⁷ Governor James S. Conway, after hearing complaints that the Muscogees had killed livestock, stolen crops, and burned fence rails for fuel, felt compelled to take action. On October 22, he issued a proclamation, ordering the Muscogees to leave the limits of Arkansas and giving county militias authority to assist in carrying out his orders. On December 6, he ordered Deas to put his party on the road immediately and not permit them to encamp within the state for any extended time. He published his letter in the Arkansas Gazette as an official order for county militia groups to enforce. Lieutenant Deas responded to the allegations: rations had been issued regularly while the Muscogees were in camp, they had supplemented their diet by hunting and had used the plentiful downed timber for fuel. As for the latter, Deas invited the governor to cross to the north side of the river and witness for himself that the rail fences in the neighborhood were still intact. Deas charged that the complaints were a pretext to get the Muscogees out of the state because of high prices that resulted from their subsistence. High prices for commodities, however, were more than balanced, he argued, by the money that the removal was bringing into the state of Arkansas, especially money that was spent by the Muscogees themselves.⁴⁸ The agents of the emigrating company were also complaining that they were losing money by long delays. To them Deas responded that their contracts called for the removal of all of the party, not part of it, to the western country, not to Arkansas. Thus he would wait.⁴⁹

Captain John Stuart at Fort Coffee, Indian Territory, a receiving station for many of the groups, also believed that charges of depredations by the Muscogees were an attempt at fraud. No specific cases of such occurrences had been reported to him. Perhaps thinking about the kinds of fraudulent claims that had been made against the Muscogees before removal, he fully expected that such claims would follow, “founded in part, upon the Representations of respectable Citizens of Arkansas, but as many of the whites are well known to seize upon any possible pretext to make exorbitant claims against the Indians, it is not to be supposed that they will let the present opportunity escape them.”⁵⁰

Deas refused to follow the governor’s directive to move on, arguing that he would remain in the vicinity until the stragglers along the Memphis road came in. Among them were some of the leading men and their families, and the Muscogees in the main party were reluctant to move on without them. However, on December 9, he ordered the group to break camp because most of the stragglers had caught up. They moved three miles up the Military Road and encamped again. The following day Deas learned that one of the principal chiefs with a large number of followers was still two or three days behind him. Thus once more he decided to wait. Finally, on December 17, he ordered the party to move on while he went back over the Memphis road to look for remaining stragglers. On the morning of December 17 what he believed to be the last detachment of them passed through the North Little Rock site. Deas and his group finally reached Fort Gibson on January 23, 1837.⁵¹

In retrospect, Lieutenant Sprague laid much of the blame for the difficulties in getting through Arkansas on the Alabama Emigrating Company. Though

he believed the agents had done better in the latter part of their journey, he wrote: “A stupid indifference to the stipulations of the contract, and a disposition to break down the authority of the officer, and drive the Indians far beyond their powers, seemed to be the determination of these Agents.”⁵²

Contingent from the Cherokee Nation, 1837

It was not until the spring of 1837 that another party of Muscogees removed through the state. Led by Lieutenant Deas, this party of 543 left Gunter’s Landing, Alabama, on May 16. They were Muscogees who had fled their nation after the removal treaty of 1832 and had been living in the Cherokee Nation, where they were rounded up by militia. During the first sixty miles of their journey from Gunter’s landing, seventy-one escaped. Deas’ experiences on the overland routes during the previous winter made him feel that the easier and faster way to travel with the group would be one of the water routes. They traveled by flat boat down the Tennessee to Tuscumbia, overland from there to Waterloo, and from there by the steamboat Black Hawk. They made good time, reaching Montgomery’s Point and passing through the White River cut-off to the Arkansas on May 27. Travel on the Arkansas was excellent at that time, the river starting to rise due to the melting snows in the Rockies. The boat could run day and night, during one day steaming 75 miles. On May 31, Lieutenant Deas wrote in his journal: “We reached Little Rock this morning at 7 o’clock, stopped there about an hour, and then continued to run until 7 P.M. having come about 50 miles. . . .It rained last night but cleared up this morning before reaching Lt. Rock, and the weather is at present fine tho’ warm in the daytime. A female child died this afternoon, but nothing else of importance has occurred thro’ the day. The River is now said to be 12 or 14 feet above low water marks.” The river level remained good, and the Black Hawk reached Fort Gibson on June 4. Because of desertions and deaths, Deas delivered only 463.⁵³

Families of the Creek Warriors in Florida, 1837

November and December, 1837, brought more Muscogees through Arkansas on their way to Indian Territory. The largest of these parties was a group of about 3,000 led by Captain John Page, who arrived in central Arkansas the third week in November. This group consisted primarily of the families of 776 Creek warriors who had been recruited to fight the Seminoles in Florida. The government failed its obligations to protect these families from white marauders intent on driving them out and occupying their lands. Nearly 4000 had gathered near Montgomery by early March, 1837, and were later moved to Mobile Point, where they were kept in camps for several months under the direction of Captain Page. Some 500 were sent to New Orleans in April, and the remainder moved to Pass Christian, Mississippi, in July. By then, nearly 200 had died. The last of the warriors from Florida did not join them until October, when, finally, they were transported to New Orleans. Some under Lieutenant Sloan were sent toward Rock Roe on the Farmer, the Far West, and the Black Hawk. Another group of 611 were sent aboard the Monmouth, which collided with the Trenton and sank near Columbia, Mississippi, costing 311 Muscogee lives. Their numbers now reduced to about 3,000, the

Muscogees were put ashore at Rock Roe and continued to Fort Gibson overland by way of the Grand Prairie and Crossroads.⁵⁴

Contingents from the Chickasaw Country, 1837

There were two additional removals by water. On November 17, the steamer Fox with Muscogees aboard passed up the river, and on November 24 the Itasca arrived with about 800 aboard, directed by Captain Gouvernor Morris. These were Muscogees who had fled to the Chickasaws after the removal treaty of 1832. By late 1837, the Chickasaws had begun to remove; thus the Muscogees among them were rounded up and shipped out of Memphis. After a night's layover in the river, the Itasca went on upstream the next day.⁵⁵

On his return back east through Little Rock in January of 1838 Captain Page reported to the Arkansas Gazette that the emigration of the Muscogees through Arkansas was complete. Over 21,000 had passed through the state.⁵⁶

Florida Indian Removal through the North Little Rock Site

The removal of the Florida Indians can be marked as the most complicated and misunderstood of the five major removals through the North Little Rock site. Scholars have classified it the Seminole Removal, and by doing so they have commonly lumped numerous individual tribes under one title. In fact, Florida was the scene of a developing tribal structure at the time of removal as a result of the nearly complete eradication of the original inhabitants of Florida by European diseases by the late eighteenth century. The extinction of these peoples freed up the rich soils of the peninsula for others. Thus, indigenous peoples began to move into the area and create their own societies and cultures. Over time these groups established themselves and began to intermingle. In the early nineteenth century, seeing the benefit of unity, they slowly began the process of organization. However, this development also came at a time when the designs of U. S. removal policy fell upon the lands of Florida.

At the time of Florida Indian removal, there were at least eleven individual tribes consisting of 5,000 native people in Florida. These tribes maintained their own identity and were classified separately by the U. S. soldiers stationed in Florida during the Seminole Wars. These groups were the Seminole proper, the "Friendly Indians" or pro-removal Florida Indians, the Miccosukees (whose tribe is still federally recognized in Florida), the Tallahasseees, the Apalachicolos (who were at the time of removal recognized by U. S. officials as a separate entity), the Yuchis, the Spanish Indians, the Indian Negroes, the Negroes (runaway slaves), the Red-Stick Muscogees, and numerous other small groups that called Florida home.

These groups made up an extremely diverse population before removal, which made it extremely difficult for the Americans to treat with them. Through the Treaty of Moultrie Creek (1823), the Treaty of Payne's Landing (1832), and numerous "talks" and meetings, U. S. agents sought to convince the Florida Indians to remove to the West. However, the Indians of Florida saw no reason to leave their homelands. Whereas the removal process of the other major tribes was based on pressures from white settlers on native lands, the removal process of the Florida Indians was in fact a preemptive strike by

the United States Government to attempt to remove all native peoples of Florida before white settlers began moving into the area. Without the internal pressures from white settlers, the Indians of Florida had no immediate annoyance to facilitate their removal. Therefore, they could see no reasons for leaving their lands, except the spite of the third Government to claim sovereignty over their homelands in recent decades. This fact coupled with the questionable Treaty of Payne's Landing (1832) and Treaty of Fort Gibson (1833) as well as a basic desire to stay in Florida created the foundation for the Second Seminole War.

The Second Seminole War is key to understanding the removal of the Florida Indians. These Indians were the only members of the "Five Civilized Tribes" to resist and outlast the process of forced emigration by the United States Government. Thus, except for the 1836 removal of Holata Imata's pro-removal Indians, the majority of the removal groups from Florida were prisoners of war. This process created unique problems for removal. Instead of sending all of the members of a single tribe, federal officials sent people west as they were captured. This created mixed parties of the tribes of Florida. Thus, in one removal party one might see Yuchis, Negro Indians, Seminoles, and Miccosukees. In the past historians, journalists, and others who did not understand the tribal distinctions among the Florida Indians, simply lumped them all together as "Seminoles." As the war dragged on, in later years the U. S. did better at removing the Indians by tribes or bands

This removal resulted in over 4,200 people moving through the North Little Rock site, a process that began in 1836 and continued until almost the beginning of the Civil War. Even though the removal of the Florida Indians was the smallest in terms of numbers of people removed, it was in fact the longest and most expensive of the removals of the southeastern tribes. Several historians and even the Seminole Nation itself claim that the United States Government spent over 40 million dollars on the removal of the Florida Indians.

Holata Imathla's Band, 1836

On May 5, 1836, the first group of Florida Indians arrived at the North Little Rock site--Holata Imathla's band of pro-removal Florida Indians. Traveling on the steamboat Compromise with keelboat in tow, these "Friendly Indians," were marked as the only members of the Florida Indians that chose not to fight in the Second Seminole War, and it was this decision that forever divided Holata Imata's band from their countrymen.

This group arrived in North Little Rock with 382 members, a number that had dwindled from an estimated 400 to 500, since they had turned themselves into the United States Troops at Fort Brooke near Tampa Bay in November of 1835. They stayed at the Fort, acting as spies and scouts for the U.S. Army until April 11, 1836, when under the command of Lt. Joseph W. Harris they boarded a schooner and set sail for their new home. Traveling through New Orleans and up the Mississippi, this group entered the boundaries of Arkansas through Montgomery's Point. Upon arriving at the North Little Rock site, Lt. Harris immediately turned over the group to Captain Jacob Brown, disbursing agent for Indian removal. Brown stationed the group a quarter mile below

Little Rock to wait for favorable waters.⁵⁷ Two days after their arrival, Brown ordered Harris's assistant, Lieutenant George Meade to load the Indians back on the Compromise and move them to their new lands (See Illustration 27). On May 7, the group left the North Little Rock site for their new lands along the Canadian River. Harris wrote, "The Indians were allowed to recreate themselves in their encampment ¼ mile below the town (Little Rock) until the 7th inst, - when they were reshipped on board the Steamer & keel that brought them thus far, under the Charge of 2d Lt. Meade 3d Arty who had accompanied me as an Assistant from Ft. Brooke; and at 10 am they pursued their voyage up the river."⁵⁸

No other Florida Indians passed through or by the site until the spring of 1838, except for a small family of eight that passed by the North Little Rock site on June 1, 1836, led by Mr. Sheffield, acting superintendent of the removal of the Seminoles. This family was originally assigned to Holata Imathla's party but missed the boat at Tampa Bay while they were out fishing.

Micanopy's, Emathla's, and Jumper's Bands, 1838

The year 1838 is discernibly the most significant year for the removal of the Florida Indians. This year saw some 2,000 to 3,000 people pass through or by the North Little Rock site from Florida. The first of these groups came in May and June of 1838. Some 878 Seminoles and 257 Negro Indians traveled through on the steamboats Renown and South Alabama. Some 453 (about 150 of these were Spanish Indians) were on board the Renown, which left New Orleans on the morning of the of May 19, and 674 were on board the South Alabama, which left New Orleans on May 22. The latter included all the Negroes who had surrendered or had been captured, with the exception of the 32 left at New Orleans in the hands of the civil authorities because of a slave claim that had followed them from Florida. Those on the Renown were under the command of Assistant Conductor G.Y. Adde, Attending Physician S.S. Simmons, and ten U.S. soldiers as guard, and reached the North Little Rock site on May 26, passing up the river the same night, but because of low water they could not ascend more than one hundred miles farther. Those on the South Alabama were under the command of Lt. John G. Reynolds, Doctor James Simmons, and Lieutenant Terret with ten U.S. soldiers as guard. They reached the North Little Rock site on the evening of June 1.⁵⁹

While the South Alabama was anchored in the river, Lieutenant Reynolds called on the Governor of Arkansas, Sam C. Roane, for assistance. It was Reynolds' duty to try and separate the Seminole from some of their slaves, who were claimed by whites, but he knew this could not be accomplished without help from the local militia. In his letter to Roane on June 3, he said: "It appears from documents in my possession, and other papers in the hands of the attorney sent on for the recovery of the negroes, that they are those taken by the Creek volunteers, in the Seminole War, and have been sold by the Creek Delegation, who have been recently at Washington; the attorney Mr. N. F. Collins of Alabama was appointed by the delegation . . . I have agreeably to my instructions, given every assistance to Mr. Collins within my power, but have not the force necessary to compel the Indians and Negroes to submit to an identification - my only resort therefore is the aid of the Civil Authority. . . ." ⁶⁰ Roane flatly refused: "After due reflection on the subject I have determined NOT to afford you any assistance to carry

these instructions into effect. - And respectfully request of you not to attempt to turn over those negroes to the claimant, within the State of Arkansas and more especially in the neighborhood of Little Rock – And I require of you to proceed with your command of Indians and Negroes to their place of destination with the least practicable delay - that the citizens of Little Rock and its vicinity may be relieved from the annoyance of a hostile band of Indians and Savage Negroes.”⁶¹

Thus on June 4, Reynolds loaded his contingent onto two boats built with shallow draft and left the North Little Rock site. The steamers Liverpool and Itasca with keelboats in tow ascended the river about one hundred miles, where they joined the Renown. When the parties reached Fort Gibson, the final count of the combined parties totaled 1,069. In all, 54 died on the journey, including Jumper, who had died in New Orleans, and Emathla, or Philip, who died shortly before reaching his destination (See Illustrations 28, 29, and 30).⁶²

Co ho lata’s Band, 1838

The next group of Seminoles to travel through the North Little Rock Site was a party of 117. This group arrived in New Orleans on May 28, and within the week was loaded on the steamboat Ozark and shipped up the Mississippi. A short distance below Pine Bluff, the Ozark ran into a snag that tore a hole in the hull. The boat was immediately run onto a sandbar, and began to take on water. All of the passengers began unloading the ship’s cargo, and without the help of the Florida Indians much of it would have been lost. The next day the Indians were transferred to the Mt. Pleasant and taken up to the North Little Rock site; where they arrived on June 11. They were placed on the Fox and, on June 13, shipped up river.⁶³

Talmas Neah Party, 1838

On June 23, Captain Pitcairn Morrison passed the North Little Rock site with a group of 305 Florida Indians and 30 “Seminole negroes,” who had reached New Orleans on June 14. This group traveled through the site on the steamboat Livingston and numbered around 335 strong. At some point on the trip Morrison picked up more passengers, because upon arrival at Fort Gibson his numbers had increased to 349.⁶⁴

“Negro Indian” Party, 1838

On June 28, the 33 Negro Indians that had been detained in New Orleans because of a slave claim were finally allowed to leave for the Indian Territory under command of J. B. Benjamin. The Indians trusted Benjamin, who had been left with the blacks during their confinement, apparently at the Indians’ request. They were sent up river with 25 days’ supplies and reached the North Little Rock site sometime between July 7 and July 10. However, they were obliged to remain at the site because of low water and the absence of boats of shallow enough draft to ascend the river. Since it would take several days or perhaps weeks to procure transportation, the group decided to board the steamer Tecumseh, with Whiteley’s party of Cherokees (See Cherokee removal below). The

boat could go no farther than Lewisburg, 70 miles upstream, where the Negroes remained in camp with the Cherokees until the July 18. Benjamin procured two ox teams (numbering 12 oxen total), along with two wagons for land transportation later that day, and they continued by land.⁶⁵

Halpata Hadjo's (Alligator's) Party, 1838

Meanwhile, Lt. John G. Reynolds had left New Orleans on July 11 aboard the steamboat Itasca in command of 67 Florida Indians. They arrived at the North Little Rock site at on July 19 when they were also detained by low water. Reynolds could not find land transportation; thus on July 22, he risked taking the Itasca on up the river. On reaching Clarksville, Reynolds learned that the 33 Indian Negroes were encamped about eighteen miles from the landing. He obtained a horse and rode out to their camp. Within twenty-four hours, they were aboard the boat with Reynolds' 67 Indians and were on their way to Fort Gibson. On July 27 the Itasca stopped two miles below Fort Coffee and could go no farther, and the party completed their journey by land, arriving on August 6.⁶⁶

Apalachicolas and Dog Island Muscogees, 1838

The last major groups to go through the North Little Rock site in 1838 were the last remnants of the Apalachicola Tribe. When the Second Seminole War broke out, three groups of Apalachicola were left in Florida: Tamathli, whose micco was John Walker, Econchati, whose micco was Econchati Micco, and the remains of John Blunt's town that had decided not to emigrate with him to Texas before the war. Under the guidance of these leaders, the Apalachicolas assisted the United States Government against the Indian resistance. They were led to believe that since they were a separate group from the Seminoles and that by helping the United States, they would be allowed to remain in Florida. This was not the case. They left Pensacola on November 29, numbering around 250. Also aboard ship with them were 34 Muscogees from Dog Island. They arrived at the North Little Rock site under the command of Major Daniel Boyd aboard the steamboat Rodney. Because of low water, they were transferred to the North St. Louis, which left on November 23. The boat ran aground below Cadron, and the party traveled overland to the Indian Territory.⁶⁷

Coe Hadjo's Band, 1839

On April 2, 1839, the steamboat Buckeye arrived at the North Little Rock site with a party of 204. They had reached Fort Jackson, Louisiana, by sailing ship in early March, directed by Captain Pitcairn Morrison.⁶⁸ From there they embarked on the Buckeye for Fort Gibson. Their journey had been slow because of low water, and they remained anchored at the site while they waited for the water to rise. The Arkansas Gazette noted: They are all fat and good humored, and look as if they had been living a life of indolent ease, instead of being hunted like wild beasts from fastness to fastness. A good portion of the party is composed of women and children."⁶⁹ The report reflected the kind of misinformation the popular press engaged in regarding the Seminole "war."

There had, in fact, been little fighting for some time. Instead, General Thomas S. Jesup had been engaged in “negotiating,” and the Cherokees had sent a delegation to Florida to try to “negotiate” an end to the “war.” The truth was that the party looked well fed because they had been at St. Augustine for some time, subsisting on rations furnished by the Army.

They were primarily the band of Coe Hadjo, who had been to Fort Gibson before. In 1832, he had been one of the delegates who had traveled west to look at the land assigned to the Florida Indians. He had been taken prisoner along with Osceola under a flag of truce by General Jesup in the fall of 1837. He had served as a spokesman for Osceola in negotiations with General Joseph Hernandez before they were seized and imprisoned at Fort Marion in St. Augustine. He had served as a guide for the Cherokee delegation that had gone to Florida to mediate the war and aided them in bringing in Micanopy, Yaholochee and other leaders, whom Jesup imprisoned as he had done Coe Hadjo himself (See Illustration 31).⁷⁰

Though the Gazette had concluded wrongly about the Indians’ condition in Florida, it accurately reported in part the makeup of the group. There were only 30 men between the ages of 25 and 50, but there were 36 women in the same age group and 66 persons under age 25. However, there are some interesting omissions in the Gazette’s report. In addition to Coe Hadjo’s people, in this group were Abraham (whom the Gazette noted), Tom, Cudjo, and Tony Barnett, free black interpreters and scouts for the U. S., who had played a major role in the early years of the Second Seminole War. Also aboard were a number of other free blacks as well as slaves belonging to Micanopy, Sally, Nocose Yahola, and Micco Potokee.⁷¹ Though the Gazette mentioned Abraham, it did not report him as a “negro,” as most contemporary sources did, nor did it report the other 13 free blacks and 48 slaves, even though they made up 30% of the party.

This party arrived at Fort Gibson on April 13, having lost only one person: a member of the party of Miscar, who fell overboard and was lost on March 11.⁷²

St. Augustine Prisoners Party, 1839

Another group passed by the North Little Rock site in mid-December, 1839. This group of 48, all of who were under the age of 25, had departed St. Augustine aboard a schooner, reaching the U. S. Barracks at New Orleans on November 28, accompanied by Lieutenant B. Board. From there, they shipped out aboard the steamboat Orleans. The Arkansas was at low water, so the Orleans could go no higher than Fort Smith, where Board left the Indians in the care of Arnold Harris, who sent them on a few days later when the river rose. They reached Fort Gibson on December 23, 1839.⁷³

Seminole Delegation Party, 1840

Small groups such as the last two indicated that removal had all but halted. The war, as well, had ground to a halt. Because no large parties had been sent west since early 1839, in the summer of 1840 the United States ventured into a new strategy to effect removal: negotiation enhanced by monetary incentives. As a result, the next party

of Seminoles to travel the Arkansas by way of the North Little Rock site was going from west to east on its way back to Florida

This group was a delegation of Seminoles whose task it would be to persuade the Indians remaining in Florida to surrender for removal. The 14 Seminoles and two interpreters gathered at Fort Gibson shortly after August 1. They had made preparations for their families' care while they were gone and received talks from those who still had relatives in Florida to whom they were to deliver the messages. They were to travel under the direction of Captain John Page of the 4th Infantry.⁷⁴ Page listed the following delegates as he says they were interpreted to him "in Indian and English": Ho la too chee (Blue), No co se o ho la (Bear), Tus ta nuc cee chee (Lieutenant), Cotchar (Tiger), Hoth lee poye (Finish the War), Tommy Ho lata (Little Blue), Thuth lo Hadjo (Crazy Fish), Lifte Hadjo (Crazy Wolf), Ho pis Hadjo (Crazy Heart), No-co-see Tus te nuc kee (Lieutenant Bear), Antonio (Sharp Bullet), Par sack E O Hola (Sentinel), and Tony and Primas (black men), interpreters. Two other Seminoles were later added without translation, Capitsa Shopka and No cosa Hadjo. Despite their early preparations and apparent desire to go, the delegation did not get away from Fort Gibson until October 1 and passed the North Little Rock site a few days later on their way to New Orleans. There, they boarded the schooner Harbinger for Tampa Bay, where they arrived on November 7.⁷⁵

During the ensuing three months, the delegation was effective in getting large numbers, primarily Tallahasseees, to surrender for removal.⁷⁶

Tallahassee Band, 1841

In late March, 1841, a party of 221 of Tallahasseees and a few others, embarked from Tampa Bay and arrived at New Orleans on March 29. On April 4, the remaining 205 Indians, 6 "Indian negroes," and one black were placed aboard the steamboat President for Fort Gibson under the direction of Major William G. Belknap of the 3rd Infantry, Lt. John T. Sprague of the 8th Infantry, and Assistant U. S. Army Surgeon Barnes.⁷⁷

This party included the Tallahassee band of Echo Imathla and his subchiefs Parhose Fixico and Tustenuggee Micco. Also in the group were 24 Spanish Indian women and children, whose warriors had been killed by troops under Col. W. S. Harney; 5 members of the party of Dennis, a free black; a slave of Parhose Fixico; and a slave known as Friday or Jim, who was claimed as the property of General D. L. Clinch.⁷⁸ They passed by the North Little Rock site on April 10 or 11 and arrived at their destination on April 19. They were unloaded opposite the mouth of Grand River, loaded into wagons, and transported to the Deep Fork to join Micanopy's group.⁷⁹

Mixed Party, 1841

The next group to pass by the North Little Rock site did so about the first of June, 1841. This group of 206 arrived at New Orleans from Tampa Bay on May 13 with instructions from General Walker K. Armistead to have them vaccinated and to allow them to visit New Orleans for several days. Major Isaac Clarke, commander of the U. S. Barracks at New Orleans sent them on three days later aboard the John Jay under the

direction of Capt. Henry McKavett because he claimed that there were slave hunters with false claims hanging about. He ordered that no man be allowed to board the steamer until it reached the Indian Territory. LeGrand Capers, however, claimed that the water was high and boats were ready as the reason Clarke sent them on.⁸⁰ He expected them to make the trip in seven or eight days, but it was nearly a month before they reached their destination. Low water forced them to land near the Choctaw Agency on June 13, and from there they traveled overland to the Deep Fork.⁸¹

Seminole Delegation Party, 1841

In late September, another delegation of Seminoles passed by the North Little Rock site on their way back to Florida. This delegation apparently grew out of a desire on the part of some who had relatives in Florida to return and try to persuade them to remove.⁸² The delegation consisted of Alligator, Hotulke Emathla, Woxie Emathla, three other Seminoles, and an interpreter. They traveled with Captain S. B. Thornton and troops of the 4th Infantry under Col. John Garland.⁸³

Coacoochee (Wild Cat) and Hospetakee Bands

The next major removal contingent passed the North Little Rock site aboard the steamer Little Rock in early November 1841. Aboard were two major leaders, Coacoochee (Wild Cat) and Hospetakee (See Illustration 32). Of the two, Coacoochee was by far the more important. Known early in the war as one of the most prominent fighters in the field, he had been captured but had escaped and reentered the fighting. After the government entered a policy of negotiation, he had become a target of negotiators, who sent him as emissary to other leaders in an attempt to persuade them to come in and remove. In early June 1841, he was suddenly seized and shipped to New Orleans in chains. However, Colonel W. J. Worth, commanding the army in Florida, had him returned to Florida in order to bring his band in and to use his influence with the leaders remaining. It was through his efforts that Hospetakee was taken.⁸⁴ The party of 200 embarked from Tampa Bay on October 12 aboard the brig Laurence Copeland. From New Orleans they were shipped on October 24 aboard the steamer Little Rock under the direction of Captain Washington Seawell and Lieutenant Forbes Britton. They lost three on the way, and the remaining 197 arrived at Fort Gibson on November 12.⁸⁵

Coacoochee's Band and Others, 1842

Another party passed the North Little Rock site in late April 1842, aboard the steamer President. This party of over 200 had departed Tampa Bay on February 4, and had remained at the U. S. Barracks at New Orleans for several weeks under Captain T. L. Alexander.⁸⁶ They were joined by a group of 94, who left Tampa Bay on April 10, and all were embarked on the President. In this party were Coacoochee's family, his aunt's family, and Alligator's sister. After the President passed the North Little Rock site in late April, it was stopped by low water about sixty miles up river. After a lengthy delay, they went on, arriving at Webber's Falls on June 1. They were finally mustered at the Seminole Agency on June 14.⁸⁷

Halleck Tustenuggee and John Cavallo Bands, 1842

Another group of 100 under Lt. E. R. S. Canby arrived at the North Little Rock site in early August, 1842. This group, including the well-known chiefs Halleck Tustenuggee and John Cavallo (Gopher John), had reached New Orleans on July 21 and embarked the following day aboard the Swan. Superintendent of removal LeGrand Capers was doubtful of their time of arrival because the Arkansas was at a particularly low level.⁸⁸ His doubts were realized when the party was forced to abandon the Swan six miles below Little Rock and march overland to Fort Smith and the Choctaw Agency. This is the only land removal of Florida Indians through the site. Canby had no authority to requisition land transportation and, not having money, had to borrow money from the black chief John Cavallo to pay for the trip from the North Little Rock site to the Choctaw Agency (See Illustration 33). Though they suffered much sickness on the way, only one died. They were delivered to the Western Seminole agent at the Creek council ground on September 6.⁸⁹

Octiarche, Thlocco Tustenuggee (Tiger Tail), Pascofa, and Passachee Bands, 1843

Another party, consisting primarily of four bands, passed the North Little Rock site on March 11, 1843. The first two groups were 99, including Octiarche and his band and Thlocco Tustenuggee (Tiger Tail) and 26 of his followers. They arrived in New Orleans from Cedar Keys on January 1. Thlocco Tustenuggee, who had been quite ill from the outset, died while they were in New Orleans. Octiarche's group was followed shortly by Pascofa's band, which numbered 51. This party left Cedar Keys on January 26, 1843, under the direction of Lt. W. S. Henry.⁹⁰ This party joined Octiarche and Tiger Tail's bands at the U. S. Barracks at New Orleans. Then Passachee's band of 62 left Cedar Keys on February 28, and all four bands embarked from New Orleans on March 4, aboard the steamboat Lucy Walker. Capt. H. M. McKavett conducted the party. The boat made good time to Little Rock, but the water rapidly fell. Over a month later, they were encamped on the riverbank about twenty miles below Fort Smith. McKavett could not arrange land transportation because the contract with the captain of the Lucy Walker was unconditional. That meant that the steamboat owner was obligated to deliver his passengers at the point of destination in order to be paid. A rise in the Canadian watershed allowed them to go as far as Webbers Falls, where they arrived on April 26, after nearly two months en route. McKavett had them unloaded on the south side of the Arkansas to prevent their joining the bands of Coacoochee and Alligator, who remained in the Cherokee Nation.⁹¹

McKavett had taken good care of this group. He had made frequent and generous rations of beef, corn, salt, pork, and flour. Although the Indians had been accused of being improvident in the consumption of rations, this group reached the West well supplied, in part, McKavett thought, because of "their prudence in saving large portions in each family" or because of fear that the rations would be stopped in the West or,

perhaps, because there were a large number of children in this group, whose volume of consumption was lower.⁹²

This group arrived west with some deep-seated resentment against U. S. officials and their agents. Octiarche, Passokee, and Neah Emathla complained that the government had not fulfilled its promises regarding how much each person was to receive upon removal. Octiarche claimed that General Worth had forced them from their camps and told them not to mind the property they left: they would be paid for it. Capt. Screven, he said, made a list of what was left. Worth promised to pay them at New Orleans, but they did not receive it. Octairche said, "What has passed between us I have not forgot: The General has it in black and white, but I have it in my heart."⁹³

The five boxes of silver that Octiarche believed he had been promised might also have contributed to the hatred the group had for their two black interpreters, Toney Barnett and John Crews. Toney claimed to have been promised \$500 if he could induce the Indians to come in, and he said that the money was shown to him and that he was promised to be paid at New Orleans. However, when he reached there, no order had been received to pay him. General Worth said of Octiarche's and Toney's claims: "in respect to that scoundrel Toney, I only regretted that it was not lawful to have had him shot instead of emigrating him." Promises were made upon faithful fulfillment of his duty. But, Capers said, instead of doing his duty, he was soon caught at his "old tricks of duplicity and double dealing and finally his conduct was so bad and treacherous, that, as an example to the other interpreters the Commanding General ordered him to be soundly whipped and the punishment was duly inflicted."⁹⁴ The Indians blamed Toney and John Crews for betraying them to the Americans, and attempted to kill Toney shortly before they got to their destination, but he escaped. They succeeded with John Crews. One day, shortly after their arrival in the West, as he lay down to take a nap, several Indians told him that it had been a year since he had betrayed them, and with that they stabbed him to death.⁹⁵

Hiatus in Removal

In early February 1844, Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. Hartley Crawford wanted to transfer future Indian removal to the military officers in Florida. No party had left Florida for a year, the few remaining Indians were reluctant to move, and the army seemed indisposed to coerce them. Thus he saw no need to keep an agent. General Worth, commanding in Florida, thought that the time was not quite right and that a removal party might be collected soon.⁹⁶ LeGrand Capers, the Indian Office's removal agent, believed that future removals would be more tedious than any before and would require "knowledge and experience of Indian character" because of "the peculiar relation in war to the Indians remaining here." He said, "The greater portion of the warriors now remaining here, are young & have grown up since hostilities commenced in this country; consequently the difficulty in treating or even communicating with them, was great, from the fact, that they have been taught to engraft in their nature a deadly hatred to the whites, and to treat every overture as made to them, as a designing plot, to entrap & remove them without their consent."⁹⁷ By the summer of 1845, General Worth apparently felt that the time was right. Capers was relieved of his duty and Captain J. T. Sprague took his place.⁹⁸

Capichuche and Cacha Fixico Bands

No removals were effected for a number of years. In 1849 another delegation from the West went to Florida in yet another attempt to persuade the remaining Indians to remove. On February 28, 1850, eighty-five under Capichuche and Cacha Fixico boarded the schooner Fashion for New Orleans. Duvall and his Arkansas delegation followed them on March 13.⁹⁹

Small Party, 1850

Another “small party” under Lt. Enoch Hudson removed in late 1850.¹⁰⁰

Hiatus in Removal

The United States entered a long period of “peaceful” coexistence with the remaining Florida Indians, during which it experimented with a commission-on-removal policy. Under a private agreement, Luther Blake arrived in Florida in May, 1851 with authority to bribe or otherwise cajole the remaining leaders, primarily Billy Bowlegs, to remove. If successful, Blake was to receive a commission for every Indian who removed. Blake traveled to the Arkansas to recruit interpreters and could not return to Florida with them and a delegation from the West until late December. Despite months of talks and offers of bribes, 36 Indians—12 warriors and 24 women and children—removed in August 1852. Another western delegation went to Florida in early 1854 and returned in April, taking seven Indians with them to the West.¹⁰¹ These removal parties passed unnoticed by the North Little Rock site.

From 1854 on, attention focused on Billy Bowlegs. During the preceding five years, tensions between the Indians and whites had increased as the white settlers in Florida pressed southward into the areas that the Indians inhabited. By 1849, Billy Bowlegs was referred to as the “head chief” of the Seminoles and “acting chief” of the Miccosukees, who attempted to diffuse conflicts. But his task became more difficult after a survey of the Everglades was ordered. When a surveyor crew destroyed one of Bowlegs’ camps in 1855 and refused to pay for the damage, he attacked their camp on December 20, 1855, setting off what is termed the “Third Seminole War.”¹⁰² Knowing the difficulties of fighting a war in Florida, the United States set about trying to persuade Bowlegs to remove.

Those efforts paid off in 1858. That year, Elias Rector, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Southern Superintendency, and Samuel Rutherford, agent for the Western Seminoles, headed a delegation of 40 Seminoles and 6 Creeks led by Chief John Jumper. Through offers of money and other inducements, they persuaded Bowlegs to remove.

Billy Bowlegs Band and Miccosukees, 1858

On May 4, he and a party of 125, including Bowlegs and subchiefs Assunwha, Nocose Emathla, Foos Hadjoo, Nocus Hadjo (who was Bowlegs’ brother-in-law), and Fushatchee Emathla, left on the steamer Grey Cloud. They stopped at the entrance to

Tampa Bay and picked up 40 more, making a total of 39 warriors and 126 women and children. Among these were Bowlegs' brother-in-law Long Jack (John Chupco), his two wives, one son, and five daughters. Bowlegs was a man of considerable wealth, with 50 slaves and \$100,000 in cash. After spending a week in New Orleans, the party shipped out on the steamer Quapaw, arriving at Fort Smith on May 28, 1858 (See Illustrations 34, 35, and 36).¹⁰³

Bowlegs Party, 1859

Bowlegs, however, was not finished with Florida. In December 1858 he returned to his homeland with Rector and seven Seminoles and persuaded 75 more Indians to leave. They departed for New Orleans on February 15, 1859, and were back in the Indian Territory by early March.¹⁰⁴ This was the last Florida removal under the provisions of the Treaty of Moultrie Creek and, therefore, the last removal party of any tribe to pass the North Little Rock site on what was known as the Trail of Tears.

Chickasaw Removal through the North Little Rock Site

Although the Chickasaws did not sign a final removal treaty until 1837, they had long anticipated the inevitable. In November of 1830 a delegation of Chickasaw leaders passed through the North Little Rock site on their way to survey the land west of Arkansas for a potential relocation site. The Arkansas and Canadian rivers bound the land they were interested in. Ratification of the Treaty of Franklin (1830) depended on the results of the trip. A few months after their trip one of the tribal leaders, Levi Colbert, wrote a letter to President Andrew Jackson, saying the Chickasaws had found the land unsuitable.¹⁰⁵

Although the Treaty of Franklin was void, excitement grew over the possibility of emigrating Indians passing through central Arkansas. A few months after the 1830 delegation passed through Little Rock, the Arkansas Gazette reported on the probable route of the tribes through central Arkansas to their new homes. The strategic positions of the North Little Rock and Little Rock sites were evident.¹⁰⁶ By the time of Chickasaw removal, the possible routes had been well established by the Choctaws and Muscogeans, and those earlier removals had proved that Indian removal was a boon for the local economy.

In 1833 another delegation of Chickasaws went through the area on their way to Indian Territory to look for land under provisions of the Treaty of Pontotoc (1832). Other exploring parties went west in 1835 and 1836, but a treaty was not approved until January 1837. The exploring party of 1836 reached an agreement with the Choctaws at Doaksville, Indian Territory, whereby the Chickasaws could purchase a part of the western portion of the Choctaw domain as a permanent home. At the time, the Chickasaws numbered about 4,914 and 1,156 slaves.¹⁰⁷

Once this treaty was signed, arrangements were made for Chickasaw removal to begin in the summer 1837 under the supervision of A. A. M. Upshaw. Following the usual method for removal, each party would be assigned a conductor who led the party, a physician who not only took care of the Indians but determined how far they could travel each day, and a disbursing officer who supervised the distribution of rations between

depots. Upshaw arranged for subsistence stations at Memphis, the North Little Rock site, and Fort Coffee, with 100,000 rations deposited at the North Little Rock site.¹⁰⁸

In most ways, Chickasaw removal was the quickest, cleanest, and most spectacular (in its basic sense of spectacle) of all the removals. The vast majority of the nation assembled for removal in the fall of 1837 and, within a short time, passed through Arkansas, creating scenes like none witnessed before.

1837-1838 Removals

The first group of Chickasaws to go west to their new territory was led by conductor John M. Millard. Working with him was disbursing agent Captain Joseph A. Phillips. This party of 450 Chickasaws marched with their personal belongings, slaves, and livestock to Memphis, where they crossed the Mississippi on July 4, 1837. They found getting through the Mississippi Swamp with their wagons a difficult task because of heavy rains. According to Millard, they “traveled boggy roads and through mud and water, frequently up to the axletrees of the wagons. The distance we come to day is about eight miles and by every person acquainted with the roads considered a good drive.”¹⁰⁹ As the party continued through Arkansas, they were joined by other parties that had left Memphis after them. By July 16 they numbered nearly 500. On July 20, the party reached Mrs. Black’s, a well-known resting place in the Grand Prairie, and reached the North Little Rock site on July 25, by then numbering 516. In this train were 13 wagons and 551 horses. An estimated 30 Chickasaws who had not enrolled with the party were still behind and were expected to catch up.¹¹⁰

On July 26, the group remained in camp, preparing for the final leg of their journey. The plan was to hire steamboat transportation for the women, children, sick, and old, while the others were to go up the Military Road to Fort Coffee. Late that day, however, problems developed. Millard wrote, “At a late hour to day Lt. Morris came to our camp and informed that Rations had not been thrown on the road, on account of the impossibility of procuring wagons. This being unexpected caused some little delay, also some difficulty having arisen with the Indians as to the road they would go. They were told by E. Mubby a chief of the nation that they should go the Red River route and some of them are determined to do so, though contrary to the positive direction of myself and all concerned in the emigration. 8 P.M. The Indians after being twice in council concluded to disobey the wishes of the conductor and go as they had been directed by their chief. After much persuasion however they, by way of compromise, agreed that their women, children and infirm should go on board the steamer Indian and proceed to the Choctaw Nation by water, and that the young men with the chief Sealy should go by land with the horses.”¹¹¹

All was made ready for departure on July 27. Millard wrote, “We now believed that all difficulty was settled to their satisfaction but we were deceived. The baggage was scarcely on board the boat when Sealy the chief came and informed me that about 300 of his men, would go with him by way of Fort Towson and would go no other way. They could not be persuaded from this intention by all the arguments and instructions of the conductors and such citizens of Little Rock as were acquainted with the Indian character and the country through which they were compelled to pass. They were told the comparative distance of the routes and the impossibility of procuring food on any but the

Fort Coffee road, as the rations purchased for them were deposited at that place, but they could not be shaken from their determination. At 3 o'clock this day, Capt. Morris, Dis Officer, Doct Keenan direct. Phys., and myself left in the Steamer Indian with all the baggage and one hundred & fifty Indians for Fort Coffee. W. R. Guy, asst. conductor left at the same time with a party of thirty Indians, about one hundred Horses and two wagons for the same place by land. The party headed by their chief Sealy were determined to go to Red River and stop when and where they pleased." After Millard left his group at Fort Coffee, he turned back to Little Rock and on August 10 set out to overtake the group on the road to Fort Towson.¹¹²

During the summer and fall of 1837, about 4,000 Chickasaws enrolled for removal. Agent Upshaw made a contract with Kentuckian Simeon Buckner to transport them by boat from Memphis to Fort Coffee, using six steamboats pulling flatboats and keelboats to carry their property. Chickasaws would drive their livestock overland. In four groups they marched to Memphis and began establishing their camps on November 9. However, about a thousand Chickasaws decided to avoid the boats and go overland when they learned that the Thomas Yeatman, which had been used in earlier removals, had blown a boiler and killed a number of crewmen. Thus four boats left Memphis on November 25: the Fox, Dekalb, Kentuckian, and Cavalier. Meanwhile, the overland party with their wagons and horses crossed the river and started west. The steamboats carrying the Chickasaws took advantage of a rise in the Arkansas, went unnoticed past the North Little Rock site, and reached Fort Coffee in eight to ten days. Those who went overland were on the road for weeks. Part of the reason was their determination to take personal property with them. Upshaw wrote, "The Chickasaws have an immense quantity of baggage. A great many of the Chickasaws have fine wagons and teams." They also had 4000 to 5000 ponies, which Upshaw had vainly tried to get them to sell.¹¹³

The overland party, with its equipage, baggage, and vast herds of horses were remarkable scenes for travelers and residents. Bowes Reed McIlvaine, a Louisville merchant, crossed the Mississippi with the land party. Imbued with the romanticism of his day, he described them as they marched to the river. He wrote, "I do not think that I have ever been a witness of so remarkable a scene as was formed by this immense column of moving Indians, several thousand, with the train of Govt wagons, the multitude of horses; it is said three to each Indian & beside at least six dogs & cats to an Indian. They were all most comfortably clad—the men in complete Indian dress with showy shawls tied in turban fashion round their heads—dashing about on their horses, like Arabs, many of them presenting the finest countenances & figures that I ever saw. The women also very decently clothed like white women, in calico gowns—but much tidier & better put on than common white-people--& how beautifully they managed their horses, how proud & calm & erect, they sat in full gallop. The young women have remarkably mild & soft countenances & are singularly decorous in their dress & deportment. There were some white women, wives of Indians & they were decidedly the least neat of the party."¹¹⁴

Once across the Mississippi, they presented a picturesque sight. "I shall never forget," he wrote, "the singular picture the whole party presented, when all were got across the Miss--& in one mass covered the whole open ground on the bank. It was a scene to paint, not describe with words—civilized society is as uniform & tame in the dress & manner & equipage that a crowd has no life in it. Here however no one man was

like another, no horse caparisoned like another. Their clothing was of all the bright colors of the rainbow & arranged with every possible variety of form & taste—but all flowing & fantastic & untailorlike. I wish I could have sketched that scene, as they stood each above the other from the water's edge to the top of the ascending ground. They seemed grouped there, to present one grand display of barbaric pomp.”¹¹⁵

On December 2, Upshaw departed Memphis with 400 more Chickasaws aboard the Fox, which had returned from Fort Coffee, having delivered a first group. He arrived at Fort Coffee on December 7.¹¹⁶

One land contingent left on December 2, and the second was supposed to leave two or three days later. J. M. Millard conducted the first group with about 1100, and Joseph A. Phillips was to take the second group of about 200. There was a third group of 114 that had gone ahead of them and crossed the White River on December 7, with 72 horses, 58 oxen, and 3 wagons.¹¹⁷ Meanwhile, Millard's contingent reached Strong's on the west side of the St. Francis on December 10 with 38 wagons and 1,100 horses. The road through the Mississippi Swamp was bad, and a number of horses bogged and died in the mud. At Mouth of Cache, the government had paid to cut a road to a new ferry over the White River. They crossed there on December 6 and arrived at the North Little Rock site on December 13. On December 19, the Arkansas Gazette reported that the Chickasaws and their horses had “been lying for some days opposite this place.” Two days earlier, two or three hundred had left upstream aboard the Cavalier with Millard while the others went by land up the Military Road.¹¹⁸

Parties on the road had combined at the North Little Rock site. On December 10, some 1938 Chickasaws, 4098 horses and oxen, and 61 wagons crossed the ferry at Palarm Bayou, and on December 15 the same numbers crossed the Cadron.¹¹⁹

Phillips' party did not get away as soon as Upshaw had expected. On January 6, 1838, he crossed the White River with 979 Chickasaws, 888 ponies, 63 oxen, and 8 wagons. On his return from Fort Coffee, Upshaw found Phillips and his party encamped at the North Little Rock site. They had lost a large number of horses in the Swamp, and those that remained were in sad shape from “fatigue and falling off.” Upshaw ordered a ration of corn for them to help them recover.¹²⁰

Meanwhile, Millard was en route to the North Little Rock site with another contingent. He crossed the White River on December 24 with 1220 Chickasaws, 902 ponies, 246 oxen and 156 wheels (George W. Ferrabee, the ferry owner, charged by wheels rather than by vehicles). They reached the North Little Rock site in early January.¹²¹

In early February 1838, a contingent of nearly 799 Chickasaws reached the North Little Rock site under the direction of R. B. Crockett. They had departed the Chickasaw Nation east on January 15. They had with them 761 horses, 201 oxen, 48 wagons, and one cart. Friedrich Gerstaecker, the German traveler, found them at the North Little Rock Site when he arrived there on February 9: “Long after sunset on the 9th I arrived on the Arkansas river; the lights of Little Rock shone from the opposite bank, but a strange fantastic scene presented itself on this side of the river, on which I stared with astonishment. An Indian tribe had pitched their tents close to the banks of the river. A number of large crackling fires, formed of whole trunks of dry fallen trees, which lay about in abundance, offering good shelter against the wind; over the fires were kettles with large pieces of venison, bear, squirrels, raccoons, opossums, wild-cats, and whatever

else the fortune of the chase had given them. Here young men were occupied securing the horses to some of the fallen trees, and supplying them with fodder; there lay others, overcome by the firewater, singing their national songs with a mournful and heavy tongue. I stood for a long time watching the animated scene.”

Gerstacker continued, “A tall powerful Indian, decked out with glass beads and silver ornaments, came staggering towards me, with an empty bottle in his left hand and a handsome rifle in his right, and, holding them both towards me, gave me to understand that he would give me the rifle if I would fill his bottle. The dealers in spirituous liquors are subject to a heavy fine if they sell any to soldiers, Indians, or Negroes. The poor Indians have fallen so low, and become so degraded by the base speculations of the pale faces, that they will give all they most value, to procure the body and soul-destroying spirits. Though I had but little money left, only twelve cents, I declined the exchange; he turned sorrowfully away, probably to offer the advantageous bargain to some one else, in which case I thought it best to indulge the poor savage, and save him his handsome rifle; I took the bottle out of his hand, filled it, and gave it back to him. On my refusing to accept his rifle, he laid hold of me, and dragged me almost forcibly to his fire, obliged me to drink with him, to smoke out of his pipe, and eat a large slice of venison, while his wife and three children sat in the tent staring with surprise at the stranger. He then stood up, and in his harmonious language related a long history to me and to some sons of the forest who had assembled round us, and of which I did not understand a word. At last as the noise became annoying, I stole away quietly to seek a berth for the night.”¹²²

1838 Removals

In late May, 1838, the Gazette reported that “a party of near 200 of this tribe, who have been loitering along the roads on this side of the Mississippi, for some months past,” had arrived at the North Little Rock site the week before. Their intent was to cross the river and go to Fort Towson. When about half had crossed, John Millard arrived on his way down river. He persuaded most of them to recross the river because the provision station was at the North Little Rock site. Millard purchased wagons and about May 30 started up the Military Road with King Ishtehotopa, the Miⁿko, and his party. Those who remained on the Little Rock side of the river went southwest and paid their own way.¹²³

Subsequent Removals

Chickasaw removal was slowing down. On July 16, Upshaw reached the North Little Rock site with 130 more, and on November 26 he arrived with about 300 with their train of wagons, cattle, and horses. Two days later they were still crossing the ferry in preparation to going on to the Red River country.¹²⁴

Although the Gazette announced that this was the end of Chickasaw removal, small parties continued to make the journey west at least until 1850.¹²⁵

Cherokee Removal through the North Little Rock Site

Authority for removal of the Cherokees came from the Treaty of New Echota (1835), generally thought to be a spurious treaty because the United States negotiated with only a small minority of the Cherokee people. Nevertheless, the United States Senate ratified it. Following the treaty, a number of groups of Cherokees removed to the land secured to them by the Treaty of 1828. These groups included not only many of those who had favored the Treaty of New Echota but others who believed that removal was inevitable. The vast majority of the Cherokee people, however, remained in their homeland, beset by legal restrictions set on them by the State of Georgia, harassment by local whites, and confiscation of their property and other outrages, while Cherokee authorities sought legal remedy to their plight.

In May of 1838 the treaty deadline imposed for removal had passed. The United States Army began rounding up the Cherokees and placing them in camps. It was from these camps that the first groups began the process of the Cherokees' forced removal to Indian Territory in June 1838. The first four contingents, removed by the federal government, came by water and passed by the North Little Rock site. In the summer of 1838, the Cherokees received permission from the United States to remove themselves. The fifth group to pass through the site was one of the thirteen contingents organized by the Cherokees, but because they were Treaty Party adherents, their removal was the source of a bitter intratribal debate. The final party was the one including Chief John Ross, who came by water. The following historical survey focuses on only these six groups.

Deas Party, April 1838

Some time around 11: 30 A.M. on the morning of April 11, 1838, a party of 250 Cherokees under the charge of Lt. Edward Deas reached Little Rock aboard the Steamboat Smelter. This party had left Waterloo, Alabama, on April 6 on their way to their new lands in the West,¹²⁶ going by Paducah, Kentucky, on April 7, and Memphis, Tennessee, two days later. The party reached Montgomery's Point, Arkansas, at 3 P.M. on April 9, where Deas hired a steamboat pilot who could to navigate the Arkansas River. By 9 P.M. that evening Deas' party was traveling on the Arkansas, which, at the time, was not very high, making it impossible to run the steamboat at night. Deas became concerned that the party would not be able to go by boat much farther than Little Rock.

When they arrived there, Deas had the captain anchor the boat between Little Rock and the North Little Rock site while he conferred with the disbursing agent about problems with the river. Usually, when the boat was anchored, Deas let the party disembark for awhile. However, he knew that Little Rock had problems with whiskey peddlers. By anchoring in the stream, Deas hoped to prevent the whiskey peddlers from having access to the Indians. He decided to transfer them to another boat, the Little Rock at \$5 a person, to go upstream as far as possible. The party would have access to one of the keelboats, to the top of the other, and to the Little Rock except for the cabins.¹²⁷ Deas and his party proceeded five miles up the river to meet with the Little Rock.

Trouble continued to plague the group. On the morning of April 12 the party boarded the Little Rock and started upstream. Unfortunately, troubles persisted as they hit a sandbar only six miles into their trip. Deas became concerned that any more delay

would be dangerous to the health of the Cherokees. The main concern was smallpox, a disease he called “most fatal” to the Cherokees, which had reached epidemic levels in parts of Indian Territory. They reached White’s on the Lewisburg sand bar at 3 P.M. the morning of April 14, where they encamped for the night and were issued their rations of pork and flour for the next four days. The party continued a few days longer, stopping to encamp on sandbars or staying at houses along the way. At McLean’s Landing Deas found it impossible for the boat to go much higher. The party encamped for four days while he hired wagons and drivers to transport the party for the remainder of their trip. They were again underway by April 24, and on May 1 they finally reached Sallisaw Creek in the Cherokee Nation where the Disbursing Agent mustered them out.¹²⁸

Deas Party, June 1838

The second party of Cherokees to pass through the North Little Rock site arrived about 8 P.M. on June 17 and lay at anchor in mid-stream for about an hour. This was one of three groups totaling 2,000 that were gathered in early June of 1838 at Ross’s Landing, Tennessee. According to Lt. Deas, who also conducted this party, his group was made up of recently captured Cherokees from Georgia, and he found the majority of the group to be “...of the poorer class, and brought with them little property.” Thus, clothing was purchased from a fund set aside for the poor and given to them for the journey.¹²⁹

Before setting out on June 6, Deas estimated his group at around 650. He did not enroll them on the outset because he thought that with such a large number it would be better to start the journey as soon as possible. He also believed it better for the party’s health to set out immediately. The Cherokees were forcibly placed on the steamboat George Guess and six keelboats by twenty-three guards, who were in charge of keeping them from deserting.¹³⁰

The water route was similar to that taken by Deas and his contingent the previous April. They were to rendezvous with the Steamboat Smelter at Tuscumbia, Alabama. The party had some difficulty with one keelboat’s running aground and heavy fog, but, those were minor problems compared to the obstacle presented by Muscle Shoals. The party had to disembark at Decatur, where they boarded railroad cars to take them to Tuscumbia to meet the Smelter. Deas thought it unnecessary for the guard to go any further with the Cherokees so he dismissed them at Decatur on June 10. The train had to make two trips to transport the party. Unfortunately, the Smelter left Tuscumbia with only the first half of the Cherokees because the river was falling and the boat had to get past Colbert Shoals below Tuscumbia. Deas and the second half of the party encamped at the Tuscumbia landing on the night of June the 10. The next morning he discovered that over one hundred of the party had escaped during the night. By June 12 his party numbered only 489.¹³¹

The party stopped briefly at Memphis on June 13 and went on because good river and weather conditions ensured that the steamboat would be able to run all night. They reached Montgomery’s Point by 1 P.M. the next day, hired a pilot, and passed through the cut-off for the Arkansas River. Once on the Arkansas, the party was able to travel seventy miles beyond Montgomery’s Point. They encamped that evening along the river, where the provision of beef that Deas procured in Memphis was distributed. They left by

daylight the next morning and traveled another seventy miles by sunset, stopping fourteen miles below Little Rock where they encamped again.¹³²

On June 17 Deas' party again set out at daylight and reached Little Rock around 8 A.M. Again, to prevent access by whiskey peddlers, the steamboat anchored in the stream for about an hour. The Arkansas was rising, so Deas decided to leave the keelboat behind in Little Rock to increase the speed of the steamboat.¹³³

There were no problems with their travel by steamboat, except a "...slight accident, to the wheel" that caused a two-hour delay, in their journey. Within two days, the party arrived and encamped opposite Fort Coffee; they wanted to settle there because they had friends and acquaintances that had settled in the neighborhood. Deas arranged for their subsistence and made sure that they were issued cotton cloth for tents to help protect them from the heat, since this group had little in the way of possessions. The evening of June 23rd Deas mustered the Cherokees, reporting as 489; apparently no deaths occurred during their journey.¹³⁴

Whiteley Party, 1838

The next party to reach the North Little Rock site arrived on July 6, 1838. They had left Ross's Landing, Tennessee, on June 12 under the charge of Lt. R.H.K. Whiteley. This party was well staffed with two attending physicians, Mrs. Betsy Woodard as interpreter, and Betsy McDaniel as hospital attendant. They began their journey down the Tennessee on six flatboats. At Brown's Ferry more Cherokees joined the party, and two more flatboats were added. Gen. Nat Smith, the Superintendent of Cherokee Removal, accompanied Whiteley's party, which had a number of desertions. The party set out with an estimated 875 Cherokees, but by the time they reached Waterloo, Alabama, the number was much lower because of desertions. The desertions stopped when the party was put aboard the Smelter there.¹³⁵

They entered the Arkansas on July 4 and from there made good time, reaching the North Little Rock site in two days. But the progress stopped. Whiteley landed his party on the North Little Rock site on July 6. This party had resisted departure. Whiteley had bought clothing for those who were destitute, but they refused to take it. They refused to be mustered and to give their names. They deserted. Whiteley had estimated their number at 875 before he departed so he used the stop at the North Little Rock site to count the people. He wrote on July 6, "Started at 4 A.M. and landed the detachment one mile above the city of Little Rock on the opposite bank of the Arkansas river at 3 P.M. The boat was anchored twenty feet from the shore, a plank thrown out, and the Indians made to pass over it singly. They were then accurately counted and found to number 722. Making an allowance of two for the four deaths that occurred on the passage, I gave a certificate for 724."¹³⁶

Because of low water the party encamped on the north bank of the river to await arrangements for transportation. Whiteley's journal entry for July 7 through 11 reads, "Remained stationary on the river bank waiting for a light draft boat to carry the Detachment up. Much sickness in the party, diseases, measles & summer complaint. S.B. Tecumseh arrived on the 11th made a contract with the owner Mr. Gleason to carry the party on the steamboat & two keels to Fort Coffee or Fort Gibson for the consideration of \$5.50 per head, and should the river be too low to ascend on high to be

paid a proportion to the distance.”¹³⁷ On July 12, they departed the North Little Rock site, taking with them 33 Seminole Negroes who had also been stranded there by low water. Two days later, the Tecumseh grounded on Benton’s Bar near Lewisburg. The party remained in camp on the riverbank for six days, while Whiteley procured wagons, sending the people overland from that point. Before they got out of Arkansas more than half were sick, and on one day six or seven died. In all, seventy died on the trip. The survivors reached their destination around August 1, 1838.¹³⁸

Drane Party, 1838

The next party reached the North Little Rock site on July 26, 1838. Captain Drane’s party left Ross’s Landing, Tennessee, the same time as Lieutenant Whiteley’s party had left. Drane delayed in joining the party until June 25 when his and Whiteley’s parties were at Bellefonte, Alabama. The next day, as Drane was about to set his party on their march, word came that General Winfield Scott had agreed to put off further removals until the fall. Many of the Cherokees refused to go any farther and began to go back to Ross’s Landing. Drane received assistance from a militia company in Bellefonte to go after the Cherokees who had deserted, but about 225 escaped even with the militia’s assistance.¹³⁹ Gen. Nat Smith ordered Drane to muster the militia into service to accompany him for a month to help keep the peace with the remainder of the party.

Drane mustered out the militia at Waterloo, from where he intended to take his party overland to Indian Territory. He thought the water route approved by the government was “unhealthy,” preferring instead the overland route approved by the Cherokees at Ross’s Landing.¹⁴⁰ He was still in Waterloo when Smith arrived back from accompanying Lieutenant Whiteley’s party to Little Rock. Drane was still having problems with the Cherokees, even unable to fill out a muster roll for the party because they refused to give their names. Smith ordered Drane to comply with the approved water route. Drane reluctantly boarded his party on the Steamboat Smelter on July 14 to proceed west.¹⁴¹

About a week later, the Smelter was stuck thirty miles below Little Rock because of the low water. Drane’s party encamped while the Smelter went on to Little Rock with Drane’s request to Capt. R.D.C. Collins, Disbursing Agent in Little Rock, to arrange for alternate travel. Collins sent the lighter draft steamboat Tecumseh on July 25 to bring the party up to Little Rock.¹⁴² The party reached Little Rock on July 26 and encamped on the north side of the river about a mile above town, where they remained for about a week while Drane made arrangements for wagons to take the party on to Indian Territory. Many in the party were sick with what the Arkansas Gazette called “the summer (or bowel) complaint,” which had caused many in Drane’s party to die.¹⁴³

Drane’s party refused to go by land to Indian Territory. A rise in the Arkansas River made it possible for him to hire the steamer Itasca to take the party up. However, they were forced to land on August 13 and encamp one mile below Lewisburg, where Drane again began to make arrangements for travel by wagon. The party departed August 18, finally reaching Mrs. Webber’s in the Cherokee Nation west on September 4. The party was finally mustered out on September 7 greatly reduced from the number that started. According to Drane, the party numbered 1072 upon leaving Ross’s Landing, 293

deserted before reaching Waterloo, and 141 died along the route. With two births along the way, Drane's party numbered 635 when they arrived in Indian Territory.¹⁴⁵

Bell Contingent, 1838 -1839

The North Little Rock site did not host another removal group of Cherokees until December 1838. General Scott had issued an order at the request of the Cherokees, postponing removal until the fall of 1838 due to drought in the country they would travel through. The party that arrived at the North Little Rock site was one of the thirteen Cherokee land detachments, led by John Bell and Captain Edward Deas, who had made many trips to the west during Indian removal. This party was supposed to have traveled the Missouri route to Indian Territory, passing through northern Arkansas near present-day Pea Ridge. But the drought of the previous summer had caused Deas concern about how his party would fare in a drought-stricken area that many other Cherokee parties would be passing through. By going overland directly to Memphis and then by water from there, Deas hoped to avoid problems with obtaining supplies for the party. However, at Memphis Deas learned that the roads west of there to White River were in good shape enabling the party to travel overland instead of by water. From Memphis on November 23, Deas sent what he called "a considerable quantity of the baggage, pot-ware, and etc." to Little Rock in the custody of George W. Long and Leathum Rankin. By reducing their load, he hoped to make the overland trip to the North Little Rock site much faster.¹⁴⁶

Although one scholar suggests that the mortality rate was high, it was, in fact, low, given the size of the party and the distance marched overland. The group had lost seventeen members between October 11 and December 1. Another would die before they reached the North little Rock site, and one would die while they were encamped there. Dr. J. W. Edington, the attending physician, had stocked up on medicines before they left Memphis and bought more from William Strong on the way. Edington's tenure ended two days after the party reached the North Little Rock site. He was replaced on December 18 by Dr. Roderick L. Dodge.¹⁴⁷

They apparently arrived at the North Little Rock site on December 15. The Arkansas Advocate noted on December 19, 1838, that the party had arrived on the north side of the river "a few days since, where they have remained encamped." They were probably there by December 15, when George Long was relieved of custody of their baggage. William E. Woodruff, the ferry operator, received \$10 for storage of the baggage for the same period and for moving it "from the steam boat to store house."¹⁴⁸ Newly arrived Little Rock resident Releaf Mason, however, recorded in her journal on December 13 that she had that day visited the town, where she picked up a bit of news: "Heard of the unexpected death of a young lady of the Cherokee nation. A very pleasant young lady but I fear she had no interest in the blood of Christ."¹⁴⁹ This may have been a report of the death that occurred before they reached the North Little Rock site.

Local farmers and others provided the subsistence and forage for the party as they approached the North Little Rock site and while they were encamped there. C. G. Harris, who resided at Mrs. Black's in the Grand Prairie, John W. Garretson, and James Danley, a north side farmer, supplied corn. James Erwin supplied fresh beef on the day before the party arrived; Danley supplied corn meal; and James McClanahan and Pleasant McCraw,

who lived between Furlow and Bayou Meto, supplied corn and fodder. The mercantile firm of Pitcher & Walters of Little Rock ferried fifty-two pairs of brogans across to the Cherokees and supplied as well, bacon, coffee, salt, rice (for the ill), flour, and soap. On December 15, five days' rations of flour, corn meal, fresh beef, bacon, sugar, and coffee were issued to 660 Cherokees.¹⁵⁰

On December 16, Mrs. Mason and her husband attended a religious meeting, apparently on the north side of the river. She writes, "This morning after attending to our usual devotions, prepared for a meeting. Weather very cloudy and wet yet our carriage very tight and comfortable. When we came to the river our horses took fright at some Indians encamped near the road and came very near precipitating us into the stream. But Providence seemed to favor us and we all succeeded in crossing the stream and reaching the meeting house in safety." She noted that December 17 was "a wet rainy day," and then on December 18 she wrote: "To-day the Indians amounting to 700 passed off, which for several days have been encamped near us. Many of them very interesting, some Christians."¹⁵¹

John Ross's Party, 1839

The final party of forcibly removed Cherokees came past the North Little Rock site in February of 1839 aboard the Steamboat Victoria. This group of a little over 200 Cherokees, including the family of Cherokee leader John Ross (See Illustration 37), consisted of ill or otherwise feeble members of the Evan Jones and Rev. Jesse Bushyhead parties, who were picked up at Cape Girardeau because they were unable to complete the overland trek through southern Missouri and northern Arkansas into Indian Territory. The Arkansas Gazette announced the party's arrival on February 6, 1839 and reported the death of John Ross's wife shortly before their arrival. She was buried in the city cemetery sometime before February 6.¹⁵²

Notes

1. Grant Foreman, Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians, New ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972, 28-33, 47, 51n, 103-104n; Arkansas Gazette, November 30, 1830, and February 9, 1831.
2. Foreman, Indian Removal, 33-40.
3. See, e. g., Arkansas Advocate, August 31, 1831; Arkansas Gazette, November 7, 1832.
4. Ibid., 40-47; Arthur H. DeRosier, Jr., "The Choctaw Removal of 1831: A Civilian Effort," Journal of the West 6 (1962), 237-242.
5. Arkansas Gazette, February 23, June 13, August 31, November 30, and December 21, 1831.
6. Foreman, Indian Removal, 52-53; DeRosier, "Choctaw Removal," 244; Arkansas Gazette, December 28, 1831, and January 4, 1832; S.V.R. Ryan to George Gibson, January 11, 1832, 23rd Congress, 1st Session, Senate Executive Document 512 (5 vols.), I: 826-827 (hereafter cited as Document 512). A good brief history of the removal season of 1831-1832 is Muriel Wright, "Removal of the Choctaws to Indian Territory, 1830-1833," Chronicles of Oklahoma, 6 (June 1928), 113-119.

7. Arkansas Gazette, January 18, 1832; Wharton Rector to Gibson, January 19, 1832, Document 512, I: 827.
- 8.. Foreman, Indian Removal, p. 51; Arkansas Gazette, January 25, 1832; Harold McCracken, George Catlin and the Old Frontier (New York: Bonanza Books, 1957), 138-143.
9. Arkansas Gazette, February 1 and 8, 1832; Foreman, Indian Removal, 57-58. See DeRosier, The Removal of the Choctaw Indians (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1970), 129-147, for an overview of the Choctaw removals during the winter of 1831-1832.
10. Foreman, Indian Removal, 75. A good brief history of the removal season 1832-1833 is Wright, "Removal of the Choctaws," 119-123. See also Arkansas Gazette, September 26 and October 10, 1832.
11. Most current research on the Grand Prairie-Cadron segment of the removal route is being conducted by Carolyn Kent, Jacksonville, Arkansas. Some of her research on the Bayou Meto, Old Austin, and Crossroads areas is currently in press. See her earlier article on Samson Gray and Bayou Meto: Carolyn Yancey Little, "Samson Gray and the Bayou Meto Settlement, 1820-1836," Pulaski County Historical Society Review 32 (Spring 1984), 2-16.
12. Arkansas Advocate, October 18, 1832; Arkansas Gazette, October 10 and November 7, 1832.
- 13.. S. T. Cross, "Journal of Occurrences," National Archives Microfilm Publication M234, Roll 185, Choctaw Emigration 1833, National Archives Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Letters Received (this collection hereafter cited as M234, followed by the Roll number); Foreman, Indian Removal, 767-77, 81; J. A. Phillips to Gibson, October 31, 1832, Document 512, I: 786-787.
14. Foreman, Indian Removal, 78, 82; S. T. Cross, "Journal of Occurrences"; Phillips to Gibson, December 2 and December 22, 1832, and Cross to Gibson, January 10, 1833, Document 512, I: 632, 788-789
- 15.. Arkansas Gazette, November 21 and 28, 1832; F. W. Armstrong to Lewis Cass, March 20, 1833, Choctaw Emigration 1833, M234-R185; Foreman, Indian Removal, 87-93; W. R. Montgomery to Gibson, January 5, 1833, and F. W. Armstrong to Gibson, December 2, 1832, Document 512, I: 401-402, 771-772.
16. Foreman, Indian Removal, 93-94; Arkansas Gazette, December 5, 1832; Armstrong to Cass, March 20, 1833.
17. Foreman, Indian Removal, 80, 93; Arkansas Gazette, December 5, 1832; Document 512, I: 401-402, 787-788, 796.
18. See Foreman, Indian Removal, 80. The Arkansas Gazette reported on January 9, that they "passed up through the Big Prairie, a day or two ago, on their way to Fort Smith."
19. Foreman, Indian Removal, 101; Arkansas Gazette, November 13 and 29, 1833; Phillips to Gibson, October 23 and November 2, 1833, Document 512, I: 811-812. The Gazette of November 13 reported that Millard's group would "proceed up, via the Cross Roads, 25 miles north of this place, to Fort Smith." A good brief history of the removal season of 1833 is Wright, "Removal of the Choctaws," 123.
20. Arkansas Advocate, May 9, 1832.
21. Arkansas Gazette, November 25, 1834; February 24, 1835; March 3, 1835. For a more detailed account of this removal, see Foreman, Indian Removal, 126-128.

22. Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., Africans and Creeks (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), 115; Foreman, Indian Removal, 126-128.
23. Littlefield, Africans and Creeks, 115-117.
24. Gaston Litton, ed., "The Journal of a Party of Emigrating Creek Indians, 1835-1836," Journal of Southern History, 7 (May 1942), 236.
25. Arkansas Gazette, January 12, 1836; Foreman, Indian Removal, 142-144.
26. See, e. g., Arkansas Advocate, February 5, 1836.
27. Arkansas Gazette, August 2, 1836; Foreman, Indian Removal, 152-156.
28. Foreman, Indian Removal, 156-157.
29. See Captain F. S. Belton's Journal of Occurrences, 1836, Creek Emigration B121-36, M234-R237. See Arkansas Gazette, August 23, 1836; Foreman, Indian Removal, 158-160.
30. Arkansas Gazette, November 8, 1836; Foreman, Indian Removal, 164.
31. John T. Sprague to C. A. Harris, April 1, 1837, Creek Emigration S249-37, M234-R238. For a glimpse at Sanford's anti-Indian activities, see Cherokee Phoenix, March 5, June 4, August 20, September 3, October 29, 1831, and May 3, 1834.
32. Ibid.
33. Arkansas Gazette, November 8, 1836.
34. Sprague to Harris, April 1, 1837.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Foreman, Indian Removal, 162
39. See Arkansas Gazette, October 11, 1836; Foreman, Indian Removal, 160-162; Opothleyahola to James S. Conway, November 7, 1836, National Archives Record Group 94, Records of the Office of the Adjutant General, General Jesup's Papers, Letters Received, Box 12.
40. See Foreman, Indian Removal, 163.
41. See Edward Deas to George Gibson, October 26, 1836, and Deas to Gibson, November 5, 1836, Creek Emigration D17-36 and D18-36, M234-R237.
42. Foreman, Indian Removal, 162-163.
43. Arkansas Gazette, November 22, 1836.
44. Deas to Gibson, October 26, 1836; Foreman, Indian Removal, 163.
45. Deas to Gibson, October 26, 1836; Deas to Gibson, November 5, 1836; and Deas to Gibson, November 22, 1836, Creek Emigration D17-36, D18-36, and D26-36, M234-R237.
46. Deas to Gibson, December 19, 1836, Creek Emigration D35-36, M234-R237..
47. Arkansas Advocate, December 16, 1836.
48. Arkansas Gazette, November 1 and December 20, 1836.
49. Deas to Gibson, December 19, 1836.
50. John Stuart to R. Jones, January 15, 1837, Creek Emigration 1837, M234-R238..
51. Arkansas Gazette, December 20, 1836; Deas to Gibson, December 19, 1836; Deas to C. A. Harris, January 25, 1837, Creek Emigration D56-37, M234-R238.
52. Sprague to Gibson, December 20, 1836, Creek Emigration S167-36, M234-R237.

53. Creek Emigration Journal of Occurrences of Lt. E. Deas, May, 1837, and Deas to Harris, May 31, 1837, Creek Emigration D97-37 and D89-37, M234-R238; Foreman, Indian Removal, 188-189.
54. See Foreman, Indian Removal, 181-188; Arkansas Gazette, November 21 and 28, 1837.
55. Arkansas Gazette, November 21 and 28, 1837; Foreman, Indian Removal, 190.
56. Arkansas Gazette, January 17, 1838.
57. Joseph W. Harris to George Gibson, May 11, 1836, Seminole Emigration H73-36, M234- 290.
58. Ibid.
59. Journal of John G. Reynolds, March-June, 1838, Florida Emigration R277-38, M234-R290.
60. Reynolds to Sam C. Roane, June 3, 1838, Florida Emigration R280-R38, M234-R291
61. Roane to Reynolds, June 4, 1838, Florida Emigration R280-38, M234-290. For a history of the slave claims in question, see Littlefield, Africans and Seminoles, 36-43.
62. Reynolds to C. A. Harris, June 18, 1838, Florida Emigration R280-38, M234-R290.
63. Arkansas Gazette, June 13, 1838; P. Morrison to Harris, June 20, 1838, Florida Emigration M436-38, M234-R290.
64. Arkansas Gazette, June 27, 1838; Morrison to Harris, June 24, June 20, and July 6, 1838, Florida Emigration M418-38, M436-38, and M425-38, M234-R290.
65. Reynolds to Harris, June 28 1838, and Reynolds' Journal, June 28, 1838, Florida Emigration R272-38 and R277-38, M234-R290; Muster Roll, June 28, 1838, Florida Emigration R278-38, M234-R290.
66. Muster Roll, July 9, 1838, Florida Emigration R278-38, M234-R290; Muster Roll, July 11, 1838, Florida Emigration R290-38, M234-R290; Quarterly Statement of Agents, September 30, 1838, Florida Emigration R399-38, M234-R290; Reynolds to Harris, August 18, 1838, and Reynolds' Journal, July 11-August 5, 1838, Florida Emigration R290-38 and R277-38, M234-R290; Arkansas Gazette, July 25, 1838.
67. Boyd to Harris, October 28, 1838, and November 13, 1838, Florida Emigration B615-38 and B39-38, M234-R290; Boyd to T. Hartley Crawford, December 3, 1838, Florida Emigration, B655-38, M234-R290; Arkansas Gazette, November 21 and 28, 1838.
68. Morrison to Crawford, March 7, 1839, Florida Emigration, M674-39, M234-R291.
69. Arkansas Gazette, April 3, 1839.
70. John K. Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842 (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1967), 214-216, 223.
71. Muster Roll, March 6, 1839, Florida Emigration M674-39, M234-R291.
72. Muster Roll, March 6, 1839; Morrison to Crawford, April 16, 1839, Florida Emigration M705-39, M234-R291.
73. William Armstrong to Crawford, January 11, 1840, Florida Emigration A736-4, and Lt. B. Board to Crawford, January 20, 1840, Florida Emigration B866-40, M234-R291.
74. John Page to Crawford, August 19, 1840, Florida Emigration P846-40, M234-R291.
75. Foreman, Indian Removal, 374-375; Page to Crawford, November 13, 1840, Florida Emigration P872-40, M234-R291.

76. Page to Crawford, November 13, 1840; March 3, 1841; and March 14, 1841, Florida Emigration P872-40, P949-41, and P951-41, M234-R291.
77. LeGrand Capers to Crawford, March 19 and April 4, 1841, Florida Emigration C1369-41 and C1831-41, M234-R291.
78. Muster Rolls, April 1, 1841, B1175-41, M234-R291.
79. Foreman, Indian Removal, 378; Littlefield, Africans and Seminoles, 51.
80. Capers to Crawford, May 7 and 18, 1841, Florida Emigration C1404-41 and C1415-41; Isaac Clarke to Crawford, May 14 and 16, 1841, Florida Emigration C1410-41 and C1413-41, M234-R291.
81. William Armstrong to Crawford, June 14, 1841, Florida Emigration A1024-41, M234-R291.
82. D. R. Mitchell to Crawford, August 10 and September 27, 1841, Florida Emigration M1189-41 and 1208-41, M234-R291.
83. Foreman, Indian Removal, 378.
84. Capers to Crawford, July 8, July 27, and August 27, 1841, Florida Emigration C148-41, C1495-41, and C1521-41, M234-Roll 291.
85. Capers to Crawford, October 11 and November 6, 1841, Florida Emigration C1500-41 and C1557-41, M234-R291; Foreman, Indian Removal, 379; Littlefield, Africans and Seminoles, 53-55; Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War, 302.
86. Capers to Crawford, February 5 and February ? 1842, Florida Emigration, C1350-42 and C1352-42, M234-R291.
87. T. L. Alexander to Crawford, May 18, 1842, Seminole Emigration A1288-42, and June 1, 1843, enclosed in John McKee to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Seminole Emigration J1663-42, M234-R806; Littlefield, Africans and Seminoles, 57; Foreman, Indian Removal, 380.
88. Capers to Crawford, July 15, 21, and 24, 1842, Seminole Emigration C1762-42, C1767-42, and C1768-42, M234-R806.
89. E. R. S. Canby to Commissioner, September 16, 1842, Seminole Emigration C1802-42, M234-R806; Littlefield, Africans and Seminoles, 57-58.
90. Capers to Crawford, January 26, 1843, Seminole Emigration C1889-43, M234-R806, enclosing muster roll.
91. Capers to Crawford, February 23, 1843, enclosing muster roll, and March 2, 1843, Florida Emigration C1918-43 and C1970-43, M234-R291; Capers to Crawford, March 4, 1843, Seminole Emigration C1923-43, M234-R806; Henry McKavett to Crawford, April 15 and 26, 1843, Florida Emigration M1690-43 and M1698-43, M234-R291.
92. McKavett to Crawford, July 12, 1843, Florida Emigration M1772-43, M234-R291.
93. W. J. Worth to Crawford, May 28, 1844, enclosing statement of Octiarche, May 2, 1843, Florida Emigration W2445-44, M234-R291.
94. Worth to Crawford, April 12, 1845, with Capers' Endorsement, Seminole Emigration W2623-45, M234-R806.
95. Armstrong to Crawford, May 22, 1843, Seminole A1457-43, M234-R800.
96. Worth to Crawford, February 14, 1844, Florida Emigration W2378-44, M234-R291.
97. Capers to Crawford, March 23, 1844, Florida Emigration C2160-44, M234-R291.
98. Worth to Crawford, August 1, 1845, Seminole Emigration W2692-45, M234-R806.

99. Marcellus Duvall to Orlando Brown, June 30, 1850, Seminole Emigration D422-50, M234-R807; Kenneth W. Porter, "Billy Bowlegs in the Seminole Wars" (Part I), Florida Historical Quarterly 45 (January 1967), 232-233.
100. John Casey to Luke Lea, January 9, 1851, Seminole Emigration C50-51, M234-R807.
101. Luther G. Blake to Luke Lea, May 15, 1851, Seminole Emigration BB914-51; Balke to Lea, June 1, 1851, Seminole Emigration ?-51; Marcellus Duval to Lea, October 1, 1851, Seminole Emigration D680-51, Blake to Lea, December 28, 1851, Seminole Emigration ?-51, Thomas S. Drew to George W. Manypenny, August 26, 1853, Seminole Emigration D380-53, Blake to Charles Mix, September 8, 1853, Seminole Emigration B274-53, and Drew to Manypenny, May 13, 1854, Seminole Emigration D603-54, M234-R807; Porter, "Billy Bowlegs," 236.
102. Porter, "Billy Bowlegs," 237.
103. Ibid., 239-240.
104. Ibid., 241.
105. Arkansas Gazette, November 24 and December 29, 1830; Arrell M. Gibson, The Chickasaws (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 156-158, 173-174.
106. Arkansas Gazette, February 23, 1831.
107. Gibson, The Chickasaws, 182-183.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid., 183-184; Journal of Occurrences, J. M. Millard to Harris, September 23, 1837, Chickasaw Emigration M220-37, M234-R143.
110. Journal of Occurrences, J. M. Millard to Harris, September 23, 1837; Gibson, The Chickasaws, 184; Arkansas Gazette, July 25, 1837.
111. Journal of Occurrences, Millard to Harris, September 23, 1837.
112. Ibid.; Journal of Occurrences, Millard to Harris, September 17, 1837, Chickasaw Emigration M225-37, M234-R143; Gibson, The Chickasaws, 184; Arkansas Gazette, July 25, August 11, and August 15, 1837. For another account of this episode, see Gouverneur Morris to Harris, August 2, 1837, Chickasaw Emigration M100-37, M234-R143.
113. A. M. M. Upshaw to C. A. Harris, November 25, 1837, Chickasaw Emigration U26-37, M234-R143; Gibson, The Chickasaws, 1876-187.
114. John E. Parsons, ed., "Letters on the Chickasaw Removal of 1837," New York Historical Society Quarterly, 37 (1953), 280.
115. Ibid.
116. Upshaw to Harris, December 1 and December 7, 1837, Chickasaw Emigration U27-37 and U28-37, M234-R143.
117. Ibid.; Receipt No. 7, Daniel L. Jackson, Chickasaw Emigration C816-38, M234-R144.
118. Receipt No. 3, William Garson, Receipt No. 7, Daniel L. Jackson, and Receipt No. 1, John Barkelo, Chickasaw Emigration C816-38, M234-R144; Arkansas Gazette, December 19, 1837.
119. Receipts No. 39 and 38, Emzy Wilson and Thomas Martin, respectively, Chickasaw Emigration C816-38, M234-R144.
120. Receipt No. 7, David L. Jackson, Chickasaw Emigration C816-38, and Upshaw to Harris, January 26, 1838, Chickasaw Emigration U32-38, M234-R144.

121. Receipt No. 15, George W. Ferrabee, Chickasaw Emigration C816-38, M234-R144. See also Receipts No. 11, 12, and 13.
122. Receipt No.35, Frederick Fletcher and Receipt No. 27, Samuel Norris, Chickasaw Emigration C186-38, M234-R144; Friedrich Gerstaecker, Wild Sports in the Far West (New York, W. L. Allison, [189--?]), 91-92.
123. Arkansas Gazette, May 30, 1838; Gibson, The Chickasaws, 188.
124. Arkansas Gazette, July 18 and November 28, 1838.
125. Gibson, The Chickasaws, 188.
126. Edward Deas Journal of Emigration, April 1838, Special Case File 249, D217-38, National Archives Microfilm Publication M574, Roll 69, National Archives Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Special Files of the Office of Indian Affairs. This source is hereafter cited as M574, followed by the roll number.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid.
129. Deas to C. A. Harris, June 13, 1838, Cherokee Emigration D231-38, M234-R115.
130. Ibid.
131. Edward Deas, Journal of Emigration, June 1838, Special Case File 249, D217-38, M574-R69.
132. Ibid.
133. Ibid.
134. Ibid.
135. R. H. K. Whiteley, Journal, June 1838, copy retrieved from <http://www.mindspring.com/~wayne.gibson>; Foreman, Indian Removal, 294.
136. Whiteley, Journal, June 1838.
137. Ibid.; Arkansas Gazette, July 11, 1838.
138. Whiteley, Journal, June 1838; Foreman, Indian Removal, 295.
139. G.S. Drane to Winfield Scott, October 17, 1838, Cherokee Emigration S1555-38, M234-R114.
140. Ibid.
141. Nat Smith to Scott, July 12, 1838, S1073-38, Special Case File 31, M574-R4.
142. Arkansas Gazette, July 25, 1838; Drane to Scott, October 17, 1838.
143. Arkansas Gazette, August 1, 1838; Drane to Scott, October 17, 1838.
144. Ibid.
145. Drane to Scott, October 17, 1838.
146. Wayne Gibson, "Cherokee Treaty Party Moves West The Bell-Deas Overland Journey, 1838-1839," Chronicles of Oklahoma, 79 (Fall, 2001), 327-328.
147. Ibid., 329, 335n; see Alfred Edington's receipts, December 17, 1838, Edward Deas File, National Archives Record Group 217, Records of the Treasury Department, Second Auditor's Records, Indian Accounts; hereafter cited as Deas File. Thanks to Carolyn Kent for analysis of the errors in Gibson's treatment of events from Memphis to the North Little Rock site. Kent to Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., July 12, 2003, author's files.
148. Arkansas Advocate, December 19, 1838; Gibson, "Cherokee Treaty Party," 335n.
149. Releaf M. Smith Mason Journal (typescript), Arkansas History Commission, Small Manuscripts Collection, Box 11, File 5, p. 17.
150. See receipts to these men, December 13-18, 1838, Deas File. Thanks to Carolyn Kent for analyzing the receipt evidence and locating suppliers. According to Kent,

Pitcher had worked in earlier removals as a teamster and wagon master. Kent to Littlefield, July 12 and 29, 2003, authors' files.

151. Mason Journal, p. 18.

152. Foreman, Indian Removal, 309-310; Arkansas Gazette, February 6, 1839.

Part V: Conditions of Travel

The story of Indian removal was first told for the most part by non-Indian historians during a period when it was popular to believe that Indians were disappearing from the American landscape. Their renderings have been perpetuated and, until recently, have generally remained unchallenged and thus have come down to the present generation. Even some descendants of the Indians who were removed have unfortunately accepted the romantic interpretation. Thus when people think of the Trail of Tears, the image that comes to mind will likely be stereotyped and highly romanticized. Usually, it is an artist's rendering that shows people—usually Cherokees—trudging through snow, perhaps with mounted soldiers riding herd. Some are staggering, some are falling, some are dying, and all are forlorn. Evidence indicates that such renderings are fraught with misconceptions about the Trail and that, in fact, for the most part, conditions of travel were not like that at all, certainly for those groups who traveled through central Arkansas and the North Little Rock site.

Fortunately, such romantic interpretations are now being challenged. Interestingly, it is Indian historians who are doing some of the best revision of the history. A good example is a recent article by Cherokee scholar Lathel Duffield,¹ who analyzes romanticized Cherokee removal history, which began in the late nineteenth century with James Mooney, whose content and tone were perpetuated by Grant Foreman and later historians. Duffield shows how these writers have taken individual, isolated outrages and generalized them to apply to most Cherokee families, and he calls for starting over, going back to the original documents in search of a more balanced picture of removal. The balance that Duffield calls for does not mitigate the suffering of the people, nor does it diminish the significance of the questions Why were these people on the trail in the first place? and Why did they have to suffer at all?

Evidence related to Indian removal through the North Little Rock site quickly makes inroads into the stereotypical image of the Trail of Tears. One useful strategy in interpreting the conditions of travel, however, might be to indicate in what ways the realities and the popular images differ. Analyses of the following will offer some specifics of the conditions of travel related to the North Little Rock site to help in that process: removal season and weather, subsistence, overland travel, steamboat travel, and health conditions.

Removal Season and Weather

It is commonly believed that the tribes were forced to remove in cold weather. However, removal literature is rife with references to the “removal season,” an expression that referred to the period roughly between the first of October and the end of March. It was the preferred season because it was healthier. Hot weather was the fever season as well as the season of insects in the South. In the summer, temperatures in Arkansas were high, the lowlands were filled with mosquitoes, and the uplands by biting

green flies. There was also a practical reason for removing during the fall and winter: the Indians could reach the West in time to plant crops in the spring.

Weather could vary greatly during the removal season, and weather conditions, perhaps more than any other factor, determined in good measure the conditions of travel. How realistic, then, is the popular image of Cherokees trudging through snow under the watchful eyes of soldiers? Without question, the Cherokees did suffer in the winter of 1838-39, as any people would who were traveling overland more than 800 miles in those days. But they rarely experienced snow.² In fact, few of the removal parties on any of the tribes experienced snow, particularly those who went through central Arkansas, for that region was apparently no more likely to have snow in the 1830s than it is today. Those who did experience snow found it to have short duration.

Cold weather, however, was another matter. The winters of the early 1830s were unusually cold, causing much suffering of the people who removed during those seasons. The following examples will illustrate. In December 1831, the Choctaws in camp at Arkansas Post suffered terribly from the cold. Because they brought with them only a limited amount of personal effects, they were ill prepared for such weather. On December 10 the temperature went down to zero degrees, and during the next week, as the Choctaws made their way to the North Little Rock site, the daily average temperature was twelve degrees. The White River froze over at its mouth, and ice was floating in the Mississippi forty to fifty miles below Helena. In November 1832, Choctaws encamped at the North Little Rock site were beset by not only cold but rain and wind that delayed their river crossing.³ Captain Jacob Brown, disbursing agent for removal at Little Rock, understated the conditions of the 1831-32 removal season this way: "The past season was truly unpropitious. There appeared to be a combination of difficulties, which nothing but the zeal and devotedness of the superintendents and agents could have surmounted."⁴ Brown gave no credit to the staying power of the Choctaws.

The first major Muscogee removal party to move through Arkansas suffered perhaps like no other from the weather. They had with much difficulty reached the North Little Rock site on February 23, 1835. At Memphis, Captain John Page split his party, sending William J. Beatty and 72 Muscogees through the Mississippi Swamp with the party's horses, while he took the remainder aboard the steamboat Harry Hill, bound for Little Rock. In some places in the swamp, Beatty had to cut a path through the ice wide enough to drive the horses through, and in others they had to tie the horses' legs together and pull them across the ice. Page and his party aboard the Harry Hill fared little better. When they got to the Arkansas River they found it frozen over from its mouth to about five miles upstream. Page had trees felled into the river to break through the ice and then had the captain run the boat into it to break off a cake of ice at a time until they broke through to open water two and a half days later. It took the Harry Hill thirteen days to reach the North Little Rock site, the time it would take to make a round trip from Little Rock to New Orleans under normal circumstances. When he returned to Rock Roe to get Beatty and his party, he found the White River frozen and had to break the ice there as well. Despite the experience, Page later wrote, "There was not an Indian frozen to death but a considerable number chill blane and I had to have them carried the whole distance after it occurred."⁵

The overland trek from the North Little Rock site to Fort Gibson was perhaps worse. Page wrote, "We were up every morning by 4 Ock, let the weather be what it

would, preparing for a start and worked hard and suffered much from day light until sun down to get six and sometimes ten miles. It rained, snowed, or hailed almost every day and freezing at the same time. We were compelled to thaw the tents & blankets before we could roll them up to put them in the wagons in the morning. The Indian children and sick Indians had to go in the wagons on top of their baggage and to prevent them from freezing we were compelled to have fires along the road and take them out and warm them, dry their blankets that were wrapped round them and replace them again in the wagons. Strict attention had to be paid to this or some must inevitably have perished and there was a continual crying from morning until night with the children. I used to encourage them by saying that the weather would moderate in a few days and it would be warm but it never happened during the whole trip. On the 9th March when we were about one hundred & fifty miles from Fort Gibson we had a very severe snow storm.”⁶

Page’s story tells of the most extreme weather-related difficulties suffered by any group of any tribe that removed through Arkansas. Arkansans told Page that they had never experienced a winter like that one before.⁷ For his part, Page said in retrospect about the trek west, “I never did witness or experience anything to equal the scenes of the trip in my life and hope it will never be my lot to do it again.”⁸

Like Page’s contingent, in 1838 the Bell Contingent of Cherokees experienced severely cold weather after they left the North Little Rock site and were on the road to the Cherokee Nation. The weather turned cold enough to put a thin coat of floating ice on the river and require “great coats” and “large fires,” said one observer.⁹

These examples represent a striking contrast to the experience of the Choctaws in late October 1833. From Memphis, Joseph A. Phillips, disbursing agent for the group, said that since they had left the Choctaw Agency in Mississippi, they had had “one continued succession of fair weather; and while crossing the river here we have had what is usually termed the Indian summer.”¹⁰

Although numerous examples of coldness and resulting suffering appear in removal literature, the adverse weather phenomenon most remarked, by far, was rain. A good example is recorded in the journal of S. T. Cross, who conducted a group of Choctaws through the Grand Prairie to the North Little Rock site in November 1832: “Novr. 16th—Left Au Grue and traveled 14 miles and encamped in the large Prairie— Issued rations and forage for two days, by noon—left camp traveled 18 miles, that night rained very hard, all night, one death reported. Novr. 17th—Left camp traveled 18 miles, that night rained very hard, all night, one death reported. Novr. 18th—Raining very hard left camp and traveled 15 miles arrived at the Arkansas River, the weather cold and wet—two deaths reported. Novr. 19th—issued rations and forage and commenced crossing the Arkansas River.”¹¹

Subsistence

One condition of travel that appears in the popular images of removal is starvation. No evidence has come to light in relation to the North Little Rock site to indicate that starvation was widespread, but, rather, isolated instances in which stragglers or small parties became separated from the main body of the removal contingent. Although one tends to distrust contemporary newspaper reports that the Indians on the Trail appeared well-fed and satisfied, there can be little doubt that, for the most part, the people were fed. Rations for people and forage for animals were either taken with the

parties or placed at supply stations at strategic places along the routes (See Part IV, above, for numerous examples). The North Little Rock site served as one of the distribution points, especially in Choctaw and Chickasaw removals. Though the system failed occasionally, as with some of the early Muscogee removals, for the most part it worked. Muscogee removal was managed by private contractors, first the J. W. A. Sanford Emigrating Company and then the Alabama Emigrating Company, whose agents were at times lax in performing their duties and consistently exhibited an insensitivity to the needs of the Muscogee people (See Part IV).

Rations remained fairly standard for removals overseen by federal officials throughout the removal period. A ration typically consisted of three-quarters quart of corn meal or one pound of wheat flour or three-quarters quart of corn; one and a quarter pound of fresh beef or fresh pork or three-quarters pound of salted pork; and four quarts of salt per hundred rations. Official orders called for rations of good quality,¹² and removal literature provides little evidence that it was not. Forage for animals consisted of fodder or hay as well as corn that was usually reserved for pack animals. Rations were commonly issued every other day, and appear to have been sufficient to sustain the people. Evidence indicates that some issues were more than the people could use. For example, Captain John Page, who assisted in removal of the Choctaws in 1832 and 1833, found that the regular issue was so excessive that the wagons became overburdened, the wagon drivers complained, and the Choctaws sold the surplus food.¹³ A similar experience was recorded by Capt. H. M. McKavett, who attended the removal of the Florida bands of Octiarche, Thlocco Tustenuggee, Pascofa, and Passachee in 1843. He had regularly issued beef, corn, salt, pork, and flour but found that families had accumulated a surplus by the time they arrived in the West.¹⁴

In addition to receiving rations, those who traveled overland supplemented their diets by hunting, fishing, and gathering wild fruits. For example, in 1836 a number of Muscogees in the removal party attended by Lieutenant John T. Sprague separated from the main body of the party and remained in the Mississippi Swamps hunting bears. That same year, Lt. Edward Deas, responding to charges that Muscogees under his direction were stealing local crops, said that since his party had been at the North Little Rock site, "their rations have been regularly issued, and they have, besides, killed an abundance of game, and were, therefore, by no means in want of subsistence."¹⁵ In 1837 a Chickasaw contingent took a leisurely pace from Little Rock toward the Red River country, primarily because they were engaged in deer hunting. On August 14, John M. Millard, conductor of the group, recorded in his journal: "The Indians felt no desire nor could they be moved today, they gave excuse, that they could not find their horses, that most of the men were engaged in hunting them. . . . The deer moreover, abounded in great numbers at this place and the hunters were very successful in killing them, which rendered them more reluctant than otherwise to remove."¹⁶ At times, the people overindulged in the wild fruits they found growing along the way; many became ill with stomach complaints, and some died, especially from eating green fruit.

There can be little doubt that the people were fed. Whether the rations met the dietary needs of the people, however, is another question.

Conditions of Overland Travel

A close search through removal literature will rarely produce evidence of good roads in Arkansas. Indeed, the most common contemporary statements about the roads reflect not only the poor construction but conditions made worse by the weather.

Precipitation in any form represented not only a health risk, but it made worse the roads of Arkansas that were difficult to travel even in the best of conditions. In 1832, a group of about 400 Choctaws became water bound and ice bound between the St. Francis and the White River for nearly 40 days and had to subsist themselves by hunting.¹⁷ That same year, Lt. I. P. Simonton, escorting a party of Choctaws, described the road approaching the North Little Rock site: “Nov 26th. Started about 8 o’clock A.M., traveled 12 miles and encamped about sunset near Grey’s farm. Issued provisions and forage this evening. Roads very bad this way. Met Lt. Van Horn from Little Rock. Nov 27th. Delayed until about 10 o’clock A. M. completing the issue of provisions & forage. Traveled this day 10 miles to the lower ferry over the Arkansas River, at Little Rock. The roads very bad for 4 miles after starting, much swamp and a new road constructing, apparently to be of little service. The wheels of one wagon slipped through the joint of the timbers on a causeway. . . The road near the river tolerable. The face of the country generally level, which has been the case the whole route from Rock Row. There are some low hills about half way from Grey’s to the Arkansas. A great deal of sickness among the Indians; took an other wagon into service to haul the sick. Arrived at the bank of the Arkansas about sunset, and encamped. Nov 28th. Lay encamped on the bank of the Arkansas all day.”¹⁸

Captain John Page graphically described what the Military Road was like in 1834 the vicinity of present-day Morrillton: “The roads were impassable for all carriages of every description except those employed in the emigration. I do not recollect of meeting any thing but one or two horse carts and they gave it up when they struck the road that we came over. There was nothing but prying out waggons from morning until night.”¹⁹

Road conditions were so bad that teams and wagons were at times good for only a one-way trip. The government maintained a fleet of wagons with teams at Little Rock during Choctaw removal, and upon their arrival at Fort Coffee, the disbursing agent sold them, both teams and wagons, because they were incapable of making the return trip to Little Rock.²⁰

An element of removal common in the popular mind is forced marches over difficult terrain such as these examples describe. There was some of that, as with Sprague’s contingent of Muscogees in 1836, but such marches were necessary to reach the next ration and forage depot. Like travelers on the Mormon Trail, who had to push on from water hole to water hole, the Indians had much at stake in traveling a particular distance, rain or shine. For example, Capt. F. S. Belton, leading a party of Muscogees in September of 1836, pushed his group hard through the Grand Prairie despite the weather. “During the passage of the prairie,” he wrote, “it has, with the exception of two days of scorching sun, rained almost all day and night. The situation of the Indians is deplorable. The sick exceed fifty of the small party and death occasionally carries off the weakest. The wagons or carts have been over loaded & great difficulties surmounted. To reach settlements forced marches have been necessary.”²¹

Only rarely does one find detailed descriptions of the daily marches or night encampments. A good example is provided by Bowes Reed McIlvaine, a Louisville merchant who observed the Chickasaw removal in Arkansas in 1837. McIlvaine left

vignettes of the overland march. “Only the poorest of the squaws,” he wrote, “carr^d burthens—nearly all had ponies for that purpose, which they led, riding (on good side saddles) other horses. . . . The fondness for dogs was the most prevalent & amusing. One old woman who had lost her pony was carrying a heavy load on her back with a belt across her forehead—to balance which, she had a basket in front suspended round her neck in which were nine fine puppies; the respectable mother of which, trotted contentedly—though doggedly behind, to see that none were dropped by the way. Some had their cats & litters of kittens—others their favorite chickens ducks & turkeys.”²²

Although McIlvaine’s sketches seem to have been drawn at the outset of their trek through Arkansas, his descriptions, despite his romanticism, perhaps give a hint of what life in the camp at the North Little Rock site was like. “It was a striking scene at night—when the multitudes of fires kindled,” he said, “showed to advantage the whole face of the country covered with the white tents & white covered wagons, with all the interstices . . . filled with a dense mass of animal life in the shape of savages, uncouth looking white hunters, the picturesque looking Indian Negroes, with dress belonging to no country but partaking of all, & these changing & mingling with the hundreds of horses hobbled & turned out to feed & the troops of dogs chasing about in search of food--& then you would hear the whoops of Indians calling their family party together to receive their rations, from another quarter a wild song from the Negroes preparing the corn, with the strange chorus that the rest would join in--& then the fires would catch tall dead trees & rushing to the tops throw a strong glare over all this moving scene, deepening the savage traits of the men, & softening the features of the women. . . . It was my delight to wander at will, wherever anything strange led me, going into the tents—making friends with the men by shaking hands & with the women by playing with the little fat naked wild children—dividing apples among them, to their great satisfaction. Great pains were taken by the agents to keep liquor from the men, & few were drunk—the women neither drink nor smoke—but mostly were seated on skins sewing or doing some kind of work—singularly calm & composed—and contrasted with the incessant galloping about of the men.”²³

Conditions of Steamboat Travel

Conditions aboard steamboats depended in large measure on water levels. Time translated to money for boat captains, who made money only if they kept moving. Removal history records numerous instances of stalled boats as a result of low water. In those instances, removal parties outfitted for water travel were ill prepared to take to the land (See Part IV). When water levels were good, boats often ran day and night, unless their contracts called for scheduled stops. Provisions were taken aboard the steamboat or placed in flatboats or keelboats in tow. With few exceptions, parties traveling by boat reached their final destinations in healthier condition and, thus, with lower mortality rates than those that went overland.

There were exceptions, however. A steamboat accident, the sinking of the Monmouth, resulted in the death of more than 300 Muscogeas, without question the most disastrous event in removal history.²⁴ The Cherokee contingent conducted by Lt. R. H. K. Whiteley in June 1838 also suffered high casualties, 70 of their number. They were

struck not only by illnesses related to summer travel but endured a measles epidemic as well.²⁵

Frequently, boats stopped at night, and the Indians camped on shore. Choctaws aboard the Reindeer in 1832, for example, camped for the night of November 19 a mile up the White River. It rained that day but cleared during the night, and the Choctaws awoke the next morning to a frozen ground. "The Indians were loath to leave their fires this morning," Lt. I. P. Simonton wrote, "and we had much difficulty in getting them on board."²⁶ Lt. Edward Deas described his practice with the Muscogees aboard the Alpha in 1835: "The mode of traveling has been to stop before dark & allow the Party to encamp & start again the next morning after daylight. In this way the Indians prefer this mode of conveyance to traveling by land." Deas intended to follow this practice until he reached Fort Gibson unless circumstances made it necessary to run at night. He issued fresh beef and meal regularly and built temporary hearths on the decks of the two keel boats so that the Muscogees could prepare food and keep themselves warm during the day. The boats were cleaned out every night to ensure the health of the people.²⁷

Health Conditions

Travel during the removal period carried with it the risk of disease. However, the potential for becoming ill or contracting a contagious disease was exacerbated by the rigors of marching outdoors all day, camping in the open at night, exposure to the elements, and unsanitary conditions that attended large masses of people in the nineteenth century.

Besides the common diseases, removal parties were vulnerable to the spread of contagious diseases that reached epidemic levels during their journey, like the measles that attacked Whiteley's party of Cherokees in 1838. Another good example is the cholera epidemic that reached Memphis and Vicksburg at the beginning of the Choctaw removal season of 1832-33. Francis W. Armstrong reported from Memphis on October 31, 1832: "The cholera is actually in our camp, and all through the country, at all the landings and towns even in the rear of this. Therefore you see we must go ahead, for in this matter we cannot stop to look around." And he predicted its spread among the Choctaws and the great destruction of human life it would cause.²⁸ His prediction proved true when the disease spread rapidly among the party at Rock Roe. The city officials of Little Rock, learning about the outbreak, sent a team of physicians to Rock Roe to assess the epidemic and help treat cases, and they established a pest hospital in Little Rock, anticipating the arrival of the disease with the Choctaws.²⁹

Traveling conditions made the Indians more vulnerable to the disease. Doctors suspected the crowded conditions on the boats as a contributing factor to the spread of the disease. Also, the diet of the Indians was a problem. The foods that "excited" the disease included fruits, vegetables, and river water. Doctors recommended beef, mutton, venison, veal, and poultry, good ham, eggs, Irish potatoes, tea and coffee and suggested that they protect their bodies from cold, especially their stomachs, bowels, and feet.³⁰ These recommendations were impossible to meet under the circumstances of overland travel.

The mortality rate was high. Two died aboard the Reindeer. Nineteen died at Rock Roe, and nineteen more after they left Rock Roe. Most of the victims were women

and children, the women outnumbering children more than two to one. Death by cholera was a terrible thing to witness. One of the Little Rock doctors sent out to treat the Choctaws at Rock Roe described the death of a young Choctaw youth as follows: "He was lying on his blanket, with his eyes looking wild and unnatural, the whites of them injected with a dark gromous blood; they were as much sunken as usually happens on the 19th or 21st day of fever, surrounded with a blue or lead colored circle; his mouth had the same bluish tinge; his arms were as cold as marble; the skin shriveled; the fingers showing a recession of blood, for they were shrunken, nails deep blue, wrist pulseless, one hand and arm distorted with spasm, great action of the diaphragm, and the bowels contracted and sunken until they assumed the appearance of being conjoined to the spine; legs cold and cramped, slight nausea, but no dysentery; entire suppression of urine. . . .; the voice low and whispering, but he would occasionally shriek as loud and fiercely as a maniac; the tongue perfectly white and cold; the thirst intense and ungovernable." Treatment was ineffective. The doctors tried to bleed him, to make him vomit by giving him salt and water, bathed his legs and arms with hot brandy, gave him croton tiglium oil, blistered his stomach, rubbed his bowels and legs with flannel and brandy, and gave him calomel and opium.³¹

Deaths from cholera occurred among this group even after they reached the North Little Rock site (See the account in Part IV above). From Little Rock, on December 2, Armstrong wrote, "No man but one who was present can form any idea of the difficulties that we have encountered owing to the cholera, and the influence occasioned by its dreadful effects. It is true we have been obliged to keep every thing to ourselves, and to browbeat the idea of the disease, although death was hourly among us, and the road lined with the sick. The extra wagons hired to haul the sick are about five to the 1,000; fortunately they are a people that will walk to the last, or I do not know how we would get on."³²

When Captain John Page arrived in Arkansas with his party of Muscogees in 1834, he faced not only extreme weather but an influenza epidemic as well. "The influenza was prevailing in Arkansas Ty," he wrote, "and as many as six or seven in a family died; it soon got amongst the Indians but we lost but three or four of that complaint and in fact the whole party was remarkably healthy considering our situation. I am well convinced if we had attempted to have laid by in consequence of the severity of the weather that one half would have died of that complaint, it proved so fatal with the inhabitants. I called at a house and found almost every member of the family down with this disease. I was convinced nothing kept it from us but being constantly on the move and exposed to the severity of the winter."³³ Later, he wrote, "Many persons pronounced it murder in the highest degree for me to move Indians or compel them to march in such severe weather when they were dying every day with the influenza, but I am well convinced it was the only thing that kept them alive, notwithstanding their exposure."³⁴

During their removal the Chickasaws faced the prospect of the great smallpox epidemic that swept through the American West in 1837 and 1838. In June 1838, reports came to Pontotoc, Mississippi, that the disease was raging between Fort Coffee and the Blue and Boggy rivers in the Choctaw Nation, where a party of Chickasaws were preparing to go. A. M. M. Upshaw, the Chickasaw removal agent, contemplated rerouting the group to Fort Towson. "Should I take that route," he said, "it will be on account of good roads, provisions, and it being free from the small pox."³⁵ At Memphis,

the prospects looked worse. Travelers from the west during the past three months had carried stories of smallpox and various other diseases. Colonel John Moore, who had just returned from Indian Territory convinced Upshaw that he would lose half of his contingent to the disease. These stories alarmed the Chickasaws, some of whom refused to go on.³⁶ They convinced Upshaw that he should send the party by way of Fort Towson. By the time they reached the North Little Rock site, the group had been stricken, not with smallpox but with fever. They crossed the river and remained in camp near Little Rock for two weeks because of illness. Of the 130 in the group 70 were down at one time with the fever. Among them was the wife of Ishtehotopa, the Chickasaw Mingo or the spiritual leader of the people, referred to by Upshaw as the King of the Chickasaws. “By strict attention,” Upshaw wrote, “we only lost two; one of the two was the King’s wife, who was Queen of the Chickasaw Nation.”³⁷ A month later, smallpox hit not only the Chickasaws but the Choctaws in Indian Territory.³⁸ By the early 1840s, removal officials had begun to take preventative measures to protect the Florida Indians from smallpox by having them vaccinated when they arrived at New Orleans.³⁹

Notes

1. Lathel Duffield, “Cherokee Emigration: Reconstructing Reality,” Chronicles of Oklahoma 80 (Fall 2002): 314-347.
2. See, for example, the diary of Daniel S. Buttrick, whose daily log gives good evidence of weather conditions during the mass removal of Cherokees in the winter of 1838-1839. See The Journal of Rev. Daniel S. Buttrick, May 19, 1838-April 1, 1839: Cherokee Removal (Park Hill, OK: The Trail of Tears Association, Oklahoma Chapter, 1998).
3. Foreman, Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 52-53, 78-82; Arthur H. DeRosier, Jr., “The Choctaw Removal of 1831: A Civilian Effort,” Journal of the West 6 (1962), 237-242, 244; Arkansas Gazette, December 21 and 28, 1831, and January 4, 1832; 23rd Congress, 1st Session, Senate Executive Document 512 (5 vols.), I: 632, 788-789, 826-827 (hereafter cited as Document 512) A good brief history of the removal season of 1831-1832 is Muriel Wright, “Removal of the Choctaws to Indian Territory, 1830-1833,” Chronicles of Oklahoma, 6 (June 1928), 113-119.
4. Document 512, I: 69.
5. John Page to George Gibson, April 25, 1835, Creek Emigration 93, National Archives Record Group 75, Records Relating to Indian Removal, Records of the Commissary General of Subsistence, Box 8, Letters Received, Creek-1835. This collection is hereafter cited as RG75, Commissary General, followed by the box and file designations.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Page to Gibson, May 1, 1835, Creek Emigration 100, RG75, Commissary General, Box 8, Letters Received, Creek-1835.
9. Wayne Gibson, “Cherokee Treaty Party Moves West: The Bell-Deas Overland Journey, 1838-1839,” Chronicles of Oklahoma 79 (Fall 2001), 328-329.
10. Document 512, I: 812.

11. Journal of S. T. Cross, National Archives Microfilm Publication M234, Roll 185, National Archives Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, Choctaw Emigration 1833. This publication is hereafter cited as M234, followed by the roll number.
12. Document 512, I: 133-134.
13. Ibid., I: 795-96.
14. Henry McKavett to T. Hartley Crawford, July 12, 1843, Florida Emigration M1772-43, M234-R291.
15. Arkansas Gazette, December 13, 1836.
16. Journal of Occurrences, J. M. Millard to Harris, September 23, 1837, NARG 75, BIA, Letters Received, Chickasaw Emigration M220-1837, M234-R143.
17. Document 512, I: 401, 449.
18. I. P. Simonton to George Gibson, April 8, 1833, Choctaw Emigration 56, RG75, Commissary General, Box 8, Letters Received, Choctaw-1833.
19. Page to Gibson, April 25, 1835, Creek Emigration 93, RG75, Commissary General, Box 8, Letters Received, Creek-1835.
20. Document 512, I: 532.
21. F. S. Belton's Journal of Occurrences, 1836, Creek Emigration B121-36, M234-R237.
22. John E. Parsons, ed., "Letters on the Chickasaw Removal of 1837," New York Historical Society Quarterly, 37 (1953), 281.
23. Ibid., 280-281.
24. See Foreman, Indian Removal, 181-188; Arkansas Gazette, November 21 and 28, 1837.
25. Journal of Lt. R. H. K. Whiteley, copy retrieved from the following web site: www.mindspring.com/~Wayne.Gibson.
26. Journal of I. P. Simonton in Simonton to George Gibson, April 8, 1833, Choctaw Emigration 56-33, RG75, Commissary General, Box 8, Letters Received, Choctaw-1833.
27. Edward Deas to Gibson, December 28, 1835, Creek Emigration 56, RG75, Commissary General, Box 8, Letters Received, Creek-1835.
28. Document 512, I: 395, 786.
29. Arkansas Gazette, November 7, 14, and 21, 1832.
30. Arkansas Gazette, November 14, 1832.
31. Arkansas Gazette, November 21 and 28, 1832; F. W. Armstrong to Lewis Cass, March 20, 1833, Choctaw Emigration, 1833, M235-R187; Foreman, Indian Removal, 87-93; Document 512, I: 401-402, 771-772.
32. Document 512, I: 401.
33. Page to Gibson, April 25, 1835, Creek Emigration 93, Commissary General, Box 8, Letters Received, Creek-1835.
34. Page to Gibson, May 1, 1835, Creek Emigration 100, RG75, Commissary General, Box 8, Letters Received, Creek-1835.
35. A. M. M. Upshaw to C. A. Harris, June 7, 1838, Chickasaw Emigration U50-38, M234-R144.
36. Upshaw to Harris, June 24, 1838, Chickasaw Emigration U51-38, M234-R144.
37. Upshaw to Harris, August 13, 1838, Chickasaw Emigration U53-38, M234-R144.
38. Arkansas Gazette, September 12, 1830.

39. See, e. g., LeGrand Capers to T. Hartley Crawford, May 7 and 18, 1841, Florida Emigration C1404-41 and C1415-41, M234-R291.

Part VI: Cultural Survival on the Trail

If there is a metaphor that captures the Trail of Tears in the collective history of the Choctaws, Muscogees, Florida Indians, Chickasaws, and Cherokees, it is the metaphor of burden. It suggests not only the literal burdens that the Indians carried on the trail but also the spiritual burden of psychological trauma that resulted from their loss of the landscapes that held everything familiar, dear, and sacred to them, and also the terrible burden of history that the dark days of enforced removal represent to the tribes today. What is elusive, hard to document, is the personal anguish that the Indians felt at the thought of removal, the experience of it, and its aftermath. Though it is elusive, our insights into that anguish become fuller and the lines more clearly focused as we look beyond the public record, listen to the words of the people whenever possible, and search out clues to cultural survival, despite the cultural discontinuity that resulted from removal. Perhaps those insights will suggest what the tribal people might well have thought and felt regarding the past and future as they passed through the North Little Rock site.

The Choctaws were the first of the tribes to experience the trauma of enforced removal under the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Unlike the Cherokees, who waged a legal battle against removal, the Choctaws based their resistance in moral arguments derived from their ancient cosmology. Statements in resistance to the treaty process are characterized by references to the Choctaws' obligations to the bones and spirits of their departed relatives.

According to the Choctaw migration story, the people carried the bones of their dead and, at the end of their journey, deposited them at Nanih Waiya. Failure to care for the bones would offend the spirits and inspire vengeance upon the people. In Choctaw society at the time of the removal, the sense of responsibility to the dead was still a powerful force. Fulfilling their duty by honoring the dead ensured the Choctaws that the ancestral spirits watched over and guided them. The bones represented both a physical and spiritual attachment to the landscape. In Choctaw beliefs, every person had two souls. Upon death, one departed to the Land of Death, and the other remained nearby to watch over the remains and to monitor how well the living fulfilled their duties to the dead. To Choctaws, removal meant abandoning the spirits of their relatives. Travel to the west also presented a fearsome prospect. The Land of the Dead was in the west, the direction from which their ancestors had traveled to Nanih Waiya. Choctaw scholar Donna Akers argues that these cultural beliefs informed the adamant refusal of so many Choctaws to remove.¹

When the removal treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek was announced, the Choctaws lapsed into despair. They stopped planting and harvesting, and hunger ensued. One missionary described them as a nation in mourning, who had simply given up in "a kind of sullen despair."² James Culberson, a Choctaw who recorded his father's experiences on the Trail of Tears, described the people's reactions to the treaty like this: "In some countries subject to earthquakes the native people have been known to return and build over anew the fatherland after it had been destroyed by some natural catastrophe, and

apparently forgot the destruction and death that had wrought such havoc to friend and neighbor, but the earthquake produced in the hearts and minds of the native-born Choctaw Indians when the knowledge that the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek had been agreed upon and approved by some of their head chiefs was greater than any that has ever occurred in the natural world.” The people, Culberson said, “staggered and almost fell from the shock to their consciousness, but recovered and gathered their last personal relic in a bundle and turned their faces westward to face unknown perils by land and in the forest, and make themselves new homes rather than violate the pledged word of their Chiefs.”³

It is easy to understand, then, why those who remained expressed their sorrow in song. As they watched their tribes’ people depart from their homes on their way to the Mississippi, those who remained sang the following song, “Hinaushi pisali, Bok Chito onali, yayali (I saw a trail to the big river, and then I cried.)” Choctaw historian Muriel Wright reported in the early twentieth century that this song was still in the repertory of the Mississippi Choctaws.⁴ And it might well be a part of it today.

For all of the tribal people, the Mississippi seemed to represent the point of no return. At Natchez, aboard the steamboat Huron on his way west in early 1832, the young Choctaw George W. Harkins drafted a letter to the American people. It reflected the resignation that inevitably set in among most of the people, who would pick up their burdens and take up the trail into the unknown. Harkins describes removal as the lesser of two evils, preferable to submitting to control by the legislators of Mississippi. He described the Choctaws’ situation thus: “We found ourselves like a benighted stranger, following false guides, until he was surrounded on every side, with fire and water. The fire was certain destruction, and a feeble hope was left him of escaping the water. A distant view of the opposite shore encourages the hope; to remain would be inevitable annihilation.”⁵ The temper of the times said that the progress of American civilization was inevitable, and in the face of it the Indians must somehow “catch up” to it or die. They argued that if they were allowed to remain where they were, they could do so. If removed, they would be destroyed, for they could not think of themselves separately from their traditional lands. Choctaw Israel Folsom and Cherokee DeWitt Clinton Duncan, both of whom made the trek, later gave expression to these ideas in their poetry.⁶

Following their removal treaty in 1832, many Muscogeese were at first defiant concerning removal beyond the Weogufky, the muddy water, their word for the Mississippi. And they had made this song: “You say you are going to drive me across the Weogufky, but I will not go.” As time wore on and removal was delayed, the whites preyed on Muscogee property and plied the Muscogeese with whiskey, the Muscogeese became demoralized, and the whites pointed to their debauchery as a further justification for removal. In their despair, the Muscogeese revised their song: “Whiskey I drink. I am drunk now. Now I am drunk. My nephew told me to drink. I drank. I am drunk. And I am singing the song that you say you are going to drive me across the Weogufky, but I will not go.”⁷

Other Muscogeese lapsed into the same kind of despair that beset the Choctaws. One woman in the early twentieth century related how, according to her family’s stories, the Muscogeese found it difficult to comprehend what was happening as her tribal town was taken to the mustering camp in preparation for removal. “We were taken to a crudely built stockade and joined others of our tribe. Even here, there was the awful

silence that showed the heartaches and sorrow at being taken from the homes and even separation from loved ones.”⁸

Other Muscogees faced removal with resignation. Opothleyohola, the famed leader, had early on opposed removal, but announced in the winter of 1835 that the Tuckabatchees and related tribal towns of Kialigees, Thlopthloccos, Thlewarles, Autaugas, and Artussees were preparing to remove at an appointed time. He said, “We shall at that time take our last black drink in this nation, rub up our tradition plates, and commence our march.” He would prepare his traveling medicine and his traveling clothes, and he would “put out his old fire and never make or kindle it again,” until he reached the West and “then never to quench it again.”⁹

To him, then, removal was an interlude, a hiatus in the ceremonial life of the nation. In the winter of 1836, he and his people passed through central Arkansas. It was they who carried the dead ashes of their town fires, the sacred copper ceremonial plates, and the sticks that contained the exact measurement of the Tuckabatchee *tcokofa*, or town house, which they would replicate to scale a few miles southwest of present-day Eufaula, Oklahoma.¹⁰

Siah Hicks, looking back at removal, reflected on the resignation with which his people faced removal: “When their removal to a country to the West was just beginning, it was the older Indians that remarked and talked about themselves by saying, ‘Now, the Indian is now on the road to disappearance.’ They had reference to their leaving of their ways, their familiar surroundings where their customs were performed, their medicine, their hunting grounds and their friends.”¹¹

For some Muscogees, the realities of removal did not sink in until the middle passage from New Orleans to Fort Gibson. They tell, for example of Sin-e-cha, who as a young girl survived the sinking of the Monmouth. One remembered Sin-e-cha, this way: “When the events, with never no more to live in the east, had taken place, she, too, remembered that she had left her home and with shattered happiness she carried a small bundle of her few belongings and reopening and retying her pitiful bundle she began a sad song which was later taken up by the others on board the ship at the time of the wreck and the words of her song was: ‘I have no more land. I am driven away from home, driven up the red waters, let us all go, let us all die together and somewhere upon the banks we will be there.’”¹²

Sin-e-cha’s “pitiful bundle” became the psychological scars or spiritual burden that those who had removed bore for the remainder of their lives. Siah Hicks, in remembering his elders, said: “When they had reached their new homes...they said, ‘We...are facing the evening of our existence and are nearly at the end of the trail that we trod when we were forced to leave our homes in Alabama and Georgia. In time, perhaps, our own language will not be used but that will be after our days.’ . . . When those old men met, they would talk about their old days with tears in their eyes and cry for the children that were to come, with the belief that they would be treated just as they had been treated.”¹³

There was the nagging belief that the time would come when they would be forced to remove again, farther west. The Muscogees revived their old song of defiance about removal west of the Mississippi. In the place of weogufky or muddy water, their word for the Mississippi, they substituted wechadi or wechadi thlocco, their words for the Arkansas and Red rivers. And now they sang, “You say you are going to drive me

across the wechadi, but I will not go,” and “You say you are going to drive me across the wechadi thlocco, but I will not go.”¹⁴

Peter Pitchlynn, the Choctaw leader who passed through the North Little Rock site on several occasions during the removal period, did not believe that removal was the last assault on tribal existence. In 1849, looking back at removal, he wrote, “For a mere pittance, we have yielded to you our country in Mississippi, the most beautiful and productive, rendered dear to us by the associations of our youth, the traditions of our people, the graves of our fathers.” The American policy of civilizing the Indians, into which removal fit, might be “beautiful in theory,” he wrote, “but it is the beauty of the summer cloud that rises in the west, its borders trimmed with golden sunlight, and ascending in its majesty it towers to the zenith—filling the beholder with wonder and awe; but the forked lightning is in that cloud, and its bolts scatter death around; the wild hurricane is in its bosom, and it is let loose to scatter, to blast and to destroy.”¹⁵

In the early 1880s, Cherokee DeWitt Clinton Duncan, a survivor of removal, wrote a narrative of the event, apparently based on his family’s experience. He says, with sarcasm, about the day they left their home in the East: “That very day he ‘hitched up,’ and putting his wife and little ones aboard he turned his face toward the Western wilderness, moved off, and surrendered his place to the service of that ‘glorious civilization before whose effulgence the American Indian, like an abnormal plant beneath the blaze of the meridian sun, naturally pines, withers and dies.’ On he went, crossed the great Father of Waters, cleared the borders of the wild Arkansas, and stayed not till he reached the Red Man’s asylum in the Indian Territory.” But the asylum was under siege. He concludes, “Years have since rolled away. He and his heroic wife have long since found rest in death. The children still live, and that malignant power, falsely called civilization, is to this day still at their heels demanding their room or their ruin.”¹⁶

Despite the losses and the psychological scars that resulted from removal, the tribes survived. Evidence indicates that cultural survival resulted in part from conscious decisions by not only the tribes themselves but American officials as well during the removal process. Opothleyohola’s view of removal as a hiatus in the ceremonial life of the Tuckabatchees and related tribes might have been more typical than it appears at first glance. For example, Muscogees tell how Tuckabatchees especially appointed to the task walked in single file ahead of the party, carrying the sacred copper plates. The Cowetas brought the ancient conch shells that they had traditionally used in their black drink ceremony. Other stories tell how men appointed to the task carried live coals or dead ashes of their town fires to use in rekindling their fires in the West.¹⁷ Some of these relics without question passed through the North Little Rock site, unknown to the local population. Neither did they likely note the men carrying reeds with eagle feathers and circling the marchers or their camps. According to Mary Hill, a woman from Okfuskee town, “There were several men carrying reeds with eagle feathers attached to the end. These men continually circled around the wagon trains or during the night around the camps. These men said the reeds with feathers had been treated by the medicine men. Their purpose was to encourage the Indians not to be heavy hearted nor to think of the homes that had been left.”¹⁸

Those who tell of transporting live coals claim that the coals were kept alive by being used to kindle their camp fires on the road. According to Angie Debo, the men entrusted to this task “observed the strictest taboos regarding women, refusing even to

drink out of a cup a woman had used; and they ate only White Food (humpeta hutke), hominy made from white corn with no seasoning or flavoring. When the new site was selected, the whole town watched while the chief established the communal hearth.” After Hotulke Emarthla, the leader of Okchiye Town, had rekindled the town fire, he said, “My town (tulwa) shall not go any further West, but this marks the end of our journey.”¹⁹

Removal officials helped to ensure tribal survival and a revival of societies and cultures through the organization of removal. The Choctaws were removed in parties made up from the various districts of the old Choctaw Nation. District chiefs retained their authority throughout the removal process, and upon arrival in the West, the people of each district tended to settle together. The Mingo of the Chickasaw Nation retained his authority through removal and into the post-removal Chickasaw society. The Muscogees were moved primarily by towns, with their miccos in power throughout the removal process. The Florida Indians were removed by bands, and removal resulted in nationhood in a sense that it had not existed for those people in Florida. There, they were a loosely affiliated group of different tribes and remnants of peoples, including people of Spanish descent and of African descent. In the West, they were united in a common cause: refusal to submit to the authority of the Muscogees as had been called for by the Treaty of Payne’s Landing (1832) and the Treaty of Fort Gibson (1833). They finally achieved separate nationhood as the Seminole Nation through an interim treaty in 1845 and finally in a treaty of 1856 under which the disparate bands merged into a single nation.

Ultimately, the story of removal is a story of survival, a fact that the tribes who endured it have been aware of through time. In the early twentieth century, Amos Green, a Muscogee, distilled the burden of history—that sense of uncertainty—that removal created in his people in this statement: “It didn’t seem possible that the Indians were forced to leave the homes that they loved for an unknown country, but when they had arrived in the Indian Territory, the leaders and some of the older prophets of those times talked of their heavy ‘sa-bo-gas’ saying that this would not be the last time they would have to take them up and carry them away.” Green continued, “‘Sa-bo-ga’ is a Creek. . . word meaning a bundle or a load of anything which is . . . carried. The word used in this case would mean the hardships that the Indians had been through as they were being brought to the new country which was to be their home. Many of those early day Indians had been through sickness, loss of all the few possessions they had and the starvations as well as the deaths that occurred without number. When the first settlements were completed for the Indians, the weary Indians without knowing whether they would be permitted to stay always in the Indian Territory are said to have remarked, ‘We place our sa-bo-gas here for we will need to take them up again.’” Green concluded: “The Indians then began to make their homes and getting accustomed to their new country. The older Indians did not forget their ‘Trail of Tears’ soon. . . .”²⁰

Thus the burden of history passed from one generation to the next. And it survives today in tribal memory. But the burden does not belong to the tribes whose family stories keep it alive. It is a burden that American society at large also must bear. The Trail of Tears National Historic Trail project provides an opportunity not just to tell the story, and tell it truthfully and accurately, but to interpret it as sensitively as possible.

Notes

1. Donna L. Akers, "Removing the Heart of the Choctaw People: Indian Removal from a Native Perspective," American Indian Culture and Research Journal 27:3 (1999), 68-70. The foregoing extremely generalized summary of Choctaw cosmology is derived from Akers. To do her work justice, one should consult her article.
2. Ibid., 70
3. James Culberson, "Choctaws Were Hastened in Starting 'Trail of Tears,'" The American Indian 3 (October 1927), 11.
4. See Muriel H. Wright, "A Chieftain's 'Farewell Letter' to the American People," The American Indian 1 (December 1926), 7.
5. George W. Harkins, "To the American People," Niles' Register 41 (February 25, 1832), 480; reprinted from the Natchez. The letter also appeared in the New-York Observer as did another letter from Harkins after he reached the West (March 3, 1832).
6. See Israel Folsom, "The Indians' Song," Vindicator, May 1, 1875; Too-qua-stee [Duncan], "The Dead Nation," Daily Chieftain, April 24, 1899.
7. "Song Sung by the Creek Indians Just before the Emigration to the West," Creek File 4200, Creek Notes, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.
8. Quoted from Angie Debo, The Road to Disappearance, 104.
9. Quoted from Ibid., 100.
10. Jackson Lewis, informant, "Creek Ethnologic and Vocabulary Notes, Oct. 1910," Creek File 1806, and "Creek Notes," Creek File 4200, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.
11. Interview with Siah Hicks, November 17, 1937, Indian-Pioneer History (Oklahoma Historical Society), 29: 80.
12. Interview with Elsie Edwards, September 17, 1937, Indian-Pioneer History (Oklahoma Historical Society), 23: 25.
13. Quoted from Debo, The Road to Disappearance, 106
14. "Song Sung by the Creek Indians Just before the Emigration to the West," Creek File 4200.
15. Peter Pitchlynn, Brief, 1849, cited from Orlando Swain, "A Tribute to Alex Posey," Alexander L. Posey Papers, Gilcrease Museum of Western Art and History, Tulsa, Oklahoma.
16. De Witt Clinton Duncan, Story of the Cherokees (No publisher, 1882?), 23-24
17. Debo, 106-107.
18. Quoted from Debo, 105.
19. Debo, The Road to Disappearance, 106-107.
20. Amos Green, Interview, Indian-Pioneer Papers (Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma), 36: 8.

Part VII: Tribal Individuals Who Passed through the North Little Rock Site

In March of 1859, the last major contingent of Florida Indians passed the North Little Rock site on their way to the West, officially ending enforced Indian removal through the site. By then the wave of anti-Indian feeling that removal had generated in Arkansas in the late 1830s had subsided somewhat, and the editor of the Arkansas Gazette could not only contemplate Billy Bowlegs as a hero, as he had done the year before, but could also express remarkable insight into the place of Florida removal in history. The editor wrote, “We are not disposed to be over sentimental in the contemplation of Indian or other character, but we think, if the Seminole Indians have justice done them, they will occupy a prominent position in the history of this country. The idea of a tribe of Indians, small and insignificant in numbers as were the Seminoles, and divided against itself, remaining in a hostile attitude towards a nation as great and powerful as the United States, defying its whole force for near a quarter of a century, and yielding, at last, not to the army but to diplomacy and money, must give the remnant of that people a prominence before the world, which impartial historians can not overlook. There is another matter in connection with the history of these Indians, which adds to its interest, while it is a blot upon the escutcheon of our government. Osceola, one of their greatest chiefs, came into the lines of the American army under the sacred protection of a flag of truce: The solemn obligation to respect that flag was violated, and Osceola kept a prisoner.”¹

Bowlegs was not the only tribal person of the removal period who reached the status of hero, at least in tribal history, and whose presence at the North Little Rock site, either on land or by water, is noteworthy. Some such as John Ross of the Cherokees are well-known because of the popular relation of the Trail of Tears with the Cherokee Nation. Interpretation at the North Little Rock site provides a unique opportunity to project visitors to the site beyond what is well known by including in it personages of other tribes who, though lesser known to the public, are noteworthy. Following, then, is a random sample of sketches of some whose presence at the North Little Rock site has been documented.

A Muscogee whose presence was conspicuous at not only the North Little Rock site but elsewhere in Arkansas was Tuckabatche Hadjo. Chief of the group that Lt. John T. Sprague led through the site in 1836, Tuckabatche Hadjo had been reluctant at times to move on earlier in his journey, but his refusal to move from the North Little Rock site brought threats from the governor of Arkansas. Sprague claimed that the chief wanted to remain at the site in order to be close to a supply of whiskey, but Sprague’s harsh estimation of Tuckabatche Hadjo’s reasons for staying was most likely inaccurate. That he had been reluctant to remove was true, but what Muscogee had not been? And he had preferred to remove beyond the limits of the United States. Just the year before, he had accompanied Opothleyohola, Jim Boy, and other Creeks to Texas to explore and negotiate the purchase of a tract from the Mexican government. But Tuckabatche Hadjo could in no way be considered “hostile.” During the previous summer, he had been one of the leaders who had assisted General Thomas S. Jesup in bringing the Creek “war” to an end and had been one who entered an agreement with General Jesup to send Creek

warriors to assist the U. S. forces against the Indians in Florida.² And by Sprague's own account, he was most certainly a party to the decision at Memphis to split up the party and engage the John Nelson. Why would a chief who had been responsible for his people now desert them?

Evidence suggests that Sprague's statement that Tuckbathe Hadjo camped where there was liquor would have been more accurate had it been reversed: Wherever the Muscogees camped, there was whiskey. Not just Muscogees but the people of the other tribes were besieged by whiskey peddlers at every settlement along removal routes. The road from Memphis to Little Rock was punctuated by public houses, such as Strong's and Black's, which offered travelers a bed, a meal, and whiskey. The public houses became regular stopping places and supply depots for removal contractors. The North Little Rock site was no exception. The public house at Rorer's ferry also had its reputation as a tavern. Even the steamboats docked for the night or anchored in the river were approached by peddlers in boats.

Sprague also probably misread Tuckebatche Hadjo's decision to remain behind as an act of a leader without authority. This action was consistent with his actions on the trail from Tallassee to Memphis. He wanted days of rest more frequently than the contractors were willing to grant.³

Tuckabatche Hadjo repeated his action at the depot near Kirkbride Potts' home at present-day Pottsville, where he later caught up with the main body of his people. When Sprague's party left Potts' place, the chief remained. The next three contingents—Batman's, Campbell's, and Screven's—passed, and still he remained. Sprague later claimed that he left Tuckabatche Hadjo and his close followers and family because the chief was ill. As time passed, he was joined by stragglers who reached the Potts encampment. In January, 1837, the Arkansas Gazette reported that in late December, Kirkbride Potts had ordered the chief and his followers to leave, "which they preemptorily refused—saying they were west of the Mississippi, and it was not in the power of any one to compel them to go on. They said threats of the whites might alarm little boys—but they were men!" The commander of the Pope County militia mustered 100 men and marched on the camp only to find that the Muscogees had "taken flight" the night before, January 1, 1837, so the newspaper said. Lieutenant Sprague later stated that to his knowledge Tuckabatche Hadjo had used no defiant language to the whites.⁴ Tuckabatche Hadjo's actions at Potts' camp were consistent with his actions at the North Little Rock site. And Lieutenant Edward Deas later scored the Arkansas press, for the chief had not been driven from the state. He had, in fact, voluntarily joined Deas' contingent when it reached Potts' place in December.⁵ Deas' party was the last Muscogee contingent to move through the state, and he brought with him all of the stragglers from Rock Roe westward. Among them were probably some of Tuckabatche Hadjo's original party, without whom he was unwilling to go on to Indian Territory. His actions bear the mark of a man who lived up to his warrior rank as a hacho and to his responsibilities as a leader, unwilling to leave his people scattered along the roads of Arkansas, waiting for some of them to catch up before moving on.

Milly Francis, Muscogee, had become known to the American public during the Red Stick War. The daughter of Hillis Hadjo or Josiah Francis, the Prophet, spiritual leader of the Red Sticks, she had successfully interceded in behalf of a young American, who had been captured by the Red Sticks and was about to be put to death. Her father,

who was vilified by the Americans, was later executed. She removed to the West with her tribe, apparently destitute and without family. After she was found living in poverty in the Indian Territory in the 1840s, Congress voted her a pension for life for her service to the Americans.⁶

Coa Hadjo, Seminole, was one of the exploring party who went West in 1832 to look at possible locations for settlement in Indian Territory. A major figure in the Second Seminole War, in October 1837 he and Osceola indicated they were willing to come in under a flag of truce to talk with General Joseph M. Hernandez, not knowing that General Thomas Jesup had directed Hernandez to violate the flag of truce, as Jesup had done before, and seize the leaders if he could. According to Dr. Nathan Jarvis, who accompanied Hernandez and his force, Osceola was so emotional he could not speak and asked Coa Hadjo to talk for the Seminoles. He told the general that they had been urged to negotiate by Philip (Emathla), through his emissary Coacoochee. Hernandez took them prisoners, he said, because the Army had been deceived by the Seminoles too often. Surrounded by troops, they were disarmed, and the two leaders with 71 warriors, 6 women, and 4 blacks were marched off to St. Augustine. Coa Hadjo agreed to lead the Cherokee delegation that sought out and brought in Micanopy, Yaholoochee, Tuskegee, Nocose Yahola, and other sub-chiefs to Fort Mellon. To the chagrin of the Cherokees, who were there to attempt to negotiate a peaceful end to the war, Jesup had the chiefs seized and promptly shipped by steamer to St. Augustine and imprisoned at Fort Marion.⁷

Halpatter Tustenuggee (Alligator), born about 1795, has been described by John K. Mahon as follows: "He was a natural comedian, evoking a laugh even in solemn councils. Yet in dealing with white men he acted as if born to the purple. His manners, in all respects, were as fine as theirs. Behind his open face and Roman nose was a stock of shrewdness, craft, and intelligence second to none." Alligator with about 120 warriors fought against the U. S. Army under Zachary Taylor at Lake Okeechobee on December 25, 1837, where 26 whites were killed and 112 wounded, and 11 Seminoles were killed and 14 wounded.⁸

Micanopy was a descendant of Cowkeeper, thought by some to be the founder of the Seminole tribe, and during the Second Seminole War was in the primary leadership position among the Seminoles. His political strength was enhanced because one of his sisters married Philip (Emathla), who was probably a Miccosukee. His authority was recognized by Alligator, an Alachua with ties to Philip's band, but he seemed a leader more in name than from ability. General Clinch called him a man with "little talent" lacking an "energetic character, whose influence derived from his age and wealth." Born about 1795 to 1800, he was about five feet, six inches tall and weighed about 250 pounds. Some observers described him as overindulging and easily manipulated.⁹ He was imprisoned at Fort Marion in St. Augustine and then at Fort Moultrie near Charleston before being shipped to the West. It was at the latter place that he was painted by George Catlin.

Halleck Tustenuggee was a leader at the famous incident of the killing of Lt. Sherwood and Mrs. Montgomery in Florida, December 28, 1840. His title indicates his high rank as a warrior among the Miccosukees, and his ability as a fighter is attested to by descriptions of him by contemporary Army officers. Lieutenant John T. Sprague, for example, called him a "most crafty and notable" chief and an "indomitable leader. A Miccosukee by birth, he boasted that his tribe had never been subdued by the white men.

Young and intelligent, with a few but well-trained followers, he was crafty, savage, and fearless. The country from St. Augustine northwest to Fort King and Micanopy, he kept in constant alarm. His infidelity at Fort King, his avowed hatred to the whites, his sagacity, the despotism with which he ruled his band, made him a dangerous and formidable foe.”¹⁰

Cosa Tustenuggee, also a leader at the killing of Lt. Sherwood and Mrs. Montgomery, December 28, 1840, held position as indicated by his high-ranking warrior title. The Sherwood event, according to Lieutenant John T. Sprague, intimidated Cosa Tustenuggee, who assembled his people near Palaklikaha and was taken with his 32 warriors and 60 women and children. They embarked for Arkansas on June 20, 1841. Because contemporary accounts tended to denigrate tribal leaders, Sprague’s description probably attests to his ability as a fighter: “The infamy of his own acts, accident, and the resolution of the detachment of dragoons, (which at first caused the arrest of the officer in command,) had relieved Florida of an Indian chieftain, cruel, cowardly, and vindictive.”¹¹

Coacoochee (Wild Cat) was perhaps the most colorful leader during the Second Seminole War and the best known after Osceola. Though he was young at the time, his authority derived from the fact that his mother was a sister to Micanopy and his father, Philip (Emathla), was an influential Miccosukee leader. He was captured under a flag of truce and imprisoned at Fort Marion but escaped and was captured a second time and released on condition that he would persuade his people to surrender for removal. He received considerable pay for his efforts and came to the West a wealthy man. Unable to reach his ambitions for nationhood or the rank he desired, he led a group of followers from the Seminole Nation and established a colony in northern Mexico, where he died of smallpox in 1857.¹²

John Cavallo (John Horse, John Cowaya, Gopher John) of Black-Seminole descent had a long-standing reputation as an interpreter and go-between before the Second Seminole War. During the war, he reached the rank of a sub-chief, commanding warriors in the field against the American Army. After he moved to the West, he allied himself with Coacoochee and migrated with him to Mexico, where he lived out his life. He was a man of substantial property and wealth at the time of removal, and at the North Little Rock site, Lt. E. R. S. Canby, who was attending the removal party in which John and his family were enrolled, found it necessary to borrow enough money from John to hire transportation to carry the group overland from the North Little Rock site to the North Fork of the Canadian.¹³

Abraham, a well-known black translator for the Florida Indians, was at times a personal advisor to Micanopy and throughout the major part of the Second Seminole War worked as a translator and negotiator for the U. S. military forces. He was the interpreter at the Treaty of Fort Gibson (1833) and in the post-removal years was regarded with suspicion by many of the Seminoles (See Illustration 40).¹⁴

Mushulatubbee, chief of the eastern division of Choctaws at the time of removal, had become chief upon the death, in 1809, of his maternal uncle, Mingo Homastubbee. He distinguished himself as a warrior and leader and was, therefore, familiar with the regions west of the Mississippi as a result of Choctaw excursions against the Caddoes and Osages. At the time of removal, he was politically opposed by non-traditional Choctaws such as David Folsom, who sought to take Mushulatubbee’s place of chief of the eastern district, and Greenwood Leflore, who attempted to make himself chief of all the

Choctaws in 1830. Mushulatubbee let it be known that he would favor removal if the United States would secure his position as chief of the eastern division. At removal, he turned against the missionaries, whom he had earlier favored. Thus, when the Choctaws under his leadership reached the North Little Rock site, they continued on up the river and settled on the Arkansas in the northern part of their new lands. Those following Folsom turned southwest to the Red River country. In the West, Mushulatubbee refused to allow the missionaries among his people. He died in the smallpox epidemic in 1838.¹⁵

David Folsom, Choctaw, was the son of a white trader, Nathaniel Folsom, and a Choctaw woman. Non-traditional and politically opposed to Mushulatubbee in the eastern district of the Choctaw Nation, he sought political reform by urging the adoption of constitutional structures.¹⁶ A major party of his followers passed through the North Little Rock site on their way to the Red River country.

Ishtehotopa, the Mingo or primary spiritual leader of the Chickasaws, was referred to by removal agent A.M.M. Upshaw as the King of the Chickasaws. He removed in 1838, and during a stay of some time at Little Rock, his party was ill with fever. One of the victims was his wife, whom Upshaw referred to as the Queen of the Chickasaws. She is presumably buried in Little Rock. When Ishtehotopa removed, Upshaw thought that removal was over and terminated all of his agents, even though there were many Chickasaws still on the road to the West.¹⁷

Tishomingo, the second ranking traditional leader of the Chickasaws under Ishtehotopa, was chief of Tishomingo District, one of the four districts of the Chickasaw Nation at the time of removal.¹⁸ When he died is uncertain. Oral histories from non-Chickasaws say that he died at Fort Coffee in 1839 as a result of small pox.¹⁹ He should not be confused with the Choctaw Tisho Mingo, who died in the Choctaw Nation in 1841 and for whom Peter Pitchlynn wrote the following obituary: “Captain Tisho Mingo, a veteran warrior of the Choctaws [the Chickasaws and Choctaws were living as one nation at that time], departed this life on the 5th inst. Although but little known beyond the limits of his nation, yet he was a man that had seen wars and fought battles—stood high among his own people as a brave and good man. He served under Gen. Wayne in the Revolutionary War, for which he received a pension from the Government of the United States, and in the late war with England, he served under Gen. Jackson, and did many deeds of valor. He had fought in nine battles for the United States. As a friend, he has served the white man faithfully. His last words were: ‘When I am gone, beat the drum and fire the guns.’ I hear the sound of the drum—the report of ‘death guns’ is roaring in our valley—a warrior spirit is passing away. The brace Tisho Mingo, the veteran warrior of our tribe is gone! His clansmen are gathering around his corpse. Long years have passed away since first his native hills re-echoed his war whoop—when grey headed warriors gathered around his war dance, and said, ‘Go young warrior, go. It is the beloved Washington who calls for help.’ Our aged warriors, and chieftains are all gone. Tisho Mingo, the last of the braces is gone! They are all gone!”²⁰

Notes

1. Arkansas Gazette, March 12, 1859.
2. See Foreman, Indian Removal, 135, 148, 161.
3. Sprague to Harris, April 1, 1837.

4. Arkansas Gazette, January 17 and January 24, 1837.
5. Edward Deas to C.A. Harris, January 25, 1837, Creek Emigration D56-37, National Archives Microfilm Publication M234, Roll 238. Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Letters Received.
6. Thomas L. McKenney and James Hall, The Indian Tribes of North America (Philadelphia, 1854), 193-194.
7. John K. Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842 (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1967), 79, 215-216, 223; quotes from Jarvis are reprinted in Mahon.
8. See Ibid., 127, 227.
9. See Ibid., 125-126.
10. John T. Sprague, The Origin, Progress, and Conclusions of the Florida War. (New York : D. Appleton, 1848), 250, 252-253.
11. Ibid., 250.
12. This sketch is derived from Donald A. Swanson, "Coacoochee," Handbook of Texas Online (last updated December 4, 2002. There are a number of good sources on Coacoochee including Kevin Mulroy, Freedom on the Border: The Seminole Maroons in Florida, the Indian Territory, Coahuila and Texas (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1993). The authority, however, is Seminole scholar Susan A. Miller's Coacoochee's Bones, scheduled for release by the University of Kansas Press in August, 2003.
13. Sources on John Cavallo abound, but see Mulroy, Freedom on the Border; Kenneth W. Porter, The Negro on the American Frontier (New York: Arno Press, 1971); Doug Sivad, The Black Seminole Indians of Texas (Boston: American Press, 1984).
14. There are many sources on Abraham, but see John K. Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War; Porter, The Negro on the American Frontier; Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., Africans and Seminoles (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977).
15. This sketch is drawn from Greg O'Brien, "Mushulatubbee and Choctaw Removal: Chiefs Confront a Changing World," Mississippi History Now (an online publication of the Mississippi Historical Society), <http://www.mshistory.k12.ms.us>.
16. Ibid.
17. Arrell M. Gibson, The Chickasaws (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 188.
18. Ibid., 174, 183.
19. For a discussion of the events surrounding Tishomingo's death, see The Chickasaw Times, April-June and July-September, 1978.
20. Arkansas Gazette, May 26, 1841.

Part VIII: Economic and Social Impact of Removal in Arkansas

In early 1831, in anticipation of Choctaw removal, editor William E. Woodruff of the Arkansas Gazette published a lengthy editorial addressed “to the Farmers, Graziers, and Salt Manufacturers, of Arkansas.” He wrote in response to the announcement by George Gibson, U. S. Commissary General of Subsistence, that the government would make contracts with local suppliers for subsistence and forage for removal parties during their journey and for subsistence for the people after they arrived in their new lands. Woodruff saw Indian removal as a major economic opportunity for Arkansas. “The subsistence of such a vast number of Indians,” he wrote, “will give profitable employment to our farmers, by furnishing an excellent market for all the beef, pork, corn &c. that they can raise, and at prices that will afford them a better reward for their labor than the raising of cotton, at the present depressed price of that article.” Woodruff outlined the likely routes the Choctaws would take through the territory, and urged farmers in those areas to shift their crop priorities in the approaching planting season. He closed his editorial by saying that the Indians “must necessarily scatter large sums of money through our Territory in procuring the means of subsistence on their journey, and we hope our citizens will look well to their interest in providing themselves with a sufficient surplus of provisions to meet the demands of the emigrants. The receipts from those sources will prove a very seasonable relief to those who complain of the hard times and scarcity of money.”¹

The editor was remarkably farsighted in his assessment of the economic prospects. Removal proved to be not only an economic boon to Arkansas in the short run but left its mark long run on the history of the state through social, political, and economic attitudes it left in its wake.

In the short run, Indian removal pumped hundreds of thousands of dollars into the cash-poor economy that the Gazette editor spoke about. Most of the contracts for supplying rations for Indians and forage for livestock went to Arkansas farmers, livestock growers, and merchants. Beef contracts, for instance, in 1832 went exclusively to Arkansans, who supplied 1,024,000 pounds of beef at an average price of \$3.16 $\frac{3}{4}$ per hundred weight. Arkansans received the contracts not only for removal parties moving through the state, but some successfully bid for contracts to supply rations to the Indians after they reached the West. Only in times of short supply or suspected price gouging did the United States go outside the local markets for subsistence. Disbursing agents who attended removal parties could exercise that option as Joseph A. Phillips urged during Choctaw removal in 1833 when corn was \$2 a bushel in Arkansas but a dollar or less in Memphis. Phillips concluded it was less expensive to buy it there and transport it than to have it supplied at ration depots in Arkansas at the higher price.²

Supply of rations placed constant demand on Arkansas producers. Daily rations remained standard throughout removal: three-quarters pound of fresh beef, pork, or bacon; three-quarters quart of corn or corn meal. Prices were slightly higher along the road from Little Rock to Fort Towson than the route from Rock Roe to Indian Territory, the difference relating, without doubt, to the productivity of the soil in each area. The

average price per ration in the territory in 1832 was 6 cents, 6 mills. Corn averaged \$1.70 a bushel and fodder \$2 per hundred weight. Prices remained steady throughout the period, in part, because from the beginning, farmers responded to the demands. In anticipation of removal, in 1831, for example, farmers in the upper Arkansas River valley shifted to corn production. G. J. Rains reported from Fort Smith, "Every farmer in the vicinity of this place has raised corn, under the expectation of finding a market for it when the Indians come on. The past season was very propitious to cultivation in this region, so that you may rely upon the fact that one hundred thousand bushels can be obtained and delivered at this place at seventy-five cents per bushel, or any lesser quantity can be gotten in the neighborhood at fifty cents."³ For the better part of a decade, farmers in the best agricultural region of Arkansas refrained from cotton production, unlike those in other Southern states, and built their agricultural economy around Indian removal.

It was not just farmers who profited from removal. When removal of a tribe was anticipated, contractors went to work. "The whole population on the route were rallied; and put into employ," according to Capt. Jacob Brown, "—some building cribs, others hauling corn, collecting and herding beeves, &c." Teamsters hired out themselves and their teams and wagons to haul subsistence and forage to ration depots or the Indians' baggage from place to place. Those with their own teams could earn \$5 a day. The extent of operation depended on the number of emigrants, teams, pack horses, and oxen expected to move past the supply depots or "stands" as they were called. If removal failed to take place, as with the Creeks in 1834 and the Seminoles in 1835, contractors stood to lose money rather than make it.⁴

Some individuals enriched themselves by engaging in a number of such services. A good example was William E. Woodruff, owner of the Arkansas Gazette and, after 1834, owner of the lower ferry at the North Little Rock site. As editor he received contracts to publish public notices related to removal, and his print shop generated many of the forms used by government officials. As well, in 1834, he had a teamster trade, hauling such items as a smith's forge and annuity iron for the Choctaws to the steamboat landing at Little Rock. He also was a contractor for rations. In 1835 he supplied Muscogee rations issued at William Strong's near the St. Francis.⁵

The ferry business, of course, was a lucrative trade. Some samples of his business during the Chickasaw removal will illustrate. He charged a dollar a wagon and twelve and a half cents for a foot passenger, a horse, or an ox. When the Chickasaws were indecisive in the summer of 1837 about whether to go to the Red River country or to the northwest, J. M. Millard convinced some of them to return across the river and go with him upstream. Woodruff and his partner literally made money "coming and going." He did the same on November 28 when he ferried 166 Chickasaws, 8 horses, and 5 wagons loaded with provisions across to the Little Rock side. The Chickasaws changed their minds and crossed back to the north side, and he charged them again. In December 1837 he supplied 153 bushes of corn and 2500 pounds of fodder to the Chickasaws. In August 1838 he ferried 127 Chickasaws, 238 horses, and 10 wagons as well as a wagon crossing and returning, carrying provisions, and one doing the same, carrying sick Chickasaws.⁶ For years, removal provided Woodruff a steady flow of ready cash, which could go far in a fledgling economy like Arkansas's.

One reason local suppliers such as Woodruff profited so well is that the office for the disbursing agents for Indian removal west of the Mississippi was in Little Rock. Men such as Capt. John B. Clark, Capt. Jacob Brown, Lt. S. V. R. Ryan, and Capt. R. D. C. Collins controlled the flow of cash. In them was vested the power to make contracts and to oversee the provision of goods and services.⁷ Their practice was to keep the cash at home.

Once Indian removal ended and the cash flow stopped, it left in its wake certain social and political attitudes that had significant implications for the tribes in decades to come. First was an anti-Indian, specifically an anti-Indian Territory, feeling that developed among the population of Arkansas, particularly in the western half of the state. Rumors floated in 1832 that the U. S. government intended to give Crawford and Washington counties to the Cherokees as incentive for them to remove. The rumors were soon laid to rest, but they were unsettling in a state whose citizens had been forced in recent times to retreat east from Lovely's Purchase and old Miller County that now lay in Indian Territory. That retreat was a warm issue. Bills to compensate the Miller County residents had been introduced in 1834.⁸

By 1836, in the midst of the Muscogee removal, the anti-Indian sentiment surfaced. Rumors of citizen complaints that the Muscogees were stealing their crops and burning their fence rails arose from a lengthy encampment of a large party of Muscogees at the North Little Rock site. Governor James Conway ordered the Indians on their way and directed officers in charge of any group to move them through the state as expeditiously as possible. He gave authority to local militias to enforce his edict. Lt. Edward Deas, in charge of the group in question, countered that economics was at the base of the complaints. Demand for commodities to provide subsistence for removal had caused prices to rise in local markets; hence the complains, Deas said.⁹

Deas' assessment was no doubt accurate, but there were other causes for the rising anti-Indian sentiment. The establishment of Indian Territory on their western border created a growing sense of vulnerability in Arkansans. At the time of the Conway-Deas exchange, they were concerned about the effectiveness of only one fort—Fort Gibson—on their western border to oversee all of the Indians concentrated there. There was a rising specter of Indian war. The Creek "war" of 1836 and the on-going conflict between the United States and the Florida Indians fueled the feeling as did the Texas Revolution.¹⁰ During the next few years, the clamor for defense grew, along with the demand for more forts and a greater military force on the western frontier.¹¹

In 1838, during Chickasaw removal, the editor of the Gazette expressed a common sentiment among the citizenry. He asked, "Can there be any thing more unjust and inhuman than the course which our Government is pursuing toward the citizens of Arkansas? It is sending thousands on thousands of Indians to be our immediate neighbors, and the greater portion of them have been driven from their homes east of the Mississippi, at the point of a bayonet, and come here with the most embittered feelings toward the white people generally."¹² Such inflamed rhetoric had clearly a political purpose, but it was common in the period. In commenting on a party of Florida Indians that passed up the river in 1841, the editor wrote, "It does not afford us any pleasure to record the arrival of treacherous enemies on our border; neither is it a pleasing task to be continually but justly, calling on the Government to send us a force adequate to the protection of the frontier; upon which she is concentrating an immense number of the

sworn enemies of the white man. . . . One thing they may be certain, should they attempt any warlike movement in their new home, that they have not the swamps and hammocks of Florida to hide in; and that the frontiersmen of Arkansas know every nook and hiding place so well, that the utter extermination of the Indian would follow any depredations committed by them on our citizens.”¹³

Concerns for defense were no doubt genuine, but there was also an economic motive behind the demand for active forts. In the flurry of militia mobilization that had occurred during the revolution in Texas had come a demand for goods. Money could be made as well from supplying an army as supplying Indians marching through the state. But instead of the need for a larger military presence, the opposite soon became obvious. Though Fort Smith was reactivated in 1839, Fort Wayne, built in 1838, was abandoned.¹⁴ Thus at the time Indian removal was slowing down and the economic boon it represented nearing an end, the economic prospect of supplying a line of forts along the western border faded.

Indian Territory represented not only a failed economic opportunity but was looked at ultimately as a barrier to the economic progress of Arkansas. A good example was the inability of Arkansas to enter the Santa Fe trade. In September 1837, the Arkansas Gazette ran a story about a company of Missouri traders who had returned with \$100,000 in gold and silver. This caused John Drennen of Crawford County to write: “How is it that the good people of Arkansas permit Missouri to monopolize this trade? It has kept specie plenty in that State, given wealth to many individuals, and made her capital a port of entry. Why do we close our eyes against these advantages?” Santa Fe lay directly west from Fort Gibson, he observed, yet the Santa Fe trade route went around Arkansas in a circuitous way.¹⁵

Indian Territory was an unyielding barrier to a direct Santa Fe route. In a like manner, during the great migration of Americans to the far west in the 1850s, much of the stream of wagon trains that brought people and money into unsettled areas bypassed Arkansas, mostly going to the north because of Indian Territory. Later, the territory became a barrier to east-west railroad construction. For some months in 1858, for example, there was national interest in building a transcontinental railroad along the thirty-fifth parallel, and a route was surveyed as far as Albuquerque. For a time, the prospect generated a good deal of local excitement around Fort Smith, a likely starting point for the road.¹⁶ However, acquisition of railroad right-of-way through Indian Territory was problematic. Indian resistance was so strong that no railroad passed through Indian Territory until the early 1870s and that from north to south. An east-to-west railroad was much later in coming.

By the last two decades of the century, the resentment against Indian Territory informed the political agenda of Arkansans in Congress who were intent on liquidating the tribal title to the land, closing down the tribal governments, and allotting the land in severalty. To the Indians, it was reminiscent of events leading up to removal. Congressman Jordan Cravens of Clarksville, whose family had made money supplying subsistence to Indians during removal, first initiated legislation to liquidate the Cherokee title to their last parcel of trust land in the state—the old Cherokee Agency reserve. The task was completed by Senator James K. Jones of Washington, Arkansas, and Congressman Clifton R. Breckenridge of Pine Bluff.¹⁷

The role of the latter two and other Arkansas politicians in dissolving the tribal nations is undisputable. Key figures were Senator James H. Berry of Bentonville, Congressman Hugh A. Densmore of Bentonville, Governor William Fishback of Fort Smith, Congressman John S. Little of Sebastian County, and Congressman Thomas S. McRae of Prescott. When the Dawes Commission was established in 1893 with a mission to dissolve the tribal nations, Jones was chair of the Senate committee on Indian Affairs, Berry was chair of the Senate committee on territories, and McRae was the chair of the House committee on public lands. Archibald McKennon of Clarksville, brother-in-law to Berry, was a member of the Dawes Commission and an author of the Curtis Act of 1898. Breckenridge also served on the Dawes Commission. Of these figures, McRae, Fishback, and McKennon were the most virulent in their verbal attacks on the tribal leadership and government.¹⁸ There is, without question, a direct relationship between the growing anti-Indian sentiment that surfaced during removal and the breakup of Indian Territory, followed by what former Cherokee Chief Wilma Mankiller has called the “Dark Ages” of tribal history.

Indian removal through Arkansas also established the financial foundation for the social and political base of certain Arkansas families. The Cravens family mentioned above got its start by supplying rations and forage for removal parties moving up the Arkansas River valley. In the late nineteenth century some of them practiced law in Fort Smith before moving to Muskogee, Creek Nation, where they did legal work in Indian allotments and other resources.

Another good example is Samuel M. Rutherford, an early settler of Clarke County, who served as sheriff there. In 1831 he was in partnership with Samson Gray of Bayou Meto to supply rations for the Choctaws. In January 1832 he was named assistant agent for removal and conductor of Netachache’s party of Choctaws from Little Rock to Fort Towson. In 1833 in partnership with Gray and David Rorer, he helped construct part of the new road from the Little Rock ferry to Bayou Meto. In 1835 he became U. S. marshal for the Indian Territory, working out of the federal court at Little Rock. And by the 1850s he had become the U. S. agent for the Seminoles.¹⁹ His steady climb in the “Indian business” laid the groundwork for his son, Samuel M. Rutherford, Jr., who first practiced law in Fort Smith and then moved to Muskogee, Creek Nation, where he became mayor and a prime mover for allotment of Indian land and dissolution of the tribal nations.

Others like Samson Gray, James Erwin, William Strong, and William E. Woodruff, as well as government officials overseeing removal used the money they made from removal to create banking and real estate enterprises. Captain Jacob Brown, for years the disbursing agent for removal at Little Rock, was elected president of the Bank of Arkansas in November of 1836 while still holding his army position. A year later, under fire, he resigned from the bank. In the interim, the U. S. War Department had invested Choctaw funds in the bank, and Brown had arranged a \$300,000 bond sale to the War Department. By then, Brown had extensive real estate holdings in Arkansas. Despite the panic of 1837, some of these men were instrumental in establishing the Real Estate Bank of Arkansas in the fall of that year. Woodruff, James Erwin, William Strong, and Capt. R. D. C. Collins, who replaced Brown as disbursing agent, held positions as board members, directors, or other officers. Collins became president of the

institution in 1839.²⁰ A casual search of the Bureau of Land Management records will reveal extensive land holdings by all of these men.

The town of D’Cantillon that was platted at the North Little Rock site in 1839 was named for R. D’Cantillon Collins, the disbursing agent. He was one of the promoters as was Simeon Buckner, the Louisville steamboat owner whose fleet had been used in Chickasaw removal a few months earlier.²¹

The connection between wealth generated by removal and the banking and real estate interests of the new state is strong, and, like the political and social attitudes about Indian resources that grew in the wake of Indian removal, the economic base established by removal guaranteed the political and social status of a number of Arkansas families. Thus the burden of history passed from one generation to the next.

Notes

1. Arkansas Gazette, February 23, 1831.
2. Arkansas Gazette, May 23 and August 8, 1832; Arkansas Advocate, March 20 and July 3, 1833; 23rd Congress, 1st Session, Senate Executive Document 512, I:18, 531, hereafter cited as Document 512.
3. Ibid., I: 825.
4. 26th Congress, 1st Session, House Report 503, 7; Arkansas Advocate, December 14, 1835.
5. See, e.g., Monthly Abstracts of Disbursements, August 1834, Choctaw Emigration 268; Report of Agents, 4th Quarter 1834, Creek Emigration; and Statement of Expenditures, September 30, 1834, Choctaw Emigration 280, all in National Archives Record Group 75, Records Relating to Indian Removal, Records of the Commissary General of Subsistence, Letters Received, Choctaw-1834 and Creek 1834.
6. See, e. g., Receipts No. 9, 26, 50, and 49, Chickasaw Emigration C816-38, National Archives Microfilm Publications M234, Roll 144, National Archives Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Letters Received.
7. Document 512, I: 47, 57, 111, 113.
8. Arkansas Gazette, May 23, 1832; Arkansas Advocate, April 11, 1834.
9. Arkansas Gazette, December 13, 1830.
10. Ibid.
11. For a detailed history of these demands, see Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., and Lonnie E. Underhill, “Fort Coffee and Frontier Affairs, 1834-1838,” Chronicles of Oklahoma 52 (Fall 1976): 314-336; Littlefield and Underhill, “Fort Wayne and the Arkansas Frontier, 1838-1840,” Arkansas Historical Quarterly 35 (Winter 1976): 335-359.
12. Arkansas Gazette, May 30, 1838.
13. Arkansas Gazette, April 11, 1841.
14. Robert G. Ferris, ed., Soldiers and Braves: Historic Places Associated with Indian Affairs and Indian Wars in the Trans-Mississippi West (Washington, DC: U. S Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1971), 85, 150, 264.
15. Arkansas Gazette, October 10, 1837.
16. See, e. g., Arkansas Intelligencer, July 2 and August 12, 1858.
17. See Littlefield and Underhill, “The Cherokee Agency Reserve, 1828-1886,” Arkansas Historical Quarterly 31 (Summer 1972), 166-180.

18. This survey is based on the unpublished work titled “The Dawes Commission: Federal Assault on Tribal Sovereignty, 1893-1898” by Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr.
19. Grant Foreman, Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 58, 385; Arkansas Gazette, May 22, 1835; Document 512, I: 73; Arkansas Advocate, May 29, 1845.
20. Arkansas Gazette, October 4 and November 8, 1836, March 28; April 2, June 27, July 11, August 8, September 12, October 17, and November 14 and 21, 1837, and November 8, 1839.
21. Arkansas Gazette, July 18, 1838.