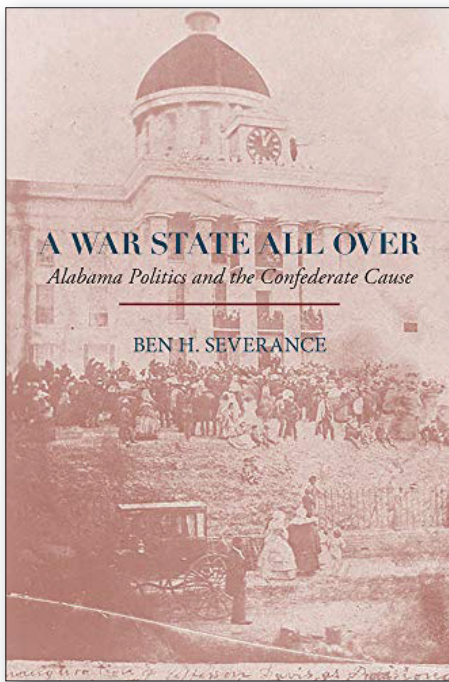


# THE VOICE

of the *Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society and Cobb Memorial Archives*



The public is invited to a presentation and discussion on the impact of the Civil War on the Civilian and Political attitudes in the State of Alabama by Dr. Ben Severance, Professor of History at Auburn University Montgomery, on Sunday, April 25th at 3:00 PM EDT (2:00 CDT). This public discussion will be held online (since the Bradshaw Library still is not yet available for presentations) via ZOOM. All attendees, both CVHS members and the general public, will need to send an active email address to the following address by 12:00 noon (EDT) on that Sunday, April 25th: [programs@cvhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:programs@cvhistoricalsociety.org). The moderator (Charles Powers) will respond to each email with specific directions on how to connect prior to the 3:00 PM meeting.

## "A WAR STATE ALL OVER"

**A VIRTUAL PRESENTATION** *By Dr. Ben H. Severance*

Dr. Ben H. Severance is a professor of history at Auburn University Montgomery, an institution he joined as a faculty member in 2005. He received his Ph.D. in 2002 from the University of Tennessee (Knoxville). His principal areas of research and teaching include the American Civil War and American Military History more broadly. Among his publications are three books: *Tennessee's Radical Army: The State Guard and Its Role in Reconstruction, 1867-1869* (University of Tennessee Press, 2005), *Portraits of Conflict: A Photographic History of Alabama during the Civil War* (University of Arkansas Press, 2012), and *A War State All Over: Alabama Politics and the Confederate Cause* (University of Alabama Press, 2020). In addition to his academic career, he was also an officer in the United States Army before pursuing his PhD.

The focus of Severance's book *A War State All Over* is a detailed study of Alabama's political allegiance to the Confederacy. His research for this project is oriented around the important mid-war elections of 1863, which serve as a crucial gauge of popular support for the Confederate war effort. Severance argues that a strong majority of Alabama's political leaders

remained steadfast to the cause of southern independence right to the end of the war. In doing so, his book illuminates the often-overlooked lives of Alabama's wartime governors, Congressmen, and state legislators.

The University of Alabama Press review of Dr. Severance's states, "Alabama's military forces were fierce and dedicated combatants for the Confederate cause. In his study of Alabama during the Civil War, Ben H. Severance argues that Alabama's electoral and political attitudes were, in their own way, just as unified in their support for the cause of southern independence. To be sure, the civilian populace often expressed unease about the conflict, as did a good many of Alabama's legislators, but the majority of government officials and military personnel displayed pronounced Confederate loyalty and a consistent willingness to accept a total war approach in pursuit of their new nation's aims. As Severance puts it, Alabama was a "war state all over."

Please encourage all to join this insightful presentation on our state history! ■

**THE CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY MEETING**  
Sunday, April 25, 2021, 3:00 p.m. EDT (2:00 CDT)  
*Online Meeting via ZOOM.*

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *by Malinda Powers*

We're ready to roll at last! As you are aware, safety protocols resulting from the pandemic and the exercise of an abundance of caution resulted in two postponements of our annual bus tour in 2020. Now, with the proliferation of vaccines, we are cautiously moving forward with our plans once more. We have teamed up with our friends south of the border- the Lee County Historical Society-to create our most unique program yet, a study tour on the Creek Indians in Alabama. The trip is now slated for June 12-16, 2021. Registration is open through May 1. For more information, please check our website.

Our itinerary ranges from the beauty of the Alabama mountains at Russell Cave to the splendor of Andrew Jackson's estate outside Nashville. However, the most intriguing part of the tour, in my opinion, is the remote Tensaw Delta in the southwestern part of the state and the all-but-forgotten stories of "the Old Southwest". Most of us are somewhat familiar with the history of the Red Stick attack on Fort Mims. But did you know there were over a dozen other "forts" in the Delta? Alabama had its own version of Paul Revere in Jeremiah Austill. There's also Issac Hayden, who literally "released the hounds" just in the nick of time to prevent another massacre at Fort Sinquefield.

The remoteness of this area prompted me recently to drive to South Alabama and personally scope out these sites, as well as road conditions and eating establishments in the area. Of special interest was a portion of the Old Federal Road in Monroe County. On Highway 5, in the middle of nowhere it seemed, my son and I discovered "Burnt Corn". Once a significant crossroads of the Federal Road and a prominent Indian trading path, it is now a ghost town. We peeked in the glass-front of a general mercantile store and saw the old sales counter, antique post office boxes, and old farm tools and memorabilia. On that beautiful spring day, I could not help but marvel at the sense of quiet stillness that enveloped this pioneer community of long ago.

We appreciate all of you who have already renewed your membership for this year. If you have not yet renewed for 2021, we're enclosing a form for your convenience. Without your loyal support, CVHS could not continue to preserve, protect and promote our historical resources. We have local projects we want to undertake in Chambers County and the Greater Valley Area in the next few years, and we need your continued support to be able to achieve these goals. Thanks so very much!

■



*Burnt Corn- This "ghost town" in rural Monroe County could easily be the setting for a Southern gothic novel. In 1813, Colonel Caller and territorial militia engaged Red Stick warriors at nearby Burnt Corn Creek a few weeks before the Ft. Mims' massacre.*



*Beautiful rolling hills provide a nice backdrop for a quick picnic lunch in the small community of Perdue Hill, a few miles from the site of Old Claiborne on the Alabama River.*

**The VOICE** is a quarterly newsletter of the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society, Inc., P.O. Box 718, West Point, Georgia 31833

Editor: Dr. Horace (Mac) Holderfield (holderfieldh112@msn.com)

Find us on Facebook and visit our website at <http://cvhistoricalsociety.org>

**MISSION STATEMENT:** As a non-profit membership organization, the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society seeks to preserve and promote the history and heritage of Chambers County, Alabama, West Point, Georgia, and the greater Chattahoochee Valley area. CVHS produces and sells historical books and media, publishes a quarterly newsletter, and presents programs with speakers on historical topics of local and regional interest.

**VISION STATEMENT:** Having been in continuous operation since its founding in 1953, the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society strives to uphold the vision of its founders while posturing the organization for growth in the 21st century.

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## STEPHEN JOHNSON'S NEWSPAPER RESEARCH--- REPORTS ABOUT THE CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY

*Our member and former President Stephen Johnson continues his research for articles in early newspapers describing the people living in our counties surrounding the Chattahoochee River. We are always indebted to him for these perspectives of our social and political histories. The first article published in 1836 describes the action of the volunteer militia from Troup County, GA; LaGrange, GA; and LaFayette, AL formed to protect populations and property from the Creek Indians in the uprisings in the summer of 1836, the Second Creek War. The newspaper article is printed as it is written with the spellings and grammar of the day except the names are in bold for your later reference. The newspaper article is followed by a brief interpretation of events and persons from writings of two contemporary academic historians and a local historian. Ed.*

**COLUMBUS ENQUIRER.** Columbus, Georgia. May 27, 1836. LaFayette, Chambers Co. May 17, 1836. To the Editors of the Enquirer:

“Gentlemen---the Creek Indians below this place, have recently exhibited themselves in hostility against the white inhabitants of this and the adjoining counties, and have committed the most cruel and merciless murders--men, women, and children have indiscriminately become their victims. Fifteen of these murders have come within my knowledge. Not content with the destruction of life, they plunder as they go, breaking open store houses and destroying the contents after taking off the articles of most value. Appealed to, by the citizens of this place and county, as well as influence by the feelings of my own heart at beholding the victims of their savage cruelty where the tomahawk and scalping knife had left them, I proceeded to raise a military company, and marched as early as possible to the seat of war. The company under my command, consisted of about one hundred and fifty men, a part of which were mounted and the balance on foot. The last named, were commanded by **Dr. Hudson** and **Green D. Brantly**, as brave and dauntless as they are known to be honorable. On Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> May, we encamped on the lower line of

Chambers County, and proceeded on the next morning to the Loca Poga Town.—This town is considered one of the most numerous and certainly the most hostile of any in this part of the nation. One part of my command was conducted down the south side of the Sawgahatcha by **Major Gilder** whose courage and soldier like conduct, backed by his knowledge of the Indian character, makes him a formidable foe to the enemy. The other division was under my own direction and marched down the north side of the Creek—both divisions having orders to burn and destroy all the houses and property of the hostile Indians, on the way, and make an attack on the town simultaneously. We met at the same time and found the town recently deserted by the Indians. I ordered the buildings to be burned, and accordingly the town house and many others were consumed. I was assisted in this enterprise by about 75 or 100 friendly Indians, under the command of **Capt. Doyle**, who behaved exceedingly well, and manifested much interest in bringing their hostile brethren to that punishment that they so richly deserved. Such property such as not consumed by the fire, was by my direction carried off by friendly Indians. This course was pursued for the purpose of widening the breach between them and establishing them on the side of the whites, believing that they were important auxiliaries in the service as soldiers and spies, and indispensable in driving the hostile from their strong holds in the swamps. On Sunday night at camp, I was joined by two companies of mounted men from Troup County, GA. one under the command of **Capt. Hugh A. Haralson**, the other under the command of **Capt. Kinchen L. Haralson**, comprising about one hundred men, who had nobly volunteered to aid us in the defense of our families and our properties. Such conduct as this, needs no comment. At their request, I assumed the command of the forces under their control, and on Monday morning with my own company, the LaGrange and Troup County Volunteers and about 40 or 50 friendly Indians

*continued on next page*

proceeded to the scene of our operation of the day before, and completed the work of destruction begun on Sunday, by burning and otherwise destroying all the houses and property belonging to the hostiles Locha Poga town, embracing a large scope of country. These troops and their officers discharged their duty faithfully, and manifested the greatest desire to engage the enemy, marching along their trails on the sides and through the extensive swamps on the large Creek on which their town is situated, twice coming in sight of them near their town house and firing on them, but at too great a distance to make effect. They uniformly retreated with great precipitation to the swamp, and refused to fight, notwithstanding that they had sent me word to come to their town and they would give me a fight. During the day every effort was used to lead them and to drive them from their strong holds, but without effect. It may be necessary here to state, that the friendly Indians under **Capt. Doyle**, manifested every disposition to cooperate with me in the exertions of the day, and that they executed every order with promptness, and uniformly charged the swamps at every order for them to do so. The hostiles are doubtless preparing for as long and as troublesome warfare as possible. We surprised a party who were collecting provisions and carrying their cattle to the swamps. They again fled and we captured 31 head of fine beef cattle, which were give to the friendly Indians with directions to distribute them among their men. On Saturday, a small detachment under **Capt. Seals** had a skirmish with the enemy, numbers not known, one Indian was left dead on the ground and several others known to be wounded, and it is believed mortally, one man killed on our side, **Mr. Biggerstaff**. On the next evening, Sunday, the forces under **Maj. Webb**, brought into a camp on a litter, the unfortunate **Harper**, and (whose wife and children had been murdered a few days before), dangerously wounded, one ball passing through the breast, and another entering near the hip and lodged near the nipple. The detachments under **Col. McLemore**, **Maj. Webb** and **Capt. Seals**, marched on Monday morning in a south west direction from camp, since which time I have had

no current information of their movements. On Monday night, we encamped at camp Ross on the extreme lower line of Chamber County, having done all that could be done. Tuesday morning took up the line of March for their respective home, having in connection with the other forces under **Col. McLemore**, **Maj. Webb** and **Capt. Seals**, stricken the enemy with sufficient terror I sincerely hope and believe, to deter them from further murders and hostilities, on the inhabitants exposed to their savage and cruel attacks until the constituted authorities of Alabama, can march a force into the country, sufficient to crush them and until such force can be marched into the country, I would recommend the erection of a fort at Kings Store, below Sitchetitchie town house, to be manned forthwith, for the protection of the lower part of Chambers, and there by save to the inhabitants of the country bordering on the hostile towns, their camps and immense amount of property, which is now entirely abandoned, and will remain so, unless protection is speedily afforded them. After I had assumed the command of the united force, I was by my own request assisted in the command of the LaFayette and Chambers County Volunteers by **Col. Julius C. Alford** of Troup county, Ga. who on hearing the distress of the citizens, and the recent horrid murders that had been committed came to my command on the first day and joined me as a soldier in the lines, bringing with him a quantity of powder and lead, at his own expense, which was distributed to the suffering inhabitants. **Col. Alford**, in his command rendered his great service by his manly submission to privation and strict subordination while in the ranks, and after taking the command assigned him his undaunted courage as an officer, inspired confidence in his men, and in every instance executing every order with promptness and decision. Before I took my leave of the **Captains Haralson's** each with their brave men volunteered their services and pledged themselves to march to the assistance of their follow citizens of Alabama whenever I should notify them that their aid was necessary. The hostile Indians are embolying I have no doubt, a large swamp called the Eoforde, some short distance above

*continued on next page*

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the Federal road. This information was derived from the friendly Indians, and also a woman taken prisoner by **Capt. Seals**. It is a very extensive swamp and will require a regular military campaign to dislodge them.

Yours very respectfully,

**ELIAS BEALL,**

Commander of LaFayette and LaGrange and Troup Co. Volunteers”

### **Brief Context for Reading the Beall Report**

Commander Elias Beall’s report to the press was descriptive, dramatic. It would have conjured a visceral response with many citizens. Newspapers of the period published exciting and newsworthy text from other papers. We may assume many people in the towns and cities of Georgia, Alabama, and even other states read with great interest the latest reports about Indian hostilities and atrocities. Billy L. Lindsay in his 1971 monograph of primary source materials of Chambers County criticizes Commander Beall’s report as “melodramatic” with his illusion to “savagery cruelty of the tomahawk and scalping knife.”<sup>1</sup> His research, interpretation of events, corroborated by later historians John T. Ellisor and Christopher D. Haverman, revealed that the motivation for Beall’s militia activity and public relations were more complex than defensive peace keeping. To best understand the frontier, early history of Chambers and neighboring counties, three books are necessary reads and rereads. First, is local historian Billy L. Lindsay’s *The Reason For the Tears* published in 1971, which is essentially a compilation of primary source information with Lindsay’s interpretations. The second and third are well researched and well written monographs by academic historians. Dr. John T. Ellisor published *The Second Creek War, Interethnic Conflict and Collusion on a Collapsing Frontier* in 2010. Dr.

Christopher D. Haverman published *Rivers of Sand, Creek Indian Emigration, Relocation, & Ethnic Cleansing in the American South* in 2016. What follows is a brief outline drawn from their research.

By the 1830’s the Creek Indian culture of West Georgia and East Alabama was in the final stages of disintegration. Creek refugees expelled from West Georgia had been moving into East Alabama along with increasing waves of intruding legal settlers, frontiersmen, roughs, squatters, countrymen traders, and land speculators. The behaviors of all of these groups and the state and Federal government were destroying the tribal/clan way of life of the Indian.<sup>2</sup> Traditional hunting skills could no longer feed the Creek as hunting areas were diminished by white farmers and by the disappearance of the mainstay source of protein, the deer. Cattle and hogs free ranging would destroy the Indians’ planting of their traditional crops. With the loss of land the past predictable sources of adequate food for many Creeks declined, to be replaced by stealing, begging and bartering of land for food and grog with the merchants and speculators who streamed into New Alabama. The three primary gateways for various ravenous outsiders to move into New Alabama, East Alabama following 1832 were through West Point, GA; Columbus, GA; and Roanoke, GA. Haverman describes Columbus, GA, as “a boomtown for white settlers, land speculators and whiskey shop owners.”<sup>3</sup>

Neither the Federal government nor the Alabama State government had the will or intent to commit resources to establish the enforcement of law and thereby protect the Creeks from the unscrupulous whites. By 1836 the relocation of Indians in Georgia to the west had been under way for a decade. In the minds of white political leadership the only way to ensure social stability in New Alabama and protect the Indian was to relocate the remaining Creeks to the west and allow their fertile land to be available for sale to the white farmers and planters. Cotton on the international market was of high value and new fertile land for cotton production was also of high

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1 Lindsay, Bobby L. *The Reason for the Tears, A History of Chambers County, 1832-1900*. West Point, GA: Hester Printing Company, Publishers, 1971: 61-63.

2 Ellisor, John T. *The Second Creek War, Interethnic Conflict and Collusion on a Collapsing Frontier*. University of Nebraska Press, 2010. 121-125.

3 Haverman, Christopher D. *Creek Indian Emigration, Relocation, & Ethnic Cleansing in the American South*. University of Nebraska Press, 2016. 25-27.

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value among the speculators.<sup>4</sup> By the time Chambers County was established, the forces which sealed the fate of the Creek Indian were in full play. By May, 1836, when the Second Creek War occurred, no physical barriers existed between the Indian and the increasing numbers of white immigrants among them who stole land and possessions from the Creeks without recourse. Haveman describes the scene as one of “inglorious misery” for the native.<sup>5</sup> Grog shops were plentiful. Lucrative trading houses for the countrymen merchants who sold liquor and other commodities on credit were found throughout New Alabama. Creeks would settle debt by selling the acres reserved and given to household heads by the 1832 Treaty of Cusseta. Excessive consumption of alcohol was common and very destructive among the Creeks.<sup>6</sup>

The tensions between the Federal and State governments and among the white and Creek inhabitants of New Alabama grew as isolated depredations increased in 1836. Young Creek warriors rose up to strike violently at their white oppressors. The brief three month war primarily occurred in that area of rich farm land along and south of the Federal Road. Disorganized numbers of the Creeks murdered and caused mayhem. Many villages did not participate or wish war and were friends with their white neighbors.<sup>7</sup> During this three month period the Creeks were able to carry out only one well organized attack which captured, burned Roanoke, Georgia. Among the white populations in New Alabama, settlers legally occupying farmsteads and countrymen engaging in illegal practices panicked and made haste to flee to Georgia when the first depredations by the Creeks occurred north of the Federal Road. Immediately, fear among the white population turned into a paranoia prophesizing a brutal uprising to destroy all whites in New Alabama.<sup>8</sup>

In December 1835, “events occurred that made the Second Creek War inevitable, by giving inspiration to Creek resistance and throwing whites into panic all over the Chattahoochee River Valley. The Seminoles, close kin to the Lower Creeks, took up arms to resist removal from the

Florida Territory.” Whites began to organize themselves for a fight. South of Columbus violent depredations and revenge slayings and burnings took place. Many Lower Creeks began to talk about resistance and war plans but their society had disintegrated to the point that collective resistance was not possible. By May 1836 rebellious Creek warriors had taken encouragement from the successes of the Seminoles in fighting to remain on their lands. Small bands of Creeks began to plunder and kill travelers on the Federal Road from Fort Mitchell to Montgomery. Stages were captured, wrecked and burned. Passengers were robbed and killed. Roanoke, Georgia was taken by the Creeks; whites were killed. The rebellion underway consisted of indiscriminate acts of murder and pillage.<sup>9</sup>

Commander Beall’s letter to the paper describes an initiative which took place following two horrific incidents of murder and pillage about May 11 north of the Federal Road, one in Macon County and one in Chambers County. The southern border of Chambers County was farther south than the present boundary and Lee County did not exist. About half of the 1836 southern boundary was shared with Russell County and the other half with Macon County.

Ellisor’s research describes, “...Tallassee warriors from the villages of Loachapoka and Sougahatchee began to kill people north of the New Road on or about May 11. They struck both in eastern Macon County and in southern Chambers County, and two of the attacks were particularly shocking. In the vicinity of Black’s store, ten miles south of LaFayette, the county seat of Chambers, the warriors killed a settler named Davis, his wife and their seven children. Then they cut off the heads of the youths and threw one child out into the cabin’s dooryard, where “the hogs eat it up.” In the other attack, the rebels slaughtered the Jones family and hung their corpses in the trees around their home. In the wake of these atrocities by Tallassee Creeks, the Chambers County settlers fled in masse to LaFayette and set up barricades for mutual protection.”<sup>10</sup>

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4 Ellisor, *The Second Creek War*, 82, 94-95, 201, 129.

5 Haverman, *Indian Emigration*, 186.

6 Haverman, *Indian Emigration*, 182-183.

7 Ellisor, *The Second Creek War*, 170-171.

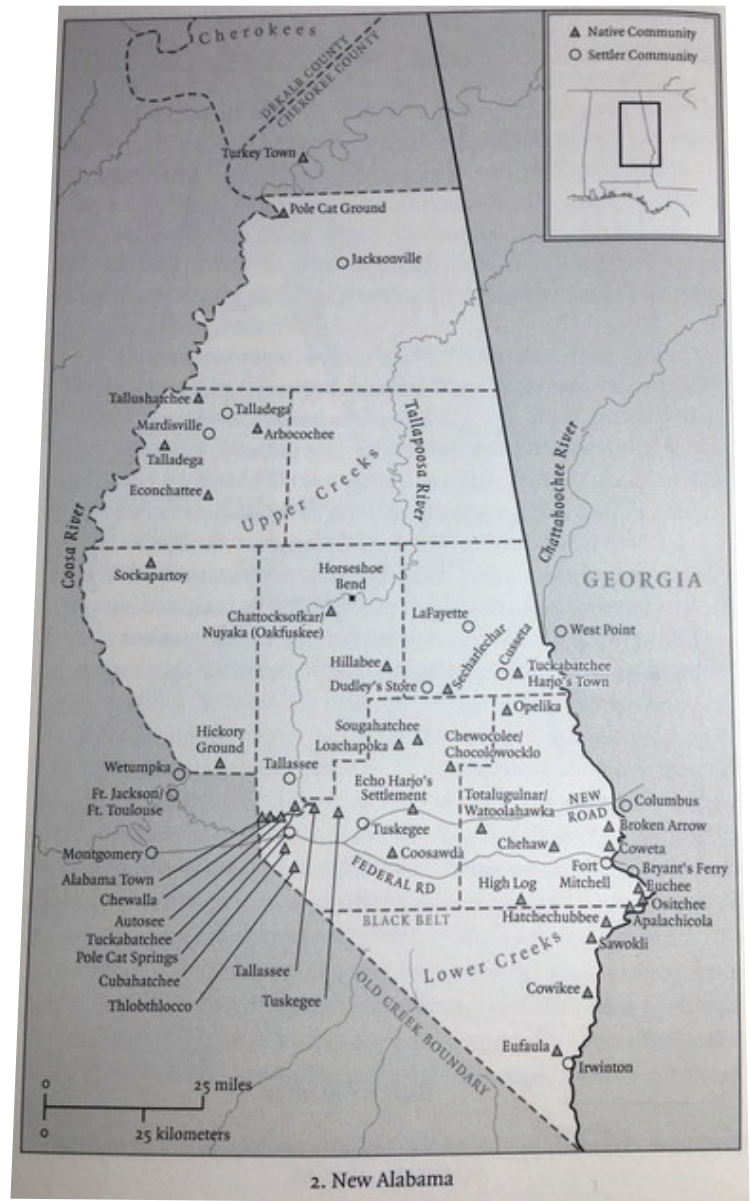
8 Ellisor, *The Second Creek War*, 151-152, 192-194

9 Ellisor, *The Second Creek War*, 152, 199; Haverman, *Indian Emigration*, 180.

10 Haverman, *Indian Emigration*, 148.

At this time local Individuals, not always recognizing and protecting the friendly villages, organized militias and with the help of friendly Indians carried out raids against the Creeks. Haveman asserts, “Except for a handful of men from Sougahatchee and Loachapoka, among others, the Upper Creeks remained neutral or supported the United States in the hostilities.”<sup>11</sup> The motivation to fight the Creeks by the local citizens who led the militias can be questioned. Brig. Gen. Elias Beall was a merchant, grog shop owner and a land speculator. Capt. Nimrod Doyle was a land speculator. Col. Charles McLemore was a well-known land speculator. One militia leader not mentioned by Beall but who led attacks with the aforementioned officers was Capt. John Broadnax, a widely known countryman and land speculator. Although McLemore’s raid on Loachapoka would destroy the village, which was under the protection of the General Thomas Jessup, the majority of the Creek population fled the location with possessions and livestock before the arrival of the militias. The militia action was not as heroic or as well directed as described by Beall’s letter to the press. The scorched earth tactic of the militias punished the many friendly Indians in the villages and was the precursor of ethnic cleansing of all Creeks from their Alabama homeland. Ellisor concluded “...Respectable citizens of Chambers County did not take part in the speculators’ “conquest” and would, in fact, call for a federal investigation of the role Beall and his kind played in causing the uprising.”<sup>12</sup>

*The above brief paragraphs do not do justice to introducing the story of New Alabama in the Second Creek War in 1836. There are many stories and lessons to be learned within stories. The reading of the three recommended monographs would be a most interesting and insightful experience for everyone. Ed.*



Map Source: John T. Ellisor. *The Second Creek War, Interethnic Conflict and Collision on a Collapsing Frontier.* University of Nebraska Press, 2010. 20.

11 Ellisor, *The Second Creek War*, 185.  
 12 Ellisor, *The Second Creek War*, 184, 214-217;  
 Lindsay, *The Reason for the Tears*, 62-64.

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## THE FALL OF FORT TYLER *By Stephen Johnson*

*The second newspaper article provided by Stephen Johnson for this issue of The VOICE was published in a Knoxville, Tennessee, newspaper first and then was picked up and published in the Columbus Daily Times, written by what appears to be a man from South Carolina who signs his article as "Palmetto." Stephen states that this article, an account of action at Fort Tyler, was not included in the CVHS book, The Battle of West Point, published in 1997. We believe the article and its account of the final hours may be published here for the first time since its original publication in the newspapers. Is the author of this letter claiming he fired the last cannon on that fateful day? Ed.*

**COLUMBUS DAILY TIMES.** Columbus, Ga. October 29, 1876:

### THE ENGAGEMENT AT WEST POINT,

KNOXVILLE, TENN., OCT. 27, 1876. Editor of the Times: In your issue of the 25th, I noticed a communication from a correspondent from West Point, in which are embodied several statements entirely foreign to the facts in the case. I noticed, however, that what purports to be historical is enclosed in quotations; but if your correspondent had taken the trouble to inquire of any citizen of West Point who resided there at the time of engagement in question, he could have obtained correct information, as several participated in the fight, some of whom were mere boys—among whom I remember young Lanier and Camp who fought with the courage of veterans and were taken prisoners. W. J. Slatter at the time editor of the daily paper at West Point, was another gentleman who participated in the battle, and was afterwards paroled at Macon as a member of my battery, to avoid any possibility of being treated as a guerrilla. Mr. Slatter is now publishing a paper at Winchester, in this state and will verify the fact.

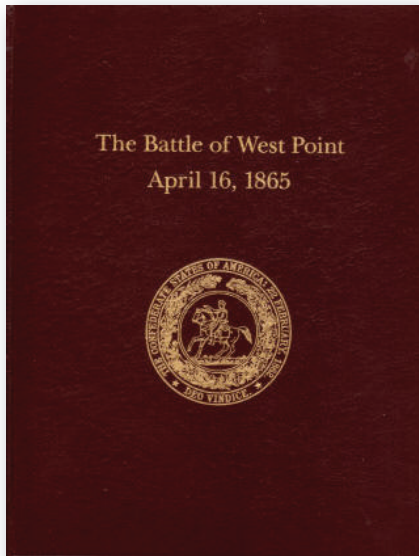
The correspondent truly says: "It was reserved for that point to be the last grand theater of our revolution. The last fight of that revolution was fought upon her heights; the last blood that was shed, and the last few that fell, was upon her sacred soil." But what I take exception to was

his utterly ignoring the command which formed the nucleus around which the men of other commands rallied. He says: "A portion of Major Allen's Battery," &c. Now in fact Major Allen was not present at the time, in the first place; field officers do not, as a usual thing, command companies in the second place; and in the third place, there was no such command in the whole Army of Tennessee.

Capt. Waties' (Waites, ed.) battery Light Artillery, from Columbia, SC., commanded by Lieut. R. D. Waddell, was there and had charge of and fought the guns in Fort Tyler which consisted of two 10-pounder Parrott rifled guns belonging to the battery, and a 32-pounder siege piece, which was mounted so as to command the railroad and county bridges over the Chattahoochee. The artillery men, except three detachments, which manned the guns, took rifles, as did the other defenders of the fort. In addition there were about thirty men from the Point Coupee (La.) Battery. The remainder of the garrison were composed of soldiers going home or returning to their commands, who were stopped in transit by order of Gen. Tyler, convalescents from the hospital and citizens of West Point. Maj. Camp, proprietor of the railroad hotel, had his eyes shot out, and his son, who was with him during the fight, was permitted by the humanity of Federal commander,

*continued on next page*





*Historic April*  
**156TH ANNIVERSARY OF BATTLE OF WEST POINT**

**April 9—Gen. R. E. Lee Surrenders**  
**April 15—Pres. Abraham Lincoln Dies**  
**April 16—Easter Sunday, Battle of West Point**

*The Battle of West Point April 16, 1865* is a hardcover book that was published in 1997 by the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society and includes eyewitness accounts of the battle, essays, anniversary commemorations, photographs, archaeology, and rebuilding of the fort. Eleanor D. Scott and Carl Summers, Jr., editors. This book is available to purchase. Simply go to our on-line bookstore to download an order form.

<https://cvhistoricalsociety.org/category/bookstore/>

Col. LaGrange, to remain and nurse his father instead of being retained as a prisoner of war.

That memorable 16th of April, 1865, will never be forgotten by the soldiers who were at Fort Tyler. The quiet of the Sabbath was disturbed by the tramp to charging squadrons, the roar of artillery and the rattle of small arms, while terrified women prayed vainly for success to crown the useless valor of their sons and the gray-clad men of other states. Three charges were repulsed but the ammunition of the garrison began to fail and the enemy took advantage of the slackened fire and gained the ditch—ham( hand, ed.) grenades were thrown over the breastworks but their foe were to numerous to be dislodged. One of the Parrott guns was disabled, at the other every cannonier was wounded , the carriage of the 32 pounder was damaged by the shell of the enemy's pieces, the flag was riddled with ball and bullet, the lanyards even being cut, so close and accurate was the fire of the Federals, but the slender cord that supported the white and crimson bunting of Tyler's battle-flag, in its recoil wrapped with serpent-like tenacity around the tall staff, so that it

could not be lowered, and at quarter past six, the gallant Col. Fannin, seeing that further resistance was hopeless, one-third of the little garrison being wounded and the ammunition being exhausted, reluctantly ordered a surrender. A subaltern tied a white handkerchief on a ramrod, the order "cease firing" was given; the Federals poured over the breastworks with deafening cheers, and the "last ditch" was won.

Col. Fannin fought with desperation, but he was *not* summoned to surrender, unless it was by his own officers, and it was not until after his surrender that the Federals entered and cut down the flagstaff.

I write this in order that credit may be given the men who participated in this engagement. The first cannonshot was fired from a South Carolina gun in 1861, and the last by a soldier from that State at West Point, in 1865.

"PALMETTO"



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## HOW TO FIND GEORGIA NEWSPAPERS *By Stephen Johnson*

You might think that I've spent hours and hours reading old newspapers to find the West Point items I have submitted to the CVHS The Voice. That is not the case. Most of them I just ran across when I was doing genealogy research at the University of Georgia Library's newspaper collection, in Athens. They have every Georgia newspaper ever found, on microfilm. But when the pandemic started, this facility was no longer available to me, so I began researching the newspapers on the Georgia Archives website.

The Georgia Archives website doesn't have as many newspapers as UGA does, but it does have some from almost every Georgia county, including some from Savannah back to 1763. There is a single issue of a West Point newspaper from 1867. This website is free to the public, and you don't need a login name or a password. And you can search for a particular individual, place, or event, which makes it an ideal reference source for genealogists or students. Here's how you can use it:

1. Go to the website: [www.georgiaarchives.org](http://www.georgiaarchives.org) and open it.
2. Scroll down to either "Online Resources for Research" in the left column, or "Virtual Vault" in the right column. Under either heading, find "Historic Georgia Newspapers" and click on it. (You may want to look at the other fascinating things under Virtual Vault, like the Historic Photographs, including some from West Point, Colonial deeds, old maps, etc.)
3. The Historic Newspaper site shows a map of the state of Georgia. If you want newspapers from a particular city or county, click on that region, and it shows you all the counties in that region and the newspapers available from each county.
4. If you want to find a particular person, place, or event, don't click the map. Instead, go to the top column, and click "Search." Then go down to the "Word Proximity" line and type in the name of the person or thing you want. To the right of that, choose "1" for "Within \_\_\_ words of each other", if there were two words. (Example, if you typed West Point, and chose anything but 1 you'd get all newspapers with either West or Point in them,

but not both words together.) Then choose the cities and newspapers you want, or just select "All Cities" and "All Newspapers" like I usually do, and then select the date range, if you know an approximate date range.

5. The search should bring up all newspapers with the words you typed in outlined in red. You can click on any of them, zoom in on a particular article (in the upper left corner) and print it.

As an example, I wanted to find the death notice of George Poer, who was killed by an exploding firecracker in West Point on Christmas Day, 1899. My mother had told me about this tragedy, and it is mentioned in our CVHS book on Pinewood Cemetery, where George is buried. Of course we have no West Point newspapers for that year, and I found that neither the LaGrange nor the Hamilton newspaper had an issue for that week, probably because they took a week off for Christmas. I did a search, typing in "George Poer", within 1 word of each other, and came up with only one newspaper, the *Athens Banner*, which had reported the story.

I have also come up with some interesting items about my ancestors which I could have never found otherwise: one ancestor advertising for a runaway slave in 1810, another one advertising a race horse the same year, another relative of a cousin being involved in a duel in Mitchell County in 1859, and many others.

This is a great way to entertain yourself in your spare time, and a great way for students to read about American History seen through the eyes of observers at the time it actually happened. I don't know of a similar website, and I recently upgraded it to include Newspapers.com which has newspapers from all over the world. It has many more Alabama newspapers than Georgia newspapers, but it does have the West Point newspapers from 1920 through 1950, and it has some very old Alabama newspapers from towns like Cahaba.

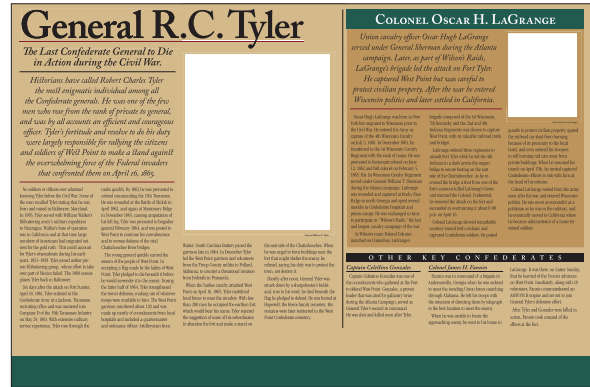
■

# FORT TYLER PATHWAY MARKER PROJECT

Visitors to the Fort Tyler site have information available to them via several large pathway markers. Pathway markers have proven to be a great way to convey facts about the fort that can be studied at the visitors' own pace. Over the years, however, some of these markers have become very difficult to read due to weathering. The sign posts and frames have also deteriorated with age.

Catherine Slavich, a member of Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia, Troop 50369 in Columbus, GA, has identified the need to replace these signs as her Girl Scout project. The "Fort Tyler Historical Marker Restoration Project" includes replacement of the informational signs along with cleaning and painting the sign posts and frames.

Funding for this sign project includes a donation from the Chattahoochee Valley Historical Society and contributions made to the Fort Tyler Association. One sign has been completed in a previous year, and three more are currently



One of the pathway markers slated for replacement in 2021.

in production. It is hoped to have these three signs finished and installed with refurbished frames and sign posts before summer of this year.

In addition, Catherine is looking at ways to restore more signs that are still in need of replacing but lack the funding to do so. ■

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There you will find a full itinerary as well as a payment schedule, registration form, and even a flyer that you may print out and post for others to see what a great opportunity we are offering.

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DVD on Ft. Tyler: **THE BATTLE OF WEST POINT** for sale on our website: [www.cvhistoricalociety.org](http://www.cvhistoricalociety.org)

When the ladies of West Point presented General Robert C. Tyler with their flag, he was so moved by their devotion he declared, "I will die beneath its folds ere I surrender it!" Those words were tragically prophetic, for on April 16, 1865, Tyler was killed by a sharpshooter's bullet while defending the fort that had been named in his honor. Tyler was serving as post commander of the small, but important, Confederate railroad supply junction at West Point, Georgia. When a Union cavalry brigade threatened the town that Easter morning, Tyler occupied the fort with a hastily organized garrison of regulars, hospital convalescents, townspeople and even schoolboys. Against incredible odds, this small group of approximately 100 defenders held off 3,700 seasoned Union troops until their ammunition was depleted, giving Fort Tyler the distinction of being the "Last Fort to Fall."

This documentary has been diligently researched and engineered to provide an historically accurate account of the battle. Visit [www.forttyler.com](http://www.forttyler.com) for more information. Produced in cooperation with the Historic Chattahoochee Commission.

SKETCH WEST POINT, GA. LINE OF DEFENSES UNDER SUPERVISION OF TERRY BRYANSON. Engineer's charge. Scale: 1" = 100'.

Running length: 24 minutes, with additional commentary feature © 2010, all rights reserved. A Doug Roberts, VISUALSforce, production

LAST FORT TO FALL  
The battle of WEST POINT



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