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Black Seminoles and North American politics 1693-1845

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ABSTRACT

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BLACK SEMINOLES AND NORTH AMERICAN POLITICS, 1693-1845

Advisor: Professor William Boone

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This study examined the interaction between rebellious African slaves, who took refuge in Florida, and the governments of Spain, Britain and the United States. The rebels fled British and American slavery in the Carolinas and Georgia. The study is based on the premise that this interaction reveals a genuine political relationship between the rebels and the governments. Administrative documents, records and military correspondence of the various governments furnish the foundation of the study’s analytical data.

This is a case study in which a political-historical method is used to analyze documents, diaries, and other data. The researcher found that numerous references about rebel slaves in Florida exist in the documents. Also, each government formed specific policies because of the rebels.

The conclusions drawn from the findings suggest that because the Florida rebels were able to sustain their freedom through war, they received the scrutiny of the various governments. As a military ally, the rebels helped Spain keep its Florida colony until 1821. British and United States political leaders were forced to seek first diplomatic, then military measures, to counter the activities of the rebels and their allies.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Topic

Between the 17th and 19th centuries, a few thousand African slaves rebelled against slavery by escaping to Florida. These slaves lived among, and became identified with, the Florida Native Americans known as Seminole.

This study of the relationship between Black Seminole rebels and Spanish, British and American political policies examines political and historic events and issues not generally discussed or factored into other analyses. Since Joshua Giddings wrote Exiles of Florida, scholars have documented the history of slave escapees in Florida and their armed rebellions against the slave industry. Giddings, an abolitionist congressman from Ohio, wrote Exiles in 1856. He follows the Seminole from the 18th century up to their flight into Mexico in the mid-19th century. As recently as 1993, in Freedom on the Border, Kevin Mulroy chronicles how runaway Black Seminole utilized the border between the United States and Spanish Florida to remain free.

In contrast to the aforementioned studies, I specifically seek to understand the relationship between the Black Seminole and political policies of Spain, Britain and the United States. Though the existence of runaway slaves from South Carolina and Georgia among the Seminole of Florida has been copiously documented, the runaways have generally been depicted as third parties, in broader political struggles between the British and the Spanish, the United States and the Spanish, or the United States and the Seminole Indians. In this type of analysis writers have generally described the runaway slaves as an
appendage or an ally of the Spaniards or Seminole, in their struggle against the British and United States for political empowerment and self-determination.

A closer review of these political, military and historical conflicts would invariably reveal the nexus that exists between the runaways, and the political policies of Spain, Britain, and the United States.

This study begins by showing the relationship of slave rebels to the early New World politics of Spain and Britain. It is important to understand that this relationship precedes British settlement in North America; and helps establish a foundation for understanding the North American relationship.

Primarily, the relationship of slave rebels to Spanish, British, and U.S. politics between 1693 and 1845 is examined. As a result of exploring these political relationships, the study sheds light upon the rebels’ relationship to: Spain’s survival in North America between 1691 and 1821; British colonial policy in the Southeast until 1763; the Founding Fathers’ policies towards the Seminole; U.S. acquisition of Florida; the Seminole Wars; the Presidential campaign of 1840; and U.S. Congressional Gag Rules from 1835 to 1844.

It is hoped that this study will provide a frame of analysis for examining how the African slave traditionally responded to being placed in political bondage. Traditionally, our perspective has ranged from docile acquiescence to the limited rebellions of Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vessey and Nat Turner. However, a careful analysis of the Seminole not only reveals the fact that Africans militarily rebelled against North American slavery, from its beginning to 1844, but additionally, the study reveals how these rebel slaves had a relationship to political policies, throughout the time frame of the study.
Definition of Concepts and Terms

Many of the words and concepts and ideas referred to in this study have more than one meaning to researchers and readers. Therefore, in this section it is necessary to clarify anything that may predictably confuse the reader. Also, words and phrases that may be totally foreign to the reader will be defined here.

When the Spanish colonist arrived in the Western Hemisphere they referred first to runaway cattle and later to Native American and African slaves as “cimmaróns.” The word is defined as wild, unruly, or as a runaway slave.¹ Perhaps the most common usage of the term “cimmarón” comes in an abbreviated form “maroon,” which was originated by the British and French pirates who encountered Spanish colonial society in the sixteenth century.²

Another variation of “cimmarón” came from the British seaman Sir Francis Drake’s voyage of 1572-73. Drake’s chaplain on board referred to the rebel slaves as “symerons.”³

By the late seventeenth century, Native Americans and Africans who were slaves of the British in South Carolina escaped into Florida.⁴ These runaway slaves were


² For a detailed explanation of the word Maroon, refer to Catherine Schwarz, ed., Chambers Concise Dictionary (Edinburgh: W & R Chambers Ltd., 1988); Price, Ibid, 1-2;


technically “cimaroons” in a Spanish colony. Between 1763-83, Florida became a British colony. During this period the combined population of those original South Carolina cimaroons and newly arriving free Natives, plus more African runaways from both Georgia and South Carolina began to be identified as the “Seminole” by the British.5 “Seminole” is an English corruption of “cimaroon.”

For the purposes of this study “Seminole” will be used in reference to all Native Americans in Florida after 1763. Also “Seminole” will at times be used to refer collectively to both Native Americans of Florida and the runaway Africans among them.

By definition a rebel is one who opposes or disobeys authority and control; or takes arms against the government or ruler of a country.6 The enslavement of Africans by Europeans in the Western Hemisphere was a prelude to the subsequent oppression of Blacks through contemporary times, from Brazil to the United States. Slaves who fled to gain their freedom and those who fought to maintain it were definitively rebels. They were the first African rebels of the Western Hemisphere and the predecessors of Blacks who oppose today’s authorities. Though “cimaroon,” “maroon,” and “Seminole accurately describe them, in most cases this study will refer to them as “rebels.” In some

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instances for the sake of clarity a prefix such as “cimeroon,” “maroon,” “African,” “Black,” or “Seminole” will be added to “rebel.”

This study seeks to explain the relationship between Black-Seminole rebels and North American politics. “Relationship” is defined as any connection, association, or involvement, direct or indirect, between the rebels and politics. For the purposes of this study “politics” refers to any direct or indirect reference, comment, or acts made by politicians, administrators, or military leaders. Most of these responses are letters or governmental documents which discuss government efforts to end the rebel threat to the slave industry. Individual responses often are the puzzle pieces which reflect upon greater trends or emerging policies. At times legislative and executive policies will be studied which have a direct relationship to the rebels.

North American politics can refer to the governmental structures of colonial Spain, Britain and the United States, at the national and local levels. Native Americans are commonly referred to as Indians. In this study I will generally use their tribal names unless for the sake of clarity, “Native,” “Native-American,” or even “Indian” would be more appropriate.

Research Question or Problem

This is a study which seeks to discover, understand and reveal the relationship which did exist between the African Seminole rebels and the governments of colonial Spain and Britain and the United States. When possible, political activity which reveals quid pro quo, or cause and effect relationships between the rebels and North American governments, will be discussed. Peripheral research questions include: What constitutes the Seminole people? And, What was the relationship of these constituent peoples to one another?
Methodology: Political-Historical

This is a case study of the political relationship between Black Seminoles and the colonial governments of Spain and Britain, and the United States. Therefore, the research method of this study must be political-historical, with an Afrocentric emphasis. African input generally was not present in the political documents being studied. However, unique conditions of slavery and oppression were made synonymous with being African in the “New World.” Therefore, the quest for freedom and the desire to minimize oppression permeated all aspects of life for the Florida rebels. This was a unique African reality. Consequently, the Afrocentric emphasis requires that this study make an assessment of any relationship between the rebel quest for freedom and the political documents under review.

Techniques

The primary technique of this study will be content analysis. Political documents of Spain, Britain, and the United States will be the subject of my analysis. Generally, two types of documents exist: episodic and running. Episodic documents are much harder to locate. Their conditions of storage and accessibility make them difficult for researchers to gather. Their precarious accessibility renders them less suitable for numerical and quantitative measurement. Episodic records are better for qualitative illustrations. I think that episodic records can go a long way towards providing information which may be very convincing and persuasive in my effort to illustrate the various relationships between political actors and the African Seminole.

Running records are usually much easier to find than episodic ones. They are generally maintained by organizations such as governments or historical groups.
Normally, they are cyclically updated and stored so that they can be readily accessed. I will make use of running records. Examples of these include the South Carolina legislative records and the Congressional Record. Examples of episodic records are the King of Spain’s Edict of 1693 and Joshua Giddings’ book *The Exiles of Florida*.

After gathering documents, my next step is content analysis. I will decide which of the documents are truly useful in helping me show the rebel Seminole relationship to American politics. Since I am not relying upon a certain numerical sampling of documents to state my argument, my focus will not be on quantitative analysis. Instead, I am seeking certain reasonably convincing records. Therefore, my analysis is more qualitative. I will combine the episodic and running records to state my argument. I am proceeding with this method aware of the pros and cons. I will have access to a subject which would otherwise be inaccessible because of the historical setting and to a small degree, perhaps, geographical inhibitions. Also, archival data is largely non-reactive. Those who recorded the data generally did so without consideration of future researchers. Written records help facilitate chronological observations. Additionally, written records are probably cheaper to obtain than is raw data.

On the other hand I realize that I have to consider any bias a writer may have had. Also, I’ll be limited to the use of those documents that happen to have survived. Because many episodic records are not kept under optimal circumstances, I must be prepared to contend with the hazards of poor storage. Also, there may be examples of forgeries or lies. In spite of those drawbacks, I believe I can make good use of the content analysis technique.

Another technique will be interviews. I will interview Dr. Jane Landers, the author of several articles on the Seminole in Florida. Dr. Landers teaches at Vanderbilt University and has produced a documentary on the subject. Also, I will interview Mrs.
Charles Emily Wilson, who is a tribal historian for the African Seminole in Bracketville, Texas. In addition to these two interviews, I will also talk with William Dub Warrior. Both Mrs. Wilson and William Warrior are descendants of the African Seminole. They will furnish insight on the perspective of the Seminole. Giddings points out that most of the chroniclers of the Seminole saga were Southerners, and as such he questions their perception of Africans as slaves of the Creeks and Indian Seminole. Mr. Warrior and Mrs. Wilson will provide resources for discovering how their ancestors perceived themselves.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

In reviewing the literature it is important to remember that “cimmarón” is the root word of both “maroon” and “Seminole.” Though “maroon” is a shortened version of “cimmarón,” both terms generally designated runaway African slaves. While “Seminole” can be seen as an English corruption of “cimmarón,” it was most widely applied to Creek Indians who had never been slaves. Generally, runaway slaves from South Carolina and Georgia will be referred to as “maroons” before the American Revolution and “African Seminole” after the establishment of the United States. In a general sense, then, “maroon” refers to runaway Africans exclusively, even though some Indians also escaped by running to Florida. “Seminole” will refer to both Africans and Indians unless otherwise specified.

African maroons played a definite role in England’s early gains against Spain. However, general texts do not reveal this.

In The American Pageant, Thomas A. Bailey credits Sir Francis Drake for leading England’s grand entrance into the New World against Spain, omitting the crucial factor of the maroons in Drake’s success. In The Beards’ New Basic History of the United States, William Beard likewise credits Drake as leading the British-
Protestant attack upon Spain and Catholicism. Both Bailey and Beard view Drake as a pirate, but neither mention the maroons. Sources which verify the maroons' assistance to Drake are numerous. In Sir Francis Drake Revived, the preacher who accompanied Drake on the voyage tells of a two-year voyage. Reverend Phillip Nichols writes of a 1572-73 odyssey in which Drake is saved from total disaster by the maroons. Because they hated their Spanish masters, the maroons rescued the Drake mission. Drake had left England with two ships and seventy-three men. After attempting to attack the Spanish, he lost one ship and all but twenty-four of his men. Included in Drake's casualties were his two brothers. His remaining crew was dying from disease. Nichols credits the maroons with housing Drake for eight months and then with providing Drake with sixty additional troops. With the help of the maroon warriors, thirty tons of silver and gold were captured.

Nichols' story is referenced by George Thomson in Sir Francis Drake. He says that without the cimmaróns, Drake's mission would have failed. He credits the success of this mission with being the beginning of the end of Spanish and Catholic dominance. In Maroon Societies, Richard Price likewise credits the maroons as being a key factor in Drake's success.

None of the authors mentioned focuses on maroon political involvement. But Nichols speaks of a maroon king and a few thousand inhabitants. Also, he makes clear the fact that the maroons changed the flow of gold to Spain. These
sources validate the notion of autonomous maroons impacting the European political equation.

Historian Irene A. Wright, in "The Spanish Resistance to the English Occupation of Jamaica, 1655-60," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, credits Spanish maroons with assisting a handful of Spanish resisters from their mountain strongholds. Wright says that in 1655, British troops overran the island and chased all but a handful of Spaniards out. These few Spaniards were given refuge by the maroons in the bases from which they had fought the Spanish government. From these bases they waged a five-year guerrilla war which prevented British civilian settlement of the island. Wright says that the Spanish government of Jamaica ceased fighting only after the primary maroon leader, known as "Governor" Juan Bolas, led the British troops to their mountain bases. The British had been unable to find these bases for five years. The Spanish governor immediately surrendered.

In The Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series VI, America and the West Indies, British records support Wright's views. In 1655, the Council of State reports that the island was taken and that the few remaining inhabitants had fled to the hills. Between 1655-60, the record shows a steady influx of weapons and troops to Jamaica. By 1661, Sir Charles Lyttelton, the Deputy Governor of the island, appointed Juan Bolas as magistrate over Free Africans. Bolas was awarded land for his help to the British in securing Jamaica. In The Fighting
Maroons of Jamaica, Carey Robinson concurs with Wright and the Calendar to a great degree. Robinson, however, believes that Bolas was always neutral between Britain and Spain. He sees the greatest challenge of the Spanish resistance as maintaining Bolas' neutrality. Robinson notes that Bolas was the most prominent maroons leader but that others aided the Spanish resistance during the five-year period. He cites both Spanish and British forces offering freedom to all maroons in exchange for military assistance.

In The Maroons of Jamaica 1655-1796, Mavis C. Campbell does not acknowledge the role of maroons in Spain’s five-year guerrilla struggle. Campbell notes that Spain fought for five years, but she says that the island was essentially conquered in the first year.

I think there is enough evidence to also show the maroons’ political impact in this case. The maroons in general, and Bolas in particular, held the balance of power between Britain and Spain over a key colony. Bolas was a political actor who negotiated with both British and Spanish governments.

In 1693, the King of Spain issued an order to the Spanish authorities in St. Augustine, Florida. This order is recorded in The Archives of the Indies. In the order, the King, discussing the fate of several runaway African Slaves from Charleston, South Carolina, said that these slaves which had just arrived in Florida should be set free and “given anything they need and favor them as much as possible.” Perhaps more important, the King said he hoped this policy would be
an example to the other British slaves. This policy shows that Spain knew the pivotal military role that maroons could play. By offering them special treatment, the King gave them autonomy and won their allegiance.

According to *The Archives*, English slaves from Carolina had been escaping to St. Augustine since the 1680’s. Florida had always been a strategic site in Spain’s efforts to guard her mines and shipping routes in Mexico and the West Indies. After England settled in Carolina, military conflict began between her and Spain. But as English strength grew in North America, the Spanish level of preparedness proved inadequate. Therefore, it seems the King knew from experience in Panama and Jamaica that in the maroons lay the balance of power. *The Archives* state that initially the Spanish government was directed by the King to compensate British slave owners from Carolina who came to St. Augustine. By 1733, the King forbade payment. Additionally, as stated in *The Archives*, by 1738 the number of maroons had become so great that the Governor had them build a combination and military fort. The fort had to be encountered before St. Augustine could be attacked. This fort, called “Mose,” stood as the first line of defense for Spain in Florida until the Treaty of Paris in 1763 forced Spain to yield Florida to the British. The fort, symbolizing maroon autonomy, existed only because of the maroon’s political significance.

In “A free African town in Spanish colonial Florida,” Jane Landers reflects upon much of the information about the maroons included in *The Archives of the*
Indies. According to Landers, both African and Indian slaves of the British escaped to Florida. Landers notes the King of Spain's order of 1693, his policies of refusing to continue compensating Carolina slave holders, and the establishment of Mose. Landers' research sheds crucial light upon the genesis of the Seminole people. She observes that the Yamasee branch of the Creek nation had been frequently united with Carolina maroons as the vanguard of St. Augustine's attacks upon Carolina. Landers says that the maroons in Florida and Carolina slaves still in captivity united with Indians in the Yamasee War of 1714. This war nearly destroyed the Carolina colony.

The Carolina legislature says that the war was initiated in St. Augustine. Landers says that the Yamasee Chief Jorge declared that he made treaties with Carolina slaves. One of these slaves fled to Florida with him. That slave, Francisco Menendez, a Mandingo, became the Commander of Mose and the leader of the St. Augustine maroons. The Governor of St. Augustine sought special decorations for Menendez for his leadership against several British attacks. Records from The Archives and the research of Landers indicate that Spanish military and political survival in Florida as in Jamaica was assisted by the maroons. Also, these sources suggest that the core of the Seminole people was born in war treaties between Yamasees and Carolina maroons, perhaps totally independent of even the Spanish.
In *The Negro on the American Frontier*, Kenneth Porter discusses the Spanish reliance upon Seminole Africans in Madison’s Patriots’ War of 1811-14. He points out that the Spanish Victory was possible only with the help of the Seminole, especially the Africans. Joseph Smith underscores the critical role of the African Seminole in Madison’s Patriots’ War in *The Plot to Steal Florida*. However, he primarily observes the role of Africans as allies of the Seminole, rather than of Spain.

The political role of the African Seminole is implicit in the observations of Porter and Smith. However, neither specifically mentions what that role is.

In *The Seminoles of Florida*, James W. Covington does not acknowledge a pre-American Revolutionary presence of the African Carolina maroons in Florida. Covington does not mention maroons as being a force until 1812. He says that the word “Seminole” was first applied to Creek Indians, who immigrated into Florida after the indigenous Apalachee people were exterminated by the British and Creeks. He cites the British as being the originators of the term because they learned it meant runaway; however, he said that the Creek immigrants rejected the definition runaway and preferred the interpretation of migrant or pioneer. Covington writes that some Africans were captured and purchased as slaves of the Creeks, while some runaways were permitted to settle among them in Florida’s forest.
In *Freedom on the Border*, Kevin Mulroy mentions the Spanish use of maroons as key elements in their defense of Florida, including Fort Mose, and he also mentions the King’s order of 1693. Though Mulroy notes the existence of Fort Mose, he dates Spanish land grants to the maroons as beginning in the early 1800’s. This runs counter to The Archives and Landers’ data. Mulroy says the word “Seminole” is a corruption of “cimmarón” and that it came into use only after the British obtained Florida in the Treaty of Paris in 1763. He writes that word “Seminole” originally applied to Creeks who migrated into Florida only but came to be applied to Africans later. Mulroy believes that African maroons primarily existed as quasi-slaves of Creeks but that some were free runaways. He notes that by 1812 the term “Seminole” applied to both African and Red. Neither Mulroy nor Covington acknowledge any runaway Indian slaves as being contributors to the Seminole people.

In the article “Creek into Seminole,” in *North American Indians in Historical Perspective*, William Sturtevant says that the Seminoles are a purely post-European phenomenon. Though Sturtevant acknowledges the Seminole connection to “cimmarón,” he says it meant “pioneer” when applied to the Creeks in Florida. Also, he dates the term’s origin to British occupation after the Treaty of Paris in 1763. Sturtevant mentions in passing runaway African slaves from Carolina. However, he cites no connection of maroons to British-Spanish conflict nor to their being soldiers nor part of the Seminole people.
Robert Weir cites both runaway Indian and African slaves as inhabitants of Fort Mose in addition to being the founders of the Seminole people in colonial South Carolina. It seems that few authors search for the reasons behind an apparent British corruption of “cimmarón.” Sturtevant and Covington discuss African runaways during the Spanish occupation. They discuss Britain’s application of the term during their occupation yet they don’t ask about whom Spain may have applied the term to during its occupation. But answers are provided by The Archives and other sources.

Though Mulroy, Porter, Smith, and The Archives acknowledge a key role of African maroons in the defense strategy of the Spanish, they do not mention a comprehensive role. In every key defensive engagement of Spain in Florida between 1693 and 1819, the Africans were vital participants. Porter sees a crucial role for Africans which spans most of the years between 1693 and 1819, but, though he cites the role of Africans in these key battles, he doesn’t mention that Spain’s survival in North America was enhanced.

A key theme which emerges while examining the African Seminole impact upon British politics is the fact that colonial development was severely limited. This observation seems clear in the Calendar of State Papers, Narratives of Early Carolina, and Colonial Records of South Carolina and Georgia.

The Calendar contains some seventeenth century accounts of how Red and African runaway slaves or cimmarónes attacked frontier settlements. From these
attacks the limits upon development or expansion are concluded. The Colonial Records both of South Carolina and of Georgia make direct statements about the manner in which development and expansion were curtailed by African runaways from British colonies who raided frontier settlements with the Spanish and Indians.

The concept of the allied efforts from Florida limiting British colonial expansion is handily acknowledged. In The Southern Colonial Frontier, 1607-1763, W. Stitt Robinson mentions the Yamasee War. However, Robinson says this war led to South Carolina’s establishing frontier posts as nuclei of settlements. In Colonial South Carolina, Robert Weir also says that the Yamasee lands were seized and settlement was encouraged at discounted rates to attract settlers. Also, though, Weir’s and Robinson’s views contradict the statement in the Colonial Records, which speaks alarmingly of the Yamasee War and its follow-up attacks by “nimble parties” of Africans and Indians.

Colonial Records also confirm that Georgia was primarily founded as a military garrison to help secure development in South Carolina, but Weir does not mention this. He stresses the colony’s humanitarian purposes. In Colonial Georgia, Kenneth Coleman says that slavery was banned in early Georgia, but he fails to explain any relationship between slavery, security, and colonial growth being limited by the proximity of the Florida maroons.
There are many sources regarding the maroons' impact upon the British politics in the Southeast before the 1763 British occupation of Florida. In *The Seminoles*, Covington tells us that Governor Moore of South Carolina invaded Florida with Creeks in 1704. Also, he tells us that Thomas Nairne, also of South Carolina, invaded Florida. Both of these men were political leaders who launched invasions at a time when Spain was sending escaped Carolina Africans and Indians to invade Carolina. Covington doesn't directly discuss the relationship of these attacks to the presence of maroons in St. Augustine, but he does bring to light other sources which refer to the context of such attacks.

Several direct references to runaway African slaves can be found in *The Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series Volume II*. In the Papers, colonial politicians reveal their fear of the phenomenon of maroonage. In 1689, the London proprietors of Carolina wrote to Governor Seth Sothell that he should “take care to prevent servants and Negroes from running away to the Spanish at St. Augustine.” In 1699, Edmond Randolph of Charleston (which the Spaniards called St. Jorge), wrote to the Council of Trade and Plantation in London informing London that Africans outnumbered Whites in Carolina four to one. He also said that one hundred Spaniards, Indians, and Africans had invaded Carolina in 1686 and had carried away at least thirteen slaves whom they refused to return. He informed London that the Spaniards said the British were on their land. In 1700, Sir William Beeston, a Carolina proprietor in London, discussed slaves
fleeing to the Spanish. In 1715, the Carolina Governor informed Lord Townsend of London that in the Yamasee War of 1714-15 the Yamasee’s primary support came from St. Augustine. In 1716, two South Carolina assemblymen, Joseph Boone and Richard Beresford, notified London that Spain, Yamasees, and African maroons were preventing the resettlement of South Carolina after the war and stealing slaves and even enslaving whites. Boone urged London to wage war against St. Augustine. London wrote back saying Spain was repaying them for their enslavement of their Indians. Also, the proprietors informed Boone that many Carolina traders had reported seeing their slaves in St. Augustine.

Narratives of Earlv Carolina, edited by Alexander Salley, indicates that in 1681 Governor Morton assembled the parliament to end the Indian slave trade and prevent maroonage. Also, a Carolina official, John Oldmixen, reported that between 1700-02, Governor Moore illegally tried to dominate the Indian slave trade. In order to hide his misdeeds, Moore invaded St. Augustine with 1,200 soldiers. He was not able to conquer St. Augustine, but he took many Apalachee Indians as slaves. Edward Randolph, the Surveyor General at Charleston, wrote to the London Board of Trade in 1698 reporting that one hundred African, Indian, and White soldiers from St. Augustine had raided Governor Morton’s plantation, taking many slaves. According to Randolph, the soldiers said that they had direct orders from the King of Spain not to return any slaves.
In 1730, *The Colonial Records of South Carolina. The Journal of the Commons House of the Assembly. 1736-39*, edited by J.H. Easterby, recorded that the Assembly President had reported that runaways and the St. Augustine forces were a deadly problem to the colony and that everything possible had to be done to deal with the problem. The assembly discussed the Spanish policy of encouraging Negro slaves to run to St. Augustine. A house member reported going to seek fifty of his slaves in St. Augustine, where he spoke to the Spanish Governor, who said Spain would not return any slaves. Between 1736-39, the Assembly passed a resolution to solve the problem by, first, seeking military help from London, second, paying friendly Indians to capture slaves, and third, launching an invasion from Charleston. Also, the *Colonial Record* shows that a special Committee of Desertions was formed. The Committee reported that the Spanish Edict of 1693 was distributed throughout South Carolina. Also, the Committee reported that this policy threatened the British Empire in America.

*English Historical Documents: American Colonial Document to 1776*, edited by Merrill Jensen, contains papers from Georgia founder James Oglethorpe, who told the King that Georgia would be “a barrier between South Carolina and St. Augustine because Africans are not permitted, any seen will be captured.”

Also in the *Documents* in 1743, Georgians listed reasons for the retardation of their colony, complaining that slaves were essential. They said that if the colony had only been meant to be a military outpost, then inhabitants were not needed.
The preceding documents, which bear evidence of the impact Florida maroons had upon the British in the Southeast, contrast with certain other authors who made limited mention of the impact. In *The Creek Frontier 1540-1783*, David Cockrane discusses the Indian slave trade. He mentions Governor Moore's invasion of Florida with 1,000 men, and the Yamasee War, but, except for more casual references to the African slaves, he fails to discuss any direct African strategic impact. In *Colonial South Carolina: A Political History 1663-1763*, Eugene Sirmans notes the Spanish political impact on South Carolina in general but writes little about how politicians responded. Also, in *Slavery in Colonial Georgia 1730-1735*, Betty Word writes about the general impact of Spanish policy upon the founding of Georgia but doesn't mention how particular legislators responded.

In *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties*, Charles J. Kappler writes about the impact of the African Seminole upon the Washington administration. Kappler displays the text of the Treaties of New York and Colrein. The New York Treaty was signed by Secretary of War Knox and several Creek chiefs. The Chiefs agreed to exist under U.S. protection rather than Spanish, and all Creeks, including Seminole, were to remain at peace with the U.S. Additionally, the Creeks agreed to deliver all Negroes among the Seminole to the Commander of U.S. forces in southern Georgia. This treaty was signed in 1790. In 1796, the Treaty of Colrein was signed between the Creek chiefs and presidential
commissioners were appointed. This treaty essentially underscored the Treaty of New York.

In his book *Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America*, Miller lists secret articles to the New York Treaty. He writes that these secret articles were never publicized but were kept in the State Department archives. In exchange for capturing slaves in Florida, the minor chiefs were to receive $100 per year, and Chief McGillivray was paid $200 per year. Also, McGillivray was made a Brigadier General.

Ohio abolitionist, Congressman Joshua Giddings, spoke about the Seminole from the House floor. In *Speeches in Congress*, Giddings says that the Indian Removal Policy, as well as the Seminole War, were part of a government cover-up which went back to George Washington. Giddings refers to the secret treaties of New York and Colrein. He says that the Creeks were illegally paid to be slave catchers.

The primary issue which characterized the early efforts of the United States political leaders in response to the African Seminole was the goal of obtaining Florida. But most scholars seem to deemphasize the importance of the Seminole. In “Jefferson and an American foreign policy,” Walter Lefeber sees the primary effort of the United States towards Florida as being rooted in a Jeffersonian desire to expand democracy. But Lefeber does also mention that Spain was too weak to control clashes between Florida Indians and advancing
U.S. settlers. Here, Lefeber does make a very indirect inference to the U.S. desire to curtail the troubles originating in Florida.

In *Shaping of America*, D.W. Meinig says that Jefferson and Madison wanted to keep Florida out of the hands of the French or British. Meinig says this was a genuine fear. Also, Meinig’s view is underscored in a speech in Congress by Georgia Senator Jackson, who questioned whom the U.S. would prefer to deal with in Florida, a weak Spain or a stronger power. But, at the core of Jackson’s concerns lay his constituents’ obsessions with ex-slaves in Florida. Meinig points this out, also, though in a slightly indirect manner. He points out that slave holders were the biggest supporters of the Florida effort because it was a haven for their slaves.

Lefeber only slightly hints of African Seminole as a possible Florida issue. He does not mention them by name, but he does cite settler-Indian clashes as a key factor in Jefferson’s motivation.

In *The Plot to Steal Florida*, Joseph B. Smith writes that in 1790, Thomas Jefferson covertly began making plans to take Florida from Spain. Smith says that in 1790, Spain began allowing Americans to settle in Florida. Jefferson told Washington that this new Spanish policy presented an opportunity to acquire Florida. According to Smith, Jefferson believed that if enough Americans settled in Florida the government could incite a rebellion and acquire the territory. However, Jefferson realized this secret strategy could take many years. Smith
says that ever since Jefferson had served as Washington's Secretary of State, he had been obsessed with acquiring Florida through covert plots. Smith writes that these covert plans of Jefferson were carried out through James Madison and James Monroe.

At the time of the Louisiana purchase, the land between New Orleans and Pensacola along the Gulf of Mexico was known as West Florida. Jefferson tried to influence France to persuade Spain to grant the U.S. all of Florida, but, failing that, he sought to argue that West Florida was part of the Louisiana purchase. Through covert rebellions, Jefferson acquired West Florida. He attempted to acquire the rest of Florida by the same means. When Madison became president, he continued Jefferson's ideas. The House and the Senate authorized a secret war to acquire Florida if the rebellion failed. Four hundred U.S. troops and mercenaries went into Florida from Georgia and West Florida in 1813. Smith reported that Madison sought to entice the Seminole into supporting the U.S., but he says that instead, the African Seminole led the effort against the Americans. When it was obvious that the Seminole could not be subdued, Congress ordered the troops to retreat.

In *The History of the United States*, Henry Adams writes that during the administrations of Jefferson and Madison the nation was dominated by the South. The South was dominated by the slave interest, and the foremost issue in the minds of the slave holders was the acquisition of Florida. Adams says that
Northerners thought Florida was a local issue which did not concern the whole nation. But, Adams points out, neither the politics of the nation or events could be understood without seeing the importance of this issue.

Neither Smith nor Adams emphasizes the underlying obsession of the U.S. with Florida, but we know from the records of the unsuccessful military campaign against the Seminole as well as from the records of the South Carolina legislature's reactions, that the autonomy of the Seminole was the issue. Smith and Adams say that Jefferson and Madison portrayed Spain as being too weak to control the Indians who harrassed white settlers in Georgia and Florida. However, we know from Spanish records in The Archives and South Carolina Legislative Records that Spain knew of its own weakness and therefore relied upon the military success of the Seminole to hang onto Florida.

Several primary sources in addition to Meinig and Adams leave no doubt that Southerners were the primary backers of the nation's quest to acquire Florida. Meinig, however, underscores the role of the African Seminole.

In The Exiles of Florida, Ohio's abolitionist Congressman Joshua Giddings writes extensively about how the South deceived the North on the subject of the Seminole. Giddings says that in 1775, the Georgia Council for Public Safety sought to get the Continental Congress to station troops in southern Georgia to prevent slaves from escaping into Florida. He cites this example to show that from the beginning of the nation up to the time he wrote his book just before the
Civil War, Southerners had illegally used Northern tax dollars to support the slave industry. The Treaties of New York and Colrein were the culmination of constant pressure from Georgia upon George Washington. Giddings documents that Georgia state officials said they made a treaty with Creek Indians in 1783 which was identical to the New York and Colrein Treaties of 1790 and 1796. First of all, Georgia couldn’t make a treaty, but as Giddings points out, Georgia clearly required Creek Indians to capture “Negroes.” Washington secretly agreed to pay Indians for the same. As an abolitionist in Congress, Giddings traces similar abuses up to the Civil War. Georgia was in a constant state of war with the Seminole, and its officials believed that the new Constitution would make the Federal government responsible for the Seminole. Giddings had no knowledge of Jefferson’s covert efforts to acquire Florida, but he discusses Madison’s covert and unsuccessful efforts in Florida.

Giddings also discusses England’s Lord Cockrane who, during the War of 1812, built a fort in the heart of Seminole country and left it to the African Seminole. A series of military campaigns were launched by Colonel Clinch, who finally destroyed the fort. The First Seminole War began after Jackson’s destruction of the fort.

About four hundred Seminole were killed at the fort. In retaliation the Seminole massacred Lt. Scott and forty men. President Monroe later got Congress to authorize warfare. Giddings says most Northern Congressmen were
new and knew nothing about the truth of the war. Monroe accused Spain of violating a 1795 treaty by not controlling the Seminole. In general, the nation believed it was an Indian war. However, those in Congress who knew the truth would say nothing because to press an issue of slavery was considered to be asking for disunion.

The Madison Administration's covert effort to acquire Florida did have the legitimate pretext of British involvement because of the War of 1812. In a secret Congressional meeting, Madison stressed the need to address issues on the Georgia-Florida border. To an extent this was the start of the First Seminole War. Key political policies which tend to suggest that African Seminole rather than Spain were the primary target of both Madison and Monroe were developed by the Federal government before, during, and after the war.

Giddings writes that the Madison Administration and Generals Gaines and Jackson were obsessed with destroying the so-called Negro fort and returning African Seminole to their masters and that after the fort was destroyed the war began. In *Freedom on the Border*, Mulroy cites the fort's destruction as the start of the war, but he doesn't connect this event to U.S. policies oriented towards African Seminole.

Kenneth Porter does see the fort's destruction as the start of the First Seminole War. He sees the war as part of a broader American policy which was
rooted in the conquest of a particular group of African Seminole who lifted the siege of St. Augustine in Madison's secret war.

In *African and Seminole*, Daniel F. Littlefield notes that the Patriots' War made the U.S. acutely aware of African Seminole in Florida, and he believes the destruction of the Negro fort started the First Seminole War. However, he does not mention any political strategy in connection with the fort's destruction.

The Negro fort was not mentioned by Congressmen or Senators in speeches concerning the First Seminole War. They emphasized Indian attacks upon settlers, but in the House documents which accompanied a Congressional investigation on the war, evidence points to the Negro fort as the direct cause. This investigation underscored the views of Giddings and Porter in particular. It seems that the war was an effort to destroy the fort and key villages and to reenslave the African Seminole. This leads to the belief that during the Madison Administration, the nation's policy shifted from a general goal of acquiring Florida to neutralizing the African Seminole specifically.

A crucial development which further suggests that African Seminole were at the core of U.S. Florida policy also occurred after the war. By 1821, the U.S. gained full title to Florida and also the Treaty of Indian Springs was signed. Giddings says this Treaty forced the Upper Creeks to give most of their land to the State of Georgia because they had not been able to capture the African Seminole. The Creeks would also receive $250,000, but that money would be
paid to the Georgia slave holders as well. In exchange, the Creeks were granted title to the African Seminole, but the federal government held that title in a trust for the Creeks. Giddings says this made the federal government a slave holder. Now in the wake of a war which had demonstrated the African Seminole were at the core of the administration's Florida policy, a Treaty was signed with Creeks which furthered this possibility.

Mulroy doesn't mention the Indian Springs Treaty at all. Porter does not mention this treaty either, though he does suggest that African Seminole were at the core of the U.S. Florida policy. Likewise Daniel Littlefield fails to mention the Indian Springs Treaty. However, this treaty was concluded just as the U.S. acquired Florida and it appears to place the African Seminole squarely at the core of its policy.

The Indian Springs Treaty distinguished the African Seminole as a special entity in the formation of national policy. Porter and Giddings acknowledge the special emphasis which the U.S. placed upon the Africans. Another so-called Indian Treaty which emphasized special treatment for Africans led to the Second Seminole War and further suggested that Africans were at the core of the nation's Seminole diplomacy. In 1832, the terms of the Treaty of Payne's Landing were completed. The treaty was concluded in compliance with Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Policy. Giddings points out that two African Seminole chiefs and six Indians negotiated the treaty. He writes that the African Seminole chiefs
specifically stipulated that they would only emigrate to Arkansas as required by the treaty if the Seminole lived separate from the Upper Creeks, who claimed them as slaves. The government refused this request, saying that the African Seminole could be claimed by slave holders in Georgia and Florida, and it further compelled the Indians to emigrate without the African Seminole. Giddings believes that this policy which isolated the African Seminole was the direct cause of the Second Seminole War. It seems that this policy further emphasized African Seminole as being the core issue of the Seminole diplomatic efforts. Mulroy also sees the treatment of African Seminole after the treaty as the spark which set off the new war.

Covington writes of the treaty as being the cause of the war, but he does not mention African Seminole as the reason for the Seminole refusal to emigrate. He only says that African Seminole were a source of tension in the aftermath of the Treaty of Payne’s Landing. Porter did not mention the Treaty of Payne’s Landing, he he wrote that the war began because the U.S. attempted to prevent African Seminole’s removal.

America’s effort to separate the African and Indian Seminole initiated the Second Seminole War, the goal of which was to enslave the Africans and move Indians to the West. A key indirect consequence of the war was the failure of President Van Buren to be reelected. In The Fox at Bay, James Curtis mentioned Van Buren’s efforts to win the war, but he did not connect these efforts to Van
Burens 1840 presidential campaign. However, in The Presidency of Martin Van Buren, Major Wilson wrote that Van Buren had inherited the war and the Indians' removal policy from Jackson. While Wilson noted that the war was Van Buren's biggest problem, and he described Van Buren's efforts to deal with the war during the campaign of 1840, he did not relate the war to the election results.

According to Wilson, the war was not a slave-catching expedition because Van Buren had begun to allow Blacks to go west and had paid slave holders to drop all claims to them. In spite of this perspective on the war, Wilson does acknowledge that the war was a Black war and not an Indian war.

Even though Wilson does not acknowledge the war's impact upon Van Buren's reelection, his comment demonstrates that the Administration was under fire for its inability to conclude the war. Wilson does at least indicate the central role of the African Seminole.

In The Romantic Age of American Politics, John Niven points out that the war and the Indian Removal Policy furnished Van Buren's opponents with plenty of means for attacks. Niven says that each session of Congress opened with criticism of Van Buren's inability to capture a few Negroes and Indians. Donald Cole, in Martin Van Buren and the American Political System, says that after 1,500 deaths and the expenditure of fifty million dollars, the war was still unwinnable. Cole says it was therefore a heavy burden upon Van Buren's campaign. While Democrats and Whigs argued over the escalation of the war,
Cole says, Van Buren pointed out that except for the Seminole the removal efforts had succeeded.

None of the above authors places direct blame for Van Buren's defeat on the war, but all note his execution of the war during the campaign. Inevitably this connection seems to suggest at least some indirect impact of African Seminole upon Van Buren's defeat.

Giddings points to the war as a more direct variable in Van Buren's defeat. Specifically, Giddings notes that just previous to the election, William Jay published a book which caused Northerners to scrutinize all government actions regarding slavery. With this additional focus upon governmental action, Giddings says that the Administration was frozen in quicksand and that his iniability to defeat the Seminole was a major reason why Van Buren lost the election. At this time Van Buren and most of the rest of Congress and the nation as a whole knew nothing about the true reasons for the war. Smith's The Plot to Steal Florida was published in 1983. It seems that Giddings may not have known of Jefferson's covert plans for Florida. If Giddings as a Congressman, could not gain access to this covert information by 1858, then, as Henry Adams has written, the Florida issue was an extremely high-security issue for the Southern slave interest.

In the wake of Van Buren's defeat, the war raged on. The Secretary of War was informed by the military in 1840 that in order to remove the Seminole from Florida, the government must promise them that African Seminole would be
allowed to go free. This could only be done after paying Florida and Georgia slave holders for their claims upon these slaves. Knowing that the Gag Rule, which had been initiated by Southern Democrats in 1836 to prevent issues which questioned slavery from being debated in Congress on the basis that debates would cause a civil war, would shield it from scrutiny, the Congress proposed a bill which authorized paying $100,000 to settle claims. Giddings used this bill in 1841 as an opportunity to challenge the Gag Rule. Giddings, William Slade, and John Quincy Adams used this bill to get around the Rule. Southern members of the House said this debate neutralized the Gag Rule.

As James Stewart points out in *Joshua Giddings and the Tactics of Radical Politics*, success in speaking out against slavery emboldened Giddings and his allies to launch a formal assault against the Rule. Giddings assembled a special committee to challenge the Rule directly. The chief issue was considered to be the Florida War, but other issues were used also. In 1842, Giddings put up such a strong challenge to the Gag Rule that he was censored by the House and removed from office. Giddings’ removal by the South helped unite the national abolitionist movement. He was reelected with a mandate to push the anti-slavery cause and fight the Gag Rule. His reelection effectively ended the rule. He came back and continued where he had left off. His defeat of the rule by 1844 removed the barrier which had existed between the North and South since the debates for ratification of the Constitution.
This also suggests that the Seminole War exerted definite indirect influences upon the politics leading to the Civil War. If the Seminole had been defeated by Washington, Jefferson, or Jackson, they could not have influenced the campaign of Van Buren, nor could they have furnished Giddings with a blatant unconstitutional act with which to challenge the Gag Rule. Once the Gag Rule was removed, open congressional debate on the issue of slavery occurred for the first time since the Constitutional Convention.

Norma L. Peterson discusses the Gag Rule in The Presidency of William Henry Harrison and John Tyler. Peterson verifies the Gag’s impact upon debates on slavery, but she does not connect the obscure Seminole War to the defeat of the rule. Rather, Peterson credits John Quincy Adams’ agitation of the Texas annexation issue for the defeat of the Gag. In Mr. Polk’s War, John H. Schroeder says that Giddings, as the leader of the radical Whigs, used many issues touching upon slavery to break the Gag Rule, including the slave trade in Washington, DC and the annexation of Texas. However, Schroeder fails to include a connection to the Seminole War. In A House Divided, Richard H. Sewall seems to connect the efforts to abolish the Gag Rule with abolitionist fears that the slave holders were so powerful that they could threaten civil liberties. Sewell also does not mention the Seminole War, but he does connect Giddings as a leader of the anti-Gag effort. In Disrupted Decades, Robert H. Jones says that James G. Birney formed an anti-slavery lobby in Washington which was supported by Giddings, John
Quincy Adams, William Slade, and Seth Gates. Again, however, Jones makes no connection to the Seminole War.

Even though none of the above authors say that the war was related to the end of the Gag Rule, Giddings is frequently mentioned as a key leader in the struggle. In Exiles of Florida, Giddings says that he was indeed able to use bits and pieces of clues he gained on the war to weaken the Gag Rule. It seems that the Seminole War was not the final issue but that, according to Giddings, it was the most consistent issue for the anti-Gag cause. After the repeal of the Gag, Sewell points out that Congress became an anti-slavery debating society. Therefore, it seems that the Black Seminole had at least an indirect connection to the repeal of the Gag.
CHAPTER III

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RED AND BLACK SEMINOLES

Rebel slave communities existed throughout the Western Hemisphere during the history of enslavement. In his comprehensive hemispheric study *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, Richard Price details the vast extent of rebellion. In surveying the phenomenon of rebellion in the Western Hemisphere under the Spanish, British, French, Portuguese, Dutch and the United States, it is useful to categorize several levels of rebellion. Too often the existence of Africans during the years of enslavement in America have been trivialized. The categories mentioned give some indication of the complexity and success of African resistance to slavery.

"Level A rebellion" applies to slaves who escape but pose no threat to anyone except perhaps their masters. Rebellion at this level may consist of a few individuals hiding out in the forest, mountains, and swamps, or there may be a larger number of rebels.

The key characteristic at this level is that the threat to the institution of slavery and the government is at most local, if at all. A few runaways could never threaten the government. Even a larger number of runaways at this level are easily subdued. In general their impact is upon a few plantations and/or
of short duration. Level A rebellion can range from single individuals who escape, to the limited rebellion of Nat Turner. Because of the relatively minimal extent of its threat, level A can be referred to as "micro-level rebellion."

Level-B rebels were able to prevent re-enslavement only through the use of offensive and defensive guerrilla warfare. Level-B rebels not only can prevent capture by the local authorities but also can resist any military overtures by the national or colonial government. At this level, communities are formed with the number of inhabitants ranging from a few dozen to thousands of members. These rebel societies are autonomous as long as they can successfully resist the government's military authority.

Perhaps the best example of level B rebellion is the Brazilian slave settlement, or quilombos, Palmares. Palmares had approximately 15-20,000 inhabitants. For a century, between 1597-1697, these rebels successfully defeated all efforts of the Portuguese and Dutch colonial governments to destroy and re-enslave them. R. K. Kent describes Palmares as a "Negro Republic," with a king who resided in a capital city. The capital contained the king's palace, ruling officials, including a police force, and 1,500 houses. In one of the smaller towns, the king's brother ruled over a village of eight

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1 *Chambers Concise Dictionary*, 459.
hundred houses. This city was only for the training of soldiers. ²

“Level-C” rebellion is similar to level B. Level C is distinguished by the fact that the government acknowledges its inability to conquer the rebels and concedes certain territorial and political gains. This process was formally concluded with a treaty. An example of level-C rebellion occurred in Mexico. By 1608 an Angolan slave, Yanga, established a rebel community of approximately two hundred inhabitants. After successfully resisting the efforts of the Spanish military for several years, Yanga was able to sign a treaty with Spain. He was made governor of San Lorenzo de los Negros in exchange for ceasing his attacks upon the Spanish colonial government.³

“Level-D” rebellions occurred in the context of European competition for the Western Hemisphere. Rebels fled to governments or Native Americans, who were opposed to their masters. In exchange for assurances of freedom and sometimes land or other resources, rebels fought against their former masters and helped to free other slaves. The African Seminoles were precisely this type of rebels, as this study will reveal.

“Level-E” rebellion was the rarest of all. It occurred only in the French colony of Saint Domingue. At this level of rebellion the slave

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³ Price, Maroon, 93-98.
population was so much greater than the white population, and its military became so overwhelming that the rebels were able to overthrow the government and replace it with their own leaders. These rebels created the Haitian Republic.4

Level B, C, D, and E, can be referred to as “macro-level” rebellion, (MLR). This is because in scale and scope the rebels have become an effective guerrilla force which is able to resist the efforts of the national government. Their autonomy and survival is maintained by one thing only, guerrilla warfare. The rebels’ success in warfare permitted them to orchestrate their fate in the context of governments which sought to oppress them. The Spanish, British, and United States political-economic systems were heavily dependent upon African slavery during the periods included in this study. Therefore, the military success of the Seminole rebels allowed them to interdict the normal flow of government.

It is this success in warfare which yields a reciprocal political response. The political responses to whatever degree they occur provide the fruits for analysis in this study. This is underscored by the extensive writings of the noted nineteenth-century military strategist and political scientist Carl Von Clausewitz. According to Von Clausewitz, “the political object, as the original

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motive of the war, will be the standard for determining both the aim of the military force and also the amount of effort to be made.” Therefore, he concludes, “war is not merely a political act but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce. . . . Policy, therefore, is interwoven with the whole notion of war and must exercise a continuous action upon it.”

Because it existed solely as a by-product of military force, macro-level rebellion (MLR) will be studied as a political commodity. As such it provides the foundation and basis for seeking a reciprocal relationship to it in the politics of Spain, Britain, and the United States.

The efforts of governments to suppress MLR led to war. The resulting wars were “political commerce.” In this regard the battlefields existed parallel to the legislative chamber. Policy outcome was decided by soldiers. To the extent that political strategy for the rebels was executed and devised by the same individuals, the scope and depth of any political activities can be best understood by a study of how the opposing governments responded to them.

Rebel policies or decisions regarding freedom were usually contingent upon the necessities of and outcome on the battlefield. And also, rebel slaves were generally not part of an extensive chain of command. However, the

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soldiers that opposed them were usually employed to execute the policy of the national government. There may have been several layers of bureaucracy between the soldier and the origin of the policy.

The soldier met the rebels on the battlefield. In a political context, the battlefield was transformed into a "quasi-legislature" from which the throes of warfare could dictate policy outcome. However, while the policy results were not likely to reverberate far beyond the individual rebel, in the opposing governments we can observe multiple levels of bureaucratic reaction to the success or failure of policy. This bureaucratic reaction furnishes the basis for examining the political relationship between MLR and Spain, Britain, and the United States. Consequently this study reveals the relationship between North American politics and the Florida Seminole rebels.

Who are the African Seminole rebels?

This study examines the political relationship between the African Seminole rebels and Spain, Britain and the United States; but as this process ensues it is important to remain cognizant of the context in which these rebels existed. As level-D rebels, they participated in alliances. Therefore, it is essential to distinguish between bureaucratic reaction to the rebels, and the allies in general.

As the study reveals, various political documents draw clear
distinctions between the allies and the rebels. The identity and role of African rebels in alliance with Spain, between 1693 and 1763, is not problematic. In the context of Spanish Florida, the phenomenon of MLR existed at the D level. The study will show that the freedom of the rebels was challenged on numerous occasions by the British government. But the phenomenon of level-D rebellion also existed from about 1790 to 1842. This time the rebels were again allies of both Spain and Seminoles until 1821, and in alliance with the Seminoles only from 1821 to 1842. Any clear understanding of the political reaction to the Florida rebels requires a review of two issues which are germane to the alliance of Native and African Seminoles: first, the distinction between Cimaroons and Seminoles, and second, the Native American enslavement of Africans in the Southeast.

These two issues must be explored because government records and especially scholarly research on the Seminole too often fails to distinguish between the rebels and the natives. As a result the role of Africans is often minimized or subverted. When this happens political reaction to the rebels can be attributed to the Native Americans. Should this occur often enough, the premise of the study would seem to be moot.

Clarifying the distinction between Seminole and “Cimaroon,” as well as clarifying the issue of Native enslavement of Africans, will bring greater understanding of the rebels’ relationship to North American politics.
For the purposes of this study "Seminole" has been defined in the Definition of Concepts section in the most accurate and comprehensive way possible. Nevertheless, there are generally two perspectives on the origin of the Seminole. On the one hand there is the most popular perspective, that the Seminoles are essentially an amalgam of the Creek confederation which migrated from Georgia into Florida and incorporated the few remnants of the nearly extinct Florida natives. The Seminole are seen as originating about the time of the British occupation, though the Creek influx is believed to have continued into the nineteenth century. The African presence is explained as either runaway slaves permitted to settle or as slaves of the Seminole, who were bought or captured from white settlers.6 The second and less popular perspective is that the first Seminole were both African and Native Americans who came to Florida fleeing British slavery in South Carolina. From this perspective it is asserted that the migration of Africans and Yamasees and Apalachees (both said to be branches of the Creek Confederation), began in

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the 1680s. The second view merges these original migrants with the larger Creek migration in the mid-eighteenth century.

Implicit in this later perspective is the idea of continuity between the rebels from 1693 until 1842. The idea of continuity is a premise upon which this study is based. The study theorizes that the continuous existence of a considerable number of autonomous rebels is the best explanation for the perplexing alliance between Africans and Natives in Florida; but in addition to this, it best explains the concept of slavery between these two allies.

This study asserts that a state of level-D macro-rebellion existed in Florida from 1693-1842. Therefore, rebels existed with their allies, and were able to militarily defend their freedom. One clue which helps to support this assertion is the etymological linkage between the words "Seminole" and "cimaroon." Some scholars who hold the former view on the origin of the Seminoles say that the word comes from "cimaroon." However, they say that "Seminole" refers not to runaway slaves but to Creek migrants in Florida who broke away from the Creek confederacy. However, since the term "Seminole" was originated during the British occupation, if the word was intended to refer only to Creek migrants, it seems an English word could have been used.

7 Weir, Colonial South Carolina, 31; Giddings, Exiles, 2-4.

8 James W. Covington, Seminoles, 3-5; Sturtevant, "Creek...", 92-105; Mulroy, Border, 6-8.
As mentioned earlier, the British spelled “cimaroon” as “symeron” during Drake’s 1572 voyage. In that case there was no change in meaning. It is therefore possible that the similarly derived “Seminole” retained some of the meaning from its etymological origin. If so, that original linkage may show roots from either African or Native cimaroons.

Between 1693 and 1763 an alliance of Spanish, Muscogee-speaking Yamasees and Apalachees, and African rebels existed. This alliance was especially complicated by intermarriage between African men of St. Augustine and Native women in regional villages. Nevertheless, records indicate that the Spanish evacuated all of their Black allies to Cuba when British occupation began in 1763. This prevented their re-enslavement by the masters from whom they had fled.

However, there is no clear record of the number of Africans who fled from South Carolina and Georgia into Florida. Even if many African rebels remained in Florida among Indians or in the swamps, it may have been impossible for them to be found or detected if they sought to evade the British. The first extensive effort to explore and chart Florida came during the Second Seminole War between 1835-42. During this war the best efforts of thousands of U. S. Soldiers to find African and Native Seminoles proved that

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9 Gatschet, Legend, 10, 52, 62, 74.

they could easily evade capture or detection for many years.\textsuperscript{11}

The British naturalist William Bartram did extensive research in South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, between 1773-76. He reported some assimilation of Spanish culture among Seminoles in Florida. Bartram made no reports about any Africans among them; however, though he traveled in a region of America where the slave population perhaps exceeded the white, he essentially said nothing of the slaves. Therefore, his silence upon Blacks among Seminoles does not exclude their existence.\textsuperscript{12}

To the extent that the Seminoles mentioned by Bartram had ties to the earlier Spanish, then it is possible that some Africans from the alliance were present also. Some African-Native linkage may have endured even after the Spanish departure. In addition to family links, Africans had also assimilated some of the Muscogee language and culture and there were old alliances between Africans and Yamasees which even precede flight into Florida.\textsuperscript{13}


pre-British alliance of Natives and Africans forged bonds which could have assisted a merger with Creeks emigrating into Florida.

Some Creek emigrants had been allies of the British and as such they had participated in wars against the Florida allies. However, even in alliance with Britain they could not conquer Florida. Therefore, to the extent that Africans and Natives were still present after the Spanish departure, in the absence of military dominance by Creek emigrants, linguistic similarities would have helped in the assimilation of the allies and Creeks on an equal basis.

It is unlikely that all Africans who had fled into Florida were evacuated with the Spanish. In all probability only those most closely associated with Spain left. Even though Spain and later Britain had political rights to all of the Florida territory, for all practical purposes their administrative authority only extended to a small region around the capital. During the Second Seminole War in the 1830s, United States Commander General Jessup informed Secretary of War Poinsett that Florida was an unexplored wilderness, "the interior of which we were as ignorant as the interior of China." With only a fraction of the later United States manpower and resources in Florida, it is unlikely that colonial Spain or Britain were any better informed about the number or location of rebel African slaves.

Even if most rebels were transported out, others continued to flee into

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14 Sprague, Florida War, 200.
Florida after 1763. By 1771 over half of the inhabitants in British Florida consisted of newly imported African slaves. The slave population ranged from 1,000 to 3,000 during this period. However, during the American Revolution, from 1776-1783, British refugees from the Carolinas and Georgia fled to Florida with their slaves. By 1783 there were up to 12,000 slaves and 9,000 whites.

British colonial records indicate that the Seminoles stole slaves from British plantations. The issue of greatest concern in the short history of the Florida Colonial Assembly, 1781-84, was punishing slaves for murder and rebellion. Therefore, it does seem probable that after 1763 rebels continued to exist among the Natives of Florida.

In 1784 with the British loss of the Revolution, Spain regained title to Florida. Population statistics during and after the Revolutionary War are inconclusive. In Loyalists in East Florida, Siebert reports that 6,540 Blacks and 3,398 whites were evacuated by the British. A Spanish census reported

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that 6,000 Blacks and Whites were evacuated. Florida Governor Tonyn reported that 4,000 refugees had passed into the United States interior.\textsuperscript{19} Also, the British processed claims for hundreds of lost, stolen or runaway slaves in Florida after the evacuation.\textsuperscript{20}

During British occupation it was likely that many rebels remained in Florida and continued assisting in the rebellion of other slaves. But even if there were none left from the first era of Spanish occupation, the consistency and growth of British slavery continued to yield rebels to the interior of Florida. Among the first orders of business for the new United States government was to stop the flow of rebels into Florida.\textsuperscript{21}

Any interaction between rebels and Natives in Florida during the years of British occupation provided the physical linkage which supports etymological ties between the words "Seminole" and "cimaroon. Also, this fosters the continued presence of macro-level rebellion in Florida. The continuous presence of militarily autonomous rebels helps explain African slavery and the "Five Civilized Tribes." In spite of a common notion that Native Americans essentially held amicable and even benevolent or fraternal

\textsuperscript{19}Mowat, \textit{East Florida}, 146.

\textsuperscript{20}Siebert, \textit{Loyalist} vol.II, 10, 16, 19, 409, 419.

feelings towards the enslaved African in North America, some Native peoples held Africans as slaves. It was encouraged by the British in the Southeastern colonies, and it seems that those with European fathers and Native mothers were the key participants.22 Neither the British colonial government nor the United States would allow a neutral policy by Natives on the subject of slavery. Even before the Washington administration, the Continental Congress had stipulations in treaties with at least thirteen Native peoples for the return of escaped slaves.23

In American Indian Policy and American Reform, Christine Bolt commented:

By the late colonial period it was only in the Carolinas and Georgia that all three races were numerically strong. . . .In this region they had many opportunities for intermarriage and trade with each other and took advantage of their opportunities. . . . Southern whites worried that Indians and Blacks might combine against them. . . . It is my contention that Whites in time passed on to the Southern Indians some of their more derogatory perceptions of the Blacks and . . . the five civilized tribes followed whites in enslaving, disliking, and pulling apart from Blacks.24 The Cherokees, Chickasaws, Creeks, Choctaws, and Seminoles were known as the “Five Civilized Tribes.” This was because they gradually attempted to assimilate the lifestyle of southern Whites, primarily by rejecting.


24 Bolt, American Indian, 5.
“hunting and gathering,” for survival and in its place adopting an economy based upon slave-based agriculture.  

Except for the Seminole, the Five Civilized Tribes produced written constitutions which included slave codes. Though slavery among the tribes was perhaps milder than among whites, still many instances of cruelty to Africans occurred. The institution of slavery began among the Five Civilized Tribes during colonialism and continued until the Civil War. Each tribe signed treaties and entered the Civil War on the side of the Confederacy.

Though relations between Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws and Creeks towards their African slaves is fairly clear and unambiguous, the situation concerning the Seminole is just the opposite. On the one hand, slavery did exist among the Seminole. But it has been described as a system in which the bonds between master and slave were so tenuous that slaves usually lived miles away from their Indian masters and only paid a small percent of

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26 Bolt, American Indian, 155; Littlefield, Chickasaw, 5; Littlefield, Cherokee, 1-11.

crops or livestock annually to their so-called owners.  

On the other hand, United States Congressional Documents from at least 1821 to 1842 specifically state that “Negroes govern the Seminole Indians.” This documentation was submitted to Congress from Florida governors, Seminole Indian agents, United States army generals, and slave-holding citizens of Florida.

Even though the resources indicate that both slave and free Blacks live among the Seminole, at times all Blacks are referred to as “the slaves,” who “rule” the Seminole. This type of documentation contradicts and tends to refute the idea of African slavery among the Seminole. In the Florida Wars, Virginia B. Peters wrote on the Black and Red Seminole:

There is a lack of specific knowledge about the relationship between the Negroes and Indians. In order to protect their allies, the Indian had to insist to white authorities that the Blacks were all slaves which they intended to defend from the depredations and claims of Americans. Also, although many army officers came to sympathize with and respect their Indian enemies, they suffered from the blindness of their time; they could never see the Negro enemy as capable of the dignity and intelligence they were willing to bestow on the chiefs. Joshua Giddings, alone, saw the role of the Negro in Florida as that of an equal partner.

Joshua Giddings was a Congressman who represented the state of Ohio

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from 1838 to 1859. As Chairman of the House Committee on Claims in 1839, Giddings opposed appropriations for the Seminole War. He believed that the war was an effort in support of slavery. According to Giddings, United States policies concerning the Seminole had all been crafted by a federal government which, since Washington and Jefferson, had been dominated by the institution of slavery. He therefore concluded that all knowledge about the Seminole was tainted by the interest of slave holders.\textsuperscript{31}

Considering Giddings' comments, it is important to understand that all presidents between 1788 and 1840 who served two terms were slave holders. Only John Adams, John Quincy Adams, and Martin Van Buren were in office one term. As this study will show, the slave-holding presidents had the greatest influence over the federal Seminole policy. These slave-holding presidents, Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and Jackson, were in office for forty years as opposed to twelve years for the others. They certainly had a greater opportunity and interest to shape the federal policy toward slavery. This would include the institution of slavery among the Five Civilized Tribes. Also, this included the gathering and dispersal of information about the Red and Black Seminoles.

First and Second Seminole Wars, who went to great lengths to insist that the roles of masters and slaves, between African and Natives, had been reversed. Such contradictory statements can be best explained by the continued presence of a macro-level rebellion.

Through the alliances with Spain and the Indians of Florida, rebel slaves had the capability to resist slavery from 1693 until 1842. This macro-rebellion capability apparently withstood the efforts of Native Americans in Florida. Slavery among the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creeks has been described as severe; only the Seminole are described as benevolent masters.

Between 1820 and 1837 the slave population among the Five Civilized Tribes ranged from two percent to twenty percent of the Native total. However, only among the Seminole is a free rebel population accounted for. The rebels were twenty percent of the total Seminole population; and the slaves were described as autonomous from the Natives. Also, a steady flow of slaves are said to have run to the Seminole.32

The continued presence of the macro rebellion is the best explanation for the unique lifestyle of Africans in Florida. Any desire of immigrant Creeks to enslave Africans was most likely scrutinized by the rebels. A type of benevolent share cropping is described between Natives and Africans. But

32Bolt, American Indian Policy, 152-55.
why would such a system only exist in Florida? The Seminole were a branch
of the Creeks, who practiced a relatively harsh form of slavery. If Native
Seminole had actually mastered the Africans, who could have compelled them
to be so benevolent? It seems that a large group of armed, autonomous rebels
is the best explanation. The relationship may have ultimately not been one of
master and slave.

The relationship between the rebels and Seminole was both old and
complex. Peters believed that Native Seminole claimed all Africans among
them as slaves as a political ploy to protect them from United States slave
holders. Such a theory has credence because the United States government
certainly recognized the Natives as legal political entities. Because of a
greater familiarity with Whites, rebel leaders often functioned as the
interpreters, or intermediaries, between Natives and the United States.33 It
seems they encouraged the idea of Native slavery as a legal barrier to the
United States claims upon them. Native claims actually provided court
challenges to the claims of United States citizens.34

The rebel position as intermediaries caused United States officials to
point to their control over Natives. In seeking to determine the true status of

33 American State Papers, ClassII, vol. 2, 441; American State Papers,

34 American State Papers, ClassV, vol.6, 459, 460.
Africans among the Seminole, nothing presents as great a quandary as the correspondence of American officials during the Seminole wars. The rebels are described as the group who would determine war or peace with the United States; also they were implicated as executioners of Natives who violated their decisions.35

There is a lack of precise information about the relationship between the African and Native Seminole. Very few sources document the beliefs of the rebels themselves. Most of the data concerning the Seminole came from individuals who had some relationship to the slave industry, which sought to reclaim a fortune in slave property among the Florida Natives. Joshua Giddings believed that federal resources on the subject were tainted by such a bias.

Sources which contend that the rebels were slaves of the Natives must be viewed parallel to those which project them as leaders among the Seminole. Though it is possible that some Africans were subjected to enslavement by the Seminole, this study takes the position that for the masses of rebels in Florida it was a physical impossibility. Sources describe the relations between the two as ranging from autonomous Africans giving a small annual tribute to Native masters, to African control and mastery of the Natives.

The original Florida alliance and the cover of the swamps provided a

unique setting in which rebel autonomy was possible. Within this context of freedom through the alliance, it appears that rebels sought to bolster their continuous military advantage with legal challenges to the claims of whites.

During the years of Spanish occupation from 1693 to 1763, and 1784 to 1821, the British and later United States generally directed all claims for slaves to the governor in St. Augustine. Therefore, any challenge to the freedom of the rebels was subjected to a rigorous two-step process. First, Spain's right to legally free British slaves, and second, occasionally the British and United States invaded in an effort to capture the rebels. The rebels were only required to bolster Spain militarily.

In 1821, Florida became United States territory. This study asserts that the rebels sought to maintain their security with a similar two-step process. Though the United States possessed Florida, they still maintained nominal respect for the property rights of Natives in Florida. Rebel leaders were fully cognizant of this fact. Indeed they were frequently present at treaty negotiations as official interpreters for the Seminole. They naturally were capable of representing their own interest.

It seems that the rebel leadership designated their people as legal property of the Seminole to provide a tenuous shield of legality, to fill the vacuum left by the Spanish. In all probability the rebels compensated the Seminole with produce to show their appreciation for this complex alliance,
which jeopardized Native relations with the United States.

The British and Americans had to observe and respect the Spanish legal barrier because Spain was a great European power. Therefore, a military defense of the policy was rarely needed. But the claims of Native ownership of Florida rebels was given only limited credence when challenged by Georgia and Florida slave holders. Therefore, the rebel freedom ultimately hinged on the second step of military force, and hence upon the Seminole Wars.

Circumstantial evidence suggests that at all times, between 1693 and 1842, an autonomous group of rebels was present in Florida. The presence of this group would have prevented enslavement as it existed among the other Five Civilized Tribes. Indeed the contradictory resources tend to preclude any actual Native Seminole enslavement of Africans. However, the rebel autonomy and strength in the alliance probably allowed them to project themselves as slaves. They attempted to protect their freedom legally, hoping that military efforts would not be necessary.

British and American politicians, administrators and military leaders responded both to the alliance and to the rebels specifically in their efforts to secure slavery. Spain united with the rebels to secure its hold on Florida. The complexity of the rebel existence must therefore be explained in context, to bring clarity to the Spanish, British, and United States political reaction to them.
The next chapter will discuss the origin of Spanish-British New World competition. It is within the context of this competition that Spain first discovers the value of forming alliances with rebel slaves. Such discoveries in Jamaica and Panama set the stage for events in Florida.
CHAPTER IV
AFRICAN SEMINOLE REBELS AND THE NEW WORLD POLICIES
OF SPAIN AND BRITAIN

The Seminole story begins in the context of European competition for the North American continent. Spain and Portugal were the first European nations to explore and lay claim to the "New World." After Columbus' first voyage to the Western Hemisphere, Pope Alexander VI, a Spaniard, issued the famous Inter Caetera, in which he drew an imaginary line which in effect divided the lands of the Western Hemisphere between Spain and Portugal.1 This act by the Catholic Church included North America as part of Spain's legal territory. In the first 30 years after Columbus' entry into the Western Hemisphere, most of Spain's attention went into the West Indies and South and Central America. But between 1520 and 1570 Spain began to fear competition in North America. This fear encouraged Spain to begin some settlement in what is today South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.2


Spanish fear was warranted by ongoing British competition in Europe. This competition extended into religion, economics, and New World Colonialism. Since Columbus' discoveries, Spain had reaped great wealth from the land divisions of the Catholic Church. She was probably the richest and most powerful nation in the world. However, the wealth encouraged a decline in the traditional Spanish economic base of local agriculture and manufacturers. The decline in Spanish home industries allowed England and other European nations to expand their economies by exporting to Spain. From its position of power, Spain sought to promote the interest of the Catholic Church. This led to an alignment of church and state in Spain. As the power of the church grew, it began to own an increasing share of wealth in Spain. Also, this stifled free thought and trade.\(^3\) In contrast to this development in Spain, the English King Henry VIII broke ties with the Catholic Church, and embraced Protestantism. England tended to promote free thought and trade, encouraging the development of stock pools which were prepared to support colonialism. England essentially became a haven for Protestants and the protector of this new faith.\(^4\)

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Queen Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry VIII, ordered English pirates to attack Spanish colonies, ships, and other areas of interest. The voyages of Sir John Hawkins and Sir Frances Drake accomplished this exact goal. While attacking the Spanish, they also revealed to England how vulnerable and unprotected Spain was north of Florida. In 1588 Philip II of Spain sought to crush the English base of Protestantism, and New World competition. He sent the 130-ship Spanish Armada to invade England but the British Navy, aided by storms, inflicted a stunning defeat upon Spain and went on to gain control of the North Atlantic Ocean. This cleared the way for British colonization of North America.

It is important to have an understanding of the Spanish-British rivalry. To properly view the New World conflict of the two nations, one must understand that it began in Europe. Also, one should see that the conflict was religious, economic, and political. This depth of competition may help clarify the role played by the rebels in North American Colonial politics. This was the context in which the Spanish-British Colonial conflict began. The British

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6 Tyler, _England_, 7.

7 Bailey, _American_, 11.
victory over the Spanish Armada militarily paved the way for British settlement.

Though the Spanish still claimed all territory between Florida and Virginia, it was in that very territory that British colonization began in the early 17th Century. In 1607 Spain unsuccessfully attempted to launch a military attack upon the early British Virginia colony. Also, from 1670 to 1700 Spain and its Native allies launched continuous raids upon British settlements in South Carolina, but these attacks were also unsuccessful.8

Long before Spain and Britain began to compete militarily in North America, both nations found that their quest for power in the Western Hemisphere was impacted by runaway African slaves. According to Charles and Mary Beard, Queen Elizabeth ordered British pirates such as Sir Frances Drake and Sir John Hawkins, to attack Spanish interest in the hemisphere. In Sir Francis Drake, George M. Thompson informs us that the voyage of 1572-73, which established Drake as Britain's leading seaman, could not have been successful without the help of Spanish cimaroons.9

The flow of gold and silver from the New World to Spain was essential to the execution of Spanish foreign policy. A key goal of British foreign

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9 Ibid.
policy was the weakening of Spain. The British realized that much of the
Spanish wealth flowed from Panama and that this was a good target for
destabilization.10

Philip Nichols, who served on this famous voyage as Drake's chaplain,
 wrote about events in Sir Francis Drake Revived.11 According to Nichols,
Drake left Plymouth, England in 1572, with two ships and 73 men, including
his two brothers. Within a few months of his attempting to raid Panama for
treasure, Drake had only one ship left. Through battle, starvation, and
disease, he had lost all but 28 of his crew. Both of his brothers had died.
Nichols says that Drake was saved by "Symerons," whom he defined as "a
Blacke people which about eightie yeares past fled from the Spaniards . . . and
are since growne to a nation under two Kings of their owne. . . ."12

Drake's mission had been crippled by attempting to raid Panama from
the sea. These rebels told him to wait five months until the rainy season
ended. They clothed, fed, housed, and medicated Drake's remaining crew
during this time. Also, they hid his ship in a shallow cove. When the rains

10 Ibid. Sir Francis Drake, 64.

11 Philip Nichols, "...Sir Francis Drake Revived," in Documents Concerning English
Voyages to the Spanish Main 1567-80, vol. 71, ed I. A. Wright. (London: Hakluyt
Society, 1628; reprint, Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1932) 254-323 (page
references are to the reprint edition).

12 Ibid., 257.
stopped they marched through the jungles and over mountains to intercept a Spanish mule train loaded with gold and silver. The rebels added 30 men to Drake's 18 men for this mission. As a result Drake was able to load his ship with treasure. Perhaps equally important, the rebel leader took Drake up a tall tree on top of a mountain, so that he could see both the Atlantic and, for the first time, the Pacific Ocean. Nichols credits the rebels with making the voyage a success.\(^{13}\)

Thomson credits Drake's voyage with helping to alter the course of world history. Drake's success was a political victory for the British. However, it was a political victory for the rebels. Nichols' report seems to indicate that the rebels existed at macro-level of rebellion. They had established towns from which they fought Spain for many years. It seems that their goals were to free other slaves and to defeat a common foe on the battlefield. Their success further destabilized the Spanish slave system, and, in addition, because slaves were used in the mines, their alignment with Drake interrupted the flow of wealth to Spain.

Since the Spanish were their enslavers, anyone who opposed them was an ally of the rebels. For the British perhaps, an enemy of Spain was a friend of theirs. Britain's political policy was to gain better access to the Western Hemisphere, and Drake helped to assure this. Thus, to whatever extent Drake

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 310.
helped to strengthen Britain and weaken Spain and thus help alter the world political equation some credit must be given to the rebels for their role.

A second, pre-North American example of the rebel relationship to the political rivalry between Spain and Britain was in Jamaica. According to Irene Wright in "The Spanish Resistance to the English Occupation of Jamaica, 1655-60," Britain invaded Jamaica with 8,000 troops in 1655 and was able to capture the whole island very quickly. Except for a handful of men, the Spaniards fled to Cuba, leaving behind bands of rebels scattered about Jamaica. The few remaining Spaniards persuaded the rebels to help them resist the British. Since the governor of Jamaica had fled, one of the remaining Spaniards, Ysassi, was appointed governor by the King. He was ordered to try and hold on until help arrived. About 1,000 fresh troops were sent to Ysassi from Mexico and Cuba but most of these either deserted, were killed, or were sent back by Ysassi, who informed the King that he'd been given refuge by the rebels in their headquarters. The location was in the mountains and was the strongest place on the island. Ysassi said that from this location with 100 men he could defeat 1,000. He said he preferred to wage guerrilla war with rebel assistance rather than use other troops.

For five years, Ysassi and the rebels waged a successful guerrilla war against British occupation forces, and they could have fought longer. However, both Britain and Spain realized that the rebels held the military
balance of power in Jamaica. Spain promised freedom, supplies and the King's gratitude for their continued assistance. The British, on the other hand, were able to provide not just promises but tangible supplies to the rebels. Therefore, their leader, "Governor" Juan Bolas, led the British to Ysassi. After Bolas' defection to the British, Ysassi immediately ceased his resistance.14

Within a few months of taking full possession of Jamaica, Deputy Governor Sir Charles Lyttelton proclaimed Juan Bolas to be magistrate over the free Black population, with all powers except life and death over his people. Bolas was given land and formed his own regiment. All this because of his assistance to the British in capturing Jamaica.15

According to Carey Robinson in The Fighting Maroons of Jamaica, Bolas had always been neutral towards Britain and Spain, and Ysassi's major accomplishment had been to convince Bolas not to help the British for five years. From the start of British occupation of Jamaica, Britain's General Sedgewick complained that the rebels were the real obstacle to conquest. Sedgewick acknowledged Bolas as the leader of the rebels. He noted that in


1656 the rebels burned British headquarters and massacred forty soldiers. Before the war ended, both British and Spanish authorities were offering freedom to the rebels. According to Robinson, the British offered the rebels freedom and the land of their choice, and Bolas was made a colonel and a magistrate.16

The Panamanian and Jamaican examples clearly illustrate the impact of macro-level rebellion, or MLR, to the politics of Spain and Britain. Long before the British came to Central America the Spanish authorities in Panama were sending official correspondence to the King of Spain, asking for stronger measures against the cimarrones, who were a threat to slavery and production.17 Appeals from the local to the national level are a sign that the level of rebellion was macro rather than micro.18 To the extent that war is an extension of political commerce, the battlefield was the political arena in which these conflicting policies were settled. The fact that the rebels were successful in battle meant that their goals prevailed.

When Queen Elizabeth sent Drake to challenge the Spanish monopoly in the New World, government policy entered the political arena of the

16 Carey Robinson. The Fighting Maroons of Jamaica (Great Britain: William Collins and Sangster, 1869), 18-27.

17 Nichols, Drake, 9-10.

18 Robinson, Fighting Maroons, 1-18.
battlefield. The British desire to weaken Spain while strengthening themselves was in harmony with the ongoing policy of the Panama rebels. Britain had no conflict with the rebels. Spain simply wanted to defend its interest against both. In battle, these allies prevailed against Spanish interest. Drake gained fortune, fame, and knighthood. The Queen succeeded in striking a blow at Spain, and the rebels perhaps weakened and enjoyed continued success against their old foe.

Regarding Jamaica, British desire to gain a rich West Indian island was part of its political policy. There were not many Spaniards or slaves on the island, and it seems that maroonage was minimal. But as Britain continued to press its New World policy, the battlefield became a political arena for executing policy. As a result, profound changes occurred. Britain sent 8,000 troops on 38 ships to Jamaica in an effort to gain a solid foothold in the heart of the New World. In the wake of the British invasion, slaves escaped to the hills and forests. The invasion and defeat of the Spaniards established the freedom and autonomy of the rebels. When Ysassi sought their military assistance and promised concessions, their participation on the battlefield and in the political arena was assured. British counter offers to the rebels established them as decisive political players in the Spanish-British political conflict.
In the Panamanian and Jamaican examples, rebels seemed to have held the balance of power which assured the successful execution of British political policies. The Spanish saw that their New World policies were unsuccessful. In both Panama and Jamaica, runaway slaves helped to assure the defeat of their objectives. However, perhaps Spain did learn the value of forming political and military alliances with rebels. Strategic negotiations between Ysassi and Juan Bolos allowed Spain to remain in Jamaica for five years.

To the extent that the battlefield is a political arena for the settlement of policy objectives, Jamaica and Panama serve as examples which demonstrate how the rebels achieved political empowerment. These cases can be seen as the beginning of a pattern in which MLR would continue to impact the Spanish, British, and United States politics. There was no rebel political continuity from Panama and Jamaica to North America. However, the quest for the natural human right of freedom stimulated similar responses among other slaves. The slave's willingness to rebel to achieve freedom was a constant variable. In North America, the British switched roles with the Spanish, and became the hated slave holders.

The Spanish, perhaps learning lessons from the conflicts in Panama and Jamaica, took steps to assure the allegiance of rebel slaves. In executing his defense of Jamaica, Yssasi informed the King of Spain that the British would
soon threaten his colony in Florida. It is conceivable that the King heeded Ysassi's warning about Florida and learned some strategic lessons about alliances with rebels. A clue to this is that within 33 years of Spain's alliance with Jamaican rebels, the King of Spain established a similar alliance with rebels who escaped from British Colonies into Florida. In Jamaica the rebel-Spanish alliance helped maintain a Spanish presence for five years after an apparent English conquest. However, in Florida for nearly 117 years African Seminole rebels helped defend Spain in conflicts with Britain and the United States in Florida.

The following chapter will reveal numerous political and military policies and calculations by Spain which will insure their alliance with the rebels.
CHAPTER V

THE SPANISH AND THE REBELS IN FLORIDA, 1693-1821

Twenty-one years after Columbus sailed into the West Indies, Ponce de Leon claimed Florida for Spain. By 1565 Spain had founded St. Augustine. However, long before Spain began to settle these regions, the Papal Bull of 1492 had granted all of North America, parts of South and Central America, and the West Indies to them. The British laid a competing claim to North America as early as 1497, after the voyages of John and Sebastian Cabot to Newfoundland.1 The voyages of Sir John Hawkins in the 1560's revealed how militarily vulnerable Spain was throughout North America. Shortly after Hawkins, Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Sir Walter Raleigh set sail for North America to exploit the Spanish weakness. However, they were intercepted by the Spanish Fleet and almost destroyed. Raleigh and Gilbert were only part of a wave of British Pirates sent to attack the interest of Spain and Catholicism. A devastating blow to Spain was Drake's triumphant voyage in 1572-73. Drake's success helped to convince the Spanish King Philip II that drastic measures were necessary to safeguard New World territories and Catholicism.

In 1588, Philip sent a 130-ship armada to invade England; however Spain's defeat cleared the way for Britain's access to North America.2

The British-Spanish competition continued there. In 1607, Spain launched military raids upon the New British colony in Jamestown, Virginia.

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1 Tyler, American Nation, 6.

Spain still claimed this part of North America but was unable to evict the
British. By 1670, British colonization of the Carolinas began. Not only were
these new settlements in a region claimed by Spain but they were very close to
the Spanish base in Florida. With the help of Native Apalachee allies in
Florida, Spain began to launch continuous raids upon the Carolina region in an
effort to destroy the British settlements.³ Most of the military strength of
Spain was centered in the West Indies and Mexico, but Florida was vital to the
protection of shipping routes. Therefore, Spain saw the Florida Natives as
vital allies against British encroachment. As early as 1602, Spain realized that
Florida might never attract a significant population of Europeans. In spite of
this, they fortified St. Augustine, and the Catholic church began to convert the
Natives. At least three dozen missions were constructed in Florida by 1675.
Apalachees and other Natives lived near the missions.⁴

Except for a brief period of British occupation, between 1763-83,
Florida would remain a Spanish colony until 1821. Spain maintained its
presence in Florida by military strength, and to a great extent its armed forces
were dependent upon rebel slaves and Native Americans.⁵

This chapter will focus upon the political relationship between rebels
from Colonial South Carolina and Georgia and Spanish Florida between 1693
and 1819. The battlefield is an extension of the political arena. Consequently,

³ Ibid, 14.

⁴ Charlton W. Tebeau, A History of Florida (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press,
1971) 43-55

⁵ Gatschet, Migration, 64, 65; Joseph B. Smith, The Plot to Steal Florida. (NY: Harbor
House, 1983) 211, 255.
by analyzing Spain's alliance with the rebels and the subsequent response to their battlefield success, it is possible to observe some corresponding policy reactions by the Spanish colonial government.

The British policy of colonization in North America was in conflict with Spain's previous claims to the territory. As in Panama and Jamaica, the primary goal of African slaves was to obtain freedom and attack the institution of slavery. Because macro rebellion is always a phenomenon which opposes its enslaver, runaway slaves found a natural ally in Spanish Florida.

The rebel alliance with the Spanish forced both the British and later the United States to undergo a two-step process, in order to threaten their freedom. Because of Spain's great power status, rebel freedom first had to undergo a legal and diplomatic challenge. Once it was clear that this had failed, a military challenge was resorted too as the last resort. The military challenges were the ultimate test both to macro rebellion and to the survival of the Spanish in Florida.

The King of Spain formally recognized the utility of the Black runaways in his Edict of 1693 which freed and encouraged more slaves to come to St. Augustine. Then the rebels were incorporated into the Spanish military which raided Carolina. The most formal acknowledgment of the crucial role of the Black Seminoles came in 1738 when they were established in a military garrison which guarded the entrance to the Spanish Capital in Florida, St. Augustine.⁶

The utility of the Black Seminoles in Spain's maintenance of Florida is most clearly demonstrated in two major wars. In 1740 the King of England declared war upon the Spanish in St. Augustine. In the war, Blacks of the garrison, led by Carolina runaways, played a decisive role in defeating the British. Finally, by 1812, the U.S. Congress secretly authorized James Madison to invade and seize Florida, the Black Seminoles led a fierce counter attack, which ultimately forced Congress to withdraw troops. Also, the Washington Treaty of 1819 ceded Florida to the United States. This treaty strongly implies that the ceding of Florida to the U.S. was the price Spain had to pay for its long alliance with millions of dollars in U.S. slave property.

The Spanish-Seminole alliance resulted in political success for Spain and for the Seminoles. In this context, Blacks thrived for 126 years as level-D rebels. The Seminole-Spanish alliance began as Spain sought to enforce its policy of keeping the British out of the region south of Virginia.

When the British established colonies in Virginia and the Carolinas, the Spanish were determined to attack them. Opinion is divided over who first used Native allies to supplement their defenses, but by the late 17th century both nations were engaged in the practice. The British attack upon and enslavement of Spain's ally, the Apalachees, may have been a calculated military move. This would have strengthened their ability to execute their political objectives. Though African slavery existed in Florida, as an institution its scale and impact were negligible in comparison to the slavery of the British, who developed slavery as a vital institution throughout their North American colonies. Perhaps it was only logical for Britain to weaken Spain by attacking Apalachees and for Spain to seek to destabilize Britain by allying
with its slaves. Within the last quarter of the 17th century, both policies were underway. This helped assure the genesis of the Seminoles and their role as allies of Spain.7

By 1674 Dr. John Woodward signed a treaty with the Carolina Natives which laid an economic foundation for the colony. The Westoe Natives agreed to capture the Apalachee allies of Spain, and sell them as slaves to the British Carolinians. The British sold most of them to the West Indies. This policy would help secure the frontier between Carolina and Florida, because it tended to eliminate Spain's chief military ally.8

This new British policy led to problems between the colonists and the proprietors in London. One early Carolinian, John Oldmixon, says that between 1682-84 the proprietors forbade Native slavery and that Governor Morton and Surveyor General Mathews were removed from office for participating in the trade. The new governor, Moore, sought to gain a monopoly over the Native trade. Moore sought to dominate the colonial assembly to achieve this goal, even to the extent of allowing Africans to vote. An investigation into Moore's activities was launched. He initiated a Native slave-catching expedition into Florida in 1702 under the guise of combating


the Spanish enemy. On this expedition Moore was accompanied by 600 Whites and 600 Yamasee and over 1,000 Apalachees were enslaved.9

Covington believed that Moore invaded Florida with 50 Whites and 1000 Creeks. He says Moore's slave raid captured 1300 Apalachee men, women, and children, and killed off the last independent members. The Apalachee Natives of Florida seem to have been the key target of the Native slave trade. Though the trade began with Dr. Woodward, by the time of Governor Moore's expedition the supply of Apalachees was nearly exhausted.10

It seems that the Carolina Native slave trade was generally rooted in the strategic goal of disposing of the Spanish ally. Native slavery had not proved to be a stable foundation of colonization in the New World. It seems likely that the British would not seek to establish a precedent in Carolina. On the other hand, the African slave industry was hemispherically the economic foundation. There was no reason to believe it would not replace Native slavery in Carolina. There were thousands of Natives in the Southeast, but the British regional policy tended to distinguish between the enslavement of the masses and those who were Spanish allies.

From the beginning, Woodward notified a London proprietor, the Earl of Shaftsbury, that local Westoes were going out getting slaves for the British in 1674.11 Also, by 1680 the proprietors notified the Carolina Governor, in

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9 Salley, Narratives, 332-40.

10 Covington. Seminoles, 3-4; Sturtevant, "Creek...", 92; Mulroy, Freedom, 6.

11 Salley, Narratives, 134.
the instructions for founding the city of Charleston, that local Indians within a
two hundred mile radius could not be enslaved or sold out of Carolina. The
proprietors indicate that some colonist had been causing problems by
capturing Natives. It seems that many of the regional tribes were captured in
the slave trade. The Creeks sold captured Choctaw in Charleston. The
Yamasee played a major role in the Carolina Indian slave trade. They helped
to facilitate the capture of the Appalachee, and also, in order to work in
concert with the British Native slave industry, they positioned themselves at
strategic sites between St. Augustine and Carolina.

The British accumulated Native and African slaves. It seems very
possible that the Apalachees would attempt to return to their Florida
homelands. If they had done so they could have been referred to as cimarrones
by Spain. Though it is also possible that the Spanish viewed Apalachee
escapees as merely returning home, and not as runaway slaves.

The phenomenon of rebellion was a major concern for Carolina. As
early as 1683, Governor Moreton assembled the legislature to discuss ways of
ending the Native slave trade and of prohibiting Negro slaves from escaping.
In 1689 Carolina Governor Seth Sothell received a letter from the London
proprietors which advised him to "take care to prevent servants and Negroes
running away to the Spanish at St. Augustine." Though the Carolina

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13 David H. Corkran. The Creek Frontier 1540-1783. (University of Oklahoma Press,
1967) 53, 57; Sturtevant, "Creek," 100.
14 Salley, Narratives, 332.
15 Fortescue, Calendar, vol. 13, 187.
political leaders do not specify the ethnicity of the Natives, it seems likely that those from Florida would seek to return home. Perhaps slaves from other regions would seek to run back to their own people and to familiar surroundings. Florida was their primary destination and African slaves accompanied them.

In the context of the political setting, the British were settling along the Atlantic coast from Massachusetts to Carolina. Thousands of colonists and slaves were proof of the British success in executing their policy goals. In southern Carolina, a leading source of wealth until about 1714 was the Native slave trade. Escaped African and Native slaves were beginning to destabilize the colony. The natural goal, desire or policy of slaves is to seek freedom. To the extent that Apalachees, Africans and any other slaves escaped into Florida, they were successful in executing their policy goals, and by definition they were “cimarones.”

As the enemies of the British masters, the escaped slaves were naturally favored by the Spanish. Spain claimed all the land up to Virginia and perhaps feared the British would soon get Florida unless something were done. Governor Ysassi of Jamaica had warned the King of Spain thirty years earlier that Britain would attempt to take Florida. Spain launched preemptive strikes against British settlements in Virginia. In Southern Carolina, Spain launched small limited invasions in an effort to stunt the growth of the British. Surveyor-General of Charleston, Edward Randolph, reported to the London Board of Trade that in 1686 a Spanish force of 100, including Blacks and

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16 Wright, "Spanish Resistance," 141.
Indians, raided the plantation of Governor Moreton. The invaders took 13 slaves away with them. Also, the invaders told the British that the Carolinas were Spanish property, and that the King of Spain had ordered them not to return any slaves to the British. Additionally, the invaders informed the British that the city of Charleston was really called St. Jorge. After that invasion, the new Governor, Colleton, sought to negotiate with Spain for the return of the African slaves who had fled with the St. Augustine forces and for other Carolina slaves who daily escaped to Florida.\(^{17}\)

The Carolina political authorities were extremely concerned about Black slaves in particular escaping to Florida. Though the Native slave trade was their most valuable industry in the late 17th century, the documents reflect more concern with the maintenance of African slavery.

As the Spanish forces were invading the Charleston region, the Spanish Governor at St. Augustine, Don Diego de Quiroga informed the King of Spain that many runaway slaves from Charleston were arriving in the city. Quiroga said the slaves had informed him that they were fleeing slavery because they wanted to become Catholics. The governor said the British were pressuring St. Augustine for the release of the slaves. He asked the King what should be done with them.\(^{18}\)

\(^{17}\) Salley, Narratives, 205; Fortescue, Calendar, vol. 17, 104-107; Jane Landers, "Free Town," 9-30.

Even though these rebels gave the excuse of running away to become Catholic, it seems that they may have been using religion to cater to the ongoing political and military struggle between Spain and Britain. In "A Free Black Town in Spanish Colonial Florida," Jane Landers says, "Although the Spanish crown preferred to emphasize religious and humane considerations for freeing slaves of the British, the political and military motives were equally, if not more, important." It seems most likely that Spain needed military allies and sought to weaken its British enemy, but by 1693 the Spanish King, Charles II, gave his answer to Governor Quiroga:

To the Governor and Captain-general of the city of St. Augustine... It has been notified in different letters, dated 1688, 89 and 90, that eight black males and two black females who had run away from the city of San Jorge, arrived to that presidio asking for the holy water of baptism, which they received after being instructed in Christian doctrine. Later on, the chief sergeant of San Jorge visited the city with intention to claim the runaways, but it was not proper to do so, because they had already become Christians.... As a prize for having adopted the Catholic doctrine and become Catholicized, as soon as you get this letter, set them all free and give them anything they need, and favor them as much as possible. I hope them to be an example, together with my generosity of what others should do. I want to be notified of the following of my instructions as soon as possible.

Dated in Madrid, November 7th, 1693, I, the King.20

This order from Charles II ultimately became the foundation of Spain's military and political policy in North America. Charles II became King of Spain in 1665. This was only five years after the rebels of Jamaica were so

19 Jane Landers, "A Free Town...", 11.

20 King Charles II, Spain, Royal Edict of 1693. (John B. Stetson Collection, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History; Gainesville: Univ. of Florida, text-fiche) SD58-1-26.
crucial in the balance of power between Spain and Britain and also it was 120 years since Sir Francis Drake was supported by the rebels in Panama.

The King waited five years to answer and had the chance to assess their potential military and political significance. He got his first letter from the Governor in 1688. Before his order of 1693 there were numerous complaints by Carolina citizens. Governor Quiroga had promised these Carolina officials that the King would compensate them for the slaves, but not return them. However, the Governor did not fulfill his promise. This prompted the St. Augustine notary to inform the King that the Governor was jeopardizing the peace with Britain and threatening Florida's security. Also, the King was informed that the British preferred the return of their slaves. Presumably Charles II knew, therefore, that a policy of freeing the British slaves could be just as militarily significant in Florida as it had been in Jamaica.

The King implied that he wanted to encourage other Carolina slaves to come to Florida to partake of his generosity and Catholicism. In a letter regarding the manner in which Governor Quiroga handled the delicate negotiations with the British, the Spanish Attorney General in Madrid reprimanded the Governor: "The attorney estimates that the Governor did break his promise and did not do right, . . . especially when religion was the excuse given so as not to turn in the Negroes."21

It seems probable that the stated goal of Catholicizing the runaways was only a diplomatic vehicle for Spain's effort to strengthen its security.

21 Irene Wright, “Dispatches,” 156
Perhaps Catholicism played some part in the King's political policy goals but there does not seem to have been any better "excuse." The role of the Jamaican rebels may have been fresh in the minds of both nations. Spain could not bluntly say that they were undermanned in Florida and that the 1693 edict could serve the dual purpose of weakening Britain and strengthening Spain. In spite of the Spanish excuse for using religion, the British seemed to realize the military implication of the new Spanish policy. Surveyor General Randolph in 1698 informed the Board of Trade in London that the new order prohibited the return of runaway slaves.22 Also, Spanish Governor Laureanode Torres y Ayala yielded to British demands and returned six Blacks and a Native slave in 1697.23

The Governor disobeyed the order of his King. In the wake of the 1693 order, the actions of both nations seems to acknowledge that its impact would transcend the sphere of religion. The Florida Governor yielded on policy to avoid conflict and the Carolinians apparently were prepared for conflict pursuant to British policy. Ultimately, the King of Spain's Edict of 1693 established a political-military policy which would draw rebels from the Southeast to freedom and as a key element in Florida's defense. Though the King, and Governor at St. Augustine spoke of spiritual justification, it seems obvious both sides had no illusion about the reality of the edict.

Between 1714 and 1716, the Yamasee War took place. This war demonstrated the utility of a united Black and Native military force as Spanish

22 Salley, Narratives, 205.

23 Landers, "A Freetown...", 15, Note 29.
allies. Also, it perhaps cemented a bond between the African and Natives which would last until at least the 1840s. The Spanish had previously supported guerrilla forces in hit and run attacks upon Carolina. Some Carolina runaways participated in the guerrilla attacks. But the Yamasee War was a coordinated effort to destroy the British presence in the Southeast. The Apalachees had been Britain's primary target in its Indian trade. They and the African slaves were escaping into Florida. The Yamasee and Creeks had been assisting the British in capturing slaves. Creeks and Yamasee were paid guns and other goods in exchange for slaves. The Yamasee developed a habit of going into debt with British traders. On one such occasion the British traders seized Yamasees as slaves to repay the debt. This act by the traders began the Yamasee War. Yamasee, Creek, and Apalachees attacked the colony of South Carolina.24

In addition to the united stand by the Natives, African slaves entered the war. According to Landers:

Blacks outnumbered Whites in the colony.... When many slaves joined the Yamasee Indian War against the British, they almost succeeded in exterminating the badly outnumbered Whites. Indians loyal to the British helped to defeat the Yamasee, who with their black allies headed for St. Augustine. Although the Carolina Assembly passed harsh legislation designed to prevent further insurrections and control the slaves, these actions and subsequent negotiations with St. Augustine failed to deter the escapes or effect the reciprocal return of slaves. British planters claimed that the Spanish policy, by drawing away their slaves, would ruin their plantation economy.25

24 Sturtevant, "Creek...", 101; Corkran, Creek Frontier, 56-60; Fortescue, Calendar, vol. 28, 299-300.

Landers also says that the Yamasee Chief Jorge, who led the attack upon the British, says that he made alliances with African slaves prior to the Yamasee war. There was a constant flow of Africans into St. Augustine even before the Yamasee War, and both Britain and the Spanish saw the impact of the policy. Both African and Native slaves who fled Carolina played key roles in this attack. For the Spanish it seemed to demonstrate the successful execution of political goals. Spain claimed the territory at least up to Virginia. Even if it was unrealistic to believe that Britain could be removed from the land, past actions demonstrate the utility of the goal of harassing the British to deter expansion. This was perhaps one of the most deadly attacks upon Colonial America. Therefore, though technically the British won the war, it seems Spain successfully used war to achieve a political goal. The war also demonstrated positive aspects of the 1693 edict, which probably enhanced Spain's general goals for the region.

Also, parallel to Spain's policy success, Yamasees and Apalachees nearly succeeded in ending the Native slave trade as a direct result of the war. This was a political goal which probably could not have been successfully negotiated away. Black slaves had been fleeing to Florida with Apalachees; this resulted in the 1693 edict. Both the Red and Black slaves can be defined as “cimmarones.” But perhaps the genesis of what would become the Seminole people can be detected during the war in the alliances of the Yamasee and the South Carolina slaves.

26 Ibid., 17, Landers explains in the text of note 38.
Though African slavery would continue in the Carolinas, the edict provided a convenient escape. Through the edict and Yamasee War a durable Spanish, Native, and Black military alliance was forged which bolstered Spain's position in North America. At the same time, Black and Red Seminole became aware of their potential in the British-Spanish conflict. In the Yamasee War, both groups opposed slavery but the primary assault was upon Native slavery. However, the Red and Black military bond established would hold in its resistance to African slavery for almost 150 years.

The South Carolina government directed most of its wrath at the St. Augustine government instead of at the Yamasee Natives. They blamed Spain for starting the war and they were critical of the 1693 edict's impact upon their slave industry. In a 1715 letter to Lord Townsend, the Colonial Governor of South Carolina said that the Yamasee were primarily supported by St. Augustine. Also, he noted that one year before the war, the Yamasee had warned the traders of their intent. In 1716, two agents for the Commons House, Joseph Boone and Richard Beresford, wrote to the London Board of Trade and Plantations and listed numerous grievances against St. Augustine. One major complaint was the Spanish support of the Yamasee War, but also London was informed that the Yamasees and others still were attacking and preventing the resettlement of plantations. Additionally, they stole African slaves and refused to return them. Boone begged London to declare war upon St. Augustine, and he said that many assembly agents had gone to St. Augustine to negotiate with the Governor for the slaves but that they had had

27 Fortescue, Calendar, vol. 28, 227.
no success. Boone stated that the Spaniards were repaying South Carolina for capturing their Natives.28

Between the Yamasee War and 1740, the general political objective of the British in the Southeast was to build successful colonies. Within this political context, St. Augustine and its allies were the primary threat. The legislative records are full of complaints against Spain's policy of providing freedom for South Carolina slaves. Special desertion committees were formed in the assembly to find solutions to the problem of runaway Africans. Assembly men notified the London proprietors that the survival of the British colonies required the destruction of St. Augustine. The desertion committee sent a petition to the King of England requesting a declaration of war and reminded them that the King of Spain's edict had been posted throughout South Carolina, and that this violated the treaty between Spain and Britain.29

Britain wanted to see the plantation economy of South Carolina thrive. Spain sought to undermine the growth of the colony. The Spanish policy drew many slaves into Florida. In spite of the edict drawing slaves and stating the policy of providing freedom, initially their position in St. Augustine was ambiguous. In 1725 the Florida Governor, Benavides, informed the King of Spain that because of the 1693 edict, Negroes and Apalachees were still arriving.30 By 1738, a group of runaway Carolina slaves had to petition the

28 Ibid., 215-226.


30 Wright, Dispatches, 164.
King for clarification of the 1693 edict because they had been either re-enslaved upon arriving in St. Augustine or were made to serve indentures. In 1738, Governor Montiano informed the King that in violation of orders some of the runaway slaves had been sold to local citizens of St. Augustine. Montiano stated that he had received a 1733 order which clarified the order of 1693. In this new order the King said that under no conditions should any money be paid to the British, nor should any more British slaves be re-enslaved.  

One of the Carolina runaways who had petitioned the King of Spain was Francisco Menendez, a Mandingo. Menendez was an ally of the Yamasee Chief Jorge. Both had fought against South Carolina and had fled together into Florida. Menendez had been re-enslaved through trickery, but it seems that his condition was more indentured than enslaved. He was the leader of a Negro militia in St. Augustine. In his position Menendez had helped defeat the British in a 1728 attack. It was Menendez who initiated the petition of "The Runaway Negroes from English Plantations to the Crown." In 1738 Governor Montiano established the free Carolina Blacks on a site 2-3 miles north of St. Augustine, situated on Mose Creek. Mose was a presidio or Fort which housed up to 200 people. Menendez was designated as the ruler of Mose by the Governor. 

31 Ibid., 58-1-29, #84; 58-1-31, #59, #62, 164, 173-75.  
32 The Mandingos were a key tribe of the Great Mali Empire, located in West Africa from approximately 1100 AD to 1400 AD. They were at the forefront of African continental resistance to European conquest, E. Jefferson Murphy, History of African Civilization. (New York: Crowell, 1972) 114-122, 266-62, 308-10.  
The new Edict of 1733 clarified the status of all British slaves arriving in Florida. Though they fled slavery in South Carolina, their status in St. Augustine was ambiguous. It seems that some had complete freedom while others were indentured, or enslaved. However, even the most illustrious rebel, Menendez, was perhaps enslaved, yet he could petition the King. It seems that this special status was based on their military value. After being set up in Mose, the rebels had some territorial integrity. Their survival was facilitated by the Spanish, yet the Spanish prevailed against the British with the help of the Mose rebels. Therefore, the freedom of those rebels was assured only through military force.

In 1727, the Tribunal of the Indies informed Madrid that the British considered the 1693 Edict an attraction to their slaves, and felt it was designed to help Spain and hurt them, and that warfare was eminent. By 1739, in a letter to the King, Montiano first informed the King that Mose was established because the Edicts of 1693 and 1733 said to favor them as Catholics, but in the same letter Montiano said St. Augustine would soon fight a war with Britain. He said the runaways were needed in the army and the Fort would attract more of them. Also, he informed the King that twenty-three more had just arrived.

In 1740 the Spanish Government in St. Augustine received the heaviest assault that would come from the British. In 1739 the South Carolina legislature had received a declaration of War from the King of England. The

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34 Wright, "Dispatches," 173-76.

legislature provided 2,000 Native troops, 2,200 White men, Negro laborers, with enough White men to guard them, and seven warships. This force was led by Georgia founder, Colonel James Oglethorpe. Oglethorpe declared, "as his majesty had ordered... Spare no personal labor nor danger towards freeing Carolina of a place from whence their Negroes were encouraged to massacre their masters and were openly harbored after such attempts."

Oglethorpe warned the Government of South Carolina that troops had to move quickly and the fleet had to blockade St. Augustine so that Spanish reinforcements could not come in from Havana. He completely surrounded St. Augustine. When he arrived at Fort Mose (the British called it Moosa), it was deserted. Nearly two hundred British troops were stationed here. Day and night, from land and sea, the British cannons bombarded St. Augustine. The only way to assault St. Augustine on the ground was through Fort Mose, and likewise any Spanish defensive assault had to encounter Mose. At four a.m., 15 June 1740, three hundred rebels and Natives captured Ft. Mose; eighty British were killed and twenty-five were taken prisoner. Most of the British casualties came in this encounter. Oglethorpe's scattered forces were afraid of being picked off by the rebels. Within three weeks, the British forces evacuated. According to a Spanish prisoner, the White Spanish forces stayed within the St. Augustine fort during the war.

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36 Easterby. Commons House. 1741–42. 86-92.

37 Ibid., 87.

38 Ibid., 87-120.
Menendez and the militia kept track of the British forces as they began their invasion of Florida, and he led the attack which devastated the British. Governor Montiano asked the King to give Menendez a special commendation for his leadership. Montiano depended on the Mose militia to a greater extent than did any other Florida Governor. Oglethorpe would initiate several more attacks upon St. Augustine but none were on the scale of the 1740 War. Menendez exploited the Spanish-British rivalry to obtain concessions from Montiano. The White Spanish military forces were few in Florida. The Mose militia were used on land and sea campaigns against South Carolina and Georgia. Montiano refused to launch Corsair naval raids without the Mose forces. Due to British attacks in the 1740's, Mose was destroyed and the militia was evacuated into St. Augustine. However, by 1752 Mose was rebuilt and reoccupied.39

It seems that Spanish Florida was overwhelmingly dependent upon auxiliary forces for its survival, and so, as the British Empire in North America grew, Spanish authorities made certain that Mose was prepared. In a letter from Don Alonso Fernandez to Father Don Julian de Arriaga, in 1756, the following comments were made:

The village of Mose, close to this city, is habitated by the fugitive Negroes from the English colonies who arrived here to be baptized and were freed... and have organized a company with a Captain, Lieutenant and Sargeant. The city works now as an advanced post. The Negroes have their lands to cultivate and support themselves without costing you any money. I sent an engineer out to plan and construct defenses and canyons. I also assigned a Franciscan Frier

39Landers, "Freetown...," 18-25.
to teach them religion. I asked the Viceroy of Mexico to give him the same salary other missionaries make among Indians.⁴⁰

These comments indicate the extent to which the rebels were vital to Florida. Though the British had managed to destroy Mose, it was rebuilt and fortified. More attacks were expected. Mose was the first line of defense. If Mose fell, eventually St. Augustine could too. Mose's significance is further underscored in a 1759 letter to the Governor of Florida from Madrid, “One of your requests from August 20, 1758, was to assign financial aid to the Negroes of Mose, for several reasons. The King wants you to assign whatever you consider necessary to help them... make arrangements to distribute aid between the Negroes of the Village of Mose.”⁴¹

The position of the Spanish authorities towards the British runaways by 1759 contrast sharply with the hesitance and ambiguity displayed between the 1680’s and the 1740 British invasion. Though Spain never dropped its insistence on the use of the religious "excuse," at least by the 1750’s the records indicate that Mose was militarily essential as an advanced post. Ironically, though the Spanish successfully defended Florida from military conquest, by 1763 in the Treaty of Paris which ended the Seven Years War and the French and Indian War, the British would be granted Florida.⁴² However, in the 1783 Treaty of Paris which ended the American Revolution,  

⁴⁰Wright, "Dispatches," 193.
⁴¹Ibid., 195.
the British came to terms with the United States and many other nations in a world war. Spain then reoccupied Florida.43

During the British occupation, the Seminole population was no longer centralized near St. Augustine. Their settlements were scattered from St. Augustine to Pensacola.

After the American Revolution, the return of Florida to the Spanish meant the continuation of the King's Edicts of 1693 and 1733. John Jay as Secretary of State for the Continental Congress, informed Thomas Jefferson of the devastation the Seminoles had brought upon the State of Georgia. Jefferson was told that the edicts must be repealed and that Spain should be punished.44 Though the edicts were in fact repealed, the Spanish made no efforts to return slaves as also promised.

As in the previous century, the Florida problem became so intense that in 1811 President Madison called a secret session of both Houses of Congress. After thirty-one votes were taken, a resolution was passed which authorized President Madison to use military force to seize Florida.45 This venture was known as the Patriot War because Madison attempted to plant patriotic Americans in Florida and then overthrow the St. Augustine government.46 But the same pattern of events occurred as in 1740. By 1811 Spain was even

43 Ibid.


46 Ibid., 188-89.
weaker in Florida than in the 18th Century. As the United States laid siege to St. Augustine, the Spaniards held fast in the fort. Florida's Governor Estrada sent word to the various Seminole camps. The Seminoles launched guerrilla attacks upon the U.S. forces and eventually forced them to retreat back into Georgia. The settlements of the patriots were also driven out. Also, as was the case in 1740, the Spaniards were able to keep Florida without leaving the well-constructed fort of St. Augustine.47

According to Covington, former Georgia Governor Mathews unsuccessfully sought the Seminoles' help in seizing Florida.48 Though the efforts initiated by Madison ended in 1813, the State of Georgia continued to try unsuccessfully to seize Florida. In The Plot to Steal Florida, Joseph B. Smith comments on the U.S. forces as they stopped at the ruins of old Fort Mose, "They were taking possession of a place that was a symbol of what their operation was finally to become—a racial conflict." Smith discusses the historical destruction and rebuilding of Mose and its prominence as "the northern bastion of the colony's outer defense ring."

Also, he says that Florida Governor Estrada attempted to reconstruct Mose in 1811 when he learned of the U.S. plans to invade but the Americans arrived too soon.49

The Patriots War demonstrated to the U.S. government that Spain was essentially powerless in Florida. In spite of Spain's prevailing over U.S.

47 Ibid., 244-269.

48 Covington, Seminoles, 28.

49 Smith, The Plot, 211-12.
forces, key American government officials were cognizant that the Seminole were the military might behind the victory. The commander of U.S. forces notified the Secretary of State, James Monroe, that the principle military strength in Florida consisted of rebel slaves who bolstered the Spanish.⁵⁰

United States military initiatives subsequent to the Patriots War ignored the Spanish presence except to scorn its weakness. Indeed, members of Congress and James Monroe as President observed that Spain’s political authority was confined to the city of St. Augustine. U.S. officials declared the Seminole to be a sovereign force unto themselves and chastised Spanish ineptness for the Seminole autonomy.⁵¹ In military activities subsequent to the Patriots War the Spanish Governor Zuniga informed the American commander Andrew Jackson that the runaways:

As rational beings, may be subjects of the king, my master, are deemed by me insurgents or rebels against the authority, not only of his Catholic Majesty, but also of the proprietors for whose service they have withdrawn themselves.⁵²

After more than 300 centuries of ascendancy in the Western Hemisphere, the Spanish Empire was falling. With more important colonies in revolt, Spain had no desire to challenge the ascending U.S. Just subsequent to

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⁵¹ Ibid, 54-56.

⁵² Ibid, 62-79.
the Patriots War, U.S. forces led by General Jackson made a special effort to capture or destroy Spain's African rebel allies in the First Seminole War.53

Jackson's campaign failed to capture rebel warriors, but a few non-combatants were taken. As a consequence of the Spanish weakness and the relative strength of the Seminole, President Monroe notified the Congress in a State of the Union address that he was pressuring Spain to relinquish Florida; partially as a quid pro quo for millions of dollars in slave property which had found refuge there for decades.54

According to Monroe, Spain had not abided by the tenants of the 1795 Treaty of San Lorenzo, which required the return of runaways in Florida. Spain would indemnify the U.S. government. The government would indemnify the slave masters.55

The First Seminole War resulted in Spain finally leaving Florida. Spain had perhaps been concerned that the British would seek to obtain Florida, since Governor Ysassi of Jamaica voiced that opinion. Politically, Spain sought to maintain the New World lands it had obtained in the 15th century.


North America was included in this geographic claim. When Britain continued its expansion in North America, the conflicting policy goals were addressed on the battlefield.

Spain had obviously been undermanned in Jamaica. With that also being the case in Florida, Spanish attempts to destabilize British settlements of North America were heavily dependent upon the assistance of Apalachee Natives. The British countered these Spanish Offensives with its own Native allies, the Creeks and to some degree the Yamasee. It seems that the British had greater success with the use of Native allies. The British initiated a Native slave trade which nearly exterminated the Apalachees. In responding to the British, Spain may have reviewed its prior experiences with British encroachment on its territory. In the cases of Panama and Jamaica, the British were able to execute its policy goals by forming alliances with runaway Spanish slaves. The Spanish Edict of 1693 not only urged British slaves to escape to Florida, but also assured them as military allies. With these runaway African slaves as the foundation of their Florida defense strategy, Spain's ability to hold Florida was greatly enhanced. With this new defense strategy, Spain was able to execute the policy of harassing British settlements. Perhaps most important though was the enhanced defensive capability which the Carolina runaways contributed to Florida.

The greatest symbol of Spain's dependence upon the rebels was Ft. Mose. The proof of the utility of the Black troops to Spain's survival is the defeat or stalemating of every British or American offensive against Florida from 1714 to 1819. During this period the rebels displayed a tenacity toward
their enslavers, which won them some territorial integrity and some political representation through Menendez.

Spain and the British sought to settle conflicting policies about possession of North America. The rebels only sought freedom. If we view the battlefield as a legislative arena, the rebels were major political players, achieving their goals while hindering Britain and helping Spain. Their political impact can be corroborated by the actions, policies, and responses of Spain's political leaders, ranging from the king to the governors of Florida. The formation of this Spanish-Rebel military alliance not only impacted Spain's Colonial politics but also helped facilitate at least 130 years of MLR.

Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight will review some of the key military and political events which were formed or responded to by Spain. However, the following chapters will review these same events from the perspective of British and United States political institutions.

In Chapter Six, some responses in the British Parliament, and within the colonial governments of South Carolina and Georgia are revealed. These responses provide a foundation for the analysis of British political reaction to the rebels.
CHAPTER VI
BRITISH COLONIAL POLITICS AND THE FLORIDA REBELS, 1693-1763

When the British began settlement upon the North American Continent in the 17th century, the African slave industry evolved into the economic foundation of this colonization effort. This was overwhelmingly true in the plantation economies of Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas. The Southern Carolinians initially thrived on an Indian slave industry, though African slavery existed simultaneously. However, in general, the colonists were most dependent upon the Africans.

The London proprietors who held the founding charter of the Carolina colony wanted the colonists to be financially self reliant as soon as possible. They needed to expand acreage, plant, clear, and settle. African slaves facilitated settlement. However, as slaves ran to Florida and became allies of the Spanish, the British colonization effort in Carolina was jeopardized.

Between 1693 and 1763 the Blacks, Natives, and Spanish kept the colonies of the Southeast on the defensive. This was the basis of the political relationship between the British and rebels. The political activities and policies of officials often were directly or indirectly in reaction to the rebel presence. The British response to the rebels first was diplomatic, and after the failure of diplomacy,
a military solution was attempted. Within the framework of this two-step process, various political activities occurred which demonstrate the relationship between the British and the rebels. Ultimately, the rebels would help the Spanish achieve its goal of slowing down and even reversing the development and expansion of the British colonial effort in the Southeast.

By 1662, King Charles II had granted a charter to eight proprietors to establish the colony of Carolina. These men were politicians who sought to profit by overseas investments. By 1665 Charles II extended the boundaries of the Carolina colony all the way to St. Augustine. Up to this time Spain had not officially acknowledged the presence of the British in North America on land which they claimed. But shortly after this extension, the Spaniards accepted the presence of Britain as far south as what would become Charleston.¹ All proprietors had invested much of their own money in Carolina. To insure returns on their investments and the overall safety and prosperity of the colony, they needed peaceful relations with the Natives and Spain. However, instead of leaving the British to peacefully develop Carolina, Spain launched attacks upon their settlements. From St. Augustine they enlisted the help of their Native allies, the Apalachees.

The charter granted the proprietors extensive control over the colony. They controlled all royalties and privileges. They made laws and wrote its constitution with the advice of colonial freemen, under conditions which they set. Also, they appointed a governor and determined the manner in which the legislative body and all administrators were selected. Ultimately, the proprietors and colonial politicians were forced to react to the Spanish attacks and the resulting impact upon Carolina's development. By 1670, Governor Sayles had notified the proprietors that the Carolina militia and its Creek allies were battling the Spanish and their Apalachee allies. It is difficult to say with certainty, but either the proprietors or the colonial politicians initiated a policy of enslaving the Native allies of the Spanish in Florida. This move resulted in a prosperous "Indian slave trade." Also, the Creeks supplied the British with thousands of deer skins. The Carolina colonists involved in the Indian slave trade were the first to prosper. This Indian trade had the dual benefits of generating profits and eliminating the chief ally of the Spanish. These Indian slaves were generally sold out of Carolina to the West Indies.

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2 Ibid., 42-43.
3 Salley, Narratives, 122.
4 Salley, Narratives, 134; Corkran, Creek Frontier, 49-53; Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., Africans and Creeks (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979) 5-6; Sirmans, Colonial South Carolina, 23-25.
In 1674, Dr. Henry Woodward wrote to a proprietor, the Earl of Shaftesbury, regarding the initiation of Native slavery: "Very well satisfied, dispatched them homewards that evening, whom I again expect in March with deerskins, furs and younge slaves."\(^5\)

On another occasion in 1680, the proprietors instructed the governor and council of Carolina to set up a board for handling "disputes between colonist and Indians and stated that no friendly Indians were to be enslaved or sold out of the colony."\(^6\) These comments indicate the possibility that the proprietors may have approved of the trade. They were notified of its beginning and later they distinguished between Natives that were to be, and those that were not to be enslaved.

On other occasions however, the comments of the proprietors seem to place the blame for the dualistic Indian trade upon the colonial politicians. In a letter to the Carolina Governor, the proprietors wrote in 1684:

Some evil men have of late made a trade of enslaving and sending away the poor Indians, for which purpose unjust wars have been made on them.... We did not mean . . . the parliament should license the transporting of Indians bought of other Indians . . . for it is only an encouragement to keep those poor people at war with each other.\(^7\)

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\(^6\) Fortescue, ed., *Calendar*, vol. 10, 524-526.

\(^7\) Ibid., vol. 11, 645.
This comment from the proprietors indicates that somehow the trade was initiated, regulated, and controlled by the colonists. At any rate, this trade was an integral part of the economy and it seemed to be in the interest of Carolina's defense strategy. Carolina political leaders prospered and competed for control of the lucrative trade. In the process some were removed from power by the proprietors specifically for engaging in the trade. Vigorous pursuit of the trade according to John Oldmixon was the sole reason for Governor Moore to enter politics. Oldmixon says Moore rigged legislative elections, even allowing Mulattos, and Negroes to vote. In 1702, Moore finally launched a slave-catching expedition against St. Augustine in the guise of an offensive war.

The efforts of the Carolina politicians nearly resulted in the extermination of the Apalachees. This was a setback for Spain. Whether the trade was sanctioned by the proprietors or not, this two track policy in effect worked in the interest of Britain, extending prosperity and growth and eliminating an ally of its enemy.

From another perspective though, the policy contributed to future instability in Carolina. Apalachees who were fortunate enough to escape from

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8 Salley, Narratives, 328.
9 Ibid., 334-40.
10 Covington, The Seminoles, 3-4.
the British perhaps naturally went back to Florida. Before 1700, Carolina had an African slave population at least four times as great as the White population. It seems that African and Indian slaves fled slavery together, and went to Florida.¹¹ Carolinian Edward Randolph notified parliament that in 1686 a Spanish invasion force included Natives and Blacks. They had carried away thirteen slaves and refused to return them.¹² In response, by 1689 the proprietors notified Governor Seth Sothell, "you must take care to prevent servants and Negroes from running away to the Spanish at St. Augustine."¹³

The zealous exploitation of the Indian slave trade both neutralized and placed oppressed Apalachee slaves in the Carolina colony. Oppressed Indians and Blacks were naturally opposed to serving as the foundation of the British colonial development strategy. They were natural allies as oppressed people. Their presence in Carolina as slaves was indeed initially positive for colonial expansion. However, the Appalachees had been significant in the Spanish effort to destabilize the British Southeast Colonial effort. Consequently, perhaps they were also at the core of the British economic, political, and military, initiatives in the region. The African slave industry in Carolina, if not equally important initially, certainly provided the balance of the colonies'...
economic foundation. When Apalachees fled slavery and returned to Florida, they were accompanied by Africans. Therefore, the loss of valuable property and labor was doubled.14

The Spanish edict of 1693 would drastically destabilize African slavery in the Southeast. However, the Yamasee War, 1714-16, would for all practical purposes destroy the “Indian trade.”15

The Yamasee War was perhaps the most critical event in the history of colonial Southern Carolina. It inaugurated a period of formal reaction to the African, Native and Spanish assaults upon the colony. Prior to 1714, nothing quite so alarming and destabilizing to the colony had occurred. Until the war the British seemed to be more on the offensive than the defensive. Colonial development and expansion had never really been so threatened. This new challenge came directly as a result of the growing factor of Native and African runaways rebelling against their role in the British economy.

In 1715 Lt. Governor Spotswood of South Carolina wrote the Virginia colonial legislature seeking military assistance and telling them that South Carolina faced the greatest army of Natives assembled since the English had arrived. He said they were encouraged by Spain. A very dismal set of

14Landers, "African Presence...." 321; Wright, "Dispatches..." 144-93, 164.

circumstances was projected. Spotswood questioned whether South Carolina would survive, because he said 1,500 White men were talking of leaving. The Carolina proprietors sought money and weapons from the Parliament, and asked for help from all other colonies. Parliament wanted to know how the proprietors would pay back the money, if they'd surrender their charter to the King, and whether or not they'd be self-supporting in the future. The proprietors responded that this was the first time in fifty years that support was requested from the King.\textsuperscript{16}

Though Lt. Governor Spotswood spoke in the heat of war, modern reflection reveals that the colony was truly in a crisis. Never before had there been such cause for alarm. Besides the questioning of their charter, perhaps the most telling comments are the proprietors' revelation that they had never had to get money from the King before. Also, placing requests with other colonies reveals the state of desperation which the political leaders of Carolina felt themselves to be in. Clearly these comments by Spotswood demonstrate that the colony's development was severely at risk..

After the Yamasee War, the Carolina proprietors and colonial politicians were able to make a good general assessment of how they were affected. By this time they had gained some perspective on the 1693 edict, and its overall impact on colonial development. In 1716, Joseph Boone and

\textsuperscript{16}Fortescue, \textit{Calendar}, vol. 28, 226-232.
Richard Beresford, agents for the Carolina House of Commons, wrote to Parliament. They first pointed out that the Governor of Virginia had done too little to assist Carolina and that they would remember him in his time of need. Also, they said, unless London sent help, the colony would have to be abandoned; in addition, it was pointed out that the Spanish believed they would soon capture Carolina. Boone and Beresford also said that because of the nearness of hostile forces, the abandoned plantations could not be resettled.17

Parallel to their political reaction to the war in general, the Carolinians complained about their great loss of Africans to the Spanish. Major James Cochran was sent to St. Augustine to negotiate for the return of slaves. The Carolina assembly reported that the Spanish had a policy of granting freedom to all English slaves who arrived and revealed numerous affidavits from individuals who observed the Spaniards arming and sheltering the Carolina runaways. Boone told the proprietors that the Spanish Governor said he couldn't release British slaves who become Catholic without the King's order. Carolina Governor Johnson reported to Parliament of an unsuccessful attack upon St. Augustine in 1719 for the purpose of recovering slaves. In 1716 the

Carolina Committee of Assembly expressed the belief that the Spanish were repaying the British for what they did to their “Indian allies.”

For the next decade after the Yamasee War, the British struggled to defend themselves from the constant attacks by the combined Florida forces. What had once been a thriving two-tract policy for British colonial development was now indirectly on the verge of setting back Carolinian development 50 years. The Native slave trade came to a virtual standstill in the years after the Yamasee War, and the African slave industry grew at a fantastic rate. According to one estimate, within fifteen years after the end of the Yamasee War, South Carolina had only 2,500 White men capable of bearing arms and an ever increasing slave population of over 40,000. Carolina's two-tract development cycle yielded profits, development, and struck a blow at Spain, but a corollary of that cycle was rebellion. The King of Spain quickly moved to utilize the runaway British slaves. Perhaps filling military slots vacated by their almost extinct Apalachee allies. All this to the utter horror of Carolina proprietors and colonial politicians.

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By 1728, the Carolina colony had split into North and South Carolina.

South Carolina Assembly President Middleton wrote to the British Foreign Minister, the Duke of Newcastle:

I am sorry we are obliged so often to represent to the government the difficulty we labor under, from the new situation of St. Augustine to this place who, without any regard to peace or war, do continually annoy our southern frontiers... We formerly complained of their receiving and harboring all our runaway Negroes, but since then, they have found out a new way of sending our own slaves against us, to rob and plunder us... We are not only at a vast expense in guarding our Southern frontiers but the inhabitants are continually alarmed, and have no leisure to look after their crops. The Indians they send against us are sent out in small parties headed by two, three or more Spaniards and sometimes joined with Negroes, and all mischief they do is on a sudden, and by surprise, and the moment they have done it, they retire again to St. Augustine... so that our plantations, being all scattering, before any men can be got together, the robbers are fled, this trade they have followed for twenty years...20

In addition to attacks on land, the Spanish government of Florida, equipped a fleet of small ships manned by Spaniards, Blacks, and Natives. This naval force known as the Coast Guardes launched destructive raids upon British coastal settlement in Carolina and later Georgia. The governor insisted that the ships could not be launched without the participation of the Black rebels.21 South Carolina officials clearly believed their survival was at stake. If their goals were to limit the development of British colonization in the South East, then it seems that the years following the Yamasee War was

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20 Fortescue, Calendar, 36, 131.

21 Ibid., 133; Easterby, Colonial Records, 291; Landers, "Free Town," 22.
successful for Spain. Middleton's letter indicates that the 1693 edict facilitated the flow of runaways into Florida, with the reciprocal result of swelling the Spanish forces. This resulted in vast military expenses for a now struggling colony. Not only did this halt the frontiers of settlement, but it seemed to have caused retraction. Also, even on land which the settlers continued to inhabit, their production was crippled by the threats of attacks from St. Augustine. According to Middleton, this had been the case since before the Yamasee War.

The proprietors and colonial administrators were put in a defensive or reactive posture. To the extent that their development strategy depended upon slavery, it was failing. There was talk of abandoning the colony. Diplomatic overtures to St. Augustine were unsuccessful. Therefore, it seems that expansion of the colony was no longer an issue, only its very survival. Also, to the degree that runaway Africans now bolstered Spain's military power, it seems that South Carolina now targeted those slaves in a manner similar to its former concentration on the Apalachees. The South Carolina government signed treaties with the Creeks and Cherokee Indians. In the treaties, they were paid a bounty for live runaways or a lesser amount for each scalp.

However, the primary reaction of South Carolina to St. Augustine was to intensify its own military effort. A major British military assault came in
1728. Colonel Palmer attacked St. Augustine by land, and Captain Mounjoy by sea, but this invasion by South Carolina was not successful. Furthermore, Palmer's lack of success was assured by the strong effort of a Black militia which was led by South Carolina runaways. The Carolina Assembly blamed Palmer's failure on a lack of support form London. In communications with the proprietors, they said that Palmer did not have proper orders for attacking St. Augustine Fort.  

In the wake of Palmer's unsuccessful raid, an air of frustration could be detected in communication between London and Charleston. As plans were being made to launch some strikes upon Spanish colonies in the West Indies, the Carolinas were seen as not being available:

> We must not hope for much assistance from either of the Carolinas; I believe the Spaniards will probably find them business enough at home; a proclamation lately published at St. Augustine has drawn many of their Negroes from them, in hopes of being enfranchised; and the rest are ripe for rebellion; so that it is really now come to pass that either the people of Carolina must take St. Augustine or St. Augustine will take them.

The efforts of the Carolinians to utilize the military for the achievement of political policy had not been successful. London officials seemed to have contemplated making some military strikes against the Spanish. However, these plans apparently did not include an invasion of

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23 Fortescue, Calendar, vol. 36, 291.
Florida commensurate to the goals of the South Carolinians. Being unable to
dislodge the Spaniards, retrieve runaway slaves, or curtail the guerrilla strikes
by force or diplomacy prompted both Charleston and London to take other
action.

As early as 1716, Carolina Assembly agents Boone and Beresford
notified Parliament that one way to encourage strength and development was
to allow settlement on the Yamasee lands, between Florida and Carolina.
However, in the same letter they added, "But we cannot expect that any
person will come to settle there 'till the Yamasees be removed from
Augustine..." By 1716 the Assembly did pass an act encouraging settlement
upon Yamasee lands for defensive purposes. However, by 1718, the
proprietors repealed this Assembly act. It is probable that the proprietors
believed that in the wake of the war, confiscation and settlement of Yamasee
lands could reignite intensive warfare.

It seems that between 1718-28, consistent depredations by St.
Augustine and the failure of Colonel Palmer's invasion helped to convince
London that a change of policy was needed. Within two years of Palmer's
invasion, James Oglethorpe proposed to establish a new colony which would
incorporate the Yamasee lands. He suggested that Georgia be established as a

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24 Ibid. vol. 29, 220; ibid. vol. 30, 322.
fortification between Florida and South Carolina, under the command of the South Carolina governor.  

James Oglethorpe was one of several trustees who were granted a charter for the establishments of the colony of Georgia, in 1732. In *Some Account of the Design of the Trustees for Establishing Colonies in America*, Oglethorpe explained the purpose of the new colony. He said that before the Yamasee War, English settlers lived dispersed among Natives as if it was a conquered nation, but after the war all settlements were moved north of the Edisto River. The region south of Edisto and Port Royal, Oglethorpe wrote, would be the Georgias.

As Oglethorpe took measure of the prevailing political-military predicament between Britain and Spain in the south east, he suggested the following:

The District intended for a new colony whilst it lies uninhabited will facilitate the Invasions of the Indians upon South Carolina. But a number of towns established along the Rivers Savannah and Alatamaha would prevent any future massacre and make a stronger barrier to the present settlements and keep the Negro Slaves of South Carolina in awe who are now so numerous as to be dreadful even to their masters.

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27 Ibid., 23.
Also, the Georgia Charter forbade slavery or even the presence of Blacks. The proprietors reasoned that any Blacks spotted could be apprehended as runaways from South Carolina, or soldiers of St. Augustine. Perceivably, the battlefield success of the Florida allies in the decade since Boone and Beresford suggested the settlement of Yamasee lands helped convince the London political leaders that this strategy was worth trying. Oglethorpe had been elected to the House of Commons at age twenty-six in 1722. Because some of the South Carolina trustees were also members of the House of Commons, he was well aware of their defense needs. But it seems that Oglethorpe's desire to shield South Carolina was secondary. In 1728, a friend of his who was an architect, was sent to debtors' prison where he died of smallpox. Oglethorpe responded by conducting a Parliamentary investigation into unhealthful conditions in debtors' prisons. His investigation led to the release of over 10,000 debtors from the prisons. By 1730 he and other London humanitarians petitioned the King for a charter to set up a charity colony. In 1732, the charter was granted. All trustees for Georgia were forbidden from owning land in the colony or profiting from office.28

Oglethorpe arrived in Charleston in 1733. Though aware of his mission to fortify the South Carolina frontier, it seems that he was most

concerned about his philanthropic effort. However, from the beginning, Governor Johnson of South Carolina made certain that the colonists realized their place in the military strategy of the region. Other than Oglethorpe, he forbade any colonist from disembarking in Charleston, for fear of them not wanting to go on to the challenges of Georgia.  

Even as the Georgia colony was being established there was no relief for South Carolina. In the mid-1730's, the South Carolina assembly stated that slave desertions were directly caused by the Spanish policy of granting freedom to all South Carolina slaves. One South Carolina slave holder, Captain Caleb Davis, wrote to the Assembly saying that nineteen of his slaves, and fifty belonging to other Port Royal planters had run off to St. Augustine. Davis went to St. Augustine and demanded that the Governor return the slaves. But the Governor informed him that he was commanded by the King to free the English slaves. Davis recommended that London send a high official to negotiate with Spain. A joint committee was set up to deal with desertions.  

The committee decided the Spanish encouragement of slave deserters and their incorporation into the guerrilla militia of St. Augustine would have

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29 Ibid., 24.

30 Easterby, Colonial Records of South Carolina, 1736-39, 590-597, 673.
"fatal consequences to the safety and welfare of the province." The committee's continued offer of rewards to Creeks for the capture of slaves proved ineffective. The Assembly notified London that South Carolina would not survive unless the King acted to negotiate Spain's violations of existing treaties or provide military assistance. Additionally, the Spanish Edict of 1693 had been distributed throughout South Carolina. It was determined by the House of Commons in 1739 that no efforts attempted against St. Augustine had been successful.

A considerable quantity of correspondence between the South Carolina government and Parliament dealt with St. Augustine; and as well, much of the South Carolina Colonial Records of the time were concerned with the same problem. The colonial political leaders believed that only military force could prevent the Spaniards from destroying their colony. The founding of Georgia was indeed a calculated military gesture, but even this was proving to have no effect on the prevention of runaways and Spanish aggression.

James Oglethorpe maintained his seat in Parliament until 1743, even though he was in Georgia. During this time as a member of the House of Commons, and as a Georgia proprietor, he continually informed both of the

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31 Ibid., 673.

32 Ibid., 680-709.
progress of the colony. The Earl of Egmont (the first president of the Georgia Board of Trustees), received the following correspondence from Oglethorpe:

On the 10th November, 1738, Colonel Oglethorpe wrote me the disagreeable situation he was in, a great number of debts, empty magazine, no money to supply them, numbers of people to be fed, mutinous soldiers to command, a Spanish claim, and a large body of their troops not far from him. That debt could not be avoided, since no one could dare dismiss the militia, or reduce the garrisons 'till the King's troops arrived to relieve them: and this had forced an expense of 20,000 pounds in a year, when only 8000 pounds was granted... there must be a vigorous application to Parliament to pay those debts...33

Even though Georgia was chartered in part as a defensive barrier between Florida and South Carolina, it seems that the proprietors underestimated just how extensive the military expenditures would be. By 1738, the colony's expenses were almost 300 percent higher than had been projected. Because Georgia was chartered on an almost non-profit basis, the Parliament was more directly involved in its fate, and its role in the struggle with Spanish Florida.

Many of the Georgia colonists consistently complained to London because slavery was prohibited. As a result of these complaints, there were numerous efforts to remind the proprietors of the critical role slavery would have in Georgia. In 1739 Robert Williams wrote the Earl of Egmont about a request for slaves. He said, it would "ruin the colony, it being impossible to

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prevent Negroes deserting to the Spaniards our near neighbors, who give freedom, land, and protection to all runaway Negroes." The issues of defense and the request for slaves seem to have been the dominant issues of correspondence between Georgia and London. Georgia proprietors not only had to develop a strategy for coping with St. Augustine, but also they had to battle fellow members of Parliament, essentially because of the high defense expenditures. One leading member of Parliament, Sir Robert Walpole, questioned Georgia's annual budget over runs because he assumed the current treaty between Spain and England would be sufficient to keep the peace. Bills for defense expenditure, boats, and other essentials regularly arrived in London from Georgia. One Parliamentarian, Mr. Tower, a trustee, believed there would be peace with Spain if the Georgia-Florida border were moved north, because he said there was no legitimate English title to the colony. In response to Tower, the Earl of Egmont said that perhaps Parliament would vote for additional aid if the proprietors could forge a title.

In 1738 and 1739 the lifeline between Georgia and London consisted of defense expenditures. A scandal occurred in 1739 when the Georgia records keeper, Mr. Causton, was accused of improper expenditures, but he blamed all cost overruns on defense needs. In 1739, the trustees collected records from

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34 Ibid., 93.

Oglethorpe and requested more. Copies were made for each trustee in London, for the purpose of lobbying Parliament to approve of additional expenditures for Georgia. Sir Robert Walpole was seen as an enemy of the colony. He believed that England did not have a legal title and that in the current round of treaty negotiations it was likely that Spain could present a legitimate title. Many in Parliament believed it was futile to spend so much to back a lost cause. However, the trustees promised to vote against the interest of those members who abandoned Georgia. The Earl of Egmont lobbied both Houses of Parliament, winning the influential support of Lord Baltimore and the Earl of Chesterfield. Finally, Walpole announced that he had secured the King's consent for money and fortifications for Georgia, while Lord Bathurst declared the King would rather part with the Indies than Georgia. In response, Georgia trustee, Mr. Tracey, announced that he was informed by the Spanish minister to England, Giraldini, that the King of Spain would rather part with Madrid than Georgia, and also that they would fight England for twenty years before letting go of Georgia.36

In general, the Georgia trustees and colonial politicians were fighting against Spanish interest and the interest of macro-rebellion. Their colony was conceived as a defensive barrier to those allied interests. However, the colonial charter's structure required dependency upon Parliament. Georgia's

36 Ibid., 102, 115-147.
quest to confront the external enemy in Florida, therefore, required confrontations with internal foes in Parliament to secure defense expenditures. Political diplomacy was conducted between London and Madrid as well as Charleston, Savannah, and St. Augustine. Diplomacy had its limits. Both Spain and Britain finally decided that war would be the political determinant in their colonial competition. The conflict had reached the highest levels of government. The Spanish were prepared to fight for twenty years, and the King of England ordered defensive preparations for Georgia.

In 1739 a diplomatic mission from St. Augustine made several stops in both Georgia and South Carolina. However, colonial officials of these colonies decided St. Augustine was using this cover of diplomacy to shield its true mission. Oglethorpe arrested them, and charged the party with spreading news of a new 1733 Spanish edict of freedom, and with inciting slaves to run to Florida and rebel. The Stono Rebellion of 1739 was blamed on this group. This rebellion occurred in South Carolina. Dozens of Whites and Blacks were killed in it. The new edict and the rebellion which it incited were considered to be unpardonable crimes and prompted the colonists of Georgia and South Carolina to seek a declaration of war from the King.37

Oglethorpe informed the Earl of Egmont that he had received the King's command to attack St. Augustine, and that he would need additional

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37 Ibid., 164-67; Easterby, Colonial Records, Southern Carolina 1741-42, 83.
expenditures to pay for the allegiance of 1,200 Creek and Cherokee Indians. Also, he said that he had to strike first before reinforcements arrived from Havana because Georgia and South Carolina had more troops than St. Augustine. He reminded Egmont, "it is impossible to keep the province of Carolina without destroying Augustine, or keeping rangers and scout boats to restrain their nimble parties." 38

Oglethorpe went before the South Carolina Legislature as the commander of what became known as the "War of Jenkins' Ear." This war got its name from an incident in which Robert Jenkins, an English pirate, had his ship seized and his ear severed by a Spanish captain in the West Indies. In 1739 Jenkins held his ear up in Parliament to help spur on a vote for war with Spain. 39

In an address to the legislature, Oglethorpe reminded the South Carolina Assembly of the King's orders to destroy St. Augustine. He said it was the source of refuge for murderous bands of runaway slaves who, with Spanish and Indian allies, plunder British Southeast colonies. 40


39 Herbert E. Bolton and Mary Ross, The Debatable Land (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1925) 77-80.

40 Easterby, Colonial Records of South Carolina, 87.
Most of the military supplies and expenditures were supplied by the South Carolina legislature. However, support for the campaign arrived from as far away as Rhode Island. Oglethorpe marched to St. Augustine with 2,000 Indians, 2,200 White troops, and Negro laborers with additional Whites to guard them. The expedition cost 120,000 pounds but South Carolina determined they could save 10,000 pounds annually in defense if the mission succeeded. Men and ships arrived from England to complete a seven-ship blockade of St. Augustine.41

St. Augustine was a large fort with thick walls and a moat. According to Captain Mark Carr it was the only place of strength in Florida. He said it had fifty cannons and could house all the inhabitants of Florida. Carr noted that within one league of the fort was a village of 200 armed Negroes and nine villages of Indians with 500 armed men.42 Oglethorpe was unable to bomb bard St. Augustine into submission. The only route to a land invasion was through Fort Mose. Mose was constructed and inhabited by escaped Carolina slaves for the specific purpose of shielding St. Augustine from invasions.

When Oglethorpe arrived at Mose he found it deserted. He ordered Colonel Dussen and Captain Palmer to occupy Mose while he proceeded to lay siege to St. Augustine. On June 15, at four a.m., Palmer and Dussen were hit

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41 Ibid., 87-92; Egmont, “Journal,” 229.

42 Ibid., 293.
with a surprise attack by 300 Blacks and Indians. Eighty British soldiers were killed in the attack and twenty-five were taken prisoner. Almost half of the British troops in the Fort Mose attack survived by running into the surrounding forest and swamps, but Colonel Dussen was mortally wounded. The Blacks and Indians reoccupied Mose until 30 June, then again vanished into the forest.

After the losses, Oglethorpe had his troops dispersed, but did not attempt a frontal assault upon St. Augustine. British forces all feared that the Black and Indian forces would surprise them with guerrilla attacks one by one. The British naval blockade had to be lifted because bad weather was setting in. Therefore, the bombardment of St. Augustine by land and sea proved to be not enough to induce a Spanish capitulation, and with the Black and Indian guerrillas at their backs, Oglethorpe evacuated his forces on 5 July.43

Other than the casualties at Fort Mose, the British forces sustained few deaths, but the losses at Mose demoralized them. Some of the Mose corpses were decapitated, and others were mutilated. The South Carolina Assembly appointed a special committee to investigate the result of the campaign. Their published account, "Report of the Committee appointed to Inquire into the Causes of the Disappointment of Success in the Late Expedition Against St.

43 Easterby, Colonial Records of South Carolina, 100-136; Smith, Plot to Steal Florida, 211.
Augustine," revealed that the British were defeated by numerically inferior forces. It was determined that White Spanish forces never left the St. Augustine fort and that only Blacks and Indians had attacked the British on the ground. Oglethorpe reported that British forces at Fort Mose were lost only because they disobeyed his orders.44

Frequently, the official correspondence between Charleston, Savannah and London expressed the belief that British Colonial expansion and stabilization in South Carolina and Georgia demanded the conquest of St. Augustine. The British government amassed one of the largest European armies ever seen in North America up to that time. The military conflict with St. Augustine forced the proprietors and colonists to respond militarily, and not only increased defense expenditures but also sparked intra-Parliamentary confrontations over Georgia's survival.

Oglethorpe's campaign in Florida perhaps cannot be called a defeat because other than the major battle at Fort Mose, there were very few real battles. The Spanish did not leave St. Augustine, and after the Fort Mose attack, the Blacks and Indians primarily remained out of sight. But it is Oglethorpe's lack of success which seems to be most important politically. The proprietors and colonial politicians were still faced with a powerful, even

44 Ibid., 115, 116, 120, 147, 157, 194.
rejuvenated foe in St. Augustine, now ready for revenge. Also, Georgia's Parliamentary foes had to be confronted.

Prior to Oglethorpe's defeat, the Earl of Egmont believed the War of Jenkins Ear provided a good opportunity to gain full Parliamentary endorsement of Georgia. He felt that a British victory would eclipse the Spanish claims and certainly secure additional funding, but defeat brought the intensification of Spanish attacks and continued destabilization of South Carolina and Georgia. In 1741, Parliament reported that a Spanish force of over 2,300 troops, including at least 800 Black and Indian troops, were poised to invade South Carolina and Georgia.43

By 1742, a British prisoner, Alexander Perris, who had been held in St. Augustine since the War of Jenkins Ear, gave a deposition to the South Carolina assembly. Mr. Perris reported that a Spanish force which included 500 Blacks, had just invaded South Carolina and Georgia. In "A Free Town in Spanish Colonial Florida," Jane Landers writes that in the decade following the War of Jenkins Ear, St. Augustine sent militias of separate and combined groups of Blacks and Indians into British territory. The Black militia of Fort Mose was led by a South Carolina runaway, Captain Francisco Menendez. The Blacks were sent into Georgia and South Carolina to arm slaves and prepare them for a Spanish counter attack following the War of Jenkins' Ear.

Also, the Spanish launched numerous Corsair ships against the British coastal settlements in the 1740's. To

Though unsuccessful in 1740, Oglethorpe eventually managed to defend Georgia and perhaps fight the Spaniards to a draw. In 1741 Oglethorpe complained to the Earl of Egmont that the Spanish Corsairs "swarmed the Georgia coast," and he notified Sir Robert Walpole of what his plans were for a second invasion of Florida. In 1742 Oglethorpe led a second invasion of St. Augustine which had only limited success but he managed to inflict extensive damage on the Spanish forces after retreating into Georgia and staging several defensive battles. The Earl of Egmont reported that a 1742 Spanish force of 3,000 men was led by the Governor of St. Augustine. In this attack Oglethorpe defended Georgia on land and sea. As a result of his defensive maneuvers, Oglethorpe was promoted to the rank of General in 1743.

The 1740's was a decade of intensive warfare between the British and Spanish in the Southeast. Both sides launched raids and counter raids upon each other. The Spanish were not able to push the British from Georgia, and the British could not conquer St. Augustine. It seems that the South Carolina political leaders began to give fewer accounts of Spanish penetration of their

46 Ibid., 553; Colonial Records of South Carolina, 235; Landers, "A Free Town...", 21-25.

territory; and to the extent that this is accurate, perhaps the strategy of making Georgia a barrier was starting to succeed. However, decreased penetration of South Carolina did not seem to limit criticism of the Georgia colony in Parliament, nor did Oglethorpe's apparent defensive success facilitate expansion or development of the colony. Oglethorpe's lack of success in the War of Jenkins Ear seemed to bring a new source of conflict, this time in America.

As Oglethorpe retreated in 1740, the Earl of Egmont reported:

The Council and Assembly of South Carolina signed a petition and representation to His Majesty expressing their miserable condition, their apprehensions of the Spaniards, upon the ill success of ye siege of Augustine which they impute to Colonel Oglethorpe's bad conduct, their danger from their own Negroes, and that their expectations and hopes arising at first from the settlement of Georgia were now vanished and gone.\textsuperscript{48}

The South Carolina Assembly investigation reported that after the attack upon the British at Fort Mose, their Creek allies accused Oglethorpe of being afraid of the Spanish.\textsuperscript{49} Lt. Colonel Cockran reported after the war, "in Carolina they cannot hear the name of Colonel Oglethorpe, but they fall into such a rage as sets the very dogs a barking."\textsuperscript{50} The Carolinians' deaths at the hands of the Blacks and Indians in particular probably contributed heavily to

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 394.

\textsuperscript{49} Easterby, Colonial Records of South Carolina 1741-42, 119.

\textsuperscript{50} Egmont, "Journal," 499.
the South Carolina Assembly's embitterment over the outcome in St. Augustine. Numerous survivors of the 1740 campaign criticized Oglethorpe's leadership. The South Carolina Assembly even sent pamphlets to both houses of Parliament critical of Oglethorpe but Governor Glen of South Carolina managed to block their distribution. He feared it would discourage expenditures for a second expedition. Several members of Parliament requested that Governor Glen lead the next expedition. The enmity of the South Carolina Assembly towards Oglethorpe was not limited to words. Oglethorpe reported to the Earl of Egmont and British foreign minister, the Duke Newcastle in 1742 and 1743 respectively, that during major invasions from Florida, the South Carolina Assembly refused to lend any assistance.51

The conflict with South Carolina seemed to have been only a limited corollary of the British confrontation with Spain and its allies. Nevertheless, it resulted from the consistent military instability in the region. The inability of Oglethorpe and other proprietors to resolve their development problems through war continued to provide their enemies in Parliament with the resources to attack the colony. In late 1740 the proprietors requested a 25 percent increase in the defense spending for Georgia. In the parliamentary debates which followed, several members requested that Georgia be abandoned because it was too expensive to defend. They proposed that the colonist

51 Ibid., 572, 645, 676.
should join South Carolina, and strengthen that colony. Lord Gage stated that he regretted having voted 129,000 to Georgia. Mr. Thomas Christie argued that during this debate he had signed a petition to allow Negroes in Georgia, but upon learning of the Spanish edicts which freed British slaves, he and several others in Parliament would have preferred to wait until St. Augustine was conquered. Other members complained that Parliamentary debates on Georgia only encouraged the Spaniards to attack.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 413-14, 434, 491-499.}

Though Georgia was partially founded as a haven for debt prisoners, the nature of Parliamentary debates indicates that it was more important as a military barrier for South Carolina. The conflict between South Carolina and Georgia was rooted in military issues also. The Spaniards used runaway Carolina slaves to limit Carolina's growth. Because the colony's growth was dependent upon the slave industry, it was believed that Georgia would protect slavery and ensure growth. In fulfilling this defensive role for South Carolina, Georgia was a far more expensive project than was planned. As Parliament debated the cost effectiveness of maintaining this garrison state, ultimately alternative funding sources had to be considered. The only real alternative was the introduction of slavery. Georgia's colonists insisted that the problems of hunger and trade could only be solved with slaves, and that the colony could function as a garrison without inhabitants. Oglethorpe insisted that St.
Augustine stirred malcontents to demand slaves so that Spain could have new allies. Also, he said that the Spaniards hoped to make Parliament grow tired of funding Georgia.\textsuperscript{53}

While Parliament debated continued funding of Georgia, one of the colonies administrators, Mr. Thomas Stephens, sent the following comments:

Your chief aim is to introduce Negroes, but its demonstrable that is a thing not to be ventured. You say that without them no exportable commodities can be raised, why none ought to be expected yet. Georgia is a frontier province, and not to be considered yet a while as a region profitable in a commercial way, but as a garrison defense, and the inhabitants as soldiers with arms in their hands, not spades. But when rendered secure, then is the time for them to apply themselves to such produces...\textsuperscript{54}

Stephens' comments shed light upon the complex political reactions of colonial politicians to the military force from St. Augustine. Though Georgia was originally put in place to safeguard slavery in Carolina, the expense of this policy led to a demand for slavery in Georgia. The words of Oglethorpe and Stephens reflect a British colonial predicament in the Southeast, using slaves to secure development, but also furnishing the Spanish with handy guerrilla recruits.

Gradually, some members of Parliament accepted demands from colonists, who were influenced by the fiscal realities. They argued that

\textsuperscript{53} Egmont, "Journal," 642.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid, 440.
Georgia must accept slavery or risk losing funds from Parliament.\(^55\) Finally, in 1750, slavery was allowed in Georgia but until that time the Parliament trustees and Georgia colonial leaders continued to debate the issues of slavery, development, and the Spanish encouragement of runaways. To the extent that several members of Parliament tired of the continued military expenditures, steps were taken to consolidate Georgia and South Carolina. By 1750, the Parliament had even disbanded Oglethorpe's military regiment. The Georgia colonial government was instructed to direct their request for military assistance to the Governor of South Carolina. Nevertheless, by 1752 the Parliament forced the trustees of Georgia to surrender their charter. By this time, slavery was allowed and Parliament decided to keep troops in Georgia.\(^56\)

In deciding to allow slavery in Georgia it seems that Parliament and the trustees opted for the strategy of seeking development and minimizing the number of slaves escaping to St. Augustine. The records indicate that the St. Augustine forces continued to limit the extent of development and expansion.

\(^{55}\) Ibid, 642.

In 1752, the freeholders of southern Georgia reported increased Spanish attacks since the reduction in Oglethorpe's regiment.57

The conflict between Britain and Spain was dramatically altered in 1763. In that year the Treaty of Paris gave Florida to the British. Spain, however, recaptured Florida in 1783 during the American Revolution. In 1763 Georgia Governor James Wright wrote to Parliament:

I most sincerely and heartily congratulate your lordships on the peace which his majesties wisdom and equity has so happily concluded... by the cessation of Florida, not only of the settlements of St. Augustine and Pensacola and now that your lordships are pleased to inform me that this province will be freed from every obstacle that has obstructed its growth and prosperity, and be no longer checked and cramped, I have no doubt of its making great strides, and very soon becoming useful to the mother country... 58

Wright underscores the historical plight of Georgia's development.

The Treaty of Paris had yielded an objective to the British which decades of war could not. Wright expressed optimism that guerrilla attacks would cease. Also, no longer would a Spanish edict draw British slaves to Florida. Nonetheless, in spite of the absence of the Spanish, by 1766 Wright reported that slaves still ran off to Florida. By 1771 the Georgia Assembly passed

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legislation which was designed to prevent runaways. Also, in this same year Governor Wright reaffirmed agreements with the Upper Creeks to, pay them for the capture of runaways.59

The political leaders of colonial Georgia and Parliament were aware of the risks of admitting slaves. But development was dependent upon the slave industry. In particular, the Spanish efforts to enforce its claims on the South East and macro-rebellion limited the expansion of colonial South Carolina and Georgia. First, the Spanish utilized the Apalachees as allies to harass British settlements. As a consequence, the British established a Native slave trade which enriched South Carolina while, nearly rendering the Apalachees extinct. For a while the Carolinas were able to prosper and expand. Conversely, the Spanish were weakened by the attacks upon its Native allies. In the midst of this struggle between the two colonial powers, the African slave industry became a factor. In 1693 the King of Spain strategically issued an edict which granted freedom and security to any British slaves which escaped to St. Augustine. This policy in effect reciprocated the effect of the British Native slavery.

The 1693 edict, however, drew a growing source of British economic stability to St. Augustine. The edict, combined with the effect of the Yamasee War, retarded British Colonial development and expansion. Ultimately, the

edict compensated Spain for its Apalachee allies which vanished in British slavery.

From the Yamasee War until the Treaty of Paris in 1763, the 1693 edict helped to undermine the foundation of British colonial development. At the same time it tended to rejuvenate Spanish colonial stability in Florida. As a consequence of Spain's policy of destabilization, British politicians, both colonial and in Parliament, were forced to adjust policy goals and objectives. The very conception of colonial Georgia was perhaps the ultimate reaction of British politicians to this destabilization. It was intended to protect Carolina's slave industry, and perhaps it did ultimately achieve this objective.

Governor Wright of Georgia believed that a diplomatic settlement of British-Spanish disagreements would allow peaceful expansion of the colony. Wright nonetheless failed to account for the continuity of rebellion. Without its Spanish ally, the scope and context of macro-rebellion was altered, but as the records indicate, rebellion was sustained. Consequently, growth and expansion of the colony continued very slowly. This was a problem with which the new United States government would have to contend.

Chapter Seven will document the reactions of the founding fathers to the presence of rebel slaves in Florida. In particular John Jay, George Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe all left written responses to the Seminole rebels which will be analyzed.
CHAPTER VII
UNITED STATES REACTION TO SEMINOLE BLACKS, 1788-1814

Between 1763 and 1783, British colonists had gone from being subjects of the crown to independent citizens of the United States of America. During those same years Florida had passed from the hands of the Spanish to the British and then back to Spain. As a result, the political policies in regards to runaway slaves variously went from the enforcement of the 1693 Edict during Spanish occupation, to non-enforcement under the British. During the American Revolution the British did encourage Georgia slaves to run to Florida as potential allies. Georgia's fear of this threat caused the assembly to require one-third of the militia to guard slaves.¹ Officially, however, British colonial Florida provided no haven for runaway slaves because slavery had increased since Spanish occupation. During British occupation it seems likely that some of the Black and Indian allies of the Spanish were incorporated among the Lower Creek Indians, who had migrated into Florida. The Lower Creeks, the rebels, Apalachees and Yamasees, all became known as the Seminoles during the British occupation.²

It was among the Seminoles that Georgia slaves ultimately found refuge after 1763. With the return of the Spanish occupation after the


² Chapter two gives a detailed explanation of the creation of a Seminole people.
Revolution it seems that runaways could have been received under terms of the 1693 edict, as well as among the Seminoles. One factor which remained constant during both Spanish and British occupation of Florida were the complaints of Georgia. Rebel slaves were at the core of Georgia's complaints.

This chapter will discuss the political relationship between the Florida rebels and the U.S. government. In general this relationship occurred within a framework of interaction already established by the British. First diplomatic solutions were attempted, then military. In this context, this chapter will show activities and initiatives from politicians which demonstrate the political relationship. A key diplomatic effort culminated in the repeal of the Royal Edicts of 1693 and 1733. The ultimate American initiative against the Florida threat would be a secret war launched by James Madison.

With Britain's expansion into Florida in 1763, their colonial growth and development continued. Georgia's Governor Wright complained about runaways and made agreements with the Upper Creeks to capture them. Therefore, in spite of British colonial expansion in Florida, it seems that runaways and Seminole attacks still hampered the colonies' growth. As early as 1785 a Georgia delegate to the Continental Congress, William Houston, served on a congressional committee which made recommendations to the entire congress on how to deal with the Southern

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Indians. This committee suggested that U.S. Indian Commissioners in Georgia be required to demand that Indians, (Lower Creeks or Seminoles) return all fugitive slaves who resided among them.4

Apparently, efforts of the commissioners in 1785 did not result in return of Georgia's slaves. By 1788 the Georgia governor and delegates pushed the Congress to take stronger measures. They issued the following resolution:

It is represented to Congress by the delegates of the State of Georgia that the . . . frontiers of that state have been for several years past invaded and kept in a state of alarm by Creek Indians . . . instigated by refugees and fugitive traders, who had formerly escaped from these states and taken refuge among them as to keep up constant and bloody incursions on the different parts of that frontier, and that the settlements of four of the exterior counties are almost entirely broken up.5

It is apparent that the settlement of the State of Georgia was limited by the attacks of the Blacks and Natives in the Georgia-Florida region. Also, it is important to remember that the U.S. government acknowledged two groups of Creeks. The Upper Creek were the main body of the nation. They resided primarily in Georgia. They had been traditional allies of the British since before the Yamasee War. It was these Creeks whom Governor Wright paid to capture runaway slaves. The Lower Creeks resided in Florida and generally became incorporated into a Seminole conglomerate. These were the notorious Creeks referred to by the Congress. Here we see that the Seminoles were operating independently of

4Continental Congress vol. 28, 119.
5Continental Congress vol. 34, 326.
the Spanish government in St. Augustine. The congress ordered the Secretary of War to make plans for war against the Seminole.\textsuperscript{6}

From the Office of Foreign Affairs, Secretary of State John Jay reported in 1788 on the Congressional resolutions. Jay noted that slaves from Georgia were escaping to St. Augustine and were being freed and sheltered by Florida Governor Zespedes. Jay reported that the Governor said he could not return any slaves without orders from the King of Spain. As early as 1787 in a letter to Thomas Jefferson, Jay acknowledged that the Georgia frontier was under attack. He also implied that Spain should be punished. Jay also sent a letter to the U.S. envoy in Madrid, William Carmichael. He instructed Carmichael to negotiate for an end to the Spanish policy of freeing and sheltering runaway slaves.\textsuperscript{7}

For nearly a century, first the British then the Americans were forced to grapple with the effects of the Spanish edict of 1693. This policy had been reasserted several times over the century. Its impact upon first colonial and then U.S. expansion can be seen in the pattern of reaction by government officials. The policy bolstered the Spanish militia in Florida. As a result, frontier settlements could be easily attacked. This caused political reactions in Parliament and in the colonial assemblies of South Carolina and Georgia. Then later, political responses occurred in Georgia State politics as well as in the Continental Congress. Under the Americans, efforts to obliterate the edict intensified.

\textsuperscript{6}Ibid, 327.

As a member of the Continental Congress, James Madison made these comments:

We learn from Georgia that the State is threatened with a dangerous war with the Creek Indians. The alarm is of so serious a nature that law martial has been proclaimed, and they are proceeding to fortify even the town of Savannah. The idea there is that the Indians derive their motives as well as their means from their Spanish neighbors. Individuals complain also that their fugitive slaves are encouraged by East Florida. The policy of this is explained by supposing that it is considered as a discouragement to the Georgians to form settlements near the Spanish boundaries.  

Madison clearly addresses the impact of the Seminoles and Spanish upon the expansion of the State of Georgia. He also makes reference to the natural reaction which echoed so many colonial political leaders. Madison's talk of war replicates the reactions of many legislative officials in former times. The Continental Congress pushed its Spanish envoy and the Florida governor for a repeal of the Edict. As a congressional delegate, Madison was fully informed about the subject.

Under the new constitution of 1788, Thomas Jefferson replaced John Jay as Secretary of State. By 1790 Jefferson continued to push Carmichael and the governor of Florida for changes in the Spanish policy. He sent transcripts and affidavits from Georgia slave holders which had been received by Secretary of War Henry Knox. Jefferson told Carmichael that the problems in Georgia were growing worse. Finally in 1790,

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Florida Governor Quesada informed Jefferson that the king had rescinded the nearly century-old Edict of 1693. Jefferson wrote Quesada in 1791 thanking him for the change of policy, but also Jefferson assumed that the Spanish would assist Georgia residents in rounding up runaway slaves. He informed Quesada that Indian Agent James Seagrove would negotiate with him for a return of the slaves. In 1791, George Washington wrote Seagrove to clarify his objective. Washington informed him of a confidential aspect of his mission:

Your first care will be to arrest the further reception of fugitive slaves, your next to obtain restitution of these slaves who have fled to Florida since the date of Governor Quesada’s letter to Mr. Jefferson, notifying the orders of his Catholic Majesty. And your last object, which may demand the greatest address, will be to give a retrospective force to the orders of the Court of Spain, beyond the date of that letter, and to procure the Governor's order for a general relinquishment of all fugitive slaves, who were the property of the United States.

Under the Continental Congress, Jay had demanded a repeal of the Edict. The Congressional Committee on the State of Southern Indian Affairs demanded that Creek Indians secure the return of all slaves, prisoners or fugitives. Under the Washington administration, Jefferson had successfully completed the efforts begun by Jay to repeal the 1693 Edict. Though the Edict had been at the core of the Spanish defensive strategy, perhaps its relinquishment in the 1790s was a sign of the lessening of the Spanish desire to fight wars for Florida. In March of 1791, Jefferson expressed optimism that Spain would help round up the various slaves. By

10 Ibid, 638.
11 Ibid, 520.
May, Washington secretly pressed Seagrove to secure an order from Governor Quesada for the "general relinquishment" of fugitives.

Washington's letter to Seagrove was essentially the blueprint of America's strategy for confronting the Florida allies. He demanded payment to American slave holders for their losses in Florida. Also, he sought the repossession of all Blacks claimed by Americans. The pursuit of Washington's objectives would follow the well-worn paths of first diplomacy, then war.

Washington and Jefferson had, in a very short time, used diplomacy to accomplish a goal which alluded the British Parliament, proprietors of South Carolina and Georgia and their colonial administrators. Both Britain and the U.S. knew that historically the edict was at the core of Spain's strength in Florida. Washington and Jefferson, however, did not draw parallels between the end of the policy and the current weakness of Spain in Florida. During the years of British occupation, the power base of the Blacks and Indians had shifted from St. Augustine itself to the Florida countryside. This was now the heartland of a new people, the Seminoles. Most likely, "Seminole country" was the primary destination of runaways from Georgia. To a great extent, the Seminoles were a consequence of the edict's 100 year history. Spain could not have marched into the countryside and delivered them to the U.S. Therefore, though the Washington administration had eliminated the edict, they were attempting to accomplish another goal which had eluded the British--the return of slaves.
Negotiations with Creeks and other Natives for the capture of runaway slaves was a process begun by the British. Creeks had assisted the British in the capture of Native and African slaves. Even before the Washington administration, the Continental Congress had stipulations in treaties with at least thirteen tribes for the return of African slaves. The Continental Congress had been negotiating with the Creeks for a treaty which would incorporate the return and apprehension of Georgia slaves. Finally, in 1790, Secretary of War Henry Knox negotiated a treaty with the Creeks. The Treaty of New York was specifically worded to include all the Creeks, Upper, Lower, and Seminoles. Even a middle group of Creeks was mentioned. Article III of the treaty stated the following:

The Creek Nation shall deliver as soon as practical to the commanding officer of the troops of the United States, stationed at the Rock-Landing on the Oconee River, all citizens of the U.S., white inhabitants or Negroes, who are now prisoners in any part of the said nation. And if such prisoners or Negroes should not be so delivered, on or before the first day of June ensuing, the governor of Georgia may empower three persons to repair to the said nation, in order to claim and receive such prisoners and Negroes.

There were some secret articles within the Treaty of New York. The Washington administration agreed to pay the Creek Chief McGillivray $1200 annually and to make him a Brigadier General. Lesser chiefs were

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paid $100 annually. The secret articles were possibly unconstitutional. In *The Exiles of Florida*, Ohio Congressman Joshua Giddings expressed the belief that Washington was secretly spending the nation's tax dollars in support of slave catching. The public articles of the treaty clearly stated that the Creeks agreed to return runaway slaves. The secret articles do not specifically say that any payment is for the return of slaves. However, specific payment of Creeks as slave catchers was a tradition which was more than a century old. Under the British it was a practice that was not controversial; but for the United States, the issue of spending federal tax dollars in support of slavery was potentially explosive.

Many objectives between the U.S. and the Creeks were stated in the treaty. Whether Washington intended to secretly pay the Creeks to catch slaves or rather for some other purpose stated in the treaty, the end result followed patterns set up during colonial days. The Creeks were expected to go into Florida and gather slaves. Instead of being paid by the British, they now were paid by the United States, to accomplish some technically unspecified objective.

By 1791, the Washington administration had established policies which were designed in response to the problems of the Georgia slave holders. Specifically, they hoped that the flow of slaves into Florida would

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15 Joshua Giddings, *Exiles of Florida*, (Columbus, Ohio: Follet, Foster and Company, 1858) ch. 1
cease and that those present would be captured either by the Spaniards in St. Augustine or the Creeks of Georgia and Florida.

In Congress, funding for Washington's Indian treaties was initially voted down, but James Madison maneuvered passage on a subsequent vote. The Georgia delegation assured Congress that war continued with the Creeks. Though Washington and Jefferson were using diplomacy to address the problems in Florida, it seems that they ultimately planned to gain possession of it. In 1791, a few months after negotiations were completed with the Creeks and the Spanish, Jefferson notified Washington that Governor Quesada of Florida had issued a new order which allowed U.S. citizens to settle in Florida with their slaves. Jefferson believed that the Spanish hoped to weaken the border states by luring debtors. In spite of the Spanish ploy he believed the U.S. could eventually fill Florida with enough Americans to annex it without a war. Shortly afterwards, Jefferson received a letter from a U.S. Diplomat in Paris, William Short. Short told Jefferson that the Marquis de la Fayette said that if the U.S. annexed Florida, the French would not fight a war in support of its Spanish ally.

Jefferson's correspondence implies at least that the U.S. was considering a military response to the activities on the Florida-Georgia border. His letter to Washington perhaps weighs a covert response rather than overt action. It is possible that the Washington Administration was sounding out the French response to a hypothetical war to annex Florida.


17 Thomas Jefferson, Papers vol. 20, 97, 530.
During a congressional recess in 1791, Jefferson sent a letter to Madison which directly addressed the issue:

Spain is unquestionably picking quarrel with us... The inevitableness of war with the Creeks, and the probability... of it with Spain (for there is not one of us who doubts it) will certainly occasion your convocation. At what time I cannot exactly say. But you should be prepared for this important change in the state of things.18

Most likely Jefferson was informing Madison that if the Seminole invaded Georgia, the congress would have to be brought back to consider war. The following year, Washington warned the senate of trouble on the border with Spain which could lead to war. Senator Jackson of Georgia introduced a bill which would authorize defense expenditures if the state was invaded during recess.19

In spite of treaties between the U.S. and the Creeks, and the elimination of the Spanish edict, border troubles persisted. The political situation for the Washington administration was in many ways similar to the colonial days. If Parliament had been able to convince Spain to revoke the Edict of 1693, perhaps colonial development would have proceeded, costly wars might have been avoided, and debates over defense expenditures would have been unnecessary. However, the United States had succeeded in revoking the edict, but in the interim between 1763 and 1783, a strong and relatively autonomous Seminole people had emerged.

18 Madison, Papers vol. 15, 37.

The Seminoles were not really consulted in Washington's two-tract strategy for solving the political crisis on the Georgia-Florida border.

In all probability it was in the interest of a weaker Spain to concede to U.S. demands on the edict. Washington had made generous concessions to the Creek chiefs. One Seminole chief was even present at the signing of the Treaty of New York. In general, though, the interests of the Seminoles were not considered. By the 1790's it was highly probable that a disproportionate percentage of the Seminole military strength was African. Washington was prepared to negotiate with Indians among the Seminole, but for Africans he offered only slavery. During colonial days the British-Creek agreements directed Creeks to go into Florida and capture Apalachees for the slave industry; but by now there may have been 600 to 1000 Africans in total, not to mention their alliance with the Red Seminoles.

It seems that George Washington himself realized this was the crux of the problem. During treaty negotiations with the Creeks, he gave instructions to the Indian commissioners to find out how many Seminoles were in the Creek nation.20 As Washington discussed the treaty with the Senate, he said, "I flatter myself that this treaty will be productive of present peace and prosperity to our southern frontier."21 A few years after


21 Walter Lowrie, Mathew St. Clair Clarke, editors, American State Papers, Class II, Indian Affairs vol. I (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1832) 81.
the treaty was signed, Washington informed both the House and the Senate that it was impossible for the Creeks to comply, specifically with the part of the treaty which required the return of slaves.22

There appears to have been a lot of uncertainty concerning the identity of the people at war with Georgia. Parallels to the pre-1763 allies of St. Augustine were apparent. Jay, Washington, Jefferson, and Madison all acknowledge a relationship between the former Spanish offer of freedom to slaves, their escape from Georgia, and later attacks upon the U.S. Both Washington and Jefferson believed that this complex situation would lead to war, but they were unsure if most of the blame belonged with Spain or Lower Creeks. Nevertheless, neither man went so far as to blame the ex-slaves. Only third parties were blamed. Washington told the Senate that the Creeks could not execute the return of slaves. He and Jefferson once believed that the African slaves resided among the Lower Creeks or Seminoles and assumed that turning them over to the U.S. would be only a formality.

References to the Seminole began during British occupation of Florida. By the time of the Washington Administration, the nation seemed to be coming to an understanding about who the Seminoles were and what their exact role might have been in the border region. Even the congressmen from Georgia seemed to be uncertain of which Natives to blame for their troubles. Both the Treaties of New York and San Lorenzo underscore state and federal efforts to secure the slave industry.

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22 Ibid, 546.
Washington instructed Indian Agent Seagrove to make a special effort to obtain all slaves. Early in the Administration, Jefferson and Washington discussed affidavits from the Florida-Georgia border about the parties of Blacks and Natives who invaded and took away slaves while spreading havoc. Also, now Washington had to admit to the congress that his apprehension about the treaties with Creeks was justified. They could not get any slaves.  

In 1794 Washington again told the congress that the treaty with the Creeks was not effective and that the nation was closer to war with Spain. Congressman Carnes of Georgia also in 1794 requested an end to the policy of giving presents to the Creek chiefs, because they were not executing their part of the treaty. Both Washington and Carnes exhibited new documentation which showed that the Creeks had continued the practice of attacking Georgia.

There is ambiguity in the statements of Washington and Carnes. It is unclear if they are referring to Seminoles, Lower Creeks, or Upper Creeks. In all probability it is the Seminoles and Lower Creeks who continue to attack, while the Upper Creeks are unable to fulfill their promise to return the Black Seminole to slavery. In 1795 the Washington administration negotiated the Treaty of San Lorenzo with Spain. This treaty formalized the end of Spanish edicts which advertised freedom for American slaves. Spain agreed to return all slaves among the Seminole to

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23 Ibid.

24 Congress, Senate, President Washington informs the Senate that Creek treaties do not work, 3rd Congress, 1st Sess., Vol. I, Annals of Congress (20 May 1794) 102, 117.
their U.S. masters. Also, they agreed to prevent the Seminole from attacking the U.S. frontier.

The Treaty of San Lorenzo overlapped the provisions of the Treaty of New York. Both Spain and the Upper Creeks were given the responsibility for subduing the Seminole and capturing the rebels.23

Though not official, it seems that in the words and actions of Washington and Jefferson, the genesis of U.S. policy to obtain Spanish Florida can be seen by this time. Already, neither the diplomatic negotiations with Spain in the wake of the revocation of the edict, nor the objectives stated in the Treaties of New York and San Lorenzo, had yielded success for the nation. As long as the institution of slavery was threatened in Georgia, the Governor and representatives would be demanding war. The administration's acknowledged failure not only meant that the Georgia frontier was ravaged but also that political pressure continued from the state. The failure of the administration's policy also meant that the Georgians were not able to fully open up their lands for development. Madison had already stated that by attacking Georgia Spain hoped to prevent settlers from getting too close to Florida. This fact alone provided ample grounds for complaining to the administration. But, additional debates arose in Congress over Georgia's defense expenditures. Georgia's congressional representatives spearheaded the battle for its citizens.

In the fifth congress, 1796-97, Georgia Congressman Milledge stated that the House knew the state was under fire, and he demanded that a provisional army be created to protect the state. Mr. Baldwin of Georgia pointed out that in 1785, Georgia had signed a treaty with the Creeks in which extensive territory was given to the state. However, in the treaty negotiations of 1790, the administration gave the land back to the Creeks. Baldwin attributed this action simply to Creeks' hostilities.26

Even greater debates arose over Georgia's claims for general defense expenditures against the attacks from Creeks, most likely Seminoles. On this issue the Speaker of the House of Representatives, during the 7th congress, presented correspondence between the Governor of Georgia and the Secretary of War, Henry Knox. This correspondence covered the years 1792-95. It showed that Knox authorized Georgia to incur militia expenses for self defense. In addition, the governor of Georgia claimed Knox had authorized assistance from South Carolina, too. Certain members of Congress argued that the Georgians exceeded Knox's allowances. The Georgians demanded full payments for lands given to the Creeks and for militia expenses.27

In consideration of the British colonial expenses in Georgia and Carolina, State of Georgia expenditures are very predictable. In fact, the


27 Ibid.
entire political strategy of the Washington administration closely parallels the British experience. The Georgia demands upon Congress for defense expenditures were preceded by colonial South Carolina's request to parliament after the Yamasee War, as well as Oglethorpe's consistent demands. The British colonial politicians were resolved to a simple solution. Because colonial expansion was limited by the Spanish attacks, St. Augustine had to be taken by force. Parliament, the colonial leaders and Oglethorpe all agreed to this. War did not solve the problems, but the peace treaty of 1763 did.

During the Washington administration, the genesis of this same solution was evident. Both Washington's and Jefferson's acknowledgment, that Florida had to be obtained, was implicit. Though there was ambiguity as to whom to blame for policy failures, ultimately the administration seemed to blame Spain. Therefore both Washington and Jefferson believed war with Spain was inevitable if not imminent. Washington stated this to both houses of congress. Jefferson discussed this with Madison, too. Jefferson also notified Washington that Spain's strongest ally, France, would not interfere if the U.S. seized Florida by force. But Jefferson also notified Washington of a peaceful strategy to obtain Florida. He discussed covert measures through Spain's willingness to allow American settlers.

Therefore, in observing the Washington administration's policies and responses we can see the genesis of the American goal not only to settle disputes, but to obtain Florida, by war or peace. The British had opted for war, but the solution came through peace. Washington set America upon the path to get Florida by either means. During the days of colonial
Georgia and South Carolina, various politicians, including James Oglethorpe, expressed the belief that Florida threatened the existence of British colonialism in the south east, and that either the Spanish would take Georgia and South Carolina or they must take Florida. By the time of the Jefferson administration, the acquisition of Florida by war or peace was a dominant issue.28

In The History of the United States, Henry Adams wrote:

During the administrations of Jefferson and Madison, the national government was in the main controlled by ideas and interests peculiar to the region south of the Potomac, and only to be understood from a Southern standpoint. Especially its foreign relations were guided by motives in which the Northern people felt little sympathy. . . . Among the varied forms of Southern ambition, none was so constant in influence as the wish to acquire the Floridas. . . yet the Northern public, though complaining of Southern favoritism, neither understood nor cared to study the subject. . . as if this were a local detail which in no way concerned the North. If Florida failed to interest the North, it exercised the more control over the South, and over a government Southern in character and purpose. Neither the politics of the union nor the development of events could be understood without treating Florida as a subject of first importance.29

Adams observed that Jefferson's "overmastering passion" was to buy or take Florida by force.30 In the above comments he also shows that the issue of Florida was more relevant to the South than the North. Implicit in


his comments also is the conclusion that the Southern obsession with
Florida primarily emphasizes legitimate competition between the U.S.,
France, and Britain. Jefferson sought to include all Spanish territory lying
along the Gulf of Mexico and east of the Mississippi in the Louisiana
purchase. The territory was known as East and West Florida. The British
did not want to see East Florida granted to the United States. Adams
seems to place these foreign policy considerations as paramount
justification of the American obsession.31

In "Jefferson and an American Foreign Policy," Walter Lafeber
attributes Jefferson's outlook on Florida to the goal of "enlarging the
empire of liberty through the purchase or if necessary the seizure of the
Floridas." He also emphasizes Spanish interference with American settlers
in Florida. However, he does note:

The Floridas, moreover, were too loosely governed by a disintegrating
Spanish empire that could not, or would not, control clashes between
Indians and advancing white settlers.32

LeFeber does not mention runaway slaves in the border clashes
between "Indians and settlers." But his reasoning does illuminate Seminole
interference with the economic development of Georgia. According to D.
W. Meinig's *Shaping of America*, the Jefferson administration wanted to
keep Florida from falling into the hands of France or the British. Meinig


32 Walter LeFeber "Jefferson and an American Foreign Policy," in, *Jeffersonian
believed that the national policy under Jefferson was that Florida should and would by one way or another become an American territory. Having stated the general apprehension with the French or British goals, Meinig asserts that the primary drive to acquire Florida came from slave holders of Georgia, Tennessee, and other nearby states. Meinig writes of the official rationale of Southern leaders:

Its very existence was intolerable to influential Americans' interest . . . . Florida was a back country out of control: Its Black villages were a standing enticement to American slaves; its Black militia was an open inflammatory threat to the order and safety of American society . . . . 33

Though it is apparent that the United States had legitimate fears of Florida somehow being transferred to Britain or France, Adams, LeFeber, and Meinig help underscore what appears to have been the primary concerns: the Southerners' close proximity to Florida, dependence upon the slave industry, and a long legacy of fighting Florida guerrillas were more ominous than any possible threat from Europe. Jefferson continued to seek the annexation of East and West Florida by diplomacy, but it was impossible for the French to include the Floridas with the Louisiana Purchase. 34

The American justification for obtaining Florida was an ancient colonial legacy, but perhaps the excuse of seeking to block the French and


34 Congress, House, Sec. of State Madison and House member try to include Florida in the LA Purchase, 7th Congress, 2nd Sess., *Annals of Congress* (March, April 1804) 1011, 1014, 1020, 1183.
British provided a vague diplomatic cover. The colonial legacy was essentially Southern. If the excuse of blocking the British and French was critical to the U.S. interest, then Adams may have been able to count the Northerners among those Americans obsessed with Florida. In 1803, Senator Jackson of Georgia discussed Florida:

Whom, then should we have to contend with? With the bayonets of the intrepid French grenadiers... or with the enervated, degraded, and emaciated Spaniards? Shall we be told that we are no match for these emaciated beings... I again repeat, sir, that I do not believe that Spain will venture war with the United States. I believe that she dare not; if she does, she will pay the cost. The Floridas will be immediately ours; they will almost take themselves. . . .

Senator Jackson's comments to the Senate were representative of the Southern perspective on the need to acquire Florida. This occurred during Jefferson's diplomatic efforts surrounding the Louisiana Purchase. Jefferson had discussed covert measures for acquiring Florida. He advised Washington in 1791 that it was possible to overwhelm Florida with such a large number of American settlers that the U.S. may acquire it without war. In the general scheme of getting Florida by any means, a variant of Jefferson's concept was executed during the Madison administration.

On October 17, 1810, John Rhea presided over a convention of United States citizens living in West Florida, near New Orleans. Lead by Rhea, this convention of U.S. citizens requested that West Florida be annexed to the United States. Madison then authorized the governor of

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Louisiana to occupy West Florida by October 27, 1810. A number of these U.S. citizens then sparked a small rebellion against the Spanish government in the region. By December, Florida's Governor Folch notified Havana that he must capitulate because of the presence of the Americans, unless military aid was sent.36

Though a French diplomat accused Madison of using the "rebellious association of a band of desperados" for the purpose of "wrestling a province from a friendly power," the secret American effort to possess all of Florida was in progress.37

At the beginning of the 3rd session of the 11th Congress, January 3, 1811, Madison called both houses together in a secret session. He notified Congress that he had received a letter of capitulation from Governor Folch of Florida. Also, Madison asked for authority and expenditures to annex both East and West Florida, to prevent British occupation. Madison reminded the congress of the unending conflict along the Georgia-Florida border. According to Madison, "taking into view... the intimate relation of the country adjoining the United States, eastward of the river Perdido

36Congress, House and Senate, President Madison tells both Houses of the plans to annex the Floridas, 11th Congress, 3rd Sess. Annals of Congress, (October 1810 to January 1811) 1251-59; Smith, Plot, 107.

(near Pensacola), to their security and tranquillity, and the peculiar interest they otherwise have in its destiny," the action was essential.\textsuperscript{38}

By January 15, 1811, after thirty votes the congress passed a bill in secret session which granted Madison the authority to use military force or diplomacy to obtain Florida.\textsuperscript{39} Madison gave secret orders to former Georgia governor, George Mathews, to execute the mission of seizing East Florida. Mathews was directed to assemble a force which could prompt a scenario similar to what had happened in West Florida. Americans already living in East Florida were urged to declare themselves sovereign and then request annexation to the U.S. Mathews' job was to facilitate the effort. But to assure a sufficient pretext for seizing Florida, Mathews was told to immediately seize the territory if he suspected an impending British action.\textsuperscript{40}

By 1812 Mathews' expedition got underway. In \textit{The Seminoles}, Edwin C. McReynolds wrote, "Early in 1812, General Mathews planned an uprising in East Florida, which he hoped would have the appearance of a spontaneous revolt."\textsuperscript{41}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{38}Congress, House and Senate, Madison addresses both houses in Secret Session, 11th Congress, 3rd Sess., \textit{Annals of Congress} (3 January 1811), 369, 370; Smith, \textit{Plot}, 112.
  
  \item \textsuperscript{39}Congress, House and Senate, After 30 votes Congress authorizes Madison to seize Florida, 11th Congress, 3rd Sess., \textit{Annals of Congress} (15 January 1811), 377.
  
  \item \textsuperscript{40}Congress, House, Sec. State Monroe authorized former GA Governor Mathews to take Florida, 12th Congress, 1st Sess., vol. II, \textit{Annals of Congress} (26 January 1811), 1687.
  
  \item \textsuperscript{41}Edwin C. McReynolds, \textit{The Seminoles}, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957) 44.
\end{itemize}
American commander refused to furnish him with gunboats in southern Georgia. It seems that the commander was unaware of Mathews' expedition. Also, it seems that information about this secret plan may have leaked to the wrong sources, causing some embarrassment to the administration. In order to disguise the overall plan, Mathews was dismissed and accused of not following orders. By April, Georgia governor Mitchell was put in charge. As with Mathews, his instructions from Secretary of State Monroe were ambiguous. He was essentially ordered to discover the best diplomatic pretext for acquiring Florida with the help of the American rebels.42

Ultimately, by May of 1813, it was apparent that Madison's attempt to acquire East Florida by both diplomatic and military efforts was a total failure. Congress therefore forced a withdrawal of U.S. troops. In the two-and-a-half year effort, though, the true nature of the American struggle in Florida became more evident. By December of 1812, the congress requested all facts relating to the Florida effort. Madison sent a secret report to Congress which contained correspondence from various officials. In the report, the leader of the American rebels complained about overall U.S. support.

Our slaves incited to rebel, and we have an army of Negroes raked up in this country and brought from Cuba to contend with. Let us ask, if we are abandoned, what will be the situation of the southern states with

this body of men in the neighborhood? St. Augustine the whole province, will be the refuge of fugitive slaves; and from thence emissaries can, and no doubt will, be detached, to bring about a revolt of the Black population in the United States. A nation that can stir up the savages round your western frontiers to murder, will hesitate but little to introduce the horrors of St. Domingo into your southern country.43

In this letter the rebel leader made clear that he believed he should get more federal support. Though many congressmen believed the primary source of opposition was the Spaniard, it seems that there may have been a considerable degree of opposition from the Black Seminoles. In The Plot to Steal Florida, Joseph B. Smith reaches a similar conclusion. Smith comments upon the U.S. troops' occupation of the ruins of Ft. Mose. According to Smith:

They were taking possession of a place that was a symbol of what their operation was finally to become, a racial conflict . . . When James Oglethorpe invaded Florida. . . a major battle took place at Moosa on June 15, 1740. A force of three hundred blacks and Indians nearly wiped out his army.44

Though Spain reinforced St. Augustine with Black Cuban forces, it appears that the Black and Indian Seminoles were the principle opponents of the U.S. Before initiating the attack upon Florida, Mathews had sat down with the Seminole chief, Paine, and had convinced him to remain neutral; however, while these negotiations were in progress, a Black envoy arrived from St. Augustine and convinced the Seminoles to assist the Spanish. In addition to Mathews the leaders of the Upper Creek Indians

43 Ibid, 156.

44 Smith, Plot, 211.
tried to convince the Seminoles to stay neutral or all Creeks would lose their land.45

In June of 1812 the new Spanish Governor Kinderlan sent a letter to Governor Mitchell:

A number of seditious persons, who were disturbing the peace of the country, occupied and fortified a house on Moosa from whence they could overlook the operations of this place. . . . The constant sight and proximity of them were very insulting to the loyal inhabitants of this city . . . My predecessor decided on sending a small party to dislodge the rebels as was done. . . .46

Mitchell responded indignantly to Kinderlan. He chastised the Spaniards for fighting back with Black troops and said that the Spanish actions at Moosa were unjustified. Mitchell complained:

There is however another subject which the candor that characterizes the United States government requires me to present to your consideration; I mean the Black troops which you have in your service. Your certain knowledge of the peculiar situation of the southern section of the Union, in regard to that description of people, one might have supposed would have induced you to abstain from introducing them into the province.47

Mitchell's response to Kinderlan is very ironic. He had just invaded Florida. Ft. Mose was the most strategic location for invading St. Augustine. It was only logical for the Spanish to attack. But Mitchell's

45 State Papers, 181-84.
46 Ibid, 193.
position on Black troops reflects upon the Southern obsession with Florida which Adams pointed out. It seems that the South placed the institution of slavery above all else. In dislodging the Americans from Ft. Mose, Spain used a force of Spanish, Blacks, and Indians from St. Augustine. Mitchell estimated that there were 500 Black and 400 white soldiers there. But, these statistics are very questionable when one considers other statements made by Mitchell.

In a letter to Secretary of State James Madison, Mitchell comments on the actions of Florida Governor Kinderlin:

The same governor has proclaimed freedom to every Negro who will join his standard and has sent a party of them to unite with, and who are actually at this time united with the Indians in their murderous excursions. Indeed the principle strength of the garrison of St. Augustine consists of Negroes, there being but a few militia of the province in the place who adhered to the royal government when the revolution broke out . . . An old battalion of regular troops whom it is understood would surrender without firing a shot.48

If there were 900 soldiers in St. Augustine, it seems likely that Mitchell could not have expected such an easy surrender. Also, though they were expelled from Ft. Mose, U.S. forces had St. Augustine under siege for five months and on the verge of starvation when an envoy was sent to the Seminoles for help. This brought a force of 200-300 Black and Red Seminoles into the struggle. Coming from their towns in the forest, the Seminoles launched guerrilla raids upon those U.S. forces which surrounded St. Augustine. Also, they raided the settlements of Americans

48 State Papers, 174, 178.
living in Florida. Many of these Americans were also among those forces laying siege to St. Augustine.

This two-phased attack broke the siege. Governor Mitchell notified Monroe that Kinderlin had armed every able-bodied Negro in the province and that he, Mitchell, had sent for reinforcements. From Georgia, Major Newnan arrived with 250 volunteers, in August. The Seminoles used the same strategy. They launched guerrilla raids upon Newnan, while sparking slave revolts and raiding plantations in Georgia. Many Georgia volunteers fled home to safeguard their families, homes, and slaves. Many of the U.S. patriots and rebels who had originally started with Mathews in Florida abandoned their plantations and fled north.49

The siege of St. Augustine was led by a Colonel Smith, who reported to Governor Mitchell that his men were sick with fever from the rains and that the environment was very unhealthy. Also, he noted that 105 of his 270 men were at all times on the sick list. He said his forces were hit 20 miles north of St. Augustine by a "motley set of Red and Black savages," 40-50 in number. Smith reported that the Seminoles were led by a black man named Prince. Though they killed all horses on a U.S. wagon train, many Americans escaped. Smith told Mitchell that he could not attack St. Augustine without 300-400 more men. Mitchell told Monroe in October that if troops were withdrawn, Georgia would be attacked and only the entire military strength of the state could save her. While war raged in Florida, Mitchell informed Monroe that, "Most of our male

Negroes are restless on the seaboard... and attempt to get to Augustine... Many have succeeded... which renders it necessary to have constant guards and patrols...”50

In spite of Mitchell's fears, Colonel Smith was convinced by the attack upon his wagon train to evacuate his forces to Georgia. He had help from Major Newnan's forces. With the siege of St. Augustine lifted and a continuous flow of alarming correspondence arriving from the frontier, any hope of seizing East Florida may have been lost by August. By this time also it was perhaps clear that the primary U.S. battlefield enemy was the Seminoles.

In September, Major Newnan was sent on a search and destroy mission against the Seminole villages. Newnan had 116 men, many of them sick with malaria. Before reaching any Seminole villages, Newnan's troops were ambushed by a force of 75-100 Seminole. The U.S. forces were kept at bay without food for one week; however the Americans had far superior weapons. Finally, the Seminoles allowed them to make a night escape. Even though they had successfully evaded severe casualties, Newnan's forces were hit by guerrilla attacks as they retreated back into Georgia. Upon arrival in Georgia, Newnan remarked that "Negroes are the best soldiers."51

With Newnan's failure, Mitchell notified Monroe, "Sir, the affairs of East Florida have assumed, within a few weeks past, a very serious and

50 Ibid, 194; State Papers, 170-76.

alarming aspect." He told Monroe, "the Seminole within the Florida line are determined upon war with us." Mitchell believed the Seminoles were inspired by the Spanish, but he thought that if there had to be a war with them it was better to chase them into Florida and destroy their towns.\textsuperscript{52}

Between February and May of 1813, Colonel Smith led 400 men into Seminole country on a search and destroy mission. The Seminoles were outnumbered 2 to 1 on the battlefield. Therefore, they hid their women and children in the swamps. Smith succeeded in the destruction of two Seminole towns and confiscated 2,000 deerskins and 1,000 head of cattle. Though Smith succeeded in destroying the towns, the Seminole continued to wage a guerrilla campaign. Their persistence convinced Congress to order U.S. forces out of Florida in May of 1813.\textsuperscript{53}

The unsuccessful effort by the Madison administration to get Florida was the culmination of efforts begun by the Continental Congress. The U.S., like the British before them, had to first surmount the diplomatic hurdles before they could seek a military solution. The Continental Congress inherited an unsolved problem with extensive political implications from the British. The records show that while Florida was British territory between 1763-83, depredations along the Florida-Georgia frontier, though diminished, continued as during the Spanish era. In the wake of the American Revolution, the Continental Congress nonetheless

\textsuperscript{52} State Papers, 174-78.

fixed the primary blame for the border problems on Spain. As Secretary of State for the Continental Congress, John Jay alerted Madison, Washington and Jefferson to the complaints of their fellow Southerners. Even during the colonial days the problem of fighting Florida was to a degree a sectional issue. Northern colonies had little interest in the far away needs of South Carolina and Georgia. However, in Parliament the issue had greater general relevance.

After Spain reestablished themselves in Florida, the Continental Congress initiated a diplomatic strategy for solving the complaints of the State of Georgia. First, efforts were made to end the Spanish policy of freeing all slaves who escaped into Florida, and second, the congress initiated treaties with the Creek Indian for the return of slaves. The diplomatic efforts with Spain was a colonial legacy, but the Indian diplomacy reflects the rise of a consolidated Seminole people. Though the treaty negotiations essentially excluded the Seminoles, by the 1780s America was aware of the existence of an autonomous group of Indians who could wage war and facilitate freedom for their runaway slaves. Some Seminoles were Lower Creeks, but it appears likely that early diplomacy efforts didn't understand the true political distinction between the Seminoles, Upper Creeks, and Lower Creeks.

Diplomatic efforts begun by Jay were inherited by the Washington administration. The century-old Spanish edict was revoked and a comprehensive treaty was signed with Spain and the Creek Indians, but even before Washington left office it was apparent that neither aspect of this diplomatic effort would yield success. Another colonial legacy which
resulted from the border problems was that Georgia's development was restricted. This benefited Spain, the Seminoles and Creeks in general. Also, as in Parliament, defense expenditures became a source of friction in the U.S. congress.

Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Jay, and Monroe all were conscious of the issues surrounding the problem with the Seminoles. Before the end of Washington's presidency, the notion of America's acquisition of Florida by diplomacy or war was at minimum implicit in their communications with each other and Congress. In particular, the Seminole depredations threatened the slave industry. Therefore, it was a larger issue to Southerners. During the Jefferson administration, efforts were made to include Florida (East and West) in the Louisiana Purchase, but this effort failed. Jefferson, however, had previously notified Washington of covert methods to obtain Florida which could be facilitated by American settlers. During the administration of James Madison, West Florida was obtained covertly. In East Florida the covert plan did not work.

Madison's covert military effort was symbolically prophesied to fail by the historic oracle of Ft. Mose. However, the correspondence between Georgia Governor Mitchell and Secretary of State James Monroe, indicate that the United States lost any pre-existing illusions it possessed about the true nature of its enemy in Florida. The covert effort began with the goal of forcing a Spanish capitulation in St. Augustine. However, history reveals that this colonial legacy was attempted several times over the previous century without success. The U.S. siege at St. Augustine ended like many in the past, but with one important difference. In the past,
besieged British forces, though defeated, still knew that the power base which thwarted them was in and around St. Augustine. Now, though, Governor Mitchell, Major Newnan, Colonel Smith, and others made it abundantly clear that the enemy which defeated them was not the Spanish in St. Augustine; it was rebels and their Seminole allies of the Florida forest. This new realization is evident in the fact that the last phase of the war was spent on search-and-destroy missions against the Seminole villages.

The Washington administration passed on to its successors the colonial legacy of the United States' acquisition of Florida by war or diplomacy. The unofficial policy culminated in James Madison's secret war to acquire the territory. The unsuccessful effort revealed a perhaps unexpected power vacuum in St. Augustine, but more conclusively it revealed the power of a lurking foe in the Seminoles of the countryside. The nation was alerted to the prowess of a formidable foe and gained a hint of the thirty years of warfare to come. The diplomatic card had been nearly exhausted. Few options were left other than war.

Madison's failure leads to the First Seminole War. In Chapter Eight, General Andrew Jackson will move to the forefront of the United States policy making toward Florida. He will oversee a direct American response to the rebels, and ultimately will become the territory's first U.S. Governor. Additionally, the proximity of Jackson to Florida will decrease the security of the rebels.
The United States government had attempted to safeguard its slave-based economy in the South by seeking to eliminate the Florida threat. Like the British in the eighteenth century, diplomatic overtures were first attempted. With the failure of diplomacy, military strategies were pursued. As with the British, military efforts would prove to be the ultimate test of macro-level rebellion. If the rebels and their allies prevailed, the MLR survived. It was victory, death, or slavery. So far the Florida allies had withstood the U.S. military efforts. Rebel freedom continued.

In the wake of the Madison administration's failed attempt to seize Florida, the Seminole made an effort to go back to the life they had lived before the war. In this context, the rebels in particular continued to facilitate the runaways' evasion of slavery, in Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee. This was consistent with the phenomenon of macro-rebellion. For one hundred and twenty years, MLR had flourished in allegiance to Spain in Florida. Madison's Patriot War had demonstrated to the United States that a large number of rebels were now thriving in alliance with the Natives of Florida. The war began as an effort to acquire Florida. At times the Seminole had the U.S. on the defensive with
guerrilla campaigns. By the end, U.S. forces were in hot pursuit of the Seminole and destroyed some of their villages. After the Patriots War, Americans knew they were confronting a united force of Africans and Natives; however, the policies and actions by U.S. political and military officials suggest a particular effort to undermine the phenomenon of macro-rebellion. This conclusion can be reached by analyzing U.S. policies, initiatives and treaties, before, during, and after the First Seminole War.

This chapter will show an intensified American military assault upon the Seminole which centers upon the rebels. They were the logical target because MLR was the key threat to the Southern economy. Previous efforts to placate the demands of the slave industry prompted Washington and Jefferson to target Spain and Creeks as the vehicle for solving the crisis with runaway slaves. This was made explicit in the initiatives to end the Edict of 1693 and the treaties at New York and San Lorenzo. The Patriot War further targeted Spain.

However, in 1816, American policy makers once again decided to invade Florida, this time to destroy the "Negro fort." This sparked the First Seminole War. In conducting this war the U.S. seemed to target the Black Seminole. The Washington treaty of 1819 ceded Florida to the U.S, as a quid pro quo for Spain's inability to honor the Treaty of San Lorenzo, which required the capture and return of rebels. In the 1821 Treaty of Indian Springs, the U.S. Upper Creek allies were forced to pay Georgians an indemnity of land and money for
uncaptured Black Seminole in Florida; additionally, under James Monroe and John C. Calhoun, the United States government became the legal owners of the Black Seminole.

Therefore, though U.S. authorities knew they confronted an allied force of Africans and Natives, the war and policies indicate that they now realized that the rebels represented the key opposition to the U.S. in Florida.

In 1819, Pennsylvania Senator Abner Lacock of the Senate Select Committee on the Seminole War issued a report. Lacock reported that the war was initiated by Upper Creeks who were dissatisfied with an 1814 treaty which confiscated their land. The report states that these Creeks were spurred on by two British agents, Robert Ambrister and Alexander Arbuthnot. Further it states that the Creeks had launched numerous attacks upon settlers and that General Gaines sought to apprehend them. Lacock says that the real war began when Lieutenant Scott and about 40 other U.S. soldiers were massacred while serving under General Gaines. Lacock does not mention the Negro fort as a cause of hostilities.¹ In The Seminole of Florida, James Covington cites another battle prior to Scott's massacre as the spark which ignited the war. He says Major Twiggs and 250 soldiers attacked a Seminole village and killed four men and one

woman. Covington mentions the U.S. attack upon the Negro fort but he does not connect it directly to the First Seminole War.\(^2\)

In Freedom on the Border, Kevin Mulroy describes the destruction of the Negro fort. Though he doesn't suggest that the fort's destruction began the war, he shows continuous raids by the Seminole as a direct response to the fort's destruction. However, Mulroy says the First Seminole War began when Africans and Natives united in opposition to southern slave catching expeditions. Also Mulroy does not mention Lieutenant Scott's massacre.\(^3\)

Though neither Covington, Mulroy, nor Lacock's senate select-committee report attributes the war to being a consequence of the fort's destruction, all seem to show a series of responses and counter responses preceding the war's beginning. Conceivably, the First Seminole War could be traced back to the Patriot War, but it seems that the U.S. decision to destroy the Negro fort marked the beginning of an effort to circumscribe the activities of the African Seminole.

The Negro fort originated in the War of 1812. British Colonel Edward Nicholls attempted to rally disaffected inhabitants of Louisiana, including slaves and Natives to the British cause. He issued a proclamation inviting all to join him. Perhaps as many as one hundred Louisiana slaves accepted his offer. After British

\(^2\)Covington, *Seminoles*, 34-42.

\(^3\)Mulroy, *Freedom*, 14-16.
losses in Louisiana, Nicholls sailed into the Appalachee Bay of Florida where again he sought allies among Africans and Natives, this time the Seminole. Nicholls promised the Natives that he would help them regain the land stolen by the U.S., and he promised some of the African Seminole that he would resettle them as free citizens of Jamaica, Bermuda, or the Bahamas. Though the British Government denounced Nicholls' behavior, it seems probable that he acted in the name of the government. With the help of the Seminole and other allies, Nicholls built what became known as "The Negro Fort." The fort was located fifteen miles north of the mouth of the Appalachicola River on the east bank. In February of 1815 after the War of 1812 had ended, Nicholls abandoned the fort and left it in the possession of the Black Seminole. The estimates of the troop strength of the fort ranged from 250-450 Africans plus a few dozen Indians.

In a letter to the Secretary of the Navy, Commodore Patterson wrote about the fort:

It had become the general rendezvous for runaway slaves and disaffected Indians. . . . The force of the Negroes was daily increasing; and they felt themselves so strong and secure that they had commenced several plantations on the fertile banks of the Appalachicola . . .

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5 *American State Papers, Class I*, vol. 4, 552-555.

It seems that the combination of security and food made the fort and the vicinity a prime destination for runaway slaves. In *The Florida Wars*, Virginia B. Peters says that as many as one thousand Blacks lived near the fort.\footnote{Peters, *The Florida Wars*, 22.} Joshua Giddings reported that they had fifty miles of plantations along the river, with their cattle and horses roaming wild in the forest.\footnote{Giddings, *Exiles*, 32-34.}

Probably nothing quite as ominous to the interest of the American slave industry had ever existed. The fort was erected by Nicholls in support of British interest, but the African Seminole and recent runaways could see it served their goals. The Negro fort to some degree facilitated the phenomenon of macro-rebellion; but perhaps ultimately it worked against it. The problem of slaves fleeing to and thriving in Florida had been addressed by George Washington's administration using diplomacy which revoked the 1693 Edict and which negotiated the Treaties of New York in 1790 and San Lorenzo in 1795. These diplomatic efforts made third parties, Spain, and the Upper Creeks, responsible for the behavior and ultimate capture and return of American claimed property, i.e. slaves. The late Patriots War had blatantly alerted Americans to the military skills of the Africans seeking to remain free or at least preserve their Spanish ally.
But in this war the Seminole Blacks were still more of an appendage of third parties.

To the extent that macro-rebellion was best facilitated by obscurity and indirect confrontation, the Negro fort would ultimately prove to be much too conspicuous. With very few Indians in the region, and being far from the jurisdiction of any possible Spanish authority, the fort became an obvious target. Except for Nicholls, who had fled to London, there was no third party to focus American attention upon. Military and political policies now had to focus upon the Black Seminole almost exclusively. No diplomatic courtesy was offered to the rebellious Africans.

In May of 1815, General Edmund Gaines notified the acting Secretary of War A.J. Dallas of the fort's existence. Over the next year there would be extensive correspondence between the War Department, General Gaines, and U.S. Commander of the Division of the South, General Andrew Jackson.9

In April of 1816 General Jackson directed the following ultimatum to the Florida Governor:

I am charged by my Government to make known to you that a Negro fort, erected during our late war with Britain. . . . is now occupied by upwards of two hundred and fifty Negroes, many of whom have been enticed from the service of their masters, citizens of the United States; all of whom are well-clothed and disciplined. Secret practices to inveigle Negroes from citizens of Georgia, as well as from the Cherokee and Creek nations of Indians are still

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continued by this banditti and the hostile Creeks. This... may endanger the peace of the nation and interrupt the good understanding which so happily exists between our governments.... The principles of good faith which always insure good neighborhood between nations, require the immediate and prompt interference of the Spanish authority to destroy or remove from our frontier this banditti, put an end to an evil of so serious a nature, and return to our citizens and friendly Indians inhabiting our territory those Negroes now in said fort.... I reflect that the conduct of this banditti is such as will not be tolerated by our government, and if not put down by Spanish authority, will compel us, in self defense, to destroy them.¹⁰

Jackson apparently expresses the policies of his immediate superior, the Secretary of War. The U.S. reverted to diplomacy. Jackson gives a third party, the Spanish, one last opportunity to take responsibility for the actions of an apparently stateless people, the Black Seminole. No longer is their status facilitated by others. Now, the rebels were projected in a manner which the U.S. slave interest perceived as directly hostile and provocative. Also, Jackson's effort to compel the Spanish to capture and return slaves reflects upon the past failure of the previous administration.

Florida Governor Zuniga's response to Jackson also reflects upon past Spanish policies. He informs Jackson that he is powerless to destroy the fort unless ordered to do so by the King of Spain. In addition to this fact, Zuniga tells Jackson that the Spanish do not have enough military might in Florida to go

¹⁰Congress, Senate, Andrew Jackson's letter to the Florida Governor discusses events leading to the First Seminole War; in Congressional documents, 15th Congress, 2nd Sess., Vol. IV, Annals of Congress (23 April 1816), 1828.
against the Negroes. Zuniga further clarifies the American dilemma with the Black Seminole:

It gives me pleasure to understand that, thinking as your excellency thinks with respect to the necessity of destroying the Negroes, the fort at Appalachicola occupied by them was not constructed by orders of the Spanish government; and that the Negroes, although in part belonging to inhabitants of this province, and as rational beings, may be subjects of the King, my master, are deemed by me insurgents or rebels against the authority, not only of his Catholic Majesty, but also of the proprietors for whose service they have withdrawn themselves; some seduced by the English Colonel Nicholls, Major Woodbine, and their agents, and others from their inclination to run off.\footnote{American State Papers, Class I, vol. IV, 556.}

Here it appears that the MLR phenomenon has transcended the facilities of third parties. Before directly confronting the Black Seminole in the fort, the U.S. seemed to make a final effort to allow Washington's diplomatic strategy to function. As stipulated by the Treaty of San Lorenzo, Jackson demanded that the Spanish destroy the fort, capture the Africans and return them to slavery. Zuniga's declaration of "lacking orders from the king," seemed to be a return to the dilemma already solved by Jay, Washington, and Jefferson. However, his statement of Spain's apparent impotency in Florida was all too familiar to the Americans. Also, though the U.S. theoretically could have only been seeking those slaves recently removed by Nicholls from Louisiana during the war, Zuniga made it specifically clear to Jackson that a wide variety of Africans were assembled in the region of the fort. Therefore, any American effort to return
slaves to their masters implicitly incorporated the provisions of Treaties with Spain and the Creeks, which specified that same objective.

Before the direct American confrontation with the Black Seminole, a diplomatic legacy of the Washington Administration was attempted. In June of 1816 General Jackson and Indian Agent Hawkins ordered Creek allies to go to the fort, capture and return the Black Seminole to their masters. But the Creeks notified them that this task was not possible.12

Though not specifically stated, Jackson's orders to the Creeks and his ultimatum to the Florida Governor was a final American effort to enforce specific provisions of treaties signed by George Washington. With this final diplomatic effort proving no less unsuccessful, direct confrontation was eminent. In June of 1816, Jackson notified Secretary of War Crawford, "there can be no fear of disturbing the good understanding that exists between us and Spain, by destroying the Negro fort, and restoring to the owners the Negroes that may be captured."13

By July, Jackson ordered Colonel Clinch and Creek Chief McIntosh to go and destroy the Negro fort and return the slaves. A few Americans were killed in skirmishes with the Seminole while holding the fort under siege. But on July

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27th, a heated cannonball struck the powder magazine of the fort. A great explosion threw pieces of bodies high into the surrounding pine trees. Two hundred and seventy men, women and children died in the explosion. There had been approximately 334 rebels and thirty-four Native Seminole in the fort. These thirty-four Natives were present because they had intermarried with the Africans. From the sixty survivors, Colonel Clinch selected one African and one Indian as symbolic chiefs of the fort. They were then tortured to death by the Creeks. The rest of the survivors were handed over to Georgia citizens, some who claimed to be descendants of original slave masters dating back to the colonial days.14

Previous American incursions into Florida were either targeting Spain or the Native Seminole. This direct confrontation with the Black Seminole rebels now brought the nation face to face with the key issue of confrontation— the interest of the slave industry. The Negro fort threatened slavery and its survivors were recycled back into the industry. Perhaps also for the first time in U.S. history the objectives of the Washington Administration were at least partially achieved. This partial success, however, was based upon U.S. troops being used as slave hunters. The destruction of the Negro fort can be seen as the beginning

of the First Seminole War, or as the spark which initiated a chain of events which led to the war. Giddings wrote:

This commencement of the First Seminole War was . . . undertaken for the purposes stated in General Jackson's order, to blow up the fort and return the Negroes to their rightful owners. Historians have failed to expose the cause of hostilities, or the barbarous foray which plunged the nation into that bloody contest which cost the people millions of treasure and the sacrifice of hundreds of human lives.15

Giddings' perspective underscores the viewpoint that the First Seminole War was indeed an effort of Americans to come to grips with a problem which had plagued the nation for years. One that had defied the efforts of Presidents since Washington, and the nation since the days of the Continental Congress. This perspective of Giddings is underscored by John Quincy Adams' writing in his memoirs as Secretary of State:

A full exposition of the causes and origin of the war in Florida would be given in a dispatch to our minister in Spain, together with all the vouchers supporting the statements of facts; that the war would be traced to Nicholls and his Negro fort and that Arbuthnot will be shown to have been the cause of the renewal of the war.16

The statements of Giddings and Adams reflect upon the event which initiated the war. Adams seems to suggest that ultimately the British agent Arbuthnot coaxed the Seminole to continue hostilities. Such a perspective would

15 Giddings, Exiles, 38.

suggest that the deaths of at least 270 men, women and children would be less of a cause for war among the Black Seminole.

By 1817, numerous reports were flooding into Washington of Seminole hostilities. American citizens on the Georgia-Florida frontier were abandoning their farms and fleeing north or to forts. Cattle and hogs from American plantations poured into Florida as confiscated possessions of the Seminole. George Perryman reported to Lieutenant Sands that Seminole spoke of Americans with contempt and swore to get even for the destruction of the Negro fort. Other reports came in, of hundreds of Black Seminole troops drilling in Florida. The major counter response to the destruction of the fort came in November of 1817. The Seminole allies attacked a party of U.S. troops escorting women and children. This group was commanded by Lieutenant Robert Scott. There were forty soldiers, seven women and four children. Ironically, the attack occurred as Scott's party traveled up the Appalachicola River in a boat. Two soldiers escaped and one woman was taken prisoner. The rest were killed.17

In the months between the massacres at the Negro fort and Lieutenant Scott's party, several confrontations had occurred between Americans and Seminole. None, though, were on such a significant scale. Also, it seems that any of the previous attacks by the Seminole could be seen as counter responses for the

fort's destruction. It was the attack upon Scott which prompted the U.S. escalation.

President James Monroe blamed Spain for the attack, insisting that they had failed to restrain the Seminole as required in a 1795 treaty. Monroe also said the attack was unwarranted. Secretary of War Calhoun ordered Generals Jackson and Gaines to pursue the Seminole. In December, before commencing full scale attacks, Gaines notified Calhoun:

The Seminole Indians, however strange and absurd it may appear to those who understand little of their real character and extreme ignorance, entertain a notion that they cannot be beaten by our troops. They confidently assert that we have never beaten them. . . . They have little or no means of knowing the strength and resources of our country. . . .This error of theirs has led them from time to time, for many years past, to massacre our frontier citizens.

It seems that General Gaines was not aware of the Seminole legacy. Perhaps the Seminole referred to historical successes against attempts to re-enslave them going back to the seventeenth century. Also, Gaines did not understand the Black Seminole's will to resist slavery. It seems probable that this comment to Calhoun was in particular reference to the Blacks. Gaines informed the Seminole Chief Kenhagee, "You harbor a great many of my Black people

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among you at Suwanee. If you give me leave to go by you against them, I shall not hurt anything belonging to you."

Gaines seemed, therefore, to believe it was futile for the Black Seminole to resist American forces. His comments reflect a developing strategy to isolate the Blacks. British traders or agents, Alexander Arbuthnot and Robert Ambrister were charged by Jackson and Gaines with, being accomplices of Colonel Nicholls, selling weapons to Seminole and inciting the war. Both were tried and executed by Andrew Jackson after the war. Prior to his death Arbuthnot wrote a letter to his son:

As I am ill able to write a long letter, it is necessary to be brief—under the immediate command of General Jackson, eighteen sail of vessels off Appalachicola. By a deserter that was brought here by the Indians, the commandant was informed that three thousand men, under the orders of General Jackson, one thousand foot and sixteen horse, under General Gaines, and five hundred under another General, were at Prospect Bluff [the Negro fort], where they are rebuilding the burnt fort; that one thousand Indians were at Spanish Bluff, building another fort under the direction of American officers; that so soon as their forts were built they intended to march. . . . The main drift of the Americans is to destroy the Black population of Suwanee. Tell my friend Boleck that it is just throwing away his people to attempt to resist such a powerful force. . . . So soon as the Suwanee is destroyed, I expect the Americans will be satisfied and retire; this is only my opinion; but I think it is conformable to the demand made by General Gaines of Kenhagee some months since."

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Arbuthnot reflects upon the great odds which were clearly set against the Seminole in general but the Blacks in particular. Some of his final thoughts in the midst of Jackson's invasion are further clues which suggest that the War Department was developing a strategy to eliminate the thriving Black Seminole towns. The existence of such a strategy is hardly perceptible and could not be openly discussed in Congress because of the delicacy of the slave issue.\textsuperscript{22}

The Red Seminole were the most numerous, but if they had been the primary adversary of the U.S., Gaines would not have written Kenhagee. The Red Seminole resided in a foreign country. If they were raiding the American frontier settlements and otherwise posing a consistent threat to the nation, it seems unlikely that Gaines would seek to exempt them from punishment. However, if Gaines believed both Blacks and Red Seminole were guilty, then he shows a discretionary reaction to the activities of the Blacks.

To the extent that Blacks were the primary target of the American troops, MLR in North America was at stake. Certainly, if the total Seminole military force was less than one thousand, then the Blacks probably never exceeded 200 or 300. MLR was sustained by strategic guerrilla warfare. Therefore, to engage Jackson's formidable force was not in the best interest of any of the Seminole.

The Adjutant General of the Southern Division of the Army of the U.S. reported

\textsuperscript{22} Peters, \textit{Florida Wars}, 51-52; Giddings, \textit{Exiles}, 49, 50.
to Congress that the Seminole never put more than 500 men on the battlefield
during the war. The Seminole objective was merely to survive physically, when
attacked by Jackson, but in some cases their guerrilla tactics were useful. They
had ambushed Lieutenant Scott's party on the Appalachicola. Also, according to
Major Muhlenburg, in the beginning of the war they had used the same tactics to
stop all American supplies shipped upon the Appalachicola. In general, though,
guerrilla tactics could not resist Jackson's two major campaigns of the war.

Jackson personally led the attacks. The first American assault came at
Lake Miccosukee, about ten miles south of the Georgia border or twenty miles
north east of Tallahassee today. Lake Miccosukee had several Black and Indian
Seminole villages, with plantations and herds of cattle. Knowing of Jackson's
approach, the Blacks in particular moved their families far away and prepared to
engage the U.S. forces. The Seminole forces divided into Black and Indian
regiments. As American forces advanced, the Seminole attacked from the most
strategic sites possible, when American reinforcements moved in, they fled in all
directions to prevent pursuit. At Miccosukee the American forces burned 300

\[\text{23 Congress, Senate, Senate Records show the strength of Jackson's army during the First}
\text{Seminole War, 15th Congress, 2nd Sess., Vol. IV, Appendix, Annals of Congress, 2296.}\]

\[\text{24 American State Papers Class 5, vol. I, 691.}\]
homes and obtained 1,000 head of cattle for their troops plus a large supply of corn.\textsuperscript{25}

U.S. forces next captured the undefended Spanish fort at St. Marks, which is situated on the Apalachee Bay. It was at this site that the British trader Arbuthnot was apprehended. Just before his capture Arbuthnot had sent the letter to Kenhagee warning of Jackson's approach. Leaving St. Marks, Jackson marched 10 miles southeast to attack the Seminole villages located upon the Suwanee River, about 30 miles from its mouth. Here there was a Black settlement of 400 people with plantations, herds of cattle and hogs, and well-built houses. As at Miccosokee, the American forces encountered separate regiments of Red and Black Seminole. Initially the Seminole offered resistance, but outnumbered at least 10 to 1, they had to scatter into the swamps and forest to avoid capture or death. Again American forces burned the houses and obtained supplies of livestock and grain. Also, the white woman spared at the ambush of Lieutenant Scott's party was retrieved.\textsuperscript{26}

It was at Suwanee that another British agent, Robert Ambrister, was captured. Both Arbuthnot and Ambrister were accused of playing a role in events since the War of 1812. Jackson hung Arbuthnot and Ambrister was executed by

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid, 689-708; Giddings, Exiles, 50-55; Covington, Seminoles, 43-47; Peters, Florida Wars, 51-55.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
firing squad. The fates of Arbuthnot and Ambrister symbolically signaled the conclusion of the First Seminole War. Both had been charged by the U.S. with considerable responsibility in its beginning. Now their deaths should bring it to a close. But this false reasoning was soon obvious. If the Seminole had no other cause of hostility, then the elimination of men who armed them and coaxed them to attack frontier settlements would bring to a halt further depredations. But even at the end of hostilities Jackson informed Secretary of War Calhoun that Blacks were roaming about and reestablishing themselves.

Jackson had conducted his campaigns between February and April of 1818. It was May when he informed Calhoun of the continued Black threat. Nevertheless, by July, President Monroe informed James Madison that Jackson still insisted the whole war could be blamed upon British adventurers and the Spanish. Jackson's statements to Calhoun and Monroe seem to suggest undertones of duplicity among American policy makers.

Because of British interest in Florida it was easily conceivable that they would seek to prevent America's expansion. Also, because of Britain's relative


28 *American State Papers, Class V*, vol. 1, 708.

29 James Monroe, *Writings*, vol. 6, 53.
weakness there, perhaps they would seek Seminole allies, just as Spain had done. Additionally, Monroe gave a State of the Union address in which he informed the Congress that the Spanish government was bound by a 1795 treaty to prevent slaves from entering Florida and to control Seminole depredations. Monroe insisted Spain's lack of authority provided a legal basis for Jackson's invasion.  

Still, on the other hand Jackson eliminated the British and Spanish problems. But his letter to Calhoun showed that key American policy makers were extremely apprehensive about a Black Seminole resurgence. Therefore, while Monroe and the Secretary of State Adams used existing problems with Britain and Spain as the key excuses in Congress, and in diplomacy for the war, more confidential documentation indicates parallel efforts before, during and after the war to circumscribe MLR.

Though Jackson had publicly declared victory, he and Gaines warned Calhoun to expect new attacks. In one letter to Calhoun, Jackson referred to Florida's instability, "her territory will always prove an asylum to the disaffected and restless savage as well as to a more dangerous population, unless some energetic government can be established..."  

Jackson's comment reflects the dominant military perspective after the war. The Seminole problem especially

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30 Ibid.

with the Blacks was not yet solved, and policy makers continued to grapple with this, but Monroe believed the war presented a prime opportunity for American acquisition of Florida. With her colonies in revolt throughout the hemisphere, he reasoned Spain could little afford to squander her fleeting power in maintaining Florida.

Monroe believed that this apparently unending problem with the Seminole Blacks should be used to finally achieve an American objective, which he had struggled with at least since assisting Jefferson and Madison negotiate the Louisiana Purchase. In 1795 the United States and Spain signed the Treaty of San Lorenzo. Under Article Five of this Treaty, Spain agreed to forcibly restrain all Indians within Florida from attacking United States territory. Under Article Six, Spain agreed to return all runaway slaves.32

In December of 1818, just after the Seminole War, Monroe gave a State of the Union Address on the Florida issue:

If the embarrassments of Spain prevented her from making an indemnity to citizens... for their losses by spoliation and otherwise, it was always in her power to have provided it by the cession of this territory. Of this her government has been repeatedly apprised... and would likewise relieve herself from the important obligation secured by the treaty of 1795 and all other compromitment respecting it.33

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33 Monroe, *Writings* vol. 6, 77.
The U.S. had long sought Florida and it seems that a combination of circumstances convinced Spain to take Monroe's advise. In February of 1819, the Senate ratified a Washington treaty in which Spain ceded all its lands lying east of the Mississippi to the U.S. Spain added some amendments which were finally ratified by the Senate in February of 1821. Article Nine of the treaty required both nations to renounce all claims upon each other. In Article Eleven, the U.S. agreed to pay American citizens five million dollars for claims against Spain for property losses under the Treaty of 1795.

Monroe seemed to express anger over Spain's need for amendments to the treaty. In his State of the Union address in December, 1819, he said, "the indemnity for . . . losses sustained, and now again acknowledged and provided for . . . was nevertheless received as the means of indemnifying our citizens in a considerable sum, the presumed amount of their losses."

In the treaty by which the U.S. acquired Florida, Monroe used the strength of the Seminole and the weakness of the Spanish to the advantage of the U.S. Though Spain had agreed to return slaves and control the behavior of the Seminole, the Patriots War re-established the African-Indian-Spanish alliance in the interest of all parties. Since the 1795 treaty, American policy makers had

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34 Miller, *Treaties*, vol. 3, 3-12.

35 Monroe, *Writings*, vol. 6, 106.
reconciled themselves to the inability of Spain to enforce the agreement; however, the realliance in the Patriot War left them frustrated. The Negro fort provided a target which transcended the alliance and allowed the U.S. to attack the core problem threatening the south. The persistent threats of MLR however seemed to be the key factor or vehicle for Monroe's insistence upon indemnity. MLR underscored the Spanish weakness in relationship to the stipulations of the 1795 treaty. Though U.S. citizens had claims against Spain for a variety of issues, the claims of the slave industry were projected by the dominant industry relative to administrations since Washington. Therefore it seems likely that the claims of the slave industry were the quid pro quo which paid the price for Florida.

Florida's acquisition provided the Monroe Administration with the long-sought opportunity to circumscribe the activities of MLR. The U.S. now provided the firm energetic government of which Jackson spoke. Further steps were initiated by the Monroe Administration, which technically increased the control of the federal government over the lives and activities of the Black Seminole.

In 1820 Calhoun appointed federal commissioners to assist Georgia state commissioners gain possession of the Black Seminole for Georgia citizens. These commissioners were seeking to gain possession of slaves under the provisions of the Treaties of New York in 1790 and Colrein in 1796;
also under provisions of agreements between the State of Georgia and Creek Indians.36

At Indian Springs in 1820 the commissioners negotiated with a group of Creek chiefs. All of the past treaties had been negotiated by their leaders. The Creeks were charged with failing to live up to the treaties because they had not delivered the Black Seminole to their masters. Speaking for the Creek Chiefs, McIntosh said they had delivered the few Negroes as required, at various intervals since the Washington administration. He said that the British took many Negroes and gave them a fort, and "we helped you destroy the fort." Also, McIntosh said, he had marched with General Jackson and had helped him catch Negroes in the Seminole War. He reminded the commissioners that the Blacks were, among the Seminole, their mutual adversary in the war. McIntosh concluded by declaring that the Upper Creeks had complied with all treaties.37

The Commissioners responded to the Creeks:

We are however sorry to find that you do not consider yourselves bound to restore to us the property as well as the Negroes taken or destroyed by your nation before the Treaty of New York. . . . Brothers: We, your friends want nothing but what is right; but that we must insist upon. You were bound to restore all property taken from us . . . . In the Treaty of Augusta, thirty-seven years ago, you agreed to restore all Negroes, horses, cattle, or


other property taken since the late war. By the treaty of Galphinton, thirty-five years ago, you agreed to restore all Negroes, horses, or other property. . . . In the Treaty of Shoulderbone, thirty-four years ago, you made the same promise. . . . By the Treaty of New York, you promised to restore all Negroes then in the nation belonging to the Georgians. . . . By the Treaty of Colrein you entered the same obligations. . . . Brothers: We know or have heard of very few Negroes having been returned or paid for. . . . and our head man the Governor of Georgia has directed us to insist according to the laws of our country, upon the restoration of, or payment for, the increase of all such Negroes belonging to the people of Georgia as have increased. . . . As to Negroes now remaining among the Seminole, belonging to white people, we consider those people a part of the Creek nation; and we look to the Chiefs of the Creek nation to cause the people there to do justice. 38

The commissioners decided that the Creek Nation was liable for previous generations of slaves who had escaped from Georgia. It seems probable that some claims went back as far as the colonial days. As compensation it was determined that the Creeks would forfeit the vast majority of their land holdings to the State of Georgia. Also, the Creeks owed the slave masters up to $250 thousand. This sum was to be paid by the Federal government to the Georgians, for the Creeks. 39 The following stipulation was added by Commissioners Daniel Forney of North Carolina, David Meriwhether of Georgia, and the former Georgia Governor David Mitchell, now U.S. Agent for Indian Affairs:

Whereas a treaty or convention has this day been made and entered into by and between the United States and the Creek Nation, by the provisions of

38 American State Papers. Class II. vol. 2, 256; Giddings, Exiles, 63-67.
which the United States have agreed to pay, and the commissioners of the State of Georgia have agreed to accept . . . for the discharge of all bona fide and liquidated claims which the citizens of the said state may establish against the Creek nation . . . and we do hereby assign, transfer, and set over unto the United States, for the use and benefit of the said Creek nation . . . all the rights, title, and interest of the citizens of the said state to all claims, debts, damages, and property, of every description.  

The Treaty Of Indian Springs essentially gave the Monroe Administration total legal control over all Blacks of Florida. Though the treaty stipulated that the U.S. government was the legal owner of the Black Seminole, for the benefit of their Creek allies, negotiations between McIntosh and the Commissioners suggest that the Natives had little real say in the matter. Though the Upper Creeks had been faithful allies of the American Government, their land was taken with impunity. Monroe declared that Spain did not restrain its Indians as required under the 1795 treaty. These "Indians," of course were the Black and Red Seminole. Therefore, for the purpose of indemnifying Georgians, the Seminole were the legal wards of Florida. Nevertheless, when McIntosh made the same point to show that the Black Seminole were residents of Florida and not among the Upper Creeks, the commissioners denied this. With such convenient duplicity being exercised in diplomacy, it was not likely that Creeks could really claim millions of dollars in slave property.

40 Ibid; Giddings, Exiles, 63-67; American State Papers Class II, vol. 2, 256.
Monroe declared the Black Seminole were under Spanish authority and covered by the 1795 treaty to help provide the legal basis for the acquisition of Florida. As such, the Seminole were to be controlled by Spain. But to acquire the bulk of remaining Creek lands for Georgia, the Seminole were declared to be governed by the Upper Creeks.

The failure of all past treaties with Spain and Creeks therefore became the legal basis for the 1819-21 Florida treaty and the 1821 Indian Springs Treaty.

In the span of five years the American quest to acquire Florida had gone from the disastrous outcome of the Patriots War to stunning diplomatic success. The ancient but dormant alliance of Spain, Black rebels, and Seminole, was activated in the Patriot War. The Negro Fort provoked a political effort to isolate MLR. Past American initiatives which challenged the threat in Florida always sought to confront third parties. Therefore, Spain and Indians were held responsible. The Negro fort transcended third party complicity. Black Seminole rebels became the obvious target of U.S. policy makers.

In the First Seminole War, the Monroe Administration seemed to make the Black Seminole their obvious primary target, militarily. However, politically and diplomatically, Spain and the Creeks were blamed and their land was acquired as a result. The Florida Treaty, geo-politically circumscribed the
Seminole in general but the Blacks in particular. However, perhaps the Indian Springs Treaty was most revealing of what the conflict was to evolve into. This treaty made the United States government de jure slave masters. Therefore, a battle was to eventually commence between slaves and slave masters.

The destruction of the Negro fort was specifically a confrontation against Black Seminole. The comments of Gaines and Arbothnot suggest that Black Seminole were the primary target of the war. These were two military initiatives which were largely against MLR. The stipulations and diplomacy surrounding the Treaties of 1819-21 suggest an effort to facilitate the control of MLR. In spite of these efforts, American policy makers seemed to believe MLR was resurgent. The military threat of the Seminole had not decreased in spite of the geo-political efforts to facilitate this objective.

Andrew Jackson was appointed as the first Governor of Florida in 1821, just after the treaties of that same year were ratified. In May, Monroe wrote Jackson, "I have full confidence that your appointment will be immediately and most beneficially felt. Smugglers and slave traders will hide their heads, pirates will disappear, and the Seminole cease to give us trouble." 41 This was only wishful thinking on the part of the President. By

41 Madison, Writings, vol. 6, 185
July, Mr. Penieres, the Sub-Agent for Indian Affairs in Florida, provided Jackson with a territorial review of land and inhabitants:

We must add to this enumeration...fifty or sixty Negroes, or mulattos, who are maroons, or half slaves to the Indians. These Negroes appeared to me far more intelligent than those who are in absolute slavery; and they have great influence over the minds of the Indians. It will be difficult to form a prudent determination with respect to the maroon Negroes who live among the Indians on the other side of the little mountains of Latchiove. Their number is said to be upward of three hundred. They fear again being made slaves under the American government and will omit nothing to increase or keep alive mistrust among the Indians, whom they in fact govern. If it should become necessary to use force with them, it is to be feared that the Indians will take their part. It will, however, be necessary to remove from Florida this lawless group of free booters, among whom runaway Negroes will always find refuge. It would perhaps be possible to have them received at St. Domingo, or furnish them the means of withdrawing themselves from the United States.42

The comments of Penieres shows a general perception of instability in Florida. It seems that the military and political initiatives of the previous five years had done little to eliminate the threat which MLR posed to American interest. Penieres said runaway slaves would always find refuge among the rebels, consequently he saw no reason to believe that U.S. forces would prevail over MLR in Florida.43 A U.S. conquest of this grand scale of rebellion would have of course brought the scope of this phenomenon back to a micro-level; and as such not requiring national forces to oppose it. This


43 Ibid, 414.
macro-level of rebellion was facilitated by the alliance with the Red Seminole. The U.S. inability to foresee a military solution is emphasized by discussion of sending the Blacks to St. Domingo or other locations. Mr. Penieres believed that the Red Seminole were governed by the Blacks. At the core of this perception may have been an alliance which dates back to the Yamasee War of 1714, or even bonds established by Africans and Indians as fellow slaves and Cimeroons before 1700. Another explanation of this perception could be the diplomatic ability of a desperate people.

At any rate Penieres advice soon was factored into national policy making. Jackson wrote Calhoun by September, "These runaway Negroes spoken of by Mr. Penieres must be removed from the Floridas or scenes of murder and confusion will exist and lead to unhappy consequences which cannot be controlled."44

Removing those Blacks required the defeat of MLR. This was not accomplished by U.S. forces. Therefore, Jackson's prophecies came true. In the Second Seminole War U.S. policy makers would be led by Jackson as President. New political and military initiatives were crafted with hopes of

44 Ibid.
ultimately ending the threat of the Black Seminoles. This time, U.S. policy makers would seek to destroy the ancient Seminole alliance.

In Chapter Nine, President Andrew Jackson develops his Indian Removal Policy. He orders native Seminole to be forcibly moved west of the Mississippi River and the rebels to be returned to slavery. These orders by the President will involve the United States in seven years of very costly warfare against the Seminole allies. In this conflict the phenomenon of MLR emerges as a significant force in the politics of the war.
CHAPTER IX

THE SECOND SEMINOLE WAR, 1835-42

The Second Seminole War occurred between 1835-42. It was a war initiated by the slave industry. Every American President between 1788 and 1836 except John Adams and John Quincy Adams had been a slave holder. Between 1836 and 1842, President Van Buren, though not a slave holder, favored the interest of slavery regarding the Seminole war. Only slave-holding Presidents had been in office for two terms. The Adams and Van Buren tenures had been for one term each. Key policies concerning the Seminole were shaped for slave holders, and in administrations dominated by slave holders. Many slave holders held key offices in Monroe's administration, but technically under the Treaty of Indian Springs, the United States Government itself became a slave-holding institution. Therefore, between the signing of the Indian Springs Treaty in 1821, and the outbreak of the Second Seminole War in 1835, national policies on the Black Seminole were truly dictated by the slave industry.

After 1821, President Monroe, Secretary of War Calhoun, and General Jackson had voiced apprehensions over the military and social cohesion between the Black and Red Seminole. Black Seminole particularly were still seen as a major threat to the slave industry, even though the federal government had technically become their masters, and Florida was a U.S.

1 Giddings, Exiles, 173.
territory. Consequently, a policy was initiated to separate the Seminole. This policy ultimately called for the re-enslavement of the Blacks. American attempts to execute this policy resulted in the Second Seminole War. However, the end result of this separation strategy was its general failure. Therefore, MLR specifically continued to survive and the policy goals of the Black Seminole were achieved. U.S. policy initiatives and failures, as well as the success of the objectives of Black Seminole, can be traced by examining the Fort Moultrie Treaty, the Treaty at Payne's Landing and the Articles of Capitulation. In the Second Seminole War MLR became a dominant influence in American government.

In 1821 the Florida Indian agent Penieres, Governor Andrew Jackson and Secretary of War Calhoun communicated on the issue of the Black Seminole threat to the slave industry. By 1823 the Fort Moultrie Treaty was initiated. In this treaty the United States government officially acknowledged the Seminole as an independent Indian nation. An effort was made to place the Seminole on a Florida reservation. Article Seven of the treaty stated the following:

The Chiefs and warriors aforesaid . . . stipulate to be active and vigilant in preventing the retreating to, or passing through, the district of country assigned them, of any absconding slaves, or fugitives from justice; and further agree, to use all necessary exertions to apprehend and deliver the same to the agent, who shall receive orders to compensate them agreeably to the trouble and expense incurred.2

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2 Sprague, Florida War, 21.
The Ft. Moultrie Treaty began to shape the circumstances under which the Second Seminole War would occur. As with the Creeks and the Spanish, a third party was made responsible for the Black Seminole. Even though the Indian Springs treaty had technically eliminated all claims on the Black Seminole, the erratic nature of the slave catching system, could make any Blacks in Florida a retrievable commodity. Therefore, all Black Seminole were seen as suspect; and consequently the presence of numerous Blacks brought request from the slave industry for compensation. The federal government provided bureaucrats from the Department of Indian Affairs to mediate between the claims of the American slave industry and those of the Red Seminole who also claimed some Blacks as slaves.³

As the first American governor of Florida, Jackson was acutely aware of the complexities of White and Indian claims upon Blacks living in Florida. As governor, he informed Calhoun that the U.S. should not make treaties with a subject people. Also, Jackson and Calhoun concurred in the idea of moving all eastern Indians west of the Mississippi.⁴ In 1824 Monroe told both houses of Congress that eastern Indians should be required to exchange their land for equal amounts west of the Mississippi.⁵

Before becoming President, Jackson believed that the federal government should not interfere with states' attacks upon Indian treaties. Up

³Giddings, Exiles, 78-81.

⁴Andrew Jackson, Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, John Spencer Bassett, ed. (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1928) 132.

⁵James Monroe, Writings, 88.
to the Jackson Presidency, previous administrations grudgingly had acknowledged Indian sovereignty. However, as President, Jackson executed an Indian policy based upon ideas expressed during the Monroe administration. In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. This law forced all Indians east of the Mississippi to exchange their lands for western territory. Treaties were to be negotiated between individual tribes and the federal government to accomplish this end.⁶

In 1832 the Seminole were forced to negotiate the Treaty of Payne's Landing, which required them to give up their Florida homes and move to Arkansas. They were granted two years to accomplish this task, but complications developed. The Seminole refused to emigrate west. Article Six of the Treaty stated:

The Seminole being anxious to be relieved from the repeated vexatious demands for slaves, and other property, alleged to have been stolen and destroyed by them, so that they may remove unembarrassed to their new homes, the United States stipulate to have the same property investigated, and to liquidate such as may be satisfactorily established, provided the amount does not exceed seven thousand dollars.⁷

The Treaty of Indian Springs had theoretically erased the claims of southern slave holders to the Black Seminole, but in the years between 1821 and 1832 an indefinite number had escaped to the Seminole from Florida, Georgia, and Alabama. The slave industry was waiting to stake a claim and forcibly apprehend the Blacks. Therefore, within the Seminole nation a

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⁷Sprague, *Florida War*, 75.
decision was made to resist removal, as the only sure means of securing the
Black Seminole. President Jackson demanded that the Seminole be forcibly
removed and the Blacks be re-enslaved as stipulated in the Payne's Landing
Treaty. This erupted into the catastrophic Second Seminole War in 1835.8

By 1834 it was evident that the Seminole chiefs had decided not to be
removed. The Seminole Indian Agent, General Wiley Thompson, told
Secretary of War Lewis Cass that the chiefs said they wanted to be near their
ancestor's graves. Thompson, however, said their fear of losing their Black
slaves was the real reason and he informed them that they must part with them
anyway. Both Cass and Thompson believed that their refusal was the idea of
the Blacks. Thompson requested troops to protect friendly chiefs because he
believed Blacks and hostile Indians would kill any Seminole trying to
emigrate.9

One of the stipulations in the Payne's Landing Treaties was that the
Seminole, as Creeks, would be located on Creek land in Arkansas. In 1834,
Florida Governor Duval and Thompson informed the War Department that
Black Seminole knew Creeks would seek to claim them under stipulations of
the 1821 Treaty at Indian Springs. Additionally, they said crooked whites who
sold whiskey to the Seminole in exchange for their corn sought to prevent
their removal. Thompson wrote that:

A third cause of hostility to emigration is the influence which it is said the
Negroes, the very slaves in the nation, have over the Indians. The Negroes
are more provident than the Indians. They not only often feed the hungry

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8 Ibid, 80-90; Mulroy, Freedom, 28-32.

Indian but having the means they introduce by stealth into the nation sometimes considerable quantities of whiskey, which enable them while they derive a profit from the sale of it, to gratify the vitiated and intemperate appetite of the Indian. This gives them a controlling influence over him.10

As early as 1821, another Florida Indian Agent, Penieres, informed Governor Andrew Jackson that the Black Seminole "in fact govern" the Indians, and should be removed to Africa. Jackson told Calhoun that if the Blacks and Seminole were not removed, uncontrollable devastation would occur.11 Also, Duval wrote the Department of Indian Affairs: "Slaves belonging to the Indians have a controlling influence over their masters and are utterly opposed to any change of residence. No treaty can be enforced as long as these Blacks are present, every Indian who seeks to stay will run to them."12

Even before he executed his Indian Removal philosophy into law, Andrew Jackson was apprehensive about the presence of Black Seminole in Florida. There was a perception in the U.S. Department of War that, though many Blacks were slaves of the Indians, they nonetheless controlled the Indians. The implication seemed to be that Blacks used this control to block the execution of federal law and that they threatened to kill Red Seminole who sought to cooperate with the government. Slavery and other relations between Black and Red Seminole have been reviewed in the first chapter.

10 Ibid, 454.


12 American State Papers, Class V, vol. 6, 458.
The very notion of masters being ruled by slaves is contradictory, nonetheless its documentation within the War Department was confirmed thirteen years previous. If indeed Blacks were a controlling force in the Seminole nation and were able to orchestrate death threats, then perhaps they were not actually slaves.

Slavery required that complete subjugation of master over slave be enforced. This prerequisite appears to be missing among the Seminole.

The primary rebel leader and one of the most dominate in general was Abraham. He served as the interpreter for the Seminole during negotiations for the Treaty of Payne's Landing. He had at one time been known as the slave of the principle Seminole chief and acted as his prime minister. Abraham accompanied the chiefs to Washington in 1825-26 as interpreter. One American commander of the Florida war, General Jesup, described Abraham: "The principle Negro chief, supposed to be friendly to the whites; said to be a good soldier and an intrepid leader; he is the most cunning and intelligent Negro we have seen; he is married to the widow of the former chief of the nation."14

The Payne's Landing Treaty required Abraham and other Seminole leaders to travel to Arkansas and review the Creek lands in which they would share. Abraham made two memorable determinations in the treaty. The Florida Indian agent had become financially indebted to Abraham; therefore, Abraham added a stipulation to the treaty which required financial

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14 American State Papers, Class V, vol. 7, 852.
compensation for interpreters. Second and most important, Abraham required the Seminole to be granted land separate from the Creeks, because of their claims upon Blacks.\(^{15}\) Regarding treaty negotiations, Sprague said,  

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\text{The mischievous influences of the whites, through the Black interpreters, operating upon the malignity and suspicions of the younger class of Indians, nearly defeated the object.}\(^{16}\)
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From the Seminole perspective the clauses stipulated by Abraham were binding.

The Jackson administration insisted that the Seminole were required to emigrate regardless of the desires of the chiefs and the people. The Seminole leaders insisted emigration was only required if all Seminole were satisfied.

The 24th Congress required President Jackson to submit a report detailing the causes of the Second Seminole War. Secretary of War Cass noted that all problems began when the Administration decided troops were needed to enforce the Payne's Landing Treaty. In early 1834, ninety-four prominent Florida citizens signed a letter to President Jackson demanding a solution to the problem of 500 runaway slaves among the Seminole. Shortly afterwards, federal troops moved in. Florida and Georgia slave catchers made constant efforts to seize undefended Blacks. Clashes between settlers and Seminole increased.\(^{17}\) By January, 1835, the War Department decided to

\(^{15}\) Giddings, Exiles, 84-87; Sprague, Origin, 72.

\(^{16}\) Ibid, 74.

\(^{17}\) American State Papers Class V, vol. 6, 56-59, 465; Giddings, Exiles, 90-91.
escalate its efforts of forced removal, and they wanted to provide increased security for settlers; consequently General Scott was put in command of the U.S. Army in Florida. Secretary of War Cass said, "General Scott was directed to allow no pacification with the Indians while a living slave belonging to a white man remained in their possession." 

As the situation in Florida intensified, Abraham gave the American authorities the impression that he was in favor of enforcing the treaty, yet he planned for war. From Havana fishermen he received shipments of gun powder and other arms. Also, he secretly notified plantation Blacks to revolt when war broke out. Even Major Dade, the greatest casualty of the war, believed up to his death that Abraham was peaceful.

General Scott demanded that the Seminole chiefs assemble their people for emigration, but Abraham and the Native chief, Osceola threatened to kill any chief who cooperated. When Chief Mathala assembled his people to go, he was killed. In an effort to coordinate the military pressure upon the Seminole for removal, 110 men under Major Dade sailed into Tampa Bay from New Orleans. A plantation slave in Tampa, Louis Pacheco, was selected to lead Dade 130 miles north to Fort King. Pacheco notified the Seminole of his route, and Dade's entire command, except for two men who escaped, were ambushed and killed. Abraham and eighty warriors were participants in the attack along with approximately 120 other Seminole.

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18 Ibid, 58.
In the Second Seminole War the United States had approximately 1,500 soldiers killed. The federal government spent approximately $40 million on the war. Giddings estimated that 300 to 500 mostly non combatants had been captured, and he said the federal government spent $80,000 per slave captured. Also, three white soldiers died to enslave each African.\textsuperscript{21}

At about the same time that Major Dade met his fate, General Thompson and several others were ambushed and scalped by Osceola and about 20 warriors.\textsuperscript{22} The attacks upon Dade and Thompson formally inaugurated the war. The Payne's Landing Treaty left one option to the Black Seminole, prevail on the battlefield or return to plantation slavery. It was this lack of options which spurred on Abraham's violent response. As a leading member of the Seminole nation and a diplomat, Abraham had traveled to Washington. He was well aware of the power and wealth of America. He knew that ultimately the Seminole couldn't prevail. Nonetheless, his objective was to wage such a protracted guerrilla struggle that American political and military leaders would alter the treaty to provide better terms for the Blacks. Abraham sought either the right to remain in Florida or free passage for all Blacks to Arkansas and land separate from the Creeks.\textsuperscript{23}

A few weeks after the massacre of Dade's forces, citizens of St. Augustine gathered to prepare for defense of the city. They sent a message of distress to the Congress, the President, and to southern newspapers, stating:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Giddings, \textit{Exiles}, 310-16.
  \item Ibid; Peters, \textit{Florida Wars}, 107.
  \item Porter, \textit{The Negro}, 314.
\end{itemize}
Our delegate requested to urge upon the Congress...and upon the President the early consideration of calamities and ruin...by the ravages of an unrestrained savage foe. Now just conceive their position—eight hundred or one thousand warriors...with three or four hundred Negroes of their own, better disciplined and more intelligent than themselves, to whom there is a daily accession of runaway Negroes from the plantations...24

Even though many Indians such as Osceola were violently opposed to emigration, the treaty held out options for them which most seemed willing to accept. The Second Seminole War was ultimately a war to preserve the freedom of the Black Seminole. Abraham personified the struggle politically and militarily. As the Spanish, then Indian, pretexts were removed by diplomacy, the Federal government was able to legally and politically circumscribe the Black Seminole. The Payne's Landing Treaty left them politically and legally isolated. However, the United States was ill prepared to confront the strongest aspect of MLR, which was its guerrilla military alliance with the Indians. Equally important to the survival of MLR was the theater of operations—the jungles, swamps, and forest of Florida.

As MLR transcended all pretext, in a mode of self-preservation, Abraham stepped from the background to assume a dominant role both politically and militarily. With the fate of all Black Seminole at stake, this was only appropriate.

After the Dade massacre, full-scale military operations got under way. General Scott was in command, assisted by Generals Clinch, Eustis, Gaines, and Jesup. There were approximately 6,000 U.S. troops and 500 to 1,000 Seminole. General Gaines was ordered to proceed from Tampa and retrace the

route of Dade with about 1,200 troops. En route, Gaines was attacked by the Seminole on the Withlacoochee River. Gaines estimated that he was confronted by 1,200-1500 Seminole. Several of his men were killed in an assault that seemed to come from all directions. The Seminole burned the forests to confuse Gaines. U.S. forces were pinned down for over one week. They got low on ammunition and began to slaughter horses for food. Even a dog was eaten. Gaines sent a rider for help. At last Abraham came forward and called a truce. He requested brandy and tobacco and allowed the Americans to fish in the river. In further negotiations, both sides agreed to stay on their sides of the river. Fearing starvation and a massacre, as with Dade, Gaines told the Seminole to beware because vast American forces would arrive any day. Finally, General Clinch arrived and the Seminole fled. ²⁵

Between December and June, 1835-36, numerous battles occurred between the U.S. and the Seminole. In most instances the Seminole were outnumbered 5 or 10 to 1. Though American generals sent reports of victorious conflicts against the enemy and noted how the Seminole were dispersed from the battlefield, little progress had been made. Florida citizens were so fearful that they abandoned their plantations and sought refuge in forts and towns. The lack of success for American troops of the battlefield spread consternation from Florida to the White House. In Tallahassee the Commander of U.S. Troops, General Scott, was burned in effigy by the

²⁵ Sprague, Origin, 110-111; Giddings, Exiles, 118-24; Cohen, Notices, 83-103; Porter, Negro, 315-16.
citizens. Florida Congressman Joseph White demanded that Scott be removed and that an investigation be held on the progress of the war.26

Captain Sprague was a participant in many of the Florida battles and was in the theater essentially from beginning to end. Sprague described the general situation in Florida in 1836:

The theatre of operations was a wilderness, and every hammock and swamp a citadel for the enemy... They harassed the troops day and night, and with the fleetness of the deer, retired to a more secluded spot. The men, worn down with constant watchings, disappointments, and tedious marches, still no nearer the enemy, struggled on in hopes they would hazard a general action. Too wary for this [the Seminole] they knew their strength consisted in moving in parties of 10, 15, or 20 men. Subsequent events, and the experience of intelligent officers, as well as citizens, have proved that a Florida campaign, however well timed, skillful and judicious in its arrangements and progress, was not to result in the capture or subjection of the Seminoles. 27

By mid 1836 it was apparent that the Seminole who had fought removal, seeking better terms, were not defeated. Their guerrilla tactics were successful at thwarting armies ten times their size. Their battlefield success set off a chain reaction. Scott's orders from the War Department were to remove the Seminole and offer no peace as long as slaves belonging to whites remained among them. This policy was unenforceable. It was initiated by slave-holding citizens pressuring Jackson, who then sent troops through the Secretary of War to execute the policy. The utter failure of the policy reverberated back to the Executive and Legislative branches of government.


27 Sprague, The Origin, 114.
General Scott was essentially accused of incompetence. In June of 1836, President Jackson convened a court of inquiry as requested by the Senate, to discover what was going on in Florida. Letters were circulating in the media which cast blame on Scott's conduct. The President responded:

Who gave Genl [sic] Scott, Genl Jesup's letter will be a subject of Inquiry when I return--however it is immaterial--the delay of Genl Scott at Columbus, with his unaccountable order to Jessup [sic] to halt when near the Indians, when one hour's delay may have been the cause of the Indians' escape was sufficient proof of his want to capacity to fight Indians, and was sufficient ground to call him from the command against Indians. . . . Scott ought to have retired and not obtruded himself on the command assigned to Jessup, but when he did he ought to have acted with promptness and put this puny Indian war down in 10 days. General Scott had ought to know, I had no hostile feelings towards him--the shameful proceedings in Florida with the panic that pervaded everywhere, which has tarnished the reputation of our army ought to have induced every military man to have exerted themselves to have regained the army's lost military character. The Inquiry will be, has Genl Scott so acted, if so, he will stand acquitted, if not, he will stand condemned.29

The testimony presented in the Inquiry revealed how a policy which was crafted in Washington became undone by guerrilla warfare. According to General Gadsen the U.S. troops were not prepared to fight a guerrilla war. He said, "the contest on our part degenerated, and therefore, from a war to a hunt, in which the enemy had to be sought as you would seek the lion or the tiger, with the hazard of being sprung upon from every jungle or thicket."30

Colonel Lindsay reported the U.S. forces had as little knowledge of the theatre as they had of the interior of Africa. Also, he said that quicker

28 American State Papers Class V, vol. 7, 125.

29 Andrew Jackson, Correspondence vol. 5, 419.

than U.S. troops could erect tents, the Seminole could construct a shelter from Palmetto branches which kept out rain. General Eustis said he never encountered more than 50 Seminole. Said Eustis, "the enemy was gifted with ubiquity, he was to be found everywhere and nowhere." Eustis reported that one-third of his 1600 South Carolina volunteers contracted the measles.

The Inquiry, testimony, and disputes centered upon Gaine's battle, and subsequent negotiations with Abraham on the Witchlaochee River. Captain Thistle was pinned down with General Gaines at the battle of Withlacoochee. His testimony was that he assumed they were confronted by 1,200 Indians and Negroes. Thistle noted that they were out of food and were eating horse and dog and were low on ammunition. He said, "The Negro Abraham hailed the camp," seeking peace, tobacco, and brandy; but in retrospect he believed Abraham only tricked Gaines. He only sought intelligence so the Seminole women and children could be moved away from the war.

General Scott felt indignant at even having to appear. Scott was sure that Jackson, Gaines, and Jesup had some personal dislike of him and believed the Inquiry was a waste of time while his men were still fighting. He resented the term, "failure of the Seminole campaign," and quickly pointed out that no one else had had any success in Florida.

The testimony of Scott and the Inquiry in which it was solicited are explicitly demonstrative of Von Clausewitz's treatise on war and politics.

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31 Ibid, 139.
32 Ibid, 143.
33 Ibid, 149-50.
According to Von Clausewitz, "war is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of political commerce." Considering Von Clausewitz, it seems the battlefield is transformed by definition into a quasi-legislative area. In the case of the Seminole War, the theatre with its lack of success was an arena ripe for the conception of policy alteration. The battle on the Withlacoochee seemed to symbolize the general failure of policy. In defending his Florida command, General Scott was a representative from this quasi-legislature. As such Scott was the first of many Generals who while accounting for failure in battle ultimately became advocates or representatives for the general Seminole goals. The goals of course were specifically tied to Abraham's battlefield strategy and diplomatic forays. Abraham's personal security was never in doubt, he therefore endeavored for the masses of the Black Seminole.

Scott and the succeeding commanders and other generals would ultimately be the representatives, or quasi-diplomats from the battlefield, who could not enforce policy, and consequently convince U.S. policy makers to change policy. The inquiry was the beginning of the documented failure of U.S. policy goals, and the reciprocal documented reason, to yield to the Seminole.

Scott defensively reviewed previous testimony:

I am persuaded that the total force of Seminole doesn't exceed 1,200. We've never yet seen 130, and I don't think 500 exist within 10 square miles, but parties of 10 to 30 are seen everywhere."35

34 Clauswitz, On War, 23.
35 Sprague, Origin, 131.
Scott, sure Gaines had been tricked by the Seminole into revealing valuable intelligence, observed:

How was I, Mr. President, to account for our not finding, three weeks after General Gaines, any considerable body of the enemy? He supposed himself to be surrounded in his breastwork, with his 1,000 or 1,100 men, by 1,200 or 1,500 warriors. What had become of them? He certainly killed but few and captured not one. Whence then the subsequent dispersion?36

Gaines had reported subduing and dispersing the Seminole at Withlacoochee, but Scott noted their request for brandy and tobacco was not the talk of a subdued enemy. Contrary to Gaine's report, Scott declared the Seminole victorious.37 Ultimately he concluded that non-success was caused by heat, sickness, and geography, he said that he:

had not a guide that knew any intricacies of the "cove," a certain labyrinth, held from the knowledge of white man, as the sacred groves of the Druids were never entered except by the initiated. . . .Government gave me no topographical information, nor had any to give; and the booksellers' maps only . . .filled up with unlucky guesses.38

Scott endeavored to show that the fate of his campaign in Florida was not so much in his control. His testimony suggests that Gaines may have been pinned down for two weeks and nearly starved, by a force one tenth the size of his own. This mystery hints at a type of psychological warfare. The court of

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36 Ibid, 132.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid, 143.
inquiry essentially cleared Scott and noted that U.S. forces were stalemated by the season, geography, and poor transportation.39

Nonetheless, Scott was removed from the Florida command. General Call temporarily replaced him, and by November of 1836 General Jesup would be placed in command. Jesup zealously waged war against the Seminole and sought to enforce the Payne's Landing Treaty, but ultimately this would lead him to become the chief advocate of the goals of Abraham and the Seminole. Upon receiving his orders to command, Jesup wrote to Acting Secretary of Defense Butler:

If I should not succeed in dislodging Powell, I can on returning to this place, strike Micanopy, Philip, and Cooper... each with from one hundred and twenty to two hundred Indians and Negro warriors, the latter perhaps the more numerous... this you may be assured is a Negro, not an Indian war; and if it be not speedily put down, the South will feel the effects of it on their slave population.40

Jesup served as Commander of U.S. forces in Florida from November, 1836, to July, 1838. During this period he had limited success. He was able to reduce the total Seminole population in Florida by two-thirds after negotiations with Abraham; however, he could not change the general pattern which ultimately led to American failure. To the end, until the best terms were achieved allowing all Seminole to freely emigrate, they would move in deadly parties of three, four or five, eluding American forces ten or 20 times their number.


40 *American State Papers Class V*, vol. 7, 853.
It seems that Jesup had no illusions about the nature of the Seminole War. Though he did not specifically call it a slave-catching expedition or a war for the slave industry, Jesup recognized the fact that slavery was the central issue. His conduct in the theatre seemed to evolve from first identifying the real issues to advocating a solution and then unilaterally executing that solution.

Upon putting Jesup in command, President Jackson remarked:

It is true that the whole Florida War from the first to the present time has been a succession of blunders and misfortune. . . .Everything at present is wrong. . . .I have tried all the Generals and as Genl Jesup is now there and in command, he I hope will finish this unfortunate business.\footnote{Jackson, \textit{Correspondence}, vol. 5, 434.}

Jackson surprisingly seemed baffled by the tremendous difficulties in Florida. Though he had commanded the First Seminole War, he was well aware of the difficulties inherent in declaring victory in Florida.

With 8,000 men, Jesup chased the Seminole, from the Okefenokee Swamp of Georgia to the Everglades of Florida, still unable to subdue them. When tired or nearly cornered, the Seminole sometimes declared truces, only as a ploy to regain their advantage. After months of heavy fighting, Jesup received peace overtures from Abraham. He wrote the Secretary of War:

I am awaiting most anxiously the movement of hostile chiefs, many of them prefer death to removal. In all the numerous battles and skirmishes that have taken place, not a single first-rate warrior has been captured. . . . The warriors have fought as long as they had life, and such seems to me, to be the determination of those who influence their councils--I mean the leading Negroes. . . .We may conquer them in time, and may destroy them, it is true; but the war will be a most harassing one. . . .I am not disposed
to overrate the difficulties which surround me, but in communicating with you, it would be criminal to underrate them. . . . Abraham has just come in with a flag, accompanied by a nephew of the Indian Cloud, and a Negro chief. 42

Perhaps sensing that American forces may be ready to alter their policy, Abraham and the key Seminole chiefs signed the Articles of Capitulation in March of 1837. The Articles incorporated the Payne's Landing stipulations except for one key change. Article 5 stated, "Major General Jesup, in behalf of the United States, agrees that the Seminole and their allies, who come in and emigrate to the west, shall be secure in their lives and property; that their Negroes their bona fide property, shall accompany them west." 43

The Articles of Capitulation, viewed together with the above statements of General Jesup, reveal a War Department which was growing weary of the Seminole War. Jesup indicates that little progress had been made towards success. It was by the utter frustration of every battlefield effort that the Payne's Landing Treaty was repudiated. Jesup received unachievable orders. Therefore, he was trapped between an unyielding federal government and Seminole guerrillas who were apparently unbeatable. It seems that Abraham negotiated a solution to the problem. In exchange for Jesup's sincere efforts to enforce Article 5, Abraham tirelessly sought to end the war and get

42 American State Papers, Class V, vol. 7, 832-34.

43 Ibid.
all Seminole to emigrate. This compromise ultimately was a victory for MLR. The triumph of the guerrilla struggle had initiated a policy change.

Jesup wrote to the Adjutant General R. Jones that he would begin to disband his troops and that settlers could begin to return and that the war was over. However, he noted: "A trifling impropriety on the part of the white population of the frontier might light it up again. The Negroes rule the Indians, and it is important they should feel themselves secure; if they should become alarmed and hold out, the war will be renewed."

When news of Jesup's Articles of Capitulation reached the regional planters, who claimed Seminole Blacks as their property, they wrote the War Department, and their congressional representatives demanding that there be no peace until their slaves were apprehended. Jesup hoped that the more recent runaways would be surrendered by the Seminole. To this end the wording of Article 5 may have been intentionally ambiguous. In all probability Abraham hoped to give as broad an interpretation to the words "allies," and "their Negroes their bona fide property," as possible, to include all Blacks among the Seminole.

On the other hand Jesup was pressured by the slave industry through the War Department, and by battlefield realities. He probably hoped to let Abraham and enough of the other key Seminole go west to bring about a beneficial effect on the battlefield. The slave holders feared Jesup might somehow ignore orders from Washington and allow Blacks to emigrate. Jesup

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44 Giddings, Exiles, 139-150; Sprague, Origin, 177-81.

45 American State Papers, Class V, vol. 7, 835
had designated certain forts as sites for the Seminole to surrender before transport to Tampa and Arkansas. By May Jesup reported to the War Department that the arrival of slave owners at the evacuation sites had caused the Blacks to flee. He insisted that because the "Negroes rule them," the Indians flee too. This was the cause of the war's renewal.46

Jesup had informed the War Department of the direct connection between Black free emigration and the end of hostilities. In spite of this it seems that no effort was made to prevent slave holders from jeopardizing the freedom of the Blacks. In June, Jesup informed the Adjutant General Jones, "

I have the honor to report that this campaign, so far as relates to Indian emigration, has entirely failed. The Seminole chiefs were, I believe, sincere in their intentions of fulfilling the provisions of the treaty, but they have no influence over their people... they were to have come in again on the 2nd, but failed, and on the night of that day they were seized by a force of armed warriors and removed to the interior. In the meantime, I desire you to present my most earnest request to the Secretary of War and the General in Chief that I be immediately relieved from command of this army.47

General Jesup was frustrated by his dilemma. The Administration was continuing to yield to pressures from American non combatants, who made his orders impossible to carry out. Jesup informed General Jones in Washington:

As an act of justice to all my predecessors in command, I consider it my duty to say, that the difficulties attending military operations in this country can be properly appreciated only by those acquainted with them. This is a service which no man would seek with any other view than the mere performance of his duty: distinction, or increase of reputation is out of the question; and the difficulties are such that the best concerted plans

46 Giddings, Exiles, 144-148; American State Papers Class V, vol. 7, 830.

may result in absolute failure, and the best established reputation be lost without a fault. If I have at any time, said aught in disparagement of the operations of others, in Florida, either verbally or in writing, officially or unofficially, knowing the country as I now know it, I consider myself bound, as a man of honor, solemnly to retract it.48

Jesup had sent a letter to the press critical of General Scott which helped to spark the Court of Inquiry, but now after several months of command and not really defeated but unable to win, he understood Scott's quandary. All the pressures of an impossible task had fallen upon the military officers. He had already attempted to end the war on terms that benefited no one except the Black Seminoles. However, with the failure of this effort he now had to take his men back into a quagmire.

In a letter to Secretary of War Poinsett, Jesup began to advocate for the modification of the war policy:

From the facts that are daily coming to my knowledge, I doubt whether the chiefs could exercise sufficient influence over their people to induce any considerable portion of them to leave the country; and if they determine to remain, it will depend upon themselves how long they will remain; they cannot be driven out so long as they can obtain ammunition, unless we use northern Indians and Spanish bloodhounds. We may harass them, and ultimately destroy them, but it will cost as much time and treasure as the war carried on by the British government against the Maroons. . .that war, if I remember right, was terminated by the bloodhounds; and resulted not in unconditional submission but in a treaty which secured both liberty and property to the conquered. How far such a policy would be proper in the present case I am hardly prepared to give an opinion. The question is surrounded by difficulties, view it as you will. The two races, the Negro and the Indian, are rapidly approximating; they are identified in interests and feelings. . . At the battle of Wahoo, a Negro, the property of a Florida planter, was one of the most distinguished leaders. . . The depredations committed on the plantations east of the St. John's were perpetrated by the plantation Negroes, headed by an Indian Negro, John

48 Sprague, Origin, 173.
Cesar, since killed, and aided by some six or seven vagabond Indians. . . . I throw out these hints for the consideration of my official superiors, without pretending to offer an opinion as to the propriety of adopting them.49

Jesup's frustrations are perceivable in the letter to Poinsett. He underscores the impossibility of military victory. His plan of using bloodhounds was attempted but was an utter failure.50 Jesup shows signs of a battlefield political reaction though. After rejecting the propriety of continuing to execute U.S. policy, he suggested freedom and land for the Seminoles. These things had already been offered to the Indians in the Payne's Landing Treaty. Therefore, he was advocating the interest of MLR. Also, Jesup explained that the Blacks and Indians had the common bond of oppression and were formidable as battlefield allies in Florida. He verifies that Abraham's battlefield strategy of gaining the allegiance of plantation Blacks had some success. The key point is Jesup's not so subtle advocacy here for the ultimate goals of Abraham and MLR Parallels drawn most likely to the maroons of Jamaica underscore the extent to which the Seminole War was a "Negro War," as specifically stated by Jesup.

Jesup commanded U.S. troops in Florida longer than any other General, between November of 1836 and July of 1838. General Scott's inability to defeat the Seminole led to his dismissal. During his command General Jesup succeeded in removing approximately 2,400 Seminole to

49 American State Papers, Class V, vol. 7, 876.

50 Giddings, Exiles, 271.
Arkansas. His success in this endeavor began only after he won the allegiance of Abraham and the official concurrence of key Seminole Indian chiefs. Once the Articles of Capitulation were signed, a ray of hope existed for the key instigators, the Black Seminole. During the negotiations of the Articles, Abraham's family and many other Indians and African Seminole surrendered for removal. Jesup kept Abraham's family hostage. The white planters caused most of the Seminole to flee and resume hostilities, but with Abraham's family as hostages he consented to assist Jesup in an intensive diplomatic effort. With Abraham as a guide and diplomat, many Seminole were captured and convinced to surrender. Often women and children were captured as a prelude to the surrender of the warriors.

According to Porter, Jesup launched "a joint campaign of military operations and peace-propaganda." Under this strategy perhaps 400 (mostly non-combatant) Blacks were returned to slavery. Most of these seem to be recent runaways. At times, whole Seminole villages were captured while U.S. officers gained their trust under the white flag of peace. This tactic corresponds to the Seminole tactic of raising the white flag under the guise of peace, only to rest, move families, and get supplies from American negotiators.

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52 Porter, Negro, 317-321; Giddings, Exiles; Covington, Seminoles, 85-95.

53 Porter, Negro, 320.
Nonetheless, though Jesup used tactics which violated truces and otherwise were duplicitous, he must be credited with a battlefield conversion which altered the course of history. He tried to first yield totally to Abraham's goal; when this failed he enforced the original policy of the War Department but modified the strategy. He sought freedom for the "bona fide property" of the Indians but re-enslavement for the most recent runaways. This modification grew into a policy which satisfied the fears of the Seminole and eventually halted the war.

In spite of removing two-thirds of the Seminole, neither Jesup nor the War Department felt any less apprehension over confronting the remaining warriors. Jesup remarked in a letter to the War Department, "We have at no former period of our history had to contend with so formidable an enemy... Governor Coppinger is said to have expressed the opinion many years ago, that the Captain General of Cuba had not force enough to control the Seminoles."  

During this period General Zachary Taylor confronted the Seminole in probably the greatest battle of the war. Taylor, with about 1,200 men, faced approximately 250 Seminole. Taylor chased the Seminole 140 miles into the Everglades, where his men were forced to dismount and wade into a deep swamp to continue pursuit. While American forces were in the swamp, the Seminole poured a heavy barrage of fire upon them, after which they retreated to the shores of Lake Okeechobee. In his report to the War Department Taylor's refrain follows those of Scott and Jesup before him:

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54 American State Papers, Class V, Vol 7, 872.
The action was a severe one, and continued from half-past twelve until three PM, a part of the time very close and severe. We suffered much, having twenty-six men killed and one-hundred and twelve wounded, among whom are some of our most valuable officers. . . . And here, I trust, I may be permitted to say, that I experienced one of the most trying scenes of my life, and he who could have looked on it with indifference, his nerves must have been very differently organized from my own--besides the killed, among whom were some of my personal friends, there lay one hundred and twelve wounded officers and soldiers, who had accompanied me one hundred and forty-five miles, most of the way through an unexplored wilderness. . . gallantly beaten the enemy, under my orders, in his strongest position, and who had to be conveyed back through swamps and hammocks . . . .Could the enemy be brought to battle, even in his strong holds, the war would soon be closed, no matter at what sacrifice of life on the part of officers and soldiers. . . .Fortunately for them, however that such is the nature of their country that concealment is found to be more efficacious than opposition, and they leave the climate to fight their battles. . . if nature has so organized the Indian that he is fleeter of foot than the white man, and given him a country where no tracks are left when he flies; and if we have not overtaken him, it is our misfortune, not our fault. And should the war be renewed (which I sincerely hope may never be the case) the only way to bring it to a successful issue, in my opinion, is to cover the whole country so as to prevent the enemy from hunting and fishing.\textsuperscript{55}

In this communication, Taylor exhibits the same pattern of dispersing the enemy, yet not defeating him, which Jesup describes. This was the war's most direct confrontation yet only 11 Seminole were killed and none captured. Like Jesup, Taylor appears exasperated by an impossible mission. However, the boldness of his action prompted Jesup to pursue the Seminole. In early 1838, Jesup chased the Seminole into a swamp. He had 500 mounted men against perhaps one hundred Seminole. Jesup's men sustained seven dead, thirty wounded. Not one Seminole was left on the field, so it is unknown if they sustained any dead or wounded. However, Jesup was severely wounded.

\textsuperscript{55} Sprague, \textit{Origin}, 208-226.
Among his men, General Eaton, Colonel Twiggs, and others urged Jesup to end the fighting and let the Seminoles live in peace. Jesup concurred and sent a messenger to notify the Seminole of the truce.\footnote{Giddings, \textit{Exiles}, 181-90}

In February of 1838, Jesup made a final appeal to the War Department to modify its terms of surrender to the Seminole. He sought a reservation for them in Florida, because of the impossibility of prevailing on the battlefield against them. According to Jesup the lands were not yet needed by Whites, and they would never been able to inhabit the region because of its climate. Also, Secretary of War Poinsett was notified that Southern Florida was not worth the cost of the medicines needed in the campaigns. Jesup said:

As a soldier it is my duty, I am aware, not to comment upon the policy of the government, but to carry it out in accordance with my instructions. I have endeavored faithfully to do so; but the prospect of terminating the war, in any reasonable time is anything but flattering. My decided opinion is, that unless immediate emigration be abandoned, the war will continue for years to come, and at constantly accumulating expense. Is it not then well worthy the serious consideration of an enlightened government, whether . . . the object we are contending for would be worth the cost. . . . I respectfully recommend the measure to your consideration, and that of the President, as the only means of terminating, immediately, a most disastrous war, and leaving the troops disposable for other service. I desire a decision as soon as your convenience will permit, as by the middle of April at farthest, the troops must be withdrawn from the posts in the interior, to preserve their lives.\footnote{Sprague, \textit{Origin}, 200-201.}

Jesup was well aware of the Black Seminole quest to remain free and of their strategy to wage guerrilla war until freedom was assured. He therefore advocated conditions under which freedom could be reasonably
hoped for. However, Poinsett notified Jesup that only a temporary truce could be agreed to and that the Payne's Landing Treaty had to be enforced. Jesup continued his dual strategy of war and negotiation, but by July he retired from Florida, after which the Senate requested a report. In that report Jesup told them that as Commander in Chief of the Army in the field he felt it was in his power to establish policies which would be most successful ultimately, but that he made sure the ultimate decision was left to his superiors. Here it seems that Jesup was communicating a policy contradicting his superiors, one which had been initiated by Abraham prior to hostilities but communicated to Jesup in the quasi-legislature of the battlefield. Jesup told the Senate that without his policy modifications it was doubtful if "twenty warriors could have been killed or taken."

Thus Jesup retired from Command of the Florida war. After having helped to ridicule General Scott for his lack of success, Jesup finally understood that the climate and geography of Florida, combined with the guerrilla tactics of the Seminole, were more than a match for American forces who outnumbered them ten to one and who possessed vast resources and technology. After making these discoveries Jesup advocated for the interest of the Seminole as a means of terminating an endless war. His key partner in the modification of policy and battlefield diplomacy was the "intrepid" warrior, Abraham.

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As Jesup prepared for retirement, he sent Abraham, his family, and approximately 90 other Black Seminole en route to Arkansas. Before his departure Abraham had a letter sent to Jesup with his X:

I have the honor to present my best respects to you. Myself and Tony Barnet have done everything promised by us, and expect the General will do by us as he said at the beginning of this campaign. . . . We wish to get in writing from the General, the agreement made with us. We will go with the Indians to our new home, and wish to know how we are to be protected, and who is to have the care of us on the road. We do not live for ourselves only, but for our wives and children who are as dear to us as those of any other men. . . . I have charge of all the Red people coming on to Pease's Creek, and all are satisfied to go to Arkansas. . . . Whoever is to be Chief Interpreter we would wish to know. I cannot do any more than I have. I have done all I can, my heart has been true since I came in. . . . I hope Toskeegee is satisfied. All his Seminole Brethren are coming in. . . . All the Black people are contented I hope. Your servant Abraham.60

After nearly three years of warfare the effort to enforce the Payne's Landing Treaty was stalemated. But as Jesup and Abraham prepared to exit the theatre there was room for optimism. By this time only the Washington policy makers and the slave industry which spurred them on still insisted on the re enslavement of Black Seminole and the removal of the Red. In 1837, Jesup had begun to use Choctaw, Creek, and Delaware Indian soldiers of fortune. He promised them and volunteer troops from the southern states a share of Seminole horses, cattle, slaves, and other plunder as partial payment for their services. On one campaign many Blacks, primarily women and children, were captured. All the soldiers of fortune and other claimants from the slave industry wanted a share of these slaves.

60 Porter, Negro, 332.
Jesup allowed a few of these to be sent into slavery with the white southern claimants. The rest were sent with Abraham to Fort Pike in New Orleans. Jesup required the Creeks and other Indians to be paid a bounty of $25 each, as their share for claims upon the Black Seminole. This policy was endorsed by the Secretary of War and the President in 1837. As was the case with the Treaty of Indian Springs, these Seminole became the property of the federal government. In this single case Jesup uncovered the solution to ending the Seminole War. Here he still executed the original policy and initiated what would prove to be a permanent solution. He let 35 slaves be sent into slavery but decided to purchase the claims of all others.

The Indian Springs Treaty of 1821 was negotiated by Georgia slave holders. When they made slaves of the United States of the population of Black Seminole, there was no apparent desire to free them from the slave industry. Jesup indicates in his report to the Senate, that as Field Commander and Chief, he felt that having the Army take custody of the Blacks and then paying off claimants was the best military policy. It seems probable that Van Buren and Secretary of War Poinsett only applied this policy modification to this single case, but Jesup knew that this modification of policy must prevail to end the war.

Just before the Court of Inquiry of 1836, Congressman John Quincy Adams generally endorsed a similar policy in connection with the war. Adams responded to critics who declared that the federal government had no right to interfere with slavery. He noted that during the Revolution and the War of

61 Giddings, Exiles, 158-62.
1812, it was the federal government which interceded on behalf of the slave industry to make claims for slaves in the peace treaties with England. Adams declared:

But the war power of Congress over the institution of slavery in the States is yet far more extensive. Suppose the case of a servile war, complicated, as to some extent it is even now, with an Indian war; suppose Congress were called to raise armies, to supply money from the whole union, to suppress a servile insurrection, would they have no authority to interfere with the institution of slavery? The issue of a servile war may be disastrous. By war the slave may emancipate himself; it may become necessary for the master to recognize his emancipation by a treaty of peace. . . . It would be equivalent to saying that Congress have no constitutional authority to make peace. . . . They must and will interfere with it—perhaps to sustain it by war; perhaps to abolish it with peace.62

Adams expounds a constitutional theory which had been applied in previous wars with a foreign power. The notion that slaves could be liberated to achieve peace directly applied to the Seminole War, and terms solicited by Abraham. His concept of war powers is far reaching. Adams theorizes that under war powers slaves can be liberated, not that they must be. However, his ideas were rebuked by a Congress in which the slave industry was dominant. Though the idea could have been helpful to MLR it also could have been used to demand their enslavement; or if necessary the contingencies of war, and war power, could have demanded a policy of enslavement for all Blacks and Indians in the United States. Adams' view of war power could not be executed from where he sat. In Washington the slave industry was dominant.

In the quasi-legislature of the battlefield, MLR had a forceful voice, which initiated policy by its very success. Adams spoke of war powers in the

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62 Congress, House, John Quincey Adams discusses the impact of the Seminole War on slavery, 24th Congress, 2nd Sess., Congressional Globe (25 May 1836) page 4040-47.
hands of the Executive and Legislative branches. The battlefield contingencies had forced the commander in the field to co-opt extensive power and make policy in the field—granting liberty, which could not have been done in Washington of 1838.

When Abraham and 90 other Black Seminole arrived in New Orleans along with Seminole Natives, immediately a lawyer representing an individual slave holder got a court order to claim all 90 Blacks as his property. General Gaines, the Commander of the Western Military District of the U.S., had been fighting the Black Seminole since he had ordered Colonel Clinch to destroy the Negro fort in 1816. General Gaines had been pinned down and nearly starved by Abraham and other Seminole in 1836. But now Gaines ignored orders from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to deliver the Blacks back into slavery. Gaines resisted the court order and demands of the New Orleans sheriff. Also, he went into court and argued that the Blacks were not nor had ever been slaves of any whites; that they were all, men, women and children, prisoners of war under the authority of the President only.

The judge rejected Gaines' argument, saying it was better to remove such formidable foes from the hands of potential savage enemies in Arkansas. Nevertheless, Gaines, who conducted this defense out of his own resources, appealed to a higher court, at which time the slave holder dropped the case. All the Black Seminole were sent on to Arkansas.63

The same lawyer for the claimant pursued the 90 Blacks to Arkansas and made the same appeal to Governor Roane and to General Arbuckle,

63 Giddings, Exiles, 209-211.
commander of Fort Gibson. He made the claim to the Blacks in the name of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Both the governor and the general turned him down on the grounds of public safety. Neither wanted the Seminole War to erupt in peaceful Arkansas.64

By May of 1838 Jesup had retired and Generally Zachary Taylor was in command of U.S. forces in Florida. Taylor made a zealous effort to move all Seminole west, but he made it known to his superiors that he would not execute the Treaty of Payne's Landing. From the beginning of his tenure as Field Commander, Taylor treated all Blacks whom he captured, or those who surrendered under the Articles of Capitulation, as prisoners of war; then all were sent to Arkansas.65 When the War Department ordered him to assist in obtaining the 90 Seminole Blacks in the company of Abraham, Taylor said the following:

I know nothing of the Negroes in question, nor of the subject, further than what is contained in the communication above referred to; but I must state distinctly for the information of all concerned, that, while I shall hold myself ever ready to do the utmost in my power to get the Indians and their Negroes out of Florida, as well as to remove them to their new homes west of the Mississippi, I cannot for a moment consent to meddle with this transaction, as to be concerned for the benefit of Collins, the Creek Indians, or any one else.66

According to Congressman Joshua Giddings, this language from a Brigadier General, to the Secretary of War was, "received at the War Department without reproof." After Jesup's retirement it seems that the

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64 Ibid.
65 Ibid, 224-226.
66 Ibid, 226.
Articles of Capitulation, negotiated by Abraham and the Seminole Chiefs had, to a very great extent, become the de facto law of the land. This was underscored by the actions of Gaines, Governor Roane, General Arbuckle, and Taylor. Finally, the slave industry pressured its legislators in Washington to take up the matter with the War Department. Secretary Poinsett, through the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, declared that, "the Government held the power and constitutional right to dispose of prisoners of war, whatever their character may be."67

The original goal of the Seminole, like all of the Indians, was to remain in their homelands east of the Mississippi. Most knew they had no realistic chance to remain. This was also the case for the Seminole. Only the threats from Blacks and radical leaders such as Osceola and Wild Cat inspired the great war. As it became apparent that the Articles of Capitulation were being executed, the number of Seminole resisters began to dwindle. Nevertheless, there were holdouts who either did not trust the Articles or who simply wanted to remain in their ancestral home. Those Seminole who surrendered or were captured, Black or Indian, were sent west by General Taylor as prisoners of war.

The few remaining Seminole still kept the U.S. at full troop strength.68 In spite of this, before his retirement from Florida, Taylor had made tentative plans to divide Florida into districts, 20 square miles each. Each district would contain forty soldiers and five topographical engineers.

67 Ibid, 227.
68 Sprague, Origin, 263.
This plan would have required a troop strength of thirty- to forty thousand men. Taylor retired from Florida in April of 1840. In his report to Congress he stated, "the enemy in several instances had been found, chased, and some killed, but they were far from being caught or subdued."69

General Armistead took command until May of 1941. Like Taylor, he came no closer to military success, and he continued to send Black and Red Seminole to Arkansas. Following Armistead, General Worth became the Florida commander. Worth's command followed the same military pattern, in spite of new tactics. U.S. forces normally would not attempt to fight between May and October or November because of the threats of disease; however, Worth attempted summer campaigns in an effort to interrupt the Seminole growing seasons.

In July and August of 1841 Worth reported sixty soldiers dead from illness and 5,000 men having reported to sick bay. In spite of his efforts, the Seminole were not yet conquered. Their population had been greatly reduced, but hostile Seminole still remained, continuing to inflict surprise attacks upon troops and settlers. Worth continued to send Seminole to Arkansas.

By May of 1842 President Tyler instructed Worth to end the war. Tyler estimated that no more than 240 Seminole remained, with perhaps eighty warriors. He noted that it was impossible to catch those remaining and too expensive to maintain the full troop strength. Tyler said the Florida settlers would have to be armed to protect themselves.70 Hostilities with the

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69 Ibid, 221, 227.

70 Ibid, 243, 247, 261-70, 475.
Seminoles continued until 1858, but the Articles of Capitulation proved to be the most effective factor which led to both political and military solutions.71

Jesup engineered the key military solution by providing the Blacks with freedom in the west; but the political pressure in Washington originated with the constituent slave holders. Before leaving office, Secretary of War Poinsett had instructed General Armistead to once again attempt to end the war under terms of "Payne's Landing and by the interest and feelings of the people of Florida."72

The interest of the people of Florida were primarily the claims upon the remaining Black Seminole. This fact, coupled with lingering apprehensions of the Black Seminole, had been the primary cause for war. Jesup had paid the claims of the Creeks to keep Abraham and others moving to Arkansas. In 1841, abolitionist congressman, Giddings, noted:

Money was now offered certain influential men of the Seminoles and Exiles [Blacks] to induce them to exert their influence with their friends to emigrate. . . . It was therefore proposed that Congress should make an appropriation for the purpose of purchasing such Exiles; yet the bill making it was general in its provisions. . . . This money was to be expended to purchase the pretended interest of certain white men to the individual Exiles whom they claimed as property.73

Apparently, it was hoped that the resources expended would remove all obstacles for the parties concerned. This tactic had been earlier used by Jesup. The purposes of the expenditures were disguised in Congress, while

71 Peters, Florida Wars, 267.

72 Giddings, Exiles, 280.

73 Ibid, 280-281; Congress, Secretary of War Bell reports to Congress on methods for ending the Seminole War, 27th Congress, 1st sess., Congressional Globe (June 1841) page 5057.
voted upon and passed by Southern Congressmen. This was accomplished in
two separate bills for a total of $1.1 million.74

Later in 1842 the Congress requested a report from President Tyler on
the disposition of slaves captured in the war. In the report, the Secretary of
War Crawford listed seventy-eight captured slaves, but he denied having any
knowledge of, or means to gain knowledge of, any payment for those slaves.
By this covert means it appears that the dominant factors which caused the
war to begin and continue were satisfied.75

In Crawford's report it was stated that Captain John T. Sprague
helped deliver Seminoles from Florida to Arkansas. Sprague had been in the
war since 1835. Concerning the war's conclusion, Sprague wrote:

With the surrender of Indians in Florida, and their embarkation for
Arkansas, an important question arose in relation to Negroes in their
possession. . . . The independence and freedom so long enjoyed,
unchecked, had unfitted him for any usefulness to the claimant. . . . These
Negroes had learned to speak the Indian language, together with a
knowledge of English, and intimacy with the habits of whites, soon gave
them an ascendancy, when the slave becomes the master. The Negroes
from the commencement of the Florida war, have, for their numbers, been
the most formidable foe, more blood thirsty, active, and revengeful, than
the Indians. . . . The lives of citizens and their property, demanded that
they should be sent far beyond the country with which they were familiar. .
. . The swamps and hammocks of Florida could, for years, be made safe
retreats from bondage, where without labor or expense, they might defy the
efforts of armed men. . . . Ten resolute Negroes, with a knowledge of the
country, are sufficient to desolate the frontier, from one extent to the
other. To obviate all difficulty, the claimant of the Negro in possession of

74 Sprague, Origin, 250; Giddings, Exiles, 281-282.

75 Congress, House, President Tyler reports to the House on how the war is ended,
55, Fiche 202, page 1.
the Indian, was, upon identifying and proving property, paid a fair equivalent, determined by a board of officers.\textsuperscript{76}

Perhaps it is not incredible that a captain who sailed from Tampa Bay to New Orleans, steamed up the Mississippi, then traveled in wagons with the Seminole to Arkansas would have knowledge about appropriations and expenditures, to the slave industry, which the War Department lacked.

It is probable that northern Congressmen and their constituents would never have approved such expenditures. If the expenditures had not been forthcoming, however, it is conceivable that the "Great Seminole War" would have extended into the Civil War and perhaps northerners would have been the allies of MLR. After traversing the Florida theatre for more than a decade, Sprague indicates that the primary concern was that Spain or England would further arm the Blacks and bring in more Black troops from the West Indies, causing a general slave uprising. Though he was from Michigan, he believed this was not an issue which could be "sheltered" in philanthropy, but that it had to be addressed by North and South "in the forum or in the field."\textsuperscript{77}

Sprague addresses a consistent theme in American politics—an apprehension with Florida. Fears of slave rebellions had been expressed since the days of the Continental Congress. Though the Second Seminole War had been foretold by Jefferson and Jackson, the scope and dimension of the conflict was probably unpredictable. During the Patriot War, Georgia Governor Mitchell expressed concern over a general African slave rebellion,

\textsuperscript{76} Sprague, \textit{Origin}, 309-10.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid, 310.
centered in Florida, with help from the West Indies. Sprague's comments perhaps underscore something unique about the African condition in America. Given a reasonable opportunity of success, they would champion the cause of personal and group freedom.

The Treaty of Moultrie Creek identified the Seminole as a people separate from the Creeks, but it continued to deny that Black Seminole were anything except property. They were only pawns of negotiations of third parties. Also, this begs the question: Did Black Seminoles seek the status of slaves for legal and diplomatic protection?

In the Second Seminole War the United States had approximately 1,500 soldiers killed. The Federal government spent approximately $40 million on the war. Giddings estimated that 300 to 500 mostly non-combatants had been captured and he said that the Federal government had spent $80,000 per slave captured; also, that three white soldiers had died to enslave each African.\(^7\)

By 1832, Jackson wanted to move all Natives west of the Mississippi. To the extent that Black Seminole were their property, they had a legal argument to be granted continued freedom in the west. The Black Seminole leader, Abraham, representing himself as a slave and diplomat for the Seminole, attempted to include stipulations which were in the interest of all Blacks. Abraham rallied the whole Seminole people to project a united front, in the face of Jackson's orders to apprehend Blacks and move Indians west. Once united in war the Seminole were determined to show the U.S. that

\(^7\)Giddings, Exiles, 310-16.
concessions or modifications to the Payne's Landing Treaty was the only peaceful solution. American Generals therefore became the advocates for MLR. In particular they advocated and enforced Abraham’s Articles of Capitulation which ended the war.

In Chapter Ten the Abolitionist Congressman Joshua Giddings discovers the nexus between the Seminole War and the slave industry. Both Giddings and fellow Abolitionist John Quincy Adams used this nexus to help repeal the congressional Gag Rule which barred any mention of slavery on the House floor. The repeal of this rule ultimately moved the nation closer to the Civil War.
CHAPTER X
THE INDIRECT IMPACT OF MLR

During the Second Seminole War, Macro-Level rebellion (MLR) was a political force which altered Federal policy. This can be directly observed in Articles of Capitulation which were emitted from the battlefield. Additionally, MLR was an indirect factor in both the failure of President Van Buren to be reelected and the repeal of the Congressional gag-rule. The repeal of the gag-rule was important because it was a legislative barrier which prevented northern and southern Congressmen from engaging in the fatal debates which helped bring on the Civil War. Therefore, macro-rebellion can be seen not only as a co-conspirator of Congressional abolitionists but also as a catalyst of the Civil War. American politicians in the federal government had been responding to the presence of Black Seminole since John Jay and the Continental Congress sought to convince Spain to repeal the Edict of 1693. This effort was begun by Jay and completed by the Washington Administration. It cannot, though, be said that these diplomatic efforts of Washington and Jay initiated American knowledge of the Black Seminole. During the previous centuries, American colonists had become acquainted with the rebels.

Washington's urgent efforts to repeal the edict demonstrate America's awareness and concern with the Black Seminole threat to the slave industry. Georgia's documented claims upon Black Seminoles extended back to the days of James Oglethorpe and continued to the days of John Jay and George
Washington. The continuity of claims and knowledge of Black Seminole impact upon growth and development made the Edict an obvious target. However, this also was certainly a clear indication that the threat to the slave industry was facilitated by Spain. Between the repeal of the Edict and the Articles of Capitulation, the primary American initiatives concerning the Black Seminole dealt with third parties. With Spain, the Treaty of 1795 stipulated that Spain would capture and return slaves. All treaties with the Creek Indians had these same stipulations. The Creeks had worked with the British and then the Americans for more than a century as slave catchers. The Treaties of Colrein and New York were key treaties in which Creeks promised the return of slaves. The Seminole were viewed as a part of the Creek nation, but the Treaty of Moultrie Fort legally established the Seminole as sovereign in the eyes of American policy makers.

The Treaty of Payne's Landing in 1832 continued to view the Black Seminole as pawns in the hands of third parties. In the process of negotiating this treaty, and the Seminole response to it, Abraham assumes a dominant role. He was certainly the most prominent Black and perhaps was the most dominant of all Seminole. This would seem to be a logical conclusion. Fourteen years prior to the commencement of the Second Seminole War, the Seminole Indian Commissioner Penieres informed Governor Jackson that the Blacks were the rulers of the Seminoles, in spite of being technically classified as slaves. Governor Jackson relayed this intelligence to the War Department, with the warning that the Black Seminole must be removed or, "scenes of murder and confusion will exist, and lead to unhappy consequences which
cannot be controlled."¹ Indian agent Thompson and Florida Governor Duval
made the same conclusions 14 years later, stating that the Black Seminole
would dictate war or peace for the Seminole. Additionally, in documents
transferred from the War Department to the Congress, General Jesup informed
policy makers that the Second Seminole War was a Negro war rather than an
Indian war. Therefore, Abraham could be rightfully viewed as the most
influential Seminole leader.

The commencement of the Seminole War during the presidency of
Andrew Jackson underscored the prophecy of peril made while he was
Florida's first governor. Abraham was the primary interpreter and diplomat of
the Seminole. In this capacity he appears to have been the architect of their
policy, rejecting removal unless Blacks were given free passage to Arkansas.
Also he most likely initiated the strategy of waging a protracted war to
achieve these terms.

General Scott was given orders to remove the Indians to Arkansas and
return the Blacks to slavery. These orders led to war. Von Clauswitz states
that war is only an extension of politics. Consequently, the battlefield is a
political arena or quasi-legislature, which is capable of initiating policies. In
the Congress, Parliament, or other variants in Republican government, policy
is influenced by a number of factors--money, votes, or reason. In the quasi-
legislature of the battlefield the throes of war can potentially become the
primary determinant of policy.

¹ American State Papers, Class II, vol. II. Walter Lowrie, Mathew St. Clair Clarke eds.
(Washington: Gates and Seaton 1832) 414.
Correspondence from the battlefield indicates that the Seminole conducted an inscrutable guerrilla campaign for at least a five-year period. Within this context, Abraham and Jesup initiated peace talks. In the Articles of Capitulation, the Treaty of Payne's Landing was enforced with one key modification, Black Seminole, deemed as bona fide Seminole property, were permitted to emigrate. Ultimately, Jesup expanded the scope of modification in U.S. policy objectives to the point that he advocated the key Seminole policy goals. The success of the Seminole is measured in the general execution of their policy objective. They did not defeat the United States, but they prohibited American commanders from executing their orders.

The U.S. sought the unification of master and slave; the Seminole sought the separation of master and slave. The Articles of Capitulation codified this, and Jesup eventually began to compensate those parties which claimed to have been separated from their slaves.

Jesup believed that American troops could pursue the Seminole throughout Florida for an indefinite number of years without successfully achieving the stated policy goals. In conceeding to the Articles, he accepted terms which Abraham and other Seminole had been seeking since the Treaty of Payne's Landing. Therefore, from the quasi-legislature, the policies of MLR were emitted to Jesup. He and other generals executed these policies. The policy of freedom for the slaves originated with the slaves. Eventually, with all commanders executing the policy, the goals of the War Department were superseded. Ultimately, the Executive Branch and the Congress and the slave industry accepted the policy of MLR crafted exclusively through a successful guerrilla campaign (see chart on following page).
Fig. 1. How policy goals moved to and from the quasi-legislature.
America's Seminole War objectives were changed as a direct result of MLR. Presidents Jackson and Van Buren in response to the slave industry ordered commanders through the War Department to enforce the Payne's Landing Treaty. Battlefield stalemates converted commanders into agents for MLR. To this extent the chain of command was subverted. For four years Van Buren presided over a failing policy. The policy was changed from the opposing end of the command structure, and the slave industry which had demanded the Black Seminole as property was compensated.

Under such circumstances it was perhaps impossible for Van Buren to remain unscathed by that policy. In 1840, Martin Van Buren ran for re-election. Regarding the campaign Giddings makes these comments:

The Presidential election of this year was conducted differently from any that had preceded it. The opponents of Mr. Van Buren arraigned him before the people for his extravagance in the expenditure of public treasure. . . . Among the subjects made prominent before the country, was that of the extravagant expenditures in prosecuting the Florida War. Speeches were made in Congress exposing the various practices by which the people's money was squandered in that unfortunate conflict. . . . These speeches were printed in pamphlet form and sent to the people in vast numbers; but the real cause of the war, the deep depravity of that policy which sought the enslavement of the Exiles, was not mentioned; nor does it appear that any member of Congress was conscious, even, that such a people as the Exiles was living in Florida. But nevertheless, it is quite certain that this war proved one of the principle causes of Mr. Van Buren's defeat.  

In Martin Van Buren and the American Political System, Donald B. Cole wrote that by the spring of 1840, as the presidential campaign was in progress, a principle burden was the Seminole War. The Democrats and

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2Joshua Giddings, Exiles, 274-275.
Whigs debated over expenditures for the war. This caused a great deal of hostility for Van Buren.\(^3\) It seems that there were other campaign issues which weakened his candidacy. The war was an added burden which helped assure his defeat.\(^4\)

For four years Van Buren ordered the execution of the Payne's Landing Treaty. The first casualty of this impossible policy came at the center of its failure, the battlefield. General Scott was relieved of the command in Florida even before Van Buren's Presidency, because he could not enforce the Treaty. Scott was a victim of President Jackson's high expectations for a "ten-day" victory.

In four years, after millions of dollars spent and over 1,000 dead, stalemate reverberated from the battlefield to the White House, giving voters one more reason to reject Van Buren.

Van Buren's loss of the Presidency was not a direct result of MLR, however it helped to shape his fate. For four years MLR was directly opposed to his objective. In all probability any aspect of American politics which depended upon the fulfillment of the Payne's Landing Treaty were forced to adjust to the new policy. Conversely, there were entities which were akin to the goals of MLR. At the core of the Seminole War was the resistance to slavery.


In the 1830s a national abolitionist movement was inaugurated. The Abolitionist Congressman, Joshua Giddings, indicates that the national movement including members in Congress were unaware of the fight against slavery being waged in Florida. In general though, the Seminole and the Abolitionists had a common objective in their opposition to slavery.

By 1832, many petitions concerned with the issue of slavery poured into Congress. Northern abolitionists were alarmed over many aspects of slavery and sought to influence changes in national slave policies by petitioning Congress. But in 1835 a southern-dominated Congress passed a resolution which prevented discussion of such Abolitionist petitions. The South reasoned that the Constitution forbade any federal interference with the institution of slavery in the various states; additionally they said the petitions were disruptive and could lead to disunion. This 1835 resolution became known as the gag-rule.5

Because the gag-rule prevented all discussion of slavery, Abolitionists in Congress often went to great lengths to connect other issues to slavery in the remotest sense. Sometimes this method allowed them to engage in limited discourses on slavery before being called to order by southern Congressmen. However, the persistence of the Seminole War required annual appropriations from Congress, and the President had to keep Congress informed about the war's progress. Therefore, with the enslavement of the Seminole rebels being the core issue of the war, Abolitionists were provided a means of transcending

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5 Joshua R. Giddings, Speeches in Congress, (: Cleveland: John P. Jewett and Company, 1853) 52.
the gag-rule. Eventually, by 1844, the Seminole War issue helped them vote out the rule.

In 1836 some Congressmen from Alabama sought relief for their constituents, who were made refugees by efforts to move Creeks to the West. John Quincy Adams took advantage of this occasion to discuss a similar resolution, which had been approved for refugees in Florida. He argued that in both instances the citizens were covered by the war powers of Congress and the President, which he said incorporated vast indefinite authority, unstipulated by the Constitution. Adams infuriated the southern Congressmen by saying that war powers gave authority to do anything, from providing for refugees to separating slaves from their masters. He argued that during servile wars such as in Florida, that if liberating slaves was in the best interest of the nation, then the federal government was required to do so.⁶

Unlike the slavery petitions which were pouring into Congress, the Seminole War demanded discussion. As Adams spoke in 1836, President Jackson and the Congress were proceeding with the Court of Inquiry, examining General Scott's conduct. Even if Southern legislators sought to direct discussion away from the Black Seminole, the very nature of the war provided a legitimate issue related to slavery, which Congressional Abolitionists could use to evade the gag-rule and chastise the institution.

In 1841 southern Congressmen proposed the first of two resolutions which provided $1.1 million to assist in the removal of the Seminole. They had just narrowly defeated a proposal by John Quincy Adams to repeal the

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gag-rule. Adams, Giddings and other Congressional Abolitionists were using every opportunity to challenge the rule. With this proposal, Congressman Giddings first acquired proof that the principle issue of the war was slavery. He decided to use this aspect of the war to test and weaken the gag-rule. Speaking to the whole House, Giddings commented:

I am somewhat incredulous as to its [the war's] immediate termination by the means presented by the gentleman from South Carolina. In order that our legislature shall conduce to its early close, we must act with reference to the causes which have unfortunately involved us in hostilities. This war has occupied the attention of the Executive for the last five years; our whole military force has been employed to carry it forward; our officers and soldiers have fallen victims to the climate; our funds have been squandered; but the propriety of this vast expenditure of life and treasure have been kept from the public view. . . . No member has attempted to explain the causes of its commencement.8

Giddings explained as much of the Seminole history as he knew at that time. In this explanation he pointed out how Blacks became the key point of contention between American slave holders and both Indians and Spaniards. Then he presented documentation from the War Department which proved that the effort to enslave the Black Seminole was the cause of the war. Giddings expressed shock at the suggestion that a resolution calling for additional expenditures could now suddenly bring an end to the war. Southern members of Congress insisted that the gag-rule prohibited exposure of the war's

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8 Giddings, Speeches, 1-2.
relationship to slavery, but the presiding officer, Mr. Clifford of Maine, allowed Giddings to continue.9

Giddings said:

I regard this interposition of the federal power to sustain slavery as unwarranted by the Constitution. This war is, therefore, unconstitutional, unjust, and an outrage upon the rights of the people of the free states. . . . I hold that if the slaves of Georgia or of any other state leave their masters and go among the Indians, the federal government has no right, no constitutional power to employ the army for their recapture, or to expend the national treasure to purchase them from the Indians. . . . These extraordinary efforts of the President to sustain slavery, will constitute an interesting chapter in our political history . . . . They have been kept from the people, and my present object is to bring them forth to the public gaze. . . . And, Sir, our army was put in motion to capture Negroes and slaves. Our officers and soldiers became slave-catchers, companions of the most degraded class of human beings who disgrace that slave-cursed region. . . . Indeed, it seems to have been an object with some of the officers employed in Florida to induce government itself to enter into the business of capturing and selling slaves.10

While Giddings spoke, Southern members screamed for him to be silenced. But he was quickly able to show the ties to new appropriations requested. Southerners gathered around him in an effort to intimidate him. Giddings received a continuous stream of attacks from the South, including one suggestion that he be lynched, and also he traded death threats with another. Julius Alford of Georgia ran to attack Giddings but was restrained. In his inaugural address, President Harrison alluded to Giddings as he denounced those who would bring on a civil war.11

9 Giddings, Exiles, 280-81.
10 Giddings, Speeches, 6-12.
11 Stewart, Giddings, 65-62.
Giddings' three-hour speech was perhaps the most deadly blow which had been struck against the gag-rule and therefore against slavery, since the latter had become a national issue in the 1830's.12

The Abolitionist movement against slavery was carried on through the underground railroad and other means. Nevertheless, the gag-rule's prohibition against all speeches and petitions further strengthened the South and weakened the Abolitionists.

In the Congress, the Seminole War was an issue which ensnared the South in a web of its own lies. The South's insistence that the war had nothing to do with slavery permitted the most volatile of all slave issues to transcend their carefully crafted gag-rule. Giddings' speech was distributed nationwide. Had the Seminole War been put down in "ten days," as Jackson had hoped, there may not have been a comparable means to transcend American law and thereby strike blows for the abolition of slavery.

In 1842, John Quincy Adams presented a petition from 46 of his constituents requesting a peaceful dissolving of the Union because of Southern outrages including the gag-rule. Several Southern Congressmen wanted to censure Adams, and they charged and tried him for treason. Among the issues which caused extreme anger in the trial was Adams' enunciation of the policy that slaves could be freed under war powers. This policy was brought to reality in the Seminole War, which clearly demonstrated the validity and practicality of the policy. In this instance the Black Seminole struggle played

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an indirect role in the South's unsuccessful effort to censure Adams. This failed effort moved the nation closer to repeal of the gag-rule.\textsuperscript{13}

There were numerous issues concerning slavery which were used by Adams, Giddings and other abolitionist Congressmen to oppose the gag-rule, but few actually provided an opportunity for legitimate debate. One such issue involved the slave ship \textit{Creole}. The \textit{Creole} was loaded with Virginia slaves headed for New Orleans. En route, the slaves revolted and sailed into the Bahamas. The British freed the slaves, but the southern legislators demanded their return.\textsuperscript{14} Giddings was poised to use the introduction of resolutions on the \textit{Creole} case to challenge the gag-rule, but the South refused to act.\textsuperscript{15} They realized that the Abolitionists were eager to overturn the rule.

Giddings attempted to argue that the federal government had no jurisdiction over slavery, only state government did. Therefore, neither state nor federal government had jurisdiction when the \textit{Creole} revolt occurred in international waters, which allowed slaves to revert back to their God given natural rights of freedom, given back by Britain.\textsuperscript{16}

Before Giddings could state his case the South attacked him and he was called to order for breaching the gag-rule. Giddings was censured and

\begin{footnotes}

\textsuperscript{14} McPherson, "Gag Rule," 188.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, 193; Stewart, Giddings, 73.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, 70; McPherson, "Gag Rule," 188.
\end{footnotes}
removed from his House seat.\textsuperscript{17} The resolution which removed Giddings stated:

\begin{quote}
Whereas the Hon. Joshua R. Giddings has this day presented to this House a series of resolutions touching the most important interest connected with a large portion of the Union, now a subject of negotiation between the United States and Great Britain of the most delicate nature, the results of which may eventually involve those nations and perhaps the whole civilized world in war; and whereas it is the duty of every good citizen, and particularly the duty of every selected agent and representative of the people, to discountenance all efforts to create excitement, dissatisfaction, and division among the people of the United States. . .
therefore, Resolved, that this House hold the conduct of the said member as altogether unwarranted . . desiring the severe condemnation of the people of this country, and of this body in particular.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

In general the petitions which flooded into Congress, calling for abolition, came from the constituents of Giddings, Adams, and most of the other northern Congressmen. The South's removal of one of their leading representatives was the tossing of the gauntlet to Abolitionists. Giddings' removal was a challenge which forced the Abolitionists to organize like no previous event had, nationwide and in Congress. Not only did the Abolitionists determine to overthrow the gag-rule, which Giddings was challenging, but they were preparing to overthrow the dominance of the slave industry which had been paramount in national politics since the Washington administration. The Seminole rebels would prove to be an immobile source of strength in this challenge.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17} Congressional Globe, 27th Congress, Blair and Rivers, eds. (Printed at the Globe office, Washington, 1842) 340-346.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 344-345.

\textsuperscript{19} Stewart, \textit{Giddings}, 75-76.
In spite of threats of lynching from Southern Congressmen, Giddings made his way back to Ohio and prepared for re-election. He was re-elected by a 7,469 to 393 vote in May, 1842. His constituents demanded that he reintroduce the Creole resolutions. Even southern members acknowledged that Giddings' return was a great triumph for Abolitionists. Giddings presented the Creole resolutions in spite of a few protesters, but no member attempted to invoke the gag-rule. According to Stewart:

Through the process of his censure, re-election, and reassertion of the Creole resolutions, Giddings had successfully defied his party and nearly all of Congress. The continued independence of the anti-slavery Whigs was now insured. Congress would henceforth be unable to escape sectional issues by forcing the agitators out. . . .

Giddings' presentation of the Creole resolutions seemed to unofficially end the gag-rule, but it was officially voted down by Congress in February of 1844. Before that vote Giddings made many comments on the rule. He said that Adams had sought disunion because of the rule's unfairness to the North; Giddings agreed that the rule challenged the permanency of the Union. He reminded members that the Articles of Confederation gave each state sole authority over its slaves and that the Constitution refused to touch the issue. But he again concurred with Adams that war powers permitted federal interference with the institution. He stated:

It is, I believe, well understood by military men; it was practiced by General Jackson, General Gaines, and General Jesup, and I believe by General Scott, while commanding our armies in the South. They did not

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20 Ibid, 77.

21 Ibid, 77.
hesitate to sever the relation of master and slave whenever they believed the public good demanded it.22

Giddings commented upon the South's unwillingness to tolerate federal interference under the war powers, but in the case of securing the slave industry, he noted their demands of federal interference. He spoke of the case of the Negro Fort, in which "270 men, women, and children were instantaneously murdered, for no other crime than a love of liberty."23

Giddings pointed to the millions of federal dollars expended by southern dominated administrations: "For the purpose of enabling the owners of southern slaves to regain their runaway Negroes, we waged a bloody and expensive war with the Indians of Florida."24

Giddings and other Abolitionists had succeeded in undermining the gag-rule in 1842 and voted it out in 1844. Even while the rule existed, violent threats were uttered in Congress, but after there was no legislative barrier, heated debates occurred which hastened the commencement of the Civil War. From this perspective the rebels can be seen indirectly to have contributed to the total abolition of slavery in the U.S.

From the quasi-legislature of the battlefield, Seminole success in guerrilla war ultimately resulted in their policy goals being executed. In general Black Seminole were permitted to travel freely to Arkansas. This pre-war Seminole objective only became an executed policy because of war, which

22 Giddings, Speeches, 55.

23 Giddings, Speeches, 59.

24 Ibid, 58.
demonstrates the direct political impact of the rebels. Their objectives reverberated from the quasi-legislature to Washington.

For four years, Van Buren, as Commander-in-Chief, had led the effort against MLR, the failure of his orders, ultimately help to assure his defeat at the polls. Conversely, the Abolitionist and the Black Seminole had fought for common interests. Therefore the success of MLR was indirectly beneficial to the Abolitionists. Unwittingly, they were coconspirators in the great American quest to abolish slavery.
CHAPTER XI

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

From 1693 to 1842, Black Seminoles launched a consistent assault against the institution of slavery on the North American continent. Though only a relatively small percentage of slaves ever escaped to Florida and fought with the Seminoles, the lives of many thousands of slaves were indirectly influenced by their efforts. The success and perseverance of the Black Seminoles perhaps can best be explained by three factors: the alliance with Spain and the Native Americans, Geography, and the will of the African to be free.

The geography of Florida, as a factor in the Black Seminole struggle, has been very well documented. However, in particular, the Second Seminole War was a conflict in which the United States army meticulously documented how geographical factors aided the Seminoles in battle. United States officers and enlisted men alike gave testimony in Present Andrew Jackson’s Court of Inquiry in 1836. Their testimony stressed Seminole knowledge and U.S. ignorance of Florida’s swamps and forests; and as a consequence, American forces were stalemated by the Seminoles for nearly seven years.

Captain Sprague was a veteran of this conflict from the beginning to the end. He wrote in his account of the war that as few as ten Black
Seminoles, who knew their geographical surroundings, were capable of mass destruction in the state. Sprague said that, "the swamps and hammocks of Florida could, for many years, be made safe retreats from bondage, where without labor or expense, they might defy the efforts of armed men."

British and American references to the Seminoles included documentation of geographical problems which complicated their endeavors to confront the Florida allies. But in the Second Seminole War, geography was stated to be one of the primary factors of the U.S.-Florida morass. One American commander, General Jesup, declared that the War Department had sent an army to explore a wilderness, and that U.S. forces were as ignorant of Florida as of the interior of China.

Perhaps the ultimate demonstration of an American commander's effort to eliminate the army's geographical liability came under the command of General Zachary Taylor. Taylor proposed to divide Florida into districts of twenty square miles each, with forty soldiers and five topographical engineers. The engineers would in theory explore and map the state and therefore put the U.S. troops on equal footing with the Seminoles. However, Taylor's ambitious plans were not adopted. They would have been far too costly, requiring a standing army of 30-40,000 troops as opposed to the approximate 6,000 already in the field.
Though Florida had been under European dominion since the 16th century, it is apparent that neither Spain, Britain, nor the United States made a comprehensive effort to explore the territory geographically until the Second Seminole War. Therefore, undoubtedly, the Black Seminoles were blessed by these advantageous geographical conditions. Consequently, their quest for freedom was strengthened, and reciprocally the efforts of Britain and the United States to apprehend them were weakened.

Another paramount benefit to the cause of the Black Seminole rebels was their alliances, first with the Spanish and later with the Native Americans. The rebels’ alliance with Spain was initiated with the Edict of 1693. This order from King Charles II to the governor of Florida inaugurated a quid pro quo relationship between rebellious British slaves and Spain. Perhaps the greatest symbol of the Spanish rebel alliance was Ft. Mose, which was in fact the manifestation of Spain’s hopes and expectations from the relationship—British slaves shielding St. Augustine from a British invasion; and for the rebels a place to live in freedom and security. Ft. Mose was the realization of the objectives of both allies.

From 1693 until the final Spanish evacuation in 1821, the Black Seminole rebels were in the vanguard of Florida’s military defense, but Spain provided the political sanctuary of a European “great power.” Spanish political sovereignty, and its parallel complex of European treaty obligations
made war a defensive measure of last resort. Both rebel freedom and Spanish territorial integrity were rarely challenged.

The Black and Red Seminole alliance was much more complex, yet it was likewise instrumental to the accomplishments of the rebels. Native American slaves and African rebel slaves formed alliances, prior to their joint flight into Florida. Africans and Native Americans provided the bulk of Spanish Florida's defensive capability during the most crucial invasions—Oglethorpe's assault of 1740, and James Madison's Patriot War of 1811-12. However, the crux of the Black and Native Seminole alliance came after Spain's departure from Florida, in 1821.

After 1821, the rebels lost the political legitimacy of their status as freemen in Florida. That status had been based upon the Spanish. The rebels had no political legitimacy with the United States government. In the wake of the Spanish evacuation and the new U.S. sovereignty, the freedom of rebels was precariously suspended between their own military skills and the policy of the United States government.

Though the Black Seminole rebels were still capable of maintaining their free status with military force, that freedom now was more likely to be subjected to continuous military challenges. They were now on U.S. soil. However, the United States did recognize limited Native Seminole sovereignty.
Most Native Americans were officially included in at least one of the many treaties with the United States. Though the provisions of these treaties were rarely fulfilled, legally the U.S. was required to respect Native lands and property.

For the "Five Civilized Tribes," (Seminole, Creek, Cherokee, Choctaw, and Chickasaws) property rights were extended to the ownership of African slaves. However, after a very careful analysis of the relations between the Red and Black Seminole, it is evident that a true master slave relationship did not exist. Nevertheless, the Federal government's respect for a purported master-slave relationship was sufficient to provide the Black Seminoles with approximately fifteen years of relative peace and freedom before the Second Seminole War. During these years, American citizens who claimed rebels in Florida had to do so through the Seminole Indian agent and the court system.

Native Americans provided both military assistance and a brief period of political legitimacy for the Black Seminoles. Their joint efforts in the Second Seminole War sustained the rebels during the period of greatest peril. In general the Black Seminoles were dependent upon their Spanish and Native allies. But perhaps their greatest resource was their own will to be free.

The slave industry challenged and even questioned the very humanity of Africans. If humans are naturally born free, then the slave industry interfered with that natural state, at birth or whenever freedom was taken.
Slaves who successfully rebel are able to reassert their humanity and reclaim their natural rights. While the slave industry was predominant in North America, the Black Seminoles’ humanity and natural rights were only sustained by their will to fight the policies of the British and the United States.

The determination and will of the rebels led to warfare against those who would claim their natural rights. According to Von Clauswitz, war is politics by other means. The sustained will of slaves to proclaim their humanity and God given rights is the prerequisite to a war against the slave industry and its policy makers. Therefore, it seems that the rebel will and humanity was ultimately expressed in the political arena. In the mix of war and politics they were in opposition to Britain and the United States, and allied to the Spanish.

In addition to the Edict of 1693 and Governor Montiano’s establishment of a rebel presidio at Ft. Mose, there were other key Spanish political actions which had some bearing upon the Black Seminoles. In 1790, the Spanish King Charles IV rescinded the Edict of 1693, as a concession to the United States because of its impact upon the slave industry. Also, in 1795, Spain negotiated the treaty of San Lorenzo with the U.S. In this treaty, the Spanish agreed to return any rebels belonging to U.S. citizens and to prevent the Seminole allies from invading the U.S.
Perhaps the ultimate Spanish political act which was related to the Black Seminoles came in 1821. At the end of the First Seminole War, Spain agreed to give Florida to the U.S. primarily as payment for millions of dollars in slave property which resided in that territory. This was an ironic reversal of fate for Spain. The Black Seminole's military services had been key to Spain's survival, as well as its final downfall in Florida. Political policies had begun and ended the ties between the Black Seminoles and the Spanish.

The military services of the Black Seminoles was very beneficial to the Spanish, but reciprocally it was damaging to the British. Between 1693 and 1763, the Florida allies kept the British colonies of the Southeast on the defensive. Consequently, British political leaders in Europe and America were forced to adopt a two-step process. First, diplomatic overtures were made to Florida in an effort to retrieve runaways and end allied attacks; then, after the failure of diplomacy, the political leaders demanded war. Within the framework of this two-step process, various political activities occurred which demonstrate a relationship between the British and the rebels.

Carolina colonial administrators sent emissaries to Florida seeking the return of their slaves. Political debates erupted between colonial administrators and Parliament, because constant attacks from Florida drove the budgets of South Carolina and Georgia far over their projections. The
British invasion of Florida failed. This failure caused severe strains between colonial leaders in Georgia and South Carolina.

The activities and policies of the British, whether diplomatic or military, failed to end the problems they faced with Black Seminoles. Their inability to bring about a resolution meant that following the American Revolution, the founding fathers had to fight the same battle. Like their British ancestors, the United States political leaders also engaged in the same two-step process. However, unlike the British, the U.S. effort resulted in a limited compromise.

As Washington’s Secretary of State, in 1790, Jefferson negotiated the end of the Edict of 1693. Also in 1795, the Washington Administration signed the Treaty of San Lorenzo with Spain, and the Treaties of New York and Colrein with the Creeks. These treaties were designed both to assist the American effort to capture the rebels and to prevent their attacks.

The failure of these diplomatic efforts led to a series of wars: Madison’s secret foray, the Patriots’ War, from 1811-13; the First Seminole War from 1817-19; and the Second Seminole War from 1835-42. Ultimately, the U.S. military efforts succeeded in removing the Black Seminole rebel threat to the slave industry in the Southeast. In the Second Seminole War, President Andrew Jackson ordered that the Black Seminoles be enslaved and Native Seminoles be moved west of the Mississippi.
Though Jackson’s orders were never carried out, a compromise move, allowing Black Seminoles to move to Arkansas with the Natives, secured slavery in the Southeast to a greater extent than it had perhaps ever been. Nonetheless, this security was obtained only because a compromise was arranged between the United States commander, General Jesup, and the Black Seminole leader, Abraham. The primary issue in the compromise, the unmolested emigration of the Black Seminoles, was sought diplomatically by Abraham before the war. Abraham used the Seminole’s ability to stalemate the U.S. Army to secure these terms of compromise from General Gaines.

Abraham’s request then fight for and finally achievement of, the free movement of the Black Seminoles from Florida to Arkansas represented direct Black influence upon U.S. politics. Additionally, the ability of the rebels to persevere on the battlefield won them a latent ally in Congress, the congressional Abolitionist. A congressional gag rule blocked all discussion of slavery in the House of Representatives. However, Abolitionists in the House were able to evade the gag rule when they discussed appropriations for the Seminole War, and, the war’s impact upon the forbidden topic of slavery. Subtle pressure from the Abolitionists on the one hand and the perseverance of the Black Seminoles on the other combined to convince a Southern dominated Congress that the Seminole War should be ended, even though President Jackson’s original orders were not fulfilled.
The Seminole War provided congressional Abolitionists with a means to challenge the gag rule—the only barrier separating slavery from anti-slavery interests—which preserved congressional harmony. Therefore, unknowingly the Black Seminoles and the Abolitionists in Congress were allies. Slave victories in Florida provided a foundation in Congress from which Abolitionists could launch an unrestrainable assault upon the gag rule. Without a gag rule, anti-slavery debates in Congress continued until the Civil War and helped to bring on the war. Thus, the Black Seminoles' unending rebellion against the slave industry helped to destroy that industry and free all enslaved Blacks in the United States.

This study contributes to more than one field of scholarship. In history it gives new life to old documents. There are thousands of pages in Spanish, British, and United States' archives which bare witness to and reflect upon rebel slaves. This study is drawn from a small percentage of these documents. It appears that never before has anyone collected these documents in a comprehensive study and analysis. Since Black Seminoles have usually been studied historically as an appendage to other primary topics, this very rare compilation of facts permits new historical conclusion to be drawn about an obscure subject.

In the field of Political Science, this study follows in the footsteps of and expands upon the research of Giddings' *Exiles at Florida*. As an
abolitionist congressman during the Second Seminole War, Giddings was anxious to reveal congressional misconduct to his northern constituents and the nation. Nevertheless, it appears that until this study, there has been little if any expansion upon his foundation. This research offers new conclusions about the rebels' relationship to U.S. since the Washington administration.

Additionally, with Giddings' basic establishment of a clear political relationship between rebel slaves and the United States, it was apparent that a similar relationship must exist with Spain and Britain. Thus, this study gives a more in-depth overview of an already obscure area of political research. Still it seems that new ground is broken in the demonstration of political relations between the Spanish and British administrators and rebel slaves. Also, never before has an extensive analysis of the political relationship between Black and Native Seminoles been attempted.

In the field of African-American or Afro-centric studies, this topic forces scholars to reconsider the extent of slave rebellion in the United States. Also, scholars must reconsider how U.S. rebels compare with others in the Americas. Scholars are perhaps more familiar with the slave rebels of Brazil, Suriname, and Jamaica. But this study reveals that the accomplishments of the Black Seminoles in Florida are equal to or perhaps exceed all other rebels in the hemisphere. Haitian rebels founded a new nation. Rebels of Suriname and Jamaica won permanent land concessions. But the Florida rebels were
ultimately able to prevail against the dominant military powers of the
Hemisphere, Britain and later the United States.

Additionally, the Florida rebels confronted the nation with the largest
white population in the Americas, with the greatest armed forces in the
hemisphere. Also, they were often outnumbered in the theatre of battle ten to
one. In Haiti, Jamaica, and Suriname, the Black and slave population was far
greater than the white, perhaps as much as ten times greater in Haiti and
Jamaica. Even when the Florida alliances are considered, the Black Seminoles
appear to have prevailed against the greatest odds in the Western Hemisphere.
In general, the warriors in particular were never subdued or conquered, and
they ultimately dictated the terms of their departure from Florida.

From 1693-1842, the Black Seminoles prevailed in no fewer than two
British and three U.S. wars in which the primary objective was to eliminate
their threat to the slave industry. Thus, it seems the Afro-centric scholars must
re-evaluate the history of slave rebellion and place the Black Seminoles in the
vanguard of that tradition.

Therefore, just as the United States often termed the vast lands west of
the Mississippi as “Indian territory,” until they were subdued after the Civil
War, Florida can be viewed as “rebel slave territory,” up to the end of the
Second Seminole War.
In the process of conducting this research it became evident that there are perhaps tens-of-thousands of pages of documents which are directly or indirectly related to the Black Seminoles. Additional in-depth research can be conducted on topics related to the rebels regarding: Native Americans who fought for the British and the U.S.; the military papers and reports of British and American officers; and, the survival of African culture in Florida villages. Also interesting research might be done on the extent of interaction between the Black Seminoles and the rebels of Haiti. One unfortunate fact of American history is that from the start of the slave industry, in the middle of the seventeenth century to its end, after the Civil War, various Native American leaders have been convinced that the best interest of their people were served by sending thousands of warriors to help capture Blacks in Florida. The circumstances, justifications, outcomes, and perspectives of native leaders and people would be a worthwhile study.

British and American officers provide extensive documentation of their encounters with the Seminole. My study uses only a small fraction of the available military documents. Data which is conceived in battle, while life and limb are in jeopardy, can provide a glimpse of reality which may be unattainable in times of more somber reflection.

The survival of African culture among the Black Seminole is a topic which could yield a very rich vein of scholarship. The data reveals that many
of the escapees to Florida had been recent arrivals from Africa. Consequently, one would expect to find a significant amount of non-western and non-native cultural traditions in the Florida villages.

Perhaps the most politically significant and most rewarding area for future scholarship lies in the exploration of a nexus between the rebels of Florida, Haiti, and other West Indian islands. The search for a Florida-Haitian nexus is particularly compelling. This is because Andrew Jackson, as Florida’s first United States Governor, and James Monroe, as President, discussed the possibilities of convincing the Seminole rebels to emigrate to Haiti. The rebels seem to have had access to Spanish ships traveling from Florida to the West Indies, and some are known to have settled in the Bahamas, other British Islands, and Cuba.

Any linkage between the Florida and Haitian rebels could yield astonishing political-historical revelations about the nature of Macro-level rebellion. Did Haiti attempt to assist North American rebels to fight the slave industry? Did any Florida rebel take refuge in Haiti? Such questions will hopefully be addressed by future scholarship.

After their migration to Arkansas, many of the Black Seminole were threatened with re-enslavement. Therefore, they and some Native Seminoles fled to Mexico and became military allies of the governor of the State of Coahuila. From their base in northern Mexico, the Black Seminoles gave
refuge to Texas slaves and helped them obtain their freedom. They conducted these activities with the same defensive military skills which they developed in Florida. Here they fought bounty-hunting slave catchers and Texas Rangers until the Civil War. Thus, it can be said that in general, Black Seminole rebels consistently and successfully waged war upon the slave industry of North America, from the beginning to the end.

And we must recall that ultimately the demise of the slave industry in North America was assisted by the “latent” alliance between congressional Abolitionists and the Florida rebels. The will of a few Africans to steadfastly challenge the slave industry eventually helped to free all slaves.
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