

ABSTRACT

MCCALLUM, DOUGLAS FORBES. "Their Look is Onward": The Politics of Cherokee Removal in North Carolina. (Under the direction of Dr. Craig Thompson Friend.)

Some historians have argued that Indian Removal existed at the center of Jacksonian era politics. Yet, such interpretations have not trickled into North Carolina historiography. State histories have ignored or trivialized the political significance of Cherokee removal within the state. If Cherokee removal has been discussed, authors have portrayed it as outside the political narrative. Even in considering how North Carolina's political leaders in the 1820s and 1830s widely disagreed about the Indian Removal Act, historians have dismissively concluded that such arguments demonstrate how North Carolinians were morally superior to neighboring southern states and the federal government.

This study explores how white North Carolinians were not morally superior or disinterested. The "Indian question" became a test of partisan politics as divided North Carolinians fought over their distinct (and increasingly distorted) visions of republicanism and political economy. Analyzing politicians' and newspaper editors' evolving stances during the Indian Removal debate uncovers a pattern of partisanship that masked a larger debate about the state's political economy and economic future. Letters to constituents, newspaper editorials, and voting and biographical data reveal that at both the national and state level, North Carolina's leaders constructed two interpretations of Jeffersonian republicanism and two contrasting images of white patriarchal responsibility that sought to advance competing visions for either an exclusively agricultural or a diversified economy. Posturing on Indian Removal was a central tactic in this endeavor and a wedge that further divided white North Carolinians from one another and whites from non-whites at the advent of the Second Party System.

White North Carolinians used Indian Removal as a political pawn, one as significant as the more historically recognized political issues of tariffs, banks, and internal improvements. Despite their competing rhetoric, North Carolina's leaders always coveted the Cherokees' land and gradually formulated a racist view of the Cherokees as innately inferior and, therefore, unworthy of citizenship and continued occupancy. Ultimately, the Cherokees suffered because partisanship and economic opportunity in Jacksonian America took precedent over law and morality.

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“Their Look is Onward”: The Politics of Cherokee Removal in North Carolina

by
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A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
North Carolina State University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

History

Raleigh, North Carolina

2017

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BIOGRAPHY

Mac McCallum originally hails from Rockville, Maryland. After graduating from St. Andrew's School (Delaware) in 2006 and Sewanee: The University of the South in 2010, Mac moved to Asheville, North Carolina where he spent five years as an administrator, teacher, and coach at Asheville School. There, he began what he hopes will be a long and rewarding career in independent schools; not before, however, pausing to fulfill his longstanding desire to pursue a Master's degree in American History. Upon graduation, Mac will resume his career on the faculty at Pace Academy in Atlanta, Georgia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Western North Carolina has played a significant role in my life, not only as a source of inspiration for this thesis, but most significantly as the place of introduction, engagement, and marriage to my wife, Mary Pat. Asheville will always be our first home, even as life takes us to wherever we may go. This work is dedicated and attributed to Mary Pat and the steadiness, patience, and warmth with which she shapes our life and home every single day.

The greatest influence upon this thesis was my adviser. I was fortunate to find myself in Dr. Craig Thompson Friend's Early American Republic course in the fall semester of 2015, and more fortunate that he agreed to undertake the commitment, patience, and attentiveness necessary to bring a project such as this to fruition. Without his wisdom, humor, guidance, care, and sleepless evenings, this work would never have been possible. It is his advising, in all its forms, that deserves the loudest acknowledgement.

I have also been blessed to find myself in the presence and care of many advisers throughout my academic life. I thank Peter and Darcy Caldwell and the rest of the faculty at St. Andrew's School for teaching me to care about my future and that only through dedication to a task can one expect to realize their potential. I owe my tools of written and oral expression to the faculty, administrators, and fellow students at Sewanee, particularly Professors of History, John Willis and Houston Roberson. Professor Roberson's sudden passing in December 2016 while this thesis was in process reminds us all to never delay an additional expression of thanks to someone who has enhanced our lives. To my former colleagues, administrators, and students at Asheville School, thank you for teaching me what it means to work hard on behalf of something you believe in. Finally, I attribute much of this work to my professors at North Carolina State

University: Dr. Mi Gyung Kim, Dr. Katherine Mellen Charron, Dr. Noah Strote, Dr. Michael Weisel, Dr. Nancy Mitchell, Dr. Ross Bassett, and Dr. David Gilmartin. They have profoundly exercised my ability to think critically and skeptically about the world around me. Although I doubt he recalls our conversation over a proposal for one of my very early papers, Dr. Strote, addressing my concern about politicizing my argument too much, stated, “everything is political!”

I derived much of the inspiration for undertaking this degree and thesis from my family. Conversations with my grandfather and father always and inevitably turn towards family history and the U.S. South. My curiosity is a direct product of theirs. Our ancestors’ early nineteenth century migration from Scotland to North Carolina and, subsequently, to Choctaw land in Mississippi, stoked an interest in the entire field of Indian Removal. Spending the first five years of my adult life in Asheville, North Carolina, and marrying into a family from nearby Sylva, generated an additional layer of curiosity about the history of the proximate Cherokee Nation. In some ways, I view my time and effort spent trying to understand the historical profession as a fulfillment of the interests held by my large and recently extended family. Their own passion for the subject fueled mine, but I was the one lucky enough to dedicate my full focus and attention to its exploration.

I extend my most heartfelt thanks to my mother, father, Anne, Sissy and Franko, Aunt Emily and Uncle Ed, Pa and Grammy, all the Williamses, Patsy and Jerry, and of course, Millie. Their love and support is my greatest source of strength and they know I love them immensely.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1790, the state of North Carolina, in order to assist the new federal government retire its public debts and secure the nation's western border, ceded to the United States its lands lying between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River. Although North Carolina relinquished sovereignty over these lands, millions of acres remained claimed by various native nations, most proximately, the Cherokees. Within a decade, the United States secured over four million acres from the Cherokees, but the Cherokees still retained approximately two million acres within the boundaries of western North Carolina, northern Georgia, newly formed Tennessee, and the Alabama territory.¹

As Indian Removal became a contentious political issue over the next forty years, North Carolinians operated through a different legal framework than did Georgians, a situation that constrained and frustrated them. Unlike North Carolina, by the early nineteenth century, Georgia had yet to negotiate a similar cession of its western territory to the federal government. To gain Georgia's trust, in 1802, the United States agreed to remove remaining Creek and Cherokee inhabitants from the state borders, albeit at an unspecified future date. North Carolina had received no such promise in its 1790 cession.²

In treaties of 1817 and 1819, the United States obtained an additional million acres from the Cherokees, guaranteeing them public lands west of the Mississippi River in exchange for lands in the East. Cherokee families were to remove westward and would receive full

¹ Hugh T. Lefler and Albert R. Newsome, *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 306; Milton Ready, *The Tar Heel State: A History of North Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 199; Jerry Clyde Cashion, *Fort Butler and the Cherokee Indian Removal from North Carolina* (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1970), 1; John R. Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees, 1819-1900* (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1984), 6.

² Finger, *The Eastern Band*, 14; Cashion, *Fort Butler*, 3; Committee on Indian Affairs, "Report and Resolution of a Joint Committee of the Legislature of North Carolina, relative to the Cherokee Indians," 27 January 1834, 23rd Congress, 1st Session, House Document No. 71. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1834), 1-4.

compensation for their former lands and any improvements. Importantly, Cherokees could also choose to remain on their homelands and become citizens of the United States, each head receiving 640 acres of land. In North Carolina, forty-nine Cherokee heads of household elected to remain under these conditions and received their plots within the state's borders.³

The Cherokee land cessions of 1817 and 1819 were an economic coup for North Carolina. Once these treaties were signed, huge swaths of land opened up for the state to sell to white settlers, generating much needed funds that could be put to alleviating some of the infrastructure deficiencies that plagued the state's economy. White citizens had rejected taxes for internal improvements, and the adverse effects of this were acutely felt by both eastern planters eager to get their crops to market and western settlers eager to tap into an increasingly interconnected economy. These deficiencies impeded economic development, restricted trade between the coast and the interior, isolated citizens, incentivized emigration, and heightened animosity between underdeveloped western counties and more populated eastern counties that dominated the state legislature, held much of the taxable wealth, and were reluctant to pay for improvements.⁴

North Carolina's General Assembly wasted no time in deciding how to utilize the land proceeds to relieve the state's infrastructure troubles. From 1815 to 1819, former state senator Archibald D. Murphey produced a series of reports detailing the state's desperate need for internal improvements. In 1819, the fruits of Murphey's plan were partially realized when the General Assembly established the "The President and Directors of the Board for Internal

³ "Treaty with the Cherokee," 8 July 1817, in *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, Volume II: Treaties, ed. Charles J. Kapper (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904), 140-44; Cashion, *Fort Butler*, 1; Finger, *The Eastern Band*, 10.

⁴ Alan D. Watson, "North Carolina and Internal Improvements, 1783-1861: The Case of Inland Navigation," *North Carolina Historical Review* 74.1 (January 1997): 37-73; Alan D. Watson, "Battling 'Old Rip': Internal Improvements and the Role of State Government in Antebellum North Carolina," *North Carolina Historical Review* 77.2 (April 2000): 179-204.

Improvements.” The Board would direct the state’s infrastructure projects and manage a “Fund for Internal Improvements” drawn largely from proceeds from anticipated sale of the Cherokee lands. White settlers who purchased acreage in the Cherokee tract would pay one-eighth in cash and the remainder in four installments, all of which would deposit immediately into the Fund for Internal Improvements.⁵

Between 1819 and 1823, Cherokee land sales generated close to \$40,000 in cash and \$70,000 in promissory notes, not nearly enough to meet the state’s internal improvements needs. So, the state eventually supplemented with dividends from stock in the banks of New Bern and Cape Fear. The Panic of 1819, however, ruined these plans. It sparked a decade-long depression that depreciated state currency, reduced property values, caused an overextension of banknotes, and forced banks to recall loans. The depression eroded the state’s ability to supplement the fund with bank stock dividends, and by 1830, the fund relied exclusively on Cherokee land sales.⁶

Yet, those proceeds remained insufficient. Cash from Cherokee land sales dwindled throughout the 1820s. Many previous purchasers had trouble completing their installments. Other would-be purchasers, believing federal titles to be sounder investments than those of the state, chose to purchase land directly from individual Cherokees who held 640-acre plots secured through the federal government. By 1833, after a steady decline in state land sales, North Carolina’s treasurer, William S. Mhoon, reported that “the Fund has become so reduced, as to have but little more than a nominal existence; nor is there a prospect of its accumulating much from any resources now within the control of the Board [of Internal Improvements]. The receipts

⁵ “An Act to create a fund for Internal Improvements, and to establish a Board for the management thereof,” *The Laws of the State of North-Carolina executed in 1819* (Raleigh: Thomas Henderson, 1820), 7-10; Watson, “North Carolina and Internal Improvements,” 46, 48; Ready, *The Tar Heel State*, 164. The law creating the Indian Improvements Fund and Board stated, “*Be it further enacted*, That the said fund shall consist of the nett proceeds of the sales of the lands lately acquired by treaty from the Cherokee Indians” (“An Act to create a fund for Internal Improvements. . . .,” 7).

⁶ Watson, “North Carolina and Internal Improvements,” 48.

from Cherokee purchasers constitute at present its only source of income. These at best would be inconsiderable.”⁷

Legal problems accompanied economic woes. After the 1819 treaty, North Carolina’s land surveyors, eager to quickly reap the financial benefits of western land sales, hastily sold many of the same tracts that the federal government had designated for Cherokees who chose to remain in the East. A large number of conflicting claims embarrassed state leaders and harmed North Carolina citizens, particularly as federal lawsuits waged against western settlers rendered their titles invalid.

One such conflicted claim made its way into the state legal system in 1824. *Euchella v. Welch* pitted Euchella, a Cherokee recipient of a federal tract, against white settler Joseph Welch, who had purchased the land from state surveyors. Chief Justice John Louis Taylor led the North Carolina Supreme Court in deciding in favor of Euchella, ruling that the treaties of 1817 and 1819 had granted citizenship to the remaining Cherokees and, therefore, protected their property rights. Taylor ruled that the Cherokees were “persons capable of being treated with, and holding property as a tribe or nation.” Still, although recognizing their citizenship, Taylor ignored how many Cherokees had adopted subsistence agricultural practices. Ensuring use of their “hunting grounds,” Taylor declared that the “Cherokee Indians shall have and enjoy all the tract of land therein described, and that it is reserved to them forever.” Since the United States alone had treaty-making power, its “acts within the limits of their authority must be obligatory on the State, their constituent.” Furthermore, Taylor concluded, “The reservations are more entitled to respect

⁷ Treasurer’s Report to North Carolina General Assembly, 18 November 1833, in *North Carolina Constitutionalist and Peoples’ Advocate* (Raleigh), 26 November 1833, 4.

since they further the policy of the State, in leading the few Indians that remain to an agricultural and civilized state.”⁸

The Court’s decree that the Cherokees owned their land proved problematic in that it inhibited the state’s ability to purchase Cherokee lands. North Carolina’s General Assembly, attempting to forestall additional conflict over title, lawsuits with the federal government, and lost funds due to direct sales between Cherokees and whites, had spent much of the early 1820s purchasing as much land as possible directly from the Cherokees and encouraging the Cherokees to resettle elsewhere in the state. Now, an increasingly hostile and polarized political landscape took shape, particularly over the relationship between state and federal authority. Partisan alignments were shifting at the same time North Carolina leaders attempted to procure Cherokee lands.⁹

Most North Carolinians had long harbored a deep belief in the ideological purity of Jeffersonian republicanism, best characterized by simplicity and frugality in government, a virtuous citizenry, and an economy built principally upon agriculture. Citizenship meant self-reliance, freedom from governmental interference, and a disinterested dedication to public good. This ideological posture played a role in the General Assembly’s reluctance to tax citizens to support public works, and continued to encumber efforts to even ratify the purchases of Cherokee lands after 1824. Self-interestedness also played a role, however, in these decisions. Wealthy eastern planters refused to pay a disproportionate amount of taxes to support public works and land purchases that would benefit emerging western counties. When it came to

⁸ Cashion, *Fort Butler*, 2; Finger, *The Eastern Band*, 11; “Report of the Committee on Judiciary,” in *Documents: Executive and Legislative, Session 1858-59* (Raleigh: Holden & Wilson, 1859), 1617-1619, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh; *Semi-Weekly Standard* (Raleigh), 7 December 1858, 3.

⁹ Finger, *The Eastern Band*, 11; Governor James Iredell Jr. to General Assembly, 17 November 1828, in *New Bern Spectator*, 29 November 1828, 1.

sacrificing for the public good, Jeffersonian republicanism dominated the state's political economy in theory but not always in practice.¹⁰

Jeffersonian Republicans had been fracturing for some time as federal policies, war with Britain in 1812, and post-war nationalism threatened to enhance federal power at the expense of the states. A conservative "Old Republican" faction committed to minimal government, low taxes, and states' rights emerged alongside a faction of National Republicans who sought to improve the economy by mixing farming, commerce and industry, government protectionism, and publicly-funded internal improvements. National Republicans believed a strong, self-sustaining nation would secure American power and forestall international conflict. Between 1816 and 1828, their policies of a national bank and federally-funded internal improvements appealed to many North Carolinians, but Old Republican suspicions remained of a centralized federal authority, particularly as a threat to the region's increasingly distinctive slave economy.¹¹

The Old Republicans dominated North Carolina politics in the 1810s and 1820s, supporting an agricultural economy, challenging government protections such as the tariff, arguing that federal banks were unconstitutional, advocating for strict construction of the Constitution, and in the election 1824, supporting William Crawford of Georgia for the presidency as he best represented an increasingly southern philosophy of states' rights and pro-slavery ideology. Four years later, when Crawford dropped out of the 1828 presidential election

¹⁰ Robert E. Shalhope, "Thomas Jefferson's Republicanism and Antebellum Southern Thought," *Journal of Southern History* 42.4 (November 1976): 529-56; "Political economy" refers to the use of government to facilitate the economic policy of the state. In this early nineteenth century context, "political economy" also held a moral dimension in that the government's role was to create policies that advanced a virtuous, independent citizenry that could contribute to the social and economic order. In this era of increased commercialization, defining the proper relationship between republican government and republican citizens was a fundamental, continually evolving, and elusive challenge. See Drew McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 5-11.

¹¹ Norman Risjord, *The Old Republicans: Southern Conservatism in the Age of Jefferson* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 5; Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 68, 84, 274, 275; William S. Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), 10.

for health reasons, many Old Republicans drifted, some begrudgingly, into the camp of General Andrew Jackson. Jackson's murky stance on the increasingly partisan and sectional issues of the tariff and internal improvements did not endear him to Old Republican ideologues, but his identity as a southern slaveholder made him a much more acceptable candidate than the incumbent, northern National Republican John Quincy Adams.¹²

Some Old Republicans appreciated Jackson's states' rights policies, anticipating vetoes on internal improvements and an attack against the "Monster Bank," which they considered a federal usurpation of state power. But some Old Republicans worried that Jackson had a dangerous tendency to exert executive authority in ways that threatened their fundamental principles of minimal federal government and states' rights. Too much executive authority posed a dangerous precedent for future administrations who might not share Jackson's "southern" view of American life. In an effort to combat the usurping "King Andrew" and reclaim true Jeffersonian notions of a people's republic, many Old Republicans would join forces with their ideological opponents, the National Republicans, to create the Whig Party in the early 1830s. The coalition provided a temporarily convenient and effective front against the Jacksonian Democrats who had come to dominate the South.¹³

Jacksonian Democracy appealed to large numbers of North Carolinians. The president's attitudes towards federally-sponsored improvements and re-chartering the Bank of the United States endeared him to many conservatives, particularly eastern planters devoted to slavery, disinterested in paying higher taxes for improvements, and with few commercial investments

¹² Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 6-15; Thomas E. Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics: North Carolina, 1815-1861* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989); Harry L. Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second Party System in Cumberland County, North Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981).

¹³ Risjord, *The Old Republicans*, 9. President Andrew Jackson vetoed the Maysville Road Bill on 27 May 1830 and removed the deposits from the Bank of the United States and placed them in state banks in the summer of 1833.

that required credit from a bank. Jackson successfully combined appeals to the wealthy and the poorer sects by attacking the “monied aristocracy” of banks and corporations that seemed complicit in the state’s declining economy over the previous decade. For those who harkened to the Jeffersonian agrarian simplicity of the past, Jackson claimed himself the true defender against those who sought to modernize the southern economy.¹⁴

As the Second American Party System of Democrats and Whigs emerged, North Carolinians on each side argued that they were advancing the true principles of republican government. Democrats fought against banks, tariffs, and federally-funded internal improvements in order to preserve republicanism and its emphasis on agricultural self-sufficiency. National Republicans and Whigs sought to diversify the state’s economy beyond agriculture through banks and increased industry, and employ the state government to promote internal improvements and increased access to education. By the 1830s, two variant strains of republican ideology had emerged in North Carolina, and politicians and newspaper editors sought to cement their visions through whatever means necessary.¹⁵

This was the shifting political spectrum within which North Carolina’s “Indian problem” developed. In February 1827, President John Quincy Adams and Georgia Governor George Troup pushed the “Indian question” into national politics, with reverberations that would greatly impact North Carolinians. Troup, as a Jacksonian Democrat, wanted to open Creek lands within Georgia’s state boundaries to settlers, extending the agrarian republic. Adams, a National Republican, responded with a threat to send a military force to protect the Creeks on their

¹⁴ Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*; Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics*; Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 381.

¹⁵ Max R. Williams, “The Foundations of the Whig Party in North Carolina: A Synthesis and a Modest Proposal,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 47.2 (April 1970): 115-29; Rush Welter, *The Mind of America, 1820-1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975); Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict*, 162-63.

federally-protected lands. Troup reacted with his own threat that he would prepare Georgia's militia in the event of an attack. In the wake of the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which had spurred a more vigilant defense of slavery from an increasingly anti-slavery North, apprehensive southerners interpreted Adams's threat against a southern slave state as another example of federal encroachment on state authority. For North Carolinians who had their own ongoing problems related to Cherokee lands, the political and constitutional stakes rose as the federal government took a militant stand to protect Indians.¹⁶ No doubt looking to ward off potential conflict with the federal government, North Carolina's General Assembly responded with a "Memorial to the United States Congress," imploring it to fully "extinguish" Cherokees' title to the remaining lands within the state. Not only would total cession boost the state's dwindling resources, but eliminating title to the 640-acre plots that dotted the North Carolina landscape would also remove a potential conflagration between federal and state authorities like that between the United States and Georgia.¹⁷

The Cherokees joined the debate. The *Cherokee Phoenix*, the official voice of the Cherokee Nation, pushed back against Jacksonian rhetoric that asserted state authority over Native Americans and claimed their rights as independent nations under the United States Constitution. More odious were Jacksonian suggestions that Cherokees were somehow uncivilized and incapable of progress, as reflected in one western North Carolina newspaper's

¹⁶ Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict*, 113; Ready, *The Tar Heel State*, 175; Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics*, 24-5; Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 10. North Carolina historian Thomas E. Jeffrey has argued that when Adams called for a national program of internal improvements, a national university, and an astronomical observatory in his first annual message to Congress in 1825, he alarmed North Carolinians committed to minimal government and strict construction of the Constitution; see *State Parties and National Politics*, 33.

¹⁷ "Report of the Joint Select Committee, appointed by the Legislature of North-Carolina to memorialize Congress, upon the subject of the Cherokee Lands," *Raleigh Register*, 20 February 1827. President John Q. Adams delivered his "Message to Congress on Rights of the Creek Indians" on 5 February 1827. The North Carolina General Assembly passed the resolution to appoint a committee on 7 February 1827.

description of the *Phoenix* as a newspaper created for the purpose “of diffusing intelligence among their people, and of civilizing and refining the more savage part of them.” In 1827, the Cherokee Nation established a capital at New Echota, Georgia, and ratified its own constitution that centralized power under legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The civilization program that had dominated federal Indian policy from George Washington to John Quincy Adams had seemingly come to fruition.¹⁸

Unfortunately for the Cherokees, their decision to claim autonomy and establish nationhood exacerbated tensions between federal and state authorities. Federal recognition of the Cherokee government would renege on the 1802 compact with Georgia and send a message that the federal government claimed authority over lands in southern states. For most white southerners, this was a deeply troubling prospect. Like other southerners, many North Carolinians were anxious about federal encroachment, particularly over slavery. Federal recognition would also limit North Carolina’s access to lands to sell, eroding what little revenue remained available to the state. As North Carolinians prepared for the election of 1828, then, the Cherokee problem became a central political consideration.

Jackson’s election to the presidency in 1828, then, represented a rejection of federal interference, Cherokee sovereignty, and the National Republican vision of banks, tariffs, manufactures, and internal improvements. Jackson, the old Indian fighter and treaty negotiator, won in a landslide. In North Carolina, he carried fifty-five of sixty-three counties, garnering 37,857 votes to Adams’s 13,918.¹⁹

¹⁸ *Western Carolinian*, reprinted in *North Carolina Star* (Raleigh) 16 August 1827, 3; Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1995), 13, 127-28. This assertion based on Anthony F. C. Wallace’s argument in *Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 14-20.

¹⁹ Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics*, 35; Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 25.

A proponent of Indian Removal, the new president encouraged Georgia to assert its authority in radical and unprecedented ways against the Cherokees. On December 19, 1829, in response to the Cherokees' announcement of their constitution and new government, and in the wake of Jackson's first State of the Union address which called for complete removal of Indians to the west of the Mississippi River, Georgia's General Assembly extended civil and criminal jurisdiction over the Cherokee Nation.²⁰ In this breach of federal law, Georgia argued that the national government had failed to purchase the remaining Cherokee lands as promised in the 1802 compact. Jackson buoyed Georgia's claim by staying silent and refusing to react, as Adams had done nearly three years earlier over the Creek dispute. With the Cherokees exerting legal and political autonomy, and a president committed to removal and protecting state sovereignty, white southerners sensed an opportunity to force the federal government's hand and test the notion of states' rights.

North Carolinians were less aggressive than Georgians, willing to wait for a less contentious opportunity to claim Cherokee lands. They did not wait long. In May 1830, the United States Congress passed the Indian Removal Act by narrow votes: 102-97 in the House and 28-19 in the Senate. The bill, which Jackson had situated as the highest priority in his legislative agenda, authorized the President to grant western lands to native peoples who voluntarily chose to leave their eastern homelands.²¹

Although previous treaties exchanged eastern lands for western territory, the Indian Removal Act denied Native Americans federal protection from state laws. Either the Indians

²⁰ Perdue and Green, *The Cherokee Removal*, 62; Andrew Jackson, "First Annual Message," 8 December 1829, in *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897*, ed. James D. Richardson, 11 vols. (Washington, DC: US Congress Joint Committee of Printing, 1920), 2: 442-62; Finger, *The Eastern Band*, 15.

²¹ "An Act to provide for an exchange of lands with the Indians residing in any of the states or territories, and for their removal west of the river Mississippi," 28 May 1830, 21st Congress, 1st Session, Ch. 48, in *The Laws of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1831), 411-12.

moved westward or they would be subject to the sovereign laws of the states in which they resided. In Georgia, such laws prohibited them from voting, suing, owning property, obtaining credit, or testifying in court against a white man. In contrast, based on the Treaty of 1819 and confirmed in the *Euchella vs. Welch* decision, North Carolina considered Cherokees to be citizens. Although few actually had acted upon their state citizenship, as long as they remained nominal citizens under state law, they received protection, theoretically. Jackson, however, made it clear that he intended to protect no Indians as long as they remained in their eastern homelands. In North Carolina, the rule of law and Jackson's intentions for complete removal were incompatible.²²

This study will prove that the "Indian question" became a test of partisan politics as North Carolinians fought over their distorted visions of Jeffersonian republicanism. Before Jackson's election, state leaders largely concurred that North Carolina must obtain the Cherokees' lands because they represented a crucial source of revenue. After Jackson proclaimed Indian Removal the foremost goal of his administration, however, partisans on each side of a widening political spectrum took stances on removal based on competing visions for the state's economic future and whether they believed Jackson supported that vision. Democrats strategically interpreted republicanism to fit their demands for states' rights and the protection and expansion of undiversified agrarian agriculture. Removing the Cherokees helped solidify this economic vision and the notion that America was an exclusively white republic. National Republicans and Whigs, meanwhile, sought to diversify the state's economy beyond agriculture, oftentimes through sophisticated federal channels. Denouncing Jackson's states' rights ideology and his authoritarian policies, particularly Indian Removal, as a distortion of Jeffersonian

²² Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 347-8; Finger, *The Eastern Band*, 11.

republicanism and egalitarianism became a stratagem to help construct a progressive economy and balance political power.

North Carolina politicians and newspaper editors couched base desires for land in the grander rhetoric of political economy. Cherokee removal became an intersection of national, sectional, and local interests, creating a complex web of political priorities. Ultimately, North Carolina's leaders wanted the Cherokees' land and the Cherokees were made to suffer because partisanship in Jacksonian America took precedent over morality and law. The Cherokees became a pawn in a larger political battle between powerful white men imbued in the belief that their inherent superiority granted them authority and responsibility to act on the Indians' behalf.

Analysis of such political manipulation, often ascribed to southerners broadly, and to Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee specifically, has seldom been applied to partisan North Carolinians. What role, if any, did North Carolina's political leaders play in subverting American idealism and law for political or economic gain? If North Carolina's leaders merely used Indian Removal as a tool to construct ideologies and organize parties, to what extent does this also make them complicit in the "calculated assault" against the Cherokees?²³

Similarly lacking exploration has been the role of race in the construction of the Second Party System in North Carolina. The commonly-referenced partisan divisions created by issues such as the tariff, internal improvements, and banking are insufficient for this endeavor. The debate over Indian Removal provides opportunity to explore the role of race in the state's political development. In what ways did white men in North Carolina manipulate racial distinctions and characterizations to help construct political parties and platforms in this new era?

²³ Tim Alan Garrison, *The Legal Ideology of Removal: The Southern Judiciary and the Sovereignty of Native American Nations* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 3, 5.

Although they have not examined North Carolina's response to Indian Removal, historians have long considered Indian Removal a notable theme in the histories of Jacksonian America and the Second American Party System. Still, they often have segregated it and trivialized its importance in relation to other issues political issues of the day. In *American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era* (1975), for example, historian Ronald Satz concluded that "Indian Removal occupied a secondary but nevertheless prominent position alongside such momentous issues as the tariff, internal improvements, and the National Bank in the formation of the new two-party system in the 1830s." Satz argued that National Republicans' opposition to and Democrats' support for removal became symptomatic of a larger political squabble during the Jacksonian years. National Republicans saw in the 1830 Indian Removal Act "an excellent propaganda vehicle" for proving to the public that President Jackson was an "ignorant, overbearing, military tyrant, prone to ruthlessness and vindictiveness." Meanwhile, Democrats interpreted their opponents' criticisms as partisan politics being waged against them rather than sincere humanitarian concern for native peoples.²⁴

According to Satz, congressional voting patterns, palpable disdain or reverence for President Andrew Jackson, and each party's abandonment of its standard philosophy regarding public expenditures evidenced the positions taken on Indian Removal as simply political loyalty tests. The most vocal opponents of removal, including Henry Clay, had actually supported it during John Quincy Adams's administration but altered their positions when Jackson embraced the measure. Hoping to defeat Jackson in the 1832 election, National Republicans and other anti-Jacksonians rallied to defeat a bill that their political enemy prioritized and upon which he hoped

²⁴ Ronald Satz, *American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 27, 39.

to build his legacy. Opposition to the Indian Removal Act became one weapon among many for defeating Jackson.²⁵

In Satz's interpretation, then, federal partisanship framed state histories of Indian Removal. Both *Cherokee Nation vs. Georgia* in 1831 and *Worcester vs. Georgia* in 1832, two widely publicized Supreme Court cases that pitted the federal government against Georgia over its relations with the Cherokees, witnessed Jacksonians and anti-Jacksonians wage a game of "political football" to achieve their political goals. Satz did not divorce state narratives from the federal history of over-aggressive partisanship, arguing that federal attorney William Wirt used the *Cherokee Nation* and *Worcester* cases to force Jackson into a corner. The president's inevitable refusal to enforce the Supreme Court's decision in *Worcester* would make him appear an anti-nationalist. As Satz wrote, to accomplish this, "the National Republicans quickly established a vast propaganda network" of newspapers, magazines, and oratorical agitation to encourage repeal of the Indian Removal Bill. In response, Democratic editors responded with charges against Clay and Wirt, reminding readers that these men had supported removal long before Jackson became president.²⁶

In "The American Indian and the Origin of the Second Party System" (1993), Fred S. Rolater built upon Satz's argument that Indian Removal was more a rhetorical tool of partisanship than a serious political issue. He explored removal's role in constructing oppositional parties, arguing that Indian Removal represented the single greatest "predictor of whether a congressman or a senator was a Whig or a Democrat." By evaluating Congressional

²⁵ Ibid., 27-30. The wholesale removal of the native tribes west of the Mississippi was predicted to cost a tremendous amount of money. Nearly all other political positions taken by the Democrats sought to reduce government expenditures. Inversely, National Republicans oftentimes sought to increase federal expenditures to achieve their policy initiatives, but vigorously opposed removal, many on grounds that its costs were prohibitive.

²⁶ Ibid., 42-43, 48, 51, 52.

bills and votes related to Indian Removal between 1830 and 1842, and categorizing those votes into pro-removal or anti-removal camps, Rolater correlated congressmen with party affiliations, regional origins, and whether or not they had Native Americans residing in their home states. Reacting to historian David Russo's claim that Indian Removal was not among the key political issues dividing National Republicans/Whigs from Democrats during the Jacksonian administrations, Rolater demonstrated that partisanship on removal bills was greater than that on all other issues, including internal improvements and banking. The controversies that historians for decades had considered the "most important issues underlying party formation," Rolater concluded, paled in comparison to the partisanship of Indian Removal.²⁷

Rolater exposed how historians have privileged some topics over others in framing the political narrative of Jacksonian America. Such historiographical decisions trickled down into North Carolina state histories, which have portrayed internal improvements, banking, and tariffs as the only topics of serious political significance. By elevating these contentious topics, historians have overlooked Indian Removal as a divisive issue in the state. When removal does appear, it is often trivialized and portrayed outside the political narrative.

This was not always the case. William K. Boyd's *History of North Carolina*, written in 1919, interpreted the first quarter of the nineteenth century as an era in which social, economic, and institutional problems, including Cherokee removal, provided the basis for a "new epoch in party organization and development." Yet, Boyd did not analyze how or why removal became a politically divisive topic, nor did he analyze the impact of removal beyond the sale of Cherokee lands as a crucial funding source for internal improvements. Still, Boyd's inclusion of removal as

²⁷ Fred S. Rolater, "The American Indian and the Origin of the Second American Party System," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 76.3 (Spring 1993): 180-203; David Russo, "The Major Political Issues of the Jacksonian Period and the Development of Party Loyalty in Congress, 1830-1840," in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 62.5 (May 1972): 3-51; Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict*, 159.

a political issue in Jacksonian America evidenced his belief that historical research would reveal inequitable historical patterns. As a Progressive historian, Boyd believed that history should do more than simply inspire patriotism.²⁸

History of North Carolina was a direct response to some other early twentieth-century historians who continued to promote a more conservative historiographical approach. Historian R. D. W. Connor, for example, denied conflict in Jacksonian America. In *North Carolina: Rebuilding the Ancient Commonwealth* (1929), he omitted the Cherokees from the state's past, allowing him to ignore Indian Removal as a contentious political issue in the 1820s and 1830s. Connor insisted that an "absence of party strife characterized the period of 1815-1830" and instead interpreted personality politics—specifically affinity for or disdain of President Andrew Jackson—as the cause of the era's political animosities. Indian Removal, Jackson's signature political achievement of his first administration, seemingly elicited no feelings of support or opposition among North Carolinians and, consequently, was not a partisan issue in the state.²⁹

Notably, Connor had studied under William A. Dunning at Columbia University. Dunning's former students helped usher in a long-standing historiographical consensus—the "Dunning School"—that argued that the South had been badly victimized by the federal government's Reconstructionist policies and black politicians. Across the Jim Crow South, historians' monographs minimized racial tension and omitted non-white actors as a means of reaffirming a white democracy properly controlled by the states. Connor's strong adherence to the Dunning consensus inspired his omission of the Cherokees from North Carolina's history. His brief characterization of passive and unthinking natives enabled Connor to conclude that

²⁸ William K. Boyd, *History of North Carolina, Volume 2: The Federal Period, 1783-1860* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1919), 66.

²⁹ R. D. W. Connor, *North Carolina: Rebuilding the Ancient Commonwealth, 1584-1925* (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1929), 504.

white southern politicians civilly and effectively tended to “real” Jacksonian political issues like the tariff, public lands, internal improvements, and the national bank.³⁰

Not surprisingly, minimizing social, racial, and economic conflict remained an historiographic theme into the mid-twentieth century as consensus historians, in the early years of the Cold War, sought to present a more unified United States and a less contentious American past. In 1954, Hugh T. Lefler and Albert R. Newsome wrote the first of four editions of *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State*, the long-standing definitive account of North Carolina history. At their behest, William Powell followed up Lefler and Newsome’s work with his own interpretation, *North Carolina: Through Four Centuries* (1989). For all three historians, the Jacksonian era may have been marred by conflict, but its ideological debates were mere family squabbles as white Americans sought to create a nation. Consensus historians were not averse to revising their scholarship to reflect new historical findings, such as the growth of industry, evolving relationships between state and federal governments, and the impact of immigration, but they were not good at all in incorporating changing historiographical conceptualizations of race relations. So, it is worth considering why Lefler, Newsome, and Powell minimized the place of Cherokee removal among the traditional themes of Jacksonian historiography. One reason may be racist assumptions about the inferiority of Native Americans that permeated white America in the twentieth century. Largely confined to reservations or hidden in urban ghettos, Native Americans seemed to have vanished by the twentieth century, and even as late as the 1980s, few historians had challenged the assumptions that their inherent “savagery” had been the cause for Native Americans’ demise. Most Consensus historians viewed

³⁰ On the Dunning School, see Vernon L. Wharton, “Reconstruction,” in *Writing Southern History*, ed. Arthur S. Link and Rembert W. Patrick (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 296-306; Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 75, 77-80.

nineteenth-century removal as incidental to American “progress.” Internal improvements, banking, federal-state relations, public education—those were “real,” long-standing political issues that one could trace throughout American history.³¹

By the turn of the twenty-first century, however, the rise of social history had shaken American historiography and forced all historians to confront the role of race in shaping the national past. Milton Ready’s *The Tar Heel State* (2005) and William A. Link’s *Change and Tradition in a Southern State* (2009) attempted to move beyond the political and economic histories that dominated the state’s historiography and incorporate race into their historical analyses. Yet, although each author engaged more deeply with topics of slavery and Indian relations, Indian Removal continued to be segregated from the political narratives of North Carolina during the Jacksonian era. Ready expressly sought to analyze Native Americans throughout his chapters to highlight their integrated and continuing role in the state’s history, but his chapter titled “Antebellum North Carolina” situated the Cherokees as an afterthought to his discussion of the politics of national banks and internal improvements. Link more vaguely stated his objective to explore how, on one hand, North Carolina held “strong, even powerful, forces of traditionalism punctuated by hierarchies of class, race relations, and gender,” while on the other hand, “a ‘progressive’ element . . . welcomed, even embraced, change.” This dichotomy was not applied to any discussion of Cherokee removal or the state’s role in it.³²

Although Ready and Link failed to explore the influence of race on the state’s antebellum politics, historians by this time had found significant evidence that race played a central role in

³¹ Hugh T. Lefler and Albert R. Newsome, *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973); William S. Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), xiv.

³² Milton Ready, *The Tar Heel State: A History of North Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), preface; William A. Link, *North Carolina: Change and Tradition in a Southern State* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2009), ix, 156-57.

the era's political developments. In *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (1981), Reginald Horsman argued that the idea of the superior Anglo-Saxon race increasingly became a useful political tool wielded on behalf of white men's desire for land and slaves. A new era emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century in which Democratic politicians and the press discovered that rhetorically constructing America as a white man's country helped achieve these ends. Consequently, Americans of various social and economic standings increasingly reconstituted their image of the republic as purely Anglo-Saxon. As Horsman argued, the idea that Anglo-Saxons were superior "fell on fertile ground" in the 1830s; "In a time of rapid growth and change, with its accompanying insecurities and dislocations, many Americans found comfort in the strength and status of a distinguished racial heritage." Those resistant to such an interpretation and clinging to the egalitarian ideals more aligned with the Enlightenment gradually yielded to the political success of elites who, utilizing "scientific" evidence, argued Indians were inherently unequal. A new age, wrought by many uncertain changes, solidified in the Jacksonian era under the auspices of white "racial confidence."³³

Non-Jacksonians were not immune from the lure of this newly emphasized racial confidence either. In *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (1990) historian Alexander Saxton agreed with Horsman that the concept of white superiority emerged from a desire to rationalize and justify the expropriation of Indian lands and slavery, but that racism came to form the basis of the Whig Party's development as well. According to Saxton, Whigs utilized rhetoric of white superiority, along with moralism and paternalism, as a political tactic to solidify their party ideology built on class hierarchy. As non-whites posed no immediate or long-term threat to white political power,

³³ Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 3, 5, 190.

Native Americans could remain in the East in an advantageous and permanent form of “clientship or dependency upon the upper class,” from which the Whig ranks principally formed. Whigs rhetorically established themselves as the moral protectorate for Indians and slaves, made possible only because their Democratic opponents had firmly established themselves, especially through the press, as the “ruthless” exporters of hard racial politics. Whigs were no less racist, but found in defending Indians a political opportunity to appeal to society’s moral sentiments as a way of solidifying their own claims to the top of a white-controlled political hierarchy.³⁴

Beyond the theme of a Cherokee presence, another consistent but equally flawed theme to North Carolina’s state histories has been the characterization of early nineteenth-century North Carolina as “Rip Van Winkle”: sleepy, disinterested, shackled by a laissez-faire approach to government, built on Jefferson’s agrarian republican ideology, and unwilling to take any public measures for the state’s benefit that might infringe upon individual rights. Historians have relied on this characterization to illustrate how North Carolina evolved from an economic and political backwater to a progressive and influential state. Connor claimed that no economic progress between 1815 and 1834 was possible without profound political changes because a laissez-faire doctrine “checked progress and held back the economic, intellectual, and social development of North Carolina until new prophets arose in Israel.” Lefler and Newsome agreed that North Carolina was “underdeveloped, backward, and indifferent to its condition,” largely due to the state’s one-party system, rooted in the “Jeffersonian philosophy of inaction—that the government which governs least is best.” Powell propounded the “Ol’ Rip” theme when he described the state as “Asleep,” full of satisfied and contented easterners and self-sufficient and isolated westerners. North Carolinians’ collective spirit of Jeffersonian individualism, which

³⁴ Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (London: Verso, 1990) 1, 70, 72, 95.

“characterized most of its people,” kept the state stagnant. Ready argued that the “Jeffersonian belief in a minimal, passive role for government in North Carolina” eventually worsened the state’s condition until a series of constitutional and democratic reformers (Connor’s “prophets”) altered the course of the state’s constitutional politics and economy. Link characterized North Carolina’s political culture as “fiercely independent” and “strongly anti-authoritarian,” unable to keep pace with the rapidly developing world of nineteenth-century America. The problem with these Jeffersonian interpretations of North Carolina politics is that historians failed to consider Jeffersonian ideology as anything more than a conservative economic philosophy.³⁵

If North Carolinians were committed Jeffersonian Republicans, their political ideologies most certainly extended beyond economic considerations of government expenditures and taxation. Beyond North Carolina historiography, scholars had uncovered other ways in which Jeffersonianism influenced early nineteenth-century American development. Bernard Sheehan argued that a consensus emerged in white America, unchanged from the American Revolution to the 1830s, that white men should be guided in their approach to the Indians by a spirit of philanthropy: an approach built on benevolence, self-satisfaction, righteousness, moral aggression, and paternalism towards African-American slaves and Native Americans. Jefferson and his adherents believed that Indian “savagery” must ultimately give way to white civilization, and it was the white man’s moral responsibility to ensure this happened. This theory, Sheehan argued, characterized all Jeffersonians no matter their differences of opinion on other issues. Anthony F.C. Wallace concurred. Jefferson’s vision for the United States incorporated native peoples into American society and culture, erasing their cultural identities through assimilation.

³⁵ Connor, *Rebuilding the Ancient Commonwealth*, 506; Lefler and Newsome, *History of a Southern State*, 314, 324; Powell, *Through Four Centuries*, 247; Ready, *The Tar Heel State*, 166-68; Link, *Change and Tradition*, viii.

Jefferson's successors, James Madison, James Monroe, and even John Quincy Adams to some extent, sustained this philosophy.³⁶

As William Powell evidenced, even when ideology is considered in historical analysis, it is often demarcated along a geographical axis, dividing the older, wealthier plantation culture in eastern North Carolina from the newer, economically insecure, small farmer culture that arose in the western part of the state. Historians have used the economic divide and coinciding cultural differences to explain divergent positions on political issues such as internal improvements, tariffs, and banking. The traditional narrative is that North Carolinians developed positions on contemporary issues relative to their geographic locations, and thus economic circumstances. Historiographically, little has changed since Connor concluded that western North Carolinians who prioritized internal improvements that would connect them to the market economy trended towards the National Republican party in the 1820s and 1830s; and eastern North Carolinians, eschewing public works projects and remaining faithful to strict constructionist principles of Jefferson, considered themselves Jacksonian Democrats.³⁷

Lefler and Newsome perpetuated the east-west dichotomy, claiming that an eastern moneyed aristocracy dominated state politics and rendered its political system highly undemocratic as a result of its legislative influence. Eastern dominance split the National Republicans: the eastern faction committed to staying in power, retaining wealth, and limiting taxation and government; and a western faction arose resentful of those powerful easterners and eager for positive government that would promote public improvements. Lefler and Newsome contended that, upon President Andrew Jackson's election in 1828, easterners became pleased

³⁶ Bernard Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 9-12; Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*, 14-20.

³⁷ Connor, *Rebuilding the Ancient Commonwealth*, 512.

with “his devotion to states’ rights with respect to the Indian problem, internal improvements, banking, and the federal surplus,” while westerners became frustrated with his veto of federally-sponsored internal improvements. Milton Ready, too, attempted to explain the Jackson administration’s waxing and waning popularity in terms of an east-west divide, arguing that when he killed the Bank of the United States, rejected internal improvements with his veto of the Maysville Road Bill, and appointed an easterner, John Branch, to his cabinet, “the mania for Jackson died in western North Carolina and was reborn in the east.” According to many North Carolina historians, sectional differences seemingly galvanized as ideological stances in Jacksonian North Carolina.³⁸

Although Lefler and Newsome mentioned Indian Removal, they, like other historians of North Carolina failed to explore the topic in relation to other political issues or to seriously consider Cherokee removal within this east-west paradigm. If a sectional-ideological divide existed in North Carolina with respect to the major political issues of internal improvements, the tariff, and banking, then one might suppose that opinions on the “Indian problem” fell into similar geographic camps. Historians have done a poor job exploring connections between sectional politics and the “Indian problem,” despite the fact that over three thousand Cherokees resided in the western part of the state, that Jackson considered removal one of the most important measures of his administration, and that an anti-Jacksonian called it “the greatest question which ever came before Congress, short of the question of peace and war.”³⁹

Yet, Indian Removal has not been entirely absent from North Carolina’s historiography. The generation of New Social historians who arrived in the aftermath of the civil rights

³⁸ Lefler and Newsome, *History of a Southern State*, 339, 343; Ready, *The Tar Heel State*, 168-69.

³⁹ Representative Edward Everett of Massachusetts, quoted in Jon Meacham, *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House* (New York: Random House, 2008), 54.

movements of the 1960s and 1970s increasingly incorporated the Cherokees into their narratives and expounded upon the “sad and pathetic chapter of Indian history” that earlier historians had mentioned but largely ignored. What began in this new era of historical writing was a monolithic castigation of southern white males as perpetrators of Indian Removal without fully analyzing the range of opinions, circumstances, and political factors that accompanied white patriarchy.⁴⁰

Among the more traditional historians, William Powell probably best realized the shifting historiographical landscape. Discussing the removal period in general, he argued that far too many whites did not believe Native Americans would or could assimilate into white American culture: “Greed and envy, a feeling of racial superiority, and an indifference to human suffering were rampant among the whites. The late twentieth-century concern for ‘endangered species’ probably never occurred to more than a handful of them.” He attributed much of this indifference to the fact that, since the American Revolution, the federal government had conducted all business with native peoples—signing treaties, constructing reservations, removing them westward, and repeating this process “many times over the next half century” until the “Indians gradually lost nearly all their ancestral land.” Painting white North Carolinians with a broad brush, Powell erased any diversity of opinion on removal that may have existed among them.⁴¹

Although they eagerly incorporated Native American perspectives into their studies, Social historians did not necessarily offer a solution to the historiographical oversights found in Powell’s work or that of other historians. Jerry Clyde Cashion’s *Fort Butler and the Cherokee Indian Removal from North Carolina* (1970) and John Finger’s *The Eastern Band of Cherokee* (1989) engaged the North Carolina Cherokees directly, seeking to uncover stories that had been ignored. Cashion intended “to clarify the action this State took—or did not take—in the

⁴⁰ Boyd, *History of North Carolina*, 77.

⁴¹ Powell, *Through Four Centuries*, 27, 239.

removal” of the Cherokees, while Finger constructed an ethnohistory of the North Carolina Cherokees and the impact federal and state governments had on their lives, legacy, and traditions. Each historian analyzed the topic of removal far more extensively than previous historians, but in emphasizing social history, both Cashion and Finger deemphasized the traditional history that laid out the partisanship of Cherokee removal as a political issue.⁴²

Consequently, despite the shift in historiographical focus, the conclusions remained very much the same. Cashion assumed that, “although generalizations in history are dangerous, it is fairly evident that in this instance the instigator of the removal was the State of Georgia, and the driving force behind the actual carrying out of the policy was President Andrew Jackson.” By making removal Georgia’s political issue and Jackson’s initiative, Cashion joined previous historians in excusing North Carolina politicians, acknowledging a generally widespread desire for the Cherokees to remove but defending an equally vigorous opposition to the methods by which removal was implemented. Georgia, not North Carolina, instigated removal and, according to Cashion, that is evidenced in “the feelings that many of the Indians had for North Carolina,” as delivered by Cherokee Chief Yonaguska in 1838: “The people of North Carolina have always been very kind to us, and we know they will never oppress us. . . . I always advise my people . . . never forget the kindness of North Carolina and always be ready to help her in time of war. I HAVE NOTHING MORE TO SAY.” Finger similarly argued that North Carolina held “no malice” in its hasty possession of ceded Cherokee land in 1819, and that “North Carolina was not as aggressive as Georgia or some other southern states,” despite white Carolinians’ interests in Cherokee lands. Contrasting North Carolina against Georgia, both Cashion and Finger largely portrayed North Carolina as the lesser of two evils, and therefore, a relatively

⁴² Cashion, *Fort Butler*, v; Finger, *The Eastern Band*, xi.

benign subject unworthy of further investigation. Echoing the defense of whiteness found in consensus historiography, the New Social history concluded that, although white North Carolinians hungered for land, they morally opposed coercive removal, were relatively kind to the Cherokees, and simply responded to the instigators and implementers—Georgia and the federal government.⁴³

It is an unsatisfactory narrative that North Carolinians wanted Cherokee land but citizens' strong moral principles restrained them from acting as aggressively as the Georgians. Digging deeper into the political motives behind their desire for land, opposition to coercion, and reluctance to confront the federal government uncovers a very different North Carolina than Cashion and Finger portrayed. Uncovering a more satisfying narrative requires joining together what has previously been treated separately: Cherokee removal and North Carolina's political scene.

Harry L. Watson's *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second Party System in Cumberland County, North Carolina* (1981) and Thomas E. Jeffrey's *State Parties and National Politics: North Carolina, 1815-1861* (1989) represent the most detailed accounts of Jacksonian politics in North Carolina. Not surprisingly, neither touches directly upon Indian Removal because the historiography has always segregated the topic from the state's political history. Still, each provides meaningful insight into the interplay of national and local issues across North Carolina, offering contexts in which to situate the debates over removal that galvanized voters and politicians.

In his case study of Cumberland County, Watson sought to explain the origins of party formation by exploring intersections of national and local issues that were exploited by

⁴³ Cashion, *Fort Butler*, 5, 27-28; Finger, *The Eastern Band*, 11, 15.

competing politicians. The “most important issues underlying party formation” were states’ rights, internal improvements, and Jackson’s Bank War. Appropriating the “personalities as politics” approach that Connor had employed, Watson argued that Jackson’s election polarized the county between those who supported the president and those who opposed him, and this became the basis of the new party system. Yet, because politicians found that issues alone did not mobilize sufficient popular support to gain political office, “county politicians created two alternative world views or intellectual frameworks which made the issues of states’ rights, internal improvements and banks intensely meaningful to the electorate. Those few who could not accommodate themselves to one viewpoint or the other dropped out of politics.” Each of these world views was a “variant of traditional republican political culture, and each enabled its adherents to identity with some version of the will of the people”—what Watson termed the “Banner of Political Faith.”⁴⁴ Watson compellingly argued that divergent strains of classical republican ideology coalesced upon Jackson’s election. Like historians of North Carolina before him, he neglected consideration of Jackson’s Indian policy, which some historians like Satz have argued was instrumental in getting him elected: “Jackson’s enthusiastic support for Indian Removal was undoubtedly one of the reasons he swept the southern states in the 1828 election.”⁴⁵

Thomas E. Jeffrey similarly argued that a mixture of state, local, and national issues shaped the Second Party System in North Carolina. He drew upon the east-west paradigm as a major contributor to political ideologies, but nuanced the sectional narrative by suggesting “both parties were coalitions of eastern and western interests.” Only internal improvements,

⁴⁴ Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict*, 2, 159, 162-163.

⁴⁵ Satz, *American Indian Policy*, 11; Rolater, “The American Indian and the Origin of the Second American Party System.”

apportionment of the public school fund, and creation of new counties evidenced pure east-west sectionalism. Other issues like the federal bank and nullification found supporters and detractors in both eastern and western North Carolina. In other words, Jacksonian North Carolina was a story not of sectionalism but intense localism that prevented effective party mobilization. In order to keep parties competitive, Jeffrey argued, Whig and Democratic organizers had to maintain citizens' attention on national issues so as not to alienate the fragile coalition of eastern and western interests that diverged when political conversations switched to local issues.⁴⁶

Watson and Jeffrey brought to light an important consideration: organizers of the Second Party System crafted ideologies out of key national issues that held meaning for North Carolinians. The hugely divisive issue of Indian Removal that split so much of the national political parties, therefore, may have been utilized as political fodder for party formation in North Carolina. The prospect raises interesting historical questions for reconsidering the political significance of removal. How did Watson's two camps of republicanism understand Indian Removal? Although Watson contended that states' rights, internal improvements, and Jackson's Bank War proved ideal vehicles for mobilizing popular support and creating ideological camps, did Indian Removal play an equally crucial role in spawning these opposing factions? Why was Indian Removal eclipsed in the political arena as politicians moved on to the "most important issues underlying party formation"? If, as Rolater concluded, the Indian Removal issue held a nationally preeminent position upon Jackson's election and continued reverberating as a political issue throughout the decade, why did it disappear from the North Carolina story so quickly? Did party leaders, who capitalized on opinions regarding internal improvements and states' rights to build a political base, similarly wield Indian Removal to serve political purposes as well, even if

⁴⁶ Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics*, 3.

only to advance positions on internal improvements and states' rights? Satz and Rolater found such motivations at the federal level. Watson and Jeffrey found similar motivations at state and county levels. It seems North Carolina's political history demands comparable consideration.

Finally, we must consider how Indian Removal was not simply a tool of partisan politics, but a consequence of partisanship as well. Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green's *The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears* (2007) boldly concluded that removal's lesson for the American people is that "racism, greed, and political partisanship can subvert even the noblest American ideals." Meanwhile, Tim Alan Garrison's *The Legal Ideology of Removal: The Southern Judiciary and the Sovereignty of Native American Nations* (2009) argued that under the influence of the "cultural and political whims of the population," southern judiciaries manipulated the law to repudiate tribal sovereignty, resulting in "thousands who suffered and died on the removal trails; . . . the casualties of a calculated assault by the southern states on the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Indian tribes."⁴⁷

According to these historians, it was not simply the federal government or Jackson, but the southern political system as well that held responsibility for removal. Georgia's desires for Cherokee land, Perdue and Green argued, did not derive from some abstract ideological difference with the federal government, but rather from politicians' dreams of "cement[ing] their political future." By engineering a cession that would grant them rewards at the ballot box, politicians simply competed with one another in the basest of pandering: acquiring land, seizing the credit, and passing free farms along to their voters. Garrison found similar motivations in the

⁴⁷ Perdue and Green, *The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears*, 164; Garrison, *The Legal Ideology of Removal*, 3, 13.

southern state courts that, supposedly acting on behalf of southern citizens, aligned judicial decisions with pro-removal political arguments.⁴⁸

This study will prove that North Carolina's politicians and newspaper editors appropriated opposite stances on the Indian Removal debate for partisan purposes. Their rhetoric drew on divergent interpretations of Jeffersonian republicanism and appeals to white men's sense of patriarchal responsibility in order to solidify their visions for the state's economic future. More complex than neighboring states, North Carolina was a critical participant in Indian Removal. Cherokee men, women, and children suffered as a result of this political gamesmanship, and this tragic chapter in the nation's history must reckon with the heart of the North Carolina story.

⁴⁸ Perdue and Green, *The Cherokee Nation*, 70-71; Garrison, *The Legal Ideology of Removal*, 6.

“Disagreeable and Dangerous Neighbors” or “Profitable Stock”? Politicians and Diverging Conceptualizations of Political Economy

On December 26, 1826, North Carolina Governor Hutchins G. Burton delivered his annual message to the General Assembly, imploring them to address one of the state’s most pressing problems: internal improvements. With successful passage of the Literary Fund Bill in 1825 to appropriate money for public education, Burton demanded the legislature take up another public initiative—the state’s infrastructure. A state with poor public education and famously known for its poorer roads, harbors, ports, and towns had problems to address.¹

Burton argued that a well-regulated and properly funded internal improvements system was necessary to secure the state’s economic future. It was apparent to all, he proclaimed, that “in particular sections of the State, the greatest distress is at present apprehended among the poorer class of our fellow citizens” who, due to lack of infrastructure, could not get their crops to market quickly enough to secure their financial well-being. A hardy and industrious population advantageously working with “a great variety of soil and climate” should not suffer from these “evils.” Only improvements could stem the massive westward emigration of the state’s citizens. “Facilitate the intercourse between the State,” implored Burton, “open your water courses, repair your old roads, and make new ones.” Yet, the Governor appealed to a legislature imbued with the Jeffersonian philosophy of restricted government expenditures and protecting an economy built principally on agriculture, not commerce. Heretofore, the General Assembly had taken only nominal steps to begin addressing these problems.²

¹ Governor Hutchins G. Burton Message to General Assembly, 26 December 1826, *Western Carolinian* (Salisbury, NC), 9 January 1827. According to historian Milton Ready, “Between 1776 and 1825, the general assembly rejected every bill to set up any system of public schools”; see Milton Ready, *The Tar Heel State: A History of North Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 166.

² Burton Message to General Assembly, 26 December 1826; Hugh Lefler and Albert Newsome determined that “the heaviest migration was from eastern parts of the state and to Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and Indiana.” As early

The State Assembly had established the Internal Improvements Fund in 1819 which, along with the Literary Fund of 1825, had been capitalized with proceeds from the sale of lands previously claimed by the Cherokees but ceded in federal treaties of 1817 and 1819. Burton argued that his internal improvements initiative could be accomplished easily if the legislature would extract additional resources from this source. “I do not wish the public money to be unnecessarily expended when it can be avoided,” said Burton, but when it is “considered that there is already a fund created, (the Cherokee Lands) and our fellow citizens will not probably be burdened with additional taxes, it is most respectfully submitted, whether a judicious system of Internal Improvements should not be prosecuted?”³

By 1826, growth of the Literary and Internal Improvement funds was too meager to be put to any large-scale project. So, Burton called on a frugal legislature to focus on selling the remaining Cherokee lands to fund internal improvements. It is believed, Burton wrote, “that the lands remaining unsold, are of sufficient value, to be well worthy the attention of the Legislature.... It is obviously the interest of the State, and more immediately of the citizens of that section of the State, that they should forthwith be brought into market.” Obtaining, selling, and settling the remaining Cherokee lands would “enhance the present revenue” and “augment the agricultural resources of the State.” Fertile lands, improved transportation networks, and education were initiatives many state leaders could get behind, particularly if the state did not have to impose additional taxes.⁴

as 1815, it was “estimated that 200,000 North Carolinians were living in other states,” and by 1850 nearly 300,000, “or about one-third of all free native North Carolinians, were living in other states.” The state’s population dropped from fourth place in 1790 to fifth in 1820, and to twelfth in 1860, causing land values and state revenue to decline. See *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 320-321.

³ Burton Message to General Assembly, 26 December 1826.

⁴ Ibid.; Alan D. Watson “North Carolina and Internal Improvements, 1783-1861: The Case of Inland Navigation,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 74.1 (January 1997): 37-73. Watson concluded that, after 1823, proceeds were

Burton concluded with a fateful warning. Vermont's General Assembly had recently advocated for the abolition of slavery. Burton argued that selling western lands and investing in internal improvements and education was a crucial piece of the "sleepless vigilance" North Carolina must maintain against such types of "unauthorized, unjustifiable interferences." "It becomes every State and people," he warned, "to be peculiarly alive to every circumstance, which may threaten their existence; and to provide every precaution, against any emergency to which they may be exposed." North Carolina could not "neglect our resources or overlook the peculiarity of our situation in common with a few other States, arising from the diversity of our population." Investments in the future, argued Burton, would empower the entire South so that the region's "peculiar institution" could be protected. His appeal worked. The General Assembly quickly went to work to procure approximately one million unsold acres of federally-held Cherokee land.⁵

Although many state leaders did not share Burton's vision of political economy, they agreed that they must act to protect North Carolina from abolitionism. Two weeks later, on January 5, 1827, state Senator Daniel Monroe Forney, a plantation owner, former United States Congressman, and federal treaty negotiator with the Creeks, submitted a resolution for the General Assembly's consideration. Rather than continue to purchase small plots of land directly from the Cherokees, as North Carolina had done for nearly a decade, Forney called for a joint committee to present a memorial to the U.S. Congress entreating it to extinguish all remaining titles to Cherokee lands within the state. Forney's resolution passed in the Senate, and shortly

negligible from the Cherokee land sales. The "Annual average income of the fund thus dwindled from \$21,866 during the years 1823 to 1827, to \$11,120 from 1828 to 1831," partially due to the fact that "noteholders either died, became insolvent, or repurchased land directly from the Cherokee, claiming that title from the Indians was superior to that from the state" (48).

⁵ Burton Message to General Assembly, 26 December 1826.

thereafter, the House of Commons agreed as well. The General Assembly wanted the federal government to take responsibility for purchasing and then transferring lands from their indigenous neighbors. After all, the federal government had initiated the situation by providing 640-acre tracts of “state” land to each Cherokee family in treaties of 1817 and 1819.⁶

If the federal government accepted North Carolina’s argument, not only would it front the bill, but it would also invalidate the titles it had provided Cherokee residents years earlier. Throughout the 1820s, state-appointed land surveyors had hastily sold western lands to white settlers before land boundaries had been established or titles had been purchased from Cherokee inhabitants. Further complicating matters, the North Carolina Supreme Court ruled in *Euchella vs. Welch* (1824) that federally-backed Cherokee titles superseded the state’s claims. North Carolina embarrassingly lost case after case in federal court, leaving white settlers on newly purchased lands with meaningless state-issued titles. The state lost money whenever settlers demanded reimbursements. The federal government’s invalidation of land titles would remedy this embarrassing and onerous financial burden.⁷

More importantly, the request to invalidate Cherokee title was politically motivated. Given the concurrent constitutional and near-military crisis between President John Quincy Adams and Georgia’s Governor George Troup over Creek lands, the legislature’s request would potentially remove a pretext for conflict between federal authorities and North Carolina’s surveyors. The Adams-Troup dispute struck a sensitive chord in North Carolina, particularly

⁶ William S. Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Volume 2: D-G (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 221; *Journals of the Senate & House of Commons of the General Assembly of North Carolina at the session of 1826-1827* (Raleigh: Lawrence & Lemay, 1827), 21, 44, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.

⁷ In *Euchella vs. Welch* (1824), the state supreme court upheld the validity of federal treaties and the primacy of Cherokee title over that of the state; see John R. Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees, 1819-1900* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 11.

among those most eager to maintain state sovereignty in the face of any increase in federal authority.

Hoping to ensure that the General Assembly approved this memorial to Congress, state representatives submitted numerous complaints from citizens begging for financial reprieve. On January 9, 1827, House member David L. Swain of Buncombe County “presented the petition of Humphrey Posey, of Haywood county, stating a grievance growing out of the purchase of Cherokee lands, and praying for remuneration.” On January 11, Representative Ninian Edmonston presented a petition on behalf of James Stephenson, also of Haywood County, “stating a grievance that he had sustained in the purchase of a tract of Cherokee land, and praying for redress.” On January 22, Swain presented another petition from Thomas Mills, also of Haywood County, “stating certain grievances growing out of the purchase of Cherokee lands, and praying for redress.” These petitions continued for many months. Swain, a future Whig governor and president of the Internal Improvements Board, along with his western colleagues, were eager to prove that their constituents had been badly mistreated due to these disputed titles, and that federal action to eliminate Cherokee title was the necessary remedy.⁸

On February 7, 1827, two days after President Adams’s message to Congress upholding federal authority over Creek lands, the General Assembly approved Forney’s resolution. The memorial began by outlining the state’s interpretation of the history behind these lands. In 1790, North Carolina had ceded to the federal government the state’s claims to westerns land stretching to the Pacific Ocean. The legislature opined that, although “It is true [this] act of cession did not require the United States to stipulate that all right and title of the Indians to lands within the

⁸ *Western Carolinian*, 30 January 1827; *North Carolina Star* (Raleigh, NC), 26 January 1827; William S. Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Volume 5: P-S (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1994), 483-86.

limits of North-Carolina, should be extinguished by the United States, as has been done by Georgia,” the federal government was *obligated* to do so. The legislature claimed that North Carolina’s leaders never requested such a stipulation in 1790 because they believed in “the parental care of the General Government, generously confiding in her sense of justice, and believing that good policy would dictate the extinguishment of Indian title.” Rather than making an appeal built on firm legal evidence, the 1827 legislature claimed that thirty years earlier, North Carolina had merely *assumed* extinguishment of Cherokee titles would occur. It was important now that the federal government fully acknowledge the state’s sovereignty over these lands.⁹

The federal government had not been totally negligent in “Acknowledging the rights of North-Carolina, and yielding to her just claims.” The United States had attempted to extinguish Cherokee titles through the treaties of 1817 and 1819. Without going into additional detail, however, the legislature claimed the federal government had failed as a result of a technicality. Some lands to be surrendered under the treaties were specified while others were ill-defined. Vague delineation of some land tracts protected Cherokee claims in the state and caused the federal government to abort its true “intention” to extinguish all their lands. Conveniently foregoing explanation of past “intentions,” the memorial outlined its reasons for title extinguishment based on present needs:

The lands in occupancy of the Cherokees ... within the limits of North-Carolina, are of great extent and value. This tract of country ... includes more than one million acres of land; & is estimated to be worth four hundred thousand dollars; and is occupied by about three thousand Indians.¹⁰

⁹ “Report of the Joint Select Committee, appointed by the Legislature of North-Carolina to memorialize Congress, upon the subject of the Cherokee Lands,” *Raleigh Register*, 20 February 1827.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

These were “not the only inducements,” claimed the legislature. Beyond the legal and economic justifications for extinguishing Cherokee title, there were racial demands as well. The legislature argued that “red men are not within the pale of civilization, they are not under the restraints of morality, nor the influence of religion; and they are always disagreeable and dangerous neighbors to a civilized people.” The solution was “extinguishment of the Indian title to this district of country, and the removal of this unfortunate race beyond the Mississippi” as it “is of momentous importance to the interests of this state. The fertility of the soil, the extent and value of territory, are sufficient inducements.” The federal government must remove “this unfortunate race of beings,” and they “might easily be induced to exchange their lands in this State, for territory beyond the Mississippi, whither so many of their brethren have gone.” So clear was this solution, legislators argued, and in line with their previous argumentation, that “It is unnecessary to recite facts or urge arguments. . . . Removal will be beneficial not only to the citizens of this State, but the Indians themselves.”¹¹

In demanding the Cherokees remove, the memorial sought to accomplish much more than title extinguishment and reimbursement for legal fees and land purchases incurred by the state. The legislature called on the federal government to remove the Cherokees beyond the Mississippi once and for all. “Peace and tranquility” in North Carolina depended on it.

Yet, achieving peace and tranquility required more than removing “disagreeable and dangerous” neighbors who occasionally skirmished with whites. Before the treaties of 1817 and 1819, “North-Carolina had the right of sovereignty and soil of all the land within her limits; the Indians enjoying a mere right of occupancy.” Rejecting *Euchella vs. Welch*, the legislature insisted that the federal government had illegally provided 640-acre tracts of land to Cherokee

¹¹ Ibid.

residents, depriving the state of these land rights. Again, reinterpreting the actions of preceding legislatures, the memorial claimed that North Carolina's statesmen had been "unwilling to array opposition against the acts of the general government."¹²

The legislature's request for removal expanded upon Governor Burton's own designs for peace the previous December, and highlighted a philosophical divide among the state's politicians. Burton had made no request to fully remove the Cherokees. The threat to peace, Burton claimed, came not from federal encroachment on state sovereignty but originated with northern state legislatures dominated by abolitionists intent on destroying the southern economy. In fact, claimed Burton, "we are indeed protected" from federal interference "by constitutional provision." Obtaining Cherokee lands to fund internal improvements and education were necessary to make the state powerful enough to defend its economy and institutions from menacing states and individuals, not the federal government.¹³

Forney and the General Assembly, in contrast, justified their desire for Cherokee lands as a means to defend the state's sovereignty and soil *from* the federal government. Obtaining Cherokee lands would secure valuable and fertile territories for an agricultural economy, remove a group of people who did not use the land as the state government expected, and solidify state authority. They made no mention of investing land proceeds into public works projects. Despite differences between the Forney and Burton plans, both agreed on the state's right to Cherokee lands.

A fundamental disagreement, however, existed at the heart of this agreement. For Burton, government provided a solution to fixing the economic problems facing North Carolina. He saw government-sponsored projects as a means to protect the capabilities of a southern economy

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Burton Message to General Assembly, 26 December 1826.

based on slave labor, but receptive to the demands of a progressive and more dynamic economic model. The federal constitution protected slavery and, therefore, increasing federal responsibilities to assist the state's economic growth was not a threat. For Forney and the legislature, the federal government was the threat. Their vision sought to proliferate a Jeffersonian-inspired agrarian economy, which increasingly required the state to protect its own sovereignty from a federal government that increasingly sought to limit slavery and promote economic diversification. As wards of the federal government and representations of its sovereignty, the Indians existed at the heart this debate.

John M. Morehead, Jonathan Parker and Francis L. Simpson—all members of the General Assembly from the North Carolina Piedmont—wrote to their constituents upon the passage of the memorial, articulating their motivations for supporting it. First, the federal government owed this money to the state, not out of legal principle, but out of due reciprocation. “It is hoped that this appeal will not be made in vain to the magnanimity and justice of the General Government,” wrote the congressmen. North Carolina's own magnanimity in voluntarily ceding so many acres to the federal government in 1790 had positioned the United States to “reapt [sic] thousands and will reap millions [of dollars] and it will be sheer justice on the part of the General Government to apply a part of its funds to extinguish the Indian title.” Echoing a portion of the memorial, the Piedmont representatives argued that the federal government simply owed money to North Carolina.¹⁴

The state's economic future depended on acquiring the Cherokee lands. If this extinguishment is successful, they wrote, “North Carolina will acquire, it is supposed near a million of acres of Land, and though much of it will be mountainous, from the best information,

¹⁴ John M. Morehead, Jonathan Parker and Francis L. Simpson, “To the freemen of Guilford,” *Greensboro Patriot*, 24 February 1827.

it is believed that it will be worth between four and five hundred thousand dollars.” Profits generated from land sales, “with proper and judicious management . . . might be vested in some profitable stock; which would yield an annual income to the State sufficient for all the purposes of Internal Improvement, and the establishment of common Schools.” Funds would also help, “by the time the Charters of the present State Banks shall expire, which will be in 1835, to establish a Bank of its own; founded upon substantial capital, sufficient for its commercial transactions.” Although Morehead, Parker, and Simpson, similar to Governor Burton, articulated a vision for the state’s economic future that would use profits from Cherokee lands to fund internal improvements, education, and banks, they did not explicitly relate land sales to agriculture or state sovereignty. For the Piedmont representatives, obtaining Cherokee land was exclusively about money, both immediate income from land sales and the potential to help diversify the economy in the long term.¹⁵

While the General Assembly waited for a response from the federal government, it worked to resolve western citizens’ grievances over the Cherokee lands, all of which came with a financial cost to the state. One act authorized the Governor to assign defense counsel to purchasers of state-issued titles who had been sued by federally-backed Cherokee claimants. Another act continued payments to relieve “such persons as became purchasers of the Cherokee lands, sold under the authority of the state.” A third act authorized the Governor to appoint a commissioner to Haywood County to “inquire into the titles of certain tracts of land claimed” by the Cherokees under the 1817 and 1819 treaties, and “contract with any of the said Indians, or any agent or agents duly authorized by them, for the purchase of tract or tracts.” The General Assembly also appealed to the U.S. Congress for \$21,090 to reimburse the payments related to

¹⁵ Ibid.

the Cherokees. While the costs were insignificant (approximately one-half million dollars in today's dollars), the legislature's acceptance of these costs as legitimate state expenses seemed to imply that the federal government had originally had right to provide Cherokees with lands in North Carolina. Throughout 1827, meanwhile, North Carolina's legislature waited for a federal response.¹⁶

Georgia was not so patient. In resolutions passed in February 1828, the Georgia legislature demanded the federal government fulfill its 1802 obligation to remove remaining Cherokee inhabitants from Georgia's borders. "By what motive or reason the general government can be influenced in so pertinaciously and unjustly refusing entirely to redeem her pledged faith to Georgia, we are unable to perceive," rebuked the Georgia legislators. The federal government's reluctance had caused "disappointment, insult, and injury" to the state, and if inaction continued, the state would, in defiance of federal law, extend its authority and laws over the Cherokees. "The lands in question belong to Georgia—she must and she will have them," they forcefully concluded.¹⁷

¹⁶ "An Act to amend an act, passed in the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-three, entitled 'an act respecting the reservations of certain Indians in the lands lately acquired by treaty from the Cherokee Indians,' *Acts passed by the General Assembly of the State of North-Carolina at the Session of 1827-28* (Raleigh: Lawrence & Lemay, 1828), 26-27, North Carolina Department of Archives and History; "An act to continue in force an act, passed at the last session of the General Assembly, entitled 'an act to revive and continue in force an act, passed in the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-four, to alter and amend an act for the relief of such persons as became purchaser of the Cherokee lands, sold under the authority of this State,' *Acts passed by the General Assembly of the State of North-Carolina at the Session of 1827-28*, 27; "An act respecting certain reservations claimed by Indians in the lands lately acquired by treaty from the Cherokee nation," *Acts passed by the General Assembly of the State of North-Carolina at the Session of 1827-28*, 28-29; *Journals of the Senate & House of Commons of the General Assembly of North-Carolina at its session in 1827/1828* (Raleigh: Lawrence & Lemay, 1829), 61, North Carolina Department of Archives and History; Governor Hutchins G. Burton Message to General Assembly, 21 November 1827, *North Carolina Star* (Raleigh), 22 November 1827; "Report of the President and Directors of the Literary Fund," *North Carolina Star*, 2 February 1827. As late as December 11, 1827, David Rodgers of Buncombe County submitted a memorial to the General Assembly "praying a reimbursement of money expended, and for damages sustained in the purchase of a tract of land within the territory lately acquired from the Cherokees"; see *North Carolina Star*, 13 December 1827.

¹⁷ "Resolutions of the Legislature of Georgia, 1828," Senate Doc. 80, 20th Cong., 1st sess., in *The New American State Papers: Public Lands, Southwest, West, 1789-1860*, ed. Thomas C. Cochran, ed., 8 vols. (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc. 1973), 8: 26.

In early 1828, during the same session of the 20th U.S. Congress, North Carolina Representative Samuel P. Carson rose to speak on behalf of his state's specific Cherokee issues and echoed some of Georgia's concerns. A representative from the state's far western district adjoining Cherokee territory, Carson philosophically opposed tariffs, internal improvements, manufacturing, and the national bank. Unlike the 1827 memorial that had claimed the state's 1790 land cession demanded federal action, Carson argued it was the Treaty of Hopewell in 1785 that actually required federal extinguishment. Signed between North Carolina and the Cherokees, the Treaty of Hopewell, Carson claimed, "extinguished the Indian title to all the lands within [North Carolina's] limits." Ratification of the federal constitution in 1789 had removed the Cherokees "from under the guardian-ship and control of North Carolina" and prohibited "them from holding any treaty with any power on earth except themselves." Because the federal government's later treaties of 1817 and 1819 had not disposed of the Cherokee lands per the terms of the Treaty of Hopewell, however, "North Carolina sustained an injury which cannot be repaid, not even by refunding this money, but by extinguishment of all the Indian title to lands within her limits." The federal government could make amends if it delivered these lands to the state.¹⁸

Most at risk, Carson argued, was state sovereignty. The federal government's protection of Cherokee property was an "unjust assumption of power" that "if justified and persisted in by this government, then, farewell, a long farewell to State rights, and to State Governments." He further outlined the dangers of this rhetorical scenario:

¹⁸ Samuel P. Carson, "Speech of Mr. Carson," *Western Carolinian*, 24 June 1828, 1 July 1828; William S. Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Volume 1: A-C (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 332-33; *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-1989* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office., 1989), 667; William S. Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), 21; Samuel P. Carson to his Constituents, 28 February 1827, in *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents, 1789-1829*, ed. Noble Cunningham (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978,) 1374-75.

No State then, Sir, can grant away her own lands; we must look to the national Government for all our land titles. I say national, Sir, for the federative features of our Government, will have all merged into that of a national, and a State Government, if, indeed, they should be in existence, will be merely nominal, for take away the right of the soil, or the right to grant the soil, then you have divested them of almost all the rights which are valuable, or worth having.

Carson's response, as well as that of Forney as head of the memorial committee, evidenced an emerging consensus: that if the federal government did not extinguish the Cherokee title, it threatened states' sovereign rights, rooted in the soil of southern lands, the only thing "valuable, or worth having."¹⁹

By a vote of 89 to 70, the U.S. Congress agreed to reimburse North Carolina for expenditures made to acquire federally-protected Cherokee lands. Yet, it did not agree to extinguish federal titles. Nevertheless, representatives from North Carolina flooded the new governor, James Iredell Jr., with congratulatory notes on the victory. On May 7, 1828, U.S. Senator John Branch wrote, "I am happy to inform you the bill to refund to N. Carolina the \$22,000 paid for certain Indian reservations wants only the signature of the President to become a law." One day later Carson wrote Iredell, "Permit me in conclusion to congratulate you and the state of NoCa upon the passage of the appropriation." U.S. House representative Willis Alston, a plantation owner from Halifax County, also extended congratulations, and representative Daniel Laurens Barringer declared to his constituents that "it affords me great satisfaction to be able to communicate to you the agreeable intelligence" that Congress issued the appropriation.²⁰

¹⁹ Samuel P. Carson, "Speech of Mr. Carson," *Western Carolinian*, 1 July 1828.

²⁰ Senator John Branch to Gov. James Iredell, 7 May 1828, James Iredell Papers, Volume 1: 1827-1827, 106, Governors Papers, State Series, North Carolina Department of Archives and History; Rep. Samuel P. Carson to Gov. James Iredell, 7 May 1828, James Iredell Papers, 1: 104-105; Congressman Willis Alston to Gov. James Iredell, 8 May 1828, James Iredell Papers, 1: 108; *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, 475-6; Daniel L. Barringer to constituents, 27 March 1829, in Cunningham, ed., *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents*, 1551.

Carson clearly interpreted the small appropriation as partial vindication of his argument that states' rights had been threatened by federal issuance of title to the Cherokees. As he wrote to his constituents regarding the appropriation, "Thus, fellow-citizens, have we a prospect of being entirely relieved of the difficulties and law-suits occasioned by the grant of those reservations to the Indians." If the state continued to purchase lands and the federal government continued to reimburse for them, perhaps it was only a matter of time before the Cherokee residents would abandon western North Carolina, and fear of federal control over southern soils could subside. At the very least, reimbursement vindicated the state's interpretation, implying that the federal government had erred in allocating North Carolina lands to the Cherokees in 1817 and 1819.²¹

Carson was not alone in advocating for further federal purchase of Cherokee lands. His ideological opponent, Lewis Williams, a fourteen-term representative from Surry County in the northern Piedmont, a strong supporter of the National Bank, and leader of the Old Republicans and later the state's Whig Party, had lamented for years about the tensions between Georgia and the federal government over Creek and Cherokee lands.²² In April 1826 and again in April 1828, Williams pondered how future controversy over indigenous lands might be quelled if the United States Congress fully purchased natives' land and removed Indian peoples. "At no distant day," he wrote, Congress "will be able to acquire, for the benefit of Georgia, whatever remnant of Indian lands may lie within her limits, and thus to comply in the fullest extent with the compact of 1802." He argued that Congress was "the only body having competent authority" to deal with

²¹ Representative Samuel P. Carson to constituents, 28 February 1829, in Cunningham, ed. *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents*, 1510.

²² William S. Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Volume 6: T-Z (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 211; Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 53; Representative Lewis Williams to his constituents, 24 April 1826, in Cunningham, ed., *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents*, 1315-1316; Representative Lewis Williams to his constituents, 21 February 1827, in Cunningham, ed., *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents*, 1367.

the Indians, and that “the government of the United States is bound by treaties and other obligations ... to prevent this aggression [Georgia’s Resolutions] upon the Indians, and this violation of [the Federal Government’s] own laws.” For Williams, the Constitution granted the federal government absolute authority over Indian affairs, and government purchase of Indian lands under this authority was key to resolving disputes between state and federal authorities that threatened the nation’s cohesion.²³

Williams’s defense of federal law and authority was a far cry from Carson’s and Forney’s arguments about the federal threat to state sovereignty. Still, each position advocated purchasing Indian lands as the way to prevent conflict between federal and state governments. Of course, they expressed different reasons for why: Carson and Forney claimed the federal government had overextended its constitutional authority; Williams countered that radical states’ rights advocates threatened to unravel the protective and supreme authority of the federal government. Like those at the state level, North Carolina’s federal representatives largely agreed that federal purchase of Indian lands was the proper course.

In May 1828, Congress passed and President John Quincy Adams signed the Tariff of 1828, known by some in the South as the “Tariff of Abominations.” Designed to protect the manufacturing industry, the protective tariff fell directly into, and exacerbated, the debate over the future of North Carolina’s economy, the role of the federal government, and debates over Indian lands. Would the state continue to develop plantation agriculture and its dependence on constitutionally-protected slave labor, or would it take certain steps to develop a manufacturing

²³ Williams to his constituents, 24 April 1826, 1315-6; Williams to his constituents, 24 April 1828, in Cunningham, ed., *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents*, 1407-8; Williams to his constituents, 21 February 1827, 1366-67.

sector with increased government protectionism, banks, credit, debt, and an improved transportation network?²⁴

Politicians who were committed agriculturalists considered the use of a federal tariff to protect industry largely unconstitutional. They argued that federal protective measures set a dangerous precedent that could result in limitations on, even the abolition of, slavery. As Governor James Iredell declared to the General Assembly in late 1828, “in the Southern States, whose interests are essentially agricultural, the injury inflicted has no lenitive balsam—the oppression is wholly unmitigated.” Most irritating was that the tariff overtly protected northern manufacturers at the expense of southern agriculturalists. As Iredell continued,

The wealthy manufactures will reap his profit, because by the exclusion of foreign competition, he will obtain a higher price for his manufactures. The agriculturalist, whether rich or poor, the owner of a large plantation, equally with the hardy yeoman who contributes most to the solid wealth of his country, and upon whose arm that country relies for its defence, is compelled at the same moment to pay more for what he consumes, and to receive less for the product of his labour.²⁵

Southern lawyers, bankers, and investors in non-agricultural enterprises interpreted such denunciations of the tariff as an assault on their designs for a diversified economy that would combine manufacturing with agriculture to advance the state’s sluggish economy. Many of these men still despised the tariff as it was constructed in 1828, but believing some regulation to be potentially advantageous, advocated for its revision and fair application. As congressman, planter, and lawyer Abraham Rencher explained, southerners merely wanted “a moderate Tariff,

²⁴ Historian Harry Watson argued the debate surrounding North Carolina’s decision to take greater steps toward promoting agriculture or manufacturing was the key political question that North Carolinians sought to answer. Watson characterized this debate as the “bare bones of the Jacksonian party debate” in Cumberland County, North Carolina; see *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second Party System in Cumberland County, North Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 14.

²⁵ Governor James Iredell Jr. to the General Assembly, *New Bern Spectator*, 29 November 1828. Historian William Freehling argued that for many South Carolinians, “the constitutional precedent set by the tariff of 1828 might lend authority to a direct assault on slavery itself.”; see *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1966), 139.

designed mainly for revenue and an adequate protection to domestic manufactures ... made more acceptable to us.” Rencher’s colleague in the House, Edward B. Dudley, similarly demanded, “Let the tariff be reduced and what amount can be spared, over the expenditures of government devoted to the improvement of the country, in equal and just proportions, north, south, east & west.”²⁶

The presidential election of 1828 occurred amid these debates on the tariff and the ongoing discussion about the Cherokee lands. Jackson’s landslide victory in North Carolina brought together a diverse coalition of voters who were opposed principally to President Adams’s nationalist program. Jackson promised to limit federal interventions, while Adams advocated greater federal action. The differences resonated in North Carolina. First, while Jackson had, in fact, a mild record of support for the tariff and viewed manufacturing and internal improvements favorably, Adams and his Secretary of State Henry Clay were loud and persistent proponents of the “American System,” a federally-funded system of internal improvements, extensive tariffs, and the national bank. Second, Jackson was a southern slaveholder and campaigned as a Jeffersonian states’ rights advocate who would protect southern interests. In contrast, Adams’s northern sympathies worried North Carolinians who felt he might not be supportive of slavery and sympathetic to the emerging abolition movement. Lastly, Jackson had for decades treated with native tribes for their lands, while Adams, in contrast, had sparked a constitutional crisis when he threatened to use military force to defend federal authority in the Creek dispute with Georgia in 1826.²⁷

²⁶ Representative Abraham Rencher, “Circular of Mr. Rencher To His Constituents of the Tenth Congressional District of North Carolina,” *Western Carolinian*, 4 April 1831; Representative Edward B. Dudley, “To the Freemen of Wilmington District,” *Cape Fear Recorder* (Wilmington, NC), 1 December 1830.

²⁷ Robert V. Remini, *The Election of Andrew Jackson* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1963), 55; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 140; Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict*, 113-14. As Remini argued, Adams’s “handling of the Indian Removal problem in the Southwest became in fact a ‘recommendation of Jackson to the

Although there were a number of reasons North Carolinians supported Jackson in the presidential election, six newspapers across the state promoted Adams's candidacy, and 27 percent of voters and eight counties supported the president's reelection. Three out of thirteen Congressional districts elected a non-Jacksonian representative as well. Jackson was the overwhelming favorite, but Adams's policies held sizeable appeal to segments of North Carolinians.²⁸

Some North Carolinians found the former general unqualified for an office that had been occupied by well-bred and educated men of talents. Jackson had been made by military victories, in many cases performed without regard to the rules of war. Many voters appreciated Adams's deliberate plans for coordinated and diversified economic progress. Adams's success in the South and in North Carolina occurred largely in towns and along commercial routes. Jackson, in contrast, garnered success from more rural areas where his vision for the opening of new lands, the removal of native peoples, and the spread of constitutionally-protected slave labor resonated. Adams's diversification programs challenged the South's agrarian image; Jackson promised to protect the agrarian values of Old Republicanism that remained strong in the South, particularly in North Carolina. The election of 1828, therefore operated as a referendum on the economic future, and many North Carolinians decided the future demanded a return to the simplicity of Jeffersonian agrarianism.²⁹

voice' of the entire [southern] region"; see *The Election of Andrew Jackson*, 124. Jackson won the popular vote in North Carolina by a count of 37,857 to Adams 13,918. See Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 25; and Thomas E. Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics: North Carolina 1815-1861* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 34-35.

²⁸ Remini, *The Election of Andrew Jackson*, 128-29. Election results from Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics*, 35; and Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 25.

²⁹ Remini, *The Election of Andrew Jackson*, 165; Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 22-23; Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 279-84. Harry Watson argued that in Cumberland County, North Carolina, "The majority of Adams men lived in Fayetteville and most Jacksonians lived in the country. . . . The Jackson men of Fayetteville

Unlike North Carolina, where more diversified agriculture allowed for vibrant debate over the state's political economy, booming cotton production in Georgia narrowed the state's economic vision. Georgia left Adams completely off the presidential ballot, and when Jackson assumed the presidency, the Georgia legislature, true to its word, responded quickly and aggressively in extending full laws and authority over the Cherokees. For Georgians, the prospect of a federal government meddling in the lucrative plantation economy was deeply troubling. In contrast, on November 24, 1829, the North Carolina General Assembly similarly debated whether to form a committee to "inquire into the expediency of extending laws of the State over the Cherokee nation of Indians, so far as the chartered limits of the State extend." After deliberation, the House on January 5, 1830, postponed acting on the subject and asked, "to be discharged from the further consideration of the subject." North Carolina legislators did not share a cohesive economic and political philosophy as did their peers in the Georgia legislature.³⁰

Also, by late 1829, President Jackson had delivered his plan for solving the "Indian problem," making it less necessary for North Carolina to exert its authority. On December 8, Jackson's first State of the Union presented "for your consideration the propriety of setting apart an ample district west of the Mississippi, and without the limits of any State or Territory now formed, to be guaranteed to the Indian tribes as long as they shall occupy it." While Jackson did not call for forced removal of Native Americans to lands west of the Mississippi River, he made

were the townsmen with the closest ties to the rural community, the ones who invested heavily in farms and real estate. . . . By contrast, most Adams men lived in the town" and "were the farmers with the largest commitment to commercial agriculture and the closest ties to urban business"; *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict*, 146.

³⁰ *Journal of the Senate & House of Commons of the General Assembly of North Carolina at its session in 1829/1830* (Raleigh: Lawrence & Lemay, 1830), 271-72, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh. By the mid-1820s "Georgia surpassed South Carolina to become, for a time, the leading cotton state, and the cotton crop mounted steadily from 90,000 bales in 1821 to 326,000 bales in 1839." North Carolina, meanwhile, would not even surpass 35,000 bales by 1840. See Anthony Gene Carey, *Parties, Slavery, and the Union in Antebellum Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 5; and William S. Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 264.

it clear that the federal government would do nothing to protect their continued residence in the East. On May 28, 1830, shortly after the House of Representatives voted 101-97 in favor and the Senate approved by a vote of 28-19, President Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act into law. The removal of 16,000 Cherokee, approximately 3,600 of whom resided in North Carolina, was now federal law. Federal control over North Carolina lands would soon be ended.³¹

Although North Carolina politicians' widespread desire to extinguish remaining Cherokee titles seemed to have been realized, their votes on the removal bill, as well as those of congressmen throughout the nation, reveal a more complex narrative. Nationally, the vote fell distinctly along party lines. In the House of Representatives, 98 out of the 101 "Yea" votes came from Jacksonian Democrats, while 72 of the 97 "Nay" votes came from non-Democrats (Whig, Anti-Jacksonian, Anti-Masonic, Republican, Anti-Masons, Federalist, Anti-Democrat, and Independents). Twenty-five Democrats voted against the bill, while ten additional Democrats abstained. Of those thirty-five total Democrats who did not vote for the bill, only seven came from the slave states: two from Kentucky, one from Maryland, one from Virginia, and three from North Carolina.³²

The slave states, then, overwhelmingly approved the bill, 61 to 15, while non-slave states voted 41 in favor and 81 against. North Carolina's neighbors, Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia voted 39 in favor (all Democrats) and only 6 against. Like Georgia,

³¹ Andrew Jackson, "First Annual Message," 8 December 1829, in *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897*, ed. James D. Richardson, 11 vols. (Washington, DC: US Congress Joint Committee of Printing, 1920), 2: 442-62; Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1995), 114-15.

³² Historian Ronald Satz has argued that the voting pattern in the Senate was overwhelmingly along party lines. See *American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 25-31.

North Carolina's neighbors shared similarly monolithic agrarian visions that made them highly partisan and heavily unified as a regional bloc.³³

Votes among North Carolina's representatives betrayed the state as an outlier among southern states, although Democrats dominated the state. Ten of North Carolina's thirteen representatives to the 21st U.S. Congress were Democrats. Still, the bill received only eight of North Carolina's congressional votes, with three of the negative votes coming from within Jackson's Democratic Party. Considered against the South's total votes against the bill, nearly half (five of eleven) came from North Carolina, including the only three Democrats to vote against the party line.

Despite the presence of Cherokees in North Carolina's western districts, proximity had little influence on congressional votes. Representatives from eastern North Carolina were far more unified in their desire to remove the Cherokees than the rest of the state: congressmen from districts one through six voted five to one for removal; congressmen from central and western North Carolina voted four to three against removal.³⁴

³³ Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 352; House Vote #149 (1830), "To Pass S. 102: To provide for an exchange of lands with the Indians residing in any of the States or Territories, and for their removal West of the river Mississippi River," GovTrack, accessed 21 February 2017, <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/21-1/h149>.

³⁴ Satz similarly argued that the overwhelming opposition to removal in the frontier state of Ohio suggests that proximity to Indians had little influence on the vote. See Satz, *American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era*, 25.

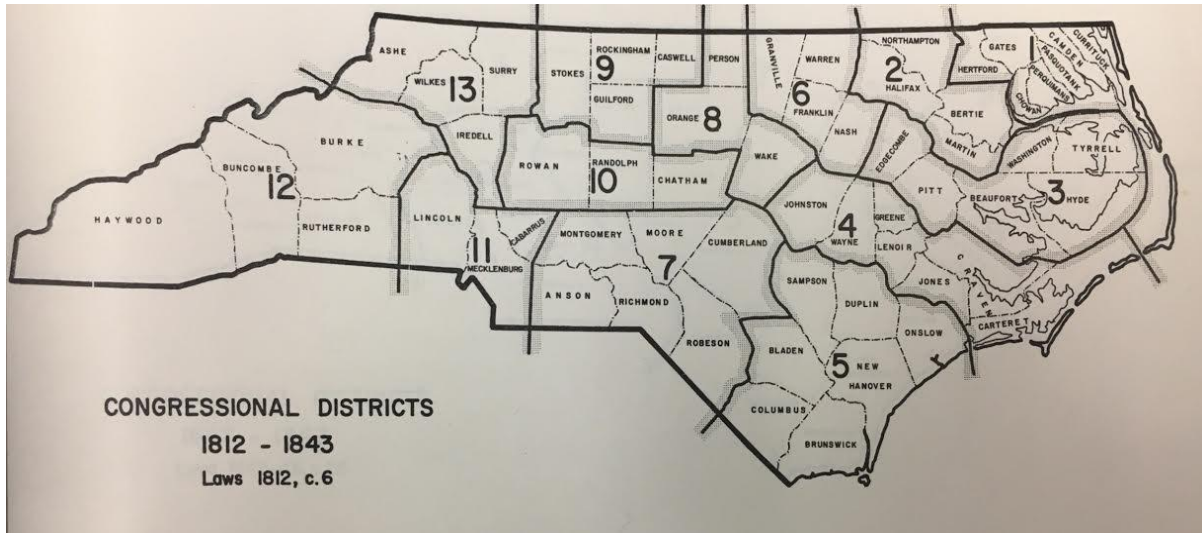


Figure 1. “Congressional Districts 1812-1843,” from John L. Sanders, *Maps of North Carolina congressional districts, 1789-1960 and State senatorial districts and apportionment of State representatives, 1776-1960* (Chapel Hill: Institute of Government, University of North Carolina, 1961), 8.

What best determined congressional votes were representatives’ professional backgrounds and philosophies of political economy. Those who supported the bill came from backgrounds in plantation agricultural, opposing tariffs, banking, federally-funded internal improvements, and the promotion of manufacturing, all of which they interpreted as unconstitutional exertions of federal authority. In short, they believed strongly in a Jeffersonian Republican vision of the federal government that upheld state sovereignty so that slavery could be protected and agrarianism could flourish. Jackson’s Democratic Party fulfilled this vision by celebrating states’ rights and rejecting Adams’s nationalism. As with several of his policies, Jackson’s removal of the Indians fit this particular interpretation of Jeffersonian republicanism in that it promised to eliminate federal control over state lands, remove an “uncivilized” non-white race, and allow an agrarian economy to prosper.

Democrat Willis Alston, North Carolina’s congressional representative for the Northeast’s District 2, for example, owned a plantation in Halifax County, was a longtime agriculturalist, and the nephew of longtime Old Republican leader, Nathaniel Macon. He was

one of the leading Jeffersonian supporters during the late president's administration. He vociferously opposed the 1828 tariff, stating, "we at the south will go with any side to defeat it." During the election of 1836, Alston would later lead North Carolina politicians against Vice President Martin Van Buren, believing him to be the "father of the tariff." He was so opposed to the tariff that Alston eventually channeled his angst into supporting South Carolina's radical nullification doctrine, opposing nearly every one of his congressional colleagues from North Carolina.³⁵

As an Old Republican, Alston claimed strong beliefs in Jeffersonian principles. Publically opposed to luxury and riches, he wrote his constituents, we must not "reject our simplicity of manners and regard for virtue. So long as we remain true to our ancient feelings and principles, we have nothing to fear." The American System of taxes and tariffs to fund internal improvements was an affront to republican simplicity and a threat to the superior agrarian-based morality that North Carolina's future demanded. Non-agricultural innovation bred riches and luxury, and was "beneath a nation of freemen." Alston voted for the Indian bill as it fell in line with his professed beliefs of restricting the federal government so that slave-based plantation-style agriculture could proliferate, not just in new and fertile Cherokee lands, but everywhere.³⁶

Like Alston, Democrat Thomas Harmison Hall, a physician, established planter, and the representative from coastal North Carolina's 3rd District was also an Old Republican associated with Nathaniel Macon. Hall was a strict constructionist, ardent states' rights advocate, and believed in restricting the power of the federal government so that the states may never become

³⁵ Representative Willis Alston to Willie P. Mangum, 16 March 1828, in *Papers of Willie Person Mangum*, ed. Henry Thomas Shanks (Raleigh: State Dept. of Archives and History, 1956), 324; Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 48-49; *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, 475-6; Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Volume 1: A-C, 30.

³⁶ Oration of Representative Willis Alston, *North-Carolina Free Press* (Halifax, NC), 9 July 1824; Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict*, 57.

dependent upon it for revenue. As he would later argue to his constituents, “each government should be confined to its own proper purposes, without interfering with the other.” For Hall, the Constitution was to be upheld at all costs so that the federal government did not exert powers it did not have, and that meant restricting its ability to tax, fund internal improvements, and utilize tariffs. Federal control of southern lands represented another direct and unauthorized interference in state governments. Hall voted for the Indian bill, not only to remove the Indians, but also to remove the federal government.³⁷

Democrat Jesse Speight, representative from eastern North Carolina’s 4th District, also forcefully opposed the tariff and the manufacturing industry. As he wrote to his constituents in 1830, “Shall we submit to double taxes because the rich monopolists . . . now seek to impose an unnecessary tax . . . for the protection of *their* manufactories.” Portraying himself as a defender of agrarian planters in a class war against a capitalist aristocracy, Speight wrote, “Our oppressors are waging an unnatural war upon the climate, by their continued efforts to transfer the proceeds of our labor to other less favored districts. . . . Disguise it as you will, it is a tax, and the planter pays it.” Speight argued the federal government used tariffs and manufacturing as a weapon to “prostrate the interest of the agricultural part of the community at the shrine of the manufactures or the aristocracy of the country.”³⁸

On the Indian bill, Speight, unsurprisingly, voted in favor. The bill “was an act of justice, demanded by existing engagements and good faith, tending to open up new sources of wealth

³⁷ Representative Thomas H. Hall, “Circular to the Citizens of the 3rd Congressional District of N.C.,” *North-Carolina Free Press*, 15 June 1831; Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics*, 139; Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 93; Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict*, 50; *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, 992; William S. Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Volume 3: H-K (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 12.

³⁸ Representative Jesse Speight, “To the Electors of The Fourth Congressional District of N. Carolina,” *New Bern Spectator*, 12 June 1830; Rep. Jesse Speight, “Remarks Of Mr. Speight of North Carolina,” 27 June 1832, *New Bern Sentinel* 27 July 1832.

and enterprise to our citizens.” It also happened to help place the Indian question “under the protection of the United States, beyond the possibility of collision with any state,” and for North Carolina, “it will give a new and valuable tract of country.” Unacknowledged by Speight and the bill’s fellow supporters, the Indian Removal Act paradoxically protected state sovereignty and planter interests by granting the federal government unprecedented, supreme, and loosely-constructed constitutional authority to remove the Indians. Federal power was acceptable, then, if it served planter interests, implied Speight and others. Appropriately, after his congressional career was over, Speight settled in Plymouth, Mississippi, former Choctaw country, where he resumed his own agricultural pursuits.³⁹

Democratic congressmen Robert Potter, from central North Carolina’s 6th District, and Henry W. Connor, from western North Carolina’s 11th district, also advocated for the interests of planters while challenging federal overreach. Earlier in his career, Potter argued in the state’s General Assembly for the establishment of a “political college” that would teach boys agricultural techniques, how to make war, and practice political economy and morality. He was also a vociferous crusader against what he felt was an unconstitutional national bank, and advocated for the investigation of officers and stockholders of North Carolina’s banks, intending to secure indictments against them and confiscate their assets. Connor, meanwhile, after serving in the U.S. military against the Creeks in 1814, settled as a planter and spent ten consecutive terms in Congress. Connor opposed exertions of federal authority, even opposing Jackson’s Force Bill despite having been a loyal supporter and a consistent Democrat since the 1824

³⁹ Speight, “To the Electors of The Fourth Congressional District of N. Carolina”; *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, 1636. Similarly, in 1834, author of the memorial, Daniel Monroe Forney, took his family and one hundred slaves to settle on former Creek lands in Alabama to engage in cotton production; *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, 904.

election. In their desires to return southern lands to state governments, both Potter and Connor found in the Indian bill an opportunity to express agrarian and states' rights philosophies.⁴⁰

Perhaps the most vocal and complex supporter of the Indian bill was Democratic representative Abraham Rencher from District 10 in the North Carolina Piedmont. Rencher, a farmer and lawyer from Salisbury, was an outspoken pro-slavery man who would later oppose re-chartering the National Bank, federally-funded internal improvements, and Jackson's authoritarianism while in office. Rencher argued that economy and simplicity in government was essential, advocating for restoration of "Government to that rigid economy which was observed in its youth, but from which we have most wofully [sic] departed, and reduce the burdens of the people, so as to meet those expenditures only which are absolutely necessary."⁴¹

Rencher's justifications for supporting the Indian Removal bill aligned him closely with many of his colleagues. Returning government to its republican simplicity, obtaining fertile lands, and preventing any future conflict between the federal and state governments that could lead to military conflict underlay Rencher's reasoning. The Indians held millions of acres of "rich and valuable territory," and the longer the federal government took to rid it of the Indians, "the more exorbitant will be the price we shall be forced to pay for it." Rencher felt "peculiar pleasure" in "advancing the best interests of my own State" by supporting Jackson's measure. Evoking the Adams-Troup dispute, he claimed that the Indians' "pretended friends in Congress seem to think that, under existing treaties with them, the President should levy an armed force,

⁴⁰ Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Volume 5: P-S, 132-33; Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 29, 65; Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics*, 130; Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Volume 1: A-C, 418; *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, 730; Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 215-260.

⁴¹ "Extracts from the Circular Letter addressed by Mr. Rencher, to the Freemen of the Tenth Congressional District of N. Carolina," *Raleigh Register*, 24 June 1830; Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Volume 5: P-S, 199-200; Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics*, 70-71; Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 53, 65.

and march to the slaughter of our Southern brethren and friends, or make them bow to Indian sovereignty.” Removal, Rencher assured his constituents, had “received the approbation of every administration, from Thomas Jefferson down to the present time, and was a favorite object with, and warmly recommended by, our late President.” “The bill does not contemplate the exercise of any force, or the violation of any treaty,” he concluded, clearly responding to concerns about the bill.⁴²

While Rencher preached many of the same Old Republican beliefs of reducing government expenditures, obtaining fertile lands, and halting federal overreach, unlike many of his colleagues who voted in the affirmative, he also expressed a concurrent belief in the need for a diversified economy. The federal government should only spend public monies on expenses that were absolutely necessary, so that “Agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, will alike flourish.” He argued for the need to modify the tariff rather than abolish it. This placed him in a distinct minority among his pro-removal colleagues.⁴³

Rencher’s view of political economy appears to have been more moderate than the views of many of his Democratic colleagues, so his decision to approve Indian Removal suggests more than just personal beliefs. District 10 was a hotbed of Jacksonian democracy. The *Western Carolinian*, the state’s most outspoken and radical supporter of South Carolina’s nullification of the tariff, published in Salisbury. To reject North Carolina’s sovereignty over “state” lands would have cost Rencher politically. He shared with his constituents a rejection of federal overreach, and in that common stance, he could justify removal.⁴⁴

⁴² “Extracts from the Circular Letter addressed by Mr. Rencher, to the Freemen of the Tenth Congressional District of N. Carolina.”

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 53, 65, 67. Rencher eventually split with Jackson, however, when the President removed federal deposits from the National Bank and placed them in banks controlled by the states. Interestingly, Rencher also opposed Jackson’s Force Bill believing these exertions of executive

Samuel P. Carson, famed orator and previous defender of North Carolina's sovereign right to Cherokee lands, similarly opposed federal authority. The Cherokees inhabited Carson's 12th District, but despite constant Democratic propaganda about the Cherokees' violent atrocities against whites, Carson seldom argued that they posed a danger. Instead, his main motivation was to relieve "the distressing situation of those of my constituents who are troubled" by unclear land titles. The Cherokees were primarily a federally-culpable economic burden, not "dangerous" neighbors as so many of his colleagues had depicted.⁴⁵

Like every one of the state's supporters of the bill, Carson engaged in agricultural pursuits throughout his life. He served on the Indian Affairs Committee while in Congress, was an ardent defender of states' rights and strict constructionism, and opposed the National Bank, the American System of internal improvements, and the tariff. To his constituents he was a defender of agricultural interests against federally-backed manufactures and "overgrown capitalists" who threatened their way of life. Opposing a proposed tax on woolen imports in 1827, Carson argued that "No act could be more pernicious in its operations, or injurious in its consequences, than this; because its effect would be, to impose a tax upon the agricultural and other laboring classes of the community, for the sole benefit of the New England incorporated companies." The tax would be placed upon those articles "which are most important to the Southern interest than any other." Again in 1828, Carson wrote of the recently passed "Tariff of Abominations,"

It appears that the south are doomed to destruction by the cupidity and avarice of the east.... The lordly manufactures, (the only persons who are already rich, and

authority a threat to the nation. On the surface, in these two actions, Rencher demonstrated both federalist and states' rights sympathies, which seldom coincided among his colleagues; however, it was likely Jackson's unilateral actions, rather than the substance of his decisions, that Rencher opposed.

⁴⁵ Samuel P. Carson to his constituents, 28 February 1829, in Cunningham, ed., *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents*, 1508.

who have capital to invest in those large manufacturing establishments of the East,) are now the only favorites of the Government; and we must legislate to enrich them more, while the South, the bleeding South, must become their bondsmen.⁴⁶

Demanding agrarian and republican simplicity in government, Carson wrote, “At peace with the world, seated on a fertile soil which yields all the necessaries and most of the luxuries of life in profusion ... we need only wisdom in administering the best governments, to lead us to the utmost limits of national and individual happiness.” Thankfully, a “Farmer [Jackson], quietly pursuing his occupation” had defeated for President a “Secretary of State [Adams], armed with all the power and patronage of government.” Carson shared with his pro-removal colleagues a belief in agrarian simplicity, an ardent opposition to federal interference, and a desire to promote a distinctly southern set of interests. His support for removal, much like his opposition to federally-sponsored economic programs, reflected his vision.⁴⁷

In contrast, North Carolinians who voted against removal largely held economic interests outside agriculture, overwhelmingly supported banks, revisions to the tariff, and federal- or state-funded investments in internal improvements, and believed in the necessary development of a strong manufacturing sector. This political economy bridged the policies of the National Republican Party of the 1810s and 1820s to the emerging Whig Party platform of the 1830s and 1840s. That is not to say these individuals jettisoned Jeffersonian republicanism and advocated for massive spending increases, the abolition of an agrarian economy, or the reduction of state authority. Many of them shared notions of Jeffersonian frugality, agrarianism, and state’s rights ideology with pro-removal colleagues. Whereas republican simplicity for Jacksonian Democrats required a strong defense of agrarianism against the corrupting influence of federal institutions,

⁴⁶ Ibid., 28 February 1827, 1374-75; and 20 May 1828, 1427.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 28 February 1829, 1510.

however, these future Whigs believed republicanism demanded effective utilization of government to defend the people from the corrupting influences of political usurpers, like Jackson. Jackson's removal policy, and its protection of planters' interests, was a reinterpretation of republicanism which they rejected; the planter elite was itself a dangerous faction whose political power should be checked by a diversified economy that would protect individual liberties. The hallmarks of a new republicanism, built upon an economic diversification that opponents of Jackson and removal would later embed in the Whig Party, were exposed in North Carolinians' opposition to Indian Removal.⁴⁸

Among the opponents was representative Edward Dudley from southeastern North Carolina's 5th District. Like many of his colleagues, particularly from eastern North Carolina, Dudley heavily invested in plantation agriculture and slaves. The son of a prominent planter who owned 10,000 acres and 87 slaves, Dudley would later serve as governor and defend southern slavery against northern abolitionists. In his 1836 campaign for governor, he made sectional opposition to Martin Van Buren the chief issue, calling the future presidential candidate "a Northern man ... in soul, in principle, and in action" and casting him as an abolitionist intent on using federal power to end slavery.⁴⁹

Like many Democrats, Dudley vigorously opposed the tariff, stating in 1830 that the "south very justly complain of the tariff of 1828," while the "north is anxious to protect their manufactures" so they could "obtain large appropriations" internal improvements. To his fellow southerners, he appealed that "Something like \$200 millions, have been taken from your industry

⁴⁸ As Jeffrey argued, "the leaders of both parties articulated and defended their own policies, and attacked those of their opponents, within the context of a commonly shared republican ideology," which for Democrats meant fighting concentrations of power in institutions, and for Whigs, fighting concentrations of power in government. See *State Parties and National Politics*, 118-28; also, Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict*, 321.

⁴⁹ Edward B. Dudley to W. R. Gales, A. Rogers, &c, 17 February 1836, *Weekly Raleigh Register*, 23 February 1836; Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 105.

and paid into the treasury, ... drawn from the many to the few—from those who do want to those who do not.” This evil must be stopped, he argued, but he did not call for the elimination of the tariff. Instead, he advocated for reductions in the tariff so that it would cease discriminating against the South and situate the South to “fully participate in appropriations for internal improvement” so that they could “be placed on a footing with the north.” Similar to Governor Burton’s message to the General Assembly four years earlier, Dudley feared less a marauding federal government, expressing more interest in making sure the South did not fall behind northern states in terms of economic and political might.⁵⁰

Still, unlike many eastern Democratic congressmen, Dudley argued that the state’s economy needed to progress beyond agricultural simplicity. Stronger banks, public works, education, and a reform of the state constitution would diversify and strengthen North Carolina’s economy, and although such actions would reduce the influence of his eastern district, they would equalize representation across North Carolina. As case in point was Dudley’s own work as president of the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad Corporation. Expanding transportation routes, something that Dudley argued was “dreadfully in need,” would facilitate trade and spur economic development.⁵¹

Dudley saw little reason to support Indian Removal: the costs would be exorbitant, the Indians were not worth dispossessing, and time would resolve what little problems they caused the state. Evoking the laissez-faire tradition of the original republican ethos, Dudley wrote his constituents, “I could not approve of the bill” as it appeared, once stripped of everything “simply,

⁵⁰ “To the Freemen of Wilmington District,” *Cape Fear Recorder* (Wilmington, NC), 1 December 1830.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*; Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Volume 2: D-G, 112-13; Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics*, 59; Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 49, 84, 105; Samuel A. Ashe, *Cyclopedia of eminent and representative men of the Carolinas of the nineteenth century* (Madison, WI: Brant & Fuller, 1892), 491-92.

the purchase of land by the general government, for the benefit of a few states, at an extravagant price!” The total costs were too much, he stated, when you add together “exchange of lands; payment for Indian improvements; payment of the expense of removing; maintaining 12 months after removal; and protection forever!?” Furthermore, the “measure is illtimed [sic] and unnecessary” wrote Dudley, declaring “we do not want the land.” Better to spend the money elsewhere for “more useful proposes, such as payment of public debt, nor to afford additional grounds for the present pretences to keep up the tariff.” The cost to remove Indians exceeded the benefits, including the spurious argument that removal protected state sovereignty and potentially slavery from the federal government.⁵²

Dudley’s attitude did not arise from purely economic motivations. Parallels between his and Thomas Jefferson’s attitudes towards Native Americans are nearly indistinguishable. Dudley wrote that they are “poor, quiet and orderly, retaining little of savage character. They possess some land, which might or might not be valuable to the State.” Better to let them remain, “allowing the white people to settle around and among them, intermarry, etc. in a few years, the Indian character, if the breed remained, would become extinct.” He continued: “They have attained some degree of civilization and improvement in agriculture, arts and sciences,” and breaking them up and changing their way of life from “agriculture to the hunting life, must necessarily destroy many, and cause others severe suffering.” If they were removed westward, whites would inevitably come upon them again. For Dudley, money was better spent on improving infrastructure. Neither the federal government, the Indians, nor the prospect of intermarriage between races posed enough threat to justify their removal.⁵³

⁵² “To the Freemen of Wilmington District.”

⁵³ Ibid. Anthony F.C. Wallace characterized Jefferson as holding theoretical space for both assimilation and removal in constructing his Indian policy. For Jefferson, Indians held the same natural capacity for advancement as whites

As much as Dudley's opposition to Indian Removal was rooted in the ideology of Old Republicanism, fellow Democrat Daniel Laurens Barringer's opposition derived from simple economics. A lawyer from Raleigh in central North Carolina's 8th District, Barringer believed in government frugality and simplicity, warning constituents in 1827,

the benefits resulting from a judicious and economical administration of the finances, are too obvious to need illustration; and in a government happily constituted as ours, and clothed in the unostentatious habiliments of republican simplicity, the public functionaries, who are but the organs of the public will, should be by the people, restricted to the "maxims of the most vigilant economy."

Similar to most of his peers, regardless of party, Barringer opposed the tariff, but his opposition was not grounded in fear of an oppressive federal government or resentment of northern manufactures. Barringer opposed tariffs on the grounds that they "reduced the revenue." Similarly, he interpreted roads and canals as "a useless waste of public money." Even the fight over the tariff was a waste of time and money: every attempt "made to revise in any way and modify the existing tariff of duties, was promptly resisted" by Congress, so the South needed to embrace the tariff for what it was and move forward under principles of republican simplicity and economic expediency. Reducing expenditures across the board would relieve the unequal burden that had been placed upon the South.⁵⁴

Like Governor Burton and Dudley, Barringer thought that a diversified economy would protect the state, allowing it to keep pace with the North. To his constituents, he encouraged "manufacturing establishments among yourselves, a change in the productions of labor, and of agricultural pursuits: for instance, the production of silk, wine, indigo, &c.... They are the only

and would shed their old customs in favor of white habits when they lived amongst and interbred with whites. Those who refused to do so would need to remove outside the white Republic. Indians as Indians were inevitably extinct, but that did not mean they all must remove. See *Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 11, 77-78, 223.

⁵⁴ Representative Daniel L. Barringer to his constituents, 14 March 1827, in Cunningham, ed., *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents*, 1392-93.

alternatives between the repeal and the severance of the Union, as I believe.” Diversification of both agriculture and manufacturing would be pivotal, and the federal government must promote these “diversified interests” in both sections of the country so that the nation did not tear apart due to the widening gulf separating the North’s and South’s diverging interests.⁵⁵

Barringer approached Indian Removal as he approached the tariff and internal improvements, with an eye toward economic efficiency. He voted against the Indian bill, although he had not always been opposed to the removal of the Cherokees. Before Jackson outlined his removal plan and Congress passed the bill, Barringer theoretically supported removing the Cherokees, “so far as it can be executed without resort to measures of constraint upon the will of those unfortunate children of nature, [it] has met my desired concurrence. Beyond that, justice should ever withhold her sanctions.” After Jackson’s announcement and despite the president’s assurance that removal would be cheap and voluntary, Barringer’s commitment to economy and moral justice seemingly outweighed his desire to see these “children of nature” displaced. Removal was not a responsible investment and, in fact, was a major deterrent for believers in republican frugality. For Barringer, and in contrast to his pro-removal colleagues, the benefits of protecting state sovereignty were not worth the cost of removing the Cherokees.⁵⁶

Edmund Deberry, a congressman from Fayetteville in the 7th District, served as an Adams elector in the 1828 election and had long opposed Jackson. While he was a highly successful planter and engaged in agricultural pursuits much of his life, he also had a successful career as a businessman and real estate mogul, and shortly after he left the General Assembly, organized a manufacturing company that produced silk, hemp, wool and iron. A staunch National Republican

⁵⁵ Ibid., 27 March 1829, 1550.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 1551.

and Whig all his life, Deberry believed in active government and had long fought for internal improvements and argued that the “people will require and will have a national bank” as well.⁵⁷

He opposed Indian Removal, then, not simply because it was embraced by his political opponents, but also because it reinforced his vision of political economy. As owner of a manufacturing company, Deberry stood to gain from federal tariffs and a national bank. His ventures in agriculture and manufacturing would benefit from public investments—state or federal—in railroads that could transport products to market. Federal control over southern lands posed little threat to a man whose investments were spread across various industries. He was not dependent upon plantation agriculture or the slave labor system.⁵⁸

Democrat and lawyer Augustine H. Shepperd from North Carolina’s District 9 in the northern Piedmont voted against the bill as well. Although he had been a Jacksonian in 1824 and 1828, Shepperd eventually become one of the South’s leading Whigs in the 1830s, particularly as his views on slavery became increasingly distant from many of his Democratic colleagues. In 1825, he was one of only two members of the state’s House of Commons to oppose a measure preventing free blacks from migrating into the state and regulating the conduct of those already in residence. In 1828, he presented a memorial to Congress from citizens of North Carolina “praying Congress to take measures for the entire abolition of slavery in the District of

⁵⁷ Representative Edmund Deberry, “To The Freemen of the Counties of Anson, Richmond, Cumberland, Moore and Montgomery,” 28 February 1835, Edmund Deberry Papers, 1829-1867, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, 793; Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Volume 2: D-G, 47; Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict*, 172;

⁵⁸ Deberry was diversifying before the Indian Removal debate took place. On 19 June 1829, Deberry sold 14,000 acres to the North Carolina Gold Mine Company. “Memorandum for my Executors,” 27 July 1832, Southern Historical Collection, Edmund Deberry Papers.

Columbia.” Several months later in 1829, he voted to abolish slavery from the District altogether, one of only a few southerners to do so.⁵⁹

Like Dudley and Deberry, Shepperd later championed the National Bank, becoming the only Democratic Congressman from North Carolina to step across party lines and vote for its recharter in 1832. Still, he also opposed the tariff but, like Daniel Barringer, found that the “injustice” and “folly” of the measure was not political oppression, but that it did not actually offer sufficient protection to the manufacturing industry. Regardless of the duties placed upon it, Shepperd argued, “the foreign fabric should still continue in undiminished [sic] amount,” and the duty’s continuance “would abundantly prove that we cannot extend the protection for which we have been so often asked.” Shepperd characterized complaints against the tariff as the production of “an importune class of our citizens, with many moving representations of their peculiar grievances and oppressions.”⁶⁰

Without this fear of federal usurpation, Shepperd viewed the few Indians living quietly in the state’s western regions as exactly that and nothing more. As Democrats continued to employ the rhetoric of southern sectionalism and ardent agrarianism, however, Shepperd and likeminded colleagues abandoned the Democratic Party. Their opposition to Indian Removal exposed this emerging fissure from within Jackson’s own party.

⁵⁹ Bartlett Yancey to Willie P. Mangum, 20 December 1825, in Shanks, ed., *Papers of Willie Person Mangum*, 215; Theodore Dwight Weld, *The Power of Congress over the District of Columbia* (New York: The American Anti-Slavery Society, 1838) 16, 19.

⁶⁰ Augustine H. Shepperd, “To the freemen of the Ninth Congressional District of North Carolina, composed of the counties of Caswell, Guilford, Rockingham and Stokes,” 20 February 1829, Broad­sides and Ephemera Collection, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC; Augustine H. Shepperd to his constituents, 20 February 1829, in Cunningham, ed., *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents*, 1494; Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 53. As historian Charles Sellers argued but overly simplified, North Carolina’s “Whig party was formed by the secession of pro-Bank men from the Democratic party.” See “Who Were the Southern Whigs?” *American Historical Review* 59. 2 (January 1954): 335-46, spec. 344. Shepperd was not alone in ditching the Democrats over the bank issue: Congressmen and supporter of removal, Abraham Rencher likewise joined the Whigs after Jackson aligned himself against the Bank of the United States.

Finally, Lewis Williams, formerly an Old Republican and later a National Republican from District 13 in the state's northwest corner, who in 1826 and 1827 had told his constituents that the federal government should peaceably acquire the Indian lands, changed course and voted against the Indian Removal Act. Importantly, Williams had never supported Jackson and actively campaigned against him, partially because, he prophetically argued, the former general's previous lawlessness and authoritarianism would pose a danger to the state governments.⁶¹ Williams moved from the Old Republican ranks towards the National Republicans during the Adams administration, as he embraced the National Bank, advocated for the federal government to distribute funds for the states to develop railroads, canals, and schools, and criticized his state government for not taking measures on its own to borrow money to finance internal improvements. On the Tariff of 1828, Williams found it "not to be unconstitutional but merely inexpedient" and opined, like Shepperd, that "opposition to it has proceeded to unreasonable and unnecessary lengths." "The Tariff may or may not be right, according to the opinion of the individual," argued Williams, "but when a majority have decided in its favor, by legislative enactment, it becomes the duty of the minority to submit." As for the Indian question, Williams argued that the federal government was "bound by treaties and other obligations of a solemn character" to prevent unlawful violations upon them by the states. For Williams, the federal government held an obligation to uphold preexisting treaties; otherwise the rule of law was powerless. Amidst the radical rhetoric of nullification, as southerners seemed overly sensitive to federal overreach, Williams wrote, "every State must be bound to submit to the Constitution and laws of the United States."⁶²

⁶¹ Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 13.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 13, 90; Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics*, 69; Lewis Williams to Willie P. Mangum, 14 September 1830, in Shanks, ed., *Papers of Willie Person Mangum*, 372; Lewis Williams to his constituents, 18 February 1829,

On June 24, 1830, Williams, consistent with his belief in constitutional supremacy, defended his vote against the Removal Act, arguing that “Congress alone have the right to regulate intercourse with the Indians, so long as they continue to be distinct, separate and independent tribes.” If that constitutional process was circumvented, “frequent wars and collisions between them [Native Americans] and the State governments would probably occur.” The Constitution did not grant the president the power to remove Indians, as the Act declared, and Georgia’s defiance of federal treaties and laws should not be rewarded. Rather than suppress the Indians, “we should rejoice to see the Indians imitating our example, and bettering their own condition,” and should “assist, rather than oppose” their efforts at forming a republican government.⁶³

Williams’s nationalism conflicted with many of the politicians in his own state. What he shared with anti-removal colleagues, however, was a belief in the positive use of government to develop the economy and check the power of states’ rights ideologues like Jackson. Williams’s district, not coincidentally, also contained the fewest slaves in the entire state. He felt less threatened by a federal government exerting economic and legal authority over the southern economy than did many of his peers. Federal protection of Cherokee lands merely represented a defense of constitutional law, a continuation of Indian policies that had existed since the days of Jefferson, and a check upon Jackson’s and Georgia’s lawless, un-republican assertions of state sovereignty.⁶⁴

in Cunningham, ed., *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents*, 1490; Lewis Williams to his constituents, *Weekly Raleigh Register*, 24 June 1830; Lewis Williams to his constituents, 21 February 1827, in Cunningham, ed., *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents*, 1367.

⁶³ Williams to his constituents, *Weekly Raleigh Register*, 24 June 1830.

⁶⁴ 7,611 slaves out of a total population of 48,377 resided in District 13, making up only 15.7 percent of the total population in Williams’s district. This contrasts with the approximately 33 percent of the total state population who were enslaved in 1830. United States Census of 1830: “Abstract of the Returns of the Fifth Census Showing the Number of Free People, The Number of Slaves, The Federal or Representative Number, and the Aggregate of Each

Still, Williams had supported efforts to obtain all Cherokee land as recently as 1828. His evolving stance suggests how the removal debate was not about protecting or saving Native Americans. Instead, it was a political debate over the proper role of the federal government in its relationship to the states. Unlike other southern states where staple crop agriculture dictated economic development, in North Carolina, the federal government's role became particularly contentious, as it would influence the future of the state's struggling economy towards either an agrarian or a diversified future.

The "Indian problem" occurred at a time when partisan identities were reshaping North Carolina. Jackson's presidency accomplished much in polarizing and cementing the ideological divide that would become the Second American Party System. Yet, as North Carolina politicians' stances on removal in the 1820s demonstrate, partisan identities remained fluid and drew from diverse interpretations of the ways in which Jeffersonian republicanism met the demands of a new era. Indian Removal became a key battleground issue that laid bare the core disagreement between an economic vision built on agricultural simplicity and an emerging vision of a more progressive and dynamic economy. The seeds of division that split the National Republicans and gave rise to the Democrats can be found in debates over the "Indian problem" prior to Jackson's presidency, but in North Carolina, at least, Indian Removal embodied the political trends that created the Second Party System, more so than other issues that garnered greater attention on the national stage—tariffs, a national bank, internal improvements, nullification, Jackson's Force Bill, and slavery.

County of Each State of the United States," 2nd Congress, 1st Session, House of Representatives Document No. 263 (Washington: Printed by Duff Green, 1832), 19-20.

**“Which of these parties is right in this claim?”:
The Political Press and the Racialization of the Jeffersonian Legacy**

Like many of their political representatives in the 1820s, North Carolina’s citizenry largely agreed that the state would inevitably and rightfully receive title to Cherokee lands, although they disagreed on the morality of such a move. It is difficult to uncover the day-to-day thoughts of the citizenry, but their ideas reverberated through newspapers, which, in turn, contributed to readers’ further conceptualizations of the “Indian problem.” Jackson’s election and announcement that he intended the federal government to conduct wholesale removal of the Indians altered the public consensus, evidenced by the ideological shifts toward the “Indian problem” taken by newspaper editors across North Carolina.

Also like the politicians they voted into office, citizens were increasingly divided in their understanding of republicanism and what Jacksonian ideology portended for the future. Their views played out across the pages of the state’s newspapers. For Jackson’s supporters, the Indians must be removed to defend an increasingly narrow vision of republicanism that valorized states’ rights as a defense for an agricultural economy. For others, Jackson’s narrow vision and efforts to subdue constitutional law hurt the state’s ability to diversify its economy, threatening their version of republicanism. As Jackson adopted Indian Removal as his policy initiative, it became engulfed in the larger legal and economic questions of the era, generating contentious and partisan gamesmanship among newspaper editors who propagandized the issue, polarizing the state’s citizens and constructing the Second Party System in North Carolina.

Crucial to editors’ rhetorical strategy to promote their brands of republicanism was to cloak their respective arguments in appeals to white men’s sense of patriarchal responsibility to take care of the “inferior”—women, children, slaves, and Indians. As the election of 1828

unleashed a profound number of new voters into the political arena, and improvements in transportation and communication expanded the reach of newspapers, the press became an increasingly effective and essential partisan tool for attracting support. North Carolina editors leaned heavily upon the characterization of Indians as an “inferior” race to galvanize voters for or against removal, and therefore, on behalf of their vision for the state’s economic future.¹

While Democrats argued Indians must remove because of the inferiority of their race, Jackson’s opponents argued that Native American inferiority demanded their protection. Both challenged their political bases to perform their duty as white males and respond accordingly.

Fused with this strategic rhetoric was the need to bend the deeply influential Jeffersonian Republican ideology to contemporary circumstances. As Jackson’s polarizing candidacy grew and he took office, North Carolinians engaged in an editorial battle over the legitimacy of the claim that Jackson was Jefferson’s ideological heir. Vociferous supporters of Jackson and removal avoided specific mention of the Indian issue when rhetorically connecting Jefferson to Jackson so as to avoid the obvious incongruences between their respective policies. Meanwhile, opponents of Jackson and removal eagerly used the Indian issue to prove Jackson was not Jefferson’s heir. The political strategy of both parties was to stake claim to the true Jeffersonian legacy, appeal to white male voters’ conception as the superior being, and generate a base of supporters for their respective visions of political economy.

Before Jackson’s election, politically engaged citizens across North Carolina—easterners and westerners, National Republicans and Democratic-Republicans—demonstrated a significant interest in treaty negotiations between the federal government and the Cherokees. Most generally

¹ Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (London: Verso, 1990), 95. Saxton argued the press “served as workshops, studios, cutting rooms for the construction and testing of racist components.”

believed securing Cherokee land through legitimate land sales would serve the state's economic interests and represent a fair and equitable deal for the Cherokees. Joseph Gales Sr., editor of the National Republican *Raleigh Register*, mayor of Raleigh, banker, railroad activist, and treasurer of the state's Internal Improvement Board, reported in July 1827 that federal commissioners, two of whom were military generals from North Carolina, planned to "hold a treaty with the Cherokee Indians, in order to effect a purchase from them of their remaining lands." The goal, according to Gales, was to gain titles to lands in North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee for a canal connecting the Hiwassee and Canasaga rivers. Both Gales's *Raleigh Register* and Democratic-Republican Philo White's *Western Carolinian*, an ardent supporter of states' rights and opponent of the American System, reported that "Should the Indians be disposed to sell, the Commissioners will await further instructions from the Secretary of War ... but should they be averse to parting with their lands, on any conditions, (and we have our fears on this point) the Commissioners can only make their report accordingly, to the War Department, and return home." Like their politicians in 1827, North Carolinians on each side of a widening political division of the Republican Party found common ground in desiring a signed treaty from Cherokee country.²

The Cherokees refused even to meet with the commissioners. Cherokee Chief John Ross explained how

the representatives of this [Cherokee] nation, in concluding the treaty of 1819, surveyed the past and present condition of their Nation and, with a deliberate and serious consideration, looked to its future destiny, and solely [sic] pledged themselves in General Council that they would never dispose of one foot more of land again.

² *Raleigh Register*, 3 July 1827, 3; *Western Carolinian* (Salisbury), 26 June 1827, 2.

Disappointed with Ross's decision, Philo White reacted, "We are sorry to learn, that the efforts of the U.S. commissioners (Gens. Davidson and Gray of this state, and Gen. Cocke, of Tennessee) to assemble the Cherokee Indians" failed. Yet, rather than legitimize Cherokee autonomy, White blamed enterprising whites and "half-breeds" for interfering in the affairs of the Cherokee and standing in the way of progress. White demonstrated what would become a key rhetorical strategy in the Indian Removal debate: the Democratic Party's appeal to the populace. As "inferior" beings, Indians did not hold the intellectual capacity to make decisions alongside the white men. It was the white man's responsibility to make decisions for them. Only the federal purchase of Cherokee land in North Carolina benefitted both whites and Cherokees, and each party eagerly awaited news that a treaty and purchase would be concluded.³

Many editors across North Carolina found in Jackson a champion to restore Jeffersonian principles to the public sphere. Therefore, Jackson's candidacy and policies demanded a strong defense against those who felt otherwise. For Philo White, the *Western Carolinian* held a clear purpose that he outlined in a prospectus in June 1828:

encourage general industry, inculcate virtue, and promote the morals of the community, as well as of individuals; to advance the solid interests of the people, by sketches of useful improvements in agriculture, the mechanic arts, and domestic economy; to notice the movements of political parties, watch with vigilance the conduct of public men, and guard with fidelity the rights and liberties of the people against the encroachments and abuses of those who have the power and patronage of the government in their hands.

White submitted this prospectus nine years after he initially took over the paper, taking the opportunity to connect his republican vision with his support for Jackson's candidacy.

Comparing Jackson to Jefferson, White wrote that the former had been "reared and educated in Republican principles; and being identified both by feeling and interest, with Southern policy"

³ *Cherokee Phoenix* (New Echota, Ga.), 28 May 1828; *North Carolina Star* (Raleigh, NC) reprinted in *Western Carolinian*, 8 November 1827, 3; *Western Carolinian*, 12 August 1828, 3.

represented the wishes of Western North Carolinians, southerners, agriculturalists, and ardent states' rights advocates.⁴

White's successor at the *Western Carolinian*, Burton Craige offered his political prospectus as well in 1830, justifying support for Jackson at the precise moment debates about the Indian Removal Act fulminated in the states' presses. Craige's tenets included "a constant and unabated regard for the spirit and strict letter of the constitution, and a wise and judicious inculcation of the Republican principles, the practice of which characterized the administrations of Jefferson, Madison and Monroe." Jackson, claimed Craige, was defending these principles and demonstrating "a spirit of manliness, openness and independence" in removing the child-like Indians. Craige wrote two months later, "Our support of State Rights has originated from the virtue and impulse of a conviction that the great principles professed and practiced by Mr. Jefferson, are the only political rules to which we can safely adhere," and that attacks against the *Western Carolinian* and Jackson's removal policy had been part of a "stratagem" to "injure the character and standing of certain prominent Jackson men, who have always stood firm and true to the integrity of their principles." Opposition to Jackson and any of his policies threatened the economic future of the state, sectional cohesion, and states' rights, according to Craige, and they also threatened the fundamental principles upon which Jefferson had founded the nation. For Jackson's supporters, opposition to his removal policy was also an attack on Jefferson.⁵

"The opinions of no man living or dead, are attended to by the American people, with greater respect than those of Mr. Jefferson," wrote Thomas J. Lemay and Alexander J. Lawrence

⁴ *Western Carolinian*, 3 June 1828, 2; On Jackson's election in North Carolina, see William S. Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), 16-25.

⁵ *Western Carolinian*, 29 June 1830, 3; *Western Carolinian*, 28 December 1830, 3. Burton Craig wrote, "the Indians, when proper explanations were made [regarding their removal], manifested little or no repugnance to the exchange; *Western Carolinian*, 24 August 1830, 3.

in the *North Carolina Star* in August 1827 as they began their rhetorical defense of Jackson's candidacy. This early support included a conversation Jefferson's nephew, Thomas Randolph, claimed to have had with the former president. Lemay and Lawrence recounted,

Of General Jackson, Mr. Jefferson often said, that he was an honest, sincere, firm, clear headed and strong minded man; of the soundest political principles ... [I]f Gen. Jackson should be brought into office to correct the alarming tendency towards formidable, and otherwise irremediable evils, beginning to develop itself in the administration of the general government, he would be entirely faithful to that object.

If Jefferson thought well of Jackson, their rhetoric claimed, Jackson's reputation and policy initiatives must be truly republican and Jeffersonian in spirit.⁶

Like White and Craig in the *Western Carolinian*, Lemay and Lawrence later buttressed this legacy claim in the aftermath of the Removal Act, stating that "A great deal of unjust and idle clamor has been raised against the President in consequence of his suggestions relative to the removal of the Indians." Even the hated President John Quincy Adams had argued, they wrote, "it is impossible to incorporate them, in masses, in any form whatever, into our system.... [T]heir *degradation* and *extermination* will be INEVITABLE." Calls to remove the Indians and political opposition to a president were nothing new; "Poisonous and malignant slanders of the designing, and profligate censures of the factious, were daily heaped upon" Jefferson as well. Thankfully, both Jefferson and Jackson "discharged the high and responsible trusts of Chief Magistrate of the Union with a fidelity and ability which challenged the admiration and warmest gratitude of his countrymen," despite being "the object of unceasing calumny and abuse." Jackson's editorial supporters, from his election through the contentious Indian Removal Act, sought to prove that defending one's principles was noble. Vitriolic opposition to his policies, including removal, was normal, and as such, Jackson's policies and resistance to attack was

⁶ *North Carolina Star*, 30 August 1827, 1, 3.

inspiringly Jeffersonian. According to pro-Jacksonian editors, it was customary for all former presidents to believe in the removal of the Indians on account of their racial “inferiority.”⁷

For conservative North Carolinians, Jackson’s candidacy represented a return to a primitive way of life built on agriculture. Jeffersonians had promoted this republican vision in debates against the Federalists at the turn of the century, and Jacksonians sought to similarly advance this argument and vision in 1828. The difference between the two generations, however, was that international demand for large-scale plantation agriculture had emerged by 1828, alongside an increase in the federal government’s scope. An agrarian vision for society no longer simply idolized the equal dispersion of virtuous, yeoman farm work, as Jefferson had articulated, but now included large-scale agriculture, with massive profits to be had if slavery received adequate protection. There was more money to defend in 1828, particularly if the increase in federal power did not correspondingly increase protections for slavery. As Indian Removal and slavery were seen as crucial to the agrarian economy, Jacksonians found they could appeal to wealthier citizens by employing a Jeffersonian-inspired vision of agrarianism and states’ rights. As a way of widening their appeal beyond the wealthy, North Carolina’s Democratic editors employed rhetoric regarding the racial inferiority of the Indians to justify their removal. Not only could Jackson be the savior of a particular agrarian version of society, but editors could make him the savior of Jefferson’s exclusively white republic as well.

This agrarian version of Jeffersonian republicanism had been threatened by the administration of John Quincy Adams, particularly with regard to the “Indian problem” in his dispute with Georgia Governor George Troup in early 1827. Creeks had stopped Georgia surveyors and informed them that the land did not belong to the state but rather to the Creeks.

⁷ *North Carolina Star*, 10 June 1830, 3; *North Carolina Star*, 25 November 1831, 3.

Ignoring these claims, Georgia ordered the surveys, and the federal government responded, bound by treaty to protect Creek lands. On February 5, 1827, President John Quincy Adams instructed Congress to

at once assure the Indians that their rights found upon the treaty and the law are recognized by this Government and will be faithfully protected, and earnestly to exhort them, by the forbearance of every act of hostility on their part, to preserve unimpaired that right to protection secured to them by the sacred pledge of the good faith of this nation.

Should Georgia authorities continue to encroach upon Creek land, an “obligation even higher than that of human authority will compel the Executive of the United States to enforce the laws and fulfill the duties of the nation by all the force committed for that purpose to his charge.”⁸ In response, Governor Troup issued General Orders to the 6th and 7th divisions of the state’s militia instructing them “to hold in readiness the several regiments and battalions within their respective commands, to repel any hostile invasion of the territory of that State.”⁹ By countering Georgia’s states’ rights argument and upholding the notion that non-whites held rights that ought to be respected, Adams posed a significant challenge to the South’s slave system.

Conservative Old Republican opponents of Adams perceived his rhetorical call-to-arms as a harbinger of war. National Republicans who supported Adams, in contrast, interpreted these threats as a simple game of chicken. Although the debate sparked over Creek lands, the fundamental issue was states’ rights and whether the federal government could exert itself against a state.

North Carolinians watched the escalating crisis with fascination and concern. Some supported the president while others believed Georgia justified. Regardless of their positions,

⁸ John Quincy Adams Message to U.S. Congress, “Message to Congress on the Rights of the Creek Indians,” 5 February 1827, Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, ed., *The American Presidency Project*, accessed 7 December 2016.

⁹ *North Carolina Star*, 2 March 1827, 3.

however, North Carolinians remained consistent in that the greater an individual perceived the likelihood of war, the greater he resisted further federal interference in solving the “Indian problem.” In other words, the federal government was seen as the instigator of problems.

Adams’s threat helped to tie the “Indian problem” to larger fears of federal interference with state authority. The Creek controversy exacerbated the divergent interpretations of federal and state authority that had originated a decade earlier.¹⁰

National Republican Joseph Gales opined that Georgians were “determined not to be behind hand with the General Government in violent measures.... Though this looks *war-like*, we trust that Congress will by some act of theirs put a stop to these extraordinary proceedings!” It was Congress’s responsibility to resolve the conflict. A firm believer in state’s rights but an opponent of slavery, Gales worried little about Adams’s military threat and the ramifications of respecting Indian rights. Threats against slavery and to the argument that whites were the only ones worthy of citizenship were seemingly inconsequential to Gales.¹¹

Edward J. Hale, a former apprentice to Gales, editor of Fayetteville’s *Carolina Observer*, banker, and ardent devotee to states’ rights, similarly concluded that “Whatever may be the rights of Georgia or of the Indians, to the lands in dispute,—or however it may be incumbent on the United States to protect the latter in the peaceful possession of their territory; the arm of the law only should be exerted to afford that protection.” Hale downplayed Adams’s threats and

¹⁰ Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 147-160, esp. 157; Norman K. Risjord, *The Old Republicans: Southern Conservatism in the Age of Jefferson* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 213-221. The Missouri Compromise of 1819, which outlawed slavery in the western territories above the 36-30 parallel represented, for many Old Republicans, a direct affront to slavery. For the first time, the federal government prescribed whether a state was allowed to maintain slavery within its borders. Most of the South, and even Jefferson, opposed any such mandate. The Compromise exposed sectional differences and tensions, placing southerners on high alert for any further evidence that the federal government would use its increasing power to promote, as historian Daniel Walker Howe put it, “economic policies contrary to southern interests. The stronger the federal government, the greater the potential danger if it fell under hostile northern control.” Thus, in the Missouri Compromise’s aftermath much of the South began to deliver stronger defenses for states’ rights as a means of protecting slavery.

¹¹ *Raleigh Register*, 27 February 1827, 3.

ascribed to the federal government the great responsibility to protect property, allowing the Indians to keep their land, but nothing more. Hale believed there were constitutional limits on the federal government's functions, one of which was property protection. Securing the Cherokees' right to property was the appropriate role of the federal government and requisite to maintaining the proper balance between federal power and states' rights. Like Gales, Hale was little troubled by ascribing property rights to the non-white race and found Adams's defense necessary and proper.¹²

In contrast, Democratic-Republican Philo White suspected the

Indians will be removed, and the Georgians will be put in possession of all the lands they leave, fully as soon as they will be prepared to make good use of them.... [W]e think it illy becomes the general government to throw out a menace to bayonet the Georgians into her measures; reason and persuasion, are much more potent agents with high-minded freemen, than gun-powder and the bayonet!

He expressed deep concern over Adams's protection of the Creeks land rights, characterizing it as abuse of power and a significant threat to state authority. Removal would protect western interests, eliminate the catalyst for federal-state conflict, and reduce the federal government's role in southern matters like Indian Removal and slavery. Although White, Gales, and Hale all ascribed to a firm belief in states' rights, White differed in that he did not believe a slave-based, exclusively white republic could be adequately protected by a Northern, nationalist president who granted rights to Indians.¹³

Similarly, Thomas J. Lemay and A. J. Lawrence, editors of Raleigh's *North Carolina Star*, expressed the severity of the threat, evoking President George Washington's 1796 Farewell Address: "Frown indignantly upon the first dawning of an attempt to alienate one portion of the Union from another.... We cannot forebear an expression of our disapprobation to the course

¹² *Carolina Observer* (Fayetteville), 1 March 1827, 3.

¹³ *Western Carolinian*, 6 March 1827, 3.

which has been pursued by the President in this matter.” According to Lemay and Lawrence, Adams’s aggression against Georgia had alienated those southern states facing the “Indian problem” from the rest of the nation, heightening sectionalism and threatening “a result the most serious, which, of all other national calamities, is the most to be deprecated . . . : [a] *civil war!*” Making no reference to the Creeks whatsoever, Lemay and Lawrence characterized this dispute in the darkest and starkest terms possible. The federal government’s threat was so egregious that civil war between the North and the South may result. Not surprisingly, for Lemay and Lawrence and other maligned North Carolinians, Indians were of minimal consideration in a larger constitutional issue that pitted the North and South on separate sides.¹⁴

For North Carolinians, Georgia’s dispute over the Creek lands offered opportunity to wage political battle about a topic much larger than Indian land rights. Beyond the hardening political divide that Gales’s, Hale’s, White’s, and Lemay and Lawrence’s opinions evidenced, the editors’ words also indicated an emerging propensity to use the Indian issue to advance larger political agendas and constitutional interpretations. Although state and federal authorities clashed over many issues in the late 1820s and early 1830s, slavery was at the epicenter. Many North Carolinians, like many southerners, worried that if the federal government successfully defined and defended Indian “nations” within state boundaries, it would attempt to dictate emancipation as well. Thus, divergent positions on the “Indian problem” corresponded closely with positions on political economy. The specter of a federal military excursion against a southern state, no

¹⁴ *North Carolina Star*, 2 March 1827, 3.

matter the reason, became the imagined threat to state sovereignty and Jeffersonian-inspired white republicanism.¹⁵

The political culture in North Carolina that produced these citizens' debates was thoroughly Jeffersonian, not only over economic policy but towards the "Indian problem" as well. Jefferson considered cultural evolution of Indians necessary to the white republican utopia he sought to build. In *Notes on the State of Virginia*, numerous letters, and his "Policy of Civilization and Assimilation," Jefferson reiterated his belief that the Indian was "equal to whites in vivacity and activity of mind," and that by "incorporating themselves with us as citizens of the United States, this is what the natural progress of things will, of course, bring on, and it will be better to promote than to retard it."¹⁶

Jeffersonian idealism widely influenced North Carolinians' image of Indians, but it began to evolve in highly incongruent ways. Prior to Jackson's election, Philo White frequently published editorials highlighting the increasingly civilized state of the Cherokees. White reported in an 1827 article titled "Cherokee Civilization" that the "new government adopted by the Cherokees appears to be in full operation. Among the first exhibitions of its power, was the public execution of an Indian for murder." The Cherokees had also developed an alphabet, which White interpreted as "the invention of a native Cherokee" and "said to display great ingenuity." The Cherokees had even proposed publishing a newspaper at New Echota, wrote White, "to be

¹⁵ Ronald Satz, *American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 4. Satz argued, "Some southerners warned that if the federal government could defend the existence of Indian 'nations' within states it could also interfere in the internal affairs of the slave states and emancipate the slaves."

¹⁶ R. D. W. Connor, *North Carolina: Rebuilding the Ancient Commonwealth, 1584-1925* (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1929), 506; Hugh T. Lefler and Albert R. Newsome, *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 314, 324; William S. Powell, *North Carolina through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 247; Milton Ready, *The Tar Heel State: A History of North Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 166-68; William A. Link, *North Carolina: Change and Tradition in a Southern State* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2009), viii; Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 77-78; "Jefferson's Policy of Civilization and Assimilation," see Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*, 223.

entitled the ‘Cherokee Phoenix:’ for the exclusive benefit of the Cherokee. The Editor, Elias [Boudinot], is a full blooded Cherokee, and was educated at Cornwall, Connecticut.”¹⁷

Cherokees’ ability to “civilize” also manifested through the success of Christian missionaries and, according to White, their race had not been a prohibitive factor. In March 1828, White reported how divine grace spread among the Cherokees: “One side of the table was occupied by about thirty Indians ... who seven years ago were as wild as the game they pursued; and the other side of the table by new converts, each one giving comfortable evidence of a change of heart.” Months later, White lauded the “Progress of the Gospel among the Cherokees,” reporting how a missionary’s “congregations are very large. Three full Cherokees recently came the distance of 25 miles, to hear the gospel preached; they are candidates for admission to the church. Others are serious, many are anxious to have the bible in Cherokee or Cherokee Tracts.”¹⁸

For many North Carolinians, conversion to Christianity was a key indicator of the emergence of Jefferson’s ideal civilization. As John Locke had enshrined in the colony’s original constitution in 1669, if Indians were given “an opportunity of acquainting themselves with the truth and reasonableness of its doctrines,” they could be won over to its truth and shed their “idolatry” and “ignorance.”¹⁹ Appropriating John Locke’s premise that “Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God,” Jefferson argued that agrarian practices would assist Indians in shedding their past ways: “The Indians being once closed in between strong settled countries on the Mississippi & Atlantic, will, for want of game, be forced to agriculture,” the promotion of which is “essential in their preservation.” Christianity, therefore, was a Jeffersonian benchmark

¹⁷ *Western Carolinian*, 11 December 1827, 2.

¹⁸ *Western Carolinian*, 18 March 1828, 4; *Western Carolinian*, 10 June 1828, 4.

¹⁹ John Locke, “Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina,” (Ann Arbor, MI; Oxford, UK: Text Creation Partnership, 2003), accessed 29 November 2016, 97.

that these Cherokees were shedding previous ignorance and practices and adopting the cultural refinements necessary for assimilation into Jefferson's agrarian republic east of the Mississippi River.²⁰

Jeffersonian understandings of the Native American capacity for "civilization" did not supplant North Carolinians' desire for Cherokee lands, however. As White made very clear in March 1827, removal would safeguard the republic from fractious political disputes of the kind evidenced in the Adams-Troup dispute. White was merely echoing the Jeffersonian view, which allowed theoretical space for removal and assimilation to coexist. Jefferson had held that there would be some Indians who would simply refuse to adopt white customs and would need to be removed. Those who preferred the hunter stage of subsistence must be relocated westward so that an agrarian, republican, and culturally white European civilization could flourish. The Jeffersonian implication, one that White promoted to his readership as late as 1828, was that Indian civilization in the East combined with removal of undesirables to the West, would simultaneously build a republic that could safeguard states' rights and federal interests.²¹

Jacksonian attitudes toward Native Americans, however, were inconsistent with Jeffersonianism. In Jackson's republican utopia, Jefferson's policy of civilizing Indians while simultaneously purchasing their land and integrating Indians into the agricultural economy, was contradictory and misguided. For Jackson, Native Americans were inevitably doomed, and their continued residence threatened the white race. Rather than civilizing them so that they could be "redeemed" within white culture, Jackson imagined westward removal as the only route by

²⁰ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XIX, "Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy," Yale University, accessed 15 February 2017; Jefferson to Henry Dearborn, 29 December 1802, in Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*, 220; "Jefferson's Policy of Civilization and Assimilation," in Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*, 223.

²¹ Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*, 17.

which Native Americans could culturally survive and for American republicanism to remain racially white. For Jackson's supporters in North Carolina, increasingly uneasy about the future of slavery, removal had little to do with preserving Indian culture and much to do with solidifying republicanism with whites in control and blacks enslaved. White's endorsement of Jackson's candidacy, then, trapped him between his older Jeffersonian understanding of Indian assimilation, and a newer Jacksonian argument for their wholesale removal. By June 1829, White, who had enthusiastically reported Cherokees' civilization efforts in 1828, began advocating exclusively for removal, arguing that if Indians remained "where they are, they will be a source of continual complaint to their white neighbors," rendering "the situation of the Indians precarious," and perpetuating "a state of feeling among the bordering settlements of whites, particularly to be deplored in a well regulated and peaceable disposed community."²²

White's ideological evolution caught him in a contradiction. Either the Cherokees could or could not civilize on account of their race. White had now argued both. Yet, he was willing to sacrifice his earlier Jeffersonian egalitarian beliefs regarding Indians to preserve Jeffersonian states' rights and promote an increasingly necessary white republic, which Jackson implicitly represented.

Like White, many of North Carolina's Old Republicans, westerners, and citizens opposed to Adams considered Andrew Jackson the most viable candidate in the election of 1828. His embrace of Jeffersonian principles of strict constructionism, states' rights, negative government at the federal level, and southern slavery aligned with their own interests. Meanwhile, National Republicans, religious pacifists such as the Quakers, and moneyed interests considered Jackson's unclear stance on the tariff, his military background, temperament, and opposition to the Bank of

²² For White's endorsement of Jackson, see *Western Carolinian*, 3 June 1828, 2; Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*, 336; *Western Carolinian*, 9 June 1829, 3.

the U.S. unsuitable for an executive leader of a republican nation that hoped to flourish in the industrial age. Jackson's large margin of victory demonstrated that Jacksonian republicanism better suited North Carolinians' ideological leanings in 1828.²³

As with Philo White, however, it appears that North Carolinians jettisoned their Jeffersonian attitudes towards native peoples in order to embrace the momentum of Jacksonianism. One important question unanswered in North Carolina historiography is the extent to which the Indian issue contributed to Jackson's 1828 victory. Historians have ignored this topic, or avoided thorough consideration of it with throw-away lines like, "Jackson's enthusiastic support for Indian Removal was undoubtedly one of the reasons he swept the southern states in the 1828 election." Was Indian Removal a core interest of North Carolina voters who overwhelmingly supported Jackson for president in 1828?²⁴

Throughout the election Jackson's supporters and opponents projected his engagements against Indians onto their expectations for his future policies. Jacksonian advocates in Wilkes County claimed that, during the 1810s, when his country demanded his services to prevent "the murderous inroads of the hostile Indians upon our Southern frontier," Jackson had come to the rescue, fulfilling the "expectations of his country, by subduing the bloodthirsty natives of the forest, driving them beyond our borders, and pursuing them into the Spanish territory, where they had hitherto sought and found protection." For many citizens, Jackson promised to defend the nation from political and racial threats, real or ideological, and provided a powerful image as the nation's protector.²⁵

²³ *Western Carolinian*, 3 June 1828, 2; *New Bern Spectator*, 23 August 1828, 2; *New Bern Spectator*, 9 August 1828, 3; Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 17-25; Thomas E. Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics: North Carolina 1815-1861* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 118. In the election of 1828 Jackson garnered 37,857 votes while John Quincy Adams managed only 13,918 votes.

²⁴ Satz, *American Indian Policy*, 11.

²⁵ *North Carolina Star*, 6 March 1828, 4.

Six months after Jackson's election, however, John Campbell drew a distinction between Adams's and Jackson's Indian policies. Fiercely pro-Jackson, anti-bank, and a deeply committed agrarian, Campbell felt he had to distinguish and clarify Jackson's Indian policy for the readers of his *Halifax Minerva*, stating, "it is very different than from the previous administration, and evinces a much more strict regard to the rights and interests" of the states. In *Halifax*, implied Campbell, the Indian issue had not served as a crucial and obvious factor in the previous fall's presidential election, but Jackson's other policies, Indian battles, and position as a slaveholder did represent a consistency of states' rights philosophy and a rejection of the idea that non-whites held rights.²⁶

In contrast, Jackson's opponents sought to discredit the rhetoric that Jackson was the nation's protector by arguing that he was unfit for office precisely because of his previous military actions against Indians. John I. Pasteur, a fervent supporter of Adams and editor of the National Republican *New Bern Spectator*, rejecting the implication that Indian-held rights represented a threat, claimed that, "Nobody ever thinks of holding up his extraordinary capacity for butchering Indians ... as furnishing evidence of his fitness for the highest honors of the nation." Appealing to North Carolinians' penchant for republican ideology, Pasteur quoted Jefferson on Jackson's military past: "the General, 'in every station he ever filled, either military or civil, made it a point to violate every order and instruction ever given to him, and take his own arbitrary will for the guide of his conduct.'" Anti-Jacksonians argued that a military background that disregarded law, authority, and humanity was a dangerous trait for the leader of a republic.

²⁶ Campbell also expressed his conservative agrarian views in a letter he received and printed from an "Old Countrymen," who wrote, "there is a disease existing and corrupting our political institutions.... The banking institutions of the state of North Carolina must undergo a purgation, or the family interest of the country must abandon their fields, the merchant his goods, and the mechanics his arts, for they alike prey merciless upon them all." *Halifax Minerva*, 14 May 1829, 3; *Halifax Minerva*, 25 June 1829, 2.

Like Jackson's supporters, however, Pasteur most often focused on Jackson's past rather than his proposed initiatives as a means of defining the characteristics of the man. Removal as a specifically Jacksonian initiative lacked definition during the election. Both supporters and opponents directed their discussions regarding policy to the tariff, international trade, and internal improvements. Proposed resolutions to the "Indian problem" were largely absent from either party during the election, reflecting a relative lack of partisan contention on the issue among North Carolinians prior to 1829.²⁷

Pasteur purposefully introduced the *New Bern Spectator* in August 1828 to oppose Jackson's presidential aspirations. The timing and tenets of his prospectus illustrate how National Republicans wrestled with removal policy in the months leading up to the election, uncommitted to a particular stance. Pasteur, perhaps Jackson's most vociferous opponent in North Carolina, both prior to and during his time in office, had in fact advocated for removal in the months leading up to the 1828 election. Excerpting a recent discourse by Justice Joseph Story that would comport with his readers' "christian" sentiments, Pasteur published, "Every where at the approach of the white man they fade away.... They should soon be at rest in fairer regions, where the Great Spirit dwelt, in a home prepared for the brave beyond the western skies." Native peoples were not threats. Instead, they were to be pitied as whites proved a "mightier power, a moral canker ... , a poison." Indians could not continue in the East, claimed Pasteur, but not because they refused to civilize. They just could not withstand the white flood. Indians were to be admired for their virtues and fearlessness, but ultimately, this courage was "absorbed in their despair.... Their look is onward.... They know, and feel that is for them still one remove farther,

²⁷ Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 16-25; *New York Daily Advertiser*, reprinted in *New Bern Spectator*, 23 August 1828, 2; *New Bern Spectator*, 9 August 1828, 2; Pasteur claimed, the "Spectator owes its existence to the Adams party of this town." *New Bern Spectator*, 19 September 1829, 3.

not distant nor unseen.” Their reduced condition and their inevitable migration was a blot upon the nation.²⁸

T. Early Strange disagreed with Pasteur on this particular point, but not on the necessity of removal. As editor of the *Greensborough Patriot* he actively criticized Jackson on many issues, but Strange found a silver lining behind the Cherokees’ inevitable westward immigration: “It is pleasing to witness, amongst most of those who are thus migrating the habits as well as the means necessary to constitute good citizens and useful members of society.” Pasteur and Strange, both lauding the Cherokees’ capabilities and opposing Jackson’s candidacy, conceded removal in the months before the election. Pasteur thought they would perish in the West, while Strange hoped their “civilized” qualities would sustain them in the new settlements. Neither man argued that removal must be stopped, or questioned its legality or morality.²⁹

It is likely that Pasteur and Strange, aware of the widespread interest in Indian lands among North Carolinians, purposefully avoided associating Adams, their preferred candidate, with any anti-removal stances that might cost him votes. Adams himself had recommended removal during his presidential term, and perhaps by conceding the inevitability of removal, they could ride the popular wave of North Carolinians’ interest in western lands, distance their candidate from his dispute with Governor Troup, and diminish Jackson’s image as Indian fighter.³⁰ Concession of removal’s inevitability did not last past the election, however, once Adams was defeated. Pasteur and Strange turned the removal issue against Jackson. Both papers

²⁸ *New Bern Spectator*, 22 November 1828, 1.

²⁹ *Greensboro Patriot*, 25 October 1828, 2.

³⁰ Satz, *American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era*, 4-6. Satz stated, “Adams and leading members of his cabinet agreed that removing the Indians to the trans-Mississippi West was the only feasible solution to the critical situation confronting the nation.”

changed their stances dramatically, continuing to laud the Cherokees' capacity for improvement, but opposing removal on moral and legal grounds as vigorously as they opposed Jackson.

The removal issue was not a core partisan interest of North Carolina voters. It took Jackson claiming removal as his policy initiative to allow North Carolina's partisans to solidify their stances and strategies for and against it. Before the election, Democrat Philo White lauded the Cherokees civilization efforts and National Republican John Pasteur acquiesced to their removal. After the election, White furiously opposed any insinuation that the Cherokees were capable of civilization and assimilation, while Pasteur argued that removal was immoral precisely because of their capacity for improvement. Once Jackson clarified his position on removal, newspaper editors found in the Cherokee issue an opportunity to coax and coalesce the public to their respective sides, and appealing to sentiments of white patriarchy became their choice rhetorical strategy.

It did not take Jackson long to stake his claim. In his first year in office, Jackson called on Congress to consider "the propriety of setting apart an ample district west of the Mississippi" for the emigration of Native Americans. The longstanding government policy "to introduce among them the arts of civilization ... of gradually reclaiming them from a wandering life" had failed because the Indians had "retained their savage habits." Removal would allow them to "be secured in the enjoyment of governments of their own choice" and would be voluntary, Jackson clarified, "for it would be as cruel as unjust to compel the aborigines to abandon the graves of their fathers and seek a home in a distant land. But they should be distinctly informed that if they remain within the limits of the States they must be subject to their laws."³¹

³¹ Andrew Jackson, "First Annual Message," 8 December 1829, in *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897*, ed. James D. Richardson, 11 vols. (Washington, DC: US Congress Joint Committee of Printing, 1920), 2: 442-62.

In North Carolina, Jackson's initiative inspired polarized responses, largely galvanized around the pro- and anti-Jackson camps that had emerged during the election of 1828, but also around the dual and seemingly conflicting Jeffersonian ideas of assimilation and removal. At the crux of the divide was a larger debate over whether non-whites were capable of republican citizenship. Once Jackson made Indian Removal his policy initiative, his supporters heavily backed it as a true defense of Jeffersonian states' rights and his designs for an exclusively white America, while opponents rejected removal as executive overreach unfit for Jefferson's egalitarian notion of republican government. Although ideologues appropriated Jackson's plan to defend or oppose their version of Jeffersonian republicanism, more often it was Jackson the man and what he portended for the state's future, that political commentators addressed.

For editorial supporters of a slave economy, republicanism meant defending states' rights and a racially white republic at any opportunity. Removing Indians, thereby removing federal control over southern lands, accomplished both. While political stances against the Tariff, federally-funded internal improvements, and the U.S. Bank buttressed their opposition to the federal government, removal provided the added and visual benefit of solidifying North Carolina as a white man's republic as well. As the Missouri Compromise made clear, the federal government was not the committed defender of slavery that many Old Republicans demanded. Thus, slavery's protection necessitated other defenses. Jeffersonian ideology was interpreted by Democrats to fit this intense need, and promoting Indian Removal helped defend states' rights and a white republic from encroachment by the federal government and the notion that non-whites could civilize and hold basic rights of citizenship.

Among Jackson's supporters, John Campbell and his new co-editor of the *Halifax Minerva*, Edmund B. Freeman, a slave owner, self-described "Southern man," and "firm

Republican,” declared confident faith in Jackson’s Indian policy, “governed by what he considers the best interest of the Land.” Jackson’s address demonstrated the “highest respect for the reserved rights of the States” and “the whole passage about the Indians is a beautiful and powerful composition.... [I]t is in fact a truly republican message and must meet with the unqualified approbation of the friends of State Rights.”³²

Similarly, Alexander J. Maurice, at the height of the removal debate, published in his pro-Jackson *New Bern Sentinel* a letter to the editor from someone who called himself “Jefferson,” claiming that Jackson’s stance on the tariff, and opposition to the “American System,” furnished evidence that Jackson was striving, “by every legitimate means in his power, to restore the Constitution to its primitive purity.”³³ In conclusion, “Jefferson” wrote,

Let us then, Mr. Editor, who are the advocates of State Rights - who would gladly see a written Constitution, purchased at so dear a price, handed down to our posterity indulge the fond hope that Heaven may preserve to use, for another term, one who seems to us to be an instrument in his hands to restore to us that civil and religious liberty which, from bad rulers, had well nigh have been lost to this once happy and prosperous people.

Interestingly, at this pivotal time in the debate over Indian Removal, Jackson’s policy was not one of the explicit actions he had taken to restore the Constitution to its primitive purity. Jackson’s Indian policy was Jeffersonian, but only implicitly.³⁴

Philo White also began to embed Indian Removal within a larger defense of the states’ rights ideology. He lauded Jackson’s recommendation in his First Inaugural Address that

³² *Roanoke Advocate* (Halifax), 4 March 1830, 3; *Halifax Minerva*, 17 December 1829, 3.

³³ One day after the Indian Removal Bill passed the House, Jackson elicited additional praise from more conservative North Carolinians when he vetoed the Maysville Road Bill, a major internal improvements project funded by the federal government. Maurice, however, seemed to engage in wishful prognosticating on the tariff as Jackson had, up until this point, been relatively unclear as to his stance for or against it. Maurice seemed to believe that the president’s protection of states’ rights on the Indian and internal improvements issues would similarly inform his future tariff policies. In other words, conservative North Carolinians were eager to mold their image of Jackson and his policies to fit their desired ends. *New Bern Sentinel*, 24 July 1830, 3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

Congress set “apart a district of the country West of the Mississippi river, for those Indians who are disposed to emigrate” as one of the “most prominent subjects touched on in the Message.” Alongside Jackson’s promotion of direct election of the President, modifying the Tariff, paying off the public debt, and rejecting federally-sponsored internal improvements, White proclaimed this single speech

of our illustrious President . . . fully realizes all the anticipations and anxious hopes of his early and steadfast friends; it enables them to look back, with a most gratifying retrospection, upon their struggles to elevate the patriot hero to the exalted station which is now honored by his occupancy.

By appropriating issues that many National Republicans had embraced in their early support for John C. Calhoun—like the tariff and federal interference in internal improvements—Jackson allowed for previously less enthusiastic supporters to also identify Indian Removal as an important piece of the republican agenda. Jackson demonstrated early in his presidency that he would defend states’ rights, and thus, offer greater protections for slavery. The Indians would be sacrificed on behalf of these principles, slavery, and the exclusive reservation of republican rights for the white race, despite any lingering Jeffersonian egalitarianism that may have characterized White’s and others’ earlier concerns.³⁵

Still, many North Carolinians expressed an opposition to removal, and their concerns were exacerbated by Jackson’s appeal to Congress. In late December 1829, John Pasteur condemned Jackson who “exerts a dangerous influence, and sets a dangerous precedent, in advising changes to the constitution of the country.” Turning his editorial to removal, he did “not approve the doctrine in regard to the Indians, laid down in the message. We have guaranteed to them by treaty their present limits—and their rights ought to be respected.” Appealing to North Carolinians’ republican tradition, Pasteur concluded, “John Locke is a name illustrious alike in

³⁵ *Western Carolinian*, 22 December 1829, 3; *Western Carolinian*, 15 December 1828, 2.

philosophy and politics—and in his ‘Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina,’ Article 97, he asserts, in regard to these unfortunate *natives* of the Land, that we have ‘no right to *expel*, or *use them all*.’ Is John Locke’s authority less than that of Andrew Jackson?” Unlike his opponents, Pasteur argued that, despite the inferiority of their race, natives held fundamental human rights in the republican tradition that deserved the respect and protection of the white male population.³⁶

In the *Greensboro Patriot*, new editor William Swaim pushed further: “But what can be more exceptionable, nay, preposterous than his project of exterminating the Indians of Alabama and Georgia?” Vainly, Swaim demanded that

Nothing but a “quick and powerful awakening of public indignation can prevent the poor, defenceless, and almost exterminated aborigines from being thrown out of the protection of the laws of Congress, of the constitution, and of treaties solemnly ratified by the treaty making powers.”³⁷

Swaim’s notion of republicanism included a defense of the rule of law and individual liberties that Jackson threatened to disregard. Indians, too, despite their inferiority, deserved these fundamental human and constitutional rights. Unless the sleeping public awakened to Jackson’s political usurpation, couched in moral terms, the republic’s constitutional safeguards were endangered.

While Swaim’s rhetoric displayed a moral superiority over the Jacksonian supporters of removal, he also demonstrated a racial superiority over the “aborigines” among the opposition. Despite their apparently successful civilization efforts, the Indians were still poor, defenseless, and inferior according to removal’s opponents, including Swaim, who demonstrated a penchant, common among the emerging Whig Party, to stand on higher moral ground as a way of attracting voters. Unlike his opponents, Swaim felt less threatened by the idea that non-whites could

³⁶ *New Bern Spectator*, 9 August 1828, 3; *New Bern Spectator*, 26 December 1829, 3.

³⁷ *Greensboro Patriot*, 30 December 1829, 3; Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 25.

civilize, and appealing to his readership's moral sensitivities as the superior and protecting white male would ideally elicit a more urgent defense of republicanism that Jackson threatened.

Swaim challenged white men to perform their duty as the protector of the non-white race, repeatedly utilizing moral imagery to oppose Jackson and removal. In early 1830, Swaim published a poem from an Indian's perspective titled, "Pathetic Appeal."

*There, on that vale luxuriant,
Beyond the white man's claims,
They form'd a civil government,
Which well deserves the name....*

*We taught our nation to maintain,
By imitating you....*

*You, white men, never want a cause,
To oust an Indian's claim....*

*But ah! ungrateful to our race,
You seal an Indian's doom;
And drive him from each resting place,
To give the white man room!³⁸*

Swaim's motivations against Jackson's removal policy are easily imagined. A firm advocate for public education, social justice, and eradicating prejudice, Swaim, while not a Quaker, lived among a large population of such religious pacifists in Guilford County, one of only eight counties that voted for Adams in the 1828 election. Opposing the administration's potentially violent and immoral policy appealed to editor and reader alike.

Yet, Swaim also operated from a more ideological position, which utilized moral opposition and appeals to white patriarchal superiority to advance a political agenda. In an editorial titled "A Pill for the Jeffersonian Republicans," Swaim printed one of Jefferson's letters which stated, "The Indians have a right to the occupation of their lands, independent of the states

³⁸ *Greensboro Patriot*, 20 January 1830, 4.

within whose chartered limits they happen to lie,” that no state or person had “a right to treat with the Indians without the consent of the general government,” and “that the government is determined to expend all its energy for the patronage and protection of the rights of the Indians.”³⁹ While demonstrating genuine moral outrage for the Cherokees, Swaim also advocated a stronger federal government, which included statutes for the gradual abolition of slavery (in contrast to immediate emancipation), the development of manufacturing comparable to that in the North, a state banking system, widespread internal improvements: all positions detested by Jacksonian Democrats. Swaim’s posturing, typical of and indeed central to the political success of the National Republicans and future Whigs, provided a larger ideological context for his stance against removal. These economic ideologies placed Swaim and men like him directly opposite Jackson, and opposing removal was another method of contesting the president’s economic policies. Like many men who would soon become Whigs, Swaim’s opposition to removal blended political and economic reasoning with moral outrage and appeals to white patriarchy. Like their Democratic opponents, the sentiments of white superiority among the population provided fertile ground for the use of the Indian Removal issue to advance political and economic agendas.⁴⁰

Thus, two ideological camps galvanized through the press on either side of the “Indian problem.” Democrats sought the best way to buttress white citizenship by eliminating the notion that non-whites held rights to land that government would recognize. Whigs couched their

³⁹ *Greensboro Patriot*, 19 January 1831, 3.

⁴⁰ *Greensboro Patriot*, 23 May 1829, 3; Historian Daniel Walker Howe argued the Whig Party that emerged in the 1830s and lasted until 1854 blended beliefs in improved technology, industry, economic capitalism and social paternalism in an attempt to redeem and better mankind. Whigs also held a belief in the superiority of the white race, but argued that Indians, free blacks and slaves also had the capacity to advance and were on the verge of redemption. Both of these economic and racial ideologies fittingly described the political tenets espoused by *Greensboro Patriot* editor William Swaim. Daniel Walker Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 9, 40.

political and economic arguments in rhetoric about whiteness, specifically in the white man's moral responsibility to defend a "helpless" non-white race.⁴¹

Posturing over republican visions, presidential authority, and white superiority climaxed in the spring of 1830 when Congress debated the Indian Removal Act. As Thomas J. Lemay and A. J. Lawrence had argued during the Adams-Troup dispute in 1827, the "Indian problem" portended a widening sectionalism as proponents of removal saw northern animus, not partisanship, at the root of the opposition's motives. As their logic went, a unique southern way of life demanded the Indians remove, and northern meddling illegally stood in the way. Supporters also combined a defense of removal with advocacy for ending the "Tariff of Abominations," assigning blame to greedy northerners who stood in the way of southern progress. Opponents of Indian Removal, in contrast, saw no such sectionalism and were likely to enjoin their opposition to removal with political, economic, and moral justifications for keeping the tariff.

In June 1830, in the aftermath of the Removal Bill's passage and as clamor from the pro- and anti-removal camps reached fever pitch, supporters in North Carolina blamed northern states for dividing the country and threatening the Union. Edmund B. Freeman, now majority editor and owner of the Democratic *Halifax Minerva*, which he renamed the *Roanoke Advocate*, discredited the 116 Representatives and Senators who had opposed Jackson and the Indian Bill, arguing that they came from the North. Appealing to the patriarchal and liberal notions among

⁴¹ Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic*, 68-69. Saxton saw little distinction between Jacksonians and their opponents in their ideas and attitudes toward non-white races. They differed, Saxton argued, in the ways they tactically used race. The Democrats typically promoted "hard" racial politics, like Indian Removal, to achieve certain ends. The Whigs, to contrast themselves from their opponents, pursued "soft" racial politics, typically couched in moral terms, which could help them secure votes and maintain their class status; Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics*, 7, 118; Rush Welter, *The Mind of America, 1820-1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 77-95; Harry L. Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second Party System in Cumberland County, North Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 318.

white North Carolinians, Freeman criticized Rhode Island and Massachusetts for imprisoning for debt both the infirm and women. “Deliver us from such law-givers,” he declared; these “are the people who have raised such a clamor against the Indian Bill; whose mock sensibilities have been so excited at the condition of the poor Indian. . . . Let such be reminded that ‘Charity begins at home,’ and when the condition of their own people is first improved,” then they could “go on the crusade in behalf of the poor Indian.” Ignoring the five congressmen from his own state who opposed the bill, Freeman believed that northerners merely used Indian Removal as a political maneuver to oppose southerners and President Jackson, rather than an issue arising from true moral outrage or concerns of constitutionalism. Promoting a unified and morally-superior South against a united and oppressive North was more effective rhetoric in defending southern institutions in his divided state.⁴²

Freeman continued his lashing of the North, republishing an editorial from the *Charleston Mercury* (S.C.) that chastised Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania for having passed laws to regulate their own Indians, rather than adhere to the provisions of the federal removal bill. “But, of course, Indians should be controlled and regulated at the North,” published Freeman, as “it is only at the South that they should be considered better than the whites.” For Freeman, the federal government had nullified federal law, rejected the rights of northern Indians, and importantly, placed non-whites above whites in the racial hierarchy. By his logic, removal had to occur so that meddling northerners did not succeed in their larger attacks upon a pure, hierarchical republic ruled by white men.⁴³

Burton Craige, editor of the *Western Carolinian*, a fervent opponent of the tariff, supporter of South Carolina’s increasingly discussed doctrine of nullification, and adherent to

⁴² *Roanoke Advocate*, 4 March 1830, 3; *Roanoke Advocate*, 17 June 1830, 3.

⁴³ *Roanoke Advocate*, 24 June 1830, 3.

Calhoun's vision of radical states' rights, also blamed northerners, not Jackson's opponents, for the furious debate over removal. On the opposition, Craige argued, "[T]he interference of the North was not founded in the conviction of the justice of the cause they advocated, but was based upon that interminable and implacable hatred, which it has manifested towards the South, since the termination of the last war." By opposing the South's desire to remove the Indians, northerners did not practice true republicanism. Instead, they were attempting to "paralyze the nerves of our institutions." States' rights and white patriarchal rule were under attack by the North and the federal government.⁴⁴

Democratic editors used removal to further crystalize an ideology on behalf of North Carolina's white male population that Jeffersonian republicanism was not only agrarian in its economy, but that its political rights were exclusively reserved for the superior white race. Despite the fact that five of North Carolina's twelve Congressmen voted against removal, Freeman and Craige characterized the opposition as northern animus towards southern institutions and racial hierarchy. The North seemingly promoted a crippling tariff, imprisoned debtors, treated women poorly, subverted true republican principles of free speech and press, placed Indians above white southerners in the racial hierarchy, hated the South, opposed President Jackson, and threatened the Union. Such claims resonated amongst North Carolinians deeply suspicious over federal and northern interference in what Craige characterized as southern "institutions." Of course, although the North voted heavily against the Removal Act, the contest had been largely between Jacksonians and non-Jacksonians, not North and South. North Carolinians like Craige and Freeman, then, sought in the removal debate an opportunity to advance a political objective and construct a narrative of northern and federal interference that

⁴⁴ *Western Carolinian*, 29 June 1830, 3.

had little to do with the Cherokees or even partisanship. Southern men's worries, not only over slavery and the tariff but losing their superior position on the racial hierarchy, made the promotion of a distinctly southern and racially white way of life advantageous to the promotion of larger political and economic issues. By using the removal issue to attract nervous voters and further the narrative of a united, and potentially secessionist South, Democrats might force northern congressmen to accommodate southern demands for stronger protections for slavery.

Like their politicians, the crucial issue undergirding editors' racial rhetoric was over political economy. The concurrent debate over the federal Tariff of 1828 lay at the heart of the removal debate. The two issues became entwined as those eager to retain but modify the tariff and protect northern-style manufacturing opposed Indian Removal, while those advocating outright repeal of the tariff supported removal.⁴⁵

In New Bern, the argument played out in the town's newspapers as John Pasteur, editor of the National Republican *New Bern Spectator*, challenged Alexander J. Maurice, editor of the Jacksonian *New Bern Sentinel* and opponent of tariffs, internal improvements, and banking. In his initial editorial, Maurice bound the question of the tariff to an enlarging and dangerous federal government:

I believe that any encroachment of the delegated powers of the General Government upon the State Sovereignities, is destructive of liberty.... I believe that Industry can protect itself, and that high pseudo protecting duties never can attain such a desirable end. I believe that the self-styled American System, is false and foolish in theory, and ruinous in practice.

⁴⁵ Historian William W. Freehling argued that many southerners could not distance their view on the tariff from their "morbid sensitivity" to abolitionism. Resting upon this conclusion, it is safe to assume that the vast consistency among North Carolinians in their opposition to the tariff and concurrent support for removal is grounded in their sensitivity to federal interference over slavery. William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 49.

Evoking the sectional antagonisms of Freeman and Craige, Maurice proclaimed the tariff “one of many evidences of the hostility which at present exists towards the South,” and that he and his ideological cohort represented “the real friends of the South.”⁴⁶ Pasteur responded that,

When the Sentinel speaks of nullification and resistance as the interest of the South, we cannot forbear asking what portion of our citizens would be benefitted by civil war.... The General Government, with one sloop of war, could annihilate our whole commerce, foreign, and coastwise. Who would not rather pay ten cents on molasses (heavy as that duty is) than to have our trade annihilated and our government dissolved?⁴⁷

Maurice defended Indian Removal, then, as an appropriate function of the federal government, in contrast to its overreach on the tariff: “We regard the Indian bill as one of the most salutary measures adopted by Congress for many years. Humanity and political expediency alike concur in its recommendation.”⁴⁸ Pasteur rejected Maurice’s position on several occasions and, less threatened by the bestowal of rights upon the non-white population, disagreed that removal was the appropriate humanitarian response. Instead, Pasteur argued, the Cherokees should “be sustained in their undisturbed enjoyment of their national and social rights.” He praised Henry Clay’s claim that Indians were “not under the laws of the United States” but “that their rights upon the lands where they inhabit or hunt, are secured to them by boundaries defined in amicable treaties between the United States and themselves.” Pasteur, pointing to a Georgia editorial defending federal treaties as “the supreme law of the land” declared it a “fallacy—so common in all discussions about State Rights—that State sovereignty is absolute.”⁴⁹

In Greensboro, William Swaim reminded his readers that “the broad principles of our Government are purely Republican,” and as such the people need protection to defend

⁴⁶ *New Bern Sentinel*, reprinted in *Roanoke Advocate*, 7 May 1830, 3; *New Bern Sentinel*, 1 May 1830, 3.

⁴⁷ *New Bern Spectator*, 8 May 1830, 3.

⁴⁸ *New Bern Sentinel*, 16 October 1830, 2.

⁴⁹ *New Bern Spectator*, 9 January 1830, 2; *New Bern Spectator*, 30 January 1830, 3; *New Bern Spectator* 6 February 1830, 3.

themselves from being “hoodwinked” by unprincipled “demagogues;” a criticism of Jackson and his supporters. One form of protecting the people was the tariff, which had been “severely execrated by those who were either unable to unwilling to see its advantages.” Swaim believed the tariff “operated substantially in favour of the Southern States; because it will influence them to manufacture their own raw materials, of which we have an abundant.” Falling in line with the partisanship on the removal debate, the pro-banking, anti-slavery, and protectionist Swaim continued to publish articles against mistreatment of the Indians, cloaking his resistance in moral imagery for his large Quaker population. Swaim often stated, “To remove the Indians by force, would be an act of violence and wrong, which it is not possible for the United States to attempt,” and that arguments suggesting the Cherokee population was dwindling, that Indians lacked the capacity to civilize, and that they desired to remove for their own benefit, much like the arguments against the tariff, were “false or greatly exaggerated.”⁵⁰

Similarly in Raleigh, Joseph Gales admonished opponents of the tariff. Despite the difficulties the tax had imposed on the South, even if it “were a thousand-fold more oppressive, who would think he was justified in forcibly opposing the settled laws of the land?” If one traveled “through our district and converse[d] with our farmers: they will find that the Tariff does not for a moment occupy their thoughts.” Gales also opposed the Indian Removal Act. Unlike the Democrats who characterized the vote as sectional, Gales claimed it was partisan: it passed by “a trembling majority ... a result which we fear, has been the effect, rather of party feeling than grave deliberation.” Similar to Pasteur and Swaim’s moral rhetoric, Gales described

⁵⁰ *Greensboro Patriot*, 23 May 1829, 3; *Greensboro Patriot*, 14 November 1829, 2; *Greensboro Patriot*, 7 June 1830, 1.

those who opposed the bill as thoughtful men of both “the head & heart,” their arguments the work of “True Eloquence” and “Moral Sense.”⁵¹

Advocates for the tariff’s continuation had much at stake. The federal government had instituted protections to assist in the development of the U.S. manufacturing economy. Eliminating this assistance could cripple some of these men’s investments in the non-agricultural sectors, and along with it, their visions for a diversified economy. They sought the federal government’s protection. Instead, the federal government’s removal of the Indians catered to the arguments for states’ rights and represented a boon to slavery’s protection. Removal threatened to open up western lands for agriculture, threatening to draw the state’s population westward, increasing workers’ wages, and limiting the need for economic diversification. For these men, the tariff needed to remain in place, and opposing Indian Removal on moral and humanitarian grounds was one means of fighting for an economic vision built not simply on agriculture, but on federally-protected industry and commerce as well.

Jacksonian Burton Craige, while promoting himself as the hoister of the “Republican banner,” denounced Swaim’s and Gales’s pro-tariff and anti-removal stances. The tariff, Craige bristled, had been “grossly abused,” “perverted to destructive purposes,” and made “an engine of ruin and oppression” against the South. On the topic of removal, Craige strongly supported the Indian bill as emanating “no less from humanity than from wisdom,” its “consummation was devoutly to be wished for,” and “the systematic opposition which it has received ... is believed to have resulted” not from the Indians themselves, but “from base advisers.” The proper humanitarian response for the white population on behalf of the “inferior” Indian, Craige articulated, was to demand they remove, not protect them in the East. Appropriating the Whigs’

⁵¹ *Raleigh Register*, 6 May 1830, 3; *Raleigh Register*, 3 June 1830, 3; *Raleigh Register*, 5 July 1830, 2; *Weekly Raleigh Register*, 24 June 1830, 1.

moral reasoning, Craige argued that the Indians' natural inability to construct an opposition or intellectual disagreement with removal proved that white men must act on their behalf: to acknowledge the Indians' ability to reason as human beings and oppose removal on their own would contradict Democrats' argument for why the Cherokees must remove.⁵²

Thomas J. Lemay and A. J. Lawrence, too, characterized the tariff as "wild, selfish, narrow, and unjust," and that southern men were smarting under "unmerited, unnecessary, and unconstitutional oppression." Jackson's removal policy was, "in our opinion, both as regards the rights of the States and the permanent welfare of the indians, the most judicious that can be adopted." Like Craige, Lemay and Lawrence justified removal as the white men's humanitarian responsibility to care for the "inferior" Indians. Tellingly, however, all three editors shared a vision for the state's agrarian economy.⁵³

These men detested the tariff as it set a precedent for the federal government to dictate one style of economy over the other. If the federal government could impose a tax that promoted manufacturing, it could utilize that same type of loose constitutionalism to reduce staple crop production and, therefore, slavery. The power to impose a tariff equated with the power to abolish slavery and to protect Indian lands. Consequently, any insinuations that non-whites held republican rights represented a serious threat to slavery's future. Anyone who opposed state sovereignty and an exclusively white republic was hostile and oppressive to the southern economy. Maurice, Craige, and Lemay and Lawrence depicted Indians as savage, removal as humane and necessary, and the republic as indisputably white so that any egalitarian impulses against slavery could be minimized.

⁵² *Western Carolinian*, 15 June 1830, 3; *Western Carolinian*, 30 November 1830, 1, 3.

⁵³ *North Carolina Star*, 22 April 1830, 3; *North Carolina Star*, 4 March 1830, 3.

Only Edward J. Hale, editor of Fayetteville's *Carolina Observer*, positioned himself on a middle political ground. A bank director and former opponent of Adams, Hale had successfully transitioned from landed heir to wealthy urban businessman. He believed the tariff's protection of industry would ultimately become a blessing to North Carolina's economy. Hale wrote,

the spirit of the South is up, and in a few years, we doubt not manufactories will be scattered over the country.... The 'American System' ... will be the happy means of wealth and independence to them, by exhibiting and calling into action all their latest resources, and giving a powerful impetus to industry and enterprise.

Similar to Swaim and Gales, Hale argued that although the tariff was injurious to the South, "the amount of that injury has been greatly overrated." It was even rumored that Hale had given a toast in June 1830 proclaiming, "The Union—Tariff or no Tariff, let us never despair of it," and rejecting appeals to nullification arising from South Carolina. The opportunities proffered for a diversified economy built on manufacturing were to be embraced, and were certainly neither unconstitutional nor overly oppressive, according to Hale.⁵⁴

Yet, unlike other pro-tariff men, Hale was surprisingly in favor of the Indian bill. He forecast, "Upon the removal of the Indians under the law passed at the last session of Congress, a new field will be opened up for the enterprise and industry of our hardy population, and a fresh and valuable source of revenue to the state." As a director of a bank and as owner of the Fayetteville Water Works, Hale's interests lay with economic development. He was a moralist also, expressing during the 1827 Creek controversy between Adams and Troup that removal was revolting and morally wrong. Politically, however, Hale also passionately embraced states' rights and quickly abandoned his moral stance when Adams threatened Georgia's sovereignty in his

⁵⁴ Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict*, 67; *Carolina Observer*, 14 August 1828, 3; *Carolina Observer*, reprinted in *Raleigh Register*, 1 April 1830, 2; *Carolina Observer*, 10 June 1830, 3; *Carolina Observer*, 27 January 1831, 3.

message to Congress.⁵⁵ Stability and predictability appeared Hale's main motivations. Even at the height of the removal debate, then, Hale chose instead to discuss the rechartering of the Bank of the U.S. In the larger economic picture, he saw little need to discuss the "Indian problem" further. Best to let enterprising, industrious, and hardy white men conduct the necessary work of putting the state on sounder economic ground through whatever means necessary.⁵⁶

Most revealing was Hale's fierce anti-partyism, which represents a window into the intersection of the tariff and removal within the larger partisan disputes in North Carolina. Unlike many of his colleagues in the press, Hale disapproved of excessive partisanship, hated the degradation of politicians' characters that so often took attention away from political issues, and refused to allow his *Observer* to engage in over-promotion of party spirit. He opposed Adams but was unenthusiastic about Jackson as well. Perhaps his anti-partyism was a political tactic in its own right. Nevertheless, Hale rejected the stark political lines drawn around Indian Removal, supporting it only so far as it did not interfere in the state's economic development and political independence.

White men were not the only ones who understood what was at stake in the Indian Removal debate and the need to appeal to North Carolinians' Jeffersonian and white patriarchal ethos. In 1830, Elias Boudinot, Cherokee editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix* and opponent of removal, similarly understood the rhetorical power of Jeffersonianism and the ways its tenets had been warped to fit Jacksonians' arguments and justifications for removal. Boudinot challenged,

We presume that all those persons who celebrated Mr. Jefferson's birthday at Washington last winter, and all others who consider him as the greatest patriot and statesman that this country has ever produced, will not hesitate to subscribe to his sentiments in the following passage . . . : 'the INDIANS HAD THE FULL

⁵⁵ Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict*, 67, 76, 176, 193, 203.

⁵⁶ *Carolina Observer*, 3 June 1830, 2; *Carolina Observer*, 1 July 1830, 3.

UNDIVIDED, AND INDEPENDENT SOVEREIGNTY AS LONG AS THEY
CHOSE TO KEEP IT, AND THAT THIS MIGHT BE FOREVER.’

Beyond the editor’s specific claims to the Jeffersonian legacy, Boudinot himself manifested the Jeffersonian belief in the Cherokees’ capacity to assimilate. Unfortunately, not even Boudinot could dissuade Jacksonians from their fears of the dangerous threat posted to the slave economy by the enlargement of federal power.⁵⁷

John Pasteur similarly used Jeffersonian Indian policy to discredit Jacksonian arguments.

Quoting Jefferson’s actual heir, James Monroe, Pasteur wrote:

I have no hesitation, however, to declare it as my opinion, that the Indian title was not affected in the slightest circumstance by the [1802] compact with Georgia, and that there is no obligation on the United States to remove the Indians by force.... An attempt to move them by force, would, in my opinion, be unjust.⁵⁸

If Monroe believed removal was unjust, then Jacksonian arguments that removal had been a presidential policy contiguous to the Jefferson administration were inaccurate. Attempting to crack a core argument that Jacksonians held exclusive right to the Jeffersonian legacy, Pasteur stated further,

Mr. Jefferson was, without doubt, one of the most sincere friends of popular rights which this or any other country has produced.... Once the leader of the most democrattick party in this country, his name has become identified with republicanism. It has consequently become an object with most political leaders to claim his authority for their principles and objects; and his name is evoked by every demagogue who starts into public notice, throughout this wide land. Jacksonians and Adamsites, Strict Constructionists and Latitudinarians, Merchants, Tariffites, and Anti-Tariffites, all invoke the authority of Jefferson! The question naturally occurs, which of these parties is right in this claim?

Even Jefferson would not ascribe to his own measures such strict constitutionalism as the Jacksonians had done. Rather, Jefferson “departed as widely from the strict letter of the constitution, as any other President,” flexibly responding to the economic needs of his era,

⁵⁷ *Cherokee Phoenix*, 10 July 1830, Vol. 3, No. 12, Pg. 4, Col. 1a.

⁵⁸ President James Monroe, quoted in *New Bern Spectator*, 9 January 1830, 1.

particularly when “the inconvenience arising from the want of manufactories in this country had been experienced during the war” led him to encourage the production of “labour saving machines.” Questioning Jacksonians who had “lately attempted, both formally and informally, to place a large and most respected party in this country, under the ban of Mr. Jefferson’s authority,” Pasteur asked, do Jacksonians “have any right to the claim of exclusive Jeffersonians” and such strict constructionism when the man they invoke “so often differed from himself.”⁵⁹

Boudinot, Pasteur, Swaim, and others understood that the party of Jefferson was truly “gone like the history of the revolution, not to be recovered.”⁶⁰ In its place, however, had emerged a new party claiming the Jeffersonian legacy but with a different agenda: militant support for states’ rights for the protection and expansion of an undiversified, agrarian, slave-based economy in North Carolina and throughout the South. Their quest to remove the Cherokees and solidify an exclusively white republic, like their opposition to tariffs, internal improvements, banking, and other progressive economic measures, all represented a stratagem to fulfill this vision. Jacksonianism was a drastic distortion of Jeffersonian ideology, proving just how far removed the country was from the days of Jefferson.

National Republicans and Whigs frustratingly countered this distorted vision with a comparably radical vision of their own, designed to distance the state from its agrarian past through sophisticated federal means. Jackson’s fundamental disregard of pre-existing federal law in seeking to remove the Cherokees was problematic in its own right, but was part of the Democratic Party’s larger and more concerning agenda to curtail a dynamic vision that could

⁵⁹ *New Bern Spectator*, 19 June 1830, 3.

⁶⁰ Nathaniel Macon to Martin Van Buren, 9 May 1823, in Elizabeth Gregory McPherson, ed., “Unpublished Letters from North Carolina to Martin Van Buren,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 15.1 (January 1938): 53-81.

alleviate the state's economic troubles. A sustainable republican government worthy of the Jeffersonian legacy was at stake. Opposing Indian Removal on moral, constitutional, racial or other grounds was one method of fighting back against a misinterpretation of Jeffersonian republicanism and an economic future they did not support.

Out of this opposition to the Democrat's removal policy emerged a sophisticatedly organized Whig Party that would dominate North Carolina politics for much of the two decades succeeding the Jackson administration. In North Carolina divergent interpretations of Jeffersonian ideology, each designed to strategically meld old principles to fit new demands, created the gulf in the states' politics. Cherokee removal existed at the epicenter of this ideological divide, alongside and entwined with more commonly referenced partisan issues such as the tariff, internal improvements, and banking.

Unlike these "standard" political issues of the emerging Second Party System, however, the Indian Removal debate exemplifies the way race and the era's politics shaped one another. The Cherokees were victimized by a game of "political football" in which they were strategically characterized by both sides as the "inferior" race at the mercy of white men.⁶¹ Upon Jackson's election, they became a valuable object in a philosophical and political debate that helped desensitize the North Carolina population to their future and humanity. Characterizing the Cherokees as inferior, either to serve a political need to remove or protect them, contributed to a more widespread understanding that the rights of republican citizenship belonged exclusively to superior white men. Political gamesmanship and economic self-interestedness always took precedence over the Cherokee men and women, despite what most politically motivated white

⁶¹ Satz, *American Indian Policy*, 48.

men said, providing a troubling legacy for North Carolina and a lesson full of unintended consequences for any form of government that treats human beings as political capital.

CONCLUSION

One day after the United States House of Representatives passed the Indian Removal Act, President Jackson vetoed the Maysville Road Bill, a federally-funded project that ran exclusively through Kentucky. Jackson waited to sign the veto until after his removal bill passed, as he knew it might cost him essential votes from congressmen eager for more federal infrastructure investments. He was correct. Nationally, many northern congressmen felt that they had backed Jackson's Indian Removal bill only for the president to blindside them by opposing one of their desired measures. For many of the ardent states' rights supporters in North Carolina, however, the veto affirmed their belief that Jackson was their ideological leader. The president was successfully implementing a republican vision of limited government in eradicating federally-protected Indian lands and stopping the construction of a federal project that would aid one geographic section of the country at the expense of all the others.¹

Many southerners argued that Jackson's lionization of states' rights was needed more than ever at this time. In September 1829, a former free black resident of North Carolina, David Walker, published his "Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World," urging slaves to revolt against their masters and spread insurrection across the South. Authorities across North Carolina moved quickly to confiscate copies that had entered the state. In late 1830, Democratic Governor John Owen disgustingly submitted a copy of this "incendiary publication" to the General

¹ Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 357-9; William S. Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), 35.

Assembly stating its existence “can leave no doubt upon any rational mind, that a systematic attempt is making by some reckless persons ... to sow sedition among our slaves.”²

The Governor argued that Walker’s publication threatened the “general protection and comfort of the slave” as much as the “property, or its value” of the master. At fault were northerners who instigated North Carolina’s “free persons of colour,” using them “as agents, for the distribution of seditious publications.” Owen called on the legislature to curtail the freedoms of free blacks so that the “general welfare” would be secured, requesting that all “be required to give security for the faithful discharge of those duties which they owe, in return for the protection they receive, from the laws of the State.” On Indian Removal, Owen stated the same: the bill emanated “no less from humanity than from wisdom,” and received disapproval only from “base advisers” who had incited the “ignorant” but “virtuous” Indians.³

Responding to Owen’s message, the General Assembly passed a series of bills on December 9 criminalizing the instruction of slaves to read and write and the circulation of seditious publications against slavery. Authorities were authorized to imprison and whip first time offenders and put to death those found guilty of a second offence.⁴ Similar to the divisiveness on the Removal Act, however, the bill only passed the Senate by a vote of 36-22, with 18 of the opposition votes coming from the Piedmont and western counties.⁵

The theoretical danger articulated in Walker’s “Appeal” and the recently founded northern abolitionist newspaper, William Lloyd Garrison’s *The Liberator*, soon became a reality

² Gov. John Owen to General Assembly, 16 November 1830, in *Western Carolinian* (Salisbury), 30 November 1830, 1-2; Milton Ready, *The Tar Heel State: A History of North Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 84-85; Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 423.

³ Gov. John Owen to General Assembly, 16 November 1830; Howe argued that instead of admitting “that slaves inevitably resent their repression, white southerners usually blamed insurrection on outside neighbors”; see Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 427.

⁴ Clement Eaton, “A Dangerous Pamphlet in the Old South,” *Journal Southern History* 2.3 (1936): 332.

⁵ *Ibid.*

for southern slave owners.⁶ In August 1831 Virginia slave Nat Turner led a mob that killed fifty-nine white men, women, and children just north of the North Carolina-Virginia line. By the end of September, in a series of reprisals, eastern North Carolinians had killed eighteen people, arrested numerous slaves and free blacks, and coerced confessions from those believed capable of carrying out similar insurrections. While there was some reprisal in western counties, the most violent reactions occurred in the southeastern counties.⁷

Similar to the pro-removal argument that the Indian “children” resisted efforts to sell their land because of the “interminable and implacable hatred” of the North, North Carolinians largely blamed northern pamphlets, newspapers, and citizens for controlling the slaves’ thinking. North Carolina whites largely argued slaves and free blacks were incapable of constructing their own opposition to slavery and crafting such plots. Worse yet, the Secretary of War denied North Carolina Governor Montfort Stokes’s request for federal troops to help guard the capital in the event of a slave insurrection. Abolitionist literature and slave insurrections provided fodder for those who had argued throughout the removal debate that northern and federal meddlers sought to destroy southern “institutions.” In contrast, opponents of removal, who had argued that there was little to fear from an increased federal presence, held a more tenuous claim when slaves revolted and the federal government refused to assist.⁸

⁶ Garrison’s *Liberator* began publication in January 1831 in Massachusetts.

⁷ Thomas E. Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics: North Carolina, 1815-1861* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 77; Harry L. Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second Party System in Cumberland County, North Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 153; Milton Ready, *The Tar Heel State*, 175; Charles Edward Morris, “Panic and Reprisal: Reaction in North Carolina to the Nat Turner Insurrection, 1831” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 62.1 (1985): 29-52. Morris argued, “Generally, the farther west one traveled, the less intense was the apprehension of the citizens and the less severe the reprisals against blacks.”

⁸ “Children” refers to longstanding theme in Jacksonian rhetoric that referred to Jackson as the Indians’ “Father,” who held their well-being foremost in his mind. See Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984); Opponent of removal, Daniel Laurens Barringer also referred to the Indians as “children of nature” as well in a message to his constituents. Representative Daniel L. Barringer to his constituents, 27 March 1829, in *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their*

By 1831, the political battle between state and federal authority over the Cherokee lands was far from conclusive. Despite the Indian Removal Act's stipulations that the federal government would no longer protect Cherokee sovereignty, it conflicted with pre-existing federal treaties that had guaranteed Indians their lands. Within one year of the Act's passage, the Supreme Court heard *Cherokee Nation vs. Georgia*. In presenting the case on behalf of the Cherokees, William Wirt, former Attorney General under John Quincy Adams, argued that the Cherokees existed as a foreign nation with an independent government. Georgia's extension of its state laws over their territory in 1828, therefore, violated the federal government's constitutional authority to treat with foreign nations. Sidestepping the heart of the issue in his decision, Chief Justice John Marshall denied Wirt's interpretation and the Supreme Court its jurisdiction, arguing the Cherokees did not constitute a foreign nation and, therefore, had no standing to sue in federal court. Instead, they were an ill-defined "domestic-dependent nation" whose "relation to the United States resembles that of a ward to his guardian."—They were dependent children subject to the will and laws of white men.⁹

One year later, the Cherokees' legal counsel obtained proper jurisdiction, and in *Worcester vs. Georgia*, Marshall altered course and ruled that Georgia's extension of its laws over the Cherokees was unconstitutional. Specifically, Georgia's imprisonment of missionaries, the most vociferous opponents of removal, for residing among the Cherokees was a breach of federal law. Georgia used a legal loophole to circumvent Marshall's decision, and Jackson, as

Constituents, 1789-1829, ed. Noble Cunningham (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 1551; Lewis Cass to Montfort Stokes, 9 December 1831, found in Morris, "Panic and Reprisal," 49; *Western Carolinian*, 29 June 1830, 3; Historian Thomas E. Jeffrey argued, the "connection between abolitionist propaganda and slave rebellion was not lost to North Carolina's political leaders. As abolitionists continued to flood the mails with antislavery tracts and pamphlets, Tarheels began to look for" more ways to prevent the circulation of incendiary publications, including lobbying other states to pass their own laws against abolitionist publications. See Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics*, 78.

⁹ Ronald Satz, *American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 44; *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* 30 U.S. 1 (1831).

executor of federal law, was not eager to enforce a ruling that conflicted with his designs for removal. By doing nothing, Georgia and Jackson had, in effect, nullified federal law. Jackson declared the Supreme Court's resolution to the Cherokee problem as "still born."¹⁰

North Carolina politicians and newspaper editors responded to the *Worcester* decision as they had for much of the previous decade. Those who favored state sovereignty, removing the Cherokees, and protecting an agrarian economy widely denounced Marshall's decision to uphold federal authority, and blamed northern instigators for the court's decision.¹¹ Advocates of federal supremacy who opposed removal and advocated for an improved manufacturing sector to accompany agriculture celebrated the decision, but worried about the response it might elicit throughout the South.¹²

Reactions to the *Worcester* decision reverberated across the South. Like Georgia, South Carolina's own agricultural success had narrowed the state's vision for its economic future. Their disapprobation of the Tariff of 1828 and its subsequent revisions echoed much of Georgia's vexation at the federal government's reluctance to fulfill its 1802 obligation to extinguish Cherokee title.¹³ Like a large percentage of conservative North Carolinians, the dominant sentiments in South Carolina and Georgia interpreted the tariff and Indian Removal as the actions of a federal government intent on dictating the South's economic future.

¹⁰ Satz, *American Indian Policy*, 49; Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 355; President Andrew Jackson, quoted in Prucha, *The Great Father*, 77.

¹¹ State Attorney General Romulus M. Saunders wrote, "All regret the decision of the Georgia question and none that I hear are disposed to aid in its support with the exception of [new editor of the *Raleigh Register* and son of Joseph Gales] Weston Gales." Saunders to Willie P. Mangum, 18 March 1832, in Harry T. Shanks (ed.), *Papers of Willie P. Mangum*, 5 vols. (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1950-1956), 514; *New Bern Sentinel*, 11 April 1832, 3; *Western Carolinian*, 26 March 1832, 2; *Western Carolinian*, 2 April 1832, 3; *Western Carolinian*, 30 April 1832, 2.

¹² *New Bern Spectator*, 6 January 1832, 1; *New Bern Spectator*, 16 March 1832, 3; *Miners and Farmers Journal* (Charlotte), 21 March 1832, 3; *Greensboro Patriot*, 11 April 1832, 3; *Greensboro Patriot*, 25 April 1832, 2; *Raleigh Register*, 26 Oct 1832.

¹³ Revisions to the Tariff of 1828 were made in 1830, 1831, 1832, and 1833. See William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 199.

In 1832, after witnessing Jackson's refusal to enforce the Supreme Court's mandate in the *Worcester* case, South Carolina tested the notion of state sovereignty by passing an Ordinance of Nullification, declaring the federal government's collection of tariffs unconstitutional and unenforceable within the state. Nullifying federal law purported to reduce federal duties, but was designed to test of the philosophy of state sovereignty. Unlike his quiet collusion with Georgia, Jackson issued a "Proclamation" in December 1832 declaring nullification non-existent, upholding federal law, and surprisingly to many, attacking the concept of unilateral state sovereignty.¹⁴

Jackson realized that his Jeffersonian rhetoric regarding the sovereignty of the states had limits. While his desire to remove the Indians, veto of the Maysville Road Bill, and destroy the "Monster Bank" of the United States all portended a vision of state sovereignty, his 1832 "Proclamation" to South Carolina qualified this ideology. Jackson argued that state supremacy is "incompatible with the existence of the Union" and "destructive of the great object for which it was formed." Furthermore, he argued, the notion that the states have preserved their whole sovereignty is "Fallacious" reasoning and "enlists State pride and finds advocates in the honest prejudices of those who have not studied the nature of our Government sufficiently to see the radical error on which it rests."¹⁵ In other words, notions of absolute state sovereignty had been wielded for political reasons.

¹⁴ South Carolina issued its Ordinance of Nullification on 24 November 1832, and its provisions would go into effect 1 February 1833. See Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, x, 234; Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 404; Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics*, 38; Hoffman, *Andrew Jackson and North Carolina Politics*, 63; Jackson's "Proclamation 43—Regarding the Nullifying Laws of South Carolina" was delivered on 10 December 1832 in response to South Carolina's Ordinance. See Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, ed. "The American Presidency Project."

¹⁵ In an attempt to destroy the federal bank, Jackson vetoed its recharter in 1832 and removed the federal deposits, placing them in state or "pet" banks in 1833; Jackson, "Proclamation 43—Regarding the Nullifying Laws of South Carolina," 10 December 1832, in Peters and Woolley, ed. "The American Presidency Project."

North Carolinians almost universally opposed South Carolina's Ordinance of Nullification, revealing that many states' rights advocates, like Jackson, were only willing to go so far. Three months after the Ordinance, North Carolina's General Assembly overwhelmingly passed, 98-22 in House and 49-9 in Senate, a series of resolutions distancing themselves from their southern neighbor. First, the General Assembly stated, we "doth unequivocally express a warm attachment to the Constitution of the United States." Second, we hold a "devoted attachment to the Federal Union, believing that on its continuance" was the future liberty, peace, and prosperity of the nation. Third, regardless of the difference of opinion on the tariff, "a large majority of the people think the acts unconstitutional, and are all united in the sentiment, that the existing Tariff" is unjust and oppressive and will continue to urge its repeal. Finally, South Carolina's Ordinance was "revolutionary in its character, subversive of the Constitution ... and leads to the dissolution of the Union." North Carolina newspapers, with the exception of the *Western Carolinian*, largely supported the General Assembly's position and denounced nullification as well. Although the tariff was unpopular among North Carolinians, few were willing to sacrifice the Union to, as one editor had previously written, reduce "ten cents on molasses."¹⁶

Advocates of state sovereignty, while numerous, were counterbalanced by far more who were less radically inclined to threaten the Union's power and authority. While much of North Carolinians' rhetoric in recent years had claimed a Jeffersonian notion of limited government and states' rights, there were limits to the application of this set of beliefs. Despite earlier calls from Representative Samuel Carson that without sovereign rights there was nothing "valuable, or

¹⁶ *North Carolina Star* (Raleigh), 22 February 1833, 3; *Carolina Watchman* (Salisbury), 26 January 1833, 3; Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics*, 39; *New Bern Spectator*, 8 May 1830, 3.

worth having,” there were limits to how much North Carolinians would sacrifice, and tariffs were not worth the price of disunion.¹⁷

Neither were the Cherokees. In February 1833, at the height of the Nullification controversy, after Georgia had gotten away with extending jurisdiction over the Cherokees, and Tennessee passed its own bill accomplishing the same, North Carolina’s General Assembly rejected, 82-21, legislation to extend its authority over the Cherokee territory.¹⁸ Surrounded by neighboring states and a president who would support them, North Carolina refused to take the opportunity to exert its state authority in defiance of the federal government.

As the General Assembly’s vote to oppose South Carolina’s Ordinance reveals, however, a sizeable percentage, twenty-two representatives and nine senators, firmly believed in state supremacy and did not agree with upholding the nationalist principles articulated in North Carolina’s “Resolutions” and Jackson’s “Proclamation.” In the aftermath of Walker’s “Appeal,” Nat Turner’s rebellion, and Jackson’s speech, many felt protecting state sovereignty to defend southern “institutions” was needed more than ever. Jackson’s “Proclamation” endeared himself to many North Carolinians, but his newly articulated federalism spawned a conservative backlash as well. Out of their common disdain for Jackson, many Old Republican supporters of states’ rights constructed an unlikely alliance with National Republicans who had long opposed Jackson’s states’ rights philosophy against Indians, internal improvements, and the bank. A

¹⁷ Representative Samuel Carson to Congress, *Western Carolinian*, 24 June 1828; *Western Carolinian*, 1 July 1828, 1.

¹⁸ North Carolina General Assembly, *Journals of the Senate and House of Commons of General Assembly of North Carolina at its session 1832-1833* (Raleigh: Lawrence & Lemay, 1833), 238.

Whig Party formed on shaky ideological ground to unite against a common enemy: Jackson's Democratic Party.¹⁹

While the Removal Act had allowed Jackson to successfully secure treaties and remove many of the non-Cherokee tribes, by late 1833 Jackson and the Cherokee Nation had yet to agree to an exchange of land. North Carolinians grew impatient. This time, however, it was a Whig Governor and opponent of Jackson who took up the cause of removal. Governor David L. Swain stated that the General Assembly must desist in its "apathy," and address "the most important subjects" of internal improvements, so that they could provide "facilities for trade," increase "agricultural productions," diffuse "the advantages of education," and adapt "our laws to the improved condition of society." With regard to the Cherokees, he implored the legislature to consider "all that concerns the character and interest of the commonwealth."²⁰

At Swain's behest, on January 20, 1834, the General Assembly submitted another memorial to Congress entreating them to extinguish Cherokee title. After reciting the exact words of their 1827 memorial, the General Assembly concluded: "the right of North Carolina to have this title extinguished by the General Government, is strengthened by the policy which has been pursued towards the Cherokees by the States of Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama."

Because their southern neighbors had taken such unconstitutional authority with regard to the Cherokees, North Carolina's good behavior demanded recognition. Additionally, thousands of

¹⁹ Historian Daniel Walker Howe argued that nationally, Jackson's decisions to veto the rechartering of the U.S. Bank and remove the Bank's deposits "reinforced political lines established by Indian Removal and Maysville," drove bank supporters out of the Democratic Party, and solidified the Second Party system. See Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 386, 390; In North Carolina specifically, Thomas Jeffrey argued that Jackson's bank war, more than anything else, "proved far more effective as a stimulus for the creation of an opposition party in North Carolina," but ignored the party lines drawn during the Indian Removal Act two years earlier. See Jeffrey, *State Parties and National Politics*, 40. Both Howe and Jeffrey agree that the Bank War was the final straw that solidified a strong and competitive opposition movement to Jackson's Democratic Party.

²⁰ Governor David L. Swain, "To the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina," 18 November 1833, in *The North Carolina Constitutionalist and People's Advocate*, 26 November 1833, 1.

Indians had taken refuge in North Carolina and, without a signed treaty, were going to use the land until the soil was “exhausted.” Overlooking the contradiction that the Assembly sought to remove a group of “peculiar” beings who were, it admitted, using the land as “civilized” white settlers would, the resolution appealed “to the justice of Congress to determine whether the continued liberality of North Carolina to this unfortunate race shall be thus rewarded.” They questioned, “Shall that State alone, which furnished an asylum for the relief of all, be denied the benefits flowing from her own liberality?”²¹ A new set of justifications, and a new political party in power, but the same desire: North Carolinians wanted the Cherokees’ land.

In December 1835, the Treaty of New Echota was signed and ratified by the U.S. Senate. Approximately two hundred Cherokees signed the treaty on behalf of the nation’s 16,000 members, granting 700,000 acres to the state of North Carolina and removing federal protections for its native inhabitants. The treaty set January 1837 as the month by which all Cherokees would migrate westward. Under terms of the 1819 treaty, however, North Carolina Cherokees had chosen to disband from the Cherokee Nation and lived as citizens for over a decade. North Carolina had recognized these “Quallatown” Cherokees, and after effective lobbying, the state and federal government sanctioned their continued residency. Article 12 of the Treaty of New Echota also allowed for desirous Cherokees to remain, but Jackson surreptitiously removed the article before affixing his signature, leading to confusion as to whether all or most Cherokees must depart. When January 1837 arrived and thousands of Cherokees had yet to leave, North

²¹ North Carolina General Assembly to the Committee on Indian Affairs of the U.S. Congress, “Report and Resolution of a Joint Committee of the Legislature of North Carolina, relative to the Cherokee Indians,” 27 January 1834 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1834): 1-4.

Carolina's Fort Butler arose as a military outpost and departure point for a forced march, which supporters of removal had long argued was never the intention.²²

Starting in the spring of 1837, federal troops under U.S. Generals John Wool and Winfield Scott arrived in North Carolina after having completed the removal of Georgia's Cherokees. They discovered a heavy resistance among the North Carolina Cherokees, and a state government nervous about the presence of federal troops operating within the state. North Carolina politicians, however, were particularly eager to complete the removal and reap the "proceeds of the late sale of the Cherokee lands" so that the Internal Improvements Fund could receive an infusion of cash.²³

Once federal troops forcibly removed most of the Cherokees westward, killing thousands along the way through what has become known as the "Trail of Tears," newspapers across North Carolina reported on the availabilities of lands for sale. Joseph Gales of the *Raleigh Register*, once a leading opponent of removal, reported that he was "very much gratified by the inspection of a Map of the country lately acquired by North Carolina from the Cherokee Indians." The tract of land covered "a greater area than either Delaware or Rhode Island" and would "in a very short time probably, be erected in a new County." Its fertility and "exceedingly rich mineral production ... will produce to the State \$91,791" but could "command a price three or four times

²² Between 1836 and 1838, North Carolina lawyer and adopted member of the Cherokee Nation, William H. Thomas, lobbied on behalf of the Cherokees, purchased land for them, and convinced the state and U.S. government to sanction their citizenship. See John R. Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees, 1819-1900* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 16-18; Robert Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars* (New York: Viking, 2001), 270.

²³ Finger, *The Eastern Band*, 18-20; H.G. Woodfin to Governor Edward B. Dudley, 26 February 1838, Governor's Papers 83, 1364-5, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, hereafter NCDAH; M. Killian to Gov. Ed. Dudley 5 January 5 1838, Governor's Letter Book 32, 148, NCDAH; Maj. General Alex Maccomb to Maj. General Winfield Scott, 6 April 1838, in Thomas C. Cochran, ed., *The New American State Papers: Public Lands, Southwest, West, 1789-1860*, vol. 10 (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1973), 115-6; Governor Dudley sent a letter to Secretary of War Poinsett complaining of the conduct of federal troops stationed in North Carolina. See Dudley to Poinsett, 23 March 1837, Governor's Papers 88.1, NCDAH; Gov. Richard D. Spaight to General Assembly, *Journals of Senate and House of Commons of General Assembly of NC at its session in 1838/1837* (Raleigh: NCDAH), 257.

as great.” Similarly, Whig Governor Edward B. Dudley, once one of the Indian Removal Act’s most vocal opponents, sent four companies of the state’s Infantry in the event their services were needed to remove the Cherokee Indians. One month later, and repeatedly advertised in the successive months, Dudley issued an executive “Proclamation,” announcing that the sale of Cherokee land “will commence at the Town of Franklin, in the county of Macon, on the first Monday in September next.”²⁴

* * *

The relationship between the federal and state governments underwent significant redefinition throughout the first decades of the nineteenth century as the federal government increased its role in the country’s development. While innovations in manufacturing and agriculture enabled politicians to consider various options for North Carolina’s economic future, after 1819, southern politicians increasingly perceived federal efforts to diversify the country’s economy as incompatible with the development of an increasingly lucrative agricultural industry dependent on slave labor. Their evidence, among others, was the federal government’s utilization of tariffs to protect manufacturing, and their reluctance to offer comparable protections for slavery. This convinced southerners that they needed to seek protection for their agricultural industry in the state governments. While many in North Carolina believed, and in fact advocated for, manufacturing and agriculture to successfully coexist, many of their southern neighbors had too much at stake to allow an increasingly unsympathetic federal government to encroach on the southern economy. Many in North Carolina also shared these sentiments. As an economically

²⁴ Estimates on the numbers killed range from 1,800 to 8,000. See Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 11; *Weekly Raleigh Register*, 29 January 1838, 3; *Biblical Recorder* (Raleigh and Charleston, S.C.), 7 April 1838, 3; *Weekly Raleigh Register*, 14 May 1838, 1.

struggling slave state grappling with major questions over how to improve the economy and balance federal and state authority, North Carolina was a state in political and economic transition by the time Jackson came to power in 1828.

Jackson wanted the Cherokees to move westward, and North Carolinians almost universally wanted the Cherokees' land. Despite their compatibility, Jackson's vision that upheld state sovereignty and restricted the federal government represented a larger, more divisive issue. While his vision appealed to many North Carolinians, it conflicted with many others who felt that the federal government had an integral role to play in diversifying the state's economy. During the Cherokee removal debate, the state's native inhabitants were never the core issue; but neither were they a peripheral issue as most historians have tragically dismissed. Instead, they were used as a pawn, as significant as the tariff, banks, and internal improvements, in a much larger debate about the future of the state's economy and whether Jackson's vision was the proper path for the state and nation to traverse. The Cherokees' humanity and future were inconsequential. They were, rather, mere manifestations of a federal government that either stood in the way or could help secure the state's economic future. North Carolina's leaders simply adopted their positions for or against removal based on where they stood on this point.

Embedded within this conflict was a deep ideological commitment by most North Carolinians to Jeffersonian republicanism. Jefferson's governmental policies, which included limiting expenditures, reserving unspecified powers to the states, and providing for agrarian simplicity all contributed significantly to the North Carolinian ethos. Many southerners found in Jeffersonian notions of small government and agrarianism an effective rhetorical strategy to defend their increasingly lucrative slave economy. Others considered calls for agrarian simplicity

to be a twisted interpretation of Jefferson and largely irrelevant to a vastly changed country that demanded more sophisticated means of economic development.

North Carolinians adhered to Jefferson's Indian policy as well which held that native inhabitants would be given the opportunity to civilize and join the white man's republic, while those who refused or were incapable would be removed westward. Unfortunately, Jackson, a non-believer in Jefferson's notion that civilization and removal were compatible and complementary options, made North Carolinians pick. Jackson's opponents and supporters appropriated their divergent stances on Indian policy—civilization or removal—around their disdain or reverence for the new president. During the removal debate, North Carolina's leaders never lost their desire to obtain the Cherokees' lands. What they discovered in removal was an opportunity to levy partisan and racial rhetoric for or against a president and an economic vision. Leaders of the Democratic Party and emerging Whig Party kept Indian Removal front and center for their supporters as a means of capturing voters in an era of increasingly sophisticated platforms and party politics. Historians of North Carolina have focused on the tariff, banking, and internal improvements as three core issues that defined partisanship within the state, but they have largely ignored Indian Removal altogether as a political issue.

This omission has been influenced not only by the larger historiography of the era's politics, but also by the sources from which historians derived their conclusions. Perhaps historians have rightly discovered that North Carolinians largely desired the Cherokee lands and, therefore, concluded there was little partisan contentiousness over an issue upon which most agreed. This study, which has considered the various stances before, during, and after removal, proves that was not the case. Many opposed removal in North Carolina, and while their partisan reasons for doing so belie some of their moral condemnations, they wielded it as a political issue,

developing their stances along the larger political contours that grew into the Second Party System.

It is also likely that contemporary North Carolinians went to great lengths, either out of shame, pride, outrage, or otherwise, to submerge the partisan nature of their stances for and against removal, preferring to cloak their support or acceptance of removal's inevitability in the guise that Indians were simply an inferior race. In 1839, North Carolina's Democratic U.S. Senator Robert Strange published anonymously the first novel written by and about North Carolina. *Eoneguski* tells the tale of a Cherokee warrior, terrorized by white settlers, fleeing from "the breath of the destroyer," traveling "in search of another home, where the wing of the angel of death might not overtake them."²⁵ Strange had traveled among the Cherokees, riding the superior circuit court earlier in his career throughout western North Carolina.²⁶ His knowledge of the Cherokees was far more intimate than many of his contemporaries, and these experiences he articulated in his novel. Seizing an opportunity to express an humanitarian understanding of what had transpired politically over the previous decade, Strange wrote, no doubt to many of his contemporaries who had been involved in removal:

There is nothing so humbling to human pride as detected baseness, and the higher the previous pretensions of the malefactor, the more galling and intolerable the vengeance with which his own pride visits him. There are thousands in the world whose only restraint from guilt is fear of its detection by men—utterly unmindful of that sleepless eye which spies out all their actions. Save only as this fear may disturb their quiet, many pass through the successive days of a long life with perfect composure in the commission of crimes most revolting to virtue, who are driven to desperation and suicide by the disclosure of the smallest of their villainies.²⁷

²⁵ Robert Strange, *Eoneguski; Or, The Cherokee Chief (1839); Two-volume Historical Novel* (Washington, D.C.: Franck Taylor, 1839; reprint, Charlotte, N.C.: McNally, 1960), vol. II, 9-10.

²⁶ Richard Walser, "Senator Strange's Indian Novel. A Neglected Page of Literary Americana." *The North Carolina Historical Review* 26.1 (1949): 2.

²⁷ Strange, *Eoneguski*, vol. II, 65.

Strange sensed a profound guilt during removal's aftermath. Men hid their shame behind a wall of silence. Terrified of the consequences of being detected as a sympathizer to an "inferior" race, an opposition party, or an ideology, men kept quiet, more scared of being outed for their true beliefs than what they had inflicted upon other humans.

Despite the publisher's preparation for a wide distribution of *Eoneguski*, the novel had very limited success and quickly went out of print. The North Carolina press barely mentioned its existence, but editors who did positioned themselves along the same ideological stances they had maintained for years. Three Whig Party organs, the *Raleigh Register*, the *Fayetteville Observer*, and the *Carolina Watchman* all printed:

The characters are strongly marked, and in good keeping, while the incidents of the tale are most interesting. The sentiments are of a fine philosophical cast, and of a high moral tendency.... We dislike to make comparisons, but if thorough interest and deep felt delight be any test, in this matter, we think this work need fear no contrast with [James Fenimore] Cooper's very best.... The author of *Eoneguski* is surely a gentleman of taste, learning and talent.²⁸

The *Raleigh Standard*, a Democratic press, simply stated "We trust the reading public will procure this work and pronounce upon its merits after a perusal. To such an issue it may be safely committed."²⁹ Most Democratic presses ignored it completely. The Democratic Senator and author of North Carolina's first novel was out of Congress one year later. When a novel like *Eoneguski* is silenced so quickly by contemporaries, it complicates the historian's task immensely. It is the unpopularity of *Eoneguski*, however, that tells us most about how contemporaries viewed their responsibility for removing the Cherokees. It is far easier to ignore and bury culpability than it is to face it directly, particularly when the rewards were great.

²⁸ *Carolina Watchman* (Salisbury), 23 February 1839, reprinted in *Raleigh Register*, 18 March 1839.

²⁹ *Raleigh Standard*, reprinted in *Tarboro Press*, 5 October 1839.

While embarrassment and shame may have silenced contemporaries' views on removal, a profound sense of racial superiority—that Indians were simply an inferior race destined for removal or extinction—characterized all sides of the removal debate and remained steadfast through much of the historiography of the twentieth century. Contemporary opponents of removal held a deep commitment to white superiority. As North Carolina Chief Justice John Louis Taylor stated in his 1824 defense of Indian property rights in *Euchella vs. Welch*, the state's policy must be to lead the few remaining Cherokees away from their "hunting grounds" to a "civilized" state, even though most of the Cherokees had already developed subsistence agriculture practices.³⁰ Similarly, opponent of the Indian Removal Act Daniel Laurens Barringer stated to his constituents that he would support whatever was best for these "unfortunate children of nature."³¹ U.S. Chief Justice John Marshall characterized the Cherokees not as autonomous human beings, but mere "dependents" of the United States, while Senator Robert Strange, seeking to elicit sympathy for the mistreated Cherokees, could not avoid repeatedly referring to them as "savage."³² Even the Cherokees' defendants were often indistinguishable from Jackson, who would often state to them, "your great father," seeking only to "open the eyes of those children of the forest to their true condition," earnestly desires "that you may be perpetuated and preserved as a nation; and this he believes can only be done and secured in your consent to remove to a country beyond the Mississippi."³³ Little wonder that white historians, predisposed perhaps by their own sense of racial superiority, and challenged by the dominant sentiments,

³⁰ *Euchella v. Welch* (3 Hawks 155), quoted in Jerry Clyde Cashion, *Fort Butler and the Cherokee Indian Removal from North Carolina* (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1970), 2.

³¹ Representative Daniel L. Barringer to his constituents, 27 March 1829, in *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents, 1789-1829*, ed. Noble Cunningham (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 1551.

³² *Cherokee Nation vs. Georgia* 30 U.S. 1 (1831); Strange, *Eoneguski*, vol. 1, 13.

³³ Andrew Jackson, quoted in Prucha, *The Great Father*, 82; Jackson to U.S. Congress, "Second Annual Message," December 6, 1830, in Peters and Woolley, ed. "The American Presidency Project."

biases, omissions, and complexities of their historical actors have largely ignored the magnitude and complexity of Indian Removal on the state's politics.

The intentions and positions of North Carolina's leaders during the Indian Removal debate place the state squarely within the history of this tragic and complex chapter. Removal is not the story or culpability of one man or state, and North Carolina's state histories can no longer treat its leaders as innocent bystanders to a peripheral issue. Instead, Indian Removal was shaped by, and in fact central to, the minds and actions of North Carolina's leaders. Indian Removal helped construct the economic, political, and social history of antebellum North Carolina, and the field must reflect its centrality.

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