



Community Archives – Old Berrien Newsletters
CA-012-002-013

Summer Quarter 2024

Old Berrien Newsletter

Vol. 06, No. 02

For this and additional works see: <https://vtext.valdosta.edu/xmlui/handle/10428/7414>

UUID: 318F8D69-F338-B090-4CB3-59C6A32175E1

Recommended Citation:

Berrien Historical Foundation. *OLD BERRIEN Newsletter of the Berrien Historical Foundation*
Vol 6, no. 2. Valdosta State University Archives and Special Collections, *Community*
Archives: Old Berrien Newsletters Collection.

<https://vtext.valdosta.edu/xmlui/handle/10428/7595>

This item is part of the *Community Archives: Old Berrien Newsletters Collection*, at Valdosta State University Archives and Special Collections. Physical and intellectual rights are reserved by the Berrien County Historical Foundation. If you have any questions or concerns contact archives@valdosta.edu

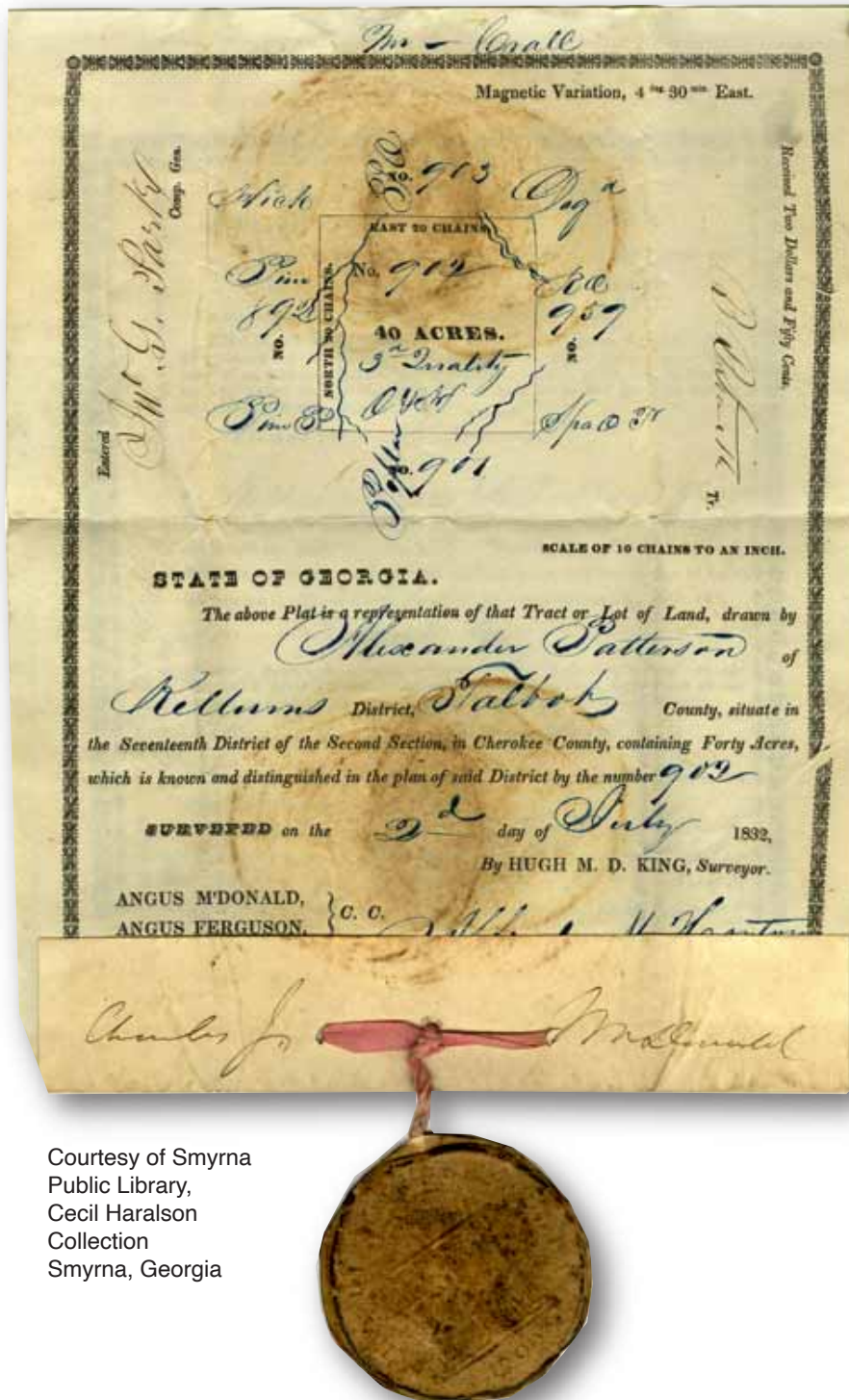
OLD BERRIEN

Newsletter of the
Berrien Historical
Foundation

Volume 6 Number 2

Summer Quarter 2024

OUR LAND HERITAGE



Courtesy of Smyrna
Public Library,
Cecil Haralson
Collection
Smyrna, Georgia

Land—It is a limited resource. It may seem obvious, however it should not be overlooked—that they are not making any more of it. And all land is claimed by someone.

Prior to 1795, the state of Georgia claimed the land from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River, bounded on the north by Tennessee and the south by Florida. But various Indian tribes claimed their ownership of all land west of the established counties at that time.

However, in 1795, the great real-estate scandal known as the Yazoo land fraud took place. That year, Georgia governor Georgia Mathews signed the Yazoo Act, which transferred 35 million acres of the state's western territory to four separate companies for a sum of \$500,000, at half-a-penny per acre.

Senator James Jackson resigned as U.S. Senator to run for the Georgia legislature and urged repeal of the Yazoo act. He succeeded in 1796.

However, the United States Supreme Court upheld the land sales. Congress was perturbed with the way that Georgia had handled the whole mess and in 1802, they forced the Georgia legislature to accept \$1,250,000 for the Yazoo territory.

Congress then turned around and paid the land buyers \$4,000,000 in 1810. The land then went into the new states of Alabama and Mississippi.

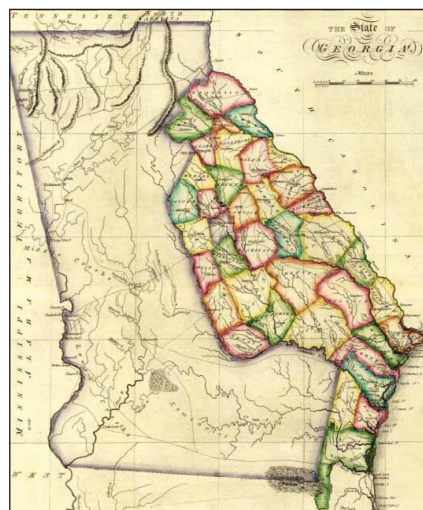
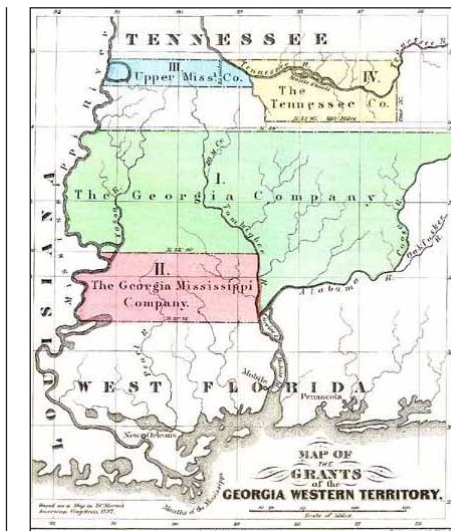
Image to the left is a remarkable condition 1832 Cherokee Land Lottery certificate for lot #902, consisting of 40 acres, in the 17th district, section 2 drawn by Alexander Patterson of Kellums District, Talbot County. Drawings for land lots in Irwin County in the 1820 Lottery of Indian land, were for 490 acres in each land lot.



Though the land dispute was settled as far as the whites were concerned, the Indian tribes felt the continued encroachment of the white settlers. The Lower Creeks were more accommodating with the American settlers, but the Upper Creeks resisted the new American influence. This brought about a civil war between the Creek nations, with the Upper Creeks, known as Red Sticks, with encouragement of the British, and assistance of Florida Spanish, against the Lower Creeks that combined forces with the American forces.

Though there were small attacks on whites prior to 1813, the Red Stick War began in earnest on August 30, 1813, with the Red Stick attack on Fort Mims Alabama, where about 250 settlers were massacred, though original reports were twice that many.

This brought General Andrew Jackson's American militia into the conflict. Over the next few months, General Jackson, along with the Lower Creek and Cherokee tribes, was engaged numerous times with the Red Sticks. On March 27, 1814, in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, Jackson and his volunteers inflicted a large loss of life upon the Red Sticks, limiting their ability to wage war, bringing the end of the Red Stick rebellion.



Pre-1795 map of Georgia, above, showing Georgia claiming land between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mississippi River, and Tennessee on the north and Florida on the south.

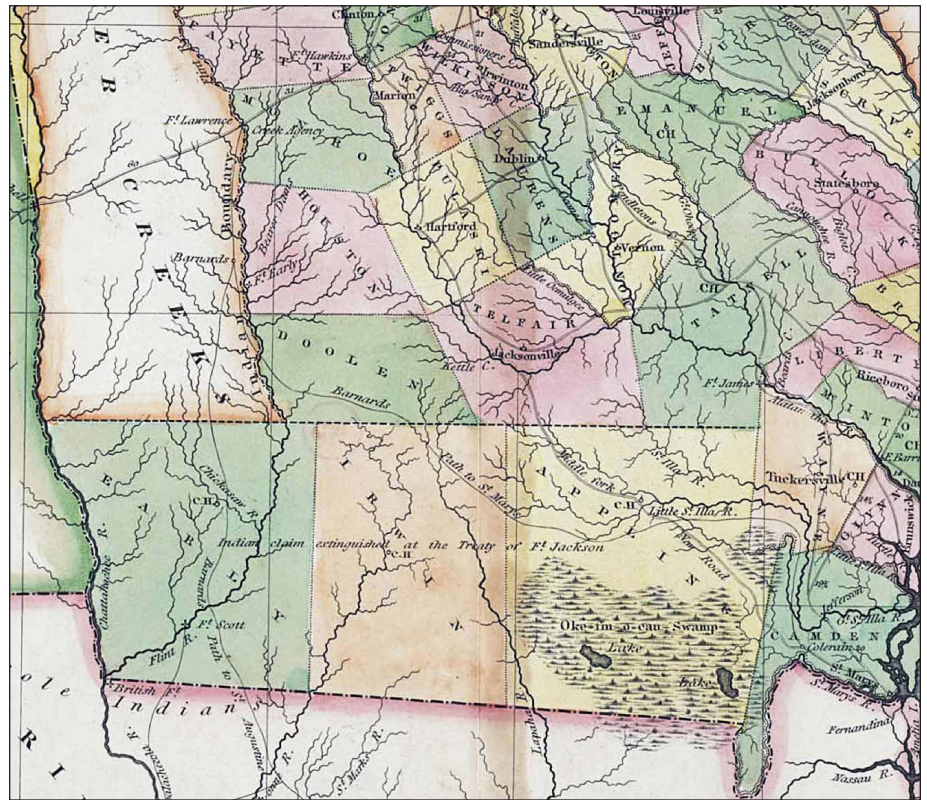
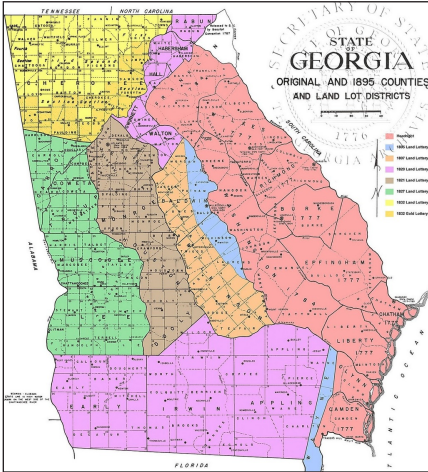
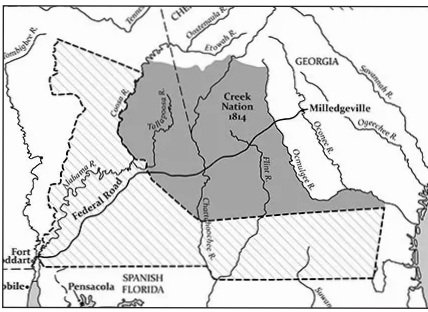
Map on the left showing the five companies and the boundaries of the 35 million acres they purchased for half-a-penny per acre.

The 1810 map on the bottom left showing the boundaries of Georgia, the Indian lands of the Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole Indian territories, and the established counties at that time.

The Treaty of Fort Jackson ended the fighting of the Red Stick War, and began a series of negotiations between the Creek Tribes and the U.S.

Government for land, property and monetary resources. Though the Lower Creeks had aided General Jackson in the defeat of the Upper Creeks, Jackson felt that they had not opposed the rebellion of the Red Sticks enough early on and should assume some of the blame for the war.

Under the terms of the treaty, the Creek Nation as a whole ceded nearly 22 million acres of their territory to the United States. This brought about half of what became Alabama, and the



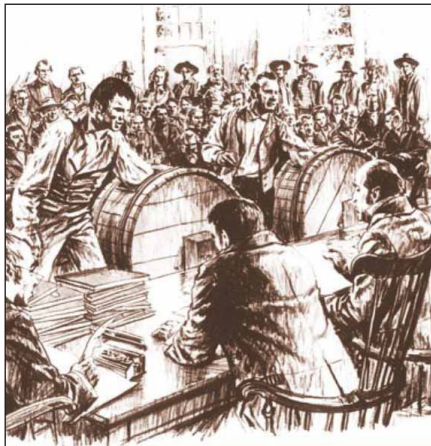
The map at the top shows the Creek Indian Lands, in the lined shading, that was ceded to the U.S government in the Jackson Treaty of 1814. The dark gray remained Indian Territory. The colored map above, shows the lands involved in the land lotteries of 1805, 1807, 1820, 1821, 1827, 1832, and the 1832 Gold Lottery.

southern counties of Georgia.

Prior to the treaty, very few whites had ventured into this territory. This large land acquisition would provide homestead land for the small farmers, and large tracts of land for the cotton barons who could make more profitable use of their slave workers.

Georgia had already made use of the land lottery system to distribute Indian territory in 1805 and 1807, at four cents an acre. However, by 1820 the three counties formed from the 1814 treaty, Appling, Irwin, and Early, and \$18 per land lot was the price, regardless of the land lot size. Appling and Irwin both had 490 acres per land lot at 3.7 cents per acre, while Early land lots were only 250 acres at 7 cents an acre.

Of course an applicant had to be a “fortunate drawer” to receive the opportunity to purchase a land lot. This was determined by having a qualified applicant’s name drawn out of a barrel



for an unspecified land lot, that was determined by drawing a specific land lot out of another barrel.

Single adult males qualified for a draw if they had resided in the state for at least three years, and had not won a plot in a previous lottery. Veterans and families of eligible males, including widows and orphans, were permitted an additional chance. There were more entries than lots available, and blanks would be added to the barrel so equal number of draws were made. An applicant was either a fortunate drawer or an unfortunate blank drawer.

Fortunate drawers were given a year to claim the title to their prize. After a year, unclaimed grants reverted to the state to be sold later at auction.

The first counties created by the 1820 land lottery of the Indian Lands of the 1814 Treaty, above, were Early, Irwin, and Appling counties.

Lotteries were conducted as shown in the adjacent illustration, with two rotating barrels, holding the lot number in one and eligible applicant names in the other.

Few of the fortunate drawers actually homesteaded the lots that they drew. Before claiming the title many visited or heard of the value and potential of the property. Most fortunate drawers who did claim their prize, immediately placed them up for sale. The vast majority of the settlers either purchased their land from fortunate drawers, or rented or squatted on vacant plots, often on a trial basis before buying them.

The land lottery spawned a land office business that mediated long-distance transactions between winners and potential settlers.

Additional land lotteries were held in Georgia, in 1821, 1827, and in 1832, all for Indian territory lands that were acquired by purchases or treaties. In 1830, President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act, which required all Indian tribes to be relocated west of the Mississippi River, by force if necessary.

