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**ANOTHER ROAD TO DISAPPEARANCE:
ASSIMILATION OF CREEK INDIANS IN
PENSACOLA, FLORIDA,
DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

by JANE E. DYSART

IN historical accounts of the old South, Indians are customarily treated as participants only in the frontier phase of colonial rivalry and during the era of territorial expansion. With the removal of the Indians to lands west of the Mississippi, southern history becomes the story of a white-dominated society composed almost exclusively of whites and blacks. The diversity of Indian-white and Indian-black relationships during the early years of the antebellum era is rarely part of the story, nor is the account of the Indians who remained behind included in the traditional narratives. Yet Indians constituted a third ethnic group in the South before removal, and they interacted with both races. After removal, those who did not isolate themselves into inaccessible or undesirable land, such as the Seminoles in the Florida Everglades and the Cherokees of western North Carolina, were forced to adjust to a biracial society. Many lost their identity as Indians altogether, and their descendants kept alive only vague memories of their ancestry. The story of this experience sheds light on another aspect of the "disappearance" of the southeastern Indians. It is perhaps best understood by examining a single community—Pensacola, Florida—and the surrounding area, which has a long history of interaction with Indians but has only recently rediscovered the Indians in its midst.¹

Identifying individuals of Indian ancestry in a biracial community such as Pensacola is difficult. Early court proceedings and Catholic church records designate Indians and mestizos, but after

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1. For a discussion of the inadequate treatment given Indians in southern historiography, see John H. Peterson, Jr., "The Indian in the Old South," in *Red, White, and Black: Symposium on Indians in the Old South*, Charles M. Hudson, ed. (Athens, 1971), 116-33.

1840 there is no mention of either racial designation in the church or court records or in the census returns. In 1907-1908, however, 116 people in the Pensacola area filed applications for the Eastern Cherokee enrollment in the mistaken belief that all Indians were included. Those applications, together with the testimony before the special claims commissioner who held hearings in Pensacola in 1908, provide extensive genealogical information.² For the present study names of Indian ancestors were located either on the 1832 Creek tribal roll or in Alabama censuses which indicated Indian race on the 1850 and 1860 returns even though it was not required to designate Indians separately until 1870. A few individuals, such as William Weatherford, were famous Creeks; others were identified as Indians in contemporary journals, memoirs, and letters. Almost every Indian applicant in the 1907-1908 enrollment had migrated to the Pensacola area from one of the south Alabama counties where several of the mixed-blood families had either settled or remained after the removal of the Creeks in the 1830s.³

Pensacola, with its favorable location on the Gulf of Mexico and its nearby rivers and bays, had been a popular hunting and fishing ground for southeastern Indians. After the establishment of the Pantan, Leslie Company there in 1785, Pensacola became a major trade center, especially for the Creeks of Alabama and

2. Applications submitted by claimants in the Eastern Cherokee Enrollment, 1907-1908, Records of the United States Court of Claims, Record Group 123, National Archives in Washington, D. C., copies in Special Collections, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida (cited hereinafter as Eastern Cherokee Applications). Records relating to Enrollment of Eastern Cherokees by Guion Miller, 1907-1908, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives Microfilm Publication M-685, roll 11, copy in John C. Pace Library (cited hereinafter as Eastern Cherokee Enrollment).
3. 1832 Census of Creek Indians taken by Parsons and Abbott, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives Microfilm Publication T-275, copy in John C. Pace Library. U. S. Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules, Seventh Census, 1850, M-432, manuscript returns for Alabama: Baldwin County, roll 1; Conecuh County, roll 3; and Monroe County, roll 11. Eighth Census, 1860, Alabama, M-653: Baldwin County, roll 1; Conecuh County, roll 6; and Monroe County, roll 18; copy in John C. Pace Library (cited hereinafter as U.S. Census Returns, year, publication number, name of state, roll number, name of county). Contemporary sources consulted include: Benjamin Hawkins, *A Sketch of the Creek Country 1798-1799 and Letters of Benjamin Hawkins, 1796-1806* (Savannah, 1848: reprint ed., Spartanburg, 1974); Thomas S. Woodward, *Woodward's Reminiscences of the Creek, or Muscogee Indians Contained in Letters to Friends in Georgia and Alabama* (Montgomery, 1859; reprinted., Birmingham, 1939).

Georgia. The town was a typical frontier garrison community with a large part of the population being males engaged in trade or service. According to a Spanish census taken in 1820, just before the transfer of the territory to American sovereignty, French and Spanish creoles were in the majority. One-third of the population was mixed-blood, including three individuals identified as mestizos. Of the 181 households listed, thirty involved white men and either Negro or mixed-blood women and their children.⁴ The community was rather lax in its attitudes toward racial mixture although, as was usually the case in Spanish societies, the varying types of miscegenation were noted and the social structure arranged according to different degrees of intermixture of blood. Mestizos and Indians being lighter in color occupied higher rungs on the social ladder than did mulattoes and Negroes.⁵ Within a few years, however, the entire character of the town changed when United States-born citizens became the majority and the town's racial attitudes came to resemble those of other southern communities, allowing no racial distinctions other than white, black, and mulatto.⁶

Even though the 1820 Spanish census did not list Indians as living in the city, Pensacola and the nearby area did include, throughout the 1820s and 1830s, a small number of Indian residents, as well as transients who came to hunt, fish, or trade. Their presence was noted in official records, travelers' accounts, and, on occasion, by artists who painted their likenesses. The full range of relationships between Indians and the community's inhabitants was represented, ranging from occasional trade transactions to intermarriage.

An encounter with Indians reminiscent of many frontier tales was described by George A. McCall who was stationed with the United States Army in Pensacola during the early 1820s. On an outing with Spanish acquaintances McCall and his companions came upon an Indian family camped on Bayou Grande a few

4. William S. Coker and G. Douglas Inglis, *The Spanish Census of Pensacola, 1794-1820: A Genealogical Guide to Spanish Pensacola* (Pensacola, 1980), 97-141.

5. Lyle N. McAllister, "Pensacola During the Second Spanish Period," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXXVII (January-April 1959), 324-25; Dian Lee Shelley, "The Effects of Increasing Racism on the Creole Colored in Three Gulf Coast Cities Between 1803 and 1860," (master's thesis, University of West Florida, 1971), 1, 47-48, 53.

6. Shelley, "Creole Colored," 66-67.

miles from the city. "Knowing that the Indians who visit Pensacola to sell their skins and procure powder, lead and other necessaries, are better acquainted with the Spanish language than either the French or English," he addressed the woman in Spanish but quickly learned that she spoke only the Muskoghean language. According to one of the Spaniards, the Indian family came from the Apalachicola River area annually to hunt in the area and to sell skins in Pensacola. While McCall was trying to communicate with the Indians, a Spaniard of bad reputation shot and wounded the brave, whom he accused of stealing his cattle. McCall, in heroic frontier style, rescued the Indian and sent the Spanish rogue on his way. A few months later McCall learned that the Indian had taken his revenge by killing and scalping the Spaniard.⁷

Other visitors, including at least two artists, confirmed the presence of Indians in Pensacola. In 1834 George Washington Sully, nephew of the famous artist Thomas Sully, painted three watercolor portraits of Indians. On the front of one picture he wrote, "painted these rascals in Pensacola, Florida, August 1834." One of the Indians Sully identified as the famous Seminole chief, Tiger Tail, who with his two companions had probably come to the city for supplies or to negotiate with government officials.⁸ Famous for his Indian portraits, George Catlin, who was visiting relatives in Pensacola in 1835, painted a family of Seminoles drying red fish on the sand dunes of nearby Santa Rosa Island.⁹ In a letter he described the Florida swamps as "lurking places of the desperate savage," but noted that the Indians in Pensacola, "like all others that are half civilized . . . are to be pitied."¹⁰

Among those "half-civilized" Indians whom Catlin pitied was perhaps a small group of "settlement" Indians living in impoverished conditions in the city. No longer members of a tribal community, they were also somewhat isolated from white so-

7. George A. McCall, *Letters from the Frontiers* (Philadelphia, 1868; facsimile ed., Gainesville, 1974), 56-60, 126.

8. Thirty-one original watercolors painted by Sully in the 1830s are located in the George Washington Sully Collection, Special Collections, John C. Pace Library.

9. Marjorie Catlin Roehm, ed., *The Letters of George Catlin and His Family* (Berkeley, 1966), 78.

10. George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians* (London, 1844; reprint ed., New York, 1973), II, 35.

ciety.¹¹ Some spoke only the Indian languages, while a few could communicate in Spanish or English. Their presence was noted only when they committed or witnessed crimes. From court records, white attitudes toward these settlement Indians can be inferred. Known only by their first names— David, Polly, John—they were regarded as cattle and horse thieves and as drunks. They evidently eked out a meager living working as laborers in local lumberyards or performing odd jobs. The murder of one Indian by another was apparently of little consequence to the white citizens. In one case involving a fatal stabbing, for example, the killing was declared self-defense.¹² In another the defendant, who was accused of beating and kicking his wife to death, was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter and was released to “catch skins.”¹³ These records reveal that whites described Indians in the same degrading terms they used for blacks. The court records also confirm the continuation during the 1820s and 1830s of the more complex social structure of the Spanish borderlands. In one murder case involving whites the testimony of Indians was accepted but not that of a Negro slave.¹⁴ Indians, however, ranked below the free Negroes in the city, many of whom were craftsmen or owned small businesses and were permitted to make all sorts of official transactions. Apparently Indians occupied a social position somewhere between free blacks and slaves, distinguished from the latter chiefly by their free status.

Living, about twenty miles outside the city near the mouth of the Blackwater River was a small band of Indians, mixed bloods, and two or three Spanish men. Well known to the townspeople, they supported themselves by catching fish and oysters for the local market. The Indians spoke English and claimed to be descended from Creeks who had come to the area from Tuckabahchee town during the American Revolution. Even though they had lived peacefully in the area for more than fifty years, they were suspected of supplying renegade Creeks from Alabama

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11. For a discussion of the term “settlement” Indians, see Charles M. Hudson, *The Catawba Nation* (Athens, 1970), 56.
 12. Escambia County, Florida, Clerk of Circuit Court, Archives Division, Circuit Court File, 1834-2818, *Territory v. Apia, an Indian*. This and all subsequent Escambia County Court cases cited are in the Escambia County Judicial Center, Pensacola.
 13. *Ibid.*, Circuit Court File 1826-2579, *Territory v. J. Indian*.
 14. *Ibid.*, Circuit Court File 1829-391, *Territory v. A. Crail*.

and Georgia. They were removed to Indian territory in 1837.¹⁵ The Indian bands that camped in the area from time to time aroused uneasiness among the townspeople. Not only were they considered a threat in times of hostilities with the Creeks and Seminoles, but more importantly they were thought to help slaves escape and to harbor runaways. Indeed, occasionally runaway slaves were found in Indian camps on the nearby rivers.¹⁶ Increasingly anxious about their slaves, and fearing the consequences of the free association of Indians and blacks, white Floridians demanded that the Indians be moved west of the Mississippi.¹⁷

Other familiar Indian-white relationships were also represented in Pensacola. Typical of frontier societies—English, Spanish, and French—was the Indian wife-white husband household. During the early 1820s a tract of land belonging to Maria Garzon, identified as an “Indian of the Tallapoosa or Creek nation,” came under litigation. Maria Garzon’s husband, Antonio, had received the land for his services to the Spanish crown as an interpreter to the Indians.¹⁸ The census of 1820 listed three mestizos in the city, and there were probably more in the outlying area who were not enumerated.¹⁹ In another court case of

15. Archibald Smith, Jr., to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 12, 1837, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1871, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives Microfilm Publication M-234, Creek Agency Reserves, roll 244 and Florida Superintendency Emigration, roll 290, copy in John C. Pace Library; Henry Wilson to Major General Thomas S. Jesup, May 18, 1837, *American State Papers: Military Affairs* (Washington, D. C., 1861), VII, 838.
16. See, for example, a court case involving a runaway slave found in an Indian camp on the Escambia River, Escambia County, Florida, Clerk of Circuit Court, Archives Division, Circuit Court File 1829-387, *J. Cook v. E. Garcon*. For an analysis of the relationship between slaves and Indians, especially the runaway problem, see Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., *Africans and Creeks from the Colonial Period to the Civil War* (Westport, Conn., 1979) 84-105.
17. Floridians sent numerous petitions and letters to Washington demanding that the Indians be removed. See especially *Pensacola Gazette*, March 23, 1827, and July 16, 1836, and Commissioner and Governor Jackson to Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, May 26, 1821, in Clarence E. Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States: Territory of Florida* (Washington, D. C., 1956), XXII, 58; Memorial to Congress by the Legislative Council, February 1832 and Proceedings of a Meeting of Citizens in Jefferson County, January 18, 1832, in Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers* (Washington, D. C., 1856), XXIV, 667, 671.
18. “Claims to Lands in East and West Florida,” *American State Papers: Public Lands* (Washington, D. C., 1859), IV, 176-77.
19. Coker and Inglis, *Spanish Census*, 98-141.

the 1820s Mary Ann Prieto, also married to a Spaniard, accused William Weatherford, the famous Creek warrior, of stealing slaves given to her by her Creek Indian father.²⁰

Although the number of Indians in the Pensacola area was not large, the Indian presence during the 1820s and 1830s in the area was evident. By 1850, however, several factors had forced those Indians who avoided removal to conceal their Indian identity and ignore their culture. Traditional frontier prejudice against Indians had been obvious since the whites had first come to the area, but during the removal era it increased. Pensacolians read newspaper accounts of Creeks fleeing from Alabama to join the Seminoles, hiding in the swamps and dense woodlands, and massacring white families. In response to reports of a hostile Creek band hiding in the area, citizens held a meeting in March 1837, and sent out a scouting party which failed to locate the Indians.²¹ Ships moving troops to south Florida to fight the Seminoles and transporting Indians to the west frequently docked in the Pensacola port. Such constant reminders of the Indian presence reinforced the already negative attitudes of the whites.²²

In 1853 the Florida legislature passed a law making it illegal for Indians to remain within the state and provided that "any Indian or Indians that remain . . . shall be captured and sent west of the Mississippi."²³ Even though the law excluded from removal half-bloods and Indians already living among the whites, most Indians evidently found it prudent to ignore or conceal their ancestry. At least no Indians were listed on official census returns during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Pensacola by the 1850s had acquired many of the racial attitudes of other southern communities. Society had polarized into a rigid biracial structure which lumped all non-whites into the "colored" category. During the 1840s the population had shifted in favor of an Anglo-American majority and, with the influx of families from nearby southeastern states, previously tolerant attitudes toward race mixing and concubinage— usually white men

20. Escambia County, Circuit Court File 1822-77, *M.A. Prieto v. W. Weatherford*.

21. *Pensacola Gazette*, March 11, 1837.

22. *Ibid.*, May 13, 1837, September 17, December 3, 1842, March 11, 1843, January 13, 1844.

23. "An Act to Provide for the Final Removal of the Indians of this State and for Other Purposes," *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Florida*, 6th Sess., 1853, 133-36.

and black or mixed-blood women— had stiffened.²⁴ Indians who remained were pressured to become either white or black and to separate themselves socially from the other race. The evidence suggests that those half-bloods whose physical characteristics allowed them to claim to be white more than likely did so. Those, on the other hand, who were dark-skinned or who had black ancestry were forced to merge with the black community.²⁵

Despite the disappearance of Indians from the official records and the historical accounts, some people of Indian ancestry, mostly Creeks, did remain in the Pensacola area, and others migrated there during the latter half of the nineteenth century. No evidence has been found which confirms stories of Creeks who returned from Indian territory during the nineteenth century and reestablished homes in the east.²⁶ Of the few known Indians who stayed in Pensacola after 1840, all were descended from families who had been in Florida before it was annexed to the United States, and all came from Spanish husband-Indian wife families. None, however, was referred to officially as Indian. When, for example, the two mestizo daughters of Maria and Antonio Garzon sued for a debt owed their mother in 1842, no mention was made of their Indian ancestry. In marked contrast to the offspring of black women and white men who were referred to as “colored” or mulattoes, Indian parentage did not permanently affix an Indian designation to the descendants.

The free black community in Pensacola absorbed a few individuals known to be of Indian blood. Several families designated as Creole colored claimed an Indian ancestor. Of mixed racial background, usually French or Spanish and Negro, these

24. Shelley, “Creole Colored,” 47-61.

25. No Indians were listed in the nineteenth-century manuscript census returns, Escambia County, Florida. Individuals known to be Indian were designated as black, white, or mulatto in all the manuscript returns during the nineteenth century. *U.S. Census Returns 1850*, M-432, Florida, roll 58, Escambia County; 1860, M-653, roll 106, Escambia County; 1870, M-593, roll 129, Escambia County; 1880, T-9, roll 127, Escambia County.

26. No references to individual Indians returning to the east during the nineteenth century were found in the Creek interviews in the Indian-Pioneer Papers in the Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the Indian Oral History Collection in the Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma Library, Norman, Oklahoma, or in the manuscript collection of the Gilcrease Institute, Tulsa, Oklahoma. To date, none of the Indians in the Pensacola area or in northwest Florida has been able to document such a return though several claim descent through Indians who reputedly went to Indian Territory and then came back to Florida.

people enjoyed a higher social status and usually a better economic position than did other free blacks in Pensacola. They were careful to preserve their privileged position by marrying within their own group or finding mates in lighter-skinned families—Indians, for example.²⁷ The Touarts, one of the prominent Creole colored families, claimed Indian grandmothers on both sides of the family. On the paternal side, they traced their descent from a well-known Alabama Creek family, and on the maternal side from a Mississippi-born Choctaw woman.²⁸ In the mid-1850s after the Florida legislature required all free negroes to acquire white guardians, the Touarts migrated to Mexico along with several other Creole colored families. Upon their return to the United States some time in the 1860s, they resumed their former prestigious position among the black community, with the men following trades as butchers, barbers, and tailors.²⁹ At least four other Creole colored families also traced lineage to Indian grandmothers.³⁰

Other blacks whose knowledge of their ancestry was less certain than the Creole colored families also claimed Indian blood. Most were probably descended from slave women and Indian men. One woman wrote in 1908: "My father was known as Big John Indian and I was raised a slave. I don't know of any other name he had but Big John."³¹ Although her claim to Indian ancestry could not be proved, it seems likely that her father was an Indian. The settlement Indians had shared a low social and economic position with blacks, ranking only slightly above the slaves. That they mixed with slaves and some free blacks is feasible. They had vanished as Indians from official records, but there is no evidence confirming their removal to Indian territory.³² Indeed, some may have been enslaved. Jonathan Walker,

27. In addition to the Shelley study of the Creole colored in Pensacola, see Linda V. Ellsworth, "Pensacola Creoles, Remnants of a Culture," typed manuscript in the files of the Historic Pensacola Preservation Board, Pensacola, Florida.

28. Eastern Cherokee Applications, 17904 and 17905.

29. "An Act to Authorize Judges of Probate of the Several Counties in this State to Appoint Guardians for Free Negroes," *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Florida*, 3rd Sess., 1848, 27; U.S. Census Returns, 1879, M-593, Florida, Escambia County, roll 129.

30. Eastern Cherokee Applications, 18684, 17902, 17903, 17905.

31. *Ibid.*, 40453.

32. Removal of the "settlement" Indians was not reported in sources which usually noted the departures of Indians for the West, such as newspaper

the abolitionist who was imprisoned in Pensacola for helping slaves escape, wrote in his journal in 1844: "A fugitive slave apprehended and committed; he had straight hair, and looked more like an Indian than a negro, and tried to pass himself for one."³³ Cases of slaves attempting to gain their freedom on the grounds that they were the illegally enslaved children of Indians were not unusual in some southern communities.³⁴

After the removal era most of the Indians who moved to Pensacola came from nearby south Alabama counties. The Reeds and Shomos represented one pattern of this migration. Both families, who were descended from prominent Creek Indians, emigrated during the economic boom in Pensacola in the late 1840s and 1850s. In both families, also, the wives were mixed-bloods who had married whites. They passed on to their children the memory of their Indian heritage even though they lived as whites. Cynthia Reed, granddaughter of Peggy Bailey, a famous survivor of the 1813 Fort Mims massacre, had married a white man and moved from Alabama to Pensacola during the late 1840s instead of going to Indian territory with her family. Her husband, Thomas Reed, was a carpenter who found jobs plentiful in Pensacola when construction of the naval installation was in full swing. Although Cynthia was enrolled as a member of the Creek nation, she stayed in Pensacola after her husband's death in 1853, and lived with her son Dixon Bailey Reed, who was a sea captain.³⁵ Rosanna Shomo, sister of William Weatherford "Red Eagle," also moved to Pensacola in the late 1840s with her children and husband, Captain Joseph Shomo, who had served with Andrew Jackson in Florida. Shomo, who was a merchant, was murdered before he could establish a trade in the port city. Despite the notoriety of the Weatherford family, Rosanna's In-

accounts in the *Pensacola Gazette*, 1835-1850, nor in RG 75, M-234, Florida Superintendency, 1832-1850, rolls 288-89; Seminole Agency Emigration, 1827-1850, rolls 806-07, Creek Agency Emigration, 1826-1849, rolls 236-40; Florida Superintendency Emigration, 1828-1853, rolls 290-91.

33. Jonathan Walker, *Trial and Imprisonment of Jonathan Walker at Pensacola, Florida, for Aiding Slaves to Escape from Bondage* (Boston, 1845, facsimile ed., Gainesville, 1974), 51.
34. Ira Berlin, *Slaves without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1974), 161-63.
35. Eastern Cherokee Enrollment, roll 11; U.S. Census Returns, 1850, M-432, Florida, roll 129, Escambia County; 1870, M-593, Florida, roll 129, Escambia County.

dian connections were not mentioned in the newspapers, in the court proceedings involving her husband's murder, or during a lawsuit on stolen slaves.³⁶

During the last three decades of the nineteenth century Indians were part of a large migration from Alabama to Escambia County, Florida.³⁷ Attracted by available land and jobs, all were mixed-bloods with most being one-quarter Indian or less. While the Indians living in the area before 1860 had generally resided in the city, most of the newcomers settled on farms or in small communities north of Pensacola. The rural character of this group was also reflected in the type of employment they found, either farming, or working for lumber companies or in saw mills.³⁸ In this respect they differed from the earlier group, most of whom were laborers, craftsmen, or small businessmen. Although none of the newcomers could be considered wealthy, several actively engaged in land transactions, purchasing acreage as well as acquiring homesteads. At least four members of the large Weatherford family, for example, moved in the 1880s to Century, about thirty miles north of Pensacola where they bought land and took up homesteads.³⁹ Most of these newcomers had thoroughly assimilated into the white community. None of the Weatherfords in Century had married spouses of Indian ancestry and, in fact, neither had their parents in Alabama.⁴⁰ Finally, the recent arrivals from Alabama apparently knew little about their Indian ancestry. During the Cherokee enrollment many of the applicants could not identify the tribe to which their ancestors had belonged. Even the Weatherfords provided little genealogical

36. U.S. Census Returns, 1850, M-432, Florida, roll 58, Escambia County; Peggy Shomo Joyner, comp., "The Shomo Family of Alabama," typed manuscript, Lelia Abercrombie Library, Pensacola Historical Society Museum, Pensacola, Florida; *Pensacola Gazette*, 1853; Escambia County Circuit Court File 1853-1380, *State v. Wm. B. Jordan* and 1851-1226, *Mayberry v. F. Bobe*.

37. In 1880 there were 1696 Alabama-born residents of Escambia County as compared to 1467 Florida natives. U.S. Census Returns, 1880, T-9, Florida, roll 127, Escambia County.

38. Eastern Cherokee Applications; U.S. Census Returns, 1880, T-9, Florida, roll 127, Escambia County; 1900, M-623, Florida, rolls 168-69, Escambia County.

39. Deed Books, XXIII, 83, XXIV, 189, LXXVII, 369, XCVII, 587, Public Records of Escambia County Florida, Escambia County Court House. See also Rolla Queen, "Creek Indians Residing in Escambia County, Florida, 1880-1940," typed manuscript in Special Collections, John C. Pace Library.

40. Eastern Cherokee Applications, 26712, 26713, 26714, 18402.

or historical information on the application forms. In effect, their culture as well as their blood had become white.⁴¹

The "road to disappearance" for the Indians of the Pensacola area, and probably hundreds of others in the southeast, was assimilation. At least sixty years before the removal era many of their ancestors had initiated the process by mixing their own blood with that of the whites and in a few cases with that of the blacks. Although the majority of the mixed-bloods moved to Indian territory, some remained in the southeast. For those individuals, pressures to adapt to the rigid southern biracial society were too strong to resist. Undoubtedly many had little desire to remain Indian. Becoming white was preferable to being stigmatized "a primitive savage." In Florida, too, there was the added fear among those who did not understand the exemptions of the law, of being transported to Indian territory if they were discovered. To become black was the other alternative. The more prominent Creole coloreds had chosen Indians or mixed-bloods as spouses in preference to free blacks or slaves. Less is known about Indians who selected Negro slaves as mates or were themselves enslaved. In some cases the mixed-blood farmers or planters formed liaisons with slave women like those of their white counterparts and their mulatto offspring later found it desirable to assert their Indian ancestry. Unlike the Cherokees of North Carolina, the Florida Seminole, and other native American groups who remained isolated and outside the mainstream of southern history, these assimilated Indians had lost their distinctive cultural traits along with their Indian identity.

41. Ibid.