

“Georgia’s Westward Expansion”

*Georgia Moves West:
Push and Pull Factors*

GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Georgia Moves West: Push and Pull Factors

Supporting Question: What were the factors of migration and how did they impact the movement of Georgia's various populations during westward expansion?

Task: Assess the different factors encouraging population migrations in Georgia during westward expansion.

Student Instructions: Review each of the five source sets included in this activity to assess the five push and pull factors that influenced people in Georgia to move west during westward expansion. Each set represents one of the five push and pull factors and is made up of primary, secondary, and tertiary sources.

First, label each set as either a push or pull factor of migration.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| • Set 1: American Revolution | push / pull |
| • Set 2: New Transportation | push / pull |
| • Set 3: The Cotton Gin | push / pull |
| • Set 4: Trade and Commerce | push / pull |
| • Set 5: Land Distribution | push / pull |

Tip: In the study of migration, push factors are those that encourage a population to leave its home, pull factors are those that draw a population to another area or place.

Next, assess the sources in each set and complete the table on the next page. For each of the five push and pull factors, research the source materials in the sets to explain how each factor impacted different groups in Georgia's population, including the Creek and Cherokee, Georgia settlers, and enslaved Africans. During your research consider the following questions:

How did each push and pull factor impact different population groups?

Are all push and pull factors the same for each group? Why or why not?

Assessment: Based on the research and evidence in the table respond to the question, what were the factors of migration and how did they impact the movement of Georgia's various populations during westward expansion?

Georgia's Westward Expansion: Impact on Populations	Revolutionary War	New Transportation (railroads, roads, steam engine)	Cotton Gin	Trade and Commerce	Land Distribution
Georgia Settlers	Example: Many evacuated the coast during the Revolution.				
Enslaved Africans					
Creek and Cherokee American Indians					

Dear Sir

Enclosed I have sent you a copy of certificates given me for sundry articles provisions etc. etc., delivered the Allied Army which before the lines of Savannah in September 1779 immediately after the surrender of this town to the British. I gave the original certificates to General Lincoln who promised to have settled and paid, but the communication between Philadelphia and this place being totally stopped have not heard from him.

I have since made application to Col. Wylly the then Acting Quarter Master General for a settlement of the same, he informs me he cannot do anything in the matter unless the original certificates were here.

I have to request that you will make particular enquiry of General Lincoln or any officer who may have the papers belonging to this department in their possession for them, and use every method to obtain the money, in case you should obtain it I must request you to lay it out or do with it as will turn out best for my interest.

— in case nothing can be done to the northward with them please to find or keep them until I can receive them without risque.

Myself and daughter present our compliments
I am your obed. Serv.
Abigail Minis

GEORGIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Charleston Jan. 14. 1780—

Dear Sir

Enclosed I have sent you a copy of certificates given me for sundry articles provisions etc. etc., delivered the Allied Army which before the lines of Savannah in September 1779 immediately after the surrender of this town to the British. I gave the original certificates to General Lincoln who promised to have settled and paid, but the communication between Philadelphia and this place being totally stopped have not heard from him.

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Source Set 1: American Revolution

A. Abigail Minis to Mordecai Sheftall. Charlestown, Jan. 14, 1780.
From the Jacob Minis Colonial Papers at the Georgia Historical Society.

Capture of Savannah

POSTED ON JUNE 16, 2014

MARKER TIME PERIOD: 18TH CENTURY, REVOLUTIONARY

MARKER SUBJECT: AMERICAN REVOLUTION, MILITARY HISTORY

COUNTY: CHATHAM

MARKER PROGRAM: GEORGIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION / DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

REGION: LOWCOUNTRY

Year Erected: 1952

Marker Text: When the British attacked Savannah on December 29, 1778, the defending Continental forces, numbering about 650 men under command of Maj. Gen. Robert Howe, were posted across Sea Island Road (now Wheaton Street) approximately 100 yards east of this marker.

The British army, 2500 strong, landed near Brewton Hill at daybreak on Dec. 29. It consisted of part of the 71st Highland Regt., New York Loyalists, and Hessians, and was commanded by Lt. Col. Archibald Campbell.

The British promptly marched on Savannah. They halted on the road about 800 yards from the American battle line and deployed for attack.

Col. Campbell meanwhile learned of an unguarded pass through the swamp, which led around the right of the American line. He thereupon detached the Light Infantry under Sir James Baird in an attempt, which proved successful, to flank the Continental position here.

Outflanked, the American position became untenable and Gen. Howe ordered Savannah evacuated. During the withdrawal, the Georgia Brigade, commanded by Gen. Lachlan McIntosh, was cut off and suffered heavy casualties.

During the subsequent siege of Savannah by the French and Americans in 1779 the British line of defenses around the Town ran through this area.



Photo: John Parham

Photo credit to Carl Vinson Institute of Government.



Tips for Finding This Marker: At Liberty and Randolph Streets in Savannah.

Source Set 1: American Revolution

B. Capture of Savannah. Erected by the Georgia Historical Commission. 1952.

Abigail Minis

Abigail Minis (c.1701-1794) was one of the earliest settlers of the Georgia colony. She landed in the new colony with her husband and children in July 1733. Her husband, Abraham Minis, became a successful merchant and land owner in Savannah. After his death in 1757, Abigail took over the management of the family's mercantile firm and tavern and oversaw more than 1,000 acres of land in and around the city of Savannah.

Throughout the American Revolution the Minis family supported the Patriots. During the Siege of Savannah, in October 1779, Abigail provided provisions to the American and French forces trying to capture the city from the British. After the failed attempt to unseat the British from Savannah, Minis and her family temporarily moved to South Carolina. While in Charleston, South Carolina, Abigail wrote the above letter on January 14, 1780 to her friend and fellow Savannahian Mordecai Sheftall, who was currently in Philadelphia. Abigail was requesting he help her gain reimbursement for the assistance she provided the Continental Army during the Siege of Savannah. Abigail Minis eventually returned to Savannah where she died on October 11, 1794 at the age of ninety-three.

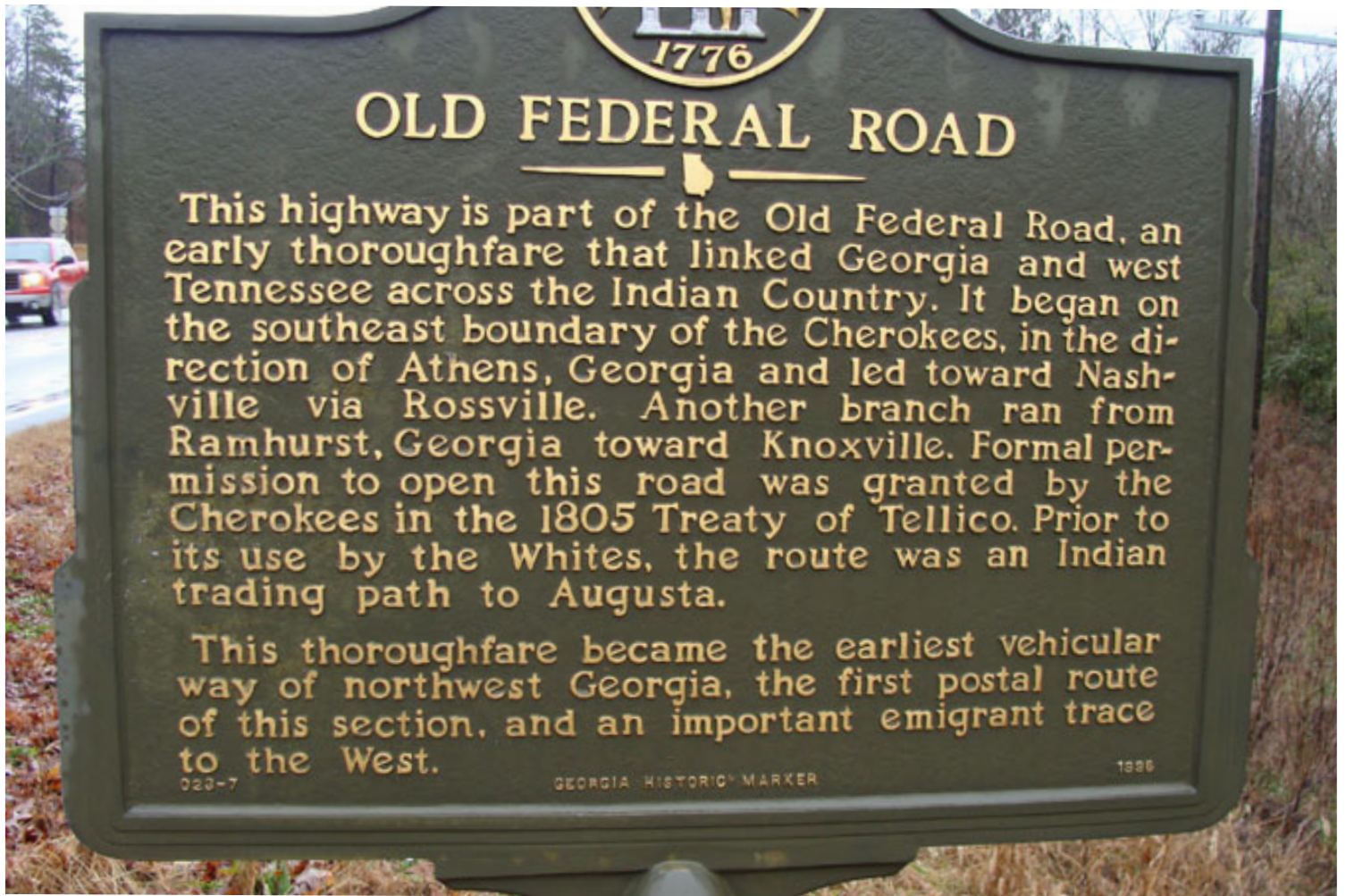
Source Set 1: American Revolution

C. "Georgia and the American Revolution." Three Centuries of Georgia History Online Exhibit from the Georgia Historical Society.



Source Set 2: New Transportation

A. Whistle. 1880. From the W.H. Mims collection of Central of Georgia technical drawings from the Georgia Historical Society.



Source Set 2: New Transportation

B. Old Federal Road. Erected by Georgia Historical Commission. 1996.

Nineteenth-Century River Traffic and Trade

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, wagon and stagecoach trails followed the old [Indian trails](#) along the Ocmulgee, linking settlements and frontier forts like Fort Hawkins along the east bank. By the 1820s numerous ferry landings linked settlements in the newly opened western territories with principal roads from [Monticello](#), Clinton, and [Milledgeville](#) (the new [state capital](#)) on the Upper Ocmulgee, and from Marion, Hartford, and Jacksonville on the lower leg.

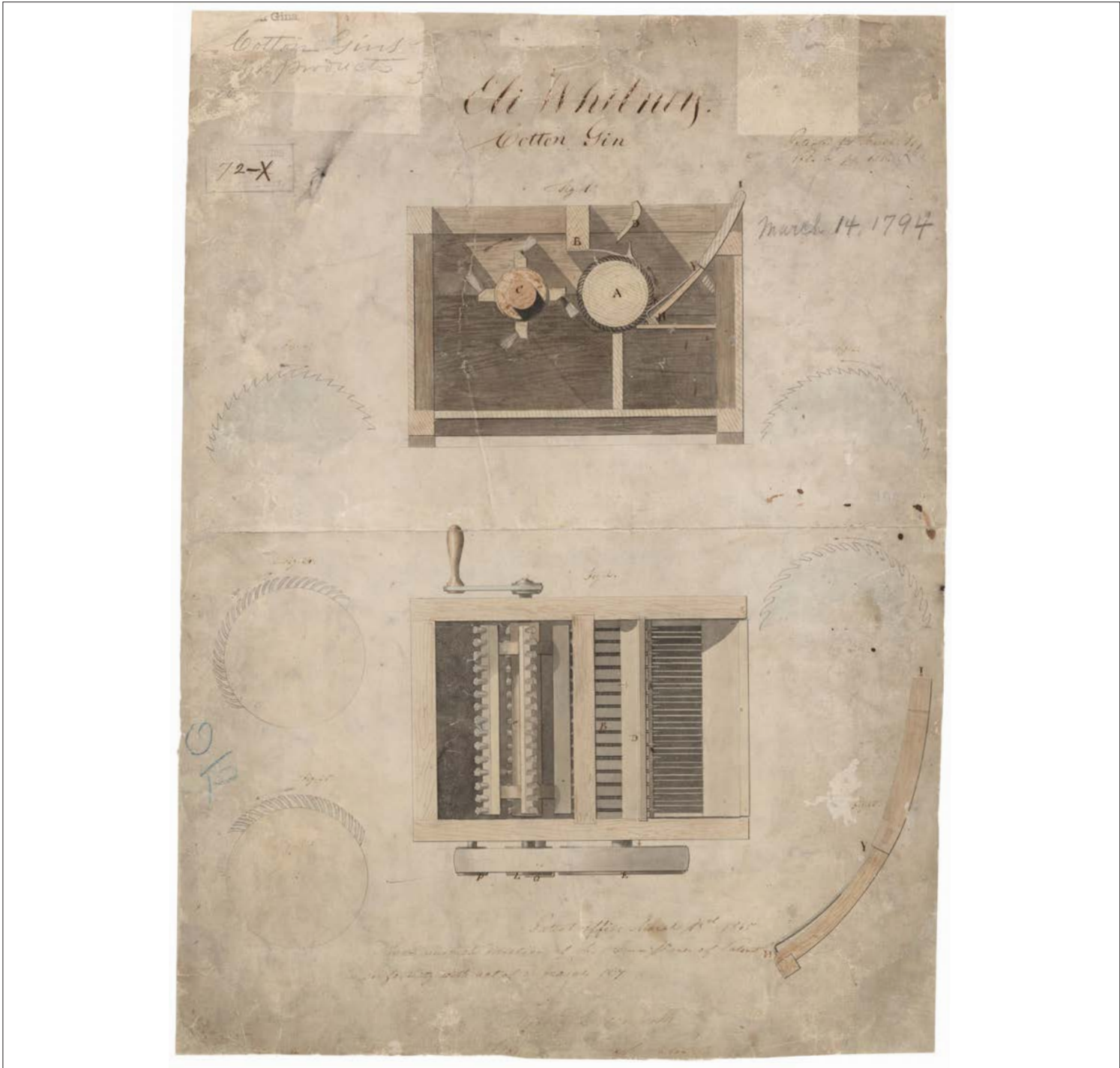
Commercial river navigation of this era depended upon log rafts loaded down with field and farm produce and guided by pole-handling crews who rode their lumber "down to [Darien](#)," where it could be sold to sawmills. These raftsmen played a major role in Georgia's economy, yet their story survives primarily through [rafting folklore](#). As [cotton](#) production expanded into the rich Lower Ocmulgee bottomlands, steamboat navigation offered the fastest route to coastal markets.

Because the river was frequently narrow and winding, and unnavigably shallow in the dry months, however, it had never been particularly well suited to commercial boat traffic. The best that steamboats could do in the 1820s was to make the trip partway from the coast and transfer their goods to poleboats, which could be pushed the rest of the way to Macon by [enslaved people](#). The first steamboat reached Macon in 1829, and the first commercial steamboat to make the full Darien-to-Macon run arrived in 1833. In late 1835 three steamboat companies operated on the river, and by the end of the decade there was a steady flow of traffic transporting cotton and lumber to the markets of [Savannah](#) and Darien from the wharves of Macon, [Hawkinsville](#), Abbeville, Jacksonville, and Lumber City, and from the river landings of prosperous Ocmulgee River plantations.

With the building of the [railroads](#) in the late 1830s and early 1840s, the Ocmulgee's importance for shipping cotton traffic from its rich bottomlands to the coast dwindled. The lobby for channel improvements and proposed [canals](#) was diverted to the raising of capital for the railways, and the first great era of Ocmulgee River traffic was all but over by 1847-48, when barely 1 percent of Macon's cotton shipments to Savannah were by boat.

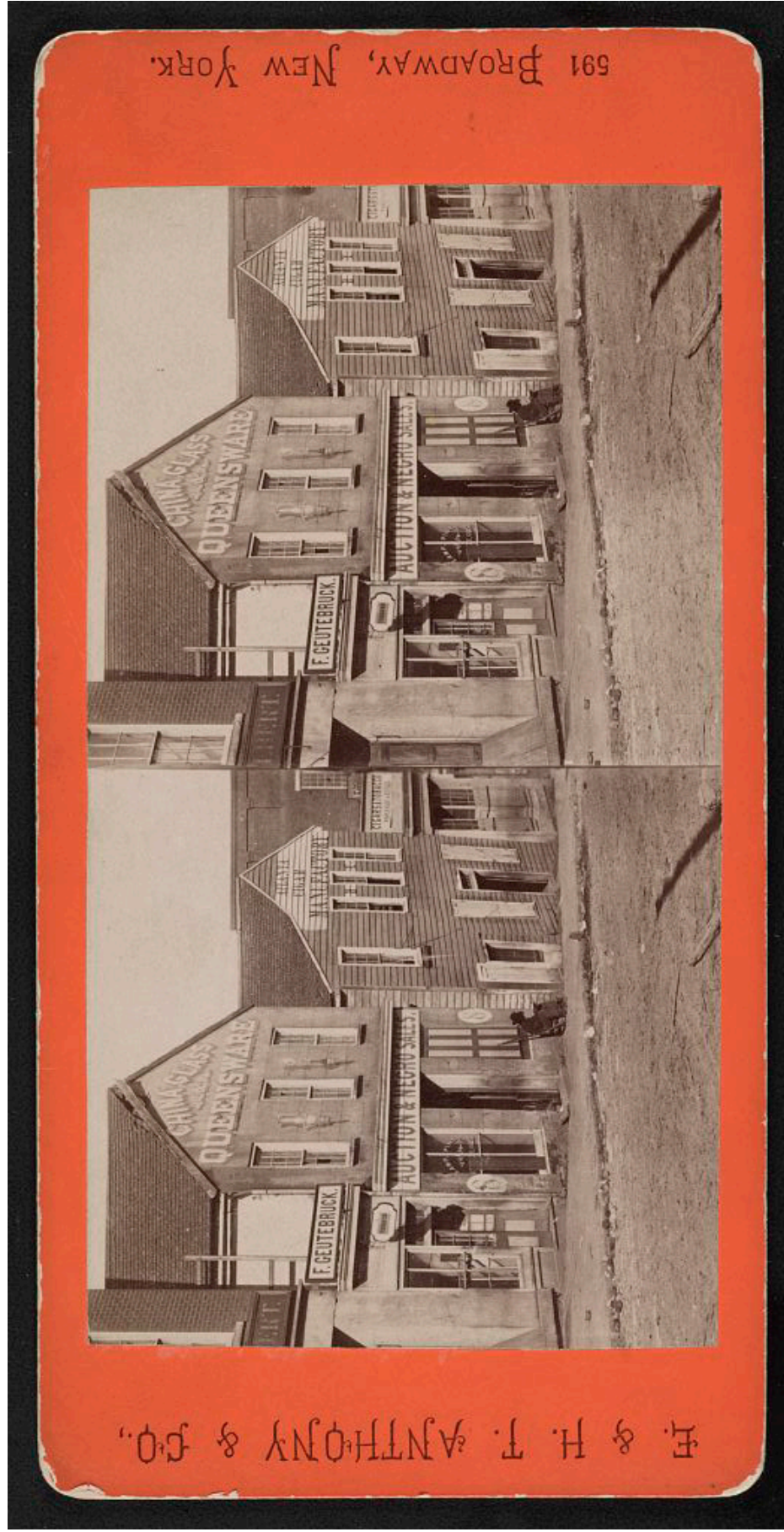
Source Set 2: New Transportation

C. Hulett, Keith. "Ocmulgee River." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 15 July 2020. Web. 17 August 2021.



Source Set 3: The Cotton Gin

A. Eli Whitney's Cotton Gin Patent Drawing; 3/14/1794; Restored Patent Drawings, 1837 - 1847; Records of the Patent and Trademark Office, Record Group 241; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.



Source Set 3: The Cotton Gin

B. Barnard, George N, photographer. The slave market, Atlanta, Ga. United States Atlanta Georgia, 1864. [New York: E. & H.T. Anthony & Co., American and Foreign Stereoscopic Emporium, 501 Broadway, or earlier] Photograph.

Impact

Despite speculation of the identity of the true inventor, the impact of the cotton gin worldwide is undeniable. The process to prepare a cotton plant for spinning into thread is tedious and time-consuming. Each plant produces several blooms consisting of thousands of staple cotton fibers; within each bloom are hundreds of tiny seeds and bits of debris that must be removed before the fibers are able to be spun into thread and then woven into fabric. Prior to the invention of the cotton gin, all the seeds and debris had to be removed by hand.[x] This process was done by enslaved workers and it would take several hours to clean any useable amount of cotton.[xi] The cotton gin automated this step by using long and skinny bristles to pick through the debris, taking only a fraction of the time. Although much more efficient in cost and time, the cotton gin took several individuals to operate, whereas prior to the gin, just one slave would be cleaning cotton all day (see fig 8). The gin revolutionized cotton as a profitable crop, making it very lucrative and superior to other fibers. Many believed that this invention would lessen the need for slave labor and in turn lower the slave population, but instead it had the opposite effect. Cotton plantations began to develop all over the South, causing a rapid demand for slave labor. The number of slaves in the United States in 1790, prior to the invention of the cotton gin, was roughly 700,000. This number rapidly grew to roughly 1,000,000 in 1810, only sixteen years after the cotton gin was patented.[xii] The impact of the cotton gin was not exclusive to just textile manufacturing. Cotton quickly became a staple for the economy in the South. Savannah was the world leader in cotton exports, founding it as the headquarters for the cotton exchange.[xiii] The amount of cotton produced and exported from the United States grew from roughly 5 million pounds in 1793 to around 500 million in 1835.[xiv] The South as a cotton superpower was only made possible by the labor of slaves. Once slavery was abolished in 1865, the South could no longer maintain the amounts of cotton exports previously seen, eventually losing the title of cotton capital of the world.[xv]

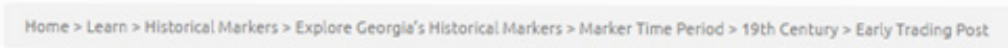
Source Set 3: The Cotton Gin

C. Washington's Southern Tour I. Tamra Gould, 2019. Hidden Histories Online Exhibit from the Georgia Historical Society.



Source Set 4: Trade and Commerce

A. A new and accurate map of the province of Georgia in North America. [London?: s.n, 1779] Map.
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2008625108/>.



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Marker Text: At this point, just north of the safest ford in the Chattahoochee River, the first white settlers in this area built their campfires in 1822. A trading post was soon established on the site and Indians traded gold nuggets and gold-dust to the settlers for merchandise. The first Nacoochee post office was established at the trading post with Charles Williams, son of one of the first settlers, serving as Postmaster for more than 50 years. To this same site in 1838 soldiers gathered the Indians from surrounding valleys and highlands to begin their "Trail of Tears" to the West.

B. Early Trading Post. Historical Marker. Erected by the Georgia Historical Commission. 1955.

Relations with the English

When General [James Oglethorpe](#) and his Georgia colonists arrived in 1733, Creek-English relations were already well established. Early interaction between Creeks and colonists centered on the [exchange of enslaved people and deerskins](#) for foreign products like textiles and kettles. Soon after the establishment of South Carolina in 1670, the Creeks set up a brisk business capturing and selling Florida Indians to their new neighbors. By 1715 this segment of the trade had nearly disappeared for lack of supply and demand. Deerskins then became the main currency.



By the 1730s tens of thousands of skins were leaving the port of Charleston, South Carolina, each year, bound for English factories, where they were cut into breeches, stretched into book covers, and sewn into gloves. [Savannah](#), Georgia, later joined Charleston as a leading port, and in the 1750s it may have exported more than 60,000 skins each year. In Creek towns the profits from the trade included cloth, kettles, guns, and rum. These items became integral parts of the culture, easing the labor tasks of Creeks. However, they also created conflict by enriching some, but not all, Indians.

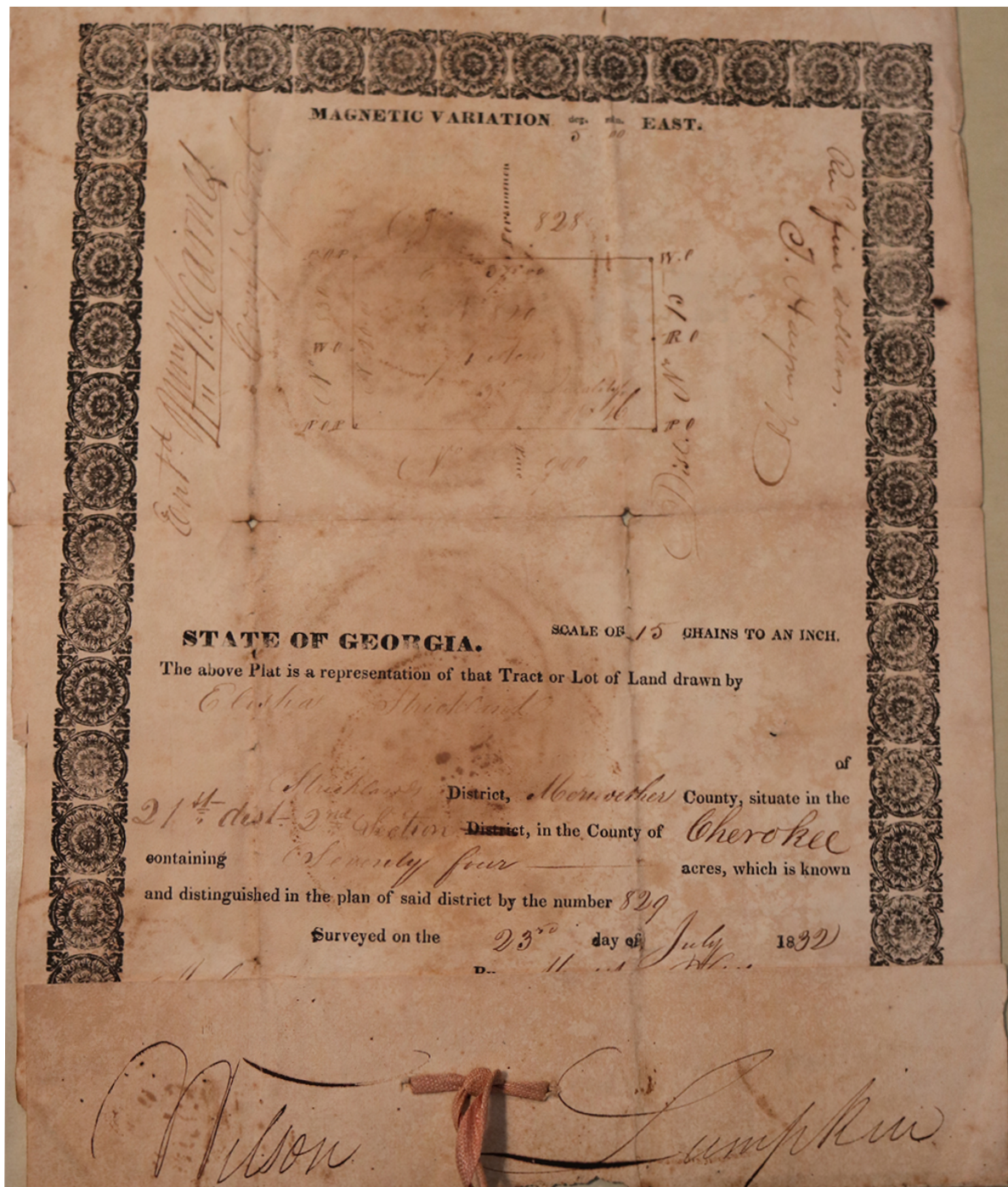


The trade also encouraged closer cultural ties between natives and newcomers. Some Georgia traders took up residence among the Creeks, settling in towns on the Chattahoochee, Coosa, and Tallapoosa rivers. They married Creek women and had children, some of whom later became important [Creek leaders](#), such as [Alexander McGillivray](#) and [William McIntosh](#). They, along with others, encouraged Georgia's native peoples to join the plantation economy spreading across the South.

Many Georgia newcomers were enslaved Africans, and they also forged ties with the Creek Indians. Over the course of the eighteenth century, hundreds of fugitives from slavery settled in Creek towns. They, too, shaped the Creek peoples, especially by encouraging them to oppose [slavery](#).

Source Set 4: Trade and Commerce

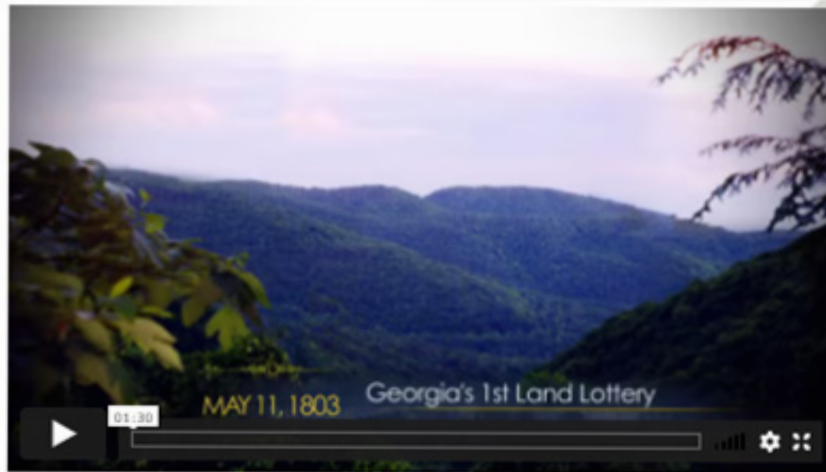
C. Saunt, Claudio. "Creek Indians." New Georgia Encyclopedia. 25 August 2020. Web. 17 August 2021.



Source Set 5: Land Distribution

- A. Land Grant to Elisha Strickland for Lot 829 in Cherokee County, 1834.
From the Georgia Historical Society Manuscript Collection, MS 769.

May 11



Georgia's First Land Lottery

May 11, 1803 - statewide

Georgia's lottery is nothing new. Between 1805 and 1833, the state held eight land lotteries. Seventy-five percent of Georgia was sold to roughly 100,000 people for bargain prices. As land-hungry Georgians began migrating westward after the American Revolution, the state negotiated treaties with the Creek and Cherokee tribes—or simply took their land—and then distributed the acreage.

Georgia turned to the lottery system because of the corrupt Yazoo Land Fraud, when the legislature sold thousands of acres to speculators. Names were put in one drum, lot numbers in another. Names could be entered multiple times based on age, marital status, military service, years of residence, and success in previous lotteries. Selling the land for an average of 7 cents an acre, the lotteries had far-reaching consequences: more widespread landownership shifted political power away from aristocratic planters but increased slave-owning as well as cotton cultivation spread across the state.

Georgia's first land lottery act was signed by Governor John Milledge on May 11, 1803. Today in Georgia History.



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19th century, Creeks, Cherokee, Native American, Yazoo, treaty, legislature, slavery, cotton, Governor, Time Continuity and Change, People Places and Environments

Related Articles & Links

[Georgia's First Land...](#)
[William McIntosh...](#)
[George Troup ...](#)

Fast Fact

Georgia was the only state to distribute land via a lottery.

GHS Finding Aids

[Daniel Sturges letter](#)

Source Set 5: Land Distribution

- B. Georgia's First Land Lottery. Today in Georgia History, a joint collaboration of the Georgia Historical Society & Georgia Public Broadcasting. Watch the 90 second video here:
<https://www.todayingeorgiahistory.org/tih-georgia-day/georgias-first-land-lottery/>



Source Set 5: Land Distribution

C. Fort Wilkinson. Georgia Historical Commission. 1961.