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This Land is Whose Land?

History, Fiction, and the 1800's Cherokee Removal in Inskeep's *Jacksonland*

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In recent news, debate surfaced aimed at unseating Andrew Jackson as the long standing face on the US twenty dollar bill. On April 20th, 2016 a grassroots campaign for Harriet Tubman to replace Jackson on the US currency surfaced and made it all the way to the Senate before being denied entry. This change would commemorate her great deeds during her lifetime, but this also poses another issue in the form of bringing to light the US's acknowledgment of the wrongdoings they participated in during the slave trade and the Civil War. Although having a woman on US currency would do well as a step towards women's equality, Jackson and Tubman were of two different time periods, and if anyone is to replace such a man as Jackson, it should be the one who fought against him for years until his defeat. Cherokee Chief Representative John Ross is the lesser known of the time period, but anyone who studies the history of Cherokee Removal will recognize his name. He and Jackson are foils of one another, and he deserves to be commemorated as a hero of the *first* Americans. Steve Inskeep, journalist and the host of NPR's Morning Edition, comments on the decades' long struggle between John Ross and Andrew Jackson in his non-ficiton biography, *Jacksonland*.

In United States history classes, students are taught the history and methods the United States used to procure every piece of land that they own today, but history teachers do not share how the US swindled and deceived natives and other parties out of huge portions of viable land. Specifically, they neglect to mention how the American government utilized 'treaties' made with groups of natives for their lands in exchange for money and agricultural supplies. In the long run, data collected shows that most were not paid for the land, as a push towards an agricultural lifestyle was the United States' goal for these savages. This was no more evident than within the Five Civilized Tribes of North America. At the start of 1828, the Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Seminole tribes were at an even greater risk the moment Andrew Jackson was deemed the next president.

Since the American mindset was baited with the thirst of expansion and wealth by his predecessor, John Quincy Adams, Jackson could effectively justify his actions in annexing Indian territories by whatever powers necessary. It was then, with the passing of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, that a clear and concise legitimization of power was made legal. This so-called "established legitimacy" is the normalization of violence or authority over a society. An analysis of this corrupted view in long term, and specifically the strategies used by the Cherokee nation to combat Jackson's bait tactics, are analyzed thoroughly in Steve Inskeep's *Jacksonland*. Inskeep cites his inspiration for the topic,

> I came to this subject because I was curious about the 1830's, and of all the amazing stories of that time, the Trail of Tears felt, to me, visceral and unresolved. It's the main detail I recall from junior-high-school history class - and if I could remember it, there must be something there. My explorations led to Andrew Jackson, of course. But I felt it was really important to write from the other perspective, and to personify it; I feel that histories of the time often portray the Indians as sad, nameless victims - they are somehow sympathetic yet not very important.[1]

[1] Steven Inskeep, Email to the author, February 5, 2019.

Jacksonland recounts the historical background and evidence on the intimate struggle between Andrew Jackson and the Cherokee Indians. Why is it that Jackson is a man who, if not praised, is merely looked over as "just another US president?" How is it that Andrew Jackson was able to get away with the mass removal of Native Americans and still end up on the United States' twenty dollar bill? It is the product of those in power that chose how he would be remembered and which traits and actions were emphasized so that he would not be seen for the avaricious man he was.

The broader question is: Why is history studied akin to sports highlights instead of an entire game. To save time? To learn the bare minimum and move on? On the topic of Jackson, in the United States, young students are taught of Andrew Jackson and the Trail of Tears separately. Students learn of the Trail of Tears, that it is a tragedy, but there is nothing that highlights the Native's emotional turmoil and the battle fought *before* they were pushed from their land. As Jackson wanted, people were meant to think that this was of voluntary action, when in fact there was a manipulation of the legal system of the United States to remove them. Why is this? It has to do with a link between history and fiction that Beverley Southgate explores in his book, *History Meets Fiction.* Southgate argues, "For any records used – anything that historians refer to as 'evidence'— necessarily themselves derive from other people's memories of what happened." [2] In this passage, Southgate aims to define memory as the evidence that historians derive their fact off of. This is true to an extent, where the collected memories of a population become warped and shifted as now a collective decides what becomes true and outsiders consider agreement because the majority has ruled it so. Southgate puts it best when he states, "that memory can play tricks, can delude us and misrepresent others, can appear to have a

[2] Beverley Southgate, *History Meets Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 73.

life of its own, detached from any 'real' experience, can adapt and get modified, come to appear as unstable and as imaginatively based as fiction. *Yet often they choose to ignore that."*[3] In this statement, Southgate suggests that through collective memory, the elimination of events that the collective deems unimportant takes place, forcibly erasing information that society no longer considers important to their collective narratives. This is how historical censuses are put together. Like a human brain, stuffed with information, many details are left out as they are believed "insignificant" to the big picture. Where humankind corrects itself is in the specific historical accounts, exploring both sides of disputes, or a compiling of primary sources to ensure that all corners of a time period are explored.

Rather than a textbook style, Inskeeps's *Jacksonland* reads as a narrative. History and fiction follow close in hand with each other begging the right to argue whether retellings are fiction or fact. This again brings into account Beverley Southgate's argument that there is a gray area between history and fiction, and they compete with each other in a constant dance for power. Southgate states, "any clear distinguishing between history and fiction, has long been rendered problematic in such literary forms as 'historical fiction' and more 'speculative histories'"[4]. As a whole, Southgate's argument presents a positive aspect to this close relationship between historical accounts and fictional stories, but this idea can be applied to a negative truth as primary source evidence comes to light. In this specific case, Inskeep uses letters written by Andrew Jackson and John Ross to prove that although Inskeep's book shares a narrative style, he raises questions and uncovers truths about Andrew Jackson through his evidence. Although *Jacksonland* is a non-fiction biography, the storytelling aspect and

[3] Southgate, *History Meets Fiction,* 74.
[4] Steve Inskeep, *Jacksonland: President Andrew Jackson, Cherokee Chief John Ross, and a Great American Land Grab* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), 172.

speculation Inskeep uses, backed with evidence, sets scenes and anecdotes that read as though they are fictional accounts. He synthesizes the events during the passage of the Indian Removal Act and the Trail of Tears. His literary structure presents the argument that there are many acts of fiction in close proximity to history making the history recited from textbooks a fraudulent fictionalization of events. In short, it was not the blood, sweat, and hard work that manufactured the "great American nation" many reside in today, but colonial settlers instead, and they constructed the United States at a cost. This cost came in the form of many societies of indigenous people. It is those in power who hold the ability to write history from their perspective, authorized by the fictionalizing of history, shining a light on their good deeds rather than the meager voices that try to climb their way into the light.

Inskeep begins his account in a time before *true* tensions amongst the Cherokee and the United States had begun to occur. This is where he establishes his main characters, being future president Andrew Jackson and future Cherokee Chief Representative John Ross. At the start, the War of 1812 in full swing, both Andrew Jackson and John Ross find themselves as allies on the same side of victory. Battling together betwixt the British and the Creek Indians, John Ross and his Cherokee people are described as being a linchpin in the battle of Horseshoe Bend. Ross would serve under the same company as General Jackson at the time. Inskeep uses these early accounts to flesh out the personalities and the values of Jackson and Ross respectively. War, it seems, is the best way to denote what a man truly values in himself.

If Inskeep's recount is parsed as a work of fiction, then there is a clear protagonist and antagonist, and in this case, a tragic hero. John Ross becomes a tragic character, whose sympathy for the Cherokee people acts as his tragic flaw. Ross is only 1/8th Cherokee and predominantly Scottish. He is described as being easily passable for a white man with his perfected English

rhetoric and strong European features. His choice on the side of the Cherokee rather than the Americans would serve to be his downfall and equate to his loss against Jackson. Southgate puts it best when he says,

> Fictions function here, then, is to reveal the political function of histories in which narratives have (necessarily) excluded as well as included, in which heroes and villains, perpetrators and victim, winners and losers have all been readily identified. Their identification depends upon the acceptance of fixed boundaries – boundaries that facilitate categorization and seem to be naturally occurring as they divide one group or class of people from all others. Those divisions result from the way that 'reality' is currently perceived and presented – conveniently (for some) defining everything and everyone in terms of prevailing or dominant beliefs.[5]

During that time period, it would have been easy for Jackson to shift the role of the villain onto these "savages." The differences, the racism that dominated the culture, allow for those in power to immediately procure a villain for the nation's hatred. Because of a changing mindset, and the allowance of tolerance into societal norms, this allows Inskeep to shift the light from the vehemently praised Jackson, the man on our twenty-dollar bill, onto a man who should be praised for his long fight as the underdog, Ross. Now the antagonist of this recount, Jackson, is portrayed in a brutal fashion. Inskeep displays Jackson's ruthlessness as well as his cunning within the very first chapter of *Jacksonland*. Inskeep brings us to a letter by Jackson condemning a mutineer in his own regiment, John Wood. Inskeep tells how, "Wood ignored an officer's order to pick up some bones…When the officer shouted at him, the private became enraged, and brandished his rifle before submitting to arrest."[6] In 1812, this denoted that a young man must now die for his crimes. It seems petty in a sense, but this brutal fashion has another effect that Jackson is keen to use. "As Jackson's aide later put it, the arrest of John Wood offered "a fit occasion' to set an example and subdue the army's 'mutinous spirit.'"[7] This sets Inskeep's tone

[5] Southgate, *History Meets Fiction,* 160.
[6] Inskeep, *Jacksonland,* 17.
[7] Ibid.

of Andrew Jackson and shows how easy it was for Jackson to create an enemy out of harmlessness. His skill of turning the masses against those he deemed villains would serve him later as it developed.

As A. Cave's suggests, Jackson wanted all citizens and non-citizens alike to believe that Indian removal was of voluntary action. Cave then goes on to clarify, quoting directly from Jackson's personal notes, that "Jackson lists among the advantages of the possible acquisition of Texas the prospect that the 'additional territory' could be used for 'concentrating the Indians,' thereby 'relieving the states of the inconveniences which the residue within their limits at present afford.'"[8] These notes give insight into the mindset of Jackson when deciding the fate of Native Americans. Jackson's opinion on the matter speaks directly to the treatment of the Native Americans during their removal period. Cave quotes Jackson again, "Build a fire under them. When it gets hot enough, they'll move."[9] This display shows that despite his honeyed words in the face of the public, voluntary removal was never an option for Natives. The Native Americans were always "meant" to be pushed out by means of a corrupt Jackson regiment and the twisted tactics of his people. Jackson functions as a foil to John Ross, and as Inskeep's narrative structure switches from one perspective to another, the reader gets a fair viewpoint from both sides and can compare and contrast them.

The anecdote chosen to illustrate Ross's personality will go on to set a tone of Ross's educated background and his cunning ability to become a chameleon in white society. Inskeep tells of Ross's convoy down the expanse of the Tennessee River with three other men in order to deliver trade goods to a Cherokee settlement. The group are confronted off the banks by white

[8] Alfred A. Cave, "Abuse of Power: Andrew Jackson and the Indian Removal Act of 1830," *The Historian* 65 (2003): 1338.
[9] Cave, "Abuse", 1339.

settlers who aim to kill them if they are Indians. The other passengers in his small boat were a black servant and carefully chosen Cherokee natives. Ross had chosen these natives because they could pass for Spaniards from afar, thus ensuring their safety as long as they stayed on the river. Ross's smart thinking and clever tongue ended up saving the group from being attacked at Muscle Shoals, a location that would be crucial to Inskeep's narrative later.

Jacksonland leads up to the Cherokee's firm stance by annotating just how much the Cherokee assimilated to better protect themselves against their more powerful enemy. One such example is the sheer number of Indians adapting their monotheistic religion to Christianity instead. However, the Cherokee already believed some of the same principles as Christians do today: an example of this is their belief in the "Ruler of the Universe."[10] The natives would not seem less like savages until they converted over to the Christian God. In some primary sources, conversion is synonymous with civilization. In the year 1827, missionaries reported over 2000 converts. Just how easy it was for missionaries to win over the Cherokee people speaks volumes to their adaptable character. From the defensive tactics they used throughout the recounts of history, the Cherokee, characteristically, would not willingly give in to a different belief system without valid reason. In this case, that reason was the pressure from the United States to conform or emigrate. Therefore, a flight or fight instinct was triggered, the fight being rejection of religion, therefore making an enemy of the Americans, and the flight being conversion and therefore "civilizing" themselves. This serves as one of the first steps toward assimilation and the normalization of the State's "established legitimacy." But, Ross himself expresses his tactical thinking as he understood these missionaries as an asset to the Cherokee people: "They could educate white men about Indian progress," says Inskeep on the topic. [11]

[10] Inskeep, *Jacksonland,* 126.
[11] Ibid.

The next conscious steps the Cherokee took to reform themselves are told in story. Inskeep narrates the first drafting of the Cherokee Nation constitution, which paralleled the United States constitution as a nod to their *big brother,*[12] as they sometimes referred to them. After adapting a government to fit their needs, it was the adoption of the newspaper and the printing press as the biggest assets to the Cherokee in not only revision of their own culture and literacy rates, but also in the ability to give white Americans an outside look into their newly "civilized" society.

Inskeep spends a hefty chapter detailing the Cherokee newspaper, *The Cherokee Phoenix*, and how it served to educate those within the Cherokee nation on their own affairs. It was drafted in their first written language and printed using a printing press. What is key to note is that articles from *The Phoenix*, such as articles by John Ross or other literate Cherokees, were sent to newspaper companies across the colonies to be published within their newspapers as well. This is a key factor and a very clever move on the part of Ross. Using this literacy and the prose that Americans were accustomed to, Ross presented formal ideas that showed white Americans they were a civil society of human beings. These articles allowed sympathizers to side with their cause.

The newspaper *Niles' Weekly Register* is responsible for publishing many works from *The Cherokee Phoenix* on the topic of Indian Removal and infringement of rights. An article by John Ross himself can be referenced in the newspaper from August 7th, 1830 just months after the passing of the Indian Removal Act by Jackson. He details his disdain for Georgia, claiming their land as its own. Ross's words are powerful and embody his nation's feelings toward removal. Ross expresses, "Without presuming to doubt the sincerity and good intentions of the advocates of this plan, we as the descendants of the Indian race, and possessing both feelings of the Indian and the white man, cannot but believe that this system to perpetuate our happiness, is visionary, and that

[12] Inskeep, *Jacksonland*, 130.

the anticipated blessings can never be realized."[13] This is the evidence that people did not see. As Jackson made clear, he believed that removal was a voluntary action. *Niles' Weekly Register* was a newspaper based in Baltimore, and served to be a small cry for help among those that were swayed into alignment with Jackson's views.

Another article from this register and *The Cherokee Phoenix* can be cited for Georgia and Cherokee relations. As many Georgian's believed that any Cherokee land was theirs, states' rights policies making it so, there was constant conflict between a trifecta of Cherokee, Georgians, and federal troops. E. Frainer, the author of this retelling, advocates for the sympathy of onlookers to this dispute in a fashion that plays the Georgia troops as the enemies. Franier narrates to the American people, "We are also notified by the officers of Georgia that they will arrest us all in the course of two or three days, for taking the gold of Georgia – but we are not yet intimidated. Being very conscious that we are not trespassers on states' rights, we expect all to be taken to goal according to notice."[14] By attempting to tell events in the form of a different perspective, Frainer can be aligned with Southgate's view that history has all different perspectives, and placing it in the form of a narrative appeals to the completeness of a story. People therefore indulge in an aesthetic comfortability that comes with reading accounts in a narrative fashion. The structure that Frainer writes, (in the form of a letter), again appeals to the aspect of human nature that enjoys "those smoothly running stories…that seem to include everything within their embrace, and to tidy all those potentially awkward bits and pieces into the sort of neat package."[15]

These are the primary sources that are largely overlooked as history is written. The party in power has the authority to control what is remembered. Southgate's section on fiction, history,

[13] John Ross, "Cherokee Indians," *Niles' Weekly Register,* August 7, 1830, 423-424.
[14] E. Frainer, "Fate of the Cherokees," *Niles' Weekly Register,* July 31, 1830, 405.
[15] Southgate, *History Meets* Fiction, 158.

and politics serves to exemplify this idea of those in power being able to manifest and fabricate a history that better suits themselves. He commentates on historical writing saying that it is,

> just taken as "natural"—actually conceals a host of events, attitudes, experiences, people, that fail to fit into or cohere with that dominant narrative. And the acceptance of a single 'hegemonic' narrative, which determines boundaries and defines the very acceptability or admissibility (or even perceptibility) of historical evidence, is of course a *political* move – a move *designed to exclude* the concerns of other peoples, whether those other peoples are different by virtue of race, or gender, or anything else.[16]

An example of this attack on the written history is the spread of information and accumulation of a hive mind through newspapers in the 1800's. *Niles' Weekly Register* is one of the only newspaper sources that printed articles by literate natives that advocated for their rights. Other newspapers only encouraged the fabricated feelings of the natives, that they were 'happier' being removed, they were only heading toward ruin if they stayed on land encroached by white settlers. *The New York Religious Chronicle* advocated for the removal of Indians in 1825 before Jackson came into power. The basis of the article explained plans to remove them past the Mississippi river so the Cherokee were no longer in conflict with Georgians violating their land. The agreement for the Cherokee to be removed from Georgia, "would not only shield them from impeding ruin, but would promote their welfare and happiness. Experience has clearly demonstrated, that in their present state, it is impossible to incorporate them, in such masses, in any form whatever, into our system."[17] This is the negative aspect that fictionalization can result in. With their voice snuffed out, the Native Americans could not begin to express their revulsion in the plan the United States presented. The treaties proposed were in primary benefit to the US, and most treaties that were accepted were only done so due to the need for financial and agricultural stability.

[16] Southgate, *History Meets Fiction*, 158.
[17] "Removal of the Indian Tribes," *New York Religious Chronicle*, February 12, 1825, 27.

The Platte County Purchase of 1830 is an example of how the United States designed treaties in their benefit rather than an equal agreement with the natives. Jason H. Combs' commentary on this purchase gives the best insight. The Platte region had been signed away by the Sacs and Foxes, the Medawah-Kanton, the Wahpacoota, the Wahpeton and Sisseton Bands of the Sioux, the Omahas, the lowas, the Otoes and the Missourias, ceding land in the cusp of Iowa and Missouri in exchange for food and supplies.

Combs elaborates on one such character, William Clark, Superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis, who argued in favor of taking the Platte Region for the United States. Combs cites a letter from Clark to the Secretary of War, John Eaton, saying, "We have good authority for saying that the cessions on the Missouri River contain a very large proportion of first rate lands, and believe them equal to any other sections of country on the Missouri River above the state line. It is better timbered, and is considered fine farming and grazing country."[18] Instead of using the land for the relocation of two other native tribes, the United States government amended treaties excluding the Platte Region for themselves. Despite argument by the two tribes in favor of the original treaties, which included the Platte region, the amended treaties were passed instead.

As not all of the Potawatomi's agreed to the nullification of their claim to Platte lands, they moved west and settled the Platte County. Combs then details, "Tensions heightened as dozens, if not hundreds, of settlers began to cross over into the Platte region, attempting to illegally establish homesteads in the most desirable areas."[19] Finally, to ease tensions, the Potawatomi were given a region in Kansas to settle, near the Osage River. The United States had

[18] Jason H. Combs, "The Platte Purchase and Native American Removal," *Plains Anthropologist* 47.182 (2002): 265-274.
[19] Combs, "Platte," 265-274.

successfully annexed the Platte Region for their own benefit, a region that was, in 1830, reserved for the relocation of Native populations. In three short years as president, Andrew Jackson was able to add more land to his map.

Jackson himself was no stranger to the illegal occupation and purchase of Native land, specifically Cherokee. In 1816, before his presidency, Jackson was a war hero and hungry for the land of Muscle Shoals in the Tennessee River Valley. It was a very fertile stretch of land, perfect for Jackson and his colleague John Coffee. Inskeep he fully details the acquisition of this land by Jackson in his article, *How Jackson Made a Killing in Real Estate,* noting that, "Having been placed in charge of postwar military affairs throughout the region, General Jackson proceeded as if the Tennessee Valley were part of the land he'd won from the Creeks during the war and had his best friend, John Coffee, appointed to survey the "captured" land."[20] John Coffee, acting as a land surveyor, intended to place the borders of the newly ceded land, and in particular, he procured the parcels of land that Jackson himself wanted control of. This gave Jackson more than two million acres for himself.

In his first conflict with Ross, who happened to be in Washington speaking with Jackson's superiors, Ross pushed for the fulfilment of his ownership of the land at Muscle Shoals, as he and the Cherokee had been loyal to the United States during war. The government complied and Jackson and Coffee were halted in their actions. Inskeep notes, "Having been thwarted in his effort to steal the land, he was given permission by Madison's administration to try to buy it. He conducted tough, coercive negotiations with Cherokees in late 1816, telling them that they had a choice: sell him the land he wanted, or run the risk that their nation would be destroyed by encroaching white settlers anyway."[21] The Cherokee ceded a portion of the land, including the

[20] Steve Inskeep, "How Jackson Made a Killing in Real Estate," *POLITICO Magazine,* July 4, 2015.
[21] Ibid.

land that Jackson so wanted. The United States Government paid out the Cherokee $65,000 in exchange for this and auctioned off portions of the land to white settlers. Jackson purchased $85,000 dollars' worth of land and quickly broke it up to sell it for triple the price. To reference Inskeep's title, Jackson was in fact making a killing in real estate. This purchase can be chalked up to Jackson's overconfidence in his knowledge on government affairs. It is one early example of the way Jackson played the system for his own benefit, so when the time came around to do it again on a larger scale, he was more than prepared to take what he wanted.

Inkseep narrates Attorney General John Berrien urging President Jackson to "deny the Cherokees two great sources of strength, their printing press and their money."[22] It was at this moment that the Cherokee's effort in assimilating themselves to conform to white society in order to stay on their land became a point of rebelliousness. In the months of debate leading up to Worcester v. Georgia, the case where the Cherokee would vie for their right to stay on their land, Jackson and his band of loyalists pulled their funding from the Cherokee government. Inskeep details this in the same chapter, "Rather than outright refusing to pay the money, administration would instead 'insist upon its distribution among the Indians at large,' spreading a few cents to each individual Cherokee so that the money conveyed no sustenance to their government."[23] This turn, as Inskeep calls it "Jackson's political jujitsu,"[24] and in this, he weakened his enemy, turning them into his weak antagonists.

Jackson did this once earlier, using the creation of the Cherokee government and its constitution against them. In 1829, Jackson was required to state his reasoning on why natives *deserved* to be removed to the public. His explanation was that a new nation was laying claim to a

[22] Inskeep, *Jacksonland,* 245.
[23] Inskeep, *Jacksonland*, 246.
[24] Inskeep, *Jacksonland,* 208.

land already inhabited by Georgians. Inskeep explains that the Cherokee had, "governed themselves for centuries, dating back to a time well before the existence of Georgia."[25] On page 208 he reveals that when Ross and the Cherokee elites reformed and updated that government in accord with American republican principles, Jackson called it a new creation that Cherokees who 'mingled much with whites' had 'lately attempted to erect.'[26] This meant that once Ross declared the Cherokee nation a sovereign society separate from the United States, they became an enemy and interloper on government land. All of this twisting of words and backward thinking established a legitimate reason to force their ultimate removal.

You may say Jackson must be commended as a true adversary who, in the end, got exactly what he wanted. He plays the perfect role of a strategic competitor doesn't he? He effectively used everything the United States initially promised in benefit for the Cherokee against them. But this does not excuse him from the fact that he sacrificed lives for his own greed, his own "Jacksonland" and the so called "good of the nation." His actions culminated in the final straw, the plan that broke the once proud Cherokee nation. The passage of the Treaty of New Echota in 1833, signed not by Ross, but by a party of natives who sought the benefit of their nation established the United States right to remove the Cherokee from their land. Finally, Jackson had won the legal way. With this final signature, the Indians had agreed to move west, leaving their land to be captured and settled by white Americans. The chronology in Inskeep's *Jacksonland* explained how Jackson used all of his political powers and mental prowess to grasp the Cherokee in his hand and gain complete control over them. The actions the Cherokee nation took to "benefit" their society only served to tighten the noose around their neck.

[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

The evidence people need to uncover conspiracies, illegal activities, and wrongdoings in history is all available, but it poses the question of what is fact and what is fiction. If there is only evidence in the form of letters, newspapers, accounts, or any other form of retelling, how can people be sure that that this information isn't falsified, isn't a joke, or isn't fiction itself? This evidence historians procure doesn't mean that it is actually truthful. Society puts its trust into historical figures and words from the past because human nature is quick to believe that history they are told is completely truthful. Therefore, as a society, they can now paint Andrew Jackson as a villain because of the lens he is put under. They can now paint John Ross as a fallen hero, even though there are records of him being a slave owner, but the lens he is placed under can shift anyone into any given role. This is where fiction and storytelling come into play, because in the evidence that has been presented, there are more than likely points and counterpoints that are buried somewhere deep in a letter from one man to another, whether it be fiction or fact. To put it candidly, a single word can be responsible for changing the course of history.

About the author

Payton Tolbert is currently a sophomore at the University of North Georgia, pursuing a degree in English with a focus on writing and publication as well as a minor in History. She hopes to pursue a job in editing novels to help other authors get their works published. She enjoys collecting vintage First Edition books, and writing in his free time.

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