

COMMEMORATIVE EXERCISE CELEBRATING THE JACKSON PURCHASE TREATY

Address written by Ed Graves, delivered by Alida Graves in Monroe County, Mississippi on October 16, 1983.

To the members of the Monroe Historical Society and the West Tennessee Historical Society, I would like to express the appreciation of the Jackson Purchase Historical Society to be allowed to participate in this commemorative exercise celebrating the signing of the Jackson Purchase Treaty of 1818.

I think it is safe to say that all of us are here because we have a love of history. In this time of international turmoil and domestic/economic upheaval there are very few of us who do not look for a personal foundation or sense of stability to carry us through these uncertain times. One of the reasons I've always enjoyed history is that it gives me a sense of the past: where we've come from and some foresight into where we may be going. Another thing that has always fascinated me about history is that it is a reflection of how other people have dealt with situations and survived them. As a boy I was fascinated with the stories of Beowulf that my father told me, derived from middle-English literature: the stories of King Arthur, the Knights of the Round Table, and Robin Hood; the early pioneers of America and the Civil War. In my young mind all of these stories, fiction or nonfiction, had a sense of reality, just as my sons David and Jonathan are now wrapped up in stories of super-heroes and Star-War characters. Gradually I began to discern that there is a difference between fiction and history. One of the appeals of history is that it is **true**. It is much more interesting than fiction.

I had the good fortune of growing up in Petersburg, Virginia, a town that has a long history and tradition of its own. As a child I played on the battlefield grounds of the Battle of The Crater. There one of my best friends, George Emory, had the good fortune to live with his family. His father was the Park Superintendent. We fought the battles of the Civil War around Petersburg over and over again. I grew up with a definite sympathy for the defense of the Southland.

But when I left Virginia to come to the Jackson Purchase area of Kentucky, I was certainly not disappointed in the historical situation and the traditions of this area. Under the guidance of Hunter Hancock—who I think is very instrumental in all of us being here today—I've come to learn more and more about the traditions of this area. But I'm still a babe in comparison to the knowledge that man holds.

Situation

The situation of the Jackson Purchase Treaty is a fascinating topic that we are going to be dealing with today. I think it was 165 years ago in October

of 1818 that that territory bordered on the north by the Ohio River, on the west by the Mississippi, and on the east by the Tennessee was purchased from the Chickasaw for the sum of \$300,000. This purchase gave name to the Jackson Purchase area of Kentucky, and brought into eventual existence 8 counties in Kentucky (I happen to be a resident of Calloway County, Kentucky) and approximately 20 counties in Tennessee.

As we look for traditions and milestones from the past, we have to thank the work of Isaac Shelby, Andrew Jackson, and the Chickasaw Nation for the places we live in and enjoy today.

But what might have arisen?

In talking with Hunter Hancock as I reviewed plans for this trip, I was fascinated to learn about the Chickasawia State. As most of you here may know, (I didn't know until just recently) in separate instances in 1775, 1790, 1830, and 1861 serious consideration was given to forming a separate state out of the territory that was purchased by Jackson in 1818. It is fascinating to know that the homogeneous nature of this region was recognized by John Cartright in 1775 when he proposed a territory to be made up of the region. It was he who recommended the name Chickasawia. In 1790, in a topographical description of the West by George Imlay, the proposal was again presented for forming a state along the Mississippi River because of its similar nature. Of course the Treaty of 1818 really laid the foundations for the present state configurations we have. But the idea itself of a Chickasawia State did not die. Again in 1830 such a proposal was made, and in 1861 a meeting was actually held in Mayfield, Kentucky, to have the Jackson Purchase area of Kentucky secede from Kentucky and join west Tennessee to form a state of its own.

I imagine all of you are probably familiar with that story. But there are a lot of people, certainly most of the people I deal with on a daily basis, who have never even heard of Chickasawia. When I first came to Kentucky in 1978, I soon learned that west Kentucky, like west Tennessee, had an identity all its own. And many people in casual conversation continue to say that western Kentucky and Tennessee should separate to form their own territory. I don't think many of them know that the proposal for a separate state is not a new idea, but an old one.

What was the final outcome?

Of course the final outcome of the Jackson Purchase Treaty of 1818 saw the formation of 20 counties in Tennessee and 8 counties in Kentucky. This development was brought about largely because of pressures for westward expansion resulting from the American Revolution. Kentucky, as a part of Virginia, and Tennessee, as a part of North Carolina, looked to the Jackson Purchase area. These states, during the Revolution, had awarded land grants to Revolutionary soldiers and their descendants, and used these to expand their own boundaries of Kentucky and Tennessee, opening up this area for white European settlement and western expansion.

The story of the Chickasaws is another story. I hope someone today may speak to that story. As a nation we owe a lot to the Chickasaws. And I'm sure the memory of the various treaties and the heavy-handed treatment by the United States is not easily forgotten by the Chickasaws and their descendants.

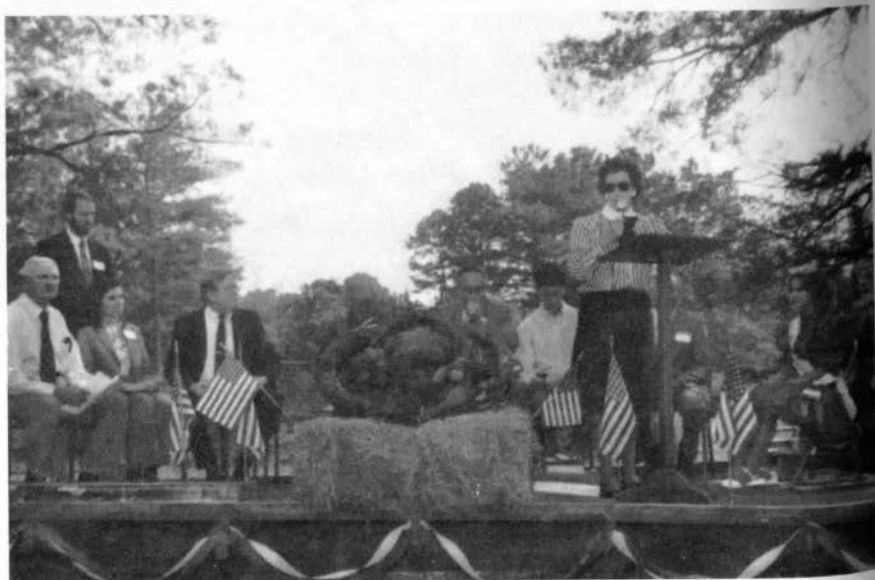
But today, we are one nation, North and South, European descendants and Indians. As we honor our past, may its good points strengthen us, and its misfortunes guide us to a better tomorrow.



Mr. Quint Guier, J.P.H.S.'s centenarian, and Mrs. Robert Herndon at Lake Monroe, Mississippi, the Society's lunch stop on Sunday.



Mr. Edward Williams, President of the West Tennessee Historical Society (left) and Dr. Charles Crawford of Memphis discuss a display from the Pink Palace Museum with Mr. Glen Hodges of Murray.



Mrs. Helen Crawford of the Monroe County (MS) Historical Society welcomes the gathering on Cotton Gin Road near the Council Tree where the Jackson Purchase Treaty was signed.

(Photos courtesy of the *Aberdeen Examiner*, Aberdeen, MS.)