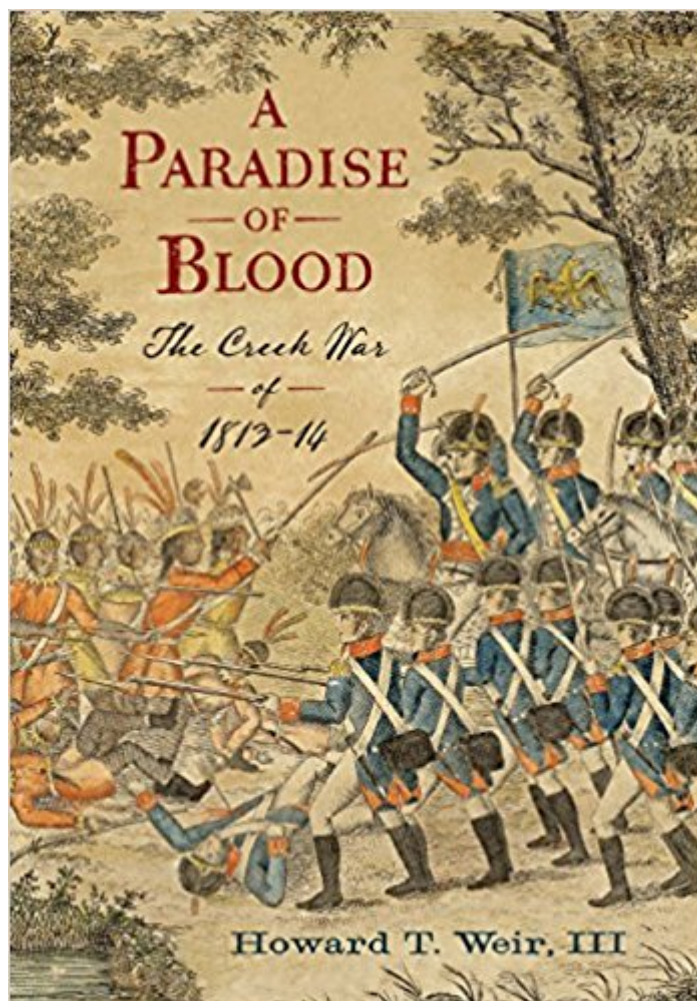


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A Paradise Of Blood: The Creek War Of 1813–14



Synopsis

The War for an Idyllic Wilderness That Brought Andrew Jackson to National Prominence, Transformed the South, and Changed America Forever

In 1811, a portion of the Creek Indians who inhabited a vast area across Georgia, Alabama, and parts of Florida and Mississippi, interpreted an earth tremor as a sign that they had to return to their traditional way of life. What was an internal Indian dispute soon became engulfed in the greater War of 1812 to become perhaps the most consequential campaign of that conflict. At immediate stake in what became known as the Creek War of 1813–14 was whether the Creeks and their inconstant British and Spanish allies or the young United States would control millions of acres of highly fertile Native American land. The conflict's larger issue was whether the Indian nations of the lower American South—the Creek, Cherokee, Choctaw, and Chickasaw—would be able to remain in their ancestral homes.

Beginning with conquistador Ferdinand DeSoto's fateful encounter with Indians of the southeast in the 1500s, A Paradise of Blood: The Creek War of 1813–14 by Howard T. Weir, III, narrates the complete story of the cultural clash and centuries-long struggle for this landscape of stunning beauty. Using contemporary letters, military reports, and other primary sources, the author places the Creek War in the context of Tecumseh's fight for Native American independence and the ongoing war between the United States and European powers for control of North America. The Creek War was marked by savagery, such as the murder of hundreds of settlers at Fort Mims, Alabama—the largest massacre of its kind in United States history—and fierce battles, including Horseshoe Bend, where more Indian warriors were confirmed killed than in any other single engagement in the long wars against the Indians. Many notable personalities fought during the conflict, including Andrew Jackson, who gained national prominence for his service, Sam Houston, War Chief William Weatherford, and Davy Crockett. When the war was over, more than twenty million acres had been added to the United States, thousands of Indians were dead or homeless, and Jackson was on his way to the presidency. The war also eliminated the last effective Native American resistance to westward expansion east of the Mississippi, and by giving the United States land that was ideal for large-scale cotton planting, it laid the foundation for the Civil War a generation later. A Paradise of Blood is a comprehensive and masterful history of one of America's most important and influential early wars.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

HOWARD T. WEIR, III has a BA in history from the University of California at Berkeley, an MFA from Hollins University, and a JD from the University of Alabama School of Law. He studied creative writing under James Dickey, George Garrett, and Lillian Hellman. He lives with his family in Washington, DC.

Mr. Weir has given us an eloquent and elegant account of the events of a critical period of US history. This densely researched and substantiated book, will almost certainly become the definitive historical work on the events and personalities of the time. But more than that, it is a thoroughly enjoyable recounting of the predations of both the Natives and the expansionist settlers in what was then the Southwestern US. It skillfully recounts the Messianic leadership, courage and cowardice, guile and idiocy, mercy and barbarity that characterized this, and other wars.

Having looked for a good book on the Creek War for years, I was very glad to find this one. It is a large book at 530 pages but the best chapters were those dealing with the battles of Fort Mims and Horseshoe Bend. I visited the Horseshoe Bend battlefield years before, and it was nice to finally add this book on my shelf of my best military history books.

An eloquent account of a largely ignored series of crucial political events that opened up the land occupied by the Creeks to cotton production, thereby helping to create the South's slave economy and ultimately leading to the Civil War. A great read.

Excellent book on this little known war in early American frontier history.

Best ever on this most interesting and formative period in American history

This book is an epic. The figures who mattered in the Creek Indian War -- Tecumseh, Andrew Jackson, Sam Houston, and a large cast of prophets, war chiefs, schemers, traders, and speculators -- are American archetypes. They were all trying to stake a claim to a huge prize, the fertile lands of the Deep South. Howard Weir has done prodigious research, and his command of the detail of the period results in a you-are-right-there experience for the reader. Better still, he understands and portrays the major characters in their full, complicated humanity. The Alabama territory was remote, but there are world-class scoundrels, heroes, and warriors in this book. Maybe the most admirable of them all was the War Chief William Weatherford, who rode his gray stallion off a high bluff and into the Alabama River to escape the forces of Andrew Jackson. For most Americans, the Creek Indian War is at best a footnote to the War of 1812. In *A Paradise of Blood*, Weir has shown that the war was something greater than that, a contest to determine the fate of nations -- the Creek nation and the new American nation. This book glows with Weir's love of his subject and his evocation of the place. The man can write.

Howard Weir transports the reader from the comforts of the Twenty First century back to the second decade of the Nineteenth. We are planted firmly in the middle of the Creek Nation in an area now known as the State of Alabama. This book lucidly describes, with ample documentation, how a land hungry United States employed brute military power as well as diplomatic chicanery to conquer the Creeks. Within seven years of Andrew Jackson's decisive victory at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, an entire civilization has been uprooted and Alabama had become a state. But before that rapid transformation could be achieved, the Creeks tried every avenue to retain their lands and their dignity. Those Creeks primarily in the southern portion of these lands had traded with white settlers for a generation. These Creeks tried to accommodate the federal government through collaboration. Those Creeks to the north, who had been jolted from their isolation by the recent encroachment of white settlers transversing their lands, chose to wage war. The Northern Creeks, whether warriors or women and children, were destroyed in battle; yet the Southern Creeks, who sometimes fought against their fellow tribe members, ended up being treated no differently at war's end. The history of the westward expansion of the United States by any means is not a new theme. But few have confirmed this truth as convincingly as Howard Weir. A fine first book.

I grew up a mile from Pintlala Creek, and I understood the importance of the rivers to the native Indians. This excellent book brought home to me the significance of the Coosa/Tallapoosa and Tombigbee basins to the settlement of the region, from the extermination of the Indians by Jackson to the cotton and slave-based economy that made it briefly the most prosperous part of America. Very good read.

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