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♦ Famous American Indians ♦

OSCEOLA

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The Red Stick Indians left forever their camping grounds on the Chattahooche river to escape the oppression of the Creeks who lived near them. They entered Northern Florida and pressed on to the borders of Okefinokee marsh.

Apart from the others on this journey plodded a tall and handsome Indian woman. Her gaily colored kerchief had been faded by sun and rain. She wore a necklace of silver beads wound many times about her throat. On one side she carried a large basket and on the other hip rode a boy of about four years of age. This woman continued to keep apart from the others, and when the camp fires were built on the journey she would sit on the unburned end of a log and pay no attention to the questions her little boy asked her so many times. At last she said: "Do not ask again about the baby with the blue eyes. Do not think of her. She does not cry for you. She plays with little Creek papposes. She is not your sister any more."

This woman was a chief's daughter. She had married a man of her tribe who was killed in battle. She then married a trader named Powell who lived among the Creeks. When the Red Sticks left she gave up with much bitterness the glory of being a trader's wife and the comforts of her home to follow them. "She was too true an Indian to desert her tribe." As her husband would not leave his trading post among the Creeks, she left him and her blue-eyed baby, bringing with her her son, a full-blood Indian, the child of her first husband. This boy was called Powell by some who remembered his step-father, but his mother called him Osceola, which means the rising sun.

The Red Sticks found the Seminoles in Florida, who received them with great friendliness because the Seminoles also hated the Creeks. The Seminoles were thrifty. They saw the well cultivated farms of the Spaniards and copied after them. Osceola saw this and saw the Indians making beginnings of what

they thought would be permanent homes. They worked the land, and had cattle, horses and hogs. Corn and potatoes were stored in log cribs. Fish were plentiful, the woods were full of game, and many wild fruits and berries grew about them.

In such surroundings Osceola was reared. He loved to work. He made his boats by burning out the heart of large cypress logs. He had unusual endurance and could still keep working or playing long after the others had quit.

Once when Osceola was acting as a guide to a party of Spaniards on horses, he asked them why they rode so slowly. They told him they were riding slow in order not to run away and leave him. Osceola told them to ride as fast as they wanted to ride, that he could keep up with them. They livened the pace. Osceola kept up. They rode faster and faster, and Osceola kept with them. The Spaniards saw that Osceola could keep with them and rode the entire day as if Osceola had a horse. When they reached the end of the journey Osceola seemed less tired than the Spaniards. With his energy, activity and endurance, was added a generous and helpful spirit, a frank manner and true kindness, which made him a favorite with all who knew him.

During the War of 1812 large numbers of negro slaves in the South went to Florida which was largely Spanish territory and in this way escaped. In this the British aided the Indians and made all the trouble they could for the United States. They built a fort on Spanish soil on the Appalachicola River. When the war ended the British left the fort, well filled with ammunition, with the Indians. The Seminoles rejoiced over this, which later proved a great curse to them.

The Southern people had complained for years about the Seminole Indians "stealing" their slaves. This "stealing" was merely receiving and protecting runaway slaves. Feeling against the Seminoles was so strong that expeditions into their territory had been made by the people on the frontier to recapture their slaves and punish the Indians. This fort was a hindrance to such affairs and the slaveholders demanded that it be destroyed. General Gaines was

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