STOLEN LANDS, STOLEN STORIES:

COLONIZING AND DECOLONIZING CHEROKEE HISTORIC SITES IN GEORGIA

by

DEVON ELLEN PAWLOSKI

(Under the Direction of Wayde Brown)

ABSTRACT

Euro-Americans have historically marginalized Native Americans at historic sites and museums. This research explores the extent of Native American authority and inclusion at historic sites, with a focus on two Cherokee sites in Georgia – New Echota State Historic Site and the Vann House State Historic Site. This thesis considers the current historic interpretation at each site in the context of the Cherokee history of the sites as well as the mid-twentieth century restoration by the Georgia Historical Commission which minimally involved the Cherokee. The effectiveness of Cherokee inclusion in the interpretive process at each site is measured through a set of consultation and collaboration criteria established through lessons learned from the broader historical institutional treatment of Native American historic sites and museums. Using this framework, this thesis proposes changes to shift authority from a traditional curatorial model to a process inclusive of Cherokee voices and knowledge.

INDEX WORDS: Cherokee History, Georgia State Historic Sites, Historic Preservation, Indigenous Preservation, Site Interpretation

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1998, Cherokee twins Sarah and Amy Vowell traced the route which their ancestors marched on the Trail of Tears.[1] They began at New Echota in present day Calhoun, Georgia. Now a Georgia State Historic Site, New Echota was the capital of Cherokee Nation at the time of removal. The historic town is where the Cherokee Trail of Tears formally began in 1835, when the Treaty of New Echota was signed by a minority faction of the Cherokee Nation. The treaty traded Cherokee ancestral land in Georgia for money and land in Oklahoma. New Echota would also be one of the locations where the United States captured Cherokees that remained in Georgia in 1838. After the federal government forced the Cherokee out of their home, New Echota was nearly lost to history until restored and reconstructed by the Georgia Historical Commission, Georgia's state agency for historic programs from 1951 to 1973. When the Vowells arrived in Calhoun, they saw a non-Native man selling ceramic figures of Indians. When the Vowells inquired who buys these "kitschy, teepee-toting" lawn ornaments, the man replied, "People here from Calhoun, around Georgia. People here around Georgia love Indians."[2] With that, Sarah and Amy visited the reconstructed town where their ancestors' Trail of Tears began, forced out of their home by the United States government with several impatient pushes by the people of Georgia.

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[1] Sarah Vowell, "Trail of Tears," July 3, 1998 (updated September 4, 2020), in *This American Life*, produced by Ira Glass, podcast, https://www.thisamericanlife.org/716/trail-of-tears.
[2] Vowell, "Trail of Tears."

The Georgia Historical Commission began establishing its historic sites in 1952, a time when the Commission had great interest in Native American history but little interest in presenting the history from any perspective but their own. This sentiment was nearly ubiquitous of the country's historic sites and museums since before the American Revolution and persisted in the decades following the formation of the Georgia Historical Commission.[3] In 1966, the passage of the National Historical Preservation Act of 1966 signaled the beginning of a greater awareness in America of historic sites. The Act provided a national context in which to identify sites and their associated historic values but lacked meaningful space not only for Native American sites, but for sites of any group outside of the dominant white, male group. When these sites were recognized for their historic significance, the National Historic Preservation Act provided no meaningful inclusion of Native Americans in the process of preserving those sites.

Over the following decades, Native Americans and their allies fought for recognition in the national historic preservation scheme. What followed was a string of legislation granting Native Americans more participation and control over their own heritage, including the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in 1990, and the creation of Tribal Historic Preservation Offices in the 1992 amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act. While representation of Native Americans at historic sites and tribal access to and control of Native heritage has vastly increased over the last fifty years, museums and historic sites have room for improvement. In her 2018 research about the need to reconsider interpretation of nineteenth-century historic sites, Professor

[3] Alan Downer, "Native Americans and Historic Preservation," in *A Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Robert E. Stipe (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 405.

Anne Lindsay noted, "All point to the single fact that Indian people are usually only considered as a footnote in interpretation…"[4]

Historic sites in Georgia require revising to portray the legacy of its contentious relationship with Native Americans more effectively and appropriately. Historic sites across the nation owe more recognition to their indigenous roots, but Georgia's state historic sites deserve special consideration. All land is Native land – and each of Georgia's state historic sites is related to Native Americans, at least tangentially.[5] Two, however, were sites owned by the Cherokee that were abandoned when they embarked on the Trail of Tears. The fact that the Georgia government, which so vigorously fought for removal, is now the owner and interpreter of Cherokee heritage points to a need to extend every feasible collaborative opportunity to the Cherokee. Additionally, Georgia itself can benefit from presenting a fuller, more multidimensional perspective of the past. Further collaboration with the Cherokee at its historic sites would "acknowledge the humanity of historical actors" and connect visitors "to the past in relatable ways."[6] In turn, this would deepen audience engagement in a way "that pushes visitors into donors, informed citizens, and into the kind of engaged curiosity that pushes us farther as a society."[7]

Research Question

This thesis will examine how effectively Georgia State Historic Sites incorporate Cherokee perspectives. How do Georgia State Historic Sites present the legacy of its relationship

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[4] Anne Lindsay, *Reconsidering Interpretation of Heritage Sites: America in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 35.
[5] For instance, the Lapham-Patterson State Historic Site is located in Thomasville, which is on Lower Creek and Apalachee land, groups which were pushed out of the area by encroaching Americans. William Warren Rogers, "Thomasville," New Georgia Encyclopedia, August 2, 2018, https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/counties-cities-neighborhoods/thomasville.
[6] Lindsay, *Reconsidering Interpretation,* 163.
[7] Lindsay, 163.

with the Cherokee? What can these historic sites do to present the Cherokee perspective more authentically and effectively?

To answer these questions, this thesis will present two case studies from Georgia State Historic Sites using information from site visits, interviews with Cherokee and Georgian cultural heritage professionals, and past interpretive documents from each historic site. This information will be analyzed against several interpretive criteria to measure effectiveness of the incorporation of Native American perspectives in Georgia DNR's historic programming at these sites. Finally, I will present tentative programs and strategies for each selected Georgia State Historic Site that can add to its interpretive scheme to more effectively and authentically represent Cherokee voices and the legacy of the Georgia-Cherokee relationship.

Chapter Two will provide background information on Euro-American interpretations of Native American historic sites. The chapter will provide a brief history of Euro-American appropriation of Native American sites, history, and culture. I will then describe the Indian self-determination movement in the latter half of the twentieth century and the beginning of improved relationships between museum professionals and tribes.

Chapter Three will supply background information necessary to understand the significance of the selected Georgia State Historic Sites – New Echota and the Vann House. Native American history belongs at each Georgia State Historic Site but given the State of Georgia's active role in the removal of the Cherokee, these sites were selected because they were consciously established as sites dedicated to Cherokee history by the Georgia Historical Commission in the mid-twentieth century.[8] The chapter will begin with a brief review of Native

[8] Other Georgia State Historic Sites considered for this thesis were Etowah Mounds, a Mississippian site, and the Dahlonega Gold Museum, which touches on Cherokee removal. Indian Springs State Park, which contains part of the last Creek lands ceded to Georgia and the United States and the tavern where Creek Chief Macintosh signed the land treaty against the will of the Creek majority. "Indian Springs State Park History," Georgia State Parks, accessed

American history in Georgia, both before and after European contact. This history will discuss the events of Indian Removal and the Trail of Tears and describe the importance of each selected site to these events. Chapter Three will also discuss the history of the Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites division of the Department of Natural Resources. This section will provide an overview of the division's history and the division's bureaucratic ancestors, particularly the Georgia Historical Commission. The chapter will then describe the Georgia Historical Commission's establishment of Native American historic sites shortly after the agency's founding in 1951. Chapters Four and Five will discuss the work of the Georgia Historical Commission in more detail and address the twentieth century restorations of New Echota and the Vann House, respectively.

Chapter Six will review current best practices for museums and historic sites interpreting Native American history and culture. The chapter will present criteria that may be used to evaluate historic site programming and interpretation to better include people of the culture the site seeks to represent.

Chapter Seven will analyze Georgia State Historic Sites' interpretation of these sites in terms of the established criteria. The chapter will close with several programmatic options that Georgia State Historic Sites may use to fulfill some of the missing criteria so that it may more effectively present the Cherokee past with an eye toward the future.

May 12, 2021, https://gastateparks.org/sites/default/files/parks/pdf/indiansprings/Indian-Springs-State-Park-history.pdf.

CHAPTER 2

SHIFTING AUTHORITY IN INTERPRETATION OF NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES AND MUSEUMS

"What a great irony that places inextricably linked to the colonization process are also the sites where the difficult aspects of our history can and must be most clearly and forcefully told."[9] While Native American historic sites have long piqued the interest of American antiquarians, it is only recently that museum and historic site collaboration with tribes has become the norm. Instead, Native Americans have been sidelined in European American interpretations of Native American histories and culture since the eighteenth century. Now, it seems that most museum professionals have recognized their responsibility to elevate the role of tribes, or in some cases to create a role, and tribal knowledge at historic sites. Even with increased collaboration between these groups, historic sites can change their programming to offer additional opportunities for tribes to tell their own story. This chapter will describe the history of Native American involvement, or lack thereof, as well as Euro-American appropriation of and interpretation of Native American historic sites.

Native American Museum & Historic Site Literature

Over the last few decades, scholarship on Native American museums and historic sites has started to focus on the decolonization of museums, though that phrase is not always used. Decolonization initially referred to the removal of colonizing powers from colonized countries

[9] Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 15.

but has since come to refer to a more general extrication of institutions from the control of the dominant group. Museum decolonization, more specifically, "begins with not pretending any longer that colonialism and its consequences are wholly in the past."[10] At its most obvious level, museum decolonization is the return of objects and human remains stolen during colonial regimes. At deeper levels, it is a dismantling of enduring colonialist beliefs and power systems that remain in museums which ultimately is "an urgent task of truth and repair among the living."[11] Part of this task is shifting authority in museums from typical curatorial models to a multivocal or community-based approach to curation and creating more authentic presentations of Native American cultures. Sources describing this shift come in the form of both practical guidance and museum critiques, and both types explain the centuries of anti-Native American policies which led to the museum decolonization movement. These sources form the basis of this chapter and the criteria in Chapter Six.

Dr. Amy Lonetree's work is a fundamental resource for decolonizing museums. Lonetree is a citizen of Ho-Chunk Nation and a history professor at the University of California at Santa Cruz where she focuses on Native American history and public history.[12] She argues that museums, including tribal cultural centers, can be sites of decolonization through "honoring Indigenous knowledge and worldviews, challenging the stereotypical representations of Native people produced in the past, serving as sites of 'knowledge making and remembering' for their own communities and the general public, and discussing the hard truths of colonization in

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[10] Dan Hicks, "Decolonising Museums Isn't Part of a 'Culture War.' It's About Keeping Them Relevant," *The Guardian,* May 7, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/may/07/decolonising-museums-isnt-part-of-a-culture-war-its-about-keeping-them-relevant?fbclid=IwAR3OZMDcEue1b6UPkLiPmxNfeFbF1vow1QVuiAASmHc8CmuSYZHjHj28qRc.
[11] Hicks, "Decolonising Museums."
[12] "Amy Lonetree," UC Santa Cruz Humanities, last modified January 18, 2018, https://humanities.ucsc.edu/about/faculty-directory.php?uid=lonetree.

exhibitions in an effort to promote healing and understanding."[13] The final prong – the "discussi[on] of hard truths" is nestled in a larger theme in museology of "difficult history" – history which evokes painful trauma but is a necessary tool to learn more about ourselves, others, and the formation of society.[14] Dr. Julia Rose's *Interpreting Difficult History at Museums and Historic Sites*, which is referenced in this chapter, looks at difficult history from the view of fields such as psychoanalysis, literature, history, museum studies, and political science. The book also reminds museum and historic site professionals that although dredging up and telling these stories may be traumatic, it can ultimately lead to stories of hope.

Some of Lonetree's work focuses on the National Museum of the American Indian. *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations* is a collection of essays about the museum's development and public reception edited by Lonetree and Dr. Amanda J. Cobb-Greetham, a Navajo professor and Director of Native Nations Center at the University of Oklahoma.[15] Essays used in this chapter were written by Lonetree on acknowledging historic truths;[16] Dr. Elizabeth Archuleta (Yaqui/Chicana), professor of ethnic studies at the University of Utah, on the storytelling methodology of the museum's exhibits;[17] Dr. Sonya Atalay (Ojibwe), University of Massachusetts public anthropology professor, on Native American cultural survivance;[18] Dr. Cynthia Chavez Lamar (San Felipe Pueblo/Hopi/Tewa/Navajo), Assistant

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[13] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 25.
[14] Julia Rose, *Interpreting Difficult History at Museums and Historic Sites* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016).
[15] "Amanda Cobb-Greetham," University of Oklahoma College of Arts and Sciences Native American Studies, accessed May 16, 2021, https://www.ou.edu/cas/nas/people/faculty/amanda-cobb-greetham.
[16] Amy Lonetree, "Acknowledging the Truth of History," in *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations*, ed. Amy Lonetree and Amanda J. Cobb (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 305-327.
[17] Elizabeth Archuleta, "Gym Shoes, Maps, and Passports, Oh My! Creating Community or Creating Chaos at the National Museum of the American Indian?," in Lonetree and Cobb, *Critical Conversations*, 181-207, 449; "Elizabeth A. Archuleta," University of Utah, accessed May 19, 2021, https://faculty.utah.edu/u0918923-ELIZABETH_A._ARCHULETA/hm/index.hml.
[18] Sonya Atalay, "No Sense of the Struggle: Creating a Context for Survivance at the National Museum of the American Indian," in Lonetree and Cobb, *Critical Conversations*, 267-89; "Sonya Atalay, Research Interests," University of Massachusetts Amherst, accessed May 16, 2021, https://blogs.umass.edu/satalay/.

Director for Collections at the National Museum of the American Indian, on collaborative exhibit development;[19] Dr. Patricia Pierce Erikson, a cultural anthropologist and Native American studies scholar, on the marginalization of Native Americans in the Smithsonian and the process of reframing these narratives for more inclusive exhibits;[20] Dr. Ira Jacknis, a research anthropologist at Berkeley's Hearst Museum, on George Gustav Heye and the development and federal acquisition of Heye's Museum of the American Indian;[21] Dr. Judith Ostrowitz, an artist and art historian, on the physical development of the museum;[22] and Paul Chaat Smith (Comanche), Associate Curator at the National Museum of the American Indian, on his perspective of museum criticism as a curator.[23]

Another resource is Raney Bench's collection of essays, *Interpreting Native American History and Culture at Museums and Historic Sites*.[24] When the book was published, Bench had decades of facilitating conversations between Native Americans and small museums.[25] This book is a practical guide for museum professionals handling Native American collections with the aim to "generate discussions about how to work collaboratively, share authority, and incorporate multiple ways of knowing about the past into all interpretation of Native people, objects, history, and culture."[26] In other words, the book prepares museums and historic sites to include Native

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[19] Cynthia Chavez Lamar, "Collaborative Exhibit Development at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian," in Lonetree and Cobb, *Critical Conversations,* 144-64; "Tessie Naranjo with Cynthia Chavez Lamar," *American Indian,* August 12, 2019, https://www.americanindianmagazine.org/media/865.
[20] Patricia Pierce Erikson, "Decolonizing the Nation's Attic: The National Museum of the American Indian and the Politics of Knowledge-Making in a National Space," in Lonetree and Cobb, *Critical Conversations,* 43-83, 451.
[21] Ira Jacknis, "A New Thing? The National Museum of the American Indian and Institutional Perspective," in Lonetree and Cobb, *Critical Conversations,* 3-42, 452.
[22] Judith Ostrowitz, "Concourse and Periphery: Planning the National Museum of the American Indian," in Lonetree and Cobb, *Critical Conversations,* 84-127, 453.
[23] Paul Chaat Smith, "Critical Reflections on the Our Peoples Exhibit: A Curator's Perspective," in Lonetree and Cobb, *Critical Conversations,* 131-143, 454.
[24] Raney Bench, *Interpreting Native American History and Culture at Native American Museums and Historic Sites* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 103.
[25] Bench, *Interpreting Native American History and Culture,* 129.
[26] Bench, 103.

Americans in the interpretive process in meaningful ways with best practices. Each practice is accompanied by a case study, authored by both Native and Non-Native museum professionals.

The other main sources used in this chapter and Chapter Six are Dr. Andrew Denson's *Monuments to Absence*: *Cherokee Removal and the Contest Over Southern Memory* and Dr. Laura Peers's *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions,* which focus on historic sites. Denson is a professor of Native American history at Western Carolina University and his *Monuments to Absence* specifically discusses memorialization of Cherokee sites in the southeastern United States, including New Echota.[27] His book touches on twentieth century Euro-American tourism and appropriation of Cherokee sites, as well as more recent Cherokee collaboration through the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. Peers's *Playing Ourselves* is about the experiences of Indigenous interpreters at historic sites, particularly the formation of Indigenous identity and interactions with tourists.[28] Previously a professor at the University of Oxford and curator at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Peers facilitates relationships between museum and indigenous communities.[29]

Early Development of Native American Historic Sites and Museums

Early European American interpretation of Native American historic sites enabled white colonists and early Americans to justify the taking of land. Eighteenth and nineteenth century fascination with Native American archaeological sites was "motivated by more than mere curiosity" and "was the focus of a heated debate that had critical public policy implications."[30] The focus of this fascination was pre-historic Indian mounds, like Georgia's Etowah Mounds and

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[27] Andrew Denson, *Monuments to Absence: Cherokee Removal and the Contest Over Southern Memory* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).
[28] Laura Peers, *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions* (Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2007).
[29] "About Me," Laura Peers Ph.D, accessed May 16, 2021, https://www.laurapeers.com/about.
[30] Downer, "Native Americans and Historic Preservation," in *A Richer Heritage*, 407.

Kolomoki Mounds or the now notorious Effigy Mounds National Monument in Iowa.[31] White visitors, in awe of the size and beauty of the mounds, concluded that Native Americans did not possess the skills to construct works of this scale. Instead, many Euro-American archaeologists believed that the archaeological sites of early Mound Builder societies were not Native American, but part of some "higher civilization."[32] Early archaeologists theorized that the mounds were built variously by the Vikings, Egyptians, Lost Tribes of Israel, Irish monks, Welshmen, Hindus, and Toltecs. In the Southeast, William Bartram, for whom the Bartram trail is named, contributed to this. In 1791, he wrote that the mounds were constructed by "the ancients, many ages prior to [the Creek and Cherokee] arrival and possessing of this country."[33] If Native Americans were not the continent's original inhabitants, then Native Americans were colonizers, too. If Native Americans were colonizers, then the more recent European colonizers also had as legitimate a claim to the land. The Mound Builder belief, developed in the absence of scientific evidence, "provided a rationalization to justify the Euro-American displacement of the Native Americans and the appropriation of their lands at the same time."[34]

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[31] One of Effigy Mounds' former site superintendents stole human remains from the site to block prospective repatriation claims under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. When the human remains were discovered in the supervisor's garage over twenty years later, they were in poor condition. The superintendent was sentenced to jail time and $108, 905 in fines. "Former Effigy Mounds National Monument Superintendent Sentenced to Serve Federal Jail Time," Department of Justice, July 8, 2016, https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndia/pr/former-effigy-mounds-national-monument-superintendent-sentenced-serve-federal-jail-time.

[32] More recently, scholars have shown that indigenous mound builders co-existed with European colonizers for 150 years, actively resisting colonial influence. Jacob Holland-Lulewicz et al., "Enduring Traditions and the (Im)Materiality of Early Colonial Encounters in the Southeastern United States," *American Antiquity* 85, no. 4 (2020): 695.

[33] Sarah E. Baires, "White Settlers Buried the Truth About the Midwest's Mysterious Mound Cities," *Smithsonian Magazine*, February 23, 2018, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/white-settlers-buried-truth-about-midwests-mysterious-mound-cities-180968246/.

[34] Downer, "Native Americans and Historic Preservation," 407. Though thoroughly debunked in the late nineteenth century, the Paleo-American theory later formed the ideologic basis of federal Indian policy, including the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990. This is seen particularly in the controversy over the Kennewick Man, in which scientists argued that the remains were so old that the remains were only distantly related to modern Native American tribes and thus should remain available for study at cultural institutions.

After the Paleo-American theory was debunked, Europeans and European Americans continued to assert ownership and their own interpretation over Native American artifacts. One of the most egregious examples of this is Gustaf Nordenskiöld's looting of the Mesa Verde cliff dwellings. Mesa Verde is a grouping of over 600 cliff structures in southwest Colorado which was occupied for several centuries until 1300.[35] Though the cliffs were no longer occupied at the time of Nordenskiöld's arrival, tribal descendants of the cliffs' inhabitants remained in the area or were removed to other territories. Tribes historically associated with the dwellings include the Hopi Tribe of Arizona; nineteen Pueblo tribes in New Mexico; Ysleta des Sur Pueblo in Texas; the Navajo Nation in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah; the Southern Ute Tribe and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe in Colorado; and the Mescalero Apache Tribe and Jicarilla Apache Tribe in New Mexico.[36]

In 1891, Nordenskiöld extensively excavated the site with the assistance of two local Coloradans who "discovered" the dwellings. Nordenskiöld operated under the false assumption that the dwellings held no spiritual importance because the dwellings had been abandoned for centuries. Whether Nordenskiöld had a good faith belief is subject to scrutiny, as his companions acknowledged that the Utes regarded the dwellings as a "sacred place."[37] The trio uncovered hundreds of objects and human remains which Nordenskiöld intended to bring home to Sweden for scientific study. Though tourists and locals had a habit of collecting souvenirs from the site in the years leading up to Nordenskiöld's excavation, they were outraged at the Swede's intent to

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[35] Michael FitzGerald, "The Majesty of Mount Verde," *Wall Street Journal*, March 14, 2009, https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB123697765848223641.
[36] Kurt Repanshek, "Finland Agrees to Return Remains, Some Items Taken from Mesa Verde in 19th Century," National Parks Traveler, October 6, 2019, https://www.nationalparkstraveler.org/2019/10/finland-agrees-return-remains-some-items-taken-mesa-verde-19th-century.
[37] Don Watson, *Indians of the Mesa Verde* (Mesa Verde National Park: Mesa Verde Museum Association, 1961), 134-37.

remove the artifacts from the country.[38] Nordenskiöld was arrested before he could leave the country, but he was released upon finding that Colorado had no looting law under which they could charge Nordenskiöld. Nordenskiold escaped to Sweden, sold the artifacts, wrote a book about Mesa Verde, and promptly died in 1894. The Native Museum of Finland eventually acquired the Mesa Verde artifacts. In 2016, the U.S. Department of State, Hopi Tribe, Pueblo of Acoma, Pueblo of Zia, and the Pueblo of Zuni began negotiations with Finland for the return of the Mesa Verde treasure.[39] Three years later, Finland agreed to the return of 48 of the 600 artifacts, including all human remains and some burial goods.[40] In September 2020, the Hopi and Pueblos reburied their ancestors and funerary objects at Mesa Verde.[41]

Though it took over a century for part of the Mesa Verde collection to return home, the Antiquities Act of 1906 was an earlier response to the looting of Mesa Verde. In the early 1900s, several bills were introduced to protect archaeological artifacts and public lands from looters, including one which would have made it a crime to harm Native American antiquities.[42] Nordenskiöld's looting unquestionably played a role in inspiring Congressmen to introduce this legislation - the proponent of the bill was Congressman John F. Shafroth of Colorado. Further, it was recognized that Congress's previous piecemeal efforts to protect sites through Congressional establishment were not sustainable. Congress had previously established "protections" for

[38] FitzGerald, "Majesty of Mount Verde."
[39] Repanshek, "Finland Agrees to Return Remains."
[40] Remarks by President Trump and President Niinistö of the Republic of Finland in Joint Press Conference, Daily Comp. Pres. Docs., 2019 DCPD No. 00688, 4.
[41] "Tribes' Ancestral Remains Return Home from Finland to Colorado's Mesa Verde National Park," *The Colorado Sun*, September 17, 2020, https://coloradosun.com/2020/09/17/ancestral-remains-mesa-verde-national-park-finland/.
[42] Mark Squillace, "The Monumental Legacy of the Antiquities Act," *Georgia Law Review* 37 (2003): 473, 479; Ronald F. Lee, "The Antiquities Act, 1900-06," in *The Story of the Antiquities Act* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2001), https://www.nps.gov/archeology/pubs/lee/lee_ch6.htm.

Yellowstone in 1872 and Casa Grande in 1892 but the lack of far-reaching legislation left most archaeological sites vulnerable to looters.[43]

These needs were partially answered through the Antiquities Act of 1906, signed into law by President Theodore Roosevelt on June 8, 1906.[44] The Act has three key parts. The first section authorized punishment for appropriating, excavating, injuring, or destroying historic monuments and objects on land owned or controlled by the United States. The second section, referred to as the "heart of the law,"[45] authorizes the President to declare landmarks of historic or scientific interest on land owned or controlled by the United States, or on private land turned over to the government for the purpose of making the national monument.[46] The third section allows the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Secretary of War to issue excavation permits to scientific and educational institutions "with a view to increasing knowledge of such objects, and that the gatherings shall be made for permanent preservation in public museums."[47]

The Antiquities Act, in theory, protected the artifacts from being taken by looters but did not assert Native American rights of access or control. This development would not occur until late in the twentieth century. When part of the original Antiquities Act was found void for

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[43] The history of the National Park Service is fraught with theft, broken promises, and other ethical misconduct. Protecting Yellowstone as a national park is not akin to protecting tribal heritage and tribal connection to the land – when President Ulysses S. Grant signed off on the Yellowstone Act, he "made trespassers of the Shoshone, Bannock, and other peoples who had called the parkland home for centuries." David Treuer (Ojibwe), "Return the National Parks to the Tribes," *The Atlantic*, May 2021, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/05/return-the-national-parks-to-the-tribes/618395/.

[44] Antiquities Act of 1906, 34 Stat. 225.

[45] Squillace, "Monumental Legacy," 476.

[46] Antiquities Act of 1906, 34 Stat. 225. Note that Mesa Verde itself was established by Congress. The bill to designate Mesa Verde National Park was introduced in 1905, so it may have been that plans were already in motion. Additionally, the bill offered stronger protections for Mesa Verde as a national park than the Antiquities Act. For example, the Mesa Verde Act authorizes a fine double that of the Antiquities Act and requires looters to restore disturbed property. 59 Stat. 616 § 4.

[47] Antiquities Act of 1906, 34 Stat. 225.

vagueness in 1974,[48] the legislature passed the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979.[49] The Archaeological Resources Protection Act improved upon the earlier Antiquities Act by better defining prohibited activities, thus avoiding the fate of the Antiquities Act, and substantially increasing penalties for violations.[50] Additionally, the Archaeological Resources Protection extended some authority to tribes. The act required the Secretary of the Interior to consult with tribes prior to issuing a permit for excavation on lands of cultural or religious importance to Native Americans, left the ultimate disposition of artifacts found on tribal land to the discretion of the tribes, and, in the case of theft, provided for penalties to be paid to tribes.[51] Until then, federal policy continued to bring harm and hardship to Native Americans and their historic sites with neither Native American input nor legal recourse. The Antiquities Act still allowed permitted institutions to excavate archaeological sites, filling museums and other institutions with additional human remains and funerary objects.

Museums and private collections of Native American artifacts, like Native American historic sites, captured the curiosity of European Americans early on.[52] Like Native American historic sites, tribes were rarely consulted on the meaning of Native objects placed in museums. Interpretive work in the early twentieth century was based on educated guesses with occasional insight from Native Americans, but the viewpoint was primarily and exclusively that of white collectors. Interpretation of Native American objects from the perspective of Native Americans,

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[48] *United States v. Diaz*, 499 F.2d 113 (9th Cir. 1974).
[49] Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, 16 U.S.C. 470 (aa)-(mm).
[50] Frances P. McManamon, "Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA)," in *Archaeological Method and Theory: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Linda Ellis (New York City: Taylor & Francis, 2000).
[51] Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (as amended in 1988), 16 U.S.C. 470(cc)(c); 470(dd); 470(gg)(c).
[52] One of the earliest known Native American museums may have been Monticello's Indian Hall – the foyer of Thomas Jefferson's home filled with Native American objects from the Lewis and Clark expedition. Bench, *Interpreting Native American History*, xi.

by way of a cultural anthropologist, were dismissed as biased.[53] The argument was that the objects must be interpreted from a scientific viewpoint which scholars believed Native Americans lacked and "[a]s a result, Native people were excluded from conversations about their own communities, objects, and values which were interpreted for the public by outsiders."[54] Additionally, Native American artifacts were often placed side by side with dinosaurs and other extinct vestiges of prehistory in natural history museums.[55] The result of these practice was that interpretation of Native American collections "often supported stereotypes about Native people – that they were savage, primitive, and vanishing from the landscape."[56] The relationship between Native Americans and museums at this time is best characterized by "exploitation, misrepresentation, and power imbalances."[57]

George Gustav Heye's collection of Native American objects and his Museum of the American Indian is a prime example of these issues. Heye was a wealthy engineer and investment banker who became interested in Native American cultures while on an engineering job in the then Arizona Territory.[58] Heye started his collection at the turn of the twentieth century, a time "viewed as the nadir of Indian existence on this continent."[59] Because collectors and scholars believed that Native Americans were a "vanishing" race, they "thought of

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[53] Bench, xii.
[54] Bench, xii.
[55] Jacknis, "A New Thing?," 5.
[56] Bench, *Interpreting Native American History*, xii.
[57] Lonetree and Cobb, *Critical Conversations*, xviii.
[58] Lawrence M. Small, "A Passionate Collector," *Smithsonian Magazine*, November 2000, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/a-passionate-collector-33794183/. This article, written by the Secretary of the Smithsonian, felt that while Heye is controversial, he "saved an irreplaceable living record that might otherwise have gone to oblivion." Former Secretary Small seems to uphold the belief that Native American cultures could only be saved through white collection, the very problem that led to the decline of cultural objects in Native Communities. A few years after writing this article, Small was convicted under the Endangered Species Act for having feathers of a protected species in his 1000-piece Amazonian tribal collection. Eric Rosenberg, "Convicted Museum Boss Still Quibbling: He Wants to Change Law That He Violated," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 17, 2005, https://www.sfchronicle.com/news/article/Convicted-museum-boss-still-quibbling-He-wants-2729986.php.
[59] Lonetree and Cobb, *Critical Conversations*, xvii.

themselves in a race against time to collect the remnants of dying cultures."[60] This was a self-fulfilling venture – the more artifacts collectors obtained, the fewer cultural and religious objects Native Americans had to pass onto their descendants and continue traditions.[61] During this time, these traditions were discouraged or even illegal under federal assimilation policies.[62] Heye collected Native American objects from all across the western hemisphere from tribes, collectors, and Heye-sponsored expeditions.[63] Heye's collection practice was so searching that it has been referred to as a "vacuum cleaner approach"[64] There are differing perspectives on whether Heye's collection practices were sound. Sometimes, Heye would not accept collections without documented provenience. However, because of Heye's tendency to buy collections in bulk, he often acquired undocumented objects, lost documentation, or relied on secondhand information from other collectors.[65] Heye also had a documented practice of recording his guesses as fact. Potentially the worst example of Heye's collection practices was his arrest for grave robbing in 1914, though he was later acquitted.[66]

Heye later used his collection to start the Museum of the American Indian in 1916 which opened to the public in 1922.[67] To cut costs, most of the museum's curatorial staff was laid off by the end of the decade and though Heye continued collection, the museum never recovered.[68] The museum closed to the public in 1956. Heye and his academically-minded curators minimally

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[60] Lonetree and Cobb, xvii.
[61] Bench, *Interpreting Native American History*, 58-59
[62] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums,* 10-11; Dennis Zotigh, "Native Perspectives on the 40th Anniversary of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act," *Smithsonian Magazine,* November 30, 2018, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/national-museum-american-indian/2018/11/30/native-perspectives-american-indian-religious-freedom-act/.
[63] Jacknis, "A New Thing?," 9.
[64] Jacknis, 9.
[65] Jacknis, 9-10.
[66] Jacknis, 30.
[67] Jacknis, 7.
[68] Jacknis, 15.

involved Native Americans throughout the lifetime of the museum, hiring Amos Oneroad, a Dakota.[69] It was not until 1977 that the museum installed Native Americans as trustees.[70] Heye's collection later formed the base of the collection of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian, described further in the next section.

By the time of the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, federal Indian policy, private collecting practices, and prejudiced attitudes had eroded Native American control over their own cultures for centuries. The National Historic Preservation Act did nothing to rectify this situation. The NHPA, landmark legislation which was culmination of a century's worth of American preservation efforts, offered a Eurocentric view of historic preservation. Further, while the NHPA created State Historic Preservation Offices to guide preservation efforts at the state and local levels, there was no such tribal equivalent in the original rendition of the Act. Indeed, there was no mention of Native Americans at all in the 1966 legislation.[71]

Native American Preservation After the National Historic Preservation Act

Activism within the Native American community led to a substantial shift in museum and historic site practices in the 1970s. During this period, Native American challenges to traditional museum practices arose out of other fights for Native American self-determination.[72] As part of the "Native American museum movement," Native Americans fought for museums to cease collection and display of Native American human remains and presentation of stereotyped versions of Native life.[73] As a result of decades of tribal efforts, Native Americans began to reclaim significant influence over their heritages and expanded tribal presence in museums and

[69] Jacknis, 30.
[70] Jacknis, 21.
[71] Downer, "Native Americans and Historic Preservation," 416.
[72] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums,* 17.
[73] Cobb and Lonetree, *Critical Conversations,* xviii.

at historic sites. This activism resulted in more robust federal legislation asserting Native American cultural rights.

In 1978, Congress passed the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) and the Act was signed into law by President Jimmy Carter on August 12, 1978.[74] AIRFA declares that it is "the policy of the United States to protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise…traditional religions including but not limited to access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites."[75] This reversed decades of federal policy making practicing Native American traditions illegal.[76] AIRFA requires that federal agencies re-evaluate their policies for tribal access and accommodation to federal lands in consultation with tribal leaders to comply with the policy.[77] However, AIRFA does not provide any substantive or procedural rights for tribes to sue an agency to comply with the Act.[78] Because of its lack of punishment for noncompliance, the law has been called ineffective.[79] Theoretically, though, the "use and possession of sacred objects" should at the very least provide a public policy reason to use in American courts for repatriation of religious objects to Native Americans. Though AIRFA is sometimes regarded as ineffective, the change in government policy offered Native Americans a step in the right direction.

Native Americans finally had meaningful authority over their heritages by the late 1980s and early 1990s. In 1990, Congress directed the National Park Service to "report on the funding needs for the management, research, interpretation, protection, and development of sites of

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[74] American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1996 (1978) (amended 1994).
[75] American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1996.
[76] Zotigh, "National Perspectives on the 40th Anniversary of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act."
[77] American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1996.
[78] American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1996.
[79] "1978: American Indian Freedom of Religion Legalized," National Library of Medicine, accessed May 16, 2021, https://www.nlm.nih.gov/nativevoices/timeline/545.html.

historical significance on Indian lands."[80] The resulting report was entitled *Keepers of the Treasures: Protecting Historic Properties and Cultural Traditions on Indian Lands.*[81] Perspectives of tribes are extensively quoted throughout the report pursuant to a request from tribal participants that "Congress can hear from the people themselves."[82] Thus, the report largely comes from the perspective of the tribes, instead of the National Park Service ascribing its own point of view. *Keepers of the Treasures* outlines what Native Americans wanted out of the historic preservation process to safeguard their heritage.

Tribes desired flexible preservation programs that could be tailored to the individual needs of tribe and the ability to participate in national preservation on an equal, government-to-government basis without having their interests subordinated by state interests.[83] The report addresses the unique heritage challenges faced by tribes due to removal, assimilation, and termination policies. Because of these policies, most Native American historic sites were not on reservations and the majority of objects produced by tribes were not in the hands of tribal citizens. The report goes on to address the disturbance of Native graves and the collection of Native remains in the name of science – disparate treatment from white graves and white remains. Finally, the report identified elements that should be included in tribal preservation programs, including preserving and maintaining oral tradition, developing and preserving tribal arts, and using tribal concepts in preservation efforts outside of the tribal community. Above all, the report concluded that "Indian tribes must have the opportunity to participate fully in the

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[80] Patricia L. Parker, *Keepers of the Treasures: Protecting Historic Properties and Cultural Traditions on Indian Lands: A Report on Tribal Preservation Funding Needs Submitted to Congress by the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1990), preface.
[81] Parker, *Keepers of the Treasures*.
[82] Parker, 3.
[83] Parker, 10 and 13.

national historic preservation program, but on terms that respect their cultural values, traditions, and sovereignty."[84] Most of these issues were addressed by federal law over the next few years.

Later that year, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act was passed.[85] NAGPRA requires federal agencies to inventory their holdings of Native American human remains and cultural items and repatriate those that Native American tribes have claimed and presented a lineal or cultural affiliation. NAGPRA also protects Native American burial sites by giving tribes greater control over found remains and cultural items. Since its inception, NAGPRA has resulted in the return of 1.7 million grave goods, 57,000 sets of human remains, and 15,000 sacred objects.[86] Opponents of NAGPRA, and repatriation more generally, argued that repatriation will put museums out of business.[87] Instead, NAGPRA led to collaboration between museums and tribes on a scale that could not have been imagined before.

In 1992, tribes finally had the ability to substantially participate in the national preservation process. Though 1980 amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act included grants to Native Americans, the inclusion was not meaningful. "[R]eferences to Native Americans were sprinkled throughout the act" and "were largely an afterthought."[88] However, the 1992 amendments offered tribes their first chance at federal and state partnership in the national preservation legal framework. First, the amendments established Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs) as a counterpart to State Historic Preservation Offices. In this arrangement, THPOs would be able to take on the same tasks as SHPOs and not be relegated to an inferior position of authority over tribal heritage.

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[84] Parker, preface.
[85] Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 25 U.S.C. §§ 3001-03 (1990).
[86] Chip Colwell, *"*As Native Americans, We Are in a Constant State of Mourning*," New York Times*, April 4, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/04/opinion/can-museums-heal-historys-wounds.html.
[87] Colwell, *"*We Are in a Constant State of Mourning."
[88] Downer, "Native Americans and Historic Preservation," 416.

Second, the amendments required that the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation include a seat for a member of a Native American tribe or Native Hawaiian organization to represent tribal interests. The Advisory Council now also includes a seat for the chairman of the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers. Thus, Native American interests are represented by at least two of the twenty-four members of the Advisory Council.

Finally, the 1992 amendments stated that traditional cultural and religious property important to tribes may be eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Traditional cultural property (TCP) was a concept developed earlier by the National Park Service.[89] Traditional cultural properties – or the current term, traditional cultural places – are places that are rooted in a living community's historic cultural traditions and remain culturally significant to that group's current practices. Preservation practitioners are encouraged to identify and cast off ethnocentric tendencies and work with cultural groups without, or at least with an acknowledgment of, one's own cultural biases. What is important is not the practitioner's determination of the site's significance – but that of the cultural group.[90] In other words, preservation professionals should listen to a people's own view of their heritage – exactly what anthropologists and other non-Native cultural interpreters were not doing over the past several centuries. The inclusion of TCPs in the amended National Historic Preservation Act

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[89] Patricia L. Parker and Thomas F. King, *National Register Bulletin 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service,1990), https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB38-Completeweb.pdf.

[90] Capacity building in communities was not a goal of Bulletin 38, but projects that followed encouraged representation of the tribal community from within that tribal community. Tribal historic preservation offices (THPOs) shortly followed Bulletin 38, but more recent projects in the preservation community have encouraged a more diverse preservation workforce so preservation professionals come from a community and understand the community's importance. See, e.g., Shannon Lawrence, "Expanding HOPE Crew to Historically Black Colleges and Universities," National Trust for Historic Preservation, August 13, 2018, https://savingplaces.org/stories/expanding-hope-crew-to-historically-black-colleges-and-universities#.YJw5hahKjIU; "Willamette Meteorite Agreement," American Museum of Natural History, June 22, 2000, https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent/the-universe/planets/planetary-impacts/willamette-meteorite/agreement.

acknowledged that the National Register criteria was not developed to include many Native American sites of cultural significance. Preservation advocates have more work ahead of them to cure the National Historic Preservation Act of its inclusion problem, but these small changes had a large, immediate impact on tribal heritage.[91]

The late 1980s also brought changes to museums with Native American collections. Encouraged by institutional changes at the Smithsonian, including the creation of development of a Native American cultural resources program in the 1970s, Native Americans approached the Smithsonian in the early 1980s to urge the institution to change the presentation of Native Americans.[92] Even so, the Smithsonian initially declined the suggestion to form a formal Native American cultural advisory committee and continued to display Native American remains.[93] When the initial decision was made that the Smithsonian should change its practices regarding curation of Native American exhibits, it was intended that the Native American collection would remain in the National Museum of Natural History, where it had been since the advent of the museum.[94]

Following the Smithsonian's disclosure in 1986 that its collection contained thousands of Native American remains, Hawaiian Senator Daniel Inouye began work on a proposal for repatriation and memorialization.[95] Despite backlash, particularly from the scientific community,

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[91] Between 1990 and 1993, grant proposals received by NPS showed "tribal interest in identifying, documenting, and evaluating traditional cultural properties has increased five-fold." Patricia L. Parker, "Traditional Cultural Properties: What You Do and How We Think," *CRM* 16 (1993): 5. More recent statistics are not readily available.
[92] Erikson, "Decolonizing the 'Nation's Attic,'" 51.
[93] Erikson, 53. The creator of the exhibit that displayed "hundreds" of human remains agreed that it was past time for the decades-old exhibit to be changed.
[94] Jacknis, "A New Thing?," 5. Though the Smithsonian had its own collection of Native artifacts since the late nineteenth century, the artifacts initially formed part of the collection of the Bureau of Ethnology and the United States National Museum. The Smithsonian's Native American collection stayed in the National Museum of Natural History, the institutional descendant of the United States National Museum, until 2004. Jacknis, "A New Thing?," 23; "A Brief History of NMNH," National Museum of Natural History, accessed January 13, 2021, https://naturalhistory.si.edu/about/brief-history-nmnh.
[95] Erikson, "Decolonizing the 'Nation's Attic,'" 57.

the National Museum of the American Indian was formally established in 1989 when legislation authorized the Smithsonian Institution to absorb Heye's ailing Museum of the American Indian.[96]

The National Museum of the American Indian offered one of the first meaningful opportunities for Native Americans to collaborate with museum curators on the interpretation and collection practices of Native American culture and human remains. The act required that seven of the twenty-five initial members of the museum's Board of Trustees be Native Americans.[97] In the years following, twelve of the twenty-five trustees were required to be Native Americans. Currently, nineteen of the twenty-four trustees and Machel Monenerkit (Comanche), the museum's acting director, hail from nineteen Native tribes across North and Central America.[98] Among the powers of the Board of Trustees are accession, deaccession, maintenance, and designation of appropriate uses of museum collections as well as financial oversight. Thus, by 1989, Native Americans gained increasing control over one the largest collections of Native American artifacts in the world.

The National Museum of the American Indian Act began to address the centuries of conflict between cultural institutions and tribes. First, the act prioritized Native American tribes in requests for loans and technical assistance.[99] Second, the act authorized the board to establish training and scholarship programs to enhance Native American participation in the museum field. Third, the act established an endowment fund for the Secretary of the Interior to distribute

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[96] National Museum of the American Indian Act, Pub. L. No. 101-185, 103 Stat. 1338 (1989).
[97] National Museum of the American Indian Act, § 5.
[98] Currently represented tribes include Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Ak-Chin, Chickasaw Nation, Chippewa, Gitxsan, Graton Rancheria, Ho-Chunk Nation, Koyukon Athabascan, Inupiaq, Miskito, Native Hawaii, Ojibwe, Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, Pawnee Nation, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Seneca Nation of Indians, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and Yup'ik. "Governance," National Museum of the American Indian, accessed May 16, 2021, https://americanindian.si.edu/about/governance.
[99] National Museum of the American Indian Act § 10.

grants to tribal museums. Finally, as a precursor to NAGPRA, the act required the Smithsonian Institution to inventory the eighteen thousand sets of human remains and funerary objects in its collection.[100] After attempting to identify the origins of the human remains, the Smithsonian Institution must notify the related tribe of its findings and, if requested by a federally recognized tribe, return the human remains to the tribe.

The legislation also called for a new museum to be built on the National Mall. It is worth noting that the Board of Trustees was not empowered to supervise design of the museum; rather, that was left to the Smithsonian's Board of Regents.[101] Nevertheless, the NMAI consulted with Native communities to compile the basic requirements for the building and grounds and later hired indigenous architects to carry out the design.[102] The resulting museum is composed of curvilinear, clifflike bands of limestone, intended to take an abstracted form of many types of indigenous architecture.[103]

The 2004 dedication of the new building of the National Museum of the American Indian was the largest recorded gathering of Native Americans.[104] Writing about both the National Museum of the American Indian and the more recent National Museum of African American History and Culture, Rose noted "the very placement of these particularly massive museums among the other highly valued museums are also expressions of the elevated value these histories

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[100] National Museum of the American Indian Act § 11; Lindee R. Grabouski, "Smoke and Mirrors: A History of NAGPRA and the Evolving U.S. View of the American Indian" (master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 2011), 44, https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/historydiss/37. Note that after the passage of NAGPRA, the Smithsonian Institution still followed the accounting and repatriation procedure laid out in the National Museum of the American Indian Act. The Smithsonian is not required to comply with NAGPRA, but the two sets of procedures are similar. Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, § 3001.
[101] National Museum of the American Indian Act § 7.
[102] "Architecture & Landscape," National Museum of the American Indian, accessed January 7, 2021, https://americanindian.si.edu/visit/washington/architecture-landscape.
[103] Ostrowitz, "Concourse and Periphery," 87, 108.
[104] "National Museum of the American Indian," Smithsonian Institution Archives, https://siarchives.si.edu/history/national-museum-american-indian.

now hold for Americans."[105] The museums "in part, serve as national reparative statements for the history of oppression endured by millions of men, women, and children over centuries in America"[106]

The new museum struck a tone that was rarely seen in non-tribal museums: it took Native Americans out of the past and showcased modern stories and human rights issues based on Native voices and narratives. One of the museum's long-lasting exhibits – the Our Peoples Exhibit – featured small galleries dedicated to different tribes off a meandering hall that tells a larger story.[107] The curators of the exhibit sought to challenge the perceptions of all visitors, Native and non-Native alike.[108] Our Peoples places indigenous peoples at the center of history – showing Native Americans not as victims in history but active peoples who influenced the world around them. The exhibit also challenges the popular portrayal of a singular, "simple, even cartoonlike" Native American *culture* and introduces the fact that there are many plural, "vibrant, disputatious," and "absurdly complicated" Native American *cultures*.[109] The exhibit ended with a panel that includes "As descendants of the one in ten who wake up in the 21st century, we share an inheritance of grief, loss, hope, and immense wealth."[110] The panel treats the past alongside the present – it mourns the tribes that did not live to see the museum, reminding visitors of the traumatic past, but shares hope for those that did, reminding visitors that indigenous peoples still exist. Another initial exhibit, Our Lives, sought to take a similar

[105] Rose, *Interpreting Difficult History*, 57.
[106] Rose, *Interpreting Difficult History*, 57.
[107] Note that the exhibit is no longer in the National Museum of the American Indian – it ran from the opening of the museum in 2004 until 2014. "Our Peoples: Giving Voice to Our Histories," National Museum of the American Indian, accessed May 16, 2021, https://americanindian.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/item?id=828.
[108] Smith, "Critical Reflections," 135.
[109] Smith, 136.
[110] Smith, 143.

multi-narrative approach but focused on twenty first century challenges to tribes.[111] After involving tribes, the focus shifted to "a balance of history, cultural traditions, and pride."[112] The curators of both exhibits took a collaborative approach in the development of the exhibits, involving tribes from the inception of the exhibit and allowing the focus of the exhibit to evolve.

While the creation of the first and only national museum dedicated solely to Native Americans was a cause for celebration, the museum's exhibits sparked much controversy from both within the Native American community and beyond. Some museum professionals and journalists decried the museum's attempts to step too far outside the bounds of traditional museum practice with what critics perceived as a lack of traditional order without a geographic or temporal flow.[113] The Our Peoples exhibit was called a "public service announcement" and "homogenized pap."[114] The content in the Our Lives exhibit was criticized as "not real scholarship."[115] In a critique of the museum as a whole, one critic from the Washington Post felt discomfort at the museum's privileging of Native voices over curators and present over past and implied "someone else could have better presented 'the Indians' than the Indians presented themselves."[116] Non-Native, dismissive visitors aside, Indigenous visitors were jarred by the museum's initial exhibits. Dr. Sonya Atalay (Anishinabe-Ojibwe), an anthropologist, while supportive of the museum's mission, was "powerfully struck and sadly disappointed by the lack

[111] Chavez Lamar, "Collaborative Exhibit Development," 147. Note that this exhibit is also no longer in the museum – it ran from the opening of the museum to 2015. "Our Lives: Contemporary Life and Identities," National Museum of the American Indian, accessed May 16, 2021, https://americanindian.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/item?id=528.
[112] Chavez Lamar, "Collaborative Exhibit Development," 149.
[113] Erikson, "Decolonizing the Nation's Attic," 75.
[114] Smith, "Critical Reflections," 141.
[115] Chavez Lamar, "Collaborative Exhibit Development," 154. Chavez Lamar, the curator of this exhibit, acknowledged that the museum should have been up front about its collaborative methodology – that museum curators did have to filter through many different Native narratives and arrange them in a way that fit budget, time, and space constraints while editing out that things that did not fit. Later exhibits do acknowledge the collaborative methodology. Chavez Lamar, 160.
[116] Archuleta, "Gym Shoes, Maps, and Passports, Oh My!," 187.

of struggle portrayed" and "found that the messages about colonization and its devastating and continual effects on Native communities were benign."[117] Lonetree poignantly notes that the large silence left by the museum's failure to include past and present genocidal policies "speaks to a historical amnesia that is tragic for a national museum of such prominence…"[118] For many, the National Museum of the American Indian's focus on survivance missed the mark by failing to show past trauma.

Ultimately, the National Museum of the American Indian set the tone for a new era of Native American museology, one in which Native Americans would be actively involved. Curator Paul Chaat Smith (Comanche) responded to the initial criticism by invoking the "museum as a site of national conversation. We are the very beginning of that conversation, and like any difficult conversation, it can be rough going, especially at first. Let's keep arguing, because at least that means we're talking."[119] By the early twenty-first century, collaboration with tribes on museum exhibits became the new norm in museum practice.[120]

On a broader geographic scale, the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail was designated in the late twentieth-century. The trail was first proposed in 1965 by Oklahoma Senator Mike Monroney at the advent of the National Trails system and later sponsored by North Carolina Congressman Roy Taylor in 1968.[121] In 1987, Congress designated 2200 miles of land and water routes across North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma traveled by the Cherokee from 1838 to 1839 to form the basis of the trail.[122] As the National Park Service fulfilled its duty to assemble these sites and prepare them

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[117] Atalay, "No Sense of the Struggle," 272.
[118] Lonetree, "Acknowledging the Truth of History," 311.
[119] Smith, "Critical Reflections," 143.
[120] Amy Lonetree, "Missed Opportunities: Reflections on the NMAI," American Indian Quarterly 30, no. 3/4: 635 (Summer/Autumn 2006), https://www.jstor.org/stable/4139033.
[121] Denson, *Monuments to Absence,* 196.
[122] Act to Amend the National Trails System Act, Pub. L. 100-192, 101 Stat. 1309 (1987).

for the public, it embarked on a broader mission to "ensure that the American story is told faithfully, completely, and accurately" and "assure that no relevant chapter in the American heritage experience remains unopened."[123] While other attempts to tell the full American story would be controversial, the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail itself was a politically safe venture.[124]

Along the trail would be at least one interpretive center in each state which had a significant historic and geographic tie to the Trail of Tears and provided accurate information, appropriate exhibitions, appropriate curation of artifacts, and availability to the public.[125] The trail is bookended by the Eastern Band of Cherokee's Museum of the Cherokee Indian in the East and Cherokee Nation's Cherokee Heritage Center in the West. The National Park Service found forty-six sites across the trail that had high potential for selection as an interpretive center, including seven locations in Georgia.[126] The Georgia sites included New Echota and the Vann House, both Georgia State Historic Sites, as well as the Major Ridge Home and John Ross House, privately owned house museums. The potential Georgia sites also included three Cherokee round-up locations – Fort Wool, Fort Gilmer, and Fort Cumming, none of which were active historic sites.

Today, the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail is composed of over 5,000 miles of land and water routes and seventy certified sites administered by tribal, federal, state, and local agencies as well as private landowners. Georgia's sites grew as well, with additions from the

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[123] *Rethinking the National Parks for the 21st Century: A Report of the National Park System Advisory Board* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2001); Denson, *Monuments to Absence*, 192.
[124] Denson, *Monuments to Absence*, 210.
[125] *Trail of Tears National Historic Trail: Comprehensive Management and Use Plan*, (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1992), 38 and 46.
[126] *Comprehensive Management and Use Plan,* 71.

Funk Heritage Center, Cherokee Garden at Green Meadows Preserve, and two additional round-up locations – Fort Newnan and Cedar Town Encampment.[127]

The designation of the trail "sparked a new wave of memorialization" across the South.[128] Old memorials, historic sites, and museums across the trail were revitalized while "[c]ommunities that barely figured in the Cherokee removal story sought to participate in the national trail, claiming the Trail of Tears as their local heritage."[129] The building of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail encouraged communities to seek out regional Cherokee history to take advantage of what was certain to become a tourist boon.[130] In the process, communities educated themselves about their area's Cherokee history or the role the region played in the Trail of Tears.[131] Established museums and historic sites along the route supplemented their offerings with exhibits about the Trail of Tears created in concert with the National Park Service.[132] The trail signified a public acceptance that the Trail of Tears was horrific, offered an opportunity for a form of ancestral atonement for non-Natives, and created spaces for Cherokee to honor and mourn their ancestors. Further, planning for the trail differed from prior Trail of Tears memorial initiatives because the National Park Service actively solicited input from the Cherokee and other tribes.[133] Cherokee involvement, particularly that of Cherokee Nation's Principal Chief Wilma P.

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[127] National Park Service, *Trail of Tears National Historic Trail Map* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2020), https://www.nps.gov/trte/planyourvisit/places-to-go.htm. Other maps include additional sites in Georgia's segment of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail, though these are not certified. A map printed by the University of West Georgia includes several additional sites, which are not certified. These include the original seven sites and Rockdale Plantation, the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, the John Ridge Home, and three additional round-up sites – Fort Buffington, Fort Newnan, and Cedar Town Encampment. University of West Georgia and National Park Service, *Trail of Tears Georgia Map and Guide*, accessed January 7, 2021, https://www.nps.gov/trte/planyourvisit/upload/Georgia-Trail-of-Tears-brochure-508.pdf.
[128] Denson, *Monuments to Absence*, 191.
[129] Denson, 191-92.
[130] Denson, 200-01.
[131] Denson, 206.
[132] Denson, 205.
[133] Denson, 194.

Mankiller, tempered tourism dollar-minded communities along the trail in favor of educational opportunities.[134]

Yet, this attempt at progress was hindered at many of the trail's new locations for failing to reckon with both injustice and triumph in the present and in more recent history. Denson notes:

> Acknowledging a history of injustice suggests that we are better now. Indeed, the very act of recognition *proves* that we are better, since it demonstrates a moral sensibility superior to that of past generations. We reassure ourselves that contemporary Americans will not commit similar mistakes, and, with that reassurance, we render the very history we commemorate less relevant and less troubling.[135]

Certainly, acknowledging past atrocities should be applauded. However, for a "settled" topic like the Trail of Tears – one where most everyone condemns the historic event – it is time for museums and historic sites to take a step further and acknowledge the present. Denson says, "Perhaps removal commemoration can serve as a forum for not only celebrating the fact of Cherokee persistence but discussing the ongoing work of Indian nations to restore their political, economic, and cultural autonomy in the present."[136] Despite the belief of many Americans, Native Americans did not cease to exist after the Trail of Tears. Jeff Marley, an artist from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, noted that "historic sites… suggest that the history of Native peoples has ended."[137] History has the magnificent ability to change how we view our own actions in the present, but without drawing the connection, museums and historic sites lose their power to effect change.

Beyond federal changes to legislation and at historic sites and museums, the Native American self-determination movement both fueled and was fueled by tribal museums and

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[134] Denson, 205.
[135] Denson, 194.
[136] Denson, 220.
[137] Denson, 221.

cultural centers. The majority of tribal cultural centers and museums were established during the self-determination movement of the 1960s and 1970s and again in the late twentieth century to today.[138] These places tend to discuss cultural continuance and challenge Native American stereotypes, but, like the National Museum of the American Indian, hesitate to engage with more traumatic, difficult history and ongoing effects of colonialism.[139] Native American activism returned control of cultural discourse to Native Americans and influenced cultural presentation at museums and historic sites beyond tribal cultural centers.[140]

This chapter presented an overview of historic policies for working, or not working, with Native Americans in interpreting tribal heritage at historic sites and museums. This chapter sets up the remainder of this thesis – the next three chapters place the restoration of New Echota and the Vann House in the context of these museum and historic site policies. Chapter Six will distill lessons learned from the historic policies of this chapter into a set of criteria that can be used by historic sites and museums to more effectively include Native American voices.

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[138] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums,* 19. As of 2006, there were roughly between 120 to 200 Native American cultural centers and museums, depending on the definition. Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums,* 19; Karen Coody Cooper and Nicolisa I. Sandoval, *Living Homes for Cultural Expression: North American Native Perspectives on Creating Community Museums* (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, 2006), 97, https://americanindian.si.edu/sites/1/dynamic/downloads/downloads_filename_66.pdf.
[139] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums,* 20-21.
[140] Lonetree, 18.

CHAPTER 3

A TALE OF TWO ERAS

"Every historic site tells two different stories about two different eras in the past."[141] So, too, do New Echota and the Vann House tell the story of the removal of Native Americans and the later attempt by white Georgians to claim that story as their own. The goal of this chapter is to set the Vann House and New Echota in historical context – both in Cherokee history prior to removal, and in Georgia's historic preservation efforts in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Cherokee History & Historic Site Literature

There are many historians who have described the extensive history of the Cherokee, and the texts that I frequently refer to in this chapter are important resources for those looking for a more extensive discussion of Cherokee history. Robert Conley's *The Cherokee Nation: A History* gives a broad overview of history from Cherokee creation to the twenty-first century.[142] Conley was a prolific writer of Cherokee fiction and nonfiction, Professor of Cherokee Studies at Western Carolina University, and Cherokee citizen, and thus provides a Cherokee perspective.[143] Dr. Julie Reed is a Cherokee professor of Native American history at Penn State and provides a more recent Cherokee perspective in *Serving the Nation: Cherokee Sovereignty and Social Welfare, 1800-1907.*[144] Reed's monograph depicts the history of Cherokee social welfare

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[141] James W. Loewen, *Lies Across America* (New York: New Press, 1999), 36.
[142] Robert J. Conley, *The Cherokee Nation: A History* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005).
[143] "Cherokee Author Robert J. Conley Dies," *Cherokee Phoenix*, February 19, 2014, https://www.cherokeephoenix.org/culture/cherokee-author-robert-j-conley-dies/article_b84dbb38-ea61-56bf-ae4f-ba4d7c0f4bf5.html.
[144] Julie Reed, *Serving the Nation: Cherokee Sovereignty and Social Welfare, 1800-1907* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016); "Julie Reed," Penn State Department of History, accessed May 16, 2021, https://history.la.psu.edu/directory/jlr6454.

institutions and fight for sovereignty in the face of American removal and assimilation policies. Early Cherokee history is supplemented by *The Cherokee Heritage Trails Guidebook* by Barbara R. Duncan, the former education director at the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, and Dr. Brett H. Riggs, a research archaeologist and anthropology professor at Western Carolina University.[145] Though this book is largely focused on tourism, the sections on southeastern history and Cherokee sites provide a helpful background to New Echota and the Vann House.

More pertinent to the specific history of New Echota and the Vann House is Dr. Theda Perdue and Dr. Michael Green's *The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears*.[146] Both Perdue and Green are recognized scholars in Native American history and former professors at the University of North Carolina.[147] *The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears* offers an in-depth, though brief, look at the interpersonal treaty politics among Cherokee leaders and between Cherokee and American leaders using Cherokee and Euro-American sources.

Historian Dr. Tiya Miles's *The House on Diamond Hill* is a more in-depth resource on the Vann House.[148] Miles is a history professor at Harvard focusing on African Americans, Native Americans, women, and the intersection of these groups.[149] *The House on Diamond Hill* is representative of Miles's area of expertise and focuses on slavery at the Vann House and in the Cherokee Nation, a topic which was largely ignored at the Vann House until Miles's work. The book also gets into twentieth century restoration of the Vann House and how Georgia has since

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[145] Barbara R. Duncan and Brett H. Riggs, *The Cherokee Heritage Trails Guidebook* (Chapel Hill: Published in association with the Museum of the Cherokee Indian by the University of North Carolina Press, 2003); "Brett Riggs," Western Carolina University, accessed May 17, 2021, https://www.wcu.edu/faculty/bhriggs.aspx.
[146] Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, *The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears* (New York: Viking, 2007).
[147] "Obituary for Professor Emeritus Mike Green," University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, August 26, 2013, https://americanstudies.unc.edu/obituary-for-professor-emeritus-mike-green/; "Theda Perdue," University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, accessed May 16, 2021, https://history.unc.edu/emeritus/theda-perdue/.
[148] Tiya Miles, *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).
[149] "Tiya Miles," Harvard University Department of History, accessed May 16, 2021, https://history.la.psu.edu/directory/jlr6454.

presented enslavement at the historic site. Miles's work on the Vann House is the most recent in-depth historic scholarship on these sites.

More recent scholarship exists concerning memorialization of these sites and others in the southeast. Andrew Denson's *Monuments to Absence* is reviewed in the previous chapter, but Denson also composed an essay, "Remembering Cherokee Removal in Civil Rights-Era Georgia," which discusses the economic and political motivations behind the twentieth century restorations.[150] Within his larger work on historic reconstructions, Dr. Wayde Brown, a historic preservation professor at the University of Georgia, comments on the "minimal Cherokee engagement" and Euro-American appropriation of Cherokee history at the "sleepy" New Echota State Historic Site.[151] Brown's and Denson's works are both undergirded by some of the primary sources used in the next chapter.

The Cherokee in Georgia

As discussed later, collective interpretation of Cherokee historic sites in Georgia should not be limited by the story of removal but connect more broadly to the ongoing effects of removal. This chapter, however, will be a brief introduction to the history of the sites, not the continued impacts of the history that occurred at the sites.[152]

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[150] Andrew Denson, "Remembering Cherokee Removal in Civil Rights-Era Georgia," *Southern Cultures* 14, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 85-101.

[151] Wayde Brown, "Taking stories, reclaiming stories," in *Reconstructing Historic Landmarks: Fabrication, Negotiation, and the Past* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 168, 174, 180.

[152] For museums looking for a basic introduction into Native American history more generally, *Why You Can't Teach United States Without American Indians* is a helpful resource to broach the topic of Native Americans during any part of history, from fighting in the Civil War to the Indian Self-Determination movement during the Civil Rights era. The book shows that Native Americans were and are relevant and central to the American story, not just prior to Indian Removal.

New Echota

In 1800, Cherokee territory was loosely structured on a system of autonomous towns and kinship ties through the tribe's seven clans.[153] By 1829, the Cherokee had formed a constitutional republic, with its capitol at New Echota. The intervening years were a time of adaptation and struggle for the Cherokee – first to contend with the United States' "civilization" policies, and later to adapt and overcome removal policies.

The imminent threat of Cherokee removal to the west began in 1802 when Thomas Jefferson promised Georgia the eventual title to all Cherokee lands in exchange for part of Georgia's lands.[154] This promise, known as the Georgia Compact, would remove Indians from Georgia's land as soon as the United States could do so in a peaceable manner. To that end, Jefferson began a series of policies to reduce the size of Native American territory. As president, Jefferson formed treaty alliances with Native Americans which provided the United States with security, trade, and, most importantly, land.[155] Jefferson took these alliances a step further by implementing a "civilization" policy – an effort to convert Native Americans to Christianity, teach Native Americans English, and encourage Native Americans to adopt agriculture. By this time, Georgia and the United States were eroding Cherokee communal land, particularly following the invention of the cotton gin.[156] To the Georgians, the Cherokee seemed to have more land than they needed because a great proportion of Cherokee land remained wooded and undeveloped for Cherokee hunting grounds. Farming, a "civilized" pursuit, took up far less

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[153] Reed, *Serving the Nation*, 28.
[154] Articles of Agreement and Cession Regarding Georgia's Western Lands, 1802, Governor's Subject Files, Executive Dept., Governor, RG 1-1-5, Georgia Archives, https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/adhoc/id/420/.
[155] "President Jefferson and the Indian Nations," *Thomas Jefferson's Monticello,* accessed February 7, 2021, https://www.monticello.org/thomas-jefferson/louisiana-lewis-clark/origins-of-the-expedition/jefferson-and-american-indians/president-jefferson-and-the-indian-nations/.
[156] Perdue and Green 48-49.

space. The United States, seeking to make use of this "surplus," pushed the Cherokee into farming and into ever smaller territory.[157] To further speed up this process, Jefferson proposed that Indian agents should encourage tribes to purchase goods on credit and go into debt, inducing tribes to sell land.[158] It was common practice for the United States government to bribe local chiefs to approve land cessions, notably in the Treaty of 1817 and Treaty of 1819.[159] In exchange for communal lands, chiefs, either self-interested or threatened with removal, received individual plots.[160] When the Cherokee sided with the United States during the War of 1812, the Cherokee intended that their alliance secure the remaining Cherokee land.[161] Nevertheless, the war was followed by more land cessions.[162]

Building New Echota

In part to combat these land cessions, the Cherokee formed a centralized government. The centralization of the Cherokee government was already set into motion by the early-eighteenth century. At that time, each town in Cherokee nation was autonomous and each town had its own peace chief and war chief.[163] Colonial governments were confused by the numerous Cherokee representatives, so in 1721 the Cherokee appointed a trade commissioner, named Wrosetasetow.[164] The trade commissioner would represent all of the Cherokee nation in trade deals with South Carolina. The appointment of the trade commissioner was the first effort to unite the many Cherokee towns.[165] In the 1790s, the Cherokee Council continued to progress

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[157] Reed, *Serving the Nation,* 33.
[158] Reed, 62; "President Jefferson and the Indian Nations," *Thomas Jefferson's Monticello,* accessed February 7, 2021, https://www.monticello.org/thomas-jefferson/louisiana-lewis-clark/origins-of-the-expedition/jefferson-and-american-indians/president-jefferson-and-the-indian-nations/.
[159] Reed, *Serving the Nation,* 45.
[160] Reed, 45, 61.
[161] Reed, 38.
[162] Reed, 50.
[163] Conley, *Cherokee Nation,* 27.
[164] Conley, 27.
[165] Conley, 84.

toward centralization by taking policing out of the hands of individual clans. In 1808, the Cherokee Council adopted their first written law.[166] The law established a national police force, called the Light Horses, which stopped horse-stealing, defended the property of wealthy Cherokee men, adjudicated internal matters, informed federal authorities of non-Indian crimes, and generally "protect[ed] the common title to their homeland and their integrity as a nation."[167]

In 1825, the Cherokee formally moved their capital from nearby Ustanali to New Echota, where the Cherokee government had already been meeting informally for years. The permanent population at New Echota remained small – though the Cherokee government initially laid out one hundred one-acre plots, only twenty buildings were in the town at the time of removal. However, when the Cherokee legislature met over the summer, the town grew exponentially.

By the time New Echota was selected as the new capital, the Cherokee had already established a centralized government with three branches, later formalized in the 1827 Cherokee Constitution. Under the Cherokee Constitution, the executive branch was headed by a principal chief who was aided by an assistant principal chief, treasurer, and national marshal.[168] The idea of an official, united tribe representative had been around for years, starting with the appointment of Wrosetasetow in 1721 as trade commissioner.[169] From 1762 to 1778, the executive role took on new meaning under Ada-gal-kala, who referred to himself as president of the Cherokee Nation.[170] Principal Chief William Hicks became the first elected chief executive under the Cherokee Constitution in 1827, after his brother, former Principal Chief Charles Hicks died.[171]

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[166] Rennard Strickland, "From Clan to Court: Development of Cherokee Law," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (1972): 316, https://www.jstor.org/stable/42623336.
[167] Conley, *Cherokee Nation,* 36; Reed, *Serving the Nation,* 54.
[168] Strickland, "From Clan to Court," 325.
[169] Conley, *Cherokee Nation,* 243.
[170] Conley, 243.
[171] Conley, 244; Brian Hicks, "The Cherokees vs. Andrew Jackson," *Smithsonian Magazine,* March 2011, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-cherokees-vs-andrew-jackson-277394/.

Principal Chief William Hicks was quickly replaced by Principal Chief John Ross in 1828, a position in which Ross remained through re-election until he died in 1886.[172] In 1817, the Cherokee established a bicameral legislature, composed of the National Committee and the National Council.[173] In 1820, the judiciary responsibilities of the Light Horses were relieved by a system of four circuit courts which broke down into eight judicial districts, each with its own judge, marshal, and local council.[174] The Cherokee Superior Court was established in 1823 to act as a supreme court within Cherokee Nation. The Supreme Court of Cherokee Nation and the Cherokee legislature were housed in New Echota.

A centralized government meant that, at least theoretically, the United States would have no choice but to interact with a government that spoke on behalf of the entire Cherokee nation, rather than peripheral chiefs. Enabled by Cherokee centralization, the Cherokee government began passing laws aimed at limiting the individual's ability to sell communal property. Under an 1821 law, if a Cherokee sought to sell his improvements on communal land, he would be fined and his improvements would return to communal property.[175] In 1825, the Cherokee Council decreed that only they had the power to sell or trade communal property.[176]

The capital at New Echota represented one of the ways that Cherokee Nation sought to appear civilized, in the Euro-American sense of the word. Conley writes, "It was as if the Cherokees had said, 'The white people don't want us for their neighbors because they think that we're savage. Therefore, if we can show them that we are really civilized, they won't mind having us nearby.'"[177] Not all Cherokees went along with the "civilization" policy, even as

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[172] Conley, *Cherokee Nation,* 244.
[173] Reed, *Serving the Nation* 45.
[174] Conley, *Cherokee Nation,* 36; Reed, *Serving the Nation,* 54.
[175] Reed, *Serving the Nation,* 63.
[176] Reed, 63.
[177] Conley, *Cherokee Nation,* 106.

means to survival. The area around New Echota was considered more progressive and thus more receptive to changes that affected traditional Cherokee culture.[178] Those in the North Carolina highlands were more remote and traditional, making it harder for civilization policies to take hold.

Another "civilized" achievement in the New Echota era was the development of the Cherokee syllabary. Sequoyah, a blacksmith and silversmith, isolated himself from the world for one year and emerged with the Cherokee syllabary, a collection of eighty-six symbols which represented syllables.[179] In 1821, the syllabary began spreading throughout Cherokee Nation and it was formally adopted in 1825.[180] "Almost overnight" a large percentage of the population became literate in the Cherokee language.[181] From the early nineteenth century to today, Sequoyah has been "a symbol of [Cherokee] unity and perseverance as they faced the Trail of Tears and the suffering and indignities that followed" and "revered as a giant of Cherokee innovation, intellectual achievement, and cultural identity."[182]

Sequoyah's invention offered educational opportunities to Cherokees who were skeptical of the Christian missionaries.[183] Christian missions were in Cherokee Nation as early as the 1760s, but they did not have firm standing until after the turn of the century when some Cherokees sought out educational opportunities and implementation of the civilization policy.[184] The missionaries set up schools in which Cherokee children learned the English language through Christian scripture. Samuel Worcester was one of the ministers hired by the American

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[178] Conley, 82.
[179] Reed, *Serving the Nation,* 30.
[180] Jan F. Simek et al, "The Red Bird River Shelter (15CY52) Revisited: The Archaeology of the Cherokee Syllabary and of Sequoyah in Kentucky," *American Antiquity* 84, no. 2 (2019), 303, https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2018.89.
[181] Conley, *Cherokee Nation,* 105.
[182] Simek et al, "Archaeology of the Cherokee Syllabary," 303.
[183] Reed, *Serving the Nation,* 30.
[184] Reed, 36.

Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to "civilize" the Cherokee through Christianity and the English language. In 1817, Worcester established the Brainerd Mission in Tennessee.[185] From there, Worcester went to New Echota where he established his home and mission school. Over time, Worcester translated the Bible into the Cherokee language.

Sequoyah's syllabary also fueled the creation of the world's first bilingual newspaper – the *Cherokee Phoenix*. In 1825, Elias Boudinot was appointed the first editor of the newspaper. Following a fundraising and lecture tour in the northeast, the first issue of the paper was printed on February 21, 1828, in New Echota's print shop. Worcester assisted with the purchase of the paper's printing press and often contributed content to the paper.[186] The *Cherokee Phoenix* succeeded in spreading the Cherokee view (at least early on) of removal policies.[187] Because the paper was published in English and Cherokee, the *Cherokee Phoenix* had a global reach, and many other newspapers reprinted Boudinot's editorials to share Cherokee news.[188] Because of the newspaper's extensive reach and mass literacy of the Cherokee, Cherokees were painfully aware of the trauma caused by the United States going back on its word in removal treaties with the Choctaw and Creek.[189]

Removal

In the 1820s, the Cherokee Council constantly asserted its sovereignty and ownership over Cherokee lands. In 1823, President James Monroe sent a delegation to New Echota, where the Cherokee Council refused to discuss ceding more land.[190] The following year, Cherokee

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[185] Conley, *Cherokee Nation,* 100.
[186] Edwin A. Miles, "After John Marshall's Decision: Worcester v. Georgia and the Nullification Crisis," *The Journal of Southern History* 39, no. 4 (1973): 520, https://doi.org/10.2307/2205966.
[187] Conley, *Cherokee Nation,* 106.
[188] Perdue and Green, *Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears,* 75.
[189] Reed, *Serving the Nation,* 67.
[190] Conley, *Cherokee Nation,* 131.

leaders traveled to Washington, where the delegates refused Monroe's demands for the Cherokee to move to Arkansas to fulfill the Georgia Compact.[191] In 1828, one month after John Ross was elected as Principal Chief of Cherokee Nation, Andrew Jackson was elected as President of the United States.

Over the next decade Jackson and his policies added fuel to the fire of anti-Indian sentiment in Georgia. Despite Cherokee attempts to "civilize" to the satisfaction of their white neighbors, Georgia and the United States thought up new and more egregious ways to steal land. Georgia grew wary of waiting for the federal government to fulfill the promises in the 1802 Georgia Compact, especially after the "discovery" of gold in Dahlonega. Georgian settlers took matters in their own hands by stealing Cherokee property, claiming Cherokee homes under the Georgia land lottery, and assaulting and arresting Cherokee people, including Cherokee leaders.[192] Georgia made its harassment of Native Americans official when it passed a series of anti-Indian laws with blatant disregard for tribal sovereignty. The laws were called "extension laws" because Georgia was attempting to extend its jurisdiction over Cherokee territory.[193] In 1828 and 1829, Georgia passed laws annexing Cherokee land, later authorizing the subdivision of Cherokee territory for distribution in a land lottery. Between 1829 and 1830, Georgia laws abolished Cherokee laws (1829), forbade Cherokees from testifying as witnesses in a legal action involving white men (1829), outlawed laws and customs which prevented Cherokees from selling Cherokee land (1829), forbade the Cherokee Council from meeting within Georgia's borders (1830), voided Cherokee contracts with whites (1830), prohibited speaking out against

[191] Conley, 131.
[192] For example, Chief John Ross's home was seized and distributed to Georgia settlers without his knowledge in 1833. Two years later, the Georgia guard arrested Chief John Ross and held him without charge for nine days at Vann's Springplace Mission. Reed, *Serving the Nation*, 64-65.
[193] K-Sue Park, "Self-Deportation Nation," *Harvard Law Review* 132 (May 2020): 1901.

Indian removal,[194] authorized the Governor to take possession of gold mines in Cherokee territory (1830), and prevented Cherokees from accessing gold mines in Cherokee territory by stationing the Georgia Guard at their entries (1830).[195] The laws were designed to make life in Georgia so intolerable that the Cherokee would leave of their own volition. Governor George Gilmer bluntly stated, "these laws 'were produced for the sole purpose of making life so miserable for the Cherokees that they would be forced to move.'"[196] Georgia also passed laws aimed at taking out Cherokee allies, forbidding white men to live in Cherokee territory without taking an oath of allegiance to Georgia.[197] Each of these crimes could be punished with a sentence of four to six years hard labor in prison. In 1833, in an effort to hasten installation of white lottery winners of Cherokee land, the Georgia legislature passed even more draconian measures. These new laws included a prohibition on a Cherokee hiring a white man, the punishment of which was the forfeiture of the Cherokee's land and improvements.[198] The Cherokee sought relief from the United States Congress, in which they had several allies, and from Jackson, who refused on the grounds that it would be improper for him to interfere with state matters.[199]

To make matters worse, Jackson attempted to stall the Cherokee government's ability to fight these laws. In 1830, following the Georgia law decreeing that the Cherokee government did not exist, Andrew Jackson refused to pay an annuity to the tribal government.[200] Instead, individual Cherokees would have to travel up to 180 miles to the Indian agent to receive

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[194] Conley, *Cherokee Nation,* 133. Conley refers to this portion of the law, but, unlike the rest of these laws, it is not described in Chief Justice John Marshall's opinion in *Worcester v. Georgia*.
[195] Conley, 133.
[196] Park, "Self-Deportation Nation," 1901.
[197] Conley, *Cherokee Nation,* 133.
[198] Act of December 20, 1833, No. 77, 1833 Ga. Laws 114, http://neptune3.galib.uga.edu/ssp/cgi-bin/legis-idx.pl?sessionid=7f000001&type=law&byte=12995277.
[199] Conley, *Cherokee Nation,* 133.
[200] Reed, *Serving the Nation,* 65

individual payouts of $0.46.[201] By declining to pay the annuity directly to the Cherokee Treasury, Jackson denied the sovereignty of the Cherokees and interfered with the Cherokees' ability to pay legal fees to fight anti-Indian laws.[202]

Nonetheless, the Cherokee took their case to the Supreme Court of the United States, which partially granted the Cherokee the relief they sought in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* and *Worcester v. Georgia.*[203] These two cases are part of a series known as the Marshall Trilogy, in which Chief Justice John Marshall defines tribal rights.[204] *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* arose from the Cherokee request for an injunction to prohibit enforcement of the anti-Indian laws aimed at the Cherokee. The Court ultimately decided that they did not have jurisdiction to hear the case because Cherokee Nation was a "domestic dependent nation" and not a "foreign state" within the meaning of Article III of the Constitution, which allows federal courts to hear cases between states and foreign states.[205] Though Chief Justice Marshall did not believe that the court could grant the relief sought, he did comment on the moral reprehensibility of Georgia's actions:

> If courts were permitted to indulge their sympathies, a case better calculated to excite them can scarcely be imagined. A people once numerous, powerful, and truly independent, found by our ancestors in the quiet and uncontrolled possession of an ample domain, gradually sinking beneath our superior policy, our arts and our arms, have yielded their lands by successive treaties, each of which contains a solemn guarantee of the residue, until they retain no more of their formerly extensive territory than is deemed necessary to their comfortable subsistence.[206]

The following year, the Court heard *Worcester v. Georgia* and clarified tribal sovereignty. This case involved the Georgia laws aimed at Cherokee allies. Samuel Worcester,

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[201] Reed, 65.
[202] Reed, 66. The Cherokee depended on donations from northern sympathizers to pay their legal fees or promised to pay back their attorneys when they were able. Thurman Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy: The Ridge Family and the Decimation of a People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 215.
[203] *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia,* 30 U.S. 1 (1831); *Worcester v. Georgia,* 31 U.S. 515 (1832).
[204] The third case in the trilogy is *Johnson v. M'intosh* in 1823, in which Chief Justice Marshall says that Native Americans have an "occupancy right" which can only be severed by the federal government, not a private landowner. *Johnson v. M'intosh,* 21 U.S. 543 (1823).
[205] *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia,* 30 U.S. at 17.
[206] *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia,* 30 U.S. at 29.

Elizur Butler, and other missionaries were convicted of living in Cherokee territory without a state license which would require them to take a loyalty oath to Georgia. The men were initially offered a pardon, but Worcester and Butler instead appealed to the Supreme Court to bring the matter of the anti-Indian laws before the Court.[207] The Court reversed the missionaries' convictions after finding that the Georgia law was repugnant to the United States Constitution and the treaties between the Cherokee and the United States. In this case, Chief Justice Marshall unambiguously affirmed Cherokee sovereignty, stating "[t]he Indian nations had always been considered as distinct, independent political communities, retaining their original natural rights, as the undisputed possessors of the soil, from time immemorial…"[208] Noting Georgia's attempts to follow up on the 1802 Georgia Compact, the Chief Justice further affirmed Cherokee sovereignty, stating:

> The Cherokee nation, then, is a distinct community, occupying its own territory, with boundaries accurately described, in which the laws of Georgia can have no force, and which the citizens of Georgia have no right to enter, but with the assent of the Cherokees themselves, or in conformity with treaties, and with the acts of congress. The whole intercourse between the United States and this nation, is by our constitution and laws, vested in the government of the United States.[209]

The Court ordered Worcester and Butler to be released from prison. Following the decision, many Cherokees celebrated with "Rejoicings Dances and Meetings."[210] Chief Ross remained skeptical, and rightly so. The Georgia courts refused to release the missionaries and Governor Wilson Lumpkin refused to grant a pardon on the grounds that the Court's interference overstepped federal authority in state matters.[211] The missionaries were eventually released after pleading guilty. Worcester was one of the missionaries that eventually accompanied the

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[207] Miles, "After John Marshall's Decision," 521.
[208] *Worcester*, 31 U.S. at 559.
[209] *Worcester*, 31 U.S. at 561.
[210] Perdue and Green, *Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears*, 88.
[211] Miles, "After John Marshall's Decision," 532.

Cherokee to Indian territory, where he continued to support the Cherokee press and proliferation of the Cherokee language.[212]

Jackson again declined to interfere, calling the Court's decision "still born" – it was up to Georgia to enforce the decision, and they chose not to.[213] While Georgia was busy enforcing its unconstitutional laws, the federal government was embarking on its own anti-Indian campaign. In 1830, the Indian Removal Act was signed into law by Jackson. The Act appropriated a $500,000 fund to carry out removal of the tribes east of the Mississippi but designated almost no process by which it would occur.[214] However, "by making the threat of mass deportation imminent, had immediate indirect effects: its passage spurred more tribes to enter into treaties to exchange their lands."[215] The Choctaw were the first to sign a treaty following the passage of the Indian Removal Act. The Cherokee, however, held out for several years. At first the leaders of Cherokee Nation presented a united front: they would not abandon their land. However, as time wore on and life in Georgia grew more miserable, the Cherokee began to diverge in their view of whether removal or staying the course would lead to the best chance of physical and cultural survival.

In 1832, the Cherokee leaders split on their stance over removal. At a meeting of the Cherokee Council in Tennessee (to avoid being prosecuted under the anti-Indian laws), the Cherokee once again declined to consider a removal treaty.[216] However, Georgia's refusal to enforce the Supreme Court's decision had begun to shift the attitudes of some Cherokee leaders, including Elias Boudinot. Boudinot hoped to use the *Cherokee Phoenix* to advocate for traveling

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[212] Conley, *Cherokee Nation,* 168.
[213] Miles, "After John Marshall's Decision," 528. Many sources report that Jackson also said, "John Marshal has made his decision, not let him enforce it." However, there does not seem to be any factual basis for this quote. Miles, 519; Conley, *Cherokee Nation,* 135.
[214] Indian Removal Act of 1830, 4 Stat. 411.
[215] Park, "Self-Deportation Nation," 1902-03.
[216] Conley, *Cherokee Nation,* 135.

westward on their own terms.[217] Chief John Ross censored Boudinot, believing that it was best to fight removal and remain united.[218] Ross installed a new editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix,* Elijah Hicks, who would promote the Cherokee opposition to removal. Ross continued to have faith in the United States and hoped that if they could hold out until 1836, better options could be pursued with a different president.[219] Ross reached out to the anti-Jackson press, which published sympathetic pieces on behalf of Cherokee nation. Ross also sent petitions to Congress for legislative relief, but each of these petitions was rejected.[220] Ross finally came to the treaty table in 1833 at Washington, when he offered Jackson part of Cherokee territory in exchange for a guarantee that the Cherokee could keep the remainder of their land for a specified number of years, after which they would become full United States citizens and assimilate into the surrounding cultures.[221] That offer was rejected by Jackson in favor of John Ross's brother Andrew's "humiliating" proposal.[222] However, the Senate refused to ratify Andrew Ross's treaty as it was clear that it did not come from an authorized delegation.[223]

As a result of Ross's censorship, Boudinot, John Ridge, Major Ridge, and Stand Watie (Boudinot's brother) decided to pursue other options. After being impeached following Andrew Ross's treaty proposal,[224] the men headed a delegation separate from that of Ross at an early 1835 meeting in Washington. Ross once again proposed his assimilation treaty and once again the treaty was rejected by all parties. Ross then proposed a complete exchange of Cherokee lands for $20 Million, a figure he likely knew would not be accepted but could stall negotiations until

[217] Reed, *Serving the Nation,* 70.
[218] Perdue and Green, *Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears,* 97-98.
[219] Perdue and Green, 99.
[220] Perdue and Green, 98-99.
[221] Perdue and Green, 103.
[222] Perdue and Green, 103
[223] Perdue and Green, 103.
[224] The men were part of the same treaty party as Andrew Ross, though they did not support his proposal. Perdue and Green, 103.

1836. The United States counteroffered with a $5 Million figure, which would allow the United States to profit $1 Million from the $6 Million they had already stolen from Cherokee gold mines.[225] The parties walked away from the meeting with no treaty. Following the meeting, the Ridge and Ross parties temporarily reached a truce and drew up terms to send to Jackson.[226] A delegation of members of both the Ross and Ridge factions set out for Washington in December 1835.

At the same time, a United States agent called a meeting to negotiate a treaty in New Echota at Jackson's behest.[227] On December 21, 1835, Georgia "legislated the Cherokee out of the state" by authorizing winners in the earlier land lottery to take their plot on November 5, 1836.[228] With this news, Georgia Cherokees were ready to meet with the United States agent to negotiate their own terms. On December 29, 1835, while Ross was away, twenty signatories gathered at Boudinot's house in New Echota and signed the Treaty of New Echota.[229] The treaty exchanged Cherokee lands in the east for Cherokee lands west of the Mississippi, $5 Million, improvement costs, removal costs, and funds for schools and orphans.[230] Under the 1825 law, the treaty was not authorized because it was not approved by the Cherokee Council. Boudinot felt his unlawful actions were necessary and benevolent. He later reflected:

> If one hundred persons are ignorant of their true situation, and are so completely blinded as not to see the destruction that awaits them, we can see strong reasons to justify the action of a minority of fifty persons to do what the majority *would do* if they understood their condition – to save a *nation* from political thralldom and moral degradation.[231]

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[225] Perdue and Green, 106.
[226] Perdue and Green, 107-109.
[227] Perdue and Green, 109-111.
[228] Perdue and Green, 109-110.
[229] Perdue and Green, 111.
[230] Conley, *Cherokee Nation,* 142-143.
[231] Elias Boudinot, "Letters and Other Papers Relating to Cherokee Affairs: Being a Reply to Sundry Publications Authorized by John Ross," (1837), in Perdue and Green, *Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears*, 91.

The treaty party took the Treaty of New Echota to Washington where Ross refused to meet with them. The treaty was ratified on May 23, 1836, by the Senate, where the measure passed by a single vote. Thus, "[i]n a fit of unholy collusion, neither the law nor morality could be allowed to hinder the removal of the Cherokees."[232]

The Cherokee were given until May 23, 1838, to leave for the west.[233] In 1837, Cherokees in the "treaty party" removed to the west following the execution of the treaty.[234] Some of the treaty signers were later killed in the new Cherokee territory, including Elias Boudinot, Major Ridge, and John Ridge.

Back in the east, fourteen thousand Cherokees petitioned the United States government to no avail on the grounds that the treaty was unauthorized.[235] The forced removal process began in 1838 when thousands of soldiers under the command of General Winfield Scott rounded up the Cherokee and imprisoned them in thirty-one stockades and forts in Georgia and Tennessee, one of which was in New Echota.[236] Wahnenauhi, a Cherokee survivor of the Trail of Tears, later recounted the trauma of her capture during the roundup:

> For these soldiers were sent, by Gorgia [sic], and they were gathered up and driven, at the point of bayonet, into camp with the others. [T]hey were not allowed to take any of their household stuff, but they were compelled to leave as they were, with only the clothes which they had on. One old, very old man, asked the soldiers to allow him time to pray once more, with his family in the dear old home, before he left it forever. The answer was, with a brutal oath, 'No! no time for prayers. Go!' at the same time giving him a rude push toward the door. In many instances, the families of settlers were at hand, and as the Indians were evicted, the whites entered, taking full possession of every thing left.[237]

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[232] Perdue and Green, *Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears,* 115.
[233] The Georgia land lottery possession date was later amended to May 25, 1838. Perdue and Green, 110.
[234] Reed, *Serving the Nation,* 74.
[235] Reed, 74.
[236] Perdue and Green, *Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears,* 123.
[237] Wahnenauhi, quoted in Charlotte Heth, "Cherokee: Surviving the Trail of Tears," in *Stories of the People: Native American Voices* (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of the American Indian, 1997), 35.

Living conditions in the stockades were poor, and disease and violence were rampant.[238] After months in the stockades, the first group of Cherokees were driven westward on foot, sometimes barefoot. Later groups took routes both by land and by water. Disease, hunger, and death befell the Cherokee on the Trail of Tears.

"[P]erish or remove! it might be, - remove *and* perish!"[239] By the time they arrived in Indian territory, 25% of the Cherokees forced from their homeland were dead.[240] Not only did Cherokee people lose beloved family and neighbors, but they also lost parts of their culture. Because they were older, traditional healers and tribal historians were most vulnerable to the conditions on the Trail of Tears. Traditional healers that did survive were forced to adapt their knowledge to unfamiliar plants. Additionally, "[t]he loss of elders cost Cherokee people their historians, those best equipped to put trauma and loss in historic perspective and remind Cherokees of their resiliency as a people and their ability to fulfill community responsibilities in the face of adversity."[241]

Vann House

The story of the Vann House paints part of the picture of the "civilization" of Cherokee Nation prior to removal. The Vann House sat on Diamond Hill plantation in Spring Place, Georgia. Diamond Hill was one of the first and largest plantations in Cherokee Nation.[242] The plantation was in the family for two generations before Chief Joseph Vann built the home seen

[238] Reed, *Serving the Nation,* 75.
[239] Wahnenauhi, quoted in Heth, "Cherokee: Surviving the Trail of Tears," 35.
[240] Reed, *Serving the Nation,* 76.
[241] Reed, 76.
[242] Miles, *House on Diamond Hill,* 3.

today in 1820.[243] Joseph Vann and his family were forcefully removed from the property in 1834 and over the years, the once stately mansion fell into disrepair.

The Vanns

The Diamond Hill plantation was first developed by Chief James Vann, Joseph Vann's father. Until recently, James Vann was believed to be responsible for commissioning the extant house at Diamond Hill in 1804.[244] However, records found in 2007 show that the house we see today was built in 1820. It is likely that James Vann commissioned a two-story log home which was later replaced by Joseph Vann's brick home.[245] Because the interpretation of the home by the Georgia Historical Commission, and still by Georgia State Historic Sites, is based on James Vann's original ownership of the building, I will briefly describe the life of James Vann. James Vann was born in 1766 to a Scottish father, Joseph James Vann, and a Cherokee mother, Wali.[246] Vann had an enterprising spirit and added to the vast wealth left to him by his father, a trader. By 1804, Vann had succeeded in bringing the federal road to Diamond Hill and planted a series of lucrative businesses alongside the federal road, including a tavern, campground, trading post, and ferry service.[247] In bringing the federal road to Cherokee country, Vann seemed to bridge the two worlds in which he lived. As a Cherokee, Vann was a staunch defender of Cherokee sovereignty and engaged in polygamy.[248] Vann incorporated Euro-American practices as well, including his manner of dress and his practice of slavery. Vann also invited Moravian missionaries to open a

[243] Miles, 168. The home is misattributed to Joseph's father, Chief James Vann, by almost every source due to an inadvertent assumption by the 1950s restorers.
[244] Miles, 168.
[245] Miles, 4.
[246] Miles, 40.
[247] Miles, 4.
[248] Miles, 53,168. Polygamy was a common practice among the Cherokee, but by this time most Cherokee elite participated in monogamous unions. Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 175.

mission on his property, not so that he could convert to Christianity but for his children to get an education.[249]

Despite his accomplishments as an advocate of the Cherokee Nation, Vann is most often remembered for his bad temper. According to most sources, Vann was a violent drunk who abused his family and his temper frequently made him enemies.[250] Recent theories have argued that this depiction of Vann may be the product of the "drunken Indian" stereotype. Instead, they posit that Vann may have suffered from undiagnosed schizophrenia or mental illness as the result of untreated syphilis.[251] Whatever the cause of his violent tendencies, Vann's proclivity for making enemies cost him his life in February 1809 when he was killed by an unknown assailant at a tavern.[252]

Following his father's death, Joseph Vann inherited Diamond Hill plantation. Like his father, Joseph Vann had a high degree of business acumen. He continued to build on his father's fortune, earning the name "Rich Joe."[253] At the time Joseph Vann was removed from his home, he had amassed one of the largest fortunes among the Cherokee, and potentially in all the Eastern United States.[254] Vann also built on his father's political success. While his father had become a town chief, Joseph Vann went on to become president of the Cherokee Nation, a position held by John Ross before he was elected Principal Chief.[255] As a politically and economically well-

[249] Miles, 67-68.
[250] Miles, 26-31.
[251] Miles, 31.
[252] Miles, 29.
[253] Miles, 166.
[254] Jennifer Elliott, "*Ga-ne-tli-yv-s-di* (Change) in the Cherokee Nation: The Vann and Ridge Houses in Northwest Georgia," *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum* 18, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 50, https://doi.org/10.5749/buildland.18.1.0043. Compensation for Vann's improvements following removal totaled $19,605. "The Editor Says," Jim Wood, *Fayette County News*, May 19, 1965, Georgia Historical Commission Director's Office Administrative Records 1950-1973, Historic Sites – Vann House, RG 61-1-1, Georgia Archives (hereafter GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence).
[255] Miles, *House on Diamond Hill,* 169.

connected man, Joseph Vann hosted President Monroe in 1819. Though most sources report that President Monroe asked to stay in the Vann House instead of the Moravian Mission building, Miles states that Monroe stayed in James Vann's two-story log home.[256] The president's visit may have been the stimulus for Vann to build his impressive plantation home.[257]

Showcase of the Cherokee Nation

The beautiful mansion at Diamond Hill would not look out of place on any southern plantation. The Georgian and Federal style house is two-and-a-half story brick building adorned with two-story projecting porticoed entryways on the front and rear of the house and chimneys on the building's sides. A modillion cornice runs the length of the front and rear elevations "supported" by thin plaster strips mimicking pilasters.

The interior of the Vann House is based on a center hallway plan and is possibly more impressive than its exterior. Throughout the house, decorative elements are covered in vibrant hues of green, yellowish gold, blue, and reddish brown, a palette described by one of Joseph Vann's contemporaries as "gaudily painted."[258] Upon entry, the most noticeable element is an enchanting floating staircase with carved stringers. A fireplace dominates each of the house's four main rooms with carvings pulled from both classical and Cherokee artistic traditions.

The house was surrounded by gardens and several outbuildings, many of which pre-dated the brick house. At the time of removal, the plantation was comprised of eight hundred acres of farmland, forty-two cabins, six barns, five smokehouses, a grist mill, a sawmill, a foundry and

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[256] Miles, 165-66.
[257] Miles, 166.
[258] Miles, 168. These colors are similar to those found in other comparable homes during the early nineteenth century, Elliott, "*Ga-ne-tli-yv-s-di*," 51-52. However, at least one author suggests the choice of colors is attributable to Cherokee tradition: "green represented the trees and grass on the Cherokee Nation's 15 million acres; the yellow, ripened grain; the blue, Cherokee sky; the reddish brown, the Georgia clay soil." Elizabeth Smith Brownstein, "Cherokee Chief Vann's House," in *If This House Could Talk: Historic Homes, Extraordinary Americans* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 113.

forge, eight corn cribs, a trading post, a peach kiln, a still, and over one thousand peach and apple trees.[259] Working the fields, tending to the Diamond Hill workshops, and building the house was a massive, enslaved labor force.

Slavery at Diamond Hill

One result of the loss of traditional Cherokee hunting grounds was a new pursuit of enslavement at the turn of the century to farm the land.[260] Enslaving workers was seen as one of the main ways that the Cherokee people had "civilized," and the Vanns exemplified this aspect of "civilization." A significant portion of the Vanns' wealth was made from the labor of the people they enslaved. The Vann House itself is a product of slave labor – except for the windows, all materials used to build the Vann House were manufactured in the shops on Vann's plantation by employed Cherokees and enslaved laborers.[261]

The slaves were not treated well. While James Vann's father socialized with the people he enslaved, and James Vann frequently asked them to play music for guests, James Vann also "burned them alive in punishment."[262] At the height of James Vann's plantation, Vann enslaved almost seventy black slaves.[263] Joseph Vann's relationship was marked by the social distance between enslavers and enslaved persons common across the south.[264] At the time Joseph Vann was forced from his home, Vann enslaved over one hundred people.[265] These people, and

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[259] "The Editor Says," Jim Wood, *Fayette County News*, May 19, 1965, Georgia Historical Commission Director's Office Administrative Records 1950-1973, Historic Sites – Vann House, RG 61-1-1, Georgia Archives (hereafter cited as GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence).
[260] Reed, *Serving the Nation*, 37.
[261] Miles, *House on Diamond Hill,* 166-67; *Society of Architectural Historians Archipedia,* s.v. "Chief Vann House," by Robert M. Craig, 2012, https://sah-archipedia.org/node/10698.
[262] Miles, *House on Diamond Hill,* 29.
[263] Miles, 4.
[264] Miles, 81
[265] Elliott, "*Ga-ne-tli-yv-s-di,"* 50.

approximately 1,600[266] people enslaved by the Cherokees, were forced to make the trek from Cherokee Georgia to Indian Territory. Following removal, Vann's treatment of the people he enslaved deteriorated and in 1842, they staged a revolt.[267] Treatment of enslaved people and chances for freedom continually declined as the western Cherokee government passed ever more repressive slave codes.[268] During the Civil War, most Cherokees sided with the Confederacy, a product of both prevalent slavery and the hope for sovereign recognition. Immediately following the Civil War, the Cherokee agreed to grant equal rights to freed Cherokee slaves, known as Cherokee Freedmen.[269] However, in 2007, the Cherokee Nation voted to enact blood quantum laws – laws which require people to prove at least a minimum percentage of Cherokee blood in order to be granted Cherokee citizenship.[270] The result was that 2,800 Freedmen descendants were stripped of their Cherokee citizenship in 2011. On February 22, 2021, the Cherokee Nation Supreme Court reversed course and unanimously ruled that the blood quantum requirements were void, restoring citizenship to the Cherokee Freedmen descendants.[271]

Vann's Removal to the West

Unlike most Cherokee, Joseph Vann left for the west prior to 1838 after he became a target of Georgia's draconian anti-Indian laws. In 1833, the Georgia Legislature passed a law, dubiously entitled "An Act more effectually providing for the government and protection of the

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[266] Reed, *Serving the Nation,* 79. This number reflects the number of people enslaved by Cherokees in 1835, not necessarily the number of enslaved people who traversed the Trail of Tears.
[267] Reed, 79.
[268] Reed, 79.
[269] Alex Kellogg, "Cherokee Nation Faces Scrutiny for Expelling Blacks," September 19, 2011, in *All Things Considered,* https://www.npr.org/2011/09/19/140594124/u-s-government-opposes-cherokee-nations-decision.
[270] Kellogg, "Cherokee Nation Faces Scrutiny for Expelling Blacks."
[271] Harmeet Kaur, "The Cherokee Nation Acknowledges That Descendants of People Once Enslaved by the Tribe Should Also Qualify as Cherokee," CNN, February 25, 2021, https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/25/us/cherokee-nation-ruling-freedmen-citizenship-trnd/index.html. The move was solidified under a new Cherokee constitution, approved by Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland on May 12, 2021. Associated Press, "Cherokee Nation Constitution Approved by U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution,* May 13, 2021, https://www.ajc.com/news/georgia-news/cherokee-nation-constitution-approved-by-us-interior-secretary-deb-haaland/SWJQ24GL6JGNNBWIGIEQJYVMOE/.

Cherokee Indians." Among other prohibitions, the law forbade Cherokee men from hiring white men without two "respectable" witnesses.[272] It is reported by many sources that Vann was not aware of this new law and, given that he frequently hired white plantation overseers, became a target of the new law.[273] In 1834, Georgia Guard Colonel William Bishop, who had already overtaken the Moravian missionaries quarters at Spring Place, demanded Vann to forfeit Vann's house and land to fulfill the punishment prescribed by the law.[274] Bishop and twenty Georgia Guardsmen invaded the house, shot one of Vann's employees (who was also attempting to stake a claim on the house), and threw a burning log on the floating staircase.[275] The evidence of this microbattle can still be seen today at the Vann House – a small burn mark is visible on the staircase.

The Vanns were smoked out of their home and fled initially to Tennessee. Deprived of his home and businesses, Vann moved his life to Oklahoma.[276] There, he built another home resembling his stolen house at Diamond Hill, and the new home was later destroyed during the Civil War. He continued to build his businesses, enslaving up to 500 slaves and adding a steamboat business.[277] Vann died at age 46 when his steamboat exploded in 1844.[278]

Rebuilding a Nation

Despite the odds presented by decades of broken promises, the Cherokee survived. In the west, they rebuilt the government and passed a new constitution in 1839, unifying the Old Settlers[279] and the newcomers in law, if not in reality. They created a national public education

[272] Act of December 20, 1833, No. 77, 1833 Ga. Laws 114.
[273] Miles, *House on Diamond Hill*, 178.
[274] Miles, 177-79.
[275] Miles, 179.
[276] Miles, 179, 182.
[277] Miles, 182-83.
[278] Miles, 183.
[279] The Old Settlers were those who moved westward prior to forced removal. The Old Settlers and the eastern Cherokees had political differences, specifically on the topic of Indian Removal. There may have also been bad

system in 1841,[280] which did not happen in the broader United States until after the Civil War. They built seminaries and three "bustling towns" and rebuilt some of the things destroyed at New Echota, including a courthouse and a national newspaper.[281]

Despite popular belief, there were and are Cherokees that remained in the east. Differing circumstances in North Carolina and Georgia made North Carolina less persistent to completely evict its Cherokee residents. Whereas, under the Georgia Compact of 1802, Georgia would receive Cherokee land following removal, North Carolina had no such promise. While most North Carolina Cherokee were rounded up like the Georgia Cherokee, around one thousand North Carolina Cherokees remained.[282] Around sixty Cherokee families who were given individual plots under the 1817 and 1819 treaties were permitted to stay in North Carolina.[283] Additionally, some Cherokee hid out in the mountains during the round up.[284] William Holland Thomas, an adopted white son of Cherokee leader Yonaguska, bought and held land for the Cherokee in the east until the Cherokee could lawfully purchase the property.[285] Thus, the ancestors of the modern Eastern Band of Cherokee continued to live in North Carolina.

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blood between the two groups because in 1810 the Cherokee National Council back east revoked the Old Settlers' Cherokee citizenship. The Cherokee National Council called the "voluntary" emigration "treason against the motherland." Perdue and Green, *Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears*, 39. The groups reunited, but were divided on several conflicts to the present day. For instance, the Old Settlers largely sided with the Union in the Civil War while the eastern Cherokees (now in the west) largely sided with the Confederacy. The two federally recognized Cherokee tribes in Oklahoma, Cherokee Nation and the United Keetoowah Band (largely descendants of the Old Settlers), continue to have a fraught relationship. Josh Clough, "United Keetoowah Band," Oklahoma Historical Society, accessed February 9, 2021, https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=UN006.

[280] Reed, *Serving the Nation*, 80.

[281] Reed, 87.

[282] Duncan and Riggs, *Cherokee Heritage Trails Guidebook*, 31.

[283] Duncan and Riggs, 29.

[284] Duncan and Riggs, 29.

[285] Duncan and Riggs, 31-32.

Georgia's Twentieth Century Cherokee Obsession

The Formation of the Georgia Historical Commission

Established in 1951, the Georgia Historical Commission was the state's first historic preservation agency.[286] The purposes of the new agency were to promote understanding of Georgia's history and historical tourism within the state through preserving and marking historic sites.[287] The creation of the Georgia Historical Commission came out of a broader effort to generate tourism along Georgia's newly paved 15,000 miles of state highways. The effort sought to lure tourists through highway welcome stations, "restoration of many gems of history," and out of state tourism promotion.[288] Unfortunately, the Commission was given no initial budget to engage in these endeavors, only a promise of future surplus funds.[289] As a result, the Commission faced chronic budget issues throughout its life, especially in the early years.

The Georgia Historical Commission was housed in the Department of the Secretary of State, then led by Ben Fortson. Fortson selected a former political editor for the *Atlanta Journal,* C.E. Gregory, as the first secretary of the Georgia Historical Commission and five other white men who were "conversant with the history of the State" to serve as the first commissioners.[290]

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[286] Georgia Historical Commission, No. 496, 1951 Ga. Laws 789, http://metis.galib.uga.edu/ssp/cgi-bin/legis-idx.pl?sessionid=4948683c-01c50f8e43-0428&type=law&byte=207292969. Before the Georgia Historical Commission, Georgia owned historic sites under the Division of State Parks, Historic Sites, and Monuments created in 1937. *History of the Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites Division,* Georgia State Parks, accessed May 17, 2021, https://gastateparks.org/sites/default/files/parks/pdf/HistoryOfGSPHSD.pdf. However, that department's focus was on nature parks, which sometimes contained historic resources.

[287] Native American sites were explicitly included in the places that the Georgia Historical Commission should preserve and mark. Act of February 21, 1951 § 14(a).

[288] "Tourist Development in Georgia," *Buford Advertiser*, July 10, 1952, Georgia Historical Commission Director's Office Scrapbooks 1952-1959, 1952-1956 Historical Markers, RG 61-1-20, Georgia Archives (hereafter cited as GHC Scrapbooks); W.S. Stuckey, "State Tourist Needs Analyzed In Move to Lure More Dollars," *Atlanta Journal Constitution,* October 19, 1952, GHC Scrapbooks.

[289] The chronic underfunding of the Georgia Historical Commission led the *Fayette News* to call it "a stepchild when state funds are being passed out." "The Editor Says," *Fayette County News*, May 19, 1965, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.

[290] Jann Haynes Gilmore, "Georgia's Historic Preservation Beginnings: The Georgia Historical Commission (1951-1973)," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* (Spring 1979): 11, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4058007; Act of February 21, 1951 § 2.

At their first meeting, the members determined the Commission's initial focus would be erecting historic markers at Civil War battlegrounds in preparation for the centennial.[291] In the following year, the Georgia Historical Commission appealed to the public to find historic sites for their marking program.[292] Of the 240 markers erected in the first year of the Commission's existence, over half were dedicated to telling the story of the "War Between the States."[293] Many of the initial markers also included Native American historic sites, including the Chief Vann House, Kolomoki Mounds, Battle of Taliwa, and Tomochichi's grave.

When the Georgia Historical Commission shifted its focus to Native American historic sites, it was acting within a broader interest in memorializing the Cherokee. Acting on its duty to promote understanding of Georgia's history, the Secretary of State's office put out a multi-part series in Macon's *Georgia Journal* called "Drama of the Cherokees," which followed the accomplishments of Sequoyah and the events preceding the Trail of Tears.[294] Some of the members advocated on behalf of tangible heritage, including that of Native Americans. For instance, as Georgia sought to fill Buford Reservoir, Commissioner A.R. Kelly urged the public that the reservoir should not be filled until a proper archaeological excavation of probable mound sites could be made.[295] Georgia Historical Commission archaeologist Clemens de Baillou and Director Gregory advocated for a historic tavern owned by James Vann, located in the prospective reservoir, to be saved by relocating it to New Echota. Above all, at least some members of the Georgia Historical Commission recognized the gravity of preserving Native

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[291] Gilmore, "Georgia's Historic Preservation Beginnings," 11.
[292] "History Group Seeking Sites in State," *Valdosta Times*, April 4, 1952, GHC Scrapbooks
[293] Marion L. Starkey and James E. Hilley, "The Cherokee Nation" *The Georgia Journal*, July 27, 1953, GHC Scrapbooks.
[294] Gus Bernd, "Drama of the Cherokees Part I," *The Georgia Journal*, August or September 1952, GHC Scrapbooks; Gus Bernd, "Drama of the Cherokees Part II," *The Georgia Journal*, September 9, 1952, GHC Scrapbooks.
[295] "Indian Camp Sites Within Reservoir Area - Two Mounds Should Be Explored," *Gainesville News*, February 12, 1953, GHC Scrapbooks.

American sites. Of New Echota, Kelly stated that the "investigation is of more than ordinary importance and should be approached cautiously…"[296]

In addition to New Echota and the Vann House, the Georgia Historical Commission demonstrated interest in other Native American sites, only one of which subsequently became a state-owned historic site. In 1952, the Georgia Historical Commission began excavating Native American sites across North Georgia. One of these was Long Swamp Creek, a Mississippian Era mound site along the Etowah River.[297] The site was misattributed to the Cherokee, although the Georgia Historical Commission did include a Cherokee student to demonstrate Cherokee language and song at a program on the site. The Georgia Historical Commission conducted archaeological studies of Tugaloo, a Cherokee village near Toccoa.[298] The Georgia Historical Commission did not acquire Tugaloo, but it did become part of a state park in 1965. In 1953, the Georgia Historical Commission studied and established a historic site at Etowah Mounds in Cartersville, which had thousands of visitors in the first year it was open to the public.[299] In 1956, Kelly investigated an Indian burial site in Abbeville.[300]

Sympathy for the Vanishing Indian

During the mid-twentieth century, white Georgians began showing interest in and sympathy for the Cherokee, particularly in relation to the Trail of Tears. Certainly, some still

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[296] "Short Delay Seen in Scheduled Excavations at New Echota," in *Calhoun Times*, January 14, 1954, GHC Scrapbooks.
[297] "Historical Society Will Tour N. Ga. Section," *Cartersville Daily Tribune News*, April 17, 1952, GHC Scrapbooks.
[298] "Archaeologists Finding Many Interesting Specimens at Old Cherokee Village Near Here," in *Toccoa Record*, June 26, 1952, GHC Scrapbooks.
[299] Interest in Etowah Mounds was not shared by all – one Cartersville newspaper said that, to some, Etowah Mounds may seem "a bunch of holes in the ground way out on the other side of nowhere…" "Etowah Mounds Are More Than 'Holes in the Ground,'" *Barton Herald*, November 12, 1953, GHC Scrapbooks; "Etowah Mounds Attracted Thousands During First Year State Ownership," *Cartersville Daily Tribune* March 22, 1954, GHC Scrapbooks.
[300] "Ocmulgee Indian Sites 1,000 Years Old Again Under Study by Archaeologists," *Fitzgerald Leader-Enterprise*, June 4, 1956, GHC Scrapbooks.

referred to Native Americans as "The Savages,"[301] but overwhelmingly white Georgians struck a tone of sorrow and, just as often, intrigue. One newspaper noted, "Today the white citizens of the United States are giving their red brethren more attention and sympathetic interest than ever before."[302] As proof of this statement, the author refers to the Georgia Historical Commission's work to turn the Vann House into an Indian museum and the "increasing attention" shown to the Etowah Mounds and Ocmulgee Mounds.

Often, southern sympathy for exiled Cherokee resonates with the vanishing Indian theory. In the 1940s, the Floyd County Historical Commission commissioned a bronze likeness of a Native American to commemorate the "period of banishment" which was "one of the most heart-breaking records of American history."[303] When the local group failed to secure additional funding and willpower to cast the draft clay figure in bronze, the project was abandoned. The statue stood as a representation of the vanished Cherokee, literally called "The Last of the Cherokee." When the New Echota restoration gained popularity in the 1950s, newspapers referred to the town as "[t]he capital of a lost and tragic nation" and the "last capitol [sic] of the Cherokee nation."[304] Despite the sympathy from many southerners, the story the south wrote for themselves allegedly on behalf of the Cherokee was not necessarily one of selfless atonement.

Economic Impacts

The desire to revive Cherokee historic sites in Georgia was also a direct result of the

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[301] Tom Sellers, "Mystery of Metal Bars Dated 1705 Still Baffles Nation's Experts Eight Years After Discovery," *Columbus Ledger*, March 11, 1956, GHC Scrapbooks.
[302] "First Georgia Historical Drama At Stone Mountain Theatre," *Atlanta Advertiser*, May 29, 1953, GHC Scrapbooks.
[303] Ernestine West, "Has Statue – Like Race It Symbolizes – Been Banished From Its Birthplace," *Rome Tribune*, January 29, 1956, GHC Scrapbooks. They initially commissioned a statue of Chief John Ross, but when the sculptor determined that Ross was "not a real Indian" (Ross's father was Scotch and his mother was Cherokee), and there was "nothing about him that slightly resembled an Indian," the sculptor went to North Carolina to make sketches of citizens of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.
[304] "Malone to Report Findings on Location of New Echota," *Gordon County News*, October 13, 1953, GHC Scrapbooks.

regional economic success enjoyed in North Carolina after the development of Cherokee historic attractions. Around this time, three popular historic attractions cropped up in the Qualla Boundary in Cherokee, North Carolina – the headquarters of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. White people interested in Cherokee history and economically improving the region invested in a museum; Oconaluftee Indian Village, a reproduction of a historic Cherokee village; and *Unto These Hills*, an outdoor historical drama.[305] Georgia sought to capitalize on similar projects.[306]

The goal of the New Echota and the Vann House restorations was to create a tourism success in Georgia the likes of Colonial Williamsburg and the three North Carolina Cherokee attractions. Time and time again, both those affiliated with the Georgia Historical Commission and the public evoke Colonial Williamsburg. One newspaper noted that Georgia could expect $10 of income at hotels, restaurants, and other tourism needs for every tourist. Given the six million visitors already brought to Virginia, "you figure out how much the Williamsburg restoration has brought into Virginia."[307] In addition to Williamsburg level visitation and profits, the Georgia Historical Commission hoped it could form its own trio attraction in North Georgia. They hoped the Vann House would become Georgia's Museum of the Cherokee Indian while New Echota would serve as Georgia's equivalent of the Oconaluftee Indian Village. Early

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[305] Christina Taylor Beard-Moose *Public Indians, Private Cherokee: Tourism and Tradition on Tribal Ground* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009), 26-27, 53. The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians now operates each of the three attractions.

[306] In the 1960s, Cherokee Nation also capitalized on North Carolina's success with its Cherokee trifecta. The Cherokee National Historic Society formed in 1963 – a joint venture between Chief Keeler and Martin Hagerstrand. The Historic Society went on to open a reconstructed ancient village in 1967, began performing an outdoor Cherokee drama (written by Dr. Kermit Hunter – the same playwright who wrote *Unto These Hills*) in 1969, and opened its museum in 1974. "CHC FAQ," Cherokee Heritage Center, last updated December 15, 2020, https://www.cherokeeheritage.org/chc-faq/.

[307] M.L.F., "Stopping Tourists Means Ringing Up Cash Register," *Cartersville Weekly Tribune*, January 29, 1953, GHC Scrapbooks. The author, M.L.F., is likely Milton L. Fleetwood, one of the first five commissioners for the Georgia Historical Commission. The author failed to take into consideration that the Colonial Williamsburg restoration was fueled by Rockefeller funds, a luxury which the Georgia Historical Commission never had.

restoration plans called for an outdoor amphitheater at New Echota to stage the Georgia version of *Unto These Hills.*[308]

North Carolina's *Unto These Hills* alone drew $50,000 to $100,000 in box office sales in its first several years of production.[309] In 1952, the Historical Attraction Committee of the Tourism Promotion Division (which included members of the Georgia Historical Commission) within the Georgia State Chamber of Commerce "investigate[d] the development of a great historical pageant for the state of the magnitude of 'Unto these Hills'…"[310] Georgia historians attended *Unto These Hills* as part of the Historical Attraction Committee's study.[311] Two months later, the Georgia State Chamber of Commerce and Georgia Historical Commission announced that they were searching for "fine manuscripts" for a new outdoor historical drama program.[312] They were open to entertaining options from all around the state, but it wanted at least one program to be shown in the North Georgia mountains. One of the resulting dramas was "The White Man's Magic," a play about Sequoyah acted by a presumably all-white cast and written by Gertrude Ruskin, a white woman who called herself Princess Chewani.[313]

The Civilized Cherokee

The new focus on Native American sites was a logical outgrowth of the Georgia

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[308] The theater was never constructed.
[309] "Theatre at Stone Mountain Is Dream of DeKalb Group," *DeKalb New Era*, July 24, 1952, GHC Scrapbooks.
[310] Dan O. Hubbard, "Committee Talks of Historic Site Preservation," *Cartersville Daily Tribune News*, July 25, 1952, GHC Scrapbooks.
[311] "A LaGrange Historical Pageant?," *LaGrange Daily News*, August 25, 1952, GHC Scrapbooks.
[312] "State Chamber Seeks Scripts for Georgia Historical Dramas," *Atlanta Journal*, September 15, 1952, GHC Scrapbooks; "The Marking of Historical Sites," *Dalton Citizen*, September 25, 1952, GHC Scrapbooks.
[313] "First Georgia Historical Drama At Stone Mountain Theatre," *Atlanta Advertiser*, May 29, 1953, GHC Scrapbooks. Note that the Stone Mountain Theatre mentioned is likely not at the infamous Stone Mountain Park, which did not open until 1965. Ruskin was an advocate for Cherokee tangible heritage in Georgia and honorary Cherokee chief. Orphaned as a child, Ruskin allegedly found out that she was 1/32 Cherokee in her adult life. Lucy Justus, "Paleface Squaw Is an Indian Chief," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 6, 1970, ProQuest; W. Jeff Bishop and Georgina DeWeese, "The Chief John Ross House: Myth & History," Trail of the Trail: The Trail of Tears…from Georgia to Oklahoma, February 18, 2010, http://trailofthetrail.blogspot.com/2010/02/chief-john-ross-house-myth-history.html.

Historical Commission's initial Civil War commemoration effort. Writing about southern commemoration of Cherokee removal, historian Andrew Denson noted:

> Fascination with the Cherokee removal can be explained by the success of the Cherokees in adapting to the 'Old South' lifestyle of the whites who surrounded them, embracing Christianity, becoming literate through the use of Sequoyah's syllabary, resistance to removal through legal means, and the suffering and mortality of the detention and forced exile on the Trail of Tears.[314]

Mid-twentieth century white Georgians were also drawn to the Cherokee story by the tribe's embrace of the Old South's largest historical marker – slavery. According to some preservationists in the mid-twentieth century, the Cherokee were early victims of an overreaching federal government.[315] The Cherokee were told by the federal government that their sovereignty did not matter – something that resonated with the Jim Crow South. Indeed, these initial efforts to memorialize Native history "emerged from a mid-century movement when white southerners turned a sympathetic eye toward Native history to mitigate the 'bad press' from the civil rights movement where the racism of the white South toward black citizens received a national spotlight."[316] Slaveholding, alongside literacy and Christianity, caused white Georgians to rethink their views of the "savage" Cherokees into "civilized" Cherokees with "a culture nearly the equal of the white man."[317] A University of Georgia professor working on the research and restoration of New Echota and the Vann House, Dr. Henry Malone, stated in the *Atlanta Journal*:

> I can see Joe Vann sitting on his veranda dressed in a long coat and tie, looking out over his fields, watching his slaves at work. I can see him pick up the Cherokee Phoenix in the afternoon to read what Congress has been doing at New Echota. I can see a man every bit as cultured as his white neighbor. That, I think, is the real Cherokee story.[318]

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[314] Denson, *Monuments to Absence*, 197.
[315] Denson, 131; Miles, *The House on Diamond Hill*, 15.
[316] Gina Caison, *Red States: Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, and Southern Studies* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018), 12.
[317] Dave Le Bey, "Ghostly Photographic Lines May Guide Diggers to Lost Capital of Cherokees," *Atlanta Journal*, November 6, 1952, GHC Scrapbooks.
[318] Le Bey, "Ghostly Photographic Lines." Malone worked for what is now Georgia State University. At the time, it was known as the Atlanta Division of the University of Georgia and later the Georgia State College of Business and

The fact that the Cherokee were seemingly just like the Georgians – civilized, slaveholding, and victims of federal trampling of states' rights – led Georgia to "preserve [New Echota] in simple dignity."[319]

This view of civilization is like a back-handed compliment. Mid-twentieth century Georgians often explain the time before Indian Removal in the context of the Cherokee's civilized ways. The *Atlanta Constitution* referred to New Echota as "the town the Cherokee Indians built in a desperate last-minute effort to copy white man's civilization."[320] The *Calhoun Times* called New Echota "a village unique in the annals of American history, where a nation of Red men rose and fell in a gallant but fruitless attempt to match the white man's civilization."[321] The *Rome New Tribune* stated that "Indian culture reached its highest peak here,"[322] as if Cherokee traditions, and other Native American cultures, prior to European contact and following the Trail of Tears were somehow less than this Europeanized ideal of civilization. Even some scholars on the Georgia Historical Commission echoed these sentiments.[323] Malone "attributed the high culture of the Cherokees essentially to the influence of the white man in the 17th and 18th centuries."[324] White Americans, upholding western European culture as the ideal, often compared (and continue to compare) Cherokee norms and desires to their own. Cherokee "civilization" in often framed in terms of Cherokee desire to be like white people instead of in

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Administration. Malone was later a commissioner of the Georgia Historical Commission from 1968 to 1973. Gilmore, "Georgia's Historic Preservation Beginnings," 11n3.

[319] Celestine Sibley, "Calhoun Pushes Cherokee Capital Restoration," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 20, 1954, GHC Scrapbooks.

[320] Sibley, "Calhoun Pushes Cherokee Capital Restoration."

[321] [J. Roy McGinty?], "Final Effort to Assure New Echota Restoration," *Calhoun Times*, July 5, 1956, GHC Scrapbooks. The author, J.R.M., is likely J. Roy McGinty, who served on the New Echota-Cherokee Foundation.

[322] "New Echota Nears Reality As Land Deeded to State," *Rome News Tribune*, July 11, 1956, GHC Scrapbooks.

[323] Letter from Mary Gregory Jewett to Joseph B. Cumming, May 16, 1958, Historic Sites – New Echota, Georgia Historical Commission Director's Office Administrative Records 1950-1973, RG 61-1-1, Georgia Archives (hereafter GHC New Echota Records & Correspondence).

[324] "Indian Culture to Shine Again," *Atlanta Journal*, July 12, 1956, GHC Scrapbooks.

terms of survival. These misguided beliefs disregard the fact that, even prior to interactions with European settlers, the Cherokee were already civilized: their own cultural identity and customs were well-established.

The End of the Georgia Historical Commission

In 1973, the Executive Reorganization Act of 1972 dissolved the Georgia Historical Commission under then-Governor Jimmy Carter.[325] The Commission's responsibilities were exported from the Secretary of State's Office to the Department of Natural Resources, a newly created conglomerate of thirty-three natural resource agencies.[326] By this time, the National Historic Preservation Act had professionalized the preservation field, and Mary Gregory Jewett took the helm as Georgia's first State Historic Preservation Officer. At the same time, New Echota and the Vann House were transferred to the State Parks and Historic Sites Division of the Department of Natural Resources.[327] The next two chapters will describe the Georgia Historical Commission's restoration of New Echota and the Vann House.

[325] Executive Reorganization Act of 1972, 1972 Ga. Laws 1015. The move was later approved by a state ballot initiative.
[326] Gilmore, "Georgia's Historic Preservation Beginnings," 19.
[327] Note that the State Historic Preservation Office was subsequently transferred from the Department of Natural Resources to the Department of Community Affairs in 2020.

CHAPTER 4

THE RESTORATION OF NEW ECHOTA

The New Echota State Historic Site was the result of decades of private-public partnership, with little solicitation of input from the Cherokees. When the project began in the early 1950s, the search for New Echota was a local effort. Budget and lack of expertise brought the project within the Georgia Historical Commission's control, though local groups remained heavily involved. As the project wore on, it became clear that the Georgia Historical Commission lacked a clear preservation vision to efficiently work through such a large project. To this point, the Georgia Historical Commission had been engaged in comparatively smaller restoration projects as opposed to complete reconstruction.[328] This conflict was amplified by the unique personalities on the team restoring the site. While these years are notable for the Georgia Historical Commission's first Cherokee consultation efforts, they are overwhelmed by the debate amongst Commission members. Initially anticipated as Georgia's Little Williamsburg, the project eventually devolved into chaos as the budget ran low and Commissioners clashed. Nonetheless, the site opened to the public in 1962.

The Search for New Echota

For years, the Calhoun Women's Club hoped for the restoration of New Echota.[329] The earliest Georgian commemoration of the site was in 1931, when the federal government placed a

[328] The Vann House project was already underway by the time any significant progress was made at New Echota.
[329] "Dreams of New Echota Nearer Reality," *Gordon County News*, November 17, 1952, GHC Scrapbooks.

memorial at New Echota, due in part to the club's advocacy.[330] The memorial was dedicated during the Georgia Press Association's annual convention in Dalton, Georgia, and focused on the "civilization" of the Cherokee, particularly the *Cherokee Phoenix*.[331] Though later preservation of the site was under the banner of atonement, the 1931 memorial reveals no feelings of guilt on the part of the state or federal governments. Nor did the memorial's descriptive panels describe the atrocities of the Trail of Tears – instead, removal was an event in which "a treaty was negotiated…whereby the entire Cherokee territory was ceded…"[332]

Following the dedication, the Calhoun Women's Club's efforts to engage in additional preservation were hindered by the Great Depression, and the project remained dormant until 1952 when the Calhoun Chamber of Commerce made the search for New Echota's buildings a priority.[333] That same year, the Georgia legislature approved the prospective acquisition of New Echota from Gordon County. Gordon County and later the New Echota-Cherokee Foundation continued to provide support and funding for acquiring land.[334] The law also created the New Echota State Memorial Park to "commemorate forever the historic grounds of the foremost tribal family of America, the land of the Cherokees."[335]

Following the acquisition, the Georgia Historical Commission began documenting the site. Dr. Henry Malone was hired in May 1953 to use documentary sources to find the town's

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[330] "Georgia Press Association Dedicates Memorial to Indian Tongue Newspaper," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 18, 1931, ProQuest.
[331] "Georgia Press Association Dedicates Memorial."
[332] "Historic Commission to Start Excavating New Echota Soon," *Gordon County News*, November 17, 1953, GHC Scrapbooks.
[333] Sibley, "Calhoun Pushes Cherokee Capital Restoration."
[334] "Chamber of Commerce Buys 145 Acres of Land at New Echota," *Calhoun Times*, January 1, 1954, GHC Scrapbooks; "Calhoun Seeking Funds To Restore New Echota," *Rome Tribune*, January 9, 1955, GHC Scrapbooks; "Committee in Charge of New Echota Plans," *Calhoun Times*, January 6, 1955, GHC Scrapbooks.
[335] New Echota State Memorial Park, 1952 Ga. Laws 609, http://metis.galib.uga.edu/ssp/cgi-bin/legis-idx.pl?sessionid=4948683c-01c50f8e43-0428&type=law&byte=211852318.

lost buildings.[336] In October, following the discovery of an 1825 surveyor's map, Malone was confident that he found the correct layout of the site.[337] Malone was able to make rough estimates of the building types and design from an 1820 Cherokee resolution to build New Echota, first-person accounts of the buildings in letters and literature, and announcements in the *Cherokee Phoenix*.[338]

The Georgia Historical Commission initially hoped to secure archaeologists from the National Park Service to increase funding and elevate interest in the New Echota restoration. Unfortunately for the Commission, the National Park Service was unwilling to do work over the winter and the Commission was not willing to wait.[339] Despite Director C.E. Gregory's belief that "the help of a nationally known expert would be worth waiting for," the Commission hired Clemens de Baillou. Commissioner A.R. Kelly, an anthropology professor at the University of Georgia and former chief archaeologist of the National Park Service, did not think de Baillou "had sufficient experience for the important work at New Echota."[340] De Baillou was an anthropology professor at the University of Georgia, exiled Austrian baron, and, at the time, a relatively inexperienced archaeologist.[341] De Baillou arrived at New Echota in early March 1954 to start pre-excavation work.[342] This included commissioning aerial photographs and sectioning off test-plots. With the help of the State Highway Commission, they soon located three other

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[336] "New Echota Restoration Plan to Be Outlined," *Gordon County News*, May 18, 1953, GHC Scrapbooks.
[337] "Dreams of New Echota Nearer Reality;" Le Bey, "Ghostly Photographic Lines; "Malone Locates New Echota Indian Village," *Cartersville Weekly Tribune*, October 26, 1953, GHC Scrapbooks.
[338] "Malone's New Echota Report Highly Praised," *Gordon County News*, October 20, 1953, GHC Scrapbooks.
[339] Letter from C.E. Gregory to R.D. Self, January 13, 1954, Georgia Historical Commission Director's Office Project Correspondence and Reports, 1951-1965, New Echota - de Baillou, Clemens Correspondence, RG 61-1-21, Georgia Archives (hereafter de Baillou Correspondence).
[340] Letter from C.E. Gregory to R.D. Self, January 13, 1954, de Baillou Correspondence; "Arthur Kelly," National Park Service, accessed May 15, 2021, https://www.nps.gov/people/Arthur-kelly.htm;%20https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Randolph_Kelly.
[341] De Baillou is named as a professor of ethnohistory and anthropology in some sources and a German language professor in others. By this time, de Baillou had already done excavation work at the Vann House but it is unclear what other archaeology experience he had prior to New Echota.
[342] "Preliminary Survey Begins On New Echota Project," *Gordon County News*, March 11, 1954, GHC Scrapbooks.

homes, including those of the Hicks, McCoys, and Rogers.[343] In late March, Lewis Larson, the state archaeologist, arrived at New Echota to begin excavation but found that de Baillou's work had not adequately prepared the site, and thus excavation began late.[344] By July, de Baillou had discovered the site of the printing office of the *Cherokee Phoenix,* along with 500 pieces of type.[345] The preliminary excavations were finished in November 1954, when de Baillou found the site of the council house.[346] Additional excavations took place in March 1957 to search for Cherokee grave sites and the McCoy Ferry house.[347] The scrapers and bulldozers used in these first excavations made subsequent, clarifying work near impossible.[348]

First Cherokee Consultation

The first consultation with the Cherokee descendants of New Echota did not occur until after the initial excavation was complete. In August 1955, Malone and de Baillou took a ten-day publicity and research trip to Oklahoma.[349] While there, they met several times with the press to promote New Echota and request information about the site from readers and listeners. The anthropologists worked with researchers and archivists from universities and museums in Oklahoma, but often met dead ends. Though much of the trip was "fruitless work," Malone and de Baillou made valuable contacts among the Cherokee. Mildred Viles, the daughter of former Principal Chief J.B. Milam, showed the men "one of the finest personal collections of Indian

[343] "Preliminary Report Filed On New Echota Operations."
[344] "Archaeologist Larson Assists in Echota Survey," *Gordon County News,* March 23, 1954, GHC Scrapbooks; Veronica Fields Johnson, "Lewis H. Larson Jr., 85: Georgia's First State Archaeologist," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution,* December 7, 2012, https://www.ajc.com/news/local-obituaries/lewis-larson-georgia-first-state-archaeologist/fALT7CYgDnAQELyareUE3H/.
[345] "Important Historical Finds," *Rome Tribune*, July 13, 1954, GHC Scrapbooks.
[346] "Indian Council House Site Discovered at New Echota," *Calhoun Times,* November 11, 1954, GHC Scrapbooks.
[347] *The Excavations at New Echota,* Spring 1957, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[348] Roy S. Dickens, Jr., "Recommendations for Council House Reconstruction at New Echota, Georgia," February 6, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[349] "Dr. Henry Malone Issues Report on Oklahoma Trip," *Calhoun Times,* October 21, 1955, GHC Scrapbooks.

materials."[350] Malone and de Baillou lunched with then Principal Chief W. W. Keeler and other Cherokee officials. They also met with Earl Boyd Pierce, an attorney for Cherokee Nation who later secured a large settlement from the United States government on behalf of the Cherokee.[351] Finally, the men met with Wheeler Mayo, the grandson of *Cherokee Phoenix* editors Elias Boudinot and John F. Wheeler. Wheeler had a personal recollection of his grandfather's print of the council house, one of the buildings the Georgia Historical Commission sought to reconstruct.[352] At each of their meetings, the men distributed a package of photos and research completed thus far at New Echota. By the end of the trip, the men formed a relationship between the New Echota State Historic Site and Cherokee Nation which still exists today.

The following summer, Georgia state officials, including Gregory, and members of the Cherokee-New Echota Foundation journeyed to Cherokee, North Carolina. While there, they met with Chief Jarrett Blythe of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, who hailed the restoration as "another step in making the nation more aware of the Cherokee Indians and Cherokee culture."[353] Both the Eastern Band and the Cherokee Historical Association agreed to assist in the restoration of New Echota.

[350] "Dr. Henry Malone Issues Report."
[351] "Dr. Henry Malone Issues Report."
[352] "Dr. Henry Malone Issues Report."
[353] "New Echota Hailed By Chief Blythe," *Calhoun Times*, August 24, 1956, GHC Scrapbooks.

Reconstruction Begins

Figure 1 Map of Present Day New Echota State Historic Site, Map Courtesy of Georgia Department of Natural Resources[354]

By 1955, the Georgia Historical Commission determined that they would reconstruct several of the historic buildings and roadways and enhance the recreational use of the space by building picnic shelters.[355] However, in 1956, the plans for reconstruction and restoration were stymied by budget problems.[356] The State of Georgia planned to provide funds for the project but would not do so until it had title to the land on which New Echota sits. While the Calhoun Chamber of Commerce and New Echota-Cherokee Foundation were working on a "dollar a head" fundraising campaign, their efforts were slower than anticipated, and they did not have the

[354] New Echota Map, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, accessed June 28, 2021, https://gastateparks.org/sites/default/files/parks/pdf/sitemaps/NewEchotaMap2019.jpg.
[355] "Calhoun Seeking Funds To Restore New Echota," *Rome Tribune*, January 9, 1955, GHC Scrapbooks.
[356] J.R.M., "Final Effort to Assure New Echota Restoration," *Calhoun Times*, July 5, 1956, GHC Scrapbooks.

funds to complete the transaction. Additionally, much of the original money they raised was sunk into one of de Baillou's projects for New Echota – the Vann Tavern.

The Vann Tavern

Figure 2 Relocated and Restored Vann Tavern (photo by the author)

The reassembly of the Vann Tavern was the first project completed at New Echota. De Baillou hoped to move Cherokee Chief James Vann's circa 1895 tavern and the tavern's two outbuildings to New Echota as a representation of one of three taverns in New Echota.[357] The buildings, as stated in the previous chapter, were on grounds that were due to be filled for the Buford Reservoir (now Lake Lanier). To save the building, the Georgia Historical Commission

[357] "Preliminary Survey Begins on New Echota."

bolstered their own funding with money raised by the New Echota-Cherokee Foundation and secured expertise from the United States Army Corps of Engineers.[358] In December 1955, the tavern and outbuildings were taken apart with plans to reconstruct them the following spring to what de Baillou believed was the original layout.[359] However, given the budget issues, the buildings remained deconstructed and "in danger of rotting" through the summer of 1956.[360] In September, Georgia Governor Marvin Griffin authorized $6,000 in emergency funds to be used to rebuild the Vann Tavern.[361] In December 1956, reassembling of the Vann Tavern finally began, built over what was believed to be the site of one of New Echota's taverns.[362] By that time, de Baillou's markings to reassemble the pieces had worn off, slowing down the reconstruction process.[363]

The Vann Tavern became one of the visitors' favorite elements of the New Echota restoration. Unlike most of the buildings surrounding the tavern, the Vann Tavern was old. Visitors were intrigued by the hand-hewn logs.[364] Today, the Vann Tavern continues to excite with scandalous stories of James Vann's drunken antics and the novelty of a to-go alcohol window.[365] At the time the Vann Tavern was finished, however, the opinions of the New Echota restoration crew were split, leading to the first large conflict in the New Echota project. Director Gregory repeatedly voiced his disdain for the tavern, though he initially voiced support for

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[358] "$10,000 for Vann Cabin Set Aside," *Atlanta Journal*, August 29, 1956, GHC Scrapbooks.
[359] Margaret Shannon, "1805 Indian Tavern Near Gainsville To Be Part of Last Cherokee Capital," *Atlanta Journal*, December 28, 1955, GHC Scrapbooks.
[360] [McGinty?], "Final Effort to Assure New Echota Restoration;" "$10,000 for Vann Cabin Set Aside."
[361] "Restoration Work Will Begin Soon at New Echota, Cherokee Capital," *Rome News-Tribune*, September 3, 1956, GHC Scrapbook. He eventually gave $10,000 total to the $11,000 required for the building to be reassembled. Letter from C.E. Gregory to A.R. Kelly, April 16, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[362] "Time Capsule is Sealed in First Echota Building," *Calhoun Times*, December 9, 1956, GHC Scrapbooks.
[363] Letter from C.E. Gregory to H. Roy McGinty, April 22, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[364] Shannon, "1805 Indian Tavern;" "Vann's Tavern," *Gordon County News*, September 3, 1957, GHC Scrapbooks.
[365] De Baillou also found the window, which he called a "jug hole," fascinating. Frank Wells, "Fled From Nazis: Austrian Diplomat 'Digs' Into History," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, February 3, 1956, GHC Scrapbooks.

moving it to New Echota. Gregory's feelings were largely based on his belief that de Baillou's expenditure of "$11,000 putting a log house back together" caused Governor Griffin and Secretary of State Fortson to provide only limited funding to the Georgia Historical Commission.[366] Thomas Little, one of de Baillou's biggest critics, felt that the restoration of the tavern was "amateurish" and "embarrassing to the Commission."[367] Little was hired in 1957 to reconstruct the Cherokee public buildings and brought with him the attitudes of his previous work on the Colonial Williamsburg restoration.[368] As described further below, Little's main gripe was that de Baillou's definition of historic authenticity was completely different from his own.

De Baillou was later supported by most members of the New Echota Advisory Committee, formed in January 1958 to address the conflicts between the Commission's experts. At a February 1958 meeting of the group, Kelly "commended the Tavern as a valid, invaluable and ethical edifice."[369] The New Echota Advisory Committee went on to unanimously pass a motion that the tavern was "of the correct historical period preserving faithfully the historical atmosphere of New Echota."[370] Further, "[t]he committee specifically reject[ed] criticisms directed at this structure on the purely architectural grounds that the building lacks charm and architectural attraction suitable for the 'Washington of the Cherokees.'"[371]

Years later, when Mary Gregory Jewett, Gregory's daughter, became the Executive Secretary of the Georgia Historical Commission, she denounced the inclusion of the tavern

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[366] Letter from C.E. Gregory to A.R. Kelly, April 16, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence
[367] Letter from Thomas G. Little to Joseph B. Cumming, April 16, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[368] Denson, *Monuments to Absence*, 118.
[369] "February Minutes of the New Echota Advisory Committee," February 28, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[370] Little, a member of the Advisory Committee, was not present to voice his opposition. "February Minutes of the New Echota Advisory Committee."
[371] "February Minutes of the New Echota Advisory Committee."

because of its crudeness. She said that the "tavern was out of character with the other buildings" and felt that it should be moved out of the way.[372] Pierce, consulted by Jewett on the potential removal of the tavern, did not believe that the "discerning Ross and pious Boudinot" would have tolerated any tavern at New Echota.[373] In 1968 and 1969, the Georgia Historical Commission tried to move the building out of the historic restoration area to be used as a visitor center.[374] However, bids to move the building were too expensive and the potential to irreversibly damage the building too high to go through with the relocation.

De Baillou may have gotten the last word on bringing old buildings to New Echota – several other buildings have been relocated to New Echota since the Vann Tavern. In May 1969, Commissioner William Tate suggested bringing a home from the soon to be flooded Carter's Dam to New Echota.[375] The house was rumored to be that of the treasurer of the Cherokee. In the 1980s, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources added a historic middle-class Cherokee farmstead to New Echota. While the Cherokee government buildings were intended to represent the "Washington of the Cherokees," the majority of Cherokee families lived in homes like these prior to removal.

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[372] Andrew Sparks, "Indian Village Comes to Life Again," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution,* September 4, 1960, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[373] Letter from Earl Boyd Pierce to Mary Gregory Jewett, October 5, 1960, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[374] Letter from Mary Gregory Jewett to Henry T. Malone, May 15, 1968, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[375] Letter from William Tate to Members of the Georgia Historical Commission, May 6, 1969, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

Figure 3 Relocated and Restored Middle-Class Cherokee Farmstead (photo by the author)

The New Echota Advisory Committee

Even after the tavern was completed, New Echota was surrounded by conflict because the Commission's small budget could not afford the ideas of all the Commission's experts. In January 1957, the Georgia legislature attempted to secure the restoration through a $250,000 fund to be spent over 1957 and 1958 on the restoration of New Echota.[376] The bill was passed with the anticipation that New Echota would "provide the great State of Georgia with one of the most important tourist attractions in the United States of America."[377] The irony that Georgia

[376] Reconstruction of New Echota Authorized, No. 116, 1957 Ga. Laws 580, http://metis.galib.uga.edu/ssp/cgi-bin/legis-idx.pl?sessionid=4948683c-01c50f8e43-0428&type=law&byte=233151560.
[377] Reconstruction of New Echota Authorized, No. 116, 1957 Ga. Laws 580.

was now paying for the restoration of a town that it had a heavy hand in destroying was not lost on some. The *Atlanta Constitution* included, "A little over a hundred years ago Georgia was defying the Supreme Court and the federal government in a determined and successful move to drive those Indians beyond her borders. Now it seems likely that state funds will be used to memorialize them, a somewhat ironic footnote to history."[378]

Unfortunately, the governor did not act on the legislature's resolution and by April 1957, New Echota once again faced budget problems.[379] Thus, the restoration halted and de Baillou and his workers headed home. At the end of May, Governor Griffin finally released $30,000 to the Georgia Historical Commission for New Echota, while designating $50,000 for a museum at Etowah Mounds and $20,000 for the Vann House Restoration.[380] Governor Griffin was reportedly ready to invest an additional $30,000 in the New Echota project.[381] However, the Governor was put off when "the New Echota insurrectionists"[382] attempted to bypass the Georgia Historical Commission with the hope of installing a $96,000 museum at the center of New Echota. Because of this "spectacle of small groups of citizens galloping off in all directions, each with a different 'hurry up' plan," the Georgia Historical Commission was still left with a budget of $30,000 instead of $60,000.[383]

After the fiscal consequences of the internal quarrels became clear, those working on the

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[378] "Once Upon a Time We Hated These Cherokees," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 12, 1956, GHC Scrapbooks.
[379] "Depletion of Funds Stalls Indian Capital Restoration," *Gordon County News*, April 30, 1957, GHC Scrapbooks. This was around the same time that Governor Griffin allocated $971,000 to restore Georgia's capitol dome. Governor Griffin noted that this was almost the same amount spent on the construction of the building in 1889. Perhaps, the governor saw the writing on the wall as to how much New Echota would cost the state beyond the initial $250,000. "Griffin Allocates Funds For Capitol," *Moultrie Observer*, April 24, 1957, GHC Scrapbooks.
[380] "Gov. Griffin Allots $30,000 For New Echota Restoration," *Calhoun Times*, May 30, 1957, GHC Scrapbooks.
[381] J. Roy McGinty, "Co-Ordination Needed On New Echota Project," *Calhoun Times*, July 4, 1957, GHC Scrapbooks.
[382] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Joseph B. Cumming, May 22, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[383] McGinty, "Co-Ordination Needed On New Echota Project."

New Echota project initially attempted to set aside their differences. Jewett, then secretary to her father, wrote:

> Probably more people have been going at cross purposes in Calhoun than anywhere we have worked. Many want only a huge tourist attraction; others are genuinely interested in a historic restoration. After being turned down by the Governor on plans for a fancy museum and allotted much less money than they expected, they are, at last, working together and things should be easier.[384]

The harmony among the Commission's experts soon ended when it became clear that the lack of funds would force the Georgia Historical Commission to change its restoration plans. This led to the prioritization of certain projects over others and conflict among the Commission's experts. Initially, after the pressing matter of the extant Worcester House, the Georgia Historical Commission planned to fill its town with reconstructions. The plan included reconstruction of the Council House, Print Shop, Supreme Courthouse, and other houses. The Georgia Historical Commission also wished to build an outdoor amphitheater and a large museum for concessions and sale of Cherokee crafts. Instead, the allocated funds would be enough to restore the Worcester House and one of the Vann Tavern outbuildings, put finishing touches on the Vann Tavern, reconstruct the Print Shop, and install electricity at the site.[385]

To mitigate impending conflict, Gregory and Joseph Cumming, Augusta attorney and new commission chair, appointed a New Echota Advisory Committee in January 1958 at the suggestion of Governor Griffin.[386] The Advisory Committee pulled together the conflicting groups interested in New Echota, including the Georgia Historical Commission, the New Echota-Cherokee Foundation, and the hired historians and archaeologists working on the project. The

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[384] Letter from Mary Gregory Jewett to H.C. Forman, July 16, 1957, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[385] "Report on New Echota Made To Commission," *Calhoun Times*, July 18, 1957, GHC Scrapbooks.
[386] "New Echota Committee Named By Commission," *Calhoun Times*, January 23, 1958, GHC Scrapbooks. Cumming previously served as one of the first commissioners for the Georgia Historical Commission and held his post as chair from 1958 until 1973. Gilmore, "Georgia's Historic Preservation Beginning," 11.

Advisory Committee was charged with coordinating plans for New Echota through creation of a master plan to guide the Georgia Historical Commission.[387] The Advisory Committee was to consider the reports of historical and architectural technicians and, if those reports conflict, reconcile the differences. The Advisory Committee would then adopt one set of recommendations to forward to the Georgia Historical Commission. Cumming felt the Advisory Committee would "do much to eliminate conflicting views and will doubtless assist the Commission in proceeding with reasonable speed in the completion of the restoration of New Echota."[388] Among others, Cumming and Gregory appointed R.D. Self, Tom B. David, and J. Roy McGinty from the New Echota-Cherokee Foundation; Kelly, Baillou, Little, and Malone, the brains behind the New Echota restoration; and Cumming as chairman of the Georgia Historical Commission.[389] Gregory stated that he did not want to serve on the Advisory Committee, saying "There are some troublemakers on the committee and when an issue arises I want to be free to line up on the Commission's side."[390] Gregory's sense that conflict was not yet over was correct - the creation of the Advisory Committee seemed to sharpen conflicts over the restoration's purpose and budget.

The first meeting of the New Echota Advisory Committee was promptly held in January 1958.[391] Among other things, they decided on ground rules, presented by Little, for the

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[387] Resolution Establishing New Echota Advisory Committee, Georgia Historical Commission, January 10, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[388] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Marvin Griffin, January 15, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[389] Letter from A.R. Kelly to Joseph B. Cumming, January 27, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence; Letter from C.E. Gregory to Joseph B. Cumming, January 16, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence. Dr. A.R. Kelly also took part in the council as a commissioner of the Georgia Historical Commission, a post which he held from the founding of the Georgia Historical Commission until 1968. Dr. Henry T. Malone, while later a commissioner from 1968 to 1972, was not yet appointed. Gilmore, "Georgia's Historic Preservation Beginning," 11n3.
[390] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Joseph B. Cumming, January 16, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[391] Minutes of the New Echota Advisory Committee, January 22, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

remainder of the restoration project. First, the ground rules set the objectives of the New Echota restoration. The restoration should "portray as accurately as humanly possible" the period prior to Cherokee removal in the form of an educational display of living history.[392] Second, the ground rules set requirements for the reconstruction. Buildings would be reconstructed using new materials and finishes that would have been available during the occupation of New Echota. Finally, buildings were to be constructed one at a time to avoid incorrect finishes from stretching the budget too far. At the next meeting, they planned to discuss the creation of a master plan – an agenda item that kept being postponed until the New Echota Advisory Committee was defunct.

[392] Thomas Little, "General Ground Rules for the Reconstruction of the Cherokee Indian Capitol City of New Echota," [January 1958?], GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

The Cherokee Phoenix Print Shop

Figure 4 Cherokee Phoenix Print Shop Reconstruction (photo by the author)

In December 1957, the Georgia Historical Commission signed off on the $14,778 contract to build the Print Shop.[393] The Print Shop was based off earlier plans by Little.[394] Little used dimensions included in historic descriptions to shape the structure and used local materials for the building, including blue stone for the foundation, hewn logs, and clapboard shingles. As a reverberation of his previous success at Colonial Williamsburg, Little planned to use "special old time brick made by Williamsburg moulds."[395] The result was a raised, one-room log building

[393] "Marietta Firm To Build Echota Printing House," *Calhoun Times*, December 6, 1957, GHC Scrapbooks.
[394] Unnamed article, *Gordon County News*, September 3, 1957, GHC Scrapbooks.
[395] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Joseph B. Cumming, April 21, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence. The bricks may have originally been made much closer to home – the overseers of the 1820 Vann House construction sold bricks for the Cherokee government buildings at New Echota without Vann's permission. Miles, *House on Diamond Hill,* 167.

with gable siding, a chimney, and long side windows. Many locals expressed pride in the reconstruction and hoped that the building would set the tone for future reconstructions at New Echota. The authenticity of the reconstruction was questioned by some of the New Echota Advisory Committee but Gregory claimed they did not voice their concerns until after the plans and building contract had already been approved, leading to the Georgia Historical Commission's second significant New Echota conflict.

Most of the New Echota Advisory Committee voiced concern over Little's interpretation and Gregory's swift delivery of a construction contract without first consulting the professionals working on New Echota.[396] At a February 1958 meeting of the New Echota Advisory Committee, the group unanimously voted "that the Advisory Committee must carefully study the historical and archaeological for the overall restoration of New Echota and submit its decisions to the Historical Commission which will in turn give instructions to the architect Little."[397] De Baillou publicly criticized the reconstruction primarily for its lack of historic patina. De Baillou thought the town should be built of salvaged materials from buildings in the correct historical period. Fitting with his ground rules for the restoration, Little believed "[t]here is no compromise in honest restoration work. It should be done, not on theory, but based on fact and precedent in every detail, never a fake, never a false aging, never misrepresentation."[398] Additionally, De Baillou and others believed that the original Print Shop would not have been as elaborate as Little's plan. Instead, he thought the level of ornamentation would fall somewhere between the Vann Tavern and Little's plan. De Baillou said, "Mr. Little is of course very capable, but

[396] Minutes of the New Echota Advisory Committee, April 19, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence; Letter from A.R. Kelly to Joseph B. Cumming, January 27, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[397] "February Minutes of the New Echota Advisory Committee."
[398] Letter from Thomas Little to C.E. Gregory, December 1957, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

possibly inclined to overdo, and to be a little flamboyant as is perhaps permissible in Williamsburg."[399] Kelly agreed with de Baillou, "[urging] that great care be taken in keeping the restoration of New Echota free from elaboration and complex architectural embroidery… He stressed that historical fact must justify every detail."[400] As the conflict grew more heated over the following months, Kelly called the reconstructed Print Shop plans "an architectural monstrosity, a bastard conception of no apparent 'period' or structural integrity… It is an obscene gesture upon an indisputably authentic historic landscape."[401]

Gregory, again in favor of Little's plan, was suspicious of the timing of these comments and felt that if de Baillou had voiced his concerns before the contracts had been let that the New Echota project "might have been saved some hostility that will not die down."[402] However, it should be noted that de Baillou had already voiced his concerns regarding the Print Shop in October 1957, possibly even earlier.[403] Gregory was concerned that the Committee's critiques of Little and the Print Shop would send Little packing for Williamsburg and "really leave this Commission in a hole… He is worth a million displaced Austrian barons."[404] In August 1958, the Cherokee Phoenix Print Shop was erected following Little's plans.[405]

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[399] Letter from Clemens de Baillou to Joseph B. Cumming, October 30, 1957, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[400] Minutes of the New Echota Advisory Committee, February 28, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[401] Letter from A.R. Kelly to Joseph B. Cumming, April 29, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[402] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Clemens de Baillou, March 3, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[403] Letter from Clemens de Baillou to Joseph B. Cumming, October 30, 1957, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[404] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Joseph B. Cumming, April 1, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[405] Newspaper, Home of Cherokee Phoenix Restored At New Echota Site, in *Calhoun Times*, August 7, 1958, GHC Scrapbooks.

Authenticity and the Advisory Committee

By Spring 1958, tensions between members of the New Echota restoration team were at an all-time high. The fights were primarily the result of conflicts over the differing conceptions of authenticity exemplified by the Print Shop and the Vann Tavern. The Georgia Historical Commission lacked a clear vision for the restoration.[406] Both the Georgia Historical Commission and New Echota Advisory Committee sought a "completely accurate"[407] restoration and to make a place that both the Cherokee and Georgians could be proud of. But what was a historic, authentic, and accurate New Echota? Was it necessary to only construct based on known designs, or was it okay to embellish the truth to communicate the "feeling" of New Echota? Should the historic site include rustic, aged buildings like the Vann Tavern or should New Echota appear "at its prime and not as it would look after 130 years of deterioration," as Little sought to show in the Print Shop design?[408] Little "wanted the site to tell visitors that the Cherokees were a refined people who achieved great things, rather than the primitive savages of popular imagination."[409] Including the type of buildings de Baillou wanted on the site – the Vann Tavern and the John Ross House – would defeat Little's attempts to portray the Cherokee attempt for "New Echota to display their 'civilized' status and their determination to remain in their homeland."[410] While Little preached accuracy, he "was willing to stretch the limits of historical accuracy in the interest of cultivating what he considered an authentic emotional experience of the Cherokee."[411] It was easier for politicians to support Little's beautiful buildings over de Baillou's rustic vision; this affected the restoration of the site over the next several years. At no time did the experts

[406] William R. Mitchell, Jr., "July 1969 Report on New Echota Restoration," July 1969, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[407] Letter from C.E. Gregory to H. Roy McGinty, April 22, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[408] Mitchell, "July 1969 Report on New Echota Restoration."
[409] Denson, *Monuments to Absence,* 120.
[410] Denson, 120.
[411] Denson, 120.

think to discuss the issue of authenticity with the Cherokee.

Kelly noted in April 1958, "Up until now the Historical Commission has performed capably and responsibly in all its assignments… It begins to look as if the Commission were a captive organization, no longer able to deliberate independently or to fix policy in the face of outside pressures."[412] The majority of the New Echota Advisory Committee, with the expertise of Kelly, de Baillou, Little, and others, sought a slow restoration to not inhibit accuracy. At their February 1958 meeting, they unanimously voted on a motion which stated "Be it resolved that before any masterplan be adopted or enacted, it be submitted to this committee for its consideration and approval, and should it not thereby be approved, it be reconciled after consultation with whomsoever prepared the plan with the purpose of enacting it."[413] The New Echota Advisory Committee wanted to ensure that the restoration did not turn into an inaccurate rendition of the historic town fueled by political and popular interests.

On the other hand, Gregory catered to the interests with power, including the Governor. Gregory seemed to prefer the work of Little because it was more attractive and an easier sell than de Baillou's conception. Meanwhile, those with technical expertise were discredited when their opinions got in the way of Gregory's desires. In a letter to Cumming, Kelly wrote that he thought "senile" Gregory's "unrealistic conception of the New Echota dev., and his plan to dump everything into the lap of the consulting architect (Little), is simply a device to short-circuit the technicians, ---particularly DeBailliou who is his bete noir [sic.]."[414] Further, Kelly felt the extensive combined experience of the men on the New Echota Advisory Committee should not

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[412] Letter from A.R. Kelly to Joseph B. Cumming, April 29, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence. It should be noted that, prior to Kelly giving this perspective, Gregory had asked Kelly to resign for Kelly's support of de Baillou over the print shop debacle. Letter from C.E. Gregory to A.R. Kelly, April 16, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

[413] Little was not present at this meeting. "February Minutes of the New Echota Advisory Committee," GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

[414] Letter from A.R. Kelly to Joseph B. Cumming, March 4, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

be cast aside because of Gregory's "uncompromising animus" toward de Baillou.[415] Though de Baillou may have been underexperienced at the start of the New Echota restoration, Kelly noted that by this time "DeBailliou [sic.] has developed into a fine historical technician" and had been recognized for his contribution to Cherokee ethno-history.[416] Besides de Baillou, the other men of the Advisory Committee had proven their worth to the project - Malone had written a book about the social history of the Cherokee and Joe Mahan was writing his doctoral dissertation on Cherokee history. "Obviously," Kelly wrote, "we cannot support Gregory or any architect who would deny the value of testimony or evidences from such sources, or who sought to derogate such material."[417]

De Baillou, recognizing Gregory's disdain for critical opinions, first went to the New Echota Advisory Committee with his reports rather than the Georgia Historical Commission.[418] From Gregory's perspective, this meant that de Baillou had not been performing the work he was hired to do, and indeed the Georgia Historical Commission was overpaying him. Gregory wrote to de Baillou, "You have delayed and practically disrupted the work at New Echota. Governor Griffin is now withholding any additional money for New Echota until this Commission is permitted to build structures of which the Commission and the Governor can be proud."[419] Not only did Gregory dislike the manner in which de Baillou shared his professional opinions, Gregory did not agree with the content of de Baillou's opinions either. Gregory summarized his view of de Baillou's concept of a rustic New Echota:

> Nor can I agree with you that the poorer classes of the Cherokees constructed the government buildings and made hovels out of them, similar to their own homes. Men of the "Rich Joe" Vann, John Ross, Judge Martin, and other Chiefs dictated the Cherokee

[415] Letter from A.R. Kelly to Joseph B. Cumming, March 4, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[416] Letter from A.R. Kelly to Joseph B. Cumming, March 4, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[417] Letter from A.R. Kelly to Joseph B. Cumming, March 4, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[418] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Clemens de Baillou, April 8, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[419] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Clemens de Baillou, April 8, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

> Constitution and its governmental requirements. They all had expensive and beautiful homes. Why would they let their government down, when they were so proud of it?[420]

The result of Gregory's disdain for de Baillou's opinions, as well as de Baillou's overspending and failure to issue reports to the Georgia Historical Commission, was de Baillou's temporary firing in April 1958.[421]

The conflicts of the prior year came to a head when opposing groups attended a May 1958 meeting of the Georgia Historical Commission.[422] This was the first time the Georgia Historical Commission would be able to hear the contentions between Little and the rest of the New Echota Advisory Committee.[423] Though contentions were largely over past projects, namely the Print Shop and Vann Tavern, Joseph Cumming felt it was "very important to prevent more hassles which may develop into serious controversy."[424] Following the meeting, it seems the experts were resolved to move forward.

After the New Echota Committee resolved to set aside their issues, Governor Griffin's faith in the project was somewhat restored. He allocated an additional $54,225.50 to the $19,225.50 for the restoration of the Worcester House, $25,000 for the reconstruction of the Supreme Courthouse, and $10,000 for additional research on the council house.[425] Funding issues were temporarily assuaged, but the previous budget issues and internal conflicts caused the New Echota restoration to be delayed by months and years. The vision of an Indian

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[420] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Clemens de Baillou, March 3, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[421] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Clemens de Baillou, April 16, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence; Letter from C.E. Gregory to Joseph B. Cumming, April 11, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence. De Baillou seems to have been rehired shortly thereafter but de Baillou's affiliation with the Georgia Historical Commission ended sometime in the 1960s, though he was still consulted on the work that he had previously done.
[422] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Henry Malone, March 25, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[423] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Henry Malone, March 25, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[424] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Thomas Little, March 25, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[425] "New Funds Appropriated For 2 Echota Buildings," *Daily Tribune News*, September 9, 1958, GHC Scrapbooks.

Williamsburg was left at a handful of buildings. Bad blood remained, particularly between de Baillou and Gregory, as the reconstructions continued.

Supreme Courthouse

Figure 5 Cherokee Supreme Courthouse Reconstruction (photo by the author)

In May 1958, the Georgia Historical Commission decided to prioritize reconstruction of the Cherokee government buildings. As per usual, de Baillou butted heads on this plan, as just the month prior, the New Echota Advisory Committee voted to construct the Boudinot house

next per de Baillou's request.[426] In July, the New Echota Advisory Committee met without de Baillou and Kelly.[427] The result of the attendance was a reversal of earlier Committee meetings in which de Baillou and Kelly's motions carried unanimously. At this meeting, the New Echota Advisory Committee determined that Little's Print Shop would set the tone for future work at the historic site, including the Supreme Courthouse. Thus, Little's design was used to construct the Supreme Courthouse by 1960. The new Supreme Courthouse is a "neat, trim" two-story building with white siding and green shutters.[428]

In August 1995, New Echota hosted a historic event – a special supreme court session including both the Cherokee Nation and Eastern Band met in the reconstructed Cherokee Supreme Courthouse.[429]

[426] "April Minutes of the New Echota Advisory Committee," April 19, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence. Though there was a big push in the early years to rebuild the Boudinot house because it was so similar to the Worcester House, and thus easier and cheaper to design and build, the house has never been reconstructed for the same reason – visitors do not need to see two of the same building. David Gomez (site manager, New Echota State Historic Site and Vann House State Historic Site), in discussion with the author, January 12, 2021. Additionally, noted in Chapter Seven, the Boudinot House has come to serve as a pseudo-memorial at New Echota.
[427] New Echota Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes, July 10, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[428] Spark, "Indian Village Comes to Life Again."
[429] "Historic Session of Georgia Supreme Court Held in New Echota," *Cherokee Advocate*, August 1995, American Indian Newspapers.

The Worcester House

Figure 6 Worcester House Restoration (photo by the author)

The Worcester House was the only New Echota building still standing when the restoration project began. By this time, however, the two-story home had been reduced to one story by several fires and a lot of work was necessary to restore the home to its appearance during Worcester's occupation. By November 1957, Dr. Henry Chandlee Forman, a restoration architect and former National Park Service archaeologist at Jamestown, had developed a restoration plan of the Worcester House.[430] Although the Worcester House restoration originally was the highest priority for the New Echota restoration, work on the Worcester House took a

[430] Letter from H.C. Forman to C.E. Gregory, November 5, 1957, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence; "Echota Advisory Group To Meet Here Saturday," *Calhoun Times*, April 17, 1958, GHC Scrapbooks.

back seat as the Vann Tavern budget grew out of control. From Forman's perspective, de Baillou's antics continued to delay the Worcester House restoration. Forman believed that de Baillou attempted to block Forman's restoration project by drawing up his own plans for the Worcester House restoration.[431] De Baillou's chief complaint was that Forman was not following Worcester's own plan for the house, the only period document which de Baillou deemed reliable.[432] Among other differences, Forman's plan called for an inside stair, while Worcester's plan included an outside stair.[433] Forman dismissed Worcester's plan as a preliminary sketch and insisted the "most valuable piece of evidence is the house itself."[434] Overall, the New Echota Committee determined that, given Forman's expertise and the amount of work that had already been put into the Worcester restoration, no changes would be made to Forman's plan.[435] Nonetheless, the Worcester House was restored to Forman's design with de Baillou's outside stair, and furnished just in time for the 1962 dedication.[436]

[431] Letter from H.C. Forman to C.E. Gregory, January 25, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence; Letter from Clemens de Baillou to H.C. Forman, April 24, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence; Letter from C.E. Gregory to H. Roy McGinty, April 22, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[432] Letter from Clemens de Baillou to C.E. Gregory, November 21, no year given but likely 1957, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[433] The Worcester house now includes both an inside stair and an outside stair.
[434] Letter from H.C. Forman to Clemens de Baillou, no date but likely November 1957, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[435] Minutes of the New Echota Advisory Committee, April 19, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[436] Letter from Tom B. David to New Echota Restoration Committee, April 9, 1962, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

The Council House

Figure 7 Council House Reconstruction (photo by the author)

In 1994, the Council House became the final reconstruction added to the New Echota State Historic Site. Though the Council House was prioritized in the initial plans for the New Echota restoration, the Commission's experts could not reach a unanimous conclusion from the evidence. Again, the Commission experts fought over whether the Council House more closely followed earlier or later Cherokee council houses. De Baillou was convinced that it was a circular building with a conical roof, as evidenced by what he believed were post holes in the ground. He was later proved wrong by the $10,000 allocated to additional research. In February

1959, the Georgia Historical Commission finally found evidence at the National Archives that the council house was a two-story rectangle made of hand-hewn logs.[437]

A decade later, the Council House still had not been reconstructed.[438] The Commission still felt that the Council House needed to be constructed, but continued to argue over the appearance of the structure. Though many of the current Commissioners had not worked on New Echota since its inception, Jewett, Malone, and Cumming remained. Malone was eager to have a Council House erected and provided evidence to the Commission's experts.[439] The evidence was largely compiled earlier by de Baillou, and heavily leaned in favor of a more rustic, circular structure. Jewett felt the evidence ought to reflect more of Little's point of view, including his original guidelines.[440] Moreover, Jewett did not share Malone's eagerness to build a council house. She wrote Malone, "we would be less than honest if we should restore a town to an exact period and intrude a building which is not proven. We have an excellent reputation among our peers for integrity in our work. I can not believe that the new Commission would choose to compromise it."[441]

In 1969, the Georgia Historical Commission returned to fieldwork in search for clarifying evidence. This time, the Commission hired Steve Baker, a recent anthropology graduate from the University of Kansas, to lead the project.[442] Baker doubted the accuracy of the Drane Survey in

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[437] "New Echota In Gordon County Destined To Be 'Little Williamsburg' Says Architect For Historical Commission," *Daily Tribune News*, February 17, 1959, GHC Scrapbooks; "Georgia Historical Commission to rebuild Cherokee Indian town of New Echota," *News Record*, May 27, 1959, GHC Scrapbooks.
[438] "Report on Recommendations of Council House Committee" in Letter from Mary Gregory Jewett to Georgia Historical Commission, April 7, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[439] Letter from Mary Gregory Jewett to Henry T. Malone, May 15, 1968, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[440] Little himself could not be present, as he was killed in a plane crash in 1962. Associated Press, "Paris Plane Crash Spurs Cultural Growth in Atlanta," Fox News, May 31, 2012, https://www.foxnews.com/us/paris-plane-crash-spurs-cultural-growth-in-atlanta.
[441] Letter from Mary Gregory Jewett to Henry T. Malone, May 15, 1968, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[442] Baker went on to complete a graduate degree in history at the University of South Carolina in 1974. "Steven Guy Baker Collection," Native American Studies Archive, University of South Carolina Lancaster, last updated October

which de Baillou and Malone placed their trust prior to their initial excavation.[443] Given that most of the 1950s work was based on the survey, de Baillou was reluctant to agree with Baker.[444] However, de Baillou admitted that it was time for additional investigation on New Echota, given that no new information had been uncovered in fifteen years. Much like the former Director Gregory, Baker resented de Baillou's poor recordkeeping. De Baillou had reportedly uncovered a large amount of information which he never disclosed, which led Baker to believe "someone was trying to get away with murder."[445]

Only a few months prior to Baker's investigation, the state elected to lease several hundred acres of land to expand the nearby Elk's Club. The Club was run by the same Calhounians who had raised funds and offered land for the New Echota project in the first place. The Georgia Historical Commission, particularly Jewett, seemed to have taken a stand against what they regarded as an encroachment.[446] The majority initially felt that the land should be retained for the sole purpose of historic development.[447] However, Commissioner John Goddard, Jr., an attorney and founder of the Griffin Historical and Preservation Society (now the Griffin-Spalding Historical Society), was of the opinion that because the Commission was not actively

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23, 2014, https://www.sc.edu/about/system_and_campuses/lancaster/documents/native_american_studies/archives/native_american_studies/steven_guy_baker/baker_collection.pdf.

[443] Letter from Clemens de Baillou to Steve Baker, August 29, 1969, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

[444] Though de Baillou was now working at the Augusta Museum, Baker corresponded with de Baillou to discuss their professional opinions and to request any of de Baillou's data and reports that had not been turned over to the Commission.

[445] Steve Baker, "Field Report for New Echota," September 2, 1969, page 46, Georgia Historical Commission Director's Office Project Correspondence and Reports, 1951-1965, New Echota - Baker, Steven G. Reports, RG 61-1-21, Georgia Archives (hereafter GHC Baker Reports).

[446] Letter from John H. Goddard, Jr. to Mary Gregory Jewett, February 17, 1969, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence; Letter from Beverly DuBose to Joseph B. Cumming, February 13, 1969, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

[447] Letter from Gordon F. Price to Mary Gregory Jewett, February 14, 1969, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence; Letter from Henry T. Malone to Mary Gregory Jewett, February 13, 1969, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

involving the land for its restoration project that the Commission had no use for it.[448] Further, Goddard and Malone saw no need to create opposition to the long term goals of the Commission by denying the lease.[449] To favor the lease would place their future historic endeavors in danger, but to deny the lease would foreclose any hope of good relations with Calhoun and incite the Legislature, with whom Calhoun had sway, to not support the Commission's future endeavors.[450] The majority took this compromise view, resulting in Georgia passing a law which authorized the State Properties Control Commission to lease land across the highway from New Echota to the Calhoun Elks Club.[451] Baker, the archaeologist, found this worrisome as it may disturb potential archaeological sites. It did, and it does not appear that the Georgia Historical Commission consulted the Cherokee at any point about the destruction of their heritage. [452]

Following Baker's dig, it was felt that there still was not enough information to accurately reconstruct the council house, and there likely never would be.[453] Thus, several experts felt that any attempt to reconstruct the council house would be misrepresentation. Should the Commission decide to move forward with the reconstruction anyway, the experts suggested creating a model of three types of council houses accompanied by the documentary evidence for each "so that the visitors would see for themselves how difficult it is to reconstruct a historical

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[448] Letter from John H. Goddard, Jr. to Mary Gregory Jewett, February 17, 1969, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence; "About," Griffin Spalding Historical Society, accessed May 13, 2021, http://www.griffinhistory.com/about/.

[449] Letter from John H. Goddard, Jr. to Mary Gregory Jewett, February 17, 1969, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence; Letter from Henry T. Malone to Mary Gregory Jewett, February 13, 1969, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

[450] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Members of the Georgia Historical Commission, February 14, 1969, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

[451] Lease of Land to Calhoun Elks Home, Inc. Authorized, No. 6 1969 Ga. Laws 209, http://metis.galib.uga.edu/ssp/cgi-bin/legis-idx.pl?sessionid=4948683c-01c50f8e43-0428&type=law&byte=304236789

[452] Steve Baker, "Field Report for New Echota," October 31, 1969, page 136, GHC Baker Reports. The golf club was open to having Baker and his team examine the golf course, but on this occasion a worker had tried to cover up the fact that he disturbed the site before he reported it.

[453] *Report on Recommendations of Council House Committee* in Letter from Mary Gregory Jewett to Georgia Historical Commission, April 7, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

building."[454] Some of the Commission members did not agree with the experts' primary opinion not to rebuild. Commissioner Thomas Gignilliat, an attorney, felt that the experts were conflating the capitol reconstruction with a capital case. In recommending that no execution of plans for the council house be made, the experts had, in his eyes, required evidence beyond a reasonable doubt. Gignilliat, Malone, and James C. Bonner, a history professor at Georgia College, felt that "to leave the restoration of the Cherokee Nation capital without its capitol is all but unthinkable."[455] Bonner, a commissioner and history professor at Georgia College, added that one of the themes of New Echota is acculturation of the Cherokee – by building the rectangular, two story council house, the historic site can show a likely middle stage in the progression between an older Cherokee council house and the one built in Oklahoma in 1850.[456] If the Georgia Historical Commission laid bare their theories to the public whilst erecting what they believed was the council house, Bonner felt that neither the site nor the Commission would lose its integrity.

At the time, the Commission had a new approach to integrity. By this time, Gregory's daughter had taken the helm as executive secretary of the Georgia Historical Commission. Jewett had previously served as secretary for the Commission since 1955. When Jewett took the lead, the Georgia Historical Commission reevaluated its restoration philosophy at New Echota. As then Staff Historian Frances Richardson explained:

> This is the natural development, restoration, and reconstruction of a site's native identity. This type of preservation attempts to assure sameness in all that constitutes the essential character of the place. Its guidelines are to preserve the soundness, honesty and unity of the historic ground… New Echota is …a place for all to come and find inspiration in a

[454] "Report on Recommendations of Council House Committee."
[455] Letter from Thomas H. Gignilliat to Joseph B. Cumming, April 28, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[456] Letter from J.C. Bonner to Joseph B. Cumming, May 3, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

recreation faithfully and authentically.[457]

Within this philosophy, Cumming and Jewett expressed concern that to build a reconstruction of the council house, even with an explanation, "will to some degree impair our scholastic integrity – a very serious thing."[458]

At the same time, William R. Mitchell, Jr., director of Georgia's historic sites survey and state historic preservation plan, proposed a clear preservation policy to avoid the conflicts of the 1950s.[459] Mitchell's report detailed the conflict between Little and de Baillou. If the Georgia Historical Commission is to be judged by Mitchell's viewpoint, the Commission undoubtedly stood by Little's side. Mitchell wrote, "Evidence exists that Tom Little made every effort to live up to his principles and that de Baillou would have compromised and did on Vann Tavern."[460] Nonetheless, the debate continued.

In 1991, the Gordon County Historical Society launched a campaign to raise the funds necessary to build the Council House.[461] Within two years, Gordon County Historical Society raised $30,000 which was added to $40,000 of state funds for the reconstruction.[462] Together, New Echota staff and the Gordon County Historical Society formed an advisory committee which included historians of Cherokee history and Cherokee Nation Deputy Chief John Ketcher, to ensure that the reconstructed Council House was historically accurate. The reconstruction left Little to roll over in his grave – the Council House incorporated porch posts from the ca. 1810 home of John Martin, a Cherokee district judge, Supreme Court justice, and National

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[457] Letter from Frances Richardson to Members of the Georgia Historical Commission, undated but likely July/August 1969, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[458] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Members of the Georgia Historical Commission, April 19, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[459] Gilmore, "Georgia's Historic Preservation Beginning," 18.
[460] Mitchell, "July 1969 Report on New Echota Restoration."
[461] "New Echota Restoration Fund Drive Launched," *Cherokee Advocate,* February 1991, American Indian Newspapers.
[462] "Reconstruction of Cherokee Nation's First Capitol Building in Progress," *Cherokee Advocate,* August 1995, American Indian Newspapers.

Treasurer.[463] The Council House was finally built in 1994 and 1995.[464]

Little Williamsburg Opens

Though many people visited New Echota throughout the 1950s archaeological and restoration efforts, the site was formally open to the public on May 12, 1962. The event drew anywhere from four thousand to eight thousand visitors "who came from great distances. There were Cherokee buffs from Seattle and Key West; museum experts of national standing from as far as New York; distinguished men in allied fields from as far as Minnesota; and holders of doctoral degrees in archaeology and history by the dozens in every direction…"[465] The honored guests included Georgia officials and Cherokee representatives from North Carolina and Oklahoma. The Georgia officials included Governor Ernest Vandiver, former Governor Marvin Griffin, and future Governor Carl E. Sanders.[466] The Georgia Historical Commission invited thirty prominent Oklahoma Cherokees suggested by Pierce.[467] Cherokee representatives included former Chief Jarrett Blythe of the Eastern Band, Senator Dennis Bushyhead of Cherokee Nation, Oklahoma Supreme Court Justice Napoleon Bonaparte Johnson of Cherokee Nation, and Pierce.[468] Both Justice Johnson and Pierce were featured as speakers during the program, alongside a representative of Chief Saunooke of the Eastern Band.[469] Though neither Chief

[463] "Reconstruction of Cherokee Nation's First Capitol Building in Progress."
[464] Robert M. Craig, *Society of Architectural Historians Archipedia,* s.v. "New Echota Cherokee Capital," by Robert M. Craig, 2012, http://sah-archipedia.org/buildings/GA-01-129-0025.
[465] Letter from Mary Gregory Jewett to Joseph B. Cumming, May 16, 1962, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[466] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Carl E. Sanders, May 4, 1962, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[467] Letter from Earl Boyd Pierce to Joseph B. Cumming, January 11, 1962, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[468] Letter from Mary Gregory Jewett to Joseph B. Cumming, May 16, 1962, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence; Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to *Augusta Chronicle*, May 15, 1962, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[469] *Formal Dedication of New Echota, Cherokee Capital Program* (Atlanta: Georgia Historical Commission 1962), GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence. Lack of participation from the Eastern Band was hypothesized to be Gertrude Ruskin's doing after the Georgia Historical Commission tactfully denied her the opportunity to speak at the program. Joseph B. Cumming did, however, acknowledge Ruskin as being one of the first to recommend that

Saunooke nor Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Keeler was able to attend the festivities, Chief Keeler requested that Justice Johnson appoint Georgia Historical Commission Chairman Joseph B. Cumming as Honorary Ambassador of Cherokee Tribe of Oklahoma.[470] Chief Keeler later wrote, "We think the various activities of the people of Georgia, favorable to the Cherokees, will have a substantial and lasting effect on the morale of our people here."[471] Back in Oklahoma, Tulsa Mayor James L. Maxwell declared the day of the grand opening "New Echota Day" and flew Georgia's state flag over city hall.[472]

The effort to commemorate Cherokee Removal extended beyond the grounds of New Echota. A few months before the grand opening of the New Echota State Historic Site, the Georgia legislature unanimously repealed some of the anti-Indian laws passed prior to removal, including the law under which Chief Joseph Vann lost his home.[473] In repealing the laws, the legislature aimed to "aton[e] for the wrong done to these worthy people."[474] The irony of Georgia Congressmen taking action to repeal laws which were "harshly restrictive of the inalienable rights of the Cherokees"[475] while actively subjecting Black Georgians to civil rights abuses was not lost on at least one contemporary. At the same time legislators were voting on the

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New Echota be restored, which greatly pleased her. Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Gertrude Ruskin, April 4, 1962, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence. Letter from Mary Gregory Jewett to Joseph B. Cumming, April 25, 1962, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence. Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Gertrude Ruskin, May 23, 1962, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

[470] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to W.W. Keeler, May 15, 1962, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

[471] Letter from W.W. Keeler to Joseph B. Cumming, May 24, 1962, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

[472] Proclamation April 24, 1962, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

[473] Letter from Earl Boyd Pierce to Joseph B. Cumming, March 26, 1962, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence. The United States did not formally "apologize" to Native Americans until 2009 when President Barack Obama signed off on a "little-noticed expression of regret." John D. McKinnon, "U.S Offers An Official Apology to Native Americans," *Wall Street Journal,* December 22, 2009, https://www.wsj.com/articles/BL-WB-15589. The apology is couched between a measure on a National Guard counterdrug program and reporting requirements in the 2010 Department of Defense Appropriations Act. Department of Defense Appropriations Act, Pub. L. 111-118, 123 Stat. 3453 (2009).

[474] Denson, *Monuments to Absence*, 112.

[475] Denson, 111-12, quoting Acts Relating to Cherokee Indians Repealed, No. 712, 1962 Ga. Laws 154.

repeal measure, black protesters marched outside decrying segregation in the Georgia State Capitol.[476] Despite the hypocrisy, the Cherokee felt this was a step in the right direction. Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Keeler wrote the Georgia Historical Commission Chairman, "We Oklahoma Cherokee are quite elated with this action taken by the people of Georgia…"[477]

Visiting New Echota in the Early Years

Following the grand opening, visitors to New Echota in the early 1960s could explore the restored Worcester House and Vann Tavern and the reconstructions of the *Cherokee Phoenix* Print Shop and Supreme Courthouse. Early interpretation revolved heavily around New Echota as the physical embodiment of Cherokee progress and civilization. Pamphlets told the story of Cherokee civilization through their centralized government at New Echota, invention of Sequoyah's syllabary, advent of the *Cherokee Phoenix*, the mass Christianization of the Cherokee, adoption of agrarian lifestyles, practice of slavery,[478] and "a general adoption of the American frontier economy."[479] The pamphlet only mentions Indian Removal as a segue to the state in which the Georgia Historical Commission found the site, stating "Following the westward removal of the Cherokees in 1836-39, during which time New Echota served as one of the centers of removal activity, the last capital of the Cherokee Nation in the East fell into disuse."[480]

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[476] Celestine Sibley, "Legislator Fights for Indians as Negro Pickets March Outside," *Atlanta Constitution,* February 14, 1962, ProQuest. Sibley sarcastically notes, "For some reason an old state law which forbids a Creek Indian to enter the state except through the 'port of Columbus' seems more harsh than a county or a town which puts out a sign, "[Racial expletive], don't let the sun set on you here."

[477] Letter from W.W. Keeler to Joseph B. Cumming, April 2, 1962, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

[478] Slavery was practiced at New Echota – Baker found what he believed were the remains of "negro houses" behind Elijah Hicks' home, now part of the golf course. Steve Baker, "Field Report for New Echota," October 13, 1969, 110 and October 15, 1969, 116, GHC Baker Reports.

[479] *New Echota Restoration Cherokee National Capital 1825-1838* (Atlanta: Georgia Historical Commission, undated but likely between 1960 and 1963), Georgia Historical Commission Director's Office Publications 1972-1973, RG 61-1-19, Georgia Archives (hereafter GHC Pamphlets and Publications).

[480] *New Echota Restoration Cherokee National Capital 1825-1838.*

The legislature breathed additional life into the ailing New Echota State Historic Site in 1963, providing additional funds "in order that the tremendous amount of effort and expenditure of funds already made will not go for nought and this wonderful tourist attraction which would pay for itself in a very short while, be made into a mecca for tourists."[481] By 1965, the site was well maintained but lacking in interpretive tools. Though Little's "ground rules" for the New Echota restoration called for living history exhibits to be conducted by Cherokees in historic costumes, this seems to never have happened.[482] The Print Shop and Worcester house contained "interesting" exhibits, but other buildings held empty display cases or had never received exhibits at all.[483] Other than these few display cases, the outdoor exhibits and markers were either nonexistent or deteriorated and no written materials were present at the site to aid in interpretation. Visitors were reliant on staff to show them around the historic site. At one point, de Baillou suggested that the Georgia Historical Commission might hire Cherokee guides to live at and lead tourists around the site, but this was evidently dismissed.[484]

To aid interpretation of the site, the New Echota State Historic Site opened a museum in November 1969.[485] The construction of the $70,000 museum was first approved in 1966. The museum building was designed to offer views of the historic area while not detracting from the views within the historic area. The museum's collection of artifacts and their associated exhibits sought to tell the story of the Cherokee before and after the Trail of Tears, particularly the stories that New Echota itself could not reach.[486] The collection included many Cherokee items from

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[481] Development of New Echota, No. 20, 1963 Ga. Laws 310, 311, http://metis.galib.uga.edu/ssp/cgi-bin/legis-idx.pl?sessionid=4948683c-01c50f8e43-0428&type=law&byte=263601581
[482] Little, "General Ground Rules for the Reconstruction."
[483] Alston C. Waylor and William R. Mitchell, Jr., "October 1965 Report on New Echota," October 1965, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[484] Brown, *Reconstructing Historic Landmarks*, 175.
[485] "Museum at New Echota Opens To The Public," *Calhoun Times*, November 12, 1969, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[486] Mitchell, "July 1969 Report on New Echota Restoration."

both before and after removal, including tools, art, a Cherokee Bible, a copy of the *Cherokee Phoenix*, a replica of Harriet Boudinot's tombstone,[487] and a copy of Cherokee laws. Several visuals also demonstrated the work of the Georgia Historical Commission in restoring and reconstructing the site. This included a display of the methods used by archaeologists alongside found artifacts. Finally, the museum showed a scale model of what the village would have looked like in the 1830s, as the reconstructed village itself could not.

The Sequoyah Centennial

On October 30, 1971, following then Governor Jimmy Carter's declared Sequoyah Week, the Georgia Historical Commission held the Sequoyah Sesquicentennial.[488] The day began with a parade in downtown Calhoun, followed by commemorative ceremonies at New Echota.[489] One of the highlights of the program was the Sigma Delta Chi National Journalism fraternity's designation of New Echota as a historic site in journalism.[490] Reflecting on the event, Malone, the chairman of the festivities ,"hoped [we] helped to implant among the people of Georgia a greater awareness of the significance of the Indian heritage in our region."[491]

Again, the Georgia Historical Commission invited Principal Chief Keeler to attend the festivities and give remarks at the Sequoyah Sesquicentennial. Malone hoped that Chief Keeler would speak as it would "be a high point indeed to have someone of [Keeler's] stature"

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[487] Harriett Boudinot was Elias Boudinot's wife. Early on in the restoration, vandals uprooted Harriett Boudinot's tombstone from the Indian Cemetery near New Echota. Chief Pathkiller's tombstone was also vandalized, obscuring part of the Chief's name. "Historic Indian Markers Can Never Be Replaced," *Gordon County News*, February 17, 1953, GHC Scrapbooks.

[488] Sequoyah Week Proclamation, October 22, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

[489] Letter from Henry T. Malone to James F. Corn, October 13, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

[490] Letter from Henry T. Malone to Wheeler Mayo, June 17, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

[491] Letter from Henry T. Malone to Joseph B. Cumming and Edna Langford, November 18, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence. Prior to the event, Malone and the Georgia Historical Commission applied to the United States Post Office to create a commemorative stamp for the Sequoyah Sesquicentennial, but the application was rejected. Letter from Henry T. Malone to Congressman John W. Davis, July 8, 1971 GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence. It should be noted that Gertrude Ruskin initially undertook this work in the 1950s. Her application was also denied.

participate in the program. Malone, while offering time to speak, did not tell Keeler what should be included in his speech, other than greetings of the Cherokee Nation, but requested that he "make an address in whatever style or fashion" Keeler would like.[492] Chief Keeler initially decided to come but was later unable to attend. Chief Keeler sent Pierce in his stead, who gave a speech on behalf of the Chief.[493] The Georgia Historical Commission requested that Pierce discuss "the Cherokee system of laws and courts as evidenced by the construction of the Cherokee Court House at New Echota."[494] Chief Keeler named Malone as a Tribal Representative for the event.[495] Chief Keeler also designated Malone as an Ambassador of Good Will for the Cherokee Tribe of Oklahoma, noting that the Oklahoma Cherokee had discussed Malone's "wonderful" work at New Echota.[496]

Malone also extended an invitation to Chief Noah Powell of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.[497] As with Chief Keeler, Chief Powell was asked to give greetings of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and "make such other remarks as you would choose."[498] Malone, familiar with the *Unto These Hills* production, requested that Chief Powell include a group of dancers in the program. Unlike Keeler and Pierce, Chief Powell was not added to the

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[492] Letter from Henry T. Malone to W.W. Keeler, June 14, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[493] Letter from Henry T. Malone to Earl Boyd Pierce, November 4, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[494] Letter from W.W. Keeler to Henry T. Malone, November 24, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence; Letter from Henry T. Malone to Earl Boyd Pierce, October 13, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[495] Letter from Henry T. Malone to George H. Shirk, July 9, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[496] Letter from W.W. Keeler to Henry T. Malone, July 16, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence. This was done at the suggestion of Cumming and Jewett when the latter worried that "Malone would be somewhat chagrined when he learned that [Cumming is] an Honorary Ambassador and he is not, though he is far more qualified to receive the honor." Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to W.W. Keeler, June 21, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[497] Letter from Henry T. Malone to Noah Powell, November 4, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[498] Letter from Henry T. Malone to Noah Powell, November 4, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

VIP lunch list.[499]

Other guests on the list included James F. Corn, author of *Red Clay and Rattlesnake Springs*, a story about the beginning of the Trail of Tears in Red Clay, Tennessee, as that is where the Cherokee learned that their land was to be taken.[500] Several descendants of prominent New Echotans were present, including Wheeler Mayo and Frank Craig, both descendants of Boudinot.[501] Invitees even included Johnny Cash, who recently played John Ross in a Trail of Tears documentary shot at New Echota.[502]

Conclusion

The first years of the Georgia Historical Commission's restoration of New Echota were marked by conflict. As the first, and only, large scale reconstruction undertaken by the Georgia Historical Commission, the Commissioners and experts were not prepared to decide on a preservation purpose and plan. Outside political pressures caused the Georgia Historical Commission to rush into construction for tangible results when a slower restoration may have led

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[499] A third "chief" was invited to join the festivities and offered a place at the VIP luncheon - Chief Noc-A-Homa, the mascot of the Atlanta Braves from 1966 to 1986. During the game, Chief Noc-A-Homa would preside over the game from his teepee, and "every time there was a home run, smoke would rise out of the teepee and Chief, in full Indian dress, would come out and perform a dance." Chief Noc-A-Homa was originally portrayed by white men, but Levi Walker of the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians got the job in 1969. Walker had the job until 1986, when the Chief Noc-A-Homa mascot was retired. Prior to the Sequoyah Sesquicentennial, Malone wrote Chief Noc-A-Homa to request his presence at the event. Malone said, "It would be most fitting if one of the principal Indians associated with the Atlanta Braves could participate in this activity." Chief Noc-A-Homa was cordially invited to participate in the parade, join the luncheon as an honored guest, and participate in the afternoon ceremonies. Malone suggested that Chief Noc-A-Homa "might be able to dance a victory dance or whatever would seem appropriate..." Letter from Henry T. Malone to Earl Boyd Pierce, November 4, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence; I.J. Rosenberg, "Whatever Happened To… Chief Noc-A-Homa (Levi Walker)," *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, September 4, 2016, https://www.ajc.com/sports/baseball/whatever-happened-chief-noc-homa-levi-walker/ZoBlkrVjEyQbfa85BZbs8H/; Letter from Henry T. Malone to Chief Noc-A-Homa, September 3, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

[500] Letter from Henry T. Malone to James F. Corn, August 6, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

[501] Letter from Henry T. Malone to Wheeler Mayo, July 9, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence; Letter from Henry T. Malone to Frank and Jacquita Craig, June 17, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.

[502] Letter from Henry T. Malone to Johnny Cash, June 24, 1971, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence; Letter from Mary Gregory Jewett to Lanny Williams, November 10, 1969, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence. At the time of the film and the Sequoyah Sesquicentennial Celebration, Cash believed he was of Cherokee descent.

to a more consistent preservation vision. The Commissioners and experts wasted time arguing among themselves about how to complete the restoration instead of consulting the descendants of those who lived and were removed from New Echota. The Georgia Historical Commission consulted with the Oklahoma Cherokee on one major trip but minimally worked with the Eastern Cherokee. While the Commission invited and involved Cherokees at each major event at New Echota, it does not appear that they made a continued effort to consult with the Cherokee as they reached roadblocks in the design of New Echota. However, the Georgia Historical Commission formed lasting relationships with the Cherokee a decade before the Native American civil rights movement and long before other historic sites along the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.

CHAPTER 5

RESTORATION OF THE VANN HOUSE

Figure 8 Vann House Restoration (photo by the author)

Before work at New Echota began, another restoration effort was already underway at the Vann House in nearby Chatsworth, Georgia. The Vann House restoration began at the local level, demonstrating pride in the county's heritage. When the Georgia Historical Commission got involved, the locals retained a high degree of control which resulted in clashes with the

Commission's experts. When the Vann House opened to the public in 1958, it presented a very different view of Native American life than Georgians were accustomed to. Those who restored the Vann House focused on the Vanns' "civilized" lifestyle. What was originally intended to be a Cherokee museum became a house museum for North Georgia with meaning chosen by the white restorers rather than the Cherokee.

Restoring the Vann House

The Vann House was not forgotten after the Cherokee were forced out of Georgia. Under the eyes of a large audience, the Daughters of the American Revolution placed a historic marker at the site in 1915, commemorating the Vann House and Moravian Mission.[503] Following the event, the *Atlanta Constitution* described the Vann House as "the most important historical site of the Cherokee Indians in north Georgia."[504] In 1931, a visitor incorrectly predicted, "In a few more years this old house which occupied such a conspicuous place in the affairs of the Cherokee nation will be no more and again the silent blue of the Cohuttas alone will remain to really know the tragedy of the past."[505]

By 1950, the building was in poor condition, leaving a house less grand than that which Joseph Vann occupied. Following Vann's forced removal, the Georgia Guard seized the Vann House and occupied it for several years. The house passed through the hands of several private owners between 1838 and 1952. During this time, the house was altered to suit the needs of each owner, including a kitchen addition, installation of an interior cellar door, and several porch

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[503] "Unveiling of Tablet on Old Indian House is Impressive," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 28, 1915, ProQuest. The marker is still at the site. Note that while the newspaper article is dated 1915, the marker itself is dated 1916. The Moravian Mission is no longer standing.

[504] "Unveiling of Tablet on Old Indian House is Impressive."

[505] Luther Mann, "Vann Home Scene of Early History," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 19, 1933, ProQuest. While HABS reported that the house was in poor condition in 1934, some visitors comment that the interior was well-preserved in 1933 and 1937. "Chief James Clement Vann House, U.S. Route 76 & State Route 255, Spring Place, Murray County, GA," Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1933, Library of Congress (HABS GA, 107-SPLA,1-), https://www.loc.gov/item/ga0291.

replacements. Despite such renovations, the roof and floor collapsed, and every window was broken by 1950.[506] Dr. J.E. Bradford, the owner who had been renting out the Vann House for twenty years, refused several requests to restore or sell the house.[507]

Seeing this deterioration, local calls to preserve the Vann House began in 1949. Several women in Calhoun felt it was important to preserve the house because of its unique architecture, its importance to Cherokee history, and the fact that it was the home of actor Will Rogers' great-grandfather.[508] Two years later, the campaign to save the Vann House began. In October 1951, members of the Georgia Historical Commission met with Gertrude Ruskin, Ivan Allen, Sr., a great-granddaughter of Joseph Vann, and members of the Daughters of the American Revolution.[509] At the meeting, the group determined that they would raise $5,000 to purchase the home for the Georgia Historical Commission with the goal of restoring it as a Cherokee museum. Allen, Sr., an Atlanta businessman who grew up near the Vann House, guaranteed the first $1,000 donation for the project.[510] Gertrude Ruskin, who wrote "White Man's Magic," sponsored an essay contest in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* to raise awareness for the Vann House preservation. The Whitfield-Murray Historical Society, headed by Dicksie Bradley Bandy, rallied local donations.[511] Together with the Whitfield-Murray Historical Society, they generated interest in the project and boosted fundraising efforts in Atlanta, Chatsworth, Dalton,

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[506] Whitfield-Murray Historical Society, *Murray County's Indian Heritage*, rev. ed. (1987; repr., Fernandina Beach: Wolfe Publishing, 1997), 13.
[507] Whitfield-Murray Historical Society, *Murray County's Indian Heritage*, 15.
[508] "The Joseph Vann House," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 18, 1949, ProQuest.
[509] "Plan to Preserve Inndian [sic.] Chief's Home," *Atlanta Constitution*, October 11, 1951, ProQuest.
[510] "Indian Museum Planned at Historic Vann House," *Atlanta Journal*, April 14, 1952, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[511] Whitfield-Murray Historical Society, *Murray County's Indian Heritage*, 16. Dicksie Bradley Bandy and her husband, Burl J. Bandy, made their fortune in the textile industry following the Great Depression. Bandy became a charitable socialite in Northwest Georgia, contributing to several causes, including the Dalton Hospital, Dalton Salvation Army, and Dalton Regional Library System. Her chief cause, though, was atoning for the Trail of Tears and restoring the Vann House. "Dicksie Bradley Bandy," *Georgia Women of Achievement*, accessed March 7, 2021, https://www.georgiawomen.org/dicksie-bradley-bandy.

and Calhoun. Dr. A.R. Kelly convinced Bradford that the Georgia Historical Commission would faithfully restore the property and obtained a purchase option.[512] By July 1952, the fundraisers purchased the Vann House and deeded it to the Georgia Historical Commission for restoration.[513]

In September, the state allocated $10,000 in surplus funds to the restoration of the Vann House and restoration began.[514] In 1953, the Georgia Historical Commission hired Clemens de Baillou as archaeologist and Henry Chandlee Forman to draft architectural plans for the restoration.[515] Despite de Baillou's relative inexperience, it was reported that within a few days of beginning the excavation, de Baillou "ha[d] learned the exact location of the original kitchen which has been torn down longer than anybody can remember."[516] The archaeological excavation eventually unearthed the kitchen building, smoke house, guest house, office, brick walkway, slave cabins, stables, blacksmith shop, and brick kiln.[517] During the course of the excavation, the men also found bits of pre-Cherokee artifacts and eighteenth and nineteenth century porcelain. In the several years following the dig, the Georgia Historical Commission restored the interior and exterior of the Vann House and in February 1955, the exterior restorations of the Vann House were nearly complete.[518]

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[512] Whitfield-Murray Historical Society, *Murray County's Indian Heritage,* 15.
[513] "Vann House Plans Call for Museum," *Atlanta Journal*, July 7, 1952, GHC Scrapbooks.
[514] "Historical Commission Given Fund," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 11, 1952, GHC Scrapbooks.
[515] "Preliminary Work Starts on Vann House Restoration," *Dalton News*, March 27, 1953, GHC Scrapbooks; "Vann House Contract to Be Let Soon," *Dalton News*, November 8, 1953, GHC Scrapbooks.
[516] "Preliminary Work Starts on Vann House Restoration."
[517] Clemens de Baillou, "The Archeological Investigation and Excavation at the Chief Vann House in Spring Place, Murray County, Georgia, April-May 1953,"in Letter from Clemens de Baillou to Joseph B. Cumming, March 3, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence; Whitfield-Murray Historical Society, *Murray County's Indian Heritage*, 16.
[518] "Vann Portrait Finished; Relics Sought for House," *Dalton News*, February 20, 1955, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.

Conflicts at the Vann House

Interpersonal clashes were not limited to New Echota. Throughout the late 1950s, C.E. Gregory's and Bandy's opinion of de Baillou deteriorated. Gregory "prevented DeBailliou [sic.] from functioning at [the] Vann House with the result that a workman with a bulldozer razed valuable original portions of the building and appurtenance there."[519] From Gregory's perspective, De Baillou "made everybody [at the Vann House] mad by [his] critical attitude, and almost caused Mrs. Bandy to stop the fine work she is doing."[520] De Baillou also attempted to caution the Georgia Historical Commission from acting so quickly on implementing the landscape design from Clermont Lee, a prominent historic landscape architect in Georgia, because de Baillou felt the land would yield more information.[521] What de Baillou saw as protecting the archaeological record, Gregory saw as "fear an arrowhead or two might be lost."[522] Kelly shared similar fears that Gregory and Bandy were causing the Commission to move too quickly, both in the landscape design and the house museum opening.[523]

In 1957, Kelly accused the Dalton and Chatsworth advocates, likely the Whitfield-Murray Historical Society, of bypassing the Georgia Historical Commission in their efforts to restore the Vann House.[524] This contention appeared to be partially over Bandy's level of control over the site and ability to influence both Gregory and Governor Griffin. The Whitfield-Murray Historical Society had circumvented Kelly to relocate and restore a Vann House period log cabin

[519] Letter from A.R. Kelly to Joseph B. Cumming, April 29, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[520] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Clemens de Baillou, April 8, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[521] "Clermont 'Monty' Huger Lee," The Cultural Landscape Foundation, accessed May 13, 2021, https://tclf.org/pioneer/clermont-lee.
[522] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Joseph B. Cumming, May 18, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[523] Letter from A.R. Kelly to Joseph B. Cumming, May 8, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[524] Letter from C.E. Gregory to A.R. Kelly, June 17, 1957, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.

at the site.[525] Kelly felt that Bandy went around the Georgia Historical Commission to get the funds from the Governor. Gregory defended Bandy to Kelly, noting the many donations she secured on the Commissions behalf and anyway, "It is rather a late hour...to criticize Mrs. Bandy."[526] Later, Gregory did acknowledge that Bandy and the Whitfield-Murray Historical Society had made a "'Captive Commission,' insofar as the Vann House is concerned, but that is a rather pleasant and economic condition insofar as this office is concerned."[527]

Like New Echota, the Vann House faced budget shortages. The lack of funds was by and large made up by the enterprising Bandy, but Bandy's ability to procure donations meant that the underbudgeted Commission was at her mercy. Bandy saved the Commission thousands of dollars through solicitation of donations and procured details that the Commission's budget would not even dream of.[528] Bandy managed to secure $8,000 draperies in a period design from Franco Scalamandré, a New York City fabric manufacturer who specialized in historic reproduction fabrics.[529] The historic accuracy of the drapes was questioned by Kelly and the legality of such a gift was questioned by Cumming.[530] The result of this suspicion was Bandy's temporary but dramatic withdrawal from all activities at the Vann House.[531] With Gregory and Bandy's combined weight, the drapes were installed. Commissioner Alexander Lawrence, an attorney and later a federal judge, remarked, "If some of these folks' ancestors had fought at

[525] The cabin was to be used as an office and living quarters by the site's caretaker. Letter from C.E. Gregory to A.R. Kelly, June 17, 1957, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[526] Letter from C.E. Gregory to A.R. Kelly, June 17, 1957, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[527] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Joseph B. Cumming, June 4, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[528] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Joseph B. Cumming, May 6, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[529] Scalamandré's reproduction projects included Hearst Castle, Monticello, the Hermitage, and even the White House under First Lady Jackie Kennedy's restoration. "The Story of Scalamandré," Scalamandré, last accessed February 1, 2021, https://www.scalamandre.com/history.
[530] Bandy accused Cumming of not being grateful for Scalamandre's "magnificent gift." Letter from Dicksie Bradley Bandy to Joseph B. Cumming, not dated but likely May 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[531] Letter from C.E. Gregory to May 7, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.

Kennesaw Mountain as hard as they fight the Battle of the Drapes the Confederacy might have become a reality."[532] Bandy succeeded in getting Marjory Rhodes, a Dalton interior designer, to trim the draperies and scrape the Vann House walls, revealing the original terra cotta, blue, green, and yellow paint colors. Bandy commissioned Frank Mack, an Atlanta artist, to paint a full-sized portrait of Joseph Vann, wearing a ring Bandy borrowed from the Vann descendants, to hang above one of the fireplaces. Bandy also secured permission for a Dalton manufacturer to duplicate John Ross's dining table, then in possession of Ross's descendants, to place in the Vann House Dining Room.[533] The search for period furnishings was aided by the research of the ladies of Bandy's Whitfield-Murray Historical Society as well as Vann descendants, contacts which Bandy procured.[534] Beyond these donations, Bandy helped the Commission secure a $20,000 fund from Governor Griffin to landscape the Vann House grounds. The Vann House grounds were further aided by donations of flowers, shrubs, trees, grasses, and fertilizer, again secured by Bandy, to carry out Lee's design.

Tension arose with Allen, Sr. Allen had donated several items to be displayed at the Vann House, including antique Georgia maps and "rough type" rocking chairs and wood chests.[535] After the creation of the Vann House Advisory Committee, Allen had to relinquish control of the furnishings. Allen also ran into trouble with Bandy. When Allen purchased a few period pieces for the museum, namely a spinning wheel, Bandy rejected them on the grounds that a man who

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[532] Letter from Alexander Atkinson Lawrence, Jr. to C.E. Gregory, May 8, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence; "Alexander A. Lawrence, A U.S. Judge in Georgia," *New York Times*, August 22, 1979, Section D Page 19, https://www.nytimes.com/1979/08/22/archives/alexander-a-lawrence-a-us-judge-in-georgia.html.
[533] Letter from Dicksie Bradley Bandy to Joseph B. Cumming, April 25, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[534] "The 'Go-Ahead' for Vann House," *Toccoa Record*, July 1, 1954, GHC Scrapbooks; Letter from C.E. Gregory to Joseph B. Cumming, May 6, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[535] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Joseph B. Cumming, May 15, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.

enslaved hundreds of people would not have had a spinning wheel.[536] In order to stem potential disputes from Allen, Gregory suggested giving Allen one room to do with as he pleased.[537]

In February 1958, Lee wrote to Cumming regarding the lack of cooperation. She wrote, "When working on landscape plans for the Chief Vann residence, I noticed a certain lack of coordination among those interested in the restoration."[538] She felt that an advisory committee, like that at New Echota, would be a "step in the right direction."[539] In March 1958, Cumming proposed that the New Echota Advisory Committee head the restoration efforts at the Vann House. De Baillou, then on the New Echota Advisory Committee, dismissed this idea. He wrote to Cumming, "I am sure that the Planning Board for New Echota could and would take care of it as you suggested, but that would omit Mrs. Bandy from Dalton, to whom Mr. Gregory has given permission to do whatever she wishes at the Vann House."[540] In June 1958, the Georgia Historical Commission followed Lee's (and de Baillou's) advice, appointing Joseph Mahan, Henry Malone, and Edward Shorter to the advisory committee.[541] Mahan and Malone served on the New Echota Advisory Committee, but Shorter was a new addition. Shorter, the director of the Columbus Museum of Arts and Crafts (now simply the Columbus Museum) was an expert on furniture from the federal period, the era in which the Vann House was built.[542] Unlike the New

[536] Letter from Mary Gregory Jewett to Joseph B. Cumming, May 16, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[537] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Joseph B. Cumming, June 4, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence. Part of Allen's collection, including the spinning wheel, is now displayed in the Vann House. His map collection is part of a rotating exhibit which was on display in Spring 2021.
[538] Letter from Clermont H. Lee to Joseph B. Cumming, February 25, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[539] Letter from Clermont H. Lee to Joseph B. Cumming, February 25, 1958, GHC New Echota Records and Correspondence.
[540] Letter from Clemens de Baillou to Joseph B. Cumming, March 3, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[541] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Edward S. Shorter, Joseph Mahan, and Henry T. Malone, June 17, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[542] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Edward S. Shorter, Joseph Mahan, and Henry T. Malone, June 17, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.

Echota committee, which was expressly created to get all adversaries in one room, the Vann House committee was deliberately kept small for efficiency and the theory that it would result in "less friction."[543] By having a small committee that was prone to agreement, the Commission had an "independent" body of experts that legitimized the decisions of the Commission. Cumming noted "The approval of these gentlemen as to the decorations and exhibits should be ample protection to the Commission against any criticism that we abandon historical accuracy in favor of local sentiment."[544]

Members of the Commission derided Gregory for bending over backwards to accommodate Bandy. Lawrence wrote, "In my personal opinion, you should assume full responsibility for all the decisions with regard to the furnishing of the house."[545] Cumming, too, felt that outside interference should be curbed in the future. Writing to Bandy, he said, "these matters are our responsibility and it wouldn't much help to reply to criticisms by saying that somebody else did it."[546]

Like New Echota, the Vann House lacked a clear preservation vision, which led to conflict between the experts and the locals. The Georgia Historical Commission initially planned on turning the restored home into a museum for Native American relics and other Cherokee artifacts during the pre-Removal period.[547] This would fulfill Georgia's attempts to compete with the North Carolina attractions. Press releases from the Georgia Historical Commission which were included in several North Georgia newspapers noted "[a] similar museum at Cherokee,

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[543] Letter from Beverly DuBose to Joseph B. Cumming, June 13, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[544] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Mary Gregory Jewett, June 11, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[545] Letter from Alexander Lawrence, Jr. to C.E. Gregory, May 8, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[546] Blind Copy to Georgia Historical Commission in letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Dicksie Bradley Bandy, May 21, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[547] "Indian Museum Planned at Historic Vann Home," *Atlanta Journal*, April 14, 1952, GHC Scrapbooks.

North Carolina, attracts thousands of tourists every year and is of great benefit to business men in the surrounding cities."[548] However, the Whitfield-Murray Historical Society, which was soliciting most of the funds and object donations for the restoration, saw this another way. They wanted the Vann House to be a house museum, something other cities such as Savannah and Augusta had, and which North Georgia did not. Gregory agreed with this vision.[549] He felt that turning the Vann House into a Native American museum would result in "cluttering it up with Indian relics, spinning wheels, and a few scalps, if they are available."[550] At most, Gregory thought the third floor of the Vann House could host Indian relics or visitors could just travel to nearby New Echota or Etowah Mounds.

The Vann House Opens

On Sunday, July 27, 1958, the Vann House formally opened to the public.[551] Bandy took charge of planning the Vann House opening in Spring 1958. She sent a suggested invitation list to the Georgia Historical Commission, later supplemented by a list of prominent Cherokees provided by Pierce. Bandy selected the events and speakers for the program.[552] True to form, Bandy secured a donation to cover the costs of the dedication.[553]

The Vann House had frequent visitors throughout its restoration, from as far as New York and Michigan and even including some Cherokees and Seminoles. On opening day, the Vann House received an even broader slate of visitors. On behalf of the Georgia Historical Commission, Gregory invited around fifty Oklahomans to the ceremony.[554] Chief Keeler was

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[548] "Museum Planned for Vann House," *Ellijay Times Courier*, April 17, 1952, GHC Scrapbooks.
[549] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Joseph B. Cumming, May 8, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[550] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Joseph B. Cumming, May 8, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[551] *The Georgia Historical Commission Announces the Formal Opening of the Chief Vann House Built in 1804* (Atlanta: Georgia Historical Commission, 1958), GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[552] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Joseph B. Cumming, June 4, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[553] Letter from C.E. Gregory to Joseph B. Cumming, June 4, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[554] Letter from Dicksie Bradley Bandy to Joseph B. Cumming, not dated but likely May or June 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.

invited to the festivities but declined and sent tidings of his "deep appreciation and gratitude for their untiring efforts in the interest of preserving the culture and historical background of our Cherokee ancestors."[555] Additional Cherokees and representatives of the Cherokee Nation attended, including Pierce and Justice Johnson, who Keeler sent to represent him. Pierce and Johnson were joined by Chief Justice Earl Welch (Chickasaw) of the Oklahoma Supreme Court. Pierce invited Justice Welch to the Vann House opening because of his extreme interest and expertise in Native American issues throughout the United States,[556] potentially to make visitors at the opening aware of continued struggles among the indigenous peoples of the United States. The final member of Boyd's party was Herbert Branan (Cherokee), then Vice President and General Counsel of the Oklahoma Gas and Electric Company. The official Cherokee contingent was rounded out by Oklahoma Governor Raymond S. Gary's representative, John A. Guthrie, an official of the Oklahoma Corporation Commission married to Josephine Vann Guthrie – a descendant of Chief Joseph Vann.[557] Forty-one other Vann descendants were present at the ceremony.[558] Like the New Echota ceremony, the Eastern Band was underrepresented. Bandy invited Chief Jarrett Blythe and tribal council members through Richard Butts, the superintendent of the Cherokee Indian Agency within the Bureau of Indian Affairs.[559] It is unclear if either of the men attended.

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[555] Letter from W.W. Keeler to C.E. Gregory, July 18, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence. Boyd specifically refers to the invitation being given "because of [Welch's] extreme interest in the solution of the Indian problem." Note that while the "Indian problem" is a common phrase associated with Indian removal and forced assimilation, in this context I believe Pierce means Native American problems more generally as he previously states that Welch is "in much demand as a speaker on Indian problems throughout the United States." [556] Letter from Earl Boyd Pierce to Dicksie Bradley Bandy, July 24, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.

[557] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Earl Boyd Pierce, October 25, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence; Who's Who John A. Guthrie, likely in a letter sent from Earl Boyd Pierce to Joseph B. Cumming, October 25, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.

[558] *Vann House*, Georgia Historical Commission, (Atlanta: Georgia Historical Commission, 1970), GHC Pamphlets and Publications.

[559] Letter from Dicksie Bradley Bandy to Richard Butts, July 15, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.

The ceremony minimally involved the Cherokees present at the event. The program included only one Cherokee speaker – Reverend J. Raymond Vann. Reverend Vann, a descendant of James Vann, gave the invocation at the suggestion of Bandy.[560] Though a large group of Cherokees were invited to, and attended the program, none other than Reverend Vann were invited to speak.[561] Cumming presided over the ceremony of largely Georgian speakers, including Congressman Erwin Mitchell, Georgia Secretary of State Ben Fortson, and Governor Marvin Griffin. Bandy, as an Ambassador for the Cherokee Nation, thanked the Georgia Historical Commission, the historic consultants, and the numerous donors for their contributions.[562] In honor of the historic Moravian Mission, Moravian Bishop John Kenneth Pfohl closed the ceremony with a benediction.

By all accounts, the Vann House opening was a success. Jewett wrote, "Speaking as a spectator, and one who was doomed to stand in the sun…I just want you to know what a great day Sunday was."[563] The Vann House opening was one of the first site openings in the Georgia Historical Commission's history. In the eyes of the Commission, Bandy set the bar high for future festivities. Despite Bandy's success, Cumming cautioned the Commission to avoid handing complete control to third parties.[564]

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[560] Letter from Dicksie Bradley Bandy to Joseph B. Cumming, not dated but likely June or July 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence; Letter from C.E. Gregory to Joseph B. Cumming, June 4, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[561] Letter from Dicksie Bradley Bandy to Joseph B. Cumming, [May or June 1958?], GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[562] Clemens de Baillou's contributions were overlooked in the opening day program. *The Georgia Historical Commission Announces the Formal Opening of the Chief Vann House* Program.
[563] Letter from Mary Gregory Jewett to Joseph B. Cumming, July 28, 1958, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[564] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to the Georgia Historical Commission, May 21, 1958, RCB 13557, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.

Grave Digging

In 1960, a rumor came to Mahan's attention that Chief James Vann's body was buried on the grounds of Blackburn House, Vann's sister's home in Forsyth County, Georgia.[565] The rumors were corroborated by the Moravian Diaries, and Jewett sought to consider the possibility of reinterring Vann in the garden of the Vann House.[566] The following year, Bandy secured a permit for the Commission's museum director and archaeologist, Frank Fenenga, to exhume the body in the presence of herself and at least one Vann ancestor.[567] Cumming felt that reinterring the putative Vann remains on the lawn of the Vann house was "at the least in questionable taste."[568] His apprehension was partially due to the fear that Cherokee traditionalists would be upset by the disturbance of a burial for what he believed was a tribal execution.[569] Pierce, who was consulted at the behest of Georgia's attorney general, echoed Cumming's concerns of Cherokee backlash and believed that there would be at least a few Vann descendants troubled by "disturbing the resting place of an ancestor."[570] Cumming also did not want to disturb the overall viewshed of the Vann House lawn – as a burial would not be in keeping with the landscape practices of Vann's time.[571] Moreover, the Commission had no desire to be responsible for the legal ramifications of human burial on state property nor for an illegal disinterment.[572] Even

[565] Letter from Mary Gregory Jewett to Earl Boyd Pierce, October 11, 1960, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[566] Letter from Mary Gregory Jewett to Earl Boyd Pierce, October 11, 1960, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[567] Letter from Dicksie Bradley Bandy to Joseph B. Cumming, [October or November 1961?], GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[568] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Earl Boyd Pierce, November 16, 1961, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[569] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Dicksie Bradley Bandy, October 31, 1961, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[570] Letter from Earl Boyd Pierce to Mary Gregory Jewett, October 5, 1960, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[571] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Earl Boyd Pierce, November 16, 1961, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[572] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Dicksie Bradley Bandy, October 31, 1961, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.

before the remains were exhumed, the Commission was troubled by the legal consequences of exhumation. In 1961, Georgia's Assistant Attorney General advised that "the removal although not legally impossible appears to be highly impracticable under our existing law."[573] In order to not be subject to lawsuits, the Commission would need unanimous permission from every descendant of Chief James Vann, something they would not be likely to achieve. Pierce had consulted with Chief Keeler and started contacting known descendants of Vann, but the Commission could never be certain that all descendants were accounted for.[574] Thus, the Commission decided not to move forward with the exhumation. At that time, Bandy graciously accepted the Commission's decision not to proceed with the exhumation.[575]

However, Bandy soon re-evaluated her stance and moved forward with the exhumation. The dig was started by Bandy with the funding and authorization of Reverend Vann to find the remains of James Vann. Bandy was convinced that the found remains were those of James Vann and sought to have the remains reinterred at Spring Place.[576] Once the exhumation occurred, the

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[573] Letter from Howard P. Wallace to Mary Gregory Jewett, November 13, 1961, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.

[574] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Earl Boyd Pierce, November 16, 1961, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence; Letter from Mary Gregory Jewett to Howard P. Wallace, November 14, 1961, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.

[575] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Howard P. Wallace, November 16, 1961, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.

[576] Letter from Dicksie Bradley Bandy to Joseph B. Cumming, [January 1962?], GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence; Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to A.R. Kelly, August 30, 1962 GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence; Letter from Dicksie Bradley Bandy to Joseph B. Cumming, n.d, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence. She disclosed to de Baillou that she planned to inter the bones, regardless of the Commission's view, on an adjacent plot owned by Dr. Bradley, the former owner of the Vann House. De Baillou then took the news to Kelly who brought word to the Commission of Bandy's plan. Letter from A.R. Kelly to Joseph B. Cumming, September 7, 1962, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence. Bandy disclosed a different plan to Malone and Cumming, who believed Bandy intended for Reverend Vann to take the human remains to Oklahoma if the Georgia Historical Commission would not agree to reburial at the Vann House. Letter from Henry T. Malone to Joseph B. Cumming, September 10, 1962, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence; Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to A.R. Kelly, August 20, 1962, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence. Bandy's intense feelings about the project may have been her attempt to cope with the recent accidental death of her granddaughter. "Coed Beauty Killed by Truck," *Atlanta Constitution,* January 17, 1962, ProQuest.

Commission brought in Fenenga and Larson, to investigate the bones.[577] If the bones did turn out to be Vann's, Cumming believed that cleaning the bones and submitting them to the Smithsonian Institution would be the best course of action.[578] Malone felt the remains, if authenticated, "should be preserved and displayed by the Commission."[579] Complicating "L'affaire Bandy," as termed by Kelly,[580] Fenenga believed that the remains were less than a century old and could not possibly be James Vann.[581] Pierce, after visiting Bandy, concluded that the remains were in fact Vann's.[582] He felt that Bandy's plans to reinter Vann's remains at Spring Place would be fitting with the desire of the Oklahoma Cherokee. The Commission gave "great weight" to Pierce's perspective,[583] but the Commission remained concerned. The Georgia Historical Commission, upon consideration of the evidence, determined that the human remains were more than likely someone other than Vann.[584] Although Bandy honored the Georgia Historical Commission's decision by reinterring the remains where they were found, Bandy never forgave Fenenga.[585]

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[577] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to A.R. Kelly, September 19. 1962, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[578] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Early Boyd Pierce, October 26, 1962, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[579] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to A.R. Kelly, September 19. 1962, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[580] Letter from A.R. Kelly to Mary Gregory Jewett, September 20, 1962, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[581] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Early Boyd Pierce, October 26, 1962, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[582] Letter from Early Boyd Pierce to Joseph B. Cumming, September 22, 1962, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[583] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Early Boyd Pierce, September 24, 1962, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[584] Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Early Boyd Pierce, October 26, 1962, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[585] Letter from Dicksie Bradley Bandy to Joseph B. Cumming, undated but likely December 1970, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence. Bandy and Fenenga's relationship had already soured in the previous decade when Bandy felt Fenenga was slow to erect the kitchen building. The members of the Whitfield-Murray Historical Society wrote Chairman Cummings to admonish the Georgia Historical Commission for its slowness, saying "This first project of the Georgia Historical Commission is proving to be of real value and interest to travelers near and far. Needless to say, it does not present itself well with the inactive clutter on the grounds." Letter from Members of the Whitfield-Murray Historical Society to Joseph B. Cumming, June 22, 1963, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence. At the time, Fenenga's wife terminally ill with cancer and Cumming felt Fenenga was doing the best he could, given the circumstances. Letter from Joseph B. Cumming to Dicksie Bradley Bandy, May 28, 1965, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.

Further, Bandy admitted to Cumming in 1970 that she had "buried a box of the gray body dust from the grave" just South of the Vann House.[586] In 1971, the Whitfield-Murray County Historical Society voted to mark the grave with a headstone for James Vann in 1971, shortly before Bandy died, but the marker was never installed or has since been removed.[587]

Visiting the Vann House in the Early Years

Though the Georgia Historical Commission originally intended for the Vann House to be a space dedicated to Cherokee history in North Georgia, the Vann House instead developed primarily into a house museum. Interpretation focused on James and Joseph Vann, Cherokee "civilization," and the architecture of the Vann House.[588] History was primarily interpreted within the house itself by the Vann House staff and volunteers.[589] In the 1960s and 1970s, the Georgia Historical Commission described the Vann House as "the finest in Cherokee Nation. Built over 150 years ago by James Clement Vann, this elaborate mansion was owned, until the Cherokee removal westward, by his son, 'Rich Joe'."[590]

Conclusion

The Georgia Historical Commission's restoration of the Vann House was one of the first big projects that it tackled, and their first restored site open to the public. The Vann House was

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[586] Letter from Dicksie Bradley Bandy to Joseph B. Cumming, [December 1970?], GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence; Letter from Dicksie Bradley Bandy to Joseph B. Cumming, undated but likely January 1971, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[587] Letter from Dicksie Bradley Bandy to Joseph B. Cumming, undated but likely December 1970, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[588] *Vann House* (Atlanta: Georgia Historical Commission, 1970), GHC Pamphlets and Publications. Though slavery was one of the focal points of Cherokee "civilization," until recently the site did not interpret slavery in depth. Miles, *The House on Diamond Hill*, 191-96. Indeed, neither the 1970 site pamphlets nor the National Register nomination for the house mention slavery at all. 1970 *Vann House* Pamphlet; William R. Mitchell, "Vann House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1969).
[589] Letter from Mary Gregory Jewett to R.E. Ellis, January 29, 1963, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence. The first superintendent and interpretive ranger were a husband-and-wife duo, Robert and Helen Ellis. Ellis-Hall Exhibit Area Sign, Vann House Sign, Georgia Department of Natural Resources.
[590] Vann House Postcard, undated but between 1958 and early 1970s, GHC Pamphlets and Publications.

also the earliest historic site depicting Native Americans living anywhere but in tipis.[591] Through the Vann House, the Georgia Historical Commission sought to tell a story of the Cherokee with which Georgians were not familiar – that of the "civilized" Cherokee. Through their efforts, and particularly through Bandy, the Georgia Historical Commission established Cherokee contacts that were invited to the opening of the Vann House and later ceremonies at New Echota. The Georgia Historical Commission minimally worked with those Cherokee contacts throughout the restoration process and later failed to consult Cherokee directly on reinterring human remains on the Vann property. Later laws, like the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and Georgia's Burial and Cemetery Protection law, would address the latter issue of failure to include Cherokee perspectives. In the future, the Georgia Historical Commission's administrative descendants would grow their relationship with the Cherokee, but the local influence remains.

[591] Loewen, *Lies Across America*, 19.

CHAPTER 6

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES

This thesis has examined several problems in the management and interpretation of Native American historic sites and museums which highlight the appropriation of Native American cultures by cultural institutions. This chapter provides a framework to evaluate a site's current involvement practices – consultation, collaboration, and substantive interpretation practices for museums and historic sites to more effectively include those of the culture it seeks to represent. These criteria echo the historical background in Chapter Two because these practices have evolved as reactions to poor practices in earlier museums presenting Native American heritage. Each criterion will be further developed in this section to demonstrate the need for it in modern institutions. The criteria come from several professional critiques of Native American museums and historic sites as well as one practical guide for heritage professionals. These criteria will be used in the final chapter of this thesis to evaluate the effectiveness of Georgia State Historic Site's inclusion of Cherokee voices.

It is necessary to note a few disclaimers about the chosen criteria. First, while the selected criteria are recognized in multiple critiques of Native American historic sites and museums, they are not necessarily the only criteria one can use to determine effectiveness of inclusion of Native American perspectives. Certainly, there are unforeseen issues that will arise in the future that museums and historic sites must tackle as these organizations continue to work together. More importantly, the criteria that truly matter are those determined by members of the interpreted culture. Though the given criteria seem important, a museum or historic site seeking to interpret

another culture should not seek to merely check this list but should seek a relationship in which the Native American community has meaningful authority to set their own criteria. On a related note, the criteria ask for a great deal of emotional labor from Native communities. Working with Native communities to determine what would be meaningful collaboration and meaningful compensation is important. Second, there is no "correct," canned history that museum professionals must include at their site. Again, determining what history is appropriate for the site should be done in collaboration with Native American communities. Instead, the criteria are largely procedural – practices that professionals can use to achieve effective representation.

Criteria

Native American Advisory Council

Establishing a Native American Advisory Council streamlines a museum or historic site's process of consulting with tribes and ensures that the organization will at least consider tribal input. The tribe can determine who will serve on the council, giving the tribe some degree of control over the council. In turn, the organization knows who they will initially approach for advice and consultation. The museum or historic site should consult with others outside of the council, but the council provides connections to the proper people to discuss museum business with inside the tribe when the council cannot.

Authority Sharing and Privileging Native Voices in Exhibits

Authority sharing in the creation of museum exhibits is the presentation of both the museum and tribal perspectives on equal ground where each perspective is valued and treated with respect. In authority sharing, all parties "have equal weight in the development of the content for an exhibit, program, or policy…with an eye toward bringing diverse perspectives and

backgrounds to the table…"[592] Academics and tribal authorities each have their own place in sharing history. Through the inclusion of many types of sources, including oral history, indigenous languages, artifacts, documents, and academic publications, a richer, more complete story can be told.[593] This does not mean that museum curators should abandon their posts – museum and historic site staff should begin any collaboration project with an overarching goal and project scope. With this plan and flexibility in mind, museum staff can then approach tribes to collaborate on the project in its early stages.[594] In later stages, curators can shape the content, such as first-person narratives or objects and photographs, to create a cohesive, understandable exhibit.[595] The National Museum of the American Indian follows a five-phased collaborative curation methodology which calls for curators working with Native communities from start to finish in the exhibit planning process.[596] First, curators initiate the process by inviting tribal leaders to participate in the exhibit. Second, curators conduct fieldwork which includes meetings with "community curators" and research. Third, the curators draft content for the exhibit and present it to community curators for revisions. Fourth, curators revise the draft content and present it to community curators again. Finally, the curators present the final content to the community curators.

Beyond authority sharing, museums and historic sites should privilege the native voice by "honoring Indigenous knowledge and worldviews."[597] Collaboration with Native Americans on exhibits "creates one of the best opportunities to transform how Native people are represented in

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[592] Bench, *Interpreting Native American History and Culture*, 20.
[593] Bench, 21.
[594] Kelli Mosteller and R. Blake Norton, "Consultation with Tribes and Advice from the Field," in *Interpreting Native American History and Culture*, 32-33.
[595] Becky Menlove, "A Permanent Gallery at the Natural History Museum of Utah," in *Interpreting Native American History and Culture*, 52-53.
[596] Chavez Lamar, "Collaborative Exhibit Development," 150.
[597] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 25.

museums and American society."[598] Museums and historic sites should not require tribes to contribute within an existing historic narrative. Rather, flexibility on the part of museum professionals can open new doors for both museums and tribes. Relinquishing to Native Americans the opportunity to take the first steps in drafting the narrative allows tribes to change public perception of Native peoples, "a critical part of (Native) strategies to survive as a distinct people."[599] For museums, refraining from asserting the dominant history may allow for unknown history to come to light with new ways to interpret collections.

Museums who seek partnership should be prepared to not get everything they hoped for out of the process. Because of the history of the institutional theft of indigenous knowledge and the need to keep some information within a tribe, tribes may not be willing to share exactly what the museum is looking for.[600] If tribes do share, museums should remember that not all tribes hold the same viewpoint and the not every tribal citizen holds the same viewpoint as another in their tribe. Thus, museums must be prepared for conflicting answers.[601] Willingness to work with tribes to adjust exhibits and incorporate multiple perspectives are keys to achieving an equal partnership with tribes.

Educational Programming Partnership

Inviting Native Americans to physically participate in educational programs offers tribes a way to directly control their narrative. Historically, costumed Native Americans were treated as side shows, feeding into the vanishing Indian narrative. Just as archaeologists raced to collect the physical remnants of Native cultures before they completely disappeared, non-Natives came far and wide to Wild West shows which "hoped to capitalize on the fascination of seeing the last of

[598] Bench, *Interpreting Native American History and Culture*, 39.
[599] Bench, *Interpreting Native American History and Culture*, 39.
[600] Chavez Lamar, "Collaborative Exhibit Development," 148.
[601] Bench, *Interpreting Native American History and Culture*, 37.

this noble race."[602] Despite early coercion to participate and the potential to verge on stereotype, these performances eventually became "a setting in which traditional skills were valued and could be practiced, at a time when these aspects of Native culture were being actively suppressed."[603]

Today, Native interpreters see themselves "within a tradition of cultural performance in which the performance serves as a vehicle for Native agendas and creates an intercultural space which can be controlled by Native performers."[604] For Native Americans, participating as interpreters at historic sites offers the opportunity to share one's own voice and change the public narrative so that visitors leave with a different impression of Native Americans. Daily, Native interpreters are faced with racist or insensitive questions - including common questions like "Whose scalp is that?" and "Are there any real Indians anymore?" [605] However, Native interpreters can correct stereotypes or misinformation in answering visitor questions. Additionally, visitors coming face-to-face with Native American interpreters are forced to confront the vanishing Indian narrative. Native interpreters are armed with "historic ammunition" to challenge visitor stereotypes. For example, "If visitors assume that Native people always live in the past, Native interpreters stress adaptation as well as the idea of heritage as a living tradition that extends into the present."[606] Museums and historic sites that include not only traditional crafts and heritage, but also contemporary artisans can further support the point that Native Americans are members of living cultures.[607] The key to including Native American

[602] Bench, 78.
[603] Peers, *Playing Ourselves,* 61.
[604] Peers, 61.
[605] Peers, 69.
[606] Peers, 77.
[607] Bench, *Interpreting Native American History and Culture*, 80.

interpreters that combat the vanishing Indian narrative is partnership with Native communities and being open to how and what Native Americans are willing to share. [608]

Finally, programming should be a two-way street. When museums began collaborating with Native Americans for museum exhibits, it was often for the purpose of tribes providing information to correct and provide insight on exhibits for appreciation and learning by non-Native audiences.[609] In other words, the exhibits were about Native Americans directed at a non-Native audience. Museums and historic sites have the opportunity to work with Native Americans to create spaces for both audiences. According to Lonetree, "one of the most important goals" of tribal museums "is to assist communities in their efforts to address the legacies of historical unresolved grief by speaking the hard truths of colonialism and thereby creating spaces for healing and understanding."[610]

Educating Staff

Hiring permanent Native American staff is not feasible for every museum or historic site. When the organization is unable to do so, staff must be prepared to counter stereotypes and represent Native interests as best they can.[611] Staff can begin by identifying the biases they hold themselves before seeking educational resources. This should include working extensively with Native American advisors to develop thematic educational programs so that staff is prepared to present the programs.[612] Programs should not come from a first-person, Native voice but include information from Native advisors alongside a variety of other sources. Additionally, staff should

[608] Bench, 79.
[609] Menlove, "A Permanent Gallery at the Natural History Museum of Utah," 48.
[610] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 5.
[611] Lonetree, 25.
[612] Bench, *Interpreting Native American History and Culture*, 82.

be prepared to field the same uncomfortable questions that Native interpreters deal with.[613] Finally, the museum shop should represent the same values the museum is seeking to present – a message of survivance without stereotypes. This is an opportunity for museums to work with contemporary tribal authors and artisans to fill the shop with souvenirs that further both the story of survivance and support the tribal community.

Assessing Collections

Museums and historic sites should look internally at their collection. Collection practices "can be one of the most significant sources of stress between museums and Native communities."[614] Early collections of Native American artifacts emerged as the western world sought to document a culture it believed to be vanishing, as demonstrated by George Heye. Assessing a museum's past and present collection practices aids in effectively presenting Native American voices for several reasons. First, museums that wish to foster a relationship with those of the cultures they seek to represent will be hard pressed to do so when they have not taken responsibility for the dubious or unethical ways that they collected tribal artifacts in the past or store them in the present. Second, acknowledging past methods of collection provides important historic information to the public about the institutional treatment of Native Americans. Third, providing access to tribes and jointly looking through collections allows curators to realize what objects – and what stories – are missing.[615] This gap analysis provides an opening for museums to work with tribes to contribute missing elements and correct misinterpretations. One missing element may be key to combatting the vanishing Indian narrative – contemporary objects. "By not collecting contemporary objects and interpreting the contemporary lives of Native people,

[613] Bench recommends the National Museum of American Indian's book, *Do All Indians Live in Tipis*, to prepare for these kinds of questions. Bench, *Interpreting Native American History and Culture*, 99.
[614] Bench, 57.
[615] Bench, 60-62.

museums segregate Native history as being apart from American history." This "primarily serves to reinforce stereotypes of Native people as living in the past" and "suggests that the Native story is only interesting or worth telling when they are "other" and apart from the mainstream."[616] The importance of including recent history and present life of Native Americans is further assessed in the following section.

Past and Present Narrative Balance

Historic sites are, for obvious reasons, predominantly engaged in the practice of presenting a historical narrative. Yet, the importance of history goes beyond students being able to recite facts of the past. A historic site which brings the past into the present offers a new way for visitors to better engage with and relate to the history which the site seeks to present. For Native American historic sites, the need to strike a balance between the past and present is evident in the struggles of the National Museum of the American Indian and museums, historic sites, and memorials along the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.

Historic sites and museums must address more recent history to avoid the "vanishing Indian narrative." Historic sites are often guilty of considering Native Americans almost as a time period. The first exhibit may discuss contributions of Native Americans to the site prior to and during colonization, but then Native American actors disappear from the remaining exhibit. Where did they go? Perhaps they disappeared, alongside the dinosaurs, fossils, and other ancient and extinct things which are often placed side-by-side with Native American history. The museum has taken a step in the right direction by addressing that Native Americans were present *at all* but failing to describe why they left and where they went contributes to this sense that they

[616] Bench, 58 and 64.

simply disappeared.[617] It ignores either the continued survival of Native Americans or fails to acknowledge the part white actors played in land-grabbing, murder, or spreading disease. It is important for museums and historic sites telling the story of removal to convey not only the removal but survivance: the concept that "We [Native Americans] are still here."[618]

At the same time, museums that focus almost entirely on modern history and the present skirt the need to discuss past trauma. In her critique of the National Museum of the American Indian, Atalay urged that there is room for and a need to include both the past and the present. She said:

> In my understanding of survivance, Native people are active, present agents whose humanity is emphasized as their responses to struggle are poignantly portrayed. Presenting the horror, injustice, and multifaceted aspects of Native peoples' struggles while simultaneously highlighting their active engagement in and resistance to such onslaughts is not to portray Native people as victims.[619]

Thus, museums and historic sites must discuss difficult history. Difficult to define, difficult history is past oppression, violence, and trauma which when remembered creates discomfort for modern people as they come to understand that the difficult history has evolved into pain and suffering in the present.[620] The history of tribes includes many difficult histories which often go unacknowledged. Lonetree advises that museums must include the difficult stories.[621] When the National Museum of the American Indian explained its focus on survivance over difficult history, it reasoned that the hardships of the post-European arrival period only make up a fraction of indigenous history. Lonetree argues that "it is critical to acknowledge that [the past five hundred years] have had a disproportionate impact on our communities and cultures. And the

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[617] In all the museums I have been to I have only ever seen one museum (not dedicated to Native American history) which described both the reason for Native Americans leaving or dying on the site and their survivance in another location. The museum, the Mosaic Museum on Jekyll Island, devoted around 20% of its space to Jekyll's native history and included a full panel on the colonization and survivance narratives.
[618] Atalay, "No Sense of Struggle," 280-81.
[619] Atalay, 280.
[620] Rose, *Difficult History*, 4, 28.
[621] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 20-21, 25.

impact this period had on our communities continues; colonization is not over, nor has the holocaust in the Americas ever been recognized."[622] Beyond the importance of recognizing past harms and their continued impacts, failure to acknowledge it decontextualizes Native American survivance and thriving, making "survival one of the greatest untold stories."[623] Without including difficult history, museums continue to reinforce their same narrative of the past few centuries – one which takes no responsibility for historic truths.

Studies show that connecting themes of history and survivance has the power to change public perception of Native Americans. In a 2018 survey, most non-Natives interviewed "recognized the historic mistreatment of Native people by the U.S. government but they underestimated its scale and did not appreciate how it still affects modern Native Americans."[624] Additionally, while many non-Native respondents "freely acknowledged the historical injustice meted out to Native peoples" they "assumed that these injustices ended in the 19th century…"[625] The survey demonstrates that non-Native people do not know or understand recent indigenous history and the continued effects of the past. The results of the study, part of a project called Reclaiming Native Truth, found that drawing the line between current hardships faced by Native Americans and past trauma resulted in a fundamental shift in understanding of Native narratives.[626]

Finding the balance between sharing the difficult stories of the past and connecting these stories to current times is a delicate task – a true challenge for historic sites. Ultimately, when a

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[622] Lonetree, "Acknowledging the Truth of History," 313.
[623] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 6.
[624] *Reclaiming Native Truth*: *Research Findings: Compilation of All Research* (Longmont: First Nations Development Institute, 2018), 28, https://www.firstnations.org/publications/compilation-of-all-research-from-the-reclaiming-native-truth-project/.
[625] *Reclaiming Native Truth*, 56.
[626] *Reclaiming Native Truth: Changing the Narrative About Native Americans: A Guide for Allies* (Longmont: First Nations Development Institute, 2018), 13, https://www.firstnations.org/publications/changing-the-narrative-about-native-americans-a-guide-for-allies/.

museum or historic site has swung the pendulum too far in either direction, visitors lose out on challenging their perspective of the past. Native American historic sites and museums must find a balance of the history of colonization and stories of Native American survivance to change the status quo.

Measuring Early Efforts of the Georgia Historical Commission

When the Georgia Historical Commission established New Echota and the Vann House as historic sites, consultation and collaboration were not common museum and historic site practices. Both the locals and the experts made the sites their own, consulting often with Georgian and other East Coast historians while rarely working with the Cherokee. While the Georgia Historical Commission and their associates were likely not contemplating any of the practices described above, it is important to see how the site was created and how initial practices affect site operations today.

The Georgia Historical Commission involved the Oklahoma Cherokee in their research and occasionally consulted them about the sites. The leaders of the restoration, including Clemens de Baillou, made trips out to Oklahoma. At New Echota, a list of appropriate historical themes was developed in conjunction with the Cherokee.[627] When the Georgia Historical Commission considered reinterment of "James Vann" at Spring Place, they consulted Earl Boyd Pierce as a legal representative of Cherokee Nation. However, these consultations were "only on terms defined by the non-Indian planners."[628]

At the time, this level of consultation was more than was the norm. Consider, for instance, the Chieftains Museum in Rome, Georgia. As the home of Major Ridge, Chieftains is

[627] Gomez, interview.
[628] Denson, *Monuments to Absence*, 206.

another Trail of Tears-related historic house museum in Northwest Georgia.[629] After Major Ridge "voluntarily" removed to Oklahoma, his home housed superintendents of the nearby mill and their families for decades. In the 1950s, around the same time that interest was growing in places like New Echota and the Vann House, the Junior Service League of Rome began work to acquire and operate the home as a museum. At the time, the Junior Service League did little to no research on the Cherokee and initially, the museum functioned as a "Grandma's attic dumping ground."[630] The Junior Service League included "Cherokee" masks and relied on Cherokee myth and legend for the parts of the museum that did interpret Cherokee history. The Georgia Historical Commission, at the very least, communicated with the Cherokee.

The Georgia Historical Commission minimally collaborated with the Cherokee, occasionally inviting Cherokee leaders to major events at the Vann House and New Echota. However, some newspapers at the time gave the impression that the Georgia Historical Commission may have been willing to give up complete control of the sites to the Cherokee following the restoration. In 1955, the *Rome Tribune* reported that the Georgia Historical Commission was planning to invite the "Cherokee Indian Indian [sic.] chiefs to come from North Carolina and Oklahoma to New Echota for the purpose of receiving from the governor of Georgia a certificate granting them permanent use of the council house for their annual council meetings."[631] Beyond this open access, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported that New Echota would be transferred to the Cherokee. The article stated that "[w]hen completed, the town will be turned over to descendants of the Indians who were driven out more than a century

[629] "The Life of Major Ridge," *Chieftains Museum*, last visited May 12, 2021, https://chieftainsmuseum.org/2011/05/history-of-chieftains/.
[630] Heather Shores (executive director, Chieftains Museum), in discussion with the author, September 12, 2020.
[631] "Calhoun Seeking Funds To Restore New Echota," *Rome Tribune*, January 9, 1955, GHC Scrapbooks.

ago."[632] In an article issued the following day by the *Atlanta Journal*, the same information was reported, but the title may give the restoration a different spin. The article, entitled "Restored New Echota To Be Given Indians," when read literally seems to indicate that Georgia was bringing the Cherokee in, rather than handing over the reins.[633] This article also stated that the restored Samuel Worcester home would be occupied by a family from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, similar to de Baillou's plan to hire Cherokee tour guides.[634] The Georgia Historical Commission never returned these sites nor relinquished meaningful authority to the Cherokee.

The restoration of the sites brought awareness to the continued survival of the Cherokee, even beyond the time immediately following the Trail of Tears. One newspaper reporting on the restoration also described an annual Alabama conference of Native Americans to bring claims against the United States for taking Native lands.[635] In doing so, the paper seems to acknowledge the continuing survival of Native Americans and the lasting impacts of Indian Removal. However, in answering the question, "What happened to the other Cherokees?" the paper states, "Many were forced to Okalahoma [sic.] reservations. And in true poetic justice, the good Lord and the United States government settled them on "washed-out" land that hovered over pools of money-producing oil. Now many of them too, are millionaires, just like old 'Rich Joe Vann.'"[636] At the time the article was published, Chief Keeler was chairman of the executive committee of Phillips Petroleum.[637] Chief Keeler, alongside many other Cherokees, made money in the oil

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[632] "Some of State Going Back to the Indians," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, February 18, 1956, GHC Scrapbooks.
[633] "Restored New Echota To Be Given Indians," *Atlanta Journal*, February 19, 1956, GHC Scrapbooks.
[634] "Restored New Echota To Be Given Indians;" Brown, *Reconstructing Historic Landmarks*, 175.
[635] "The Editor Says," *Fayette County News*, May 19, 1965, GHC Vann House Records and Correspondence.
[636] "The Editor Says."
[637] Chief Keeler later served as CEO of Phillips Petroleum. Brad Agnew, "Keeler, William Wayne," The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture, https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=KE002.

industry. Nevertheless, the article ignored the actual policies the Native Americans were fighting in the conference and those which the Cherokee were fighting directly.

The Georgia Historical Commission made some attempts at discussing the survival of the Cherokee in the East. The second edition of a multi-part *Georgia Journal* series discusses the Cherokees that remained in the East following the Trail of Tears. The article states, "A few escaped into Appalachian fastnesses where their descendants in many cases still reside."[638] Yet, the article acknowledges neither the enduring harm to Native Americans posed by the Trail of Tears nor the continued federal policies which endangered Native American rights. The article concludes, "In 1839, the two Ridges and Elias Boudinot were killed for agreeing to the removal. A dreadful chapter had come to an end."[639]

The publicity surrounding the restoration of New Echota and the Vann House confronted Georgians with the reality of the Cherokee situation prior to removal. The *Dade County News* wrote:

> It may come as a surprise to hear of Indians running a printshop, a courthouse or a supreme court. Thanks to Hollywood, we think the Indian's only authentic pose is squatting before his tepee or, all painted up and dancing around a campfire, hatchet in hand, and clad only in a loin cloth and tooth beads.[640]

Simply put, Georgians did not realize that Cherokee were "civilized." They, like their descendants today, held a stereotypical image of Native Americans. While the restorations did nothing to elevate and respect what Georgians saw as "savage" Indian culture, the Georgia Historical Commission did take some first steps to present an alternative view of Native Americans.

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[638] Bernd, "Drama of the Cherokees Part II."
[639] Bernd, "Drama of the Cherokees Part II."
[640] "Cherokee Republic's Capital Being Restored Near Calhoun," *Dade County Times*, July 8, 1954, GHC Scrapbooks.

Conclusion

Early work of the Georgia Historical Commission exemplifies the need to reevaluate museum and historic site practices in the present. "Due to modern and historic violence against their communities, Native Americans have often lacked the social, political and economic capital to exercise control over narratives presented about them in mainstream society."[641] As a result, "[c]urrent narratives are mostly written by outsiders who fail to grasp the nuances and intricacies of the many varied Native communities."[642] For a long time, the Cherokee and other tribes have not been welcome to control their own narrative outside of tribal heritage centers– a process to which cultural institutions have actively contributed. "The stereotypes inherent in historic museum representations of 'Indianness' have repeatedly overwritten the existences and persistence of actual Native American communities."[643] The goal of the above criteria is to help museums rebuke past collection and interpretation practices which contributed to centuries of Native American stereotypes and the myth of the vanishing Indian. The next chapter will review how the current New Echota and the Vann House historic sites fulfills these criteria.

[641] *Reclaiming Native Truth,* 64.
[642] *Reclaiming Native Truth,* 64.
[643] Erikson, "Decolonizing the 'Nation's Attic,'" 46.

CHAPTER 7

GEORGIA STATE HISTORIC SITE CASE STUDIES

Since ejecting Georgia's Cherokee from ancestral lands, Georgia has twice taken charge of New Echota and the Vann House. The first time, Georgia divided up Cherokee lands for the lucky land lottery winners. Because the Georgia Guard set up their headquarters in the Vann House, Georgia also physically occupied one of the Cherokee historic sites. Years later, after many owners, Georgia once again took physical possession of the Vann House and New Echota. In the early years of these historic sites, the Georgian restorers made the sites their own with little request for Cherokee input. This failure to meaningfully include Cherokee perspectives about Cherokee cultural heritage fit with the general treatment of Native American Historic sites in the mid-twentieth century.

Moving forward, Georgia Historic Sites grew its relationships with the Cherokee. The effects of these stronger relationships are reflected in the stories now told at the Vann House and New Echota but could be made even stronger through additional collaboration. This chapter will examine the inclusion and interpretation of Cherokee perspectives at the Vann House and New Echota. The content of this chapter was created through visits to the Vann House and New Echota and consultations with Cherokee and Georgia cultural heritage representatives which tell of the modern relationship between Georgia State Historic Sites and Cherokee tribes.[644]

[644] Professionals consulted for this project include Dakota Brown, program director for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians' Museum of the Cherokee Indian; Gina Caison, professor of southern and Native American literature at Georgia State University; Callie Chunestudy, culture and tourism coordinator for Cherokee National Businesses and curator for Cherokee Heritage Center; Irina Garner, interpretive ranger of the Vann House; David Gomez, site manager of New Echota and the Vann House; and Whitney Warrior, director of the United Keetoowah Band's Historic Preservation Office.

The first section will discuss what these two sites are currently doing to tell their stories. The second section will assess the sites' formal interpretation using the criteria discussed in the previous chapter. Recognizing that interpretation runs much deeper and occurs at many levels, this chapter will only examine the explicit, formal presentation of the site rather than the many implicit decisions made to reinforce the sites' narratives. Following descriptions of the sites' formal presentation, gaps in criteria fulfillment will be assessed. The chapter will close with some proposed changes that Georgia Historic Sites can make to more effectively include Cherokee voices at Cherokee sites.

Site Visits

Before getting to the main content of this chapter, I would like to make a few notes about my site visits. First, this topic was selected several months into the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to my research, I had not visited nor had I any knowledge of New Echota and the Vann House. Thus, information contained in this chapter gleaned from my site visits may not represent a normal visit in a non-pandemic time. Second, my interpretive guides were aware that I was writing about Native American historic sites for my graduate thesis. That certainly changed the interaction that I had with the site staff, so the tour content that I received may not always reflect that of the average tour. Had it not been a pandemic year, I would have liked to observe the tour and interactions between site staff and visitors rather than intrude my own project. Additionally, I would have liked to observe other opportunities offered at the sites, like annual events and K-12 educational tours.

<u>A Visit to New Echota State Historic Site</u>

New Echota tells the story of the Cherokee through its 1969 interpretive museum and the restored and reconstructed historic area. The interpretive museum contains the site's exhibit

space and introductory film. The main exhibit space begins with the history of the Cherokee largely from European contact to the aftermath of the Trail of Tears through historic eras entitled "One nation shrinks…another nation grows," "A world in transition," and "Georgia takes control." History is told mostly through informational panels, which include quotes from the letters of John Ross and the missionaries, Cherokee language, Cherokee creation stories, and illustrations. Scattered throughout the exhibit are eye-catching interpretive aids, such as archaeological finds from New Echota, pieces of type, tools, and pottery; primary source documents, including Chief Justice John Marshall's *Worcester v. Georgia* opinion, land lottery deeds, and an issue of the *Cherokee Phoenix;* and reproductions, including an example of Cherokee construction techniques and baskets. The museum's most recent addition is an exhibit on Cherokee basketry, made by modern Cherokee artisans, and the three sisters (corn, beans, and squash), an exhibit made in collaboration with Georgia's state-recognized tribes.

Exhibits in the film room tell more modern stories than the rest of the museum: the Georgia Historical Commission restoration and the survivance of the Cherokee. The story of the restoration is demonstrated through artifacts and photographs in a display case on the 1950s archaeological dig. The case is surrounded by panels of newspapers describing the restoration and fundraising efforts, particularly those of Calhoun citizens and the New Echota Foundation. Finally, the film room touches on survivance of the tribes in a panel erected in 2002 by the current site manager, David Gomez.[645] The panel shows the photos of modern federally recognized Cherokee principal chiefs: Richard G. Sneed (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians),

[645] Gomez, interview.

Bill John Baker (Cherokee Nation), and Joe Bunch (United Keetowah Band). [646] The photos are accompanied by a brief paragraph about each tribe's population, location, and businesses.

In the same room is a seventeen-minute introductory film to the site's history produced in 1990.[647] The film discusses Cherokee life prior to European arrival and discusses Cherokee "civilization" through the buildings now standing at New Echota State Historic Site. The film also describes harassment of the Cherokee and Cherokee attempts to oppose removal. Finally, the film discusses the signing of the Treaty of New Echota and its aftermath, including the round-up of Cherokees at Fort Wool and the Trail of Tears. This history is told through partial docudrama with costumed characters and historic perspectives. To close out the film, the narrator states, "Today the restored and reconstructed buildings of New Echota stand as a silent testimony to the achievements of a civilized nation of Indians. Their silence is also a testimony to the injustices man sometimes bestows on his fellow man. Perhaps this silence can be a lesson for us all."[648]

Just outside of the museum are New Echota's three reconstructed buildings (the Print Shop, Supreme Courthouse, and Council House), one restored building (the Worcester House), several restored and relocated buildings and outbuildings (the Vann Tavern, Middle-Class Cherokee Farmstead, and Common Cherokee Farmstead), one house ruin (the Boudinot House), and two nature trails. Out here, historic information is conveyed through interpretive guides, posted signs, and audio boxes.

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[646] I think the intent is to have the current chiefs of the three tribes, but the historic site is a little behind on these photos. Principal Chief Bill John Baker was succeeded by Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin in 2019.
[647] Available at *The Cherokee Nation: The Story of New Echota* (Atlanta: Georgia State Parks, 1990), YouTube Video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ym0Ar9LQwEc
[648] *The Cherokee Nation: The Story of New Echota.*

The easiest way tourists engage with the historic area is through posted signage and the site brochure. The brochure's suggested tour takes visitors to each of the historic and reconstructed buildings, though visitors can freely enter only the reconstructed Supreme Courthouse and Council House.[649] Signs are located outside of each building and near other historic points of interest, like the Boudinot House, town center, orchard, and Fort Wool.[650] The suggested tour ends where the Treaty of New Echota was signed at the ruins of the Boudinot House. [651] Though the twentieth century restorers called for the Boudinot House to be rebuilt, what remains of the Boudinot House feels like a silent, unconstructed memorial.

Interpretive guides provide an in-depth, interactive experience with most buildings at New Echota. Because most of New Echota's buildings are locked, visitors must have an interpretive guide to access them. On the tour, the guide largely sticks to a script,[652] so the tour is not infused with personal, updated information. However, the guide's answers to visitor questions reflect more updated knowledge rather than relying on older, scripted materials. Some of the buildings serve as living history exhibits while touring with the guide. The tour guide, a true jack of all trades, demonstrates a blow gun and corn masher in the Middle-Class Cherokee Farmstead and operates the printing press in the Print Shop. Due to the low staffing (New Echota has three full-time staff and three part-time staff) and size of the site, it is possible for visitors to not have a tour guide and thus miss this interactive experience and entry into many buildings.[653]

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[649] For a helpful visual, see Georgia State Parks' map of the site in Chapter Four.
[650] The Fort Wool sign is placed near the Worcester House as the estimated location of Fort Wool is on private property.
[651] Sarah Vowell, mentioned in the introduction, described her interaction with the Boudinot House, "It's not a grave, Gomez tells us, but that's what it feels like. We tiptoe onto it, this profane ground. Then we tiptoe away." Vowell, "Trail of Tears."
[652] My interpretive guide's content seemed to follow the content in the audio guide described in the following paragraph.
[653] The first time I visited New Echota, I happened to run into the tour group as I was walking around and was able to join the tour. The second time I visited New Echota, the site manager told me that the interpretive guide was giving a tour and I ran around until I found him.

There are two audio options at the site. The first is an audio and video guide produced in collaboration with the Cherokee Language Program at Western Carolina University.[654] The audio guide includes content very similar to the guided tour, and is a suitable, albeit less exciting, replacement to the guided tour if an interpretive guide is not available. Unfortunately, the audio guide is accessible only by a QR Code that is located at the Common Cherokee Farmstead, the fifth stop along the site pamphlet's recommended route.

The second audio option is the most recent addition to the historic area – audio boxes added in 2017. The audio boxes are hand-cranked machines with a selection of sound clips created in collaboration with Dr. Gina Caison and her students at Georgia State University.[655] The audio boxes are located at the Worcester House, Common Cherokee Farmstead, Orchard, and Courthouse. Working with New Echota staff and Cherokee speakers, the GSU students selected clips based on frequently asked questions which are not answered by the site's signage or brochure.[656] The resulting sound clips cover "new history" topics including evolution of Cherokee gender roles and Cherokee social status. Clips about generational trauma and modern Cherokee tribes also connect life at New Echota and the Trail of Tears to the modern world.

Finally, those who are not able to visit New Echota in person can interact with the site through its small online presence. New Echota is part of Georgia Public Broadcasting's virtual field trip about the Cherokee Nation, which also includes the Chief John Ross House and Chieftains Museum (Major Ridge's home).[657] The virtual field trip, listed on New Echota's DNR website, tells the story of Cherokee Nation through these historic sites. After the start of the

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[654] "New Echota: Explore the Cherokee Capital," Creative Digital Productions, accessed May 18, 2021, http://cdigmobile2.com/newechota/.
[655] Gomez, interview.
[656] Gomez, interview.
[657] "Cherokee Nation," Georgia Public Broadcasting Education, accessed May 18, 2021, https://www.gpb.org/ga-digital-textbook/#/en/issue/9AC25D40E8E9AAF020EB88E43ADAEEA8.

COVID-19 pandemic, DNR began offering e-Ranger lessons for several historic sites.[658] New Echota's e-Ranger activities include a guided tour of the Vann Tavern and mini-lectures on Cherokee clans, printing press, eighteenth century clothing, eastern bluebirds, and fire starting. New Echota's website additionally has a photo gallery and site map. While DNR does not operate social media specifically for New Echota, the Friends of New Echota group does run a frequently updated Facebook page.

A Visit to the Vann House

The interpretive structure of the Vann House Historic Site follows a pattern similar to New Echota but deviates in the presentation of the historic area. The Vann House's Robert E. Chambers Interpretive Center was dedicated in the presence of Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chad Smith and Eastern Band Principal Chief Leon Jones on July 27, 2002, the forty-fourth anniversary of the historic site's opening.[659] The interpretive center, like New Echota, houses the introductory film, gift shop, and exhibits.

The Vann House's introductory film was released in 2002.[660] The film centers on the Vanns' existence in both Cherokee and European worlds, with a particular focus on the European customs the men adopted. The film then discusses how these worlds clashed, resulting in Joseph Vann's expulsion and the Trail of Tears. Though the film is written and produced by DNR staff, the film includes several Cherokee actors. James Vann is played by Cherokee storyteller Fred Bradley while Joseph Vann is played by Henry Bradley. Most of the story is told

[658] "eRanger – Self Guided Learning," Georgia Department of Natural Resources State Parks & Historic Sites, accessed April 25, 2021, https://gastateparks.org/eRanger.
[659] Yolanda Putman, "Indian Center Opens at Vann House," *Chattanooga Times Free Press,* July 28, 2002, Newsbank. Robert Chambers (1890-1982) was the treasurer for the Committee to Save the Vann House and accepted the deed for the house from Dr. Bradford on the Commission's behalf.
[660] Available at *Walking in Two Worlds: The Vann Family and the Cherokee Nation* (Atlanta: Georgia State Parks, 2002), YouTube Video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BH7q_ETh-_o.

through these historic reenactors, narrative voiceover, and entries in the Moravian Missionary diaries, and the film closes with words from Elias Boudinot.

The main exhibit, reflecting the name and subject of the film, is "Walking in Two Worlds: The Vann Family and the Cherokee Nation." The exhibit features informational panels on local Native American life prior to European contact, Cherokee domestic life, James and Joseph Vann, construction and architecture of the Vann House,[661] the Springplace Moravian Mission, Cherokee removal, the life (and death) of Joseph Vann after removal, and the Vann House after Cherokee removal. These stories are told through more physical objects than New Echota, displaying archaeological artifacts, costumed mannequins, discarded building materials, and Joseph Vann's violin. Like New Echota, the exhibit has a section dedicated to the modern Cherokee featuring photos of Cherokee visitors at the Vann House and modern Cherokee craft.

Vann House somewhat diverges from New Echota in the historic area. Visitors are free to roam the grounds to see and enter several restored and relocated buildings (none of the 95 original outbuildings survived) including a Cherokee farmstead and kitchen house.[662] The typical Cherokee farmstead, a foil to the atypical luxury of the Vann House, is composed of a corn crib, smoke house, and two log cabins. Each of these buildings is supported by a short explanation the building's use and origins. Beyond the buildings, there is minimal signage around the historic

[661] Though historians Tiya Miles and Andrew Denson note that the extant house was commissioned by Joseph Vann, site information and tours maintain that the house was commissioned by James Vann. Miles, *House on Diamond Hill*, 168; Denson, *Monuments to Absence*, 113. Shifting this history within the interpretive center would be an expensive undertaking, given how engrained James Vann is in the story woven throughout the informational panels and film.

[662] The kitchen house was moved to the Vann House in the 1950s as an approximation of the original and served as the site manager's living quarters and office. In 2008, the kitchen house was transformed into an exhibit on the enslaved people living at Spring Place. Miles, *The House on Diamond Hill*, 191. The kitchen is currently not open to the public as it undergoes restoration. The remaining buildings were donated in 2004 and 2007. While these buildings are not definitively Cherokee, they exemplify typical Cherokee construction from the early 1800s. These buildings were all donated to the Vann House and restoration funds were often provided by the Friends of the Vann House. Casey and Lori Vann, Vann descendants, donated the funds to restore the corn crib.

site explaining buildings that may have been on the property during the Vanns' occupation. A short walk away from the main house is God's Acre – a cemetery and former site of the Springplace Moravian Mission.

Of course, the gem of a visit to the Vann House State Historic Site is a tour of the mansion itself. Though the Vann House has only one full-time and four part-time staff members, the smaller tour coverage means that as part of every visit, interpretive guides take visitors on a tour through the Vann House which is otherwise closed to visitors. Each tour covers the house's architectural features and historical significance in each room. [663] Historic topics covered are the lives of the Vanns, domestic life, enslavement, political activity, visiting dignitaries, and, of course, the infamous storming of the house by the Georgia Guard. Because the tour's main points are laid out in the site's training manual, the tour should be similar each time it is given. However, I found that my guide occasionally strayed from the manual to discuss "newer" points of history, like Vann's mental illness.[664]

The Vann House has a small online presence. Unlike New Echota, the Vann House does not have online education tools, other than an online edition of the 2002 introductory film and a photo gallery of the historic site. The Friends of the Vann House, described more below, post regularly on social media but the site itself does not maintain social media.

Site Summaries

While the two sites have filled in some narrative gaps over the last several decades, interpretation at the sites still focuses on the "civilization" narrative largely concocted by white

[663] The site's volunteer training manual has a significant amount of material on donations and origins of objects of interest within the house, though the tours I attended did not discuss this. *Volunteer Training Manual* (Chatsworth: Chief Vann House State Historic Site, Friends of the Vann House, Whitfield-Murray Historical Society, 2017) (hereafter Vann House Training Manual).

[664] I heard from another visitor that her tour guide was extremely hesitant to discuss slavery at the Vann House, whereas my tour guide freely discussed it – each tour will be different.

Georgians in the mid-twentieth century. Through tours, signage, and interpretive museums, the sites tell of the changes in Cherokee religion, government, language, and enslavement practices as a result of interaction with and encroachment from white settlers. The sites also have gone a step past the early 1931 New Echota Cherokee Indian Memorial to discuss the trauma of the Trail of Tears, even acknowledging generational trauma at New Echota. The sites also tell of modern Cherokee sovereignty and survivance through interpretive panels and crafts. New Echota and the Vann House now have visible involvement of the Cherokee cultures that Georgia State Historical Sites seek to represent, but the degree to which they could expand on that involvement to best represent Cherokee history and culture is explored in the next sections.

Analysis: Meeting the Tribal Consultation and Collaboration Criteria

Using the criteria described in Chapter Six, this section will evaluate the sites' interpretation to determine how effectively the sites include Cherokee voices. This section will determine whether each criterion from Chapter Six is fulfilled. Often, the sites fall somewhere in the middle of completely meeting or not meeting criteria, so an approximate degree of fulfillment will be listed. The determination will be followed by the sites' activities which could lead to fulfillment of each criterion.

Cherokee Advisory Committee

Although the sites get Cherokee input from other sources, New Echota and the Vann House do not have a Cherokee Advisory Committee and do not meet this criterion. There are a few consultative groups that warrant mentioning: the Georgia Council on American Indian Concerns and the Friends of Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites.

The State has a standing Georgia Council on American Indian Concerns, which is not specifically for New Echota and the Vann House or other Native American historic sites. The

Georgia Council was established in 1992 on the heels of NAGPRA to facilitate the return of Native American human remains and grave goods in the possession of Georgia museums.[665] The Georgia Council positions are filled by Native Americans as well as heritage experts through nomination by the governor. The Georgia Council's tribal members hail from Georgia's three state-recognized tribes - the Cherokee of Georgia Tribal Council, the Georgia Tribe of Eastern Cherokee, and the Lower Muscogee Creek Tribe – and are required to live in Georgia.[666] In 2002, the Georgia legislature expanded the Georgia Council's duties to include "preserv[ing] and foster[ing] the culture and heritage of Indians and Indian descendants in this state…"[667]

Though the Georgia Council was not specifically created for historic sites, its involvement with Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites is evident. While the Georgia Council is referenced neither at the Vann House nor at New Echota, the Georgia Council has been involved in funding efforts. For example, the Georgia Council funded a wattle and daub house exhibit at Etowah Mounds, the first outdoor exhibit upon leaving the site's interpretive museum. Additionally, the Georgia Council agreed in 2020 to fund some exhibit updates at New Echota.[668]

There are a few drawbacks to designating the Georgia Council on American Indian Concerns as a consultative committee. First, the Georgia Council is largely intended for higher

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[665] Georgia's law covers museums in Georgia not subject to NAGPRA.

[666] Some conflict exists among state recognized tribes and between state recognized tribes and federally recognized tribes as to the legitimacy of the state recognized organizations. Joshua Silavent, "Fight Over Cherokee Blood Line Could Be Nearing Resolution," *Gainesville Times,* February 21, 2016, https://www.gainesvilletimes.com/news/fight-over-cherokee-blood-line-could-be-nearing-resolution/; Grant D. Crawford, "'Fake Tribes' Can Threaten Federally Recognized Ones, Genealogist Says," *Tahlequah Daily Press*, October 4, 2019, https://www.tahlequahdailypress.com/news/fake-tribes-can-threaten-federally-recognized-ones-genealogist-says/article_79c715a4-f9ac-5bba-8871-f1599342d07d.html; Dakota Brown (educational director, Museum of the Cherokee Indian), in discussion with the author, April 8, 2021.

[667] Ga. Code Ann. § 44-12-283.

[668] Jared M. Wood (member, Georgia Council on American Indian Concerns), email message to the author, January 30, 2021.

level, oversight type projects, like NAGPRA-esque duties at the state level.[669] Because it operates at a higher level, the Georgia Council is largely there to interact with executive offices, like the Historic Preservation Division, rather than work on the ground with specific sites. Second, the Georgia Council is not a very visible group. Other than additions of photos of new members, the Georgia Council's website has largely not been updated in several years.[670] Third, the Native American members of the Georgia Council are required to be from state-recognized tribes in Georgia – New Echota and the Vann House are the heritage of a much broader Cherokee group, most of whom live beyond Georgia's borders.

Both sites have "Friends" groups which support them in ways that the State cannot by providing additional funds, volunteering time, and raising awareness for the sites and their history.[671] The Friends of New Echota and the Friends of the Vann House both include Cherokee members and donors.[672] However, the Cherokee members are not very involved with the organization by virtue of their geographic dislocation.[673] Both organizations nevertheless support the Cherokee by promoting Cherokee Nation content on their Facebook pages, such as tourist information, Cherokee language learning opportunities, and Indigenous Peoples Day, in addition

[669] For projects at the sites with federal involvement (e.g., NAGPRA, § 106 consultations, federal funding) consultation with federally recognized tribes would be required. In § 106 cases, the Georgia Historic Preservation Division consults not only with tribal historic preservation offices and chiefs, but also ordinary Cherokee citizens.
[670] The website's sidebar includes a tab on "Council Recommendations for State Recognition of Tribes" next to "NEW" in a cartoon-like bubble. The associated document was signed in 2001. Georgia Council on American Indian Concerns, accessed May 18, 2021, https://georgiaindiancouncil.com/. My inquiry to the given contact email was returned undeliverable and the given phone number is not manned by the Georgia Council, but a Historic Preservation Division Interpretive Specialist. I was able to contact the Georgia Council only by reaching out to academic members whose emails were published on university websites. The Georgia Council also does not routinely publish agendas or other public facing items, which I was unable to obtain from either Professor Wood or an Open Records Request to the Office of the Governor. In short, while I found my individual conversation with the council member to be enlightening, the organization itself appears to not be available to the public.
[671] "Our Mission," Friends of Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites, last accessed April 30, 2021, https://friendsofgastateparks.org/node/66.
[672] Vann descendants are heavy donors to the Friends of the Vann House. Irina Garner (interpretive ranger, Vann House State Historic Site), email message to the author, April 30, 2021.
[673] Gomez, interview; Garner, email.

to site- and Georgia-focused content.[674] Recently, the Friends shared stereotype-fighting information, addressing a rising recent belief that the Cherokees were themselves responsible for and willing to leave Georgia. On April 1, 2021, the Friends of the Vann House shared, "It is very distressing to hear the term 'fake news' associated with the Cherokee expulsion from the east, equally distressing is the very dangerous position that the Cherokee were somehow responsible for their own misery on the Trail of Tears."[675] These actions attest to the caring volunteerism of the Friends groups but do not pass for Cherokee participation.

Authority Sharing and Privileging Cherokee Voices in Exhibits

New Echota and the Vann House staff have taken important steps to include the Cherokee in the interpretive process, but they still do not lend equal weight to Cherokee knowledge in its exhibits and so do not yet meet this criterion. Generally, the sites take more of a consultative approach than a collaborative one, though there are examples of Cherokee collaboration at the sites.

New Echota has routinely consulted Cherokee Nation and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians since at least the 1990s. In the 1990s, site staff generally consulted tribal leaders for advice on the direction, programming, and use of New Echota, hoping to "reserve New Echota

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[674] Friends of New Echota (sharing from Visit Cherokee Nation), "Happy New Year! Make it your resolution to come visit us this year!", Facebook, January 2, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/newechota/posts/10158700700579663; Friends of New Echota (sharing from Cherokee Nation), "With November being #NativeAmericanHeritageMonth, what a perfect time to announce our ᏣᎳᎩ ᎦᏬᏂᎯᏍᏗ ᎠᏂᎾᎡᏍᎩ Cherokee Language Master Apprentice Program is now accepting applications for its Spring Cohort!", Facebook, November 5, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/newechota/posts/10158574361974663; Friends of New Echota (sharing from Cherokee Nation), "Osiyo, October!", Facebook, September 30, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/newechota/posts/10158490029299663; Friends of the Vann House, "This Week in History," Facebook, April 16, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/friendsofthechiefvannhouse/posts/1501329596736418; Friends of the Vann House, "Homeschool Day: Orienteering at the Vann House," Facebook, April 3, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/friendsofthechiefvannhouse/posts/1493028350899876; Friends of the Vann House, "Today marks 182 years ago that one of the final groups of Cherokees ended their journey across the Trail of Tears, Facebook, March 24, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/friendsofthechiefvannhouse/posts/1486938664842178.

[675] Friends of the Vann House, Facebook, April 1, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/friendsofthechiefvannhouse/posts/1491796407689737.

for programs and interpretation consistent with the wishes and advice" of the federally recognized Cherokee tribes.[676] Today, Cherokee consultation is the norm at New Echota. While other sites might see tribal consultation as a burden, New Echota's manager Dave Gomez seems to take an interest in consulting with Cherokee people and learning more about the site.[677]

In 1962, the same year the site opened, Georgia historians met with Cherokees to determine subject matter that would be appropriate for New Echota.[678] Subsequent interpretive plans, largely developed in the 1970s, are based on these 1962 themes. Modern consultation, then, occurs mostly within these initial, potentially outdated themes. Further, when staff work on new exhibits, they generally consult Cherokees as needed – only when staff has gaps in technical expertise, particularly the Cherokee language.[679] This allows for rather restrictive participation of the Cherokee. Rather than follow the NMAI model – offering tribes the first opportunity to draft exhibits and thus a broader degree of autonomy over content – Georgia site staff create most exhibit content and shepherd Cherokee contributions into small, concise areas within a set of themes.

The Vann House also consults with the Cherokee but does so less often as a satellite site of New Echota. Currently, the Vann House is involved in a Department of Transportation project which requires Cherokee consultation. As part of historic mitigation for the project, the DOT has funded a few new interpretive panels at the Vann House, which has involved direct consultation between Vann House staff and Cherokee representatives to establish themes for the panels.[680]

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[676] Letter from Billy Townsend to Ewell Lyle (Georgia Department of Natural Resources Chief of Operations), June 8, 1995, Parks and Historic Sites Director's Office Director's Subject Files 1989-2002 Sites Only, New Echota State Park, RG 30-1-11, Georgia Archives.
[677] Gina Caison (professor, Georgia State University), in discussion with the author, April 29, 2021.
[678] Gomez, interview.
[679] Gomez, interview. As a recent example, Gomez is working on an article for the 200th anniversary of Sequoyah's Syllabary. During his research for the article, he consulted with a Cherokee language specialist to confirm that he had used the correct words and spelling.
[680] Garner, email.

The Vann House also communicates with the Cherokee for annual events, like the Remember the Removal event described below.

Neither New Echota nor the Vann House have relinquished curatorial control and shared with Cherokee advisors the opportunity to fully develop an exhibit, but the site manager is open to this idea.[681] However, the site manager does not think it would be feasible because of spatial concerns and geographic dislocation. Additionally, the Vann House's interpretive ranger felt that as a state-owned facility, it is expected that the state staff have the expertise to create exhibit content or the ability to do the research.[682]

At New Echota and the Vann House, there are a few examples of the site's Cherokee collaboration and inclusion. Though weight is given to academic sources and European historic perspectives, New Echota and the Vann House does include a variety of Cherokee sources to develop a richer story. Cherokee crafts made by Cherokee artisans are woven throughout New Echota's exhibits in the interpretive museum and building exhibits. Cherokee creation stories are placed in the interpretive exhibit. Cherokee perspectives are represented from the words of John Ross, Elias Boudinot, and the *Cherokee Phoenix*. Each site's introductory film includes some Cherokee actors or voiceovers. Cherokee works are also represented in the gift shop of each site, including Cherokee-made art and a few books.[683]

As a more specific example of privileging Cherokee voices, New Echota's audio boxes, mentioned above, were the result of a collaborative effort with Cherokees.[684] The project began when Gomez secured a grant to install the ecofriendly audio boxes. Gomez worked with Tom

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[681] Gomez, interview.
[682] Garner, email.
[683] The books are *Cherokee Study Course*, a language learning tool from Prentice Robinson, and W.H. Vann's *Vann Generations*, which is a compilation of Vann oral histories recorded over the years.
[684] Gomez, interview; Caison, interview.

Belt (Cherokee Nation), a fluent Cherokee speaker and Cherokee Language Program Coordinator at Western Carolina University, to produce initial recordings based on themes Gomez recognized were missing at the site.[685] In 2017, Georgia State University's Dr. Gina Caison brought her students to New Echota to continue work on the project. Both Gomez and Dr. Caison agreed that the additional recordings should not be voiced by non-Native speakers, namely themselves and the students. Instead, they sought to bring Cherokee professors – Ben Frey (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians), Brook Colley (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians), Martha Macri (Cherokee Nation), and Jace Weaver (Cherokee) – to the site to collaborate on the project and voice the recordings.[686] The students used the initial themes and pulled in the expertise of their selected speakers to create rough drafts of the recording content with Gomez. When the speakers arrived at New Echota to record their parts, the students and speakers edited the drafts together until the Cherokee speaker signed off on the script. The resulting recordings, even if all visitors do not stop to listen to them, allowed the Cherokee speakers to "say their piece at that site in the way that it should be said."[687]

Educational Programming Partnership

New Echota and the Vann House have begun to meet this criterion because the sites involve the Cherokee in its educational programming events, but they do not fully meet this criterion because inclusion is more on the basis of invitation rather than collaboration. Every November, New Echota draws a large crowd for its living history event during Native American Heritage Month. Staff members and volunteers from the Friends of New Echota with heritage

[685] Caison, interview.
[686] Gina Caison, "New Voice at New Echota: The Ethics of Presentation in C19 History," (paper, C19: The Society for Nineteenth-Century Americanists: Seminar on Indigenous Textualities: Native Americans, Writing, and Representation, Albequerque, NM, March 22, 2018).
[687] Caison, interview.

skills generally play costumed interpreters for the event. Each year Cherokees from the east and west are invited to attend, but usually do not attend in large numbers because of the geographic dislocation.[688]

In addition to these general events, New Echota and the Vann House have some programs aimed particularly at a Cherokee audience. There is one New Echota and Vann House event only for the Cherokee, though it is part of an event put on outside of Georgia State Historic Sites. New Echota serves as the starting point of an annual Cherokee event – the Remember the Removal Bike Ride. Remember the Removal is a youth leadership and heritage ride which includes around twenty Cherokee Nation and Eastern Band students each year as they bike across the northern Trail of Tears route from New Echota to Tahlequah, Oklahoma.[689] The Friends of New Echota host a dinner at New Echota for the cyclists, followed by a guided tour of the grounds from the New Echota staff.[690] On the route, the cyclists also stop by at the Vann House.

New Echota's staff addressed the needs of researchers in the Qualla Boundary and Tahlequah.[691] Researchers frequently requested information about New Echota's Cherokee basket collection, and GSU students, again lead by Caison, conserved, photographed, and digitized the collection for remote access.

Finally, while the content of the audio box project will ultimately be consumed by largely non-Native visitors, the process of creating the audio clips can be said to be in part for the Cherokee speakers. The speakers were "radically honest" and "direct about the process and

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[688] One deterrent for inviting Cherokee speakers to many events is the cost because travel and hotel stays come out of the site's budget or the Friends budget. Without knowing if the event will have good weather or successful attendance, the staff is hesitant to use funds from an already insufficient budget. Garner, email.
[689] "Our Journey," Remember the Removal, last accessed April 26, 2021, https://rememberthetheremoval.cherokee.org/our-journey.html.
[690] Gomez, interview.
[691] Caison, interview.

perpetrators of ethnic cleansing in the Southeast."[692] The Cherokee speakers could "address the legacies of historical unresolved grief," previously untold at New Echota.[693] Speaking truth to this generational trauma can be part of emotional healing for Cherokee participants.

Educating Staff

Both sites have begun to meet this criterion as staff are given a wide variety of education sources, so staff are highly knowledgeable about the site, but do not necessarily know how to answer tough questions. Both sites have on-site training for staff and volunteers. At New Echota, staff education is primarily through the 1962 thematic guide and training from supervising staff, other state park employees with expertise, or skilled Friends members.[694] Staff may take advantage of other educational opportunities, like Cherokee language courses, if they are close enough to New Echota.

At the Vann House, a short manual to the property's architecture and Vann history is available for volunteer tour guides and is the foundational training material. The manual is a basic introduction, so it does not cover material needed to address Native American stereotypes and uncomfortable questions. In fact, the guide seems to reinforce certain stereotypes – like the "drunken Indian" stereotype. In the master bedroom, for examples, guides should talk about the Vanns' interests in "gambling, drinking, horseracing, and guns."[695] James Vann's erratic and violent behavior is often attributed to alcoholism, presented almost like a fun fact in the 1950s site literature. Fortunately, my tour guide strayed from the manual and offered the alternative and growing view that Vann's behavior may be attributable to an undiagnosed mental illness.

[692] Caison, "New Voice at New Echota," 3-4.
[693] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 9.
[694] Gomez, interview.
[695] *Vann House Training Manual*.

Additionally, though staff had been confronted with many uncomfortable questions, particularly from children regarding the continued survivance of the Cherokee, they have not been trained to answer those questions. My guides at both sites said they dealt with children who did not believe that Native Americans continue to exist, including a young boy who refused to believe that the Cherokee and other tribes are living people and kept repeating, "nope, they all died" each time the guide attempted to correct him. Adult visitors, too, have a difficult time challenging their world view. One adult visitor at the Vann House accused my guide of rewriting history for presenting the Trail of Tears as a horrific event, rather than a voluntary removal. At the same time, some Vann House visitors have been resistant to seeing Cherokees both as victims of Indian Removal and perpetrators of enslavement.[696]

While the training guide does not address these issues, the Vann House and New Echota have a library available for staff and volunteer use which go beyond the basics of on-site training.[697] One staff member at the Vann House pointed out her favorite resources – *Lies Across America* and *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, both by James Loewen, and *Knights of Spain, Warriors* by Charles M. Hudson. Each of the Loewen books sets out to challenge traditional notions of history while Hudson's *Knights of Spain* addresses the harms Hernando de Soto's invasion of the southeast inflicted on Native Americans and its impacts for the centuries to come. These resources provide a background for staff to begin learning how to challenge historic stereotypes regarding Native Americans, but additional education is warranted.

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[696] Over the past few decades, the Vann House has changed how they present enslavement. Miles, *House on Diamond Hill,*194-95*;* Garner, email. Though there certainly were enslaved people living at New Echota (one slave cabin now lies under the neighboring golf course), this is not presented as part of the New Echota tour, though it is briefly mentioned in the museum.

[697] Gomez, interview.

Assessing Collections Practices

Neither site meets this criterion because the sites fail to acknowledge responsibility for past collection practices. However, the sites partially meet this criterion for their current collection practices. Through the exhibits, it should be clear to visitors that these sites were brought into Georgian hands through nineteenth century Georgian actions, but this link is not made with an explicit reference of colonization and continued colonization.[698] The film room at New Echota has a large display on the work done by the Gordon County Historic Society and the Georgia Historical Commission, but it does not discuss what was absent: Cherokee involvement. While consultation with tribes was not required at that time, the fact remains that the restoration of the Vann House and the construction of the new New Echota occurred with little Cherokee consultation, other than de Baillou and Malone's research trip to Oklahoma and much later, the Council House. This restoration work was demonstrative of the late-Heye era of collecting: the Commission failed to solicit input from the culture it sought to represent. Failure to acknowledge this lack of consultation excuses past institutional behavior – acknowledging it informs the public about another theft from the Cherokee. Instead of land, this time Georgia took the ability to interpret Cherokee culture.

New Echota and the Vann House are not active collectors. However, when they do need to add reproductions of Cherokee artifacts, they seem to do so responsibly. New baskets and other crafts for display come from modern Cherokee artisans.[699]

The site staff also have not conducted a recent high-level gap analysis of their collection and interpretation with Cherokee advisors. The Vann House themes have been reimagined more

[698] Though this link is not clear through the museum, it is clearly a link understood by the staff as Gomez touched on it in our interview. Gomez, interview.
[699] Gomez, interview.

recently, but the last time New Echota staff took a high-level look at what the site was presenting was 1962. The current site manager believes that although historians may have finessed their knowledge of the site over the past several decades, the main themes considered important have not changed.[700] While a full-scale analysis and thematic change has not occurred, there have been some moments of filling in gaps. At the Vann House, for example, staff added an exhibit on enslavement, interpretation of which was lacking since the time of the Georgia Historical Commission (and is still largely absent at New Echota). It is unclear whether that project involved consultation with the Cherokee. At New Echota, the audio box project began to fill in gaps of the site's presentation in the historic area.

Balancing Past and Present Narratives

Both historic sites begin to meet this criterion for acknowledging history and the present, but do not fully meet this criterion as they do not look deeply at either period and do not draw connections between the past and present. Both interpretive museums have dedicated space to remind visitors of Cherokee survivance. As soon as visitors get to the site, they are confronted with the flags of the three federally recognized Cherokee tribes and in the exhibit, visitors are reminded that the Cherokee are "an important part of our world today." Unlike the National Museum of the American Indian, the site will not be criticized for being too focused on the present without revealing the trauma of the past. However, the site is almost too focused on the pre-Removal era. The original topic for this Georgia-focused paper was the degree to which Georgia Historic Sites include modern Native American history and current events in their interpretive programs and exhibits. When I divulged this potential topic to one of New Echota's rangers, he said "I'll save you from wasting your time." He pointed me to a panel on the wall of

[700] Gomez, interview.

the interpretive film room which shows photos of the current chiefs of the Eastern Band of Cherokee, Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, and the United Keetoowah Band. The panel also includes where the tribes are located, membership, and a few activities of each tribe. The interpretive ranger told me that the focus of the museum is not on the present nor on the Trail of Tears, but the high level of civilization achieved by the Cherokee prior to removal.

Site Manager David Gomez erected this panel in 2002 in response to visitor ignorance about the modern Cherokee. Because most of the Cherokee and Creek were forcibly removed from Georgia, the majority of New Echota's visitors do not encounter Native Americans on a regular basis, though this perception is changing with Department of Transportation Trail of Tears highway signage and improvement in K-12 social studies education in Georgia.[701] Gomez wants his visitors to understand that the Cherokee "didn't just disappear, they were pushed west across the Mississippi River. People sometimes forget that there are still Cherokee tribes, there are still chiefs, there is still a government-to-government relationship… even though time and time those [treaties and laws] have been ignored by the United States."[702]

New Echota is also missing a period of history. The site jumps from 1839 to the 1950s restoration and then again to the 2002 modern Cherokee panel information, but there is a long, eventful history in between those time periods which relate to New Echota's message. With this

[701] Gomez noted that the curriculum used to jump from discussing Tomochichi and Oglethorpe in the colonial era and the American Revolution to the Civil War. Currently, fourth graders and eighth graders learn about Indian Removal and the Trail of Tears, which has increased the number of students accessing the site through field trips. "Social Studies Georgia Standards of Excellence, Kindergarten – Grade 12," Georgia Department of Education, June 9, 2016, https://www.georgiastandards.org/Georgia-Standards/Documents/Social-Studies-K-12-Georgia-Standards.pdf. High school educators are required to discuss Native Americans as part of Georgia's United States History Standards of Excellence in terms of English colonization, the French and Indian War, the American Revolution, Indian Removal, Reconstruction, and Manifest Destiny. In Georgia, Native Americans still do not "exist" in the high school curriculum beyond 1900. "Social Studies Georgia Standards of Excellence, United States History," Georgia Department of Education, June 9, 2016, https://lor2.gadoe.org/gadoe/file/6d0fa279-21d4-4f08-aaa0-9f0e5f3ad6bf/1/Social-Studies-United-States-History-Georgia-Standards.pdf.

[702] Gomez, interview.

temporal disconnect is also a failure to acknowledge continued impacts of colonialism and Removal in the present day, with the exception of the audio box project.

Despite the understanding that modern Cherokee and Native American history is important to acknowledge at the site and the staff's desire to do so, New Echota staff don't believe that the site has any more space to dedicate to recent history than it already has.[703] Certainly, the museum does more than some others by including one panel about recent history of three Cherokee tribes, but by remaining true to its 1962 interpretive themes, New Echota misses out on delivering a stronger message of survivance.

Like New Echota, the Vann House interpretive museum acknowledges that the Cherokee are living people. A significant portion of the museum is dedicated to two modern Cherokee tribes – Cherokee Nation and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.[704] The modern Cherokee exhibit includes a panel on each nation's first female principal chief – Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Wilma P. Mankiller and Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Principal Chief Joyce Dugan – and a display of Cherokee art from modern artisans. The Vann House takes history beyond Vann's removal, following Vann to his death in 1844 aboard the *Lucy Walker* as well as his descendants to some extent through the end of the nineteenth century. The history of the house also does not end after Vann's removal but is briefly discussed through its purchase for the Georgia Historical Commission.

Thesis Answer: Effectiveness of Georgia State Historic Sites Incorporation of Cherokee Perspectives

Based on these criteria, Georgia State Historic Sites' incorporation of Cherokee perspectives is only moderately effective. None of the collaboration criteria have been fully met:

[703] Gomez, interview.
[704] The United Keetoowah Band is not mentioned at the site.

these sites have minimally begun to meet most of the collaboration criteria and has not begun to meet the Cherokee advisory committee criterion.

Recommendations for Meeting the Criteria

Because Georgia State Historic Sites' presentation of Cherokee voices is only moderately effective, this section contains recommendations to work toward meeting the criteria. These suggestions are not exhaustive and are from my perspective. More important suggestions to meet these criteria and beyond will come from further collaboration with Cherokee advisors.

Native American Advisory Committee Recommendation

Establish Cherokee Advisory Council: Georgia State Historic Sites should establish a standing advisory council for New Echota and the Vann House. It can follow in the footsteps of the Atlanta History Center, which recently established an advisory council to revise its Cherokee and Creek history exhibit. The Atlanta History Center brought on Native American advisors, including advisors from the Museum of the Cherokee Indian and Cherokee Heritage Center, at an early developmental stage.[705] The Atlanta History Center works with their advisors to determine how Native Americans want their voices to be shared. For example, following a recent group session each committee member was asked what they would like to see in a museum as a Native American.[706]

Instead of the occasional, as needed consultation currently employed by New Echota and the Vann House, a standing advisory committee could be consulted regularly on exhibit content, important events, and educational programming. The sites already have several consultation contacts among the Cherokee that could be asked to join the committee initially, as well as

[705] Brown, interview; Callie Chunestudy (curator, Cherokee Heritage Center and culture and tourism director, Cherokee Nation Businesses), email message to the author, April 28, 2021.
[706] Brown, interview.

Cherokee leaders and representatives from Cherokee heritage centers. Creation of a Cherokee advisory council is a helpful step to working on the remaining recommendations but understanding the logistics of getting so many people to meet, the rest of these suggestions could be implemented through smaller-scale consultation and collaboration.

Authority Sharing Recommendations

Establish Regular Consultation: Both sites consult Cherokee historians and representatives as needed. Understandably, consulting with the Cherokee every time something is changed is a burden both on staff and on Cherokee consultants. Establishing a regular consultation could inform future projects and analyze changes that should be made to exhibits and interpretive themes.

Review Interpretive Themes with Advisory Committee: New Echota, and the Vann House to a certain degree, should reevaluate their site's core themes with the advisory committee and determine what is important to show modern visitors. The perspective of Paul Chaat Smith (Comanche), a curator at the National Museum of the American Indian, challenges New Echota to look beyond its original interpretive themes, saying "We tell visitors that although the past never changes, the way we understand it changes all the time. We say that all histories have agendas, including ours."[707]

Increase Collaboration on Exhibits: Recognizing spatial concerns, additions can be made without encroaching on the current exhibits. Working with the advisory council, both sites can expand on the 2017 New Echota audio box project to bring in additional Cherokee perspectives. Instead of audio boxes, content could be accessed by smart phone through QR code (throughout the site). While New Echota's museum may be full, there is plenty of space in the Council House

[707] Smith, "Critical Reflections," 140.

and Supreme Courthouse to add additional informational panels. Currently, there is no information posted in these spaces and guides do not take visitors through them because they are unlocked. These spaces can provide room for new exhibits.

Relinquish Control of Exhibit Space: Using the same spatial ideas above, the sites can offer exhibit space to tribes or the consideration of the advisory committee. Both the Museum of the Cherokee Indian and Cherokee Heritage Center have worked on rotating exhibits installed at other museums.[708]

Expand Cherokee Resources in the Gift Shop: The museum can continue to privilege Cherokee voices even after guests leave by including additional Cherokee resources in the gift shop. The museum already includes art for sale from the Qualla Boundary and a few resources written by Cherokees, but there are many Cherokee historians and other Cherokee authors that are not represented in the gift shop.

Educational Programming Partnership Recommendations

Create Content for Georgians and Cherokees: Working with the advisory committee, the site staff can determine if there are needs of the Cherokee community that it can fulfill, not just teach non-Natives about Cherokee history and culture.

Review Educational Programs: Working with the advisory committee, the site staff can work through inaccuracies and fill gaps for its living history days and school programs to enhance education for school aged children.

Cherokee Internship: Offer a funded internship for Cherokee students to work at the site or work on a research project from afar if sitework is not geographically feasible.

[708] Brown, interview; Chunestudy, email.

Cherokee Visits: Offer virtual visits to Cherokee visitors who cannot otherwise come to the site because of geographic dislocation.

Educating Staff Recommendations

Train Staff to Respond to Stereotypes: Site staff should be trained to present Cherokee history in a respectful way and in a way which combats stereotypes. This can be through bias awareness training, reading more Cherokee resources (and picking up *Do All Indians Live in Tipis*), and paying attention to current Cherokee news to consider what questions visitors may bring up at the site.[709]

Increase Cherokee Material in Staff Library: Given the budget issues that plague Georgia's historic sites, the cheapest and most feasible way to authentically represent the Cherokee is to shift the way staff talks about the sites. Introducing additional materials from Cherokee historians and modern Cherokee writings can help staff begin to represent and elevate Cherokee voices instead of relying on European or academic sources.

Assessing Collections Practices Recommendations

Address Georgia's Ownership: The restoration exhibit should address how it came to hold these historic sites and the work done in the mid-twentieth century. The site should explicitly acknowledge that Georgia's ownership is a continued impact of colonization. The current restoration exhibit can be modified to include more information about the restoration process, as well as the restoration team's motivations.

Reconsider Interpretive Themes: Since 1962, the museum world has come to recognize the importance of many issues that were dismissed early on, like the role of women and life of people outside of the upper class. Sixty eventful years of history have passed since New Echota

[709] Bench, *Interpreting Native American History and Culture,* 82, 99.

staff decided on its interpretive themes which could be revisited to pull New Echota's history to the present. Revisiting the themes, this time with meaningful input from the Cherokee through a Cherokee advisory committee, could determine both what is missing and what the site means today to Cherokees and Georgians alike.

Balancing Past and Present Narratives Recommendations

Reconsider History: New Echota's interpretive themes are now almost 60 years old. Together with the advisory council, the staff can reconsider what is important. This may include additional themes, like Cherokee enslavement and the role of women.[710] This may also mean addressing missing history – New Echota largely does not consider history between 1838 and 2002. Before and during the New Echota era, Cherokee land was stolen in the 1700s and 1800s by the United States and Georgia. During the period of history that is nonexistent at New Echota, the Cherokees continued to have land stolen as the federal government appointed chiefs who signed treaties in the twentieth century. In 2020, the Supreme Court of the United States reaffirmed tribal lands in Oklahoma.[711] Each of these events shows that New Echota remain relevant today.

Reconsider the Present: The sites already show visitors that the Cherokee are still around. They do this through informational panels, inviting Cherokee speakers and craftspeople to events, and displaying modern-made Cherokee crafts in museum exhibits and in museum stores. Including more content about modern Cherokee tribes either through informational panels or through staff tours can strengthen the message of survivance. Making the site relatable to the present will reinforce the importance of the sites' history and could challenge visitor worldview.

[710] Brown, interview; Gomez, interview.
[711] *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, 140 S.Ct. 1452 (2020).

Conclusion: Beyond the Criteria

Once stolen from the Cherokees by Georgia, these sites were again brought into Georgia hands at the outset of the Georgia Historical Commission in 1952. These sites were and are recognized to tell an important, complex history – made even more complex by its current stewards. The histories of the sites were appropriated and molded by the mid-twentieth century restorers and efforts so far to reorient the site through increasing authentic representation of Cherokee histories and cultures at the site have not been entirely effective. While Cherokee opinion was largely not sought at the beginning of these sites' restoration history, Cherokee involvement has vastly improved since the late-twentieth century to involve regular consultation. The sites' caretakers have shown that they understand the importance of the task before them to carefully explain the history of the sites and Cherokee survivance.

The State of Georgia, however, does not seem to understand its role as a steward of these sites. One continuing thread from the beginning of the restoration to today is Georgia's underfunding of these sites. Yet, Georgia has decided these sites are worth keeping despite economic downturns. A 1970s recession resulted in the deaccessioning of several state parks and historic sites in 1975, but the Vann House and New Echota remained within DNR.[712] Again, after the Great Recession DNR budgets and staff were drastically cut by 39%, and the Vann House was nearly sold to Murray County.[713] Current small budgets and low staffing levels mean

[712] Letter from Joe D. Tanner (Commissioner of Georgia Department of Natural Resources) to W.H. Lumpkin, August 19, 1975, Natural Resources Commissioner's Office Commissioner's Subject Files, 1972-1986, Division: Parks and Recreation Reorganization Plan – Vann House, RG 86-1-1, Georgia Archives.
[713] Charles Oliver, "DNR Cuts Anger Cherokees, Friends of the Vann House," *Daily Citizen-News* (Dalton, GA), May 27, 2009, https://www.dailycitizen.news/news/local_news/dnr-cuts-anger-cherokees-friends-of-the-vann-house/article_d1efdabf-ed13-5709-90c6-2062cce98579.html; Tiya Miles, "Georgia's Historic Sites Need Funds," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 22, 2010, Newsbank; Kelly Jackson, "Chatsworth Community, Cherokee Leaders Looking to Return Vann House to Normal Operations," *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, June 20, 2009, https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/georgia/story/2009/jun/20/chatsworth-community-cherokee-leaders-looking-retu/224204/?bcsubid=f228724f-f589-4f53-9f47-490d6f5625e2&pbdialog=reg-wall-login-created-tfp.

that meeting the collaboration criteria through the above recommendations are improbable or even impossible in the near future. Even if New Echota and the Vann House met the criteria suggested in this thesis, the sites can never truly be removed from a colonial mindset so long as they remain in the hands of Georgia. The Georgia Historical Commission ascribed values to New Echota and the Vann House based on what was important to white Georgians in the twentieth century – values which remain embedded within the interpretation of the sites. Returning the Vann House and New Echota to the Cherokee would offer the sites a new life: this time infused with the values Cherokee people find important.

In recent years, calls to return sacred Native land to Native owners have increased.[714] More specifically, since the 1990s, the Eastern Band of Cherokee have been buying stolen, ancestral lands in North Carolina and Tennessee.[715] The notion of buying stolen sacred land is painful – and the notion of the Cherokee purchasing New Echota and the Vann House from the State of Georgia is worse. Georgia must work with the Cherokee to faithfully convey these sites' history and acknowledge continuing impacts of the difficult history the State caused – returning these sites, and providing a fund for their upkeep, is the best way to fulfill this obligation. In an ideal world, the State of Georgia would recognize that because it is responsible for the forced removal of the Cherokee and later elected to become the stewards of that same culture by

[714] David Treuer (Ojibwe), "Return the National Parks to the Tribes," *The Atlantic,* May 2021, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/05/return-the-national-parks-to-the-tribes/618395/; Shirley Sneve (Rosebud Sioux Tribe), "Tribes Reclaiming Lands 'Actually Happening,'" *Indian Country Today,* January 15, 2021, https://indiancountrytoday.com/news/tribes-reclaiming-lands-actually-happening; Michael Albertus, "The Time to Return Land to Native Americans is Long Overdue," *The Hill,* March 9, 2021, https://thehill.com/opinion/campaign/542310-the-time-to-return-land-to-native-americans-is-long-overdue; Andrea Guzman, "A Call to Return Land to Tribal Nations Grows Stronger," *Mother Jones,* April 30, 2021, https://www.motherjones.com/environment/2021/04/land-back-tribal-nations-sovereignty-treaties-white-supremacy/.

[715] Sheyahshe Littledave (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians), "'Our DNA is of This Land': The Cherokee Quest to Reclaim Stolen Territory," *National Geographic,* December 9, 2020, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/dna-of-this-land-cherokee-quest-reclaim-stolen-territory.

establishing these historic sites, the State has an ethical obligation to support and present these sites in a way that authentically represents the Cherokee. It is time to return these sites and these lands to their rightful Cherokee owners.

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