

# Using Primary Sources in the Classroom

## The Creek War

This lesson was created by educators working with the Alabama Department of Archives as part of the “[Using Primary Sources in the Classroom](#)” project in 1996.

### Lesson 2: Geography Determines History

#### Content Standards:

Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies (2010)

- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade: Standard 3
  - Explain the social, political, and economic impact of the War of 1812, including battles and significant leaders of the Creek War, on Alabama.
    - Examples:
      - social—adoption of European culture by American Indians, opening of Alabama land for settlement
      - political—forced relocation of American Indians, labeling of Andrew Jackson as a hero and propelling him toward Presidency
      - economic—acquisition of tribal land in Alabama by the United States
  - Explaining the impact of the Trail of Tears on Alabama American Indians’ lives, rights, and territories
- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade: Standard 10
  - Describe political, social, and economic events between 1803 and 1860 that led to the expansion of the territory of the United States, including the War of 1812, the Indian Removal Act, the Texas-Mexican War, the Mexican-American War, and the Gold Rush of 1849.
    - Identifying Alabama’s role in the expansion movement in the United States, including the Battle of Horseshoe Bend and the Trail of Tears
- 10<sup>th</sup> Grade: Standard 8
  - Compare major events in Alabama from 1781 to 1823, including statehood as part of the expanding nation, acquisition of land, settlement, and the Creek War, to those of the developing nation.

#### National Standards for History

- Era 4, Standard 1 – United States territorial expansion between 1801 and 1861, and how it affected relations with external powers and Native Americans

#### National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- Standard 6 – Power, Authority, and Governance

- Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance.
- Standard 9 – Global Connections
  - Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence

### **Learning Objectives:**

Upon completion of this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Describe the geographic location of the Creek War.
2. Name the rivers where the battles took place.
3. Analyze the importance of geographic features in planning battles.
4. Describe the importance of mapping roads through the wilderness.
5. Analyze the importance of maps in planning military strategy.
6. Debate the relevance of the statement: Geography determines history.

### **Suggested Activity for Entire lesson**

1. Make a copy of Documents 1, 2, 3 and 4 for each student.
2. Ask the students to arrange the maps in chronological order. They may use their textbooks or other references to help with this.
3. After students complete these tasks, organize the class into four groups. Assign one map to each group. Ask each group to use the general guidelines for analyzing a map and compile their observations and report their conclusions to the class.

### **Suggested Activity for Document 1:**

Note that the orientation of the map is unusual - the title and names of sites, printed sideways, distort the traditional north-south orientation. You may need to bring this to the attention of younger children; older students should discover this in their analysis.

1. Use this map to locate forts, battles, towns, etc., mentioned in other documents relating to the Creek War.
2. Orientation activity-- use blank Alabama map and ask students to mark locations of battles mentioned in documents and write them in with correct orientation.
3. Discuss the importance of the rivers for transportation and also the problems associated with travel for militia (waterways too shallow, flooded, need for boats, etc.).

### **Suggested Activity for Document 2:**

The Creek Indian attack on Fort Mims was one of the primary causes of the Creek War of 1813-14. Over five hundred people lost their lives in the battle. During this period, General Ferdinand Leigh Claiborne served as leader of the Mississippi volunteers who defended settlers along the

Alabama River. He and his forces defeated the Creeks at the Battle of Holy Ground in 1813 December, effectively ending the uprising between the Alabama River and Lake Tensaw.

This Map of Fort Mims and its environs belonged to Gen. Claiborne The map delineates, with sketches of trees and shrubs, the clearing in which Fort Mims stood, and it shows a layout of the fort with simple sketches of the buildings within the barricades. The main road to the fort from the Pensacola road is marked as well as the main ferry landing on the Alabama River.

Various homes and businesses are noted. The map also contains numerous notations about the fort, the massacre, and the surrounding area. Notes identify the directions from which the Creek Indians advanced on the fort, the placement of troops defending the fort, and the fate of the homes and businesses in the area around the fort. The map of Fort Mims was probably created after the massacre.

1. When do you think the map was drawn? Before or after the battle? Why?
2. Why did families move into Fort Mims?
3. How do you think the families managed to provide shelter and food for their children within the walls of this fort?
4. Why was there a separate kitchen?
5. Read other accounts of Fort Mims and see how they compare with names of families on this map.

### **Suggested Activity for Document 3:**

The Battle of Talladega occurred 9 November 1813 near present day Talladega, Alabama. The forces of General Andrew Jackson attacked a large number of Creek Indians, hostile to the Americans, who had surrounded a fort containing a number of Creek Indians, allies of the Americans. Jackson's men killed over two hundred warriors and won the battle. This mp, which appears to be of the Battle of Talladega, is not dated. The creator of this map is unknown. It includes the names of the United States commanders, a list of their troops' positions, and the directions in which their forces moved against the hostile Creeks. The map also shows the location of a camp of hostile Indians and a fort of friendly Indians along a small stream. The location of the hostile Creeks is highlighted in red pencil. A legend is also on the map.

1. Discuss the information included on map.
2. Why is the legend important in understanding the map?
3. Do you think this map was made before or after the battle?
4. How did General Jackson know "friendly" (those allied with the Americans) Creeks were in the fort?
5. What would you include in a map if you were a spy giving information to your commanding officer?
6. Why do you think this map was made?

### **Suggested Activity for Document 4:**

Leonard Tarrant was an officer during the Creek Indian War of 1813-14. Later, President Andrew Jackson appointed Tarrant as Indian Agent. He was also a Methodist minister who would later serve as a member of the Alabama legislature. The map of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend was made for Captain Tarrant after the battle when the Creeks had been defeated. The map of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend shows the position of the United States forces and the opposing Creek Indians in the bend along the Tallapoosa River for which the battle was named. The map also shows the location of the Creek's fortifications in the bend and the positions taken during the battle by General Andrew Jackson's forces. The location of the baggage and stores of the United States forces is noted, as well as the site of the Indian village, Tohopeka, in the bend and a line of "cragge" hills opposite the bend.

1. Why was the location of Horseshoe Bend so important to the Creeks?
2. How did General Jackson overcome the natural barriers as well as the man-made barriers found at this site?
3. Why did the Cherokee Indians help fight against the Creeks?
4. Why was it important to note the "cragge" hills opposite the bend?
5. Compare this battle site with the others battle sites in Documents 1, 2, and 3.

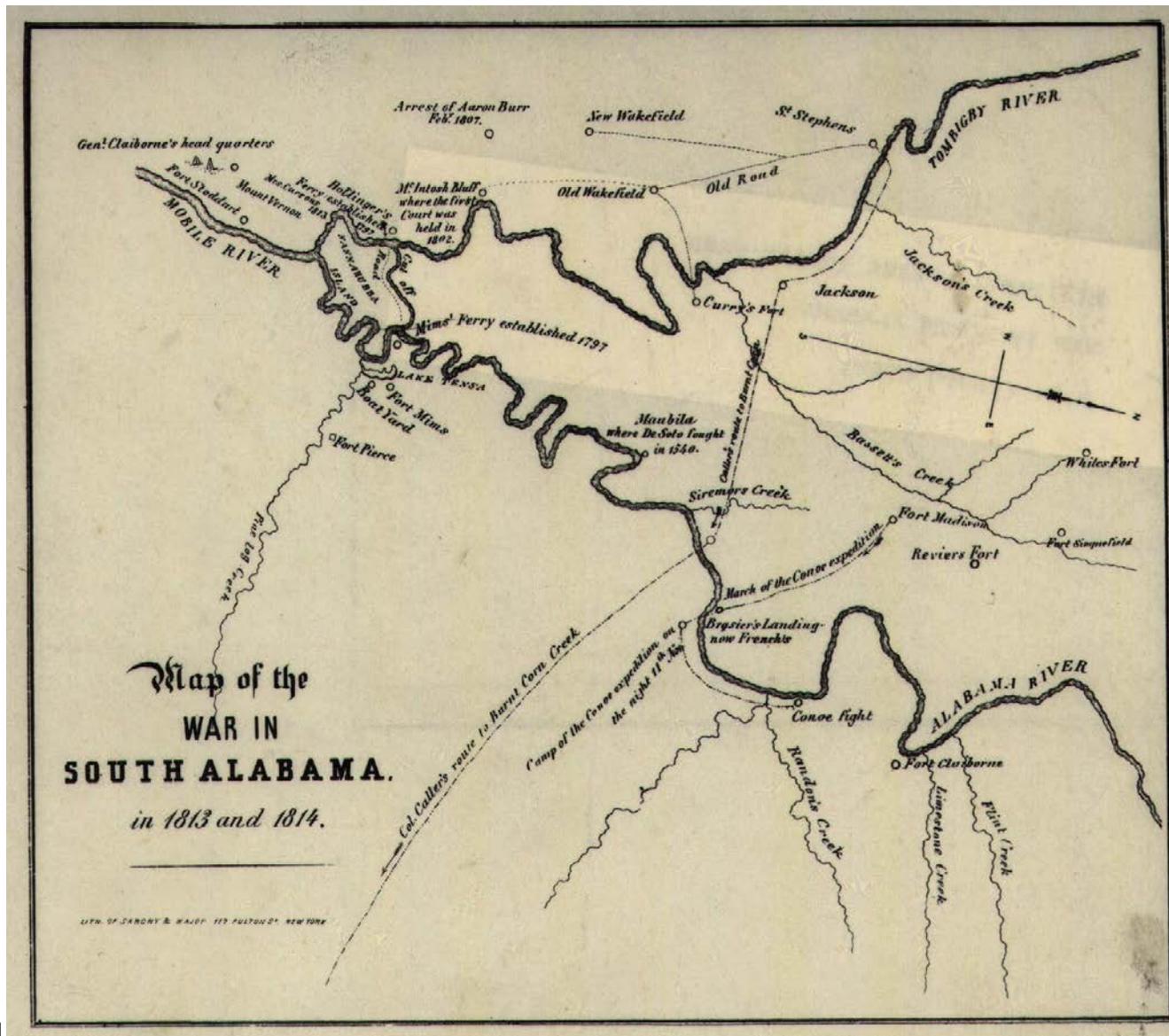
**Primary Sources:**

[Document 1](#): Map of the War in South Alabama in 1813 and 1814, CB-47, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

[Document 2](#): Ferdinand Leigh Claiborne, Map of Fort Mims and Environs, CB-23, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

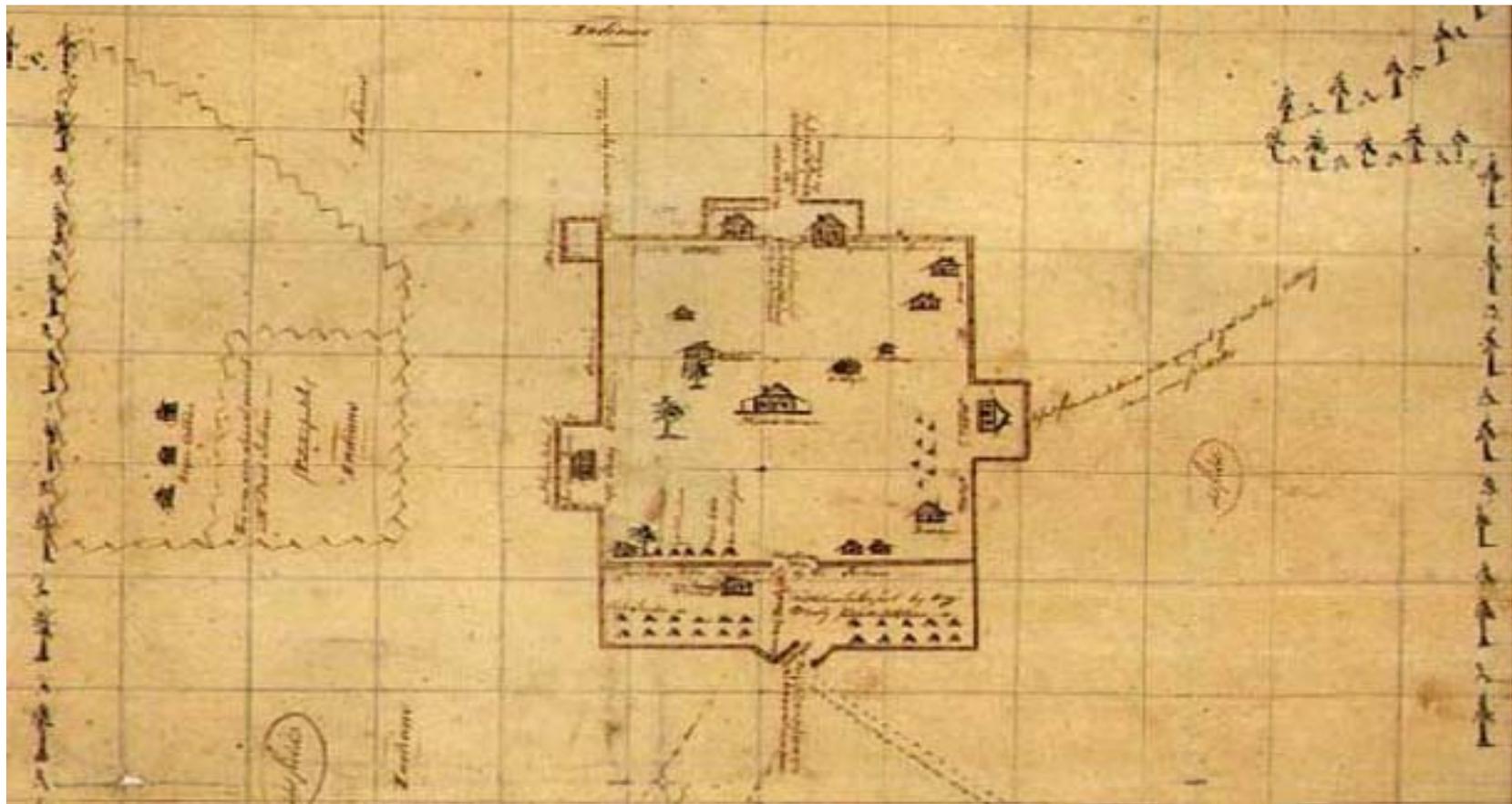
[Document 3](#): Map of the Battle of Talladega, A-43, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

[Document 4](#): Leonard Tarrant, Map of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, A-44, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

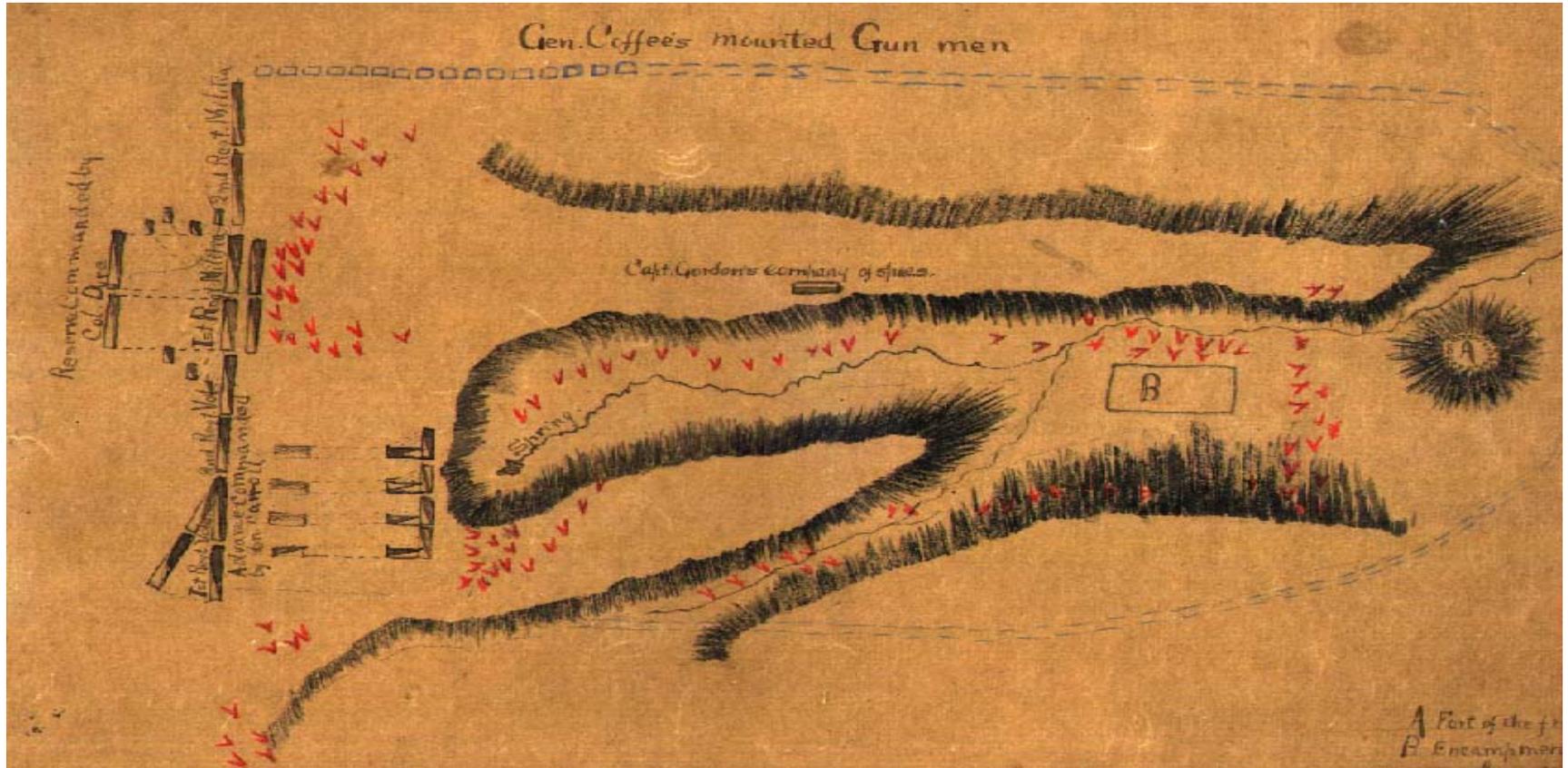


Document 1

Document 2



Document 3



A Fort of the friendly Croaks  
B Encampment

A Fort of the friendly Croaks  
B Encampment of hostile Croaks  
 American Infantry  
 American Riflemen  
 American Cavalry & Mounted Gun Men  
 Indians

Document 4

