Part I

Young Andrew Jackson's America

Chapter One

Life on the Early American Borderlands

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In the spring of 1788, Andrew Jackson and a small cadre of companions traversed the rugged Blue Ridge Mountains and arrived in the western community of Jonesboro (in modern-day northeastern Tennessee). The twenty-one-year-old lawyer remained in the Upper Tennessee Valley community for several months before departing for his ultimate destination, the rapidly developing Cumberland River settlement of Nashville (Remini, 1977: 35; Brands, 2005: 52–4). Jackson's western foray plunged the young and ambitious barrister into a dynamic frontier region undergoing a remarkable socioeconomic transformation. The region stretching from the western slopes of the southern Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River and south of the Ohio River to the Gulf of Mexico, an area often referred to as the "Old Southwest," had developed into a multiethnic, multiracial borderland in which Spanish, Amerindian, and American westerners vied for political and economic dominion. Despite the violence that plagued the region, Andrew Jackson's new home was also characterized by cross-cultural exchanges and a remarkable amount of transnational cooperation and collaboration. This was a shifting world where métis Creek hunters sold deerskins to Scottish traders, British frontier diplomats negotiated military alliances with neighboring Indian towns, and Cherokee "War Women" decided the fate of unfortunate war captives. The region's economy was also flourishing and expanding at a rapid pace, and by the time of Jackson's arrival in Nashville in October of 1788, the trans-Appalachian West was already deeply integrated into the regional slave-based agrarian economy and transatlantic exchange of goods.

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Early frontier historians and Andrew Jackson biographers paint a strikingly different portrait of this region, and over the last century historians have been challenging these early depictions of the eighteenth century trans-Appalachian borderlands. Early frontier chroniclers typically depicted the North American backcountry as an isolated and primitive region defined by violence between Indians and English-speaking whites. These scholars succeeded in constructing a North American frontier that was racially and ethnically homogeneous and nearly devoid of women, and a regional economy that stood as undeveloped, disconnected, and unimportant in the larger Atlantic world. The frontier's indigenous peoples stood as savage obstacles and unwitting diplomatic pawns in the contest for the trans-Appalachian West. In short, to these historians, the southern frontier that Andrew Jackson entered in 1788 was a murderous, bloody wasteland unfit for civilized habitation, cultural and commercial exchanges, and women and children. More recently, Borderlands, "new Indian" and early American historians have reconceptualized our understanding of the North American frontier by integrating often ignored or marginalized ethic, racial, and gender groups, recasting the region's native peoples, and reevaluating the inner-workings and position of the backcountry economy within a national and global context. These historians have reimagined North America's frontier past and constructed a much more complex, rich, and ultimately representative depiction of the region and its inhabitants.

From the formative studies of early frontier historians like Frederick Jackson Turner and Theodore Roosevelt to recent revisionary scholarship that has reshaped the field, this chapter traces the evolution of our understanding of the early American West and its inhabitants. By expanding the ethnic, racial, and gender palette of the region, complicating the scope and nature of Amerindian-Euroamerican interactions, and outlining the contours of the region's dynamic economic system, scholars have continuously reinterpreted the history of the region known collectively as the western frontier, a designation itself fraught with troublesome cultural and geographical implications.

Two early frontier historians stand out as strongly influential scholars shaping our understanding of life on the edges of empire, Frederick Jackson Turner and Theodore Roosevelt. The story of Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 address to the American Historical Association amidst the chaos and excitement of the Columbian Exposition is well known to American historians. As Chicagoans reveled in amazement at the wonders of the White City and Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, the thirty-two-year-old University of Wisconsin professor delivered his seminal paper, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," to an underwhelmed audience (White and Limerick, 1994: 7–10). Despite the initial reception, Turner's "frontier thesis" quickly defined the scholarly parameters of the North American backcountry. Influenced by the 1890 United States Census Bureau's report

announcing that there was no longer an American "frontier line," Turner challenged the so-called "Germ Theory" that attributed the growth of American political ideologies, capitalism, and culture to the pathogenic influence of Europe. Turner dismissed or minimized these European antecedents and argued that it was the rigors and challenges of the western frontier that accounted for the creation of an "exceptional" United States. In Turner's version of American history, America's democratic impulses, capitalistic innovations, and national character were the result of frontier adaptations aimed at conquering the "hither edges" of the continent and the region's indigenous peoples. Turner writes, "The peculiarity of American institutions is, the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people; to the changes involved in crossing a continent, in winning a wilderness, and in developing at each area of this progress out of the primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier into the complexity of city life." (Turner, 1935: 1–5)

Since the publication of "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," Turner's ideas have continually come under attack by historians. Despite denying the existence of American exceptionalism and rejecting the formation of a "composite nationality," Turner's critics continue to rely on many of the central arguments, models, and themes of his frontier thesis to drive the development of frontier historiography (Turner, 1935: 1–5). In addition to challenging Turner's conclusions historians have also pointed out numerous omissions and distortions in Turner's analysis of the backcountry and its influence on the transformation of North America, including ignoring the central roles played by women, non-Anglo Euro-americans, and Amerindians in the development of the frontier. To these critics, the Turnerian model failed to offer the diplomatic, cultural, or socioeconomic sophistication necessary for reconstructing the complex multiracial, multiethnic, and culturally-dynamic early American frontier.

Along with Frederick Jackson Turner, future President of the United States Theodore Roosevelt also deeply influenced the early historical construction of the southern frontier. In his four-volume *The Winning of the West*, published in 1889, Roosevelt offered readers an Anglo-centric, male-dominated history of the frontier that is driven by a narrative that posits the region's native peoples as dangerous impediments to be overcome by "English-speaking peoples." Offering only a token nod to the influence of non-Anglo westerners and completely ignoring the contributions of women and Amerindians to the history of the region, Roosevelt's triumphalist frontier history chronicles the conquest of the untamed wilderness and its "savage" inhabitants (Roosevelt: 1889: 1, 10, 15).

Many of Andrew Jackson's first generation of biographers anticipate the Turnerian and Rooseveltian depiction of the trans-Appalachian West when describing Jackson's early life on the southern frontier. In his 1882 Jackson biography entitled simply *Andrew Jackson*, Yale professor William Graham

Sumner describes the Tennessee backcountry as a "wild frontier country, in which the whites and Indians were engaged in constant hostilities." Sumner also depicts the region as an isolated country "shut off from connection to the Atlantic States by the mountains" and "cut off from the tools, furniture, clothing, and other manufactured articles such as civilized men use." The challenges of farming and threats posed by the Indians caused the frontier residents to sink "back to the hunting stage of civilization" and to engage in alcohol-fueled violence (Sumner: 1882: 6–8). William Garrett Brown's 1900 biography, also entitled *Andrew Jackson,* offers a description of the western frontier strikingly similar to Sumner's account. According to Brown, when Jackson crosses the Blue Ridge Mountains into the future state of Tennessee he entered an "almost unbroken wilderness . . . infested by Indians." Brown also describes a region economically and culturally "shut off from the world eastward," ethnically homogeneous, and populated by people who "hated foreigners and Indians and were ready to fight anyone who behaved like an enemy" (Brown: 1900: 13–17, 39). Taken in concert, Turner, Roosevelt, Sumner and Brown's accounts of the early trans-Appalachian West present a region dominated by violence and racism, hopelessly culturally and economically isolated and underdeveloped, ethnically homogeneous, and nearly absent of women.

In many ways, this nineteenth-century depiction of life on the early American frontier persisted among historians throughout the first half of the twentieth century. However, there were several important challenges to the Turnerian and Rooseveltian versions of the frontier narrative during this period. One of the strongest critiques of Turner's frontier thesis came from one of his own students, Herbert Eugene Bolton. Bolton studied with Turner at the University of Wisconsin at the turn of the nineteenth century and, with Turner's support, quickly emerged as a leading historian of the North American West. While his own scholarship clearly evinced the influence of his mentor, Bolton's research into the western frontier, which he dubbed the "borderlands," broke sharply from Turner in a number of key ways. Bolton criticized Turner for halting his analysis of the frontier at the Mississippi River and for failing to consider the influence of the Spanish on the development of the West. For Bolton, North America's frontier was not simply a steadily retreating "dividing line" in which Anglo-American culture, ideologies, and armies fatefully conquered primitive Amerindian groups. Bolton offered a more nuanced construction of the frontier and forced historians to consider the significant position non-English-speaking peoples occupied in the historical development of North America (Bannon, 1964: 4–5; Weber, 1986: 68–71).

Herbert Eugene Bolton's borderland construct inspired a second generation of western scholars in the second half of the twentieth century, who also sought to challenge the Turnerian focus on the "Anglo-American frontier." Saint Louis University professor John Francis Bannon was perhaps

the best known of the "Boltonians," and in his 1970 book *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513–1821*, Bannon "attempts to retell the story of the Borderlands" and "in the process to recognize that North America had frontiers other than the more familiar ones of Anglo making." Bannon's study of the Spanish borderlands sought to "show that the Anglo-American experience . . . was not as unique as it is sometimes pictured and chauvinistically thought to be" and that the Spanish also played a central role in "advancing the frontier into the [North American] wilderness" (Bannon, 1970: ix–x, 1–7).

While Bolton and Bannon erected the historiographic framework of an emerging borderlands history, the field of Borderland Studies quickly developed and expanded in a number of ways after the 1970s. Over the last three decades, scholars have reconceptualized the "Boltonlands," created new borderland historical models, and have found innovative methods to integrate new historical voices into the history of the trans-Mississippi West. The descriptions of the trans-Appalachian West offered by these scholars scarcely resemble the frontier region described by Turner, Roosevelt, or the Boltonians. Southern Methodist University professor David J. Weber stands at the forefront of contemporary borderland studies. In his 1992 book *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, Weber takes up Bolton's challenge to offer "a balanced view of the nation's past" that includes "an understanding of its Hispanic origins as well as of its French and English backgrounds." Weber's book offers a sweeping study of the "Spanish frontiers in North America" from "the landing of Ponce de Leon in 1513 to the end of the Spanish empire in North America in 1821." Weber's efforts to "explain Spain's impact on the lives, institutions, and environments of native peoples of North America" while simultaneously exploring "the impact of North America on the lives and institutions of [the] Spaniards" reflect one of the primary historiographical objectives of Borderland Studies. However, as Weber writes in the introduction of *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, borderlands scholars have moved "beyond" Bolton's call to simply consider Spanish influence on the development of North America "into arenas earlier generations [of historians] have slighted" (Weber, 1992: 6–9, 360).

This new generation of borderlands historians continues to broaden our understanding of North America's lower Mississippi Valley backcountry economy, demographics, and social relations. In his 1992 book *Indians, Settlers, & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783*, historian Daniel H. Usner, Jr. examines the interactions between Euroamericans, Africans, and Amerindians in colonial Louisiana in order to reveal "fluidity that characterized social and economic relations between all groups of people." Usner's search for "common ground" between these three frontier groups also allows him to illuminate the development of a complex regional "frontier exchange economy" that was

simultaneously rooted in local markets and connected to the larger transatlantic economy. Additionally, Usner's integration of both free and enslaved Africans into the lower Mississippi Valley's economy further enriches our understanding of the complexities of backcountry race relations and elevates an often marginalized frontier group into being full participants in the maturation of the southern backcountry (Usner, 1992: 7–9).

James F. Brooks also considers the myriad of cross-cultural connections between Euroamericans, Africans, and Amerindians fostered by the frontier market economy. In his book *Captive and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands*, Brooks traces the evolution of the southwestern Indian's "captive slave economy" from its traditional form rooted in captive assimilation into an exploitive "slave system" integrated into "the Atlantic World's market economy." In Brooks's description of the southwestern frontier, Native Americans, Spanish colonists, and later, American westerners engaged in a wide range of cultural and economic exchanges related to slave raids, slavery, kinship networks, and the growth of the region's agrarian economy. According to Brooks, "The reciprocal seizure, sale, and exploitation of people by American Indians and Euroamericans . . . developed through interaction into a unifying web of intellectual, material, and emotional exchange within which native and Euroamerican men fought and traded to exploit and bind to themselves women and children of other peoples." (Brooks, 2002: 30–40)

Numerous other borderland historians have highlighted the cultivation of cross-cultural exchanges within the inner-workings of the western economy. Historians Claudio Saunt, Kathryn E. Holland Braund, Robbie Ethridge, and Andrew K. Frank examine the relationships that emerge between Creek Indians and Euroamericans on the southern frontier. In *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733–1816*, Claudio Saunt demonstrates the "disruptive" force unleashed by métis Creek leaders like Alexander McGillivray by embracing materialism and private property, African-American slavery, and the centralization of the Muscogee government (Saunt, 1999: 2). Braund's *Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685–1815* (1993), Frank's *Creeks and Southerners: Biculturalism on the Early American Frontier* (2005), and Ethridge's *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and their World* (2003) also explore the shared economic, cultural, and political consequences of the deerskin trade, the so-called "factory system," on both Creeks and European traders and merchants. All four of these historians place the Muscogee people at the center of the dynamic trans-Appalachian trade networks and consider the impact of Amerindian-Euroamerican economic exchanges on both Indian and white participants. Additionally, by highlighting the myriad of non-violent exchanges that frequently occurred across the trans-Appalachian West, these scholars challenge the images of perpetual bloodshed and warfare

that defined the hyperviolent Turnerian frontier model and early western scholarly depictions.

In addition to the cross-cultural and transnational exchanges between Muscogee and Euroamerican colonists, borderland historians have also exposed numerous other examples of the cultivation of non-martial economic and cultural ties that developed across the trans-Appalachian frontier. In the first chapter, entitled "Slaves, Skins, and Wampum: Destruction of Southern Appalachia's Precapitalist Mode of Production, 1540–1763," of her study *The First American Frontier: Transition to Capitalism in Southern Appalachia, 1700–1860*, Wilma A. Dunaway describes the rapid absorption into the European network of markets by the Cherokee Indians as they increasingly were drawn into the transatlantic deerskin trade. Relying heavily upon sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems theory that provides a model for understanding the development and expansion of global capitalism, Dunaway's analysis reveals how quickly the indigenous peoples of southern Appalachia were "articulated" into the vast transatlantic trade economy. However, Dunaway's description of the Cherokees' position within the southern Appalachian pelt trade does not paint them as hapless patsies ignorant of the consequences of their participation in Europe's pelt industry. Instead, Dunaway describes the influence of Cherokee culture, ritual, and business savvy on the internal dynamics of the pelt trade and the Euroamericans involved in the exchanges (Dunaway, 1996: 23–50).

In *Separate Peoples, One Land: The Minds of Cherokees, Blacks, and Whites on the Tennessee Frontier*, Cynthia Cumfer examines the collision of "ideologies" of the Tennessee frontier's indigenous, African-American, and Euroamerican residents. Despite bringing "dissimilar intellectual approaches to diplomacy and . . . social organization," Cumfer argues that the pressures caused by cohabitation and competition for the region forced the three groups to "reenvision social, governmental, and material relations." Cumfer's study draws heavily upon borderlands historical models and makes a concerted effort to present "the Cherokee perspective" on frontier "diplomacy, community, politics, and the economy." She also evokes "the metaphor of a meeting ground" to characterize the Tennessee frontier to describe the "multiethnic convergence" of ideas and interests in the Tennessee Valley (Cumfer, 2007: 2–17).

While much of the recent borderland scholarship draws it empirical base from the trans-Mississippi West, borderlands theory, methods, and historical models have also made an impact on the study of the southern borderlands in Jackson's time. In their 1999 article "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History," historians Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron recast the terms frontier and borderland in an effort to "disentangle . . . each construct." Adelman and Aron argue that the two concepts have been blurred by

frontier historians, and in order to draw distinctions between the two concepts, Adelman and Aron establish useful working definitions for each. "Frontier" is defined as a geographic and cultural crossroads where amorphous borders produced "intercultural relations," "mixing," and "accommodation." They then define a "borderland" as "the contested boundaries between colonial dominions" (Adelman and Aron, 1999: 814–816). These two historical constructions capture two of the most significant applications of borderlands models and also illustrate the influence of borderlands scholarship on "new Indian history," "new western history," and the history of the trans-Appalachian West.

Blending Adelman and Aron's definitions of frontier and borderland, Bolton, Bannon, and Weber's call to include non-Anglo actors in early western history, and the critiques of the Turnerian frontier model, historians have transformed our understanding of the trans-Appalachian West. Beginning with Adelman and Aron's concept of a frontier as a cultural mixing zone, numerous historians have challenged the Turnerian frontier narrative emphasizing conflict and violence between Euroamerican and Amerindian groups. While there is little doubt that there was a considerable amount of bloodshed in the eighteenth-century southern backcountry, there was also a wide range of strong internal and external transnational connections that transcended ethnic, cultural, geographic, and geopolitical lines.

While Boltonians have implored historians to consider the influence of non-English speaking peoples on the western frontier, "new Indian historians" have made a concerted effort to integrate Amerindians into the history of the trans-Appalachian West. In *Facing East From Indian Country: A Narrative History of Early America*, Daniel K. Richter argues that by shifting our perspective of the frontier from a westward facing, Anglocentric view to one that "faces east from Indian country, the history [of the west] takes on a very different appearance" (Richter, 2001: 8). Numerous Native American historians have heeded the call to examine the roles played by native peoples in the cultural, economic, and political development of the frontier. Richard White's influential 1991 book *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* serves as the historiographical model for many of these recent "Indian-centered" historical studies. White characterizes the Great Lakes region, called the *pays d'en haunt* (upper country) by the French, as a "world [where] the older worlds of the Algonquians and the various Europeans overlapped, and their mixture created new systems of meaning and exchange." While cautioning readers not to ignore the Indian-Euroamerican "violence" and "horrors" that often characterized relations in the Great Lakes region, White argues that the "middle ground" was also defined by mutual cultural accommodation. White brands *The Middle Ground* as "new Indian history," and states that the study "places Indian

peoples at the center of the scene and seeks to understand the reasons for their actions" (White, 1991: ix–xvi).

Many historians examining the southern backcountry have embraced White's "middle ground" model in their efforts to elucidate the myriad of peaceable frontier interactions. In her 1993 examination of the Muscogee pelt trade entitled *Deerskins & Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685–1815*, Kathryn E. Holland Braund explores the development, internal dynamics, and socioeconomic impact of the sale of white-tailed deerskins to Euroamericans on the Creek people. From the origins of the Muscogee communities to the devastating consequences of postrevolutionary civilization efforts, Braund's study places the Creeks at the center of the rapidly transforming southern frontier. One of the key hallmarks of "new Indian histories" is the identification of cross-cultural exchanges between whites and Amerindians. In *Deerskins and Duffels*, Braund recounts the impact of Creek contact and collaboration on the Euroamericans intimately involved in the deerskin economy, including dress and appearance, intermarriage, language, and rituals. Of course, on the "middle ground," cultural assimilation was a "two way street," and Braund offers numerous examples of Creek acculturation as well, including political and economic restructuring, cosmological shifts, changing gender roles, and the adoption of African-American slavery. While emphasizing the cataclysmic consequences of the Creek's integration into the Atlantic market economy, Braund argues that the Creeks managed to assert control over many central aspects of the pelt trade and preserve essential characteristics of their traditional indigenous culture amidst the profound changes initiated by these economic exchanges.

In addition to the significance of métis Indian leaders on Creek society previously mentioned in this chapter, Claudio Saunt's *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733–1816*, also considers the impact of trade and the lure of materialism on the Muscogee people. Focusing on the postrevolutionary emergence of métis headmen like Alexander McGillivray, Saunt argues that the emergence of a "new Creek order" that embraced African-American slavery and the trappings of Euroamerican society transformed Creek society. These new Muscogee micos, or headmen/chiefs, supplanted traditional Creek political and economic systems based on towns, clans, communal ownership, and the pelt trade with a new political and economic order that fostered tribal divisions, supported "civilization" efforts, centralized political and judicial power, and reshaped Creek society at its foundations. Despite eventually ushering in the removal of the Creeks, these new Creek leaders ultimately controlled their nation's postrevolutionary destiny. Andrew K. Frank's *Creeks and Southerners: Biculturalism on the Early American Frontier* echoes Saunt's description of the influence of prominent métis members of Creek society and offers a "more inclusive understanding of race and

identity on the early American frontier." Frank argues that "the children of [Euroamericans and Creek] intermarriage" also served as "cultural brokers" by "bridging the gap between southern and Creek societies" (Frank, 2005: 4–5).

Perhaps the most Creek-centered study of the Muscogee world is Robbie Ethridge's *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and Their World*. Ethridge's "historical ethnography" seeks to recreate the lives, landscape, and environment of the Creeks by relying largely on evidence collected by archeologists and from United States Indian agent Benjamin Hawkins. Ethridge forgoes historical narrative and instead examines the Creeks' relationship to the natural world. From the cultural, political, and economic significance of regional waterways to the impact of civilization efforts, farming, ranching, and land speculation on Creek identity, Ethridge's depiction of the beginning and closing of Creek country placed the Muscogee people at the epicenter of a dynamic southern frontier.

Of course, the Creeks were not the only Amerindian residents of the southern borderlands. When Andrew Jackson traversed the Blue Ridge Mountains, he passed into the lands of the Overhill Cherokee people. Historians have devoted a tremendous amount of scholarly energy to chronicling Appalachia's "principal people," but much of this predates the "new Indian history" movement. The most important early chronicler of the Cherokee people is ethnographer James Mooney. With the assistance of Swimmer, a prominent tribal shaman, Mooney managed to collect and record invaluable historical and cultural materials from the residents of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee in the mountains of western North Carolina at the turn of the twentieth century. Mooney's Cherokee scholarship has recently been combined into a single volume, entitled *James Mooney's History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokee* (1992). The volume is essentially divided into two sections: a brief history of the Cherokee and a collection of Cherokee myths and stories. Mooney's "Historical Sketch of the Cherokee" offers a reader a remarkable blend of linguistic, cultural, and historical analysis that forms the basis for much of the Cherokee scholarship that followed. Mooney's years among the Cherokee at the close of the nineteenth century allowed the researcher to amass an enormous amount of invaluable orally transmitted materials at a time when the Cherokee's "old ways" were rapidly disappearing.

Most of the Cherokee scholarship that followed Mooney's work focuses on the Indian removal period and post-removal struggles in Oklahoma and North Carolina. John Ehle's *Trail of Tears: Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation* (1988), Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green's *The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears* (2007), William L. Anderson's edited volume *Cherokee Removal: Before and After* (1992), John R. Finger's *Eastern Band of the Cherokees, 1819–1900* (1984), and William G. McLoughlin's *After the Trail of Tears: The Cherokee Struggle for Sovereignty, 1839–1880* (1994)

stand out as the best works on the removal period. Less attention has been paid to the postrevolutionary plight of the Cherokee people and the roles the tribe played in the transformation of the southern frontier. William G. McLoughlin's *Cherokee Renaissance in the New Republic* (1992) offers a sweeping examination of the Cherokee struggle to survive the new political and economic realities of early America. McLoughlin's analysis explores the shifting dynamics of the postrevolutionary fur trade, intensification of pressure for land cessions, and the treacherous path the tribe's leaders navigated between acculturation and territorial and cultural sovereignty.

John R. Finger's *Tennessee Frontiers: Three Regions in Transition* (2001) explores the complex diplomatic, economic, and cultural world of the Overhill Cherokee. Finger has been at the forefront of Cherokee scholarship and new Indian history for several decades and *Tennessee Frontiers* integrates the tribe's trans-Appalachian communities into the overall history of the Tennessee backcountry. Finger draws upon both "new Indian history" and borderlands studies in an effort to recreate "Tennessee's frontier experiences." Finger describes the Tennessee frontier as "an arena of interaction between whites and Indians" and a "zone of cultural interaction within those two groups [Euroamericans and Amerindians]." He depicts the Cherokee as "resilient, culturally innovative, and syncretic" historical actors who were "able to devise rational responses to new situations" that allowed them to "retain their identity." The Cherokee were not "victims," but equal participants, along with the Spanish, in the transformation of the Tennessee frontier (Finger, 2001: xx–xxi).

Taken in concert, both borderlands and "new Indian" historians' efforts to integrate the frontier's indigenous and non-English speaking peoples into the historical narrative has created a much more textured and realistic reconstruction of the southern frontier. Frontier historians have not simply stopped with these groups in their efforts to complicate our understanding of the ethnic and racial diversity of the North American borderlands. One of the richest areas of frontier scholarship over the last two decades has been the study of African-American slavery on the southern frontier and a number of scholars have written about the complex roles slavery and African-Americans played in the rapidly developing frontier exchange economy. When Andrew Jackson arrived in the Upper Tennessee Valley in 1788, the institution of slavery was already firmly entrenched in the region. Primarily utilized in the valley's rapidly developing commercial agrarian economy, tax records from 1788 indicate that regional slaveholders owned approximately 1,500 slaves (Barksdale, 2009: 26–27). A decade later, the regional slave population surrounding Jackson's new home of Nashville had swollen to over 8,000 slaves (Ray, 2007: 69).

As previously mentioned, in *Indians, Settlers, & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783*, Daniel H. Usner, Jr. examines the "social relations" among Euroamericans, Amerindians, and

African slaves in colonial French Louisiana. Usner is primarily concerned with the development of the region's economy and the "economic" and "cross-cultural interactions" between these three frontier groups. In an effort to "illuminate the diverse and dynamic participation of Indians, settlers, and slaves" in the regional market economy, Usner examines each group's "separate stakes" in the region's maturation. By including African slaves as vital participants in the growth of French Louisiana's regional frontier exchange economy, Usner joins a growing group of historians seeking to devote the "scholarly attention [to African-Americans and American Indians] commensurate with their presence and influence in colonial America" (Usner, 1992: 1–9).

In *Captives & Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands*, also discussed earlier, James F. Brooks traces the evolution of the traditional Plains Indians' "captive exchange economy" into a "slave system in which victims symbolized social wealth, performed services for their masters, and produced material goods under the threat of violence." Brooks describes the southwestern plains as a pastoral borderland where captive and kinship networks and cultural and economic interactions between African-American slaves, Indians, and Euroamericans (primarily the Spanish and later Americans) forged a "multiethnic" "political economy" (Brooks, 2002: 31, 196–197). As the capture and exchange of regional Plains Indians was supplanted by African-American chattel slavery, the traditional process in which captives were transformed into kin (metaphorical cousins) slowly disappeared. As Brooks writes, "Eventually the power, economy, and moralism of the broader modernizing world ended this local system." (Brooks, 2002: 40) The efforts of both Usner and Brooks to weave the stories of the southwestern borderland's Indian, Euroamerican, and enslaved residents into a cohesive narrative and to emphasize the cross-cultural interactions fostered by economic, martial, and familial exchanges has transformed scholars' views of both the frontier and contours of the institution of slavery.

Recently, historians have also considered the presence and importance of African-American slaves and slavery in the Creek and Cherokee societies across the southern backcountry. Most early histories of the Cherokee ignore the presence of slaves among the tribe. For example, Grace Steele Woodward's 1963 study entitled *The Cherokees* mentions "Indian slavery" only in passing and ignores African-American slavery among the tribe completely (Woodward, 1963: 58). James Mooney also fails to mention the presence of enslaved African-Americans among the Cherokee in his "Historical Sketch of the Cherokee." Historian Theda Perdue has been at the forefront of examining the emergence of chattel slavery among the Cherokee. Her 1979 work *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society 1540–1866*, traces the tribe's relationship to the institution from their first contact with Hernando de Soto's slaves through the Cherokee's adoption of the slave systems during the decades surrounding Indian removal. Over

the course of nearly three hundred years, the Cherokee's construction and relationship to the institution of slavery underwent continuous reinvention. Cherokee slavery advanced from the "aboriginal" phase of bondage in which the slave was often fully integrated into a Cherokee clan or kinship group (i.e. war captives) to a system that mirrored the Euroamerican chattel system. Perdue notes that this evolution of slavery came at a terrible cost to the Cherokee, including "economic inequality" and "cultural dichotomy" that still "exists today" (Perdue, 1988: 145).

In her "intellectual history of Tennessee from 1768–1810" entitled *Separate Peoples, One Land: The Minds of Cherokees, Blacks, and Whites on the Tennessee Frontier*, Cynthia Cumfer considers the "ideologies of the three communities (Indian, white, and black) brought together by the [eighteenth-century] land rush and how contact and revolutionary and postcolonial ideas transformed their concepts and assumptions." Cumfer's analysis of the cultural and ideological interactions between these three frontier groups draws heavily upon borderland and "new Indian" historiographies, but her analytical inclusion of African-Americans and her focus on the power and dynamism of frontier ideas and beliefs separates this book from much of the recent frontier historiography. Cumfer is interested in the collision of ideas, the fluidity of identities, and the reshaping of ideologies across the Tennessee frontier, or as Cumfer writes, "This book explores the imaginative worlds that they constructed during the frontier and borderland years in the trans-Appalachian Southwest." (Cumfer, 2007: 1–19)

The most obvious manifestation of the racial and cultural intermixing that occurred on the southern frontier was the increasing numbers and influence of "mixed-blood," or métis, individuals. Many of the offspring of Amerindian, Euroamerican, and African cross-cultural sexual encounters and intermarriages emerged as important frontier leaders and intermediaries. In his 1999 Bancroft Award-winning book *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (1999), James H. Merrell explores the tenuous existence of mixed-blood and other cultural brokers on Pennsylvania's borderlands. Merrell labels these individuals "go-betweens," which perfectly describes their roles as diplomats, trade facilitators, and treaty negotiators. These Pennsylvania backcountry "go-betweens" managed to straddle the racial, cultural, and geopolitical lines that separated North American society and serve as a link between Pennsylvania's diverse Euroamerican and Indian communities.

The southern frontier also contained a skilled cadre of frontier "go-betweens" and métis community leaders. However, there is considerable disagreement over the impact and legacy of these individuals on Amerindian society. In *A New Order of Things*, Claudio Saunt argues that the increased influence of métis Creeks like Alexander McGillivray "had a profound and disruptive impact on Creek society." By embracing African chattel slavery, Euroamerican materialism, and eventually American "civilization" efforts,

mixed-blood leaders created deep divisions within the nation, destroyed long-standing political and economic structures, and sowed the seeds of physical and cultural demise for the Muscogee peoples (Saunt, 1999: 2). Gregory Evans Dowd's book *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745–1815* does not paint métis Upper Creek leader Alexander McGillivray as unflatteringly as Saunt's *A New Order of Things*. Dowd agrees that McGillivray embraced Euroamerican cultural, political, and economic ways, but the Creek mico continued to cling to "Indian values." Dowd writes that McGillivray owed his frontier influence to his "skill as a mediator between European powers," but "despite this role" he "retained his tribal identity" and "remained dedicated to preserving [Creek] autonomy and economic security" (Dowd, 1992: 91–92). The Cherokee Nation also contained a number of influential mixed-blood leaders who helped shape the southern borderlands, including Chickamauga resistant leader John Watts and the Overhill town's "beloved woman" Nancy Ward. In a published collection of lectures from Mercer University's Lamar Lectures series entitled *Mixed Blood Indians: Racial Construction in the Early South*, Theda Perdue also examines the position and "participation" of métis and other "non-Indians" in Amerindian society and the "construction of the racial category of mixed blood" (Perdue, 2003: x).

In her article "Frederick Jackson Turner Overlooked the Ladies," Glenda Riley (1993) points out another weakness of the Turnerian frontier model, his failure to include women in his analysis of the backcountry. Riley brands Turner "a major mythmaker" and asserts that the inclusion of frontier women in his analysis would have fundamentally altered his historical conclusions (Riley, 1993: 65). Riley is not alone in her criticism of Turner and other early frontier historians, and these scholars have actively integrated women into the historical frontier narrative and have reshaped our understanding of the dynamics of gender relations and the significance of Euroamerican and Amerindian women on the early American borderlands.

Juliana Barr and Theda Perdue examine the plight of women on the edges of the southern borderlands. In *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands*, Barr argues that gender and "gendered terms of kinship" lay at the heart of "Spanish-Indian interaction in Texas." Barr challenges the notion that Iberian-Amerindian relations are best understood "in the context of race relations" and that "Europeans had all the power" in the backcountry exchanges. Instead, Barr contends that, in a world "where kinship provided the foundation for every institution . . . gender and power were inseparable." In addition to placing women and gender relations at the center of Iberian-Indian exchanges, Barr also flips the European-Amerindian power dynamic on its head by demonstrating that the Texas borderland was "a world in which Indians dictated the rules and Europeans were the ones who had to accommodate, resist, and persevere" (Barr, 2007: 1–15, 287–291).

In *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700–1835*, Theda Perdue attempts to remove Indian women from the "historical shadows" by elevating them to the position of "major players in the great historical drama" of early America. Perdue is also critical of the Turnerian frontier paradigm and its "failure to use gender as a category of analysis." By drawing heavily upon ethnography and challenging the "declension model" of women's deteriorating post-contact status and influence in Indian society, Perdue manages to overcome the limitations of Eurocentric and male-dominated primary source materials and recover the surprisingly "traditional" world of Cherokee women. *Cherokee Women* reveals the entrenchment of gender and domestic roles, division of labor, sexual mores, and diplomatic positions in the Cherokee's rapidly changing world despite the disruptive influence of Christian missionaries and United States Indian agents. Perdue argues that the Cherokee cultural, political, and economic transformation that accompanied Euroamerican contact and later "civilization" efforts did not fundamentally change or "restructure" the construction of gender or eliminate the importance of women in Cherokee society. According to Perdue, "The story of most Cherokee women is not cultural transformation . . . . , but remarkable cultural persistence." (Perdue, 1998: 3–11)

There is one final group that has also been ignored by early frontier historians, non-elite whites or "common settlers." It is perhaps strange that the people that would most come to symbolize Andrew Jackson's backcountry roots have largely evaded the historical record. The dearth of sources and historiographical tendency to focus on frontier elites and prominent political and economic leaders, in fact, has silenced the majority of backcountry voices. In her book *Border Life: Experience and Memory in the Revolutionary Ohio Valley*, Elizabeth A. Perkins utilizes the oral interviews of Ohio minister John Dabney Shane and the oft-consulted collection of Wisconsin Historical Society archivist Lyman Copeland Draper to "view the backcountry . . . through the eyes of common settlers as they reflected upon their experiences." Perkins argues that "reconstructing the mental world" of these common settlers requires careful consideration of the significance of Amerindian interactions, conceptions of the landscape and natural world, the events and legacy of the American Revolution, and the construction of memory and mythology in the development of the Ohio Country (Perkins, 1998: 1–4).

While the recent trend in frontier and borderland historiography has been to deemphasize conflict and violence on the North American backcountry, several historians have argued that violence actually defined frontier relations and shaped the region's political economy. In *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (2009), Peter Silver examines how "fear and horror . . . can remake whole societies and their political landscapes." Silver's study of the mid-Atlantic frontier during the eighteenth-century Indian wars reveals the role Amerindian violence,

racism, and hatred played in forging race-based identities and communal cohesion. For Silver, the day-to-day interactions of North America's heterogeneous populace "did not break down their shared stereotypes" or "improve intergroup relations." Instead, he argues that "it took war, and the fear that it brought" to create a shared sense of "commonality," or as Silver writes, to create "the white people" (Silver, 2008: xvii–xxvi).

Mathew C. Ward's *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754–1765* also explores the transformative and disruptive power of violence and warfare on the early American frontier. *Breaking the Backcountry* focuses primarily on the military and political decision-making surrounding the French and Indian War and Pontiac's Rebellion, however, Ward does describe the consequences of frontier bloodshed on Pennsylvania and Virginia's backcountry communities. Ward argues that war and violence "transformed the nature of colonial life" in a number of ways, including: expanding the authority and influence of colonial assemblies; altering the "relationship" between the North American colonies and London; intensifying Indian racism and hatred among colonists; cultivating colonial "ethnic and social divisions," and diminishing the power of regional elites. By the end of the Ottawa leader Pontiac's pan-Indian force's assault on the frontier, tensions emerged between frontier and eastern colonial leaders, Amerindian military strength stood as a force to be reckoned with, and western communities remained in a perilously fragile state. Despite these problems, these two wars did benefit frontier residents by expanding the regional economy and trade, creating a militia force that proved effective during the American Revolution, and increasing eastern political interest in the western hinterlands (Ward, 2003: 1–5, 256–258).

The historiographical debate over the connectedness of the North American frontier economy has also occupied a remarkable amount of scholarly attention over the last four decades. Early frontier historians emphasized the primitive nature of the southern backcountry economy and have repeatedly described the region's economic system as subsistent and isolated from larger regional, national, and global market developments. The images of remote and isolated frontier homesteads dotting a primitive economic landscape dominated popular and scholarly conceptions of the early American frontier since the eighteenth century. However, over the last forty years, historians have challenged this economic depiction and have demonstrated that the frontier market economy was capitalistic, diverse, and connected to the Atlantic markets. Frontier families and Native American inhabitants found themselves engulfed in a regional economy defined by commercial agriculture and stock farming, early proto-industrial development (i.e. natural resource extraction and the pelt trade), and regional and global market exchanges. By the time of Andrew Jackson's arrival in the Upper Tennessee Valley, commercial farmers, entrepreneurs

(tavern operators, merchants, millers, blacksmiths, etc.), and land speculators had succeeded in creating a thriving regional market economy. Jackson's own appetite for land speculation and business, combined with his legal expertise, drew the young North Carolinian into the region. His eventual removal to the Cumberland settlements also placed the young barrister in a dynamic community undergoing the emergence of slave-based plantation agriculture, mercantilism, and, of course, land speculation (Barksdale, 2009: 22–26; Ray, 2007: 3–13). As contemporary frontier economic historians inquired into the inner-workings of community and regional marketplaces, the image of a remote subsistent backcountry economy faded into obscurity.

While recent historians have thoroughly debunked the notion of a prolonged frontier subsistent economy, there has been considerable debate over exactly how to classify and describe the early backcountry economy. The so-called "moral versus market" debate essentially boils down to two primary issues: first, was there ever really a subsistence-based moral economy? And second, if there was a moral economy in place, when did it transform into a commercially oriented market economy? Historians James T. Lemon and Wilma A. Dunaway argue that the American frontier economy was capitalistic from the beginning of settlement. In *Best Poor Man's County: Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (1972), Lemon argues that early Pennsylvanians inhabited a "liberal" world in which individualism, market considerations, and material gains trumped public interests. Capitalism and "possessive liberalism" were present in southeastern Pennsylvania from the time of settlement. Appalachian historian Wilma Dunaway concurs with Lemon's analysis in her book *The First American Frontier: The Transition to Capitalism in Southern Appalachia, 1700–1860.* Utilizing World Systems Theory, Dunaway argues that the Appalachian frontier stood as a peripheral region connected to core regions through extensive market linkages. Beginning with Euroamerican contact with the Cherokee, the southern backcountry economy was enmeshed with the rapidly advancing transatlantic marketplace. From the development of the Cherokee pelt trade through the period of rampant land speculation, *The First American Frontier* reveals the market relations and capitalistic inclinations of early frontier residents.

While concurring that the early southern frontier economy was indeed market-oriented, several historians have challenged the notion that this occurred immediately after Euroamerican-Indian contact and white settlement. While there is considerable disagreement over when and how this occurred, these historians generally agree that the southern backcountry underwent an economic transition from a primitive, isolated, and subsistent moral economy to a capitalist economy tied to outside markets. In his article "Families and Farms: Mentalité in Pre-Industrial America," James A. Henretta (1978) directly challenges James T. Lemon's argument that

the earliest Pennsylvanians were driven by a "possessive liberalism" to accumulate wealth. Instead, Henretta argues that early American settlers were initially in a "transition phase" between a "traditional" subsistence or semi-subsistence economic orientation and capitalist or proto-capitalist market economy. Henretta concedes that early American settlers did strive to accumulate landed wealth, but other considerations were also at play, including the financial protection of the families and sheer survival.

James A. Henretta's historical contention that the early American backcountry went through a transition from moral to a market economy is echoed by a number of scholars. Alan Kulikoff's article "The Transition to Capitalism in Rural America" also supports the notion that America's backcountry economies underwent an evolution from a non-commercial economy to a commercial economy. Seeking to find middle ground between the "market historian's" insistence on the presence of capitalism from the point of settlement and the "social historian's" contention that rural economies exhibited characteristics of non-capitalist economies into the nineteenth century, Kulikoff calls for a synthesis of these two historical views. He argues that these rural economic transitions differed regionally and could be characterized as both an "intensification of capitalist production" and a transformation from a non-commercial to a commercial economy (Kulikoff, 1989: 125). In his book *Commercialism and Frontier: Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley* (1977), Robert D. Mitchell also contends that the economy of Virginia's "Great Valley" briefly started out as a subsistence-based economy but quickly phased into a commercially oriented economy.

Finally, there is a group of historians who argue that early American frontier economies often exhibited both moral and market characteristics and that subsistent and commercial economies coexisted in early America. In his 1990 article "Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America," Daniel Vickers blurs the line between the moral and market economic label. Vickers argues that Europeans entered North America determined to provide their families with a level of economic security and "comfortable independence," or what he calls "competency." Vickers argues that the search for competency naturally led early Americans to embrace commercialism as an acceptable means to secure economic independence. In short, Vickers asserts that both moral and market forces coexisted in the dynamic early American mixed economy. Gregory H. Nobles supports the notion of a mixed economy in his article "Breaking into the Backcountry: New Approaches to the Early American Frontier, 1750–1800." Nobles agrees with so-called "Market Historians" that capitalism, in the form of the Amerindian deerskin trade and the commercial efforts of frontier landed elites, existed from the time of initial Indian-Euroamerican contact and white settlement. However, Nobles also argues that backcountry smallholders continued to assert their desire for economic

independence and that their moral and commercial objectives were not "incompatible" (Nobles, 1989: 655).

Despite the historiographical disagreement over how best to characterize North America's frontier economy, historians do concur that the traditional notions of backcountry economic isolation and primitivism fail to capture the complexity and interconnectedness of the early American frontier marketplace. At least as early as Euroamerican-Amerindian contact, the southern frontier quickly developed a dynamic commercial economy that was closely tied to regional, national, and global markets. North America's indigenous peoples and white traders and settlers fostered a thriving frontier exchange economy in animal skins, Euroamerican trade goods, land sales, and enslaved peoples. The growth of backcountry commercial agriculture and stock farming, African-American chattel slavery, and the pelt trade placed the region and its residents within an emerging transatlantic marketplace. As the white population and backcountry communities expanded in the eighteenth century, these economic developments increased the importance of the frontier economy to the greater Atlantic world, became the basis for cross-cultural and transnational exchanges between the region's Euroamerican and Indian residents, and continuously transformed the southern borderlands.

Taken in concert, Borderland Studies, "new Indian history," the historical integration of women and "common settlers," and frontier economic historians have reshaped our understanding and vision of the North American frontier and the early backcountry environment of Andrew Jackson. When Jackson arrived in Jonesboro in the spring of 1788, he entered an ethnically and racially diverse community undergoing rapid economic development. On November 17, 1788, Jackson recorded his bill of sale for the purchase of "a Negro Woman named Nancy about Eighteen or Twenty Years of Age" in the Washington County Courthouse (Smith and Owsley, 1980: 15). Clearly the institution of slavery and the slave-based commercial economy was flourishing across the Tennessee frontier at the end of the eighteenth century and the region's populace was far from being homogeneously British. When Jackson departed Jonesboro for the Cumberland River settlement of Nashville in the fall of 1788, he again entered into a dynamic borderland inhabited and shaped by a diverse group of Amerindian and Euroamerican residents. His appointment as public prosecutor in October of 1788 and election as attorney-general in December of 1789 confirms this fact. Jackson served as a prosecutor and attorney-general for North Carolina's Mero District. The region's political leaders selected the name Mero District as an expression of respect for Spain's Louisiana Governor Estevan Miro (even as they obviously misspelled his last name) and demonstrated the central role Spain played in the development of the southern backcountry. The image of Andrew Jackson and his teenage female slave travelling to a political district named after a Spanish colonial official and inhabited by a motley and interconnected population

of Euroamericans and Amerindians does not fit the Turnerian frontier model or the backcountry depictions of Theodore Roosevelt and early Jackson biographers. However, this is the North American frontier reality that the collective efforts of borderland, Native American, women, African-American, and economic historians have painstakingly recreated.

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