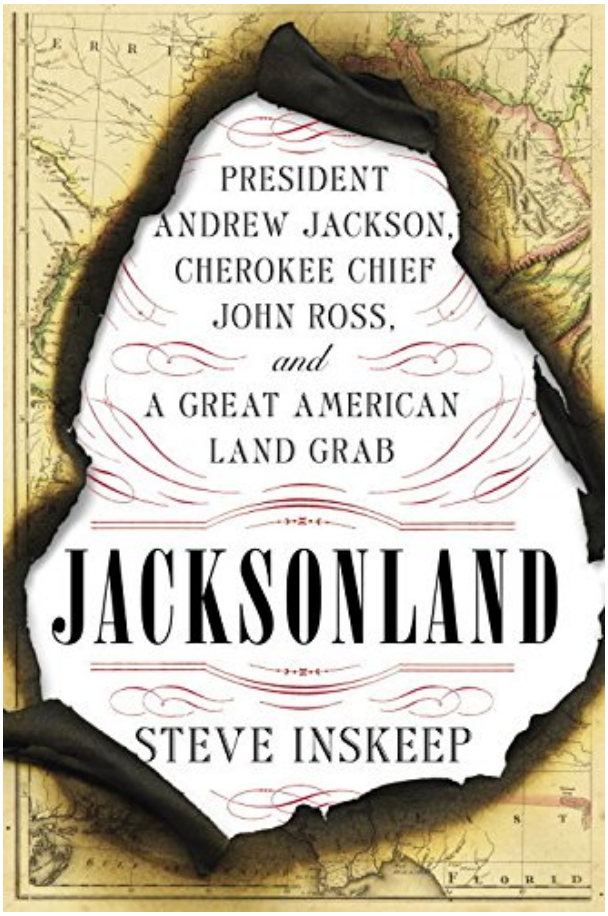
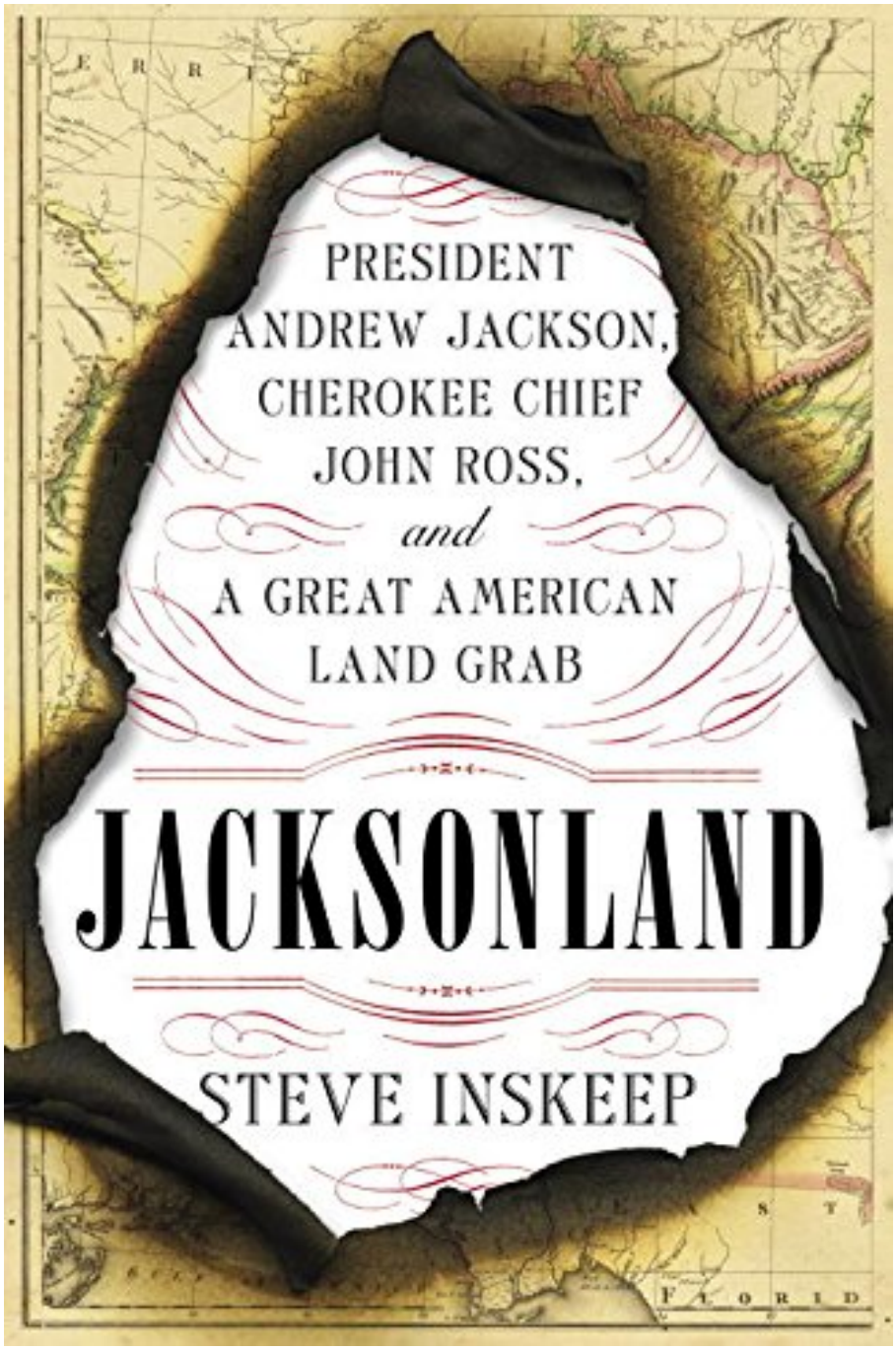
JACKSONLAND: PRESIDENT ANDREW JACKSON, CHEROKEE CHIEF JOHN ROSS, AND A GREAT AMERICAN LAND GRAB BY STEVE INSKEEP





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Review
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“Surely everyone knows, or should know, about the Cherokee Trail of Tears - an ordeal imposed upon thousands of Cherokees, who, after fighting and winning a judgment in the Supreme Court against their removal from the Eastern Seaboard, were nonetheless dispossessed of their tribal lands and marched to Indian Territory in the early 1830s. The scale of the removal was staggering. Not only the Cherokee but also the Muskogee, Seminole, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and many of their African-American slaves were removed in one of the largest and most brutal acts of aggression ever committed by the United States. But not till now, with the coming of NPR journalist Steve Inskeep's magnificent book, focusing as it does on the two key players - President Andrew Jackson and Cherokee Principal Chief John Ross - has this episode in American history been rendered in such personal detail and human touch. . . The story of the Cherokee removal has been told many times, but never before has a single book given us such a sense of how it happened and what it meant, not only for Indians, but also for the future and soul of America.”

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About the Author
STEVE INSKEEP is a cohost of NPR's Morning Edition, the most widely heard radio news program in the United States. His investigative journalism has received an Edward R. Murrow Award, a Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award, and an Alfred I. duPont–Columbia University Award. He is the author of Instant City: Life and Death in Karachi. @NPRinskeep

Prologue:
The Indian Map and the White Man's Map

This story follows two men who fought for more than twenty years. They fought over land in the American South, which is where they lived, though some said it wasn't big enough for the two of them.

One man was Andrew Jackson, who became a general, then president, then the man on the twenty- dollar bill. Those honors merely hint at the scale of his outsize life. The other man was John Ross, who was Native American, or Indian as natives were called. He became principal chief of the Cherokee Nation, though this title, too, fails to capture his full experience.

Before he was chief, and before he met Jackson, Ross was a young man navigating his complex and perilous world. That is how we first encounter him. At the age of twenty-two,he bought a boat. It was a wooden flatboat, essentially a raft with some housing on the deck. And on that boat, near the end of 1812, he set out on the Tennessee River. Starting somewhere around the site of present-day Chattanooga, the boat and its crew floated westward with the current, a speck on the water, dwarfed by riverside cliffs that marked the river's passage through the Appalachians.

Ross was traveling several hundred miles, toward a band of Cherokees living west of the Mississippi. He intended to sell them the cargo on his boat: calico, gingham, buttons, beaver traps, and shotguns. But the westward course of the Tennessee River had a way of testing travelers. Ross struggled to navigate currents so perilous that they had ominous names such as Dead Man's Eddy and the Suck. He grew so frustrated after days on the water that he stopped at a riverside settlement to sell his boat, trading for a keelboat that was narrower and more maneuverable. His crew heaved their cargo from one boat to the other. Then Ross and crew crashed through forty miles of whitewater known as Muscle Shoals, scraping on shallows and passing islands piled with driftwood. At last the water calmed, and the boat followed the river's great bend northward toward the Ohio.

Anyone covertly studying the boat would have seen four men on board. Ross was black-haired, brown-eyed, slight but handsome. Each of his three companions could be described in a phrase (a Cherokee interpreter, an older Cherokee man named Kalsatee, and a servant), but Ross was harder to categorize. He was the son of a Scottish trader, whose family had lived among Cherokees for generations in their homeland in the southern Appalachians. Ross was an aspiring trader himself. Yet he also had a solid claim to his identity as an Indian. A man of mixed race, he had grown up among Cherokee children and, in keeping with Cherokee custom, received a new name at adulthood: Kooweskoowe, said to be a species of bird.

Whether he was a white man or an Indian became a matter of life and death on December 28, 1812. In Kentucky, as Ross later recorded in a letter, "we was haled by a party of white men." The men on the riverbank called for the boat to come closer.

Ross asked what they wanted.

Give us the news, one called back.

Something bothered Ross about the men. “I told them we had no news worth their attention.”

Now the white men revealed their true purpose. One shouted that they had orders from a garrison of soldiers nearby “to stop every boat descending the river to examine if any Indians was on board as they were not permitted to come about that place.” Come to us, the men concluded. Or we’ll come to you.

Ross didn’t come.

“Damn my soul if those two are not Indians,” one of the men shouted, referring to two of Ross’s crew. The man added that he would gather a company of men to pursue and kill them.

Ross came up with an answer: “These two men are Spaniard,” he called back.

The white men demanded the “Spaniards” prove their identity by speaking Spanish. Peter, the servant, actually could, but the white men still “insisted it was an Indian boat & mounted their horses & galloped off.”

Ross had to assume the white men were serious. The United States had declared war on Britain that year, and some native nations had joined the British side, killing white settlers, fighting alongside British troops, and throwing the frontier into turmoil. The white horsemen would not pause to find out that Ross’s Cherokees were loyal to the United States. The Cherokees could travel in only one direction, and would have little chance to escape if the men on horseback arranged an unpleasant reception downstream.

Ross decided on a precaution: he whitened the boat. He had told the horsemen there were no Indians on board, and the best chance of safety was to make this claim appear true. He modified the racial composition of his crew, leaving only those who could pass as non-Indian. Ross could pass, as could the Cherokee interpreter, who like Ross was an English speaker and a “mixed-blood,” parlance for part white and part Indian. The servant, who may have been a black man, would be ignored. Only old Kalsatee was a full-blooded Cherokee with no chance to fool anybody. His mere presence might even cause the others to be perceived as Indians. This, apparently, was Ross’s thinking, because as he confided later, “we concluded it was good policy to let Kalsatee out of the boat.” The old man would have to set off overland and meet the craft later. The remaining crew put their poles in the water and shoved the keelboat toward whatever lay ahead.

Ross spent two anxious days on the water, and Kalsatee had “a disagreeable walk of about thirty miles,” probably along the bank opposite from where they’d seen the horsemen. Finally the old man rejoined the boat downstream, and they all floated to a safe haven, Fort Massac on the Ohio River, manned by professional soldiers who could tell friend from foe. The horsemen never reappeared. Reflecting on this afterward, Ross said he was “convinced” that “the independent manner in which I answered” the horsemen had “confounded their apprehension of it being an Indian boat.” Indians were supposed to be children of the woods, in a common phrase of the era: dangerous but not too bright, and expected to address white men respectfully as elder brothers. Ross had talked back to the men in clear and defiant English. The future leader of the Cherokee Nation had passed as white.

That was John Ross: careful with his language, resourceful, willing to do what was necessary to survive. Also persistent, because after leaving Fort Massac, he made it to his destination west of the Mississippi as planned, offering his gingham and shotguns for sale to the band of Cherokees living there. When he finished

trading in 1813, he made the long journey back to the southern Appalachians, the ancient homeland of the bulk of the Cherokee Nation. It is upon his return that our story truly begins, because that is when he first encountered AndrewJackson.

Jackson was a soldier at the time. He was a longtime Tennessee state militia general, recently elevated into federal service to help fight the British and hostile Indians in the War of 1812. The government in

Washington authorized him to recruit Tennessee volunteers to serve under his command. Though his force initially consisted of twenty-five hundred white frontiersmen, it was expanded to meet an emergency in the fall of 1813. Jackson accepted the services of several hundred friendly Indians, mostly Cherokees, who organized their own regiment under the command of a trusted white officer. The Cherokee Regiment included John Ross, and from the moment he enrolled, his destiny and Jackson's were linked. They were fighting on the same side, at least at first, but they were bound for a historic collision. Each man rose to supreme leadership of his nation, and struggled for control of millions of acres.

Their story is a prequel to the Civil War, and a prelude to the democratic debates of our era. It established the physical landscape and defined the political culture for much that followed. At the time they met, the United States was very different from what it soon became. Reading about it today feels like falling into a dream, exploring territory at once foreign and familiar. The nation was barely a generation beyond its founding. The chief executive was one of the original Founding Fathers: President James Madison, a member of a small governing elite. From a capital under construction, Madison presided over eighteen states with only a handful of notable cities. The population of the entire United States was about seven million, smaller than the modern-day populace of greater metropolitan Chicago. The future site of Chicago was a lonesome military post called Fort Dearborn, which had recently been burned by Potawatomi warriors. Immense territories from the Appalachians westward were native domains, as they had been since long before Europeans arrived. But settlers were pushing westward, and the War of 1812 spurred greater change, weakening natives and strengthening the movement of white farmers, who often brought along black enslaved laborers. In the decades after that war, young men such as Jefferson Davis, Abraham Lincoln, and Stephen Douglas were coming of age on the frontier, while the United States was swelling into the form they would inherit by the time of the Southern rebellion in 1861. This was the era when Jackson and Ross became national figures. They rose with the country and the country with them.

Jackson emerged from the War of 1812 as a hero, a full-time army general, and later the founder of the Democratic Party, whose election tothe presidency came in 1828. No man of such a humble background—anorphan from an Appalachian valley—had ever risen so far. Proclaimed to be a champion of common people, he smashed what he considered elitist institutions and permanently altered American politics. Throughout his career he also constantly pressed Indians to surrender land. He used reason, intimidation, bribery, duplicity, and force. As president he codified a policy known as Indian removal, saying both races would benefit if natives moved westward to make room for white settlement. Ross rose in opposition to Jackson. He emerged from the war as a veteran officer, who soon became a Cherokee diplomat, and in 1816 temporarily blocked one of Jackson's great land acquisitions. Later, hoping to halt Cherokees' constant losses of land, Ross presided over the creation of a Cherokee constitution, which declared that the boundaries of the Cherokee Nation "shall forever hereafter remain unalterably the same." His election as Cherokee principal chief in 1828 required him to obey that mandate never to cede another foot of land.

In theory this duty was straightforward. Treaties with the United States had affirmed the Cherokees' sovereignty. They were not regarded as U.S. citizens, but as citizens of an independent nation that had every right to control its remaining territory. Yet the same treaties placed the Cherokee Nation under the

“protection” of the federal government. In practice Cherokees were under U.S. authority and dependent on Washington’s good faith. The Cherokee government relied on annual payments from the federal government— annuities that had been earned through past land sales, but that made Washington the Cherokees’ paymaster. Cherokees were overseen by a federal “Indian agent” who lived among them and wielded great influence, like an ambassador from a colonial power. Ross, like every Cherokee, was caught in the United States’ embrace—and his innovation was to embrace it back. He never followed the example of native leaders who rose in hopeless rebellion. “We consider ourselves as a part of the great family of the Republic of the U. States,” he wrote, “and we are ready at any time to sacrifice our lives, our property & every thing sacred to us, in its cause.” His strategy was to insist on Cherokee rights within the great family. He fought Jackson within the democratic system just as that system was taking shape. Each man came to personify a basic democratic value: Jackson, the principle of majority rule; Ross, the principle of minority rights.

Many excellent histories describe the early nineteenth century from Jackson’s point of view, with Indians as ill-fated minor characters. Many powerful works explore the same period from the vantage of Ross or other natives, with Jackson as a terrible destructive force. Weaving the stories of both men together casts them in a different light. When we judge them as players on a democratic stage, it becomes easier to understand their actions, even when we disapprove. Jackson, sometimes portrayed as a hot-tempered man of narrow intelligence, deeply understood strategy and power. Ross, often criticized for his epic stubbornness, was also creative and subtle. The Cherokees were more than mere victims: they were skilled political operators who played a bad hand long and well. Their resistance to Indian removal forced much of the nation to take sides, foreshadowed modern movements for the rights of racial minorities, and added to our democratic tradition.

This book follows the story in the order it unfolded. Titanic figures step onto the stage. They range from Jackson’s great rival Henry Clay of Kentucky to his steady ally Lewis Cass of Michigan, and from the storytelling frontiersman Davy Crockett to the crafty Supreme Court chief justice John Marshall. Other characters are less famous today than they deserve to be: Elias Boudinot, a Cherokee newspaper editor; Major Ridge, his wealthy and powerful Cherokee uncle; George Troup, a ruthless Georgia governor; and Catharine Beecher, who helped to organize the first mass political campaign by women in American history.

The tangible thing over which all of them fought was real estate. We already have the land in sight, because the Tennessee River on which Ross was traveling in 1812 was a major highway through it. Our story will take us many times past the white water at Muscle Shoals. Other times we will pass the riverside settlement that today is Chattanooga: in Ross’s time it was a Cherokee settlement that he developed as a ferry crossing called Ross’s Landing.

Whenever land is discussed in this book, it will be vital to keep in mind that in the early nineteenth century, the same place could be represented on two different and mutually exclusive maps. There was a white man’s map and an Indian map. The white man’s map, the map of the United States, divided the region into states and territories, often bounded by straight and imaginary lines. The Indian map divided much of the same landmass into native nations, commonly bounded by landmarks such as rivers or ridgelines. On the U.S. map, for example, Ross lived in a house in north Georgia, within a moment’s walk of the Tennessee line. By the Indian map the same house was in the heart of the Cherokee Nation, an enclave that spread across parts of several states. On the U.S. map his 1812 river journey wound several times in and out of Tennessee; on the Indian map it passed the Cherokee, Creek, and Chickasaw nations. Each map was like a parallel universe, though both were recognized by the government in Washington, which had its reasons to embrace ambiguity.

I call this book Jacksonland because Jackson strove to make the map his own. “The object of the Govt,” he

wrote once while serving as a major general, “is to bring into markett this land & have it populated.”

He did that in more ways than one. This book documents, perhaps more fully than before, Jackson’s personal dealings in real estate that he captured as a general. While still in military service he bought and operated slave plantations on former Indian land that he had opened to white settlement using doubtful means. He worked in concert with friends who bought even more land than he did, and colonized the newly acquired territory. The names of Jackson, his friends, and his relations appeared on the purchase records for at least forty-five thousand acres sold in the Tennessee River valley from 1818 onward. Jackson mixed public and private business in ways that would be considered scandalous today, and were criticized even in the nineteenth century, when notions of ethics were different and not all details of his acts were known.

Jackson, more than any other single person, was responsible for creating the region we call the Deep South. In a larger sense Jackson was filling out the wider American South, which has persisted ever since as a powerful cultural and political force. Maybe it all would have grown the same way without him—great historical forces were at work—but his contemporaries understood that Jackson did the work, and did it his way. Not for nothing did they bestow his name on Jackson, Mississippi, Jacksonville, Florida, and Jackson County as well as Jacksonville, Alabama. Those were the three states he did the most to establish.

On the Indian map, of course, the future Deep South was mostly Cherokee land, or Creek land, or Choctaw or Chickasaw or Seminole land. These were the five large tribal groups remaining in the region in Jackson’s day. They would become known as the Five Civilized Tribes because they were adapting their ancient cultures to white society. Despite internal resistance, many Cherokees changed their clothing, their agriculture, their religion, and the relationship between men and women. They embraced literacy and written laws, and even adopted the practice of owning slaves. They acted like immigrants assimilating to a new country, except that the new country was coming to them. Just as John Ross altered the appearance of the people on his boat in 1812, Cherokees were altering their nation in ways they considered necessary for their safety and well-being. It was also to ensure their safety that they turned for leadership to a man with the skills of John Ross. Maybe the Cherokee story would have read the same way without him—here, too, great forces were in motion— but when the crisis arrived, he chose a different path than other native leaders, and even other Cherokee leaders. Right or wrong, his choices are part of what makes the Cherokee story so meaningful and moving. Ross wanted to stay on the map, and find an enduring place for his people in Jacksonland.

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Jacksonland is the thrilling narrative history of two men—President Andrew Jackson and Cherokee chief John Ross—who led their respective nations at a crossroads of American history. Five decades after the Revolutionary War, the United States approached a constitutional crisis. At its center stood two former military comrades locked in a struggle that tested the boundaries of our fledgling democracy. Jacksonland is their story.

One man we recognize: Andrew Jackson—war hero, populist, and exemplar of the expanding South—whose first major initiative as president instigated the massive expulsion of Native Americans known as the Trail of Tears. The other is a half-forgotten figure: John Ross—a mixed-race Cherokee politician and diplomat—who used the United States' own legal system and democratic ideals to oppose Jackson. Representing one of the Five Civilized Tribes who had adopted the ways of white settlers—cultivating farms, publishing a newspaper in their own language, and sending children to school—Ross championed the tribes' cause all the way to the Supreme Court. He gained allies like Senator Henry Clay, Chief Justice John Marshall, and even Davy Crockett. In a fight that seems at once distant and familiar, Ross and his allies made their case in the media, committed civil disobedience, and benefited from the first mass political action by American women. Their struggle contained ominous overtures of later events like the Civil War and set the pattern for modern-day politics.

At stake in this struggle was the land of the Five Civilized Tribes. In shocking detail, Jacksonland reveals how Jackson, as a general, extracted immense wealth from his own armies' conquest of native lands. Later, as president, Jackson set in motion the seizure of tens of millions of acres—"Jacksonland"—in today's Deep South.

Jacksonland is the work of renowned journalist Steve Inskeep, cohost of NPR's Morning Edition, who offers here a heart-stopping narrative masterpiece, a tragedy of American history that feels ripped from the headlines in its immediacy, drama, and relevance to our lives.

Harrowing, inspiring, and deeply moving, Inskeep's Jacksonland is the story of America at a moment of transition, when the fate of states and nations was decided by the actions of two heroic yet tragically opposed men.

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“Surely everyone knows, or should know, about the Cherokee Trail of Tears - an ordeal imposed upon thousands of Cherokees, who, after fighting and winning a judgment in the Supreme Court against their removal from the Eastern Seaboard, were nonetheless dispossessed of their tribal lands and marched to Indian Territory in the early 1830s. The scale of the removal was staggering. Not only the Cherokee but also the Muskogee, Seminole, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and many of their African-American slaves were removed in one of the largest and most brutal acts of aggression ever committed by the United States. But not till now, with the coming of NPR journalist Steve Inskeep's magnificent book, focusing as it does on the two key players - President Andrew Jackson and Cherokee Principal Chief John Ross - has this episode in American history been rendered in such personal detail and human touch. . . The story of the Cherokee removal has been told many times, but never before has a single book given us such a sense of how it happened and what it meant, not only for Indians, but also for the future and soul of America.”

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STEVE INSKEEP is a cohost of NPR's Morning Edition, the most widely heard radio news program in the United States. His investigative journalism has received an Edward R. Murrow Award, a Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award, and an Alfred I. duPont–Columbia University Award. He is the author of Instant City: Life and Death in Karachi. @NPRinskeep

Prologue:
The Indian Map and the White Man's Map

This story follows two men who fought for more than twenty years. They fought over land in the American South, which is where they lived, though some said it wasn't big enough for the two of them.

One man was Andrew Jackson, who became a general, then president, then the man on the twenty- dollar bill. Those honors merely hint at the scale of his outsize life. The other man was John Ross, who was Native American, or Indian as natives were called. He became principal chief of the Cherokee Nation, though this

title, too, fails to capture his full experience.

Before he was chief, and before he met Jackson, Ross was a young man navigating his complex and perilous world. That is how we first encounter him. At the age of twenty-two,he bought a boat. It was a wooden flatboat, essentially a raft with some housing on the deck. And on that boat, near the end of 1812, he set out on the Tennessee River. Starting somewhere around the site of present-day Chattanooga, the boat and its crew floated westward with the current, a speck on the water, dwarfed by riverside cliffs that marked the river's passage through the Appalachians.

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Whether he was a white man or an Indian became a matter of life and death on December 28, 1812. In Kentucky, as Ross later recorded in a letter, "we was haled by a party of white men." The men on the riverbank called for the boat to come closer.

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Give us the news, one called back.

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Now the white men revealed their true purpose. One shouted that they had orders from a garrison of soldiers nearby "to stop every boat descending the river to examine if any Indians was on board as they were not permitted to come about that place." Come to us, the men concluded. Or we'll come to you.

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Ross decided on a precaution: he whitened the boat. He had told the horsemen there were no Indians on board, and the best chance of safety was to make this claim appear true. He modified the racial composition of his crew, leaving only those who could pass as non-Indian. Ross could pass, as could the Cherokee interpreter, who like Ross was an English speaker and a “mixed-blood,” parlance for part white and part Indian. The servant, who may have been a black man, would be ignored. Only old Kalsatee was a full-blooded Cherokee with no chance to fool anybody. His mere presence might even cause the others to be perceived as Indians. This, apparently, was Ross’s thinking, because as he confided later, “we concluded it was good policy to let Kalsatee out of the boat.” The old man would have to set off overland and meet the craft later. The remaining crew put their poles in the water and shoved the keelboat toward whatever lay ahead.

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That was John Ross: careful with his language, resourceful, willing to do what was necessary to survive. Also persistent, because after leaving Fort Massac, he made it to his destination west of the Mississippi as planned, offering his gingham and shotguns for sale to the band of Cherokees living there. When he finished trading in 1813, he made the long journey back to the southern Appalachians, the ancient homeland of the bulk of the Cherokee Nation. It is upon his return that our story truly begins, because that is when he first encountered AndrewJackson.

Jackson was a soldier at the time. He was a longtime Tennessee state militia general, recently elevated into federal service to help fight the British and hostile Indians in the War of 1812. The government in

Washington authorized him to recruit Tennessee volunteers to serve under his command. Though his force initially consisted of twenty-five hundred white frontiersmen, it was expanded to meet an emergency in the fall of 1813. Jackson accepted the services of several hundred friendly Indians, mostly Cherokees, who organized their own regiment under the command of a trusted white officer. The Cherokee Regiment included John Ross, and from the moment he enrolled, his destiny and Jackson’s were linked. They were fighting on the same side, at least at first, but they were bound for a historic collision. Each man rose to supreme leadership of his nation, and struggled for control of millions of acres.

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physical landscape and defined the political culture for much that followed. At the time they met, the United States was very different from what it soon became. Reading about it today feels like falling into a dream, exploring territory at once foreign and familiar. The nation was barely a generation beyond its founding. The chief executive was one of the original Founding Fathers: President James Madison, a member of a small governing elite. From a capital under construction, Madison presided over eighteen states with only a handful of notable cities. The population of the entire United States was about seven million, smaller than the modern-day populace of greater metropolitan Chicago. The future site of Chicago was a lonesome military post called Fort Dearborn, which had recently been burned by Potawatomi warriors. Immense territories from the Appalachians westward were native domains, as they had been since long before Europeans arrived. But settlers were pushing westward, and the War of 1812 spurred greater change, weakening natives and strengthening the movement of white farmers, who often brought along black enslaved laborers. In the decades after that war, young men such as Jefferson Davis, Abraham Lincoln, and Stephen Douglas were coming of age on the frontier, while the United States was swelling into the form they would inherit by the time of the Southern rebellion in 1861. This was the era when Jackson and Ross became national figures. They rose with the country and the country with them.

Jackson emerged from the War of 1812 as a hero, a full-time army general, and later the founder of the Democratic Party, whose election tothe presidency came in 1828. No man of such a humble background—anorphan from an Appalachian valley—had ever risen so far. Proclaimed to be a champion of common people, he smashed what he considered elitist institutions and permanently altered American politics. Throughout his career he also constantly pressed Indians to surrender land. He used reason, intimidation, bribery, duplicity, and force. As president he codified a policy known as Indian removal, saying both races would benefit if natives moved westward to make room for white settlement. Ross rose in opposition to Jackson. He emerged from the war as a veteran officer, who soon became a Cherokee diplomat, and in 1816 temporarily blocked one of Jackson's great land acquisitions. Later, hoping to halt Cherokees' constant losses of land, Ross presided over the creation of a Cherokee constitution, which declared that the boundaries of the Cherokee Nation "shall forever hereafter remain unalterably the same." His election as Cherokee principal chief in 1828 required him to obey that mandate never to cede another foot of land.

In theory this duty was straightforward. Treaties with the United States had affirmed the Cherokees' sovereignty. They were not regarded as U.S. citizens, but as citizens of an independent nation that had every right to control its remaining territory. Yet the same treaties placed the Cherokee Nation under the "protection" of the federal government. In practice Cherokees were under U.S. authority and dependent on Washington's good faith. The Cherokee government relied on annual payments from the federal government— annuities that had been earned through past land sales, but that made Washington the Cherokees' paymaster. Cherokees were overseen by a federal "Indian agent" who lived among them and wielded great influence, like an ambassador from a colonial power. Ross, like every Cherokee, was caught in the United States' embrace—and his innovation was to embrace it back. He never followed the example of native leaders who rose in hopeless rebellion. "We consider ourselves as a part of the great family of the Republic of the U. States," he wrote, "and we are ready at any time to sacrifice our
lives, our property & every thing sacred to us, in its cause." His strategy was to insist on Cherokee rights within the great family. He fought Jackson within the democratic system just as that system was taking shape. Each man came to personify a basic democratic value: Jackson, the principle of majority rule; Ross, the principle of minority rights.

Many excellent histories describe the early nineteenth century from Jackson's point of view, with Indians as ill-fated minor characters. Many powerful works explore the same period from the vantage of Ross or other natives, with Jackson as a terrible destructive force. Weaving the stories of both men together casts them in a

different light. When we judge them as players on a democratic stage, it becomes easier to understand their actions, even when we disapprove. Jackson, sometimes portrayed as a hot-tempered man of narrow intelligence, deeply understood strategy and power. Ross, often criticized for his epic stubbornness, was also creative and subtle. The Cherokees were more than mere victims: they were skilled political operators who played a bad hand long and well. Their resistance to Indian removal forced much of the nation to take sides, foreshadowed modern movements for the rights of racial minorities, and added to our democratic tradition.

This book follows the story in the order it unfolded. Titanic figures step onto the stage. They range from Jackson's great rival Henry Clay of Kentucky to his steady ally Lewis Cass of Michigan, and from the storytelling frontiersman Davy Crockett to the crafty Supreme Court chief justice John Marshall. Other characters are less famous today than they deserve to be: Elias Boudinot, a Cherokee newspaper editor; Major Ridge, his wealthy and powerful Cherokee uncle; George Troup, a ruthless Georgia governor; and Catharine Beecher, who helped to organize the first mass political campaign by women in American history.

The tangible thing over which all of them fought was real estate. We already have the land in sight, because the Tennessee River on which Ross was traveling in 1812 was a major highway through it. Our story will take us many times past the white water at Muscle Shoals. Other times we will pass the riverside settlement that today is Chattanooga: in Ross's time it was a Cherokee settlement that he developed as a ferry crossing called Ross's Landing.

Whenever land is discussed in this book, it will be vital to keep in mind that in the early nineteenth century, the same place could be represented on two different and mutually exclusive maps. There was a white man's map and an Indian map. The white man's map, the map of the United States, divided the region into states and territories, often bounded by straight and imaginary lines. The Indian map divided much of the same landmass into native nations, commonly bounded by landmarks such as rivers or ridgelines. On the U.S. map, for example, Ross lived in a house in north Georgia, within a moment's walk of the Tennessee line. By the Indian map the same house was in the heart of the Cherokee Nation, an enclave that spread across parts of several states. On the U.S. map his 1812 river journey wound several times in and out of Tennessee; on the Indian map it passed the Cherokee, Creek, and Chickasaw nations. Each map was like a parallel universe, though both were recognized by the government in Washington, which had its reasons to embrace ambiguity.

I call this book Jacksonland because Jackson strove to make the map his own. "The object of the Govt," he wrote once while serving as a major general, "is to bring into markett this land & have it populated."

He did that in more ways than one. This book documents, perhaps more fully than before, Jackson's personal dealings in real estate that he captured as a general. While still in military service he bought and operated slave plantations on former Indian land that he had opened to white settlement using doubtful means. He worked in concert with friends who bought even more land than he did, and colonized the newly acquired territory. The names of Jackson, his friends, and his relations appeared on the purchase records for at least forty-five thousand acres sold in the Tennessee River valley from 1818 onward. Jackson mixed public and private business in ways that would be considered scandalous today, and were criticized even in the nineteenth century, when notions of ethics were different and not all details of his acts were known.

Jackson, more than any other single person, was responsible for creating the region we call the Deep South. In a larger sense Jackson was filling out the wider American South, which has persisted ever since as a powerful cultural and political force. Maybe it all would have grown the same way without him—great historical forces were at work—but his contemporaries understood that Jackson did the work, and did it his way. Not for nothing did they bestow his name on Jackson, Mississippi, Jacksonville, Florida, and Jackson

County as well as Jacksonville, Alabama. Those were the three states he did the most to establish.

On the Indian map, of course, the future Deep South was mostly Cherokee land, or Creek land, or Choctaw or Chickasaw or Seminole land. These were the five large tribal groups remaining in the region in Jackson's day. They would become known as the Five Civilized Tribes because they were adapting their ancient cultures to white society. Despite internal resistance, many Cherokees changed their clothing, their agriculture, their religion, and the relationship between men and women. They embraced literacy and written laws, and even adopted the practice of owning slaves. They acted like immigrants assimilating to a new country, except that the new country was coming to them. Just as John Ross altered the appearance of the people on his boat in 1812, Cherokees were altering their nation in ways they considered necessary for their safety and well-being. It was also to ensure their safety that they turned for leadership to a man with the skills of John Ross. Maybe the Cherokee story would have read the same way without him—here, too, great forces were in motion— but when the crisis arrived, he chose a different path than other native leaders, and even other Cherokee leaders. Right or wrong, his choices are part of what makes the Cherokee story so meaningful and moving. Ross wanted to stay on the map, and find an enduring place for his people in Jacksonland.

Most helpful customer reviews

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful.
Good, wanted more; a case study on how history is hard to write
By Spartacuss
Mostly enjoyable and interesting, although not as good as I was expecting based on Steve Inskeep's work for NPR. I liked the focus on Cherokee chief John Ross, who often gets overlooked, as well as Inskeep's exploration of how Jackson and his cronies made out like bandits. But writing about history is hard. I found myself skimming pages frequently as backstory would kill the book's momentum time and time again, something the best popular histories manage to avoid. But at least I now understand the Yazoo land fraud.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.
Good book...not quite great...but I learned a lot.
By J. Bristow
I read this book after spending a day this summer at The Hermitage in Tennessee. I found Jacksonland to be a well-written and fascinating story of a part of our history of which I was probably less aware than I should be. The author writes well and weaves the lives of Jackson and Ross into an intricate dance that is captivating. It is a very readable book. The author's research and illumination of obscure facts and documents was outstanding. My reasoning for not giving 5-stars: at a number of points throughout the story the author's "modern day" judgment of Jackson's and Ross' positions bleeds ever so slightly onto the pages (and in several passages not "ever so slightly"). It is obviously we are being led to a conclusion. In historical texts, and historical novels based largely on facts and original evidence, I believe the reader should be "pointed in a direction" without being "pushed there". Still, I was able to filter that out and read the entire book eagerly. It is well worth the time spent and I hope to return to The Hermitage in the next several years with more information with which to view his plantation.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.
Honesty and Integrity Missing in Action
By Carla C. Kerr
This author has done his research and I learned many things about Andrew Jackson and his treatment of my Cherokee brothers and sisters. He was a liar, a manipulator and a very greedy individual. Cherokee Chief John Ross was used and abused because he expected honesty and integrity from Jackson. It is a sad commentary on politics during that time, but, then, here we are in 2015 and not much has changed in this

regard. I highly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in the earlier history of the United States and the Indians who inhabited this land.

See all 143 customer reviews...

JACKSONLAND: PRESIDENT ANDREW JACKSON, CHEROKEE CHIEF JOHN ROSS, AND A GREAT AMERICAN LAND GRAB BY STEVE INSKEEP PDF

Based upon the **Jacksonland: President Andrew Jackson, Cherokee Chief John Ross, And A Great American Land Grab By Steve Inskeep** details that we offer, you might not be so baffled to be right here and to be participant. Get now the soft file of this book Jacksonland: President Andrew Jackson, Cherokee Chief John Ross, And A Great American Land Grab By Steve Inskeep and also wait to be your own. You conserving can lead you to stimulate the convenience of you in reading this book Jacksonland: President Andrew Jackson, Cherokee Chief John Ross, And A Great American Land Grab By Steve Inskeep Also this is forms of soft file. You could truly make better possibility to obtain this Jacksonland: President Andrew Jackson, Cherokee Chief John Ross, And A Great American Land Grab By Steve Inskeep as the suggested book to read.

Review
Washington Post:
“Surely everyone knows, or should know, about the Cherokee Trail of Tears - an ordeal imposed upon thousands of Cherokees, who, after fighting and winning a judgment in the Supreme Court against their removal from the Eastern Seaboard, were nonetheless dispossessed of their tribal lands and marched to Indian Territory in the early 1830s. The scale of the removal was staggering. Not only the Cherokee but also the Muskogee, Seminole, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and many of their African-American slaves were removed in one of the largest and most brutal acts of aggression ever committed by the United States. But not till now, with the coming of NPR journalist Steve Inskeep's magnificent book, focusing as it does on the two key players - President Andrew Jackson and Cherokee Principal Chief John Ross - has this episode in American history been rendered in such personal detail and human touch. . . The story of the Cherokee removal has been told many times, but never before has a single book given us such a sense of how it happened and what it meant, not only for Indians, but also for the future and soul of America.”

Chicago Tribune:
“Grounded in vivid primary sources, it is also a moving tale of leadership, betrayal and (violated) minority rights, culminating in the tragedies we know as Indian removal and the Trail of Tears. . . "Jacksonland" successfully transports readers to an era when travel was slow and dangerous, racial and sectional divisions growing, and America very much a work in progress . . . Inskeep writes with the urgency of a thriller, a cinematic eye and a consciousness that even history's apparent losers won occasional important battles.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette:
“The narrative reads as if written by a watchful observer. It brings a part of history alive that is not usually discussed with this much depth.”

Kirkus:
“Confident, lucid prose. . . . The author knows how to hold an audience. . . Well-researched, -organized, and -presented, this is a sober, balanced examination of the origins of one of the more regrettable chapters in American history. “

JON MEACHAM, author of American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House
“Steve Inskeep has found an illuminating and provocative way to talk about the American past—and, truth be told, the American present and future too. By taking us back to the epic struggle between Andrew Jackson and Chief John Ross, Inskeep tells an essential story of geography, greed, and power: and the forces he so clearly delineates are the ones that shape us still.”

CANDICE MILLARD, author of Destiny of the Republic and The River of Doubt
“Inskeep tells this, one of the most tragic and transformative stories in American history, in swift, confident, colorful strokes. So well, and so intimately, does he know his subject that the reader comes away feeling as if Jackson and Ross’s epic struggle for the future of their nations took place yesterday rather than nearly two hundred years ago.”

JAMES McPHERSON, author of Embattled Rebel and Battle Cry of Freedom
“This narrative of the forced removal of Cherokee Indians from their ancient homeland in the 1830s is framed as a contest between two determined and stubborn adversaries who had once been allies. President Andrew Jackson eventually prevailed over Cherokee chief John Ross in a conflict that culminated in the infamous Trail of Tears. Steve Inskeep skillfully captures the poignant drama of this tragic tale.”

DANIEL FELLER, director of the Papers of Andrew Jackson, University of Tennessee
“Few episodes in American history evoke greater controversy and bitterness than Indian removal and the Cherokee Trail of Tears. Steve Inskeep’s Jacksonland brilliantly illuminates this troubling story. Told with pinpoint accuracy, evenhanded sympathy, and sparkling prose, this is truly a tale for our times.”

PRINCIPAL CHIEF BILL JOHN BAKER, Cherokee Nation
“Steve Inskeep has paid incredible attention to detail and his references are impeccable and well researched. History often overlooks, or briefly mentions, that one of Andrew Jackson's major initiatives as President of the United States was the removal of Indian tribes, including the Cherokee, from their ancestral homelands. The honest and factual detailing of how Cherokee traditional lands were usurped is compelling, and I hope it gives contemporary American readers a new perspective on our collective history. Andrew Jackson and his political allies in Congress wanted what we had and they simply took it by any means necessary. Clearly, our ancestors didn’t stand a chance. Steve Inskeep tells the story fairly and pays proper due diligence to the politics of the day, especially the treatment of the Five Civilized Tribes."

H.W. BRANDS, author of The Man Who Saved the Union and Andrew Jackson
“History is complicated, and in its complications lies its appeal. Steve Inskeep understands this, and his elegantly twinned account of Andrew Jackson and John Ross shows just how complicated and appealing history can be. Each man was a bundle of contradictions; together their lives illuminate the confusing, sometimes infuriating adolescent years of the American republic.”

MICHAEL BESCHLOSS, author of Presidential Courage
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Washington authorized him to recruit Tennessee volunteers to serve under his command. Though his force initially consisted of twenty-five hundred white frontiersmen, it was expanded to meet an emergency in the fall of 1813. Jackson accepted the services of several hundred friendly Indians, mostly Cherokees, who organized their own regiment under the command of a trusted white officer. The Cherokee Regiment included John Ross, and from the moment he enrolled, his destiny and Jackson's were linked. They were fighting on the same side, at least at first, but they were bound for a historic collision. Each man rose to supreme leadership of his nation, and struggled for control of millions of acres.

Their story is a prequel to the Civil War, and a prelude to the democratic debates of our era. It established the physical landscape and defined the political culture for much that followed. At the time they met, the United States was very different from what it soon became. Reading about it today feels like falling into a dream, exploring territory at once foreign and familiar. The nation was barely a generation beyond its founding. The chief executive was one of the original Founding Fathers: President James Madison, a member of a small governing elite. From a capital under construction, Madison presided over eighteen states with only a handful of notable cities. The population of the entire United States was about seven million, smaller than the modern-day populace of greater metropolitan Chicago. The future site of Chicago was a lonesome military post called Fort Dearborn, which had recently been burned by Potawatomi warriors. Immense territories from the Appalachians westward were native domains, as they had been since long before Europeans arrived. But settlers were pushing westward, and the War of 1812 spurred greater change, weakening natives and strengthening the movement of white farmers, who often brought along black enslaved laborers. In the decades after that war, young men such as Jefferson Davis, Abraham Lincoln, and Stephen Douglas were coming of age on the frontier, while the United States was swelling into the form they would inherit by the time of the Southern rebellion in 1861. This was the era when Jackson and Ross became national figures. They rose with the country and the country with them.

Jackson emerged from the War of 1812 as a hero, a full-time army general, and later the founder of the Democratic Party, whose election tothe presidency came in 1828. No man of such a humble background—anorphan from an Appalachian valley—had ever risen so far. Proclaimed to be a champion of common people, he smashed what he considered elitist institutions and permanently altered American politics. Throughout his career he also constantly pressed Indians to surrender land. He used reason, intimidation, bribery, duplicity, and force. As president he codified a policy known as Indian removal, saying both races would benefit if natives moved westward to make room for white settlement. Ross rose in opposition to Jackson. He emerged from the war as a veteran officer, who soon became a Cherokee diplomat, and in 1816 temporarily blocked one of Jackson's great land acquisitions. Later, hoping to halt Cherokees' constant losses of land, Ross presided over the creation of a Cherokee constitution, which declared that the boundaries of the Cherokee Nation "shall forever hereafter remain unalterably the same." His election as Cherokee principal chief in 1828 required him to obey that mandate never to cede another foot of land.

In theory this duty was straightforward. Treaties with the United States had affirmed the Cherokees' sovereignty. They were not regarded as U.S. citizens, but as citizens of an independent nation that had every right to control its remaining territory. Yet the same treaties placed the Cherokee Nation under the "protection" of the federal government. In practice Cherokees were under U.S. authority and dependent on Washington's good faith. The Cherokee government relied on annual payments from the federal government— annuities that had been earned through past land sales, but that made Washington the Cherokees' paymaster. Cherokees were overseen by a federal "Indian agent" who lived among them and wielded great influence, like an ambassador from a colonial power. Ross, like every Cherokee, was caught in the United States' embrace—and his innovation was to embrace it back. He never followed the example of

native leaders who rose in hopeless rebellion. “We consider ourselves as a part of the great family of the Republic of the U. States,” he wrote, “and we are ready at any time to sacrifice our lives, our property & every thing sacred to us, in its cause.” His strategy was to insist on Cherokee rights within the great family. He fought Jackson within the democratic system just as that system was taking shape. Each man came to personify a basic democratic value: Jackson, the principle of majority rule; Ross, the principle of minority rights.

Many excellent histories describe the early nineteenth century from Jackson’s point of view, with Indians as ill-fated minor characters. Many powerful works explore the same period from the vantage of Ross or other natives, with Jackson as a terrible destructive force. Weaving the stories of both men together casts them in a different light. When we judge them as players on a democratic stage, it becomes easier to understand their actions, even when we disapprove. Jackson, sometimes portrayed as a hot-tempered man of narrow intelligence, deeply understood strategy and power. Ross, often criticized for his epic stubbornness, was also creative and subtle. The Cherokees were more than mere victims: they were skilled political operators who played a bad hand long and well. Their resistance to Indian removal forced much of the nation to take sides, foreshadowed modern movements for the rights of racial minorities, and added to our democratic tradition.

This book follows the story in the order it unfolded. Titanic figures step onto the stage. They range from Jackson’s great rival Henry Clay of Kentucky to his steady ally Lewis Cass of Michigan, and from the storytelling frontiersman Davy Crockett to the crafty Supreme Court chief justice John Marshall. Other characters are less famous today than they deserve to be: Elias Boudinot, a Cherokee newspaper editor; Major Ridge, his wealthy and powerful Cherokee uncle; George Troup, a ruthless Georgia governor; and Catharine Beecher, who helped to organize the first mass political campaign by women in American history.

The tangible thing over which all of them fought was real estate. We already have the land in sight, because the Tennessee River on which Ross was traveling in 1812 was a major highway through it. Our story will take us many times past the white water at Muscle Shoals. Other times we will pass the riverside settlement that today is Chattanooga: in Ross’s time it was a Cherokee settlement that he developed as a ferry crossing called Ross’s Landing.

Whenever land is discussed in this book, it will be vital to keep in mind that in the early nineteenth century, the same place could be represented on two different and mutually exclusive maps. There was a white man’s map and an Indian map. The white man’s map, the map of the United States, divided the region into states and territories, often bounded by straight and imaginary lines. The Indian map divided much of the same landmass into native nations, commonly bounded by landmarks such as rivers or ridgelines. On the U.S. map, for example, Ross lived in a house in north Georgia, within a moment’s walk of the Tennessee line. By the Indian map the same house was in the heart of the Cherokee Nation, an enclave that spread across parts of several states. On the U.S. map his 1812 river journey wound several times in and out of Tennessee; on the Indian map it passed the Cherokee, Creek, and Chickasaw nations. Each map was like a parallel universe, though both were recognized by the government in Washington, which had its reasons to embrace ambiguity.

I call this book Jacksonland because Jackson strove to make the map his own. “The object of the Govt,” he wrote once while serving as a major general, “is to bring into markett this land & have it populated.”

He did that in more ways than one. This book documents, perhaps more fully than before, Jackson’s personal dealings in real estate that he captured as a general. While still in military service he bought and operated slave plantations on former Indian land that he had opened to white settlement using doubtful means. He worked in concert with friends who bought even more land than he did, and colonized the newly acquired

territory. The names of Jackson, his friends, and his relations appeared on the purchase records for at least forty-five thousand acres sold in the Tennessee River valley from 1818 onward. Jackson mixed public and private business in ways that would be considered scandalous today, and were criticized even in the nineteenth century, when notions of ethics were different and not all details of his acts were known.

Jackson, more than any other single person, was responsible for creating the region we call the Deep South. In a larger sense Jackson was filling out the wider American South, which has persisted ever since as a powerful cultural and political force. Maybe it all would have grown the same way without him—great historical forces were at work—but his contemporaries understood that Jackson did the work, and did it his way. Not for nothing did they bestow his name on Jackson, Mississippi, Jacksonville, Florida, and Jackson County as well as Jacksonville, Alabama. Those were the three states he did the most to establish.

On the Indian map, of course, the future Deep South was mostly Cherokee land, or Creek land, or Choctaw or Chickasaw or Seminole land. These were the five large tribal groups remaining in the region in Jackson's day. They would become known as the Five Civilized Tribes because they were adapting their ancient cultures to white society. Despite internal resistance, many Cherokees changed their clothing, their agriculture, their religion, and the relationship between men and women. They embraced literacy and written laws, and even adopted the practice of owning slaves. They acted like immigrants assimilating to a new country, except that the new country was coming to them. Just as John Ross altered the appearance of the people on his boat in 1812, Cherokees were altering their nation in ways they considered necessary for their safety and well-being. It was also to ensure their safety that they turned for leadership to a man with the skills of John Ross. Maybe the Cherokee story would have read the same way without him—here, too, great forces were in motion— but when the crisis arrived, he chose a different path than other native leaders, and even other Cherokee leaders. Right or wrong, his choices are part of what makes the Cherokee story so meaningful and moving. Ross wanted to stay on the map, and find an enduring place for his people in Jacksonland.