

Brief History of Amos Voyles

Veteran of the War of 1812

War broke out between the United States and the British in 1812 for numerous reasons. It was fought in three theatres. The first theater was among warships and privateers as each side attacked the others' merchant ships and the British blockaded the American Atlantic coast. Later in the war, the British mounted land raids, such as the burning of Washington. Several thousand U.S. sailors were impressed into service by British warships in the years leading up to the war. The second theatre included the land and naval battles fought along the U.S.-Canadian border. The third theatre included the large-scale battles in the southern U.S. and along the Gulf Coast.

In the background of the War of 1812, the Creek Indians were fighting a civil war. It was a regional war among Creek factions. Territorial conflicts among the Americans, British, Spanish, and French left the Creeks free to maintain control over most of the southwestern territory. Eventually, the Creek nation splintered between those who were more willing to adopt European ways and nativist who wished to maintain traditional culture and ways of life. The splintering came to a head after 1811. The Red Stick faction of the Creeks militantly resisted civilization programs administered by the U.S. government, which had stronger alliances with the Creek in the lower sections of the southwest. Some of the "progressive" Creek adopted American farming practices as more Americans settlers moved into Creek territories and towns.

The Shawnee leader Tecumseh led the resistance to assimilation and the movement to forcibly remove the Americans from Native American territories. Tecumseh's message resonated with the Creek and the Seminole. As Tecumseh's Red Stick movement gained momentum, his followers began attacks on its Indian enemies. The first major attack by the Red Sticks was against the Upper Creek in July 1813. In the same month, territorial militia discovered a party of Red Sticks returning from Florida, where they had obtained rifles from the Spanish governor in Pensacola. Initially, the Red Sticks escaped, but as the soldiers looted, the Creek regrouped and attacked in what became the Battle of Burnt Corn. Thus, the Creek Civil War expanded to include American forces. The Red Sticks then attacked Fort Mims in Mobile, Alabama, where 400 to 500 people were killed, including women, children, and several white settlers. What became known as the Fort Mims Massacre was a rallying cry for American militia. The Red Stick subsequently attacked other forts in the area. Militias in the southwestern states mobilized in alliances with various factions of Creek to protect the western borders.

North and South Carolina militias deployed along the Georgia frontier to face the Red Sticks. The militias were commanded by Brigadier General Joseph Graham and included Colonel Reuben Nash's South Carolina volunteer militia. Amos Voyles was a private in Nash's regiment. The military records show also a John Voyles and a Robert Voyles, either or both of whom may have been related. That will be a point for further research. The easily available records on the internet do not identify when Nash's Regiment formed, but they left South Carolina near the end of January 1814. According to the Gutenberg website, they first marched to the beginning of the Federal Road in Augusta, Georgia, proceeding to Fort Benjamin Hawkins, which is located in modern Macon, Georgia. They appear to have been marching to reinforce various frontier forts, including Fort Mitchell (in current Phenix City, Alabama) and Fort Jackson (Alabama). The muster rolls of Captain John Wallace, who commanded a company in Nash's regiment, show that his company was near Fort Hawkins on February 9, 1814, near Fort Jackson on May 13, and near Fort Hawkins again on July 13. Other companies in Nash's regiment

were at Fort Mitchell in July 1814. General Graham's brigade, which included Nash's Regiment, participated in only a few skirmishes before returning home.

The only other record I have found regarding Nash's Regiment is on <http://freepages.military.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~york/1812/Nashs.html>, which says the following: "D. D. Wallace's SOUTH CAROLINA: A SHORT HISTORY: "Peace came to a South Carolina that held a very creditable record. Colonel Nash's regiment of South Carolina volunteers suffered great hardships in the Creek war phase of the conflict." Since Nash's Regiment appears to have been notable, much more information may be available in histories about the Creek Civil War. That will be the subject of future research.

The Creek Civil War ended in August 1814, when Andrew Jackson forced both the friendly and the nativist Creek to sign the Treaty of Fort Jackson. The combined Creek Nation ceded 23 million acres of land to the United States. Jackson believed the land to be critical to the security of the U.S. After subduing the Redsticks and obtaining the Creek land, Jackson invaded Spanish Florida, where he drove the British from Pensacola. He proceeded to Louisiana, where he defeated the British at the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1815, before he received the news that the U.S. had entered a treaty with the British and the war was over.

According to Family Search and Ancestry records, Amos was the son of John B Voyles, born 14 December 1743 in Danbighshire, Wales. How he came to the U.S. will be the topic of a separate research and writing. However, I believe he was one of the four sons of Jacob Voyles who came to America from Wales in around 1759. Amos's mother, Agnes Corzine, was born in Mecklenburg, North Carolina. John and Agnes married in 1789 and Amos was born the same year. I have not personally verified these lineages and dates. And Ancestry shows that Amos' mother was Mary Elizabeth Bowman and not Agnes Corzine. We do not know whence Mary hailed.

By the time that Amos enlisted in Nash's Regiment, probably in late 1813, Amos was around 24 years old and presumably lived in South Carolina. Anderson, South Carolina, which is where his grandson James Anderson Voyles was born in 1850, appears to be the locus of this branch of the Voyles clan during this era, and it is only approximately 130 miles from Mecklenburg County, NC, which is where Charlotte is located. Records also indicate that Amos married his wife Mary in around 1824. Family Search records identify her as Mary W. Amos, but her having the same last name as his first name leaves substantial doubt as to whether her name is accurate, although the 1850 census confirms that Mary was her name. The records in Family Search only show two sons born to the marriage: John B and Franklin.

At some time prior to around 1857, parts of the Voyles clan, including Amos' son John Bailus Voyles, migrated further west into Georgia. According to one unverified account, Amos died in Jackson, Georgia in 1957 and his son John Balias Voyles died in Milton, Georgia, on July 3, 1863 while his former military unit, the Georgia 22nd Infantry, was engaged with the Union army at Gettysburg. John Balias' son, James Anderson Voyles, migrated further west to Elkmont, Limestone, Alabama before heading south to Florida. Amos and Mary had at least five children: John Bailus, Franklin, Malissa, Amos, and Benson.

Why the family kept moving west is not precisely known. They were farmers, and farmers were migrating westward for better lands as farm land to the east became depleted of nutrients over time. However, the line of march of Nash's Regiment in 1814 may have influenced why and where the Voyles

migrated. Perhaps Amos had seen “greener pastures” to the west during the march that influenced his decision as well of the decisions of his children to move west over time.