



A Conquering Spirit: Fort Mims and the Redstick War of 1813–1814 (Fire Ant Books)

By Gregory A. Waselkov

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The Fort Mims massacre changed the course of American history in many ways, not the least of which was the ensuing rise of one Andrew Jackson to the national stage. The unprecedented Indian victory over the encroaching Americans who were bent on taking their lands and destroying their culture horrified many and injured the young nation's pride. Tragedies such as this one have always rallied Americans to a common cause: a single-minded determination to destroy the enemy and avenge the fallen. The August 30, 1813, massacre at Fort Mims, involving hundreds of dead men, women, and children, was just such a spark.

Gregory Waselkov tells compellingly the story of this fierce battle at the fortified plantation home of Samuel Mims in the Tensas District of the Mississippi Territory. With valuable maps, tables, and artifact illustrations, Waselkov looks closely at the battle to cut through the legends and misinformation that have grown around the event almost from the moment the last flames died at the smoldering ruins. At least as important as the details of the battle, though, is his elucidation of how social forces remarkably converged to spark the conflict and how reverberations of the battle echo still today, nearly two hundred years later.

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Editorial Review

Review

"A fine-grained analysis of an almost-forgotten event and place [that] illuminates the social processes at work in a given era. . . . Waselkov is at his most impressive when narrating the 'Many Paths to the Tensaw' and describing the community that developed there. . . . The vignettes about these people demonstrate his mastery of the relevant sources."

—*Journal of Southern History*

"Blending the diverse and complex but complementary skills of the historian, archaeologist, anthropologist, and ethnographer, Waselkov has plowed new ground and authored a *tour de force*, a must-read for those interested in the vital but tragic early history of our nation, as well as those who savor heritage tourism."

—Ed Bearrs, Chief Historian Emeritus, National Park Service

"By far the most levelheaded and detailed description of the events that surrounded the assault on Fort Mims. . . . Carefully written and persuasive in its central claims, *A Conquering Spirit* will certainly remain the standard reference for the event for many years to come."

—*American Historical Review*

About the Author

Gregory A. Waselkov is Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Center for Archaeological Studies at the University of South Alabama. He has written, edited, and contributed to several books, including *Old Mobile Archaeology*.

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