

## Sketch: The Patteson Men in the War of 1812

Not many years after the Patteson family moved from Virginia to Giles county Tennessee a war began to brew in the land. The War of 1812 was fought, primarily, between the Americans and British. It had multiple causes, and was fought in four very different theaters – the sea, the US east coast, the northeastern US along the US-Canadian border, and the US interior.

*For the thousands of Tennesseans who participated in the War of 1812, it was in the Creek War of 1813-1814 that they actually saw service. The Creek Indians, living in what is now Georgia and Alabama, were considered allies to Great Britain. When hostilities broke out within the Creek nation, it was Tennessee that took advantage of the explosive situation and with overwhelming numbers quelled the feeble resistance of the Creeks*

[source] Tennessee State Library website.

Two, perhaps three, of the sons of Nelson Patteson and Rebecca Markham gave service in the Creek Wars, and then moved on with General Andrew Jackson to the defense of New Orleans near the end of the War. The oldest son, James Patteson, served as Lieutenant, and right hand man, to Col John Gordon in his troop of Mounted Spies. His brother, Bernard Patteson, was a Sgt Major in Thomas Hart Benton's 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Tennessee Volunteers, and went on to serve in the 39<sup>th</sup> Infantry. The youngest son, Nelson Patteson, was just turning eighteen in the year his brothers marched off to war. A Giles county history suggests that he joined the fighting men of the county, but no record has been found of his service.

In December of 1812, General Andrew Jackson led troops to Natchez Mississippi. Bernard Patteson, as Sgt Major to Col Thomas Hart Benton, likely was a part of this expedition. They travelled as a flotilla down the Ohio, Muskingum, and Mississippi rivers and camped several weeks at Natchez before being recalled. An angry General Jackson marched his soldiers home to Tennessee. A journal of the Natchez Expedition can be found in John Spenser Bassett, ed., *The Correspondence of Andrew Jackson - Volume I* (Washington, DC, 1926).

By September and October of 1813 Tennessee militia were being called up again:

*Tennessee troops under Andrew Jackson rendezvoused at Fayetteville, Tennessee in early October 1813 for their first excursion into Creek territory. This army of 2,500 men marched to Huntsville (Alabama), crossed the Tennessee River at Ditto's Landing and established a supply base nearby named Fort Deposit. They next penetrated the rugged terrain of enemy territory and began construction of Fort Strother on the Coosa River at a spot known locally as the Ten Islands. Fort Strother became the main rendezvous point for the American armies during the Creek War.*

[source] Brief History of Tennessee in the War of 1812; Prepared by Tom Kanon, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

Official records of the exact service of James Patteson and Bernard Patteson in the Creek Wars is difficult to follow. After Bernard Patteson's service in the Natchez Expedition he may have

stayed with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment under new leadership, but he eventually seems to be associated with the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Regular Army.

James Patteson probably moved about, participating with a number of different regiments who coveted his skills. Four official records, all under the Patterson spelling, probably represent him: Chiles' Battalion Mounted Gunmen, East Tennessee Volunteers; 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment Mounted Gunmen (Williamson's); 2<sup>nd</sup> Regt Mounted Gunmen (Cannon's), Corporal; Captain Gordon's Company of Mounted Spies, Lieutenant. The Spies usually rode ahead to the army to do reconnaissance work.

A brief look into these various companies suggests that both brothers were probably present at the major engagements of the Creek Wars – Tallushatchee, Talladega, and Battle of the Hillabees all in November of 1813; Emuckfau and Enotochopco in January 1814; and Battle of Horseshoe Bend in March 1814.

James Patteson is specifically recognized at Tallushatchee:

*Less than fifteen miles from Fort Strother lay the Creek village of Tallushatchee, where a large body of Red Sticks had assembled. Jackson ordered General John Coffee, along with a thousand mounted men, to destroy the town. On the morning of 3 November 1813, Coffee approached the village and divided his detachment into two columns: the right composed of cavalry under*

*Colonel John Alcorn and the left under the command of Colonel Newton Cannon. The columns encircled the town and the companies of Captain Eli Hammond and **Lieutenant James Patterson** went inside the circle to draw the Creeks into the open. The ruse worked. The Creek warriors charged the right column of Coffee's brigade, only to retreat to their village where they were forced to make a desperate stand. Coffee's army overpowered the Creeks and quickly eliminated them. Coffee commented that "the enemy fought with savage fury, and met death with all its horrors, without shrinking or complaining: no one asked to be spared, but fought as long as they could stand or sit." One of the Tennessee soldiers, the legendary David Crockett, simply said: "We shot them like dogs." The carnage ended in about thirty minutes. At least 200 Creek warriors (and some women) lay dead and nearly 100 prisoners, mostly women and children, were taken. American losses amounted to five killed and about forty wounded.*

[source] Brief History of Tennessee in the War of 1812; Prepared by Tom Kanon, Tennessee State Library and Archives.



Red Creek Wars map

Following the Creek defeat at Horseshoe Bend in March 1814, General Jackson turned his sites toward Spanish Pensacola and finally New Orleans. A diminished force of men joined Jackson at Pensacola, but it did include the 39<sup>th</sup> Infantry. After Jackson's victory there, he left a large portion of his troops to garrison various forts throughout the Mississippi territory. The 39<sup>th</sup> Infantry marched on with him to New Orleans and arrived in December 1814. The army set up for defense of the city, and engaged with the British on several occasions in December 1814 and January 1815. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 1815 the final conflict of the 1812 War occurred in New Orleans. General Jackson's forces came away with a resounding victory. It cannot be determined with certainty that James and Bernard Patteson were there on that day. It does seem likely!



Battle of New Orleans, by Laclotte, 1815.

As an aside: I came across an interesting family note attached to the Daniel-Miller Database of researcher Fran Daniel, at ancestry.com. It introduces Jacob Reynolds who served in the 39<sup>th</sup> Infantry of US Regulars from Tennessee. A further search in indexes suggests that he may have been in Chiles' Battalion of Mounted Gunmen. Jacob Reynolds (Runnels) and his wife Elizabeth Ann Banks named one of their sons Bernard M Patteson Reynolds. In 1820 Bernard M Patteson gave a deposition supporting Jacob Reynolds (Runnels) service. In the deposition Bernard Patteson states that he (Patteson) took command of a unit when the commanding officer was wounded. He also states Jacob Reynolds was wounded during the same battle. Jacob Reynold's descendants speculate that Bernard Patteson may have been instrumental in saving the life of Jacob Reynolds. According to his pension application, Jacob Reynolds (Runnels) received a medical discharge for a musket ball he took through both thighs in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend.

Do you want to know more?

[Link to James Patteson](#)

[Link to Bernard M Patteson](#)

[Link to Nelson A Patteson](#)

Further Reading:

For those wanting a “primer” on Tennessee’s participation in the War of 1812, I highly recommend –

Brief History of Tennessee in the War of 1812; Prepared by Tom Kanon, Tennessee State Library and Archives. See the TSLA website.

Photo Credit:

Red Creek Wars map; This helpful map appears at the website of the US 23rd Infantry Regiment War of 1812 Reenactment Group; <http://www.23rdus1812reg.org/H11082013.htm>

The Battle of New Orleans at Chalmette; Jean Hyacinthe de Laclotte (1766-1829), a member of the Louisiana Militia who participated in the battle; painted by him after the victory based on his sketches made at the scene; 1815.

**Sketch: The Patteson Men in the War of 1812; Pamela Hutchison Garrett, 2014.**