

# Osceola and the Indian Removal Act

Osceola paced in front of his thatched-roof home. He was mumbling to himself when his friend Hachi began to pace with him.

“You look troubled, Osceola,” said Hachi. “You have heard of the Indian Removal Act.”

Osceola stopped pacing. “It is terrible. President Andrew Jackson proposes that we give up our Florida tribal lands. He wants us to relocate to territory west of the Mississippi River. Doesn’t he understand that this is our homeland? How can we leave it?”

“I know,” said Hachi. “There are many of us who feel the same. But, there is nothing we can do tonight. Get some rest and we’ll call a meeting tomorrow.”

Osceola lowered his head. “You’re right, of course. We’ll make plans tomorrow.”

The next morning, Osceola and Hachi sent word throughout their camp and sent warriors on horseback to surrounding Seminole camps. There would be a meeting in two days.

On the morning of the meeting, Osceola dressed in his best clothes. He smoothed his button-fastened leggings. Then he put threaded garters over his pants just below his knees. Next, he put his embroidered sash across his shoulder and over his shirt. Then came the ceremonial metal plates that hung from his neck and covered his chest. Osceola was ready.

At noon, the Seminole warriors flooded into Osceola’s camp. They greeted one another then sat for a powwow.

“It is good you came,” started Osceola. “The time has come for us to take a stand. Is there anyone here who does not want to keep our homeland?”

The warriors all yelled, “No!”

Osceola stood. “Good. We must now take action.”

Nokosi rose and looked at Osceola. “You were not born a Seminole. Why should we listen to you?”

Hachi jumped and stood next to Osceola. “He has earned our respect through leadership and battles. Listen to him.”

“I may not be a Seminole by birth,” said Osceola as he sat back down, “but I am Seminole in my heart and soul. Many of the Seminole, Cherokee, and Choctaw chiefs have agreed to the Removal Act, but we will not. We will fight for our homeland.”

The warriors yelled in agreement. Soon after that day, Osceola led the warriors into battle. This was the start of the Second Seminole War.

**Questions**

1. What did President Andrew Jackson want the Seminole people to do?
2. Why did Osceola not want to move?
3. What does *flooded* mean in this sentence: "At noon, the Seminole warriors flooded into Osceola's camp."?
4. Why do you think Osceola dressed so carefully for the meeting?

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**Vocabulary List**

Each of the vocabulary words below are used in the reading passage. As you read the passage, pay attention to context clues that suggest the word's meaning.

1. Relocate
2. Sash
3. Ceremonial
4. Battles
5. Yelled

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**Context Clues**

Using context clues from the sentences in the passage, underline the correct meaning of the word in boldface.

1. "He wants us to **relocate** to territory west of the Mississippi River."

- a. buy land    b. move    c. visit    d. travel

2. "Next, he put his embroidered **sash** across his shoulder and over his shirt."

- a. fabric jacket    b. cape    c. tie    d. band of material

3. "Then came the **ceremonial** metal plates that hung from his neck and covered his chest."

- a. special occasion    b. holiday    c. birthday    d. decorative

4. "Hachi jumped and stood next to Osceola. "He has earned our respect through leadership and **battles**. Listen to him."

- a. lessons    b. games    c. fights    d. schooling

5. "The warriors **yelled** in agreement."

- a. nodded    b. waved    c. screamed    d. signed