

# Learning Lagniappe: Educator Extras

## Administration Papers 1769, 1788-1817, n.d.

Series 488

[http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital\\_archives/series/s488](http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/s488)

The Administration Papers are loose documents related to all aspects of the administration of the Mississippi Territory (1798-1817). The series has been referred to as the correspondence of the territorial governors, including Winthrop Sargent, William C. C. Claiborne, Robert Williams, and David Holmes, but the scope is larger. The papers pertain to the workings of the territorial government (i.e., the duties of the governor, the legislature, the military, and the courts, as well as early county governments and individuals' affairs), and touch upon most of the important themes in the government: Indian relations and lands, adjacent U.S. territories (particularly Louisiana), allegiance to the United States and duty to its service, and safe travel and trade for citizens.

### Subjects that can be addressed within this Digital Archive:

Early Mississippi government, Native American tribes such as the Choctaw, first-hand accounts of negotiating peace treaties between American government and Native American tribes, the War of 1812, Governor David Holmes, and Andrew Jackson.

### Navigating the Administration Papers:

The Administration Papers were scanned page by page. There are multiple images on each page with the page number handwritten at the bottom of the scanned page. At the bottom of each page is a written description and explanation of the images above of the images above.

- You can search for the images in two ways:
  1. Click on **Browse Images** and click on the individual pages.
  2. Or use the “**search for keyword**” **box** to look up individual documents by their catalogue number or by keyword.

*For more lessons and activities based on territorial Mississippi, the Digital Archives, and other collections visit the Classroom Materials page on our website at*

<http://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/learn/classroom-materials/lesson-plans-and-teaching-units/>

## Teacher Discussion Guide

Use the images from the MDAH Digital Archive entitled “Administration Papers, 1769, 1788-1817, n.d.” (found at [http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital\\_archives/series/s488](http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/s488)) to lead your class in a discussion analyzing and interpreting the following images:

- 1. In the “search for keyword” box type “1996,” hit enter, and click on the second image (a typed transcript).** This is a letter written to Governor of Mississippi David Holmes by General Andrew Jackson during the War of 1812. What are some of the things he describes experiencing upon arriving at Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers? What does Jackson write about the war’s end? Were his assumptions correct? Jackson recalls the surrender of two Native American chiefs along with the surrender of several African American runaway slaves. He also recalls seeing approximately 150 scalps (mostly belonging to women) from the massacre at Fort Mimms. Jackson writes “We have fully enforced the lex taliones [an eye for an eye warfare], broken the spirit of the War party, and I suppose peace is not very distant.” In fact, the War of 1812 did not conclude until December 24, 1814, eight months after the writing this letter.
- 2. In the “search for keyword” box type “11/27/1802” and hit enter.**
  - When the Chickasaws met with the United States President Thomas Jefferson, was the meeting considered successful? Why or why not? Henry Dearborn of the War Department considered the meeting between the Chickasaw delegates and the United States President unsuccessful. This was due primarily to the poor communication and lack of interpretation between the Native American visitors and the President. While the Native Americans were met in the spirit of friendship and gifts were exchanged, Dearborn considered the trip to be too expensive and dangerous for this occurrence to happen on a more frequent basis.
  - What effects do you think this experience had on future relations between Native Americans and the U.S. government? This incident serves as a sign of what is to come in the future, as it become harder and harder for the Native American people of any tribe to maintain a cordial relationship with the U.S. government. This in turn isolates the Native Americans and eventually causes them to lose their rights as well as property to new settlers moving westward. Treaties between the Native American tribes and the U.S. government continue to deteriorate, leading to events such as the Trail of Tears decades later and the removal of Native Americans to government-controlled reservations.
- 3. In the “search for keyword” box type “2209a” and hit enter.**
  - This document is an invoice of various items being shipped from New Orleans to Natchez. What are some of the items listed on the invoice? What do you think some of these items are or what do you think they would have been used for? Items listed include two carriages, two water buckets, two pair of single trees, ammunition chests, rammer and sponges, handspikes. Many of the items deal with construction materials and weaponry, two common needs in a country that was still largely unsettled in 1815.
  - What role did steamboats play in American life at the turn of the 19th century? Steamboats played a major role in American trade because they gave businessmen an opportunity to ship their products farther and faster than previously. Steamboats also allowed for easier travel among businessmen and plantation owners along the Mississippi River and improved communication for the country. They were used to ship cargo such as crops, trade items, and even weapons and medical supplies during the Civil War.
- 4. The documents in this particular digital archive were all hand-written in cursive writing. How do they compare with written communication today?** This type of elaborate cursive writing was practiced at this time not just by American people but also others from around the world. This was the style of the day, much like we consider emailing or texting on a cell phone to be a style of writing we consider normal in our society today. During this era, one could tell a lot about a person based on the style and presentation of their writing in a formal or non-formal letter. Although the purpose of written communication is still very much the same today, the formats used indicate the importance and priority of the message.
- 5. When reading and analyzing these documents, was it at all difficult to read and interpret what was being said? Why or why not? Do you think this would also present a problem for historians who study and transcribe historical documents? Why or why not?** The cursive writing can be difficult to read and language use has changed over the years. In addition to this, the age of the letters has resulted in damage (tearing, holes in pages, water/fire damage, etc.), all of which makes reading difficult. For historians, they oftentimes have to infer (guess) what information a missing piece of a page holds based on the information that remains or the contents of other documents.