

**diplomacy:** The art of conducting negotiations with other countries. People who engage in diplomacy are called *diplomats*.

## 15.3 Florida

Having acquired Louisiana through **diplomacy**, President Jefferson turned next to Florida. Spain had colonized this sunny peninsula in the late 1500s. By the 1800s, Florida had a diverse population of Seminole Indians, Spanish colonists, English traders, and runaway slaves. In 1804, Jefferson sent two diplomats to Spain to buy Florida. Spain's answer was "no deal."

Many white Americans in the Southeast wanted the United States to take over Florida. Slave owners in Georgia were angry because slaves sometimes ran away to Florida. (Some of the runaways were accepted and welcomed by the Seminole Indians.) In addition, white landowners in Georgia were upset by Seminole raids on their lands.

Over the next few years, Spain's control of Florida weakened. The Spanish government could do nothing to stop the raids on farms in Georgia by Seminoles and ex-slaves.



Escaped slaves were accepted into Seminole Indian communities, and often intermarried. Here we see Chief Abraham, a Seminole leader of both African and Seminole heritage.

**Andrew Jackson Invades Florida** In 1818, President James Monroe sent Andrew Jackson—the hero of the Battle of New Orleans—to Georgia with orders to end the raids. Jackson was told that he could chase raiding Seminoles into Florida. But he did not have authority to invade the Spanish colony.

Despite his orders, Jackson marched into Florida with a force of 1,700 troops. Over the next few weeks, he captured nearly every military post in the colony. He arrested, tried, and executed two British subjects for stirring up Indian attacks. He also replaced the Spanish governor with an American. Later Jackson said that he was

sorry that he didn't execute the governor as well. Spain demanded that Jackson be called back to Washington and punished for his illegal invasion.

**"Govern or Get Out"** Fearing war, Monroe asked his cabinet for advice. All but one of his cabinet members advised him to remove Jackson and apologize to Spain. The exception was Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. Rather than apologize, Adams convinced Monroe to send a blunt message to Spain. The message was, either govern Florida properly or get out.

Equally fearful of war, Spain decided to get out. In 1819, the Spanish government agreed to yield Florida to the United States. In exchange, the United States agreed to pay off \$5 million in settlers' claims against Spain. The United States also agreed to honor Spain's long-time claim to Texas.

Not all Americans were happy about leaving Spain in charge of Texas. One newspaper declared that Texas was "worth ten Floridas." Even so, the Senate ratified the Florida treaty two days after it was signed.