



# APRIL W GARDNER

# The Sacred Writings

# Beneath the Blackberry Moon Part Two

AUDIOBOOK COMPANION DOCUMENT

## April W Gardner



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Scripture quotations taken from the King James Version.

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#### **Clickable Table of Contents**

Cast of Characters

Author's Notes

Maps

Glossary

## **Cast of Characters**

#### Wolf Clan

Totka Hadjo (TOTE-kuh, Mad Fire), also known as Totka Lawe (Hungry Fire), Amadayh, widow (Ah-muh-DAHEE) Lance/Tall Bull, cousin to Totka (and siblings) Little Warrior, also known as Fire Maker, son of Singing Grass Cetto Imala, head of family, uncle ("pawa") to Totka (and siblings) and Tall Bull White Stone, elder sister to Singing Grass and Totka Singing Grass, wife of Nokose Fixico Children: Fire Maker, Rain Child, Speaks Sweetly Zachariah McGirth, adopted Wolf Leaning Bow, clan headman

#### **Off-screen Wolf Characters**

Rain Falling, Totka's mother Singing Voice, Totka's grandmother, wife to Grandfather Wild Edge

#### **Beaver** Clan

Adela McGirth (Copper Woman), adopted Beaver Clan Leaping Waters, wife to Tall Bull Long Arrow, brother to Leaping Waters

Grandmother Kit Fox, Nokose's grandmother, clan mother Ayo (AH-yoh), Leaping Waters' mother Nokose Fixico (No-KOH-suh, Heartless Bear), husband to Singing Grass, pawa (PAH-wuh) to Leaping Waters and Long Arrow Lillian McGirth (Bitter Eyes), adopted Beaver Clan

#### **Off-screen Beaver Character**

Strong Deer, Leaping Waters' aunt

#### **McGirth Family**

Zachariah McGirth Daughters: Adela, Lillian

#### **Other Notable Characters**

Lachlan Gibb, Scottish blacksmith Old Grandfather, Kossati's Beloved Man Gray Hawk, Totka's father, Deer Clan Bird Creek Fekseko, Kossati's peace chief (Fek-SEK-oh) Slim Face, stickball player from Tuskegee Minko Yellow Tree, Choctaw chief (MEEN-ko) Rainmaker, Choctaw warrior Hilaho, Choctaw warrior (Hi-LAH-hoh)

## Author's Notes

If you're a warm-blooded female, you might have been grumpy at me for keeping you hanging with Totka and Adela's love story. Trust me. I understand. No one likes to be strung along!

But Totka Hadjo is who he is because of how this story has evolved over the thirteen years since I first typed his name, and I wouldn't change a thing about him. Would you believe he started out as a minor character with little bearing on the plot? Amazing how a character can take over a novel and transform it in unpredictable ways! If you've been with me from the start of my writing career, you've likely read the first version of this series and can agree that putting their romance on hold to tell Totka's story was a much-needed improvement.

Historical novels are generally categorized as Historical Romance and Historical Fiction. My goal as a writer is to create a pleasing blend of those two. *The Red Feather* is my hearty tribute to romance. Isn't Totka dreamy? *The Sacred Writings,* while giving a respectable nod to romance, delves into the cultural aspect that history buffs yearn for. *The Ebony Cloak* is a lovely blend of both. It introduces new characters, while following the old, and it explores a tragic event you most likely have never heard of before.

Thank you for your patience and dedication to the characters and landscape that have swept my heart away. That Happily Ever After you've been waiting for is right around the next bend . . .

This is typically the portion of the back matter in which I elaborate on the story's historical plot points — those that are accurate to history and those that are my invention. Interestingly enough, this is the first novel I've written that is not structured around a historical event. I'd often wondered whether I could actually write an engaging plot without the backbone of a historical timeline. Did I succeed? I'm happy with the results and hope you are too!

And that glossary? Oh my word. A girl shouldn't have so much fun creating definitions for littleknown words used in a novel. If you found it half as helpful as I found enjoyable to create, it was worth the effort.

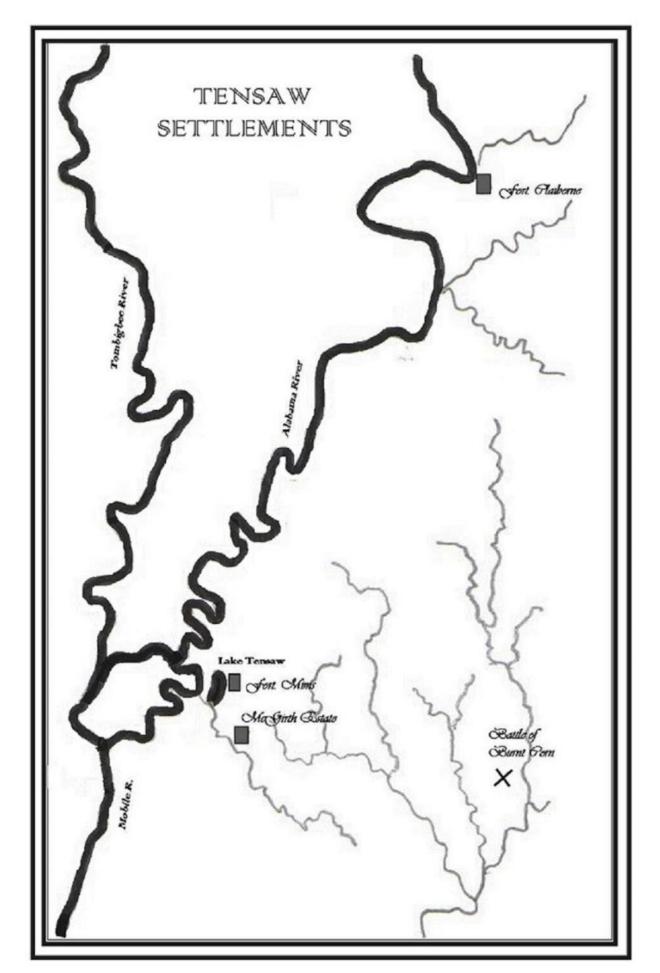
The one event in the story that is based on history is the stickball match. While researching the sport, I came across a tiny paragraph that described a 1700s stickball game between Muscogees and Choctaws. The result would determine which tribe would have full rights to hunting grounds and a body of water called Beaver Lake. Tempers flared during the match and a fierce battle broke out. Sadly, the winner was not recorded, but we'll pretend it was Totka – er, I mean, the Muscogees. When I read that bit of

history, I'd already plotted the game in the book, but I was stoked to learn it actually happened. Beaver Lake Town in *The Sacred Writings* is my salute to those unknown warriors who got in a tangle over a lake and made it into Wikipedia.

The novel itself is a memorial to the tribes who for centuries dominated our Southeastern United States. If you live in Alabama or Georgia, pause for a moment, touch that gorgeous red earth beneath your feet, and remember that this land was not always ours. It first belonged to the Muscogees.

# Maps





### Glossary

**Acadians:** descendents of 17<sup>th</sup>-century French colonists who were exiled from Canada by the British. Those who settled in Louisiana become known as Cajuns.

Alabama: Roll Tide! (Couldn't help myself.)

**Alabama Town:** a town of my creation based off a tribe that still exists, the Alabamas. Ancient Alabamas lived in seven towns near the location of my fictional Kossati. Alabama Indians were *not* Muscogee but a separate tribe of the Muskogean linguistic group and part of the confederacy. They were closely related to the Koasatis (see Kossati) and more distantly to the Choctaws.

**Blood Vengeance:** among the topmost legal principle of Southeastern Indians of the time. If a person was killed, it was the responsibility of his male clansmen, under guidance of the clan mothers, to retaliate in equal manner. The purpose being to restore balance in the clans.

**Bluecoat:** soldiers in the United States Army. So named because of their blue wool coatees. For this era, my creation.

**Breechcloth:** a long rectangular piece of animal hide or cloth that was brought up between the legs and under a belt at the waist. The ends hung like a flap over the belt in front and behind. Worn as outerwear by men and sometimes as underwear by women.

**Broken Days:** counting sticks bundled together to keep track of the passage of time. They were distributed to towns to mark the approach of special events such as battle or ceremony.

**Chokofa (cho-KOH-fuh):** circular townhouse found in the ceremonial centers of some towns. Used in cold or inclement weather in a manner similar to the town square.

**Chunkey:** a variety of hoop and pole game in which a stone was rolled and sticks were thrown to the location the player believed the stone will land.

**Clan:** a category of people who believed themselves to be blood relatives, even if untraceable. Clan permission, authority, and protection were often called upon. The blood law fell on clan shoulders. Clan structure and responsibilities extended across the confederacy so that a member of Deer Clan

would expect to be received as a family in any Deer Clan home in any town. Clans were associated with particular animals and natural phenomenon, the care of which they were often responsible. Deer Clan elders, for example, would monitor proper hunting in proper season.

**Cock Fletch:** the fletch of an arrow that varies in color from the other two. Often points down when nocked on the bowstring.

**Couch:** used for sitting and sleeping. Couches were arranged along the wall, raised two-three feet off the ground, made of saplings and cane, and covered with split-cane mats and animal skins.

**Creek (Muscogee) Confederacy:** formed by survivors of the devastation wrought by 16<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish expeditions. The Muscogee were the strongest tribe at the time, and over the course of one hundred plus years, accepted refugee tribes under the umbrella of their protection. At its peak, it was so mighty George Washington treated the confederacy on a level of respect equal to that of France and Britain. The Creek War of 1813-14 began its decline.

**Creek countrymen:** sons of European traders and Creek women who grew up in Creek country yet lived slightly apart in a blended lifestyle.

**Darkening Land:** the spirit world; where a soul goes after death; located in the west. Also called Spirit Land, or the Haven of Souls.

**Earth Spirit:** female; one of the four law-giving elements. Takes forms such as soil, rock, and Corn Woman who is the embodiment of the spirit and from whose body corn originated. Also called Mother Earth.

**East, Sacred:** one of four sacred cardinal directions; associated with the Sun Spirit, the sacred fire, life, and success.

**Elder Brother:** 1. a title of honor. Elder brothers were supposed to be kind and protective to toward their younger brothers. **2.** A woman's brother was her closest blood relative, and in some ways closer to her than her husband. Their relationship carried over to her children. In place of their father, an elder brother taught her sons much of what they needed to know to be men. In the absence of an elder brother, a younger brother filled the role.

**Federal Road:** a U.S. postal route bisecting Creek country. It linked trading establishments and became a route for pioneers passing through to lands in the west. The road became a point of disturbance between Creeks and Americans.

**Five Civilized Tribes:** consisted of Creeks, Seminoles, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Cherokees. So named by George Washington in his "plan for civilization."

Fire Spirit: male; assistant to the Sun Spirit.

Flageolet: a simple wind instrument made of cane.

**Four, Sacred:** a "magic" number that is expressive of the Creek belief system. Their *four* can be understood in a rough comparison to the Christian *three* for the Holy Trinity.

**Four-day Journey:** the number of days it was believed to take for a soul to journey to the Darkening Land.

Go to Water: ritualistic bathing done all year at dawn to overcome pollution and increase longevity.

**Grand Council, 1811:** the annual Creek grand council in which Shawnee-Creek Tecumseh arrived from the north with a plea for all tribes to join forces against the whites. There is debate on whether he preached peace or violence, but regardless, it was the spark the eventually enflamed the Creeks to civil war.

**Great Warrior:** the warrior selected led the town in war. He arranged ball games with Great Warriors from other towns and carried out the will of the micco.

**Healing Song:** a formula chanted or sung over a patient with the intent of engaging his spirit, restoring the correct flow of energy, and returning him to full health.

Herbal Warriors: the spiritual role of herbs as they work to heal a person's body.

Hunting Dreams: instead of saying "good night," the Creeks said, "I go to hunt a dream."

**Ibofanga (ey-boh-fahn-guh):** neither male nor female; was above all and was the unifying principle of the spirit world. Ibofanga was the impersonal Creative Force. It created and set in motion laws that govern the universe. Every element of nature had a part of Ibofanga residing inside it. Its counterpart was the Chaotic Force, represented by such beings as the tie-snake.

**Knower:** an individual with spiritual and psychological wisdom who also possessed second sight. A knower could foretell death and interpret dreams, among other things. A knower diagnosed but did not cure illness. Not to be confused with medicine maker.

**Kossati (koh-SAH-tee):** a town of my creation based off of a Muskogean tribe that still exists, the Koasatis. Ancient Koasatis lived in two towns very near the location of my fictional Kossati both bearing the name Wetumpka. Big Wetumpka was situated on the site of present-day Wetumpka, Alabama. Koasati Indians were *not* Muscogee but a tribe of the Muskogean linguistic group and part of the confederacy. They were closely related to the Alabama.

**Lineage:** a Creek's closest blood relatives, specifically those who lived together in the same family settlement. The Creek social system was organized as follows: individual, lineage, clan, town. The Creeks were a matrilineal society, meaning their blood (and clan) was traced through the women. Although a man was involved in his children's lives, he was not their blood relative nor was he ultimately responsible for their upbringing.

**Little Brother of War:** stickball. Defined as such because of its violent nature and its use as a substitute for war.

Long Guns: Indian term for white settlers. My creation.

**Long Hairs:** extinct Muskogee term for Choctaws. The Choctaws originally wore their hair long and unshaven. By the historic period (the story's setting), warriors had begun to shave their heads in a manner similar to the Creeks, but I revived the term to add flavor.

**Long Snake:** a term I borrowed from the Cherokee's river deity.

**Lower Towns:** all Muskogean towns established along the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers and their tributaries. Being geographically closer to Georgia colonists, the Lower Towns had easier access to trade goods. Because of that, they became dependent on the whites and were supportive of keeping peace with whites and assimilating their cultures. Many Lower Towns allied with the Americans during the Creek War. See Upper Towns.

**Lunar Retreat:** the time during menstruation when a woman was to stay separate in a designated moon lodge. Her latent power during that time would weaken a man. To break a lunar retreat rule was to commit a crime similar in nature to adultery or even murder.

Maddo (mah-doh): thank you (Muskogee language).

Master of Breath: see Wind Spirit.

**Medicine:** Creeks' equivalent to our terms "magic" or "power." Bad medicine was used by witches. Examples of good medicine were herbal warriors or healing songs. Medicine could also be neither good nor bad. A woman's medicine during menstruation was powerful but not bad, so long as it was properly handled.

**Medicine Bundle:** small items wrapped in a package and worn by warriors for spiritual protection. Items varied from individual to individual but each held special significance to that warrior.

**Medicine Maker:** men who were trained in the nature of diseases and healing herbs. Valued for their knowledge, not for any innate power they might have.

**Micco, talwa (MEE-koh, TAHL-wuh)):** town chief. There were many levels of micco in both civil and military roles. This particular title was political.

Milledgeville: capital of Georgia from 1804-1868.

Minko (MEEN-ko): chief. Choctaw language.

**Mississippi Territory:** an organized incorporated territory of the United States that existed from 1798-1817 and was comprised of present-day Alabama and Mississippi.

Moon Lodge: a place set apart for women.

**Muscogees:** an indigenous people who once dominated the Southeast. They occupied land from the Atlantic coast to central Alabama and were the founders of the Creek Confederacy. Also known as the Creeks.

**Muskogee:** language spoken by the Creeks and Seminoles.

**Muskogean:** indigenous languages originating in Southeastern United States. They consist of many dialects which are divided into two regions. East – Creek and Seminole (Muskogee), plus four others. West – Chickasaw and Choctaw.

North, Sacred: one of four sacred cardinal directions; associated with cold, trouble, and defeat.

Old Beloved Men: old war leaders retired from battle but venerated in council.

Old Beloved Path: tribal traditions handed down by elders generation after generation.

**Order of Things:** natural law that encompasses ecological principles. A way of doing things to promote harmony, show reverence for law-giving elements, and to avoid their displeasure.

**Owl:** an ill-omen, a witch on the wing.

**Pawa (PAH-wuh):** maternal uncle. A pawa oversaw the discipline and training of his sisters' sons. See elder brother. (Muskogee language.)

**Peace Town:** a sanctuary where no violence could take place. Places of refuge for runaway slaves, the homeless, bands in conflict, and lawbreakers. The peace was enforced by Red Sticks.

**People of the Point:** Muskogee term for Seminole Indians. So called because of the peninsula (Florida) they lived on.

**Red Sticks: 1.** one of two social labels available to Creek men (Red Sticks/White Sticks). Red Sticks were known for courage, strength, alertness, physical skills. They held leadership roles in warfare, security, and law enforcement. So called because of the red war club, the symbol of war. **2.** During the Creek War, the term "Red Stick" took on new meaning for the white settlers. For the duration of the war, a Red Stick was a Creek warrior who opposed the Americans; however, many warriors of the white persuasion shared their views and fought alongside them.

**Red War Club:** symbol of war. Before the musket, it was the preferred hand-to-hand combat weapon. To call men to battle, a red war club was raised in the square.

**Regular Army:** soldiers under the direction and pay of the federal government. Contrast with militiamen, who were volunteers organized by state.

Roach: a stiff crest of hair running down the middle of the head. Also called a Mohawk.

**Sacred Fire:** the principle symbol of purity. Sun's representative on earth. Believed to report evil to the Sun who would dispense punishment. Found in each town's square and chokofa.

**Scratching:** a practice used to train for hardiness, to purify, to seek spiritual knowing, and to invoke the spirit of the individual's totem animal. A sharp, four-pointed instrument was raked across the chest,

back, arms, legs. Depending on gender, age, and purpose, scratches varied from simply breaking the skin to creating wounds that bled and left scars.

**Shadows:** ghosts, evil spirits. The term is my invention, although the Muskogees did believe that ghosts of bodies improperly buried or those of ancestors whose deaths were not avenged could haunt a man. The Muskogees before Christian influence did not have a "good great spirit" or an evil counterpart such as Satan. Their concept of "evil" was one of chaos.

**Sight**, **a**: as far as one could see. Rough equivalent to our mile.

**Single-pole Ball Game:** played by men and women together around a pole up to fifty feet tall. A player who succeeded in hitting an object on the pole with a ball earned points. Men used stickball sticks; women used hands.

**Slave Pole:** a pole stationed in the town square to which slaves and captives were tied and often tortured. By the historic period (the story's setting), slave poles were no longer in use. I brought them back into use to serve the story's purpose. However, during the Creek War, soldiers *did* come across Red Stick towns (see Red Sticks definition 2) that featured red poles adorned with scalps.

**Sleeps:** the marking of days or the passage of time. One sleep equals one day.

**Sofkee (SOHF-kee):** a thin gruel made of cornmeal or rice. Cooked with wood-ash lye and often eaten after being left to sour.

South, Sacred: one of four sacred cardinal directions; associated with warmth, peace, and happiness

**Standing Militia:** the most reliable units of militia (volunteer soldiers). They were well-equipped (at their own expense), organized, and met annually to train.

**Stickball:** a violent team sport resembling lacrosse in which a set of cupped sticks were used to lob a ball against a pole or between two poles that formed a goal. Used as training for battle and sometimes used as a substitute for war. Also called the little brother of war.

**Stomp Dance:** intertribal celebrations or social events. As with most every Creek event, stomp dances were religious in nature and, through ritual, blended the four law-giving elements in a reverential way.

**Sun Spirit:** female; one of the four law-giving elements. Source of all light and life. Also known as Grandmother Sun.

**Tafia (TAH-feeuh):** a cheap trade rum, the primary liquor consumed by the Southeastern Indians of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Talwa (TAL-wuh): a Creek community. Muskogee language.

Tippling House: an establishment in which liquors are sold in small quantities.

**The Floridas:** the combination name given the two regions of Florida (West Florida and East Florida) which existed during the setting of this book. In 1813, Spain owned both. Also called Las Floridas.

This World: the middle world of the Indian three-world cosmos. The place Indians lived.

Tie-snake: believed to be powerful snakes that crawled up on land to drag victims under water.

**Under World:** the lowest of the Indian three-world cosmos. Existed below the earth and water. Epitomized chaos.

**Upper Towns:** all Muskogean towns established along the Alabama River, its branches (the Coosa and Tallapoosa), and their tributaries. Being sheltered from the Georgia colonists by geographic distance, the Upper Towns were more staunchly traditional. Because of that, they resisted assimilation and fought to retain their way of life. Many Upper Towns put out the red war club against the Americans and their allies during the Creek War. See Lower Towns.

**Upper World:** the highest of the Indian three-world cosmos. Existed above the sky. Epitomized order.

Warriors' House: the communal lodge where warriors met for council, purification, and to plot warfare.

**Water Spirit:** female; one of the four law-giving elements. Takes the form of rivers, lakes, rain, mist, streams, and the ocean.

West, Sacred: one of four sacred cardinal directions; associated with the Moon Spirit, souls of the dead, and death.

White Sticks: 1. one of two social labels available to Creek men. White Sticks were known for reasonability, patience, mediation skills, scientific knowledge. Their roles included medicine maker, civil duties, diplomacy, ensuring of peace. 2. During the Creek War, the term "White Stick" took on

new meaning. For the duration of the war a White Stick was a Creek warrior who allied with the Americans; however, many warriors of the Red persuasion shared their views and fought alongside them.

White Drink: an herbal tea brewed for ceremonial purposes. It was consumed in large quantities in the council square and had a stimulating effect similar to excessive quantities of coffee. It often caused vomiting, which was done outside the square and was said to empty the body of impurities (alcohol) and ensure a clear mind. Called black drink by the Anglos.

**Widow:** required to mourn four years. During that time she was to crop her hair (representing a severing of accumulated memories) and not care for it. She was to dress unattractively and sleep over her husband's grave.

Wind Clan: the most prestigious clan. Specialized in predicting weather.

Wind Spirit: male; one of the four law-giving elements. Also called Master of Breath.

**Winters:** the span of a year. My creation. The Creek year began in late summer at the Green Corn Festival.

**Witch:** any person who is heartlessly evil as to be beyond forgiveness. A witch sought the demise of others to add the deceased person's life to the span of his own.

**Yatika (yah-TEE-kuh):** speaker, orator (Muskogee language). Every talwa had a yatika who was well-versed in the nuances of the many Muskogean dialects. Typically, a micco did not make public speeches. This job fell to the yatika who knew the micco's mind and used his oratory talents to convey the micco's (and the council's) wishes.