



Beneath
the
BLACKBERRY
MOON PART 3

The Ebony Cloak

APRIL W GARDNER

The Ebony Cloak

AUDIOBOOK COMPANION FILE

Beneath the Blackberry Moon Part Three

April W Gardner



Beneath the Blackberry Moon, Part 3: the Ebony Cloak

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Scripture quotations taken from the King James Version.

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April W Gardner's

Beneath the Blackberry Moon parts 1-3

(must be read in order)

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Part 2: [The Sacred Writings](#)

Part 3: [The Ebony Cloak](#)

[The Untold Stories \(bonus material\)](#)

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The Ebony Cloak by April W Gardner
(audiobook companion file)

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Cast of Historical Figures

Please note that while I enjoy using and following history as closely as possible, I made the characters—even the historical figures—as I wanted them to be. I try not to misrepresent history, but I always put the fiction first.

Captain Isaacs

Isaacs was a mixed-blood and one of the early Creek prophets influenced by Tecumseh's famous speech at the 1811 Grand Council of the Creek Nation. Because of his increased fame, other prophets such as Josiah Francis grew jealous and sought to have him killed. To save his skin, Captain Isaacs defected to Big Warrior's "white" faction. When he left, he took with him a great amount of gunpowder and lead, forcing the Red Sticks to travel to the Spanish in Pensacola and, in a roundabout way, causing the Battle of Burnt Corn (*Beneath the Blackberry Moon: The Red Feather*). Isaacs was described by a contemporary historian as being "one of the most cunning, artful scamps I ever saw among the Indians*."

Chief Garcon

Garcon, whose first name eludes history, was a former slave who served as sergeant major of the British post on Prospect Bluff (known as "Negro Fort") while it was under the command of Major Edward Nicholls. Following orders, he defended the fort against American attack and was executed by the Creeks for crimes against American sailors. He was characterized as "lean, intense, hot-eyed and tight-lipped, cunning, courageous, and cruel**."

Colonel Duncan Clinch

Although Clinch rose to the rank of general and became a wealthy plantation owner, the Second Seminole War ruined him. He moved to Georgia and became involved in banking. He was described by his steward as "most fatherly, always available to others and beaming with kindness."

Major William McIntosh

Born of a Creek mother and a Scots father, McIntosh (called White Warrior) was commissioned a brigadier general in the US Army for his service to General Jackson, but in 1825 he was executed by his own people for having violated Creek policy by ceding lands to the federal government.

Sailing Master Jairus Loomis of the United States Navy

Outside of the Negro Fort episode, history has little to say about Sailing Master Loomis, except that his conduct was exemplary. It does appear, however, that a petition was put in for Congressional recognition. Whether that was approved isn't clear.

Surgeon Marcus C. Buck of the Fourth Infantry

In an obscure 1845 Boston medical journal (thank you Google books!), I found a tidbit about Surgeon Buck. At the time of the Negro Fort disaster, he was a major on Colonel Clinch's staff. Dr. Buck (as he later became known) was at some point "Military Storekeeper at the Washington Arsenal," and at the time of his death at age 56 was Secretary of the Medical Department of the National Institute. He died of "apoplexy" in 1845. Keep an eye out for Marcus in future novels . . .

Zachariah McGirth

Son of a British commander from the Revolutionary War, Zachariah grew up in Creek country and married a half-Creek woman named Vicey. He became a wealthy planter in the Tensaw region of Mississippi Territory and narrowly escaped the Fort Mims Massacre by being absent the day of the attack. Believing his wife and children dead, Zachariah became overridden by grief and employed himself the duration of the Creek War by riding as courier between his settlements and Georgia when no one else could be found brave enough to go. Learn the rest of the McGirths' story in *Beneath the Blackberry Moon: The Red Feather*.

*Woodward, Thomas S. Woodward's *Reminiscences of the Creek, or Muscogee, Indians*. Montgomery: Barrett and Wimbish, 1859.

**Griffith, Benjamin W. *McIntosh and Weatherford, Creek Indian Leaders*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1988.

Book Club Discussion Questions

1. Only Milly's African-textured hair gives away her heritage, allowing her to hide who she really is. In chapter one, Isum tries to remove her bonnet then says, "You don't need that no more. From here on, we'll be exactly like the Almighty created us to be . . . Your feet can run, but your heart, it gotta stop chasin' after lies. It's time you be who you's meant to be . . . A child of the King. And my girl. Nothin' else mattuh." For all Isum's gruffness, he makes an excellent point. At what place in the book does Milly finally believe this statement? What events bring her to that knowledge?

For personal introspection—What truth about yourself are you hiding from? What lies are you believing? Who does God mean for you to be?

2. Isum truly loves Milly, but her love for him is one of a different sort. How much do you believe his gruffness with her affects how she feels about him? Is there any other reason she might have for not being able to fully give him her heart? Was there ever a place during the book you wished they would end up together? Do you blame Isum for what he tried to do to Phillip?

3. Milly experiences a "treacherous yearning in her spirit" for unconditional affection. It motivates her to continue the lie that she's a white woman, like any other, and all for a few more respectful, tender moments with Phillip. God placed within women the desire to be tenderly loved and protected. Balanced with an accurate view of how God sees us, this is natural and good.

For personal introspection—Is there any area in your life influenced by the same yearning that drove Milly to lie? If so, is it healthy, or might you need to reevaluate your thoughts and/or behavior?

4. Captain Phillip Bailey suffers with a form of post traumatic stress disorder as a result of his experience at Fort Mims. He is ashamed of his overpowering physiological and psychological reactions to certain things, such as the sight of gore. As an officer in the army, how do you think his commanders would react if they knew of his weakness? What about his troops? Do you believe Marcus to be correct in his approach to help Phillip hide his problem, or should he have used his authority as a medical officer to force Phillip off the battlefield?

5. Fort Mims took everything from Phillip. The army is the only thing he believes he has left. His drive to advance in his career is so strong that he volunteers for battle despite his weakness. Along the way, his goal transforms. What did it change to and what events prompted this?

6. What is Phillip's view of slavery at the outset of the book compared to what it is at the end? How do his relationships with Saul, Enoch, and Milly play into this? Do you think Phillip still has room to grow in regard to his opinion about blacks and natives?

7. Was True Seeker justified in taking food from the McGirth's house? When he realized he had "stolen" the watch, he found himself in a sticky situation. Was there a better way he could have handled it?

8. An excellent judge of character, Grandmother Mahila gave True Seeker his name. During the book, in what ways does True Seeker live up to it?

9. Throughout the book, True Seeker strives to become a worthy man and warrior, as his uncle and father before him – a difficult task considering the war took his role models from him. What characters fill that position, and how specifically do they each help True Seeker? In his last scene, what statement does he make that hints at the fact that he, at last, has begun to see himself as something more than an awkward boy?