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A DESCRIPTION OF OSCEOLA

*Winthrop Williams to Mrs. Susan M. S. Crouch*¹

Charleston, January 6, 1838

. . . Today being Saturday I took leave of the city about 11 o'clock, embarked in a Packet Boat for Sulivans Island, arrived there at ¼ past 12, visited Fort Moultrie, saw Mickanopy, Oseola, Allegator, Jumper, Cloud, Billy Hix and about two hundred more Seminole Indians²—Oseola was the one I was most curious to see. He is about 35 years old, large sized, about 6 feet high, well formed, has every appearance of the Indian, does not speak English, has an intelligent countenance, with a sad expression. He is now in rather bad health. Mickanopy the King is a brawny old fellow of about 60—Some of the minor chiefs were fine looking men, well made and quite free with visitors—One of them asked me for a cigar. He spoke the word cigar plainly. I bought a pair of Buck skin mocasins from Billy Hix for 50 cts. He was quite amused with my whiskers, which I wear the same as I did when you left here; he had a slight pair of mustachios—Most of the common people are slightly clad; the children were most of them perfectly naked boys and girls running here and there among the visitors, among whom there were many Ladies. About a Dozen of the Chiefs came up this evening and are now at the new Theatre at the invitation of Mr. Abbott the manager. The house will be thronged to see them no doubt—It is the first time they have ever been among the whites—It is a mistake about Oseolas being an educated man. He is no doubt a good indian warrior and nothing more. There are but one or two that can speak English among the whole of them. They appeared quite satisfied with their situation; they have the liberty of going about the Island anywhere, without a guard. The Fort is occupied by

¹ The following letters were both written to Mrs. Susan M. S. Crouch, who lived in Providence, Rhode Island. The first is from her brother Winthrop Williams; the second from her sister Harriet H. Williams. Winthrop and his sister had recently moved to Charleston. Winthrop was the father of the late Henry T. Williams of 39 South Battery, Charleston, and great grandfather of Henry T. Gaud of Charleston in whose possession are the original letters. The editor of this *Magazine* has broken the account into sentences.

² The Charleston *Courier* reported on January 3, 1838, that "Chief Micanopy, principal chief, Coahadjo, King Philip, Oseola, Little Cloud, and 116 warriors, and 82 women and children" had arrived at Fort Moultrie. See excerpts from this newspaper printed in "The Complete Osceola," *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXXIII (1955), 247.

them and about 40 U. S. Soldiers. There were not more than a dozen men on duty to-day—I can assure you I have not been so well pleased with any excursion for some time as this today. . . .

Harriet H. Williams to Mrs. Susan M. S. Crouch

[Charleston,] February 9, 183[8]

. . . they liked to have lost a negro the other night Gilbert with the Quincy, the same complaint that Oceola died with. You must have seen an account of his death in the paper. Unfortunate Chief, he would not let a Physician attend him. An old Indian Dr that had cured him before administered. He might of cured him again if they had been in the Woods where he could have had access to roots and herbs, but it was folly to attempt it shut up as they were. He is no more, and his life could have been easily saved if they would have suffered a Physician to attend him. However, I think he would have died from grief; his countenance was the Picture of Melancholly. . . .³

³ This description of his last illness, when he suffered from quinsy, agrees with those in *ibid.*, pp. 195-198.