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1838

OSEOLA

[Anonymous]

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Early Visions of Florida

Poetry • Stories • Chronicles from an American Borderland

Anonymous, “OSEOLA”

[Anonymous.] ‘OSEOLA’ [sic]. Published in the Waldo Patriot (Belfast, ME) on 23 March 1838, less than sixty days after the Seminole leader’s death, and reprinted in the New-York Gazette. Interestingly, the date noted at the close of the poem is 6 February 1838, just one week after Osceola’s death.

There is a romance in the history of this savage chieftain, not a little heightened by the circumstances under which he died. The poet pencil of Catlin has invested it with an interest little less vivid than the written description of the scene of Oseola’s dying days. We think the following verses, sent to us yesterday, full worthy of the subject, and the gifted individual from whom we received them.

The tempest is hush’d, and the Eagle is dead!

His thunderbolts fly, and his wings clap no more!

The plumes that to war and to victory led,

Forever he folded on Marano’s^[i] shore.

Beneath the deep shade of a mute willow only,

O’er the warrior’s relics pale liberty weeps;

And a letterless stone, mid those barrens so lonely,

Alone marks the spot where the Seminole sleeps.

The ancients of Egypt entwined round the dead

The papyrus that bright immortality gave;

By a far distant age the memorial is read,

And a far distant nation bends over his grave.

Oh! had we the art, we might frame such a spell,

As the damps of the sepulchre never could tame;

And the symbols of faith, valor, honor should tell,

OSEOLA, thy virtues, thy deeds, and thy fame.

Yes! to long after times would a *sword with a heart*,

The story unfold of thy worth and thy power;

Thy name, Oseola, itself might depart,

But a record so noble, no time could devour.

But, warrior and chief! thou art laid in the dust,

Embalm'd in the tears of the nation ye sway'd,

The proudest of titles that perfume might trust,

Which years upon years shall behold undecay'd.

Immortal with man, when mausoleums are rotten;

While genius and valor still honor'd shall be,

Thou shalt need not the praise of the earthly forgotten,

Thy fame is impressed on the hearts of the free!

Barren isle! thou dost hold in thy sea-beaten bosom

His ashes—be proud of the treasure that's there!

For pilgrims for ages shall scatter the blossom,

Till thy deserts smile lovely, thy rocks become fair!

February 6th, 1838