

**“In Time of Iron-Age: The Choctaw Civil War and the Southern Frontier”**

by

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## Abstract

This dissertation is the first extended ethnohistorical study of the Choctaw civil war that occurred between 1746 and 1750 CE. Using gender as a primary lens of inquiry, it outlines the mutual intelligibility of Choctaw and French martial cultures, which manifested in masculine displays, gender-charged rhetoric, and violent acts. It offers a reconsideration of the origins of the civil war by focusing on the experiences of individuals silenced by the archive, namely, an unnamed wife of Red Shoe who was abused by a French officer. Red Shoe's extended kinship network, bound by gendered obligations to avenge these attacks on his wife, joined his violent anti-French agenda, with family members comprising all the notable leadership positions within this faction. This dissertation proposes a periodization for the war, with the first phase epitomized by Red Shoe's personal campaign of revenge against the French. This was interrupted at the end of 1747 and 1749 due to a smallpox epidemic. The final phase that followed was characterized by raids taken by eastern and southern Choctaws aimed specifically at eliminating villages associated with Red Shoe's kinship network. Pro-French and pro-English Choctaw factions reestablished peace in 1750 with the adoption of a diplomatic approach that did not equate a ban on European traders with a ban on traders' merchandise, thereby allowing a reversion to the form of payoff system that existed before the war which facilitated the acquisition of gender-affirming weapons and goods. The Choctaw civil war was a bio-social event spurred by individual gendered claims to power and authority.

## Acknowledgments

As one of my advisors once quipped, only graduate students read this part. This is *especially* true of dissertations instead of book manuscripts. Yet every research project relies on the work and support of a number of individuals and institutions. It truly takes a village to nurture and raise an idea, and this dissertation project is old enough to be in kindergarten.

I have been lucky enough to work with outstanding advisors and mentors at Auburn University. Kathryn Braund's insistence that if I simply sit down and read James Adair I would find a dissertation topic proved prophetic. She has aided me every step of the way with encouragement, constructive criticism, and her constant reminders of soft (and sometimes not so soft) deadlines in order to keep me on track. More than anyone, she shepherded me along through courses, research, and writing. And while that metaphor may by implication reduce me to a sheep, it accurately describes the debt I owe her for being an exemplary advisor. Adam Jortner pushed me to think critically about the significance of the frontier and the determinative role of Native Americans in the history of the colonial south. Donna Bohanan and Ralph Kingston graciously steered me towards relevant scholarship on early modern French gender and martial culture. While any errors in the study you find on the following pages are wholly mine, most of the insights greatly benefitted from the influence of my dissertation committee members.

Other Auburn faculty members offered advice and support along the way. Kelly Kennington answered (and continues to answer) the frequent random questions I have about eighteenth-century slavery in South Carolina. Charles Israel's rousing seminar on American Religion reminded me to consider the spiritual implications of Native American warfare. Rupali Mishra gave me substantive feedback on application materials that resulted in a research fellowship at the Huntington Library. I likely abused Chris Ferguson's open-door policy with my many questions about the first British Empire. Frank Smith graciously offered some editorial suggestions after reading the entire final draft. The earliest drafts of the following chapters were completed during a year-term as a graduate assistant with Carla Keyvanian and Danielle Willkins in the College of Architecture, Design and Construction. The LADC is Auburn's best kept secret, and the perfect setting for reflection and writing. James Truman at the Miller Writing Center gave me an opportunity to immerse myself in a community of writers from all disciplines. I have joined Emily Burns for many professional development workshops over the years, and she graciously acted as an outsider reader for this dissertation defense. And David Carter, Eden McLean, and Malcom McLean have kept me grounded by their unwavering friendship.

Friends in Auburn distracted me with good food and (sometimes not so good) football just enough to remind me that life in graduate school can in fact be fun. Most of this dissertation probably was written while drinking Kona coffee supplied by Kim Hayes. Thomas Murphy agreed to accompany me on my cross-country drive from Alabama to California for my Huntington fellowship and we (somehow) still like each other. I wish we had more time to stop and explore this great big country. Let's do it

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I especially want to single out the graduate teaching assistants assigned to my World History classes during the 2017-2018 academic year, who have all been immensely helpful. Peter Thomas, Taylor McGaughy, Grace London, and Michael Megelsh — all outstanding scholars in their own right — made my life easier these past couple months by allowing me to focus on the completion of this project.

Discussions at a number of conferences significantly influenced the arguments that follow. In 2015 at the meeting of the Southern Historical Society, Kristofer Ray pointed me towards the Natchez's role in fomenting the Chickasaw-Choctaw rivalry. At the 2016 annual meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory, Greg O'Brien suggested I consider the Chakchiumas and their seemingly tangential roles. At the same meeting, Joshua Piker pushed me to more clearly articulate why gender is so important to the story of Choctaw civil war. I was able to reconnect with Josh again during the annual William & Mary Quarterly/Early Modern Studies Institute workshop at the Huntington in

2017. Both he and Brett Rushforth listened as I described the way my project evolved since I last saw him, offering encouragement to get over the final hurdles. Their message of excitement may have been simple, but it was an incalculably positive affirmation to hear for an unproven graduate student like myself. Their words meant more to me than they can know, and I can't thank them enough.

More than any other presentation, the feedback I received at the McNeil Center of Early American Studies' 2017 Biennial Graduate Student Conference allowed me to work through some of the more frustrating frameworks I had been operating with. In particular, Liz Ellis and Brooke Bauer pushed me to further incorporate how the Choctaws' regional divisions effected factionalism, Ala Montgomery wondered how I would reframe the war if I considered its effect on individual bodies, and David Babaian questioned the appropriateness of deploying "Anglophile" and "Francophile" as organizing constructs. Haley Negrin, my panel commenter (and fellow summer Huntington resident), graciously read through my presentation and offered feedback on how to better frame the social implications of the smallpox epidemic to the Choctaw civil war. The McNeil Center brought David, Ala, Greg Wiker, Alexi Garrett, Lisa Rose Lamson, Stephanie McKellop, Casey Schmitt, John Nelson, Nicole Breault, and Max Speare into my life, and I am humbled to consider them friends and excited to see everyone's work in the coming years.

This study benefitted from the financial support of research fellowships and travel grants from many institutions: Auburn University's Department of History; the Auburn University College of Liberal Arts; the Friends of the Alabama Department of Archives and History; the Alabama Chapter of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of

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My pursuit of history was recognized and encouraged by my family for as long as I can remember. My parents, Nick and Dee, probably knew graduate school was in the works during trips to Disney World when we were all younger, tipped off by the fact I was more excited to see the Hall of Presidents or listen to the narrative history of communication in EPCOT's Spaceship Earth than anything else. The patience they have exhibited toward their terminal student son is much appreciated. My sister Theresa and brother-in-law Andrew allowed me to live with them while I was trying to find my bearings between graduate programs, and I am forever indebted to their kindness. I hope I have made them all proud.

I met Amanda Cameron on the first day in the first graduate seminar of my first semester in Auburn's doctoral program. She has lived with this dissertation for almost as long as she has known me. She has put up with rambling absent-minded comments about eighteenth-century Native American communities, given me space and time to read and write, and been a sounding board for hypotheses and writing struggles. Somewhere along the line I convinced her to change her name to "Sparacio," and our number of household pets has quadrupled. I still adore her all the same. To the best of wives and best of women, I dedicate this work.

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## Note on Titles and Names

The original name of one of the central players in this history is lost. The war chief of the leading western division town of Couëchitto is referred to as “The Rebel,” “Imataha Chitto,” “Red Shoes,” “Red Shooes,” “Red Slippers,” “Shulush Houmma,” “Shulashummashtabe,” and “Soulouche Oumastabé” throughout various sources. All of these terms are variations of the Choctaw title given to any war chief. *Soulouche* (or *shulush*) roughly translates to “red.” *Oumastabe*, coming from the root terms *ouma* (also meaning “red” or “war”) and *abe* (meaning “kill”), roughly translates to “shoes.” Patricia Galloway has suggested the title may be connected with “the wearing of red moccasins in the initiation ceremony for a new warrior observed among the Chickasaws.”<sup>1</sup> Because any warrior with an illustrious military career could potentially attain this rank and title, multiple Red Shoes existed during the period of time this dissertation examines, including the years 1746-1750, during which the Choctaw civil war raged. For clarity, and in keeping with previous scholars’ treatment of this individual, I will continue to use the English translation of this title, “Red Shoe,” in reference to the war chief of the village of Couëchitto. Other headmen with this title will always be referred to by title *and* village, i.e. Red Shoe of Yanabé or Red Shoe of Toussana.

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<sup>1</sup> Patricia Galloway, “Choctaw Names and Choctaw Roles: Another Method for Evaluating Sociopolitical Structure” in *Practicing Ethnohistory: Mining Archives, Hearing Testimony, Constructing Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 216.

## Introduction

In mid-September 1759, Jean-Bernard Bossu found himself in trouble. Close to what is now the Black Warrior River in present day Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Bossu encountered a “rebellious party” of Choctaw Indians intent on traveling east to meet the English.<sup>2</sup> The leader of this party, Mingo-Houmas, asked Bossu to “give him some brandy.” Bossu refused. Mingo-Houmas, angered by the lack of hospitality, flew into a rage and attacked the Frenchman. As Bossu recollected, the Choctaw chief “even had the audacity to raise his axe over my head.” His life in jeopardy, Bossu quickly yelled at his attacker, exclaiming to Mingo-Houmas “that I was a *real man*, that I was not afraid to die, and that I had given up my body.” Bossu continued to proclaim his martial honor, stating boldly that he felt “perfectly satisfied to die,” adding his certainty that if Mingo-Houmas “killed me and my small group of warriors, the great chief of France across the

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<sup>2</sup> The original name of the waterway has rarely found representation in European sources, although some maps are helpful. In particular, the Delisle maps of 1701 and 1703 refer to the river as “les Aepaetaniche.” Patricia Galloway has noted that “variations of the name appeared in maps and texts of the British – better informed through their Alabama and Chickasaw allies – labeling what later became known as the Black Warrior.” See Galloway, *Choctaw Genesis, 1500-1700* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 263.

big lake would seek revenge by sending against their nation as many warriors as there were leaves in the trees.”<sup>3</sup>

Whether intentionally uttered in defiance or simply out of fright, these strong words saved Bossu’s life. Mingo-Houmas, with years of experience dealing with Europeans (and their demands), knew that the French usually failed to deliver on their outlandish claims – even regarding trade. He was aware of the low number of French troops that occupied Louisiana. As such, the threat of overseas retribution alone cannot explain what paused his tomahawk. Instead, Bossu’s appeal to Choctaw martial and masculine sensibilities most likely saved his life. At an early age, Choctaws learned to withstand pain by offering no evidence of the suffering they experienced at the hands of their tormentors, and when taken prisoner Choctaw captives were expected to taunt their captors.<sup>4</sup> “Surprised at my resolution,” Bossu wrote, “these people decided that I was a ‘man of valor’ and that I had restored to them the sanity which they had lost when they devised the plan to abandon their father” (a reference to the French king). Mingo-Houmas and his followers did not exactly apologize, but they did ask Bossu to “forget the past.”

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<sup>3</sup> Jean-Bernard Bossu, *Travels in the Interior of North America, 1751-1762*, ed. and trans. Seymour Feiler (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 158. Emphasis added. The “small party” that Bossu travelled with included Mobilian Indians. Bossu includes clarification regarding the phrase “I had given up my body” with the following margin note: “This means that I was ready to die for my country.” Mingo-Houmas most likely was the same Chickasawhay chief named Mingo Ouma present at the 1746 conference called to decide the fate of Red Shoe. See Jadart de Beauchamp’s Journal in *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion, 5 Vols.*, eds. Dunbar Rowland, A.G. Sanders, and Patricia Galloway (Jackson: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1927-1932 and Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 4: 269-297 (henceforth referred to as *MPAFD*). Regardless, the fact that “ouma” (“red”) made up the title of the war party leader signifies that he occupied an elevated status in Choctaw society due to his abilities as a warrior. Peter Mancall traces the growing importance of alcohol to frontier relations during the eighteenth century in *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> John R. Swanton, “An Early Account of the Choctaw Indians,” *American Anthropological Association Memoirs* 5 (1918): 51-72, especially 66.

They offered him a calumet and agreed to light a new fire, signifying a renewal of the Franco-Choctaw alliance and “that the past was forgotten.”<sup>5</sup>

Bossu’s perceived bravery during this encounter reminded the Choctaw of their own actions in the face of danger, and offers an illuminating example of the ways in which Choctaws and Frenchmen sustained their diplomatic relationship in the early and mid-eighteenth century. This mutual intercultural understanding was grounded in appeals to both Choctaw and French martial cultures, which often manifested in masculine displays, gender-charged rhetoric, and violent acts. These appeals to manhood across cultures could both foster and undermine Franco-Choctaw relations along the southern frontier and contributed directly to one of the most important, yet least studied episodes in the history of the Native South: the Choctaw civil war.

### **HISTORIOGRAPHY: REEVALUATING THE CHOCTAW CIVIL WAR**

This dissertation seeks to highlight the complexity of the Choctaw civil war. The war was not an example of technological determinism or some presage of technological dependency by way of global market integration, as Richard White suggests, because through all the trauma, Choctaws continued to dictate diplomatic terms of compliance and friendship to the French, establishing what Kathleen DuVal has referred to as a “native ground.”<sup>6</sup> Those Choctaws who allied with the English did so for personal

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<sup>5</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 159.

<sup>6</sup> Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change Among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983). James Taylor Carson refuted White’s declension narrative, noting that cultural practices such as gendered division of labor, a matrilineal kinship system, chiefly political organization,

reasons, either out of a desire to uphold kinship responsibilities or to bolster their own local claims to power. Nor did the Choctaw civil war, as earlier works contend, perform the mere function of a proxy theater for the War of Austrian Succession that embroiled Europe throughout most of the 1740s or, on an even larger chronological scale, the “second hundred years’ war” that characterized what historians have referred to as the long eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Patricia Galloway was the first to offer an ethnographic approach to the war, drawing upon her knowledge of the Choctaws’ complex process of ethnogenesis and asserting that a combination of ethnicity and moiety affiliation dictated Choctaw factionalism.<sup>8</sup> Greg O’Brien agrees, tracing the ethnic fault lines within

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and cosmology continued until the removal era of the nineteenth century in *Searching for the Bright Path: The Mississippian Choctaws from Prehistory to Removal* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> On the Choctaw Civil War as a proxy war, see Norman Caldwell, “The Southern Frontier during King George’s War,” *The Journal of Southern History* 7, no. 1 (1941): 37-54; Charles William Paape, “The Choctaw Revolt: A Chapter in the Intercolonial Rivalry in the Old Southwest” (PhD diss., University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 1946); Charles Wayne Goss, “The French and the Choctaw Indians, 1700-1763” (PhD diss., Texas Tech University, 1971); Michael J. Foret, “On the Marchlands of Empire: Trade, Diplomacy and War on the Southeastern Frontier, 1733-1763,” (PhD diss., The College of William and Mary, 1990); and Clara Sue Kidwell, *Choctaws and Missionaries in Mississippi, 1818-1918* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 11. On the Anglo-French rivalry, see François Crouzet, “The Second Hundred Years War: Some Reflections,” *French History* 10, no. 4 (1996): 432-450; Brendan McConville, *The King’s Three Faces: The Rise and Fall of Royal America, 1688-1766* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute for Early American History and Culture, 2007); Owen Stanwood, *The Empire Reformed: English America in the Age of the Glorious Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); and Paul Mapp, *The Elusive West and the Contest for Empire, 1713-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute for Early American History and Culture, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Patricia Galloway, “Choctaw Factionalism and Civil War, 1746-1750,” *Journal of Mississippi History* 44, no. 4 (1982): 289-327. This seminal work has been reprinted in *The Choctaw before Removal*, ed. Carolyn K. Reeves (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1985), 120-156; in Galloway, *Practicing Ethnohistory: Mining Archives, Hearing Testimony, Constructing Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 259-291; and in *Pre-Removal Choctaw History: Exploring New Paths*, ed. Greg O’Brien (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 70-102. On Choctaw ethnogenesis, see Galloway, *Choctaw Genesis, 1500-1700*; Galloway, “Choctaws at the Border of the Shatter Zone: Spheres of Exchange and Spheres of Social Value” in *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone: The Colonial Indian Slave Trade and Regional Instability in the American South*, eds. Robbie Ethridge and Sheri M. Shuck-Hall (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 333-364; and Jeff Benvenuto, “Revisiting Choctaw Ethnocide and Ethnogenesis: The Creative Destruction of Colonial Genocide” in *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America*, eds. Benvenuto, Andrew Woolford, and Alexander Laban Hinton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 208-225.

Choctaw country to help explain the changing nature of chiefly authority in the late eighteenth century, stating “the fierceness and longevity of the war can only be explained by the ethnic divisions among the Choctaws rather than any supposed loyalty to European powers.”<sup>9</sup>

However, these studies do not account for the fact that many headmen that professed their allegiance to Red Shoe - including his brother-in-law Mongoulacha Mingo - did not claim offices or titles associated with the “red” or “war” moiety that Red Shoe himself used to accumulate social capital. Nor does the western *Imoklasha*/eastern *Inhulahta* ethnic dichotomy explain the motivations of headmen and warriors from the southern Six Towns division and their leading group of Chickasawhay settlements. While agreeing with previous interpretations that stress the adherence to cultural norms by eastern *Inhulahta* and southern Six Towns Choctaws, this study further traces the individual social and economic motivations for headmen in the eastern *Inhulahta* and southern Six Towns Choctaw divisions to help explain their objections to Red Shoe’s agenda, which challenged their own local claims to power.

Although the failed attempts by Red Shoe of Couëchitto to establish ties with the English has appeared sporadically in recent literature, his singular fame acts as a historiographic eclipse over interpretations of the war as a whole.<sup>10</sup> This over-simplification denies the agency of opposing headmen from other Choctaw divisions as

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<sup>9</sup> O’Brien, “The Coming of Age of Choctaw History” in *Pre-Removal Choctaw History*, 10. See also O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 20.

<sup>10</sup> An early biographical treatment of Red Shoe is White, “Red Shoes: Warrior and Diplomat” in *Struggle and Survival in Colonial America*, eds. David G. Sweet and Gary B. Nash (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 49-68. See also Jesse O. McKee and Jon A. Schlenker, *The Choctaws: Cultural Evolution of a Native American Tribe* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1980), 34-35 and more recently David J. Silverman, *Thundersticks: Firearms and the Violent Transformation of Native America* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2016), 87-89.

well as the rest of the members of Red Shoe's faction. There is no debating how Red Shoe's frontier politicking and acts of violence were instrumental in laying the groundwork for the Choctaw civil war. But he did not live to see the most brutal stages of the factional conflict; he was dead by the autumn of 1747, while outright warfare did not begin until later. It was his younger brother, Imataha Pouscouche (referred to as "Little King" by English sources), who held the reins of the faction and acted on its behalf through many of the remaining years of the war, until his death. This dissertation, in part, seeks as much as possible to recognize the contingencies of *all* the Choctaw headmen involved and not focus squarely on the architect of the event. In doing so, it releases Red Shoe from the unintended historical byproduct of previous interpretations, which allowed his presence to overshadow the fact that many Choctaw towns were willing to align themselves with the English.

In previous studies, Red Shoe is cast as some sort of anomaly among Choctaw headmen. In one sense, these interpretations are correct: Red Shoe proved extraordinary in the power that he claimed through his own wartime exploits against the Chickasaws, his ability to redistribute gifts to his followers, as well as his recognition as a medal chief by the French. Yet all this could not guarantee his support base. He was not an authoritarian paramount chieftain compelling warriors and lesser headmen to support him through strong-arm tactics.<sup>11</sup> While he tapped into kinship bonds for his closest advisors, he was also wholly reliant upon the individual decisions of other headmen and warriors to

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<sup>11</sup> For examples of this type of native leadership, refer to the studies of the Natchez Great Sun in George Edward Milne, *Natchez Country: Indians, Colonists, and the Landscapes of Race in French Louisiana* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015) and the Algonquian-speaking Wahunsunacawh in Frederic W. Gleach, *Powhatan's World and Colonial Virginia: A Conflict of Cultures* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).



declare their allegiance to him. This Anglophile faction was not forged by coercion, but by the choices of headmen and warriors alike who tired of the continued false promises uttered by French colonial officials. The faction functioned through collaboration, not compulsion, and this simple fact helps explain why, after repeated failures by English traders to prove their worth as reliable partners, these same headmen returned to the French “interest.”

This diplomatic oscillation represented the logical outcome of the preexisting playoff system, yet also highlights how previous interpretations that use this framework to understand native diplomacy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries erred by their tendency to generalize these agreements and alliances.<sup>12</sup> Native groups did not completely switch from European partner to European partner; instead, it was towns, connected by kinship networks, that made individual decisions regarding whom they wished to trade with.<sup>13</sup> Simply put, the playoff system in praxis was not universal.

### **CONTRIBUTIONS: GENDER, DISEASE, AND FACTIONALISM IN THE CHOCTAW CIVIL WAR**

In addition to examining Choctaw identity by both town affiliations and kinship networks, this study also uses gender as a lens to better understand Choctaw intercultural diplomacy. As such, it builds upon the previous work of Galloway and Michelle LeMaster, who have traced how colonial diplomatic prerogative grafted to native

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<sup>12</sup> The playoff system was not a specifically Atlantic phenomenon; see Siraya reactions to the colonization efforts of the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (Dutch East Indian Company, or VOC) in Adam Clulow, “The Art of Claiming: Possession and Resistance in Early Modern Asia,” *The American Historical Review* 121, no. 1 (2016): 17-38.

<sup>13</sup> On the centrality of town affiliation to southeastern Native American identity, see Joshua Piker, *Okfuskee: A Creek Indian Town in Colonial America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

conceptions of kinship and authority.<sup>14</sup> In particular, LeMaster argues that notions of gender served as “logical building blocks in the creation of new diplomatic norms to govern interactions” and that specifically between the British and the Native Americans the relationship was “shaped by both complementary and clashing understandings of masculinity and femininity.” While notions of gender figured prominently in treaty talks and in records, these ideas were constantly being contested. Different social groups accepted divergent expressions of sexuality and family relations, demonstrating that gender norms were constructed by the speaker to be consumed by the audience. For LeMaster, actions as well as rhetoric “often produced a kind of cross-cultural conversation that exposes conflicting gender ideals.” Native Americans considered the idea of the family as central, with fictive kinship playing a crucial role in shaping relations. This familial kinship could be expanded to include others when faced with an enemy.<sup>15</sup>

LeMaster argues that gender shaped relations between southeastern Native nations and the English in four ways: through diplomacy, warfare, trade, and intermarriage. Of these, only intermarriage did not factor prominently into Choctaw relations with both French and Englishmen in the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>16</sup> While LeMaster was only concerned with English intercultural diplomacy, conceptions of

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<sup>14</sup> Galloway, ““The Chief Who Is Your Father”: Choctaw and French Views of the Diplomatic Relation” in *Powhatan’s Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, Revised and Expanded Edition, eds. Gregory Waselkov, Peter H. Wood, and Tom Hatley (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> Michelle LeMaster, *Brothers Born of One Mother: British-Native American Relations in the Colonial Southeast* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 2-3, 5.

<sup>16</sup> Kathleen DuVal, “Indian Intermarriage and Métissage in Colonial Louisiana,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 65, no. 2 (2008): 267-304. While intermarriage was not a prevalent practice among the French and Choctaws, Doris Garraway has argued that sexuality proved fundamental to the colonization of the French Caribbean; see Garraway, *The Libertine Colony: Creolization in the Early French Caribbean* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

gender — specifically that of appropriate masculine behavior — also proved fundamental in explaining the frustrations that arose between the French and Choctaw.<sup>17</sup> Like the English dealings described by LeMaster, the French formulated a diplomatic ideology based on patriarchal claims that had deep cultural roots, yet spread throughout the Atlantic World.<sup>18</sup> As in other early American contexts, a “gender frontier” existed in the Native South, facilitating the desire among some Choctaws to spurn their traditional French trade partners for English alternatives.<sup>19</sup> Cross-cultural interactions took place in a space epitomized by mobility between different gender contexts. In a recent study of French fur traders in the Aninshinaabeg-Ojibwa territory of the western Great Lakes, Amélie Allard has argued that “mobility both constrained and enabled masculine ideas.” This observation holds true for Louisiana as well: meetings between French colonial officials or officers and Choctaw headmen and *tasca* (warriors) created the conditions “for the performance of different gendered ideals of masculinity along lines of class, rank, and experience” that held the potential to either strengthen or weaken intercultural diplomacy.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the mobile nature of men’s responsibilities as warriors served as an

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<sup>17</sup> On cross-cultural martial traditions, see Gail D. Danvers, “Gendered Encounters: Warriors, Women, and William Johnson,” *Journal of American Studies* 35, no. 2 (2001): 187-202 and Christian Ayne Crouch, *Nobility Lost: French and Canadian Martial Cultures, Indians, and the End of New France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014).

<sup>18</sup> Julie Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy: Gender and the Politics of Household Authority in Early Modern France* (College Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998). The patriarchal dynamics of the household heavily informed the relationship between the monarchy and French subjects. Robert Olwell argued a similar framework helped shaped life in colonial South Carolina; see Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Low Country, 1740-1790* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

<sup>19</sup> Kathleen Brown defines a “gender frontier” as “the meeting of two or more culturally specific systems of knowledge about gender and nature” in *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American history and Culture, 1996), 33.

<sup>20</sup> Amélie Allard, “Gendered Mobilities: Performing Masculinities in the Late Eighteenth-Century Mobile Fur Trade Community,” *Ethnohistory* 65, no. 1 (2018): 75-99, quote from 77. There were distinct shifts in French ideas regarding masculinity during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; see Crouch, *Nobility*

essential component of Choctaw masculinity. The Choctaw civil war is an event rooted in claims and expressions of masculinity, whether through physical exertion and martial accomplishment, or material acquisition and trade.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, pairing gender theory with ethnographic observation allows for the recovery of historical actors - such as Choctaw women - kept intentionally silent by the documentary record as well as recognition of the true significance of material culture that shaped eighteenth-century Choctaw life. Not only did these objects have lives, as Jessica Stern has so recently articulated, but the “lives of goods” were also deeply gendered, as these goods affirmed identity either in their originally intended European manufactured purpose or their improvised usage by Native Americans.<sup>22</sup> Gender played a central role in the fashion (figuratively and literally) in which the Choctaw civil war unfolded.

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*Lost*; Ellery Schalk, *From Valor to Pedigree: Ideas of Nobility in France in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); Jeffrey Merrick, “Fathers and Kings: Patriarchalism and Absolutism in Eighteenth-Century French Politics,” *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 308 (1993): 281-303; Merrick, “Masculinity and Effeminacy in the *Mémoires secrets*” in *The Mémoires secrets and the Culture of Publicity in Eighteenth-Century France*, eds. Jeremy Popkin and Bernadette Ford (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1998): 129-42; Michèle Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1996); Jay M. Smith, *The Culture of Merit: Nobility, Royal Service, and the Making of Absolute Monarchy in France, 1600-1789* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); Smith, *Nobility Reminaged: The Patriotic Nation in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Stuart Carroll, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Christopher E. Forth and Bertrand Taithe, eds., *French Masculinities: History, Politics, and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); and Christy L. Pichichero, *The Military Enlightenment: War and Culture in the French Empire from Louis XIV to Napoleon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017), especially 65-109.

<sup>21</sup> This study acknowledges the social construction of manhood, and therefore the existence of multiple masculinities as outlined in R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, Second Edition. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). The seminal work on gender remains Joan Wallach Scott’s *Gender and the Politics of History*, Revised Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). On masculinity in early America, see *New Men: Manliness in Early America*, ed. Thomas Foster (New York: New York University Press, 2011) and Susan Abram, ““Souls in the Treetops”: Cherokee War, Masculinity, and Community, 1760-1820” (PhD diss., Auburn University, 2009).

<sup>22</sup> Jessica Y. Stern, *The Lives of Objects: Native Americans, British Colonists, and Cultures of Labor and Exchange in the Southeast* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017). On trade in the Native South, see Pamela Martin McRae, “French Trade with the Choctaw Indians, 1725-1733: The Roots of Choctaw Discontent with the French Régime” (M.A. Thesis, Auburn University, 1986); Daniel Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History

Trade routes — and items and individuals that travelled on them — not only moved merchandise, but pathogens as well. Intercultural trade brought the Choctaws significant epidemiological pressures in an already heightened factional atmosphere, specifically a smallpox (*variola major*) outbreak between 1747-1749. Ultimately responsible for more deaths than the civil war itself, the smallpox epidemic in Choctaw country altered warfare and trade. It removed the voices of experienced elder headmen and warriors, leaving decision making to a younger, more volatile, warrior generation. At the same time, demographic loss placed even more stress on dwindling intercultural trade. Demand for specific items necessary for the elaborate Choctaw burial process and secured only through European trading partners skyrocketed, also presenting Choctaws with a dilemma: to divert resources for assuring fallen *tasca* (warriors) passage to the afterlife, or to reserve valuable weapons and ammunition for factional warfare. In addition to being an event driven by gendered actions and rhetoric, the Choctaw civil war must be understood as a bio-social event.<sup>23</sup>

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and Culture, 1992); Khalil Saadani, “Gift Exchange between the French and Native Americans in Louisiana” in *French Colonial Louisiana and the Atlantic World*, ed. Bradley S. Bond (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 2005), 43-64; Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815*, Second Edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008); Robert Paulett, *An Empire of Small Places: Mapping the Southeastern Anglo-Indian Trade, 1732-1795* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012); and Robert S. DuPlessis, *The Material Atlantic: Clothing, Commerce, and Colonization in the Atlantic World, 1650-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 82-124.

<sup>23</sup> On smallpox in early America, see Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2001); David S. Jones, *Rationalizing Epidemics: Meaning and Uses of American Indian Mortality since 1600* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), especially 68-117; and Paul Kelton, *Cherokee Medicine, Colonial Germs: An Indigenous Nation’s Fight against Smallpox, 1518-1824* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015).

## METHODOLOGY: RECOVERING THE CHOCTAW CIVIL WAR

No Choctaw sources commenting directly on this event remain. On one level, this is unsurprising — a Choctaw written language was not created and standardized until the nineteenth century. Since later ethnographic sources fail to mention the conflict in any detail, the voices of Choctaw historical actors can only be recovered through reliance on settler-colonial sources. Tribal histories rarely mention the civil war, except in passing, and the only Choctaw author to offer any extended discussion of the civil war, Michelene Pesantubbee, does not engage with the causes and consequences of the conflict.<sup>24</sup> The lack of Choctaw voices poses a significant obstacle for scholars but Choctaw perspectives can be ascertained through such methodologies as “upstreaming” (the interpretation of historical sources in light of ethnological and folkloric materials collected in later periods) and “sidestreaming” (a means of inferring conclusions about Native American culture from evidence of their linguistic, cultural, and geographic neighbors). Any study of the Choctaw civil war necessitates an interdisciplinary approach.

This project has relied on a number of contemporary French and English sources that help construct the events surrounding the Choctaw civil war. Since the French served as the Choctaws’ primary ally and trading partner throughout the eighteenth century, Dunbar Rowland’s and Patricia Galloway’s edited volumes of the *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion* have been essential for understanding Franco-Choctaw

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<sup>24</sup> Michelene E. Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 42-42, 50-51. In her historical novel, Choctaw author LeAnne Howe depicts Red Shoe as *osano* (“bloodsucker”), driven only by individual greed; see *Shell Shaker* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2001). Official publications released by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians rarely include any content related to the civil war; only *Choctaw Government: A New Era*, ed. William Brescia (Philadelphia: Choctaw Heritage Press, 1982), 12-13 speaks directly to the civil war, but makes no claims regarding the immediate causes and consequences of the war. *Chata Hapia Hoke: We are Choctaw* (Philadelphia: 1981) states the conclusion of the civil war “united the tribe under French dominion” (7), and *Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians: An Era of Change* (Philadelphia: 1974) does not include the civil war in its discussion of pre-removal Choctaw history.

relations. A month-long fellowship at the Huntington Library during the summer of 2017 gave me access to the correspondence and letterbooks of Pierre de Rigaud, marquis de Vaudreuil, the governor of French Louisiana from 1743 to 1753. The *South Carolina Commons House Journals*, edited by J.H. Easterby, and the unpublished manuscript *Upper House and Royal Council Journals* at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, are especially insightful in outlining Red Shoe's attempts to establish an Anglo-Choctaw trade in response to French abuses. Additionally, the papers of Edmond Atkins found in both the the British Library and the Loudoun: Americana collection at the Huntington were useful in reconstructing English machinations in response to Choctaw factionalism as well as the expectations that Red Shoe and his followers likely held about English traders and their potential contributions if given the opportunity to set up posts in western Choctaw towns.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The dissertation begins with a description of eighteenth-century Choctaw society and manhood (*hatak toba*). Importantly, it stresses the local definitions of power and authority in Choctaw society, while also elaborating the means by which Choctaw males substantiated their claims to masculinity. This ethnographic study pays particular attention to the varied components of Choctaw masculinity, which for *tasca* included prowess in hunting and warfare. For headmen, authority derived from the ability to redistribute weapons and goods secured through trade with Europeans. These weapons in turn came to reflect the martial capabilities of Choctaw warriors, allowing them to perform their hunting with more ease while also better equipping males to defend their kin, town, and region. The French officers that treated with Choctaw headmen found

correlations between Choctaw definitions of masculinity with their own masculine sensibilities that privileged personal honor, conspicuous display, and martial competency. Mutually intelligible claims to manhood served as the foundation of Franco-Choctaw relations.

The second chapter builds upon this notion of martial masculinity, examining the ways gender informed Franco-Choctaw diplomacy, resulting in an alliance that blossomed during the first decades of the eighteenth century. Simply put, Choctaw notions of masculinity aligned well with French definitions of acceptable violence, facilitating close intercultural ties. Over the notion of justice, however, these martial masculinities clashed. Military pursuits and campaigns against the Chickasaws led to the ascent (*oiya*) of Red Shoe of Couëchitto. Red Shoe's first attempt to establish a regular Anglo-Choctaw trade paralleled the murders perpetrated by the creole Barthelemy half-brothers, illustrating how the Choctaw "ethic of restitution" at times conflicted with the early modern French "culture of retribution" — directly contributing to breakdowns in Franco-Choctaw relations.<sup>25</sup>

Having discussed the importance of martial masculinities to the overall Franco-Choctaw alliance, the focus shifts to the rhetorical and performative aspects of these masculinities in Chapter Three. A close reading of Jadart de Beauchamp's journal detailing a 1746 assembly (*hatak itahoba*) of Choctaw headmen reveals the importance of aggressive language, posturing, and symbolic acts by both Choctaws and Frenchmen in an effort to demonstrate their mastery at an intense diplomatic juncture. Contested themes regarding masculinity that were first introduced in Chapter Two — especially martial

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<sup>25</sup> Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World* and William Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: The Culture of Retribution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).



pro prowess, access to provisions, and trustworthiness — continued to be rhetorical flash points during Beauchamp’s assembly, reflecting continuities with the longer history of Franco-Choctaw relations.

The testimony of Choctaw headmen during the final stages of the 1746 assembly detailed in Chapter Three reveals a hidden central character who is never more than tersely mentioned (if at all) in previous studies of the Choctaw Civil War: one of the unnamed wives of Red Shoe of Couëchitto. Chapter Four centers the role of Choctaw women in deteriorating Franco-Choctaw relations by examining the importance of women in eighteenth-century Choctaw society.<sup>26</sup> In recognition of the sexual violence perpetrated by the French officer Henri de Verbois against this woman, the chapter includes a discussion of sexual transgression and abuse. The consequences of Verbois’ abuse rippled through Choctaw country, as Red Shoe’s wife’s kinship network connected Red Shoe’s power seat at Couëchitto to the rest of the western *Imoklahsa* division’s leadership. The towns composing this kinship network (*chuka achafa*) were repeatedly targeted during the Choctaw Civil War.

Chapter Five offers the English perspective from colonial officials and Indian traders based in South Carolina while also proposing a periodization for the Choctaw civil war. The first phase of the conflict, roughly from 1746-1747, is best understood as a retaliatory private war of revenge (*atobbi mih isht illi*) between Red Shoe of Couëchitto

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<sup>26</sup> On the lives of women in the Native South, see Braund, “Guardians and Handmaidens to Change: Women’s Roles in Creek Economic and Social Life during the Eighteenth Century,” *American Indian Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1990): 239-253; Carson, “From Corn Mothers to Cotton Spinners: Continuity in Choctaw Women’s Economic Life, A.D. 950-1830” in *Women of the American South: A Multicultural Reader*, ed. Christie Anne Farnham (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 8-25; Clara Sue Kidwell, “Choctaw Women and Cultural Persistence in Mississippi” in *Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women*, ed. Nancy Shoemaker (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995), 115-134, and Theda Purdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

and the French for their treatment and abuse of one of his wives. Red Shoe and Governor James Glen of South Carolina found mutual interest in establishing a regular Anglo-Choctaw trade alliance. The war chief of Couëchitto bolstered his influence among his followers by guaranteeing English goods of superior quality relative to the French, while also striking against the colony that he held responsible for the attack on his wife. This agenda overlapped with Glen's intentions of having South Carolina play a pivotal role in the trans-Atlantic War of Austrian Succession. Recruiting the Choctaws into the "interest" of the English would land a crippling blow to France's colonial holdings in North America, and Glen believed adding the Choctaws to a pan-Indian anti-French alliance would effectively overwhelm and expel the French from Louisiana.

Chapter Six examines the second and third phases of the war. The second phase, from late 1747 to 1749, was a period of infrequent warfare due to the epidemic spread of smallpox (*chilakwa abi tanap*) throughout the Native South into the Missouri River Valley. This epidemiological crisis facilitated a generational crisis: as headmen and elders died during warfare and due to disease, young *tasca* replaced them on the battlefields and in assemblies. The third stage, from 1748 to 1750, was characterized by an initial spike in large-scale ethnic battles conducted by the eastern *Inhulahta* and southern Six Towns divisions bent on the elimination of a specific western *Imoklasha* kinship network before transitioning to smaller raids made by composite parties of Choctaws and native allies against French settlements. This violence resulted from a lack of guidance for *tasca* and their craving to fulfill performative requirements to express their martial masculinity. This chapter also traces the shifting agendas of each Choctaw faction's colonial allies, in particular arguing that private competition and financial self-

interest undermined any potential success associated with a regular Anglo-Choctaw trade. By the time colonial decision-makers had recognized their errors, a combination of factors including the breakdown of the tenuous Cherokee-Creek peace, the conclusion of the War of Austrian Succession, and a wide-ranging conspiracy led by slaves owned by Council members all discouraged attention and capital investment in the cause of the pro-English western *Imoklasha* Choctaws.

The final chapter deals with the consequences of the Choctaw civil war. While at first a renewed sense of Francophilia appears to drive diplomacy, I argue that subtle shifts occurred in the policies issued by the eastern division Concha chief and pro-French leader Alibamon Mingo that facilitated a return to normalcy. In particular, I focus on his prerogative that European traders and their merchandise constituted separate entities, so that a ban on the former did not necessarily apply to the latter. In this way, Alibamon Mingo reestablished internal peace (*achukma*) within the Choctaw nation through the resumption of the traditional practice of a playoff system between the English and French, while also allowing him to accumulate rank and influence among all divisions. An ethnographic approach highlights the logic behind the Choctaw transition to the *status quo ante bellum* that has often confused scholars.

The Choctaw civil war highlights how questions of local power and authority were paramount concerns as Native communities adapted to their increasing entanglement in a larger Atlantic economy. Instead of acting as a united “nation,” Choctaw towns decided with whom they wished to trade. Choctaw factionalism — while molded by kinship and ethnic divisional identity — functioned through collaboration. By continuing to frame native dealings with Euroamerican empires as a universally decided

policy, scholars obscure how authority rested at local levels. To ignore these political deviations is to refuse to recognize the complex contingencies, contestations, and claims to power that contributed to the Choctaw civil war and characterized Native American history overall.

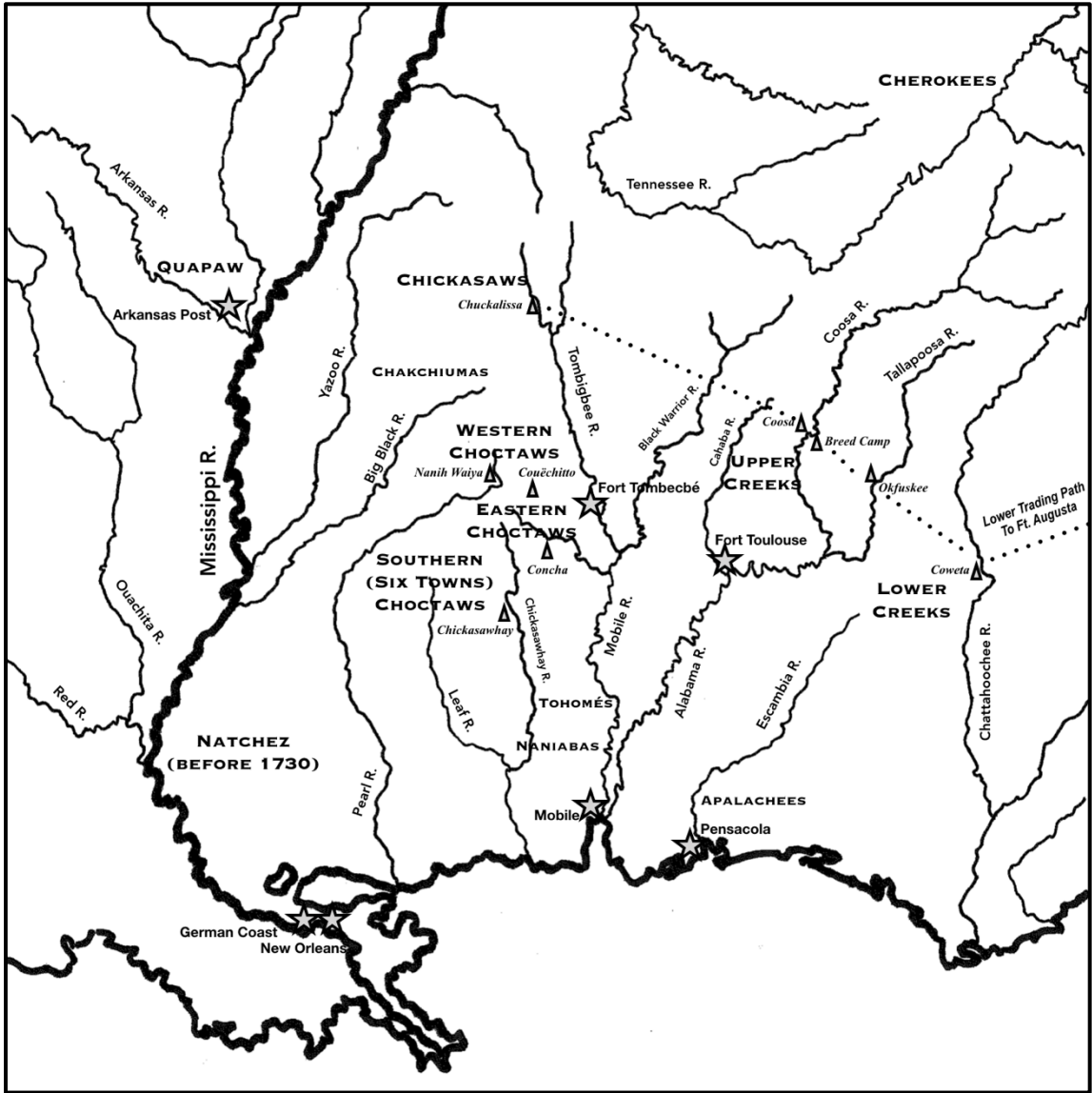


Figure 1 - The Choctaw World. Produced by the author.

**Chapter One**  
***Hatak toba:***  
**Martial Masculinity in Choctaw Country**

The Choctaws are children of the earth. They emerged at *Nanih Waiya*, a “very noted Mound” located in present-day Winston County, Mississippi, on the western bank of the Nanih Waiya Creek past the forks of the Pearl River.<sup>27</sup> Surrounded by fertile lands, the site of their birth as a people sustained Choctaws by providing the things needed for life.<sup>28</sup>

Archeology offers a different origin story. The Choctaws were among the coalescent societies that developed in the wake of the Mississippian collapse and the European *entrada*. Mound-building societies may have “shared basic cultural

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<sup>27</sup> Letter from F.M. Shields, 18 April 1904 in Henry Halbert Papers, Box 6, Fol. 13, Alabama Department of History and Archives, Montgomery, Alabama.

<sup>28</sup> On Choctaw origin stories, see Antoine-Simon Le Page du Pratz, *Histoire de la Louisiane: contenant la decouverte de ce vaste pays; sa description geographique; un voyage dans les terres; l’histoire naturelle, les moeurs, coutumes, & religion des naturels, avec leurs origines; deux voyages dans le nord du nouveau Mexique, dont un jusqu’a la mer du Sud* (Paris, 1758), Vol. 2, 216-17; James Adair, *The History of the American Indians*, ed. Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 354; Bernard Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, ed., Braund (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 129; and William Brescia, Jr., “Choctaw Oral Tradition Relating to Tribal Origin” in *The Choctaw before Removal*, ed. Carolyn K. Reeves (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1985), 3-16. On the Nanih Waiya site, see Henry Halbert, “Nanah Waiya: The Sacred Mound of the Choctaws,” *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society* 2 (1899): 224 and Calvin S. Brown, *Archeology of Mississippi* (Oxford: University Press of Mississippi, 1926), 24.

understandings,” but findings indicate a surprising level of variation between the population centers of Etowah, Spiro, and Moundville — to the point that the once-popular notion of a “unitary” Southeastern Ceremonial Complex has fallen out of favor among academics.<sup>29</sup> Located in present-day western Alabama, Moundville ascended to the position of “regional necropolis” roughly around 1350, and its iconography (referred to as “Hempville”) heavily influenced the Choctaws during the era of devolution and cultural dispersion between 1500 and 1700.<sup>30</sup> At this time, individual leaders – almost always male – established smaller kingdoms by amassing power and political clout.<sup>31</sup> It was these political entities that first encountered the Spanish, and the brute force and pathogens introduced by de Soto, de Luna, and others initiated a new era of instability and migration. The combination of political collapse resulting from the faltering of these smaller kingdoms, the introduction of European pathogens, and the necessity of

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<sup>29</sup> Charles Hudson, “Introduction” in *The Transformation of the Southeastern Indians, 1540-1760*, eds. Robbie Ethridge and Hudson (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002), xv; Vernon James Knight Jr, “Farewell to the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex,” *Southeastern Archeology* 25 (2006): 1-5; Knight, Jr., and Vincas P. Steponaitis, “A Redefinition of the Hempville Style in Mississippian Art” in *Visualizing the Sacred: Cosmic Visions, Regionalism, and the Art of the Mississippian World*, eds. George E. Lankford, F. Kent Reilly III, and James F. Garber (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 201.

<sup>30</sup> The iconography of Moundville’s “Hempville” style was distinctive among mound building societies. It focused less on the Birdman motif that permeated Cahokian culture and was the only regional style throughout the Mississippian World to adopt the Winged Serpent pottery design. See Knight, Jr. and Steponaitis, “A Redefinition of the Hempville Style,” 236. See also Knight Jr., *Mound Excavations at Moundville: Architecture, Elites, and Social Order* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010) and *Rethinking Moundville and Its Hinterland*, eds. Steponaitis and C. Margaret Scarry (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016).

<sup>31</sup> Gideon Lincecum writes of the appointment of a woman as *minko* in his telling of the Choctaw origin story. A transcription of this unpublished work is found in Cheri Lynn Wolfe, ““The Traditional History of the Chahta People”: An Analysis of Gideon Lincecum’s 19th Century Narrative,” (PhD diss., University of Texas-Austin, 1993), 550-617. The veracity of Lincecum’s work has been dismissed by Galloway as “claptrap” in *Choctaw Genesis*, 332-333. In addition to Wolfe, Vernon Knight Jr. takes a more accommodating stance, noting that Lincecum’s observations corroborate other ethnographic sources from the nineteenth century; see Knight Jr., “Symbolism of Mississippian Mounds” in *Powhatan’s Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast, Revised and Expanded Edition*, eds. Peter Wood, Gregory Waselkov, and Tom Hatley (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 431. On Lincecum, see *Adventures of a Frontier Naturalist: The Life and Times of Gideon Lincecum*, eds., Jerry Bryan Lincecum and Edward Hake Phillips (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1994).

performing retributive violence in the form of avenging an increasing number of slave raids throughout the South – referred to by ethnohistorian Robbie Ethridge as the “shatter zone” – pushed many groups to resettle in present-day east-central Mississippi.<sup>32</sup>

The Choctaws also emerged from this cultural milieu.<sup>33</sup> While as a group the Choctaws certainly had completed the process of what ethnohistorian Patricia Galloway has referred to as “ethnogenesis,” the resulting clusters of widely-dispersed villages were far from uniform in social structure, language, and political outlook (See Figure 1). By 1700, three divisions made up the Choctaw nation, their boundaries being dictated by geographic location and major watersheds. Western division Choctaws settled along the Pearl River, while eastern division towns clustered on the Tombigbee. The southern division, usually referred to as the “Six Towns” due to the number of original settlements and dominated by the influential Chickasawhays, settled on the banks of the Pascagoula River. Southern Choctaws, whose ancestors hailed from the Mobile-Tensaw delta, proved unique in many ways. Each division spoke a different dialect of the dominant western *Imoklasha* Choctaw language, and sported distinctive tattoos, leading to some of them being nicknamed “blewmouths.”<sup>34</sup> While southern Choctaws sported unique facial markings, all Choctaws — in contrast to other southeastern nations — performed cranial

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<sup>32</sup> *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone: The Colonial Indian Slave Trade and Regional Instability in the American South*, eds. Robbie Ethridge and Sheri M. Shuck-Hall (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).

<sup>33</sup> Patricia Galloway argues that unlike other native nations, early Choctaws benefited immensely from their isolation from continuous European engagement; see Galloway, “Choctaws at the Border of the Shatter Zone: Spheres of Exchange and Spheres of Social Value” in *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone*, 333-334.

<sup>34</sup> On the western *Imoklasha* dialect being preferred for public discourse, see Greg O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 20 and John R. Swanton, “Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians,” *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin*, no. 103 (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1931), 56. On regionally distinct facial tattoos for the southern Six Towns division, see Swanton, “Source Material,” 57.



deformation using bags of sand “fastened on the skull of an infant” to “flatten their foreheads.”<sup>35</sup> While all shared a common Moundville heritage, these regional divisions often acted autonomously in regards to foreign policy, even at times working closely with neighboring nations that other Choctaw divisions considered enemies. For example, the trade and kinship links between western division Choctaws and the Chickasaws appear strong, while the towns located in the southern division often treated with the closer *petit nations* whose territories hugged the Gulf South. Unlike the western division Choctaws, eastern Choctaws maintained amicable relations with their neighbors, the Alabama Creeks.<sup>36</sup> Each division would also negotiate its own diplomatic terms with the French and English colonial installations in Louisiana, South Carolina, and (by the mid-1730s) Georgia. Eastern and southern Choctaws enjoyed close ties with the French, as their leading towns lay directly along the trade routes that brought Choctaw headmen to the French trade and military posts at Mobile to the south and Fort Tombecbé to the east. In contrast, western Choctaws found easier access to European goods and weapons through the English traders set up among the Chickasaws.<sup>37</sup> In addition, divisions were not considered equal in strength and influence. As the eighteenth century progressed, the

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<sup>35</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 297.

<sup>36</sup> Galloway, *Choctaw Genesis: 1500-1700* (Lincoln: Bison Books for the University of Nebraska Press, 1998). On Choctaw regionalism, see Sandra Faiman-Silva, *Choctaws at the Crossroads: The Political Economy of Class and Culture in the Oklahoma Timber Region* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 8-9 and James Taylor Carson, *Searching for the Bright Path: The Mississippi Choctaws from Prehistory to Removal* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 11-15.

<sup>37</sup> Baron de Crenay, *Carte de partie de la Louisianne qui comprend le Cours du Missisipy depuis son embouchure jusques aux Arcansas celuy des rivieres de la Mobille depuis la Baye jusqu'au Fort de Toulouse, des Pascagoula de la riviere aux Perles...* (Paris, 1733) in William P. Cumming, *The Southeast in Early Maps*, Third Edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Bernard Romans and David Taitt, “A Map of West Florida part of Et: Florida, Georgia, part of So: Carolina [In]cluding Chactaw Chickasaw & Creek Nation...” (1772), currently held at the William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan; Kenneth Hoffman Carleton, “Eighteenth-Century Trails in the Choctaw Territory of Mississippi and Alabama,” (M.A. thesis, University of Georgia, 1989), 91-2.

concentration of power gradually shifted out of the western division's seat at the town of Couëchitto to the eastern town of Concha under the leadership of Alibamon Mingo before reverting back to Franchimastabé's western town of West Yazoo because of its role as a main location for diplomatic negotiations with foreign officials.<sup>38</sup>

Sources are either “contradictory or ambiguous” regarding the relationship between Choctaw kinship networks, clans (*iksas*) and the *Imoklahsa/Inhulahta* ethnic designation.<sup>39</sup> These identities overlapped at times, and it is difficult to ascertain whether the *Imoklahsa/Inhulahta* ethnic designation was exclusive to each or existed within both *iksas*.<sup>40</sup> This discussion is all the more convoluted because of general disagreement over the definition of *iksa*. Some early students of the Choctaws, like missionary Henry Halbert and ethnographer John Swanton, believed *iska* applied to the moieties present among the Choctaws. In this framework, popular among anthropologists, moieties were separate groups that provided leaders for war-making or maintaining peace. Although historian Greg O'Brien translates *iksa* to “clan,” Swanton noted there were “only the faintest traces of groups with truly totemic designations,” with these few examples coming from the nineteenth century. No tangible evidence suggests the existence of clans, so prominent in Creek and Cherokee social organization, among the Choctaws during the eighteenth century.<sup>41</sup> While ties of social affiliation existed, it is difficult to pinpoint the organizing framework. These ties nevertheless proved important because they not only structured social life, but also maintained systems of justice, as members of

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<sup>38</sup> O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830*, 15-17, 25.

<sup>39</sup> Carson, *Searching for the Bright Path*, 15.

<sup>40</sup> O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830*, 24.

<sup>41</sup> Swanton, “Source Material,” 78-79.

kinship networks or clans were necessary to mete out punishment to Choctaws who performed criminal acts.

The diversity inherent in early eighteenth-century Choctaw society therefore necessitates movement away from a divisional to a more local form of identification. If the Choctaw world was, as Stephen Warren has suggested for the Shawnees, a “world of villages,” it was also so much more than that. They lived in a world of villages connected by matrilineal kinship networks.<sup>42</sup> Identity passed from one generation to the next through a mother’s line. By the nineteenth century, it became common practice for Choctaws to use a type of fasces, or bundle of sticks, to symbolize familial lineage. The longest stick in this bundle, called the “family stick” and varying between six and eight inches in length, marked the matriarch. Male children were represented by shorter sticks that were tied to the family stick; female children were represented by notches carved at mid-length of the family stick.<sup>43</sup> After marriage, which was always pursued outside of one’s kinship group, it was expected that a man move to his wife’s village or town. If the Choctaws followed the practice of their Creek neighbors, however, the marriages by Choctaw elites required the wives of chiefs (*mikkos* in the Creek language, *mingos* in the Choctaw language) to live in the husband’s town.<sup>44</sup> Regardless of social standing, therefore, links through marriage created a vast web that tied far away towns together.

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<sup>42</sup> Stephen Warren, *The Worlds the Shawnee Made: Migration and Violence in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 214.

<sup>43</sup> Jacqueline Anderson Matte, *They Say the Wind is Red: The Alabama Choctaw, Lost in their Own Land*, Revised Edition (Montgomery: New South Books, 2002), 53.

<sup>44</sup> O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830*, 23.

Choctaw villages varied in size. Régis du Roullet observed in 1732 that the village of Boucfouca claimed three “hamlets;” other villages were more isolated.<sup>45</sup> These “hamlets” or smaller towns (known as *tamahushi*) clustered around more populous great towns (*tamaha chito*) organized by matrilineages (*iksas*). A *tamahushi* depended on a *tamaha chito*’s access to foreign trade goods, food stuffs in time of famine (as storehouses were kept in the great towns), and the ceremonial facilities such as the sweat house, dance grounds, and stick game fields located on the *tamaha chito*’s premises.<sup>46</sup> Early evidence suggests that Choctaws may have had designated hunting camps, although it is difficult to ascertain if they served the same function as the distinctive summer and winter houses used by the Creeks. Regardless, even if Choctaws did “leave the village and go with their families to camp in the woods” during the early years of the eighteenth century, textual sources indicate this practice fell out of use as the century progressed.<sup>47</sup> Houses consisted of circular mud structures with conical roofs made of cane, usually with a buttressed wall to protect against the north wind. Places for women to process animal skins were located near water, and the village’s supply of corn was kept in a separate storehouse. Homes were constructed in a stand-alone fashion, described as placed “a gunshot distance from one another,” thereby signifying the level of individual autonomy

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<sup>45</sup> Roullet’s Journal in *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion*, 5 Vols., eds. Dunbar Rowland, A.G. Sanders, and Patricia Galloway (Jackson: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1927-1932 and Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 1: 136-154, especially 145 (henceforth referred to as *MPAFD*).

<sup>46</sup> O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830*, 13. Choctaw translations were drawn from Cyrus Byington, “A Dictionary of the Choctaw Language,” *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin* 46 (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1915), 586.

<sup>47</sup> Swanton, “Source Material,” 49.

within each household while still remaining integrated into a larger political community.<sup>48</sup>

Choctaw villages were organized along gendered lines. Men were responsible for taking lives. Giving life — whether through birth or agriculture — was the domain of women. Mobility and martial success outside the protective confines of the village or town brought social advancement to Choctaw men. This protection is represented materially in the circle and cross motif found throughout Mississippian archeology. Scholars disagree on the ultimate significance of these symbols: George Lankford claims these icons symbolized the cardinal directions and the specific “location on the world axis” for each town, while James Carson argues these motifs marked the boundary that separated the order of home life from the disorder of the outside world.<sup>49</sup> “Horrible anomalous creatures” that included trickster spirits and monsters lorded over life outside Choctaw towns.<sup>50</sup> The terrors of the outside world necessitated a purification process that forced warriors to isolate themselves for days before returning to town. Therefore, the first time a young Choctaw proved successful on the battlefield against enemies, as well as to be able to resist the spirits that resided in the woods and waters of the outside world, marked a significant moment in his life.

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<sup>48</sup> Swanton, “An Early Account of the Choctaw Indians,” *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association* 5, no. 2 (1918): 57-59. See also, Mease, “Narrative of a Journey Through Several Parts of the Province of West Florida in the Years 1770 and 1771,” quoted in Swanton, “Source Material,” 38-39.

<sup>49</sup> George E. Lankford, “The Swirl Cross and the Center” in *Visualizing the Sacred*, 266. Lankford draws from Penelope Ballard Drooker, *Mississippian Village Textiles at Wickliffe* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992), 239-240. James Taylor Carson’s *Searching of the Bright Path: The Mississippi Choctaws from Prehistory to Removal* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 23-25 and “Sacred Circles and Dangerous People: Native American Cosmology and the French Settlement of Louisiana” in *French Colonial Louisiana and the Atlantic World*, ed. Bradley G. Bond (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 65-83. See also David I. Busnell, Jr., “Myths of the Louisiana Choctaw,” *American Anthropologist* 12 (1910): 526-535.

<sup>50</sup> O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 28.

Power came in large part with success on the battlefield, and warfare was considered a predominantly masculine enterprise. Boys could only be recognized as adults after killing their first enemy, either as an individual or as member of a war party. Recognition of these successes came when young men received new warrior titles, representing a transition from adolescence to adulthood.<sup>51</sup> Failure to adhere to these social norms brought ridicule and ostracization. Because masculinity was defined by achievements in hunting and warfare, Choctaw men who failed to live up to normative masculine values were chastised by their peers as a woman or eunuch, an insult described by Chickasaw trader James Adair as “the sharpest and most lasting affront.”<sup>52</sup>

These rhetorical barbs, however, should not suggest a solely binary gender construction among Choctaws. Like other southeastern nations, Choctaw society included the presence of *berdache*, or “two-spirit people,” males who dressed in women’s clothing and performed duties usually reserved for females. Two Spirit Choctaws were not homosexual or transgender per se, with some accounts even suggesting they married and raised families, but are best considered “morphological male[s] who does not fill a society’s standard male role.”<sup>53</sup> European observers projected their own heteronormative beliefs when referencing — usually in passing — Two-Spirit Choctaws because the

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<sup>51</sup> O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 28.

<sup>52</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, qtd. in Nancy Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness: Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth-Century North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 108.

<sup>53</sup> Walter L. Williams, *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 2. For more on the berdache, see the essays included in *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality*, eds. Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), Will Roscoe, *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), and Roger M. Carpenter, “Womanish Men and Manlike Women: The Native American Two-Spirit as Warrior” in *Gender and Sexuality in Indigenous North America*, eds. Sandra Slater and Fay A. Yarborough (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2011), 146-164.

existence of these Choctaws existed “outside of colonial logic.”<sup>54</sup> Bossu noted that “corrupt men” who sought to emulate the appearance of women by having long hair and wearing “short skirts” were “held in great contempt.”<sup>55</sup> Bernard Romans also noted the presence of “*Cinædi* among the Chactaws,” adding he believed them to be less prevalent than among the neighboring Creeks and Chickasaws. He too, alleged that Choctaw women “highly despised” Two-Spirit Choctaws.<sup>56</sup> As the settler-colonial observations of social outsiders, these statements were not necessarily indicative of the way two-spirit people operated within Choctaw society and therefore must be treated with caution. If Europeans wrote with disgust about the liminal status of Two-Spirit Choctaws because of perceived sexual perversions, Choctaw men and women themselves likely used discretion when interacting with these individuals because of their liminal status as social “anomalies,” meaning they held “potentially generative and (more important for our

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<sup>54</sup> Qwo-Li Driskill, *Asegi Stories: Cherokee Queer and Two-Spirit Memory* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2016), 5. Discussing the Cherokees specifically, Driskill argues that the lack of evidence in the documentary record derives from a combination of heteronormative revulsion and a willingness by colonizers to feminize indigenous populations in order to justify their subjugation: “Cherokee culture became characterized as one in which all Cherokees behaved in ways Europeans thought only men should behave, and, because of this, Cherokee men feminized. While same-sex sexualities and people we would now call Two-Spirit are rarely mentioned, I think it is in part because such people are rendered invisible within a larger characterization of all Cherokees as always-already gender-nonconforming and sexually deviant” (41). This has had profound implications in the construction and reading of the archive, as Gunlög Fur has noted. She argues that many studies fail to consider how “centuries of forceful white indoctrination” have contributed to “the romanticization of ‘traditional’ Indian practices.” See Fur, ““Some Women are Wiser than Some Men”: Gender and Native American History” in *Clearing a Path: Theorizing the Past in Native American Studies*, ed. Shoemaker (New York: Routledge, 2002), 92. Gregory D. Smithers argues that historians face “evidentiary burdens” (636) that discourage the incorporation of methodologies utilized by gender theorists and LGBTQ+ scholars, and would be well served thinking “about what constitutes evidence, and how we analyze it, in a more robust manner” (651); see Smithers, “Cherokee ‘Two Spirits’: Gender, Ritual, and Spirituality in the Native South,” *Early American Studies* 12, no. 3 (2014): 626-651. This sentiment is reiterated in Joanne Barker, “Introduction” in *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies*, ed. Barker (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 1-44.

<sup>55</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 169.

<sup>56</sup> Romans, *Concise Natural History*, 137.

discussion) destructive qualities simultaneously.”<sup>57</sup> If Choctaw society was grounded on the maintenance of spiritual balance, members of the community that frequently navigated between poles of cultural norms held significant power, leading to suspicion and outright avoidance by neighbors.<sup>58</sup>

While the total number of Two-Spirit people among the Choctaws (or, for that matter, the rest of the Native South) can never be determined based on extant sources, their existence nonetheless illustrates the spectrum of gender identity existing within native communities. Certain gendered expectations shaped everyday tasks and responsibilities. In particular, warfare was the realm of men. Trophy motifs found prominently at the Moundville site suggest Choctaws were not simply “a nation of farmers,” as Romans claimed, but a tenacious and skilled people with a long history of war campaigns.<sup>59</sup> According to historian Greg O’Brien, “Choctaw males incorporated warfare as a basic component of their lives.”<sup>60</sup> Success in war constituted a necessary step to social advancement and the transition of male adolescence to adulthood. Scalps served as the material evidence of their success and important components for warriors’ reintegration into society after battle. In times of peace when opportunities for battle did

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<sup>57</sup> Driskill, *Asegi Stories*, 47. Driskill’s use of “anomaly” is drawn from Daniel Heath Justice, “Notes Toward a Theory of Anomaly,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16, no. 1-2 (2010): 209.

<sup>58</sup> Roger M. Carpenter notes this reluctance to embrace spiritually active individuals in native communities: “Certainly most native people appreciated the supernatural, but they also recognized that such power cut both ways, being used for both good and evil. Playing it safe, other native people often thought it best to avoid berdaches, lest they somehow incur their ire.” See Carpenter, “Womanish Men and Manlike Women,” 149.

<sup>59</sup> Romans, *A Concise Natural History*, 129. Trophy motifs — including severed hands, forearms, heads, and broken weapons — “are most commonly depicted on ceramic vessels from the Central Mississippi Valley and at Moundville.” See David H. Dye, “Ritual, Medicine, and the War Trophy Iconographic Theme in the Mississippian Southeast” in *Ancient Objects and Sacred Realms: Interpretations of Mississippian Iconography*, eds. F. Kent Reilly III and James F. Garber (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 152-173, especially 161.

<sup>60</sup> O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 27.



not present themselves, Choctaws found other idioms in which to broadcast their martial masculinity, such as hunting and participation in the stick game, colloquially known as the ‘little brother of war,’ played throughout the Native South.

While this work is primarily concerned with male *tasca*, martial culture was not exclusively the domain of Choctaw men, encompassing the “entire community.”<sup>61</sup> Jean-Bernard Bossu noted that “some of the women love their husbands so much that they follow them into battle,” and these women were referred to as *ohoyo tashko*.<sup>62</sup> Historian Michelene Pesantubbee also noted Choctaw women’s war time contributions, especially in regard to “dances and torture of captives.”<sup>63</sup> Choctaw women sang songs of encouragement before or during battles, “crying to them not to fear the enemy and to die like real men.”<sup>64</sup> If women chose to accompany a war party, they tended to injured warriors, putting themselves in harm’s way. Should the Choctaw war party sustain losses, women took a leading role in the communal mourning process. “The women will be there constantly,” Romans noted in reference to Choctaw women serving vigil over deceased warriors, “and sometimes with the corrupted air and heat of the sun faint so as to oblige the bystanders to carry them home.”<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 42.

<sup>62</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 164. Romans’ writings also suggest a more active role performed by Choctaw women in war time, offering the following anecdote: “A woman of that tribe made a bargain with me to give her ammunition for some provisions I bought her; and when I expressed my surprise thereat, she informed me that she kept a gun to defend herself as well as her husband did; and I have several times seen armed women in motion with the parties going in pursuit of the invading enemy...” (Romans, *A Concise Natural History*, 131). On the term *ohoyo tashko*, see O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 30.

<sup>63</sup> Michelene E. Pensantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 28.

<sup>64</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 164.

<sup>65</sup> Romans, *Concise Natural History*, 140-2.

In contrast, after a successful attack Choctaw women recognized the exploits of their kinsmen through celebratory dance. Joseph Christophe de Lusser observed in 1730 how following a “great feast of potatoes and bear oil,” women danced “armed and daubed with paints, with bonnets of eagle feathers,” which he considered “the finest of all Indian dances.”<sup>66</sup> According to at least one observer, women also participated in the fictive war-training exercise of the stick game:

“When the men’s game is finished, the women get together to play to avenge their husband’s losses. Their rackets are different from those that the men use in that they are bent. The women, who are very good at this game, run swiftly and push each other around just as the men do. They are dressed exactly like the men, but with a little more modesty. They put red paint on their cheeks only and apply vermilion instead of powder to their hair.”<sup>67</sup>

Whether through emotional support, active encouragement, or in rare cases, actually fighting, women contributed in many ways to Choctaw martial culture.

Fulfillment of gendered expectations helped order Choctaw society, and mechanisms were in place to allow such expressions. Training for warfare began at an early age for young boys. Bossu observed that Choctaw children shot “arrows for prizes.” Special skill with a bow could even put a Choctaw youth on the fast-track to recognized manhood. Winners of these competitions received praise from an elder and were “given the title of ‘apprentice warrior.’” Choctaw children also proved “very handy with the blowpipe, a weapon made of a reed about seven feet long into which is placed a little arrow feathered with thistle down.”<sup>68</sup> While a blowpipe may not have been of much use

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<sup>66</sup> Journal of Lusser in *MPAFD*, 1:102.

<sup>67</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 170.

<sup>68</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 169. See also Margaret Zehmer Searcy, “Choctaw Subsistence: Hunting, Fishing, Farming, and Gathering 1540-1830” in *The Choctaw before Removal*, 42.

for any prey larger than “small birds,” skill with this weapon helped develop the necessary patience for hunting larger game. Indeed, as Jean-François-Benjamin Dumont de Montigny noted in his memoir both verbally and visually, patience served as “the very foundation” of native hunting strategy. Hunters would disguise themselves and lull their targets – either deer, bears, buffalo, or fowl – into a false sense of security by “carrying the head of a deer with its skin and horns attached.” This technique was especially useful in luring male deers in rut, and when the prey noticed the presence of the hunters, they moved “with all the manners of a deer” by pretending “to lick their flanks or to graze or look about to the right or left.” After the target was acclimated to the faux deer, the hunter approached it slowly until close enough to “shoot a fatal blow unto the shoulder of their prey and bring it down.”<sup>69</sup>

Besides hunting, the activity designed to both cultivate and mitigate Choctaw martial masculinity that drew the most attention of European observers was the stick game. Bossu erroneously described this activity as “a game similar to ... tennis.”<sup>70</sup> At its core, the ball game served as “a trial of skill between village and village.” A game took place “on the day after a village lights its own special fire,” and was preceded by dancing, singing, and “insulting remarks” shouted between participants. At each opposite end of the field “two large posts” were set up, with the objective being to get the ball – “either a small ball of deerskin or a large one of woolen rags” – between these posts.<sup>71</sup> The first

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<sup>69</sup> Jean-François-Benjamin Dumont de Montigny, *The Memoir of Lieutenant Dumont, 1715-1747: A Sojourner in the French Atlantic*, trans. and ed. Gordon M. Sayre (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2012), 338-9. See also Dumont de Montigny, “*Sauvage a la chase*,” VAULT Oversize Ayer MS 257, Fig. 1, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois accessed via the American Indian History and Cultures online database.

<sup>70</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 169.

<sup>71</sup> Romans, *Concise Natural History*, 134.

village to score sixteen points won. Forty players per team crowded on to the field, each wielding “a racket two and one-half feet long, made of walnut or chestnut wood and covered in deer skin.”<sup>72</sup>

A game commenced when an “old man,” standing in the center of the field, opened play by throwing the ball into the air, after which “the players then run and try to catch the ball in the rackets.” The quick movement of the ball that whizzed through the air, the players that crisscrossed the field, and swinging rackets made for a dizzying scene than often became violent. Romans observed that in the scramble to secure the ball, players attempted “to beat it about from one to the other with amazing violence.”<sup>73</sup> Likewise, Bossu stated that “both teams play with such ardor that shoulders are often dislocated in the fray.” Tensions sometimes ran so high that “the old men,” acting as referees, needed to remind the participants that they played “for sport not for blood.” Once the game ended, everyone returned to their villages or towns either “in hope or in shame,” with each team promising the other “to play another day when the best man will win.”<sup>74</sup>

Hunts and communal games honed skills and battle tactics of Choctaw men, allowing for their martial successes, even if they generally proved “not so fond of wandering abroad to do mischief.”<sup>75</sup> Bossu reported that the Choctaws were “good strategists,” and many observed the tenacity in which they defended their home villages.<sup>76</sup> Chickasaw trader James Adair noticed the Choctaws acted “as desperate

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<sup>72</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 169.

<sup>73</sup> Romans, *Concise Natural History*, 134.

<sup>74</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 169-70.

<sup>75</sup> Romans, *Concise Natural History*, 130.

<sup>76</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 164. See also Romans, *Concise Natural History*, 130.

veterans when attacked in their own country.”<sup>77</sup> Bossu summarized the Choctaw art of war succinctly: it consisted of “vigilance and the ability to avoid surprise attacks and to catch the enemy off balance, in addition to the patience and the stamina required to withstand hunger, thirst, the elements, and the inescapable hardship of battle.”<sup>78</sup>

Adair considered the Choctaws “amazingly artful” in avoiding detection.<sup>79</sup> To retain the element of surprise, Choctaw war parties would “only travel by night,” bypassing trade paths as much as possible.<sup>80</sup> When war parties stopped, they set up “circular” war camps “with a fire at the center.” Warriors rested beneath “crutched branches” where they stored their firearms and hung powder and shot.<sup>81</sup> Attacks often occurred at daybreak. Blending in to the surrounding environment was key for warriors from all southeastern nations, so the leader of the party often held “a thick bush in front of him as camouflage.” In order to avoid notice from enemy trackers, Choctaw warriors walked “in single file.”<sup>82</sup> In addition to having the last man cover the party’s tracks “by arranging the leaves and the earth on which they have stepped,” Adair noted that southeastern warriors sometimes fastened “the paws and trotters of panthers, bears, and buffalos to their feet and hands,” winding about “like the circling of such animals, in the lands they usually frequent.”<sup>83</sup> *Tascas* (warriors) also mimicked “the different notes of the wild fowl.”<sup>84</sup> Done improperly, enemy warriors could easily read their tracks. Bossu recalled a conversation he had with an unspecified Native American, who proceeded to

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<sup>77</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 317.

<sup>78</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 166.

<sup>79</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 317.

<sup>80</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 165.

<sup>81</sup> Romans, *Concise Natural History*, 126.

<sup>82</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 165-6.

<sup>83</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 166 and Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 317.

<sup>84</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 317.

point out “in a place where I had noticed nothing, the footsteps of Frenchmen, Indians, and Negroes” as well as “how long ago they had gone by.” Done properly, however, these precautions resulted in “no telltale trace” left behind.<sup>85</sup>

Success in battle, and therefore the likelihood of young Choctaws reaching adulthood and recognition as warriors, relied on two factors: the skillfulness of the war party leader, and a *tasca*'s own individual courage. Decisions made by the war chief – ranging from the tactical to more ethereal, spiritual observances – directly influenced the outcome of a battle or raid. War chiefs bore these responsibilities exclusively. “As long as they are at war,” Bossu observed, “the chief is obeyed without question.” The war chief was also responsible for the maintenance of his personal prestige. Failure in battle cast doubt upon his abilities, resulting in a reduction “in rank to a mere warrior” because “no one has any further confidence in his leadership.” To avoid such missteps, war chiefs used caution “to spare their warriors and to attack the enemy only when assured of victory because of either superior numbers or advantageous battle positions.”<sup>86</sup>

Ritual observance and communication with the spirit world also influenced decisions made by Choctaw war chiefs, who were charged with carrying and consulting a war ark. According to Bossu, the party always placed the war ark “in the direction in which they intend to march against the enemy.” The war chief made sure to “post guards around it.”<sup>87</sup> Across the Native South, war arks – often “drest [in] deer-skin and placed

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<sup>85</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 166.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* In this regard, the placement of the war ark acted in a similar fashion to the “leaning poles” included in some versions of the Choctaw origin myth. Lincecum, George Catlin, Alfred Wright, Horatio Cushman, and Israel Folsom all mentioned in their Choctaw origin accounts how headmen placed a single or multiple poles in the ground during nightly encampments when the ancient Choctaws undertook a great migration. In the morning, if the pole was found leaning in a particular direction (in these accounts, almost always

on a couple of short blocks” – represented sacred vessels that could be contaminated if touched or viewed by an unworthy audience, explaining the need for armed protection. Adair claimed that Native Americans “durst not touch it upon any account...under the penalty of incurring great evil.”<sup>88</sup> The ark was treated as a member of the war party itself and given precedence among the warriors. “They revere it to such an extent that they will not eat,” Bossu observed, “until after the chief has offered it the first share of food.” In addition to spiritual vessels, war chiefs communicated with the spirit world through dreams. Indeed, this was one of the few instances in which inaction on the part of the war chief was viewed favorably by his people. If “such a desertion is attributed to a bad dream,” especially if the chief dreams of heavy losses, the warriors will “turn around and go back to their village.” It is telling that the Choctaw find this course of action “not considered shameful,” and indicative of the value placed on warriors’ individual lives. As Bossu notes, the Choctaws considered “a victory bought with the blood of their friends and relatives” as “absolutely worthless.”<sup>89</sup> To be in tune with the spirit world – whether by listening to nocturnal messages or preserving appropriate worldly boundaries – greatly aided the efforts by war chiefs to attain battlefield victory.

Singing war chants and hurling insults towards their enemies, Choctaw warriors fought ferociously and “courageously” because the violence of Indian warfare served restorative purposes.<sup>90</sup> Historian Michelene Pesantubbee refers to this guiding principle

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toward the East), then the group would continue their journey until the pole(s) ceased its nocturnal movements. See the various accounts included in Swanton, “Source Material,” 10-29.

<sup>88</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 195. See also Susan Abram, “Souls in the Treetops:” Cherokee War, Masculinity, and Community, 1760-1820” (PhD diss., Auburn University, 2009), 26.

<sup>89</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 165.

<sup>90</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 164.

as the “ethic of restitution” — and by eighteenth century contemporaries as “blood for blood” — meaning if one nation or town attacked and killed a number of its enemies, the attacked community would counterattack to restore balance.<sup>91</sup> Warriors claimed restitution for their village, and glory for themselves in the process, by taking captives or enemy scalps. Adair claims there was a competitive aspect to this method of warfare. Each of the warriors “is so emulous of exceeding another on this point of honor,” he noted, “that it frequently stops them in their pursuit.” To scalp an enemy, a warrior would grab the head of his dead or disabled adversary, putting pressure on the neck with their foot while at the same time grabbing their enemy’s hair and stretching it taut. Using “a long sharp-pointed knife” with their other hand, the attacker then gave “a slash round the top of the skull.” The scalping process, considered by the Choctaws an “honorable service,” was completed in seconds by experienced warriors.<sup>92</sup>

Victory achieved, Choctaw warriors returned home with the scalps of enemies in tow. For young Choctaws, a number of steps remained before the rest of Choctaw society recognized them as warriors: bodily declaration, bodily and spiritual rejuvenation, and lastly, remembrance. Bodily declaration occurred in two forms. Warriors proudly displayed the scalps they gathered as trophies. At times, scalps were divided among multiple members of a war party. In addition to this display of enemy flesh, Choctaw

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<sup>91</sup> Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women*, 47.

<sup>92</sup> Adair, *History of American Indians*, 382. The 1775 text states this act took “two minutes” (original text, 388), but Braund notes that trader George Galphin’s copy of Adair housed by the Charleston Library Society has the word “minutes” crossed out with the word “seconds” substituted. See Adair, *History of American Indians*, 541 n. 431.



*tasca* recorded a tally using their own skin as canvas, commemorating their successes “by having a mark tattooed” on their bodies.<sup>93</sup>

Bodily and spiritual rejuvenation was a complex process. Before returning to the village proper, a Choctaw war party rested for four days on the outskirts of the settlement. During these four days of “festive reintroduction,” warriors ate, danced, and sang. They purged themselves by ritual vomiting of “blacke drink” (*illex cassine*), thereby releasing any unwelcome war spirits from their bodies.<sup>94</sup> The bodily and spiritual cleansing continued when warriors took “baths in steam cabinets in which is boiled all sorts of medicinal and sweet-smelling herbs.”<sup>95</sup> The vapors dissipated pain and restored physical strength.

Mourning – both individual and communal – marked the final step of a Choctaw war party’s return. Individually, if a warrior (or soon-to-be-recognized-as-warrior) killed an enemy, he went “into a month’s mourning for his victim,” during which he was “not permitted to comb his hair.”<sup>96</sup> The mourning process for fallen brethren proved more complicated. Warriors that died in battle were not immediately buried. A bier of cypress bark was constructed on four posts approximately fifteen feet high and “painted red with vermillion.” The corpse, covered with a blanket (or at times, a bear skin), was then placed

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<sup>93</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 166. Arnaud Balvay argues that French settlers used Native American tattoos “as signatures” to facilitate diplomacy by means of helping identify specific individuals or nations. See Balvay, “Tattooing and Its Role in French-Native American Relation in the Eighteenth Century,” *French Colonial History* 9 (2008): 1-14, quote from 4.

<sup>94</sup> O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 42. Adair notes that the beverage is made from the “Yopon, or *Cusseena*” species of tea, a “bitter liquid” served in conch shells. See Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 160-1, and more generally, the essays included in *Black Drink: A Native American Tea*, Revised Edition, ed. Charles M. Hudson (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004).

<sup>95</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 167.

<sup>96</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 166. If his head itched, a warrior’s only reprieve was to scratch himself with a “little stick” tied to his waist specifically for that purpose.

on the platform. The relatives of the warriors then paid respects, weeping and interrogating the corpse with questions about the quality of his life, an act referred to as *yaiya*. These questions were “accompanied by loud howlings.” Women kept vigil over the corpse; men only visited “in the night or at unseasonable times, when they are least likely to be discovered.”<sup>97</sup> After the passing of two to four months, the family again gathered, this time joined by old men.<sup>98</sup> After preparing a ceremonial fire, these “venerable old Gentlemen” proceeded to breakdown the body with their “very long nails as a distinguishing badge on the thumb, fore, and middle finger of each hand.” The nails of these “respectable operators” removed the victims’ remaining flesh, which was then thrown in the fire. Particular attention was paid to the cleaning of the victim’s skull, which was painted red and then placed with the rest of the bones in a box. After a brief meal, the family in “mournful silence” carried the remains to a common cemetery “where the bones of the dead man’s ancestors are buried.” This interment marked the end of the burial process, but the fallen warrior was not forgotten. According to Bossu, each November families returned to the boxed remains of their kinsfolk as part of a celebration of “an important holiday called the feast of the dead or feast of souls.”<sup>99</sup>

Choctaw gendered expectations also shaped intercultural trade. For headmen in particular, access to European trade helped substantiate local claims to power, which they derived from the ability to redistribute goods among their warrior followers.

Unsurprisingly, Choctaw masculine identity came to be associated with a number of

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<sup>97</sup> Romans, *Concise Natural History*, 140-2.

<sup>98</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 166.

<sup>99</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 166-7. This date is highly significant. Lankford notes that late November marks the first moment during each calendar year the spirit of a dead Indian can begin passage along the “path of souls” (the Milky Way) to the after life. See Lankford, “The ‘Path of Souls’: Some Death Imagery in the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex” in *Ancient Objects and Sacred Realms*, 174-212, especially 177.

goods available only from their European trading partners as the eighteenth century progressed. These goods were not novel additions to an expanding Choctaw definition of masculinity, but replacements for items that had long been components of male identity. In particular, firearms and their accoutrements, clothing and textiles, and war paint became staples of intercultural diplomacy when they were exchanged for animal skins.<sup>100</sup> Their desirability likely accounted for the fact that the uses associated with these items substantiated Choctaw claims to masculinity. Choctaws associated masculine identity with being a good hunter, provider, and procuring certain European-manufactured goods, such as metal pots and textiles. Most important of all, however, were firearms, especially after Choctaw villages were targeted by slave raids perpetrated by Chickasaws who used guns to overwhelm them. As more firearms entered into Choctaw villages, demand for powder and balls correspondingly increased, to the point that in French outposts such as Fort Toulouse, gunpowder was considered a “currency.”<sup>101</sup> Paint, both red and black, was also an essential item for Choctaw raiding rituals. Cloth, however, proved so important that historians have suggested renaming the fur trade the cloth trade.<sup>102</sup>

Choctaws, like the rest of the Southeastern Indians, preferred textiles over traditional materials because of the range of colors available and other socio-cultural

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<sup>100</sup> Jessica Y. Stern, “Native American Taste: Re-evaluating the Gift-Commodity Debate in the British Colonial Southeast,” *Native South*, 5, no. 1 (2012): 1-37 and *The Lives of Objects: Native Americans, British Colonists, and Cultures of Labor and Exchange in the Southeast* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

<sup>101</sup> Gregory A. Waselkov, “French Colonial Trade in Upper Creek Country” in *Calumet and Fleur-de-Lys: Archeology of Indian and French Contact in the Midcontinent*, eds. John Walthall and Thomas Emerson (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1992), 36.

<sup>102</sup> Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1665-1815*, Second Edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 122. On the French cloth trade, see Dianna DiPaolo Loren, “Material Manipulations Beads and Cloth in the French Colonies” in *The Materiality of Individuality: Archeological Studies of Individual Lives*, ed. Carolyn L. White (New York: Springer, 2009), 109-124.

characteristics of the cloth. They were shrewd consumers, seeking out cloth that mimicked familiar designs and particular textiles for their softness and color, especially red, white, and blue.<sup>103</sup> Red and white textiles correlated with the “war” and “peace” moieties, respectively, that existed in most Choctaw villages, while blue cloth was prized throughout the Native South because of its connotation with truthfulness and loyalty between a warrior and his chief.<sup>104</sup> Choctaws continually expressed their tastes to their French trade partners in requests for more textiles of the “English variety.”<sup>105</sup> These transatlantic entreaties even produced a selection of samples to better illustrate to officials and manufacturers in France the templates that proved most popular among the Choctaws.<sup>106</sup> In addition to appealing to a Choctaw aesthetic, cloth became a necessary component of the elaborate Choctaw burial process, as the body of the deceased was wrapped in a blanket before being raised on poles and later having the flesh stripped away.<sup>107</sup> In the absence of cloth to wrap the body, entry into the Choctaw afterlife would effectively be barred, thereby condemning the spirit of the deceased to haunt this world.

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<sup>103</sup> For visual examples of Native American adoption of European textiles, see “Naturels en Hyver,” in Le Page du Pratz, *Histoire de la Louisiane*, Vol. 2, plate facing 309 and “Indians going a’ hunting” in *Von Reck’s Voyage: Drawings and Journal of Philipp Georg Friedrich von Reck*, Kristian Hvidt, ed. (Savannah: Beehive Press for the Library of Georgia, 1990), 126-127. The original manuscript and drawings are held at Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen, Denmark, NKS 565 4°. They can be accessed online at <http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/manus/22/eng/>.

<sup>104</sup> On the symbolism of the color blue, see Simpson Tubby, quoted by Swanton in “Source Material,” 101. Andrea Feeser noted the versatility in the symbolic connotations of the color blue among Southeastern Native groups in *Red, White, & Black Make Blue: Indigo in the Fabric of Colonial South Carolina Life* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013), 33-36.

<sup>105</sup> Maurepas to Vaudreuil, 28 October 1748, LO 140, Vaudreuil Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California (henceforth referred to as LO); Maurepas to Vaudreuil, 4 Nov. 1748, LO 142.

<sup>106</sup> See the “Échantillons d’étoffes d’Angleterre, à l’usage des Espagnols en Europe et en Amérique” described in Roland Lamontagne, *Textiles et Documents Maurepas* (Ottawa: Les Editions Leméac, 1970), 77. The original sample sheet is currently located in the collections at the Winterthur Museum, Garden, and Library, Delaware.

<sup>107</sup> Swanton, “An Early Account,” 64. See also Laura E. Johnson, “Material Translations: Cloth in Early American Encounters, 1520-1750,” (PhD diss., University of Delaware, 2010), 99-101.

Considering the metaphysical consequences of the appropriate use of textiles along with the powers imbued in war paint, it is easy to see the spiritual significance of the trade that accompanied intercultural diplomacy in the Native South.

While firearms “never displaced the bow and arrows, hatchet, or club, it did become an essential part” of the Choctaw arsenal. Demand was initially borne out of necessity, with Choctaws seeking any firearms for protection against Chickasaw raids, but over time they joined other tribes in recognizing the superior quality of French trade guns produced at the royal armory in Tulle.<sup>108</sup> If these specific weapons were unavailable, they sought out English guns, whose quality proved suspect at times.<sup>109</sup> In addition to durability, performance, and weight, Choctaws also demonstrated a preference for firearms that bore certain personalized and decorative elements. In particular, the English in the mid-eighteenth century tried to lure away the Choctaw’s allegiance from the French with gifts of weapons crafted “to be all light, the Barrels blue, and to have a mark of Distinction, both on the Barrel & the Lock.” In the late 1750s, Edmond Atkin described this “mark” as depicting “a Hand in Hand,” an embossed representation of the ties of intercultural diplomacy.<sup>110</sup> Firearms with these elaborate designs and colors further substantiated a Choctaw warrior’s place within his village, region, and nation. This proved yet another example of how Choctaw men brought

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<sup>108</sup> David J. Silverman, *Thundersticks: Firearms and the Violent Transformation of Native America* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2016), 8, 85.

<sup>109</sup> In 1744 the Royal Council in Charles Town complained how “The Muskets which were lately brought over in his Majesty’s ship the Aldborough, being unfit for the service intended . . . as they are too dear to be purchased by the generality of the militia, and too heavy for their use in this hot Climate.” See South Carolina Department of Archives and History, His Royal Majesty’s Council Journal, 14: 185, 282 (quote) (henceforth referred to as SCDAH).

<sup>110</sup> Edmond Atkin, “A List of Goods proper to be sent from England to Charles Town in South Carolina to be given as presents from his Majesty to the Indians in the Southern District, for the Service of the year 1757,” LO 3517. Loudoun Papers: Americana, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

signifiers of their households and towns into the larger world. *Tascas* used a pouch or bag to carry the equipment necessary for masculine excursions: grease, gun wadding, a gun cap, and time-keeping sticks; these bags were fashioned out of game (whether otter, beaver, raccoon, fox, or wolf) specific to each locality.<sup>111</sup> Even so, it was the ability to wield a firearm expertly, not the simple acquisition of such a weapon, that allowed a *tasca* to fulfill a gamut of Choctaw “warrior pursuits” and thereby claim social status amongst his peers and kinsmen.

The Choctaws’ most important European trading partners were the French, beginning in 1699 when Pierre Le Moyne d’Iberville established Fort Maurepas (sometimes referred to as Fort Biloxi) on the Gulf Coast. The French had explored the extent of the Mississippi River during the preceding years in hopes of finding the Northwest Passage and encircling the English Atlantic seaboard colonies. The Choctaws continued to meet with the French as the century progressed, although the English made periodic attempts at establishing trading posts within Choctaw villages. The French established the posts of Fort Toulouse and Fort Tombecbé in 1717 and 1736, respectively. Both these sites were accessible through marine traffic, although the ease of transit was seasonal. While these posts acted as markers for the French “imperial imaginary,” their true value lay in being sites of exchange for Choctaws interested in procuring European-manufactured weapons and supplies. The location of these posts in present-day Alabama — Fort Toulouse near the juncture of the Coosa and Talapoosa

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<sup>111</sup> Swanton, “Source Material,” 42. On the individual markings of Choctaw tomahawks, see a reference made regarding the Okéoulou *tasca* in Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 3 March 1749 in *MPAFD*, 5: 15.

Rivers and Fort Tombecbé on the river it is named after — allowed reader access than the colonial administration’s preferred diplomatic location at Mobile.<sup>112</sup>

While the English entrepôt in South Carolina proved too distant to try to integrate the Choctaws into their colonial apparatus, the French almost immediately established a comprehensible system that allowed for easier intercultural diplomacy. The French solution to the problem posed by regional diffusion of authority and overlapping town and kinship identity throughout Choctaw villages was to seek out and recognize who they believed to be the most influential headmen by bestowing medals and titles on them, which was determined by their demonstrated power and authority during diplomatic meetings. The number of medal chiefs slightly increased throughout the history of French colonial Louisiana. Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, the first governor of Louisiana, initially only gave a medal to Chicacha Oulacta of the western division town of Couëchitto in 1707, recognizing this headman as the Great Medal Chief. Governor Étienne Périer later expanded this practice by establishing a “two-tier system” that increased the number of overall medals and recipients. By 1732 five chiefs hailing from four villages across all divisions received medals — one medal awarded to an influential headman from each division, in addition to the Great Medal Chief and the leading Red (or “war”) Chief of the nation.<sup>113</sup> Contrary to English criticisms that this policy

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<sup>112</sup> On “imperial imaginaries,” see Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Fort Toulouse is located in present day Elmore County; Fort Tombecbé in present-day Sumter county; see Waselkov, *Fort Toulouse Studies*, Auburn University Archeological Monograph 9 (Montgomery: Alabama Historical Commission, 1984), and Peter J. Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1976), 188-200.

<sup>113</sup> Galloway, “The Medal Chief’s *Grosse Lettre*: A Chapter in French Indian Management Policy” in *Practicing Ethnohistory: Mining Archives, Hearing Testimony, Constructing Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 292-310, especially 296-297. By 1745, the number of medal headmen concentrated (three of the five total) in the western division: the Great Medal Chief (Couëchitto), Red Shoe

transformed headmen into mere “peddlers” for the French, this practice was in reality less an attempt to bring the Choctaws under outright French subjugation than an effort by bewildered colonial leadership at making sense of a confusing Choctaw political landscape that at first glance looked vastly unfamiliar from the emergent absolutist state of France.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, this was a means of creating a political relationship that in some important ways mimicked the deeply personal vertical ties of patronage that formed the backbone of early modern French statecraft.<sup>115</sup>

The earliest French explorers of the Mississippi could not help but notice the difficult-to-ignore similarities between Native and French social hierarchies, paying particular attention to “analogous positions” that emphasized masculine endeavors.<sup>116</sup> This is not surprising, considering the importance of masculine status in early modern French society. Between the 1570s and 1580s, conceptions about the nobility underwent a fundamental shift away from a basis in *vertu* – holding a military office – towards a basis on bloodlines.<sup>117</sup> This shift did not halt *élite*’s practice of engaging in state-

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of Couëchitto, and the headman of Cushtusha. A more expansive discussion of Indian medals can be found in Grace Lee Nute, “Indian Medals and Certificates,” *Minnesota History* 25 (1944): 265-270.

<sup>114</sup> Adair believed the French “always kept the head-men in pay. These, at every public meeting, and convenient occasion, gave stated energetic orations in praise of the French; and, by this means, the rest were influenced. The peddlers thus got almost what they were pleased to ask, in return for their worthless trifles.” See Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 298.

<sup>115</sup> Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). On the influence of the nobility, see J. Russell Major, *From Renaissance Monarchy to Absolute Monarchy: French Kings, Nobles, and Estates* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

<sup>116</sup> George Edward Milne, “Bondsmen, Servants, and Slaves: Social Hierarchies in the Heart of Seventeenth-Century North America,” *Ethnohistory* 64, no. 1 (2017): 115-139, quote from 131.

<sup>117</sup> Ellery Schalk, *From Valor to Pedigree: Ideas of Nobility in France in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). For an interpretation that challenges the intellectual homogeneity of correlations between masculinity and violence, see John Jeffries Martin, ““*Et nulle autre fait plus proprement homme que cette cy*”: Michel de Montaigne’s embodied masculinity,” *European Review of History – Revue européenne d’histoire* 22, no. 4 (2015): 563-578. The following discussion is informed by Christian Ayne Crouch, *Nobility Lost: French and Canadian Martial Cultures, Indians, and the End of New France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), especially 1-37.



sanctioned violence, and in fact these “warrior pursuits” allowed the advancement of individual political and confessional goals.<sup>118</sup> With the “fabrication” of absolutism in the seventeenth century and its attempts towards increasing centralization, violence continued to legitimize masculinity in France.<sup>119</sup> The *noblesse d’épée* (nobility of the sword) “spoke a language of honor and appropriate conduct in war” that maintained their distinction from the *noblesse de robe* (wealthy administrative nobles).<sup>120</sup> In France’s New World colonies, fluency in this martial eloquence continued to distinguish elite warriors from men who filled the ranks of the *companies franches de la marine* and colonial militias.<sup>121</sup> In addition to this institutional definition of martial masculinity, French popular culture also recognized violent expressions of manhood.<sup>122</sup> In his comparison between early modern French popular revolts and factional movements, historian

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<sup>118</sup> Brian Sandberg, *Warrior Pursuits: Noble Culture and Civil Conflict in Early Modern France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010). On confessional violence in general, see Barbara Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). Keith Luria pushes against Diefendorf’s conclusions, arguing everyday confessional interactions were characterized by restraint in *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early Modern France* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005).

<sup>119</sup> It should be noted that these outbursts did decline across the continent over the course of the seventeenth century; see Jonathan Dewald, *The European Nobility, 1400-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 117. Recent scholarship has acknowledged the limitations of absolutism; for the continental empire, see Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) and William Beik, “The Absolutism of Louis XIV as Social Collaboration,” *Past & Present* 188 (2002): 195-224. For the obstacles presented by the French New World colonies, see Kenneth Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Sea: Communications and the State in the French Atlantic, 1713-1763* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002) and Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil’s Empire: French Colonial New Orleans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2008).

<sup>120</sup> Crouch, *Nobility Lost*, 19.

<sup>121</sup> Crouch, *Nobility Lost* and Julia Osman, “Pride, Prejudice, and Prestige: French Officers in North America during the Seven Years’ War” in *The Seven Years’ War: Global Views*, Mark H. Danley and Patrick J. Speelman, Eds. (Boston: Brill, 2012), 191-211.

<sup>122</sup> See, for example, the transmission of brawling between inter-regional groups of artisans to the New World in Leslie Choquetter, “*Compagnonnage* in Eighteenth Century New France” in *Essays in French Colonial History: Proceedings of the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the French Colonial Society*, ed. A.J.B. Johnston (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1997), 75-91. On violent behavior associated with bands of youthful artisans in the Old World, see James R. Farr, *Hands of Honor: Artisans and their World in Dijon, 1550-1650* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), especially 150-195. On the specific connection between manhood and violence, see Robert Muchembled, *A History of Violence: From the End of the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Jean Birrell (Malden: Polity Press, 2012), especially 176-190.

William Beik noted how the nature of the latter proved “more masculine” than the former, illustrating how manhood served to level class distinctions by emphasizing personal loyalty and honor.<sup>123</sup> Both military officers and colonists circulated these concepts about masculinity throughout the French Atlantic, and in lower Louisiana specifically, martial sensibilities combined with material gain to produce a “rogue colonialism” that epitomized the allegedly dysfunctional nature of the colony in the eighteenth century.<sup>124</sup>

Claims to manhood therefore, undergirded Choctaw society as well as serving as the foundation for Franco-Choctaw relations. In the diplomatic arena, the French seized upon the idea of acting like real men to strengthen their relationship with the Choctaws. The origins of this policy are seen as early as 1706, when Governor Bienville agreed to arm the Choctaws against the Chickasaws.<sup>125</sup> Four decades later, Jadart de Beauchamp, while chastising a number of Choctaw headmen, recalled the long history of Franco-Choctaw relations grounded not only on recognition as ‘brothers,’ but as proper men. “They ought to remember their former State,” Beauchamp reminded his Choctaw

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<sup>123</sup> Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: The Culture of Retribution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 200.

<sup>124</sup> Dawdy, *Building the Devil’s Empire*, 254. Recent revisions of French North American colonial policy can be found in Christopher Hodson and Brett Rushforth. “Absolutely Atlantic: Colonialism and the Early Modern French State in Recent Historiography,” *History Compass*, 8, no. 1 (2010): 101-117 and Paul W. Mapp, *The Elusive West and the Contest for Empire, 1713-1763* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute for Early American History and Culture, 2011), 147-257; a more conservative interpretation can be found in James S. Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). On the obstacles inhibiting the study of the French Atlantic, see Cécile Vidal, “The Reluctance of French Historians to Address Atlantic History,” *The Southern Quarterly*, 43, no. 4 (2006): 153-189. Thankfully, recent emphasis has sought to correct this hesitancy, as evidenced by the recent “Emerging Histories of the Early Modern French Atlantic” conference supported by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture in Williamsburg, Virginia, October 16-18, 2015.

<sup>125</sup> Cited in Patricia Galloway, *Practicing Ethnohistory: Mining Archives, Hearing Testimony, Constructing Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 246.

audience, “that if they are men today, it is to the French alone that they are obliged for it.”<sup>126</sup> This mutual recognition of martial masculinities along the southern frontier between the Choctaws and French Louisiana helped to diffuse intercultural tensions, but as the next chapter will illustrate, also had the capacity to undermine this relationship as well. In fact, claims to manhood facilitated the establishment of a French policy that would profoundly influence the emerging factionalism led by Red Shoe of Couëchitto within Choctaw country, to devastating effects.

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<sup>126</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 273.

**Chapter Two**  
***Oiya:***  
**Manhood, Violence, and Political Ascendency on the Franco-Choctaw Frontier**

Choctaws and Frenchmen sustained their diplomatic relationship in the early and mid-eighteenth century by striking a balance of mutual understanding grounded in appeals to both Choctaw and French martial cultures. In the collaborative process of solidifying their respective geopolitical positions in the region, both Choctaws and Frenchmen came to recognize a number of characteristics as essential components to their mutually intelligible definition of masculinity. First, conceptions about masculine leadership obligations to provide material goods solidified claims to authority. Provision and obligation, so central to the patron-client relationships that epitomized political administration in early modern France, found parallels in Choctaws' chiefly expectations to redistribute items amongst their followers. Secondly, success on the battlefield proved an important metric. Lastly, trustworthiness proved the most fickle of all the intercultural fault lines between the Choctaws and the French. Accusatory rhetoric shaped Franco-Choctaw relations at specific moments when expectations grounded in provision and martial prowess failed to materialize, contributing to a tenuous alliance which could at any time be compromised by perceived attacks on individual claims to honor or more general notions of cultural superiority. Red Shoe of Couëchitto used all of these criteria

to take advantage of the French colonial agenda and bolster his own claims to authority among not only the western division he hailed from, but the entire Choctaw nation.

While often aligned in order to attain shared geopolitical aims, differences in Choctaw and French martial policy led to a decline in trustworthiness between the two groups. French military reliance on Choctaw *tascas* during the Natchez and Chickasaw wars, as well as a conspicuous material dearth, frustrated intercultural relations and revealed the overall weakness of French claims to martial masculinity. The purpose of this chapter is to chart the rise of Red Shoe within this context and the consolidation of his pro-English factional base. Red Shoe gained popularity through battlefield successes and redistribution of property. Yet when French goods evaporated due to a combination of administrative decisions and inefficient colonial infrastructure, Red Shoe sought out English trading partners as a way to maintain social capital. While provisions, martial prowess, and trustworthiness ultimately served as essential components to their mutually intelligible definition of masculinity, these same individual and group appeals to manhood at times undermined Franco-Choctaw relations along the southern frontier.

The sustainability of a Franco-Choctaw relationship grounded in trade and expressions of intelligible masculinities can be attributed to the alliance networks developing between native powers and European colonial claims in the region, especially French frustrations with the Chickasaws. The early history of the Louisiana colony saw control bounce between the Crown and mercantile interests. This would profoundly influence Indian affairs, as the transition to colonial administration by John Law's *Compagnie d'Occident* (literally, "Company of the West" or Mississippi Company) after Antoine Crozat's administrative failure in 1717 resulted in the promotion of Jean-Baptiste

Le Moyne de Bienville to governor.<sup>127</sup> Bienville's policy prioritized healthy Franco-Choctaw relations. Throughout his term(s) as governor, Bienville asked the Choctaws to wage war on the English-allied Chickasaws with regularity. Possibly motivated by personal animosity, Bienville offered impressive rewards to Choctaw *tascas* who brought him Chickasaw scalps: a musket (worth twenty deerskins) and bullets. Bienville also set the bounty for a captive Chickasaw woman or child at 80 livres worth of trade goods.<sup>128</sup> These early sponsored raids against the Chickasaws allowed the Choctaws to realize their "considerable military potential," epitomized by the complete destruction of three Chickasaw villages in the fall of 1722.<sup>129</sup>

Choctaw-Chickasaw antagonisms continued throughout the 1720s in an uninterrupted cycle of violence. But it was the Chickasaws' role in the Natchez "revolt" that renewed French calls for aid from the Choctaws. On November 29, 1729, the Natchez Indians led a coordinated attack that resulted in the deaths of approximately 230 colonists and the destruction of Fort Rosalie and Saint Catherine's Concession.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> On Crozat, see Pierre Ménard, *Le Français qui possédait l'Amérique: La Vie Extraordinaire d'Antoine Crozat, Milliaire sous Louis XIV* (Paris: Cherche midi, 2017).

<sup>128</sup> Minutes of the Council of Commerce of Louisiana, 8 February 1721 in *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion*, 5 Vols., eds. Dunbar Rowland, A.G. Sanders, and Patricia Galloway (Jackson: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1927-1932 and Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 3: 303 and Bienville to the Council, 1 February 1723 in *MPAFD*, 3: 343 (henceforth referred to as *MPAFD*). The roots of Bienville's hatred towards the Chickasaws are unclear. James F. Barnett, Jr. suggests that it was because Bienville blamed the group for the death of his brother, St. Hélène in *Mississippi's American Indians* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi for the Mississippi Historical Society and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 2012), 114-5. Revenge for a death in the family may be Bienville's motivation, but it could not have been his brother, as he died in 1690 defending Québec. Bienville's nephew, however, of the same name of Jacques Le Moyne de St. Hélène, was killed in Louisiana during a slaving expedition in 1708. See Philomena Hauck, *Bienville: Father of Louisiana* (Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1998), 7, 48.

<sup>129</sup> Barnett, Jr., *Mississippi's American Indians*, 115. On the destruction of the Chickasaw villages see Chassin to Bobe, 1 July 1722 in *MPAFD*, 2: 277; Bienville to the Council, 1 February 1723 in *MPAFD*, 3: 343; Minutes of the Superior Council of Louisiana, 23 July 1723 in *MPAFD*, 3: 355.

<sup>130</sup> Périer to Maurepas, 5 December 1729 in *MPAFD*, 1: 54-6; Diron d'Artaguetto to Maurepas, 9-10 February 1730 in *MPAFD*, 1: 56-61; Périer to Maurepas, 18 March 1730 in *MPAFD*, 1: 61-70.

Louisiana Governor Etienne Périer enlisted Choctaw support against the Natchez and their allies, the Yazoos. In negotiations led by Bienville's cousin Jean Paul Le Sueur, the Choctaw renewed their military alliance with the French, in which the leading towns from all the Choctaw divisions pledged support.<sup>131</sup> The western *Imoklsha* division towns of Couëchitto, Cushtusha, Caffetalaya, and Boucfouca answered the French call to arms, joined by southern Six Towns warriors from the towns of Chickasawhay, Yowani, Tala, Yellow Canes, and Nachoubaouenya. The eastern *Inhulahta* division was the least represented, with only warriors from the leading town of Concha choosing to join the seven-hundred strong army that helped lay siege to Natchez forts in early 1730.<sup>132</sup> These Choctaw headmen and warriors – *not* French officers or militia – fought and resolved the Natchez “revolt.”

Choctaw claims to victory in driving out the Natchez created fissures in their alliance with the French in two interrelated ways: (1) French criticism of Choctaw unwillingness to meet French military objectives and (2) the subsequent Choctaw

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Contemporaries such as Dumont, Broutin, and du Pratz seem to be in agreement that the actions of Chépart, the commandant at Fort Rosalie, provided the immediate causes of the attack; see “de Chépart” in *France’s Forgotten Legion: Service Records of French Military and Administrative Personnel Stationed in the Mississippi Valley and Gulf Coast Region, 1699-1769*, ed. Carl Brasseaux (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 2:2:24-5 (henceforth referred to as *FFL*). Since this is an unusual source (CD-ROM), I follow the citation method of Gordon Sayre: “The first of the three numbers corresponds to [one of the] six [thematic] parts, the second to the chapters within that part, and the third to a page number.” See “A Biographical Dictionary of the Persons Named in Dumont’s Manuscript Memoir” in Jean-François-Benjamin Dumont de Montigny, *The Memoir of Lieutenant Dumont, 1715-1747: A Sojourner in the French Atlantic*, trans. and ed. Gordon M. Sayre (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2012), 413-414.

<sup>131</sup> George Edward Milne argues that the violence perpetrated by the Natchez against the French “horrified” the Choctaws; see *Natchez Country: Indians, Colonists, and the Landscapes of Race in French Louisiana* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015), 1. This unwarranted display, which stood in contrast to the measured responses inherent to the Choctaw spirit of restitution, *may* have contributed to Choctaw support for the French; however, Choctaws probably viewed participation as a means of ensuring continued access to French goods instead of altruism.

<sup>132</sup> The breakdown of Choctaw support for the French can be found in Lusser’s journal, *MPAFD*, 1: 81-117.

criticisms of French martial capacity. In the face of overwhelming Choctaw military strength, the remaining Natchez fled and settled among the Chickasaws for protection. Choctaw headmen recognized how much the French utterly relied on them for tracking down the Natchez refugees. However, the Choctaws and French disagreed on the objectives of the campaigns against the Chickasaws to weed out the Natchez. Influenced by their culture of retribution, the French sought punishment in the form of extirpation, whereas the Choctaw culture of restitution considered the attacks on the Chickasaws as a means of settling long-standing blood feuds.<sup>133</sup> While these campaigns proved useful for attaining Choctaw ends — particularly reclaiming members of kinship networks that the Chickasaws had formerly enslaved — the French grew increasingly frustrated by what they perceived as incomplete battlefield results. Typically small in scale, Choctaw raids did not fulfill the French aims of destroying all the Chickasaws and the Natchez refugees they sheltered.<sup>134</sup> Choctaw headmen and warriors, content with their accomplishments, made easy targets for French colonial officials who questioned their sincerity through public rhetorical challenges to their masculinity.

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<sup>133</sup> For the French “culture of retribution,” see William Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France: The Culture of Retribution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); on the Choctaw culture or ethic of restitution, see Michelene Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005).

<sup>134</sup> French genocidal intentions towards the Natchez are clearly stated in both French and English documents. For example, Edmond Atkin, in his 1755 report on the Southeastern Indians, stated that French campaigns were “professedly in order to extirpate the Chicasaw Nation;” see Atkin, “To the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations,” LO 578. Loudoun Papers: Americana, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California. Scholarship is beginning to take note of Native awareness of Euroamerican extirpative intentions throughout the colonial period. See Jeffrey Ostler, ““To Extirpate the Indians”: An Indigenous Consciousness of Genocide in the Ohio Valley and Lower Great Lakes, 1750s-1810,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series Vol. 72, no. 4 (2015): 587-623 and Benjamin Madley, “Reexamining the American Genocide Debate: Meaning, Historiography, and New Methods,” *American Historical Review* Vol. 120, no. 1 (2015): 98-139. For British America, Susan Juster has connected extirpative violence directed towards Native Americans to the longer history of European holy warfare; see *Sacred Violence in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), especially 100-125.



Equating masculinity with demonstrative Francophilia, French officials openly questioned the manhood of the two leading men and medal chiefs of Couëchitto during the Natchez campaigns, the Great Chief and Red Shoe. Both chiefs told ensign Régis du Roullet how Diron d'Artaguette, commandant at Mobile, made these comments in the presence of a large Choctaw assembly. Apoplectic, Red Shoe recounted how Diron "said in the presence of the little chief of the Yellow Canes and several others that I was a woman." Clearly miffed, Red Shoe offered an oral resume of his most recent accomplishments: "I showed him that I was a true man in the Chickasaw war by the large number of scalps and of skulls that I have brought back." He also emphasized the numerous times he went to battle on behalf of the French. In a further effort to expose Diron's erroneous statements, Red Shoe pointed to his reputation among his fellow Choctaws, regardless of their division. "No one," he relished, "talked of anything but Red Shoe" and his battlefield successes.<sup>135</sup>

Red Shoe was not alone in his anger towards Diron d'Artaguette. The Great Chief also reacted harshly to the news of Diron's slights. While admitting that "the French have made us men" due to the weapons the Choctaws secured through trade, the Great Chief explained to Roullet that he threw his medal into the river in a rage after being sent "word that I was a woman." By physically throwing away his medal, the Great Chief literally and symbolically cast away any association the French enjoyed with his village. This was no mere tantrum; more than any other head man, the Great Chief recognized that leading headmen - notably, *himself* - owed some of their social stature to their role as re-distributors of weapons and goods secured only through trade with the French. To merely

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<sup>135</sup> Journal of Régis du Roullet (1729) in *MPAFD*, 1: 34.

contemplate a symbolic surrender of this diplomatic relationship illustrates the egregious nature of Diron d'Artaguet's statements. The Great Chief only retrieved the medal when he heard of Régis du Roullet's impending arrival to meet and ostensibly apologize to Couëchitto's headmen. Even so, the Great Chief kept the status of his allegiance shrouded in mystery — while he reaffirmed his diplomatic attachment by stating he “embrace[d] absolutely the word of the French,” he also continued to abstain from wearing the medal.<sup>136</sup> Although Roullet's effort eventually calmed western division leaders, whose support proved pivotal in the ongoing French efforts to root out the Natchez, this episode highlights the significance of gendered discourse to intercultural relations between the Choctaw and the French. Words — especially appeals to masculinity — mattered on the frontier.

While French officials cast aspersions at Choctaw headmen by questioning their trustworthiness, Choctaw headmen in turn undermined French claims to martial masculinity by negotiating their own cease-fire with the Chickasaws in exchange for slaves (both native and African) and French prisoners. The Choctaws ransomed back these prisoners on their own, because the French had not yet compensated them for their earlier assistance against the Natchez.<sup>137</sup> As if French inability to vanquish the Natchez without Choctaw support was not embarrassing enough, the Choctaws effectively highlighted the shortcomings of French military capabilities in Louisiana by controlling the distribution of human war booty in the form of French colonists and propertied Africans.

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<sup>136</sup> Journal of Régis du Roullet (1729) in *MPAFD*, 1: 37.

<sup>137</sup> Milne, *Natchez Country*, 196.

Red Shoe profited the most by leading raids against the Chickasaws throughout the 1730s, buttressing his political and social clout with various military successes. In contrast, the decade brought the French more martial failures.<sup>138</sup> By 1736, Bienville had returned to Louisiana to again serve as governor, immediately setting out for a redemptive war against the Chickasaws that would finally bring about the group's subjugation (if not outright extermination). His expensive plan, however, failed miserably. Bienville originally planned to meet up with a composite force of warriors from various French-allied tribes and Frenchmen travelling from Illinois country and led by Pierre d'Artaguette – brother of the aforementioned sharp-tongued Diron. Together, Bienville and d'Artaguette would then march overland from the Chickasaw Bluffs. But they were never able to combine forces, making D'Artaguette attack the Chickasaw villages early because he was running low on supplies.<sup>139</sup> The Chickasaws easily vanquished, captured, and killed nearly all of D'Artaguette's forces, leaving only two survivors. It was a complete and utter defeat, highlighting the inefficiency of French combat forces when matched against native warriors. The Chickasaws reveled in their destruction of D'Artaguette's men, even claiming their "hogs had now plenty of ugly French carcasses to feed on til next year."<sup>140</sup> This doomed campaign happened before Bienville even stepped foot out of Fort Condé in Mobile.<sup>141</sup> When six hundred Choctaw warriors finally escorted Bienville to the scene, they refused to follow his orders,

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<sup>138</sup> Father Beaudouin to Salmon, 23 November 1732 in *MPAFD*, 1: 159; Régis du Roulet to Périer, 16 March 1731 in *MPAFD*, 4: 70-1.

<sup>139</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, 28 June 1736 in *MPAFD*, 1: 312-4.

<sup>140</sup> James Adair, *The History of the American Indians*, ed. Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 356.

<sup>141</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, 28 June 1736 in *MPAFD*, 1: 312-4.

resulting in a humiliating defeat at the village of Ackia.<sup>142</sup> News of the failure spread “grief and trembling throughout” Louisiana, and French officers considered any mention of the Chickasaws who bested them on the battlefield as “dreadful.”<sup>143</sup>

In view of the debacle at Ackia, Red Shoe openly questioned French martial ability – and by extension, French masculinity writ large – causing the colonial militia to suffer a significant loss in reputation among the Choctaws. In a letter to the Minister of Marine Jean-Frédéric Phélypeaux, Comte de Maurepas, Diron D’Artaguette, whose brother died during Bienville’s ill-fated attack on the Chickasaws, recorded a conversation he had with Red Shoe during which the war chief made clear his disdain for French military incompetence. “This chief told me that the French did not know at all the way to carry on war,” D’Artaguette related, with the chief of Couëchitto chiding that the French “had lost many men without being able to say [they] had killed a single one.”<sup>144</sup> Bienville believed the only way to recover from this embarrassment was to immediately plan a retaliatory campaign against the Chickasaws. To prove to the Choctaws that the outcome at Ackia represented an anomaly, Bienville requested two hundred and fifty additional soldiers from France to supplement Louisiana’s colonial militia.<sup>145</sup> Along a cross-cultural frontier that privileged military prowess as essential to claims to power, the French could ill-afford further battlefield embarrassments.

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<sup>142</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, 28 June, 1736 in *MPAFD*, 1: 303-4. See also Dumont de Montigny, “[*Campement*] de l’armée François [devant u]n village des enemies, las Chicachas le 26 [de Mais] 1736,” VAULT Oversize Ayer MS 257, Map 11 Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois accessed via the American Indian History and Cultures online database.

<sup>143</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 356-357.

<sup>144</sup> Diron d’Artaguette to Maurepas, 8 May, 1737 in *MPAFD*, 1: 339.

<sup>145</sup> Louis XV to Bienville, 1738 in *MPAFD*, 1: 376-7.

Emboldened by their success at Ackia, the Chickasaws continued to pester the French and Choctaws with occasional raids, including an attack in May 1737 on the newly established Fort Tombecbé. In response, Red Shoe led Choctaw *tasca* and Frenchmen under Sieur dé Lery in raiding and burning Chickasaw cornfields.<sup>146</sup> By targeting the Chickasaws' primary food source, Red Shoe forced them to sue for peace.<sup>147</sup> He then used this cease-fire to his advantage, accumulating more power by putting a halt to costly winter campaigns that drew men away from the hunt. He also secured more reliable access to Europeans goods from the Chickasaw's English allies in lieu of French shortages. For Red Shoe, a Choctaw-Chickasaw peace was the key to ascendant power within the Choctaw nation.

Exploits on the battlefield during the Chickasaw wars and a desire to control the distribution of European goods allowed Red Shoe to become the most influential headman not only in the western division, but within the entire Choctaw nation. Red Shoe was able to harness the frustration most Choctaw headmen held towards the inefficient French supply chain. The French continually struggled to deliver guns and merchandise punctually, with Henri Chevalier de Louboëy, the major at Mobile, recognizing how this problem reflected poorly on maintaining the ties between the French and the Choctaw. In particular, Louboëy described how the recent late arrival of the merchant vessel *Marie François* contributed to "the dissatisfaction of the Choctaw." Yet it was not only goods arriving late from La Rochelle that frustrated the Choctaws; Louboëy also criticized

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<sup>146</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, 17 June 1737 in *MPAFD*, 3: 701-5.

<sup>147</sup> Barnett, Jr., *Mississippi's American Indians*, 134. On native alliance networks in the southeast, refer to Alexandre de Batz, "Nations Friendly and Hostile to the Chickasaws," 7 September 1737 in *MPAFD*, 1: 355-6 and Gregory Waselkov, "Indian Maps of the Colonial Southeast" in *Powhatan's Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, Revised and Expanded Edition, eds. Gregory A. Waselkov, Peter H. Wood, and Tom Hatley (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 435-502.

Governor Bienville's diplomatic tactics, sarcastically noting how he "flattered himself" and reported that in point of fact "Red Shoe's party has got the upper hand." Red Shoe accomplished this by promising "marvels" in the form of Chickasaw scalps, which would, in turn, result in the governor offering "rewards." Louboëy caught on to this scheme, noting that the southern division Choctaws closer to Mobile failed to follow through and "all these promised vanished." "Nobody dared to take action in our favor," he discouragingly told the Minister of the Marine in 1738. In fact, relations had deteriorated to such an extent that the captain of Fort Tombeché, and his interpreter found the Choctaw attitude "very badly disposed" towards them, and "thought it advisable to return promptly" to the post instead of completing a scheduled diplomatic mission.<sup>148</sup>

Red Shoe's faction, made of followers from various western division towns, created this upheaval. The Red Shoe of Cushtusha travelled to Carolina with an escort of "several Chickasaws," and "returned overwhelmed with attentions and presents." He brought back an informal British commission in the form of a "medal and flag" intended for the Red Shoe of Couëchitto, who promptly took the flag and "raised [it] over his house" in the leading western division town. More importantly, the Red Shoe of Cushtusha returned with "four English traders" leading a horse train twenty-five long "loaded with all sorts of merchandise." The traders then "established warehouses." The combined work by both Red Shoes challenged the French monopoly on supplies, as it bypassed the inefficient annual meetings and allowed for direct trade between headmen,

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<sup>148</sup> Louboey to Maurepas, 28 November 1738 in *MPAFD*, 4: 155. This was a long-standing problem in Louisiana. For example, in 1709, the colony received no transatlantic supply shipments. See Patricia Dillon Woods, *French-Indian Relations on the Southern Frontier, 1699-1762* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1980), 9.

warriors, and English traders. It brought the English and Choctaws “very closely united.” In return for these newly established posts, English traders encouraged their hosts “to strike some blows at the French.”<sup>149</sup> No longer constrained by the French colonial diplomatic calendar or the unreliable French trans-Atlantic supply lines for merchandise, weapons, and supplies, Red Shoe considered the English trade contacts among the Chickasaws as the most efficient way to continuously supply his followers with identity-affirming items.

Much to Red Shoe’s delight, the English “spared nothing” to convince him to abandon the Franco-Choctaw alliance while the French bungled their way through the first Chickasaw campaign.<sup>150</sup> These traders’ incursions into Choctaw country represented just the beginning of a larger English operation aimed at crippling French Louisiana. While the new warehouses would cut into the Franco-Choctaw trade, Red Shoe made good on his word to attack the French plantations on the Mobile River and the German-settled Pascagoula territory, “as well as the tar-works that are on the other side of Lake Pontchartrain.” These attacks targeted the slaves found on these lands, with the English offering to pay the exorbitant sum of “sixteen limbourg blankets” per stolen slave. Although Louboëy reported that “two Choctaw chiefs who were friends” of the French rejected this proposal, the French continued to proceed cautiously to protect the colony’s valuable economic production sectors. Bienville still “thought it advisable” to recall to New Orleans all the workers involved in the tar-and-pitch industry for their safety. Fear

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<sup>149</sup> Louboey to Maurepas, 28 November 1738 in *MPAFD*, 4: 155. This Red Shoe is not to be confused with the more famous Red Shoe of Couëchitto; the possibility remains that this is a case of mistaken identity, however, later sources clearly refer to the village of Cushtusha as staunchly pro-English. The Chickasaw escort is mentioned in Louboey to Maurepas, 11 July 1738 in *MPAFD* 1: 371.

<sup>150</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 162-3.

gripped Louisiana, and the belief that “the colony has never been in such evident peril” seemed pervasive.<sup>151</sup> French colonists took a cue from some of the neighboring *petit nations* who decided earlier in 1738 to distance themselves from the increasingly unpredictable Choctaws. For example, the Biloxis relocated to Shell Island “in order to remove themselves from the surprise attacks of the Choctaw, of whom they are extremely afraid.” Another small group, the Capinans, also reportedly “abandoned its village and...retreated to Deer Island.” In sum, “a great uneasiness” prevailed among the many peoples of Louisiana – red and white – in reaction to the emerging Choctaw factionalism.<sup>152</sup>

Bienville’s strategy for dealing with Red Shoe was straightforward: the governor forbade anyone from trading with or selling any weapons or munitions to villages in league with the chief of Couëchitto. Unsurprisingly, this decision backfired. The western division supporters of Red Shoe interpreted this cessation of trade as a cessation of diplomatic relations, and immediately sought English partners. “This prohibition, which ought to have overthrown the influence of this chief (since it had reduced his partisans to extreme wretchedness during the entire summer) produced a contrary effect,” reported Noyan to Maurepas, “because of the conclusions that [Red Shoe] drew from it.” Red Shoe seized these French decisions and used them to his own rhetorical advantage, telling

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<sup>151</sup> Louboey to Maurepas, 28 November 1738 in *MPAFD*, 4: 155-6. Several pitch-and-tar operations were located north of the city on the far side of Lake Pontchartrain. Gordon Sayre notes that one of these operations was led by a free woman of color. See Montigny, *Memoir*, 276 n27. This may also be a reference to the factory owned by M. Aufrère; see Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1995), 116. German families resettled in the Pascagoulas after having left Dauphin Island; see J. Hanno Deiler, *The Settlement of the German Coast of Louisiana and the Creoles of German Descent* (Philadelphia: The German American Historical Society, 1909), 25-6.

<sup>152</sup> Louboey to Maurepas, 28 November 1738 in *MPAFD*, 4: 156.



his followers that recent events confirmed English rumors. “The English are right,” Red Shoe proclaimed, “in assuring us that the French wish to destroy us.” Considering his personal familiarity with earlier attempts undertaken by the French to wipe out the Natchez and Chickasaws, Red Shoe was far from exaggerating when he concluded that the French would “not be long in declaring open war” on the Choctaws.<sup>153</sup>

Having preached a tale of existential threat to his followers, Red Shoe sought an alliance between western division *Imoklasha* Choctaws and the Chickasaws. Efforts at peace may have been aided by a mutual feeling of “wretchedness” among the two nations. Red Shoe ordered a partisan to travel to the Chickasaws – most likely the *fanimingo* who served as the traditional mediator between the two tribes – to relay his complaints about his division’s inability to access European goods.<sup>154</sup> The empathetic Chickasaws agreed and “did not fail to argue about this prohibition in the same manner.” More than any other Chickasaw leader, Blind King (*Imayatabé le Borgne*) vocalized clearly how the French intentions of abandoning the Choctaws should convince them to conclude a peace. He foresaw a frontier domino effect. “The Choctaws can no longer doubt the evil designs,” he proclaimed, “that the French have against the Indians.” “They will begin with us,” he ominously predicted, citing the long history of warfare between the Chickasaws and French while predicting the French would “fall next upon the

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<sup>153</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 159-60.

<sup>154</sup> Thomas Nairne described the purpose of the *fanimingo* as such: “His bussiness is to make up all Breaches between the 2 nations, to keep the pipes of peace by which they first contracted Friendship, to divert the Warriors from any designe against the people they protect. . . and if after all are unable to oppose the stream, are to send the people private intelligence to provide for their own safety.” See *Nairne’s Muskhogean Journals: The 1708 Expedition to the Mississippi River*, ed. Alexander Moore (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1988), 40-41. The title *fanimingo* roughly translates to “squirrel king”; see Galloway, “The Currency of Language: The Mobilian *Lingua Franca* in Colonial Louisiana” in *Practicing Ethnohistory: Mining Archives, Hearing Testimony, Constructing Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 225-244, especially 230-231.

Choctaws.” For their mutual survival, Blind King encouraged the two nations to “unite in order to forestall the evil that threatens us all.”

Red Shoe “declared himself” the “protector” of English traders operating in the western division. And although French sources claimed the headman of Couëchitto was simply “won over by presents,” Red Shoe still refused to call for a complete reformation of Choctaw foreign trade diplomacy, suggesting this change only “to oblige the French to sell...merchandise at the same price as the English did.” Alibamon Mingo, leader of the eastern division town of Concha, himself admitted to subscribing to Red Shoe’s intentions to play the French off the British in order to gain the most advantageous trade position, even in his role as a French recognized medal chief. He agreed to follow Red Shoe’s lead in the matter, although allegedly only under the “condition that when the French had granted [the Choctaw] trade at the rate of the English [they] would dismiss the latter in order to not get into a quarrel.”<sup>155</sup> Alibamon Mingo allowed the English to establish “one of their warehouses” in his town of Concha.<sup>156</sup> This decision to allow the English to set up shop in his village was less a rejection of French trade than a method by which Alibamon Mingo could further entrench his regional claims to authority. His rationale followed the earlier precedent set by Red Shoe: with higher-quality English goods, the Concha medal chief could better redistribute items desperately desired by minor headman and *tasca* in his affiliated villages. As such, ties of obligation and allegiance between Alibamon Mingo and his dependents would be strengthened. At best,

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<sup>155</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 163.

<sup>156</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 163. See also Bienville to Maurepas, 10 February 1736 in *MPAFD*, 1: 277-9.

these headmen would be able to draw upon the resources of two European trading partners; at worst, the French would be forced to reduce the price of their goods.

The latter is precisely what happened. Neither Red Shoe nor Alibamon Mingo were surprised when the rest of the Choctaw medal chiefs and headmen objected to “this enterprise.” Taken in conjunction with news that the English “arranged a conference between Red Shoe and the Chickasaw chiefs” to draft a peace treaty, the scheme was met with near-universal disapproval. Choctaws of all ranks – from warriors to the Great Medal Chief – “rejected the proposal.”<sup>157</sup> This vote was far from shocking, considering the fact that the commander of Fort Tombecbé, Le Sueur, was in attendance. While the French reported that Red Shoe and his deputies, including his younger brother Little King, “withdrew overwhelmed with reproaches and confusion,” the faction nevertheless proceeded with the Chickasaw peace proposal as planned, in violation of the wishes of the assembled chiefs representing all Choctaw towns.<sup>158</sup>

Red Shoe planned to depart for English Georgia, but first met with his partner Alibamon Mingo along the Upper Trade Path at Kaapa, an Abihka village on the Cahaba River. There, Alibamon Mingo tried to “divert” Red Shoe and convince him to travel to Mobile instead. Red Shoe first refused the invitation “gently.” After repeated requests, Alibamon Mingo’s tone darkened, suggesting “the interest of the nation demanded” Red Shoe’s public submission at Mobile. This challenge angered Red Shoe, who snapped at his fellow medal chief, “Let come what may, my decision is made.” Lines became drawn,

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<sup>157</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, 10 February 1736 in *MPAFD*, 1: 277.

<sup>158</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 160-1. On role of Blind King, see James Adair, *The History of the American Indians*, ed. Braund, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 322 and David H. Corkran, *The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 117.

alliances confirmed. Red Shoes asserted, “I shall be as loyal to the English as you wish to be to the French.” He then issued a defiant rebuke: “We shall see whether my warriors or yours will return better satisfied with the presents that they have received.”<sup>159</sup> Not only was Red Shoe resolute in his abandonment of the playoff system for an exclusive trade policy with the English, he did so by challenging the masculinity of Alibamon Mingo and his *tasca* supporters. Red Shoe’s saltiness enraged Alibamon Mingo, making him “catch fire” and unleash his own barrage of strong words. He called Red Shoe “in the presence of his friends a reckless young fellow,” a direct challenge that diminished all of Red Shoe’s previous military achievements and social status. He then went on to denounce Red Shoe as someone whose actions would “destroy those who were crazy enough to follow him,” an attack on Red Shoe’s capacity as a war chief — a leadership position ultimately responsible for preserving and protecting the lives of his *tasca*. With this flourish, Alibamon Mingo stormed out, followed by more threats that Red Shoe hurled at his back – threats that the Concha medal chief ominously informed Noyan would “possibly be put into action.”<sup>160</sup>

Red Shoe’s decision was final: he traveled to Georgia. Forty men accompanied him, although Alibamon Mingo referred to this escort as rag-tag. Of this group, only two “were well known” headmen, one of whom was likely Red Shoe’s younger brother, Little King. “Young men without reputation” and relatives predominantly comprised the group, further illustrating how factional politics were splitting along local, kinship, and generational fault lines. Perhaps because this group included unproven *tasca* – known as

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<sup>159</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 164-5.

<sup>160</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 165. On chiefly responsibilities, see Bossu, *Travels*, 165.

*atak emittla* – Alibamon Mingo believed many in the caravan “would give up in discouragement at the fatigues of such a long journey.”<sup>161</sup>

These developments contradicted Governor Bienville’s reports that most Choctaws supported the Chickasaw wars. Acting as “father,” Bienville issued instructions to which the Choctaws “replied that they would not lower the tomahawk which they had raised over the Chickasaw” until told otherwise.<sup>162</sup> After the general assembly in which the headmen rejected the Choctaw-Chickasaw peace proposed by Red Shoe, “several” chiefs asserted that “they were going to leave at once to attack the enemies of the French.” Bienville took heart in the fact eastern *Inhulahta* and southern Six Towns Choctaws already had “war parties in the field who have brought back several scalps.”<sup>163</sup> Eastern and southern Choctaws were clearly willing to wage war on the Chickasaws, but Bienville’s claims that they did so out of obligation – casting himself as the authoritative “father” and the Choctaws as receptive and obedient “children” – displayed a fundamental misunderstanding of Choctaw matrilineal society. Since identity was passed through the mother’s bloodline, authority rested not with a woman’s husband, but her brother. Indeed, Choctaw social norms cast fathers as less authoritative figures than uncles. As there was no obligation to listen to fathers in Choctaw society, Bienville’s claims to authority rang hollow. Choctaw *tasca* did not raid Chickasaw villages because of French desires, but out of their own personal ambition to prove themselves as true men among their peers.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 165.

<sup>162</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, 10 February 1736 in *MPAFD*, 1: 277.

<sup>163</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, 10 February 1736 in *MPAFD*, 1: 277.

<sup>164</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, 10 February 1736 in *MPAFD*, 1: 277. On the misunderstood nature of familial designations within intercultural fictive kinship networks, see Michelle LeMaster, *Brothers Born of One*

Even so, pro-French headmen could not halt Red Shoe's plans, as they were powerless to stop the leading western and eastern medal chiefs from breaking with the traditional practice of universal deliberation and agreement. The Great Medal Chief of the Choctaws admitted he "did not have the strength to oppose Red Shoe." At first glance this admission appears startling. However, the fact that the Great Chief and Red Shoe hailed from the same village – Couëchitto – likely split local ties along kinship lines. As such, supporters of neither the Great Medal Chief nor Red Shoe – both of whom would have been expected to redistribute goods to the town's warriors – may have been able to claim a local majority. The increasing intrigues of the English with Red Shoe, coupled with the Great Medal Chief's personal allegiance to the French, drew residents of Couëchitto into factions, with neither being able to assert control. Factionalism transcended local boundaries, though, contributing to the second reason why the Choctaw-Chickasaw peace remained in effect: personal animosity. Alibamon Mingo continued to support Red Shoe's agenda because of the slights they received at the hands of the French as a consequence of allowing the English to establish a trading post at Concha. For two years, the French withheld presents from Alibamon Mingo as punishment – a challenge to not only Alibamon Mingo's individual claims to masculinity and power, but all the *tasca* of his affiliate villages who in turn received no guns, ammunition, or textiles. The disappointment of the entire warrior class in Concha and its surrounding hamlets was palpable, as they found their social standings threatened by the

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*Mother: British-Native American Relations in the Colonial Southeast* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012) and Galloway, "'The Chief Who Is Your Father': Choctaw and French Views of the Diplomatic Relation" in *Powhatan's Mantle*, 345-370.

French embargo. This pushed them towards the necessary decision to trade with the English via Chickasaw warriors.<sup>165</sup>

The French had stood idly by as Red Shoe tried to dismantle the system of redistribution. Bienville sent a party of twelve soldiers led by Sieur de Léry – described as “a young creole full of courage and prudence” – to investigate the presence of alleged English traders among the Choctaw at Concha. The governor instructed de Léry to forcibly remove Red Shoe back to New Orleans to face judgement before the Superior Council and induce the traders “to leave the nation.”<sup>166</sup> Of the four traders who Red Shoe of Cushtusha brought back from Charles Town, “only one single Englishman,” James Campbell, remained to watch over the merchandise at Concha. De Léry’s arrival coincided with a meeting between medal chiefs to discuss Red Shoe’s proposed Anglo-Choctaw trade. The Great Medal Chief, Red Shoe, Alibamon Mingo and Campbell were all present when de Léry arrived. Confronting Alibamon Mingo, de Léry asked why an English trader had set up in his village. He ordered his “detachment” to surround Alibamon Mingo’s “cabin” and demanded that he and Red Shoe both surrender the trader. The Great Chief, who remained “truly devoted” to Louisiana yet proved unable to stem the Anglophilia of Red Shoe’s followers, then delivered “a rather animated speech” in support of de Léry’s orders.<sup>167</sup> Yet his authority was limited in Concha, with Alibamon Mingo proudly replying “that an Englishman would never be taken from his house in his presence.” He even claimed “he would rather die in defending him.” At this moment, Red Shoe grabbed a gun and moved Campbell, now “much frightened by this scene,” behind

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<sup>165</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 163.

<sup>166</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, 10 February 1736 in *MPAFD*, 1: 279.

<sup>167</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 163; Bienville to Maurepas, 10 February 1736 in *MPAFD*, 1: 280.

them for protection. Aware that they were surrounded by armed Frenchmen, Red Shoe chose his words carefully, de-escalating a potentially explosive situation. He spoke for the first time, appealing to honor by stating, “It would be disgraceful for the nation that a man who had remained among them on the faith of their word should be taken from their hands.”<sup>168</sup> This was no mere threat — it was a clear assertion of Choctaw masculinity and power. Words bound Choctaw leaders to action, as trustworthiness formed an essential component to Choctaw leadership. To renege on guarantees of protection would not only cast the headmen as liars, it would also reflect poorly on their overall authority.<sup>169</sup> Cognizant of the potential for violence and the uncomfortable position of being surrounded by French soldiers with guns aimed at him, Red Shoe negotiated with de Léry and the Great Chief. All agreed to Campbell leaving at once. Everyone involved maintained their honor: de Léry was able to cast out the English trader and Alibamon Mingo maintained the protection of Campbell under his charge.

Red Shoe’s negotiation, however, did enough to hoodwink de Léry. He bought time to allow Campbell to successfully move goods in holding at Concha into western division towns. Almost immediately – not even “two hours afterward” – Campbell had returned to the town of Kaapa “by roundabout roads,” where he awaited “other traders ready to travel to the Choctaws with a very large convoy of merchandise.” These traders found their plans of returning to the warehouse at Concha frustrated by news of the recent ambush. No longer believing their course of action “advisable” because they toted a new supply of goods, three of the traders returned to Concha to retrieve the goods they left

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<sup>168</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, 10 February 1736 in *MPAFD*, 1: 280.

<sup>169</sup> Jean-Bernard Bossu, *Travels in the Interior of North America, 1751-1762*, trans. and ed. Seymour Feiler (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 165.



accompanied by a detail of three mounted Tallapoosas.<sup>170</sup> Yet when the traders and their Upper Creek escorts finally arrived, they found an empty warehouse. Red Shoe and Alibamon Mingo had seized the goods and already given them away to their *tasca*. This turn of events left the English traders “little satisfied.” Although the two medal chiefs promised to repay the traders the following spring, Bienville claimed this mix-up made the traders “feel that there was little confidence to be placed in the good faith of the Choctaws.” Part of this language is wishful thinking, especially if we consider the fact that the two chiefs saved Campbell from being detained – or worse – by de Léry. More likely, the decision by Campbell’s associates to remove their goods not only from Concha town, but from Kaapa as well, was for both physical and fiscal self-preservation. Not only had de Léry already threatened to detain and ship one of their group to New Orleans, they all lost a sizable amount of goods.<sup>171</sup> From a Choctaw perspective, however, the playoff system had worked to perfection: no traders were dead and the medal chiefs were able to secure goods from the English after the French attempted to cut them off. Through redistribution, they successfully substantiated their own local claims to authority and masculinity as well as those of their followers.

With his brash decision-making and attacks on Louisiana’s tar-and-pitch makers (and their enslaved workforce), Red Shoe forced Bienville’s hand. The governor sent his nephew, Gilles-Augustin Payen de Noyan, to “try to win Red Shoe over.” Although he had little confidence that the meeting between Noyan and Red Shoe would result in any major alteration to the preexisting relations between the French and the western division, Louboëy suggested the meeting might be useful in so far as it would give Red Shoe a

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<sup>170</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, 10 February 1736 in *MPAFD*, 1: 280.

<sup>171</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, 10 February 1736 in *MPAFD*, 1: 280. They lost 12 horse loads worth of goods.

reason to pause until the arrival of French troops. He hoped the presence of French soldiers would make a favorable impression, not so much on Red Shoe, but on the remaining sympathetic pro-French Choctaws who in turn would hopefully “throw off their mask and procure for [the French] the means of being able to attack the Chickasaws,” with whom the French remained at war. By posturing and showing off their own martial capability, Louboëy hoped the French would kindle the Choctaws’ own desire to go wage war against their mutual enemy. The French needed time, as Louboëy explained, because the present number of colonial militia available – approximately five hundred and fifty – was not enough to continue military operations against the Chickasaws. The prospects of French victory relied heavily on the services of allied Choctaw warriors, however, and the French had to prove themselves as capable warriors in order to confirm this alliance.<sup>172</sup>

It took Noyan five days to reach the first Choctaw town, where he found the Chickasawhay chiefs “very uneasy” due to the lateness of the arrival of French goods. There was little Noyan could do to allay these fears except tell the headmen to travel to Mobile as soon as they heard that the merchandise arrived. A day and a half later, Noyan and his interpreter Roussère met with Father Michael Baudouin, the French missionary to the Chickasawhays, the Chickasawhay medal chief Mongoulacha Mingo, and Alibamon Mingo, who travelled south from Concha. Requesting “the sentiments of the Choctaw” from his audience, Noyan instead received from Alibamon Mingo — “unquestionably the strongest supporter” of the French faction and considered “the only man capable of offering resistance to Red Shoe” — a history lesson about Franco-Choctaw diplomacy.

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<sup>172</sup> Louboey to Maurepas, 28 November 1738 in *MPAFD*, 4: 156.

The Concha chief quickly deflected the source of recent tensions away from the Choctaws, in doing so distancing himself from the faction led by Red Shoe. At first implicating the English as responsible for “all that has happened contrary to [French] interests since they came to settle these lands,” Alibamon Mingo then revealed how the dramatic standoff at Concha marked the beginning of his split with Red Shoe. He would never again dabble with English traders, taking it upon himself to reaffirm the traditional close ties between the Eastern Choctaws and the Alabamas, by sending a runner to the group to surrender the British flag “that these traders had brought me on behalf of their governor.” Alibamon Mingo wanted the Alabamas to “send it back on my behalf” to South Carolina. In addition, he “begged the nations of these districts [the Creeks] to refuse passage to the English, or at least not to furnish them with any more guides.” Alibamon Mingo continued to explain how he tried to undermine Red Shoe’s plans at Kaapa by asking the Alabamas, who offered him great respect, to help the Abeikas (Creeks) suspend English traders’ rights of passage through their lands. Red Shoe and Alibamon Mingo had relayed different messages to those awaiting news at Kaapa: while Alibamon Mingo admitted his outreach to the Creeks “did not prevent” two English parties from returning, Red Shoe planned on rendezvousing with them at Kaapa.

At this point, the two medal chiefs clearly pursued opposing agendas. The eastern *Inhulahta* medal chief was in no way interested in allowing Red Shoe’s *Imoklasha* faction opportunities to accumulate more power than it already claimed. At present, Concha’s location relative to English traders among the Creeks allowed the headmen to play English and French traders and officials off one another. But allowing the trade to circumnavigate the eastern division and operate out of the Chickasaw villages closer to

the western division would make them irrelevant. Alibamon Mingo wanted an Anglo-Choctaw trade, to be sure, but he wanted that trade funneled through *his* towns. To further express his disapproval of Red Shoe, one of Alibamon Mingo's Concha warriors killed three horses belonging to Red Shoe, including the "finest" that belonged to the chief of Couëchitto.<sup>173</sup>

For his part, the peace chief Mongoulacha Mingo of the southern division Chickasawhays claimed that "the villages under his authority" had never wanted peace with the Chickasaws. He admitted that he personally "had done nothing to thwart the plans of Red Shoe" because he was not sure he would receive support from any other Choctaw "partisans of the French." Even so, Mongoulacha Mingo firmly pledged himself "ready to undertake anything in cooperation with Alibamon Mingo." Like his fellow medal chief, Mongoulacha Mingo profited immensely from controlled access to French goods through Chickasawhay, which served for all Choctaws as the gateway to the French at Mobile. Mongoulacha Mingo threw in his lot not with the French, but with another Choctaw headman whose politics - the use of the playoff system to lower the French prices for trade goods - he supported and sought to replicate within his own southern division. This distinction was lost on Noyan, who instead interpreted these words as evidence of Francophilia, and "begged" the Choctaw medal chiefs for advice on how to deal with Red Shoe going forward. They gave Noyan two options: he could either use "favors" to "detach" Red Shoe from the English interest or the French could "oppose him with such a strong faction that he will not dare again in the future to undertake

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<sup>173</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 163.

anything.” Addressing Alibamon Mingo and the medal chief of the Chickaswhays as “brothers,” Noyan asked the Choctaw leaders for guidance.<sup>174</sup>

Alibamon Mingo responded, quickly dismissing the notion of changing Red Shoe’s mind by showering him with gifts. He told Noyan this would work “if Red Shoe thought like other men.” But Red Shoe did not. This course of action would only lead to Red Shoe acting “more haughty,” Alibamon Mingo cautioned, and more gifts “would embolden him to do them more harm by providing him with the means of acquiring more partisans.” Giving Red Shoe access to more resources would only broaden his influence. “His decision is made,” Alibamon Mingo stated bluntly before recounting his earlier meeting with Red Shoe and the western *Imoklasha*’s declaration that “he was irrevocably on the side of the English.” It would be futile for the French to believe they could convince Red Shoe to abandon his efforts to establish an Anglo-Choctaw trade alliance.<sup>175</sup>

Alibamon Mingo spoke to ten other western division chiefs, all who reaffirmed their allegiance to Red Shoe. With Red Shoe’s message infiltrating so many towns, Bienville found himself lacking options. Unable to bribe Red Shoe into compliance, his remaining option was to ensure pro-French headmen continued to receive merchandise and stand pat, hoping for Red Shoe to misstep. As such, Bienville was following the precedent set by French provincial magistrates dating back at least two centuries, who allowed popular protests (factional or otherwise) to run their course, thereby saving face while still providing for an emotional release for disgruntled parties. Alibamon Mingo

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<sup>174</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 164. Noyan was negotiating from an assumed position of equality, demonstrating his cultural ignorance regarding Choctaw matrilineal society. See also note 24 above.

<sup>175</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 164.

agreed with this tactic, stating “It will be much easier and much more expedient to make [Red Shoe] lose the influence that he has acquired by lies and by promises that he will never be able to fulfill, for it is not possible that he will bring back from the English all that he has promised to his partisans.” Alibamon Mingo supported this stance not because he agreed with Bienville, but because he stood to gain support with his continuous supply of French goods while Red Shoe and his western towns faced an embargo and an uncertain reception in Georgia. These leaders believed Red Shoe would reveal himself as a fraud over time, and his support would correspondingly dwindle.<sup>176</sup>

Red Shoe’s trip to Georgia, however, put pressure on the French to act. Noyan rejected outright any option that would allow Red Shoe to orchestrate his own downfall. The French wanted a direct resolution; to rely upon Red Shoe embarrassing himself sounded not only risky, but also smacked of similar tactics that both medal chiefs admitted to using earlier in order to gain the most advantageous trade agreement for their respective division. Intercultural relations broke down under the pretense of trustworthiness: Governor Bienville believed the Choctaws were “trying to trifle with him by means of vain promises.” The French therefore demanded proof from Alibamon Mingo that all Choctaws supported the Louisiana colony — that the Choctaws confirmed the “sincerity of their sentiments” by helping the renewed French efforts to subdue the Chickasaws. The French would remain unconvinced of Alibamon Mingo’s trustworthiness unless he personally was “the first to raise the tomahawk” and lead war parties against the Chickasaws. “You owe this example to the nation,” Noyan insisted, equating trustworthiness with allegiance, “and this is the first blow that you must strike at

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<sup>176</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 165; Beik, *Urban Protest in Seventeenth-Century France*, 259-260.

Red Shoe.” In return, the French offered to promote Alibamon Mingo to the status of “Great Chief of the Nation.” The French were so determined to politically ostracize Red Shoe by waging war against the Chickasaws they contemplated reordering their entire diplomatic hierarchy with the Choctaws. Developments in Couëchitto had swung in favor of Red Shoe – the French had lost faith in the current Great Medal Chief’s ability to stymie the growing influence of Red Shoe, in essence placing the title up for grabs to other Francophile headmen. Desperate times called for desperate measures – even to the point of a complete overhaul of the recognized Choctaw political structure.<sup>177</sup> From a French perspective, Alibamon Mingo would be mad to refuse such an offer.

Yet the Concha medal chief “begged off” in order to distance himself from any personal involvement in the dispute between between the French and Red Shoe’s strengthening Anglophile faction. Once more, trustworthiness informed the negotiation. Whereas Noyan challenged Alibamon Mingo to prove his worth by campaigning, Alibamon Mingo turned this line of reasoning against the French officer, stating he was uncomfortable with breaking the agreed-upon peace with the Chickasaws ahead of schedule. He had already informed the pro-French eastern and southern Choctaws that their actions must wait until the “next spring.”<sup>178</sup> The Machiavellian practice of breaking diplomatic agreements, while typical of early modern politics, contrasted with Choctaw norms that eschewed behavior that called into question one’s trust. For a headman to break previous promises represented an egregious error among the Choctaw. According to Jean-Bernard Bossu, “the Choctaws lose all confidence in anyone who does not keep

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<sup>177</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 165.

<sup>178</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 165.

his word.” Any offender was “treated scornfully and called a liar.”<sup>179</sup> Perhaps most importantly, Alibamon Mingo’s obligation to the French was less important than his role as a “peace” or “white” chief. His followers had entrusted him to make decisions that would keep them out of harm’s way. Alibamon Mingo prioritized the health and well-being of his *tasca* supporters. He made this abundantly clear when explaining to Noyan that he could not lead a campaign because “there were many Choctaws hunting in the direction of the Chickasaws who would run risks if they were not warned of this break.” This point proved nonnegotiable; the more Noyan pushed Alibamon Mingo on the subject, the more the Concha chief “excused himself.” After some prodding by Mongoulacha Mingo – who urged his fellow medal chief to “show deference” to Noyan for fear of making the French “displeased” and expanding the trade embargo to all the Choctaw divisions – Alibamon Mingo asked for more time to reflect before making a final decision.<sup>180</sup>

Two hours passed, during which Alibamon Mingo and Mongoulacha Mingo hotly debated what to do about Red Shoe before reconvening with Noyan. When the medal chiefs reassembled, they were joined by three of Alibamon Mingo’s brothers and “three other war chiefs.” Alibamon Mingo agreed to take the field against the Chickasaws, and after sending runners to neighboring towns, who “came in emulation of each other as soon as they learned that the tomahawk was raised.” Although Noyan believed he had succeeded in creating a coalition of pro-French Choctaws aimed at disrupting the

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<sup>179</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 169. By the nineteenth century, truthfulness had become intertwined with Choctaw spirituality. For example, Pushmataha, in a 1811 retort to Tecumseh’s recruitment overtures, stated: “The Great Spirit will punish those who break their word.” See *Indian Oratory: Famous Speeches by Noted Indian Chieftains*, ed. W.C. Vanderwith (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1971), 73.

<sup>180</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 165.



Choctaw-Chickasaw peace necessary for establishing a regular Anglo-Choctaw trade, this decision was less an act of acquiescence to French demands than a self-interested decision to stay in the good graces of a *tasca* class itching to prove its own masculinity. In some ways, the medal chiefs had little choice: French goods had been cut off, calling into question their ability to maintain social status without items to redistribute. This war party cut across moiety, kinship, and regional distinctions: the group consisted of warriors from “different villages and from six different castes that compose the nation,” all with the intention of frightening the Chickasaws to the point “of making them abandon” their contest against the French.<sup>181</sup> As much as he flattered himself for guiding the Choctaws to this decision, it was not Noyan who brought about their change of heart, but the desires of the warrior class that followed both the Concha and Chickasaway medal chiefs.

Word of Alibamon Mingo’s decision moved fast. Choctaw chiefs “coming from all sides” travelled to meet and discuss joining the new Chickasaw war campaign. Even “several from Red Shoe’s faction” enquired “whether they could go to Mobile” to receive their annual gifts. Noyan’s response was clear: they ought not “to hope for rewards” because the King only granted gifts “to those who had deserved them.” Once again, Noyan deployed rhetoric that conflated masculine pursuits undergirded by the notion of trustworthiness with presents. They could improve their standing with the French, however, by collecting Chickasaw scalps as proof of participation in war campaigns that contradicted Red Shoe’s agenda. This forced Red Shoe’s supporters to choose between

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<sup>181</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 165.

surrendering their practical and identity-affirming goods or continuing the peace with their traditional enemy.<sup>182</sup>

It is worth considering why Noyan did not simply ask the headmen to kill the English traders Red Shoe introduced into Choctaw country, whom he considered “the authors of all these difficulties.” First, the number of English traders among the Choctaws appeared inconsequential. After the standoff in Concha, Noyan knew of only three traders – whom he described as “rather poorly supplied with merchandise” – left in Choctaw towns. Because of this, he believed their shortcomings as providers would offend Choctaw sensibilities, thereby supporting French claims that they should remain the preferred trade partner. Secondly, Noyan believed that if he “succeeded in rekindling the [Chickasaw] war the English would not take long to make up their own minds” and vacate Choctaw country on their own volition due to their unwavering alliance with the Chickasaws. Thirdly, Noyan did not want to let wavering Choctaws off the hook so easily, allowing them to “think that they had done enough for us.” War with the Chickasaws was considered as important as expelling the English, therefore negotiating these terms would be disadvantageous and illustrative of French weakness. The whole matter had become one of honor — not simply of restoration but of retribution — and Noyan harbored reservations towards Alibamon Mingo’s sincerity. “Appearances are gratifying enough,” he later wrote to Maurepas, “but experience has often made us recognize that it is not safe to count [on] them.” The rhetoric he deployed implicitly undermined the reputability (and therefore masculinity) of Alibamon Mingo. Noyan

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<sup>182</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 165.

remained convinced of the duplicity of the Concha chief in his dealings with the English. Trust on the Franco-Choctaw frontier was in short supply.<sup>183</sup>

Noyan, “rather well pleased with the Choctaws,” prepared to depart from Chickaswhay, but was delayed by news that held the potential to undermine his entire diplomatic mission: a letter from Governor Bienville stating how his officers apprehended two creole half-brothers charged with murdering two Choctaws. Bienville instructed Noyan to assure the headmen that the French were working diligently to “give them satisfaction.” All of a sudden, the French, constant accusers of the Choctaws’ lack of trustworthiness, now found it necessary to deflect calls for restitution. These chiefs, already suspicious of French intentions because of Red Shoe’s inflammatory rhetoric, displayed palpable disappointment upon receiving “the facts.” “They were surprised and sorry that this murder had been committed by Frenchmen,” Noyan recollected, and “that they would not be able to refrain from asking M. de Bienville for vengeance when they went to visit him” in New Orleans.<sup>184</sup>

With the mutual understanding through appeals to manhood that bridged the Choctaw and the French straining under the weight of emerging factionalism, demonstrations of martial masculinity that stood at odds with each other almost demolished the very diplomatic relationship it was supposed to anchor. Nothing illustrated this better than the arrest, trial, and execution of two creole half-brothers in late 1738-early 1739. A year prior, Alexandre (24) and Barthelemy (15 or 16) – half-brothers in a socially-upward moving family – set out by boat from Mobile to the Pascagoulas to “look for food supplies.” Accompanied by their family’s recently-acquired slave, they

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<sup>183</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 166-7.

<sup>184</sup> Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 165-6.

met a Choctaw man and his wife seeking to travel back to Mobile to trade a “few deerskins” and some bear grease, highly valued for its cooking, medicinal, and cosmetic purposes. The brothers agreed to share their pirogue and give them passage.<sup>185</sup>

Quickly after setting out, windy conditions “cast them ashore on some neighboring islands.” To make the best of the circumstances, the brothers and their slave went hunting to pass the time. Away from the camp, they hatched a murderous plot. Alexandre suggested “to the Negro that he shall kill the husband and wife.” Certainly, the elder half-brother posited to his slave, “If [the Choctaws] ran across Frenchmen in the same straits in their country they would not object to killing them” – an allusion to the supposed duplicity of Native Americans, who he referred to generally as “dogs.” The slave refused this request saying “he had no reason to kill them” and that the couple, far from acting the suspicious part Alexandre had cast them, “had done him no wrong.” Turning to his younger half-brother, Alexandre assured Barthelemy that he “would be doing a valorous deed” if he killed the Indian couple, stressing that “he would be regarded as *a true man*.” His words resonated with the impressionable teen, and Barthelemy “allowed himself to be persuaded.” During the night, Alexandre moved the Choctaws’ gun “under the pretext of putting it under cover” because it started raining. At

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<sup>185</sup> Salmon to Maurepas, 12 January 1739 in AC C13A 24: 116 quoted in Galloway, “Barthelemy Murders,” 250. On native uses and European reactions to bear grease, see Daniel H. Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1992), 206; Milne, *Natchez Country*, 195; *Arkansas: A Narrative History*, Second Edition, eds. Jeannie M. Whayne, Thomas A. Deblack, George Sabo III, and Morris S. Arnold (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2013), 76; John Ashton, *Old Times: A Picture of Social Life at the End of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Scribner & Welford, 1885), 58; and William Tullett, “Grease and Sweat: Race and Smell in Eighteenth-Century English Culture,” *Cultural and Social History* 13, no. 3 (2016): 307-322.

sunrise the following morning, Barthelemy “shot twice at the husband and his wife,” killing the defenseless Choctaws instantly.<sup>186</sup>

No immediate punishment or retributive reaction occurred after the murders, likely resulting from the fact the colony lacked a police system.<sup>187</sup> In fact, by the time Noyan departed on his diplomatic mission to the Choctaws some “six months” later, local informants noted the Choctaws “did not doubt that these two young men had killed the Indians.”<sup>188</sup> How the Choctaws arrived at this conclusion is difficult to ascertain. It could be that some Choctaws knew the usual hunting grounds of the couple and recognized these young men as the last to have been seen entering the area before their disappearance. Some Choctaws may have pointed to other evidence as well, although the documentary record is frustratingly sparse in details. If either of these men returned with the gun, or even the pouch, of the *tasca*, other Choctaws would have instantly suggested their involvement in the couple’s disappearance, because these items almost always bore personalized materials and markings. Regardless of how they knew who the murderers were, Choctaws pressured the French into action, and the commissary of Mobile Bizotton de St. Martin, acting for the Superior Council, arrested the half-brothers and their slave. Once the Choctaws had discovered the French authorities held the suspected murderers in custody, they demanded action. At the annual meeting for gift distribution in Mobile, Governor Bienville assured justice, and even went so far as to open the colony’s coffers to “pay for the expenses of such witnesses as the Choctaw wished to leave behind at

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<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

<sup>187</sup> Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil’s Empire: French Colonial New Orleans* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 189-218.

<sup>188</sup> Bizotton to Maurepas, 15 December 1738 in AC C13A 23: 200-2 quoted in Galloway, “Barthelemy Murders,” 250; Noyan to Maurepas, 4 January 1739 in *MPAFD*, 4: 161.

Mobile to await the outcome of the trial.”<sup>189</sup> Since they were held by the Superior Council in New Orleans, the half-brothers needed to be moved to Mobile for the trial, but weather delayed this until December 24.

Transit to Mobile pushed the trial back to January 10, 1739. Found guilty and sentenced to death, the half-brothers were scheduled for execution on January 14. Their slave was “dismissed as guiltless.” The four-day interim period between sentencing and execution reveals much about French understandings of martial masculinities. First, as Patricia Galloway highlights in her case study of the murders, the half-brothers remained resolute in their conviction regarding the appropriateness of their violent behavior. The younger brother, Barthelemy, proved especially stubborn in his claims to innocence. As audience to the trial, Edmé Gatien Salmon reported that Barthelemy “had no notion of guilt,” citing “the dangerous times then prevailing.” Even in the face of death, he believed “he had performed a deed worthy of praise.” This creole definition of masculinity justified violence against Native Americans, in sharp contrast to the French colonial administration that encouraged collaboration. However, violence remained an important component to masculine identity - if not the defining characteristic. Barthelemy’s allusions to conspiracy might have been an effort to save face and salvage his claims to innocence, but considering the recent movements of the *petit nations* in lieu of Choctaw expansion, an assertion that colonists lived in “dangerous times” sounds more rational than artifice. Because of this, it may be easier to explain why the records indicate that the authorities changed the method of execution after the sentence was issued. Salmon’s trial summary notes the half-brothers were “to have their heads broken”

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<sup>189</sup> Galloway, “Barthelemy Murders,” 251.

(“*La tête cassée*”) – an expression normally used by the French to describe tomahawking – illustrating a willingness on the part of Bienville to allow justice to be administered by the French colonial administration in Choctaw fashion in order to prove the sincerity of French intentions to make the unfortunate situation right. Punishment in Louisiana was flexible according to each individual case. This type of sentence was not altogether uncommon, although almost always reserved for Native offenders. For example, during proceedings following the Natchez revolt, Governor Périer tried the Female Sun of the Flour Village with complicity for European deaths and ruled she and her followers “were to die by the same torment that they had wanted for the others.”<sup>190</sup> However, in the case of the Barthelemy brothers, the initial appeals to the Choctaw ethic of restitution must have met public resistance either from French officials sympathetic to Barthelemy’s racial views, or perhaps even from the family of the half-brothers petitioning for an execution that did not include bodily mutilation. Whatever the reason, the manner of execution changed, with the official report submitted to Maurepas in May of 1739 describing death by firing squad, the typical form of public execution.<sup>191</sup>

Like the Choctaw couple they murdered, the fate of the half-brothers’ bodies is unknown. The names “Philippe” and “Barthelemy” appear heavily crossed out in the margins of the *registre mortuaire* of Mobile. With the exception of this vague contemporary redaction, no other burial records for the two half-brothers exist. Some possible explanations exist. Bienville may have allowed the Choctaws who remained in Mobile to take the bodies, although this scenario is unlikely, as Choctaw cultural norms

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<sup>190</sup> Quoted in Milne, *Natchez Country*, 198.

<sup>191</sup> The only extant source of this trial can only be found in Salmon’s summary, as the Superior Council records both in France and at the Louisiana Historical Center appear to have been destroyed; see Galloway, “Barthelemy Murders,” 251 n.29.

dictated that burial was reserved only for those deemed honorable — a description that clearly did not apply to the creoles. This manipulated record may also indicate an effort to literally strike out the unfortunate event from memory as quickly as possible, or even to graphically illustrate to the Choctaws that the French colonial administration wanted to distance themselves from the actions of the half-brothers. It is unknown if this mnemonic practice would resonate with the Choctaws' predominantly oral culture; the few remaining Choctaw pictographs do not correlate in structure or appearance to a redaction, suggesting that the audience had to physically be in attendance to watch Governor Bienville literally strike the names from the records.<sup>192</sup> Lastly, as Galloway suggests, the decision to execute the creoles may have been highly unpopular among the colony's *habitants*, and this annotation may represent an effort by the two-time governor to disassociate himself from the controversial ruling.<sup>193</sup>

While potentially unpopular among the colonists, the execution of the half-brothers did succeed in confirming French understanding of Choctaw notions of *lex talionis*. French colonial justice designed for retribution successfully resolved Choctaw demands for restitution. Choctaws did not fail to recognize this, facilitating reconciliation between the two groups. With relations between the French and Choctaws thawing, Choctaw headmen appeared to get along better with each other as well, with a majority

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<sup>192</sup> Bernard Romans includes an example of Choctaw hieroglyphs in *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, ed. Braund (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 150. The caption reads: "an expedition by seventy men, led by seven principal warriors, and eight of inferior rank, had in an action killed nine of their enemies, of which they brought the scalps, and that the place where it was marked was the first publick place in their territories where they arrived with the scalps" (151).

<sup>193</sup> Like Salmon's trial summary mentioned above, the *registre mortuaire* is also problematic. Galloway had the presence of the names confirmed in the original copy in April 1980 by The Most Reverend Oscar H. Lipscomb, archbishop of Mobile. Based on a research trip in August 2016, the author can confirm Galloway's observation that the redactions do not appear on the photostat copy of the *registre* currently held by the Alabama Department of History and Archives. See Galloway, "Barthelemy Murders," 251 n.32.



accepting a renewed unilateral French foreign policy. Choctaw decisions to re-embrace the French relied not only on mutually intelligible demonstrations of restitution, but also from news that Red Shoe's trip to Georgia proved unsuccessful. Alibamon Mingo's predictions were accurate. Disenchanted with the amount of English goods available to him and his *tasca* – who allegedly received “nothing at all” – Red Shoe fell in line with the rest of his fellow Choctaw headmen. He placed his efforts to conclude a Chickasaw peace on an indefinite hiatus, instead choosing to support the continuation of the war.<sup>194</sup> Red Shoe paid dearly for his abandonment of the Chickasaws: in 1740, they killed seventeen of his followers.<sup>195</sup> In response, the war chief of Couëchitto initiated a private war against the Chickasaws in observance of the Choctaw ethic of restitution.

Even the addition of Red Shoe's declared support, however, could not help avoid Bienville's second campaign against the Chickasaws from ending in disaster. Throughout 1739, he repeatedly delayed deployment, each time claiming he needed to secure more supplies to assure victory, in the process often uttering guarantees to his superiors that the French would set off “as soon as possible.”<sup>196</sup> Between the four winter months of November 1739 and February 1740, Bienville remained in camp at Fort Assumption near present-day Memphis, Tennessee. His indecision resulted in a waste of valuable, finite resources. Bienville's campaign – so reliant upon essential Native American warrior support – dwindled, as native allies left to participate in winter hunts.<sup>197</sup> Once again,

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<sup>194</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, 20 May 1739 in *MPAFD*, 1: 395-6.

<sup>195</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, 20 May 1739 in *MPAFD*, 1: 396.

<sup>196</sup> Bienville to Louboey, 8 December 1739 in *MPAFD*, 1: 411; Bienville, “Deliberations of the Council of War,” 1 June 1740 in *MPAFD*, 1: 431.

<sup>197</sup> An estimate of necessary supplies for Bienville's second Chickasaw campaign is found in Broutin to Maurepas, 15 February 1740 in *MPAFD*, 1: 423-7. Notably, the animals that were required to move all the war materiel succumbed to the harsh weather; see Beauchamp to Maurepas, 21 May 1740 in *MPAFD*, 1: 463-4. These repeated failures caused a rift between Salmon and Bienville, with the former reporting to

Bienville faced submitting to Chickasaw peace stipulations.<sup>198</sup> His tragicomic final term as governor ended in what was becoming a familiar sight: admission of French martial incompetence in the face of native martial superiority.

Even though Bienville's approach to the Barthelemy murders illustrated the compatibility of Choctaw notions of masculinity centered on restitution with French notions of masculinity centered on retribution, the second failed Chickasaw campaign solidified Choctaw conceptions of inferior French martial masculinity throughout the 1740s. In particular, Red Shoe of Couëchitto, observing this disaster unfold for the French, became more and more convinced of French political and military inferiority, pushing him further toward the English. Although the English had failed to provide adequate goods during his trip to Georgia, they did not repeatedly flounder militarily on such a large scale as the French under Bienville's leadership, nor did they seemingly ignore Choctaw calls for increased trade traffic. Peace with the Chickasaws proved problematic in the immediate sense, but concerns regarding war-weariness had already permeated most Choctaw villages. If the Chickasaw campaigns demonstrated anything, it was that the French could not exert their agenda on their native neighbors. The French would continue to flail as the colonial administration transitioned from rule under Bienville to Pierrre de Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil-Cavagnial, who repeatedly mentioned "the *Embarras*" he experienced "for want of Indian Goods."<sup>199</sup> With patience,

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Maurepas that Bienville's supply requests were impossible to fulfill; see Salmon to Maurepas, 29 June 1740 in *MPAFD*, 1: 469.

<sup>198</sup> Sieur de Céloron negotiated the peace; see Bienville to Maurepas 6 May 1740 in *MPAFD*, 1: 451-8.

<sup>199</sup> John Appy, "Extracts in English taken from Volumes 1 and 2 of Vaudreuil's Letterbooks", LO 26, p. 12, 29, 40 in the Vaudreuil Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Red Shoe's longed for Choctaw-Chickasaw peace would eventually come to fruition, and with it, the supposed bounty of English trade.

**Chapter Three**  
***Hatak itahoba:***  
**Masculinity and Diplomacy in Beauchamp's Journal**

The crack of metal hatchet on human bone ripped through the heavy August air, echoing off the shimmering surface of the Tombigbee River and signaling the end of Henri de Verbois' life. Verbois had arrived in Louisiana colony in 1737, and his reputation as a “very well behaved and dedicated” soldier brought him a promotion to the rank of gentleman cadet within three years. In 1742, he ranged for the French against the Crown's long-time native enemies, the Chickasaws, and his experience with Louisiana's native nations led to his reassignment to Fort Tombecbé in late 1745. Now he was dead, struck down by the same Choctaws that assisted him on his earlier campaigns against the Chickasaws. Verbois' assailants, led by Red Shoe of Couëchitto, had overwhelmed his party, which included another soldier and the trader Petit, before he could react. Red Shoe's *tascas* then swiftly scalped the three Frenchmen, producing war trophies as well as recruitment materials to be sent to the neighboring Chickasaws and Creeks in hopes of expanding the ranks of Red Shoe's Anglophile camp throughout the Native South. With this deadly ambush, Red Shoe openly declared war on the French. In response, the French wanted him dead.

The war chief of Couëchitto's definitive break with the French was not an impulsive decision, but one long in the making. Although by the end of the 1730s Red Shoe had broadcast his wavering interest in establishing an Anglo-Choctaw trade, the next decade brought with it further English flirtations in order to gain more merchandise and substantiate his claims to power. While the Chickasaw campaigns of 1741-1743 provided Choctaw *tasca* a theater to prove themselves - including those who participated in a massive raiding party numbering 1,500 in August 1742 - by the following summer many headmen reportedly grew "tired of the War." Peace talks between the Chickasaws and Choctaws once more began in earnest in 1745, the same year Verbois arrived at his new post at Ft. Tombecbé. Minor raids consistently frustrated Choctaw-Chickasaw peace talks, but by October overall Choctaw war weariness, coupled with "the disappointment they suffer[ed] from the French in the matter of Indian Goods," worked to legitimize Red Shoe's proposals, much to the concern of the French.<sup>200</sup> Indeed, Red Shoe abandoned any façade of catering to French wishes early in 1746, when he decided to forego the annual gift-giving meeting at Mobile in favor of traveling to the Chickasaws to finalize a peace and gain access to English goods.

Red Shoe's murder of Verbois and two others would call into question the vitality of the Franco-Choctaw intercultural alliance by testing the willingness of leaders from both groups to adhere to the policy of *lex talionis* ("blood for blood") that had become *de facto* framework in the wake of the murders of two Choctaws at the hand of the Barthelemy half-brothers in 1739. Unlike that crime, the culprit was not a random, misguided youth, but perhaps the most powerful headman in Choctaw country. But, like

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<sup>200</sup> John Appy, "Extracts in English taken from Volumes 1 and 2 of Vaudreuil's Letterbooks," LO 26, 2, 21 in the Vaudreuil Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

the youngster Barthlemey, Red Shoe framed the murders as expressions of masculinity, casting Verbois and the other victims as less than men. Red Shoe referred to his three victims as “people who didn’t amount to much,” disregarding the military ranks of the slain soldier and cadet. In doing so, he refused to acknowledge these men as warriors, therefore depriving them an essential component of a Choctaw definition of masculinity. He left no doubt of the status he attributed to the three Frenchmen, considering the murders as “no more important than if he had killed some wood rats that were only in their country to eat their chickens.”<sup>201</sup> To Red Shoe, these men were no more than vermin, beasts that resided on the ground and often associated with the Under World in Choctaw cosmology.<sup>202</sup> With these strong words, Red Shoe rejected the notions of mutually understood martial masculinity that undergirded Franco-Choctaw relations in the early eighteenth century. But still, the Frenchmen were dead at the hands of the Choctaw and their deaths required a response in kind. However, retribution - or, as the French so often called it, “satisfaction” - would be no easy task. Therefore, Governor Vaudreuil placed his trust in one of his most reliable officers, Jadart de Beauchamp, to meet and communicate French demands regarding justice to Choctaw headmen in autumn 1746.

This chapter focuses specifically on the masculine discourse that epitomized Franco-Choctaw diplomacy in the wake of Verbois’ murder. Rhetoric deployed by both Choctaws and the Frenchman Beauchamp during an assembly at the Choctaw village of

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<sup>201</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp (1746) in *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion*, 5 Vols., eds. Dunbar Rowland, A.G. Sanders, and Patricia Galloway (Jackson: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1927-1932 and Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 4: 270 (henceforth referred to as *MPAFD*).

<sup>202</sup> Charles Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 128.

Chickasawhay reiterated the themes that had become so central to healthy relations between the two groups: Beauchamp and the Choctaw headmen he treated with all asserted and appealed to a mutually intelligible martial masculinity that emphasized in varying degrees martial prowess, provisional responsibilities, and notions of trustworthiness. Choctaws and Frenchmen appealed to each other through these values, while at the same time, volleying accusations towards each other to effectively refute the other's claims to masculinity. Importantly, Beauchamp's journal of the proceedings provides a survey of the varied motivations and standpoints of particular Choctaw headmen as well as how Choctaw notions of masculinity grounded in restitution obstructed French notions of masculinity grounded in retribution. While Choctaws adhered to a system of justice best characterized as "blood for blood" that allowed for possible substitute executions (as long as ultimately there were the same number of dead), the French demanded mortal retribution from specific guilty individuals, namely, in the form of the heads of Red Shoes and his followers.

Beauchamp approached this meeting for retribution with confidence, buoying himself with a steadfast ethnocentrism attributing every recent Choctaw success to French support. He repeatedly deployed this constructed narrative as he and his entourage traveled on waterways and from village to village on their way to their final destination among the Chickasawhays. In many ways, his travelling party was representative of the multiethnic Louisiana colony. There were men from scattered Atlantic World locales such as Switzerland, France, the African interior, Spain, as well as a Native American

slave.<sup>203</sup> The Naniabas, a small tribe that settled on the Tombigbee River above its confluence with the Alabama River, hosted Beauchamp's party on their route. Many Naniabas urged caution to Beauchamp before he departed their village after a night of rest, to which the French officer declared, "I did not fear for my life in the least." He even guaranteed to "put everything back in order" between the French and Choctaws, in effect whitening "the ground the ill-intentioned had reddened."<sup>204</sup>

After a little less than two weeks in transit, the French party arrived at Chickasawhay around noon on September 28. The next morning, Beauchamp delivered Governor Vaudreuil's speech to his Choctaw audience, gathered at the request of the French to discuss Red Shoe. Vaudreuil's demand was simple: the French would accept nothing less than the heads of Red Shoe and those of his followers responsible for the deaths of Verbois' party. Unsurprisingly, his message intentionally appealed to three fundamental components of masculinity: Choctaw males' roles as providers, their trustworthy characters, and their martial prowess.<sup>205</sup> Speaking for the governor,

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<sup>203</sup> Beauchamp's Journal includes a roster of all members of the party. The group included Swiss lieutenant Jean Philippe Goujon de Grondol; cadet Dominique de Verbois, the brother of the slain Henri; the interpreter Roussève; ensign Antoine Pechon de Conte, who spent eighteen months living among the Choctaw as a teenager in order to learn their language; an unnamed French corporal; four other unnamed soldiers (two French and two Swiss); "a Spaniard to take care of the horses loaded with merchandise"; and two slaves (one Indian, one African) "belonging to M. De Beauchamp" See *MPAFD*, 4: 269-270. Jean Philippe Goujon de Grondol's biographical information can be found in Bienville to Maurepas, 28 June 1736 in *MPAFD*, 1: 306n. See also "Pechon de Conte" in *France's Forgotten Legion: Service Records of French Military and Administrative Personnel Stationed in the Mississippi Valley and Gulf Coast Region, 1699-1769*, ed. Carl Brasseaux (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 2:5:61-53 (henceforth referred to a *FFL*). The first generations of slaves in Louisiana often originated in the African interior; see Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1998), 77.

<sup>204</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 270.

<sup>205</sup> Jay M. Smith notes that appeals to trustworthiness helped undergird early modern French conceptions of virtue, and that this definition of virtue was not exclusively applied to the nobility in early modern French print culture; see Smith, *Nobility Reimagined: The Patriotic Nation in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).



Beauchamp echoed the conclusion that Red Shoe of Couëchitto “was only trying to disgrace his nation,” an opening salvo that struck directly at the individual honor of Choctaws in attendance. He then spoke directly about provision. Although the role of provider was traditionally split between both Choctaw men and women, increasing engagement in the Atlantic economy had resulted in more gender-specific tasks, of which the French identified and privileged a patriarchal role of provider.<sup>206</sup> From a French perspective influenced by traditional Western gender roles, mens’ labor allowed for domestic tranquility. Pointing to the welfare of women and children, Beauchamp argued that Choctaw families and kin would suffer greatly if the headmen did not provide the requested restitution, thereby forcing the French to cut off trade. “What would become of you?” Beauchamp asked the assembly, “If we abandon you, what resources do you have?” According to Beauchamp, the Choctaws could not hope to replace the lost trade with the French by simply turning east to the English. “To whom would you have recourse, the English?” he chided before dismissing the viability of this option. “It would be completely impossible for them to furnish you with a quarter of your needs,” Beauchamp assured his audience, the result of which he ominously predicted would leave “your wives and children...dying of miseries.”<sup>207</sup>

Simply put, Beauchamp framed action against Red Shoe as a matter of life or death. In a way, he was not entirely wrong - he simply arrived at an ethnocentrically misguided conclusion. The only way to avoid this potential misery was for the Choctaw to offer retribution for the deaths of the three Frenchmen by delivering three heads in

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<sup>206</sup> James T. Carson, *Searching for the Bright Path: The Mississippi Choctaws from Prehistory to Removal* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003); Claudio Saunt, *New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>207</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 272.

return. The implication of whose heads should be offered was not lost on Beauchamp's Choctaw audience. In fact, as Beauchamp quickly reminded his listeners, a mutual understanding of *lex talionis* had allowed the French and Choctaws to navigate tense moments in the past, citing the fallout and resolution of the Barthelemy murders. "We ask nothing of you but justice," he argued, "since M. de Bienville had justice done you in 1740 for a man and woman that some Frenchmen had killed." Beauchamp reminded the assembly that the Barthelemy retribution established a diplomatic precedent, echoing past Choctaw promises that they would "do the same for the French if the Choctaws committed any actions of that [meaning murderous] kind."<sup>208</sup> Choctaws from all divisions rarely attacked, let alone killed, Frenchmen, making this an unusual situation to begin with. Further complicating matters was the fact that for the first time in recent memory the accused was a headman — indeed, a medal chief — as opposed to a youth or minor warrior.

The Choctaws, as evidenced by their behavior during the early Barthelemy trials, understood the notion of "blood-for-blood" justice the French were asking for. But they also recognized alternative forms of equal justice that did not necessarily require the execution of the original guilty party. What mattered more to the Choctaw headmen in attendance was a resolution that brought about equilibrium for all parties (i.e., the same number of dead); they cared less about the punishment of a specific individual wrongdoer.

Beauchamp alluded to the French-constructed narrative grounded on the notion of Choctaw dependency, casting the French as holding the keys to Choctaw masculinity and

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<sup>208</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 272.

security. Urging the Choctaw “to remember their former state,” Beauchamp reminded those in attendance that the French “put arms in their hands to defend themselves against the nations that were opposing” and enslaving them, namely, the Chickasaws, Creeks, and English. He suggested that the Choctaws were only able to assert themselves as a regional power in the Native South because of this French aid, with successful military campaigns cementing their reputation as a nation of feared warriors “respected by other nations.” Beauchamp concluded bluntly, that if the Choctaw were “men today. . .it is to the French alone that they are obliged for it.”<sup>209</sup> The French call for justice proved an audacious message because it mimicked Red Shoe’s own words: just as Red Shoe rhetorically emasculated the three Frenchmen by refusing to acknowledge their warrior status by referring to them as “people who didn’t amount to much,” Beauchamp similarly rhetorically shamed the entire *tasca* class of the Choctaw nation by insinuating the French were ultimately responsible for any of their previous battlefield successes.<sup>210</sup>

Choctaw reactions to Beauchamp’s words varied. Some headmen nominally agreed with the French request for retribution, while others dismissed the address. Regardless of their individual stances on the subjects, however, all Choctaw headmen framed their responses according to the same themes that Beauchamp emphasized - namely, those of martial prowess, provision, and trustworthiness and honor. Importantly, all Choctaws emphasized their own political autonomy, not a submissive acquiescence to French wishes. In other words, if retribution would occur, it would be according to Choctaw terms. At times, this perspective led to seemingly contradictory statements that denounced the murderous act performed by Red Shoe and his pro-English followers

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<sup>209</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 272-3.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

while also failing to guarantee the fulfillment of French demands for Red Shoe's head. As a result, Beauchamp told his audience, "I was chagrined to see that all those who boasted so loudly not only had done nothing for us but on the contrary it seemed to me that they were all in league with those that committed this horrible act." Beauchamp called his most vocal supporters liars to their faces, questioning the Choctaws' collective sincerity, especially since they appeared to him "so tranquil after the assurances that they had given...to die for the service of the French."<sup>211</sup>

If the Choctaws failed to render justice for the murders, Vaudreuil proposed a substantial French embargo on all trade items into Choctaw country. If allowed to happen, it would have substantial socio-cultural consequences. Beauchamp understood this completely, and for this reason cast himself in a role that paralleled Choctaw headmen - a provider through redistribution. "A man like me," he declared, "never went anywhere without merchandise." Specifically, he stressed his ability to ban access to goods: he noted that the merchandise he and his men toted to the Chickasawhay village was predominantly for their own subsistence. A surplus, however, was reserved for gifts "to those whom [Beauchamp] judged worthy."<sup>212</sup> Although Beauchamp recognized how authority lay in one's ability to redistribute goods, his assertion of masculinity and power according to traditional Choctaw definitions erred in its emphasis on the *denial* of those very goods. Stinginess may have been viewed favorably by a French royal court concerned by the bottom line in a time of continental warfare, but it had no place in Choctaw towns where magnanimity allowed for the accumulation of social capital.

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<sup>211</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 285.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

First and foremost, Choctaw headmen and French officials built their alliance on trade and access to provisions. Of primary importance was accessibility to European manufactured firearms and ammunition, as well as individuals' knowledge in weapons maintenance and repair. These items, and the ability of headmen to subsequently redistribute them, formed an essential component not only to Choctaw masculinity, but to Choctaw political authority in general. This reason alone may help explain some Choctaw's willingness to listen to demands for Red Shoe's head and why some, like Quikanabé Mingo, considered the French their "benefactors."<sup>213</sup>

From a more practical standpoint, Choctaw villages would be without means of protection. Safety concerns aside, however, Choctaw appropriation of the flintlock rifle substantiated claims to masculinity, both as a warrior and as a hunter. Alibamon Mingo, a medal chief and the most influential Francophile headman in attendance, reiterated as much during a speech, when he "remembered perfectly well his former state," an allusion to the inability to protect against English-sponsored Chickasaw slave raids earlier in the century, as well as his difficulty in securing enough skins to adequately provide trade goods for his family and kin. "If the Choctaws lost the French they ought to consider themselves dead," he ended with a convincing flourish, since "[our] wives and children would not only be naked as in the past but would die of wretchedness and hunger."<sup>214</sup> Later, on October 6, Alibamon Mingo delivered another "handsome speech" in favor of French retribution by adopting Beauchamp's rhetoric of dependency and conflating it

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<sup>213</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 279.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

with Choctaw masculine responsibility by stating how Choctaw women and children “would die of hunger” if villages lost access to European arms.<sup>215</sup>

The captain of the host-village Chickasawhay was the first headman who responded to Beauchamp’s message, sharing worries regarding Choctaw reliance on European firearms. On September 29, the captain spoke nervously of the recent widespread adoption of European weapons resulting in Choctaw *tasca* having “completely lost the custom” of using bows and arrows. This created a dire situation for Choctaw men “who have a family to feed and support.” On October 12, the captain made an additional short didactic performance. He began by showing the assembly a bow and arrows, then explained “he had just tried his old arms, but that he could no longer use them, having forgotten how.” Although he hoped “to touch the hearers” with this cautionary tale in order “to make them understand how miserable they would be” without the French, Beauchamp noted this demonstration failed to elicit any noteworthy reaction.<sup>216</sup>

A number of headmen from the villages in the southern Six Towns division, however, disagreed with the concerns of headmen like Alibamon Mingo and the captain of Chickasawhay. During deliberations, Beauchamp grew frustrated by the complaints and intractable attitudes of the Six Towns chiefs, and he proved particularly irked by complaints that if the French failed to furnish or repair the chief’s war supplies, the Choctaws were willing to abandon European arms altogether, having “recourse to their old arms – meaning by that the bow and arrow.” Beauchamp called their bluff, questioning their martial masculinity. “I made them understand,” he later recorded, “that

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<sup>215</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 281.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 289-290.

it was a very small resource for people who had lost the habit of it.” The chiefs offered Beauchamp a biting response, quickly voicing confidence in their ability to wage “wars with some nations,” even if forced to fight only with traditional weaponry.<sup>217</sup> These responses allowed the Choctaw headmen to disavow the French narrative of dependency while in turn giving them a forum in which to posture their superior martial talents.

As these examples show, provision and trade were intertwined with Choctaw abilities to maintain a high standard of military prowess. In this regard, Beauchamp also attempted to find a middle ground in which to curry the Choctaw’s favor, ending his speech by correlating his military rank as major with trustworthiness. “A man like me,” he proclaimed, “was incapable of lying to them.”<sup>218</sup> Most headmen, however, deployed their own military exploits and successes as a means of demonstrating their attachment to the French, even if they proved unwilling to guarantee French retribution. Many recited their own narratives of battlefield success. Even though Toupe Oumastabé, captain of the Conchas, advised Beauchamp against departing from Chickasawhay mid-assembly because of threats to the French commander’s life, he delivered a biting anti-French “harangue” on October 6. The perceived inconsistency between Toupe Oumastabé’s words and actions frustrated the French major, who described the speech as “filled with evasions, ambiguities, and fears, bringing up the many difficulties in this affair” – a clear attempt to undermine Toupe Oumastabé’s claims to manhood by emphasizing the raw fear the Choctaw captain professed. Toupe Oumastabé, however, countered these

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<sup>217</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 281. By “other nations,” Beauchamp believes the Six Town chiefs were referring to the Creeks, not the partisans of Red Shoe.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 276.

accusations of timidity by “repeating from time to time his great deeds,” and used history as a defensive mechanism against Beauchamp’s defamatory statements.<sup>219</sup>

Toupe Oumastabé was not alone in bragging about his victories in order to deflect challenges to masculinity. Although not physically present at the assembly in Chickasawhay, a letter from commandant François Marie Joseph Hazeur at Fort Tombecbé to Beauchamp related that Paemingo of the Western village of Cushtusha claimed the French had insulted his masculine status as a warrior. Hazeur wrote how Paemingo subjected him to a tongue-lashing “with vehemence,” with the headman complaining “of the little attention that was paid to him.” Paemingo then proceeded to recount “what he had done very recently for the French, almost risking his life and those of his warriors for their service.” Alluding to his martial capabilities, Paemingo described how he “prowled for a long time around the Chickasaw villages,” eventually ambushing and killing – although unable to secure a scalp – a young man. Although lacking a raid trophy, Paemingo believed himself worthy of recognition as an equal man by the French. “He was so well known to the French,” Hazeur explained, “that he thought he would be rewarded.” A lack of merchandise, however, heightened the slight he perceived against him, with Paemingo threatening that “his last recourse would be to play [the French] with rods,” beating them with the aid of his warriors. In short, Paemingo of the Cushtushas would take physical action against his mockers in order to prove his masculinity and in the process dispel any rumors stating otherwise.<sup>220</sup> Similarly (although perhaps most dramatically), the aforementioned captain of the Chickasawhays ripped his shirt off in the presence of his countrymen to show the “wounds that he still carries and that he received

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<sup>219</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 278.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 285-6.



in [French] service,” an effective tactic according to Beauchamp, who voiced his approval of these “convincing proofs.”<sup>221</sup>

A small number of Choctaws told Beauchamp they tried to march on Red Shoe’s pro-English faction as soon as they heard of Verbois’ death, perhaps an attempt to prove their willingness to fight. Yet they were unable to maintain enthusiasm for these campaigns after a couple of hours. On October 3, Taskanangouchi of Blue Wood - who called himself “destroyer of the English” - related how he “instantly sounded the general alarm” after receiving the news of the three murdered Frenchmen. He successfully raised sixty warriors in his own village before marching to East Yazoo “beating the drum, thinking that all the Choctaws would take sides in this affair.” Upon arrival, however, he observed the climate in East Yazoo less warhawkish; he found “no one who would support him,” and because of this the war march petered out. The Taskanangouchi also recalled how the chiefs of the villages of Blue Wood and East Yazoo called him “insane” because they thought the current circumstances held “too many risks to run.” Most importantly, the chiefs reprimanded the Taskanangouchi of Blue Wood for acting unilaterally – a complaint similar to that levied against Red Shoe in his quest to establish an Anglo-Choctaw alliance – reminding the captain “that first it was necessary to get the opinion of all the chiefs of the nation.” In other words, Choctaw manners of governance dictated the appropriate expressions of martial masculinity; to act violently on one’s own accord was viewed as inappropriate behavior.<sup>222</sup>

Also on October 3, Beauchamp privately met with Quikanabé Mingo at night, because the headman claimed Red Shoe “had spies” in the assembly that watched,

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<sup>221</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 275

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

recorded, and relayed details from the deliberations back to Couëchitto. Finally in a setting that allowed for frank talk, Quikanabé Mingo – like Taskanangouchi of Blue Wood earlier – stated “that as soon as he had heard this sad news (in reference to the three slain Frenchmen), he decided to go on the march to do justice for it.” He also encountered unwillingness on the part of other Choctaw headmen, stating he failed “because no one had wanted to back him up.” Indeed, if able to drum up sufficient manpower, he “was ready to start again.” He asserted his manhood, proclaiming himself unafraid “to risk his life to avenge the Frenchmen and establish peace in the nation.”<sup>223</sup>

In other moments, Choctaw headmen proposed going to war against the Chickasaws instead of punishing other fellow Choctaws. Imataha Mingo of Ebitoupougoulas told Beauchamp that if the French major “commanded him to go to war on the Chickasaws he would leave immediately with his warriors.” Beauchamp’s insistence on action against Red Shoe, however, provoked no such enthusiasm. Imataha Mingo understood the implications of a potential civil war, stating “he was too afraid to fight with his own nation.” Collectively, the Choctaw leaders that met with Beauchamp had established the parameters of acceptable violence and remained steadfast in their adherence to traditional practices that discouraged conflict among themselves. In fact, Choctaw restraint in the face of factional conflict paralleled the manner in which most Frenchmen conducted themselves during the toxic confessional wars of the seventeenth century. Avoidance of outright violence came to be characteristic of everyday interactions within provincial French towns during their own civil wars over religion. As historian Keith Luria has noted, violence became prevalent in these contexts only after

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<sup>223</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 279.

the interjection of royal officials who urged direct action.<sup>224</sup> This was an early modern phenomenon that ironically manifested more in French militarized outposts throughout Louisiana, operating under direct order from the royal governor, than in France itself, where centralized authority dissipated quickly in the *pays d'États*. As Choctaw restitution was inherently a local concern – one that could only be properly resolved within a particular kinship network or town – efforts to sidestep any unnecessary bloodshed by the Choctaws through the use of surrogates while maintaining amicable relations with the French represented a logically consistent solution. Beauchamp, however, still clinging to a mutually understood policy of *lex talionis*, failed to recognize Choctaw actions as rational and measured, and instead considered efforts at finding alternative means of placating the French – such as making the path to the Chickasaws red once more – as attempts at “making a trophy of cowardice.”<sup>225</sup>

Although Beauchamp focused primarily on Choctaw battlefield enthusiasm to judge their allegiance to French interests in view of a growing Anglophile faction, he also used other metrics to gauge the trustworthiness of the headmen he spoke with. For example, Imataha Mingo of Ebitoupougoulas pledged he would attempt to bring about French satisfaction, although he also qualified his intentions “without...promising anything positive” due to the situation growing increasingly volatile. His willingness left a favorable impression on Beauchamp, who appealed to Imataha Mingo's masculinity and

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<sup>224</sup> Keith P. Luria, *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early Modern France* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of American Press, 2005). Luria is writing against the earlier claims of Barbara Diefendorf, who focused on urban religious violence in *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) and Brad S. Gregory, who argued for the veracity of those actively seeking violent martyrdom in *Salvation at the Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

<sup>225</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 283.

approved his “ambition.”<sup>226</sup> At other times, Beauchamp considered mere attendance as evidence of faithfulness, and therefore indicative of a Choctaw’s trustworthiness, honor, and masculinity. Perhaps the clearest example of this was Beauchamp’s dealings with Quikanabé Mingo, a headman already burdened by the burials of his children. Upon hearing news of Beauchamp’s visit to the Chickasawhays, he immediately left “the cabin where he was weeping.” To willingly interrupt this mourning period speaks volumes not only to the serious nature of the unraveling factionalism then afflicting Choctaw country, but also the amount of personal investment certain headmen had in its resolution.<sup>227</sup>

In addition to ambition and attendance, Beauchamp also found the lenses of race and reputation useful in determining the trustworthiness of members of his Choctaw audience. His allusion to race and reputation also highlighted the larger potential native geopolitical repercussions of Choctaw factionalism. Red Shoe of Couëchitto gave the scalps of Verbois and his comrades to Chickasaw allies to be carried to their community among the Creeks at Breed Camp. The scalps would serve as a sign of the renewed peace between the Choctaw and Chickasaw peoples, united in their hatred of the French. Yet the pro-English Choctaw recruitment call went unanswered. The Upper Creeks disagreed, stopping the Chickasaw messengers *en route* and refusing to allow the scalps passage through their lands. Perhaps sensing some skepticism among his audience, Beauchamp noted to his Chickasawhay listeners that the French were not the source of the Creeks’ decision to reject the scalps, but news that came directly from the Alabamas themselves

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<sup>226</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 283.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

by way of an Apalachee runner.<sup>228</sup> Beauchamp appealed to Choctaw masculine cultural norms, which abhorred lying, while at the same time elevating this general characteristic of truthfulness to a racial quality. Since the Apalachee runner “was a red man like them,” Beauchamp reasoned, his Choctaw audience should “have more faith in him” and take the messenger at his word.<sup>229</sup> Whereas Beauchamp framed trustworthiness as a universal quality found among Native Americans, some Choctaw headmen such as Red Shoe of Yanabé voiced concerns about Choctaw reputations abroad, believing that if they did not provide the French retribution, Choctaws “would be despised by the other nations, who would consider them with reason as ungrateful and treacherous.” To any that doubted the veracity of his claims, he issued the following challenge: “if the Choctaws doubted what he had told them, they could choose some deputies from among their people who were trustworthy [to go] with him to the Alabamas, who would report to them what the nations of that quarter think about them.”<sup>230</sup>

Reputations abroad did not constitute superficial concerns. The kinship networks of the Native South put Red Shoe of Yanabé in a unique position to understand the importance of Choctaw reputations because his son had married into the Upper Creek Alabama village of Conchatys. His son likely informed Red Shoe of Yanabé that Tamatlé Mingo of the Alabamas was on his way to meet with Beauchamp, and this Upper Creek delegation arrived on October 12 accompanied by Red Shoe of Tombecbé and Assetaoumstabé of Concha. In front of Choctaws from many villages, the Creek headman

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<sup>228</sup> As the Apalachees were not members of the Creek Confederacy, being decimated by Creek attacks in the early eighteenth century, it is likely that this runner was a slave. Personal Correspondence with Kathryn E. Holland Braund, 15 January 2018.

<sup>229</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 276.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 287-8.

launched into a lengthy speech that included “many gallantries” that sought to impress upon the Choctaws the extent to which Francophile sentiment existed in neighboring groups. Tamatlé Mingo of the Alabamas first questioned the wisdom for even considering establishing a regular Anglo-Choctaw diplomatic relationship. “Do not count on the English,” he advised, adding, “Your hopes would be ill-founded.” Tamatlé Mingo claimed the English refused to give presents and were only good for trading skins and little else. He spoke with authority, having dealt regularly with both the French and English, while also admitting, “Without the French whom [the Alabamas] had among them, they would lack munitions entirely, unless they wanted to load their guns with *limbourg* and other merchandise.” He sarcastically added that if that were the case, “perhaps the English could furnish them a little.”<sup>231</sup>

The last comment, while made in jest, highlights an important underlying assumption that emerged in deliberations between Beauchamp and his Choctaw hosts: that Red Shoe’s English allies were inherently untrustworthy, and unworthy of consideration as equal men. A deep-seated distrust of the English pervaded Alibamon Mingo’s speeches, and the Concha headman considered Red Shoe’s Anglophilia as cause enough to regard the headman of Couëchitto’s promises as “vain and fantastic.” “It was not necessary to treat with respect,” he noted in reference to the English, “people who had for a long time sought nothing but the fall and the ruin of the Choctaw nation.”<sup>232</sup> If the Choctaws proved honorable, they would refuse to deal with the Chickasaw trader James Campbell, who Tamatlé Mingo referred to as “a robber who did not dare return home.” Campbell had a Chickasaw wife, and matrilineal norms dictated that husbands

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<sup>231</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 288.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

reside in the villages of their wives. But his work as a trader, coupled with increasing tensions throughout Indian country, required long absences from the Chickasaws, supporting Tamatlé Mingo's claims Campbell abandoned the Chickasaws. Appeals to manhood aside, Tamatlé Mingo also explained that native geopolitics presently trended towards a pan-Indian French alliance, and the Choctaws would not want to be on the outside looking in. A twelve-man Shawnee delegation had recently travelled through Creek country, proclaiming its recent peace with the Cherokees which, with the mediation of the French commander at the Illinois, "had whitened the earth of the whole northern quarter." Tamatlé Mingo then informed his audience "that Alabamas and others had accepted" the peace proposed by the Shawnees, who promised the following spring to send many families to settle near Tombeché. All the nations, he concluded, had "reunited around the fire of the French like a little circle which he showed by joining his thumb to his index finger," except (apparently) the Choctaws, who, "were going to be miserable because of their faults."<sup>233</sup>

The best examples of how all these themes - martial prowess, access to provisions, and trustworthiness - coalesced to inform specific deliberations can be found in two particular discussions that bookended the assembly at Chickasawhay. After Beauchamp wrapped up his initial address, Mongoulacha Mingo of the host Chickasawhays responded first. Speaking with "anger and animosity," he quickly refused to comply with the French request of three heads as retribution and fulfillment of *lex*

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<sup>233</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 289. Céline Carayon has recently posited that non-verbal methods of communication, such as Alibamon Mingo's gestures mentioned above, may have constituted a kind of universal native language in "The Gesture Speech of Mankind": Old and New Entanglements in the Histories of American Indian and European Sign Languages," *American Historical Review* 121, no. 2 (2016): 461-491; see also Sean P. Harvey and Sarah Rivett, "Colonial-Indigenous Language Encounters in North America and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World," *Early American Studies* 15 no. 3 (2017): 442-473.

*talionis* obligations. “I do not think...that the Choctaws will give *any* heads for those Frenchmen,” Mongoulacha Mingo stated plainly, “and as for that of the Rebel Imataha Chitto [Red Shoe], it would be useless to count on it.” Although he received Beauchamp and his entourage “with evidence of friendship,” the chief of the village now revealed the full extent of his personal distrust of French intentions. Perhaps in an effort to garner support for his kin (Mongoulacha Mingo and Red Shoe were brothers-in-law), Mongoulacha Mingo shifted attention away from Red Shoe to focus on the French, admitting that “he had known for a long time that [the French] were seeking the destruction of the red men.” These allegations of distrust were rooted in the treatment of a former chief of the neighboring Tohomé people, which confirmed Mongoulacha Mingo’s suspicions of French extirpative intent. He recounted how former governor Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville ordered the Tohomé chief “sent to the Islands to make him die in the early days of the old fort at Mobile.” Beauchamp, understanding the seriousness of these allegations, immediately interrupted Mongoulacha Mingo to try to set the record straight. Describing the Tohomé in question not as a chief, but as a conjuror – in his words, a “Belle Dent” – Beauchamp claimed that it was the Tohomés who approached Bienville to have him removed over concerns that his presence spiritually tainted the village. It was explicitly not a French decision. In addition, Beauchamp clarified that the nameless Tohomé was not given a death sentence, but “had been sent to Havana,” a fact confirmed by the youngest of Bienville’s brothers, Antoine le Moyne de Chateaugé. In fact, Chateaugé reported that the Tohomé in question found refuge among a religious order and was so impressed by his post-conversion experiences “that being a Christian he



no longer thought about the red men, and thought himself lucky to have left them.”<sup>234</sup>

Beauchamp likely believed his retort would quickly extinguish any ill-notions percolating among the Chickasawhays. From his French perspective, Beauchamp had dispelled Mongoulacha Mingo’s concerns of French ethnocentrism as utter lies. In reality, however, Beauchamp may have inadvertently lent credence to Mongoulacha Mingo’s claims: he confirmed that the French willingly moved the Tohomé man to the French Caribbean. Even worse, he also admitted that in addition to the physical removal of the man from the land of his kinfolk, the French encouraged spiritual removal from the Native South through Christian indoctrination. In other words, Beauchamp unwittingly portrayed the French as complicit in the practice of cultural genocide.

Mongoulacha Mingo immediately recognized the gravity of Beauchamp’s statements. “There you see how the French are,” he retorted, before he started to again “revile [the French] with indefensible attacks.” His suspicions confirmed, Mongoulacha Mingo proclaimed “that he would never again return to favor with” the French. These new revelations, in conjunction with rumors that the French intended to recalibrate their annual gift allotment had caused Mongoulacha Mingo “to cut off his medal and throw it into a stream,” echoing the Great Chief’s reaction years before. He then proceeded to tell

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<sup>234</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 272-273 (emphasis added). Galloway considers this exchange as potential evidence that the Choctaws had already incorporated the smaller Tohomé tribe; see *MPAFD*, 4: 272. The de facto integration of the smaller Tohomé (and Naniaba) into the larger Choctaw socio-political world happened well before these groups official addition to the Choctaw nation; see *Plantation Archeology at Rivière aux Chiens, ca. 1725-1848*, eds. Gregory A. Waselkov and Bonnie L. Gums (Mobile: University of South Alabama Press for the Center for Archeological Studies, 2000). The title “conjurer” was often synonymous with witchcraft and sorcery - legitimate concerns in Choctaw society. Choctaws continued to persecute witches well into the nineteenth century. See Sarah Tuttle, *Conversations on the Choctaw Mission: by the Author of Conversations on the Bombay Mission*, 2 Vols. (Boston: T.R. Martin for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Union, 1830), 1: 24-28, 2: 40 and John R. Swanton, “Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians,” *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin*, 103 (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1931), 110, 239.

his people that “since the French were going to abandon them, it was necessary to take up the bow and arrow again.” With this proclamation, Mongoulacha Mingo appealed to the definition of manhood associated with expertise using traditional weaponry, and even claimed that he and his followers should also eschew the enticements of the English and altogether “remain poor” to illustrate how the Choctaws depended on no European support.<sup>235</sup> Provisions did not allure Mongoulacha Mingo, who recognized how they represented the slippery slope toward dependency.

Beauchamp clearly hit a nerve and worked quickly to extinguish this heated debate. Mongoulacha Mingo, however, failed to cooperate, refusing to allow Beauchamp a chance to respond to the allegations thrown at him. Beauchamp “ordered him to be quiet,” and this only further angered the Chickasawhay chief, who – according to Beauchamp – “wanted to attack me after I had imposed silence on him.” Beauchamp responded to this challenge in kind, proclaiming his own masculinity by emphasizing his combat skills. “I told him that if he had dared do such a thing,” Beauchamp wrote in his journal, “I would have killed him or had him killed on the spot.”<sup>236</sup> This may have been embellishment or wishful thinking on the part of the French major, considering he was surrounded by Mongoulacha Mingo’s Chickasawhay *tasca*. Showing restraint in the face of Beauchamp’s boasting – each word constituting a borderline death wish from a Choctaw perspective – Mongoulacha Mingo left the assembly. Storming home, he “acted like a madman at his house,” tearing down the French flag he had hung upon Beauchamp’s arrival.

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<sup>235</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 273-274. For the Great Chief’s outburst caused by being referred to as a woman by Diron d’Artaguet, see Regis du Roulet to Maurepas, 5 October 1729 in *MPAFD*, 1: 37.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 274.

If the assembly began on a tenuous footing with the barbs cast between Mongoulacha Mingo and Beauchamp, it ended, with a less dramatic but equally illuminating conversation between the French commandant and Red Shoe's older brother, Tatoulimataha, who arrived on October 13 with the chief of Tchanké. Beauchamp considered securing Tatoulimataha's support as paramount to the success of his mission: while over the previous two weeks, Beauchamp privately received individual pledges from Paemingo of Cushtusha, Taskaoumingo (the captain of Boucfouca), Pouchimataha of Toussana, and Illetaska of Immongoulacha to help bring about French retribution, completion of this plan hinged on his ability to convince an immediate member of Red Shoe's kinship network – in this case, his older brother – to strike the blow in accordance with Choctaw notions of restitution. Tatoulimataha, however, refused any such role, telling Beauchamp “he would never make an attempt on his brother's life.” And even though, like many headmen before him, Tatoulimataha recognized the French desire for satisfaction, he also made abundantly clear his unwillingness to negotiate on the matter. “The party of his brother was too strong to dare risk killing him,” Beauchamp noted, adding “that even if [Tatoulimataha] was given a warehouse full of merchandise, he would not do it.”<sup>237</sup> In this case, French appeals to masculinity by way of access to provisions fell on deaf ears. The French could not simply buy Tatoulimataha's allegiance.

Tatoulimataha offered an alternative solution, suggesting Beauchamp approach the Creeks, likely the Alabamas (who greatly valued the French presence at Ft. Toulouse) to perform retribution for the French, because “they would have authority to have [Red Shoe's] head broken.” This proposal fulfilled the basic premise of *lex talionis* while at the

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<sup>237</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 291.

same time releasing Francophile Choctaws from the uncomfortable position of potentially sparking a civil war. In other words, it removed Choctaws – with the exception of Red Shoe, of course – from the equation of frontier justice. For obvious reasons, this appealed to headmen struggling to navigate the deepening factionalism within the Choctaw nation by outsourcing restitution to the neighboring Creeks.<sup>238</sup> Yet this suggestion also ignored the recent trends towards peace in native geopolitics, evidenced by the Shawnee delegation, because it most certainly would have ignited a Creek-Choctaw war. What Tatoulimataha offered, in fact, was a plan that would in effect undermine all the efforts made by French colonial officials in both Upper and Lower Louisiana at establishing a pan-Indian alliance.<sup>239</sup> Therefore, the French faced a dilemma: did they want a universal peace in Indian country that could be used to overwhelm the English in their eastern seaboard colonies? Or did the French want individual justice and retribution? By forcing the French to declare their priorities, Tatoulimataha effectively established a Choctaw position of power in native geopolitics while limiting French diplomacy.<sup>240</sup>

Choctaws did not adopt the French ethic of retribution verbatim, instead spending their energy devising or implementing culturally-appropriate ways to deliver satisfaction to the French while still adhering to the Choctaw ethic of restitution. This was an important distinction, as Choctaws saw no need for punishment of specific guilty parties involved in the murder of a non-Choctaw. They refused to kill one of their own for the death of Verbois and sought substitutions or alternative means of satisfaction that avoided

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<sup>238</sup> The Creeks themselves followed this protocol; see Joshua Piker, *The Four Deaths of Acorn Whistler: Telling Stories in Colonial America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 9-12.

<sup>239</sup> On pan-Indian movements, see Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) and Robert M. Owens, *Red Dreams, White Nightmares: Pan-Indian Alliances in the Anglo-American Mind, 1763-1815* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015).

<sup>240</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 291.

sparkling a blood-for-blood cycle of violent justice reserved for Choctaw deaths. The hesitancy on display either practically or rhetorically during the assembly at Chickaswhay - so frustrating to Beauchamp - in fact illustrates regional claims to power. Yet Beauchamp considered these responses as inadequate, therefore casting accusations that sought to undercut the personal authority and masculinity of the Choctaw headmen in attendance. To cajole these headmen, Beauchamp deployed the same time-tested tropes alluding to masculinity – namely, those of martial prowess, material provisions, and trustworthiness – that had undergirded Franco-Choctaw relationships for decades. He should not have been surprised when a number of these Choctaws responded in kind, whether by sweeping aside Beauchamp’s entrenched narrative of material dependency or by physically confronting and challenging the masculinity of the French commandant.

Indeed, Tatoulmataha’s testimony effectively marked the conclusion of the assembly, with Beauchamp packing up to return to Mobile “by indirect and different routes” almost as soon as Red Shoe’s brother finished speaking.<sup>241</sup> The following chapter will discuss his revelations — and their socio-cultural implications — regarding the roots of Red Shoe’s anger that so shook the commandant that Beauchamp no longer saw the usefulness of calling for French retribution from his audience.

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<sup>241</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp in *MPAFD*, 4: 293.

**Chapter Four**  
***Chuka achafa:***  
**Violence and Kinship in the Choctaw Civil War**

They came and went. As the leaves began to change from verdant hues to brilliant yellows and oranges, some forty – if not more – delegates from villages scattered across Choctaw country (present-day Mississippi and western Alabama) passed through the village of Chickasawhay to discuss the demands of their French allies. To the French, the issue at hand seemed straight forward: Red Shoe of the village of Couëchitto, aided by some of his followers, had slain the trader Henri de Verbois and two others. For this, he had to die. To demand justice for the French, Governor Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil de Cavagnial asked Jadart de Beauchamp to bring about a speedy resolution to the matter. For over a month, Beauchamp recorded meetings – both public and private – between himself and numerous Choctaws in a journal.<sup>242</sup> His journal allows us to expand our growing recognition of the trouble of obtaining cross-cultural justice in the Native South

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<sup>242</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp (1746) in *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion*, 5 Vols., eds. Dunbar Rowland, A.G. Sanders, and Patricia Galloway (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 4: 269-297 (henceforth referred to as *MPAFD*).

due to conflicting systems of justice and responsibility.<sup>243</sup> While both the French culture of retribution and Choctaw ethic of restitution called for criminal accountability, Choctaws differed from the French by requiring the punishment of the guilty individuals only for crimes between Choctaws, as opposed to instances of intercultural violence. In such cases, alternatives could be sought in order to fulfill the blood for blood obligation of Choctaw justice. The French legal culture, however, demanded the punishment of the specific offender for every crime, regardless of the victim. A close reading of Beauchamp's journal reveals evidence of the existence of what historian Kathleen Brown has termed a "gender frontier" regarding masculine responsibility between Choctaws and Frenchmen.<sup>244</sup> Importantly, the journal reveals how French demands for justice overlooked women's "beloved" status within matrilineal Choctaw society and violated Choctaw cultural norms regarding masculine responsibility, courtship, marriage, and adultery. Additionally, the journal offers clues regarding the extent to which kinship networks influenced Choctaw reactions to Beauchamp's demands. In fact, following kinship networks allows one to trace the progression of violence throughout the duration of the Choctaw Civil War.

Beauchamp's notes plainly state the willingness of Choctaw headmen to atone for the French lives taken by Red Shoe. One can appreciate the level of cognitive dissonance between Beauchamp's demands and the solutions (or lack thereof) offered by the

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<sup>243</sup> On these tensions, see John Phillip Reid, *A Better Kind of Hatchet: Law, Trade and Diplomacy in the Cherokee Nation during the Early Years of European Contact* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976) and Joshua Piker, *The Four Deaths of Acorn Whistler: Telling Stories in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

<sup>244</sup> Kathleen Brown defines a "gender frontier" as "the meeting of two or more culturally specific systems of knowledge about gender and nature" in *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1996), 33.

Choctaws he met. Throughout the assembly, Choctaw condemnations of Red Shoe's actions and the refusal by the same Choctaw headmen to take punitive action continually vexed Beauchamp. For example, he grew aggravated when on October 3, Alibamon Mingo of the Conchas told the French major "he ought not to doubt" the chief's attachment to the French, but then immediately added that it was not *his* fault that "this unpleasant affair" with Red Shoe was not already resolved.<sup>245</sup> About a week later, his frustrations with Choctaw inaction boiled over in a meeting with the Red Shoe of Yanabé, prompting Beauchamp to exclaim that the promises of the headmen "fainted or drowned in the bayous."<sup>246</sup>

To get to the root of Beauchamp's initial confusion, it is useful to begin with the end of the journal, where he describes his final significant meeting with a noteworthy Choctaw headman. Throughout much of the eighteenth century, Choctaw villages had been splitting into Anglo- and Francophile camps, complicating the playoff system that had successfully steered Choctaw foreign relations for decades.<sup>247</sup> On October 13, 1746, Beauchamp met with Tatoulimataha, the older brother of the pro-English factional leader Red Shoe. In the month-plus he had spent among the Choctaws, Beauchamp had assembled a small group of headmen that nominally (meaning, almost always in private) had pledged their willingness to kill Red Shoe for the French. Recruiting a relative of Red Shoe would expedite and provide legitimacy to this process. However, Tatoulimataha staunchly refused any such role. This did not preclude Tatoulimataha, however, from recognizing the French desire for satisfaction. Pledging he "would not abandon" the

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<sup>245</sup> Beauchamp's Journal, August 1746 in *MPAFD*, 4: 277.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, 285.

<sup>247</sup> On the playoff system, refer to James T. Carson, *Searching for the Bright Path: The Mississippi Choctaw from Prehistory to Removal* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).



French, he instead suggested the enlistment of the Abeika and Tallapoosa Creeks, a solution that released pro-French Choctaws from the uncomfortable position of potentially sparking a civil war by having to execute one of their own.<sup>248</sup>

While factional concerns played an important role in explaining why other Choctaw headmen refused to move against Red Shoe, Choctaw gender norms dictating the masculine duties regarding justice also cautioned against action. Whereas French colonial officials conceived of the principle of *lex talionis* literally – that one French life equated to one Choctaw life – they failed to recognize that the avenues to restitution mattered just as much, if not more, than simply a balanced result. Members of specific kinship networks or villages were required to be the ones ultimately responsible for providing restitution.<sup>249</sup> Contrary to intentions of diffusing the factional strife, therefore, asking a Concha or Yanabé warrior to kill Red Shoe in an effort to restore balance would serve only to increase the cycle of retributive violence. In this regard, Beauchamp handicapped his efforts by virtue of the Choctaws he met with. Of the forty headmen he recorded speaking with in his journal, less than a quarter (nine) definitively travelled from Western villages, the same regional distinction as Red Shoe. More specifically, less than a handful, including Tatoulmataha, hailed from the same kinship network.<sup>250</sup> Put

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<sup>248</sup> Beauchamp's Journal, August 1746 in *MPAFD*, 4: 291. On this practice, see Patricia Galloway, "The Barthelemy Murders: Bienville's Establishment of the *Lex Talionis* as a Principle of Indian Diplomacy" in *Practicing Ethnohistory: Mining Archives, Hearing Testimony, Constructing Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 245-258. Tatoulmataha's suggestion, however, ignored the recent trends towards peace in native geopolitics evidenced by a recent Shawnee delegation because it would most certainly ignite a Creek-Choctaw war.

<sup>249</sup> On the ethic of restitution, see Michelene E. Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 47. The neighboring Creeks followed similar protocol, namely, seeking out outsiders or relatives to diffuse cycles of retributive violence. See Piker, *Four Deaths of Acorn Whistler*, 9-12.

<sup>250</sup> The headmen from Western villages that Beauchamp recorded meeting with were the Chief of Oka Lussa, the War Chief of Oka Lussa, the Chief of Immongoulacha, the Paemingo of Cuchtusha, the Chief of Tchank, the Chief of Oni, the Second Chief of Oni, the Taskaoumingo of Boucfouca, and Tatoulmataha of

another way, most of the Choctaw headmen that Beauchamp demanded justice from were simply incapable of acting on his requests due to the strictures of Choctaw legal culture.

As a brother, Tatoulimataha was one of the few Choctaws in a position to offer legitimate restitution to the French. He coupled his refusal with an explanation of Red Shoe's rationale for murdering Verbois in the first place, revealing that his brother "committed this evil act" for many reasons. Red Shoe told him "that the English had only asked for one French head for an Englishman who had been killed by the Choctaws of the village of Blue Wood," but the warriors traveling with him "exceeded his order," resulting in three deaths. Tatoulimataha also noted that Red Shoe felt "despair of seeing that the promises that had been given him in the past at Fort Tombecbé had not been kept," in reference to the French tendency to fail to deliver merchandise in a timely fashion. Notably, Red Shoe felt dishonored with the "little recognition" he received from the French, bristling over the fact that the French placed a trader at Toussana village instead of Couëchitto. The final – and therefore most important – point related by Tatoulimataha, cited the "bad treatment that [Red Shoe] had received...in the matter of his wives."<sup>251</sup>

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Couëchitto. This list is comprised from Beauchamp's Journal, August 1746 in *MPAFD* 4: 269-297, n. 25 and Regis du Roullet's 1732 list in *MPAFD* 1: 136-54. It should be noted that some towns are referred to as Western on Roullet's 1732 map but are later listed specifically as members of the Six Towns region: Nachoubaouenya (the Chief and Second Chief), Bouctouloucti (a Chief), Seneacha (Imataha Pousouche, a possible War Lieutenant), Toussana (Pouchimataha, a War Chief), and Yowani (a War Lieutenant).

<sup>251</sup> Beauchamp's Journal, August 1746 in *MPAFD*, 4: 291-2. Trader James Adair described the offense as a violation of the law of marriage, perhaps suggesting the affront was adultery instead of rape; see Adair, *The History of the American Indians*, ed. Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006), 335. Because Choctaw women had the ability to end marriages with relative ease, however, the notion of adultery likely does not factor into this complaint; see John R. Swanton, "Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians," *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin*, no. 103 (1931), 128. A recent work focusing on the utilization of this same rhetorical construction — namely, having the last item on a list of grievances be considered the most serious — albeit in a different eighteenth-century context, is Samuel Fisher, "Fit Instruments in a Howling Wilderness: Colonists, Indians,

It is perhaps no surprise that the assembly drew to a close shortly after Tatoulimataha's revelation. By late October, Beauchamp and his aides had quickly packed up and returned to Mobile, proclaiming their success in persuading the Choctaw assembly.<sup>252</sup> Beauchamp's background may reveal the decision behind his abrupt dismissal. A member of an influential noble family in Champagne, he travelled to Louisiana in 1719, eventually receiving a promotion to captain for his adept dealing with the Choctaws in 1732. The following year, then-Governor Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville described Beauchamp as "known and liked by Choctaws." In other words, this was a man who was familiar with Choctaw socio-cultural norms. After twenty-five years of working closely with the Choctaws, it is safe to assume that Beauchamp would have completely understood the gravity of Tatoulimataha's allegations. With this new knowledge, he likely recognized the staunch Choctaw position to be non-negotiable moving forward. There would be little reason for further discussions or secret attempts to cajole unconvinced headmen; better instead for Beauchamp to leave and inform Vaudreuil that his mission met with success.<sup>253</sup>

Beauchamp's extensive experience working among the Choctaw would have made him aware of the formative role of women within Choctaw society. He would have likely recognized how the entire Choctaw social structure revolved around women – it was both matrilineal and matrilineal. Kinship networks calibrated according to the

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and the Origins of the American Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 73, no. 4 (2016): 647-680.

<sup>252</sup> Beauchamp's Journal, August 1746 in *MPAFD*, 4: 293. A roster of the party is found in *MPAFD*, 4: 269-270.

<sup>253</sup> "Jadart de Beauchamp" in *France's Forgotten Legion: Service Records of French Military and Administrative Personnel Stationed in the Mississippi Valley and Gulf Coast Region, 1699-1769*, ed. Carl Brasseaux (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 2:3:51-53 (henceforth referred to as *FFL*).

bloodline of the mother. After marriage, the village of the wife was considered home, in contrast to traditional Western practices of adopting the home and familial surname of the husband.<sup>254</sup> Additionally, women lay at the center of the most important Choctaw origin stories. The sacred mound called *Nanih waiya* that is believed to have birthed the Choctaw (and a number of other Southeastern tribes) was referred to as *Inholitopa Ishki*, which translates to “beloved mother.”<sup>255</sup> The Choctaw discovery of corn, the staple foodstuff for the group, also centered around a woman. The story relates that two Choctaw hunters stumbled upon a strange woman who complained of hunger. The hunters killed and roasted a hawk that they in turn fed her. After this act of kindness, the woman in gratitude revealed herself as the daughter of *Shilup Chitoh-Osh*, the Great Spirit of the Choctaw. She instructed the hunters to return to the spot where they found her “when the next midsummer moon should come.” The hunters heeded her message, and when they returned they found the place “covered with a strange plant” which they called *tunchi* (corn).<sup>256</sup>

Historian Michelene Pesantubbee argues that all Choctaw women could attain the status of “beloved” among their peers.<sup>257</sup> Any number of practical and political responsibilities contributed to social stature. Choctaw women acted as the main agricultural producers, prompting an early French observer to note how they “work the

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<sup>254</sup> On matrilineal and matrilocal customs, see Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women*, 9-10 and Galloway, “Natchez Matrilineal Kinship: Du Pratz and the Woman’s Touch” in *Practicing Ethnohistory*, 97-108, especially 98-99.

<sup>255</sup> Swanton, “Source Material,” 30. See also *Creation Myths and Legends of the Creek Indians*, ed. Bill Grantham (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 126.

<sup>256</sup> Swanton, “Source Material,” 209. See also Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women*, 22-3 and the various corn discovery myths included in *Choctaw Tales*, ed. Tom Mould (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2004), 77-8.

<sup>257</sup> Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women*, 4-5.

ground, sow, and harvest the crop.”<sup>258</sup> Women also prepared food and drink, including the supplemental gathering of pecans (*oksak fula*) and hickory nuts (variously referred to as *kapko*, *kapun*, and *oksak*).<sup>259</sup> Trader James Adair noted how southeastern Indian women processed corn into a beverage by beating “in mortars their flinty corn, till all husks are taken off.” They then sifted the mash before boiling it, after which they finished by mixing the concoction with cold water to create a “pleasant and very nourishing” drink.<sup>260</sup> When corn harvests proved insufficient in any particular year, the Choctaw turned to acorn mush (*okshush*) to avoid hunger. In more plentiful years, nuts and corn were often prepared together, as in the dish known as *oksak bahpo*, a mix of the meat of hickory nuts and parched corn that was pounded together with a mortar. Left over nuts were then taken by women and encased in “airtight mud cells” for storage.<sup>261</sup> Even when men hunted, women accompanied hunting parties in order to quickly process the slain animal – either deer or bear – into foodstuffs as well as into items for possible transaction within the frontier exchange economy.<sup>262</sup> In fact, one of the earliest European visual representations of any Choctaw, a painting by Alexandre de Batz, illustrates a

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<sup>258</sup> Swanton, “An Early Account of the Choctaw Indians,” *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association* 5 (1918), 59.

<sup>259</sup> Gideon Lincecum noted how women collected mulberries, which were either immediately eaten off the vine or dried for later usage. Additionally, Lincecum noted how Choctaw women also preserved a black grape – referred to as *panhki* – by storing the grapes in cane basket containers and submerging them under water, allowing the grapes to remain unspoiled throughout the winter. See T.N. Campbell, “Choctaw Subsistence: Ethnographic Notes from the Lincecum Manuscript,” *The Florida Anthropologist* 12 (1959): 9-24, especially 15.

<sup>260</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 406.

<sup>261</sup> Campbell, “Choctaw Subsistence,” 15.

<sup>262</sup> Daniel H. Usner, *Indians, Settlers, & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1992). For an example of a mixed-gender hunting party, refer to Galloway, “The Barthelemy Murders” in *Practicing Ethnohistory*, 245-258.

Choctaw woman hard at work, patiently scraping tendons away from an animal skin. As in legend, women sustained Choctaw society in everyday practice.<sup>263</sup>

The responsibilities of Choctaw women were not limited to the domestic sphere. Women served a number of roles in Choctaw diplomacy: they served as escorts, members of political delegations, intermediaries between the Choctaws and other native groups, as well as the important function of being keepers of the calumet.<sup>264</sup> As described in chapter one, eighteenth-century sources also noted how women assumed the role of warrior if necessary.<sup>265</sup> These clues may account for the fact that as late as the second half of the twentieth century, Choctaw women participated in war dances, in contrast to every other tribe in the Southeast.<sup>266</sup>

Because of their importance, a number of socio-cultural practices regulated access to Choctaw women. In contrast to Euro-Americans' assertions of unremitted Native American sexuality, women appear to have controlled most – if not all – aspects of the traditional Choctaw courtship and marriage process. Unwarranted advances by Choctaw men brought quick communal retribution. “If a man should take their liberties with a squaw present,” missionary J.F.H. Claiborne later recorded, “she would immediately resent it by attacking him with a stick, and every squaw present would assist her.” These

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<sup>263</sup> Alexandre de Batz, *Desseins de Sauvages de Plusieurs Nations, Nouvelle Orleans* (1735), watercolor, Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Acc. No. PM 41-72-10/2.

<sup>264</sup> On the role of women in Choctaw diplomacy, see Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women*, 27.

<sup>265</sup> Jean-Bernard Bossu, *Travels in the Interior of North America, 1751-1762*, trans. and ed. Seymour Feiler (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 164.

<sup>266</sup> James H. Howard and Victoria Lindsay Levine, *Choctaw Music and Dance* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 52. According to Howard and Levine, “the narrator for performance of the War Dance by Eugene Wilson’s troupe in 1974 commented that of all the Indian tribes which perform a War Dance, only the Choctaws admit female dancers as partners for the men” (52). Wilson’s troupe, while based in Oklahoma, performed dances and songs “entirely derived from that of the Mississippi groups” (20).

group repulsions could number into the dozens, and at least one source claimed eyewitness reports of an incident that resulted in “twenty squaws thus beating a too ardent lover.”<sup>267</sup> Appropriate conduct in courtship required Choctaw men to appeal directly to a woman’s uncle. During this encounter they agreed upon a sort of dowry. Even so, the marriage ceremony allowed a Choctaw woman the right of last refusal. Multiple sources describe the ceremony. To begin, the man and woman were placed in separate lodges, and a pole set up at “a distance of two or three hundred yards.” At the appointed time, the woman “springs out and starts for the pole with the lightness and swiftness of an antelope.” The woman is given a head start enough to ensure the man “from overtaking her if she is so inclined.” The match was finally confirmed when the man caught the woman before she reached the pole. A woman’s refusal to be caught, however, served as “public acknowledgement” of her change of heart, leaving the man “grievously disappointed.”<sup>268</sup> Even through the act of marriage, Choctaw women claimed ultimate authority over their bodies.

This did not, however, give Choctaw women license for adultery, as many Euro-American observers assumed. Indeed, the consequences for a Choctaw woman found guilty of such an offense proved severe, resulting in her expulsion from her town. The anonymous “Early Account” notes how after complaints were first made to the offender’s guardians, the process of social ostracization continued by cutting off the woman’s hair in order “to repudiate her.”<sup>269</sup> The alteration of a woman’s hairstyle is significant, as the cut

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<sup>267</sup> Swanton, “Source Material,” 131.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>269</sup> Swanton, “An Early Account,” 61. This anonymous account erroneously considers Choctaw parents to be the authoritative figures within the kinship networks. In reality, uncles claimed authority within Choctaw matrilineally-structured communities.

and length of hair served as an important social marker within Choctaw society. As early as the Spanish *entrada*, neighboring native groups referred to the Choctaw as *Pa<sup>n</sup>sfalaya*, meaning “Long Hairs.”<sup>270</sup> Length of hair – especially for women – became a marker of identity, as Choctaws derisively referred to other native groups as “*Skoobálè’shtó*” (“very naked” or “bare heads”).<sup>271</sup> For a Choctaw woman to have her hair forcibly removed, therefore, was to effectively remove her from the kinship network that defined her social life. After the cutting of hair, both man and woman were then subjected to “a hundred blows with sticks.” Before the eighteenth century, punishment may have included physical mutilation, but over time the practice was discontinued “on account of the deformity” which it caused, even to the point of death.<sup>272</sup>

Choctaw women faced their own unique punishment for adultery. The most obvious was gang-rape, allegedly by up “to three or four hundred young people.” Subjection to this physical trauma at times resulted in death. Even if the woman were to survive such punishment, her life remained in a state of what sociologist Orlando Patterson has referred to as “social death.”<sup>273</sup> After being forced to announce herself as an

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<sup>270</sup> Swanton, “Source Material,” 4. This conclusion is based on accounts by Rodrigo Ranjel and The Gentleman of Elvas in *The De Soto Chronicles: The Expedition of Hernando de Soto to North America in 1539-1543*, eds. Lawrence A. Clayton, Vernon James Knight Jr., and Edward C. Moore (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 19-220, 247-306.

<sup>271</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 219. According to David Bushnell Jr., “women allowed their hair to grow very long.” See Bushnell Jr., “The Choctaw of Bayou Lacomb, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana,” *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin* 48 (1909), 10.

<sup>272</sup> Swanton, “An Early Account,” 61. The Creeks followed a similar protocol. In 1734, Johann Martin Boltzius recorded that “an *Indian* Man, that is married, cut both Ears and Hair off from an *Indian* Woman, his Wife, for being too familiar with a white Man.” See *An Extract of the Journals of M. Commissary Von Reck, Who Conducted the First Transport of Saltburgers to Georgia: and of the Reverend Mr Bolzius, One of the Ministers. Giving an Account of their Voyage to, and happy Settlement in that Province. Published by the Direction of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* (London: M. Downing, 1734), 49.

<sup>273</sup> Orlando Patterson introduced the idea of “social death,” defined as the complete removal of an individual from kinship networks, in *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).



adulterer, a woman was “obliged to go along the stream in the dusk of the evening singing songs belonging to this usage.” This melodic scarlet letter allowed any Choctaw male to claim her body for sexual purposes. This concubine-like state was temporary and dependent on the whims of the Choctaw male. If his feelings towards her changed, the woman again faced abandonment.<sup>274</sup> Ritual adoption offered the only escape from this state, and due to Choctaw social norms that forbid marriage within villages, the possibility of adoption lay only in the hands of outsider men.<sup>275</sup> The frequency of such punishments, however, is impossible to know for certain. The almost complete lack of specific instances during which such punishments were administered suggests they rarely happened.

In order to avoid the privations of Euro-Americans and protect their women, Choctaws shied away from intermarriage with whites. The practice stood in contrast to many other native groups the French interacted with throughout Upper Louisiana and New France. Historian Kathleen DuVal has argued persuasively that intermarriage – at least for the purposes of solidifying trade alliances between the Choctaws and Euro-Americans – do not “seem to have been widespread in the first half of the eighteenth century.”<sup>276</sup> These tendencies eventually found expression in Choctaw folklore. Horatio

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<sup>274</sup> Swanton, “An Early Account,” 61.

<sup>275</sup> Swanton, “Source Material,” 77.

<sup>276</sup> Kathleen DuVal, “Indian Intermarriage and Métissage in Colonial Louisiana,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 65, no. 2 (2008): 267-304. Quote from 297. DuVal argues that this policy became more flexible as the eighteenth century progressed. This shift was not lost upon contemporaries either. Bernard Romans observed that “before the English traders came among them, there were scarcely any half breed, but now they abound among the younger sort.” See Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, ed. Braund, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 137. The lack of this inter-cultural practice may be attributed to the fact that the French colonial agenda in Lower Mississippi differed greatly from that in New France and the Illinois Country, which relied on cultural assimilation through intermarriage. On this policy, see Saliha Belmessous, “Assimilation and Racialism in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century French Colonial Policy,” *American Historical Review* 110, no. 2 (2005): 322-349. On the distinctions between colonialism in Upper and Lower Louisiana, see Sophie White, *Wild Frenchmen*

Cushman recorded a story centered on heated debates about intercultural intimacy: after the birth of the first child between a white man and Choctaw woman, a grand council was called “to consider the propriety of permitting” intermarriages. The ancient headmen argued that such “natural results” should be avoided at all costs, out of fear that the Choctaw would over time lose “their national characteristics.” The decision was therefore made “to stop all future marriages” between Choctaws and whites.<sup>277</sup> Protecting Choctaw women was not simply a personal obligation for Choctaw men – it marked an important step in maintaining cultural preservation.

While Choctaw men were likely not more overprotective of their women when compared to other Native or Euro-Americans in the colonial South, their recent experiences with the Indian slave trade likely served as a reminder of the vulnerability of their aunts, daughters, and wives. The Choctaw headmen who met with Beauchamp to discuss punishment for Red Shoe were at most two generations removed from the traumatic slave raids performed by the neighboring Chickasaws and Creeks during the turn of the eighteenth century. Women and children were the targets of these raids, as attackers sought the deaths of men and the securing of enemy scalps in order to prove their masculinity. Slavers often targeted the Choctaws because of their relatively large population.<sup>278</sup> In an attempt to bring peace between the two groups in March 1702, Pierre Le Moyne d’Iberville recorded that over the preceding decade the Chickasaw – by the

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and *Frenchified Indians: Material Culture and Race in Colonial Louisiana* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), especially 7-16.

<sup>277</sup> Horatio Cushman, *History of the Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Natchez Indians* (Greenville: Headlight Printing House, 1899), 373-374.

<sup>278</sup> For population estimates for the Native South, refer to Peter H. Wood, “The Changing Population of the Colonial South: An Overview by Race and Region, 1685-1790” in *Powhatan’s Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, Revised and Expanded Edition, eds. Gregory A. Waselkov, Peter H. Wood and Tom Hatley (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 57-132.

instigation of the English – had “taken more than 500 prisoners and killed more than 1,800 Chaqueta.”<sup>279</sup> These numbers would only increase, as Euro-American sponsorship resulted in a shift in raid methods by the Chickasaw. In a letter to Queen Anne, Scottish frontiersman John Stewart explained that Chickasaw raiders would avoid attacking Choctaw towns at all costs, instead relying on “stealth” to ambush “stragglers in the woods at great distances from home.”<sup>280</sup> Emboldened by English weapons, however, attacks became more brazen. In 1706 alone, the Chickasaws delivered at least three hundred Choctaw slaves to the English.<sup>281</sup> By 1711, both the Chickasaws and Creeks aided English attempts to subjugate the Choctaws. An expedition led by Theophilus Hastings in the winter of 1711, in which the Carolina trader marched an army composed predominantly of Creek warriors “into the Chuctau nation,” resulted in a scene during which “he ravaged the whole country by burning their Houses...and taking about 130 prisoners.”<sup>282</sup> The South Carolina Commons House estimated an even higher number of Choctaw prisoners – 200 – were sold into slavery with the aid of the Creeks.<sup>283</sup> Such attacks ended only after the conclusion of the Yamasee War.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Pierre Le Moyne d’Iberville, *Iberville’s Gulf Journals*, trans. and ed. Richebourg Gallard McWilliams, (Tuscaloosa : University of Alabama Press, 1981), 172.

<sup>280</sup> John Stewart to Queen Anne, March 10, 1711, Archives des Colonies, Archives Nationales, Paris, C13C, 2:80 (microfilm) quoted in Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 182.

<sup>281</sup> Jean-Baptiste Bénéard de La Harpe, *The Historical Journal of the Establishment of the French in Louisiana*, trans. Virginia Koenig and Joan Cain, ed. Glenn R. Conrad (Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana Press, 1971), 73.

<sup>282</sup> Theophilus Hastings to Governor Robert Gibbs, December 19, 1711, cited in the *Boston News-Letter*, March 24-31, 1712 quoted in Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade*, 291.

<sup>283</sup> South Carolina Commons House Journal, May 13, 1712-June 7, 1712, May 24, South Carolina Department of Archives and History (microfilm) quoted in Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade*, 291.

<sup>284</sup> On the Yamasee War, see Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade*, 315-344 and William Ramsey, *The Yamasee War: A Study of Culture, Economy, and Conflict in the Colonial South* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010).

The slave raid would prove to be only the first trauma experienced by Choctaw women. Chickasaws then forcibly moved their Choctaw captives, now considered human capital, to the slave market at Charles Town. According to Stewart, each night between two or three prisoners were “put to death with great and lingering torments and burnt alive.” Additionally, prisoners deemed physically unable to continue the march were scalped and killed.<sup>285</sup> Some English abettors to Chickasaw raids kept slaves for themselves instead of bringing them to market. Henri de Tonti recorded an encounter with one such man while attempting to broker a peace agreement between the Chickasaws and Choctaws in 1702. In early March, negotiations seemed promising, but the unforeseen appearance of an anonymous Englishman cast doubt on the viability of Tonti’s endeavor. According to Tonti, this trader “was having all these nations destroyed in order to obtain slaves.” While the trader vehemently disagreed, Tonti remained convinced that the Englishman’s only objective was “to be sated with human flesh.” Tonti reported to d’Iberville “that this Englishman is a very bad character,” and, significantly, highlighted the fact that “his cabin is full of slaves that he abuses.”<sup>286</sup>

While shipment across the English Caribbean might prove the most extreme removal for a Choctaw prisoner, even those prisoners who remained captives within Native America faced a period of intense emotional trauma. In an important distinction to racial slavery that white Euro-Americans implemented against Africans, Native

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<sup>285</sup> John Stewart to Queen Anne, October 1711, Archives des Colonies, Archives Nationales, Paris, C13C, 2:72 (microfilm) quoted in Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade*, 185.

<sup>286</sup> Transcriptions of extracts from Tonti’s letters can be found in Galloway, “Henri de Tonti du village des Chacta, 1702: The Beginning of the French Alliance” in *Le Salle and His Legacy: Frenchmen and Indians in the Lower Mississippi Valley*, ed. Galloway (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1982), 146-175. Quotes from 169-170.

American captives did have the opportunity to assume identities that – while different from their original ones – allowed them to integrate into new kinship networks. Even so, for a significant amount of time, captives remained outside such kinship networks, and therefore considered less than human.<sup>287</sup> While Native American slavery may not have been social death, neither did it represent social resurrection.<sup>288</sup> While “women and children were far more likely candidates for adoption” than Choctaw men, a slave could not resume any past personal connections. Indian slaves rarely resumed former emotional ties after they completed the process of social adoption, because they became integrated into a different kinship network entirely.<sup>289</sup> The point here must be stressed: Indian slavery that specifically targeted Native American women proved no less traumatic than other systems of captivity in early America.

The potential experiences of the Indian slave trade stood in stark contrast, however, to the sexual assaults perpetrated by Euro-American traders against Native American women. The violent nature of these affronts only served to heighten the fact that violence against women rarely occurred within native communities. With the exception of punitive action, eighteenth-century sources fail to mention many instances of native men abusing native women. William Bartram, the acclaimed naturalist, recorded his observations of his travels throughout the Native South, where he specifically noted that during his “weeks and months amongst them in their towns,” he

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<sup>287</sup> Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 8, 22.

<sup>288</sup> On “social death,” see note 273 above.

<sup>289</sup> Theda Perdue, “*Mixed Blood*” *Indians: Racial Construction in the Early South*, Mercer University Lamar Memorial Lectures Number 45 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003), 8. On the process of ritual adoption, see Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country*, 101-105.

had “never observed the least sign of contention or wrangling” between the sexes. Bartram admitted he “never saw an instance of an Indian beating his wife, or even reproving her in anger.” This respect between the sexes clearly impressed Bartram, and he referred to Native Americans as “examples of reproof to the most civilized nations.”<sup>290</sup> A number of explanations exist for this relative lack of violence against women. Bartram’s comments highlight the gender equity present in native societies, and the use of rape as an expression of power and subjugation proved anathema to native sensibilities. By examining published captivity narratives, historian Sharon Block has outlined how Euro-American attitudes towards native treatment of women shifted away from allegations of savagery in the seventeenth century to begrudging eighteenth-century recognition that native men rarely abused women. Native groups may have avoided sexual abuse of wartime captives in order to draw “a dividing line between life-taking war and life-giving sexual acts.”<sup>291</sup> Additionally, the possibility of ritual adoption of female captives added an element of taboo to such considerations.<sup>292</sup> Although marriage entailed elaborate courtship processes that provided a venue for male suitors to demonstrate their masculinity, there was also general agreement that native relationships offered flexibility that would allow one or both parties to dissolve the partnership at any time. In other words, access to women may not have been as restrictive among Native Americas, and this freedom likely resulted in a diminished need for sexual energy

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<sup>290</sup> William Bartram, “Travels through North and South Carolina...” in *Bartram on the Southeastern Indians*, eds. Waselkov and Braund (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 114.

<sup>291</sup> Sharon Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2006), 225. See also Ramón A. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1991), 19-20, 26.

<sup>292</sup> Block, *Rape and Sexual Power*, 225. See also James Axtell, *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 182.

directed either towards women in other tribes or Euro-American strangers.<sup>293</sup> White men, therefore, monopolized sexual violence along the Southern frontier.

Trader abuses – both fiscal and sexual – had long standing consequences in the early eighteenth-century South. Historian Verner Crane was the first to draw a connection between “the real mischief” done by “lawless and oppressive Indian traders” and the outbreak of the Yamasee War. Traders fanned flames through “thieving,” “the abuse of rum to facilitate sharp dealing,” and “the use of cheating weights.”<sup>294</sup> While historian William Ramsey is correct in arguing that more attention needs to be paid to credit and the Indian slave trade when considering the outbreak of that particular conflict, he errs by conceptually divorcing the Indian slave trade from what he refers to as “gender-based complaints,” precisely because the slave trade predominantly affected women.<sup>295</sup> The interconnected nature of trade malpractices, extensions of credit networks into native economies, debt collection, and Indian slavery resulted in the deaths of at least four hundred colonists and an unknown number of Native Americans during the Yamasee War. The Choctaw observed this “calamity” by virtue of their role as “auxiliary confederates” of the Yamasees.<sup>296</sup> Although a number of Choctaw villages briefly incorporated into a Carolina-dominated trade network, Choctaw leaders watched closely as English actions contradicted English words, revealing the potential “corrosive” influences of Euro-American men not only at an individual level, but across the political landscape.<sup>297</sup> Choctaw headmen never forgot the lessons of the Yamasee War. Although

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<sup>293</sup> Block, *Rape and Sexual Power*, 227.

<sup>294</sup> Verner W. Crane, *The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), 165.

<sup>295</sup> Ramsey, *The Yamasee War*, 15-19.

<sup>296</sup> Crane, *The Southern Frontier*, 167; Ramsey, *The Yamasee War*, 134-148.

<sup>297</sup> Ramsey, *The Yamasee War*, 18. On the Choctaw flirtation with the English, see Reverend Father Beaudouin to Salmon in *MPAFD* 1:156-8.

they predominantly dealt with French – not English – traders, Choctaws remained cognizant of trader abuses towards native women. They recognized the French, like the English traders before them, “took Indian women as slaves for labor and sex,” especially during the later Natchez Revolt.<sup>298</sup> While direct comments by Frenchmen on the attractiveness of Choctaw women are missing from the extant sources, the low number of arranged political marriages between Choctaws and the French is better explained as an effort to protect Choctaw women from French advancements and attempts “to satisfy their passions.”<sup>299</sup>

The Choctaws were not alone in their concern over the lascivious and violent behavior of French men. Across the Atlantic, civic officials and intellectuals had long publically debated the limitations of appropriate male behavior. By the late sixteenth century, the noted Renaissance philosopher Michel de Montaigne – influenced in part by new ethnographic studies circulating in response to the discovery of the New World and its native peoples – “fashioned an ideal of masculinity that was...intended to enable his contemporaries to escape from unnecessary acts of cruelty.”<sup>300</sup> Among the poor, communal efforts to police masculine expressions of sexuality continued throughout the early modern era. Historian Julie Harwick has examined hundreds of *declarations de grossesse* and concluded that “sexual desire and some forms of intimacy were not in fact

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<sup>298</sup> Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women*, 45 references Régis du Roulet to Maurepas in *MPAFD* 1: 176.

<sup>299</sup> Tivas de Gourville to Count de Pontchartrain in *MPAFD* 2: 69. On the low number of arranged political marriages, see Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women*, 105-108 and DuVal, “Indian Intermarriage and Métissage in Colonial Louisiana.” While an important study, DuVal’s conclusions fail to consider French law; French colonists needed permission to marry indigenous women after 1735.

<sup>300</sup> John Jeffries Martin, ““*Et nulle autre me faict plus proprement homme que cette cy*”: Michel de Montaigne’s Embodied Masculinity,” *European Review of History: Revue européenne d’histoire* 22, no. 4 (2015): 563-578. Quote from 565. Martin notes the important influence of Montaigne’s Erasmian reading of the works by the Roman poet Lucretius in formulating this new definition of masculinity.



illicit,” arguing that only “out-of-wedlock pregnancy” surpassed the bounds of acceptable behavior. However, the system of practices that Hardwick describes – namely, “close surveillance by themselves, their peers, neighbors, coworkers, as well as parents and other kin” – was impossible to transplant to, let alone maintain, within French Louisiana.<sup>301</sup> The colony lacked a sufficiently large – and perhaps more importantly – pervasive urbanized landscape that allowed the keeping of tabs on young men; military posts that doubled as trading houses offered even less in terms of communal surveillance. Regardless of the fact that sexual violence represented a concern of which the French were certainly aware, the realities of the colonial project in Louisiana obstructed any potential attempts to regulate French trader or officer assaults, such as the one perpetrated by Henri de Verbois.

Frenchmen rarely entered into marriages with Choctaw women. Arranged marriages were infrequent and often only among French interpreters (young men who grew up in Choctaw villages in order to master their language) or among a handful of officers that did not cycle out of their posts at Fort Tombecbé. For the most part, these couples appear to have lived in healthy unions and treated each other with respect, although sources do note the occasional misunderstanding.<sup>302</sup> Indian women taken as slaves, however, enjoyed no such lifestyles, often forced to engage in sexual acts by their masters. Because only slaves seemed to be ill-treated by Frenchmen, then, the abuse of Red Shoe’s wife is all the more striking. It is therefore unsurprising that Tatoulimataha

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<sup>301</sup> Julie Harwick, “Policing Paternity: Historicising Masculinity and Sexuality in Early-Modern France,” *European Review of History: Revue européenne d’histoire* 22, no. 4 (2015): 643-657. Quotes from 646 and 649.

<sup>302</sup> On the place of interpreters in Choctaw communities, see Pesantubbe, *Choctaw Women*, 105-106.

told Beauchamp that “red men would kill one another” over the treatment that his brother’s wife received at the hands of Verbois.<sup>303</sup>

If the mistreatment or rape of Red Shoe’s wife by Verbois is considered the epicenter of the Choctaw civil war, the reverberations of the aftershocks ran along fault lines created by kinship networks. While difficult to reconstruct, Red Shoe’s kinship network may reveal some insight as to why the Choctaw civil war unfolded in the fashion it did. The identity of the woman who was abused is lost to us. Sources are murky on whether the woman was Choctaw or Chickasaw. Sources clearly note that Red Shoe had multiple wives. Since Choctaws at times practiced sororal polygamy, the possibility remains that the woman mistreated or raped by Verbois was related to Red Shoe’s other wives.<sup>304</sup> Perhaps, too, one of Red Shoe’s other wives was a Chickasaw woman, but the evidence is too circumstantial to make a conclusion one way or another (Figure 2). Chickasaw trader James Adair noted a wife being shot “dead on the spot” during an ambush by pro-French Choctaws during a rendezvous between Red Shoe and trader James Campbell.<sup>305</sup> If so, this political marriage drew Red Shoe’s Couëchitto and the Chickasaws closer, and would account for Red Shoe’s tendency to travel frequently through Chickasaw villages, as well as his general pro-English attitude regarding foreign relations and trade. Standard matrilineal practice, however, would make it uncommon for a Chickasaw wife to travel so far away from her village, although evidence suggests that

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<sup>303</sup> Beauchamp’s Journal, August 1746 in *MPAFD*, 4: 291.

<sup>304</sup> On sororal polygamy, see Charles Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 199-201 and Arrell M. Gibson, *The Chickasaws* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 19.

<sup>305</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 334. In reference to this attack, Adair spoke of “our great English friend [Red Shoe] along-side of his Chikkasah wife” (334). There remains the possibility that the woman in question was the wife of trader John Campbell.

Creeks allowed women paired in arranged marriages between native elites to live in the husband's town.<sup>306</sup> Regardless, the attack on Red Shoe's wife — especially if in the form of extreme mistreatment such as rape — represented more than a personal affront: it was an existential threat to the lineage Red Shoe was tasked to protect.

In addition to multiple wives, Red Shoe had at least two brothers, a very problematic term when considering the Native South.<sup>307</sup> Although diplomatically utilized as a title merely to designate close ties, there is no reason to believe that the brothers in question were not related by lineage. These brothers served as Red Shoes' closest followers. Red Shoe's younger brother, *Imataha Pouscouche* (also referred to as Little King), was obviously a close confidant; he served as Red Shoe's surrogate "Mouth" and formally signed a commercial and military treaty with South Carolina governor James Glen in April 1747.<sup>308</sup> After Red Shoe was struck down by an assassin in July that year, Little King acted as the Anglophile factional leader for the better part of the next two years.<sup>309</sup> By all remaining accounts, it appears the older brother of Red Shoe, the aforementioned Tatoulmataha, played a less active role in the overall operations of Red Shoe's faction. That said, like Little King, Tatoulmataha also acted as Red Shoe's spokesman when necessary. As stated earlier, it was Tatoulmataha who met with

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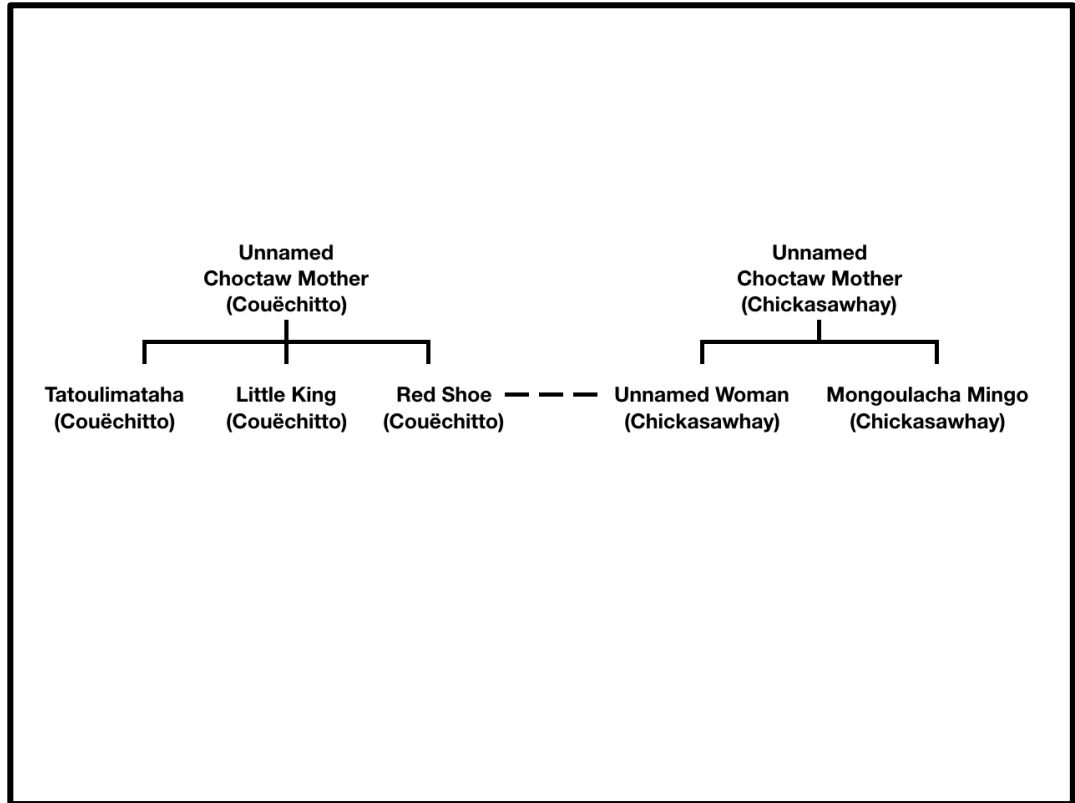
<sup>306</sup> Greg O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 23.

<sup>307</sup> On the cultural and political significance of this term, see Michelle LeMaster, *Brothers Born of One Mother: British-Native American Relations in the Colonial Southeast* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012).

<sup>308</sup> Edmond Atkin, "Historical Account of the Revolt of the Chactaw Indians in the late War from the French to the British Alliance and of Their Return since to that of the French..." The British Library, Lansdowne MS 809, 3; Royal Council Journal MS, No. 15, June 4 1747 – July 20, 1748, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Acc. No. S 171002, 57-60; *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, September 10, 1746 - June 13, 1747*, ed. J.W. Easterby (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1958), 220-221.

<sup>309</sup> On Red Shoe's death, see Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 324.

Beauchamp and revealed Red Shoe’s disgust over the wretched treatment of his wife. And while he went so far as to acknowledge the French outrage over the actions made by his brother’s “wicked heart,” Tatoulimataha never wavered in his support for Red Shoe, stating, he “would never make an attempt on his brother’s life.”<sup>310</sup> Leadership of the pro-English faction remained within the confines of Red Shoe’s kinship network.



*Figure 2 - Proposed Red Shoe Family Tree (Choctaw Wife)*

<sup>310</sup> Beauchamp’s Journal, August 1746 in *MPAFD*, 4: 291.

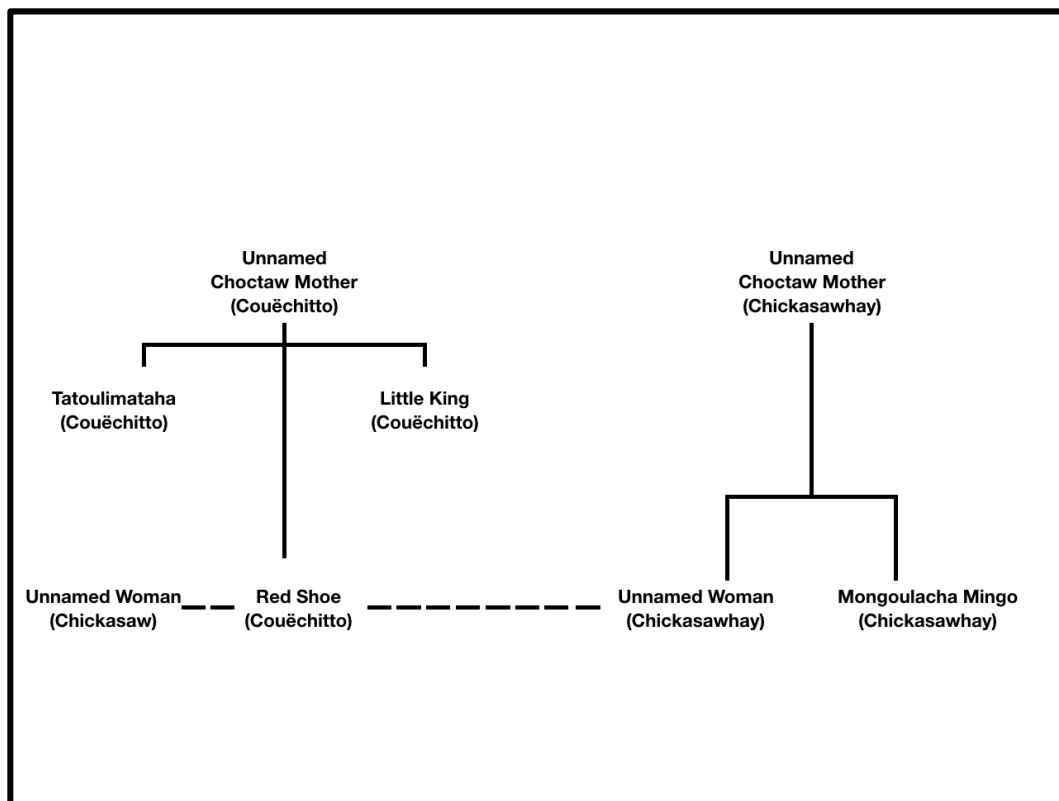


Figure 3 - Proposed Red Shoe Family Tree (Chickasaw Wife)

Connections through kinship networks extended outside of Couëchitto, connecting Red Shoe to other Choctaw villages as well. This is illustrated in a November 1748 letter from Governor Vaudreuil to Jean-Frédéric Phélypeaux, comte de Maurepas, Minister of the Marine. In his report, Vaudreuil referred to the medal chief of the Chickasaways, Mougoulacha Mingo, as “the most influential partisan of the English and of the late chief Red Shoe, *whose brother-in-law he was*” (Figure 3).<sup>311</sup> There is no evidence clearly connecting Mongoulacha Mingo with the wife of Red Shoe who was abused. However, two details from Beauchamp’s 1746 report are worth highlighting: the village of the Chickasawhays was chosen to host the assembly, possibly in an effort to allay an aggrieved kinship network that included the medal chief of the village; and, of all

<sup>311</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 5 November 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 339. Emphasis added.

the Choctaw headmen in attendance, only Mongoulacha Mingo appeared drunk, perhaps evidence of alcohol use as a coping mechanism.<sup>312</sup> Although other Choctaws spoke out against the French desire for restitution for the three men Red Shoe and his followers murdered, Mongoulacha Mingo spoke with by far the most “anger and animosity.” He declared the French “were seeking the destruction of the red man,” and even went so far as to “cut off his medal and throw it into a stream.” Mongoulacha Mingo’s symbolic act almost led to a physical act of violence, as Beauchamp noted that the chief “even wanted to attack me” before cooler heads prevailed. Stomping out of the assembly in a drunken rage, Mongoulacha Mingo “acted like a madman, [and] tore down the French flag that he had hung” upon the Frenchman’s arrival.<sup>313</sup> In addition to his preexisting suspicions that the French sought to weaken the influence of his *Imoklasha* moiety, the pent up rage that Mongoulacha Mingo held towards the French on account of the poor treatment of his sister explains why his opinions about the appropriate use of violence by Red Shoe betrayed the standard behavior associated with his role as a “white,” or peace, chief.<sup>314</sup>

When reframed in kinship terms, then, the origins of the Choctaw civil war become more than a factional conflict over long-standing divergent foreign trade policies. Close reading of sources such as Beauchamp’s journal reveals a deeply personal story of trauma and revenge. Importantly, it allows historians to recover one of the hidden figures of the drama – Red Shoe’s unnamed wife – while also squarely situating her seminal role in the war’s outbreak. It illustrates how one single aggrieved kinship network could push

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<sup>312</sup> For more on Native engagement with alcohol as a trade good and its subsequent usages, see Peter Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

<sup>313</sup> Beauchamp’s Journal, August 1746 in *MPAFD*, 4: 273-4. This mimicked the 1738 actions of the Great Medal Chief of the Choctaws after he was slighted by the French officer Diron; see Journal of Régis du Roulet (1729) in *MPAFD*, 1: 37.

<sup>314</sup> On moiety designation, and Mongoulacha Mingo’s status more specifically, see Galloway, “Choctaw Factionalism, 1746-1750” in *Practicing Ethnohistory*, 271.

a particular group to civil war with implications that stretched from New Orleans to Charles Town, while also explaining why seemingly unrelated groups such as the Chickasaws were also wrapped up in this family drama. Although material acquisition played an important role because of the myriad ways merchandise helped create and sustain identity, material consumption alone cannot explain the contingencies that shaped the Choctaw civil war. Only by focusing on Red Shoe's kinship network, and tracing how that network transcended village affiliation, can we appreciate the personal and political upheaval wrought by the Choctaw civil war.

**Chapter Five**  
*Atobbi mih isht illi:*  
**Private War and the Limitations of the Anglo-Choctaw Alliance**

When Choctaws die, the souls of the deceased undergo an ordeal to determine their fate. The departed cross a fallen cypress tree spanning an immense “cataract.” During the crossing, trickster spirits pelt them in order to break their concentration and knock them off the tree trunk. Honorable Choctaws would evade these lobbed obstacles, cross the fallen cypress, and successfully gain entry into the “Good Hunting Ground” – an afterlife in “a land of flowers and butterflies, and every tree and shrub and weed and blade of grass is loaded with fruits of the most delicious flavor.” Those who fell from the cypress into the void were swept into a dark river known as the *Oka lusa hacha*, where they were thrust against rocks, breaking bones before finally pulling themselves onto shore. This brutal near-drowning would set the tone for the rest of their time spent in the “Bad Hunting Ground.” Here was an eternity of “perpetual dim twilight,” “leafless trees,” and a nonstop “piercing north wind.” To Choctaws living through years of civil war



between 1747 and 1750, these words did not merely describe the afterlife, but their present circumstance. The “Bad Hunting Ground” had become reality.<sup>315</sup>

Why — and more importantly, how — did Choctaw country descend into a state of violence and death? A small number of historians have offered explanations for this exceptional era of violence, including Choctaw material dependence, fluctuations in the exchange economy, the malfunctioning of the playoff system, tensions between moieties, Choctaws acting as European proxies, and the consequences of an expanding gun frontier.<sup>316</sup> Understandings of the civil war must be centered on Choctaw contingency, recognizing how myriad pressures — gendered, ethnic, and economic — dictated the course of the war. These considerations figured prominently in each distinctive stage of the war.

In addition, it is impossible to understand the Choctaw civil war without situating the internal decay of the Choctaw nation amid the shifting alliances between and machinations of other powers among the Native and colonial Souths. This chapter details

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<sup>315</sup> T.N. Campbell surveyed all available ethnographic works – those done by David Bushnell Jr., Horatio Cushman, Israel Folsom, Gideon Lincecum, Peter Pitchlynn, and Alfred Wright – on the subject in “The Choctaw Afterworld,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 72 (1959): 146-154.

<sup>316</sup> Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 34-68; Daniel H. Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute for Early American History and Culture, 1996), 87-96; Patricia Dillon Woods, *French-Indian Relations on the Southern Frontier, 1699-1762* (Ann Arbor: UMI Press, 1980), 152-159; James Taylor Carson, *Searching for the Bright Path: The Mississippi Choctaws from Prehistory to Removal* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 29-33; Patricia Galloway, “Choctaw Factionalism and Civil War,” *Journal of Mississippi History* 44, no. 4 (1982): 289-327, reprinted in *The Choctaw Before Removal*, ed. Carolyn Keller Reeves (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1985), 120-156; Galloway, *Practicing Ethnohistory: Mining Archives, Hearing Testimony, Constructing Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 259-291 and *Pre-Removal Choctaw History: Exploring New Paths*, ed. Greg O’Brien (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 70-102 (all subsequent citations of this work will reference the 2008 edition); Norman Caldwell, “The Southern Frontier during King George’s War,” *The Journal of Southern History* 7, no. 1 (1941): 37-54; Charles William Paape, “The Choctaw Revolt: A Chapter in the Intercolonial Rivalry in the Old Southwest” (PhD diss., University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 1946); David Silverman, *Thundersticks: Firearms and the Violent Transformation of Native America* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2016), 87-89.

the first phase of the Choctaw civil war, from 1746 to 1748, and argues it is best understood as a private campaign waged between Red Shoe of the western division (*Imoklasha*) town of Couëchitto and the French in order to avenge a sexual assault on his wife. During this brief window, Red Shoe accomplished what he long sought: a trade alliance with Charles Town, where he found receptive colonial officials and merchants anxious to make a profit while ensuring the backcountry would not fall victim to French aggression in a North American theater of the War of Austrian Succession. The consideration of English objectives below makes clear how South Carolinians and English administrators across the Atlantic needed the western Choctaws just as much (if not more than) the western Choctaws needed them for war supplies and goods.

While the Choctaws fractured along pro-English and pro-French lines, political life in South Carolina grappled with its own internal divisions. The question whether power ultimately rested in South Carolina between the Commons House, the Royal Council, or the governor's office manifested in distrust among all three parties.<sup>317</sup> Indeed, Carolina and Choctaw factionalism would each ultimately influence the resolution of the other's crisis: outspoken criticism of Carolina's failed attempts to install its agenda into the Choctaw civil war – especially in the public sphere – contributed to the eventual diminution of the status of the governorship and the decline of James Glen. At the same time, the mismanagement of Glen's personally-selected trading outfit deprived western

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<sup>317</sup> Robert Mercantini, *Who Shall Rule at Home?: The Evolution of South Carolina Political Culture, 1748-1776* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007). See also M. Eugene Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina: A Political History, 1663-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966) and Jack P. Greene, *The Quest for Power: The Lower Houses of Assembly in the Southern Royal Colonies, 1689-1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963).

Choctaws of necessary guns and ammunition, squandering Red Shoe's initial successes in convincing his followers to support the establishment of a regular Anglo-Choctaw trade.

The struggle over political authority in South Carolina dates to its birth. Founded in 1620, the original colony granted to Robert Heath was formally divided into two royal colonies a century later, with colonists rejecting proprietary leadership in the same manner as their Barbadian predecessors.<sup>318</sup> Historian Robert Mercantini has correctly traced the intertwined contestations between elites and the colonial governor at the local level and between authorities in London and Charles Town. Indeed, the growth of political influence of both the colonial elites and lower assemblies depended in large part upon the relatively lax attitudes of London officials towards the colonies in the period immediately following the Glorious Revolution.<sup>319</sup> Attempts at colonial consolidation sought to mold an "America that worked for the empire."<sup>320</sup> This process began in earnest under the Earl of Halifax in 1748 – during the height of the Choctaw crisis – and South Carolina governor James Glen, bolstered by an imperial agenda that in theory placed ultimate authority in his office, intentionally chose to completely bypass and ignore standard institutional procedure. Glen's actions drew the ire of a Commons House that until that point had enjoyed *de facto* political authority.

Central to these disagreements was power over the purse. Although the governor (aided by the Royal Council) was charged with the responsibility of the province's

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<sup>318</sup> Michelle LeMaster and Brandon J. Wood, "Introduction" in *Creating and Contesting Carolina: Proprietary Era Histories*, eds. LeMaster and Wood (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2013), 16.

<sup>319</sup> Mercantini, *Who Shall Rule at Home*, 5.

<sup>320</sup> Andrew D.M. Beaumont, *Colonial America and the Earl of Halifax, 1748-1761* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 2.

safety, during the Royal Period (1719-1776), the governor had no control of colonial expenses. Instead, the Commons House determined the colony's budget. While this structural tension preceded his administration, Glen's actions would heighten the rival claims to authority between governor and assembly.<sup>321</sup>

Indian affairs, then, proved an important political flashpoint in the relationship between the assemblies and the governor's office because securing the backcountry was Glen's highest priority. In his royal commission, King George II authorized Glen "full Power and Authority to levy, arm, muster, command, and employ all Persons" for colonial defense, as well as the option "to execute Martial Law, in time of Invasion." The governor – pending approval by the Royal Council – was also tasked with the power "to erect, raise and build in Our said Province and Territory such and so many Forts and Platforms, Castles, Cities, Boroughs, Towns, and Fortifications" as deemed necessary. In other words, Glen's duties as governor prioritized "the Security and Defence" of South Carolina.<sup>322</sup>

Glen viewed the addition of an alliance with the traditionally pro-French Choctaws as essential to "the Security and Defence" of the colony. From an English perspective, the imagined colonial balance of power in the South had for some time leaned precipitously in favor of the French. The threat of the War of Austrian Succession extending across the Atlantic compounded local concerns about defense held by the South Carolina government regarding French-allied native groups. Although the North American colonies, especially in the South, remained far away from "the Troubles" of the

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<sup>321</sup> On the rivalry between the governor's office and the assembly, see Mercantini, *Who Shall Rule at Home*; M. Eugene Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*; and Greene, *The Quest for Power*.

<sup>322</sup> Royal Commission to James Glen, 15 June 1739 in National Archives (UK), CO 5/198, 88-90.

battlefields of Toulon, Fontenoy, and Roucoux, Governor Glen saw the potential of the backcountry in aiding British efforts to defeat the French.<sup>323</sup> For Glen, developments in the backcountry would serve as a means of expelling the French from their southern colonial holdings, therefore weakening their stronger outposts in Canada. In other words, he saw South Carolina as an essential component of the English “imperial imaginary,” and constantly sought the aid of neighboring native groups as auxiliaries to help defeat the French in what he considered proxy battles.<sup>324</sup> Conversely, Glen recognized “French Intrigues” could result in an “Indian War” which would “prove certain ruin to this Province.”<sup>325</sup> However fiscally and militarily overstretched the colony might become, Glen believed that if he could convince the native powers that surrounded South Carolina to forget the quarrels among themselves and unite in the English interest, the colony was capable of striking a crippling blow against the French.

Concerns over the tenuous state of South Carolina’s claims to regional power became so worrisome that Glen sent a member of the Royal Council, John Fenwicke, to London to plead directly with the Board of Trade for more support regarding the “growing Powers of the French Settlements.” Fenwicke’s appeal, read before the Board on

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<sup>323</sup> *A Copy of the Declaration of War of the King of Great Britain against the French King...* (Boston, T. Fleet, 1744) accessed via *America’s Historical Imprints* database, Ref. Bristol B1241. For more on these battles, see Reed Browning, *The War of Austrian Succession* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993), 152-5, 206-221, and 281-6. For a general introduction to English strategy, see Jeremy Black, “British Foreign Policy and the War of the Austrian Succession, 1740-48: A Research Priority,” *Canadian Journal of History* 21, no 3. (1986): 313-331. For studies that focus specifically on the Southern colonies, see Caldwell, “The Southern Frontier During King George’s War” and Richard Paul Sonderegger, “The Southern Frontier from the Founding of Georgia to the End of King George’s War,” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1964).

<sup>324</sup> Eric Hinderaker deploys this term in reference to the Ohio River Valley in *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). For a continental perspective on this rivalry, see Paul W. Mapp, *The Elusive West and the Contest for Empire, 1713-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2013).

<sup>325</sup> Glen to the Duke of Newcastle, 2 May 1746 in National Archives (UK), CO 5/385 Part II, 125.

April 23, 1745, alleged the French had secured the interests of almost “all the Nations of Indians between Hudson’s Bay to the Bay of Mexico.” Fenwicke lamented the relative weakness of the colony; the decentralized nature of native politics, he informed the Board, created a situation in which “it is in the Power of a few, to destroy our Traders, who live Scattered among their towns.” Signs of weakness, he reasoned, would push native powers further into the French orbit, facilitating the “Easy Conquest” of South Carolina. Recent events brought the backcountry to a crisis point. He voiced fears that the Chickasaws would “no Doubt be obliged to Conform” to French demands issued from Mobile, including the stipulation that English traders should be forced “out of their nation.” He also doubted the support of the neighboring Cherokees, considering them “ready to joyn in any Enterprise where there is a View of Plunder.” Fenwicke’s remarks presaged domino theory: to allow the French inroads into the native nations that lay proximate to South Carolina could very well spell the doom of *all* the English colonies – not simply those along the North American seaboard, but throughout the entire British Atlantic world. If Carolina fell, an emboldened French Louisiana would represent “a Thorn in the Sides, Not only of all our Plantations on the Continent, but would Endanger also the Lofs of our Sugar Colonys.”<sup>326</sup>

Despite his desperate tone, Fenwicke came to the Board armed with “Speedy and proper Measures” that hinged on the construction of a pan-Indian alliance across the Native South bolstered by the addition of the Creeks and Choctaws to the British interest. “If we Engage the Creek nation to joyn us in Acting Offencively,” Fenwicke was convinced the British would “not then Fail of Securing (in like manners) the Chickasaws

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<sup>326</sup> The Representation of John Fenwicke to the Board of Trade, 23 April 1745 in National Archives (UK), CO 5/371, 61-62.

and Cherokees.” The Choctaw would then follow suit after finding themselves surrounded by so many “brave and Warlike People.” Additionally, the plan was pitched as economically feasible: “All this may be Effectuated,” he claimed, by combining gratuitous gifts to their native allies with the deployment of a joint force campaign of between fifty and one hundred British Regulars with Caribbean-based naval vessels against the vulnerable garrisons of the French, described as “Miferable poor drowned” places.<sup>327</sup>

Fenwicke’s plan appears straightforward enough: the colonists, aided by the Creeks, Cherokees, Chickasaws, and Choctaws, a few British Regulars and “three or four Small Men of war . . . detached from the Squadron always at Jamaica” would overrun Louisiana. Implementation of this plan, however, depended upon the financial assistance from the Board of Trade to help pay for “good Presents” to be given to their Native allies. According to Fenwicke, the colony could not foot the bill for a number of reasons. First, the transition to rice monoculture had not resulted in the expected tax windfall for the colony. Fenwicke noted how planters proved unable to “pay the high Freight Insurance Duty and other Charges w<sup>ch</sup> are due on it” because rice currently held “little Value in Europe.” Merchants everywhere felt the pinch of recession as the war interrupted trade. Henry Laurens lamented in 1747 how “Matters have taken a strange turn in respect to freight & the commodity of the Country” and the “very Little” profits to be made. He and

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<sup>327</sup> The Representation of John Fenwicke to the Board of Trade, 23 April 1745 in National Archives (UK), CO 5/371, 62. The official language that Fenwicke deploys here – namely, that the BOT needed to finance Indian “presents” – implies that the Lord Commissioners may have already arrived at a nuanced understanding of diplomatic relations sustained by gift-giving as a calculable return on the gift earlier than previously understood. Georgia Carley notes that clarity in this practical approach to the bottom line had been reached by at least the mid 1760s; see Carley, “Cost, Commodity, and Gift: The Board of Trade’s Conceptualization of British-Native American Gift Giving during Pontiac’s War,” *Early American Studies* 14, no. 2 (2016): 203-224.

his cohort faced “melancholy prospects” during this period.”<sup>328</sup> Second, with the defense budget already soaring, another tax would result in South Carolinians being placed “under the greatest Straits and Difficulty Imaginable.” Fenwicke went so far as to claim the colonists would be unable “Even to Cloath their Familys.” The “present Unavoidable Taxes” made the plan impossible to complete without some assistance from the metropole.<sup>329</sup> Such support, he reasoned, would be a small price for the preservation of English interests throughout the Atlantic.

The necessity of securing a pan-Indian anti-French native alliance system was an obsession for Glen, and for good reason: recent events had demonstrated Louisiana’s advance into South Carolina’s backcountry. This constituted an existential threat to the commercial expansion of the colony. Securing the Choctaw in the English interest would help allay the fears of some of the colony’s most remote settlers. On April 16, 1746, the settlers of two riverine frontier towns, Sax Gotha and Williamsburg, delivered separate petitions calling for the shoring up of colonial defense.<sup>330</sup> Although the predominantly German settlers of Sax Gotha, located at the confluence of the Broad and Saluda rivers, pledged to “contribute their personal Labor” to help finish a defensive fortification, they admitted their inability to complete the project on their own, citing financial constraints.

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<sup>328</sup> *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, 16 Vols., ed. Phillip M. Hamer (Columbia: South Carolina Historical Society, 1968), 1: 8.

<sup>329</sup> The Representation of John Fenwicke to the Board of Trade, 23 April 1745 in National Archives (UK), CO 5/371, 62. Rice production would remain the economic foundation of the colony for the next 20 years, with the *South-Carolina and American General Gazette* reporting in 1768 that “Rice [is] Our Staple Article of Export.” On the general strength of the South Carolina economy, see *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789*, eds. John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1985), 186-187 and R.C. Nash, “South Carolina Indigo, European Textiles, and the British Atlantic Economy in the Eighteenth Century,” *The Economic History Review* 63, no. 2 (2010): 362-392.

<sup>330</sup> The Township Plan of 1730 proposed by Governor Robert Johnson established these settlements; see Kenneth E. Lewis, *The Carolina Backcountry Venture: Trade, Capital, & Circumstance in the Development of Camden and the Wateree Valley, 1740-1810* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2017), 16, 26, 35-38.



The settlers asked the Commons House for aid to help speed construction along, but also confided their collective distrust of the effectiveness of their fort, stating “these Forts we conceive will not be sufficient alone to secure those People.” To help “allay their Fears,” the settlers requested funding from the colony to speed construction of the fort and the deployment of “a Party of Horse Rangers for some Months.”

To the east, the Irish Protestant inhabitants of Williamsburg on the banks of the Black River echoed these sentiments. Furthermore, the settlers at Williamsburg believed they had proof that French native allies were ready to overrun not only their town, but the entire colony. Over the previous winter, “Rumours of a threatened invasion” alarmed those in Williamsburg “several Times.” News that “seven French Indians who went through the Township” without stopping for rest or victuals substantiated these fears, as the group was “reputed to be Spies.” The town was thrown into “a great Terror,” and for months raised “the Alarm at any Rumour which Fear, Error, or Design used to generate on such Occassion.” Settlers were concerned the town’s layout would allow enemies to easily surround their homes, offering them little hope of escape should an Indian raid occur. According to Williamsburg’s petitioners, the town lacked a “fixed Place where to meet and where to secure their Wives and Children.” At best, “they could not think upon any thing else than either to hide their little ones with their Mothers in the Swamps or Bushes or to die with them.” In short, they decried, the town proved “useless for the Defence of the Province.” The Commons House attempted to quiet the fears of “the Number of those Out Settlers,” agreeing that the erection of “a Palisado Fort mounted with a few Swivel Guns” would be sufficient for the inhabitants “to make a suitable Defence against their Foes.” And while the request for fifty rangers to aid the towns

“passed in the Negative,” the Commons did approve of two companies of forty total rangers dispatched for the duration of six months.<sup>331</sup>

English colonial administrators feared the French would attempt to establish a pan-Indian alliance against them.<sup>332</sup> In response, they worked hard to create their own anti-French alliance by getting all the major native nations to act cohesively. The success of their plan was dependent on upsetting the Franco-Choctaw relationship that anchored Lower Louisiana. Yet it was not so much the Franco-Choctaw alliance that troubled English minds as the repeated French inroads into areas considered already within the domain of the English backcountry. In particular, various Cherokee and Creek villages received French officers and goods continuously throughout the mid-eighteenth century. Because of these perceived French successes – as well as native willingness to accept new diplomatic overtures from the French – the need to offset these perceived losses by drawing the Choctaws into the English interest became all the more urgent.

Although the Cherokees were located the farthest from French colonial centers, the English believed the nation kindly received French calls to establish a regular trade in the late 1730s and early 1740s. This directly threatened concerted English efforts to protect the Tennessee Corridor, which encompassed the Tennessee and Wabash Rivers.<sup>333</sup> The case of Christian Gottlieb Priber showed the lengths to which the English

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<sup>331</sup> *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly*, 12 Vols., ed. J.H. Easterby (Columbia: Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1951), 6: 193-197 (henceforth referred to as *JCHA*).

<sup>332</sup> On the importance of rumor and panic, see Gregory Evans Dowd, “The Panic of 1751: The Significance of Rumors on the South Carolina-Cherokee Frontier,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 53, no. 3 (1996): 527-560 and *Groundless: Rumors, Legends, and Hoaxes on the Early American Frontier* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015).

<sup>333</sup> Kristofer Ray, “Cherokees and Franco-British Confrontation in the Tennessee Corridor, 1730-1760,” *Native South* 7, no. 1 (2014): 33-67. See also “Cherokees, Empire, and the Tennessee Corridor in the British Imagination, 1670-1730” in *Before the Volunteer State: New Thoughts on Early Tennessee, 1540—1800*, ed. Ray (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2014), 35-63.

went in order to ensure unconditional Cherokee support. From 1736 until his capture in 1742, Priber's residence among the Overhill Cherokees worried South Carolinians. Born in Saxony, Priber travelled across the Atlantic, attracted by the idealism inherent in the establishment of a "free" Georgia, and ultimately settling in the Overhill Cherokee village of Great Tellico where he fully rejected Western cultural norms.<sup>334</sup> In reality more concerned with establishing a utopian community referred to as the "Kingdom of Paradise" that would include "fugitive English, French, Germans, and Negroes," trader James Adair claimed Priber was an agent of the French, sent to "impress" the Cherokees "with a very ill opinion of the English."<sup>335</sup> Adair believed Priber planned to wrest the Cherokees from the English by abolishing Cherokee dependence on English trade. Priber brought with him weights and measures to guard against swindling English traders.<sup>336</sup> In addition, Adair believed Priber intended to help the Cherokees establish their own native powder industry to strengthen their military might. The Overhill villages were a prime location for such an enterprise: direct water routes between the Cherokees and New

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<sup>334</sup> Knox Mellon, Jr., "Christian Priber's Cherokee 'Kingdom of Paradise,'" *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (1973): 319-331, especially 322. On the early history of Georgia, see Noeleen McIlvenna, *The Short Life of Free Georgia: Class and Slavery in the Colonial South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015). On Priber's quirks, see James Adair, *The History of the American Indians*, ed. Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006), 258-261.

<sup>335</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 258 and Account of Christian Pryber's Proceedings, 22 April 1743 in National Archives (UK), CO 5/655 Part II, 199-200. On Priber's vision, see Verner W. Crane, "A Lost Utopia of the First American Frontier" *The Sewanee Review* 27, no. 1 (1919): 48-61 and Crystal Aycock Bowne, "Priber's 'Kingdom of Paradise': Belief Systems and Ethnicity in the Colonial South" (M.A. thesis, University of Georgia, 2009). Robert Owens has detailed the Anglo-American preoccupation with antagonistic pan-Indian movements, however, his study lacks a discussion of how these fears worked in concert with concern regarding the ever-growing slave population in the south. See Robert Owens, *Red Dreams, White Nightmares: Pan-Indian Alliances in the Anglo-American Mind, 1763-1815* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015). On the confluence of white racial concerns on the frontier, see Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1999) and Robert Parkinson, *The Common Cause: Creating Race and Nation in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, 2016).

<sup>336</sup> Mellon, Jr., "Christian Priber," 324-5.

Orleans via the Mississippi and Tennessee Rivers would allow the easy movement of “a sufficient number of Frenchmen of proper skill to instruct them in the art of marking gunpowder.” It is no stretch of the imagination to recognize the appeal of a munitions production centered on Cherokee land to aid not only hunting but also defense. When Adair spoke of Priber’s new “red imperial æra,” he might as well have been referencing a Cherokee regional hegemony that resulted from the transmission of French technological knowledge throughout the backcountry.<sup>337</sup>

These prospects terrified the English, who after a number of failed attempts captured Priber near the Creek town of Tallapoosa in 1742. Christian Priber died in prison at Frederica on the Georgia coast, effectively extinguishing this allegedly French-backed utopian vision. Cherokee factionalism, however, continued to worry Glen. By the mid 1740s, the council town of Chota had made inquiries “to establish peace and trade” with the French at Fort Toulouse, in part to combat the rise of another Overhill town, Great Tellico.<sup>338</sup> In response, Glen made plans to tour Indian country to prevent headmen “being misled and ruined by the Artifice of the French.” After meeting with Creeks and Chickasaws at Fort Moore, Glen hosted approximately sixty Cherokee headmen at Ninety-Six.<sup>339</sup> During this meeting, Lower Town Cherokee headmen agreed to exchange a parcel of land that stretched from Ninety-Six to the eastern bank of the Long Cane Creek, a decision that brought vocal disagreement from other Cherokees. This treaty

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<sup>337</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indian*, 259-260.

<sup>338</sup> South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Upper House Journal, 14: 55 (henceforth referred to as SCDAH). See also Bienville to Maurepas, 5 August 1742 in *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion*, 5 Vols., eds. Dunbar Rowland, A.G. Sanders, and Galloway (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1927-1932 and Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 3: 772-3 (henceforth referred to *MPAFD*). See also David Corkran, *The Cherokee Frontier: Conflict and Survival, 1740-1762* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 16-18.

<sup>339</sup> *JCHA*, 8: 334. See also SCDAH, His Majesty’s Royal Council Journal, June 25, 1748.

especially upset the Overhill Towns, who allegedly grew “very insolent & have little or no Esteem for the White People.” Chota again became the center of Cherokee politics, as warriors from all regions supported the efforts of Connecorte (referred to by the English as “Old Hop”).<sup>340</sup> Aided by Iroquois, Shawnee, and Nottowega warriors, the Overhill Cherokees attacked the Lower Towns. Factional strife - so much a concern for Choctaw headmen – also reared its head in Cherokee lands during the early 1740s.<sup>341</sup>

The Choctaws and Cherokees were not the only tribes suffering from factionalism. Internal tensions in the late 1740s within the Creek confederacy also worried the English. Following his predecessor, William Bull Sr., James Glen, recognized Malatchi of the Lower Creek town of Coweta by extending to him a British commission in November 1746. That same year coincidentally marked the beginning of a prolonged land grant controversy between the Lower Creeks, the colonial government of Georgia, and Mary Matthews.<sup>342</sup> The land in question was a specific tract on which Mary and her first husband John Musgrove first “settled at a Trading House at Yamacraw” outside Savannah in 1732. According to Mary’s petition, “very large Quantities of Deer Skins” financially buoyed their operation, the success of which the couple secured “Large Credit and Supplies of Goods to carry on that Traffick from Merchants in Charles Town.” After the planting of the Georgia colony, Mary’s role shifted from frontier supplier to cultural mediator, and these new responsibilities diverted attention away from “her own

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<sup>340</sup> SCDAAH, His Majesty’s Royal Council Journal, 15: 195.

<sup>341</sup> Daniel J. Tortura, *Carolina in Crisis: Cherokees, Colonists, and Slaves in the American Southeast, 1745-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 22. On the regional importance of Chota, see Tyler Boulware, *Deconstructing the Cherokee Nation: Town, Region, and Nation among Eighteenth-Century Cherokees* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011), 27-28.

<sup>342</sup> On the bestowal of an official commission to Malatchi, see SCDAAH, His Majesty’s Royal Council Journal, November 1, 1746.

private Affairs and Improvements” to the point of “ruin.”<sup>343</sup> Mary served Georgia well, and expected compensation after some Yamassee Indians burned her post to the ground. As part of her restitution — for which she appealed directly to the Duke of Newcastle for the sum of £5,714 — Mary sought confirmation of her claim to the Yamacraw tract due to her status as the “Rightfull and Natural Princess” of the Creeks. Malatchi, who himself claimed recognition as “Emperor of the Upper and Lower Creek Nation,” supported her endeavor, stating the Creeks “look’d upon her as one of Us,” and therefore agreeing she had “an equal right to the Land with us.”<sup>344</sup>

Malatchi valued Mary as a “Peace-maker” and viewed any threat to her (or her new husband, Thomas Bosomworth) as a threat to the Creeks. After he heard rumors that Major Horton, commanding officer at Fort Frederica, ordered Mary and Thomas “to be hang’d for settling at the Forks upon the King’s Land,” Malatchi sent a raiding party armed with “Bow and Quiver” to offer Lower Creek support for the Bosomworth’s cause. In addition to Mary’s maltreatment, Malatchi grew frustrated with the contradictory signals sent by English representatives: first, Malatchi bristled at the revelation that Tomochichi “had given away all our Lands to the King.” This discovery made him “very uneasy” — the fact that James Oglethorpe would “impose” upon the Creeks “a Paper to take away [their] Lands, and not let [them] know any thing of it” called into question British intentions. Glen’s unceasing requests from South Carolina for Malatchi to lend Creek manpower to help attack Fort Toulouse, as well as an interrupted Anglo-Creek trade due to the War of Austrian Succession — resulting in violent threats between

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<sup>343</sup> Petition of Mary Bosomworth, 8 September 1747 in National Archives (UK), CO 5/656, 4v-5v.

<sup>344</sup> Speech by Malatchi, 2 December 1747 in National Archives (UK), CO 5/656, 26-26v.

Lower Creek warriors and officers at Augusta — made French overtures more attractive to Malatchi.<sup>345</sup>

The French sent presents and “desir’d” that Malatchi “go and hear their Talk.”<sup>346</sup> He agreed, and travelled to Fort Toulouse to attend a “general assembly of all the Choctaw chiefs.”<sup>347</sup> According to Malatchi, the French “told me that my eyes might be open, for the day would soon come that I should find their words true, that the English wanted only to take away our Lands & enslave us.” The events of the past months had made Malatchi “ready to believe what the French said.”<sup>348</sup> To sweeten the deal, the commandant at Mobile, Périer, reduced “the price of trade goods by half” during this visit. Malatchi may have preferred the more relaxed Périer – who implemented this price reduction “only on condition that no nation would establish a warehouse or trade among them” – to the near-manic insistence by Glen to build an English fort among the Creeks earlier in the year.<sup>349</sup> In return, the French would be in a better position to undermine Anglo-Creek relations while also endangering the English trade with the Chickasaws. This would not only bolster the relative strength of Louisiana, but also weaken the defenses of South Carolina and Georgia. This frontier diplomacy mirrored the way the French approached dealings with the Choctaws — namely, identifying one specific headman as a primary negotiator to make bargaining easier by ignoring local power structures. However, the French failed to recognize that Malatchi could not conclude a

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<sup>345</sup> Speech by Malatchi, 2 December 1747 in National Archives (UK), CO 5/656, 26-27v. Trader George Galphin was instrumental in informing Malatchi of the contested land claims; see Michael Morris, *George Galphin and the Transformation of the Georgia-South Carolina Backcountry* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014).

<sup>346</sup> Speech by Malatchi, 2 December 1747 in National Archives (UK), CO 5/656, 27v.

<sup>347</sup> Périer to Ory in *MPAFD*, 4: 53.

<sup>348</sup> Speech by Malatchi, 2 December 1747 in National Archives (UK), CO 5/656, 28.

<sup>349</sup> Périer to Ory in *MPAFD*, 4: 53.

Franco-Creek treaty on behalf of both the Upper and Lower Creek Nations, as he derived authority only from his Lower Creek town of Coweta.

In addition to French ignorance of Creek politics, which would have doomed the treaty from the start, three other major developments dissuaded Malatchi from formalizing a peace with the French. First, French-allied Cherokees attacked the Lower Creeks, making it much more difficult for Malatchi to take an unyielding stance towards the British, who despite their touchiness still represented the most easily accessible and convenient supply of guns and ammunition. Second, kinship ties between the Lower Creeks and the British were momentarily renewed due to the efforts of Abraham Bosomworth, Mary's brother-in-law, who acted as an "Agent" for the Georgia colony.<sup>350</sup> Creek trader George Galphin, in a letter from Coweta to Colonel Heron, noted that this resuscitated Anglo-Lower Creek "Friendship and Alliance" depended on a steady supply of weapons. According to Galphin, Bosomworth "was obliged (as he found it highly necessary for His Majesty's Service & the Continuance & Security of their further Friendship) to make Promises of considerable presents." Malatchi ensured the Georgians were clear on the stipulations of access to goods, threatening that if such supplies were "not given and continued to them, a War will inevitably ensue." Clearly, this threat represented Malatchi's degree of hesitancy toward the agreement. Finally, the longer history of Creek-Choctaw violence cautioned against peaceful relations between the two groups. Indeed, for Malatchi to allow this multi-generational rival to gain from and (perhaps even worse) divert guns and ammunition initially bound exclusively for the Lower Creeks would be unthinkable. After it became clear that Red Shoe's faction was

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<sup>350</sup> Petition of Mary Bosomworth, 8 September 1747 in National Archives (UK), CO 5/656, 3.



seriously engaged in trade negotiations with the English in Charles Town, Malatchi travelled to treat with the French. This trip most likely resulted less as an outgrowth of persistent French overtures, and more as a means to immediately supplement defense stores in light of increasing Anglo-Choctaw weapon shipments. Viewed in this light, it is clear why Malatchi abandoned his French flirtation after Abraham Bosomworth promised him a “large Distribution of Presents, and other Artifices.” To ignore securing as large an arsenal as possible would be foolish given the changing native political landscape.<sup>351</sup>

In contrast to the apparently wavering Anglophile allegiances of the Cherokees and Creeks, the Chickasaws remained without question the most amicable and reliably pro-English of all the southeastern indigenous nations. Since at least the turn of the eighteenth century, the Chickasaws – in particular the Lower Towns – gravitated towards South Carolina’s orbit due to English willingness to supply the group with weapons vital for the seizure of Indian captives. Historian Ed Cashin has argued the Chickasaws served as the “guardians” of English interests in Indian country. Indeed, historians have noted the central role played by the Chickasaws in the development of a booming Indian slave trade that buoyed the practice of plantation enterprise in the colony.<sup>352</sup> The Chickasaws’ close relationship with the English was buttressed by a consistent French belligerence directed towards the group throughout the eighteenth century. The execution of a supposed French spy among the Chickasaws in 1720 sparked years of violence and raids that brought the full weight of the French colonial forces on the nation, resulting in the

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<sup>351</sup> The humble Representation of all the English traders in the Creek Indians Nation, 18 August 1747 in National Archives (UK), CO 5/656, 1. A copy of this letter is found in the Loudoun Papers: Americana, LO 87, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

<sup>352</sup> Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

deaths of four hundred Chickasaw warriors and the destruction of three villages. By the end of the decade, French colonial officials accused the Chickasaws of orchestrating the outbreak of the Natchez Revolt, reigniting warfare and cementing the Chickasaws' allegiance with the English.<sup>353</sup>

By the time Red Shoe's faction emerged as a destabilizing force in Choctaw politics, most of the remaining Chickasaw communities defensively clustered around present-day Tupelo, Mississippi. While autonomous, these communities effectively operated as one large town.<sup>354</sup> Chickasaws used satellite communities to maintain their supply line to English goods. While a means of securing access to deerskins for the lucrative fur trade, the practice of English traders marrying into Chickasaw towns also served the purpose of repelling periodic French peace overtures. One of the satellite communities was called "Breed Camp" because of the number of intermarriages between English traders and Chickasaw women, resulting in a preponderance of mixed-blood children.<sup>355</sup> The English so respected their Chickasaw allies that the South Carolina Committee on Indian Affairs believed it prudent to respect the desires of the headman known as Squirrel King, who requested a fully funded voyage to London in 1746.<sup>356</sup> Indeed, the close relationship fostered by Red Shoe with the Chickasaws served to provide a modicum of assurance in the steadfast belief in the trustworthiness of the Chickasaws by the English. Of all the native groups South Carolina regularly treated with, the Chickasaws gave them the least pause.

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<sup>353</sup> Edward Cashin, *Guardians of the Valley: Chickasaws in Colonial South Carolina and Georgia* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 6. On the 1722 destruction, see Minutes of the Superior Council of Louisiana, 16 May - 13 October 1723 in *MPAFD*, 3: 357.

<sup>354</sup> Charles A. Weeks, *Paths to a Middle Ground: The Diplomacy of Natchez, Boukfouka, Nogales, and San Fernando de las Barrancas, 1791-1795* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 21.

<sup>355</sup> Cashin, *Guardians of the Valley*, 4.

<sup>356</sup> SCDAAH, Upper House Journal 14: 55-56.

Glen viewed the creation of an alliance with the traditionally pro-French Choctaws as essential to his goal of establishing an Indian coalition that would help drive the French from Louisiana. These imperial aims paralleled Red Shoe's own personal desire to expel the French. With their close ties to the Chickasaw and Creek trades, the English were a logical partner for Red Shoe to reach out to, as they had been during the previous decade. The mutual interests of Glen and Red Shoe would not only help secure the southern colonies in England's renewed fight against France in the War of Austrian Succession, but also reassert Red Shoe's claims to power among all the Choctaw divisions.

Red Shoe was no different from his peers, who frequently played English attempts to penetrate their market against the French in order to keep prices down and maintain uninterrupted access to European wares. The closing stages of the second Franco-Chickasaw campaign in the late 1730s saw his charismatic rise and his first attempts to abandon the French trade completely. In the late 1730s and early 1740s Red Shoe met varying levels of success in this endeavor, recruiting many followers to his camp. As early as 1738 the Commons House deliberated the notion of establishing an Anglo-Choctaw trade, contingent upon "a limitation of certain Towns to each Trader." A Choctaw delegation arrived in Savannah that year, and colonists worked hard to impress their guests with gifts in hopes of swaying them to the English "interest." On this trip, Red Shoe of Couëchitto – erroneously referred to as the "Chactaw King" by Commons House speaker Charles Pinckney – served as the delegation's leader and received "a very handsome scarlet Coat laced with Gold and the like for his Son." Another anonymous "Chactaw warrior" also received "an handsome blue Coat with Gold or Silver Buttons."

Laced hats, shirts, shoes, buckles, stockings, blankets, guns, and ammunition were all given to Choctaw attendees in order to “preserve a good Understanding with those People.”<sup>357</sup> This early visitation likely galvanized Red Shoe’s commitment to an Anglo-Choctaw trade while also presaging later tensions between private individuals (including the governor) and the colonial assembly over funding for Indian affairs.<sup>358</sup> In 1744, Red Shoe again agreed to set up his own treaty with the help of trader Lachlan McGillivray, who noted how the Choctaws began “to groan under the French yoke.”<sup>359</sup> A special committee was formed and agreed to extend McGillivray exclusive trading rights to the Choctaws, but nothing substantial came of this commission.<sup>360</sup>

Red Shoe’s commitment to the English was serious enough him to take on the mantle of the protector of English traders in Choctaw country. Eastern and southern Choctaws, wanting to ensure the French did not halt the trade at Mobile or Fort Tombecbé, took to heart French requests that they expel English competition from ever taking root among their towns. Eastern and southern attacks on English traders certainly complicated Red Shoe’s diplomatic agenda, forcing him to act as protectorate in the

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<sup>357</sup> *JCHA*, 1: 572-3, 575.

<sup>358</sup> In this instance, Captain Pepper upset the Commons House by paying for the gifts to the Choctaws out-of-pocket, leading them to admonish Pepper “not to supply any Indians for the Future with anything but the common Necessaries of Corn and Beef” without first consulting the legislative body. *JCHA*, 1: 590, 622, and 653 (quote).

<sup>359</sup> SCDAH, His Royal Majesty’s Council Journal, 14: 41.

<sup>360</sup> *JCHA*, 5: 309, 311, 349, 358. The six-man committee included Robert Wright of Dorchester, Robert Wright of Ashpoo, Culcheth Golightly, Captain Peter Taylor, John Dart, and Thomas Middleton. On Dart, see Kathleen Staples, ““Useful, Ornamental, or Necessary in this Province”: The Textile Inventory of John Dart, 1754,” *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts* 29, no. 2 (2003): 39-82. Middleton held property on the Cohambee, Coer and Ashley Rivers and would eventually receive the rank of colonel during the Cherokee Wars; see George C. Rogers, Jr., *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 36 and 86. See also the Thomas Middleton Plantation Book at the Southern Historical Collection, The University of North Carolina and Chapel Hill. On McGillivray, see Mary Ann Oglesby Neeley, “Lachlan McGillivray: A Scot on the Alabama Frontier,” *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (1974): 5-17 and Edward Cashin, *Lachlan McGillivray, Indian Trader: The Shaping of the Southern Colonial Frontier* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), especially 83-4.

interests of English traders. Two English traders were killed in 1745, after Red Shoe had contacted Lachlan McGillivray, and another was killed by pro-French warriors while traveling to the western town of Blue Wood. To prove his commitment to the English, Red Shoe sent swan wings, a calumet with tobacco, and white beads as “a strong confirmation of...[a] treaty of peace” to the remaining English traders among the Chickasaws.<sup>361</sup> More drastically, he took it upon himself to deliver justice for murdered Englishmen. Sources plainly state Red Shoe’s desire to avenge these deaths.

Tatoulimataha, his brother, noted Red Shoe’s frustrations that “an Englishman...had been killed by the Choctaw of the village of Blue Wood” while voicing the war chief’s list of grievances to Beauchamp at the 1746 assembly at Chickasawhay.<sup>362</sup>

Already determined to do all within his power to establish the western towns under his leadership as havens for English traders, the twin developments of the re-ignition of war between France and Britain and the rape of one of Red Shoe’s wives in 1746 brought Red Shoe and Glen even closer together. Glen had fully embraced a militaristic approach to French colonial expansion by the time that a fifty-five person delegation sent by Red Shoe arrived in Charles Town during April 1747 to finalize an alliance with South Carolina. Although the Board of Trade had rejected the earlier proposal by Royal Council member John Fenwicke, Glen believed he had successfully recalibrated his plans of creating a concerted pan-Indian campaign against the French. While still adamant regarding the necessity of military aggression — emphasized by the fact that South Carolina received more combined ordnance and small arms than any other

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<sup>361</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 323. See also Louboey to Maurepas, 8 February 1746 in *MPAFD*, 4: 260.

<sup>362</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp (1746) in *MPAFD*, 4: 292.

British Atlantic colony except for Jamaica between the years 1720 and 1755 — Glen also now preached the value of the subtler influence of trade.<sup>363</sup> Specifically, Glen believed he had found a foolproof plan “to establish all the Indians between us and the River Mississippi in...Friendship and Commerce.” This siphoning of resources from Indian country could only be accomplished through the construction of forts, which would serve as trade centers as well as architectural manifestations of territorial claims. The French had been proactive in establishing forts earlier in the eighteenth century, including Fort Toulouse (sometimes referred to as the French Alabama Fort) and Fort Tombecké.<sup>364</sup> However, he had received recent news indicating the willingness of Southeastern Native groups to allow the erection of rival English frontier installations. In a message to the Commons House, he proclaimed “how Sollicitous and how unanimous” the Cherokees appeared in their desire to host an English fort. The Creeks, too, “offered to assist in building a Fort” in “the Town called Mucklessees” to counter the French Fort Toulouse. More importantly, the Creeks also pledged “not to suffer the French to molest” the proposed new English fort.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>363</sup> Board of Ordnance, “Ordnance, Mortars, Small Arms, and Gun Powder sent to America from 1720 to 1755” in Loudoun Papers: Americana, LO 1, Huntington Library, San Marino, California. This tally indicates that the protection of Great Britain’s southeastern mainland colonies was prioritized throughout the early half of the eighteenth century. According to this report, South Carolina (and Georgia, which remained completely under the orbit of South Carolina during this period) was sent the second most iron guns in the British Atlantic World, a startling 157 pieces. Only Jamaica received more during this thirty-five year period, due to its circumstance as the most valuable sugar-producing island in the Americas. Surprisingly, South Carolina received more pieces than all of Newfoundland (divided among five different posts), Nova Scotia (divided between Annapolis and Halifax), and New York. Although South Carolina received fewer barrels of gun powder than Nova Scotia, it still ranked fourth overall in terms of total amount received, with only the Bahamas and Virginia receiving more. The colony also was the destination of the second highest total number of muskets, likely because of the item’s use for defense as well as the Indian trade.

<sup>364</sup> For more on Fort Toulouse, see Daniel Thomas, *Fort Toulouse: The French Outpost at the Alabamas and the Coosa* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989).

<sup>365</sup> *JCHA*, 7: 215-6. The rationale for the Creeks agreeing to allow the construction of an English fort may have had to do with rival power claims among prominent Upper Creek headmen. Perhaps in response to the

While South Carolina worked to bring all the indigenous nations of the southeast together in a common cause against the French, Red Shoe worked to establish more amicable relations directly with the English, thereby factoring prominently into Glen's frontier arithmetic. The Couëchitto headman tasked his younger brother, Imataha Pouscouche (also referred to as "Little King"), with traveling to Charles Towne to finalize this alliance. Explaining his role as the spokesperson or "Mouth" of Red Shoe, Little King assured Glen and the Royal Council that the Choctaws eagerly awaited English traders, claiming "that there was no danger in their Towns on account of the French." Western Choctaws were desperate for supplies and negotiated a number of terms: in addition to English requests that they aid the Creeks in attacking Fort Toulouse and assist in building an English fort near Fort Tombeché, Little King also guaranteed Choctaw escorts for English traders traveling close to French fortifications. Edmond Atkin, a Council member who later penned a meticulous account of the "Chactaw Revolt," also reported Little King's willingness to "move their Towns closer" to the English.<sup>366</sup> This was a stipulation of the utmost importance for Red Shoe and Little King,

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growing influence of Malatchi of Coweta, another Upper Creek headman, the Wolf of Muccolossus may have viewed this opportunity to establish a support base both domestically and abroad. To wage war on the French and their Choctaw sympathizers would be popular among a group that struggled with – just like their Choctaw neighbors – restless warrior youths. At the same time, the Wolf would give the appearance of outward support for Glen's dreams of a pan-Indian force intended for the ousting of the French from the British backcountry. According to a message from Glen to the South Carolina Commons House, the Wolf of Muccolossus "expressed great Readiness" to his plan. In particular, the Wolf did not object to, but in fact "approved of, and cheerfully promised their Assistance" in building a British fort among the Upper Creeks. The Wolf even volunteered his own "Mucklessy Town" as a location for the fort, arguing that his town was "a very proper Spot for one" due to its location "within seven Miles of the French fort" (*JCHA* 6: 193). As such, it represented a blatant challenge to Maltchi's claims as "Emperor of the Upper and Lower Creek Nation." On Malatchi's claims, made in the context of the unfolding Bosomworth Controversy, see National Archives (UK), CO 5/656, 26. See also Steven C. Hahn, *The Invention of the Creek Nation, 1670-1763* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

<sup>366</sup> Edmond Atkin, "Historical Account of the Revolt of the Chactaw Indians in the late War from the French to the British Alliance and of Their Return since to that of the French..." The British Library, Lansdowne MS 809, 3.

who wanted to protect their supporters, many of whom were part of his kinship network. In an effort to expedite this, Little King requested all future negotiations occur at Savannah instead of Charles town, citing the “long” journey and the fact he and other headmen “intend[ed] to bring their Wives and Children with them.”<sup>367</sup> These intentions may have represented the first step in a resettlement scheme among Chickasaws sympathetic to the western Choctaws at Augusta that would bring pro-English Choctaws closer to trading centers and shorten the supply chain.<sup>368</sup> While Choctaw escorts became the *de facto* practice under this arrangement, there does not appear to be any evidence to suggest western Choctaw towns relocated themselves closer to either English colony. This may be explained by the fact that South Carolina never approved the funds for the erection of a post on Choctaw lands to oppose Fort Tombeché. An English post was eventually erected, but in Okfuskee, which grew to be the largest and most influential Upper Creek town. In return for all this, Little King received a “red Suit, Shirt, Hat, Shoes, a Flag, and a Commission,” while the rest of his travelling party received blue coats and breeches, blankets, guns, powder, bullets, knives, glass, and paint. This delegation agreed to bring back to Red Shoe gifts of “a suit of red Cloathes, a Shirt, a Gun, Cutlass, 50 Lbs. of Powder, 100 Lbs. of Bullets, and an English Flag.”<sup>369</sup>

Little King also gave Glen permission “to build a Fort in their Nation” whenever he pleased.<sup>370</sup> His willingness to entertain and agree to the notion of an English fort makes sense: pro-English Choctaws would no longer have to travel through potentially

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<sup>367</sup> SCDAH, His Majesty’s Royal Council Journal, 15: 60.

<sup>368</sup> On this settlement see Cashin, *Guardians of the Valley*, 4.

<sup>369</sup> *JCHA*, 7: 221. On the importance of incorporating Euro-American garb into Native projections of political power, see Timothy J. Shannon, “Dressing for Success on the Mohawk Frontier: Hendrick, William Johnson, and the Indian Fashion,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 53, no. 1 (1996): 13-42.

<sup>370</sup> *JCHA*, 7: 215.



hostile Chickasaws or Creek lands to treat with the English. At the same time, this infusion of a backcountry military presence would require the assignment of a gunsmith to the post, an incalculably valuable resource for Choctaw allies preparing to go to war with French Louisiana. Not only would a gunsmith have brought knowledge regarding firearm maintenance and repairs — the French typically repaired broken or malfunctioning firearms at their posts for free — he would bring technology and manufactured goods inaccessible to most native communities. Western *Imoklasha* Choctaws could reasonably expect a gunsmith to bring an assistant and “A Forge Cart with Bellows, Anvil &c,” “Forge hammers,” “Forge tongs in pairs,” “glew,” files, saws, and drills. In addition to tools for repairs, a gunsmith usually brought a variety of “Forged Works of Sorts,” including hammers, nails, coring awls, and “tips for ramrods.”<sup>371</sup> To add someone with such skills would be a boon for Red Shoe’s movement. Hosting a gunsmith would further also potentially strengthen ties of obligation between Red Shoe and his *tasca* followers, whose use of particular weapons shaped their masculinity. At the same time, the presence of a gunsmith would have increased the potential arsenal available to western Choctaws.

Overall, the agreement concluded in Charles Town was advantageous to both parties: Little King secured access to identity-affirming materials for Red Shoe’s followers, and Glen moved one step closer to realizing a South Carolinian trade empire that would serve as a bulwark against the French.

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<sup>371</sup> Atkin, “A list of Utensils and Materials necessary with a Forge Cart for one Gunlock Smith ... to be set up in the Crick Nation of Indians...” in Loudoun Papers: Americana, LO 3246, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

While in Charles Town, Little King conveyed “the Wants of his nation” in the strongest terms possible.<sup>372</sup> He pledged to remain in the colonial capital until the assembly granted at least one trader permission “to go up with Goods & Ammunition in Company with him.” With time of the essence, he offered any trader protection “under his Convoy” to assure safe passage to western Choctaw villages. This offer paralleled a regular Chickasaw practice that helped ensure the arrival of English goods and traders. The question then turned to which trader would accompany Little King, thereby becoming responsible for maintaining this new Anglo-Choctaw trade. Although both the Committee of Indian Affairs and the Commons House overwhelmingly supported Lachlan McGillivray’s request for his proposed monopoly in 1745, James Glen overlooked the immensely qualified McGillivray for the same job in 1747. Nor did Glen select another trader, John Campbell, who had experience with the Choctaws – and Red Shoe personally – dating back to 1738. Instead, the governor tasked someone else with ensuring pro-English Choctaws received essential guns, ammunition, and supplies: Charles McNaire.<sup>373</sup>

Glen’s decision to choose McNaire proved questionable at best. Although the governor claimed McNaire had been recommended as a “proper Person to be the Trader,” nothing could be further from the truth. He admittedly had no experience with Native Americans, being “a stranger lately to Carolina.” McNaire’s only previous trading experience “met with Misfortune at Sea” and he looked “to try his luck on Shore.” Regardless, Glen proclaimed McNaire’s business experience as a selling point to convince the Council of his fitness for the post. He cited McNaire’s demeanor –

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<sup>372</sup> Atkin, “Historical Account,” 3.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*

described as “a more sober decent sort of Man than commonly goes to trade in the Indian Nations” – in addition to the fact that a merchant named Matthew Roche had already agreed to extend credit to McNaire. To counter the evidence of how unqualified he was for the commission, McNaire agreed to “carry the Publick Present (being 9 Horse Loads) free of Expense” to the Choctaws. McNaire told the governor and Little King he would “set off as soon as he could” after securing an interpreter. The urgency of the situation – Little King continually spoke of “the Necessity” of his quick return with supplies – prompted the Council and Commons to set aside any initial misgivings. With provincial approval, a private stock company known as the Charles McNaire Company – later referred to derisively as the Sphynx Company by trader James Adair – came into existence. In addition to the aforementioned Matthew Roche, his brother Jordan, and James Maxwell bought stock in the Company, allocating much needed capital to get the business off the ground.<sup>374</sup> Atkin later revealed that while the Company was named after McNaire, Glen made out the “exclusive Patent for the whole Choctaw Trade” to Matthew Roche in return for the governor’s brother, Doctor Glen, also receiving a stockholder’s share in the operation.<sup>375</sup> This private agreement therefore made the success of the Company not only a political matter for the governor, but a personal concern as well, with members of Glen’s family standing to gain directly from the Sphynx Company’s successes.

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<sup>374</sup> Matthew Roche was a partner with John MacKenzie in the firm MacKenzie & Roche; see *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 1: 11 n1 for biographical information. James Maxwell was a planter and justice of the peace for Berkeley County who had extensive experience working with the Cherokees; see *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 1: 139 n2.

<sup>375</sup> Atkin, “Historical Account,” 3-4.

Glen's actions reflected standard political practice throughout the British Atlantic World in the early eighteenth century. Historian Andrew Beaumont has outlined a similar methodology employed by the Earl of Halifax throughout his tenure: between 1748 and 1761, Halifax's personal network proved instrumental in bridging the divide between colonial center and periphery. In the context of South Carolina, Glen's patronage networks acted as the organs of institutional control regarding Indian Affairs. At both the imperial and local levels, private interest worked in tandem to secure state goals. Although many historians have been critical of Glen's approach in securing the Anglophile Choctaw interest, the use of private companies complicated the narrative of greedy self-interest because their nominally ultimate purpose – regardless of who was responsible on the ground – was to secure the safety of the colony. While contemporaries and later historians both criticized and decried the private financial benefit of the investors of the Sphynx Company, the creation of such an entity was a normal practice prescribed by Whiggish interpretations of mercantilism in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.<sup>376</sup> On the surface, then, there was nothing particularly unusual about the formation of the Sphynx Company. Even the eventual failure of the Company should not be considered abnormal. What *was* unusual – and later provided the basis of the Commons House's criticism of the scheme – was the means by which Glen circumvented both the Commons House and Royal Council through his exclusive dealing with the company and kept the assembly in the dark about Indian Affairs.

The possibility remained that if McNaire proved competent for the job, this blatant display of patronage and nepotism would have aroused less criticism from the

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<sup>376</sup> Beaumont, *Colonial America and the Earl of Halifax*, 9. See also Steve Pincus et al., "Forum: Rethinking Mercantilism," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 69, no. 1 (2012): 3-70.

Commons (and perhaps none at all). But the Sphynx Company bumbled its way to failure, and there were many early signs of mismanagement and outright carelessness. Little King and Glen clashed over the former's persistent lingering and refusal to leave without the agreed upon supplies. Glen ultimately convinced Little King to depart early, citing the need to avoid potential illness, as "the Water of that Town seldom agrees with Indians." Against his wishes, Little King left Charles Town without any "Goods & Chiefly the Ammunition." His hesitation was well-founded. The English dawdled, with McNaire informing the governor that his team – including Thomas Maxwell, Arthur Harvey, James Vann, and himself – still required at least "a Fortnight" before being ready to set out for Choctaw country.<sup>377</sup>

Word of the formal alliance concluded by Little King (on behalf of Red Shoe) and Glen spread quickly throughout Choctaw country and the trader community: a new market had been opened — monopolies be damned — and English traders took it upon themselves to approach individual western towns and set up storehouses. This spike in trader activity caught the attention of eastern and southern Choctaws who wanted to curb English trade in order to secure their own importance as French trading hubs clustered about Fort Tombeché and Mobile. Pro-French Choctaws attacked a conference held between Red Shoe and trader John Campbell, an ambush that killed either Red Shoe's or the trader's wife and put a bullet in Campbell's shoulder. As a result, Red Shoe personally escorted him back and forth between Couëchitto and Chickasaw country, including a trip in which Campbell brought "ten horses ... loaded with six sacks of

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<sup>377</sup> Atkin, "Historical Account," 3-4. Glen concern about Little King's health was likely sincere - Indians often avoided traveling to Charles Town because they noticed the link between presence at the colonial entrepôt and illness.

bullets, an equal amount of powder, and several lengths of limbourg” to the western village of Seneacha.<sup>378</sup> On June 22, 1747, during one of these trips, the headman fell sick. Allegedly influenced by a “high reward of the French,” one of the traveling party assassinated Red Shoe in his weakened state before fleeing the camp.<sup>379</sup> The identity of the assassin remains a mystery, although it should be noted that typical notions of Choctaw justice required members of an individual’s village or kinship network to execute a wrongdoer to break the cycle of retributive violence.<sup>380</sup> All known members of Red Shoe’s kinship network — Tatoulmataha, Little King, and Mongoloucha Mingo — refused to betray Red Shoe at Beauchamp’s assembly, and their consistent public service to him demonstrated their steadfast allegiance.

Although his kin remained supportive of his movement, many other Choctaw headmen were likely happy to see Red Shoe dead. Other medal chiefs from the eastern and southern divisions had motives to undermine Red Shoe’s close ties with the English. As leaders who received annual gifts directly from the French, these medal chiefs could not have been pleased with Red Shoe’s attempt to bypass the traditional redistribution practice with his encouragement of direct trade with the English. In particular, the leading eastern and southern division towns claimed close ties with French military posts and transaction sites. Numerous contemporary maps indicate almost every Choctaw traveling party that went annually to Mobile to receive gifts from Governor Vaudreuil passed

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<sup>378</sup> “Anonymous Letter” in *MPAFD*, 4: 308.

<sup>379</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 334.

<sup>380</sup> On the ethic of restitution, see Michelene Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005).

through the southern division town of Chickasawhay.<sup>381</sup> Its location midway between the eastern and western Choctaw villages to the north and the French in Mobile to the south allowed the town to steadily gain influence in the first half of the eighteenth century. Similarly, the leading eastern division town of Concha, with its connections to Fort Tombecbé, would have been undercut in influence by western villages that traded directly with Englishmen stationed among the Chickasaws, as Red Shoe proposed. Indeed, a letter sent from Henri de Louboey, commandant at Mobile to Jean-Frédéric Phélypeaux, comte de Maurepas, Minister of the Marine, lauded the “efforts” of Pierre Annibal Develle, the acting commander at Tombecbé, in “the death of the rebel.”<sup>382</sup> The establishment of an Anglo-Choctaw trade that flowed through western division towns threatened to dismantle the traditional practice of chiefly redistribution and status currently enjoyed by the recognized medal chiefs of each division.

The medal chief that stood to lose the most if Red Shoe’s reimagined trade alliance took root was the Great Medal Chief. The Great Medal Chief was not assigned to any particular division, instead acting as the main figurehead for Choctaw diplomacy as the French tried to make sense of the multiethnic character of the Choctaw peoples. To

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<sup>381</sup> For examples, see Baron de Crenay, *Carte de partie de la Louisianne qui comprend le Cours du Missisipy depuis son embouchure jusques aux Arcansas celuy des rivieres de la Mobbille depuis la Baye jusqu’au Fort de Toulouse, des Pascagoula de la riviere aux Perles...* (Paris, 1733) in William P. Cumming, *The Southeast in Early Maps*, Third Edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998) and Bernard Romans and David Taitt, “A Map of West Florida part of Et: Florida, Georgia, part of So: Carolina [In]cluding Chactaw Chickasaw & Creek Nation...” (1772), currently held at the William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan; Kenneth Hoffman Carleton, “Eighteen-Century Trails in the Choctaw Territory of Mississippi and Alabama,” (M.A. thesis, University of Georgia, 1989), 91-2.

<sup>382</sup> Louboey to Maurepas, 16 February 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 312. Vaudreuil recommended Develle for the Cross of St. Louis in September 28, 1749, although his recommendation makes no specific mention of his involvement with Red Shoe’s demise; see “De Velle” in *France’s Forgotten legion: Service Records of French Military and Administrative Personnel Stationed in the Mississippi Valley and Gulf Coast Region, 1699-1769*, ed. Carl Brasseur (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 2:2: 60-61 (henceforth referred to as *FFL*). See note 130 above.

try and streamline intercultural diplomacy, Governor Bienville recognized one headman as the Great Medal Chief in 1707, a western headman from Couëchitto named Chicacha Oulacta, who would act as the primary negotiator for the Choctaws instead of the French seeking out approval from each town's individual headman.<sup>383</sup> It is unknown if Chicacha Oulacta remained in power at the time of the factional crisis between 1746-1750, but some evidence exists to suggest the Great Medal Chief was ostracized from Couëchitto by Red Shoe and his followers as his faction gained power.<sup>384</sup> A 1748 letter from Vaudreuil to Maurepas places the home of the Great Medal Chief not at Couëchitto, but at Oulitacha, a town that Baron de Crenay depicted as adjacent to the leading western division town.<sup>385</sup> Personal animosity may have driven a wedge between Red Shoe and the Great Medal King, who were neighbors in Couëchitto but members of different moieties, and Red Shoe's intentions of establishing a regular Anglo-Choctaw trade directly challenged the Great Medal Chief's authority bolstered by French gifts. It is likely that one of the Great Medal Chief's supporters actually was the assassin, as evidenced by commissary at Mobile Jean Baptiste Claude Bobé Descloseaux's reports that "some white men of the small faction" — meaning members of the peace (or white) moiety — killed Red Shoe.<sup>386</sup>

Regardless, Red Shoe was dead. Without his charismatic leadership, the pro-English movement of the western *Imoklasha* Choctaws struggled to find direction.

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<sup>383</sup> Father Baudouin to Salmon, 23 November 1732 in *MPAFD*, 1: 158. See also Galloway, "The Medal Chief's *Grosse Lettre*" in *Practicing Ethnohistory: Mining Archives, Hearing Testimony, Constructing Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006): 292-310, especially 296-7.

<sup>384</sup> It may be that Chicacha Oulacta had died, but no French sources record any such event, which would presumably have been met with much commentary and consternation.

<sup>385</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 5 November 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 335; John S. Swanton included a transcribed version of de Crenay's work in "Early History of the Creek Indians and Their Neighbors," *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin*, 73 (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1922), Plate 5.

<sup>386</sup> Descloseaux to Maurepas, 25 October 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 329.



Further complicating the frustrations of the remaining western Choctaw leadership was the Sphynx Company's mismanagement. McNaire and his partners assured Little King they only needed another fortnight to outfit their pack train after formalizing the peace in Charles Town in April. That fortnight passed. Little King, taking their word and anxious for news and weapons, waited on the banks of the Savannah River at Fort Moore. Another fortnight passed. And another. After eight weeks, McNaire had finally assembled his pack train, something wondrous to behold: the Sphynx Company outfitted "no less than about 200 Horses with Goods."<sup>387</sup> McNaire and his team finally set out June 10. He unloaded most of his supplies while stopping at the Upper Creek Town Wewoka (present-day Wetumpka, Alabama) near Fort Toulouse. McNaire and his men took "double the Time" to complete the journey, compared to the average length of time other traders spent traveling the estimated 730 to 900 miles from Charles Town.<sup>388</sup> The Company would not reach Choctaw country until September 25 – nearly four and a half months after Little King first arrived in Charles Town.

The Sphynx Company's glacial pace allowed other traders, chief among them the Chickasaw trader James Adair, to enter Choctaw villages, in direct violation of the license granted to Roche. Adair's presence further complicated an already fraying relationship between Little King and McNaire. While the Sphynx Company lollygagged among the Creeks, Adair met with Little King, reiterating McNaire's plans with significant alterations. While Adair assured Little King that McNaire was on his way, he

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<sup>387</sup> Atkin, "Historical Account," 7.

<sup>388</sup> Atkin, "Observations touching the intended Appointment for Mr. Atkin," 1 in *Loudoun Papers: Americana*, LO 559, Huntington Library, San Marino, California. Atkin estimates "whenever an Opportunity presents & it is necessary by the Lower way near the French Fort at Tambekbé 730 or to avoid that by way of the Chicasaws above 900."

added that McNaire brought with him “all kinds of Goods that the Nation wanted as Presents” in addition to the agreed upon nine-horse load “Publick Present of Ammunition.” Adair also shrewdly noted that should McNaire fail to bring all this, “he himself would come again & do it.” Adair also delivered to Little King a yardstick that McNaire later alleged “was one quarter longer” and agreed to a fixed price for deerskins (likely the same rate he established with the Chickasaws).<sup>389</sup> In other words, Adair’s private discussion with Little King allowed the trader to preemptively undercut Choctaw confidence in McNaire (and any potential future profits the Sphynx Company might enjoy) while establishing himself as the most trustworthy trade partner in the nation.

Adair’s motives for independently seeking out the western Choctaws originated from self-interest and pride. With many years experience among the neighboring Chickasaws, Adair likely bristled at the notion of an outsider being granted such a potentially lucrative exclusive license to trade with the Choctaws.<sup>390</sup> As the closest in proximity to Choctaw villages, stores among the Chickasaws maintained by traders such as Adair, John Campbell, and his associate John Highrider appeared to be more sensible launching pads than attempting to start a regular Anglo-Choctaw trade from scratch. As such, Adair marketing himself to Little King as plentifully supplied in relation to McNaire, who had yet to even materialize amongst the Choctaw, made shrewd business sense. While colonial policy dictated exclusive trading rights to the Sphynx Company,

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<sup>389</sup> Atkin, “Historical Account,” 7. McNaire brought allegations of “schemes” such as a faulty yardstick against Adair directly to Governor Glen, but the governor cared little for these complaints, as it was McNaire’s responsibility to deliver the entirety of the public gift, making the yardstick purposeless. See Kathryn E. Holland Braund, “James Adair: His Life and History” in Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 11.

<sup>390</sup> On Adair’s mentality, see Braund, “James Adair: His Life and History” in *History of the American Indians*, 1-53 and Wilcomb E. Washburn, “James Adair’s ‘Noble Savages’” in *The Colonial Legacy, Volume III: Historians of Nature and Man’s Nature* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 91-120.

the fact remained that other English traders had seeped into Choctaw country to fill demands for supplies. Put differently, Adair had more immediate competition in Choctaw country than simply McNaire. Edmond Atkin later admitted as much, noting that both Creek traders “as well as those in the Chicasaw Nation, had continued to carry Goods to the Choctaws.” Importantly, according to Atkin, these traders “all had returned with success.” This situation quickly came to an end, however, as Adair’s gift of a faulty yard measure and agreement on cheaper exchange rates with Little King prompted “others to quit the Trade immediately.”<sup>391</sup> Even if the Sphynx Company officially claimed a monopoly on the Choctaw trade, Adair made strides to try and secure that monopoly for himself, in the process eliminating many willing alternative English trading partners in Choctaw country.

Charles McNaire, then, faced a slew of unexpected problems when he finally arrived at Couëchitto. Having been told of the bounty of McNaire’s supply – in addition to a likely assumption that the longer the wait, the greater the reward – Little King justifiably “appeared greatly confused” when McNaire brought only the small public gift of ammunition. McNaire left his private stock of goods — separate from the public gift raised by the colony — among the Creeks. Thrust into control of the western Choctaws, Little King “did not know how to appear before his people, or how to behave” in light of this news.<sup>392</sup> While Little King welcomed the ammunition, it alone would not guarantee his power base against the influence of eastern and southern Choctaws. Ammunition was useless without a weapon to shoot it. Armed defense appealed to Choctaw notions of martial masculinity, but other supplies were expected to confirm English attachment to

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<sup>391</sup> Atkin, “Historical Account,” 6-7. Original emphasis.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

their faction. Indeed, Little King pleaded with McNaire that without the goods guaranteed earlier by Glen at Charles Town and Adair at Couéchitto, “he could not give his People a Talk or Encourage them to go to Warr.”<sup>393</sup> While ammunition addressed an immediate need, a sign of good faith in the sustained trade Red Shoe wanted to establish would also have to include everyday items.

Choctaws were not alone in this assumption. For example, John Colcock later told the South Carolina Commons House, “For although the French seem to have the Advantage by their Proximity, yet as the Trade with the Indians consists mostly of woolen Manufacturing we can undersell them and the Charges of carrying them is sufficiently made up by the Value of the Returns, Skins being worth at least fifty per Centum more in England than in France.”<sup>394</sup> McNaire showed up almost empty-handed, with no guns, textiles, or war paint. With little to redistribute to his followers, Little King’s support base wavered. He admitted to McNaire that without gifts, his supporters might accuse him of keeping certain supplies “for his particular Friends.” Along with allegations of favoritism, Little King voiced grave concerns that his followers “would forsake him & turn to the French, in which case he expected to meet the Fate of his Brother Red Shoes.”<sup>395</sup> Burdened by Little King’s immediate needs and the heightened expectations instilled by Adair, McNaire handed over everything he had brought to Little King. Unfortunately for the western Choctaws, this amounted to only approximately £57 Sterling. The price of this negotiation proved steep as Little King allowed McNaire to discard the exchange rate set earlier by Adair. Regardless, Little King’s western

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<sup>393</sup> SCDAAH, His Majesty’s Royal Council Journal, 15: 58.

<sup>394</sup> *JCAH*, 9: 180.

<sup>395</sup> Atkin, “Historical Account,” 7.

Choctaws had nothing to trade in return. McNaire was hardly pleased, complaining to the governor and Royal Council in Charles Town by letter “That there was no Leather then in the Nation, nor did he expect any ‘till after the Winter Hunt.”<sup>396</sup>

Adair’s actions unintentionally hampered the western Choctaws’ objectives of securing more weapons and goods on multiple levels. That said, Adair was not alone to blame for McNaire’s shortcomings as an Indian trader; McNaire and his partners made the decision to bring only the public present directly to Little King. The initial prices agreed to by Adair, likely the same rates he established with the Chickasaws, also may have underwhelmed McNaire and his desire for profit by breaking into the new market. McNaire may have set prices above rates established by Adair, complicating matters as it appears that these two were the only traders operating among the Choctaws after pro-French Choctaws killed one of the few remaining traders, a man named Elsey, near Fort Tombecbé shortly after McNaire’s arrival at Couëchitto.<sup>397</sup> Other traders, already dissuaded by the long hard slog of the trade path, were smart enough to recognize the dangers presented by Choctaw factionalism and avoided the area completely. The evaporation of English traders from Choctaw country, in conjunction with McNaire’s unwillingness to bring his complete supply, created an initial void in resources that proved impossible for western Choctaw followers of Red Shoe and Little King to overcome.

Colonial administrators in Charles Town also made decisions that contributed to the western Choctaws’ struggles. The Committee on Indian Affairs agreed with Glen’s ultimate goal of having the Choctaws help destroy the French fort among the Creeks, but

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<sup>396</sup> Atkin, “Historical Account,” 8; see also SCDAH, His Majesty’s Royal Council Journal, 15: 59.

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

they believed success hinged on the inclusion of a supplementary force of six hundred “effective men” working with their new Choctaw allies. This would require the raising and outfitting of an additional three hundred men to join the three independent companies already assembled a year prior in response to the aforementioned concerns about French-allied Indians overrunning the out settlements. The high number of soldiers was considered necessary in case the English were forced “to face the French in the Field.” The plan’s budget reflected its proposed audacity: since the target was estimated to be five hundred miles distant from Charles Town, the costs associated with outfitting and provisioning these new supplementary forces to the Choctaws — in addition to having to fight the Creeks that would have defended Fort Toulouse — represented a crippling amount for a colonial economy already under dire straits. The cost of employing the three existing companies for four months was estimated at £21,102 South Carolina currency alone. Another three hundred provincials would realistically double this amount, and when factoring in Indian presents – in addition to those already received by Little King’s delegation – as well as other “contingent Charges,” it is no surprise that the Committee on Indian Affairs set the proposed budget at an astronomical £56,000.<sup>398</sup>

The Upper House agreed in principal to the expediency of the situation, yet voiced legitimate concerns over how exactly the colony would be able to afford this venture. Edmond Atkin called attention to the elephant in the room: “the Inability of this Province to defray the Expence of such an Expedition, in the usual Way of Taxes.” The Upper House did, however, recognize the need to strike and therefore recommended shelving the armed expedition against Fort Toulouse to divert valuable resources to

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<sup>398</sup> *JCHA*, 7: 220, 221, 224.

assure the erection of an English fort at the Mucklessees (Creek) Town “to raise [their] Reputation among the Indians.” Within a month, then, the English had already radically deviated from the terms of peace agreed to by Little King.<sup>399</sup> These initial conditions of the Anglo-Choctaw peace agreement hamstrung any possibility of success for the western Choctaws.

These obstacles aside, Red Shoe’s western Choctaw followers attacked the French directly, seeking retribution for the death of their leader. Intracultural justice preached patience and therefore further encouraged non-Choctaw targets. Le Singe (“The Monkey”), captain of the eastern town of Epitoupougoulas, revealed this practice when meeting with Beauchamp and his subaltern Dupumeux in 1751, explaining how Choctaws “pardon children when they err the first time, but if they repeat the offense, we chastise them in anger.”<sup>400</sup> Additionally, aware that Red Shoe’s assassin worked for a French bounty, the western *Imoklasha* Choctaws projected their rage toward the French colonial population and – importantly – *not* towards their fellow Choctaws. The actions of zealous pro-French Choctaws drove the western Choctaws to adopt objectives that matched Glen’s imperial motives: an Anglo-Choctaw alliance that worked to eliminate the French from Louisiana.

Charles McNaire and his Sphynx Company associates’ tardy arrival in Choctaw Country forced Little King and his followers, who were lacking weapons, to delay launching a raid on French settlers. Western Choctaws wasted no time in using the small amount of powder McNaire delivered, setting out immediately on the night of September 25 to ambush two French homesteads near Mobile the following day. The family of

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<sup>399</sup> *JCHA*, 7: 230, 232.

<sup>400</sup> Dupumeux to Beauchamp, 18 June 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 90.

Pierre Garland *dit* La Chaumetter, including his wife and child, were slain, as well as Pierre Moisel and his female slave, named Agette. Governor Vaudreuil noted that the scalps of those killed were brought back to English traders, “who sent them to Carolina by some Choctaws and Chakchiumas from the village of Couëchitto, whom they caused to understand that by this mark the English governor would take them under his protection and furnish them all the assistance that they would need.”<sup>401</sup> It proved a perfectly executed attack, with Louboey disturbed at how easily the settlers “let themselves be taken by surprise” because of their “blind confidence” in their safety.<sup>402</sup> In response, other settlers near Mobile “decided to abandon [their homes] and withdraw” into the fort. With “the houses of the city...left to go to ruin,” Bobé Descloseaux encouraged the displaced settlers to help erect “an enclosure of palisades around the city.” An assembly agreed to this plan on the assumption the funding would come from the Crown. While the raid itself did not result in catastrophic death tolls, it successfully disrupted the Mobile settlement, the symbolic seat of the Franco-Choctaw alliance as the venue of the annual gift-giving and diplomatic renewal ceremony, while also consuming precious resources in the cash-strapped colony. This further exacerbated the financial crisis the colony faced: no supply ships, no money, no sense of legitimacy in the grand imperial scheme.<sup>403</sup>

Western division Choctaws, still enraged by the French-sponsored assassination of Red Shoe, continued to lash out against colonial settlements. In order to inflict lasting

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<sup>401</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 5 November 1748 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 147, Huntington Library; see also *MPAFD*, 4: 333.

<sup>402</sup> Louboey to Maurepas, 16 February 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 312. There is some confusion over the date of this attack; Descloseaux dated the attack on September 24, while Louboey claimed it occurred on September 26. See *MPAFD*, 4: 329.

<sup>403</sup> Descloseaux to Maurepas, 25 October 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 329.



damage, western war chiefs focused their energies on the German Coast settlements. Repeated raids on these communities had two objectives: (1) slave abductions to cripple economic production and (2) to expel Louisiana's agricultural producers. The settlers these western Choctaws targeted, however, were familiar with hardship: the oldest families survived a recruitment and migration process that ultimately killed about a third of the original traveling party.<sup>404</sup> After finally settling in the New World, a hurricane devastated these survivors' homesteads in 1722 with floods. Reports from 1726 suggest the Germans could not afford to build a church. Yet they persevered. By 1746, the German Coast was characterized by small lot farms that proved essential for the survival of the colonial capital at New Orleans. German farmers produced vegetables, herbs, butter, eggs, poultry, and livestock for the city, and used their surplus profits to purchase 200 slaves roughly divided among one hundred land cessions. Left unprotected by colonial administrators, the relatively low slave per household ratio made the prospects for successfully kidnapping bonded labor much likelier than on larger plantations located closer to New Orleans, which boasted larger slave forces and increased surveillance.<sup>405</sup> In addition, the same brutal winter that would eventually bring smallpox to the Choctaws also claimed the lives of a number of slaves on the German Coast.<sup>406</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> On recruitment to the colony, see John Hanno Deiler, *The Settlement of the German Coast of Louisiana and the Creoles of German Descent* (Philadelphia: The German American Historical Society, 1909), 11-13.

<sup>405</sup> Helmut Blume, *The German Coast during the Colonial Era, 1722-1803*, trans. and ed. Ellen C. Merrill (Destrehan: The German-Acadian Coast Historical and Genealogical Society, 1990), 16, 47, 49, 68, 126. On the monetary value of slaves, see Mancall, Joshua L. Rosenbloom, and Thomas Weiss, "Slave Prices and the South Carolina Economy, 1722-1809," *The Journal of Economic History*, 61, no. 3 (2001): 616-639, especially Table 1 "Slave Values and Slave Prices In South Carolina, 1722-1809" (619-620). On slave life along the German Coast, see Ibrahima Seck, *Bouki Fait Gombo: A History of the Slave Community of Habitation Haydel (Whitney Plantation), Louisiana, 1750-1860* (New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2014).

<sup>406</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, June 1748 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 124, Huntington Library.

Demonstrating the ease by which they could strike New Orleans, western Choctaws inflicted heavy damage to the colony's ability to support itself. In April 1748, a party of nine *tasca* from the villages of Couëchitto and West Abeika raided a plantation, killing a man named Cheval, wounding his wife, and kidnapping their child and five slaves.<sup>407</sup> Terror marked the ensuing days in the settlement. "As soon as the blow was struck," Governor Vaudreuil informed Minister of the Marine Maurepas, colonists "abandoned their plantations and almost all fled to New Orleans." Refugees in their own land, the German Coast settlers demanded "a considerable detachment" for their protection and to escort them back to their homesteads. Upon their return, however, the settlers "abandoned their houses, and left their well cultivated and planted lands," choosing instead to relocate on the opposite river bank in hopes this new site would offer increased protection from western Choctaw raids.<sup>408</sup>

French attempts to apprehend the Choctaws responsible for the German Coast attack unfolded in a comical scene. Noyan ordered Louis Tixerant, a noted drunkard, and the Swiss officer Montendon to bring the western Choctaw perpetrators to justice. Traveling by pirogue on April 9 with a force of forty-five men, French scouts stumbled across three Choctaws. The pursuit broke out into a firefight. Frightened by their war whoops, the scouts fell into "dismay" and in confusion threw themselves into two pirogues to escape to the other side of the river. The ensuing skirmish killed one Swiss officer and wounded two others. The exchange of volleys from canebrake to canebrake lasted "a rather long while," before the head of the Choctaw party pointed out to the

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<sup>407</sup> The daughter was eventually ransomed by the English, taken to Carolina, and sent back to New Orleans. See Memoir to the King, 26 February 1749 in *MPAFD*, 5: 14 and Atkin, "Historical Account," 46.

<sup>408</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 4 June 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 318.

French detachment that his party had followed the French since their departure, yet refused to attack them. In the spirit of the ceasefire, Tixerant tried to convince the Choctaws that he simply wanted to recover “some red and black slaves that belonged to the French.” The leader of the Choctaw party confirmed the slaves were among them, and insisted the slaves were actually responsible for firing the first shots. He told Tixerant the slaves were “afraid to be captured by the French.” Coming out of hiding, Pahemingo, brother of the chief of the village of West Immongoulacha, invited Tixerant to retrieve the slaves, but the French officer, being “on his guard,” refused to meet Pahemingo at either the Choctaw camp or at a suggested drop-point near the German Coast tar works. Fearing a trap, Tixerant allowed the Choctaws to leave and keep the kidnapped slaves.<sup>409</sup> This “pathetic action” of Tixerant was a “dismal event,” Vaudreuil wrote to Maurepas later that summer, and threw the colony into fits. Colonists from the out-settlements to New Orleans believed “the Choctaw nation was declaring [war] against” the French.<sup>410</sup>

Western Choctaw incursions coupled with Tixerant’s folly forced Vaudreuil to shift his tone from mere aggravation to legitimate concern in the following days. On June 6, he issued a dire warning to Maurepas about the short-handed state of colonial defense. “It is impossible for me to provide for the security of these settlers by using detachments of regular troops, of whom I have not even what I need to guard the most necessary posts,” he exclaimed.<sup>411</sup> Defense of the colony was best served by the deployment of sympathetic eastern and southern Choctaws, but supplying this faction continued to vex

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<sup>409</sup> Gwendolyn Midlo Hall suggested the Choctaws aided these slaves altruistically, but this overlooks the pragmatic motivation of western division Choctaws to undermine French control in the area. See Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 115-118.

<sup>410</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 4 June 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 320.

<sup>411</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 6 June 1748 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 135, Huntington Library; see also *MPAFD*, 4: 321.

the governor. Breakdowns in French trans-Atlantic shipping disrupted by the later stages of the War of Austrian Succession complicated this task. In addition, Vaudreuil set aside the remaining supplies in the colony to “furnish” and entice a contingent of Shawnees led by Peter Chartier that settled among the Alabamas to the French interest, ensuring they received “*limbourg* in the English style.”<sup>412</sup> Rumors also flew through Choctaw country that “the King no longer had any vessels” to send gifts and supplies to Louisiana, a message that was either an English fabrication or more likely a misunderstanding of news concerning the English capture of the French West Indies fleet the previous summer.<sup>413</sup> Even if Vaudreuil could get supplies to the Choctaws, the warehouses at Mobile were “totally rotten” and in such poor condition that officers considered “the merchandise, munitions, and provision are exposed to loss.”<sup>414</sup> Timing also made it difficult for the French to move supplies to their eastern and southern division allies. October was the best month to move items because it afforded “deep water” to travel easily to the posts at Tombeché and Toulouse, but most of the year low water levels cautioned against using large boats. The use of pirogues, which Jadart de Beauchamp claimed “carried almost nothing,” made the trade exorbitantly expensive and “injurious to the interests of the King.”<sup>415</sup> Nature – whether through the erosion of store houses or low river levels – played an important role in Francophile Choctaws’ ability to receive supplies from their allies.

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<sup>412</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 15 June 1748 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 136, Huntington Library; see also *MPAFD*, 4: 323.

<sup>413</sup> Memoir for the King on the Choctaws, 6 September 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 325. On the defeat of the West Indies fleet, see Richard Harding, *The Emergence of Britain’s Global Naval Supremacy* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2013), 332-333 and J.S. Bromley, “Prize Office and Prize Agency at Portsmouth, 1689-1748” in *Corsairs and Navies, 1660-1760*, ed. Bromley (London: Hambledon Press, 1987), 485.

<sup>414</sup> Descloseaux to Maurepas, 25 October 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 331.

<sup>415</sup> Beauchamp to Maurepas, 24 October 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 327.

In conclusion, nature may have posed an obstacle to French desires to supply their eastern and southern Choctaw supporters, but the English also faltered in their efforts to arm western Choctaws. Enraged by the treatment of his wife, Red Shoe and his western *Imoklasha* Choctaw supporters began a personal campaign against the French, raiding and attacking colonial settlements between Mobile and the German Coast west of New Orleans. He also sought the formality of an alliance with the English in South Carolina, a plan met with approval by the Glen-led colonial administration anxious to contribute to the reignited global war against France. With Red Shoe guaranteeing the hearts and brawn of Choctaw *tascas* to the English “interest,” South Carolina stood as a potential vanguard in the defense of English North America. With the combined might of South Carolina military companies, the Chickasaws, Creeks, and Cherokees, Glen believed Red Shoe’s diplomatic defection the final step toward the expulsion of the French threat in Louisiana. Regardless of these mutually beneficial agendas, Glen’s decision to entrust the new Anglo-Choctaw trade monopoly in the hands of the inexperienced Charles McNaire immediately backfired, doomed by poor decision making, tardy transit into Choctaw country, and economic self-interest.

While nature made it difficult for the French to store and deliver weapons to the eastern and southern Choctaws, the nature of the English attempts to supply their allies kept arms out of western Choctaw hands. Nature profoundly influenced the course of the Choctaw civil war in other ways as well, and the next chapter will examine the socio-cultural consequences of a smallpox epidemic that ripped through Choctaw country at the same time that Red Shoe’s followers sought direct vengeance against the French.

**Chapter Six**  
***Chilakwa abi tanap:***  
**War and Disease in Choctaw Country**

The second phase of the Choctaw civil war, from late 1747 through 1748, was a period of infrequent raiding due to a smallpox (*variola major*) epidemic that devastated the entire Native South. While Choctaw society split into open warfare along factional, ethnic, and kinship lines, the fact remains that the majority of the casualties of the era must be attributed to smallpox.<sup>416</sup> This period saw English attempts at supplying their Choctaw allies fail spectacularly, while increasing demand for weapons and war material necessary for fighting and (perhaps more importantly) grieving the fallen Choctaw dead. Although recent scholarship has revised our understanding of the intersections between disease and eighteenth and nineteenth-century American warfare, many questions still remain regarding how - to paraphrase Drew Gilpin Faust - the “work of dying” unfolded in eighteenth-century *Native America*.<sup>417</sup> What were the socio-cultural consequences of

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<sup>416</sup> Patricia Galloway mentions smallpox briefly in “Choctaw Factionalism and Civil War” in *Pre-Removal Choctaw History: Exploring New Paths*, ed. Greg O’Brien (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 92.

<sup>417</sup> Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage, 2009), xiv. The “work of death” mentioned by Faust is not dissimilar to the framework of “deathways” introduced by Erik R. Seeman in *Death in the New World: Cross-Cultural Encounters, 1492-1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). Other seminal works on the relationship between war, society, and disease include Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of*

smallpox on a Choctaw people riven by factionalism? In what ways did disease influence Choctaw warfare?<sup>418</sup> Historians must reframe the manners in which disease, violence, and trade intersect with one another. Not only did this epidemiological crisis directly contribute to a generational crisis among the Choctaws, resulting in young *tasca* replacing headmen and elders who succumbed to smallpox on battlefields and in assemblies, it also calls for a reconsideration of the materials that epitomized intercultural diplomacy between Choctaw factions and their French or English allies.<sup>419</sup> The Choctaw civil war must be understood as a bio-social event.

The third and final phase of the war, between late 1748 through 1750, was characterized by an initial spike in ethnic clashes between western (*Imoklasha*) Choctaws and their eastern (*Inhulahta*) and southern Six Towns counterparts.<sup>420</sup> The manner of violence then transitioned away from larger battles to smaller raids performed by Choctaws in tandem with other sympathetic indigenous groups, including the Arkansas, Chakchiumas, and Chickasaws. What had originally begun as a struggle between Choctaw factions had evolved briefly into a struggle that included many different native

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1775-82 (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), Paul Kelton, *Cherokee Medicine, Colonial Germs: An Indigenous Nation's Fight against Smallpox, 1518-1824* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), and Jim Downs, *Sick of Freedom: African-American Illness and Suffering during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>418</sup> These concerns echo Paul Kelton's assertion that "epidemics, to be sure, occurred, but... scholars have overlooked how colonialism's violence set the stage for these supposedly unintended biological events, curtailed the abilities of Natives to protect themselves from infection, exacerbated mortality, and impeded recovery." See Kelton, *Cherokee Medicine*, 9 and David Jones, "Virgin Soils Revisited," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series 60, no. 4 (2003): 703-742.

<sup>419</sup> On trade and diplomacy, see Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: The Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685-1815*, Second Edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), Laura E. Johnson, "Material Translations: Cloth in Early American Encounters, 1520-1750," (PhD diss., University of Delaware, 2010), especially 112-127, and Jessica Yirush Stern, *The Lives of Objects: Native Americans, British Colonists, and Cultures of Labor and Exchange in the Southeast* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

<sup>420</sup> On ethnic identity among the Choctaw, see Galloway, *Choctaw Genesis 1500-1700* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 338-360; James T. Carson, *Searching for the Bright Path: The Mississippi Choctaws from Prehistory to Removal* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003); and Greg O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 15-17, 20.

nations of the Southeast, each of which who used the war to push their respective agendas.

While western *Imoklasha* Choctaws under the leadership of Little King took the field to fulfill Red Shoe's private war against French settlers and their Choctaw supporters to avenge the attacks on Red Shoe's kinship network, an outbreak of smallpox that affected the entire Native South put hostilities on hiatus throughout the winter of 1747-1748. It is difficult to assess the extent of the epidemic; passing references from European sources note the epidemic *in situ* or that it had passed from one Indian town to another.<sup>421</sup> This lack of documentation is no doubt due to the danger posed by factional conflict; few Frenchmen were willing to travel among the Choctaws, and only English trader James Adair offered direct commentary. He confirmed that his supply train accidentally brought the virus from Charles Town, although the city itself did not experience an epidemic: "The small-pox broke out in our camp, when we got nigh to the Muskohge country."<sup>422</sup> This is not surprising; the threat of smallpox was ever-present in Charles Town and isolated flare-ups frequently occurred in the early and mid-eighteenth century.<sup>423</sup> Indeed, these smaller cases may have made the colonial entrepôt more susceptible to other infectious diseases, weakening immune systems and facilitating a

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<sup>421</sup> For an excellent example of how disease can be spread within a tightly-knit community in early America, see Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Vintage, 1991), especially 36-71.

<sup>422</sup> James Adair, *The History of the American Indians*, ed. Braund (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006), 289-90, 336, 343.

<sup>423</sup> The *South-Carolina Gazette* did not mention all of these individual and isolated cases. However, extant sources note the presence of smallpox from time to time. For example, Eliza Lucas Pinckney mentioned her brother's bout with smallpox in January 1742 while the newspaper remained silent regarding a potential outbreak. See *The Letterbook of Eliza Lucas Pinckney, 1739-1762*, ed. Marvin R. Zahniser (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 14.



deadly yellow fever outbreak in 1748.<sup>424</sup> Yet, if smallpox moved through the city quietly in 1747, the disease quickly engulfed Indian country. In February 1748, Henri de Louboey, commandant at Mobile wrote directly to Jean-Frédéric Phélypeaux, comte de Maurepas, Minister of the Marine stating, “The measles, mixed with the smallpox, has made great ravages” amongst the Choctaws.<sup>425</sup> A month later, Governor Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil de Cavagnial, Marquis de Vaudreuil passed along an update to Maurepas. “I have received some [news] today from the Arkansas,” Vaudreuil wrote, “from which the commandant writes me that the nations of this continent have been attacked by diseases that have greatly diminished their number.” Smallpox had moved through Choctaw country to the Arkansas. In addition, members of all of the smaller Gulf Coast native groups, referred to as the *petit nations*, succumbed to smallpox.<sup>426</sup> Within a year, the disease had spread from the Creeks to the Choctaws, parts of Cherokee and Chickasaw country, and as far as the Osage and Kansas, traveling further into the continent’s interior and winnowing the native population living along the Missouri River to less than 2,000.<sup>427</sup>

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<sup>424</sup> John Lining, *A Description of the American Yellow Fever, which prevailed at Charleston, in South Carolina, in the Year 1748* (Philadelphia: Print House of Thomas Dobson, 1799) accessed via *Eighteenth-Century English Books* online database.

<sup>425</sup> Louboey to Maurepas, 16 February 1748 in in *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion*, 5 Vols., eds. Dunbar Rowland, A.G. Sanders, and Galloway (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1927-1932 and Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 4: 313 (henceforth referred to as *MPAFD*). See also Archives Nationales (Paris), C13A, Vol. 32, fols. 211-13v. The source of Louboey’s hesitation in attributing the affliction specifically to smallpox likely derives from the fact that measles and smallpox share a number of early symptoms, including a short-lived high fever that temporarily abates. After the initial symptoms, the distinctive pustules would indicate that the Native Americas were, in fact, combatting smallpox. See Burke A. Cunha, “Smallpox and Measles: Historical Aspects and Clinical Differentiation,” *Infectious Disease Clinics of North America* 18, no.1 (2004): 79-100, especially the discussion from 92-95.

<sup>426</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 20 March 1748 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 117 and LO 121, Huntington Library; *MPAFD*, 4: 316. See also Archives Nationales (Paris), C13A, Vol. 32, fols. 28-30.

<sup>427</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 24 June 1750 in *MPAFD*, 5: 47; Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 289-90, 343; “Memoir on Indians by [Louis Billouart, Chevalier de] Kerlérec,” 12 December 1758 in *MPAFD*, 5: 207; Kelton, *Cherokee Medicine*, 95; Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2006), 111.

While the course of smallpox's geographic sprawl is somewhat cloudy, the course it takes through human bodies is well known. Initial symptoms suggest a fever – body aches, heightened temperature, and vomiting. After a couple of days, the fever seemingly breaks, before the first telltale signs of the true diagnosis reveals itself. Sores appear in the mouth, the throat, and the nasal passages. Smallpox manifests in one of two ways. Internally, the pox can cause subcutaneous hemorrhaging, resulting in bleeding out from any number of orifices (including one's gums, nose, or eyes). Externally, the pox can spread to the limbs, digits, back, and face, where infection could result in blindness. Death was likely to occur between ten and sixteen days after symptoms appeared, during the same moments that scabs begin “encrust[ing] most of the body,” making any movement excruciatingly painful. If an infected Choctaw survived the winter of 1747-1748, he or she would have endured approximately a month of relentless pain and most likely was left with numerous scars and perhaps even permanent disability.<sup>428</sup> Until his or her final scab fell off, a person remained contagious.

The Choctaws' first recorded encounter with smallpox occurred in 1731. Influential headmen responded immediately, establishing a precedent they likely followed throughout the rest of the decade. When fear of smallpox transmission arose due to concern over “cane sugar” and “*limbourg* that [the English] had sent to trade by way of the Chickasaws,” Concha headmen including Alibamon Mingo and Toupa Oumastabé immediately ceased trade with the English. They refused to deal with traders in an effort to create as much distance between themselves and the infected European people and

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<sup>428</sup> Fenn, *Pox Americana*, 16-20.

goods.<sup>429</sup> Adair's observation that Choctaws recovered by "drinking a strong concoction of hot roots" corroborates later sources that note the effectiveness of *hoshukome* (*Rumex verticillatus*), which warded off smallpox if administered repeatedly over the course of four days.<sup>430</sup> Choctaws utilized the land – in both its flora and wide-ranging vastness – to their every advantage when faced with smallpox.

Records suggest the Choctaws again successfully followed the practice of embargo and isolationism in 1738, when one of the deadliest smallpox epidemics hit South Carolina. The first line of defense for South Carolinians, a statute requiring a quarantine period for all ships transporting slaves into Charles Town harbor dating back to 1698, failed to screen a ship named the *London Frigate*. If proper procedure had been followed, a commissioner would have inspected the vessel during a period of two weeks, utilizing a house "built at a considerable Expence on Sullivan's Island for the reception of all Ship's Crews" while infected individuals remained on board.<sup>431</sup> On May 4, the *South-Carolina Gazette* first reported that infected slaves had been removed from the ship and already sold. Colonists in Charles Town hesitantly experimented with widespread inoculation for the first time due to the efforts of doctor James Killpatrick.<sup>432</sup> Although

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<sup>429</sup> Régis du Roullet to Étienne Périer, 21 February 1731 in *MPAFD* 4: 58-59. See also Archives Nationales (Paris), C13A, Vol. 13, fols. 173-180. Isolation was a standard practice for native groups seeking the avoidance of illnesses they believed originated from Europeans. For example, the Cherokees practiced isolation in 1749 in response to the aforementioned yellow fever outbreak in Charles Town; see Kelton, *Cherokee Medicine*, 95.

<sup>430</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 343; David I Bushnell, Jr., "The Choctaw of Bayou Lacomb, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana," *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin* 48 (1909), 23. Bushnell also lists a number of other plants the Choctaws used to fight fevers, including *hohshish okwa stikbe ishkwo* (*Verbesina virginica*), *hungwekilo* (*Myrica cerifera*), and *hoshukkosona* (*Pluchea foetida*). See also Lyda Averill Taylor, *Plants Used as Curatives by Certain Southeastern Tribes* (Cambridge: Botanical Museum of Harvard University, 1940), 21, 32.

<sup>431</sup> South Carolina Department of Archives and History, His Royal Majesty's Council Journal, 14: 91 (henceforth referred to as SCDAH).

<sup>432</sup> Killpatrick later published his experiences of the Charles Town smallpox outbreak. See James Killpatrick, *An Essay on Inoculation, Occasioned by the Small-Pox being brought into South Carolina in*

initially unpopular, the *Gazette* later reported the practice's effectiveness: a mere 5% mortality rate for those willing to be inoculated, in contrast to a 15-20% death rate for those that did not.<sup>433</sup> In addition to inoculation, colonists tried other treatments, such as imbibing a simple concoction known as "tarr-water;" perhaps unsurprisingly, there is no follow-up report indicating the overall effectiveness of this homespun tonic.<sup>434</sup> The suffering of the city prompted the preacher George Whitfield to proclaim the illness as "God's judgments" against a colonial population "wholly devoted to pleasure."<sup>435</sup> Providential punishment or not, the *South-Carolina Gazette* estimated that by October of that year, 2,100 colonists had been infected.<sup>436</sup>

As it moved outward from the colonial city, the virus gained strength. James Adair noted the morbid results in his *History of the American Indians*: "About the year 1738, the Cheerake [Cherokee] received a most depopulating shock, by the small pox, which reduced them almost one half, in about a year's time: it was conveyed into Charles-town by the Guinea-men, and soon after among them, by the infected goods."<sup>437</sup> Unlike

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*the Year 1738* (London, 1743) accessed via *Eighteenth-Century English Books* online database. Peter McCandless argues that full acceptance of smallpox inoculation in South Carolina occurred by the smallpox outbreak of 1760. See McCandless, *Slavery, Disease, and Suffering in the Southern Lowcountry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 214. Marion Stange notes that while inoculation was not exactly a popular response in South Carolina during the 1738 outbreak, inoculation did not become a regular practice in France until the mid-1760s, and therefore did not exist in French Louisiana. See Stange, *Vital Negotiations: Protecting Settlers' Health in Colonial Louisiana and South Carolina* (Göttingen: V & R unipress, 2012), 209-213.

<sup>433</sup> *South-Carolina Gazette* n. 245, October 5, 1738. Inoculation prompted a minor pamphlet war between Killpatrick and another doctor named Thomas Dale; see Hennig Cohen, *The South Carolina Gazette, 1721-1775* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1953), 40-1.

<sup>434</sup> The recipe is as follows: marinate two quarts of tar with 5 pints of water overnight, then "the next Morning pour off the clear Water, and take...near a Pint, which is to be continued 5 days successively, every Morning." *South-Carolina Gazette* n. 231, 29 June 1738. See also Dana P. Arneman, "Medical History of Colonial South Carolina" (PhD diss., University of South Carolina, 1996), 140.

<sup>435</sup> *George Whitfield's Journals, 1737-1741* (Gainesville: Scholar's Facsimilies & Reprints, 1969), 159-160 quoted in Peter McCandless, *Slavery, Disease, and Suffering*, 191.

<sup>436</sup> *South-Carolina Gazette* n. 245, October 5, 1738. See also Stange, *Vital Negotiations*, 7.

<sup>437</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 252.

the Charles Town elites, the Cherokees did not inoculate. Although Adair referred to Cherokee medicine men as “deficient in proper skill” for the treatment of this particular ailment, native herbal treatments in general were recognized, respected, and contemplated for their potency. However, English natural scientists mistakenly identified the use of the ‘cassiny’ herb as an alternative smallpox treatment before inoculation became a mainstream practice.<sup>438</sup> Cherokee medicine men required a restoration of spiritual balance for a return to good health, but not through extensive use of the “black drinke” as the English suggested. Instead, the primary form of combating smallpox included an “alternately applied...regimen of hot and cold things, to those who were infected,” indicating quick successive baths in steam houses and rivers.<sup>439</sup> For all the misery encountered by Cherokees and South Carolinians, however, records fail to mention any presence of smallpox amongst the Choctaws in 1738. Isolation and embargo worked.

When again confronted with smallpox almost a decade later, however, Choctaw headmen did not have the option of simply abstaining from intercultural trade with the

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<sup>438</sup> English physician John Peachi published a short tract on the herb. See Peachi, *Some Observations Made Upon the Herb Cassiny; Imported from Carolina* (London, 1695) accessed via *Early English Books Online* database. The “cassiny herb” was another name for the yaupon, or emetic holly (*Ilex vomitoria*) that was the main ingredient of the Native American black drink. See Shiu Ying Hu, “The Botany of Yaupon” in *Black Drink, A Native American Tea*, ed. Charles M. Hudson (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979), 10-39, especially 22. On the guarded fascination of Native American medicinal practices by the English, see Susan Scott Parrish, *American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2006), especially 247-258. The English were not exclusive in their adoption of Native herbal medicine; see Galloway, “Savage Medicine: Du Pratz and Eighteenth-Century French Medical Practice,” *Proceedings of the Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society* 22 (1998): 107-118.

<sup>439</sup> James Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 252. This appears to have been a common practice across the entire Native South, as Jean-François-Benjamin Dumont de Montigny remarked how the Natchez considered the sweat bath “their most important remedy” against smallpox. See *The Memoir of Lieutenant Dumont, 1715-1747: A Sojourner in the French Atlantic*, trans. and ed. Gordon M. Sayre (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2012), 369.

English. A survey of available French sources failed to mention any presence of smallpox in larger settlements such as New Orleans, Mobile, or Biloxi; therefore, the smallpox epidemic must have originated within the English colonies.<sup>440</sup> However, the inherent exclusivity of the increasingly galvanized factionalism between Choctaws – especially on the part of Red Shoe’s pro-English faction – muted any discussion of cutting off trade with South Carolina. In contrast to earlier instances in which Choctaws could oscillate between European trade partners in order to maintain a steady supply of goods, guns, and ammunition, by 1747-1748, Anglophile Choctaws could *only* hope to rely upon English traders based in Carolina and Georgia. There was simply no one else to turn to in order to help create the earlier condition of spatial isolation from Euro-Americans who acted as vectors for disease.

In addition, efforts by both factions to defend themselves against their counterparts may have facilitated the spread of smallpox. Evidence demonstrates a tendency on the parties of each faction to move *en masse* from village stronghold to village stronghold in order to fend off surprise attacks.<sup>441</sup> In a letter to Governor Glen, trader Charles McNaire noted how western division Choctaws “seldom go out but in large Bodies” to avoid being picked off by their enemies.<sup>442</sup> In doing so the faction may

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<sup>440</sup> French sources reveal surprisingly little regarding the presence of any infectious disease among the colonial population. Reports of possible transmission of the plague from Jamaica appear in 1741 (*MPAFD*, 4: 185), and a minor outbreak of smallpox is specifically noted in October 1763 (*MPAFD*, 5: 288-9). In general, when illness is mentioned in Louisiana, it is connected to the “rogue” nature of the colony. For example, Governor Vaudreuil described soldiers as having contracted “diseases occasioned by the licentious life.” See Vaudreuil and Michel to Rouillé, 20 May 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 82. Indeed, a bad wine shipment is blamed for general illness in both Canada and Louisiana in 1747; see Maurepas to Vaudreuil, 25 October 1747 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 107, Huntington Library. On “rogue colonialism,” see Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil’s Empire: French Colonial New Orleans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

<sup>441</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 20 November 1746 in *MPAFD*, 4: 303.

<sup>442</sup> SCDAH, His Royal Majesty’s Council Journal No. 15 (4 June 1747 - 20 July 1748), 81. On proximity as an essential initial condition for smallpox transmission, see Cunha, “Smallpox and Measles,” 80.

have provided the close proximity necessary for smallpox transmission. Choctaw fortified villages built during wartime, like those of other native groups in the Gulf South, also acted as perfect breeding grounds for smallpox, trapping the infected within walls made of “two rows of large logs of wood” about ten feet tall and two feet thick.<sup>443</sup>

What, then, were the consequences of smallpox in a Choctaw country split by civil war? Fear of attack and disease together forced eastern and southern division Choctaws to ask for French food supplies because they “abandoned their crops.”<sup>444</sup> Since women worked the land, this statement reveals that significant numbers of female Choctaws were either forced to abandon their towns — or worse — contracted or succumbed to the virus between 1747-1748.<sup>445</sup> This loss was not insignificant; lack of food may have pushed more reticent Choctaws towards the Francophile camp, deepening the schism within Choctaw villages.

If illness disrupted traditional Choctaw routines of agricultural production, it also directly influenced the course of the war, as the violence these young *tascas* perpetrated resulted from a lack of elderly guidance and a craving to fulfill performative requirements to express their masculinity. Smallpox culled a large number of experienced *tascas* before raids between the factions began in earnest. As a result, *atac emittla*, “those who have not struck blows or who have killed only a woman or child,” would be forced to take up the slack, and the presence of these inexperienced warriors may explain the

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<sup>443</sup> Antoine-Simon Le Page du Pratz, *The History of Louisiana, or of the Western Parts of Virginia and Carolina*.... 2 Vols. (London: T. Becket and P.A. De Hondt, 1763), 2: 252.

<sup>444</sup> Descloseaux to Maurepas, 25 October 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 330.

<sup>445</sup> On women’s role in Choctaw agriculture, refer to Swanton, “An Early Account,” 59; T.N. Campbell, “Choctaw Subsistence: Ethnographic Notes from the Lincecum Manuscript,” *The Florida Anthropologist* 12 (1959): 9-24; Margaret Zehmer Searcy, “Choctaw Subsistence: Hunting, Fishing, Farming, and Gathering 1540-1830” in *The Choctaw Before Removal*, 32-54.

brutality inflicted by Choctaws against one another.<sup>446</sup> Both French officials and Choctaw headmen considered these bands of freshly-minted warriors unpredictable, springing to action rashly or demonstrating hesitancy on the battlefield. Indeed, by 1750 Governor Vaudreuil was “convinced... that the Choctaw chiefs, however well-intentioned they might be, do not have enough authority over their warriors.”<sup>447</sup> Smallpox had robbed leadership from all Choctaw divisions at the moment it was most needed.

In view of the stark mortality due to illness and warfare, historians must revise some bygone conclusions regarding the material requests issued by all Choctaws between the spring of 1748 and the “official” conclusion of the war in 1750. In general, both factions Choctaws asked for the same goods from their respective European partners. Two examples from right after the smallpox epidemic had ended illustrate the factions’ shared experiences. In 1749, Governor Vaudreuil listed the requests made by the war chief of Nachoubayenou, Mingo Ouma. The Choctaw leader asked for blankets, knives of various lengths, war paint the color of “blackbirds” and vermilion, cannon, almost fifty guns, combs, needles, wire, lead, powder, and balls.<sup>448</sup> Similarly, John Highrider wrote to Governor Glen from Augusta about western division requests because there was “no Ammunition or Paint in their Nation.” He immediately sent “6 lb. Paint” to address this shortage, in addition to promising additional supplies of guns and powder.<sup>449</sup> These requests obviously contain the urgency of factional warfare, and the desire to accumulate

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<sup>446</sup> John R. Swanton, “An Early Account of the Choctaw Indians,” *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association* 5 (1918): 55. Swanton translates this title to be a combination of *hatak*, “man” and *imatali*, “supporting.”

<sup>447</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 24 June 1750 in *MPAFD*, 5: 47.

<sup>448</sup> Vaudreuil, “A list of presents for the Choctaw Indians,” Sept. 1749 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 508, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

<sup>449</sup> John Highrider to Glen, 24 October 1750 in *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, May 12, 1750 - August 7, 1754*, ed. William L. McDowell, Jr. (Columbia, SC: South Carolina Archives Department, 1958), 39.



as many weapons as possible in order for each faction to flex their respective muscles.

Yet they reveal something else: the vulnerability of Choctaw communities trying to cope with loss.

All these materials – guns, ammunition, blankets, paint – were necessary in order to complete the complex and time-consuming practice of burying the Choctaw dead, artistically depicted in Bernard Romans’ 1775 *Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*.<sup>450</sup> According to other French observers, the death of a warrior required the closest members of his kinship network to “erect a kind of cabin in the shape of a coffin, directly opposite his door six feet from the ground on six stakes, surrounded by a mud wall, and covered with bark in which they enclose this body all dressed, and which they cover with a blanket.” Afterwards, the corpse was stripped of the remaining flesh and the skull covered red with war paint before the bones were interred with the *tasca*’s gun and ammunition.<sup>451</sup> Therefore, wartime disruptions of access to these items – whether from Vaudreuil’s earlier imposed bans on trade, faulty supply lines from Mobile or Charles Town, or Choctaws’ decisions to suspend the winter hunt and complicate trade with the English – did not prove some mere inconvenience. They threatened the ability for Choctaws to appropriately grieve their dead.<sup>452</sup> European cloth helped wrapp Choctaw

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<sup>450</sup> Bernard Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, ed. Braund (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 141.

<sup>451</sup> Swanton, “An Early Account,” 64. On the flesh stripping process by Choctaw elders, see Jean-Bernard Bossu, *Travels in the Interior of North America, 1751-1762*, trans. and ed. Seymour Feiler (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 166-167. Although Choctaws did not consider blankets “to exist in the supernatural realm” like the Salish of the Pacific Northwest, blankets did act as a type of gateway item to the afterlife as part of this ritual burial process. See Leslie H. Tepper, Janice George, and Willard Joseph, *Salish Blankets: Robes of Protection and Transformation, Symbols of Wealth* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), xiii.

<sup>452</sup> Death of any individual rippled throughout Native American communities, creating a unique elegiac environment. Arnold Krupat notes, “The irrecoverable personal uniqueness of any person is less important than his or her socially recuperable function.” See “*That the People Might Live*”: *Loss and Renewal in Native American Elegy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 4.

bodies. European paint helped cover Choctaw skulls. European firearms were interred in Choctaw graves. Not having these items during a time of unparalleled bloodshed and death damned the *shilups* (ghosts) of deceased kinsmen to eternal wanderings on This World. These appeals to French and English governors were not entirely to help wage war. They were pleas to help bury Choctaw dead.

After the epidemiological crisis presented by smallpox, the nature of factional fighting shifted to more direct engagements between Red Shoe's followers scattered throughout villages located in the western (*Imoklasha*) division and their counterparts in the eastern (*Inhulahta*) and southern Six Towns divisions. The western Choctaws' persistent raids against French colonial settlements set the stage for this transition. Approximately a month after the first attacks on Mobile, in late October 1747, eastern and western Choctaws clashed over an English caravan returning to Charles Town. A Choctaw informant forewarned Chevalier de La Houssaye, who had returned to his post as commandant at Tombeché, of the caravan's path and he enlisted the aid of twelve Concha warriors who were led by a head warrior known as the Great Tohomé. The Concha war party attacked the caravan as it passed near Tombeché, claiming forty horses loaded with peltries as booty. The Conchas also successfully "killed the chief who was conducting" the caravan.<sup>453</sup> Western Choctaws, "determined to avenge themselves" against the Conchas for the lost weapons and headman, "promised nothing less than to kill the chiefs and warriors by taking their fort." While Choctaw warriors often offered sharp vocal rebukes in the field, the rash willingness to partake in such a violent blood-for-blood retaliation indicates that the pro-English warriors may have been young

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<sup>453</sup> Patricia Galloway argues this was the moment in which Choctaw warfare crossed the threshold into internecine violence; see Galloway, "Choctaw Factionalism" in *Pre-Removal Choctaw History*, 91.

*tasca*, or even *atac emittla* (inexperienced hunters) thrust into action because of the unfolding smallpox epidemic. Not only did the English-supplied warriors seek the death of fellow Choctaws, they also boasted they would take the Concha “wives and children as slaves in order to turn them over to the English.”<sup>454</sup> The threat of enslavement was not an idle one given the trade in captives by the English. However, South Carolina had halted the Indian slave trade after the Yamassee War. These young warriors, hyped for war, demonstrated deep acumen regarding South Carolina’s dependency on slave labor. Indeed, if the hunting seasons had been interrupted by the unfolding factional crisis or recent entry of smallpox, the need for trade goods may have pushed western Choctaws to seek out the most valuable property a Carolinian could claim: a slave.

With insults being hurled through the air, battles between western *Imoklasha* and eastern *Inhulahta* Choctaw warriors on November 2 and 3, 1747 proved fierce. Each side suffered the same losses: two warriors killed and one wounded. The Conchas “fortified themselves” in their town to deflect the efforts of the angered western Choctaws. However, because the western Choctaws failed in taking the village, Louboey proclaimed the Conchas “masters of the field of battle.” The Conchas utilized this victory to bolster their bargaining power with the French — commandant Louboey from his post at Mobile contradicted Vaudreuil’s wishes of withholding goods from all Choctaws as punishment for Red Shoe’s murder of Verbois by giving presents to those eastern Choctaws who he believed “deserved them.” Even so, there remained the stipulation that the Concha-led eastern *Inhulahta* Choctaws not grow complacent and continue their efforts to “break the necks of the English.”<sup>455</sup>

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<sup>454</sup> Louboey to Maurepas, 16 February 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 313.

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid.*, 313-314.

While eastern and southern Choctaws were encouraged to kill any English traders they encountered, western Choctaws took every opportunity to meet with English traders and request more supplies for their fight against the pro-French faction. If we are to believe James Adair, western Choctaws sent messengers to English traders among the Chickasaws detailing their upcoming raids. “They used to tell the English traders they were going on such a day to fight,” he wrote. These messengers also requested any supplies the traders could spare, whether weapons and ammunition or textiles. Hoping to secure goods for their warriors and dependents after having been cut off completely from the French, western headmen “earnestly impugned” the English for “a Stroud blanket, or white shirt a-piece, that they might make a genteel appearance in English cloth, when they died.”<sup>456</sup> These requests underscored the desperate material condition of the forces fighting for western division towns; they also highlight the way European manufactures — even non-weapons — had become adopted into these men’s identity as *tasca*. The act of wearing an English jacket, shirt, or traveling with an English blanket not only declared geopolitical allegiance, the decision also broadcasted the high opinion held by each individual *tasca* of his skill as a warrior, as only the most successful on the battlefield traditionally received such gifts in recognition for their martial prowess.

Anxiety over dwindling supplies may have spurred the eastern and southern Choctaws to raid trader convoys, as leaders in both divisions fretted over imaginary lost French supply fleets. Yet their western division opponents also proved unable to secure valuable European guns, ammunition, and trade goods. Ironically, English traders — theoretically the best means of access to these items — directly contributed to the *lack* of

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<sup>456</sup> Adair, *History of the American Indians*, 336.

English goods among western villages. The inexperience and corrupt decisions of Charles McNaire's Sphynx Company frustrated western *Imoklasha* headmen. Armed with a governor-appointed trade monopoly for the Choctaws, McNaire's spectacular tendency to misplace or withhold guns and ammunition vital to the western cause led to open disagreement between the trader and Little King. McNaire alleged Little King held him hostage at Couëchitto against his will, but this accusation aroused the suspicion of the western headman, who refuted these charges with "the greatest surprise" in the presence of Governor James Glen on a visit to Charles Town. In case there was any confusion, Little King added he "never asked or received the Value of a Gun Flint" when he hosted McNaire.<sup>457</sup>

As clashes shifted between Choctaws and French settlers to between western and other pro-French Choctaws, the villages most closely aligned with Red Shoe's faction found themselves targeted. They were also running out of supplies. As spring transitioned into summer in 1748, they made do with the resources available to them for defense. On July 14, eastern division Conchas targeted Couëchitto, the home of Red Shoe and Little King. A coalition of *tasca* led by Alibamon Mingo and the Great Medal Chief of Toussana "vigorously" attacked, setting fire to cabins and the town's fort. Thirteen Couëchitto warriors and two honored men were killed in the assault. The nearby western division village of Nushkobo met a similar fate, including the death of its pro-English chief named Tchicachas Ouma. The destruction of these villages proved so complete that

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<sup>457</sup> Edmond Atkin, "Historical Account of the Revolt of the Chactaw Indians in the late War from the French to the British Alliance and of Their Return since to that of the French..." The British Library, Lansdowne MS 809, 12-13.

both were abandoned, with a number of survivors fleeing to the Chickasaws for sanctuary.<sup>458</sup>

Hamstrung by the unfulfilled requests made to English traders, the western division innovatively manufactured their own ammunition, loading their guns “with small pebbles [and] walnut and oak knots dried over fire.” In contrast, the French successfully provided “everything that they needed to fight” to their Choctaw allies. A little over a month after the campaign that saw their base of operations at Couëchitto leveled, western Choctaws struck back. Aided by English traders and “several” Chickasaw chiefs, they attacked the village of Oulitacha, home of the Great Medal Chief, on August 16. The fighting was furious, killing about one hundred total *tasca* from both sides. The marked material advantage in guns and ammunition, however, aided eastern and southern Choctaws in this engagement, which proved a costly defeat for the western division. Several of Red Shoe’s closest supporters died in this battle, including the Captain of Boucfouca and Mingo Imataha of West Abeika.<sup>459</sup> Indeed, the battle turned decidedly in favor of the pro-French contingent after they shot and scalped the Captain of Boucfouca, who led the western forces. Eastern and southern warriors mutilated the Captain, disemboweling him before “they trod his intestines under their feet.”<sup>460</sup> According to the French, this type of treatment “until that time had never been practiced on the part of the Choctaws,” although the violence was standard among the Creeks. The stress and frustrations of factional war intensified the violence. The punishment wrought on the

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<sup>458</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 5 November 1748 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 147, Huntington Library; see also *MPAFD*, 4: 335.

<sup>459</sup> Beauchamp to Maurepas, 24 October 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 326.

<sup>460</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 5 November 1748 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 147, Huntington Library; see also *MPAFD*, 4: 335.

Captain of Boucfouca demonstrated how ethnic identity now dictated the treatment of divisional enemies. The intensity of this act was traditionally reserved for outsiders, with the degree of difference between divisions now so acute that factional enemies refused to allow proper burials.<sup>461</sup> In addition to physical punishment, eastern and southern Choctaws sought eternal punishment for their western *Imoklasha* opponents. The Captain of Boucfouca's *shilup* would never find rest, forced to haunt the fields of Oulitacha.<sup>462</sup>

After the scalping and disembowelment of the Captain of Boucfouca, the western Choctaws were forced to flee. Retreat brought further disaster. Eastern and southern *tasca* gave hot pursuit over a distance of three leagues, killing over eighty western division *tasca* and wounding perhaps as many.<sup>463</sup> Battle wounds sustained during the retreat eventually claimed Pahémingo, an honored man of Toussana, and two of Red Shoe's closest followers: Apekimata, chief of West Abeihka, and Mongoulacha Opayé of Immongoulacha. The eastern *Inhulahta* and southern Six Towns Choctaws specifically targeted these two men because they were both implicated in Red Shoe's murder of Henri de Verbois. In contrast to the substantial losses sustained by the western Choctaws, only thirteen eastern and southern *tasca* died in this action, although the number lost included the honored men of the villages of Epitoupogoula and Bouctoucoulouchitto and the chief of Chichtalaya.<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Memoir to the King, 26 February 1749 in *MPAFD*, 5: 14.

<sup>462</sup> On the *shilup*, see T.N. Campbell, "The Choctaw Afterworld," *The Journal of American Folklore* 72, no. 284 (1959), 151.

<sup>463</sup> Memoir to the King, 26 February 1747 in *MPAFD*, 5: 14.

<sup>464</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 5 November 1748 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 147, Huntington Library; see also *MPAFD*, 4: 335.

By October 1748, the practice of “open attack” had become normal, replacing the “several small fights” of late summer and resulting in Bobé Descloseaux’s estimation that “a great many people” had been killed in both factions.<sup>465</sup> Western Choctaws regrouped after the initial attacks on Couëchitto, again drawing eastern Choctaw rage. However, this was not because Red Shoe’s followers continued to harass French settlements or McNaire remained in the village under the auspices of Little King.<sup>466</sup> Instead the eastern *Inhulahta* Conchas raided Couëchitto in response to the earlier attack on their town by western *tasca*. According to French sources, the Concha revenge was terrible in its “zeal:” they “burned a part of the town” and killed “several” Couëchitto warriors, including a captain who previously raided Mobile.<sup>467</sup> This raid is best understood not as some French proxy force, but a Concha attempt to secure justice for losses following the ethic of restitution, which required the settlement of war debts between warring nations.<sup>468</sup>

October also saw Choctaw factionalism boil over into the rest of the surrounding Native South. In particular, the Chakchiumas began working in concert with western division Choctaws by attacking French posts. The repeated attacks on Couëchitto displaced a number of Chakchiumas residing in Red Shoe’s village.<sup>469</sup> The Chakchiumas were a separate tribe that at the turn of the eighteenth century occupied a type of buffer zone between the Choctaws and Chickasaws.<sup>470</sup> All three nations claimed common origin

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<sup>465</sup> Descloseaux to Maurepas, 25 October 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 330; Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 5 November 1748 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 147, Huntington Library; see also *MPAFD*, 4: 335.

<sup>466</sup> Atkin, “Historical Account,” 7-8.

<sup>467</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 5 November 1748 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 147, Huntington Library; see also *MPAFD*, 4: 334.

<sup>468</sup> On the ethic of restitution, see Michelene Pesantubbee, *Choctaw Women in a Chaotic World: The Clash of Cultures in the Colonial Southeast* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005).

<sup>469</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 5 November 1748 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 147, Huntington Library; see also *MPAFD*, 4: 333, 337-338.

<sup>470</sup> Galloway, *Choctaw Genesis*, 193.



stories detailing how they travelled together during their eastward migration before finally settling along the Mississippi River.<sup>471</sup> While the Chakchiumas and Chickasaws were closely aligned during the height of the Indian slave trade in the first two decades of the eighteenth century, the Franco-Chickasaw campaigns of the late 1730s severed this relationship.<sup>472</sup> Archeological and ethnological evidence confirms that Chakchiuma refugees eventually settled among both the Chickasaws and Choctaws.<sup>473</sup> The village of Nushkobo might have been one of these refugee resettlements — the town did not appear on Iberville’s 1702 list of Choctaw villages, nor Regis du Roullet’s 1732 census, suggesting it was a recently settled village. Nushkobo’s settlement corresponds with the general timeline of the Chakchiumas’ diaspora after the French wars.<sup>474</sup> Further, the cosmopolitan nature of Nushkobo is suggested in the name of its headman: Tchicachas Ouma, quite literally, “Chickasaw Red.” The Chakchiuma’s proximity to both the Chickasaw trading path and the regional center at Couëchitto may indicate the group secured permission from Red Shoe to settle in such a high stakes location along the

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<sup>471</sup> Adair noted, “The most southern old town, which the Chikkasah first settled, after the Chokchoomah, Choktah, and they, separated on our side of the Mississippi, into three different tribes, they called *Yanèka*, thereby inverting *Yahkàne*, the name of the earth; as their former brotherhood was then turned into enmity.” See *History of the American Indians*, 117. See also, Galloway, *Choctaw Genesis*, 334, 336.

<sup>472</sup> See Galloway, “Chakchiuma” in *Handbook of the North American Indians*, Vol. 14. *Southeast*, ed. Raymond D. Fogelson (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2004): 496-498. On the Chakchiumas’ involvement in the Indian slave trade, see Alan Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 131 and Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 118.

<sup>473</sup> Robbie Ethridge, *From Chicaza to Chickasaw: The European Invasion and the Transformation of the Mississippian World, 1540-1715* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 229. In her study, Snyder includes a folktale that serves as a metaphor for Chakchiuma incorporation into Choctaw society; see *Slavery in Indian Country*, 101-102.

<sup>474</sup> See “Table 5.1 - Iberville’s List of Choctaw Town Names, 1702” in Galloway, *Choctaw Genesis*, 198; “Journal of Regis du Roullet” in *MPAFD*, 1: 149-154.

Petickfa Creek (in present-day Kemper County, Mississippi).<sup>475</sup> Indeed, Red Shoe may have even bet on the Chakchiumas helping protect the trade route as *de facto* middlemen or escorts, since Chakchiumas who resettled in both Chickasaw and Choctaw villages stood to profit from a continuous flow of English goods. In response to the eastern division raid on their recently settled village, the Chakchiumas took to the field to aid their western allies, choosing to re-open a second front attacking the French.<sup>476</sup>

The Chakchiumas repeatedly attacked French posts, including the Natchez fort on October 11, 1748. The commandant of the post, Chevalier d'Orgon, informed Vaudreuil that one of his soldiers had been killed while fishing. The tomahawk left near the soldier's body bore Chakchiuma markings. Later that month, on October 22, d'Orgon's men were ambushed again, this time while collecting firewood. Even with four of the ten "keeping watch while the others were working," one of the soldiers in the party died. A sentinel made out the taunts of the attackers as they faded into the woods, identifying themselves as Chakchiumas.<sup>477</sup> The Chakchiuma alliance ultimately proved more harmful than helpful, however, as western Choctaws inadvertently gained a new native opponent. In response to the repeated attacks on his post, d'Orgon enlisted the nearby Arkansas for aid. Long time enemies of the Chakchiumas dating back at least to 1700, the Arkansas now turned their attention towards the western Choctaws. About fifteen Arkansas parties

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<sup>475</sup> John R. Swanton suggests this location for Nushkobo in "Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians," *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin* 103 (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1931), 75.

<sup>476</sup> Greg O'Brien claims the Chakchiumas played a central mediator role in eighteenth-century Choctaw-Chickasaw relations in "Quieting the Ghosts: How the Choctaws and Chickasaws Stopped Fighting" in *The Native South: New Histories and Enduring Legacies*, eds. O'Brien and Tim Alan Garrison (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 47-69, especially 58-59.

<sup>477</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 5 November 1748 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 147, Huntington Library; see also *MPAFD*, 4: 337-338 and Memoir to the King, 26 February 1747 in *MPAFD*, 5: 13.

of 10 warriors each “went and prowled the paths of the Chickasaws and Choctaws,” informing d’Orgeon they intended “to spend the winter there.”<sup>478</sup> The Arkansas raided the western Choctaws, delivering “more than twenty-five scalps” to Governor Vaudreuil in 1749. They used these raids to their advantage, leveraging the western scalps for the erection of a new French post – and easier access to the merchandise found at such an establishment – closer to their villages.<sup>479</sup>

New Orleans’ out-settlements again became a central theatre of war as November 1748 drew to a close. Later that month, three Frenchmen left the city to hunt but encountered a western Choctaw raiding party. Wanting to ensure the residents of the city received warning of a possible attack, the hunters split up: two returned to New Orleans, while the other agreed to hide and track the Indians. Before his colleagues could return, however, a western contingent made up of warriors from the villages of Tchanké, Oni, and Okéoulou attacked and killed the hunter, surprising him “in a place where he had hidden himself.” From there the western Choctaws proceeded to the German Coast again, attacking and killing at least two settlers.<sup>480</sup> Red Shoe of the southern division town of Yowani later “assured” Vaudreuil the marks on the discarded tomahawks at the scene matched those carried by Okéoulou *tasca*.<sup>481</sup> In contrast to previous raids on the German Coast, however, a colonial detachment offered staunch resistance on behalf of the settlers. The preparedness of the French surprised the Choctaws, with Vaudreuil proudly

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<sup>478</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 5 November 1748 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 147, Huntington Library; see also *MPAFD*, 4: 338-339.

<sup>479</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 22 September 1749 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 185, Huntington Library; see also *MPAFD*, 5: 35.

<sup>480</sup> Memoir to the King, 26 February 1749 in *MPAFD*, 5: 13-14.

<sup>481</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 3 March 1749 in *MPAFD*, 5: 15.

notifying the King how the western Choctaws were “completely defeated” by the French, forcing at least four of them to “take refuge in the swamps.”<sup>482</sup>

While the eastern division Choctaws attempted to begin reconciliation (a lengthy process covered in the next chapter) through peace talks and meetings at Mobile with the Vaudreuil, the Great Chief of the Choctaws, and a small number of western division headmen, more zealous pro-English western headmen continued their efforts to establish a viable Anglo-Choctaw trade. Fanimingo Tchaa, chief of the western town of Seneacha, travelled to the Chickasaws and arranged for four English traders to come to his village. His role as a *fanimingo* proved vital in this latest attempt, since he specifically acted as a recognized diplomatic mediator, or “squirrel king,” between the Chickasaws and Choctaws.<sup>483</sup> His trusted status signified that the western division’s call for traders and goods was made in good faith and not fabricated in order to trick the Chickasaws into letting their guard down. However, his actions alienated “the greater part of his warriors,” splitting the village between pro-English and pro-French camps. Fanimingo Tchaa’s warriors killed him and scalped eight more of his kinsman. Although the four English traders were able to escape, they saw “all their merchandise plundered.”<sup>484</sup> Shaken from having seen their leader killed before their eyes, the pro-English Seneachas took flight to find refuge among the other western towns of Tchanké, Oni, and Okéoulou. Already infused with the earlier waves of Couëchitto and Chakchiuma refugees, the addition of these displaced Seneachas further entrenched this cluster of villages as the new

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<sup>482</sup> Memoir to the King, 26 February 1749 in *MPAFD*, 5: 13-14.

<sup>483</sup> On the role of *fanimingos*, see Galloway, “The Currency of Language: The Mobilian *Lingua Franca* in Colonial Louisiana” in *Practicing Ethnohistory: Mining Archives, Hearing Testimony, Constructing Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 225-244, especially 230-231.

<sup>484</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 8 May 1749, in *MPAFD*, 5: 26; *MPAFD*, 5: 31.

stronghold of the western *Imoklasha* Choctaw division. A coalition of *tasca* from Seneacha, Tchanké, Oni, and Okéoulou then attacked the southern division town of Nachoubaouenya. Twenty *tasca* died in this attack, which proved so fierce that the remaining Nachoubaouenyas fled to the town of Yowani about ten leagues away. Under the command and protection of Red Shoe of the Yowani, the southern division dug in their heels, protecting themselves in a fortified village and raising additional recruits. From their base at Yowani, the southern division Choctaws conducted “several raids” on the western posts at Seneacha, Tchanké, and Oni. These reprisals claimed a total of forty western *tasca*. At the conclusion of this campaign, the Yowanis and Nachoubaouenyas took the scalps they collected and split the total in half before sending the war trophies to New Orleans and Mobile.<sup>485</sup> The southern division Choctaws continued to hound Seneacha warriors who had thrown in their lot with Fanimingo Tchaa. Chickasawhays, Yowanis, Nachoubaouenyas, Bouctoulouctas, and Yellow Canes warriors attacked a coalition force of Tchanké, Oni, and Okéoulou warriors, killing twelve and wounding “a great many” more. After another ambush claimed seven additional pro-English warriors, the faction as a whole had reached a crisis point.<sup>486</sup>

In the wake of Charles McNaire and his Sphynx Company’s initial failures, western Choctaws looked to Chickasaw trader James Adair for help. A group of twenty remaining western leaders travelled with Adair to Charles Town in early January 1749. Although a December 4 letter from fellow trader John Campbell referred to this group as “all men of Consequence & one [of] them as great a Man as was ever among them,” the Council and governor were shocked to observe “there were but two Heads of Towns

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<sup>485</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 22 September 1749 in *MPAFD*, 5: 32.

<sup>486</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 8 May 1749, in *MPAFD*, 5: 26.

among them.” The Royal Council treated the western delegation with derision – why did the chiefs refuse to treat on their own behalf, as Red Shoe and Little King before them? As one of the two stated headmen in attendance, Pouchimataha of Toussana set the record straight, glumly describing how “all the Headmen of his Place were killed.” Chastising the South Carolinians, Pouchimataha recounted the failure of Little King’s previous dealings, and how upon his return to Couëchitto he “had no Ammunition or Guns left.” Taking the mantle of western leadership, Pouchimataha desired “to get Traders & Ammunition sent up.” The other headman, Pahemingo, added his own hopes that “the Gov<sup>r</sup> would send White men home along with them with Ammunition & other Things.” Without weapons, ammunition, and trade goods, Pahemingo continued, “their Enemies who had said that the English only deceived them, would laugh at them.” Time being of the essence, the group sought relief in any form. To punctuate his pleas, Pouchimataha reminded his white audience of the reliability of Choctaw trade agreements, stating “they had bought all the Goods that were ever sent up, and had the Skins ready to buy more.” This final lowly appeal to the colonists’ business sensibilities made the Council feel “quite ashamed.”<sup>487</sup> Emotions aside, the Council appeared more interested in determining the alarming inconsistencies between the testimonies of McNaire and his associates and reports provided by Choctaw headmen and English traders than putting together a new supply for the Anglophile Choctaws.

Southern and eastern Choctaws worked diligently to remove all English traders, frustrating western attempts at convincing South Carolina to send more supplies. While

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<sup>487</sup> Atkin, “Historical Account,” 21-22. Some of these statements were underlined for emphasis in the original manuscript. Atkin errs in his reference to the second headman by the name Poya Mico, French sources indicate that Pouchimataha’s travel partner was Pahemingo, also of Toussana. See Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 22 September 1749 in *MPAFD*, 5: 36.

Pouchimataha and Pahemingo pleaded in Charles Town in January, a southern division party attacked two English traders leading a twelve-horse convoy close to Fort Toulouse. One of the traders escaped on horseback, while the other was taken as prisoner for interrogation by Vaudreuil at New Orleans.<sup>488</sup> Two months later, more traders associated with the town of West Yazoo were shot. In late July, the nephew of the Anglophile chief of West Immongoulacha killed another trader, likely David Currell.<sup>489</sup> This violence dissuaded English traders from engaging with their western allies, prompting one final trip by western division leadership to Charles Town in early August 1749. Escorted by Chickasaws, these Choctaws met with Governor Glen, who conferred with Atkin a week later about “making a Present of Ammunition to the Chactaws.” The governor informed him how the Coosa trader John Pettycrou, with horses ready at Augusta, had already offered to move these goods. Glen surprisingly refused, however, citing how Pettycrou’s “Company possessed a considerable Trade already,” in reference to the Creeks.<sup>490</sup> Glen’s criticism is all the more remarkable considering his earlier decision to entrust the nascent Choctaw trade to McNaire, an individual with no experience whatsoever.

At this point wholly convinced of Little King’s earlier criticisms regarding McNaire’s venture, Atkin dismissed Glen, stating, “That the [Sphynx] Company was the last that ought to be entrusted again” given its poor record the preceding two years. On August 14, the Council met to discuss sending a new present to the pro-English Choctaws: “1000<sup>li</sup> weight of Powder & 2000<sup>li</sup> weight of Bullets.” The Council again pegged John Pettycrou for this task, with the Committee on Indian Affairs voting in favor

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<sup>488</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 8 May 1749, in *MPAFD*, 5: 27.

<sup>489</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 22 September 1749 in *MPAFD*, 5: 32; Atkin, “Historical Account,” 32.

<sup>490</sup> Atkin, “Historical Account,” 30.

of his selection by citing reports that members of Pettycrou’s trading company “brought News that the French party” had attacked the ill-equipped western Choctaws. A few days later, Pettycrou set off for Augusta to wait for the ammunition packed “on board a Boat to follow him thither by Water.”<sup>491</sup> He admitted it took the ammunition longer than usual to get to his trading house in Augusta, but he wasted little time, setting out on October 16 with sixty horses. Within two weeks, his convoy had arrived at Breed Camp among the Chickasaws.<sup>492</sup> To avoid the French, who he believed had “Intelligence of the Ammunition,” Pettycrou deviated from the Upper Trade path, instead traveling “through the Woods” to reach the Chickasaws by November 25. At this point, the pack-train waited for a Choctaw escort, “not thinking [it] proper to proceed further without a Guard.” None arrived until January 1, 1750. Finally under the protection of western Choctaws, the party set off the following day, arriving at the village of Toussana on January 12. The same Pouchimataha who earlier visited Charles Town invited other headmen to travel to his village to hear a message written by Governor Glen as well as receive gifts of ammunition. For all intents and purposes, Pouchimataha used this opportunity to grab power, and assumed the leading role of the western division. Not only did Pouchimataha claim the exclusive ability to redistribute items, he also cast himself as the diplomatic figurehead by which the English would treat with the division — a direct parallel to the diplomatic structure established by the French and their appointment of the Great Medal Chief.<sup>493</sup> There were limits to English magnanimity, however, as Pettycrou instructed Pouchimataha to inform the rest of the western *tasca* “to bring two Skins each

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<sup>491</sup> Atkin, “Historical Account,” 30-1.

<sup>492</sup> Atkin recorded Pettycrou as having eighty horses, but this must be an error. Pettycrou outfitted twenty horses each for the Chickasaws, Creeks, and Choctaws, which amounts to sixty.

<sup>493</sup> Galloway, “The Medal Chief’s Grosse Letter” in *Practicing Ethnohistory*, 292-310.



for a Present to the Gov<sup>r</sup>, as a Token of their Fidelity.” Pouchimataha then distributed the ammunition to each town “according to their number of men,” before delivering Glen’s message.<sup>494</sup> The western Choctaws reacted positively to Pouchimataha’s address and goods with “great Shouts and Acclimations, and in fine Speeches.”<sup>495</sup> Pouchimataha then escorted Pettycrou “through several other Towns,” further cementing his status before allowing the trader to leave on February 15. The reintroduction of English traders like Pettycrou in Toussana was not without drama, however, as the village experienced a social rift similar to what unfolded at Seneacha, as “many warriors of the village ... and from the neighboring villages” wished to kill the traders and “pillage their merchandise.”<sup>496</sup> According to Pettycrou, Pouchimataha claimed support from twenty-four towns. Even if Pettycrou’s exaggerated total is taken at face-value, his trip represented the final substantial public present from South Carolina delivered to the western division.<sup>497</sup>

While Pettycrou waited at Augusta for goods to bring to Pouchimataha, displaced Seneachas again complicated attempts to broker a peace between divisions. During an assembly of Choctaw headmen at the village of Yanabé, seven pro-English Seneacha *tasca* lashed out against the French settlements near Mobile, killing a Swiss soldier and a slave couple. Once again, southern Choctaws retaliated by killing three men, a woman, and child, punctuated by a threat that their raids on the Seneachas would continue “until these seven murderers of the French were destroyed.”<sup>498</sup> In one sense, this attack

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<sup>494</sup> Atkin, “Historical Account,” 31-2.

<sup>495</sup> *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, May 21, 1750-August 7, 1754*, ed. William L. McDowell, Jr. (Columbia: South Carolina Archives Department, 1958), 16.

<sup>496</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 22 September 1749 in *MPAFD*, 5: 36.

<sup>497</sup> Atkin, “Historical Account,” 32-33.

<sup>498</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 22 September 1749 in *MPAFD*, 5: 32.

appeared a pretty obvious expression of unbridled Choctaw masculinity, as young *tasca* without guidance – all the headmen had travelled to Yanabé for the assembly – took it upon themselves to remedy the slight without French compulsion. Their impulsive decision to attack instead of waiting for their headmen to return belied their inexperience as warriors. At the same time, this attack signified the construction of ethnic difference that became engrained during the past three years of factional war. To target women was a normal practice of the native powers of the southeast, and also a particularly devastating assault on ethnic identity.<sup>499</sup> While individual *tasca* could claim masculine status by killing a woman or child, the intentional targeting of women constituted an attempt to obliterate matrilineal and matrilocal enemies.<sup>500</sup> In other words, the definitions of identity organized along divisional affiliation became so galvanized that southern Choctaws believed western Choctaws were fundamentally different and incompatible in their society.

As 1750 unfolded, factional fighting became more and more sporadic, as the superior fire- and manpower of the southern division became overwhelmingly evident. Although dwindling in numbers, western Choctaws continued to strike at French targets. Perhaps relying on intelligence gathered earlier by their Chakchiuma allies, a party of eight *tasca* “thought to be from the village of West Immongoulacha” ambushed the French Natchez fort. One French soldier died in the attack. Southern division Choctaws

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<sup>499</sup> John Appy, “Extracts in English taken from Volumes One and Two of Vaudreuil’s Letterbooks,” 21 August 1742-20 January 1750, Vaudreuil Papers, LO 26, Huntington Library observes it was not out of the ordinary for Chickasaws to kill women during their raids.

<sup>500</sup> Brooke Bauer highlighted this aspect of Indian warfare during a question and answer session concerning her forthcoming chapter, “The Catawba Homeland, Before and During Contact” (presentation, McNeil Center for Early American Studies “Lenses and Contacts: Framing Early America” Biennial Graduate Student Conference, Philadelphia, PA, October 6, 2017).

disavowed this attack and informed Vaudreuil their determination “to attack until the chiefs and the warriors who struck the blow shall have lost their lives.”<sup>501</sup> This new attack at the Natchez fort also prompted the deployment of French forces to take the field for the first time since factional violence began. The infusion of French officers and (perhaps more importantly) artillery during the autumn of 1750 proved decisive. The campaign, led by Sieur Grandpré, commandant at Tombeché, occurred in two stages in late September and early October. Although the Natchez Fort perpetrators were initially identified as from West Immongoulacha, Vaudreuil reported that Grandpré’s investigations concluded “those who caused it” resided among the remaining leading western division villages: Tchanké, Oni, and Okéoulou. The first stage of the campaign targeted these villages. Aided by a *pierrier* – a swivel gun – from Fort Tombeché, the pro-French coalition then turned its attention to villages closely aligned with Pouchimataha, laying siege to Cushtusha and Caffetalaya in October. In all, the campaigns took twenty-five scalps and, according to French sources, “intimidated these rebels so thoroughly that they took flight by night and abandoned [all] five of their forts.”<sup>502</sup>

These results secured Grandpré the Cross of St. Louis and the end of the war. Vaudreuil reported having “the satisfaction” of hearing from eastern and southern headmen “that they are indebted for the peace.”<sup>503</sup> This peace brought with it staggering loss for the Choctaws, although the western division sustained the heaviest casualties. Tenuously held together by the efforts of Pouchimataha of Toussana, the western division

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<sup>501</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 24 June 1750 in *MPAFD*, 5: 47.

<sup>502</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 12 January 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 60.

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

was on the brink of collapse by the end of 1750. According to John R. Swanton's survey of all eight extant eighteenth-century Choctaw censuses, only the former home of Red Shoe and Little King, Couëchitto, was completely destroyed. Western *Imoklasha* Choctaws momentarily abandoned seven other towns: Nushkobo, West Abeika, Tchanké, Oni, Okéoulou, Cushtusha, and Caffetalaya. Most of these towns resettled by 1764, although it must be noted that Nushkobo does not reappear in the source base until 1784, when the town no longer identified as an *Imoklasha* (western) town but as *Inhulahta* (eastern).<sup>504</sup> Between 600 and 800 total warriors died during the war, and another 1000 to 1200 succumbed to smallpox between 1747 and 1749. Based on these estimates — which does not account for the number of women and children that died (as this information is unknown) — sixteen percent of the total Choctaw population died between 1746 and 1750.<sup>505</sup> In all, less than 3,600 *tasca* remained in Choctaw villages by 1755.<sup>506</sup>

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<sup>504</sup> Swanton compiled a database of Choctaw towns using materials collected by Iberville (1702), de Lusser (1730), Roulet (1732), de Crenay (1733), Farmar (1764), Romans (1771), and the Spanish (1784). He also uses the anonymous account, which he erroneously dates to 1755; Galloway suggests an older origin for this source. See Swanton, "Source Material," 59-75 and Galloway, "Choctaw Names and Choctaw Roles: Another Method of Evaluating Sociopolitical Structure" in *Practicing Ethnohistory*, 202-204. Although no source specifically refers to an engagement that resulted in the abandonment of West Abeika, multiple letters by Vaudreuil refer to the town as either "entirely destroyed" or "completely destroyed." See Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 24 June 1750 in *MPAFD*, 5: 46-47 and Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 12 January 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 62.

<sup>505</sup> On smallpox casualties, see Louboey to Maurepas, 16 February 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 313. On estimates on the total number of *tasca* killed, see Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 12 January 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 62 (800 "chiefs, honored men, and warriors") and the "Memoir on Indians by Kerlérec," 12 December 1758, *MPAFD*, 5: 218 ("more than six hundred"). The estimated demographic loss is based on suggested population totals in Peter H. Wood, "The Changing Population of the Colonial South: An Overview by Race and Region, 1685-1790" in *Powhatan's Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, Revised and Expanded Edition, eds. Gregory A. Waselkov, Wood, and Tom Hatley (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 92-99.

<sup>506</sup> Edmond Atkin, "To the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantation," 30 May 1755, 24 in Loudoun Papers: Americana, LO 578, Huntington Library. This report was reprinted in *The Appalachian Indian Frontier: The Edmond Atkin Report and Plan of 1755*, ed. Wilbur R. Jacobs (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967). The male Choctaw population would rebound over time. The English estimated the total had risen to 6,000 within a decade; see letter from Johnson and Stuart, 12 June 1765 in *Mississippi Provincial Archives: English Dominion*, ed. Rowland (Nashville: Press of Brandon Printing Company, 1911), 1: 185.

The violence associated with the Choctaw civil war proved unprecedented in the Native South, but to dwell only on its brutality removes contingency from the narrative. At worst, this perpetuates the myth of Native American “savagism.” Choctaw headmen and *tasca* acted exceptionally because they were caught in a firestorm of political, epidemiological, and social crises. Choctaw gender roles and systems of justice dictated western *Imoklasha* Choctaw *tasca* take the field to avenge the degrading treatment of their women and assassination of their leader by the French and their eastern *Inhulahta* and southern Six Towns supporters.

The progression of violence as the civil war transitioned from cold to hot also illustrates the importance Red Shoe’s kinship network. Couëchitto was repeatedly targeted before being burnt to the ground in July 1748. Pro-French Choctaws hunted down the refugees of that village who fled to the nearby villages of Tchanké, Oni, Tala, and Okéoulou. These raids proved particularly violent and accounted for at least a hundred deaths, based on the number of scalps delivered to Vaudreuil by Alibamon Mingo at Mobile in January 1749.<sup>507</sup> Again, the use of kinship networks as a lens for understanding the conflict also explains why the politics of Mongoulacha Mingo diverted so much from the predominantly pro-French attitude of his Chickasawhay warriors. At first, it appears incongruous that one of Red Shoe’s most ardent supporters served as the headman of the village that took the lead in attempting to extirpate Red Shoe and his followers by attacking the four aforementioned villages. But these same Chickasawhay warriors eventually turned on Mongoulacha Mingo. Five warriors tomahawked the chief in late summer 1748, finally politically unifying the village under one faction. At the

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<sup>507</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 3 March 1749 in *MPAFD*, 5: 16.

time, Beauchamp believed that Mongoulacha Mingo's death was a turning point in the war and would contribute "no little to reestablishing calm in the Choctaw nation." A tally of Red Shoe's extended kinship network by 1749 proves morbid: Red Shoe and Mongoulacha Mingo assassinated, in addition to the flight of Little King to the Creeks. As such, we cannot take Beauchamp's comment regarding the suppression of "that evil family" as a simple exaggeration, but quite literally an encapsulation of French extirpative policy towards Red Shoe's faction.<sup>508</sup> Red Shoe's kinship network was a prioritized target that dictated when and where pro-French Choctaw violence occurred.

Smallpox also contributed to this volatile social dynamic. Although unknown in origin, the fevers and pox did not simply mean the deaths of Choctaw warriors (and their families) in both factions. The circumstances of Choctaw factionalism only served to help spread the disease. Factionalism facilitated the transmission of smallpox into Choctaw towns and villages, and the virus in turn may have deepened factional reliance on specific European-manufactured items because of their role not in waging war, but in burial. As such, historians must reframe and reconsider the purpose of gifts, presents, and material requests that undergirded intercultural diplomacy during times of conflict. Traditionally considered only as invoices listing instruments by which Choctaw headmen grabbed power through their redistribution of goods, these lists tell another tale: one of communal sorrow, grief, and loss. To properly care for the dead, Choctaws of both factions sought European items to complete the burial process. To harken back to Faust's earlier quote, the Choctaw "work of death" now relied on European items. Choctaws used imported goods to accompany them into the afterlife, with this confluence of mortuary and material

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<sup>508</sup> Beauchamp to Maurepas, 24 October 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 326.

culture standing in stark contrast to the popular notion that Native Americans in the second half of the eighteenth century viewed these items – blankets especially – as tools of imperialism and death.<sup>509</sup>

As pressures within Choctaw divisions mounted, headmen and warriors abandoned the pretenses of cultural homogeneity and embraced their specific regional and ethnic identities to continue justified raids and slaughter of other Choctaws. These ethnically-driven decisions were calculated — not indiscriminate — and sought the maintenance of power and authority at both local and divisional levels. While nightmarish, expressions of masculinity, disease, and ethnic identity signaled the arrival of the “Bad Hunting Ground.”

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<sup>509</sup> Other works make similar push backs against the popular notion of smallpox blankets, first popularized in Francis Parkman, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac and the Indian War after the Conquest of Canada* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1851). See Adrienne Mayor, “The Nessus Shirt in the New World: Smallpox Blankets in History and Legend,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 108, no. 427 (1995): 54-77; Fenn, “Biological Warfare in Eighteenth-Century North America: Beyond Jeffery Amherst,” *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 4 (2000): 1552-1580; Philip Ranlet, “The British, the Indians, and Smallpox: What Actually Happened at Fort Pitt in 1763?” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 67, no. 3 (2000): 427- 441; Erica Charters, “Military Medicine and the Ethics of War: British Colonial Warfare during the Seven Years War (1756-63),” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History/Bulletin Canadien d’Histoire de la Médecine* 27, no. 2 (2010): 273-98; Gregory Evans Dowd, *Groundless: Rumors, Legends, and Hoaxes on the Early American Frontier* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 38-62.

**Chapter Seven**  
***Achukma:***  
**Alibamon Mingo and Choctaw Peace**

For at least the fourth time in 1748, Alibamon Mingo returned to the “small green hut” located outside of Concha town. Although he acknowledged the importance of waging war for the maturation and social mobility of the warriors under his guidance, he no longer shared their youthful enthusiasm. He had grown tired – tired of incessant French directives for slights he considered juvenile, tired of raising the tomahawk against fellow Choctaws, tired of being haunted by the *shilups* of both friend and foe. Upon his return, cultural protocol would have dictated he draw back the woven reed door to enter a cabin and join his closest and bravest warriors. It may have been in one of these sweat lodges where he resolved to bring the internecine fighting to an end by any means necessary.

After returning from battle, Choctaw warriors were required to spend four days undergoing a spiritual cleanse. These four days would have given Alibamon Mingo time to formulate a plan for reconciliation. The cleanse began when the steam cabin filled with “all sorts of medicinal and sweet-smelling herbs.” Alibamon Mingo would have sweated,



inhaling “the essence and salts of these herbs.”<sup>510</sup> Then, he would have fasted. Unable to eat solid food, he would partake in the ubiquitous “black drinke” and perhaps another concoction favored by the neighboring Chickasaws, water “highly imbittered with the button-snake-root.”<sup>511</sup> He would have purged. For the blood he and his warriors spilled, Choctaw belief required this purification process; to return to Concha still stained with enemy blood would be to bring unbridled “spiritual power” into their homes, with unpredictable results.<sup>512</sup> Taken together – the sweating, the fasting, the purging – these acts represented a remedy that eased “pain and causes[d] it to disappear.”<sup>513</sup> But most of all, Alibamon Mingo, cut off from the distractions of the world, would have planned. These repeated cleanses may have afforded him time to recognize that the entire Choctaw nation required time to undergo the same process purification. Choctaws from all division and kinship networks needed to find their own way to ease the pain and cause it to disappear.

This chapter considers the very process by which Choctaws found peace in an era of civil war. It outlines the politics of many headmen, although Alibamon Mingo of the eastern division town of Concha – perhaps the most influential of all remaining Choctaw leaders – figures most prominently. Like the ritual described above, the trauma of the Choctaw civil war needed to be washed away, and an ethnographic approach illustrates

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<sup>510</sup> Jean-Bernard Bossu, *Travels in the Interior of North America, 1751-1762*, trans. and ed. Seymour Feiler (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962) 168.

<sup>511</sup> James Adair, *The History of the American Indians*, ed. Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 162.

<sup>512</sup> On the spiritual aspects of this process, see Greg O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 42-3. See also William J. Merrill, “The Beloved Tree: *Ilex vomitoria* among the Indians of the Southeast and Adjacent Regions” in *Black Drink: A Native American Tea*, Revised Edition, ed. Charles Hudson (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004), especially 62-64.

<sup>513</sup> Bossu, *Travels*, 168.

the attempts by which pro-French leadership pursued a corrective, and therefore legitimate, peace. Choctaws sought a return to the *status quo ante bellum* – a notion contrasting American (and especially Southern) experiences, considering the close ties between military defeat, memory, and cultural identity. Unlike settler-colonists, the Choctaws largely attained this goal.<sup>514</sup> By deftly navigating French demands and successfully imposing their own stipulations that the documentary sources have hitherto shrouded, Alibamon Mingo and others facilitated a peace that allowed all Choctaws to move past the horrors of war.

The year 1748 drew to a close, and as the days shortened and chilled, Choctaw headmen trickled into Mobile to await an address by Governor Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil de Cavagnial. Choctaws did not usually have a reputation for being late.<sup>515</sup> Yet leading Choctaws “did not come at the time appointed,” forcing the French colonial governor to wait until December 23, when Alibamon Mingo finally arrived, accompanied by a number of headmen from pro-French towns (including the Great Chief of the Choctaws), as well as a few headmen from the western villages of Okalusa and Yanabé.<sup>516</sup> With a flourish, Alibamon Mingo, now recognized as the unquestioned head of the pro-French faction, threw at Vaudreuil’s “feet more than a hundred scalps taken

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<sup>514</sup> Nothing akin to a “Lost Cause” ideology arose as a result of the Choctaw Civil War, even with the violence perpetrated by members of both factions. On the construction of the “Lost Cause” narrative, see C. Vann Woodward, “The Search for Southern Identity,” in *The Burden of Southern History*, Third Edition (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 3-26; Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); and Charles Regan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920*, Second Edition (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2009).

<sup>515</sup> John R. Swanton noted the regular use of time-keeping stick bundles in “Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians,” *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin* 103 (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1931), 44.

<sup>516</sup> John Appy, “Extracts in English taken from Volumes One and Two of Vaudreuil’s Letterbooks,” 21 August 1742-20 January 1750, Vaudreuil Papers, LO 26, Huntington Library.

from the rebellious Choctaws.” To these scalps he added the skulls of the chiefs of the villages of Couëchitto, Nushkobo, and West Abeika, which he proclaimed “existed no longer.” The Concha medal chief then presented a number of stipulations to Vaudreuil to renew the alliance between the French and their Choctaw allies. First, Alibamon Mingo requested “a double present” for the following year of 1749. He then asked that Vaudreuil adjust the price of exchange for the western scalps to three times the rate of a Chickasaw scalp on account that the eastern and southern Choctaws “had done themselves much more violence in killing their own brothers than in killing strangers.” Lastly, Vaudreuil was asked if he was willing to “liberally compensate the families of warriors who had been killed.” In other words, eastern and southern Choctaws tried to impose their own method of compensation that related perceived value, in contrast to French desires. Based upon the faction’s requests, the price of this warfare was steep — and as much a challenge to Vaudreuil’s authority as the western Choctaws. Unwilling to immediately cater to their whims, the cash-strapped governor therefore attempted to sidestep giving an explicit answer to Alibamon Mingo’s requests, believing them “indiscreetly made” and stating he would consider their demands and “try to satisfy them.”<sup>517</sup> This negotiation would be the first in a series of instances during which Choctaws successfully dictated the terms of factional peace.

December 24 brought more southern division headmen to Mobile, including those from the Chickasawhays, Yowanis, and other Six Towns villages. The infusion of headmen from villages that had been active in retaliatory attacks against the western

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<sup>517</sup> Appy, “Extracts” in LO 26, 42; Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 3 March 1749 in *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion*, 5 Vols., eds. Dunbar Rowland, A.G. Sanders, and Patricia Galloway (Jackson: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1927-1932 and Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 5: 16 (henceforth referred to as *MPAFD*).

division elicited a good amount of posturing in the company of the governor. Vaudreuil later wrote that among these Choctaw leaders he “learned that those who distinguished themselves most and took our interests most to heart, such as the Chikasawhays, Conchas, and several others, were the ones who boasted of it *least*, and that the chiefs and warriors of the Choctaw villages of the east, who were the last to declare themselves in our favor, were the ones who boasted most to us of their services.” More worrisome for the French governor was the fact that the chiefs of the villages of Great Epitoupougoula and Chicitalaya admitted they withheld Vaudreuil’s earlier peace overtures intended for western Choctaws they may encounter.<sup>518</sup> Vaudreuil met this perceived subterfuge with rage, accusing these headmen of failing to fully commit to a pro-French stance. He accused the warriors of Great Epitoupougoula and Chicitalaya of attacking the western division strongholds only because “they were forced to do so.” The lack of a united pro-French front bristled Vaudreuil.

It is difficult to determine the main reason for the varying degrees of allegiance between different pro-French Choctaw towns: it could have been over trustworthiness (as explained above), due to reservations regarding internecine warfare and the taboos inherent in such actions, or over appropriate expressions of martial masculinity. Vaudreuil “noticed that among our allies there did not fail to be some division, that several of them disapproved of the conduct of those who were boasting of the services that they had rendered to us and were glorying in the scalps taken from their own nation, [and] that a very large number were tired of war and were acting secretly to become reconciled and to make their peace with the rebels.” Evidence of this came in the form of

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<sup>518</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 3 March 1749 in *MPAFD*, 5: 17-18. Emphasis added.

some Choctaw headmen attempting to remain neutral throughout the entire conflict, including “two honored men” from the villages of Yazoo and West Immongoulacha who willingly withdrew “at the beginning of the trouble in order not to participate in it.”<sup>519</sup> In addition, Vaudreuil used the antipathy voiced by some concerned corners of the pro-French faction to threaten to withhold the compensation that had been earlier agreed to at Tombecbé and Mobile. In essence, he stated that unless the Choctaws demonstrated one hundred percent commitment across all three divisions, there was no justification for distributing rewards. And, as always, it is also highly likely that the habitual shortage of merchandise from France influenced this decision. Vaudreuil even condescendingly told his Choctaw audience that they were the authors of their own misfortune, claiming, “If they had rendered me justice as soon as I had asked them for it, they would not have killed each other as they have done and would not have experienced the misfortunes of civil war.”<sup>520</sup> In a blatant cultural misunderstanding of appropriate masculine behavior, Vaudreuil had come to expect that warriors would celebrate the vanquishing of their enemies. However, eastern and southern Choctaws were largely hesitant to act in the boastful manner Vaudreuil expected because their victims were kinsfolk, not enemies in any normal sense. Vaudreuil instead came to equate the celebratory nature of battlefield victory with an agreed upon price – why should he pay more for scalps that the Choctaws apparently did not value themselves?

Despite his peacocking, Vaudreuil had to give presents – and “gratuities” – to the headmen of the twenty-five Choctaws villages that supported the French during the ongoing conflict. A Franco-Choctaw alliance proved simply too valuable to cut off

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<sup>519</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 3 March 1749 in *MPAFD*, 5: 18.

<sup>520</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

entirely, with the English still making last-ditch efforts to establish traders among western villages. He then used this opportunity to reiterate French demands that the English be completely expelled. If not, he would be forced to take drastic measures, including the withdrawal of all French traders from Choctaw villages. “If any came (as they were vagabonds who were owned by their chiefs),” Vaudreuil instructed, “I intended that they should be plundered.” Schooled in Western patriarchal culture, Vaudreuil failed to detect the true intentions of Alibamon Mingo’s counteroffer. This response was grounded in gendered notions of the relationship between Choctaw “children” and French “fathers” — an appeal to kinship relations that actually undermined his intentions. Alibamon Mingo referred to Vaudreuil as a “father touched by the misfortunes of their nation” and continued, declaring, “Let the English remain with the Talapoosas and the Abihkas, but let them not go farther and let them not come again upon our land which we have granted to the French.” Should the English encroach into Choctaw lands, they would “consider them usurpers and we shall kill them.”<sup>521</sup> Notably, Alibamon Mingo never called for the Choctaw to stop trading with the English, simply that they should not be allowed to enter the country. There would still be many ways of accessing English goods through the Upper Creeks and the Chickasaws. Considered in this light, it is easy to see how the French and Choctaws came to vastly different conclusions based on the language of their alliance. On one hand, Alibamon Mingo had recalibrated the traditional Choctaw approach to foreign relations by playing the French and English off one another. On the other hand, Vaudreuil heard what he wanted – namely, that the English would no

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<sup>521</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 3 March 1749 in *MPAFD*, 5: 20.

longer be welcomed into the country. With this agreement clear as mud, the assembly dismissed.

Vaudreuil continued to fume over what he perceived to be a lax pursuit regarding the continued infiltration of English goods into Choctaw villages. Alibamon Mingo and his followers interpreted his demands differently. English traders should not be allowed to enter Choctaw villages, for sure, but this did not necessarily have to entail the specific murder of those traders, or, for that matter, any general embargo on English goods. It was the Choctaws who said they *might* kill traders, if necessary. In other words, Vaudreuil considered English traders and their goods synonymous; Choctaws clearly considered them as separate entities.<sup>522</sup> The Choctaw interpretation derived from the belief, propagated by the eastern division Choctaws led by Alibamon Mingo, that requests at restitution had been already fulfilled: the three skulls of the Anglophile leaders in return for the three Frenchman killed by Red Shoes. Indeed, some Choctaws may have believed this restitution paid many times over if all the scalps presented to Vaudreuil in December 1748 at Mobile were also included in this arithmetic of justice. From a Choctaw perspective then — even one amenable to the French — any new attack *would* reignite the cycle of violence inherent to native warfare. In contrast, Vaudreuil was convinced that the Choctaws were simply stalling to allow the western villages to regroup.

Efforts to bring about peace – desired by many when Vaudreuil met with headmen in late December 1748 and January 1749 at Mobile – continued in spite of the coalition of western Choctaw holdouts. After news of the murder of the English trader at West Immongoulacha, a number of western headmen informed Vaudreuil of their

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<sup>522</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 8 May 1749, in *MPAFD*, 5: 27.

willingness to begin peace deliberations. Vaudreuil ordered Sieur Grandpré, commandant at Tombeché, to invite Choctaw headmen to treat with him at the French fort. Standing in front of his Choctaw audience in early July 1749, Grandpré reiterated Vaudreuil's stipulations from the previous meeting held at Mobile; namely, that the Choctaws would not receive "the usual presents" that year, nor would the French resume sending traders into their villages, thereby cutting off the Choctaws from "the things they needed." The western headmen in attendance diplomatically tapped into the provisional component of Choctaw notions of masculinity — just as Red Shoe did in 1738 — scoffing at Grandpré's pronouncements, arguing that if they followed French demands and "killed the English the Choctaws would still be poor," accusing the commandant that "the French were not well enough supplied with trade goods to be able to supply the needs of such a large nation." Being prepared for such a biting retort, Grandpré informed his guests that the governor had in fact already "sent to Tombeché a large amount of trade goods and a trader," ready to travel to their villages as soon as the two factions came to terms. This prompted yet another general assembly, which took place on July 1 in the village of Yanabé, where Choctaws from all divisions agreed "to forget the causes of dissatisfaction" between them. Headmen then issued their own proclamation to the French stating their willingness "to prevent the English from returning to this nation." Just as Alibamon Mingo had distinguished beforehand, they paid particular attention to make no mention of a complete cessation of trade with the English, simply the reinforcement of a hardened border. Goods continued to be welcome, if not the traders themselves who worked hard to bring these supplies to Creek and Chickasaw villages.<sup>523</sup>

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<sup>523</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 22 September 1749 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 185, Huntington Library; see also *MPAFD*, 5: 32-33.



As 1749 drew to a close, Grandpré believed his message well-received by the Choctaws, yet the peace process revealed cracks within the foundation of the French colonial administration. In December, a group of fourteen Choctaws from western division villages appeared in New Orleans, escorted by the *fermier* (trader) Islets, the same man who had accompanied Grandpré to Tombeché earlier that summer. These Choctaws “held several councils” with Governor Vaudreuil. This exclusive manner of meeting in private with the Choctaws – similar to James Glen’s actions in South Carolina – noticeably upset *commissaire ordonnateur* Honoré Michel de la Rouvillière, who complained to Rouillé in January of his astonishment at the fact that “the Commissary General and *Ordonnateur*, the second most important person of the country...[was] not even summoned to matters of this importance.”<sup>524</sup> Flummoxed in January, Michel later proved outright disdainful in his feelings toward Vaudreuil. In a June 27 letter, Michel voiced his disgust over the fact that French warehouses remained “empty,” while also implicating the governor’s expensive efforts to buy the loyalty of all Choctaws. Michel described Vaudreuil as having returned from the annual gift-giving meeting at Mobile “laden with promises and fine words from the Choctaws, the performance of which we have not yet seen.”<sup>525</sup>

Choctaw behavior continually frustrated French expectations, at both literal and figurative costs to Louisiana. In correspondence back to France, Vaudreuil constantly rationalized his failure to secure unanimous Choctaw support. On June 24, he blamed

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<sup>524</sup> Michel to Rouillé, 17 January 1750 in *MPAFD*, 5: 38. On private meetings between Glen and Anglophile Choctaw headmen, see Edmond Atkin, “Historical Account of the Revolt of the Chactaw Indians in the late War from the French to the British Alliance and of Their Return since to that of the French...,” The British Library, Lansdowne MS 809.

<sup>525</sup> Michel to Rouillé, 27 June 1750 in *MPAFD*, 5: 51.

outside instigators, pointing out how the two holdout western villages, Cushtusha and Caffetalaya, “were within reach of the Chickasaws” and “might have been assisted by them.”<sup>526</sup> Three months later, on September 24, he blamed the devastating consequences of the civil war (and, perhaps, the smallpox epidemic). Choctaw promises to expel the English, Vaudreuil admitted, “have not yet had their fulfillment.” He attributed this hesitancy to “want of food supplies,” noting the Choctaws “found themselves unprovided,” and therefore drawn to English provisions, in spite of French discouragement.<sup>527</sup> Vaudreuil failed to comprehend that Choctaws from all divisions were simply adopting the prerogative established earlier by Alibamon Mingo at Mobile. This inability to secure a definitive Choctaw alliance to the French contributed to internal breakdowns between the most senior colonial officials in Louisiana.<sup>528</sup>

The continued presence of English traders only exacerbated administrative tensions in Louisiana. Pouchimataha of the western town of Toussana orchestrated the final attempts to establish a regular Anglo-Choctaw trade. Having witnessed the rest of the leadership of his village (including members of his own kinship network) killed as a result of the factional violence, Pouchimataha proved unwilling to abandon the objective of western division leaders.<sup>529</sup> Regardless of the hardships he faced, he remained staunchly pro-English, even going so far as to travel to Charles Town himself to ask for

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<sup>526</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 24 June 1750 in *MPAFD*, 5: 46.

<sup>527</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 24 September 1750 in *MPAFD*, 5: 55.

<sup>528</sup> The institutional structure of Louisiana also kept the office of the governor and the commissaire-ordonnateur at odds with each other, especially over the colonial budget. See Donald Lemieux, “The Office of ‘Commissaire Ordonnateur’ in French Louisiana 1731-1763: A Study in French Colonial Administration,” (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 1972) and Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil’s Empire: French Colonial New Orleans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 195-6.

<sup>529</sup> Francophiles killed Pouchimataha’s brother as well as Pahémingo, an honored man of Toussana; see Vaudreuil to Maurepas, 5 November 1748 in *MPAFD*, 4: 335, 340.

merchandise, where he finally convinced trader John Pettycrow to return with him to Choctaw country. By December 1749 they had returned, and Toussana joined Caffetalaya and Cushtusha as the remaining declared pro-English western villages.<sup>530</sup> Thanks to Pouchimataha's efforts, these three villages became a hub of activity for English traders. Although the French continued to encourage their Choctaw allies "to lay violent hands upon the warriors who might still persist stubbornly in giving [English traders] asylum," eastern and southern leaders recognized the fruitlessness of this request. Pouchimataha and his followers could easily slip back and forth between Chickasaw and Choctaw lands to retrieve English goods. While not ideal, the effort it would take to force the issue seemed exorbitant. Better instead for Francophile headmen to make ultimatums and see if the remaining Anglophiles would voluntarily surrender rather than continue fighting. This wait-and-see approach lasted for half a year. In a letter to Rouillé, Vaudreuil threatened that if Pouchimataha's western division followers in Toussana, Caffetalaya, and Cushtusha did not acquiesce "they would meet the same fate as Couëchitto and Nushkobo, villages of the late Red Shoe that have been entirely destroyed."<sup>531</sup> While this threat is extreme, the fact Vaudreuil uttered it nearly eight months *after* Pettycrow and his associates' first arrived at Toussana belies these words as having more bark than bite.

Further complicating attempts at peace was the fact that the civil war and concurrent smallpox epidemic spawned generational tensions within Choctaw society. Vaudreuil noted how Choctaw headmen faced difficulty controlling the warriors in their villages. This rowdiness resulted because *tasca*, in some cases very green in terms of

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<sup>530</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 1 February 1750 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 203, Huntington Library; see also *MPAFD*, 5: 43.

<sup>531</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 24 June 1750 in *MPAFD*, 5: 47.

diplomacy and warfare, now found themselves placed in leadership positions requiring life and death decisions without the guidance of more seasoned advisors. This often resulted in one of two possible outcomes: first, by springing to rash action; or second, failing to inspire confidence from fellow warriors, therefore resulting in hesitancy on the battlefield. Vaudreuil told Rouillé he was “convinced... that the Choctaw chiefs, however well intentioned they might be, do not have enough authority over their warriors to carry out their promises so punctually.”<sup>532</sup> In this state of socio-political upheaval, Vaudreuil believed it expedient to bypass questions regarding the new class of Choctaw leadership through means of material enticement. Although he wanted the last remaining English traders completely removed from Choctaw country – even going so far as to refuse the annual gifts to the eastern and southern divisions if they failed to “act vigorously” to drive them out – Vaudreuil ultimately decided to once again bestow the annual gifts from Mobile.<sup>533</sup> Unsurprisingly, he omitted the western towns of Cushtusha and Caffetalaya from the gift-giving ceremony. In addition, he continued the practice of the previous year by rewarding individuals who “distinguished themselves” in their Francophilia by thwarting “the projects of the English,” as well as following the precedent of paying for scalps of Anglophile Choctaws and their Chickasaw allies.<sup>534</sup> Vaudreuil had no choice but to continue encouraging his eastern *Inhulahta* and southern Six Towns allies through compensation against the western division and the English traders they harbored.

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<sup>532</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 24 June 1750 in *MPAFD*, 5: 47.

<sup>533</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 1 February 1750 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 203, Huntington Library; see also *MPAFD*, 5: 43.

<sup>534</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 24 June 1750 in *MPAFD*, 5: 47.

Vaudreuil believed another approach – namely, his machinations to spark a new Chickasaw war – to be “the most expedient to settle the inconstancy of the Choctaws.”<sup>535</sup> Eastern and southern Choctaws proved more receptive to projecting their martial masculinity outward towards the Chickasaws instead of continuous factional warfare. Choctaws from both divisions took advantage of the renewed French rewards for Chickasaw scalps. In November 1749, thirteen Anglophile headmen from the villages of Tchanké, Oni, and Okéoulou joined with honored men from the village of Tala and traveled to New Orleans to meet with Vaudreuil directly and announced “that they sincerely wished to become reconciled.” To demonstrate their change of heart, the headmen immediately organized war parties from each of their villages – four in all – to go “attack the Chickasaws.”<sup>536</sup> They returned to Mobile in April 1750 and delivered twelve Chickasaw scalps to Vaudreuil. Vaudreuil argued these raids were undertaken to “give...proofs of their sincere conversion” and newfound loyalty to the French, although repeated attacks by eastern and southern Choctaws against the villages, in conjunction with Alibamon Mingo’s efforts to bring about a resolution likely contributed to their abandonment of the Anglophile cause. In addition, the pro-French western Chichatalaya village sent a war party, delivering “six Chickasaw scalps” to Grandpré at Tombeché.<sup>537</sup>

Alibamon Mingo’s bid for peace was not without obstacles, however, including a new infusion of English traders and a temporary flare-up of factional violence before securing an official cease-fire. Fourteen Englishmen had entered Choctaw country,

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<sup>535</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 1 February 1750 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 203, Huntington Library; see also *MPAFD*, 5: 45.

<sup>536</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 1 February 1750 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 203, Huntington Library; see also *MPAFD*, 5: 42-43.

<sup>537</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 24 June 1750 in *MPAFD*, 5: 47, 49.

prompting a pro-French response. An unidentified Francophile “insulted one of the Englishmen and killed a women of the opposite faction in order to avenge the death of one of his kinsmen who had been previously killed in a similar quarrel.” Memories of the violence of the Choctaw civil war remained raw, resulting in this initial fight and holding the potential to unravel the tenuous strands of peace woven by Alibamon Mingo. Western Choctaws, “thinking that this was treachery” on the part of the eastern and southern Choctaws, attacked and killed ten pro-French warriors. The sources are vague regarding the specifics of this fight, and it is likely that some other motivations was at play here: the justice administered doesn’t match the crime. A southern division Choctaw ridiculed an Englishman, then killed a western Choctaw woman — further proof that violence was never arbitrary but directed by kinship and regional concerns. By this moment in time, however, local conflict no longer remained local, tinted by the recent history of factional and ethnic violence. As such, southern Choctaws “raised an armed force of *all* their men” in response, the immense size of the war party indicative of their intent to extinguish any reignited factional violence. With *tascas* once again on the warpath, western Choctaws evacuated English traders, protecting them from any punishment.<sup>538</sup> With this action, however, they effectively removed any means of being able to secure English weapons and powder for defense, as South Carolina’s colonial officials already determined they would no longer offer provisions in light of the new peace treaty with France concluding the War of Austrian Succession.

The fighting took a turn in late September and early October, with the first official campaigns of French officers, soldiers, and heavy artillery into Choctaw country, which

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<sup>538</sup> Michel to Rouillé, 2 July 1750 in *MPAFD*, 5: 52. Emphasis added. On the number of English traders, see Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 24 September 1750 in *MPAFD*, 5: 55.

effectively brought an end to the raiding by both factions. Without any significant base of operations after the destruction of the five western *Imoklasha* villages of Tchanké, Oni, Okéoulou, Cushtusha, and Caffetalaya, the remaining pro-English western Choctaws were forced “to surrender and ask for mercy.”<sup>539</sup> This crushing campaign brought about formal peace talks, including the following stipulations of what ethnohistorian Patricia Galloway has referred to as the “Grandpré treaty”: (1) a reaffirmation of the mutually recognized practice of *lex talionis*; (2) the punishment of Choctaws who brought Englishmen into their villages; (3) the official renewal of Choctaw hostilities against the Chickasaws; and (4) the dissolution of any remaining western Choctaw forces.<sup>540</sup> On November 15 at Fort Tombecbé, with Grandpré looking on, Choctaw headmen from all divisions “performed all the ceremonies that are customary with Indians who recognize their faults and who honestly wish to be reconciled...to obtain life and peace.”<sup>541</sup>

There is no record of the process of intratribal reconciliation undertaken by the Choctaws. Since the civil war encouraged Choctaw divisions to consider themselves as distinct from one another, they may have adapted the ceremonial attributes of intertribal reconciliation. Although no records of what exactly occurred during the specific peace meeting between Choctaw factions survive, records do remain of European-mediated peace agreements between Choctaws and other native groups. The peace talks at Tombecbé may have followed similar protocol, unfolding in scenes cloaked in white, the symbolic color of peace: headmen of both factions would have covered themselves in clay-based white paint, bearing white swan wings while meeting under white flags. They

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<sup>539</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 12 January 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 60.

<sup>540</sup> Memoir for the King, 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 58.

<sup>541</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 12 January 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 60-61.

would have met in an open space before regaling each other with “peace songs,” all the while waving eagle and swan wings. A highly-coordinated fictive battle might then ensue. Afterwards, members of the two factions may have met, joined hands, and give each other red war clubs to demonstrate the cessation of hostilities. Smaller, less ostentatious meetings between the two factions may have been held over the following days.<sup>542</sup> Since this particular treaty was agreed to away from the colonial capital, a package was sent to governor Vaudreuil in New Orleans; including “white feathers worked in the form of a flag together with a calumet.” In addition to these symbols of “enduring peace,” the Choctaws sent the English commissions and flags received by western leaders Pouchimataha of Toussna and Mingo Ouma of Cushtusha when they travelled to South Carolina. By sending these items, these western headmen ostensibly “were renouncing...evil words forever.”<sup>543</sup>

Close reading of the terms of the peace agreement engineered by Grandpré, however, reveals the underwhelming nature of its stipulations for French leaders. It was not an imposition of French demands – regardless of how strongly worded the treaty was – but more a confirmation of practices that had become standardized over the final year of the war. An analysis of each point confirms this interpretation. The first stipulation – “that every Choctaw chief, honored man, or warrior who shall dip his hand in the blood of a Frenchman shall be killed without mercy, and that if the kinsman of the aggressor oppose this justice, the entire nation shall take up arms against them and shall subject them to the same fate as the guilty ones” – was not a novel concept. As previous chapters

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<sup>542</sup> The description of this scene is based on a peace ceremony held between the Choctaws and Creeks in October 1776; see O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 35-36.

<sup>543</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 12 January 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 61.



have illustrated, this notion served as the foundation for intercultural diplomacy between the French and the Choctaws. What *is* interesting to note, however, is the French emphasis on security by monitoring specific kinship networks. With Grandpré's terms, Choctaw justice no longer was the responsibility of the offending town, kinship network, or division. In order to consolidate claims to authority, the French wanted to extend legitimacy in these matters to *all* Choctaw leadership. This focus is logical considering the actions taken against Red Shoe's kinship network, which was comprised of his closest advisors and allies.<sup>544</sup>

The second point of the treaty required "every Choctaw chief or warrior who introduced the English into his village" to be "punished by death together with the Englishmen." Of particular note, Grandpré included a stipulation that "no one whoever of the nation shall be permitted to take vengeance for it," an attempt to quell the Choctaw ethic of restitution while also protecting French imperial interests. For the French, this reiterates the approach they wanted the Choctaws to follow. This idealism, however, differs from the policy that guided Alibamon Mingo and his supporters, whose actions appear less concerned about killing English traders than expelling them, while still keeping them in close enough proximity to continue having access to goods.<sup>545</sup>

The third point – "that the entire Choctaw nation shall continue to make war on the Chickasaws and that it shall not cease to attack these perfidious people as long as any of them exist" - is another continuation of what Vaudreuil had requested the year before. Some western towns, such as Chichtalaya, took up this French request quickly. The real

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<sup>544</sup> Memoir for the King, 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 58. On *lex talionis*, see Chapter 1 above. On violence directed towards specific kinship networks, see Chapter 4 above.

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.* The peace conditions of Grandpré's treaty are reiterated in Rouillé to Vaudreuil, 6 October 1750 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 279, Huntington Library.

question would be if Toussana and Cushtusha, towns whose headmen received British commissions, would continue to send warriors against the Chickasaws because their towns were the most closely integrated nodes remaining in the Chickasaw/Choctaw trade axis. The lesser western villages of Tchanké, Oni, Okéoulou, had joined the southern town of Tala in sending war parties against the Chickasaws before Grandpré's final autumn campaigns. Yet whether these towns would continue in their martial enthusiasm remained in question, especially after the forcible abandonment of their villages.<sup>546</sup> The material rewards for headmen who agreed to lead their *tasca* in raids against the Chickasaws could be potentially lucrative: the war chief of Nachoubayenou requested over fifty guns with ammunition from Vaudreuil in exchange for agreeing to attack the Chickasaw.<sup>547</sup> Over time, however, sources indicate that Choctaw raids against the Chickasaws continued through the end of the Vaudreuil administration, as his successor, Louis Billouart de Kerlérec, was met by seven western headmen bearing Chickasaw scalps upon his arrival in the colony.<sup>548</sup>

The final (and perhaps the most intriguing) stipulation of the treaty called for “the villages hitherto in revolt” to “disband their forces as soon as possible and that both sides shall return the prisoners and the slaves taken during the war.”<sup>549</sup> The death toll wrought by the civil war may have forced eastern and southern division Choctaws to adopt western prisoners or slaves, but very few of the remaining French reports mention the taking of prisoners or slaves during battle. When they do, they are almost always in

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<sup>546</sup> Memoir for the King, 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 58.

<sup>547</sup> Vaudreuil, “A list of presents for the Choctaw Indians,” Sept. 1749 in Vaudreuil Papers, LO 508, Huntington Library.

<sup>548</sup> Louis Billouart de Kerlérec to Rouillé, 8 March 1753 in *MPAFD*, 5: 122.

<sup>549</sup> Memoir for the King, 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 58.

reference to people being ransomed by the English or as being kidnapped from French – *not* eastern or southern Choctaw – settlements. The French did return slaves stolen by the Arkansas during their 1749 raids on the western division. As such, instead of some sort of captive exchange program between the Choctaw factions, this stipulation was more likely directed towards French restitutions of private losses and the return of bonded labor to French settlements, especially along the German Coast.<sup>550</sup>

In other words, the official colonial memoir sent to King Louis XV unsurprisingly included only *French* concerns. It therefore omitted perhaps the most important arrangement finalized by the peace. An examination of Governor Vaudreuil's correspondence, however, reveals this "fifth" stipulation. In a 1751 letter to Rouillé, Vaudreuil described how the Choctaws, led by Alibamon Mingo, actually dictated the terms of peace by indicating the continued French presence at Fort Tombecbé as an essential component of the final agreement. Colonial administration had debated at length whether to shut the post down to save money, but Alibamon Mingo demanded it remain open. Although going against all fiscal sense, Vaudreuil admitted the necessity of respecting Choctaw wishes:

“In the confidence that they felt that we would preserve for them the post of Tombecbé, with all of whose advantages they have become acquainted in their quarrels and especially in these latest actions, I think, my lord, that if in the present circumstances we should decide to withdraw from this fort it would be making a decision contrary to the welfare of the service, which would undoubtedly cast this colony into a predicament perhaps greater than that from which we are emerging.”

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<sup>550</sup> Memoir for the King, 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 58. On the recovery of stolen slaves, see Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 24 June 1750 in *MPAFD*, 5: 49.

Vaudreuil also asked Rouillé to apologize directly to the King for him – in his words, “entreating [Louis XV] to not be offended” – if a royal order calling for “the suppression of this fort” had already been issued. This was a remarkable statement: Vaudreuil admitted to blatantly rejecting royal orders! He justified his treason by expressing how the closure of Tombecbé would be “such an unexpected change... [and] have the effect of puzzling beyond all expression the Choctaws... who would think themselves thereby abandoned.”<sup>551</sup> The Choctaws extracted what they wanted from the French, even to the point of treason: continued access to goods at Fort Tombecbé.

French policy remained dependent on Choctaw good-will, a fact complicated by the poor state of the Tombecbé post and the unpredictable nature of trans-Atlantic supply shipping. In this regard, Vaudreuil was lucky – and probably very happy – to hear Choctaw requests that he *not* immediately travel to Mobile to dispense presents until the normally scheduled spring gift-giving ceremony. He attributed this to Choctaw desires to “recover from their fatigue and hunt more tranquilly,” and “to have an opportunity to give me fresh proofs of the sincerity of their sentiments toward us” by securing more Chickasaw scalps. This language again illustrated how the usual Choctaw hunting schedule had been interrupted by war in the previous years. On the other hand, this also may have allowed English traders to return to Choctaw towns. Vaudreuil noted how he could not have gone to meet the Choctaws even if he wanted, because of a lack of supplies: “...I would not have been able to undertake sooner even had they demanded it, because of the lack of merchandise in the King’s warehouse and [of] the arms necessary for the ordinary present to this nation.”<sup>552</sup> Regardless, what is important to note here is

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<sup>551</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 12 January 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 63-64.

<sup>552</sup> *Ibid.*, 61-62.

how the Choctaws dictated orders to the French to remain away, thereby allowing a return to the regular practice of playing off English and French supply chains. What is observed here is *not* acquiescence to French demands, but a demonstration of Choctaw geopolitical strength.

Vaudreuil was not alone in commenting on the poor and compromised condition of Fort Tombeché. Bobé Descloseaux described the post as “entirely unfit for service” and in dire need of “restoration.”<sup>553</sup> Descloseaux admitted the necessity of retaining the post, aligning his sentiments closer to Vaudreuil rather than the fiscally conservative agendas pushed by both Rouillé and Michel. “We cannot avoid making this expenditure,” he wrote. But neither would Descloseaux simply stand pat, recognizing the potential for increased efficiency (and profit) in Louisiana’s convoluted colonial supply network. Traveling to Fort Tombeché required a problematic ninety-league journey that could only be undertaken at “the time of high water” to allow the transport of all the necessary merchandise. “Often we do not have suitable provisions and merchandise at Mobile at that time,” Descloseaux stated plainly,” and we are obliged at low water to make use of an infinite number of small pirogues, which, drawing little water, carry only a small amount of goods and cause infinite expense.”<sup>554</sup>

Descloseaux proposed a solution to address the issues presented by the transatlantic and domestic shipping schedules that stubbornly refused to align. First, he recommended abandoning the post as a military venture, instead allowing private traders to occupy and “maintain it at their cost and expense.” Any concern regarding troop withdrawal from Tombeché would be offset by Descloseaux’s second point: the

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<sup>553</sup> Bobé Descloseaux to Rouillé, 21 April 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 66.

<sup>554</sup> *Ibid.*

relocation and establishment of a “small palisade fort at a place name Pachatchouka.” Descloseaux pinpointed this as the best possible location for a new military installation, as it would effectively cut transport time and distance in half. The proposed site rested “forty-five leagues below Tombeché and forty-five leagues above Mobile.” The advantages appeared obvious: the deeper waterways would allow year-round movement of troops and supplies between Mobile and Pachatchouka while giving the Choctaws multiple options for sites of trade. The combination of shorter supply routes and the trade being divided between two sites — with only one being funded by the Crown — allowed Descloseaux to believe his proposed reorganization scheme would “cost the King much less flour, liquor, and merchandise, which has been a very large item hitherto.”<sup>555</sup> His proposal appears to have fallen on deaf ears, however, as an updated defense model forwarded a mere week after his suggestion made no mention of a relocated military post. Instead, Vaudreuil simply cut the number of men allocated to Fort Tombeché down to “only one company.” Fewer men, he reasoned, would both placate the Choctaws’ demands for a continued French presence as well as offset “the greater expense that a more considerable garrison in this place would cause.”<sup>556</sup> Choctaw desires shaped the French fortification network in Lower Louisiana.

While the official (a term loosely applied) peace between the French and Choctaws encouraged making the path red against the Chickasaws, the French still worried about indiscriminate Choctaw warfare against other neighboring groups. In particular, Vaudreuil voiced concern over breakdowns in Choctaw-Creek relations,

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<sup>555</sup> Descloseaux to Rouillé, 21 April 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 66. *Pachatchouka* may translate to “a roaring of water” or rapids. See Cyrus Byington, “A Dictionary of the Choctaw Language,” *Bureau of American Ethnology*, 46 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1915).

<sup>556</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 28 April 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 70.

highlighting the Choctaws' capacity to dismantle the fragile native alliance system the French wanted to install throughout the Native South. French relations with some of the Upper Creek towns were relatively positive, epitomized by the social life of Fort Toulouse. The Alabamas "have even declared several times that they regard as their own children all the creoles of both sexes born in their land," reported Vaudreuil, who estimated the number of *metis* at Toulouse between "eighty or ninety."<sup>557</sup> The vibrant frontier cosmopolitanism of Toulouse went a long way in dissuading the Upper Creeks from abandoning the French wholesale for the English. A nominally reunified Choctaw nation, however, could easily disrupt the Franco-Creek relationship. Choctaws "killed five or six" Upper Creeks in 1750 when they trespassed on Creek hunting grounds during their campaigns against the Chickasaws. "In the raids that they made upon the Chickasaws," Vaudreuil wrote, "these Choctaws have fallen back upon the hunting grounds of these Abhikas and have made attacks upon some of them and routed them." In May the following year, Vaudreuil informed Rouillé how the Abeika and Tallapoosa Creeks remained upset about these attacks. Vaudreuil considered this as nothing more than an English conspiracy, but in fact Franco-Choctaw diplomacy created the conditions for this potential breakdown.<sup>558</sup> Ironically, French peace terms with the Choctaws laid the foundations for a potential war with the Creeks!

This delicate pan-Indian peace (sans the Chickasaws) was vital to Vaudreuil's plans regarding budget cuts for Fort Tombecké. "It is not to be doubted at all," he told Rouillé, "that if war is declared among these nations, travels on the rivers in that region

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<sup>557</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 28 April 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 70-1. See also Craig T. Sheldon, Ned J. Jenkins, and Gregory A. Waselkov, "French Habitation at the Alabama Post, ca. 1720-1763," *Archéologiques*, 2 (2008): 112-127.

<sup>558</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 10 May 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 73.

will be interrupted.” Since Vaudreuil planned to cut the number of troops stationed at the post, the potential for wartime disruptions led him to suggest stockpiling merchandise. “It would be well,” he argued, if Tombeché “be provisioned for a year in case there might come about among these nations certain uprisings that often cannot be foreseen.” French calls for a Choctaw-Chickasaw war, however, raised the prospects of a Franco-Creek war, as rumors swirled that Abeikas “threatened to come and attack” the French if they refused to “check the raids of the Choctaws” upon their villages.<sup>559</sup> Signs increasingly pointed towards war, causing Vaudreuil to panic when he received news on May 15 from Fort Toulouse that “a party of fifty to sixty warriors, both Abihkas and Talapoosas, who were going to attack the Choctaws.” The Upper Creeks reiterated “that they would always respect the French names and that their differences [were] with the Choctaws,” bringing a measure of relief, but Vaudreuil continued to keep abreast of any subtle shifts in Indian affairs.<sup>560</sup>

The French governor’s constant vigilance remained tied to Choctaw demands. He therefore continued to maintain Fort Tombeché, contrary to royal wishes. Although all major French colonial administrators on both sides of the Atlantic recognized how Tombeché stood as “an excessive burden to the King and to the colony,” Choctaw sentiment forced the French to keep the post operational. Vaudreuil and Michel agreed “it would be dangerous at present to wish to irritate [the Choctaws] by the abandonment of that post,” a suggestion further complicated by the brewing Choctaw-Creek war. Prudence, and the patience to allow “these matters” to cool, proved necessary before proceeding with the privatization suggested previously by Descloseaux. Although neither

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<sup>559</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 10 May 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 74.

<sup>560</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 15 May 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 77-8.



governor nor *commissaire-ordonnateur* proposed a relocation plan similar to Descloseaux's, both believed "it would be well to abandon and to destroy the fort at Tombecbé and to obtain instead traders for the Choctaws. This system would allow private traders access to "a good interpreter and an office if it is necessary."<sup>561</sup> The strength of the Choctaws continually frustrated French attempts to steer diplomacy in the Native South.

Correspondence of the individuals most exposed to the Franco-Choctaw power dynamic, the traders, also revealed the extent to which Choctaw demands influenced French projections of power in the region. This was on full display at Fort Tombecbé in July 1751, ever the focal point of French budgetary concerns. The *fermier* Dupumeux recorded his June 16 meeting with many Choctaw headmen, including Alibamon Mingo, which concerned the fate of a number of deserters that Choctaw *tasca* helped apprehend and return to Tombecbé. Eight soldiers (four French and four Swiss) fled the post. Records do not indicate their intended destination, although it was not uncommon for Frenchmen to abandon their post in hopes of reaching asylum among the English in South Carolina.<sup>562</sup> The Choctaws tracked down seven of them. The Choctaws spoke on behalf of everyone they tracked down and returned, arguing the deserters "should not face any punishment." As such, they presented five deerskins as a "white sign" in exchange for the deserters' safety.<sup>563</sup>

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<sup>561</sup> Vaudreuil and Michel to Rouillé, 21 May 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 88.

<sup>562</sup> Sheldon, Jenkins, and Waselkov, "French Habitation at the Alabama Post," 114.

<sup>563</sup> Dupumeux to Beauchamp, 18 June 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 91. Galloway believes the recipient to be Beauchamp based on the letter's content and the manner in which it was addressed – with a "sir" rather than a "lord." See *MPAFD*, 5: 96 n 1.

Alibamon Mingo first addressed Dupumeux, emphasizing the fact that he spoke for “all the chiefs and headmen.” While not completely dismissing French calls for justice – recognizing that “these Frenchmen have done wrong” – Alibamon Mingo voiced his hopes that the French would follow their diplomatic rhetoric as “fathers” and act indulgently towards Choctaw demands. “That will show the red men so much more clearly,” he claimed, “that M. de Vaudreuil, their father, has consideration for their requests.” This was shrewd politicking on the part of the leading eastern *Inhulahta* headman: not only did it tap into French conceptions of diplomatic paternalism, it also cast the French in a culturally non-authoritative role within the imagined Franco-Choctaw diplomatic kinship network. By preemptively referring to Vaudreuil as “their father,” Alibamon Mingo freed himself and all of his followers from any obligation to actually follow through with Vaudreuil’s requests. While clearly articulating Choctaw autonomy, Alibamon Mingo deftly continued to emphasize the close relationship between his people and the French. “Are not these Frenchmen, so to speak, our brothers,” he asked, “do we not dwell, as it were, in the same cabin?”<sup>564</sup>

The deserters in question, although unnamed in this specific piece of correspondence, would not have been unknown to the Choctaws due to Tombecbé’s role as a nexus in Franco-Choctaw trade. Since the post rarely turned over its roster – once a year, if at all – these deserters would have been familiar men to Choctaws who travelled to the fort for trade and diplomacy. For this reason, Alibamon Mingo stressed how any punishments these deserters might face would lead to “infinite pain” to their Choctaw deliverers. The influential Concha chief ended his speech with a final request for

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<sup>564</sup> Dupumeux to Beauchamp, 18 June 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 90.

Governor Vaudreuil to “not refuse his children the favor they ask of him,” before concluding with a veiled threat: that “the zeal of the red men for the French” depended on Vaudreuil’s decision alone, assuring the governor that Choctaws “shall have no tranquility” until his decision.”<sup>565</sup>

The next to address Dupumeux was the captain of Epitouougoula, Imataha Mingo, who the French referred to as *Le Singe* (The Monkey). He reiterated how the Choctaws listened to French requests and “gladly” arrested the deserters. From there, The Monkey elaborated on Alibamon Mingo’s requests for leniency, in the process suggesting the Choctaws’ investment in the fate of the deserters: “the blood of these Frenchmen must not be shed inasmuch as it would be the Choctaw nation that would be the cause of their death.” Cultural norms assigned a certain level of responsibility for the Frenchmen’s deaths to their Choctaw captors. As such, “it would be costly” and “unpleasant” to the Choctaws “if the French whom we bring back to the feet of their chief should be killed.” So many unwarranted deaths, from a Choctaw perspective, had the potential to unleash more waves of retributive violence, and this possibility (unsurprisingly) proved unpopular to a group who just emerged from years of internecine warfare. For this reason, as a means to dissuade further violence, The Monkey implored Vaudreuil to “not shed the blood of these Frenchmen, which he ought to be as reluctant to shed as we are.” Instead, the captain of Epitouougoula recommended second chances for the seven remaining deserters. If afterwards they – or others – ignored this act of mercy and decided to again abandon the post, the French, according to *Le Singe*, should feel justified in exacting justice. In this scenario, the French would “find no objection to their

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<sup>565</sup> Dupumeux to Beauchamp, 18 June 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 90.

being killed” from the Choctaws. At the same time, such a scenario would free the Choctaws from any direct involvement, and therefore, any burden of responsibility regarding the capital punishment of the deserters in question.<sup>566</sup>

Again and again, Choctaw chiefs and honored men submitted their requests for Vaudreuil to reconsider the “stern order” to kill the deserters. Imataha Pouscouche of Bouctoucoulou (not to be confused with Red Shoe’s youngest brother) proclaimed his village was “sorry to see shed the blood of the French for whom we fight every day.” The war chief of the western town of Chichitalaya then pointed out how he risked his life “often enough for the service of the French to deserve this pardon.” He reiterated the feeling that should punishment come to the deserters, he would blame himself for their fate. “I can assure you,” he guaranteed, “I would charge myself with having killed them myself inasmuch as it is I who had them arrested.” The Second Chief of Epitoupougoula, comrade of *Le Singe*, offered a dire warning. He cited “a bad omen” — a dream by one of his attendants the previous night which depicted the deaths of the deserters. As in battlefield custom, most of the Epitoupougoula *tasca* “wished to turn back” and return home, but the Second Chief assured his followers that Vaudreuil had no reason to “refuse a favor” to the eastern Choctaws “which has always sacrificed itself for the French.” Sixteen additional headmen delivered speeches to Dupumeux, all containing “the same requests and same earnest entreaties.”<sup>567</sup>

Why did these Choctaw men have such an emotional investment in these deserters? The headmen may have found common cause with the deserters’ criticism of French stinginess. In particular, a continuous lack of French supplies bound these

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<sup>566</sup> Dupumeux to Beauchamp, 18 June 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 90-1.

<sup>567</sup> *Ibid.*, 91-2.

“brothers” together. The deserters testified that they fled Fort Tombeché because “they had not been reimbursed at all...for the rations of flour that they had lacked for a long time.” In addition to no flour, they complained of the price of housing in the barracks, the excessive charges to use the mill, and a lack of available clothes. Worse, they could not purchase any merchandise from the warehouse to alleviate any of these necessities because of high prices. In other words, life at Tombeché made “it impossible for them to subsist.” The Choctaws could empathize. Vaudreuil noted a month after the speech-filled meeting how the Choctaws still wondered “to what to attribute the delay of their presents.” While the governor squarely placed blame on *commissaire-ordonnatuer* Michel – complaining how he “has not been willing to deliver but half of what is necessary for the general trade” – the Choctaws sought their own solution in a familiar place: the English traders who remained among the Chickasaws.<sup>568</sup> At the same time eastern Choctaw headmen pleaded with Dupumeux over the fate of the deserters, headmen from the western villages of Cushtusha, Toussana, and the southern Six Towns “had departed to go and to find some Englishmen at the Chickasaws with merchandise.” A trader named Duverger warned the commanding officer at Tombeché, Louis de Populus, that these headmen may have been operating under the direction of the western division leaders Pouchimataha and Mingo Oumastabe, who grew disgruntled with how “the French did not keep their promises.”<sup>569</sup>

This was not the first time that western Choctaws used French requests to try and secure materials, if not traders, from the English. However, this particular trip may have been coordinated, as opposed to being prompted by factional disagreements, a conclusion

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<sup>568</sup> Vaudreuil and Michel to Rouillé, 20 July 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 94.

<sup>569</sup> Dupumeux to Beauchamp, 18 June 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 92.

drawn from assurances given by the Immongoulacha Choctaws. The trader Duverger related that the Immongoulachas led “a large party” of other pro-French Choctaws “to lie in wait for [English traders] on the roads and to pillage the merchandise.”<sup>570</sup> Interestingly, the Immongoulachas made no mention of punishment for those who sought out the English, in direct violation of one of the pillars of the Grandpré treaty: “every Choctaw chief or warrior who introduced the English into his village” must be “punished by death together with the Englishmen.”<sup>571</sup> Additionally, the traditionally pro-French southern Six Towns joined western counterparts from Cushtusha and Toussana in this venture. Taken together, this evidence should be viewed not as an example of “the greed of the Indians,” as purported by Michel and the rest of the French, but as the logical application of Alibamon Mingo’s retooled playoff system.<sup>572</sup>

Choctaw demands continued to strain the relationship between *Commissaire-Ordonnateur* Michel and Governor Vaudreuil. “As long as there is a single Choctaw Indian in the colony,” an exasperated Michel wrote, “[Vaudreuil] will always be a cause of considerable expense for the King because of all the devious devices that are put into practice to hold this nation in equilibrium, which makes it necessary for us to treat it with consideration.” Michel found fault at all levels of decision-making regarding the French relationship with the Choctaws, and he cast a wide net of aspersions in his correspondence with Rouillé. He referred to the aforementioned Populus as “the most imprudent and reckless of all the officers in the colony,” and called the Indian traders who Grandpré reintroduced into the nation “vagabonds and jailbirds.” More seriously,

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<sup>570</sup> Dupumeux to Beauchamp, 18 June 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 92.

<sup>571</sup> Memoir to the King, 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 58.

<sup>572</sup> Vaudreuil and Michel to Rouillé, 21 May 1751 in *MPAFD*, 5: 86.

however, the perpetual conversation about rising administrative costs led Michel to privately accuse Vaudreuil of “cabals and vexations” that allowed the governor to enrich himself at the expense of both King and colony. In July 1751, Michel claimed Vaudreuil controlled “a third of this post for his profit.” According to the *commissaire-ordonnateur*, the governor’s patron network proved leviathan, as he filled the trading posts with “all his Canadian creatures and his kinsman and allies of himself.”<sup>573</sup> Michel’s source, Jean Joseph Delfau de Pontalba, the captain of the post at Pointe Coupée, admitted to splitting profits at the post with the governor’s wife, Louise-Élisabeth. In addition to monopolizing the trade market, Michel claimed the governor consistently misplaced his trust, and his playing of favorites led to dysfunction throughout the colony. The Arkansas post, commanded by “a relative of M. de Vaudreuil” named Delino, was deserted and picked clean when the ensign left the fort to make an unnecessary trip to meet with the governor in New Orleans. In his absence, the garrison “robbed him of everything they could carry, both his [property] and that of the King.” Upon this return, Delino then wrote to Michel asking for “substitute” supplies. This caused Michel to proclaim with disgust, “All these gentlemen imagine that it is the King who must bear the expense of their bad moves, and in fact he does bear them, since they put it all down in their account!” The abuses of power displayed by the commandant of the Missouri post (and another Vaudreuil relative), Augustin Antoine de La Barre du Jardin, resulted in the officer being

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<sup>573</sup> On the importance of patron-client relationships to the functions of the early modern French state, refer to Sharon Kettering’s *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) and *Patronage in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France* (Aldershot: Routledge, 2002).

“shot to death by a soldier in his garrison.” Michel concluded that due to Vaudreuil’s misrule, “no one is acquainted” with discipline throughout the entire colony.<sup>574</sup>

At the center of Michel’s criticisms was the total control over the warehouses exercised by Vaudreuil and his associates. In particular, the posts’ dispersion of alcohol rations appeared to bring all the soldiers under Vaudreuil’s influence. Rampant alcoholism seemed to be the only thing that spurred soldiers to action, and Michel blamed the soldiers for spending their days “lying idle at the barracks.” When on their feet, however, they violated laws by withdrawing wine and rum from the stores to “resell it to the negroes and Indians.” The officer in charge of the canteen, François Scimars de Bellisle, operated under Vaudreuil’s instructions, and was also alleged to have set aside specific profits from rum sales to be transferred directly to Vaudreuil’s wife. Michel drew the connection clearly between the present state of the alcohol stores and colonial discipline: “Everything is permitted to the soldier,” he wrote, “provided that he drinks up his money at the canteen.” Louise-Élisabeth had her say as well, fixing the prices of specific goods before forcing “the merchants and individuals here to take charge of her merchandise to sell it.” Indeed, the Vaudreuil family maintained its own personal warehouse containing “all sorts of stuff” and operated by the governor’s butler. From these personal transactions, Vaudreuil allegedly received “good revenue.”<sup>575</sup> Far from attempting to curb the rampant behavior occurring in posts like Fort Tombeché, Vaudreuil instead attempted to profit from it as much as possible. Ideally, the easiest way to counter such abuses of power by the governor was to close the post, but Choctaw

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<sup>574</sup> Michel to Rouillé, 20 July 1751, in *MPAFD*, 5: 97-100. Michel referred to La Barre as “another kinsman of M. de Vaudreuil both on his side and on that of his wife” (100).

<sup>575</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-101.



requests that Tombecbé remain open meant the French continued having to deal with unruly personalities.

In one of his final letters as governor of Louisiana, Vaudreuil summarized the ways in which the material component of Choctaw expressions of martial masculinity influenced French policy. Having confronted some headmen about why a number of their brethren continued to seek out the English, the Choctaws explained to him the importance of access to guns, ammunitions, paint, and cloth to their identities as true men. “There had been more reason of self-interest than of sincerity,” they told the governor, “inasmuch as those warriors had found the resources for their *needs*.” Stated plainly, French efforts to provide these desired supplies proved successful “only to a very small extent.” When pushed for further explanation, the Choctaw *tascas* reiterated the necessity of these items to sate their “honorable ambition.” Being able to perform the masculine tasks of conspicuous display, hunting, and raiding would prove difficult in the absence of these trade goods, and since the French had “no means of gratifying” their demands, the Choctaws searched for alternative sources.<sup>576</sup>

Vaudreuil again found himself being forced to justify the ballooning expenses of the Choctaw trade. He argued that a failure to provide the Choctaws goods “would be dangerous,” bringing risk to a colony that in its present condition could “not afford security” to its residents. The most prudent course of action, according to Vaudreuil, was “to keep in its villages warehouses sufficiently supplied with merchandise to be able to trade for skins that hunting procures for it annually.” This would in turn “deprive [Choctaw] warriors of any reason for wishing for the English and of any pretext for

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<sup>576</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 28 January 1752 in *MPAFD*, 5: 110. Emphasis added.

having any recourse to them.”<sup>577</sup> After years of encouraging conflict between the Choctaw factions, Vaudreuil now faced the reality of having to placate a new generation of warriors, forged in the late civil war, who may have lacked personal attachment to the French. These *tasca*, unlike their elders, felt no obligation to Louisiana except for the goods it contributed to their social status. To these young warriors, so concerned about protecting their reputations and personal claims to martial masculinity, the trade partner for these socially-substantiating items was less important than ensuring trade occurred at all.

The long peace process of the Choctaw civil war revealed how the Choctaws responded to hitherto unseen levels of conflict and death by navigating complex cultural requirements of retribution and obligation. The French decision to become an active participant in the conflict freed eastern and southern Choctaws of continuing to participate in acts of restitutive violence, allowing factions to conclude a peace. Even before this peace was finalized, however, eastern headman Alibamon Mingo reestablished a flexible approach to foreign affairs that mimicked the traditional Choctaw playoff system, encouraging headmen and warriors to follow their own prerogatives while also technically adhering to the terms of peace first outlined by Grandpré. Most important, though, was how Choctaw demands throughout the peace process illustrated their position of power in Louisiana vis-à-vis the French. Choctaw demands, centered on access to French goods at Fort Tombeché, not only highlighted geopolitical strength, but forced the French to continue to fund a financially disastrous post. This decision resulted in dissent, private accusations of embezzlement, and even treason among French colonial

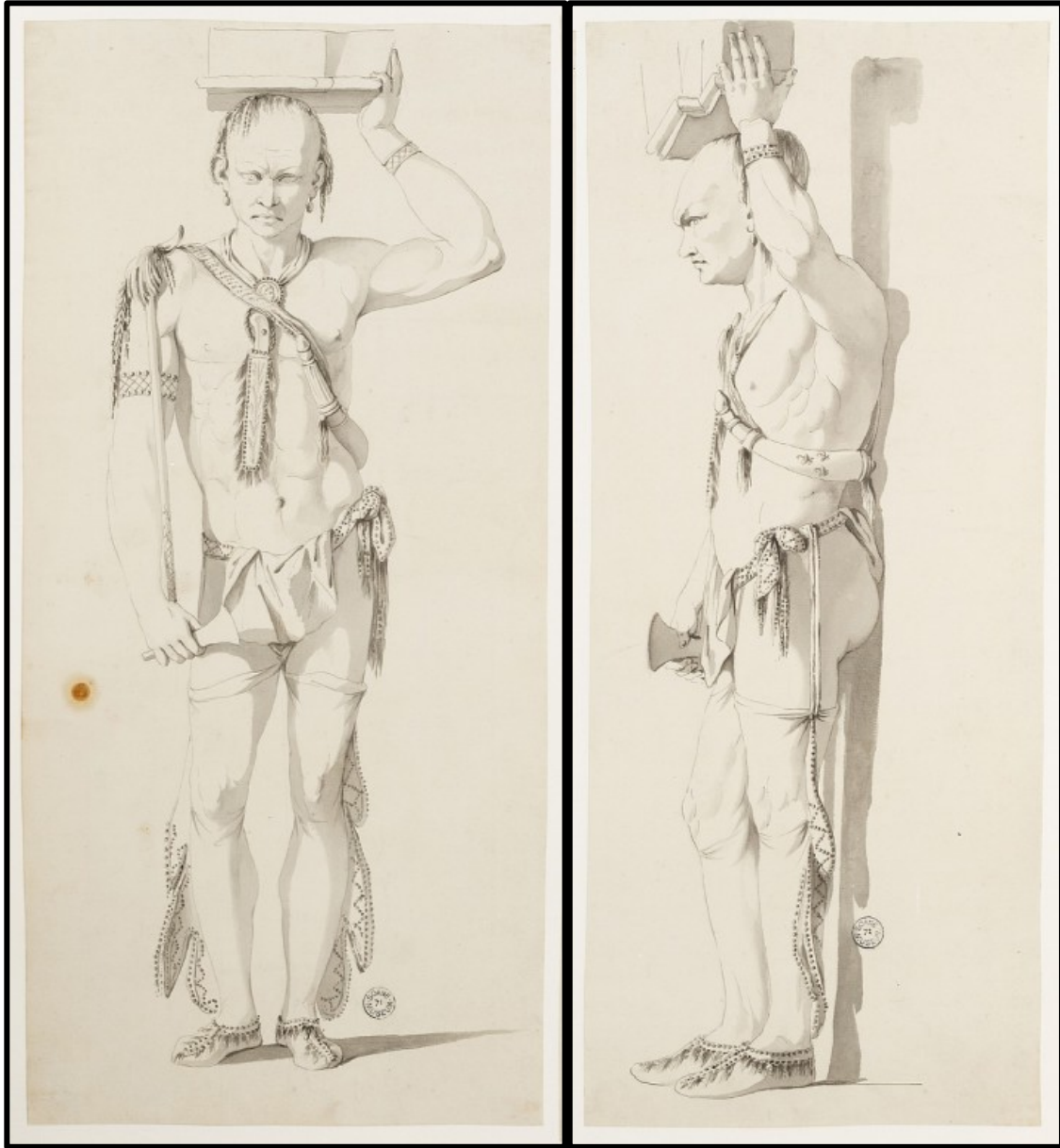
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<sup>577</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 28 January 1752 in *MPAFD*, 5: 110-111.

leadership. In all, the Choctaws demonstrated that regardless of the trauma of the previous years, they still – to quote historian Kathleen DuVal – “called the shots.”<sup>578</sup>

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<sup>578</sup> Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 12.



*Figures 4 and 5 – Designs for the atlantes on the funerary monument of Lieutenant-Colonel Roger Townshend (1760).  
The Robert and James Adam Office (hand of Agostino Brunias), SM Adam volume 19/71 (L) and 19/72 (R).  
Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum, London.*

## Conclusion

The 1759 encounter between Jean-Bernard Bossu and Mingo Houmas that began this study noted how Choctaws and Frenchmen bolstered their alliance by appeals to martial cultures, which often manifested in masculine displays, gender-charged rhetoric, and violent acts.<sup>579</sup> Trade in weapons and cloth further substantiated claims to masculinity and power throughout the Choctaw nation in the early eighteenth century. In particular, Red Shoe's attempts to restructure the means of material acquisition and redistribution by establishing an exclusive Anglo-Choctaw trade represented an existential threat to headman in the eastern *Inhulahta* and southern Six Towns divisions. After Red Shoe lashed out against the French to avenge the abuse of one of his wives, a lack in elder leadership due to a smallpox epidemic and divisional animosity combined to encourage eastern and southern warriors to join French retaliatory campaigns. Gendered claims to power fanned the flames of civil war between Choctaws for nearly four years.

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<sup>579</sup> Jean-Bernard Bossu, *Travels in the Interior of North America, 1751-1762*, trans. and ed. Seymour Feiler (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 158-159.

Yet Bossu's encounter revealed more than simply the role gender played in Franco-Choctaw relations — it also illustrated the presence of sustained Anglophilia in certain corners of Choctaw country well after the failures of Red Shoe and his kin. Mingo-Oumas may be the same Mingo Ouma Chitto who served as the war chief of Chickasawhay during Beauchamp's 1746 assembly with influential Choctaw headmen. Mingo Ouma Chitto plainly stated the pervasive anti-French sentiment in his village, and in response to Beauchamp's calls for retribution told the commandant to keep out of Choctaw affairs and instead "let the nation...get on with it."<sup>580</sup> Much to the chagrin of Beauchamp - and some ardent Francophile Choctaws - the practice of playing one European colony off another was never fully extinguished. Due to the efforts of Alibamon Mingo in the wake of the Choctaw civil war, this diplomatic framework returned to standard practice, as evidenced by Mingo-Oumas' trip to English Georgia.

Choctaws continued to seek out the English through the conclusion of the Seven Years' War, as goods and trade allowed for the fullest expression of local power and masculinity. Even Alibamon Mingo, who worked tirelessly to reestablish the playoff system, admitted the necessity of connecting diplomacy, trade, and masculinity with the newly exclusive English colonial presence in the Southeast. Meeting with English Governor of West Florida George Johnstone at a congress held at Mobile in March 1765, the Concha headman voiced his hopes that a transition away from the playoff system would continue to bring prosperity to the villages of his nation. "I now See another Race of White Men Come amongst us bearing the Same abundance, & I expect they will be

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<sup>580</sup> Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp (1746) in *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion*, 5 Vols., eds. Dunbar Rowland, A.G. Sanders, and Patricia Galloway (Jackson: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1927-1932 and Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 4: 274.

equally Bountyfull which must be done if they wish to gain the affection of my people,” he stated to colonial leaders. “I and my Men have used the Guns of Europe these Eighty Winters Back,” he recounted, before continuing, “I wish I was Young to try the English Guns & English Powder both of which I hope will flourish & rejoice the Heart of the Hunters thro’ the Land and Cover the Nakedness of the Women.”<sup>581</sup>

Ironically, close ties with the English (*not* the French) resulted in the clearest material expression of eighteenth-century Choctaw masculinity, housed in perhaps the unlikeliest of places. Far away from the bayous, canebrakes, and fields of clustered Choctaw villages, in the imposing and monumentally gothic Westminster Abby, resides the only extant three-dimensional rendering of an eighteenth-century Choctaw *tasca*. Art historian Stephanie Pratt considers this rendering “the most significant eighteenth century monumental representation of an American Indian.” A funerary monument dedicated to Lieutenant Colonel Roger Townshend, who met his end a little over a year before Mingo-Oumas’ clash with Bossu, during the Battle at Carillon (Ticonderoga), includes two life-size sculptures of Choctaw warriors. Although Choctaws did not participate in Townshend’s final battle, artist Robert Adam used a captured Choctaw boy who had fallen under the protection of Townshend’s brother, General George Townshend, as a model, resulting in a historically dissonant memorial. Even so, close attention to detail relates how “emphatically contemporary in appearance” the statues are: one holds a tomahawk, while the other is depicted grasping the hilt of a flintlock musket while

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<sup>581</sup> “Choctaw Congress,” 12 June 1765 in *Mississippi Provincial Archives: English Dominion, 1763-1766*, ed. Dunbar Rowland (Nashville: Brandon Printing Company, 1911), 240.

standing the gun on its butt.<sup>582</sup> In addition, both figures have sheathed knives hanging from their necks and matching buckskin leggings. The hairstyle of the warriors is unmistakably Choctaw, with the same accentuated foreheads that led outsiders to comment that the group were “flatheads.”<sup>583</sup> Adam’s school, especially sketch artist Agostino Brunias, paid particular attention to the model’s identity, confirming him as a Choctaw by including powder horns depicting the *fleur-de-lys* slung over each shoulder, a recognition of the long-standing Franco-Choctaw alliance (Figures 4 and 5).<sup>584</sup> Many battle accoutrements are absent because of the marble medium - most notably the black or red war paint that decorated the face and perhaps torso, as well as the ubiquitous audio accompaniment of the Choctaw war whoop. Even so, this monument remains a startling material testament to the Choctaw martial masculinity that dictated the balance of power in the eighteenth-century Native South.

The English were willing to commemorate Choctaw support for their imperial aims. Yet the Choctaws themselves installed a type of cultural amnesia on the events surrounding their civil war. No post-Revolutionary or nineteenth-century ethnographic report mentions any details about the conflict. What ultimately accounts for the lack of commentary? Can the collective silence be explained by the fact that by 1750 restitution

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<sup>582</sup> Stephanie Pratt, *American Indians in British Art, 1700-1840* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 44-46. See also Geoffrey W. Beard, *The Work of Robert Adam* (New York: Arco, 1978), 55, plate 173.

<sup>583</sup> James Adair, *The History of the American Indians*, ed. Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 71.

<sup>584</sup> Robert Adam’s and Agostino Brunias’ original sketches for the Townshend Monument are located at Sir John Soane’s Museum, London. Adam’s perspective sketch for the whole project is in SM Adam volume 54/2/8. Brunias’ various sketches for the Choctaw atlantes of the funerary monument can be found in SM Adam volume 54/7/17 (<http://collections.soane.org/OBJECT4145>), SM Adam volume 19/71 (<http://collections.soane.org/ARC909>), SM Adam volume 19/72 (<http://collections.soane.org/ARC910>), and SM Adam volume 19/85 (<http://collections.soane.org/ARC908>) (all sites last accessed 2 February 2018).



had been delivered to the French, thereby providing a restoration of balance? This is a difficult conclusion to accept, as such an interpretation fundamentally mischaracterizes Choctaw projections of masculinity, which were wholly dependent on the continual articulation of martial successes. Indeed, one could argue that Choctaw masculinity was by nature a conspicuous display of memory. Memory, especially that of battlefield successes, left its mark on Choctaw *tasca* in a number of different ways, most importantly with the bestowal of new names and titles. For all intents and purposes, memory was not found in the past, but very much a part of the present identity of eighteenth-century Choctaws. And as historian Katherine M.B. Osburn has outlined, the practice of deploying a narrative of military service would continue, proving foundational to the efforts of later nineteenth and twentieth century Choctaw activists.<sup>585</sup> To *not* remember military exploits, therefore, indicates something else at work.

In her detailed study of the works of physician, naturalist, and ethnocentric ethnologist Gideon Lincecum, Cheri Lynn Wolfe considers it “astonishing” that Lincecum failed to include any details regarding the Choctaw civil war. Wolfe argues that although Lincecum’s informant, the elderly Chata Imataha, may have mentioned it because of the details included in other descriptions of the Choctaws’ origins, Lincecum may have willingly left out these discussions. “The civil war obviously contradicted his carefully constructed theme of Choctaw unity,” Wolfe concludes, “and could have been omitted for that reason alone.”<sup>586</sup> Many ethnohistorians doubt the veracity of Lincecum’s

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<sup>585</sup> Katherine M.B. Osburn, *Choctaw Resurgence in Mississippi: Race, Class, and Nation Building in the Jim Crow South, 1830-1977* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 4.

<sup>586</sup> Cheri Lynn Wolfe, ““The Traditional History of the Chahta People”: An Analysis of Gideon Lincecum’s Nineteenth Century Narrative” (PhD. diss. University of Texas-Austin, 1993), 892.

writings, instead considering his conversations as (at best) culturally-informed fabrications.<sup>587</sup> Yet his silence on this particular issue is consistent with more trusted sources. If Lincecum intentionally committed this act, he was not alone in trying to edit out this era of internecine warfare. Choctaws themselves imposed their own silences on an unsettling and perhaps even embarrassing event.

This silence echoes the later discourse by the neighboring Creeks, whose own violent civil war — which resulted in perhaps two thousand Creek deaths — prompted difficult discussions regarding memory and collective trauma.<sup>588</sup> “We choose not to bring it out,” Ted Isham, a western Muscogee (Creek), reflected in response to a 2012 symposium on the Creek War and the War of 1812. “We gloss over it. We don’t want to pass it on to our children.” Importantly, though, Isham tells us that the Creek community focused less on the devastation wrought by the war, choosing instead to celebrate two things. First, almost all Creeks recognized the efforts by some warriors to take a stand against existential challenges to their livelihood. Second, all Creeks celebrated their ability to survive and rebuild their riven communities.<sup>589</sup> In other words, attention was directed not toward the divisiveness of the conflict itself, but the perseverance of the individuals who remained in reestablishing their way of life. Therefore, the Creek

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<sup>587</sup> On criticisms of Lincecum, see Patricia Galloway, *Choctaw Genesis, 1500-1770* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 332-333 and note 31 above.

<sup>588</sup> Using the estimated casualties of the engagements at Fort Mims, Autosee, Calebee Creek, Holy Ground, Tallushatchee, Talladega, and Horseshoe Bend, a rough estimate of 1,980 total Creek deaths has been calculated. This is likely a low estimate of the overall death toll, because this total does not include all non-combatant deaths outside the battlefield, which resulted from forced migration or starvation. Estimated totals for these engagements have been drawn from *Tohopeka: Rethinking the Creek War and the War of 1812*, ed. Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012), Michael D. Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), and Gregory Waselkov, *A Conquering Spirit: Fort Mims and the Redstick War of 1813-1814* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006).

<sup>589</sup> Ted Isham, “Afterword: The Western Muscogee (Creek) Perspective” in *Tohopeka*, 247-248.

example may be instructive of how memory in Native America — its composition and contours — played out after the conclusion of the Choctaw civil war.

Little more than a century after Alibamon Mingo brokered a peace between western *Imoklasha* Choctaws and their eastern *Inhulahta* and southern Six Towns counterparts, after Dancing Rabbit Creek and removal, Choctaws once again faced factionalism and civil war. In 1863, Peter Pitchlynn delivered his inaugural address as the Principal Chief of the Choctaw Nation, speaking directly to the Choctaw Senate and House of Representatives in Oklahoma. In declaring the Choctaws' support for the Confederacy, Pitchlynn emphasized the singular purpose and mindset of the Choctaw people. He told his rapt audience how he felt honored to act on behalf of a more “united and determined people” than “any previous period” in Choctaw history. Complimenting “gallant” efforts of Choctaws in the allied Army of the District of the Indian Territory, Pitchlynn reiterated how unity would finally deliver independence to the Choctaws, still reeling from their defeat at the Battle of Honey Springs. “We must - we will continue as a united people,” he advised. To act otherwise, to be “forgetful of the past,” would lead the Choctaws to disgrace themselves and their forefathers.<sup>590</sup> For all his rhetoric of remembering the past, however, Pitchlynn overlooked the fact that this was not the first time civil war had visited the Choctaws.

*Hatak okla hut okchaya bilia hoh-illi bila.*

The people are ever living, ever dying, ever alive.<sup>591</sup>

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<sup>590</sup> Peter Pitchlynn, “Inaugural Address as Chief of the Choctaw Nation” (n.a., 1863), 2. The only known extant bound edition of this speech is located at the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, call no. 52701.

<sup>591</sup> LeAnne Howe, *Shell Shaker* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2001), 96.

## Appendices

### **APPENDIX 1. Eighteenth-Century Choctaw Towns and Divisional Affiliations**

The following pages includes a table with an alphabetical listing of all known Choctaw village names that are mentioned in census-like documents ranging the entire eighteenth century. These include French, British, and Spanish sources. The table is based upon one included in John R. Swanton's influential work of Choctaw ethnography, "Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians." Swanton's original contribution remains important but is problematic in that it is arbitrarily organized. This table improves on Swanton's original work by chronologically organizing the sources, thereby allowing one to easily see the formation and dissolution of specific towns throughout the eighteenth century. When indicated in the original sources, I have also noted the declared divisional affiliation of each town as either western (W), eastern (E), or southern (S). In the case of Regis du Roulet's 1732 journal, a fourth division, referred to as the "central" (C) division, is also mentioned. In the case of Bernard Roman's 1771 work, there are some instances in which the spelling between the towns listed on the map legend differs from the notes attached to the map. As noted below, a number of villages shifted divisions throughout the century.

TOWN (SWANTON, 1931)	LOCATION	IBERVILLE (1702)	DE LUSSER (1730)	ROULET (1732)	CRENAY MAP (1733)	MEMOIR (1755?)	FARMAR (1764)	ROMANS MAP (1771)	SPANISH LIST (1784)
ABISSA ("village of mulberries")	Unknown		Abissa (E)	Abisa (W)	Abissa	Abissa (W)	Abissa (W)		Besahacha (W)
AHIPATA BITA BRUGOULA ("potatoes spread about")	Unknown	Alipata bita Brugoula							
ALAMUEHA	19 miles from Sukenatcha Cr., Kemper County								
ATHLEPELE ("at or toward the end")	Unknown		Attepelé (W)		Athlépelé				
ALTANTCHITOU ("big [something]")	Unknown		Aloné Echito (1729)		Atlantchitou				
BALUPAK ("where there are slippery elms")	Unknown			Baloupouk (W)					
BISHKUN	N part of Jasper County	Busca							Biscombe (S)
BISSASHA ("blackberry place" or "mulberry place")	W side of Little Rock Cr. in Newton County		Bisacha (W)	Bisacha (W)	Bessacha	Bisacha (W)	Beyacha (S)	Bishapa	Beacha (S)
BOK CHITO ("big creek")	Probably Bogue Chito, Neshoba and Kemper Co.		Bouchito (E)	Bouk ichitou (W)	Boukchito				Buflaya (E) Buepica (E) (or Buejuca)
BOKFALAI ("long creek")	Unknown	Boufalaya	Boufalaya (E)	Bouk falaya (W)	Boukfalaya	Boufalaya (W)	Bouksalaya (W)		
BOKFOKA ("about the creek")	Unknown		Boufouka (W)	Bouk fouca (W)	Boukfouka	Boucfouca (W)			
BOKTOKOLO ("two creeks")	Unknown	Bouktoucoule				Bouctoucouilou (2nd) (W)			
BOKTOKOLO CHITO ("big two creeks")	At the confluence of Running Tiger and Sukenatcha Creeks, about 4 miles NW of De Kalb	Bouktoucoula	Bouctoucoulou (E)	Bouk toucoulou (C)	Bouktoukoulou	Bouctoucouilou (W)	Bouktoucouchito (E)	Bogue Toucolo chitto	Buctucuiu (E)
BOKTOLOSKI ("little two streams")	On Bogueulaski Cr., a SW affluent of Chickasawhay River.		Bouctoulouxy (W)		Bouktouloukché	Bouktouloutchy (S)	Boutoucoulouxy (S)	Booctoulooce	
CABEA HOOLA ("to stand")	Unknown							Cabea hoola	
CHICHATALYA CHICKASAWHAY ("two oaks")	Unknown						Chichatalya (E)		
CHICKASAWHAY	On Chickasawhay River in Clarke Co.		Chicacahae (E)	Chikachohé (W)	Chicacahé	Chicacahae (S)	Tchicacahahé (S)	Chickasawhay	Chicacahae (S)
CHISA FOKA ("among the post oaks")	On the site of Jackson, Miss.								
CHISKLIKBACHA ("blackjacks in a row")	Probably Jasper Co.								
CHOUTOUA	Unknown								
TOGOULE ("two people hanging")	Unknown								
CHUCAFALAYA ("long house")	Unknown								Chuca falaya (S)

TOWN (SWANTON, 1931)	LOCATION	IBERVILLE (1702)	DE LUSSEY (1730)	ROULLET (1732)	CRENAY MAP (1733)	MEMOIR (1755?)	FARMAR (1764)	ROMANS MAP (1771)	SPANISH LIST (1784)
CHUKA HULLO ("sacred [or beloved] house")	N side of Sukenatcha Cr., somewhere between the mouths of Running Tiger and Straight Creeks, Kemper Co.							Choooca-hoola	
CHUKA LUSA ("black house")	Unknown		Choukelissa (E)		Tchuké lussa				
CHUNKY (perhaps a reference to the ball game)	On the site of Union, Newton County		Tchanké (W)	Tchanké (W)	Tchanké	Etchanqué (W)	Thanke (W)	Chanki	Chanké (W)
CHUNCKY CHITO ("big chunky")	W bank of Chunky Cr., about half a mile below the confluence with Talasha Cr.								
COATRAW (a likely misspelling)	4 miles SW of the town of Newton, in Newton County							Coatraw	
COUSSANA (or TOUSSANA)	Unknown; probably same as Inkillis Tamaha ("English Town")			Baloupouk (W)					
CUTHA AIMETHAW	Unknown							Cutha Aimethaw	
CUTHI UCKAHACA	Probably on/near the mouth of Parker's Cr., which empties into Petickfa Cr.							Cuthi Uckehaca	
EAST ABEKA ("east unhealthy place")	Junction of Straight Cr. with the Sukenatcha, in Kemper County	Abiska	Abeca (W)	Abeka (E)	Abeka	Abeca (W)	Abekas de La Est (E)	East Abeika; East Abeika; East Abeika	Abeca (E)
EAST KUNSHAK CHITO ("east big cane town")	Near Moscow, Kemper County							East Coongceto	Coucha (E)
FANI TALLEMON ("land abounding in squirrels")	Unknown			Fany tallemon (W)		Filtiamon (W)			
FANI YAKNI ("squirrel country")	Unknown		Faniakné (W)	Fany jakena (W)					
HALUNLAWI ASHA ("bullfrog place")	On the site of Philadelphia, Neshoba County							Alloon Looanshaw	Olonlauacha (W)
HANKHA ULA ("wild goose crying")	On the ridge between Petickfa and Blackwater Creeks, Kemper County		Athouchouga (W)	Achouk tchuka (W)	Achouktchouka			Htáinkah Ullah	Ankkaula (E)
HASHUK CHUKA ("grass house")	Unknown								Achenchuba (E)
HASHUK HOMA ("red grass")	Unknown					Achouquma (W)			
HOLIHTA ASHA ("fort place")	Site of De Kalb, Kemper County	Toilstache Boulistaché	Oulitacha (W)	Oulitacha (E)	Ouleciácha	Oulitacha (W)	Oliktiachaes (E)	Olitassa	Olonlauacha (W)
IBETAP OKLA CHITO ("big source people")	Perhaps on Straight Cr., Kemper County	Bíta bogoula	Bitoupgoula (W)	Ebitoupgoula (E)	Bitoupgoula le grand	Ebitoupgoula (W)	Ebitipougoulachito (E)	Ebita Pooola Chitto; Ebetap-ooocolocho	Ebitábugula (E)

TOWN (SWANTON, 1931)	LOCATION	IBERVILLE (1702)	DE LUSSER (1730)	ROULET (1732)	CRENAV MAP (1733)	MEMOIR (1755?)	FARMAR (1764)	ROMANS MAP (1771)	SPANISH LIST (1784)
IBETAP OKLA ISKITINI ("little source people")	At the head of the main prong of Yazoo Cr., Kemper County	Bitabougoula	Bitoupgoula (E)		Bitoupgoula le petit	Ebitoupgoula (E)	Ebitoupgoula (E)	Ebita pocola skatane	Ebitabouguluchi (E)
IMOKLASHA ("their people are there")	On the headwaters of Talasha Cr. in Neshoba County	Mongoulacha	Mongoulacha (W)	Mongoulacha	Mongoulacha	Mongoulacha (W)	Immongoulacha (W)	West Immongoulacha	Mongoulacha (W)
IMOKLASHA ISKITINI ("little band of relations")	On Flat Cr., the E prong of Yazoo Cr., Kemper County	Mongoulacha	Mongoulacha (W)	Mongoulacha (E)	Mongoulacha	Mongoulacha (W)	Immongoulachaskatanne (E)	Immongoulacha Skatane; East Moka-Lassa	Mongoulacha Esquiatani (E)
INKILLIS TAMAHA ("English town")	NE part of Jasper County								Yngles tamaha (S)
ITE OUSANO ("hard wood")	Unknown			Ite ousano (W)					
ITECHANA ("notched stick")	Unknown								Itechana (S)
ITCHIPOTA ("little trees")	Between the headwaters of Chickasawhay and Tombigbee Rivers	Yty thipouta	Itéchipouta (E)	Itéchipuntia (W)	Ytéchipouts	Siéchipouta (W)	Itéchipouta (W)		Etue Cambulé (W)
ITOKCHAKO ("blue wood")	Near East Abeka, Kemper County	Itouichacou	Itotchakou (W)	Ite oukchako (E)	Y'teoutchako	Itéokchaqio/ Itéopchaqio (W)	Itéochakko (E)	Etuck Chukke	Ite Ochaco (E)
IYANÁBI ("ironwood")	On Yarnubbee Cr., about 8 miles SW of De Kalb, Kemper County	Ayanabé augoula	Yanabé (W)	Ayanabé (C)	Yanabe	Yanabé (E)	Ayanabé (W)	Ayanabi	Yanabe (E)
KAFITALALA ("sassafras thicket")	On Owl Cr., in Neshoba County S side of Custusha Cr., about 3 miles a little S of W of West Yazoo Town	Caféta saya	Kafetalaya (W)	Cafítaloya (W)	Cafítalaya	Cafítalaya	Kasatalaya (W)	Kaffítalaya	Café talaya (W)
KASHTASHA ("place of fleas")		Cachetacha	Kastacha (W)	Castacha (W)	Castacha	Castacha (W)	Casstaches (W)	Cuctachas	
KINTE OKÉ ("water where there are beaver")	Unknown			Kinta Oké (W)					
KOWEH CHITO ("a great league [in circuit]")	NW of De Kalb, Kemper County	Coimche thoucousa logoule	Couenchito (E)	Coué tchitou	Couenchito or Great Village	Coit chiot (W)			
KONSHAK OSAPA ("canebrake field")	Somewhere W of West Imoklasha	Onascousba							
KUNSHAK ("cane town")	Lost Horse Cr., 4 miles SE of Lazelia, Lauderdale County		Conchas (E)	Concha (C)	Concha	Conchats (E)	Conchas (W)	Coosa	
KUNSHAK BOLUKTA ("round cane break")	SW part of Kemper Co., between the Neshoba and Lauderdale County lines							Coosak Balongtaw	Concha buluceta (S)
KUNSHAK CHITO ("big cane town")	On the upper course of Oktibbeha Cr.								
KUNSHAK TIKPI ("canebreak knob")	On Coonshark Cr. in Neshoba County					Conchabouloucta (W)	Conchabouloucta (W)	Coosak Balongtaw	Conchatikpi
LUKFATA ("chalk" or "white clay")	Headwaters of one of the prongs of Sukenatcha Cr.		Loucfata (E)	Loukfata (C)	Loukfata	Loucfatá (W)	Loukseata (E)	Lukfé	Luçfata (E)

TOWN (SWANTON, 1931)	LOCATION	IBERVILLE (1702)	DE LUSSER (1730)	ROULLET (1732)	CRENAY MAP (1733)	MEMOIR (1755)	FARMAR (1764)	ROMANS MAP (1771)	SPANISH LIST (1784)
LUSHAPA ("swamp edge (or border)")	Perhaps on Lussalaka Cr., a tributary of Kentucky Cr., Neshoba County							Lushapa	
NASHOBAWENYA ("howling wolf")	SW part of Jasper County	Nachoubamouanya (W)	Nachou baouania (W)	Nachoubaotianja (W)	Nachoubaotianja (S)	Nachoubaotienya (S)	Natchoumaouenia (S)	Nashoopawaya	Nachuba huranya (S)
NITA ASHA ("bear's home")	Unknown - abandoned by 1702			Nitacha (W)					
NUSHKOBO ("head")	Perhaps on or near Pettickfa Cr., Kemper County							Escooba	Nascobó (E)
NUSI KON CHITTO ("big acorns")	Unknown			Nousec kou tehitou (W)					
OKA ALTAKALA ("between the waters")	Probably the confluence of Pettickfa and Yamubbee Creeks, Kemper County							Oka Altakala; Oka A'takkala	
OKA CHIPPO ("water run down")	Unknown							Oka Chippo	
OKA COOPOLY ("water where the biting is")	On Ocobly Cr., Neshoba County							Oka Coopoly	Ognecupic (W)
OKA KAPASSA ("cold water")	About Pinckney Mill, in Newton County							Oka Kapassa	
OKAHATA TALALA ("spreading pool")	In the Conchatta District of Newton County								
OKALUSA ("black water")	In Roman's time, on White Br., Kemper County	Oughlousa	Okeloussa (W)		Okeloussa	Oqué loüsa (E)	Okléoussates (W)	Oaka Loosa; Oka Loosa	Oquetuza (E)
OKAPOOLA	Unknown							Okapoola	
OKATALAIA ("spreading/stagnant water")	E part of Smith County or W part of Jasper County								
OKLATANAP ("war people")	Unknown, but perhaps near the Chickasaws					Ougoulatanap (W)			
OKEHANEA TAMAHA ("town in triangle marked by streams of water")	Unknown	Ocouhiman						Okchancatamaha (W)	
OKA HULLO ("sacred (or beloved) water")	Probably on/near the mouth of Sanotee Cr., which empties into Pettickfa Cr., Kemper County		Okeollou (W)	Oke oullou (W)		Oqué oulloui (W)	Okeoullou (W)	Oka-hoolah	
OKLABALBAHA ("people talking unintelligibly")	Unknown					Ougoulabalbas			
OKSAK TALALA ("hickory grove")	Near the line between Neshoba and Kemper Counties						Oksaktalaya (W)	Osuktalaya	Ochactalaya (W)



TOWN (SWANTON, 1931)	LOCATION	IBERVILLE (1702)	DE LUSSER (1730)	ROULLET (1732)	CRENAY MAP (1733)	MEMOIR (1755?)	FARMAR (1764)	ROMANS MAP (1771)	SPANISH LIST (1784)
OKSAK TALAIA ("hickory grove")	Near the line between Neshoba and Kemper Counties						Oksakatalaya (W)	Oskitalaya	Ochaetalya (W)
ONI TALEMON ("where there are wild onions")	S of Pinckney Mill, Newton County			Ouni talemou (W)			Onny (W0)	Oony	Uni (W)
OSAPA CHITO ("big corn field")	Site of Dixon PO, Neshoba County						Ossapatchitto (W)	Sapa Chitto	Ozapachito (W)
OSAPA CHITO ("big field")	Unknown (perhaps multiple names)								Ozapachito (S)
OSAPA ISSA ("abandoned field")	N side of Blackwater Cr., Neshoba County								
OSKELAGNA ("yellow cane")	Probably Jasper County		Ouskelagana (W)	Oske laguna (W)			Oskelagana (S)	Oskclagna	Úsque lagana (S)
OTAK CHITO TAMAHA ("big prairie town")	Unknown							Oaksbanabe	
OTAKCHINAKBI ("crooked prairie")	Site of Garlandville, Jasper County								
OTUK FALAIA ("long [something!"])	Unknown								
OUIACHA ("where there is a brush arbor")	Unknown								Ouiacha (S)
PACHANUCHA ("where the pigeons sleep")	Unknown			Patcha nouce (E)	Patachanoucha				
PANTE ("white rats found in the prairies")	At head of Ponta Cr., Lauderdale County		Panty (E)	Panté (E)	Pante	Pinté (W)	Panthés (W)	Panthe; Paonte	Panté (E)
PUSKUSTAKALI ("child hanging")	SW corner of Kemper County or the proximate part of Neshoba County	Pouscouche tacase	Ponscouchelacale (W)	Poucecoute Fakalé (W)		Louscouchetacanié (W)	Pouscouch Jacaic (S)	Pooscoos te Kalé (N)	Puscus tackle (S)
SAKTI TAMAHA ("bluff town")	Unknown								Sacte tamahá (S)
SHINUK CHUKILLISSA ("the deserted sand")	Unknown			Chenouk Tchankelisa					
SHINUK KAHA ("lying in the sand")	About 7 miles a little N of E of Philadelphia, Neshoba County							Schekaha	Chenucaha (W)
SHUKHATA ("opossum")	On the site of Columbus, AL								
SHUMOTAKALI ("moss/thistle-down hanging")	Kemper County, between the two head prongs of Blackwater Creek						Choumontakale (W)	Choumontakali	Chemontacale (E)
SHUMOTAKALI ("moss/thistle-down hanging")	Unknown (perhaps multiple names)								Chemon tacanié (S)
SINIASHA ("sycamore place")	Unknown		Cheniacha (W)	Seneacha (W)	Sentéacha		Séneachaes (S)	Shanhaw	Seniacha (S)

TOWN (SWANTON, 1931)	LOCATION	IBERVILLE (1702)	DE LUSSE (1730)	ROULLET (1732)	CRENAY MAP (1733)	MEMOIR (1755?)	FARMAR (1764)	ROMANS MAP (1771)	SPANISH LIST (1784)
SKANAPA ("the unfortunate ones")	Probably on Running Tiger Cr., Kemper County	Iscanaba Thousand Togrule	Scanapa (E)	Schikanuapa (C)	Schikanapa	Scanapa (W)		Skunncpaw	
TABOGOULA (may be same as Taboka)	Unknown	Tabougoula							
TALA ("palmetto")	S part of Newton County, between Tarlow and Bogue Felamma Creeks		Tala (W)	Tala (S)	Tala	Tala (S)	Tala (S)	Tallaw	Tala (S)
TALPOKTA ("palmetto where two bayous unite")	Jasper County			Tala poukta (W)	Talapoucta		Talpa Etioka (S)	Talapahoka	Taulepa (S)
TEEKHAILY EKUTAPA ("standing pine [something]")	On the lower Tombigbee River							Teeakhaily Ekutapa	Town of Tombecbé (E)
THATA TASCANAN GOUCHY	Unknown; (from title <i>Taskanangouchi</i> )	Thata tascanan gouchy							
THICACHO OULASTA ("near Chickasaw")	Unknown	Thicacho oulasta						Otaksbanabe	
TINSCAITLA ("blue jay")	Unknown								Tinsca itla (S)
TIWAELE	Unknown	Tohia sale				Totiaie (W)			
TONICAHAW/ TONIK HIKLA ("standing post")	Unknown							Tonicahaw	
UTAPACHA ("rows of chestnut trees")	Unknown			Outapoucha (W)	Outapacha	Outapacha (W)			
WATONLULA ("whooping crane")	Unknown	Suabouloula	Quantor oullou (E)		Ouantonloula	Ouantonaotia (W)			
WIATAKALI ("hanging loft [or arbor]")	About 1 mile S of the De Kalb and Jackson road, Neshoba Co.		Ouantonloula (E)	Ayoutaka (C)	Ayoutiakale (?)		Onatouloula (W)		
WEST ABEKA ("unhealthy place")	Unknown	Abiksa Thocalogoule	Apeca (W)	Abeka (W)	Abeka	Abeca (W)	Abeka (W)	West Abeika	
WEST KUNSHAK CHITO ("west big cane town")	Neshoba County, near the headwaters of Oktibbeha Cr. Perhaps on Indian branch of Running Tiger Creek							West Congeeto; Coocheto	
YAKNIACHUKMA ("good land")	Probably in SW Kemper County							Yagna Shoogawa achucuma (S)	
YANATOE	Kemper County							Yanatoc	
YAZOO OR WEST YAZOO	Neshoba County, near the headwaters of Oktibbeha Cr.	Yachou	Yazoux (W)	Jachou (W)	Yazou	Yachou (W)	Yaroux de L'ouest (W)	West Yaso	Yasu (W)
YAZOO ISKITINI ("little Yazoo")	Both sides of Yazoo Cr., between its mouth and the fork E side of Chickasawhay R., in the S part of Wayne County	Yacho	Yasoux (E)	Jachou (E)	Yazou	Yacholi or Achoualouliá (W)	Yaroux de L'Est (E)	East Yazoo Skatane	Yasu (E)
YOWANI ("June bug")			Ouani (E)	Youannes (W)	Yotiané	Youanny (S)	Eouanné (S)	Ewany	Yoanni (S)

## APPENDIX 2. Recorded Attendance at Chickasawhay in Beauchamp’s Journal

The following chart identifies all of the confirmed attendees of the influential assembly held at Chickasawhay in the autumn of 1746. The names below are individuals specifically mentioned as being present by Jadart de Beauchamp in his journal. Beauchamp’s journal does not include the role of *iska* (moiety) of every attendee; when possible, I have used rough translations of a man’s title to determine if his role dealt with war (red) or civil (peace) responsibilities. For example, the title “Oulisso Mingo” includes the Choctaw root words *ouma* (“war”) and *isso* (“smiter”), likely indicating this individual was a war chief. If recorded in the journal, the voiced sentiment of each headman is also included.

NAME/TITLE	ROLE	ISKA	TOWN	REGION	SENTIMENT
Alibamon Mingo	Medal Chief	White	Concha	Eastern	Pro-French
Anonymous	Captain	Red	Chickasawhay	Southern	Pro-French
Anonymous	Captain	Red	Nachoubauenya	Southern	Non-committal
Anonymous	Chief	White	Black Water ( <i>Oka Lussa</i> )	Western	
Anonymous	Chief		Bouctouloucti	Southern	Considered French request impossible
Anonymous	Chief		Tchanké	Western	
Anonymous	Chief		Oni ( <i>Oni Talemon</i> )	Western	Pro-French
Anonymous	Chief		Tala	Southern	Considered French request impossible
Anonymous	Chief		Yellow Canes	Southern	Non-committal
Anonymous	Second Chief		Chichatalaya	Eastern	
Anonymous	Second Chief	Red	Nachoubauenya	Southern	
Anonymous	Second Chief		Oni/ <i>Oni Talemon</i>	Western	Pro-French
Assetaoumastabé	War Lieutenant	Red	Concha	Eastern	Pro-French
Attachimingo	Chief		Bouctoucoulou	Eastern	Pro-French
Fanimingo Tchala	Squirrel King	White	Seneacha	Southern	Non-committal

Great Medal Chief	Medal Chief		Couëchitto/Oulitacha	Western/Eastern	Pro-French
Illetaska	Chief		West Immongoulacha	Western	Pro-French
Imataha Mingo ( <i>LE SINGE</i> )	War Chief	Red	Ebitoupougoulas	Eastern	Pro-French
Imataha Pousouche	War Lieutenant	Red	Seneacha	Southern	Non-committal
Itemongoulacha	Honored Man	Red	Chickasawhay	Southern	Pro-French
Iteokchako	Medicine Man	White	Blue Wood ( <i>Iteokchako</i> )	Eastern	
Mingo Ouma Chitto	War Chief	Red	Chickaswhay	Southern	
Mongoulacha Mingo	Medal Chief	White	Chickasawhay	Southern	Anti-French
Oulisso Mingo	War Chief	Red	Black Water ( <i>Oka Lussa</i> )	Western	Pro-French
Paemingo	War Chief	Red	Cushtusha	Western	Pledges to kill Red Shoe for French
Pouchimataha	War Chief	Red	Toussana	Southern	Pledges to kill Red Shoe for French
Quikanabé Mingo	War Lieutenant	Red	Blue Wood ( <i>Iteokchako</i> )	Eastern	
Red Shoe	War Chief	Red	Tombecbé	Eastern	Pro-French
Red Shoe	War Chief	Red	Yanabé	Eastern	Pro-French
Sonakabetaska	Spokesperson or War Chief		Chukalissa	Chickasaw*	Pledges to kill Red Shoe for French
Tantlé Mingo	Chief		Conchantys (Alabama)	Upper Creek*	Anti-English
Taskanangouchi	War Lieutenant	Red	Blue Wood ( <i>Iteokchako</i> )	Eastern	Pro-French
Taskanangouchi	War Lieutenant	Red	Yowani	Southern	Pro-French
Taskanangouchi Atlako	War Lieutenant	Red	Yazoo	Eastern	
Taskaoumingo	Captain	Red	Boucfouca	Western	Non-committal
Tatoulimataha			Couëchitto	Western	Non-committal
Tchioulacta	Chief		Bouctoucoulou	Eastern	Pro-French
Tichou Mingo	Speaker		Chickasawhay	Southern	Non-committal
Toupa Oumastabé	Captain	Red	Concha	Eastern	Pro-French

*SOURCES: Journal of Jadart de Beauchamp (1746) in Dunbar Rowland, A.G. Sanders, and Patricia Galloway, eds. Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion, 5 Vols. (Jackson: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1927-1932 and Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 4: 269-297; John R. Swanton, "Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians," Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin, no. 103 (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1931), 55-75; Galloway, "Choctaw Names and Choctaw Roles: Another Method for Evaluating Sociopolitical Structure" in Practicing Ethnohistory: Mining Archives, Hearing Testimony, Constructing Narrative (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 212-13.*

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