

Interconnectedness and Diversity in “French Louisiana”<sup>\*</sup>  
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In 1750, after more than half a century of colonization, the French governor of Louisiana declared in exasperation, “we can do nothing by ourselves.”<sup>1</sup> While the French called Louisiana their colony, in reality, as Governor Vaudreuil knew, officials, explorers, priests, merchants, traders, and slaves became small parts of the large, complex neighborhood of the Mississippi Valley. One narrative of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries stars French colonial officials such as Vaudreuil forging (and losing) Louisiana, where they sought to profit and to challenge France’s European rivals. But countless other intertwined narratives run through this place and time, centering on Choctaws, Natchez, Chickasaws, Tunicas, Osages, Quapaws, Bambaras, Mobilians, Caddoans, Britons, Spaniards, and other groups and individuals within them.

This is not to say that the French had no effect on Louisiana. On the contrary, European diseases and goods changed the region’s history. Indians became entangled in the world economies that colonialism created, and ultimately the arrival of the French proved one of the most important events of the late seventeenth-century Mississippi Valley. But emphasizing change that occurred after Europeans arrived can create the impression that Europeans *directed*

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<sup>\*</sup> This article will be printed in the 2nd edition of *Powhatan’s Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, ed. Peter H. Wood, Gregory A. Waselkov, and M. Thomas Hatley. It also forms the starting point of my second book project, which will be a history of French Louisiana. Like the article, the book will be a multi-perspectival history of the region, arguing that the French were only one of many important actors in the place they named “Louisiana.” I would like the workshop’s help not only on revising the article but also on planning the book. Thank you for your interest.

<sup>1</sup> Vaudreuil to Rouillé, February 1, 1750, LO 203, box 5, Vaudreuil Papers, Loudoun Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, California. Translations throughout are mine unless an English-language edition is noted.

change. In reality, the French had little power, and the Mississippi Valley remained largely an Indian-defined and Indian-controlled place through the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

Native peoples chose how to deal with and interpret the new dangers and opportunities that resulted from foreign incursions. Most Mississippi Valley people's priorities did not center on Europeans. To Indians, who constituted the vast majority of Louisiana's population, Indian rivalries, alliances, military strategies, trade networks, and ways of conducting foreign relations generally bore more relevance than Europeans. Indians sought European alliances and trade in order to gain an advantage in their rivalries with other Indians or to draw Indians into alliance by offering desired goods. Even most of the colonial population operated with little regard for French colonial interests. Seeking converts and trading partners, priests and traders focused on Indians. Runaway slaves and deserting soldiers by definition worked against the colonial establishment.

All people living in the place that Europeans called colonial Louisiana found themselves entangled in foreign relations. Any of them could have complained of their inability to do anything "by ourselves." But the ambitions of the colonial project made the French particularly dependent on others. Because they wanted a colony to rival the Spanish and English and because they sought to rule Louisiana despite lacking a large army, they had to pay attention to Indian priorities. Of the scores of diverse and intertwined peoples who populated Louisiana, the French proved one of the least independent and least successful in manipulating others.

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<sup>2</sup> Most histories of the colonial Mississippi Valley have focused on the French imperial narrative. See, for example, W. J. Eccles, *The French in North America, 1500-1765* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1998); Norman Ward Caldwell, *The French in the Mississippi Valley, 1740-1750* (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1941). Even historians whose interests also lie in other narratives tend to emphasize how the French changed native economies and ways of living on the land, even if they were not as effective as later colonizers would be. See, for example, Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

The roots of eighteenth-century alliances and rivalries lie in the Mississippi period. Beginning around AD 800, independent groups built ceremonial centers, where they conducted planting and harvest rituals and festivals. Some provided a place for mutual defense or storing and protecting food. Eventually, thousands of people settled in or near towns that rose and fell in the Mississippi Valley and the Southeast, including (in the names used today) Moundville in northwestern Alabama, Etowah in the foothills of the Appalachians, Cahokia across the Mississippi from present-day St. Louis, and Spiro on the Arkansas River near the state border of Oklahoma and Arkansas. While centralized societies may have existed previously in North America, the Mississippian chiefdoms were unprecedented in number and density. Over the centuries, some chiefdoms fell and others took their places. Until the American Revolution, no population centers north of Mexico would approach these towns in size or centralization.<sup>3</sup>

Between the mid-1500s and the mid-1600s, centralized Mississippian towns ceased to exist, probably because of some combination of factors—climate change, depleted fields, drought, floods, warfare, and European diseases. Before 1492, smallpox, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, whooping cough, chicken pox, influenza, malaria, typhoid fever, cholera, pneumonia, yellow fever, and scarlet fever were unknown in the Americas, and American Indians had not developed resistance to them.<sup>4</sup> Beginning with Spanish exploration and settlement, waves of epidemics spread across North America, directly from Europeans and through native trading networks.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Bruce D. Smith, “The Archaeology of the Southeastern United States: From Dalton to De Soto, 10,500-500 B.P.,” *Advances in World Archaeology* 5 (1986), 1-92; Brian M. Fagan, *Ancient North America: The Archaeology of a Continent*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 439-468; Lynda Norene Shaffer, *Native Americans before 1492: The Moundbuilding Centers of the Eastern Woodlands* (Armonk, N.Y., M. E. Sharpe, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 197-201.

<sup>5</sup> Barbara A. Burnett and Katherine A. Murray, “Death, Drought, and de Soto: The Bioarcheology of Depopulation,” in *The Expedition of Hernando de Soto West of the Mississippi, 1541-1543: Proceedings of the De Soto Symposia*

In response, some Mississippian peoples disbanded entirely. Others adapted their social and political structures to new circumstances, many moving or combining with other peoples.<sup>6</sup> Choctaw origin histories suggest that some of their ancestors lived in the Mississippian chiefdom of Moundville. After 1500, they abandoned Moundville, founded dispersed settlements in what is now the state of Mississippi, and merged with allied chiefdoms and others from surrounding areas. The clear regional and ethnic divisions that remained within the Choctaw nation in the eighteenth century and beyond represented vestiges of these earlier mergings.<sup>7</sup> The Natchez probably changed the least. Although their territory contracted and some of their districts combined, they continued to build mounds and retained their chiefdom's hierarchical class structure with a powerful nobility and a great chief. They adopted neighboring peoples whose chiefdoms had suffered more devastating change, but it appears that, unlike the looser and more

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*1988 and 1990*, ed. Gloria A. Young and Michael P. Hoffman (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1993), 232-235; Ann F. Ramenofsky and Patricia Galloway, "Disease and the Soto Entrada," in *Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography, and "Discovery" in the Southeast*, 259-279; Elizabeth A. H. John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds: The Confrontation of Indians, Spanish, and French in the Southwest, 1540-1795*, 2d ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 38-39, 63, 83, 86, 134; James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2002), 49-50; John L. Kessel, *Spain in the Southwest: A Narrative History of Colonial New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and California* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 159, 167, 297; Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, 266; Alfred W. Crosby, "Virgin Soil Epidemics as a Factor in the Aboriginal Depopulation in America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 33 (April 1976), 290.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 34-39; Tristram R. Kidder, "Excavations at the Jordan Site (16MO1), Morehouse Parish, Louisiana," *Southeastern Archaeology* 11 (Winter 1992), 109-131.

<sup>7</sup> Patricia Galloway, *Choctaw Genesis, 1500-1700* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995); Greg O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 12-20; Clara Sue Kidwell, "Choctaw," in *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*, ed. Frederick Hoxie (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 119; 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*, ed. Peter H. Wood, Gregory A. Waselkov, and M. Thomas Hatley (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 67; Patricia Galloway, "Choctaw Factionalism and Civil War, 1746-1750," *Journal of Mississippi History* 44 (1982), 294-295.

equitable affiliating of Choctaw ancestors, the Natchez incorporated others as subordinates in their society.<sup>8</sup>

The seventeenth century also saw the arrival of new Indian peoples, including the Osages and Quapaws. Their oral histories and tales to early European explorers suggest that they moved west from the Ohio River Valley **across the Mississippi River**, perhaps fleeing Iroquoian-speakers armed with Dutch weapons. In turn, newcomers altered the dynamics of the Mississippi Valley. The Quapaws probably drove some former Mississippians south of the Arkansas River, and the Osages established themselves as a powerful new presence below the Missouri River.<sup>9</sup> Counterattacks and ill will from these intrusions lingered into the eighteenth century.

The fall of the Mississippian chiefdoms changed diplomacy in the region. Chiefs or their representatives had generally negotiated Mississippian foreign relations, but it appears that Mississippian decline led some people to distrust concentrated power. Authority both within

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<sup>8</sup> Jeffrey P. Brain, "La Salle at The Natchez: An Archaeological and Historical Perspective," in *La Salle and His Legacy: Frenchmen and Indians in the Lower Mississippi Valley*, ed. Patricia Galloway (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1982), 53-55; Jeffrey P. Brain, "The Natchez 'Paradox'," *Ethnology* 10 (1971), 215-222; Ian W. Brown, "Natchez Indians and the Remains of a Proud Past," in *Natchez before 1830*, ed. Noel Polk (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1989), 8-28; Fagan, *Ancient North America*, 467; André Pénicaut, *Fleur de Lys and Calumet Being the Pénicaut Narrative of French Adventure in Louisiana*, tr. and ed. Richebourg Gaillard McWilliams (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1953), 85, 89-96.

<sup>9</sup> Tonti to his brother, March 4, 1700, "Tonti Letters," *Mid-America: An Historical Review* 21 (July 1939): 230; Jacques Gravier, "Relation or Journal of the voyage of Father Gravier, of the Society of Jesus, in 1700, from the Country of the Illinois To the Mouth of the Mississippi River," February 16, 1701, *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791*, ed. and trans. Reuben Gold Thwaites (New York: Pageant Book Company, 1959), February 16, 1701, 65: 107; Anastasious Douay, Relation, *First Establishment of the Faith in New France, Containing the publication of the Gospel, the history of the French colonies, and the famous discoveries from the river St. Lawrence, Louisiana, and the river Colbert, to the Gulf of Mexico, accomplished under the direction of the late Mr. de la Salle*, ed. Christian Le Clerq, trans. John Gilmary Shea (New York: John G. Shea, 1881), 2: 272; Thomas Nuttall, *A Journal of Travels into the Arkansas Territory during the Year 1819*, ed. Savoie Lottinville (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 93; Susan C. Vehik, "Dhegiha Origins and Plains Archaeology," *Plains Anthropologist* 38 (1993): 231-252; Michael P. Hoffman, "The Terminal Mississippian Period in the Arkansas River Valley and Quapaw Ethnogenesis," in *Towns and Temples Along the Mississippi*, ed. David H. Dye and Cheryl Anne Cox (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990), 208-226; George Sabo III, "The Quapaw Indians of Arkansas, 1673-1803," in *Indians of the Greater Southeast: Historical Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, ed. Bonnie G. McEwan (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 185-186; W. David Baird, *The Quapaw Indians: A History of the Downstream People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 3-8; Willard H. Rollings, *The Osage: An Ethnohistorical Study of Hegemony*

societies and over foreign relations spread more broadly across most populations. Probably building on earlier customs in which chiefs provided hospitality and gifts to visiting dignitaries, reciprocity became the central component in foreign relations.<sup>10</sup> By the late seventeenth century, most North American Indians saw reciprocal gift-giving and marital or fictive kinship ties as the means to establish and maintain good relations between peoples.<sup>11</sup> When the French arrived, Indians greeted them with the same ceremonies they used to transform any foreigners into friends and allies—calumet (peace pipe) dances and songs, speeches of welcome, and feasts to demonstrate generosity and friendship.<sup>12</sup>

Indians courted the French because the French had something that Indians wanted. Facing threats from others newly armed with Spanish and English weapons, Indians throughout the Mississippi Valley needed French guns and ammunition. By 1700, Chickasaw bands were raiding old enemies, and making new ones, to acquire slaves to trade to the English at Charles

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*on the Prairie-Plains* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 5; John Joseph Mathews, *The Osages, Children of the Middle Waters* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 341.

<sup>10</sup> Patricia Galloway, “‘The Chief Who Is Your Father’: Choctaw and French Views of the Diplomatic Relation,” in *Powhatan’s Mantle*, 257-258. For examples of diplomacy in the 1530s and 1540s, see, for example, A Gentleman of Elvas, “True Relation of the Hardships Suffered by Governor Don Hernando de Soto and Certain Portuguese Gentlemen in the Discovery of the Province of Florida,” trans. James Alexander Robertson, and Rodrigo Rangel, “Account of the Northern Conquest and Discovery of Hernando De Soto,” trans. John E. Worth, both in *The De Soto Chronicles: The Expedition of Hernando de Soto to North America in 1539-1543*, ed. Lawrence A. Clayton, Vernon James Knight, Jr., and Edward C. Moore (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 1: 119-121, 124, 303.

<sup>11</sup> Mary Druke Becker, “Linking Arms: The Structure of Iroquois Intertribal Diplomacy,” *Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600-1800*, ed. Daniel K. Richter and James H. Merrell, 2nd ed. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 29-39; Robert A. Williams, Jr., *Linking Arms Together: American Indian Treaty Visions of Law and Peace, 1600-1800* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 62, 76-81; Cornelius J. Jaenen, “The Role of Presents in French-Amerindian Trade,” in *Explorations in Canadian Economic History: Essays in Honour of Irene M. Spry*, ed. Duncan Cameron (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1985), 231; James Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 40; Daniel Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 22.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Jacques Marquette, “Of the First Voyage Made by Father Marquette toward New Mexico,” *Jesuit Relations*, 59: 114.

Town for guns, ammunition, and horses.<sup>13</sup> In the northeast, Iroquoian peoples monopolized Dutch and British trade and regularly attacked Illinois Indians and others east of the Mississippi. In the west, Apache and Comanche bands soon blocked Spanish trade.

Mississippi Valley Indians who hoped to attract French trade used established diplomatic methods to recruit the French. For example, in 1680, Quapaw, Osage, and Chickasaw delegates came together to the new French mission at Kaskaskia. There, they presented deerskins and other hides to the Frenchmen, told the French that the Mississippi was navigable to the Gulf of Mexico, and invited them to come to their towns to “dance the Calumet of peace” and establish trade relations.<sup>14</sup> These delegates hoped to use the French to serve their own purposes in relations with other Indians. Not only would French trade strengthen each of the three peoples, but their coming together suggests that they hoped French goods would lessen the Chickasaws’ English trade and thus reduce Chickasaw slave raids, which often victimized the Quapaws. Because goods distribution within Indian societies could enhance a person’s prestige, the delegates may also have sought to enhance their individual influence within their own communities.

To the south, other Indians also sought French assistance to counter the Chickasaw-English trade. In May of 1700, Tohome and Mobilian chiefs traveled to the new French capital at Biloxi to request a trade alliance. They offered provisions, which the governor of Louisiana, Pierre Le Moyne d’Iberville, desperately needed. In return, the Tohomes and Mobilians solicited

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<sup>13</sup> Jay K. Johnson, “The Chickasaws,” in *Indians of the Greater Southeast*, 85, 91, 93; Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); John D. Stubbs, Jr., “The Chickasaw Contact with the La Salle Expedition in 1682,” in *La Salle and His Legacy*, 47. For more on Chickasaw policies and foreign relations throughout the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Wendy St. Jean, “Trading Paths: Chickasaws and Their Neighbors in the Greater Southeast, 1690s-1790s,” Ph.D. diss, forthcoming.

<sup>14</sup> R. P. Louis Hennepin, *Description de la Louisiane, Nouvellement Découverte au Sud Oüest de la Nouvelle France, par ordre du Roy* (Paris: Sebastien Huré, 1683), 180-181; R. P. Louis Hennepin, *Nouvelle Découverte d’un tres grand pays situé dans l’Amérique, entre Le Nouveau Mexique, et La Mer Glaciale* (Utrecht: Guillaume Broedelet, 1697), 234.

assistance against enemy attacks. They “passionately” urged the French to move closer to them, explaining that a Spanish delegation had visited them from the new post at Pensacola several months earlier but had not returned. The Tohomes and Mobilians succeeded. Knowing that his weak numbers would require Indian allies and supplies (and eager to move in before the Spanish did), Governor Iberville established a new French capital at Mobile.<sup>15</sup>

In the eighteenth century, Indians farther west sought French trade to compete with Spanish-armed rivals and Indians such as the Osages who established trade with the French earlier. In 1719, people living on the Arkansas River, probably in what is now Oklahoma, heard that a French party was approaching. By the time it drew near, several thousand Tawakonis, Taovayas, Guichitas, and Iscanis (mostly ancestors of the Wichita or Kitikitiish confederacy) had assembled at a Tawakoni town, with speeches prepared. The chiefs told the expedition’s leader, Jean-Baptiste B nard de La Harpe, that all the peoples of the middle Arkansas wished to ally with the French, who “would bring weapons for them to defend themselves against their enemies.” In return, they promised horses, bison robes, salt, tobacco, various metals and stones, and slaves. One chief whispered to La Harpe that they also had “yellow iron,” which “the Spanish value very highly.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> De Sauvole de la Villantray, Narrative, August 4, 1701, *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion* (MPAFD), ed. and trans. Dunbar Rowland and A. G. Sanders (vols. 1-3: Jackson: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1927; vols. 4-5: ed. Patricia Kay Galloway, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 2: 9-10; Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 17-18. For more on Indian-English trade, see Joel W. Martin, “Southeastern Indians and the English Trade in Skins and Slaves,” in *The Forgotten Centuries: Indians and Europeans in the American South, 1521-1704*, ed. Charles Hudson and Carmen Chaves Tesser (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 304-324. In 1713, Tohomes killed English trader Price Hughes, knowing that he bought slaves from Chickasaw and other raiders. P nicaut, *Fleur de Lys*, 163.

<sup>16</sup> Jean-Baptiste B nard de la Harpe, “Relation du voyage de B nard de la Harpe, d couverte faite par lui de plusieurs nations situ es a l’ouest,” *D couvertes et  tablissements des Fran ais dans l’ouest et dans le sud de l’Am rique septentrionale, 1614-1698: m moires et documents inedits*, ed. Pierre Margry, (New York: AMS Press, 1974), 6: 289-293; La Harpe to the Directors of the Company of the Indies, December 25, 1720, folio 99, bobine 9, C13A6, Louisiana Colonial Records Project, Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, Louisiana,



Despite their immediate popularity, the French were one of the weakest groups in a land full of people struggling to strengthen their positions in the wake of sixteenth-century change. Although colonial officials regularly requested more soldiers and arms to “intimidate the Indians,” tight budgets, desertions, and recurrent French war against other European nations kept Louisiana’s forces small and unstable. At times, fewer than two hundred soldiers were assigned to all of the colony, on both sides of the Mississippi. In the mid-1720s, Louisiana had some 2500 French, plus 1500 slaves. In contrast, Louisiana Indians numbered well over 35,000. While many Indian groups were tiny, the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Natchez, Osages, and Caddoans all had populations greater than the French, and many others rivaled the French population.<sup>17</sup> No one people had the power to rule the others, and all found themselves entangled in webs of foreign relations and obligations.

Size was not everything. Although the largest group, Choctaws found that regional and ethnic loyalties often outweighed national interests. Some smaller groups such as the Quapaws used their relative unity to wield an influence beyond their numbers. Even more fragmented than the Choctaws, the French arrived in North America as diverse people with various goals and methods, which only occasionally combined into serving the colonial project. French men and women came to the region for many reasons besides the advancement of the colony—converting

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microfilmed from the Archives Nationales Colonies, Paris, France; George H. Odell, *La Harpe’s Post: A Tale of French-Wichita Contact on the Eastern Plains* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2002).

<sup>17</sup> Pierre Le Moyne d’Iberville, *Iberville’s Gulf Journals*, tr. and ed. Richebourg Gaillard McWilliams (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1950), 174; Tonti to his brother, March 4, 1700, “Tonti Letters,” 229, 232; St. Cosme to the Bishop of Quebec, n.d. [1699], *Early Voyages Up and Down the Mississippi by Cavalier, St. Cosme, Le Sueur, Gravier, and Guignas*, ed. and trans. John Gilmary Shea (Albany: Joel Munsell, 1861), 74; Montigny to --, May 6, 1699, “Tonti Letters,” 229n; François Le Maire, “M. Le Maire on Louisiana,” January 15, 1714, ed. and trans. Jean Delanglez, *Mid-America: An Historical Review* 19 (April 1937), 146-147; Etienne Veniard de Bourgmont, “Etienne Veniard De Bourgmont’s ‘Exact Description of Louisiana,’” c. 1714, trans. Mrs. Max W. Myer, ed. Marcel Giraud, *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin* 15 (October 1958), 13; Du Poisson to Father ---, October 3, 1727, *Jesuit Relations*, 67: 319; Wood, “Changing Population,” 38-39, 68-71; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 44-49; Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *American Indians in the Lower Mississippi Valley: Social and Economic Histories* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 35.

Indians to Christianity, making individual profits, escaping trouble at home, and forced removal from the streets of Paris and Marseilles.

The presence of powerful native peoples weakened French officials' control over the colonial population by broadening opportunities. The *voyageurs* (independent traders) who traversed the land held more allegiance to their own interests and often to their Indian trading partners than they did to French officials, as the French hierarchy was well aware. Etienne de Périer, Louisiana governor in 1729, petitioned his superior to strengthen the Louisiana government in order to “subdue the inhabitants of this area who are just *voyageurs* and *coureurs de bois* who work that trade only because they want to be their own masters and who would easily withdraw from their obedience to the King if we were not prepared to repress them.”<sup>18</sup> Like the Chickasaws at Kaskaskia, these Frenchmen sought trade from multiple sources, which could help them “be their own masters.” Even French soldiers did not always serve colonial interests. Desertion was a constant problem as the fur trade lured scores of soldiers away from the dangers and deprivations of the colonial army.<sup>19</sup> The Quapaws recruited French deserters to settle nearby, in order to strengthen their own numbers on a contested Indian borderland. At times the Quapaws successfully protected and incorporated runaway slaves and soldiers accused of treason, desertion, and even murder.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Périer to Le Pelletier, April 1, 1729, fol. 7, bob. 18, C13A12, Louisiana Colonial Records Project.

<sup>19</sup> Vaudreuil to the Court, July 20, 1751, 2: 152, LO 9, Vaudreuil Letterbook, Loudoun Collection, Huntington Library; Vaudreuil to Rouillé, October 10, 1751, *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War, 1747-1755*, ed. and trans. Theodore Calvin Pease and Ernestine Jenison (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1940), 410; Macarty to Vaudreuil, September 2, 1752, LO 376, box 7, Vaudreuil Papers; Caldwell, *French in the Mississippi Valley*, 13; Faye, “Arkansas Post of Louisiana: French Domination,” 700; “Translated Excerpts from Declarations Made in Santa Fé, New Mexico, in 1749 and 1750,” Appendix, Mildred Mott Wedel, *The Deer Creek Site, Oklahoma: A Wichita Village Sometimes Called Ferdinandina, An Ethnohistorian's View* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1981), 68, 70-72.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Vaudreuil to Maurepas, December 20, 1744, 1: 42v, LO 9, Vaudreuil Letterbook; Le Pelletier to Vaudreuil, December 1, 1752, LO 410, box 8, Vaudreuil Papers; Guedetonguay, Speech, June 20, 1756, MPAFD, 5: 173-175; De Clouet to Monsieur, August 4, 1769, folio 14, legajo 107, Papeles de Cuba, Archivo de Indias, Seville, Spain. The 1785 census showed that one-sixth of the non-Indians living on the lower Arkansas were “free people of

The extreme fragmentation of the colonial population put the French in a unique position. In some ways, being fragmented made them more influential because they spread across the countryside, encountering a wider variety of people than most Indians met and offering goods that native peoples wanted. But being fragmented also meant that the French were more influenced by native peoples than they might otherwise have been. Various French people's goals and methods often conflicted, and their de-centralized nature attenuated them, giving more centralized, established, and knowledgeable people opportunities to influence the newcomers. French officials quickly learned that their low numbers and fragmentation precluded dominating Indians.

In fact, Indian power and French weakness forced the French to do the opposite—attempt to persuade Indians to fight French battles. But more often than not, French officials found themselves conducting foreign policy according to their Indian allies' interests. In 1730, Périer informed his superiors that using Indian allies was the least efficient way to run the colony. As he explained, he had to spend so much on gifts to allies that “it will cost the Company more to make the Indians act when they are needed” than to support the same number of troops. To make matters worse for the governor, paying Indians by no means guaranteed that they would do his bidding. As Périer put it, “the least little nation thinks itself our protector” and “that we use them only because we are not capable of making war”—which of course was true.<sup>21</sup> Indians knew how much the French depended on them.

How various Indians used this knowledge depended on their own history, their beliefs about themselves and the world, their current relations with neighbors, what they needed or

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color,” by far the largest percentage in all of Louisiana or West Florida and one of the largest populations of free people of color in these colonies. Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 114.

<sup>21</sup> Périer to Ory, December 18, 1730, MPAFD, 4: 39-40.

wanted from Europeans, as well as what kind and how many Europeans they met and how often. As the French attempted to make Indians serve colonial purposes, Indians worked to shape the French into useful allies and neighbors. All Indian allies demanded French compliance with the dictates of reciprocity. As early as 1717, the Commissary General of Louisiana, Marc Antoine Hubert, could report that “all the chiefs of the Indians, even those remote from these posts,” regularly traveled “to see the commandants, with the expectation of receiving some presents.” Within the rubric of reciprocity, these gifts served as the obligation of those wealthy in exotic goods but short on practicalities to those able to provide guides, interpreters, warriors, food, and land. Often in fact short on goods, French officials thought of these demands as tribute. When Jean Michele de L’Epinay arrived in March of 1717 to take his place as governor, he had to spend more than two months hosting calumet ceremonies from two dozen nations, including the Mobilians, Tohomes, Choctaws, Natchez, Tunicas, and Chickasaws, of course giving presents to all. Nonetheless, according to Hubert, many Indians considered Governor L’Epinay stingier than his predecessor, calling him “an old mangy dog.”<sup>22</sup>

French officials had no choice but to comply. There was no other way to counter the English and Spanish. In fact, Indians’ desire for French weapons to counter enemies armed by Spanish and especially English trade harmonized with French imperial objectives.<sup>23</sup> French-Indian negotiations developed a standard vocabulary that drew on the presence of other Europeans. Indians complained of attacks by European-armed foes, and French officials

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<sup>22</sup> The Choctaws particularly received a large share. By 1733, the colonial government was giving some one hundred and fifty livres to each of the 111 “chiefs” plus separate presents to the thirty-nine towns. Analysis of Bienville Letters, May 15, 1733, fol. 206, bob. 23, C13A16, Louisiana Colonial Records Project; Hubert to the Council, October 26, 1717, MPAFD, 2: 249-250; Pénicaut, *Fleur de Lys*, 206.

<sup>23</sup> The Bourbon alliance mitigated French-Spanish tension for a decade and a half, during and immediately after the War of Spanish Succession (1702–1713).

promised not only weapons but a friendship more in line with Indian ideals of reciprocity and obligation than other Europeans would provide.

For example, when a delegation of seven Chickasaws and four Choctaws arrived at Mobile in March of 1702, Governor Iberville quickly prepared a generous gift—each delegate received 200 pounds of gunpowder, 200 pounds of bullets, 200 pounds of game-shot, 12 guns, 100 axes, 150 knives, and several kettles, glass beads, and gun flints. Knowing well the Chickasaws' advantageous trade with Charles Town, the governor had his anti-English speech prepared. He declared that the French desired for all Indians to live in peace and prosperity, whereas the English were inciting the Chickasaws to make war on the Choctaws so that the English could profit from the slave trade. Iberville accused the English of false friendship, saying they were as willing to sell Chickasaw as Choctaw slaves because they cared only for profit.

Iberville portrayed the English as deviants in a world governed by Indian epistemologies, while the French were true friends, bound by local rules and relationships. Rather than inciting Indian wars and seeking Indian slaves, he declared, “skins of buffalo, deer, and bear—those are the slaves I want. . . . To get them will not cost you your lives.” Still, the French were not all goodness and light either. If the Chickasaws continued to trade with the English, Iberville warned, “the French and you cannot be friends with one another, and I shall engage in no trading with you” and instead would arm the Choctaws, Mobilians, Tohomes, Natchez, Illinois, and other allies against the Chickasaws. As violent as the threat was, it complied with his listeners' notions of friendship. Allies had obligations, but if the Chickasaws chose to be the enemies of the French and their allies, attacks against them were not unreasonable.<sup>24</sup> The English used similar tactics, repeatedly telling the Chickasaws that the French only pretended to be true

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<sup>24</sup> *Iberville's Gulf Journals*, 171-173.

friends but in reality planned to destroy the Chickasaws and other Indians so that they could have Louisiana to themselves.<sup>25</sup>

Native peoples in turn used their knowledge of European rivalries to instruct Europeans in how they should act. Louisiana Indians sought trade with as many Europeans as possible, and most traded at least sporadically with the English from at least 1700.<sup>26</sup> Despite French, English, and Spanish admonitions that trading relationships were exclusive to one European power, their Indian partners did not agree. In 1745, Quapaw leaders warned their local commandant that if supplies did not improve, they would “see the English again.” They knew that mentioning the English would always agitate the French official, who quickly wrote to the governor requesting more merchandise.<sup>27</sup>

At times, people used an alliance with one nation to attract others. The Choctaw delegates who met Iberville in 1702 surely hoped to use French trade to draw their troublesome Chickasaw neighbors into a peaceful alliance, as the Quapaws and Osages had unsuccessfully attempted at Kaskaskia twenty years before. Chickasaw and Creek raids were enslaving and killing thousands of Choctaws. The same month, other Choctaws and Chickasaws were using French officer Henri de Tonti as a mediator. Similarly, the Chickasaws used English trade goods to entice Indians into trading relations.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Diron d’Artaguet to Maurepas, October 24, 1737, MPAFD, 4: 149-150.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Pierre Le Moyne d’Iberville, “Journal du voyage du chevalier d’Iberville sur le vaisseau du Roi la *Renommée*, en 1699, depuis le cap Français jusqu’à la côte du Mississipi, et son retour,” *Découvertes et établissements*, 4: 430; Gravier, “Relation,” February 16, 1701, 65: 119; Verner W. Crane, “The Tennessee River as the Road to Carolina: The Beginnings of Exploration and Trade,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 3 (June 1916): 6-13; Verner W. Crane, “The Southern Frontier in Queen Anne’s War,” *American Historical Review* 24 (April 1919): 382, 390.

<sup>27</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, October 30, 1745, 1: 65, LO 9, Vaudreuil Letterbook.

<sup>28</sup> Patricia K. Galloway, “Henri de Tonti du village des Chacta, 1702: The Beginning of the French Alliance,” in *La Salle and His Legacy*, 158-162; Tonti to Iberville, March 14, 1702, trans. Patricia K. Galloway, printed in “Henri de Tonti du village des Chacta,” 168-172; Richard White, “Red Shoes: Warrior and Diplomat,” in *Struggle and Survival in Colonial America*, ed. David G. Sweet and Gary B. Nash (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 50.

Events surrounding the Natchez war, which began in 1729, illuminate this unstable world of alliances and rivalries. Triggered by Natchez-French conflict, war spread through the complicated alliances of the Mississippi Valley. Natchez-French relations began with mixed messages. In 1682, the Natchez initially received the Sieur de La Salle and his entourage well, but farther down the Mississippi La Salle's men skirmished with some Quinipissas. By the time the French party made its way back upstream, the Natchez had learned of the battle. Whether alarmed by French ferocity, sympathetic to the Quinipissas, aiming to keep the grain supplies that the French had stored at Natchez, or simply angling for battle, some 1500 armed Natchez warriors assembled to meet the French. After seeing this display and receiving a warning from the chief, the French wisely hurried on their way.<sup>29</sup>

By the next French visit, Natchez advocates of French usefulness appear to have prevailed. In 1700, they hosted Iberville with a three-day calumet peace ceremony and feasting, and they agreed to his proposal to send a French boy to live with them and learn their language. Indeed, André Pénicaut, who visited the Natchez again in 1704, called them "the most courteous and civil along the banks of the Missicipy." By the next decade, they had established steady French trade, exchanging food and hides for guns, powder, lead, cloth, and brandy. However, like most of their neighbors, they also found ways of acquiring English goods. In 1713, fifteen Choctaws escorted several English traders and a Welch trader to the Natchez and Tunicas. To

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<sup>29</sup> "Memoir Sent in 1693, on the Discovery of the Mississippi and the Neighboring Nations by M. de La Salle, from the Year 1678 to the time of his death, and by the Sieur de Tonty to the Year 1691," in *Historical Collections of Louisiana*, ed. B. F. French (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Libraries, 1994), 1: 62-65.

acquire slaves to sell, a party of Natchez, Yazoo, and Chickasaws immediately set off to raid the Chaouachas, a smaller nation to the south.<sup>30</sup>

In coming years, distrust mounted between Natchez and French leaders, as each attempted to dominate the other. To the Natchez, allowing French settlements made these French into subordinates, like previous **Indian** settlers. When French traders and officials proved less pliable than the Natchez expected, some began to consider that pillaging French goods and recruiting English trade might be a more reliable way to maintain Natchez security than continuing this unstable and unpredictable relationship. As Tattooed Serpent, a military leader and brother of the Great Sun Chief, explained to settler Antoine Simon Le Page du Pratz, “before the arrival of the French, we lived like men who can be satisfied with what they have.” The Natchez had found French goods tantalizingly useful but perhaps more trouble than they were worth.<sup>31</sup>

On several occasions beginning in the 1710s, Natchez killed and raided French parties when they violated Natchez propriety. In the 1720s, the Natchez’s White Apple village found itself at the center of conflict. In the winter of 1723 a dispute over debt led to the death of one of that village’s men. When the French commandant only reprimanded the murderer, warriors from the White Apple village attacked nearby French settlements. Only the careful diplomacy of Tattooed Serpent restored peace between the village and the French, as he had in the past. Despite the renewed and formalized peace, Louisiana Lieutenant Governor Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, led an army the following winter to punish the White Apple village. Pressured by French violence and probably the insistence of other villages, the White Apple

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<sup>30</sup> Pénicaut, *Fleur de Lys*, 28-30, 83, 159-163; Antoine Simon Le Page du Pratz, *The History of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, rpt. of 1774 trans., 1975). For more on Natchez-French relations, see Usner, *American Indians in the Lower Mississippi Valley*, 15-32.



village surrendered the chief whom Bienville demanded as recompense for the previous winter's violence. In the peace terms, the Natchez agreed to build a fort on their lands that the French would staff and supply, granting the Natchez steadier access to trade and a means for settling future disputes with French traders and settlers.<sup>32</sup>

Still, anger lingered over Bienville's flouting of the previous peace. Tattooed Serpent asked Le Page du Pratz, "Have the French two hearts, a good one to-day and to-morrow a bad one?" As Natchez distrust grew, they discussed with their neighbors how to handle the French. As early as 1714, three Natchez traveled to the Tunicas to encourage them to pillage the French and increase trade with the English, who gave better prices. The Tunicas refused the advice and told the French of Natchez overtures, undermining the already deteriorating Natchez-French relationship.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the tension, more French settlers came to farm tobacco on Natchez lands. In the 1720s, these settlements grew to 200 Frenchmen, 80 Frenchwomen, 150 French children, and 280 black slaves. Although the Natchez had originally welcomed settlers, they seemed to be growing out of Natchez control. Indeed, in the 1723 conflict, White Apple village warriors had attacked the symbols of French settlements, livestock and slaves, as well as the settlers themselves. While the Natchez had assigned the previous land grants, in late November of 1729, the commandant of the French post, the Sieur de Chépart, ordered the White Apple village to evacuate so that French settlers could farm their land.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Le Page du Pratz, *History of Louisiana*, 44-45.

<sup>32</sup> Le Page du Pratz, *History of Louisiana*, 36-42; Pénicaud, *Fleur de Lys*, 180-182; Usner, *American Indians in the Lower Mississippi Valley*, 21.

<sup>33</sup> Pénicaud, *Fleur de Lys*, 167-177; Bienville to Raudot, January 20, 1716, MPAFD, 3: 198; Duclos to Pontchartrain, June 7, 1716, MPAFD, 3: 205-209; Le Page du Pratz, *History of Louisiana*, 43-44.

<sup>34</sup> Le Page du Pratz, *History of Louisiana*, 28, 44, 79-80; Diron d'Artaguette to Maurepas, March 20, 1730, *Découvertes et établissements*, 1: 76; Patricia Dillon Woods, *French-Indian Relations on the Southern Frontier, 1699-1762* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979), 73-74.

More accustomed to giving than taking orders, the Natchez decided to get rid of these interlopers once and for all. At the urging of the White Apple village's chiefs, the Natchez again sent representatives to meet with potential allies, including Yazoo, Koroas, Illinois, Chickasaws, and Choctaws.<sup>35</sup> Changing tactics this time, they also reached out to African slaves held on the plantations near Natchez. According to a later report, the Natchez invited all slaves to join the Natchez side and thereby gain their freedom. But they warned that those who refused would be sold to the Chickasaws and the English when the Natchez prevailed.<sup>36</sup> At eight in the morning of November 28, Natchez warriors knocked at the door of each French house and asked to borrow guns for a hunting expedition. Then they turned the guns on their owners, killing nearly all the Frenchmen, including the commandant and the Jesuit priest. The Natchez captured the slaves and most of the French women and children and burned the houses and sheds, destroying thousands of pounds of tobacco. Thus, they cast out the disrespectful newcomers who would not play by Natchez rules.<sup>37</sup>

The Natchez attack decisively placed the French on the opposite side of this conflict. But lining up the sides did not determine how the French should react. Many desired vengeance, but fear was the dominant reaction amongst the French population. As Governor P rier reported in 1730 of his colonists, "the least rumor makes them rush to the woods like hares."<sup>38</sup> Local Indians

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<sup>35</sup> Lusser to Maurepas, journal entry for March 9, 1730, MPAFD, 1: 99; P rier to Maurepas, March 18, 1730, MPAFD, 1: 64; P rier to Maurepas, April 10, 1730, fol. 300, bob. 19, C13A12, Louisiana Colonial Records Project; Le Page du Pratz, *History of Louisiana*, 84, 86.

<sup>36</sup> P rier to Maurepas, March 18, 1730, MPAFD, 1: 63; Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 100-101.

<sup>37</sup> Diron d'Artaquette to Maurepas, February 9, 1730, *D couvertes et  tablissements*, 1: 57-58; P rier to Maurepas, March 18, 1730, MPAFD, 1: 62-63, 71; Diron d'Artaquette to Maurepas, March 20, 1730, *D couvertes et  tablissements*, 1: 76-77; Father Philibert, Register of those massacred at Natchez, June 9, 1730, MPAFD, 1: 122-126; P rier to Ory, December 18, 1730, MPAFD, 4: 39; Le Page du Pratz, *History of Louisiana*, 90; Woods, *French-Indian Relations*, 96.

<sup>38</sup> P rier to Ory, December 18, 1730, MPAFD, 4: 39.

stoked these fears with reports that the powerful Chickasaws and Choctaws had joined the conspiracy and were going to kill all the French throughout the colony.<sup>39</sup> With frightened and outnumbered colonists, French officials knew that they would have to persuade their allies to reject Natchez overtures and instead assist the French in getting revenge.

The crisis of 1729 brought alliances into the open, forcing people who preferred to cultivate friendship broadly now to choose sides. In the conflict, all Natchez neighbors felt pulled by the demands of allies, and all attempted to enforce their own notions of alliance obligations on others. Generally having the least power, Africans took opportunities when they came. Slaves at Natchez did not kill any French that November, but some apparently joined the Natchez defense later. In January of 1730, captured slaves fought off a Choctaw attack long enough to allow the Natchez to regroup within their forts. More often, Africans' wartime opportunities came fighting for the French or laboring for the French military. Although officials feared armed slaves, they continued to use them (in small numbers) because, as Governor P erier put it, slaves seemed to fight considerably better than the French soldiers, "who seem expressly made for Louisiana, they are so bad." In addition, P erier hoped that pitting slaves against native enemies would prevent Indian-African collaboration.<sup>40</sup>

Most Indians' reactions to the crisis depended more on relationships with other Indians than with Europeans. The Yazooos and Koroas agreed to join the Natchez effort. Their familial and alliance ties to the Natchez combined with the devastation they had experienced from European disease to pull their loyalties to the Natchez side.<sup>41</sup> Following the Natchez example, the Yazooos and Koroas killed their Jesuit missionary, the French who were in their post, and

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<sup>39</sup> P erier to Maurepas, March 18, 1730, MPAFD, 1: 62-64.

<sup>40</sup> P erier to Maurepas, March 18, 1730, MPAFD, 1: 64, 68, 70, 71-72; Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 102-104; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 86-87.

several ill-fated traders who happened to pass along the Mississippi. Koroa women, who apparently had the authority to determine the fate of captives, decreed that five French women and four children be taken to the Chickasaws and sold rather than killed.<sup>42</sup> With their decision to attack the French in November of 1729, the Yazooos and Koroas found their destinies linked with the Natchez.<sup>43</sup>

The Quapaws' choice was as clear as the Yazooos' and Koroas'. Since the Quapaws' move west, they had resisted these Mississippian descendants, who contested the Quapaws' right to settle on the Mississippi River. The Quapaws eagerly joined the fight against their enemies, declaring that "while there was an [Quapaw] in the world, the Natchez and the Yazooos would not be without an enemy."<sup>44</sup> Throughout the 1730s, they conducted successful raids against the Natchez, Yazooos, and Koroas.<sup>45</sup> Rather than fighting *for* the French, as historians often describe Indian-European military alliances, the Quapaws were delighted to have an agitated ally who would provide troops, supplies, and encouragement.

The Quapaws' good relations with the French also contributed to their decision. In contrast to the Natchez, the Quapaws built a strong friendship with their French neighbors. One reason was the smaller numbers of French—fewer than fifty—living in their midst.<sup>46</sup> And these French and the Quapaws both had reasons to be more adaptable than did their French and

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<sup>41</sup> Bienville, Memoir on Louisiana, 1726, MPAFD, 3: 531; Brain, "La Salle at The Natchez," 55.

<sup>42</sup> Diron d'Artaguette to Maurepas, February 9, 1730, MPAFD, 1: 58; Lusser to Maurepas, journal entry for March 9, 1730, MPAFD, 1: 99-100; Le Page du Pratz, *History of Louisiana*, 91.

<sup>43</sup> Périer to Maurepas, April 1, 1730, fol. 352, bob. 19, C13A12, Louisiana Colonial Records Project; Périer to Ory, December 18, 1730, MPAFD, 4: 41.

<sup>44</sup> Lepetit to D'Avagour, July 12, 1730, *Jesuit Relations*, 67: 377; Watrin, "Banishment of the Jesuits from Louisiana," September 3, 1764, *Jesuit Relations*, 70: 247.

<sup>45</sup> Périer to Ory, December 18, 1730, MPAFD, 4: 41; Marchand to Périer, abstract, September 15, 1732, MPAFD, 4: 124; Périer to Maurepas, January 25, 1733, MPAFD, 1: 167. For earlier raids on the Koroas, see, for example, Bienville to Pontchartrain, September 6, 1704, MPAFD, 3: 22-23.

<sup>46</sup> Du Poisson to Patouillet, [1726], *Jesuit Relations*, 67: 261; "Recensement general des habitans establys a sotébouy Arkansas es des Ouvriers de la concession cy devans appartenant a Sr. Law," February 18, 1723, transcribed

Natchez counterparts. Not only outnumbered in a strange land hundreds of miles from Louisiana's French capital, non-Indians on the Arkansas also had not come as settlers determined to build plantations. They were *voyageurs, engagés* (indentured servants) freed and stranded by John Law's 1720 financial debacle, and deserters. For the Quapaws' part, their status as newcomers on a contested land seems to have given them a flexibility that the long-powerful Natchez chiefs lacked as well as a greater desire to get along with the most recent newcomers. The French farmed fields and lived in a town surrounded by Quapaw fields and towns, and under their supervision. The French settlers provided mutual protection in a dangerous place and traded furs, food, and other material goods. Their needs coincided with those of the Quapaws, and Quapaw rituals transformed neighbors into family. Having successfully incorporated French men and women, largely on local terms, the Quapaws seized the opportunity to ally with the French against old enemies.<sup>47</sup>

Although not enemies of the Natchez, Yazoo, or Koroas, the Choctaws had no particular affinity for them and hoped to profit from the captives, spoils, and French supplies that would come from the war. French officials very much hoped to have this powerful people on their side, whose participation would be infinitely more valuable than the Louisiana army. In January of 1730, French soldiers established a siege on Natchez. But when the Natchez charged out of the fort to fight, the French soldiers fled "without firing a single shot," as Governor Périer

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by Dorothy Core, no. 6a, box I, Small Manuscripts Collection, Arkansas Historical Commission, Little Rock, Arkansas; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 48.

<sup>47</sup> In 1758 a French observer noted that the two communities were "more like brothers than like neighbors." Jean Baptiste Le Page du Pratz, *Histoire de la Louisiane, Contenant la Découverte de ce vaste Pays; sa Description géographique; un Voyage dans les Terres; l'Histoire Naturelle; les Moeurs, Coûtumes & Religion des Naturels, avec leurs Origines; deux Voyages dans le Nord du nouveau Mexique, dont un jusqu'à la Mer du Sud; ornée de deux Cartes & de 40 Planches en Taille douce* (Paris: De Bure, 1758), 2: 291; Diron d'Artaguiette, *Journal, 1722-1723, Travels in the American Colonies*, ed. Newton D. Mereness (New York: Antiquarian Press, 1961), 56. For more on this relationship, see Kathleen DuVal, "'A Good Relationship, & Commerce': The Native Political

despondently informed his superior. To the governor's and the Natchez's surprise, five hundred Choctaws attacked Natchez two days later. In the battle, they killed at least one hundred Natchez and recovered fifty French women and children and between fifty and one hundred African slaves. The French governor's delight was dimmed a bit by a rumor that the Choctaws had attacked rapidly because they wanted to retrieve the captives before the French or any other Indians got to them.

When the French politely asked for the captives' return, the Choctaws demanded ransoms for each, in part to make up for the hunting their warriors had forfeited in order to fight. They declared their willingness to sell the African captives to the English if they gave better prices. The French claim that the slaves belonged to them carried little weight. The Choctaws considered them justly acquired in battle. While the French might have a claim to the return of their families, they had held the Africans in bondage and had no right to prevent the Choctaws or English from doing the same. Alibamon Mingo, a Choctaw chief from the town of Concha, listed the price for each black slave: "a coat, a gun, a white blanket, four ells of limburg cloth," plus presents for each town and for individual chiefs. One Choctaw chief told French officer Régis du Roulet that his men were keeping the slaves that they had captured to serve them and that "the French ought to be content with those who had been returned to them." Without Choctaw assistance, the chief pointed out, the French "would have got nothing at all" because they "did not have enough courage to take them."<sup>48</sup>

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Economy of the Arkansas River Valley," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 1 (Spring 2003), 61-89.

<sup>48</sup> Diron d'Artaquette to Maurepas, February 10, 1730 (postscript to February 9), MPAFD, 1: 60-61; Périer to Maurepas, March 18, 1730, MPAFD, 1: 67-69; Régis du Roulet, Journal, entries for February 8, March 20, March 29, April 2, April 13, April 27, May 13, and July 5, 1730, MPAFD, 1: 178-181; Le Page du Pratz, *History of Louisiana*, 92. For other instances of Choctaws and others haggling over the return of the French captives, see Lusser to Maurepas, journal entries for March 9 and 16, 1730, MPAFD, 1: 101, 109-111.

The Tunicas' history with the Natchez made them more ambivalent than the Yazoo, Koroas, Quapaws, or Choctaws. They apparently had allied with the Natchez in the past, but conflict had erupted in 1723 when Tunicas killed three Natchez.<sup>49</sup> In early 1730, the Tunicas swore to fight the Natchez and their allies. They scouted for the French, although it is not clear that they actually engaged in battle.<sup>50</sup> Whatever their earlier designs, in June of 1730, the Tunicas made a mistake. One hundred Natchez men plus women and children who had fled after the Choctaw attack sought refuge among the Tunicas. They asked for Tunica mediation to make peace with the French. Whether sincerely or in hopes of capturing the Natchez to deliver to the French, the Tunicas invited the Natchez refugees to settle among them. When the Tunicas asked the Natchez men to hand over their arms, the men answered that they wanted to but that they needed to hold onto them "to reassure their wives," who were naturally apprehensive about entering the town of their former enemy. Acceding to the sensibility of the women's fear, the Tunicas hosted the Natchez with a calumet ceremony and feast that lasted well into the night. After the Tunicas went to sleep, the Natchez guests killed twenty of them and drove off the rest long enough to escape with the Tunicas' guns and ammunition, of which they had a large supply due to recent French recruitment.<sup>51</sup> This betrayal placed the Tunicas firmly on the anti-Natchez side. They

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<sup>49</sup> Bienville, Representations to the Superior Council of Louisiana, August 3 and 10, 1723, MPAFD, 3: 360-361, 369-370; Leblond de La Tour, Representation to the Superior Council of Louisiana, August 5, 1723, MPAFD, 3: 364.

<sup>50</sup> Périer to Maurepas, April 1, 1730, fol. 352, bob. 19, C13A12, Louisiana Colonial Records Project; Périer to Maurepas, April 10, 1730, fol. 300, bob. 19, C13A12, Louisiana Colonial Records Project.

<sup>51</sup> Diron d'Artaquette to Maurepas, June 24, 1731, MPAFD, 4: 77; Beauchamp to Maurepas, November 5, 1731, MPAFD, 4: 79; Périer to Maurepas, December 10, 1731, MPAFD, 4: 102-103; Le Page du Pratz, *History of Louisiana*, 93.

routed Natchez refugees along both sides of the Mississippi through the early 1740s, demanding provisions and armaments from the French to supply their missions.<sup>52</sup>

According to one account, the Natchez were assisted at the Tunicas by Koroa and Chickasaw warriors who had hidden outside the town during the feasting.<sup>53</sup> Traditionally allies of the Natchez, Yazoo, and Koroas, the Chickasaws at first hoped to play both sides in the conflict. The French had failed to defeat them in the “First Chickasaw War” of the early 1720s, but most Chickasaws ~~apparently preferred~~ ~~seemed to prefer~~ neutrality to overt war. They apparently knew of Natchez plans in 1729 but did not join in the violence. However, when refugees from the three nations sought protection in Chickasaw country after the Choctaws drove them from their homes in early 1730, the Chickasaws could not remain neutral.<sup>54</sup> The demands and plight of the Natchez pulled the Chickasaws toward war. In the summer of 1730, they sent emissaries to the Quapaws, Choctaws, Cherokees, Miamis, and several Illinois peoples proposing that they all join against the French with the Natchez, Yazoo, and Koroas, armed with English weapons supplied by the Chickasaws. Apparently, at least one former French slave who had been captured by the Natchez simultaneously traveled to New Orleans to tell slaves that “they would get their liberty” if they revolted against the French.<sup>55</sup>

By early 1731, after some debate, the Chickasaws escorted Natchez refugees onto Chickasaw lands, allowing them to settle near their clustered towns to act as a barrier from

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<sup>52</sup> See, for example, Bienville to Maurepas, May 18, 1733, MPAFD, 3: 623; Bienville to Maurepas, March 15, 1734, MPAFD, 3: 635; Bienville to Maurepas, April 28, 1738, MPAFD, 3: 708; Bienville to Maurepas, September 30, 1741, MPAFD, 3: 756.

<sup>53</sup> Périer to Maurepas, December 10, 1731, MPAFD, 4: 103.

<sup>54</sup> Périer to Maurepas, April 10, 1730, fol. 300, bob. 19, C13A12, Louisiana Colonial Records Project; Lepetit to D’Avagour, July 12, 1730, *Jesuit Relations*, 67: 377; Bienville to Maurepas, May 18, 1733, MPAFD, 3: 622.

<sup>55</sup> Périer to Maurepas, April 1, 1730, fol. 352, , bob. 19, C13A12, Louisiana Colonial Records Project; Périer to Maurepas, August 1, 1730, MPAFD, 4: 35; Périer to Ory, December 18, 1730, MPAFD, 4: 39, 41; Beauchamp to Maurepas, November 5, 1731, MPAFD, 4: 81; Périer to Maurepas, December 10, 1731, MPAFD, 4: 104-105; St.



Choctaw raids.<sup>56</sup> Although Chickasaw-Natchez relations would occasionally become strained, the Chickasaws generally fulfilled their alliance obligations. When Governor Périer demanded that the Chickasaws surrender these refugees, the Chickasaws answered that they “had not gone to get them in order to hand them over.”<sup>57</sup> As they committed themselves to the Natchez coalition in the 1730s, the Chickasaws continued to attempt to recruit the Choctaws, Tunicas, and Quapaws, and the French determined to pursue a second Chickasaw war.<sup>58</sup>

Despite occasional disagreements, the French, Choctaws, Quapaws, and Tunicas generally agreed to fight the Natchez, Yazoo, and Koroas. When the French attempted to include the Chickasaws among the war’s targets, the allies proved less united. Not even all French officials agreed on the wisdom of fighting the Chickasaws. Mobile Commandant Diron d’Artaguette warned that the Chickasaws were strong enough to “bar the Mississippi to us for more than one hundred leagues.”<sup>59</sup> But Governor Périer determined “to destroy them without fail.”<sup>60</sup> Not all French defined their interests in line with those of colonial decision-makers. In 1736, Bienville discovered an apparent plot by four French and Swiss soldiers at Fort Tombeché to kill the rest of the garrison and seek refuge with the Chickasaws and English.<sup>61</sup>

Fighting the Natchez fit Quapaw, Tunica, and Choctaw alliance obligations as well as interests. Not only were the Natchez old aggressors, their attacks on the French and the Tunicas did seem to break the rules. Even a Chickasaw chief reportedly told a Natchez delegation in 1730

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Ange to Périer, abstract, October 30, 1732, MPAFD, 4: 124; Périer to Maurepas, January 25, 1733, MPAFD, 1: 167; Vaudreuil to La Houssaye, November 2, 1743, 3: 16, LO 9, Vaudreuil Letterbook.

<sup>56</sup> Régis de Roulet to Périer, February 21, 1731, MPAFD, 4: 62; Régis de Roulet to Périer, March 16, 1731, MPAFD, 4: 70; Louboey to Maurepas, May 8, 1733, MPAFD, 1: 215-216; Analysis of letters from Bienville, May 15, 1733, fol. 206, bob. 23, C13A16, Louisiana Colonial Records Project.

<sup>57</sup> Diron d’Artaguette to Maurepas, June 24, 1731, MPAFD, 4: 78.

<sup>58</sup> See, for example, Bienville to Maurepas, February 10, 1736, MPAFD, 1: 281-285.

<sup>59</sup> Diron d’Artaguette to Maurepas, February 9, 1730, MPAFD, 1: 59.

<sup>60</sup> Périer to Ory, December 18, 1730, MPAFD, 4: 41.

<sup>61</sup> Le Page du Pratz, *History of Louisiana*, 97-98.

that the French had a right to defend themselves and avenge the killings at the Natchez post.<sup>62</sup> For most Indians, fighting Chickasaws was ~~less cut and dry~~ harder to justify. While often enemies of the Quapaws and Choctaws, their main offense here was harboring fugitives.<sup>63</sup> More importantly, the Chickasaws were more populous and better armed, and starting a war against them would decisively cut off the English trade that they brokered.

Much of the debate surrounded the nature of alliance. To all, alliances entailed obligations, within limits. As Patricia Galloway has demonstrated, Europeans and Indians often interpreted one another's vocabularies and symbols of alliance differently, a misinterpretation useful in first encounters but that could cause difficulties in determining responsibilities in times of crisis.<sup>64</sup> Reciprocal by nature, the alliances were under no one people's control. Having the same enemy did not necessarily make two peoples into allies. In the spring of 1734, 150 Quapaws going to fight the Natchez came across a band of Tunicas on the same mission. They instead began to argue, reviving their old animosity. Just before their warriors came to blows, the Tunicas turned home, and the Quapaws did the same, both abandoning their war plans.<sup>65</sup> At least out in the field, their old rivalry trumped their opposition to ~~their~~ common enemies and their common alliance with the French. French officials instructed their allies to destroy the Chickasaws, but the Quapaws, Tunicas, and Choctaws fought according to their own methods and goals.

Choctaws had varying reactions to this French-Chickasaw war. The divided nature of the Choctaw polity meant that different divisions maintained ties with different neighbors, and the

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<sup>62</sup> Régis du Roullet to Maurepas, journal abstract for October 9, 1730, MPAFD, 1: 182-183.

<sup>63</sup> Still, this was an offense. Choctaw War Chief Red Shoe explained that accepting refugees could mean taking on the refugees' enemies. Régis de Roullet to Périer, March 16, 1731, MPAFD, 4: 70.

Choctaw western towns had in recent years found themselves drawn into Chickasaw offers of trade.<sup>66</sup> The history of Chickasaw and English violence against the Choctaws proved a vivid enough memory to prevent the Choctaws from joining the Chickasaws' coalition, but a unified anti-Chickasaw policy proved elusive.<sup>67</sup> In 1734, Choctaw chiefs sent word to Bienville that they might go against the Chickasaws if provided with the necessary munitions. In response, Bienville sent a thousand pounds of powder, two thousand pounds of bullets, twenty guns, and several pounds of red war paint. But after receiving these supplies, the Choctaws said they were unwilling to fight alone. They requested a hundred French soldiers. Bienville sent fifteen men—all he thought he could spare from New Orleans's defenses. The Choctaws called this effort "very feeble." When the governor sent fifteen more, a thousand Choctaw men marched with them toward the Chickasaws.

But the party fell apart when it began to plan its attack. Thirty leagues from the Chickasaw towns, many Choctaws began to argue that they should not attack the Chickasaws directly but rather should pretend to make peace and have the warriors surreptitiously attack the towns while the chiefs were at the negotiation. Then other Choctaws suggested sincerely making peace, a plan that to many sounded even safer. One speaker proposed that, if "the English sell goods as cheaply as they are offering them, why should we refuse these advantages? Could we not[,] without offending the French[,] trade with both?" With the thirty French soldiers helpless

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<sup>64</sup> Galloway, "The Chief Who Is Your Father." For more on the usefulness of what Richard White calls "creative misunderstandings," see Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>65</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, April 23, 1734, MPAFD, 1: 228.

<sup>66</sup> O'Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*, 14.

<sup>67</sup> For Chickasaw recruitment of the Choctaws through trade, marriage, and calumet chiefs, see St. Jean, "Trading Paths," ch. 4.

to lead the party, the Choctaws decided not to fight and instead to send an embassy to a place where they had heard there might be English traders.<sup>68</sup>

On other occasions, French-Choctaw war parties split over strategy, and Choctaw reasoning generally prevailed.<sup>69</sup> In contrast to their essential and decisive participation in the Natchez war, Choctaw warriors preferred small skirmishes intended to obtain spoils but not alienate English traders or Choctaws opposed to the war.<sup>70</sup> For example, in the 1730s, Red Shoe, who had trading and familial ties with certain Chickasaw towns, raided other Chickasaw towns in the late fall or early spring, just in time to reap rewards at the annual French present ceremonies, while trading with the English throughout much of the year.<sup>71</sup>

Tensions over alliance methods heightened when the French attempted to assemble their allies to defeat the Chickasaws in one decisive conflict. The war party was to include one thousand French soldiers led by Bienville, more than three hundred African slaves, Choctaws, Quapaws, Indians and French civilians from the Illinois country, and an Iroquois contingent, which the Quapaws **supposedly** had recruited. At first, the allies heartily backed such a decisive plan. In the fall of 1737, Quapaw guides led a French party to explore the route from the Mississippi to the Chickasaw towns. Quapaws and several parties of Illinois Indians helped to build forts on both sides of the Mississippi to house the coming troops and supplies for an assault in the fall of 1739. But Bienville repeatedly postponed the attack because of delays and lack of communication among New Orleans, the forces assembled on the Mississippi, the

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<sup>68</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, April 23, 1734, MPAFD, 1: 222-224; Bienville to Maurepas, August 26, 1734, MPAFD, 1: 231-233.

<sup>69</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, June 28, 1736, MPAFD, 1: 300-310.

<sup>70</sup> Régis du Roullet, journal entry for November 20, 1730, MPAFD, 1: 190; Bienville to Maurepas, April 23, 1734, MPAFD, 1: 228-229; Bienville to Maurepas, August 26, 1734, MPAFD, 1: 229-232.

<sup>71</sup> Galloway, "Choctaw Factionalism," 299, 304; Régis du Roullet to Maurepas, 1729, MPAFD, 1: 34; Noyan to Maurepas, November 8, 1734, MPAFD, 4: 139; Louboey to Maurepas, July 11, 1738, MPAFD, 1: 371. For more on Red Shoe, see also White, "Red Shoes: Warrior and Diplomat," 49-68.

reinforcements supposedly coming from the Illinois country, and the promised Iroquois. In addition, French officials vacillated between including the Choctaws and keeping them out of the battle for fear they would demand high prices for their services.

Frustration mounted. For months, the assembled warriors urged Bienville to commence the fight. But Bienville wanted everything to be ready first, including roads built to the Chickasaw towns for his heavy artillery. His war strategy must have seemed absurd to people who believed that the best military tactic was surprise attack. Building a road to the enemy's town certainly spoiled the surprise. French soldiers were no happier with the delay and exposure to potential Chickasaw assaults and grew more mutinous as provisions ran out and illness decreased their ranks. In January of 1740, a contingent of French soldiers, acting without orders, sent a message to the Chickasaws saying that, if they surrendered the Natchez refugees and cast out the English, the French would make peace. The Indian allies began to disband, and Bienville had to accept a Chickasaw peace plan, which lasted only long enough for the Chickasaws to ascertain that the war party had dispersed.<sup>72</sup>

When the peace proved short-lived and Chickasaws began to inflict heavy damage on French convoys, the Quapaws persuaded the French to accept an alternative war plan for protecting the Mississippi River. The Quapaws fought the Chickasaws when they wished, in parties of thirty to fifty warriors who could strike quickly and escape without major casualties.<sup>73</sup> The French contributed by paying the Quapaws for Chickasaw scalps. Nor did they interfere when Quapaw attacks occasionally hit the Choctaws. ~~In describing the raids to his superior,~~

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<sup>72</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, February 28, 1737, MPAFD, 3: 693-694; Bienville and Salmon to Maurepas, December 22, 1737, MPAFD, 1: 357-359; Salmon to Maurepas, May 4, 1740, MPAFD, 1: 441-445; Bienville to Maurepas, May 6, 1740, MPAFD, 1: 449-461; Le Page du Pratz, *History of Louisiana*, 102-104; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 84.

Louisiana's governor in the 1740s, Vaudreuil, ~~claimed to have~~ told his superiors that he had "engaged" ~~them the Quapaws to raid the Chickasaws; however, for this purpose. However~~ it is clear that the Quapaws were now in charge of their effort and that their methods were more effective.<sup>74</sup>

In contrast, Choctaw unity dissolved as the war dragged on. Unable to remain neutral, Choctaws disagreed over their Chickasaw, English, and French policies, arguments that devolved into violent civil strife in the 1740s. Many historians have labeled the Choctaw divisions in this civil war as "pro-English" (usually the western towns) and "pro-French" (the eastern). But European relations were less central to Choctaw decision-making than these labels imply. The conflict centered on how Choctaws as a society would decide how to handle the demands and inducements of their neighbors, including the Chickasaws, English, French, and other nations.

By the 1740s, many Choctaws had wearied of the Chickasaw war. If the French had met the Choctaws' pecuniary demands, they might have simply skirmished occasionally against the Chickasaws, as Red Shoe did in the 1730s and the Quapaws and Tunicas continued to do. But the persistent temptations of trade that the Chickasaws offered prompted some Choctaws to desire a Chickasaw alliance.<sup>75</sup> When rumors spread that the French were trading and allying with the Chickasaws behind Choctaw backs, many Choctaws felt they had been duped into depriving themselves of Chickasaw trade. These desires and grievances pulled against both the eastern Choctaw towns' continued reliance on French trade and the Choctaws' history of alliance with

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<sup>73</sup> Vaudreuil to d'Erneville, November 11, 1744, 3: 144, LO 9, Vaudreuil Letterbook; Vaudreuil to Maurepas, December 24, 1744, 1: 44v, LO 9, Vaudreuil Letterbook; Vaudreuil to Maurepas, October 30, 1745, 1: 65, LO 9, Vaudreuil Letterbook.

<sup>74</sup> Vaudreuil to Maurepas, March 15, 1747, LO 89, box 2, Vaudreuil Papers; Vaudreuil to Maurepas, November 5, 1748, LO 147, box 3, Vaudreuil Papers; Vaudreuil to Rouillé, September 22, 1749, LO 185, box 4, Vaudreuil Papers.

<sup>75</sup> See, for example, Vaudreuil to Maurepas, December 28, 1744, MPAFD, 4: 230; Louboey to Maurepas, November 6, 1745, MPAFD, 4: 255.

the French versus the Chickasaws and English. A movement arose to make a publicized peace with all. In 1738, Red Shoe declared in front of French and Chickasaw listeners, “I have made peace with the Chickasaws whom I regard as my brothers. For too long a time the French have been causing the blood of the Indians to be shed.”<sup>76</sup> Over the next few years, more Choctaws came to agree with Red Shoe, while others resolutely opposed him. In the 1740s, violence escalated and became more chaotic as groups of Choctaws, French, and Chickasaws raided and counter-raided each other, some Choctaws attacked English traders, and ultimately various Choctaw factions committed violence against one another.<sup>77</sup>

Old alliances and animosities had expanded the Natchez-French conflict into regional, and in one case civil, war. When the Natchez used extreme violence against the French invaders, they forced their neighbors to make choices, informed by their relations with others. Pushed by their allegiance to the Natchez and conflict with the French, Choctaws, and Quapaws, the Yazoos and Koroas supported the Natchez. By the summer of 1732, most of them were dead, enslaved and shipped to the Caribbean, or refugees among the Chickasaws, Creeks, and Cherokees.<sup>78</sup> While some African captives fought with the Natchez, most found themselves treated like booty, captured in Choctaw and Chickasaw raids and counter-raids. At least twenty returned to French slavery. Others were sold to the English or died in captivity, and a few

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<sup>76</sup> Bienville to Maurepas, April 28, 1738, MPAFD, 3: 711. Greg O’Brien points out that, in the eighteenth century, rival sources of authority existed within Choctaw society, an older one based on ritual, and spirituality and a newer source one based on access to European goods, as Red Shoe did drew on the latter source to build his influence. O’Brien, *Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age*.

<sup>77</sup> One of the first victims of intra-Choctaw violence was Red Shoe himself. Bienville to Maurepas, June 28, 1736, MPAFD, 1: 300-310; Beauchamp, Journal, August 1746, MPAFD, 4: 269-294; Louboey to Maurepas, February 16, 1748, MPAFD, 4: 312; Descloseaux to Maurepas, October 25, 1748, MPAFD, 4: 329-330. For a full discussion of hostilities within the Choctaw nation, see White, “Red Shoes: Warrior and Diplomat,” 49-68; Galloway, “Choctaw Factionalism,” 289-327; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 78-96. For Red Shoe’s past involvement in the Chickasaw war, see for example, Bienville to Maurepas, August 23, 1734, MPAFD, 1: 224.

<sup>78</sup> Usner, *American Indians in the Lower Mississippi Valley*, 30-31.

escaped to build lives lost to the records.<sup>79</sup> The Natchez war had repercussions for other Africans, too. Participation on the French side resulted in permanent free black participation in Louisiana militia.<sup>80</sup> And the Natchez war may have inspired an attempted slave revolt. In the summer of 1731, French officials in New Orleans uncovered an apparent plot to kill the masters returning from mass. Even if the French exaggerated the conspiracy, clearly some New Orleans men and women had considered following the Natchez example, or at least taking advantage of the troops' preoccupation to the north, and some were executed for the possibility.<sup>81</sup> The Choctaws, Tunicas, and Quapaws sought moderate policies, which led the Tunicas to expose themselves to Natchez deception and the Choctaws to internal discord. Still, all remained influential groups into the nineteenth century and beyond. Despite their decision to support the Natchez, so too did the Chickasaws, whom the French by no means succeeded in destroying.

Europeans and Africans carved out what spaces they could in this native world. Rather than being colonized, Indians drew these newcomers into local alliances, rivalries, and ways of conducting diplomacy, trade, and war, which held sway even as they adapted to changing circumstances. By molding colonialism to fit Indian desires and demands, French officials maintained a presence in Louisiana for nearly a century, but the colonial project of extracting natural resources for profit failed, and Louisiana's economy remained more Indian than colonial.<sup>82</sup> This is not to say that any particular Indians ruled Louisiana, or that their world did

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<sup>79</sup> Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 74.

<sup>80</sup> Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 103; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 86-87.

<sup>81</sup> Beauchamp to Maurepas, November 5, 1731, MPAFD, 4: 82; Périer to Maurepas, December 10, 1731, MPAFD, 4: 104; Le Page du Pratz, *History of Louisiana*, 77-79; Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, 74-75; Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, 106-112.

<sup>82</sup> For more on Louisiana's economy, see Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*.



not change. Rather, groups and individuals used Europeans and occasionally Africans to forward their own priorities in the intricate and changing relationships of the Mississippi Valley.

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