

The Great Choctaw-Chickasaw Peace and the War that Made It Possible

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In the winter and spring of 1758-1759, two of the South's most implacable enemies agreed to forever end their attacks against each other. The creation of peace between the Choctaws and Chickasaws during the Seven Years' War has not caught the attention of scholars of the war or of Native peoples in the South.¹ Yet for those two peoples, few events had a greater impact on their and their region's subsequent history. The Seven Years' War in North America forced all southern Indian groups to reassess their relationships with each other and with European powers. Unlike in the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes regions where most of the fighting between British and French troops occurred, the South saw no fighting between European armies, and, other than the Cherokee War between British South Carolina and the Cherokees that began in 1760, events nearer the Gulf Coast during this time are poorly understood. The role of Indian people in shaping early America's history is now accepted by most historians of the era; studies that expose the motivations of Indian people during the Seven Years' War have made an impact on the historiography.² However, there exists no recent study of the southern region between the Mississippi River and Georgia during the conflict, despite the obvious potential for much historical intrigue with France occupying Natchez, Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and Mobile; Spain occupying Pensacola and St. Augustine; Britain occupying Savannah, Charleston, and points inland; and with the Cherokee, Creek, Alabama, Choctaw, and Chickasaw Indian nations and their constituent parts occupying the immense interior between the European powers. The war dramatically impacted all of the region's people before and after the Paris Peace Treaty in 1763, but not necessarily through violence. Historians traditionally gravitate toward events of conflict and war, and that may explain the paucity of studies on the

South for this time period, but the reality of what happened in this region is as dramatic as any story of battle.³

At the start of the Seven Year's War in North America the Choctaws traded primarily with France, the Creeks and Alabamas sought trade from both France and Britain, and the Chickasaws, Cherokees, and other southern Indians relied primarily on Britain for manufactured goods. All southern Indians use their European-supplied armaments to wage war on each other.⁴ Various Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Cherokee groups had fought against each other for decades before the Seven Years' War and they continued to do so through the War of 1812, and even after Indian Removal during the U.S. Civil War. Despite their decades of attachment to French traders and government officials, Choctaws desired a mutually-beneficial trade relationship with Britain during the Seven Years' War, and they insisted that British officials and traders meet with them and take part in rituals to create a lasting relationship. Their demands resulted in at least three major negotiations between the Choctaws and British colonies during the Seven Years' War. In these meetings Choctaw chiefs established the groundwork for a dramatically different post-war world in which they recognized British victory over the French before the war ended, while simultaneously incorporating Britain into their political and kinship system. Other southern Indian groups also seized opportunities presented by the Seven Years' War that counter notions that they acted as pawns of European governments or that few significant actions occurred in the South during the war. In the South, no less than in the Ohio Valley and Northeast, the Seven Years' War enabled moments of unprecedented opportunity for new directions in inter-tribal and Indian-European relations.

For nearly a century before the Seven Years' War, Chickasaws had raided Choctaw villages and hunting parties and Choctaws retaliated in a seemingly endless cycle of revenge killings. Though closely related through culture, language, and occasional intermarriage, Chickasaw and Choctaw relations fell apart with the establishment of the Chickasaw-British alliance after the founding of Charles Town (Charleston) in 1670. Chickasaws supplied the British demand for Indian slaves by using their British guns to attack their Choctaw neighbors to the south and sell thousands of Choctaw captives into the Charleston-Caribbean slave market.⁵ French intrusion in the lower Mississippi Valley, starting at the beginning of the eighteenth century, enabled the Choctaws to acquire their own guns and to counter Chickasaw raids with equally deadly ones of their own. On behalf of France, and sometimes with French forces at their side, Choctaws mounted major unsuccessful campaigns against the Chickasaws in the early 1720s and late 1730s, and both groups assaulted each other nearly continuously through the 1750s.⁶

Though war was, naturally, violent and resulted in deaths and injuries, it was also a significant aspect of normal life and culture among all southeastern Indians. Choctaw and Chickasaw males attacked each other in order to become men or to develop into men with greater status and authority. Southeastern Indian boys, no matter their actual age, remained children until they participated in a successful raid on an enemy. Only then did they acquire a title bestowed by accomplished war leaders and elders that designated them men. Men who then killed an enemy with their own hands, especially an enemy warrior rather than a woman or child, gained higher status and new titles. Ever higher status and authority could be gained for those men who then successfully led warriors into battle, success being judged by the killing of an

enemy and minimal loss of one's own forces. Veteran war leaders sometimes became diplomats entrusted with forging peace with other peoples because they had proven that they could negotiate the hazards presented by the outside world. What successful war-making proved was that a man could tap into spiritual forces to defend his people and conquer his enemies. Moreover, war was rarely a large-scale event characterized by annihilation of the enemy. Rather, southeastern Indian warfare, like that between the Choctaws and Chickasaws, usually involved small-scale attacks on hunting parties or unguarded individuals tending to crops or venturing out to travel and trade with other villages. Such warfare still invoked terror because of the unpredictability of attacks, but the numbers of people killed generally remained relatively low. Besides male status, though often conflated with it, motivations for war also stemmed from the need to avenge the death of one's kinsman or kinswoman. When someone was murdered, only revenge and the death of the murderer or the murderer's relative could restore the balance between two peoples. These cultural imperatives to wage war remained in effect for most Choctaw and Chickasaw males until at least the early nineteenth century, and they provided fuel to the engine of continuous warfare.⁷

When Choctaw and Chickasaw men attacked each other at the insistence of the French or British, they often did so because they could use such actions to enhance their status or gain greater access to European-made merchandise. Only when European demands for attacks meshed with Indian motivations did such attacks occur, but the competing European powers did, nonetheless, provide further incentive to engage in war against other Native peoples. Choctaw and Chickasaw relations with the French and British helped to cause the destructive Choctaw Civil War that lasted from 1746 to 1750.⁸ That conflict between the three major Choctaw

political and ethnic divisions (Western, Eastern, and Six Towns) arose, in part, over disagreement about which European country--France or Britain--could better supply their trade needs. Chiefs and other ranked men of the Western Division had persistently contacted British traders and officials throughout the eighteenth century. One of them, the famous war leader Red Shoes, who apparently counted a Chickasaw woman among his multiple wives and ironically rose to a position of prominence through leading a successful war party against the Chickasaws in the early 1730s, led a delegation of Choctaws to the Chickasaw villages in 1738 to make peace and gain access to British traders; however, most Choctaw chiefs refused to recognize it and warring resumed within months.⁹ In 1744, during King George's War between France and Britain, the Choctaws and Chickasaws again temporarily ceased hostilities as the Choctaws sought access to British trade via the Chickasaw villages. Foreshadowing events in the mid-1750s, France was unable to supply the Choctaws with trade goods because of the disruptions of the war, forcing the Choctaws to find British goods even if that meant crafting a truce with the Chickasaws.¹⁰ Red Shoes led still another Choctaw peace delegation to the Chickasaws in 1746 after a Frenchman reportedly forced one of his wives into a sexual relationship. Red Shoes then instigated the Choctaw Civil War by killing three Frenchmen in 1746, forcing French officials to encourage the Eastern and Six Towns Divisions to attack Red Shoes and his Western Division kinsmen. Western Division fighters maintained access to European trade through the Chickasaw villages during the civil war. In 1750 and after hundreds of deaths among the Choctaws, the Eastern Division, the Choctaw division allied most strongly with France at the time, won the civil war and the alliance between France and the Choctaws seemed secure, putting the Choctaws and Chickasaws again at war.¹¹ Thus, by the early 1750s, the Choctaws and

Chickasaws had fought a half-century long conflict spurred on by Britain and France, as well as by Choctaw and Chickasaw cultural pressures to enhance male status. With the opening of the Seven Years' War, there was little reason to think this scenario would alter significantly.

To explain how the Choctaws and Chickasaws came to see this nearly permanent state of war as bad policy, the actions of other southern Indians and Europeans in response to the Seven Years' War must be considered. The geopolitical environment in which the Choctaws and Chickasaws operated in the late 1750s was not entirely of their choosing, even as they took advantage of changing circumstances. After the defeat of Colonel George Washington's Virginia forces by the French and their Indian allies in the Ohio country in 1754 and the subsequent defeat of British General Braddock in the same area the following year, all southern Indians were aware of the growing conflict between two of the three European powers established in the South. As in previous wars between their European neighbors, most recently King George's War in 1740-1748, southern Indians played the sides off each other where possible and jockeyed for the best possible trade position. This latest outbreak of war between France and Britain provided southern Indians an opportunity to negotiate from a position of strength as both sides sought their allegiance. Although the outcome of the Seven Years' War resulted in the defeat of France and the eventual evacuation of French forces from the South (France occupied New Orleans until 1766), southern Indians began to establish the groundwork for fundamental geopolitical changes as soon as the Seven Years' War commenced.

As early as the spring of 1755, French Louisiana Governor Louis Billouart de Kerlérec encouraged Indian delegations from throughout the South to visit him at Fort Toulouse. Fort Toulouse, or the Alabama Fort as the British called it, was located at the western edge of Upper

Creek territory among the Alabama Indian villages near where the Alabama River is formed at the confluence of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers and north of present-day Montgomery, Alabama. Kerlérec mediated a peace between the Alabamas and visiting Choctaw emissaries, which remained tenuous as a young Alabama man killed and scalped two Choctaws within the next year. Since both the Alabamas and the Choctaws counted the French as a trading partner, Kerlérec did not gain a new ally for France with this negotiation, but Indian motivations coincided with his desire to keep France's Native allies at peace with one another. If the Choctaws were to reach beyond Kerlérec to British trade and successfully take advantage of enhanced British and French demand for their attention, they ironically had to first create peace and metaphoric kinship with the Alabamas since the Alabama towns provided the gateway to British traders from the east. A delegation of Creek Indians also visited with Kerlérec after refusing a request of South Carolina Governor James Glen to visit Charles Town. The Creek chiefs declared that they officially lived at peace with Britain, but they admonished British traders to sell goods to them as cheaply as they did to the Cherokees. Besides receiving gifts and promises of cheap trade, the visiting Creek delegation also allowed French officials at Fort Toulouse to mediate an agreement between them and a visiting group of Choctaw Indians. Both Upper and Lower Creek chiefs participated, along with about 200-300 of their kinsmen. The Creeks and Choctaws had sporadically warred against each other for decades, with each new killing sparking a series of revenge killings by the other side. We do not have the full record of these peace negotiations nor do we know exactly which Choctaws participated, but what is known follows southeastern Indian diplomatic protocols. Whenever southeastern Indian groups met to establish a new peace with another Indian group after they had been at war, they required

that a third party host the meetings and mediate the negotiations, a role performed by either the French or the Alabama Indians in this instance. Then former enemies needed to convert each other into fictive kin before trade could commence. Southeastern Indians also required leading chiefs, or “headmen,” to visit the villages of the other group to assure the people that war had ended and peace reigned, and Creek chiefs promptly traveled to the Choctaw villages in 1756 after this peace was established. These seemingly insignificant peace negotiations between the Alabamas and Choctaws and the Creeks and Choctaws in 1755 had far-reaching consequences.¹²

In the winter of 1755 British fur traders reported that Creek Indian chiefs, such as Malatchi, who were supposedly pro-British continued to visit Fort Toulouse seeking trade goods while condemning British settlers trespassing on Creek lands that bordered Georgia. Echoing the sentiment expressed to British fur traders earlier that year, another Creek headman ordered British fur traders to sell goods at lower prices than the French or else leave the nation permanently. The Creeks also apparently assured French officials that they consented to the destruction of the British-allied Chickasaw Indians by the French and Choctaws. Governor Glen of South Carolina feared that war with the Creeks was soon to break out, so he invited a Creek delegation to Charles Town and negotiated a treaty with them in January 1756. The Creeks refused a British request to build a fort among their towns but did encourage the British to send trade goods. They also pledged to prevent British encroachments on their lands but also promised to leave the Chickasaws alone by neither attacking nor helping them. Glen’s successor, William Henry Lyttelton, became governor in June 1756 and also worried about the intentions of the Creeks and the role of Fort Toulouse. In the first half of 1756 fighting had broken out in the American northeast between French and British forces and war had spilled over

to Europe. Lyttelton sent an agent, Daniel Pepper, to tour the Creek villages and spy on the French fort in an attempt to counter French machinations. Pepper's reports back to Lyttelton described skirmishes between the Creeks and backcountry British settlers and a growing French influence among the Creeks despite the small French force posted at Fort Toulouse.¹³

Regardless of British fears, French Fort Toulouse and the Alabama towns proved to be less a place where French designs on the southern Indian nations were realized than a location where Indians sought additional sources of trade and came together to work out their own disputes. The Alabamas also hosted a long-standing British trading house on their lands and turned some of their French and British neighbors into kinsmen, physically embodying the southeastern Indian demand for trade from whichever source could provide better terms. The potential for European trade and the chance to meet with French officials provided part of the incentive for southern Indians to journey to the Alabama villages in the mid-eighteenth century, but the Alabamas themselves seem to have held a unique status as economic and diplomatic brokers that may have dated from an earlier pre-contact era. Their homes enjoyed geographic significance for their position at the crossroads of competing European empires and Indian nations and where two rivers joined to form one, a site rife with sacred and historical meaning. It is no accident that Fort Toulouse and the Alabama villages played a key role in the Indian and European diplomatic strategies that occurred during the Seven Years' War in the South.¹⁴

Besides the Creeks and Choctaws who visited Fort Toulouse in the spring of 1755, some Cherokees from the Tellico village visited the post in 1756 to discuss trade possibilities with the French. They had to travel there by a different path than a band of departing Creeks in order to prevent a battle between the two groups who were then at war. The Cherokee mission found

shelter and protection, probably among relatives, in the Alabama village of Oakchoy, or Okchai, near Fort Toulouse on a branch of the Tallapoosa River. During their visit to Fort Toulouse, the Cherokee delegation also met with a visiting party of Choctaws who told the Cherokees “that notwithstanding they had for a long time been at war with them and kill’d great numbers of their people they were extremely proud to see them and had forgot all past injuries.”¹⁵ The Choctaws then attempted, according to the British source, to convince the Cherokees to join them in alliance with France. Other Cherokees who remained allied with Britain called the Tellico delegation a group of “old men” who only sought French trade goods, and they assured British agents that the Tellico chiefs visiting Fort Toulouse did not speak for the whole Cherokee nation. Rather than seeking an alliance with the Cherokees on behalf of the French, the Choctaws who met with the Cherokee chiefs at Fort Toulouse more likely wanted peace with the Cherokees for their own reasons having to do with access to British trade and the need for peace. The Choctaws promised to visit the Cherokee Tellico village the following spring to verify the peace and likely discuss trade.¹⁶

Meanwhile, French officials at Fort Toulouse also sent three messages to the Chickasaws to encourage them to abandon their decades-long war against France and join an anti-British alliance. The Chickasaws refused, pledging to continue the war against France, which prompted Creek chiefs to promise to attack the Chickasaws. Creek warriors brought three Chickasaw scalps to Fort Toulouse in 1756 while the Cherokees were there to show their allegiance to France and to receive a reward of trade goods. Reports from British fur traders confirmed that the Chickasaws and Choctaws continued to harass and kill one another. The Chickasaws declined all invitations to visit the Alabama villages or Fort Toulouse and remained firmly in the

British alliance. Nevertheless, visits to Fort Toulouse by various other southern Indian delegations continued throughout the Seven Years' War. Although both French and British government officials and fur traders encouraged the southern Indians to join their side in the latest war for empire, Indians pursued alliances with Europeans and with each other that matched their perceived best interests.¹⁷

Paradigms that had guided southern Indians in their relationships throughout the eighteenth century began to break down by 1756. The Chickasaws still warred with France, the Creeks, and the Choctaws. The Choctaws still counted numerous enemies among the other Native peoples of the South, but peaceful relations were beginning between the Choctaws, the Creeks, and the Alabamas as well as with the Cherokees. Though the French seemed to benefit from these early efforts in 1756 since the Choctaws were supposedly their allies, and Fort Toulouse would remain an important meeting site, southern Indians enacted their own agendas. Meetings held over the next few years at Fort Toulouse, the Alabama villages, Creek towns, and at other Indian sites actually benefitted Britain at the expense of France as all of the southern Indians sought British trade goods, though southern Indians perceived the benefit as their own and did not necessarily become "pro-British" or follow British agendas. Some historians have been misled about the realities of what was happening in the South during the Seven Years' War because they have followed too closely British and French rumors and anxieties over which European power was directing Indian actions. Rather than acting at the instigation of Europeans, as French and British officials feared, Indians in the South pursued their own goals.

Understanding the Seven Years' War in the South requires us to see autonomous Indian

populations enacting rational, if sometimes contradictory, plans that impacted the futures of all peoples in the region.¹⁸

The primary reason that Choctaws could be found among the Alabama villages in 1755, that Creek chiefs visited Choctaw villages in 1756, and that Choctaws and Cherokees met on friendly terms in 1756 was access to European trade. Peace, of course, had its own benefits in lessened violence and an easing of tensions, but Indian-European trade drove Indian actions in unpredictable ways. The French colony of Louisiana lagged behind the British colonies on the Atlantic coast in both quantity and quality of supplies for the Indian deerskin trade, and the outbreak of war in the mid-1750s further exacerbated this discrepancy. From the declaration of war between France and Britain until 1758 not one French ship arrived in New Orleans loaded with Indian supplies.¹⁹ Governor Kerlérec, repeatedly asked his superiors for additional supplies as he feared that not only would France fail to secure new Indian allies such as the Creek Indians, they may lose their long-time friends the Choctaws. In early 1757 Choctaw “deputies” visited the governor in New Orleans to give him one more chance to produce the trade goods and annual presents they expected of their European neighbors. After three years of no manufactured goods from the French, the Choctaws told the Governor “that the nation could no longer do without receiving the English among them.”²⁰ Kerlérec appealed to his superiors in France later that year that the “King’s warehouses are stripped,” and “We are daily annoyed by the Choctaws, who are in want of everything. They threaten us more than ever to resort to the English and to introduce their traders into their country.” Just as ominous, the “Alabama nations talk in the same tone.”²¹ Simultaneously, British agents began urging the Choctaws to visit Charles Town, South Carolina to establish trade relations.²² Choctaws and other Southeastern Indians had long

used the threat of collaboration with the British or French as an effective method of attaining gifts and favors from the other European power.²³ Although based in part on Choctaw expectations of generosity from Europeans who claimed land near their villages, the need to acquire European trade goods exposed a material dependence among the Choctaws that had become firmly entrenched by the 1750s.

European manufactured goods provided an essential part of American Indian material life throughout eastern North America by the mid-eighteenth century. French trade to the Choctaws was normally composed of limbourg cloth, blankets, clothing, guns, red paint, and an assortment of metal items. European goods also served an important status function within Native societies as chiefs, elite families, and accomplished warriors reserved certain items for their own use. The French had largely followed Choctaw custom by funneling trade items through chiefly hands in order to maintain strong diplomatic ties, whereas the more entrepreneurial and profit-driven British trade tended to seek any Indian men, and sometimes women, who could supply them with deerskins or other furs. French adherence to Choctaw social and diplomatic ethics bolstered chiefly authority by enabling chiefs to redistribute commodities to other Choctaws. Choctaws expected their chiefs to acquire foreign items for the use of the community, and French neglect in the mid 1750s threatened the ability of chiefs to perform the role expected of them.²⁴ For a variety of very real and culturally crucial reasons, therefore, mid eighteenth-century Choctaws, especially chiefs and their families, needed to maintain access to this European merchandise, and the French trade disruptions during the Seven Years' War were failing them. The alternative was British trade, but that meant a new surge in inter-tribal diplomacy and the formation of new

relationships throughout the Southeast, eventually culminating in a Choctaw-Chickasaw rapprochement.

In the spring and winter of 1757, additional groups of Choctaws journeyed east to the villages of the Alabama Indians and the Upper Creek Indians in search of British deerskin traders. Building upon the peace and fictive kinship established at the Alabama villages in 1755, Choctaws now sought trade with the Alabamas and Upper Creeks. British traders had also invited Choctaw and Chickasaw chiefs to a meeting at the nearby Alabama/Upper Creek village of Oakchoy that spring in order to end the fighting between them. However, only two Chickasaw chiefs from the “Breed Camp” (a group of a couple of hundred Chickasaws who lived a few miles north of Oakchoy) attended and they could not speak for the main Chickasaw villages. The twenty five Choctaws who journeyed to the Alabama villages in the spring told Governor Lyttelton’s agent Daniel Pepper that they would report back to their nation and encourage a larger delegation with more authority to return later in the year and perhaps send a small delegation on to Charles Town to meet directly with British government officials. Pepper subsequently sent a letter to the Chickasaws urging them not to attack any Choctaws in anticipation of a future peace between the two nations.²⁵

Eastern Division Choctaws, despite their close alliance with France dating from the Choctaw Civil War, were likely responsible for answering the invitation and opening the contact with British traders among the Creek Indians, as only they held traditional connections to these eastern peoples. The Alabamas maintained close cultural connections with the Eastern Division Choctaws with whom they may have shared common ancestry dating from the seventeenth century or earlier. Renewing ties with the Alabamas and the Upper Creeks most likely depended

upon the initiative of chiefs in the Eastern Division who had the authority and demonstrated mastery of spiritual power to lead expeditions beyond the boundaries of Choctaw society. One such Eastern Division Choctaw chief of the mid-eighteenth century was named Alibamon Mingo and possibly possessed Alabama Indian ancestry, as his name means “chief among the Alabamas,” although he also identified himself as a member of the Choctaw Inhulahta ethnic group which dominated the Eastern Division. Alabama Mingo famously told French officials in 1738 that the Alabamas “consider me their chief.”²⁶ The existing records are unclear about who led the Choctaws to the Alabama villages in 1755 and 1757, but it is probable that Alabama Mingo either participated or at least tacitly agreed to the new diplomatic effort performed by his Eastern Division cohorts.²⁷

During the December 1757 visit to the Alabama towns, the Choctaws exchanged their deerskins with the Alabama Indians, rather than with British traders, for Alabama-owned “old Cloaths [sic]” and “their Blanketts [sic], Flaps, Shirts &c.” In turn, the Alabamas, perhaps trying to enrich themselves as middlemen or possibly at French insistence, since Fort Toulouse was nearby, traded the Choctaw deerskins with the British traders for new goods, rather than allowing direct contact between the Choctaws and British. As a sign of just how literally the Alabama towns were located at a crossroad of empire, British traders and officials noted that the French troops at Fort Toulouse often provisioned themselves with British goods via trade with the Alabamas since supplies from France or other French posts remained in perpetual short supply. The French garrison further benefited from the Alabama tactic of preventing Choctaw contact with the British by being able to then attain British goods from the Alabamas, something the French could not have easily accomplished with the Choctaws since the Choctaws took their new

merchandise to their own villages. Choctaw eagerness to trade with Britain eventually circumvented any Alabama or French interference. As promised during the spring 1757 visit to the Alabama villages, an unnamed Choctaw chief accompanied a Creek delegation to Charles Town in early 1758 and South Carolina Governor William Henry Lyttelton sent him home with a letter of greeting to the Choctaws.²⁸

One major obstacle to the opening of Choctaw-British trade remained. Before trade between the Choctaws and Britain could commence, the Choctaws and Chickasaws also had to establish peace. Britain refused to trade with the Choctaws “as long as matters were indeterminate between that nation & the Chickasaws.”²⁹ The decades-long war between the two nations raged on, however, as the Choctaws simultaneously tried to reach British traders to their east among the Alabama and Creek Indians and engaged in revenge killings against the Chickasaws. British fur trader Jerome Courtonne visited the Chickasaw villages from September 1756 until the end of May 1757 and recorded numerous battles between the Choctaws and Chickasaws. The Chickasaws told Courtonne that in early 1756 they fought “the largest Army of Choctaws that they had ever seen” to a draw. A group of about thirty Chickasaw warriors subsequently killed and scalped three Choctaws and brought one Choctaw captive back to their villages to be burned to death. The Choctaws killed one Chickasaw hunter in October 1756, another Chickasaw man died similarly in November, and three more perished in December. In retaliation, a Chickasaw war party of 130 men left their villages from December 25 to January 4, 1757 to attack the Choctaws, returning with ten Choctaw scalps. Throughout the spring of 1757, “gangs” of Choctaws and Chickasaws attacked each other at remote hunting camps. Some prisoners were tortured to death, women fell to enemy scalping knives, and the Chickasaws were

unable to effectively hunt for deerskins in order to trade with the British, while running out of ammunition and gunpowder for their guns. In addition, “northward Indians” also attacked the Chickasaws incessantly. A force estimated at two hundred Choctaws abandoned their attack on the Chickasaw villages in April 1757, and instead split up and harassed Chickasaw hunting camps, killing three Chickasaws at one camp and stealing their horses, deerskins, and supplies.³⁰

British trader John Buckles lived with the Chickasaws and left two journals covering the periods from May 1757 to April 1758 and from May 1758 to April 1759. In the summer of 1757 Choctaws burned a Chickasaw house, wounded a child and killed a man as they slept in a corn house scaffold, and picked off lone Chickasaw travelers who strayed too far from their villages. In September the Choctaws killed three Chickasaws out hunting and at least five more Chickasaws were slain in October while hunting. Five “gangs” of Chickasaws set out against the Choctaw villages in September and October, one of them returning with a Choctaw scalp. In December the Chickasaws succeeded in redeeming a woman and children and killed five Choctaw warriors who had kidnapped them and killed their father. In early 1758 the attacks continued, with two Chickasaw women murdered by Choctaws within sight of their villages, and another large group of Choctaws estimated to number two hundred forced to retreat after stealing ten Chickasaw horses. As usual since the outbreak of the Seven Years’ War, Quapaws from west of the Mississippi River and “northern Indians” also assaulted the Chickasaws. Despite a relatively small population and losses from the on-going war against the Choctaws and others, Chickasaw chiefs remained defiant but beseeched Governor Lyttelton in May 1758 to send them ammunition, a call that the British answered with a new shipment of goods. In June the Chickasaws again took the fight to the Choctaws, returning home with four scalps and two

captives who they “would have Burnt directly” had not Buckles intervened to save their lives. Buckles saved the two Choctaw men “finding that they were two belonging to the Towns that was formerly in our Interest [the Western Division].” Rather than dying a tortuous death, the two Choctaw men went home with blankets, shirts, paint, and other items supplied by Buckles in order to put them in a good frame of mind towards the British.³¹

Choctaw attitudes toward the British had begun to change long before, but it was the intervention of another obscure group of Indians who began to turn the tide of the Choctaw-Chickasaw conflict. In late July 1758 Chickasaw warriors captured a man who they thought at first to be a Choctaw but who turned out to be a Chakchiuma Indian. The Chakchiumas had traditionally lived in the Yazoo River basin between the Choctaw and Chickasaw territories in present-day Mississippi. Culturally and linguistically related to both the Choctaws and Chickasaws, the Chakchiumas supposedly disappeared as an identifiable group after Chickasaw attacks decimated them in 1739. Some Chakchiumas joined and intermarried with the Choctaws while the rest did so with the Chickasaws. British trader Courtonne described the Chakchiumas in 1758 as a “formerly distinct people and a Nation of themselves, but they were reduced by the Chickasaws some Time ago and since [then] the best Part of them have resided in the Chickasaws.”³² Although the Chakchiumas split in two and amalgamated with two distinct Indian groups, they maintained powerful connections across the Choctaw-Chickasaw border. The Chakchiuma man captured by the Chickasaws appealed to his relatives among the Chickasaws and was soon released and then queried about circumstances in the Choctaw Nation. He reported the extreme want of European merchandise among the Choctaws and the readiness of the Choctaws to make peace with the Chickasaws. Meanwhile, war continued as two

Choctaws died at Chickasaw hands in August and four Chickasaws and five Choctaws died in a pitched battle in November. Then on December 12, 1758 another Chakchiuma “fellow” arrived in the Chickasaw towns on a peace mission from the Choctaws.³³

The unnamed Chakchiuma diplomat lived among the Choctaws but counted numerous Chakchiuma relatives living among the Chickasaws, enabling him to communicate and travel easily between the nations. This circumstance made him an ideal mediator between the two old enemies. He informed the Chickasaws that the Choctaws had prepared to send several war parties against the Chickasaws but “had resolved on making a Peace with the English & Chickasaws” instead. The Chakchiuma man explained the seriousness of the Choctaw proposal for five days and then the Chickasaws had a “general meeting” to consider the offer. The Chickasaws agreed to the peace if the Choctaws proved their commitment to ending the conflict. They sent the Chakchiuma diplomat back to the Choctaws “with all the usual Tokens of Peace as are Customary in such Cases amongst Indians, such as a White Flag, a string of White Beads, Tobacco & Pipes & so forth.”³⁴ White was the universally recognized color of peaceful intentions, and smoking from a shared pipe similarly expressed open intentions and the desire for honesty. Southeastern Indians always insisted on a neutral third party to host talks and act as the conduit of communication in order to establish a lasting peace between warring nations, a role played in this case by surviving Chakchiumas. The Chakchiumas were perhaps the only population in the region who could move between the Choctaws and Chickasaws with impunity. The Chickasaws had clearly grown weary of the constant attacks, and, just as clearly, the Choctaws too suffered from the violence and lack of access to European trade.

The Western Division Choctaws maintained close relations and cultural ties with the Chickasaw Indians to their north, and they accordingly led the effort to end the long-standing war against the Chickasaws, just as the Eastern Division Choctaws led the similar peace process with their cultural and literal relatives among the Alabamas and Creeks.³⁵ The Chakchiumas who lived among the Choctaws after 1739 also seem to have lived exclusively in the Western Division, as that group of Choctaw villages was located closest to their former lands and Chakchiuma warriors had assisted the Western Division during the Choctaw Civil War. It is also probable that many of the Western Division Choctaw and Chickasaw intermarriages of the eighteenth century actually derived from the dispersed Chakchiuma population, furthering the Chakchiuma role as Choctaw-Chickasaw intermediaries. By May 8, 1759 word reached Governor Lyttelton that “the Chactaws and Chickesaws have made a Peace.”³⁶ On May 28, 1759, a Choctaw delegation of 86 people arrived in the Chickasaw villages bearing a white flag, tobacco to facilitate negotiations, and a “Peace Talk” from various Western Division villages and some Six Towns Division towns. An Eastern Division delegation of 46 individuals reached the Chickasaws a few days later with another white flag, and they were “received with all the Serimoney [sic] usuall [sic] on such occasions.” The Choctaw delegates emphasized their need for a consistent trade in order to hunt and trade deerskins, and they promised to live at peace with the Chickasaws, leaving six warriors among them as a symbol of their good intentions. Visitations by high-ranking former enemies were a mainstay of post-war diplomacy among southeastern Indians, as they provided tangible proof that a new era of peaceful coexistence and cooperation existed. Leaving some delegates behind likewise provided hostages of peaceful intentions. By the summer of 1759 several Choctaw, Alabama, Creek, and Chickasaw villages

maintained contact with one another. Although the British reported that a few Choctaw chiefs and villages remained allied with France, chiefs from all three Choctaw divisions played major roles in the peace with the Chickasaws and in approaching negotiations with British officials, demonstrating that the various Choctaw divisions were cooperating in a time of crisis and beginning to form greater cohesion in the aftermath of their civil war.³⁷

Once the Choctaws and Chickasaws affirmed their new peace in 1759, a new series of diplomatic maneuvers burst out among all of the Indian nations of the South. The Choctaw-Chickasaw peace removed the final major stumbling block to region-wide inter-tribal and international cooperation. Chiefs among the Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Creeks began an elaborate series of diplomatic meetings that summer in an attempt to formally incorporate the Choctaws into a British trading alliance. A group of Choctaws traveled to the Upper Creek villages in early June with a Chickasaw headman named Opoyamingo to see about initiating trade. In response, some Creek headmen journeyed to Choctaw villages to negotiate, and additional Choctaw chiefs and warriors began appearing among the Upper Creek towns. A group of twenty-six Choctaws insisted on seeing the British Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the South, Edmond Atkin, who was visiting Creek villages that summer. Although unable to find Atkin before returning home, these Choctaws underscored their displeasure with the French and their commitment to peace with the Chickasaws.³⁸ Another Choctaw party of nineteen warriors waited on Atkin at the Creek village of Cussita, and he sent them home with instructions to bring representatives of the whole nation to meet him in the Upper Creek villages.³⁹ Atkin distrusted the Choctaws initially and saw French machinations behind their actions, but the Choctaws soon proved him wrong.

While Atkin met with Upper Creek chiefs at their villages in early July, a representation of four chiefs and about thirty other Choctaws presented themselves to Atkin and gained permission to participate in the meeting. They were accompanied by another 460 or so men and twenty women. Thus far, the Choctaws had concluded peaceful relations with the Alabamas, Creeks, Cherokees, and Chickasaws, but the British remained formally outside of that peace network. In order to turn the British into trading partners, the Choctaws first had to perform a series of diplomatic rituals meant to publicly demonstrate their peaceful intentions and their desire for a lasting relationship. “Before [the Choctaws] came in sight, being painted [white], they began to sing & dance with Eagle tails,” according to Atkin’s account of the proceedings. “When they were approaching, 4 small Arms were fired from among them. Whereupon the Superintendent [Atkin] sitting at the Door of his Tent saluted them with a Discharge of his Brass Blunderbusses, & the small Arms of his Troop drawn up in a line, the Traders standing near him. Then the [Choctaw] Indians advanced gradually after the same manner; and after stroking him with the Eagle Feathers, & presenting a Pipe to smoke, they left off singing, and dancing; & the chief men having shaken hands with the Superintendent.”⁴⁰

These actions initiated the process of constructing a peaceful relationship with the British. Whenever the Choctaws and their neighbors met in diplomacy, especially if a new peace was being negotiated, they painted their bodies with white clay. The color white symbolized “an emblem of peace” and publicly demonstrated the peaceable intentions of the Choctaw delegation.⁴¹ The eagle tail dance provided a sign of great respect to foreign dignitaries such as Atkin and was used pervasively in the Indian southeast.⁴² At a diplomatic meeting between the Choctaws and the United States in 1786, a chief explained that “these feathers of the Eagle tail

we always hold when we make peace.” Bald eagles appear repeatedly in Southeastern Indian iconography as a symbol of peace, and Choctaws considered their feathers absolutely vital to diplomacy.⁴³ The shooting of guns had become a standard greeting when Choctaws and Europeans entered each other’s villages and when Choctaw warriors returned home after conducting war. Smoking and sharing tobacco, a diplomatic practice used by many American Indian peoples, further promoted an environment of peace. The pipe smoke placed a sacred aura over all subsequent negotiations and was used at the end of any talks to sanctify the agreement. The fire and smoke coming from the pipe, in effect, carried the smoker’s words upward to the sun—the most important manifestation of spiritual power among Southeastern Indians—and the sun remembered everyone’s promises.⁴⁴ Singing and dancing similarly demonstrated that the Choctaws meant peaceful intentions, for these actions expressed openness, and such performances also helped to create the sacred atmosphere required of meeting with foreign peoples.

The final ritual, though not mentioned in the British documents, most likely involved the twenty women accompanying the Choctaw mission. According to Choctaw rules, foreigners must be turned into metaphoric relatives before trade could commence, and only women, as the heads of Choctaw matrilineal families, could incorporate strangers into the Choctaw kinship network. Europeans frequently discounted the role of Indian women in diplomacy based on their experience of men as negotiators, but we know from other diplomatic meetings that Choctaw women performed the crucial role of adoption in diplomacy. Once Choctaw women converted these British outsiders into kin, other normal human interactions like trade could begin.⁴⁵

Atkin concluded his meetings with the Upper Creeks at the village of Tuckabatchee on July 9 and then proceeded to the nearby Creek village of “Waulyhatchey” to talk further with the Choctaw party. On July 18, 1759 the Choctaws and Britain signed a formal treaty. Delegates representing all three Choctaw divisions agreed to maintain peace with the Creeks and Chickasaws and to protect British traders visiting their towns. The Choctaws made demands that reflected their attempts to preserve divisional cooperation. For example, the two divisions most responsible for constructing peaceful relations with the Creeks and Chickasaws, the Eastern and Western, picked one village each to be the sites where British traders should conduct trading. In addition, three villages, Yazoo in the Western Division, Coonsa in the Eastern Division, and “Shinnyahsah” in the Six Towns Division, were chosen as the places where a British flag should fly to let everyone know that the Choctaws and Britain lived in peace. This divisional unity was further expressed by the chiefs who signed the treaty: a chief named “Ocahpuckano-mingo” signed as “Chief or Ruler of the Town of Coonsa and Speaker for the Eastern Division .” A man named “Oquatchitoby” signed as “Chief and Speaker for the Western and 6 Towns Divisions.”⁴⁶

Sixty-two Choctaw towns, and all three divisions, participated in the treaty and expected to reap the forthcoming benefits. The Choctaw and British leaders concluded the meeting by exchanging gifts and agreeing to an exchange rate of deerskins for 36 separate trade goods, with guns as the most expensive item at sixteen deerskins each. Atkin loaded his new Choctaw friends with gifts for their return journey, and British fur traders William Hewitt and a Mr. Thompson soon arrived in the Choctaw towns with goods accompanied by a Choctaw escort. Atkin warned the Choctaws that he would cut off trade after hearing of any attacks or mistreatment of the traders.⁴⁷ In the days following the treaty, the Eastern Division leader

Ocahpuckano-mingo asked Atkin if Britain would “give reward” to Choctaw warriors “of 6 Blankets & 3 Shirts, for the scalp of a Frenchman, as he said the French have offered for the Head of an Englishman.” Knowing that France and Britain were at war with one another, even though no fighting between the two European powers had occurred in the South, this Choctaw chief attempted to take advantage of the situation as a method of acquiring more goods. Calling it “a Savage Custom” and concerned about the “monstrous Expence” such a policy entailed, Atkin refused to compensate Indians for killing Frenchmen, unless actual fighting between British and French troops ensued.⁴⁸

Though denied, this Choctaw request for the British to reimburse warriors for French scalps was a harbinger of additional Choctaw demands for British goods. Although British gifts and traders had made their way to Choctaw country by mid-August 1759 Choctaws sought still more presents and traders. A group of 36 Choctaws, carrying a letter from trader William Hewitt, found Atkin at the Creek village of Tuckabatchee on September 17 and told him that a high-level delegation was on the way to demand more trade of him. Their “Insolent Demands and Expectations of more Presents” infuriated Atkin. Apparently, Choctaws had threatened to end the trade with their new British friends and return to the French trade, for Atkin urged Hewitt to gently scold them for this demand and to “[t]ell them their People cried for a trade with the English; we are not going to buy it of them. If they want no more of it, let us part Friends as we met.”⁴⁹ Choctaws felt emboldened enough to demand British acquiescence to their requests because French Louisiana had finally received and distributed gifts to the Choctaws at Mobile in early May 1759, coincidentally at the same moment that the Choctaws concluded their peace with the Chickasaws.⁵⁰ Atkin deeply resented this attempt of the Choctaws to “play-off” Britain

and France, but in October he faced another 73 Choctaw chiefs and warriors and three women at the Upper Creek village of Okfuskee who had escorted British traders back from their villages, and who now demanded a new affirmation of the British alliance.

These Choctaw emissaries insisted, and Atkin accepted their portrayal, that their visit was a necessary ratification of the peace treaty conducted in July. It is in this October 1759 conference that the Choctaws most clearly acknowledged that Britain constituted the trading partner of the future, even though France still controlled sites like Mobile, New Orleans, and Natchez close to the Choctaw homeland and the war between France and Britain would not officially end for another four years. As a result of having successfully established peace with Britain and her Native allies, the Choctaws then initiated a new trade strategy at this follow-up meeting with Atkin that recognized forthcoming changes in the geopolitical makeup of the region while simultaneously constructing as much Choctaw control over the new trade relationship as possible. At several points in their talks with Atkin the Choctaw speakers applauded the fact that “we have got the English fast” and did not intend to let them go. Closely related to that declaration was Choctaw and Chickasaw commitment to never again go to war against each other. Moreover, Atkin and the Choctaw chiefs shared laughs more than once over the imminent removal of the French and inevitable relocation of British territory to points nearer the Choctaws.⁵¹

The new strategy proposed by the Choctaws at this October conference rested upon incorporating British traders into their families in a more intimate way than ever before. Emphasizing the dire need of Choctaws for more trade goods, one Eastern Division chief named the Red Captain argued that “we know it is in your power to send us what Whitemen, or what

goods you think proper.” Therefore, “we have built Houses for the English White People in our towns & we beg that you may let us have Traders & Goods sent to them.” “If you gratify us in this,” Red Captain continued, “we will turn our Faces to our own Land, & go home with a good Heart, & there will be nothing to fear hereafter.” The Choctaw speakers who made this offer contended that they “were the Greatest Men in our Nation” and thus had the power to make new proposals on behalf of all their people.⁵² By having traders reside in their villages and marry into their families, chiefs could exercise some authority over their actions and connect themselves directly with a source of high-status merchandise.

In spite of this promising new idea suggested by the Choctaws, Britain’s attention in the South, particularly that of South Carolina, turned to war against the Cherokees in 1760. Only sporadic British trade missions made their way to Choctaw country until the Paris Peace Treaty ending the Seven Years’ War in 1763. The Choctaws never stopped trying to convince the British of their desire for trade though, as they sent a diplomatic mission to Georgia in the autumn of 1760. In Georgia, they again tried to convince the British to pay them for French scalps and even brought one with them to demonstrate their anti-French intentions. Not until British occupation of Pensacola and Mobile in 1763, however, did a steady British trade to the Choctaws resume.⁵³

Despite a delay in securing a consistent trade with Britain, the vision of Choctaw chiefs in 1759 that they wished to have traders living in their villages and marrying into their families came to typify elite Choctaw reactions to an unstable trade relationship in the post-war years. This method of accessing and managing trade became vitally important in the decades after the Seven Years’ War. With French power extinguished and British settlements established all

around their homeland, the Choctaws had no choice but to acquire goods from British traders from 1763 until the Spanish established a presence in New Orleans after 1766 and the battles between Spain and Britain during the American Revolution. Unfortunately for the Choctaws, unregulated British trade after 1763 severely strained their society as traders bartered with alcohol, assaulted Choctaw women, cheated Choctaws out of their deerskins, and refused to obey Choctaw custom by conducting transactions through the established chiefs. But the system of resident traders that the Choctaws first suggested to the British in 1759 expanded as various traders married into elite Choctaw families and provided their new families with a steady supply of manufactured merchandise, while, in turn, providing chiefs some control over certain aspects of the necessary trade. Elite Choctaw families began to further distance themselves from their fellow Choctaws with this trade strategy, and they began to use their access to trader relatives to move into other money-generating activities such as cash-crop farming, cattle ranching, and slave ownership.⁵⁴

During the Seven Years' War, Choctaw and Chickasaw chiefs and their families established the groundwork for a dramatically different post-war world in which they recognized British victory over the French years before the formal end to the war, while simultaneously incorporating Britain into their political and kinship system. Consequently, they constructed as much control over their own destiny as possible and obligated Britain to behave according to Indian rules and wishes. With the agency of Indian people restored to the historical record of the Seven Years' War in the South, we begin to see how southeastern Indians used the war to their advantage, ironically using war between Europeans to promote peace between Indian peoples, and how they established the new trade institutions that became increasingly important in the

post-war period. Choctaw-Chickasaw relations were forever altered by the events of 1758-1759, as they never again fought a war against each other and became forever linked in their origin stories and subsequent history. The presence and continued resilience of the Chakchiumas gave the Choctaw-Chickasaw peace efforts their needed structure, but the ever-lasting inter-tribal war and the economic pressures of the Seven Years' War provided the impetus.

The story of the Seven Years' War for southern Indians, other than the Cherokees once their war with Britain broke out in 1760, is one of peace, trade, and understanding. On their own initiative the southern Indian groups restored peace with one another through a series of delicate diplomatic meetings. Their reasons for establishing peace and making paths between the nations "white and clean" derived mainly from economic issues related to the deerskin trade, while their techniques for making peace relied upon kin relationships that connected all of the various southern Indian groups. Within their various negotiations with each other and with the British, southern Indians exposed a prescient understanding of the world that would confront them after the Seven Years' war ended. The era of the Seven Years' War in the South is better understood with Indians reinserted into the economic, political, and cultural equation. Such an analysis restores agency to the historical characters most responsible for these actions, challenges once again the notion that Indian groups can be portrayed as committed allies of any European power without first examining their motivations, and serves as a reminder of American Indian power to affect the direction of European imperial actions in contexts other than violence and battle.

Endnotes

¹ Two recent works on the Chickasaws cite the Paris Peace Treaty in 1763 and the end of French rule as the timing and reason for Choctaw-Chickasaw cooperation and peace while failing to cite or notice the diplomatic efforts by both groups during the war, James R. Atkinson, Splendid Land, Splendid People: The Chickasaw Indians to Removal (Tuscaloosa, Ala., 2004), 88-89; and Wendy St. Jean, "Trading Paths: Chickasaw Diplomacy in the Greater Southeast, 1690s-1790s," (Ph.D. diss., University of Connecticut, 2004), 127, 150.

² See, for example, the collected essays in Warren R. Hofstra, ed., Cultures in Conflict: The Seven Year's War in North America (Lanham, Md., 2007).

³ The latest scholarly syntheses of the Seven Years War in North America cite the Cherokee War, and that briefly, in discussions of actions south of Virginia, see Fred Anderson, Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766 (New York, 2000); and William R. Nester, The First Global War: Britain, France, and the Fate of North America, 1756-1775 (Westport, Conn., 2000). Older works on this period in the South, though ones that emphasize British goals and actions more than Indian ones, are John Richard Alden, John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier: A Study of Indian Relations, War, Trade, and Land Problems in the Southern Wilderness, 1754-1775 (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1944), esp. 38-136; and two books by David H. Corkran, The Cherokee Frontier Conflict and Survival, 1740-62 (Norman, Okla., 1962) and The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783 (Norman, Okla., 1967), esp. 160-228. On the Cherokee War see Corkran, The Cherokee Frontier, Tom Hatley, The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians through the Revolutionary Era (New York, 1995); Robin Fabel, Colonial Challenges: Britons, Native Americans, and Caribs, 1759-1775 (Gainesville, Fla., 2000), 12-87; and John Oliphant, Peace and War on the Anglo-Cherokee Frontier, 1756-63 (Baton Rouge, La., 2001). For recent works that discuss Indians outside of the South during the war, see Francis Jennings, Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America (New York, 1988); Richard White, The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815 (New York, 1991); Gregory Dowd, A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815 (Baltimore, Md., 1992); Michael McConnell, A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and its Peoples, 1724-1774 (Lincoln, Nebr., 1992); Eric Hinderaker, Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800 (New York, 1997); and Gregory Dowd, War Under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations & the British Empire (Baltimore, Md., 2002).

⁴ I use the term "Seven Year's War in North America" rather than the "French and Indian War" to reflect recent scholarship and the realities of a series of events that involved multiple European, Indian, and colonial actors.

⁵ Alan Galloway, The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717 (New Haven, Conn., 2002), 296-299.

⁶ My interpretation of decades of war between the Choctaws and Chickasaws runs counter to Wendy St. Jean's argument that the Chickasaws continually tried to establish peace with the Choctaws but that French interference prevented success, St. Jean, "Trading Paths," 126-150.

⁷ Greg O'Brien, Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 1750-1830 (Lincoln, Nebr., 2002), 27-49.

⁸ The best analysis of the Choctaw Civil War is by Patricia Galloway, "Choctaw Factionalism and Civil War, 1746-1750," Journal of Mississippi History 44 (1982), 289-327, also in Greg O'Brien, ed., Pre-removal Choctaw History: Exploring New Paths (Norman, Okla., 2008), 70-102.

⁹ Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion (vols. 1-3 edited by Dunbar Rowland and A. G. Sanders, Jackson, Miss., 1927-1932; vols. 4-5 edited by Patricia Kay Galloway, Baton Rouge, La., 1984), 3:709-713, 718-19, 4:162-64, collection hereafter cited as MPA:FD; and Galloway, "Choctaw Factionalism and Civil War, 1746-1750," O'Brien, ed., Pre-removal Choctaw History, 80. On the origins of the Choctaw Confederacy, see Patricia Galloway,

Choctaw Genesis, 1500-1700 (Lincoln, Nebr., 1995).

¹⁰ MPA:FD 4:225-26.

¹¹ MPA:FD 5:216-19. On Red Shoes see also Richard White, "Red Shoes: Warrior and Diplomat," David G. Sweet and Gary B. Nash, eds., Struggle and Survival in Colonial America (Berkeley, Cal., 1981), 49-68. For the Choctaw terms for their divisions, see John Swanton, Source Material for the Social and Ceremonial Life of the Choctaw Indians (Washington, D.C., Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin no. 103, 1931), 55-57. On Chickasaw-Choctaw relations in the 1730s-1750s, see also Atkinson, Splendid Land, Splendid People, 65-87.

¹² MPA:FD 5:170; and Journal of an Indian Trader, January-May 1755, William L. McDowell, Jr., ed, Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, 1754-1765 (Columbia, S.C., 1970), 66-67, volume hereafter cited as SCIA. For a general history of Fort Toulouse see Daniel H. Thomas, Fort Toulouse: The French Outpost at the Alabamas on the Coosa (Tuscaloosa, Ala., 1989).

¹³ Journal of an Indian Trader, January-May 1755, SCIA, 62-65; James Glen to Lords Commissioners for Trade April 14, 1756, Records in British Public Record Office Relating to South Carolina, 1663-1782 (Columbia, S.C., microfilm), reel 9:52-56, hereafter cited as Records Relating to South Carolina; William Henry Lyttelton to Lords Commissioners for Trade October 17, 1756, Records Relating to South Carolina, 9:154-57; Daniel Pepper to Lyttelton November 30, 1756, December 21, 1756, and December 23, 1756, all in SCIA, 295-301.

¹⁴ For a history of the Alabama Indians and their villages around Fort Toulouse, see Sheri Marie Shuck-Hall, Journey to the West: The Alabama and Coushatta Indians (Norman, Okla., 2008), 32, 54-63, 77, 93-94; and Patricia Kay Galloway, "Four Ages of Alibamon Mingo, *fl.* 1700-1766," Journal of Mississippi History 65:4 (2003), 331-32. On the symbolism of rivers among southeastern Indians see Charles Hudson, The Southeastern Indians (Knoxville, Tenn., 1976), 128, 172-73, 355, 416.

¹⁵ Records Relating to South Carolina, 9:226-27.

¹⁶ SCIA 261-62.

¹⁷ Records Relating to South Carolina, 9:228-29; and SCIA 294-97.

¹⁸ Examples of French and British excessive optimism and unfounded fears about the influence of each other in southern Indian affairs during the war abound. For example, see the journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, captain in the French military and aide-de-camp to the Marquis de Montcalm, where the French military is convinced that Choctaw forces are soon to join them in Detroit in 1757, while the next year expressing dismay that British Indian Agent Sir William Johnson has marched to Lake Champlain with hundreds of Indians, including Choctaws, neither of which action the Choctaws seem to have actually engaged in, Edward P. Hamilton, ed., Adventure in the Wilderness: The American Journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, 1756-1760 (Norman, Okla., 1964), 89, 119, 180, 196, 232. Andrew Lewis wrote to Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia in 1756 that all Indians in the South were joining the French and would soon attack the British, Lewis to Dinwiddie, Oct. 11, 1756, British Colonial Record Office, Class 5 files, vol. 48, also found in Randolph Boehm, ed., British Colonial Office, French and Indian War, 1754-1763 (microfilm, Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America), reel 2. For an example of a historian uncritically accepting such rumors as fact, see Nester, The First Global War, 193 ("hundreds" of Choctaw warriors joining British forces in Pennsylvania).

¹⁹ Alden, John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier, 96.

²⁰ MPA:FD 5:182-83; and see also MPA:FD 5:179-81, 220-22.

²¹ MPA:FD 5:189. See also MPA:FD 5:191, 194-98, 222-23.

²² Alden, John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier, 92-93.

²³ Richard White aptly termed this diplomatic strategy among the Choctaws a “play-off” system, in The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos (Lincoln, Nebr., 1983), 1-146.

²⁴ MPA:FD 5:230-31; and O’Brien, Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 70-97.

²⁵ SCIA, 354, 364, 370, 378-79, 390, 420.

²⁶ MPA:FD 4:163. See also Galloway, “Four Ages of Alibamon Mingo,” 321-342.

²⁷ On the Eastern Division’s relationship with the Alabamas see Galloway, Choctaw Genesis, 311-13; and Galloway, “Confederacy as a Solution to Chiefdom Dissolution: Historical Evidence in the Choctaw Case,” Charles Hudson and Carmen Tesser, eds., The Forgotten Centuries: Indians and Europeans in the American South, 1521-1704 (Athens, Ga., 1994), 393-420. On the Eastern Division’s pro-French stance see Galloway, “Choctaw Factionalism and Civil War,” Galloway, “‘So Many Little Republics’: British Negotiations with the Choctaw Confederacy, 1765,” Ethnohistory 41 (1994), 522-23; Galloway, Choctaw Genesis, 323; and MPA:FD, 5:61.

²⁸ SCIA, 420, quotes: 423, 424. For the French garrison trading for British goods, see Shuck-Hall, Journey to the West, 93; and Edmond Atkin, The Appalachian Indian Frontier: The Edmond Atkin Report and Plan of 1755, Wilbur R. Jacobs, ed., (Lincoln, Nebr, 1967), 63-64. See also Alden, John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier, 97.

²⁹ John Buckles to John Brown, 8 June 1759, William Henry Lyttelton Papers, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. I wish to thank the Clements Library for awarding me a Price Research Fellowship in 1997 that enabled me to examine the Lyttelton Papers.

³⁰ SCIA, 413-17.

³¹ SCIA, 458-61; and Records Relating to South Carolina, 9:230-31, quotes on 231.

³² SCIA, 415.

³³ Records Relating to South Carolina, 9:232-34. For a brief recent history of the Chakchiumas see Patricia Galloway, “Chakchiuma,” in William C. Sturtevant, gen. ed., and Raymond D. Fogelson, vol. ed., Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 14: Southeast (Washington, D.C., 2004), 496-98.

³⁴ Records Relating to South Carolina, 9:234.

³⁵ For the traditional cultural ties between the Western Division and the Chickasaws see Galloway, Choctaw Genesis, 311-13; and Galloway, “Confederacy as a Solution to Chiefdom Dissolution, 393-420.

³⁶ Records Relating to South Carolina, 9:191.

³⁷ John Buckles to John Brown, 8 June 1759, Lyttelton Papers.

³⁸ Atkin to Lyttelton, 17 June 1759, Lyttelton Papers.

³⁹ Atkin to John Buckles, 29 July, 1759, Lyttelton Papers; and Alden, John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier, 98.

⁴⁰ Speeches before going into Tookyahchy & afterwards in that Square to the Headmen of the Upper Towns, July 1759, Lyttelton Papers. This particular meeting with the Choctaws took place on July 7.

⁴¹ Joseph Martin, "Journal of the Hopewell Treaties," Draper Manuscripts Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, ser. U, vol. 14, p. 82 (quote). See also Greg O'Brien, "The conqueror Meets the Unconquered: Negotiating Cultural Boundaries on the Post-Revolutionary Southern Frontier," Journal of Southern History LXVII (2001), 57; and Hudson, The Southeastern Indians, 132, 226.

⁴² British trader James Adair reported that "the Indians cannot shew greater honour to the greatest potentate on earth, than to...dance before him with the eagles tails, Adair, History of the American Indians (1775; rpt., Samuel Cole Williams, ed., Johnson City, Tenn, 1930), 176-77.

⁴³ Martin, "Journal of the Hopewell Treaties," 82 (quote). For the importance of eagles among Southeastern Indians see Adair, History, 32; and Hudson, The Southeastern Indians, 163-65.

⁴⁴ See Robert Williams, Linking Arms Together: American Indian Treaty Visions of Law and Peace, 1600-1800 (New York, 1997), 44, 47, 75-76; and Hudson Southeastern Indians, 317-18.

⁴⁵ O'Brien, "The Conqueror Meets the Unconquered," 59.

⁴⁶ Treaty of Friendship and Commerce, 18 July 1759, Lyttelton Papers.

⁴⁷ Atkin to John Buckles, 29 July, 1759, Lyttelton Papers; Atkin to Jerome Courtonne, John Brown, and John Heyarider [traders among the Chickasaws], 20 Sept., 1759, Lyttelton Papers; Alden, John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier, 98; and Corkran, Creek Frontier, 202.

⁴⁸ Superintendent's Instructions to Hewitt & Johnston, 9 August 1759, Lyttelton Papers.

⁴⁹ Atkin to Hewitt, 21 Sept., 1759, Lyttelton Papers.

⁵⁰ MPA:FD, 5:541-42.

⁵¹ Conferences with 73 Chactaw Head Warriors, 25 Oct. - 1 Nov., 1759, Lyttelton Papers.

⁵² All quotes in Conferences with 73 Chactaw Head Warriors, 25 Oct. - 1 Nov., 1759, Lyttelton Papers.

⁵³ Allen D. Candler and Kenneth Coleman, eds., Colonial Records of the State of Georgia (Atlanta and Athens, 1904-1989), 8:394-98; and Alden, John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier, 98-99.

⁵⁴ See Greg O'Brien, "Protecting Trade through War: Choctaw Elites and British Occupation of the Floridas," Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern eds., Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600-1850 (London, and Philadelphia, 1999), 149-67; and O'Brien, Choctaws in a Revolutionary Age, 70-97.